

Green Spaces Strategy Implementation and Business Plan 22/23 – 25/26

Final Version 13/06/22

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Timeline

**Cabinet Approval – 22nd June 2022
Implementation – June 2022**

Comms

- Once approved, it will become an operational document, used for internal monitoring and direction of officers of resources towards achieving the objectives within it.
- A public, more accessible, publication of this document will be made available online, following Cabinet approval.



Foreword

To be drafted and signed by the Lead Cabinet Member for public document.

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1.0 Summary

- 1.1 The responsibility for green spaces (commonly referred to as parks and open spaces) sits with the parks service and includes parks, playgrounds, amenity green spaces, green corridors, nature reserves, playing pitches, outdoor youth play infrastructure, built facilities in parks, and allotments.
- 1.2 The Green Spaces Service sits within the Directorate of Borough Economy and is part of the Parks and Grounds Service – including parks, grounds maintenance, urban forestry, and – temporarily – Sandwell Valley, Forge Mill Farm, and Lightwoods House and Park.
- 1.3 For the purposes of this strategy, the parks service is referred to as Green Spaces Service. The service currently includes four officers, and two front line operatives responsible for playground maintenance and inspection. Separately to this, Green Spaces are supported by Grounds Maintenance with 7 park gardeners, 3 park rangers, and operatives responsible for trees, urban forestry, arboriculture and countryside maintenance.
- 1.4 Litter and waste responsibilities in most green spaces are part of the waste and street cleansing contract with Serco. However, nature reserves and Sandwell Valley are currently not included in this arrangement and is currently dealt with by Park Rangers, supported by grounds maintenance operatives.
- 1.5 **Green spaces have achieved the following in the last six months (Nov 2021 to May 2022 - the period which was least impacted by the Covid pandemic in the last financial year):**
 - a. **Business Plan for Sandwell Valley (Appendix A) and Lightwoods House and Park (Appendix B):** the three-year business plan for both sites sets out the strategy to achieve a self-sustained financial position and improved education and visitor offering by 25/26. This includes a relaunch of Sandwell Valley (phase one part delivered, phase one to be fully delivered by 8th June 2022), transition to completing the Heritage Lottery Fund commitments at Lightwoods House and Park, and expansion of Forge Mill Farm.
 - b. **Pilot of Environment Response Team (Appendix C):** since Dec 2021, green spaces have benefited from the pilot of the environment response team, with over 4,000 hours completed, with over 40 small sites and 11 large sites in deep cleanse and green infrastructure improvements (including parks, playgrounds, amenity green spaces, green corridors, and road side green spaces). These sites were selected based on their impact on the community and the significance of the waste or overgrowth on health and safety. Due to the success of the initial six months, this pilot will continue until July 2022, and has been proposed to continue as part of the business as usual operations. Local level green spaces have benefited from this work, which currently score lowest in quality.

- c. **Large bid for Britannia Park completed for Town's Fund:** A bid to invest in the refurb and development of Britannia Park (The Britannia Park Community Hub Project) was approved by the Towns Fund Super Board and Government, for delivery in 2022 -2024.
- d. **New posts in place:** vacant posts have now been filled – Community Development and Allotment Assistant, and West Smethwick Park Community Engagement Officer – and additional appointments within base budget are currently being made. This includes an education and outreach manager and two officers who will pilot a countryside and animal welfare education programme at Sandwell Valley and Forge Mill Farm, as well as developing a volunteer programme for green spaces, and a catering service lead officer to continue our pilot for parks-based coffee huts, and additional posts to develop our local level green spaces, nature reserves, playgrounds, and playing pitches.
- e. **New systems adopted:** we have begun the transition to digital systems, through the procurement of *PSS Ultimate* – a complete grounds and green spaces management and maintenance solution. This will be onboarded in June 2022, with live information on green spaces, inspections, works and outstanding actions to feed key performance indicators and make the service more data driven. We have also procured a venue management system to automate bookings for green spaces – both parks and built facilities – which includes integration with play finder and sports promotion sites, with all sites online by July 2022.
- f. **New ways of working introduced:** the management processes and ways of working have been reconfigured to embed joined up ways of working, data led approaches to decision making, and stronger audit and governance. This includes implementation of service level and individual objectives, the use of key performance indicators, and the reinduction of all officers in member/officer code of conduct and audit and governance (due for completion by July 2022).
- g. **Greater synergy between events and green spaces:** the temporary inclusion of Sandwell Valley, Lightwoods House and Events into the Parks and Grounds Service has resulted in a positive synergy and joined up working between teams. This will enable future economies of scales in procurement and administration, sharing knowledge and expertise between services, and increasing the use of green spaces for community events. Responding to The Audit Governance Report of 2021 from Grant Thornton, the Event Governance Framework (**Appendix D**) is now in use, including the *EventApp* online system, designed for better audit trails and decision-making processes on events on council land – much of which happens on green spaces.
- h. **Completed the capital scheme West Smethwick Park Pavilion:** The West Smethwick Park Pavilion has now been handed over and works to the landscapes are due for completion in May. This is a c. £5m investment from HLF

and Sandwell Council, and the operation of The Pavilion as a venue hire / community engagement facility and café will go live in July 2022.

- i. **Successful bid for the development of Urban Bike Track:** 400k secured from Sport England, with 100k matched funding from Sandwell and 100k from Birmingham Council, to build a new Urban Bike Track at Sandwell Valley. Sandwell are the lead on this project, and delivery of the project has begun and is due to be completed for Summer 2023 opening.

1.6 The parks service has experienced the following challenges, which this strategy seeks to address:

- a. **Demand challenges:** the covid pandemic has seen an increase in the use of green spaces across the country, including Sandwell. This has increased the pace of 'wear and tear' of parks and playgrounds. The pandemic also saw a significant number of parks and grounds maintenance staff absent through covid sickness and the work from home period at the peak of the pandemic. This resulted in a significant backlog of works, which consumed the workload in the latter part of 2021, with backlogs of work still in progress ranging from overgrowth to playground enhancements and returning swings to pre-covid arrangements.
- b. **Resource challenges:** green spaces knowledge benefits from officers with strong local knowledge and civic pride in our green spaces. We will build on this to gain experience from other authorities, best practice, and modern improvements to green spaces strategy and methodology.
- c. **Modernisation challenges:** much of the parks and grounds maintenance service is managed and monitored through manual processes and systems. There has been a lack of profile about best practice in green spaces, modern arrangements for working with stakeholders, and the use of key performance indicators and data to inform decisions.
- d. **Expectation challenges:** There are - rightly – high levels of Elected Member and resident expectations about progress for green spaces in their ward. The use of the portal and a clear strategy and pipeline of works for green spaces will improve expectations from Elected Members, and allow them to know when works are due for green spaces in their ward.
- e. **Communications challenges:** there is a knowledge gap – both for internal and external stakeholders, including Elected Members and residents – around green spaces methodology and approaches to develop and maintain these for maximum community impact. There has also been a focus on borough level parks (Town Parks) and – for other green spaces - a largely reactive service. There is a need to improve our communications in our programme of works for green spaces, and our methodology and approach.

- f. Funding challenges:** Sandwell is not unique in having budget pressures, and green spaces are not immune to these challenges. The current budget – and the way in which it is used - does not meet the current demands of the number of green spaces Sandwell has – particularly neighbourhood and local level green spaces, such as amenity green spaces, play areas, and green corridors (which benefit the more deprived residents without daily access to borough level parks). There is evidence of good practice from other authorities addressing these challenges through a more directed and planned approach to works and development of green spaces, increased use of income generation approaches, and more rigorous funding activities through grants and community/friends groups. This strategy seeks to embrace those opportunities.
- g. Opportunity challenges:** the green spaces service has largely worked in isolation from other services in the council, resulting in lost opportunity through partnership working with education, public health, leisure and tourism, climate change team, and regeneration. Whilst there are examples of good work in this area – such as public health led dementia walks and sports activities – this strategy seem to develop a joined-up approach with other services with green spaces and clear evidence in terms of outputs and outcomes.
- h. Strategic Challenges:** the green spaces service sits within parks and grounds, which includes urban forestry. This strategy seems to embed a culture of joined up working between green spaces, green services, urban forestry, and cleansing services. The service will transition from being largely reactive, driven by demands from members and residents, to a strategic approach benefiting the green spaces most in need. The Green Spaces Audit commissioned and completed in 2018, which included recommendations for a Green Spaces Strategy, has not been implemented; this strategy seeks to implement the key recommendations from this audit.

1.7 This Green Spaces Strategy and Business Plan will set out to achieve the following:

1.7.1 Three Year Strategy – Approach

- a. Focus on priority works only for 2022/2023 to resolve current health and safety / significant community impacts in parks and playgrounds.
- b. Implement actions from the Green Spaces Strategy recommendations that can be achieved in the following 3 financial years. Prioritise those actions that allow a transition to a Green Spaces Strategy that works towards the vision addressed in the forward to this document.
- c. Continue to maintain the Green Flag Awards currently held; but prioritise further improvements to neighbourhood and local level green spaces (green corridors, play areas, smaller parks, and amenity green spaces) in wards with the highest levels of deprivation.

- d. Learn from best practice approaches in green spaces strategy and build internal capacity to work towards this. Embed this process of learning, so that we consistently learn from the best in this field and develop our own set of best practice learning and examples.
- e. Modernise ways of working: more efficient, transparent, and data driven.
- f. Reconfigure the service to empower community and stakeholder engagement in the development, management, and maintenance of green spaces, and achieve synergy with other services to deliver on the corporate plan and 2030 ambitions.
- g. Lay the foundations to secure the financial future of our green spaces as a cost effective and high performing service integrated across the council.

1.7.2 Three Year Strategy – Objectives (detailed outputs and measures from P36)

- a. Increase average quality score for Sandwell Green Space by 15 points, with a clear strategy to achieve a ‘good’ average score by 2030.
- b. Improve accessibility and use of green spaces for sport and physical activity.
- c. Improve accessibility and use of green spaces to reduce health inequalities, loneliness, dementia, disability, and improve physical, mental health, and wellbeing.
- d. Improve stakeholder engagement in the development, management, and maintenance, and funding of green spaces with Friends Groups, community groups, residents and others.
- e. Continue to improve the security and safety of green spaces.
- f. Increase funding for green spaces through income generation, fundraising and external grants, and efficiencies in processes, systems and ways of working.
- g. Increase educational activity for children and young people in green spaces, conservation, wildlife management, and access to nature.
- h. Improve the accessibility and use of green spaces buildings and facilities – achieving maximum utilisation of spaces.

- i. Improve the management and development of nature reserves, urban forestry, and wildlife, and link to the Climate Change Action Plan for Sandwell.
- j. Achieve excellent governance, oversight, and management of green spaces.
- k. Improve the provision of allotments and community food production.

1.8 The governance of this 3-year strategy and business plan will be:

- Cabinet approval of Green Spaces Strategy Implementation and Business Plan in June 2022.
- Annual review of strategy progress by Cabinet and approval of annual programme of works in green spaces (next review: March 2023).
- Six monthly internal green spaces advisory group, including stakeholders from other services to ensure synergy with other strategies and work.
- Quarterly KPI updates to Cabinet Member, and published on the council website.

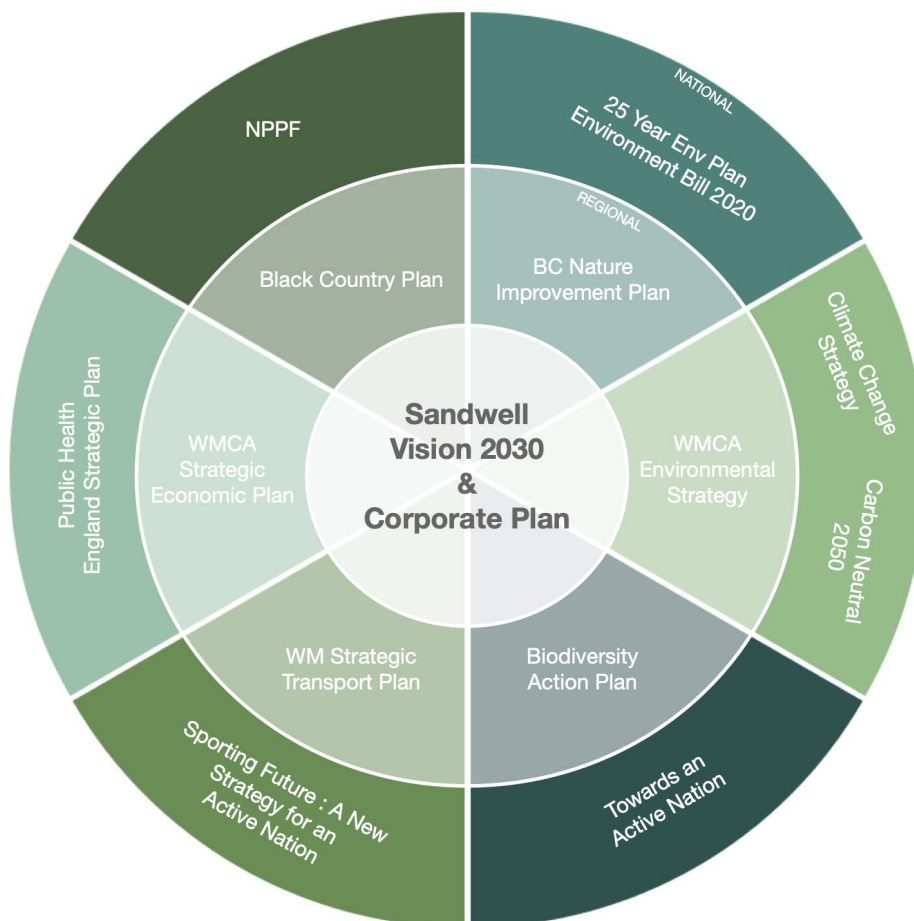
1.9 This plan and the approved annual programme of planned works on green spaces will be communicated to Members and made available to the public through a series of presentations and comms in June and July 2022, including a refresh of our green spaces information on Sandwell.gov.uk and Visitsandwell.co.uk.

1.10 The progress of this strategy and business plan will be monitored through key performance indicators reported to the Cabinet Member quarterly scorecard and confirmed externally by a Green Space Audit every five years (Appendix F).

2.0 Context – Green Spaces Strategy Terminology

2.1 The Green Spaces Audit – completed in 2006, 2013, and 2018 – has set a framework for the way in which we consider green spaces. This is informed by national and regional policy and guidance including the methodology previously referred to as Planning for Open Space (PG 17), Sport and Recreation, the National Planning Policy Framework, and the Black Country Plan (2011).

2.2 Additional national, regional, and local policy and guidance frameworks are used to inform Green Spaces Audit and this Green Spaces Strategy and includes:



Source: 2018 Green Spaces Audit – Sandwell Borough Report

2.3 Open Space is defined as:

“All open space of public value, including not just land, but also areas of water (such as rivers, canals, lakes and reservoirs) which offer important opportunities for sport and recreation and can act as a visual amenity”¹.

2.4 Green space is a subset of open space that includes vegetated land or water within an urban area such as parks and (public) gardens, playing fields, children’s play areas, nature reserves, woods and other natural areas, grassed areas, cemeteries and allotments along with green corridors like paths, disused railway lines, rivers and canals. Green space does not include agricultural land, private gardens or civic spaces that are part of the built landscape. Green Belt and green space are not synonymous, since the former is a specific planning designation to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open.

¹ NPPF (2019)- Glossary

2.5 National guidance contained in “Assessing Needs and Opportunities”, the companion guide to PPG17 sets out a suggested typology of space for local authorities to use as their starting point for defining their own local standards. This has been modified slightly based on local circumstances to form the Typology shown below:

Level 1 Typology	Level 2 Typology	Primary Purpose
Parks and Gardens	Play; Youth; Sports; Semi-natural; Water	Accessible, high quality opportunities for informal recreation and community events.
Natural and Semi-Natural Green spaces	Semi-natural; Water	Wildlife conservation, bio-diversity and environmental education and awareness.
Green Corridors	Semi-natural	Walking, cycling or horse riding, whether for leisure purposes or travel, and opportunities for wildlife migration.
Outdoor Sports Facilities	Play Youth Semi-natural Water	Participation in outdoor sports, such as pitch sports, tennis, bowls, athletics or countryside and water sports. This category does not include sports provision at other Level 1 categorised sites.
Amenity Green space	NA	Opportunities for informal activities close to home or work or enhancement of the appearance of residential or other areas.
Provision for Children and Young People	Play Youth	Areas designed primarily for play and social interaction involving children and young people, such as equipped play areas, ball courts, skateboard areas and teenage shelters.
Allotments	NA	Opportunities for those people who wish to do so to grow their own produce as part of the long term promotion of sustainability, health and social inclusion.

2.6 Accessibility levels used to classify green spaces are:

Accessibility Level	Description
Unrestricted	Sites have unrestricted public access although some sites may have limitations to access between dusk and dawn.
Limited	Sites may be publicly or privately owned but access is limited either by a physical barrier such as membership, or psychological barrier such as a feeling that a green space is private.
Not accessible	Sites are out of bounds to the public

- 2.7 All green spaces are important. However, there is a need to classify types of green spaces in terms of significance, which is done through the following hierarchy:

Hierarchy level	Description
Borough	Those sites whose significance should attract people from across the entire borough. Usually large sites with a range of facilities or designated importance for history or nature conservation.
Neighbourhood	Those sites which perform a function that serves a more immediate community. Unlikely to attract people from across the borough
Local	Those sites which perform a function to a small area – typically areas of amenity green space.

- 2.8 The Green Spaces Audit 2018, completed by external consultants, compiles evidence using the following methodology:

- a. Mapping green spaces in quantity through the above typography and hierarchy. This is benchmarked against a sample of other local authorities and is measured in the number of hectares (i.e. play space provision) per 1,000 population.
- b. Sampling green spaces on quality in the following way using a score out of 10 for each criterion, and a maximum score available for each site of 100:

2018 Criteria
A Welcoming Place
1. Welcoming
2. Good and safe access
3. Signage
4. Equal access for all
Healthy, Safe and Secure
5. Appropriate levels of quality facilities and activities
6. Safe equipment and facilities
7. Personal security
8. Control of Dogs/ Fouling
Clean and Well Maintained
9. Litter and waste management
10. Horticultural maintenance
11. Arboricultural maintenance
12. Buildings and infrastructure maintenance
13. Equipment maintenance
14. Arboricultural maintenance
Biodiversity, Landscape and Heritage
15. Management of natural features, wild fauna and flora
16. Conservation of landscape features
17. Conservation of buildings and structures
Community Involvement
18. Appropriate provision for community
Marketing and Communication
19. Appropriate educational interpretation/ information

Total of 209 sites (c40% of green space sites) were assessed as part of the Green Spaces Audit 2018 using these criteria across the borough.

Town	Number of Sites Assessed (2018)
Tipton	33
Oldbury	24
West Bromwich	57
Smethwick	27
Rowley Regis	38
Wednesbury	30
Total	209

Score	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Quality	Very Poor		Poor		Fair			Good	Very Good	Excellent	Exceptional

- c. Sampling green spaces on value in the following way using a score out of 10 for each criterion:

Reference	Factor	Reference	Criteria	Maximum score
A	Context	A1	Accessibility	10
		A2	Proximity	10
		A3	Quantity	10
Maximum Score		30	Calculation (score/3)x2.5	25%
B	Level and type of use	B1	Hierarchy	10
		B2	Level of use	10
Maximum Score		20	Calculation (Score/2)x2.5	25%
C	Wider benefits	C1	Ecological benefits	10
		C2	Education benefits	10
		C3	Social inclusion	10
		C4	Cultural and heritage	10
Maximum Score		40	Calculation (score/4)x2.5	25%
D	Open Space Networks	D1	Strategic Open Space	10
		D2	Linear Open Space	5
Maximum Score		10	Calculation (Score/1)x2.5	25%

- d. Sampling residents through a survey of 15,000 households, with a response rate of 1,314 valid surveys.

Town	n	% of total sample	Population	Population Rank
Oldbury	250	19.0	53,285	3
Rowley Regis	203	15.4	51,255	4
Smethwick	211	16.0	60,033	2
Tipton	186	14.1	41,080	5
Wednesbury	194	14.8	39,160	6
West Bromwich	240	18.3	80,647	1
No town stated	31	2.4	-	-
Grand Total	1315	100.0	325,460	-

- e. Sampling community groups through a community group survey, with 10 respondents:

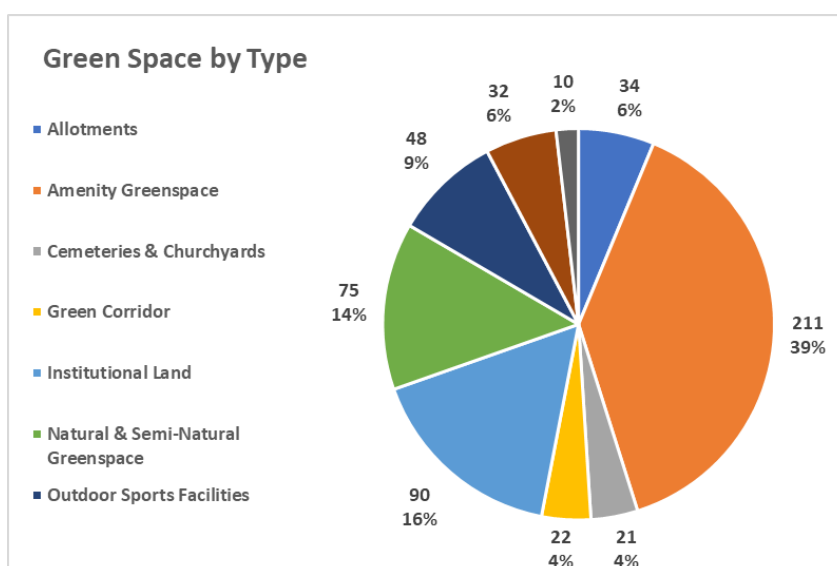
Name of group	Name of park(s) and open space(s)
Friends of Sheepwash	Sheepwash Nature Reserve
Friends of Kerr Drive Open Space	Kerr Drive Open Space
Friends of Brunswick Park	Brunswick Park
Friends of Victoria Park	Victoria Park Tipton
Friends of Red House Park	Red House Park
Friends of Mary Macarthur Gardens	Mary Macarthur Gardens

Go Play Rowley	Britannia Park and Haden Hill Park
Creative Academies Network	West Bromwich
Friends of Rowley Hills	Rowley Hills
Albion Foundation (Go Play Team)	Warley Woods, Lewisham, Victoria, Lightwoods

3.0 Green Spaces in Sandwell – Current Picture

Green Spaces

3.1 Sandwell is rightly proud of its green spaces, with:



Level 1 Typology	Number	Area (Ha)	% of Total (Area)
Allotments	34	43.72	6.3
Amenity Greenspace	211	269.33	38.9
Cemeteries & Churchyards	21	80.60	3.9
Green Corridor	22	75.36	4.1
Institutional Land	90	216.67	16.6
Natural & Semi-Natural Greenspace	75	727.83	13.8
Outdoor Sports Facilities	48	334.61	8.8
Parks & Gardens	32	264.89	5.9
Provision for Children & Young People	10	5.30	1.8
Total	543	2018.31	100.0

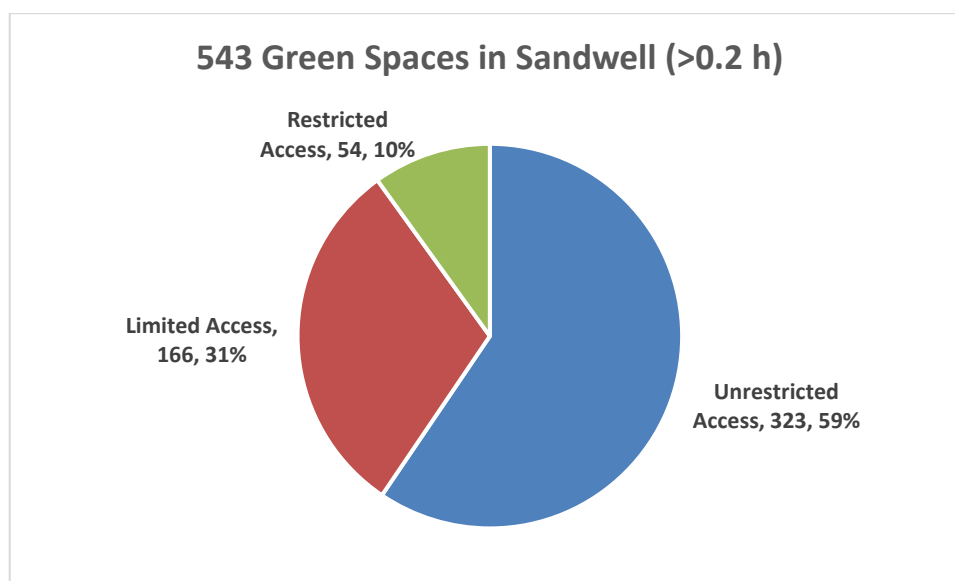
3.2 This translates to a town profile of:

Typology Level 1	Oldbury	Rowley Regis	Smethwick	Tipton	Wednesbury	West Bromwich	Total
Allotments	9	4	8	2	7	4	34
Amenity Greenspace	49	46	10	37	17	52	211
Cemeteries & Churchyards ⁱ	1	4	6	4	3	3	21
Green Corridor	0	1	3	9	6	3	22
Institutional Land	23	16	9	11	13	18	90
Natural & Semi-Natural Greenspace	6	21	4	7	11	26	75
Outdoor Sports Facilities	8	11	6	3	8	12	48
Parks & Gardens	4	5	8	4	4	7	32
Provision for Children & Young People	1	1	4	0	1	3	10
Total	101	109	58	77	70	128	543

3.3 Sandwell Borough has significant amounts of green space, which make up nearly 24% of the total land area, ranking towards middle of the table for comparison studies, and more unrestricted green space per 1,000 population than Birmingham, Oldham, Hull, and Knowsley.

Other Green Space Studies (by consultant)	Hectares of unrestricted green space per 1000 population
Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council (2011)	7.51
Stoke-on-Trent City Council (2011)	6.60
Coventry City Council (2018)	3.69
Gateshead Council (2011)	5.64
Walsall Council (2018)	4.72
Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council (2011)	4.51
Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council (2018)	3.63
Wolverhampton City Council (2011)	3.60
Birmingham City Council (2018)	2.80
Oldham Council (2011)	3.14
Hull City Council (2011)	1.78
Knowsley Council (2011)	1.50

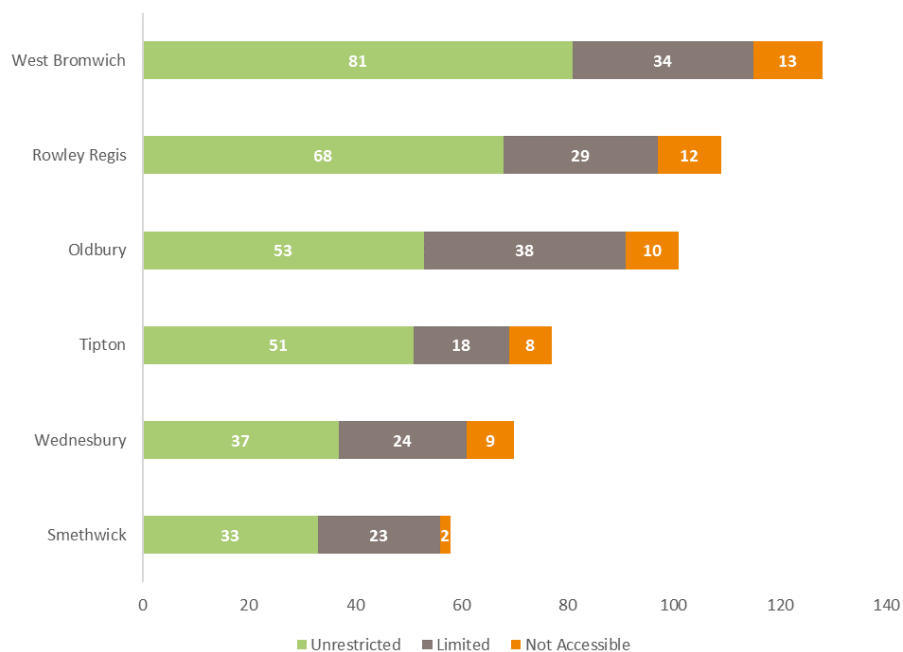
- 3.4 There are 323 green spaces making up nearly 1200 hectares (14% of the total land area, and 59% of all green spaces) that have unrestricted access. Natural and Semi-natural Green Space makes up nearly 40% of the supply (by area) of unrestricted green space and is important in terms of contributing to landscape character and biodiversity.



Town	Number of Sites	Area (Ha)	% of Total (Area)
Oldbury	53	111.69	9.4
Rowley Regis	68	213.00	18.0
Smethwick	33	146.40	12.4
Tipton	51	169.52	14.3
Wednesbury	37	84.52	7.1
West Bromwich	81	457.39	38.7
Total	323	1182.52	100.0

Table Unrestricted Green space area by Town

- 3.5 For all towns, the percentage of unrestricted green space sites is between 53-67%. However, in Smethwick and Tipton, unrestricted green space makes up around 3 quarters of the total area of green space (71.6% and 76.8% respectively), which is considerably higher than other towns. This does not reflect the quality score for these spaces, or that these Town's do not warrant focus within this strategy.



3.6 The average quality score in the 2018 green spaces audit was 34 (out of 100), the same as in 2006, but 4 points lower than 2013. However, the overall average mask a more complex picture where the quality of larger more significant spaces at a Borough and Neighbourhood level remain largely unchanged from 2013. The quality of local level spaces has however declined and is lower than the average recorded in 2006 and 2013.

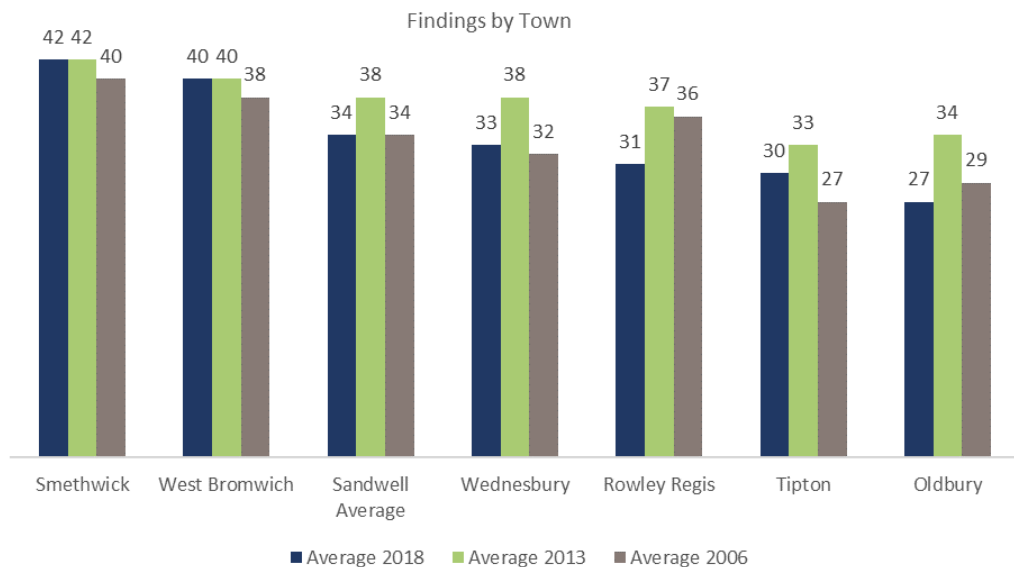
	Very poor		Poor		Fair		Good		Very Good	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Smethwick	1	4%	12	44%	11	41%	3	11%	0	0%
West Bromwich	1	2%	30	53%	17	20%	7	12%	2	3%
Wednesbury	0	0%	23	77%	6	20%	1	3%	0	0%
Rowley Regis	2	5%	26	68%	9	24%	0	0%	1	3%
Tipton	1	3%	26	79%	4	12%	2	6%	0	0%
Oldbury	2	8%	8	79%	2	8%	1	4%	0	0%
Total	7	3%	125	60%	49	23%	14	7%	3	1%

	Very poor		Poor		Fair		Good		Very Good	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Borough	0	0%	2	9%	8	36%	10	45%	3	14%
Neighbourhood	0	0%	21	42%	21	42%	1	2%	0	0%
Local	7	5%	113	82%	20	14%	3	2%	0	0%

	Very poor		Poor		Fair		Good		Very Good	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Amenity Greenspace	3	4%	68	83%	10	12%	1	1%	0	0%
Cemeteries & Churchyards*	0	0%	1	13%	5	63%	2	25%	0	0%
Green Corridor	0	0%	13	87%	2	13%	0	0%	0	0%
Natural & Semi-Natural Greenspace	4	9%	28	65%	8	19%	2	5%	1	2%
Outdoor Sports Facilities	0	0%	16	73%	5	23%	1	5%	0	0%
Parks & Gardens	0	0%	6	19%	15	48%	8	25%	2	6%
Provision for Children & Young People	0	0%	4	50%	4	50%	0	0%	0	0%

**not part of the Green Spaces Strategy*

3.7 At a town level, Smethwick had the highest average quality score (42) and Oldbury the lowest (27). The average quality of spaces in Smethwick and West Bromwich has increased since 2006 and these increased have been sustained. The average quality in Wednesbury and Tipton is now higher than 2006, but the average scores have reduced since 2013. The average quality In Oldbury and Rowley Regis is now lower than in 2006.



Type	Number of sites	Range	Average 2018	Average 2013	Average 2006
Amenity Greenspace	82	6 - 60	29	31	28
Cemeteries & Churchyards	8	25 - 67	51	56	50
Green Corridor	15	13 - 57	28	30	25
Natural & Semi-Natural Greenspace	43	7 - 71	32	37	33
Outdoor Sports Facilities	22	24 - 60	36	35	33
Parks & Gardens	31	13 - 75	51	54	47
Provision for Children & Young People	8	13 - 51	36	37	35

- 3.8 Parks and Gardens have the highest average score of all green spaces. Several parks have benefited from external funding and significant council investment in the last ten years, resulting in award winning parks and facilities at Sandwell Valley, Forge Mill Farm, Lightwoods House and Park, Haden Hill Park, West Smethwick Park, Dartmouth Park, Brunswick Park, and others. A funding bid to the Towns Fund is currently seeking approval for further investment into Britannia Park, and HLF and Sandwell Council Funded West Smethwick Park improvements are due for completion in June 22.

Park/Garden and Location			Current Measure Scores (2018)			
Area	Ward	Town	Quality		Value	
Dartmouth Park	West Bromwich	West Bromwich	75	Good	74	Good
Haden Hill Park	Cradley Heath and Old Hill	Rowley Regis	71	Good	65	Fair
Warley Woods	Abbey	Smethwick	69	Fair	75	Good
Lightwoods Park	Abbey	Smethwick	66	Fair	61	Fair
Redhouse Park	Great Barr	West Bromwich	66	Fair	50	Fair
Victoria Park, Tipton	Tipton Green	Tipton	64	Fair	63	Fair
Barnford Park	Langley	Oldbury	61	Fair	47	Poor
Brunswick Park	Wednesbury North	Wednesbury	61	Fair	58	Fair
Garden of Remembrance		West Bromwich	61	Fair	37	Poor
West Smethwick Park	St Pauls	Smethwick	58	Fair	45	Poor
Victoria Park, Smethwick	Soho and Victoria	Smethwick	57	Fair	49	Poor
Kenrick Park	West Bromwich	West Bromwich	56	Fair	46	Poor
Mary MacArthur Gardens	Cradley Heath and Old Hill	Rowley Regis	51	Fair	33	Poor
Lewisham Park	St Pauls	Smethwick	49	Poor	50	Fair
Britannia Park	Blackheath	Rowley Regis	46	Poor	40	Poor
Farley Park	Great Bridge	Tipton	46	Poor	30	Poor
Jubilee Park	Great Bridge	Tipton	46	Poor	34	Poor
Oakwood Park	West Bromwich	West Bromwich	46	Poor	31	Poor
Hill Top Park	Wednesbury South	Wednesbury	44	Poor	39	Poor
Langley park	Langley	Oldbury	43	Poor	45	Poor
Bury Hill Park	Langley	Oldbury	43	Poor	62	Fair
Lyng Park	Lyng	West Bromwich	42	Poor	25	Poor
Harry Mitchell Park	Smethwick	Smethwick	39	Poor	32	Poor
Smethwick Hall park	St Pauls	Smethwick	37	Poor	34	Poor
Coronation Gardens	Tipton Green	Tipton	36	Poor	40	Poor
Linear Park		Tipton	36	Poor	40	Poor
Tivdale Park	Oldbury	Oldbury	34	Poor	42	Poor
Laybourne Park	Princes End	Tipton	33	Poor	26	Poor
Broadwell park	Langley	Oldbury	32	Poor	33	Poor
Black Patch Park	Soho and Victoria	Smethwick	13	Very Poor	37	Poor
Marl Hole Park	West Bromwich	West Bromwich	-	-	-	-
Ratcliffe Park	Wednesbury	Wednesbury	-	-	-	-

3.9 Priorities have traditionally been set to focus on achieving Green Flag Awards for parks. This is understandable, as the priority had been to deliver significant externally funded parks development projects, and a focus on achieving Green Flag status assisted with this. However, the 2018 Green Spaces Audit demonstrates the need to address the neighbourhood and local level green spaces for the wards with the lowest amount of high-quality green space, with a larger number of smaller sites (green corridors and amenity green spaces) significantly impacting the quality score for Sandwell green spaces. This will be addressed by a more strategic approach to prioritising improvement works on parks and gardens (detailed in section 6 and 7 of this document).

3.10 Quality scores by criteria demonstrate the priority areas for improvement in green spaces:

Criteria	Average Score (2018)	Variance	Average Score (2013)	Average Score (2006)
Personal security in park	4.3	-0.5	4.8	4.9
Safe equipment and facilities	4.3	-0.6	4.9	4.1
Equipment maintenance	4.3	-0.5	4.8	4.4
Conservation of buildings and structures	4.2	-1.1	5.3	4.5
Good and safe access	4.1	-0.3	4.4	4.1
Dog fouling	3.9	-0.9	4.8	4.9
Buildings and infrastructure maintenance	3.9	+0.3	3.6	3.5
Arboricultural maintenance	3.8	-0.2	4	3.8
Appropriate provision for the community	3.8	-0.5	4.3	4.2
Appropriate levels of quality facilities & activities.	3.7	-0.7	4.4	4.1
Welcoming	3.7	-0.3	4	4.1
Management of natural features, wild fauna and flora	3.6	-0.2	3.8	3.9
Conservation of landscape features	3.6	-1.5	5.1	4.1
Horticultural maintenance	3.5	+0.1	3.4	3.3
Equal access for all	3.4	-0.6	4	3.6
BOROUGH AVERAGE	3.4	-0.6	4	3.5
Litter and waste management	2.8	-1.2	4	2.9
Signage	2.2	-0.5	2.7	1.8
Appropriate educational interpretation/info	1.2	+0.2	1	0.5

a. Litter – while the 2013 audit saw an improvement in the levels of litter and detritus across much of the Borough, the 2018 audit saw a return to a lower average score. Borough level Parks & Gardens had the highest average criteria score of 6.6. These spaces tend to have plenty of bins, including recycling bins, as well as being well staffed and well-maintained in general. Borough level sites as a whole had a higher average (5.5), whereas the local level sites that make up two thirds of the sites audited, only had an average score of 2.1 for litter.

Action: We will map the current provision of bins in green spaces at borough, neighbourhood, and local level, including the maintenance and litter picking schedules, and ensure this is fit for purpose. We will also engage with residents and community partners – such as litter watch – to target litter hot spot areas, to both educate the public on the impacts of littering on biodiversity and people, and our community safety and environmental protection teams to target identified hot spots.

b. Conservation of buildings and structures; and Conservation of landscape features – both these criteria scored significantly lower in comparison to the 2013 audit. The average score for Cemeteries and Churchyards, and Parks and Gardens were above the borough average in these criteria, suggesting the heritage features of these sites are overall being conserved. However, the average score for the Conservation of landscape features in Amenity Greenspaces was only 2.1, and 2 for Green Corridors.

Action: We will audit the buildings and structures in amenity green spaces and green corridors and develop a conservation plan to address this.

- C. Interpretation** – the provision of appropriate educational interpretation or information continues to score low.

Action: We will review and replace some of the older panels to ensure the quality is being maintained and the information is still relevant. Local level sites scored particularly low, with an average of 0.7. We will complete an audit of interpretation at all sites as part of developing site improvement plans, and look at ways to improve the provision of interpretation to improve people's sense of place and understanding of their local green spaces. Improvements in this area will also assist in engaging residents in the care and maintenance of local level sites, and targeting littering.

- d. Signage** – the majority of sites have some kind of signage. However, half of the sites with signage only scored between 3 or less, indicating that either there is not adequate signage, or that the signs present lack maintenance. The signs were generally consistent across council-owned sites, with larger borough and neighbourhood spaces often having welcome notice boards. These sometimes lacked maintenance or had graffiti.

Action: As the prominent position of signage is a factor in the welcoming nature of the site's entrance, their on-going maintenance and replacement will be a priority, with a map of signage assets and required improvements to these developed in 2022. This will include commissioning clear, up to date maps at the larger spaces. We will also modernise signage with the use of QR codes, to increase knowledge of walking routes and green spaces features.

- e. Management of natural features, wild fauna and flora**– the council owns or manages some important natural and semi-natural green spaces, such as remnant heathland and semi-ancient woodlands. Natural and semi-natural greenspaces; and green corridors scored slightly above the criteria average, but still did not achieve half of the possible marks. The 2013 audit highlighted that these are at a tipping point with regards to their biodiversity and their conservation will need to be a priority to ensure their long-term value. The average criteria score reduced by -1.5, with spaces for Children and Young People scoring the lowest average at 2.1.

Action: We will appoint a Nature Reserves Development Officer, as well as strengthen the agricultural and countryside ground maintenance team, to address this, as well as creating greater interest and range of provision for children and young people with regards to the natural world through our new countryside education team.

- f. Arboriculture maintenance** - Sandwell Council, along with other Black Country Unitary Authorities, has maximised its use of the major grant schemes such as the Forestry Commission's Woodland Grant Scheme and the Millennium Forestry Programme to create a number of woodlands and plantations on its parks and green spaces. The 2013 audit recommended that many of these are now at a development stage where there needs to be a clear strategy for their future management in order to maximise their potential for conservation, education and recreation. The most recent audit found that many areas of young woodland would benefit from thinning and require a long-term management strategy.

Action: We have commissioned a tree consultancy to work with us on developing a tree strategy for 2022, application for new tree funding, and to scope the longer-term aspiration to develop an urban forestry master plan.

3.11 The Green Spaces Audit 2018 learnings from quality scores are:

Areas of Progress and Success	Areas for Development
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Dartmouth Park (1st) and Haden Hill Park (2nd) the highest scoping space on quality points. - Swan Pool/Priory Woods nature reserves increased by 19 points since 2003 (due to accessibility / interpretation improvements) - Scores for over half (52%) of highest scoring sites have increased. - A third of sites saw their quality increase - 17 sites scored over 60 points, compared to 9 sites in 2003. - Sites that improved scores did so by an average of +5. - Victoria Park (Smethwick), Brunswick Park, Red House Park, Lightwoods Park scores have benefited from significant investment from external funding. - Lyng Park, the Maltings Open Space, and Wednesbury Oak Play Area increased in scores. - Greets Green Playing Fields increased its score marginally, but remains significant potential for green space use. - Tollhouse Way Amenity Area was highlighted as an example of how even small, local amenity sites can provide high quality public realm spaces with multiple use. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sites that decreased did so by an average of -6. - Some spaces that had scores increase, would have had a greater increase if there were more bins, signage, and weed control. - Warrens Hall Park scores decreased from 2013, due to ASB, and improvements needed in accessibility and signage (these improvements have since been completed in 2021). - Warrens Hall Farm scored considerably low across most criteria: main issues being broken fencing, unchecked growth, ack of signage – opportunity to increase link between both Warrens Hall sites. - Hall Green Open Space declined in scores from 2013, largely due to ASB, security and accessibility, litter. - Timbertree Open Space continues to score low, largely due to signage and needing greater links to the community.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Criteria scored highly were personal security, safe equipment and facilities, and equipment maintenance. - Litter and detritus in parks and gardens scored highest at 6.6 average. - Conservation of buildings, structures, and landscape scored highest for parks and gardens. - The majority of sites have some signage, which is generally consistent and includes welcome notice boards at larger sites. - Management of natural features, wild fauna and flora scored slightly above the criteria average for natural and semi natural green spaces and green corridors. - Sandwell Council maximised its use of the major grant schemes for Arboriculture Maintenance. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Litter and detritus at local sites (amenity green spaces, green corridors, open spaces) scored lowest, at 2.1 average. - Conservation of buildings, structure, and landscape scored lowest for amenity green spaces (2.1) and green corridors (2). - Interpretation (appropriate educational and information) scored lowest for amenity green spaces, green corridors, and some larger sites. - Signage overall scored between 3 or less, largely due to maintenance and graffiti. - Management of natural features, wild fauna and flora have seen a decline of -1.5 since 2013 and requires investment, particularly in creating greater interest and range of provision for children and young people. - Areas of young woodland would benefit from thinning and require a long term management strategy.

Governance and Management

- 3.12 Green Spaces sits within the directorate of borough economy, and as part of the Parks and Grounds Service. Green spaces are managed and developed by the parks team, and maintenance of green spaces sits with the ground's maintenance team (including urban forestry).
- 3.13 Sandwell Valley, Nature Reserves, and Lightwoods House have been temporarily incorporated into the Parks and Grounds Service to achieve synergy with grounds maintenance functions, income generation and education. There is scope to consider further synergy with other green spaces linked to heritage sites, achieving economies of scale in maintenance and income generation functions.
- 3.14 The Green Spaces Audit (2018) recommended a Green Spaces Strategic Delivery Group. This will be implemented in 2022 as a Green Spaces Strategic Advisory Group, with officers from relevant departments and key external stakeholders meeting twice yearly. The purpose of this group is to share best practice and achieve greater levels of synergy between green spaces and the corporate plan / vision across other services and stakeholders. There will be a terms of reference established for this group.
- 3.15 Cabinet members are currently kept up to date on the work of green spaces through weekly cabinet member briefings. Parks officers also attend town lead meetings and regularly engage with ward members on parks visits. We will formalise these governance arrangements, through an annual report to Cabinet on the progress of the Green Spaces Strategy and approval of the annual programme of planned works. Town Leads will continue to be engaged, through a six-monthly update on Green Spaces in their Town and through Cabinet Member Scorecards.
- 3.16** The Green Spaces Audit – every five years – provides a benchmark for progress and improvements completed by an external provider. Some of these KPIs – as well as others – will be incorporated into our regular reporting internally (Appendix G). We will commission the next Green Spaces Audit to take place in 2025 to assess the progress of this strategy and business plan.
- 3.17 The parks team experience a high level of member and public enquiries and requests for parks development and works both through and outside of the portal. We will address this by being more transparent about our annual programme of planned works, and that Elected Members and residents are aware of this. This will allow officers to focus on delivering these works and the green spaces strategy, understanding that there will still be issues raised through the portal that require response and action, and those that require transparency about timescales. We will continue to prioritise those requests and enquiries related to health and safety.
- 3.18 There is a corporate and public knowledge profile gap in understanding green spaces in strategic terms and the reasons for our approach to the development and maintenance of green spaces. We will develop a learning and development offering for Elected Members and more information about our approach to green spaces on Sandwell internal and external communication channels.

Community Impact – Education

- 3.19 There are some examples of excellent educational schemes and activity, particularly the Forest School and forestry education programme in primary schools. The appointment of an Education and Outreach Manager and two officers to pilot a countryside and animal welfare education programme at Sandwell Valley and Forge Mill Farm in 2022/2023 is also positive. We will seek to expand this over the next three years and deliver a national curriculum linked and out of school education and activity programme in green spaces, wildlife management, and nature.
- 3.20 Forge Mill Farm already benefits from a formal partnership with Sandwell College, offering Animal Welfare Course facilities and assessment. We will seek to expand this over the next 3 years with enhancements to this offering, making Forge Mill Farm a Centre of Excellence in Animal Welfare and further partnerships with other colleges, including adult education, in horticulture, land management, small animal welfare, and an increased number of apprentices, internships, work experience placement, and a care leaver apprenticeship pilot.
- 3.21 Our Parks and Gardens – and other green spaces – benefit from horticultural improvements and significant investment into the development and maintenance of these. The new developments at Sandwell Valley Visitor Centre Walled Kitchen Garden, as well as other parks and gardens, presents an opportunity to increase horticulture apprenticeships and community level learning. We will seek to develop formal partnerships with colleges and education providers to offer horticulture sites for learning and assessment.

Community Impact – Volunteering and Friends Groups

- 3.22 There is a significant amount of volunteer activity – both formal and informal – in our green spaces. This includes Litter Watch, Lightwoods House and Park Volunteers, and Warley Woods Community Trust Volunteers – the latter two delivering more than £60k in volunteer value a year. Although there is no further borough wide data on volunteering value, friends' groups – particularly Friends of Dartmouth Park (which has 200 members) – have delivered thousands of hours volunteering each year. We will work to formalise a volunteering offer in the management, development, and maintenance of green spaces with the appointment of a Volunteer Development Officer for green spaces in 2022/2023.
- 3.23 Community engagement – mostly through volunteering and friends' groups – is predominately focussed on large borough wide and neighbourhood level parks and nature reserves. We will work to develop community engagement and volunteer capacity at the local level, particularly with high value, low quality green spaces, such as green corridors and amenity green spaces.
- 3.24 Sandwell has an active number of friends' groups, with 10 referenced in the 2018 Green Spaces Audit, and 14 currently listed on the Sandwell.gov.uk website. The relationship between the council and friends' groups varies and is largely dependent on informal arrangements and personal relationships. This provides inconsistent governance and risks a disjointed approach to partnership working. Similarly – although there is a lot of good work done by many friends' groups volunteers - there

is a lack of formal and verifiable information about this activity, and we are unable to assess the community impact because of this.

- 3.25 The Green Spaces Audit 2018 consultation with friends' groups showed support from the council has been available. They would like to improve the support available for fundraising and grant applications (details of survey themes below).

Theme	Responses
Advice i.e. to apply for funding	6
Grant funding	4
Staff time	3
Other	3
Training	2
Meeting spaces	1
Storage / office space	1
Postage and photocopying	1
Assistance to take more ownership / responsibility for site specific assets	1

- 3.26 We will formalise the relationship with friends' groups through agreements and structure, and integrate these relationships into the green spaces governance plan. This will ensure that:
- a. There is a register of friends' groups recognised by the council, and a clear agreement in place for this.
 - b. Expectations are clear between friends groups and the council about the relationship, roles and responsibilities.
 - c. Support is made available in a clearly defined and consistent way to friends groups in the areas of funding advice, provision of meeting spaces, and access to training.
 - d. There is clarity about the communication channels with the council and council officers, to enable prioritisation of work by officers in line with this strategy.
- 3.27 The draft of the Friends Group Ways of Working and Agreement (Appendix H) will be consulted on with friends groups in June 2022, and implemented following Cabinet approval of this strategy in June 2022.
- 3.28 Friends groups are an important part of improving our Green Spaces. However, the representation of residents on friends groups varies – both in numbers, age, and ethnicity. There is a disproportionate focus of officer time on engaging with a small number of friends groups, sometimes at the cost of engagement with all residents. We will seek to redress this balance with increased engagement and communications with all residents on green spaces directly, an agreed programme of meetings with friends groups throughout the year, and increasing the representation of those with disabilities, younger people, LGBT+, and from BAME residents (who make up 31% of the borough) in the development of Green Spaces.

Community Impact: Health and Physical Activity

- 3.29 Green spaces have a vital role in addressing health inequalities in Sandwell through increased physical activity and access to nature. However, the Green Spaces Audit 2018 shows that we can do more in this area. Approximately one third of residents are inactive compared to a quarter of the population nationally; people living in deprived areas are twice as likely to be physically inactive as those living in more prosperous areas. The proportion of children in the borough obese or overweight is higher than the national average, and Sandwell ranks within the top ten nationally for child obesity.
- 3.30 There is already a significant amount of sports and physical activity taking place in our green spaces – both informally and formally. There is no reliable borough wide data on the scale and impact of this activity, as much of it is informal (i.e. organised locally, and not booked or promoted through council avenues). A Parks Development Officer will be allocated specific responsibility for improving the facilities and activities available for informal and formal sport and physical activity in our green spaces, working with community groups, sports groups, football associations, the Lawn Tennis Association and implementing our Playing Pitches Strategy. This will include establishing borough wide data on physical and sports activity in green spaces.
- 3.31 There is a significant amount of physical activity organised by volunteers, residents, other organisations, and the council. We will collate and promote this activity in easily accessible formats and medium. This will include working with the Sport and Leisure and Public Health colleagues.
- 3.32 Green Corridors are a significant benefit to health and wellbeing – providing walking, cycling, and running routes from one location to the other, across different parts of the borough. We will develop a map of these green corridors, making walking, cycling and running routes clearer for residents, and improving these spaces to make them accessible and well used. This includes engaging with other public health initiatives, such as Move More Sandwell.
- 3.33 In 22/23 we will pilot the development of a green corridor into a multi-purpose space, including park facilities, community event facilities, and accessible routes for walking, running and cycling, at what is commonly known as ‘The Railer’ in Tipton. We will seek further funding to develop this green corridor for improved community use and outcomes for the local community.

Community Impact – Disability and Mental Health

- 3.34 Green spaces provided a much-needed space for emotional and social health during the recent pandemic. There is a significant amount of emerging research about the benefits of green spaces in improving mental health, but also treating mental health conditions. We will work with public health colleagues to review best practice in this field – including the use of green prescriptions – and work with public health colleagues for green spaces to be better able to support, promote, and treat mental health conditions.

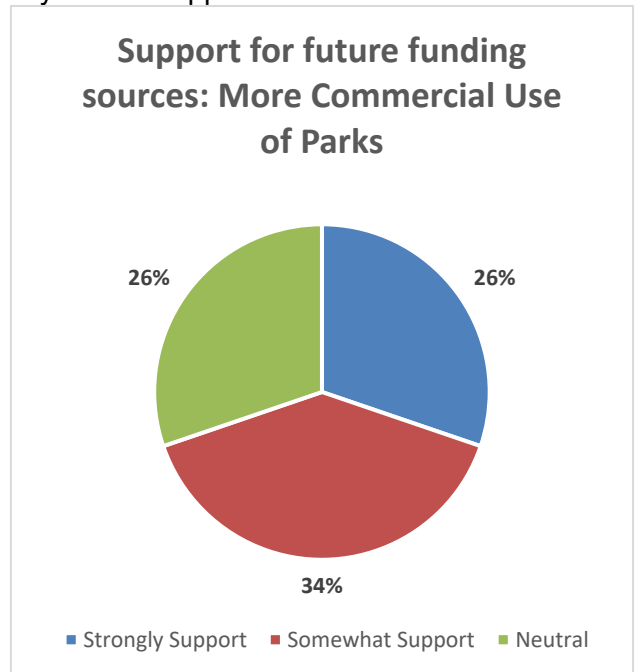
- 3.35 Sandwell benefits from improved accessibility to green spaces for disabled people. There is scope for improvements to accessibility for a number of Borough wide sites, including nature reserves. We will prioritise accessibility improvements to green spaces for disabled people and develop a specific action plan for all sites with accessibility limitations for disabled people.
- 3.36 Green spaces also provide a safe and inclusive space for disabled people with visual and hearing impairments and autism. The sensory garden at Dartmouth Park is an example of this. We will learn from best practice in other authorities and scope proposals for additional inclusive green space facilities for disabled people. We will engage with disability groups nationally and locally in the development of these initiatives.
- 3.37 Green spaces are already used by older residents to combat loneliness – through engagement with volunteering and walking groups – and there are several dementia walking groups supported by Sandwell’s Public Health teams. We will work with Public Health to further enhance and promote green spaces for use to combat loneliness and dementia.
- 3.38 Access to toilets is an issue for those with disabilities and some older people. We will complete an audit of our current toilet provision and seek to improve this provision with improved access to toilets (using digital locking and access systems) and scope additional needs and funding requirements for toilets in large green spaces.

Financial

- 3.39 Sandwell – like most authorities – has a challenging financial position, with increased costs from external factors, and growth in costs for adult and children’s social care provision. Similarly, the level of revenue funding available to green spaces is no longer keeping pace with the improvements and maintenance required for our green spaces. A more efficiency and effective model is therefore required.
- 3.40 Green spaces across England are facing an increase in use following the recent and ongoing Covid pandemic. During the pandemic, green spaces were critical in maintaining the emotional and physical health of people when they were unable to use other spaces; it is expected that this increase in outdoor activity and use of green spaces will continue. This has further impacted the investment needed to maintain and improve our green spaces.
- 3.41 Conversely, there are low quality, low value (in terms of impact) green spaces in Sandwell that would benefit from further analysis as to its future. It may be that repurposing some low quality, low value green spaces – that demonstrate little value to the community – can release funding for investment into low quality, high value green spaces, and increase the amount of accessible green spaces by investing in currently restricted / limited access green spaces. This may also positively impact maintenance, through a community adoption approach to some sites. The audit of current assets in the green spaces service in 2022 will scope this further.
- 3.42 The primary source of income generation in parks is through ice cream concessions, park hire, and sports facilities hire (football and bowls predominantly). The current systems and processes for administering this income – from marketing, booking and

fulfilment, and policing of income generating locations such as football pitches – is largely manual and is not capable of scalability. We will appoint an Income Generation Officer in the Green Services team to modernise these processes through digital solutions and address other areas of income generation through some appropriate commercial activity.

3.43 There is little to no commercial activity in most green spaces, except for ice cream concessions and pitch bookings. The community response in the recent green spaces audit household survey showed that the majority of residents would favour commercial activity of some kind that benefits the green space and its users. The income strategy detailed in this plan proposes a phased approach to testing income generation potential, as well as delivering an increase in income over the next three years to contribute to revenue funding for green spaces development and maintenance.



3.44 There has been some success with external funding; primarily larger bids for capital funding through Heritage Lottery Fund. There is scope to access small to medium funding through council applications and supporting friends and community groups to access funds that the council could not. We have appointed a funding consultant to work with green services for the next three months to prepare and submit funding applications for parks specific funds, and to scope potential small, medium, and large capital and revenue funding streams available. We will use this scoping report to guide community groups and friends’ groups in types of funding available.

Facilities and Activities – Green Spaces Built Facilities

3.45 The Green Spaces Built Facilities portfolio includes a range of assets in varying condition and levels of usage. Well run and resourced green space facilities have the potential to be hubs of community engagement and activity in green spaces. These facilities currently include:

Facility	Town/Ward	Location	Facilities
Barnford Changing Rooms	Oldbury / Bristnall	Barnford Park	6 x changing rooms, toilets, conference room
Bearmore Changing Rooms	Cradley Heath / Cradley & Old Hill	Bearmore Playing Fields	4 x changing rooms, 2 shower rooms
Cakemore Changing Rooms	Oldbury / Langley	Cakemore Playing Fields	8 x changing rooms, 1 x shower room
Charlemont Changing Rooms	West Bromwich / Charlemont	Charlemont Playing Fields	2 x changing rooms, café, toilets
Churchfield Changing Rooms	West Bromwich / West Bromwich Central	Churchfield Playing Fields	8 x changing rooms, tea room, toilets, meeting room
Black Patch Park - Portacabin	Smethwick / Soho & Victoria	Black Patch Park	Meeting room
Brunswick Park Lodge	Wednesbury / Wednesbury North	Brunswick Park	
Brunswick Park Mess Room	Wednesbury / Wednesbury North	Brunswick Park	Toilet and mess room space
Hydes Road Changing Rooms	Wednesbury / Wednesbury South	Hydes Road Playing Fields	10 x changing rooms, 2 x shower rooms, 2 x toilets
Lion Farm / Birchley Sports Pavillion	Oldbury / Langley	Lion Farm Playing Fields	24 x changing rooms, 2 x large function rooms, toilets
Tividale Park Changing Rooms	Oldbury / Oldbury	Tividale Park	8 x changing rooms, 1 x shower room
Redhouse Park Changing Rooms	West Bromwich / Newton	Redhouse Park	4 x changing rooms, 2 shower rooms, meeting room, toilets
West Smethwick Park Changing Rooms	Smethwick / St Pauls	West Smethwick Park	8 x changing rooms, 1 x shower room
Dartmouth Park Pavillion	West Bromwich / West Bromwich Central	Dartmouth Park	1 x conference room, 2 x offices, café, toilets
West Smethwick Park Pavillion	Smethwick / St Pauls	West Smethwick Park	2 (or 4) x conference rooms. Toilets, café
Victoria Park Smethwick Mess Room	Smethwick / Soho & Victoria	Victoria Park Smethwick	Toilet and mess room space
Victoria Park Tipton Mess Room	Tipton / Tipton Green	Victoria Park Tipton	Toilets and mess room space
Red House Park Mess Room	West Bromwich / Newton	Red House Park	1 x portacabin
Greets Green Changing Rooms	West Bromwich / Greets Green & Lyng	Greets Green	
Haden Hill Park Bowls Hut	Cradley Heath / Cradley & Old Hill	Haden Hill Park	1 x portacabin
Langley Band Room	Oldbury / Langley	Langley Park	
Lewisham Park Changing Rooms	Smethwick / St Pauls	Lewisham Park	
West Smethwick Park Sons of Rest	Smethwick / St Pauls	West Smethwick Park	Meeting room, kitchen, toilet

Key: Yellow = planned works and development; Blue = not in use, requires scoping; White = no current planned works and development, requires scoping.

3.46 Pavilions provide a base within a park for community activity and community events and additional income opportunities with room hire, catering, and ticketed events. Sandwell currently operates four pavilion style facilities, with the opportunity to increase community engagement and activity, and increase income generation for the park:

- Dartmouth Park Pavilion
- West Smethwick Park Pavilion
- Redhouse Park Pavilion
- Lion Farm / Birchley Sports Pavilion

3.47 Changing room facilities provide a base for sports activity, meeting space facilities, and changing rooms with showers and toilets and are a requirement of the football league. Sandwell MBC currently operates six changing room facilities, with the opportunity to increase sports activity in parks, community engagement with meeting rooms, and increased income generation for the park:

- Tividale Park Changing Rooms
- Redhouse Park Changing Rooms (part of the Pavilion)
- West Smethwick Park Changing Rooms
- Barnford Changing Rooms
- Bearmore Changing Rooms
- Cakemore Changing Rooms (operated by Oldbury United Football Club)

- Charlemont Changing Rooms (operated by Bustleholme)
 - Churchfield Changing Rooms (operated by the Albion Foundation)
- 3.48 Meeting space facilities provides a base for community engagement, community activities and events, and meeting room facilities. Sandwell currently operates two meeting space facilities, in addition to the Pavilion facilities (which also have meeting room facilities):
- West Smethwick Park Sons of Rest
 - Black Patch Park – Portacabin (operated by the Friends of Black Patch Park)
- 3.49 Sandwell currently has five parks facilities buildings out of operation. The work to assess and consult on these spaces is currently underway as part of the assets review and outcomes will be confirmed as part of the 23/24 business plan proposed to Cabinet. These are:
- Brunswick Park Lodge
 - Hydes Road Changing Rooms (requires building improvements)
 - Greets Green Changing Rooms
 - Langley Band Room
 - Lewisham Park Changing Rooms
- 3.50 Maintenance arrangements for pavilions and changing rooms is currently shared between several services and contractors, including arrangements with external organisations and community groups. We will review and formalise these maintenance and management arrangements in 22/23 to ensure value for money and continued development of these sites as a valuable community resource and achieving a single entity self-sustained position by 2030.
- 3.51 The appointment of a Pavilions Development Officer for two years from 22/23 will achieve a self-sustained position for Dartmouth Park Pavilion by 25/26, and a clear plan for the remaining facilities to achieve this by 2030. This post will also seek to increase the opening times for built facilities and maximise community use and impact from these facilities.
- 3.52 West Smethwick Park Pavilion and Parks works will be fully completed end of May 22, with an official community day opening the facilities in late June. This will be developed as a facility for community events, sports and health and wellbeing activities, venue hire, and a café (detailed within our income strategy). A separate business plan for West Smethwick Park – to include delivery of HLF outputs and a five year transition to a self sustained position – is currently been drafted, and will be included in the final draft of this document that goes to Cabinet for approval.

Facilities and Activities – Fishing and Allotments

- 3.53 Fishing is an activity that benefits resident’s health, both physically and mentally. Sandwell currently has five sites available for fishing, with a requirement for licences for anybody wishing to fish on these sites:
- a. Dartmouth Park

- b. Swan Pool, Sandwell Valley
- c. Sheepwash Nature Reserve
- d. Hydes Pool
- e. West Smethwick Park

3.54 There is no current reliable data on fishing usage, as annual pass income is negligible, and licenses are not currently monitored. There is also no verifiable data on fishing stock. We will promote and limit annual fishing passes to the following sites for 22/23, and conduct an analysis of usage, demand, and approach to maintaining fish stock and fishing facilities, with a proposed approach to fishing as part of the 23/24 green spaces business plan to Cabinet. We will work with fishing groups and associations to explore potential partnership models in developing this offer, and policing / administering income from passes.

Area	Town	22/23 Annual Pass Capacity	22/23 Annual Pass Income	Cost of Sale
Dartmouth Park	West Bromwich	20	1,000	500
Swan Pool, Sandwell Valley	West Bromwich	20	1,000	500
Sheepwash Nature Reserve	Tipton	20	1,000	500
Hydes Pool	Wednesbury	20	1,000	500
West Smethwick Park	West Smethwick	20	1,000	500

3.55 Allotments are a place for residents to grow their own fresh produce, who do not have access to their own green space or garden. There are currently 34 allotment sites, with various management arrangements, and 1,445 allotment plots across the Borough. These are:

Area	Number	Town
Tividale	23	Oldbury
Dudley Road	42	Oldbury
Pound Road	42	Oldbury
Cemetery Road	23	Oldbury
Basons Lane	31	Oldbury
Newbury Lane	29	Oldbury
Barnford Park	88	Oldbury
Meadow Road	3	Oldbury
Brandhall	32	Oldbury
Ramsay Road	23	Oldbury
Lewis Estate	22	Oldbury
Britannia Park	12	Rowley Regis
Perry Park	9	Rowley Regis
Cherry Orchard	18	Rowley Regis
Silverthorne	11	Rowley Regis
Stony Lane	82	Smethwick
Hall Road	8	Smethwick
Thimblemill	8	Smethwick
Bearwood Road	114	Smethwick
Londonderry	174	Smethwick
Hamilton Road	26	Smethwick
Salop Drive (now a Community Agriculture Site)	34	Smethwick
Lee Howl	72	Tipton
Central Library	8	Tipton
Whitehall Road	32	Tipton
Dingley Road	18	Wednesbury
Woodgreen	83	Wednesbury
Black Horse	29	Wednesbury
Brunswick Park	4	Wednesbury
Mesty Croft	14	Wednesbury
Paul Street	12	Wednesbury
Friar Park	36	Wednesbury
Woden Road South	56	Wednesbury
Moorlands	19	West Bromwich
Newton Street	39	West Bromwich
Caroline Street (Now a Community Agriculture Site)	8	West Bromwich
Bromford Lane	121	West Bromwich
Kenrick Park	40	West Bromwich

3.56 The current fees and charges and contract arrangements for allotments management requires renewal in 2023. We will review this in 2022 and propose to Cabinet revised arrangements to achieve value for money and improved governance and maintenance arrangements for allotments.

3.57 There is a high demand for allotment plots with 510 on the waiting list. There is scope to increase the provision of allotment sites and plots, looking at the current limited and restricted green spaces in the borough.

3.58 There have been some examples of community allotment projects, including in Sandwell – where multiple residents or a community group take on an allotment plot and share the produce for the community – with varied success. Learnings from this shared approach to allotment use and food production – as well as best practice from other authorities – show that purpose built and well-run allotment facilities for community food production and shared use, rather than individual plots, can be a successful model with multiple benefits, including health, wellbeing, and community cohesion.

3.59 We will prioritise further development of new allotment sites and

plots for use as community allotments and community food production, with appropriate facilities and support to develop this further. We will seek to pilot a community allotment site in 23/24, and scope further plans for this following the pilot.

Facilities and Activities – Playing Pitches

3.60 Sandwell currently has 13 sites with official football playing pitches:

Facility	Town/Ward	Location	Facilities
Lion Farm Football Pitches	Oldbury / Langley	Lion Farm Playing Fields	11 x 11 a side pitches
Hydes Road Football Pitches	Wednesbury / Wednesbury South	Hydes Road Playing Fields	6 x 11 a side pitches, 1 x 9 a side pitch
Cakemore Football Pitches	Oldbury / Langley	Cakemore Playing Fields	2 x 5 a side, 2 x 7 a side, 2 x 9 a side pitches
Churchfields Football Pitches	West Bromwich / West Bromwich Central	Churchfield Playing Fields	2 x 11 a side, 1 x 9 a side, 1 x 7 a side
Bearmore Football Pitches	Cradley Heath / Cradley & Old Hill	Bearmore Playing Fields	2 x 11 a side
Barnford Park Football Pitches	Oldbury / Bristnall	Barnford Park	2 x 11 a side
Redhouse Park Football Pitches	West Bromwich / Newton	Red House Park	4 x 11 a side, 1 x 7 a side
Jubilee Park Football Pitches	Tipton / Great Bridge	Jubilee Park	2 x 11 a side
West Smethwick Football Pitches	Smethwick / St Pauls	West Smethwick Park	4 x 11 a side, 1 x 7 a side
Farley Park Football Pitches	Tipton / Great Bridge	Farley Park	1 x 11 a side
Britannia Park Football Pitches	Rowley/ Blackheath	Britannia Park	1 x 11 a side, 1 x 9 a side, 1 x 7 a side
Jesson Football Pitches	West Bromwich / Greets Green & Lyng	Jesson Playing Fields	1 x 11 a side
Tividale Park Football Pitches	Oldbury / Oldbury	Tividale Park	2 x 11 a side, 2 x 9 a side, 1 x 7 a side

3.61 Sandwell currently has 4 sites with official bowling playing pitches:

Facility	Town/Ward	Location	Facilities
Haden Hill Bowling Green	Cradley Heath / Cradley & Old Hill	Haden Hill Park	1 x Bowling Green
Victoria Park Bowling Green	Tipton / Tipton Green	Victoria Park Tipton	1 x Bowling Green
Farley Park Bowling Green	Tipton / Great Bridge	Farley Park	1 x Bowling Green
Hydes Road Bowling Green	Wednesbury / Wednesbury South	Hydes Road Playing Fields	1 x Bowling Green

3.62 This Green Spaces Strategy does not address the development of these spaces. This is addressed in the Playing Pitches Strategy, which will be reviewed with internal and external stakeholders in 2022, with a revised Playing Pitches Strategy presented to Cabinet for 2023 implementation.

3.63 We recognise the need to further improve the relationships with football, bowling, cricket and other playing pitch organisations and associations. We will consult again on our playing pitches strategy, with a clear plan to improve these relationships both locally and nationally, for the 2023 Cabinet report.

3.64 In 22/23 specifically, we will work with Oldbury United Football Club to scope and develop options for improving the facilities at Cakemore Playing Fields.

Playgrounds and Play Facilities

3.65 Play spaces may or may not include sites containing play areas, Multi Use Games Areas (MUGAs) and outdoor gym equipment. In total, there are 69 sites with play spaces in Sandwell. Of these, 27 are local equipped area for play (LEAP) standard, with 7 additional neighbourhood equipped area for play) NEAP sites. There is only one strategic equipped for play (SEAP) site in Sandwell: Sandwell Park Farm. Overall, 35 sites have multi-use games areas (MUGA), 31 contain play areas or play equipment, 19 have fitness equipment, including trim trails and exercise machines, and 10 have skate or BMX facilities.

3.66 In 22/23 we will commission a further – more detailed – review of our playgrounds and play facilities, and develop an improvement plan for these for 23/24 – 2030.

Town	Sites with play provision
Rowley Regis	16
Smethwick	14
West Bromwich	12
Tipton	10
Oldbury	9
Wednesbury	8
Total	69

Town	Area of sites with play provision (ha)	Town Area (ha)	% of town area catered for by play provision
Tipton	73.61	963.68	7.6
West Bromwich	158.61	2481.40	6.4
Smethwick	63.45	1147.62	5.5
Rowley Regis	61.14	1357.76	4.5
Oldbury	41.36	1450.27	2.9
Wednesbury	30.15	1156.89	2.6
Total	428.32	8557.62	29.5

Row Labels	Area (Ha)	Population	Ha/1000
Oldbury	38.25	53,285	0.72
Rowley Regis	40.96	51,255	0.80
Smethwick	63.63	60,033	1.06
Tipton	81.23	41,080	1.98
Wednesbury	33.92	39,160	0.87
West Bromwich	164.48	80,647	2.04
Total	422.47	325,460	1.30

Natures Reserves and Urban Forestry

- 3.67 There are a total of 9 designated Local Nature Reserves in Sandwell Borough. The total area amounts to 288.60 hectares which equates to 0.89 hectare per 1000 population, which is 0.11 hectares per 1000 population below the ANGSt Standard of 1.0 hectares per 1000 population. Therefore, Sandwell requires an additional 35.80 hectares designated as Local Nature Reserve to meet the National Standard.
- 3.68 The current nature reserves are: Codsall Coppice, Forge Mill Lake, Gorse Farm Wood, Holly Wood, Mousesweet Brook, Priory Woods, Sheepwash, Sots Hole, and Warrens Hall. We will seek to increase our provision of nature reserves to meet the ANGSt standard of 1.0 hectares per 1,000 population. The first site to consult on this development is Millpool, and current discussions are happening with The Hateley Cross Big Local project to scope this further and bring pack proposals to Cabinet to develop this site as a nature reserve and work towards its designation as such. Timescales will depend on the funding available in 22/23, which is currently being scoped with a timeline expected to be approved in July 22.

- 3.69 We do not currently have nature reserve management plans in place for 9 local nature reserves. We have transitioned nature reserves from tourism and culture, to the green spaces team, and will now develop a management plan for each nature research, including maintenance and education. This will be presented as a strategy to Cabinet by the end of the 22/23 financial year.
- 3.70 We are currently developing a tree strategy with a consultancy that will give further analysis of our tree stock, forestry management, policy and approach, and deliver a trees strategy for presentation to Cabinet in late 2022. This will include the maintenance and development of current trees and forestry, as well as a sustainable plan to plant a further 10,000 trees in Sandwell by 2030.

Climate Change

- 3.71 Green spaces and urban forestry have a vital part to play in the successful outputs defined in the Climate Change Strategy and national / international climate change commitments. We will work with climate change colleagues to develop a specific action plan for green spaces to dovetail with the Climate Change Strategy objectives for Sandwell.
- 3.72 We will use our Green Spaces to enhance the knowledge of residents of climate change and what they can do; we will begin this with a Green Fair at Sandwell Valley in 2022, and will seek to develop climate change information as part of our interpretation and signage at key green spaces.

4.0 Green Spaces Strategy 2022/2023 – 2025/2026

4.1 Increase average quality and value scores for green spaces.

22/23	23/24; 24/25	3 Year Outputs
<p>a. Complete priority 1 and 2 works for parks and play areas (section 6 – 8 of this document).</p> <p>b. Approve a 3 year investment strategy into parks and play areas.</p> <p>c. Retain Green Flag Status for current Green Flag parks.</p> <p>d. Develop improvement plans for parks and gardens with the lowest scores (section 7 of this document)</p> <p>e. Develop a management and maintenance schedule for green spaces, including contractors (waste), for integration and</p>	<p>a. Maintain Green Flag Standards for borough and neighbourhood level green spaces.</p> <p>b. Develop an improvement plan for local level spaces, including green corridors and amenity green spaces.</p> <p>c. Embed the green spaces offer into the culture and tourism offer, including destination green spaces.</p>	<p>a. Increase parks and gardens quality and value scores</p> <p>b. Clear improvement plan for increasing quality and value scores for green corridors and amenity green spaces.</p> <p>c. Increase overall Green Spaces quality score by 10 points.</p> <p>d. Maintenance and monitoring schedule through PSS Ultimate to self-score sample green spaces on</p>

<p>monitoring through PSS Ultimate.</p> <p>f. Commission a scoping exercise for low value, low quality sites.</p>	<p>d. Implement a plan to improve access to spaces that currently have limited or no public access in wards with lowest amount of quality green spaces.</p>	<p>an quarterly and annual basis.</p>
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4.2 Improve accessibility and use of green spaces for sport and physical activity.

22/23	23/24	3 Year Outputs
<p>a. Develop a relationship with the Lawn Tennis Association; 3 year development plan.</p> <p>b. Assess current use of green spaces for sport and physical activity in parks, and develop a programme of activity to expand on this</p> <p>c. Review the current Playing Pitches Strategy to ensure it is fit for purpose and has a clear five year set of objectives.</p> <p>d. Work with Oldbury United Football Club to scope and develop improvements for Cakemore Playing Fields and facilities.</p>	<p>a. Implement improvement plans for playing pitches.</p> <p>b. Improve communications for green space sport and physical activity, to provide residents a one stop source of information.</p> <p>c. Monitor the use of green spaces for sport and physical activity.</p>	<p>a. Baseline measurements for the use of green spaces for sport and physical activity.</p>

4.3 Improve accessibility and use of green spaces to target health inequalities, loneliness, disability, and mental health.

22/23	23/24	3 Year Outputs
<p>a. Develop a pilot project for community food production and community gardening for 23/24 delivery, and secure funding and partner.</p> <p>b. Design a programme of green spaces events and activity programmes, working</p>	<p>a. Implement the actions within the playing pitch strategy.</p> <p>b. Scope opportunities to link green corridors and linear walkways in the highest levels of air</p>	<p>a. All Parks and Gardens and Nature Reserves with adequate accessibility for disabled people.</p> <p>b. Map / Programme of activity in green spaces that addresses health inequalities,</p>

<p>with stakeholders, for 23/24 delivery.</p> <p>c. Work with public health and sports colleagues to map current activities using green spaces to target health inequalities, loneliness, disability, and mental health.</p> <p>d. Commission an accessibility audit of Parks and Gardens, Nature Reserves, and local level priority green spaces to develop a programme of improvement works to improve disabled access of these spaces.</p> <p>e. Develop a map of our Green Corridors across the borough, and an improvement plan for these – encouraging walking, running, and cycling as a form of transport.</p> <p>f. Further develop ‘The Railer’ in Tipton as a multi-purpose Green Corridor, as a pilot and potential blueprint for other green corridors.</p>	<p>pollution and health inequality – supporting the Sandwell Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan.</p> <p>c. Scope the potential to develop pocket parks and make greater use of low value green spaces in areas where the health inequality are the highest (amenity green spaces, green corridors)</p>	<p>loneliness, disability, and mental health.</p> <p>c. Strategy for development of green corridors, and local level green spaces to increase walking, cycling and physical activity by 20230.</p>
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4.4 Improve stakeholder engagement in the development, management, and maintenance of green spaces.

22/23	23/24	3 Year Outputs
<p>a. Implement a Friends of Parks agreement and framework.</p> <p>b. Develop a programme of development opportunities for friends of parks groups to increase community engagement and fundraising activities.</p> <p>c. Appoint a Volunteer Development Officer and develop a volunteer strategy for green spaces.</p>	<p>a. Promote and support opportunities for new friends groups to form.</p> <p>b. Deliver programme of development opportunities for friends of parks groups.</p> <p>c. Recruit 50 green spaces volunteers a year, each giving 6</p>	<p>a. Increased number of active friends groups, measured by volunteer activity / fundraising activity / development activity.</p> <p>b. Pilot a community ownership model for at least one green space site</p>

<p>d. Develop a stakeholder map for green spaces, and establish development plans for key stakeholder relationships.</p> <p>e. Refresh resident and public communications information for green spaces.</p> <p>f. Work with resident and friends group of Goldcroft Park, to scope further developments to establishing this as a local level park.</p> <p>g. Work with Sandwell Equalities and Diversity Team to develop an EDI plan for green spaces to improve the representation of BME residents and young people in the development of green spaces.</p>	<p>hours minimum a month.</p> <p>d. Meet with key stakeholders to build on positive relationships.</p> <p>e. Support the Big Local Partnerships to develop a masterplan for their local green spaces and deliver the identified improvements.</p> <p>f. Develop a green spaces forum for engagement with external stakeholders and communities.</p>	<p>neighbourhood and local level.</p> <p>c. 150 active green space volunteers (exc. Friends groups volunteers) with a coordinated delivery plan of supported annual activity in green space improvements.</p> <p>d. Improved representation of BME residents and young people in the development of green spaces, through friends groups, volunteers, residents surveys, and other forums.</p>
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4.5 Continue to improve the security and safety of green spaces.

22/23	23/24	3 Year Outputs
<p>a. Conduct a best practice analysis of parks and green spaces security and safety.</p> <p>b. Present cabinet report on Green Spaces Security and Safety Strategy.</p> <p>c. Integrate the Anti Social Behaviour in parks as a permanent agenda item for Borough Tasking.</p> <p>d. Transition H&S checks in green spaces to PSS Ultimate.</p> <p>e. Increase signage and community awareness of self reporting mechanisms for ASB and off road motorbikes in parks.</p>	<p>a. Implement Green Spaces Security and Safety Strategy.</p> <p>b. Implement self service locks to tennis courts, where possible.</p>	<p>a. Increased quality score for personal security and green spaces safety in next audit.</p> <p>b. Decrease in reported incidents of ASB, including off road motorbikes in parks.</p>

4.6 Increase funding for green spaces through income generation, fundraising and external grants, and efficiencies in processes, systems and ways of working.

22/23	23/24 – 25/26	3 Year Outputs
<p>a. Pilot coffee bar pop up model at Swan Pool, Forge Mill Farm Playground, and Sandwell Valley Adventure Playground.</p> <p>b. Launch marketing activity, addition in directories for park spaces hire, park buildings hire, sports hire, and other income generation.</p> <p>c. Complete a scoping report on funding opportunities available for the next 5 years (Inc. friends groups and community groups).</p> <p>d. Submit funding applications for playgrounds and amenity green space development.</p> <p>e. Transition to digital ways of working, through venue hire software for parks spaces hire, and PSS Ultimate for parks and playgrounds inspection and maintenance.</p> <p>f. Revalue and retender the ice cream contracts for parks.</p>	<p>a. Open 3 new pop up coffee bars, open for 168 days a year (sites to be determined).</p> <p>b. Deliver 12 parks events achieving 2k surplus to the park each event (16 – 24/25; 24 – 25/26)</p> <p>c. Achieve a year on year venue hire increase of 10% for 3 years.</p> <p>d. Scope appropriate attraction contracts for some park sites (23/24).</p> <p>e. Appoint new ice cream and concession tenders for parks.</p> <p>f. Implement fundraising strategy for parks and open spaces: empower friends groups to raise 50k.</p>	<p>a. Increase income for use for green spaces by c. 511k (total over 3 years) and c. 229k a year thereafter.</p> <p>b. Use 20% of additional income generation to reduce budget contribution from SMBC by c.128k (target: 862k per year budget contribution, vs current 934k.</p> <p>c. 24 parks events a year in partnership or SMBC run, achieving 2k surplus to parks per event.</p> <p>d. Achieve a year on year increase of 10% for 3 years.</p>

4.7 Increase educational activity for children and young people in green spaces, conservation, wildlife management, and access to nature.

22/23	23/24	3 Year Outputs
<p>a. Recruit education manager and education and outreach officer.</p> <p>b. Pilot national curriculum linked programme of school visits and school activity in Sandwell Valley and Forge Mill Farm.</p> <p>c. Scope best practice on education initiatives for parks, conservation,</p>	<p>a. Expand education programme to include nature reserves and one key park in each Town.</p> <p>b. Develop green spaces partner model with schools – linking key green spaces to school activity in conservation, wildlife management, and access to nature.</p>	<p>a. Increased score on education and interpretation for children.</p> <p>b. 500 school visits a year, as part of the national curriculum.</p> <p>c. Formal partnership with one school in each ward, linked to a key open space.</p> <p>d. Green Spaces Sandwell micro-site</p>

wildlife management, and access to nature.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> c. Install child friendly interpretation at Green Flag Parks and Nature Reserves. d. Develop resources for education on conservation, wildlife management, and access to nature for schools, clubs, and children. e. Work with education stakeholders to increase the provision of forest school and forestry education. 	(website) with educational resources for children.
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4.8 Improve the accessibility and use of green spaces buildings and facilities – achieving maximum utilisation of spaces.

22/23	23/24	Outcomes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Complete an audit of use and value of all green space assets – buildings and facilities, with recommendations to the Director of Regeneration as to future use options. b. Complete a site survey of all buildings and facilities, and deliver an action plan for the development and maintenance of these spaces. c. Deliver improvements to sites for priority 1 and 2 actions. d. Recruit a Development Officer for 2 years to increase the use of buildings and community engagement in the management and maintenance of these sites. e. Implement online booking of sites through venue hire software. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Implement cabinet report actions on the development of green spaces buildings and facilities. b. Increase income generations, community activity, sport and physical activity use of Dartmouth Park Pavilion, West Smethwick Park Pavilion, and other sites. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Investment secured for the development and maintenance of green spaces buildings and facilities. b. Dartmouth Park Pavilion self-sustained through income generation. c. West Smethwick Park Pavilion delivery of HLF objectives d. Buildings and facilities on target to be self-sustained by 2030.

4.9 Improve the management and development of nature reserves and wilding sites.

22/23	23/24	Outcomes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Commission and complete an assessment of each of nature reserve site, with a national reserve management plan. b. Scope best practice on nature reserve management and funding, and develop a Nature Reserves strategy and Local Nature Recovery Strategy. c. Deliver improvements to sites for priority 1 and 2 actions. d. Appoint a nature reserves development officer for three years. e. Develop a trees strategy. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Develop and classify Millpool site as a nature reserve. b. Implement Nature Reserves Strategy. c. Secure funding for the further development of nature reserves to address shortfall in national target per 1,000 population. d. Develop online resources for nature reserve education and activity. e. Implement the trees strategy. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Increased community engagement in Nature Reserve management, development, and maintenance. b. Additional Nature Reserve (Mill Pool). c. Improved interpretation and nature reserve quality scores. d. Online resources educate people of all ages on nature reserve management, development and maintenance. e. 3,000 new trees planted, with a clear planting strategy for a further 7,000 by 2030.

4.10 Achieve excellent governance, oversight, and management of green spaces.

22/23	23/24	Outcomes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Set up a Green Spaces Strategy Advisory Group, with all key stakeholders to advise and deliver on the green spaces strategy. b. Complete a 'mini' green spaces audit (internal) to test assumptions and benchmark progress. c. Set up reporting framework, for twice yearly updates to Town Leads and Cabinet. d. Formally report to Cabinet annually on the progress of the Green Spaces Strategy. e. Appoint a green spaces champion on key boards: i.e. health and wellbeing board. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Review and update management plans for all key parks and green spaces , assets etc b. Consider development of a natural capital account for green spaces in Sandwell. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Green spaces advisory group that meets 2 times a year and contributes to the delivery of the Green Spaces Strategy. b. Clear set of KPIs, monitored throughout the year, with a data led approach to resource allocation in the green spaces and green services teams.

4.11 Improve the provision of allotments and community food production.

22/23	23/24	Outcomes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Complete an allotments strategy and improvement plan for allotment sites. b. Scope a pilot for community allotments and food production and seek funding for this. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Deliver the allotments strategy and improvement plan. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Increase in the allotment provision of sites and plots. b. Evidence from at least one pilot for a community allotment site.

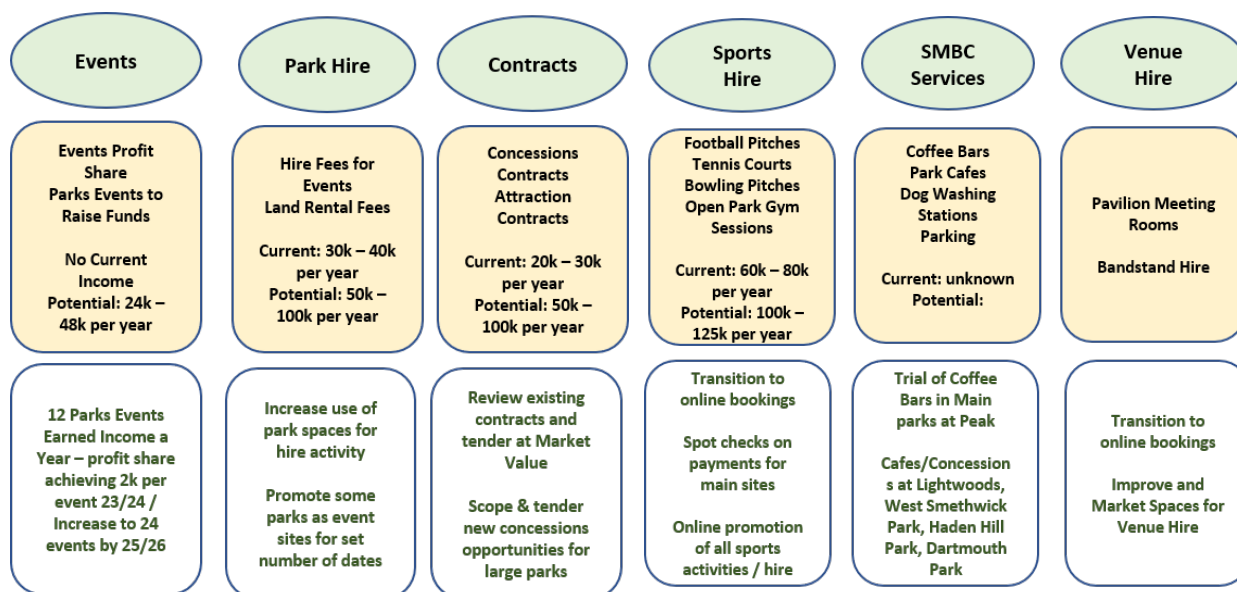
5.0 Green Spaces Budget and Investment – 3 year strategy

5.1 This strategy is underpinned by the need to increase income through external sources, both earned income and grant income:

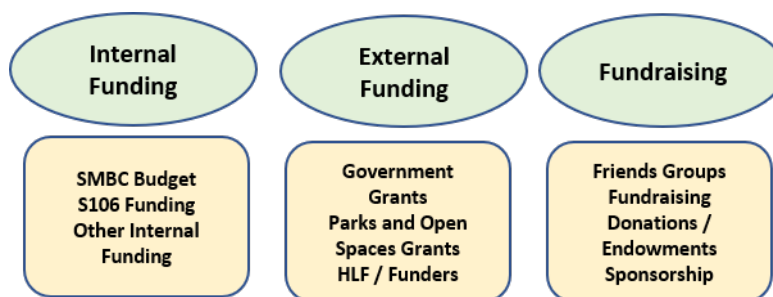
	21/22	22/23	23/24	24/25	25/26	26/27 >
Total Income	350,100	350,100	555,598	672,897	746,779	746,779
Total Employee Costs	437,200	437,200	498,800	498,800	498,800	498,900
Total Premises	218,400	218,400	218,400	218,400	218,400	218,400
Total Transport	9,600	9,600	9,600	9,600	9,600	9,600
Supplies & Services						
D01001 Equipment & Furniture	134,400.00	134,400.00	134,400.00	134,400.00	134,400.00	134,400.00
D01002 Materials & Consumables	7,000.00	7,000.00	7,000.00	7,000.00	7,000.00	7,000.00
D02002 Catering Provisions	1,000.00	1,000.00	1,000.00	1,000.00	1,000.00	1,000.00
D04001 Printing Stationery	4,400.00	4,400.00	4,400.00	4,400.00	4,400.00	4,400.00
D05001 Operational Services	25,600.00	25,600.00	25,600.00	25,600.00	25,600.00	25,600.00
D05002 Professional Services	42,400.00	42,400.00	42,400.00	42,400.00	42,400.00	42,400.00
D05006 Pest Control	4,500.00	4,500.00	4,500.00	4,500.00	4,500.00	4,500.00
D06001 Telephones	3,700.00	3,700.00	3,700.00	3,700.00	3,700.00	3,700.00
D06002 Postages, Carriage & Courier	600.00	600.00	600.00	600.00	600.00	600.00
D07009 Waste Disposal Charge	1,800.00	1,800.00	1,800.00	1,800.00	1,800.00	1,800.00
D07016 Civic Events	6,200.00	6,200.00	6,200.00	6,200.00	6,200.00	6,200.00
D08001 Grant Payments	73,100.00	73,100.00	58,480.00	46,784.00	46,784.00	46,784.00
Total Supplies & Services	304,700.00	304,700.00	290,080.00	278,384.00	278,384.00	278,384.00
Total Controllable Expenditure	969,900	969,900	1,016,880	1,005,184	1,005,184	1,005,284
H01001 Capital Charges - L&B	27,000	27,000	27,000	27,000	27,000	27,000
Capital Investment for Income			50,000	70,000	90,000	
H01005 Capital Charges - Equipment	291,000	291,000	291,000	291,000	291,000	291,000
Total Capital Charges	318,000	318,000	368,000	388,000	408,000	318,000
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	1,287,900	1,287,900	1,384,880	1,393,184	1,413,184	1,323,284
TOTAL NET	- 937,800	- 937,800	- 829,282	- 720,287	- 666,405	- 576,505
Total Year on Year Change			108,518	217,513	271,395	361,295
Total Additional Parks Spend Available			108,518	217,513	271,395	361,295
Total Net Budget Requirement	- 937,800	- 937,800	- 937,800	- 937,800	- 937,800	- 937,800

5.2 Green spaces currently generate a target income of c.350k per financial year (excluding allotments). The revenue allocation for the maintenance and development of green spaces is unable to keep pace with the current and future needs of this strategy, without accessing additional funding. Funding sources have been defined as:

a. Income Generation



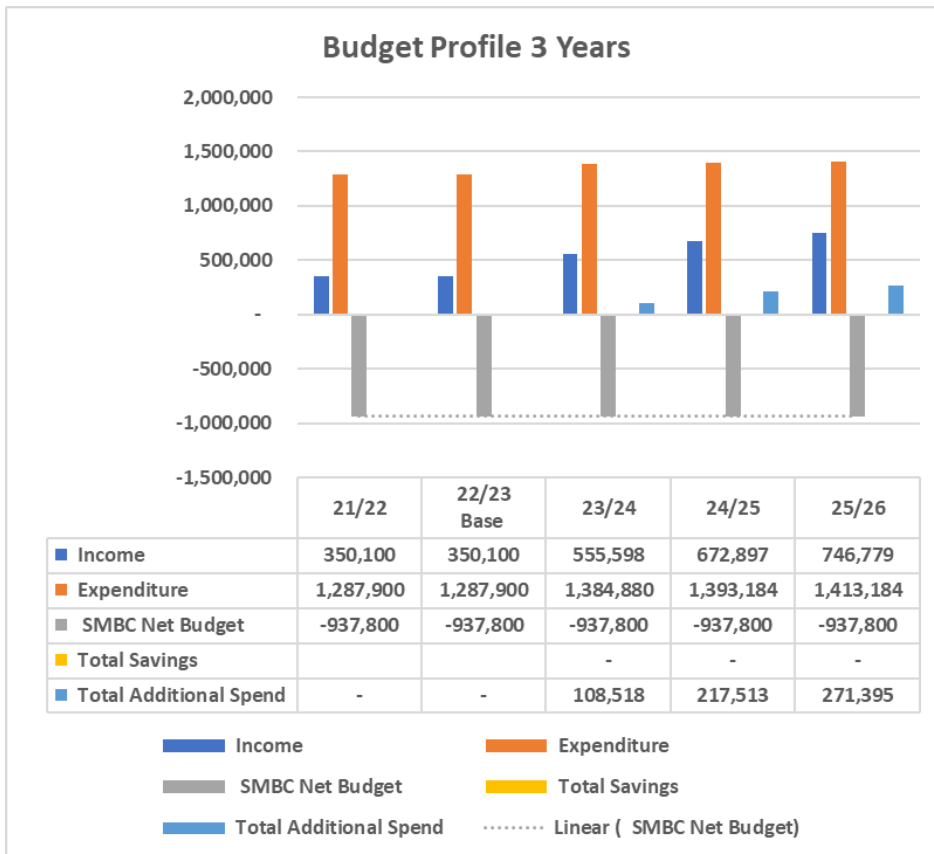
b. Internal and External Funding



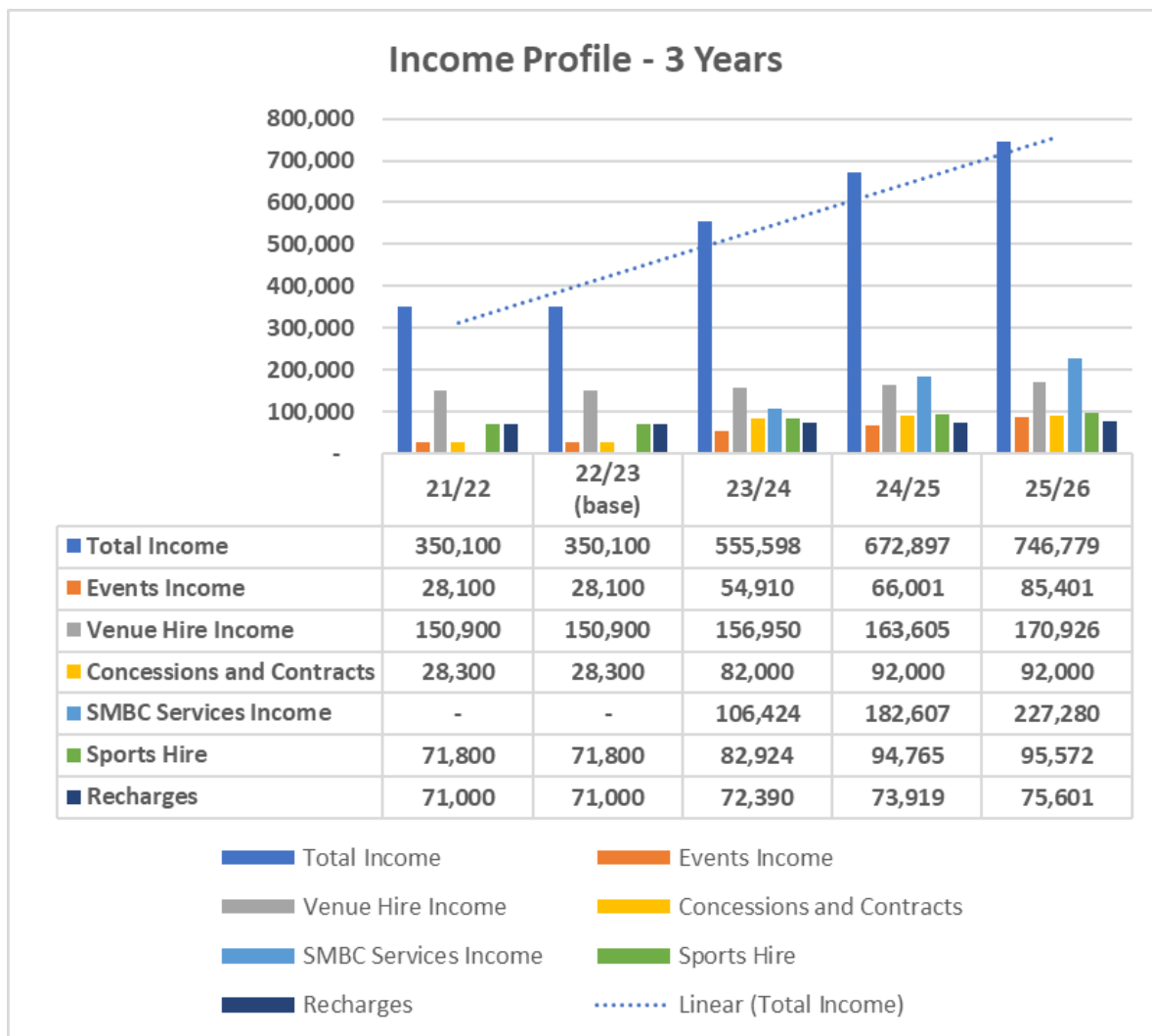
- 5.3 S106 current funds available are more than £1.2m. c.400k is currently planned for priority spend in 22/23, which leaves a balance of c.£0.8m. We will scope the remaining use of these funds, much of which is restricted to specific green space sites and wards, forecasting for the next 3 – 5 years. Future investment into S106 funds is unknown at this time, and relying on this fund alone for development of green spaces in the future is not an option.
- 5.4 Income generation opportunities have been scoped and a phased approach to increasing current income streams, as well as developing new income streams, will deliver additional revenue budget for green spaces development and maintenance. This increased income generation will be utilised for development and maintenance on priority sites, targeting those with the lowest quality, highest value.
- 5.5 Based on a phased approach to trial new income generation opportunities, as well as increasing current streams, is expected to increase the revenue budget for the next three years from 2023/24 by c638k over three years.

5.6 The additional income includes the following costs, incorporated into the proposed budget for this strategy:

- a. Capital expenditure over 3 years for income generation investment (210k over three years – subject to annual budget setting / invest to save process)
- b. Additional employee costs to deliver income generation targets and deliver improvements and funding for nature reserves and wildlife management.



5.7 Once achieved, we will seek to at least maintain this additional level of income generation, with an expected additional £376k per year, increasing the revenue budget for development and maintenance to c.495k. Dependent on the income generation success, and the results of concessions and catering in some parks, this has the potential to increase further by 2030.



5.8 Subject to Council annual budget setting process, it is proposed as part of the Green Spaces Strategy and Business Plan that the additional income above base budget is ring fenced to contribute to the development of green spaces, and the delivery of the Green Spaces Strategy Objectives, in line with the Corporate Plan and 2030 ambitions. Only additional income achieved will be allocated to spend, once achieved (we will not propose and spend potential income, until this has is actual income). Spend allocation from additional income will be proposed as part of the annual budget setting and proposed programme of green spaces works to Cabinet.

5.9 The budget profile below does not account for additional funding through fundraising, funding applications, and fundraising activities by friends and community groups. Fundraising and grant activity will be allocated to specific projects and developments. We will develop an external funding plan for green spaces, including grant opportunities for community groups and friend groups.

6.0 2022/2023 Programme of Planned Works

- 6.1 The programme of planned maintenance and refurbishment works (that do not require public consultation) will be proposed to Cabinet on an annual basis, deciding the allocation of green spaces team resources – both financial and officer time – for that financial year. Only those approved works will be actioned in that financial year.
- 6.2 The exception to this will be where urgent health and safety actions are required to play equipment and green spaces, which are defined as high risk as part of the monthly play and parks inspections.
- 6.3 There are c.807k priority 1 and priority 2 works identified for 22/23 (requiring immediate rectification due to health and safety requirements or/and community impact through site and playground inspections).
- 6.4 The proposed schedule of priority works are subject to supply availability of equipment and install, and final prices.
- 6.5 The proposed schedule of works will be expanded, with delegated authority to the Cabinet Member for Leisure and Tourism and the Director of Borough Economy, as external funding becomes available during 2022 (such as Covid Recovery grants).

	Base	S106	Other	Total	
Play Areas	152,040	312,920	68,000	532,960	807k Priority Works Total.
BMX	4,000	800		4,800	229k priority works from base budget.
Skate			8,000	8,000	
Gym	1,200	15,320	-	16,520	Base budget available: 135k
MUGA	6,250	1,500	78,500	86,250	
Parks	23,760	67,200	-	90,960	Budget pressure from base budget: c94k
Playing Fields	1,600	400	25,600	27,600	
Nature Reserves	20,000			20,000	Budget pressure to be identified through grants, covid funding, income.
Emergency Provision	20,000			20,000	
Totals	228,850	398,140	180,100	807,090	

6.6 Proposed Programme of Works 22/23: BMX Tracks

Area	Ward	Town	Works	Cost	Funding
Barnford Skate Park	Bristnall	Oldbury			
Britannia Park Junior, Toddler, MUGA & Skatepark	Blackheath	Rowley Regis			
Brunswick Park MUGA, Skatepark & Outdoor Gym	Wednesbury North	Wednesbury			
Charlemont Open Space and Skate Park	Charlemont	West Bromwich			
Norman Deeley	Wednesbury	Wednesbury	BMX Resurfacing	4,000	Base
Farley Park MUGA and Fitness	Great Bridge	West Bromwich	BMX Resurfacing	50,000	Base
Hill Top Park Play Area, Skate & MUGA	Wednesbury South	Wednesbury			
Kenrick Park Play Area, Skate & MUGA	West Bromwich Central	West Bromwich			
Ratcliffe Park BMX	Wednesbury	Wednesbury			
Lightwood Park Play Area, MUGA & Wheeled Sports	Abbey	Smethwick			
Tanhouse Open Space	Newton	West Bromwich			
Victoria Park Tipton All Areas	Tipton Green	Tipton	BMX Repairs	10,000	Base

6.7 Programme of Works 22/23: Skate Parks

Area	Ward	Town	Cost	Funding
Barnford Skate Park	Bristnall	Oldbury		
Britannia Park Junior, Toddler, MUGA & Skatepark	Blackheath	Rowley Regis		
Brunswick Park MUGA, Skatepark & Outdoor Gym	Wednesbury North	Wednesbury		
Charlemont Open Space and Skate Park	Charlemont	West Bromwich		
Farley Park MUGA and Fitness	Great Bridge	West Bromwich		
Hill Top Park Play Area, Skate & MUGA	Wednesbury South	Wednesbury		
Kenrick Park Play Area, Skate & MUGA	West Bromwich Central	West Bromwich		
Lightwood Park Play Area, MUGA & Wheeled Sports	Abbey	Smethwick	8,000	NLHF
Tanhouse Open Space	Newton	West Bromwich		
Victoria Park Tipton All Areas	Tipton Green	Tipton		

6.8 Programme of Works 22/23: MUGAs

Area	Ward	Town	Cost	Budget
Barnford Park MAGU & Natural Play	Bristnall	Oldbury	500	S106
Black Patch park				
Farley Park MUGA and Fitness	Great Bridge	West Bromwich		
Galton Village MUGA	St Pauls	Smethwick		
Jubilee Park MUGA	Great Bridge	Tipton	51,000	Sport England
Montague Road Open Space	Soho & Victoria	Smethwick		
Queensway MUGA	Old Warley	Oldbury	500	Base
Red House Park MUGA & Natural Play	Newton	West Bromwich		
West Smethwick Park Adult Fitness & MUGA	St Pauls	Smethwick	1,000	Small sided pitches

6.9 Programme of works 22/23: Play Areas

Area	Ward	Town	Cost	Funding
Barnford Hill Park - Junior & Toddler	Bristnall	Oldbury		
Brades Green Play Area & MUGA	Oldbury	Oldbury	520	S106
Broadwell Park Junior & Toddler	Oldbury	Oldbury	12,600	S106
Hartlebury Road	Langley	Oldbury		
Langley Park Play Area	Langley	Oldbury	400	S106
Pitfields Close Play Area	Old Warley	Oldbury		
Tividale Park Play Area, MUGA & Fitness	Oldbury	Oldbury		

Area	Ward	Town	Cost	Funding
Bearmore Open Space, Play Area and MUGA	Cradley & Old Hill	Rowley Regis		
Brickhouse Play Area	Rowley	Rowley Regis	8,000	Base
Britannia Park Junior, Toddler, MUGA & Skatepark	Blackheath	Rowley Regis		
Bury Hill Park Play Area & MUGA	Tivdale	Rowley Regis	6,560	S106
Cradley Heath Community Centre (Redhill CC)	Cradley & Old Hill	Rowley Regis	1,000	Base
Haden Hill Park MUGA & Play Area	Cradley & Old Hill	Rowley Regis	21,200	Base
Mary McArthur Memorial Gardens Play Area	Cradley & Old Hill	Rowley Regis	12,000	S106
Moorlands Court Play Area	Blackheath	Rowley Regis		
Mousesweet Play Area	Cradley & Old Hill	Rowley Regis	22,000	Base
Ridding Mound	Cradley & Old Hill	Rowley Regis	400	Base
Rowley Hall School Play Area	Rowley	Rowley Regis	200	Base
St Giles Court Play Area	Blackheath	Rowley Regis	6,800	S106
Timbertree Open Space	Cradley & Old Hill	Rowley Regis		
Wallace Close - Darley House Play Area	Tivdale	Rowley Regis		
Wallace Close - Selby House Gap Project	Tivdale	Rowley Regis		
Woodhouse Way	Cradley & Old Hill	Rowley Regis		

Area	Ward	Town	Cost	Funding
Brindley Village Play Area	St Pauls	Smethwick	9,600	S106
Cuin Road Play Area	Soho & Victoria	Smethwick		
Grenville Drive Toddler (Chance Drive)	St Pauls	Smethwick	1,600	S106
Harry Mitchell Park MUGA and Natural Play Area	Smethwick	Smethwick	24,000	S106
Lewisham Park Play Area & MUGA	St Pauls	Smethwick	3,600	S106
Lightwood Park Play Area, MUGA & Wheeled Sports	Abbey	Smethwick	20,000	NHLF
Montague Road Junior & Toddler	Soho & Victoria	Smethwick	400	Base
Ron Davies Close Play Area	Soho & Victoria	Smethwick	9,760	Base
Smethwick Hall Park Play Area	Smethwick	Smethwick		
Unett Street Junior and Toddler Play Area	Soho & Victoria	Smethwick	20,000	HRA
Victoria Park Smethwick Junior, Toddler & Fitness	Soho & Victoria	Smethwick		
West Smethwick Park Play Area & MUGA	St Pauls	Smethwick	82,000	S106

Area	Ward	Town	Cost	Funding
Hickman Road Flats Play Area	Princes End	Tipton		
Jubilee Community Centre	Great Bridge	Tipton		
Jubilee Park Trim Trail & Play Area	Great Bridge	Tipton	46,400	S106
Tibbington Play Area	Princes End	Tipton	7,200	S106
Victoria Park Tipton Toddler PA2	Tipton Green	Tipton	10,400	S106
Wednesbury Oak Play Area	Princes End	Tipton		

Area	Ward	Town	Cost	Funding
Balls Hill Park Play Area and Fitness	Wednesbury South	Wednesbury		
Bilston Road Playing Fields Play Area	Wood Green	Wednesbury		
Brunswick Park Play Area	Wednesbury North	Wednesbury	8,800	S106 / Base
Carnegie Drive Play Area	Wednesbury North	Wednesbury	3,600	Base
Friar Park Open Space, Play Area & MUGA	Friar Park	Wednesbury		
Hill Top Park Play Area, Skate & MUGA	Wednesbury South	Wednesbury	400	Base
Hydes Road Open Space Play Area	Wednesbury South	Wednesbury	10,600	S106/Base
Kent Road	Friar Park	Wednesbury		
Norman Deeley O/S, PA, MUGA & BMX	Wednesbury North	Wednesbury	200	Base
Ratcliffe Park Play Area, MUGA & Skate	Wednesbury South	Wednesbury	24,800	Base

Area	Ward	Town	Cost	Funding
Charlemont Open Space and Skate Park	Charlemont	West Bromwich	4,800	s106 / Base
Churchfields Play Area	West Bromwich Central	West Bromwich		
Dartmouth Park Enclosed, Open & Adizone Play Area	West Bromwich Central	West Bromwich	21,500	NHLF
Farley Park Playground	Great Bridge	West Bromwich	8,000	S106
Forge Mill Farm Play Area	West Bromwich Central	West Bromwich		
Greets Green Open Space, Play Area & MUGA	Greets Green & Lyng	West Bromwich		
Kendrick Park Play Area, Skate & MUGA	West Bromwich Central	West Bromwich	9,000	S106
Lyng Play Area	Greets Green & Lyng	West Bromwich	22,400	S106
Marl Hole Park Junior & Toddler Play Area	Greets Green & Lyng	West Bromwich	3,600	S106
Oak Barns	Greets Green & Lyng	West Bromwich		
Oakwood Park Natural Play Area, Play Area & MUGA	West Bromwich Central	West Bromwich	6,500	LAB
Red House Park Toddler & Junior Play Area	Newton	West Bromwich	15,200	S106/Base
Redwood Road Play Area & MUGA	Great Barr & Yew Tree	West Bromwich	4,000	S106
Sandwell Valley Adventure Playground	West Bromwich Central	West Bromwich	59,200	S106
Tanhouse Open Space	Newton	West Bromwich		
Tiddly Wink Play Area	Hateley Heath	West Bromwich		
Tame Road Play Area	Oldbury	Oldbury	35,200	Base

6.10 Programme of Works 22/23: Parks and Gardens

Area	Ward	Town	Cost	Funding
Barnford Park	Langley	Oldbury	38,400	S106
Langley park	Langley	Oldbury	400	S106
Bury Hill Park	Langley	Oldbury	2,400	S106
Tividale Park	Oldbury	Oldbury		
Broadwell park	Langley	Oldbury	800	S106
Haden Hill Park	Cradley Heath and Old Hill	Rowley Regis		
Mary MacArthur Gardens	Cradley Heath and Old Hill	Rowley Regis		
Britannia Park	Blackheath	Rowley Regis		
Warley Woods	Abbey	Smethwick		
Lightwoods Park	Abbey	Smethwick		
West Smethwick Park	St Pauls	Smethwick	12,000	s106
Victoria Park, Smethwick	Soho and Victoria	Smethwick		
Lewisham Park	St Pauls	Smethwick		
Harry Mitchell Park	Smethwick	Smethwick	2,400	S106
Smethwick Hall park	St Pauls	Smethwick	9,600	S106
Black Patch Park	Soho and Victoria	Smethwick		
Victoria Park, Tipton	Tipton Green	Tipton		
Farley Park	Great Bridge	Tipton	3,600	Base
Jubilee Park	Great Bridge	Tipton		
Coronation Gardens	Tipton Green	Tipton		
Linear Park		Tipton		
Laybourne Park	Princes End	Tipton	800	Base
Brunswick Park	Wednesbury North	Wednesbury		
Hill Top Park	Wednesbury South	Wednesbury	1,200	s106
Ratcliffe Park	Wednesbury	Wednesbury		
Dartmouth Park	West Bromwich	West Bromwich		
Redhouse Park	Great Barr	West Bromwich		
Garden of Remembrance		West Bromwich		
Kenrick Park	West Bromwich	West Bromwich		
Oakwood Park	West Bromwich	West Bromwich		
Lyng Park	Lyng	West Bromwich		
Marl Hole Park	West Bromwich	West Bromwich		

7.0 Quality Improvement Plan – 22/23 – 25/26

- 7.1 We will improve the quality and value scores for our Green Spaces by adopting the following strategy:
- a. **MAINTAINING (M)** green spaces with Good or Fair scores above 55/100 in Quality.
 - b. Development an **Improvement Plan (IP)** for all green spaces with a fair, poor and very poor score (below 55 as a priority), with the priority order below.
 - c. **Implementing (I)** those improvement plans, with the objective of all parks and gardens achieving a fair to good quality and value score by 25/26, and a clear timetable of improvements and quality/value targets for other green spaces in 23/24.
- 7.2 **Maintaining (M):** this means maintaining the current quality and value scores, and for some improving these marginally where required (i.e. in a low value score but high quality score). This will mean:
- a. No planned new investment over the next three years, enabling resources to be allocated to those with the lowest quality and value scores.
 - b. Maintaining a level of park gardening activity to maintain these scores, but not maintaining full time gardeners allocated to one park as is the current model. This will allow the current quality and value score to be maintained, but also deploy some park gardener resource to those parks and gardens with low quality and value scores.
 - c. A clear and transparent maintenance schedule, that includes all stakeholders in maintaining the park / garden.
- 7.3 **Improvement Plan (IP):** this means developing an improvement plan that addresses the reasons for the low quality / value score, using the criteria set out in the Green Spaces Audit (and in this green spaces strategy).
- 7.4 **Implementation (I):** this means implementing the improvement plan to achieve fair to good quality and value costs, based on the targets below by 25/26. This includes:
- a. Rediverting some park gardener and garden gang resource to improving garden elements of a park / garden.
 - b. Deploying additional grounds maintenance and environment response teams to address significant maintenance issues impacting on quality and value scores.
 - c. Commissioning additional / improvements to interpretation and signage.

- d. Working with friends' groups, residents, volunteers, and community groups to increase stakeholder engagement in the implementation plan for the improvement plan, and a clear longer term plan for development and maintenance over following 25/26 – 2030.

7.5 Monitoring

- a. The Green Spaces team will complete an assessment of quality and value, and progress against the improvement plan:
- a. Every 3 months for Parks, Gardens, Play Areas, and Nature Reserves.
 - b. Every year for the sample of 209 green spaces assessed by the Green Spaces Audit.
- b. We will commission the next Green Spaces Audit to take place in 2025.

7.6 Quality Improvement Plan – Priority Areas

Criteria	Average Score (2018)	22/23 Actions
Personal security in park	4.3	Develop a Safer Parks and Green Spaces Strategy and Improvement Plan
Safe equipment and facilities	4.3	Priority budget spend in 22/23; Assess works and funding required for the next 3 years
Equipment maintenance	4.3	Priority budget spend in 22/23; Assess works and funding required for the next 3 years
Conservation of buildings and structures	4.2	Complete a review of our current built facilities and develop a 3 year programme of works and usage plans.
Good and safe access	4.1	Develop a Safer Parks and Green Spaces Strategy and Improvement Plan
Dog fouling	3.9	Increase awareness signage of the impact of dog fouling; increase bins in areas with high dog fouling / no bin access
Buildings and infrastructure maintenance	3.9	Complete a review of our current built facilities and develop a 3 year programme of works and usage plans.
Arboricultural maintenance	3.8	Develop a trees strategy in 22/23 and a 3 year programme of works
Appropriate provision for the community	3.8	Complete a review of our current facilities and activities and provision for the community and develop a strategy to address this for 23/24 onwards.
Appropriate levels of quality facilities & activities.	3.7	
Welcoming	3.7	Develop a Nature Reserves and Green Spaces Wildling Strategy
Management of natural features, wild fauna and flora	3.6	
Conservation of landscape features	3.6	Review the maintenance plan and use of current resources for horticulture maintenance in parks and gardens, and develop a strategy to address this.
Horticultural maintenance	3.5	
Equal access for all	3.4	Review accessibility of parks, gardens, and nature reserves and a 3 year programme of works.
Litter and waste management	2.8	Audit the provision of litter bins and signage in green spaces, including collection and litter picking schedules, and a programme of works for 22/23 and 23/24.
Signage	2.2	Commission a review of green spaces signage and interpretation and develop a 3 year programme of works.
Appropriate educational interpretation/info	1.2	

7.7 Quality Improvement Plan – Parks and Gardens

Park/Garden and Location			Current Measure Scores (2018)				3 Year Strategy				Target Measure	
Area	Ward	Town	Quality		Value		22/23	23/24	24/25	25/26	Quality	Value
Dartmouth Park	West Bromwich	West Bromwich	75	Good	74	Good	M	M	M	M	Good	Good
Haden Hill Park	Cradley Heath and Old Hill	Rowley Regis	71	Good	65	Fair	M	M	M	M	Good	Good
Warley Woods	Abbey	Smethwick	69	Fair	75	Good	SM	SM	SM	SM	Good	Good
Lightwoods Park	Abbey	Smethwick	66	Fair	61	Fair	M	M	M	M	Good	Good
Redhouse Park	Great Barr	West Bromwich	66	Fair	50	Fair	M	M	IP	I	Good	Good
Victoria Park, Tipton	Tipton Green	Tipton	64	Fair	63	Fair	M	M	M	M	Good	Good
Barnford Park	Langley	Oldbury	61	Fair	47	Poor	M	IP	I	M	Good	Fair
Brunswick Park	Wednesbury North	Wednesbury	61	Fair	58	Fair	M	M	IP	I	Good	Good
Garden of Remembrance		West Bromwich	61	Fair	37	Poor	M	IP	I	M	Good	Fair
West Smethwick Park	St Pauls	Smethwick	58	Fair	45	Poor	F	I	I	M	Good	Good
Victoria Park, Smethwick	Soho and Victoria	Smethwick	57	Fair	49	Poor	M	IP	I	M	Good	Good
Kenrick Park	West Bromwich	West Bromwich	56	Fair	46	Poor	M	IP	I	M	Good	Good
Mary MacArthur Gardens	Cradley Heath and Old Hill	Rowley Regis	51	Fair	33	Poor	M	IP	I	M	Good	Good
Lewisham Park	St Pauls	Smethwick	49	Poor	50	Fair	M	IP	I	I	Fair	Fair
Britannia Park	Blackheath	Rowley Regis	46	Poor	40	Poor	F	I	I	I	Fair	Fair
Farley Park	Great Bridge	Tipton	46	Poor	30	Poor	IP	I	I	I	Fair	Fair
Jubilee Park	Great Bridge	Tipton	46	Poor	34	Poor	IP	I	I	I	Fair	Fair
Oakwood Park	West Bromwich	West Bromwich	46	Poor	31	Poor	IP	I	I	I	Fair	Fair
Hill Top Park	Wednesbury South	Wednesbury	44	Poor	39	Poor	IP	I	I	I	Fair	Fair
Langley park	Langley	Oldbury	43	Poor	45	Poor	IP	I	I	I	Fair	Fair
Bury Hill Park	Langley	Oldbury	43	Poor	62	Fair	IP	I	I	I	Fair	Fair
Lyng Park	Lyng	West Bromwich	42	Poor	25	Poor	IP	I	I	I	Fair	Fair
Harry Mitchell Park	Smethwick	Smethwick	39	Poor	32	Poor	IP	I	I	I	Fair	Fair
Smethwick Hall park	St Pauls	Smethwick	37	Poor	34	Poor	IP	I	I	I	Fair	Fair
Coronation Gardens	Tipton Green	Tipton	36	Poor	40	Poor	IP	I	I	I	Fair	Fair
Linear Park		Tipton	36	Poor	40	Poor	IP	I	I	I	Fair	Fair
Tividale Park	Oldbury	Oldbury	34	Poor	42	Poor	IP	I	I	I	Fair	Fair
Laybourne Park	Princes End	Tipton	33	Poor	26	Poor	IP	I	I	I	Fair	Fair
Broadwell park	Langley	Oldbury	32	Poor	33	Poor	IP	I	I	I	Fair	Fair
Black Patch Park	Soho and Victoria	Smethwick	13	Very Poor	37	Poor	IP	I	I	I	Fair	Fair
Marl Hole Park	West Bromwich	West Bromwich	-	-	-	-	IP	I	I	I	TBC	TBC
Ratcliffe Park	Wednesbury	Wednesbury	-	-	-	-	IP	I	I	I	TBC	TBC

7.8 Quality Improvement Plan – Green Spaces (exc. parks and gardens)

7.8.1 We will Complete an assessment of low level/low value sites from the 2018 Green Spaces Audit and propose options for improvements, repurpose, and community engagement / asset transfer to Cabinet in 23/24.

7.8.2 Complete an improvement plan and 3-year targets for amenity green spaces, green corridors, play areas, nature reserves, and allotments for proposal to Cabinet as part of the 23/24 business plan.

8.0 Programme of Works 23/24

8.1 The reviews completed in 23/24 will provide an analysis of the required works and spend requirements for the next 3 years for all green spaces.

8.2 This will include further assessment of the increase in earned income for parks, and the potential funding available from external sources.

Appendix A: Sandwell Valley Business Plan 22/23 – 25/26 Summary

Approved as part of 22/23 budget setting.

Appendix A: Sandwell Valley Business Plan 22/23 – 25/26 Summary

1.0 Summary

1.1 Sandwell Valley has a number of services for visitor and community benefit managed directly by SMBC and indirectly through a range of concessions and contracts. These include:

- 1.1.1 Sandwell Valley Park Farm
- 1.1.2 Forge Mill Farm
- 1.1.3 Sandwell Showground (which is part occupied by Kay's children's funfair)
- 1.1.4 King George V Pavilion (KGP)
- 1.1.5 Play and Gym Equipment – adventure playground, high roles, children's playground
- 1.1.6 Sandwell Valley Sailing Club Building
- 1.1.7 Brown's Farm
- 1.1.8 Hill House Farm
- 1.1.9 Staff Accommodation
- 1.1.10 The Sandwell
- 1.1.11 Ice House Structure, Priory Woods Nature Reserve

1.2 The three-year horizon for Sandwell Valley is to be cost neutral to SMBC and self-sustaining for the long term (reducing the current subsidy of around 700k to zero).

1.3 This business plan sets out the delivery detail for 22/23 with a focus on Sandwell Valley Park Farm and Forge Mill Farm and start to consider the three-year horizon and beyond for Sandwell Valley. The focus for 22/23 is to:

- Increase visitor and event income at Sandwell Valley
- Enhance visitor attractions and experience at Sandwell Valley
- Increase secondary spend and move towards full cost recovery and industry standard 'surplus' for café and shop income.
- Increase venue hire income.
- Implement an education offering for schools and colleges.

And

- Lays the foundations for the drafting of a Master Plan and long-term business plan for Sandwell Valley incorporating Browns Farm, Hill House Farm, The Sandwell, Ice House Structure, Priory Woods Nature Reserve, and other further investment into our education offering.

2.0 Current Position

2.1 Sandwell Valley has been impacted by several factors over recent years:

- Decline in visitor income (largely attributable to Covid restrictions) – from a peak of 188,000 visitors in 2015 to the 109,000 pre-covid 2019.

- Sustained reduction in secondary spend, not achieving full cost recovery: cafes and shops.
- Redundant assets and undervalued concessions and attractions contracts.
- The removal of animals from Sandwell Valley Park Farm to comply with modern day animal welfare standards; and the decline in the heritage experience of the 'Victorian Walled Garden' – this resulted in the removal of admission fees in 2021, with a loss of c.260k annual income.
- Lack of strategy, modern offering for education visits, venue hire, and events infrastructure at across Sandwell Valley.

2.2 Despite these impacts, Sandwell Valley still attracts a 100,000's of walkers, runners, and visitors every year and remains a place of pride for Sandwell. The current infrastructure at Sandwell Valley Park Farm and Forge Mill Farm – with some initial investment – is well placed to recover from these impacts; establishing the foundations for an ambitious long-term plan for Sandwell Valley as a whole.

2.3 The business plan for 2022/23 financial is planned to achieve the following:

- Increase visitor income and secondary spend by at least 60k in 22/23, with significant increases in 23/24 – 25/26 to achieve net zero.
- Deliver 60k budget savings in 22/23 corporate budget through additional income (towards achieving net zero within three years).
- Increase additional income from venue hire, education, and events.
- Deliver on social value and SMBC corporate plan outputs.
- Measure the business plan stretch budget to achieve a further increase in income above the current corporate budget planned increase.

3.0 Increasing Visitor Income – Approach

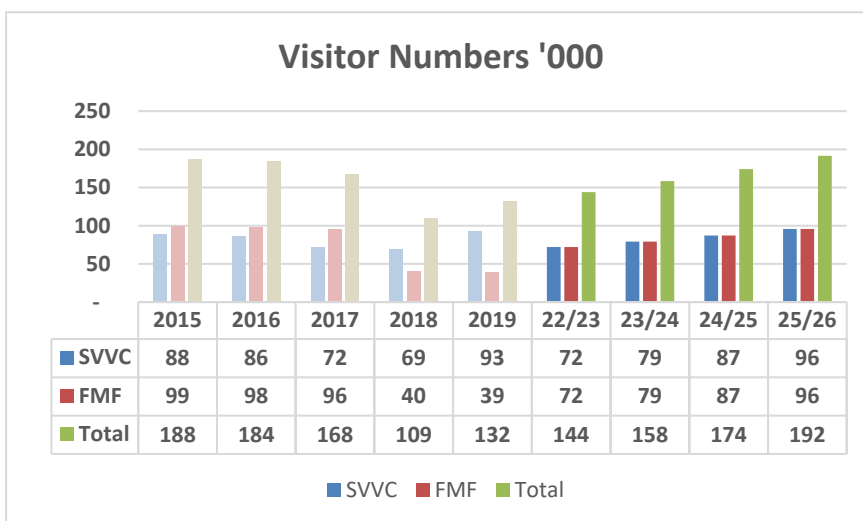


Table 1

Figures tracked annual from 2015 – 2019

No current figures from 2020 and 2022 (due to no tracking)

New tracking by financial year from 22/23.

3.1 Table (1) shows a peak on visitors to both sites in 2015 and 2016, with a significant dip in 2018 (both sites) and 2019 (Forge Mill Farm). Visitor numbers for 2020 and 2021 are not

included as part of this planning, due to lockdown closures significantly impacting this number. The KPI for visitor numbers is based on:

- Reasonable 22/23 visitor number increase based on the enhancement / addition of new visitor experience below.
- Planned increment of 10% per year until 25/26 financial year, were we expect visitor numbers to return to 2015/2016 levels.
- An average visitor fee per person of £2.5 – this means that there are different charges based on offer, family ticket options, and discounted options, but the average fee for financial planning purposes is achieved.

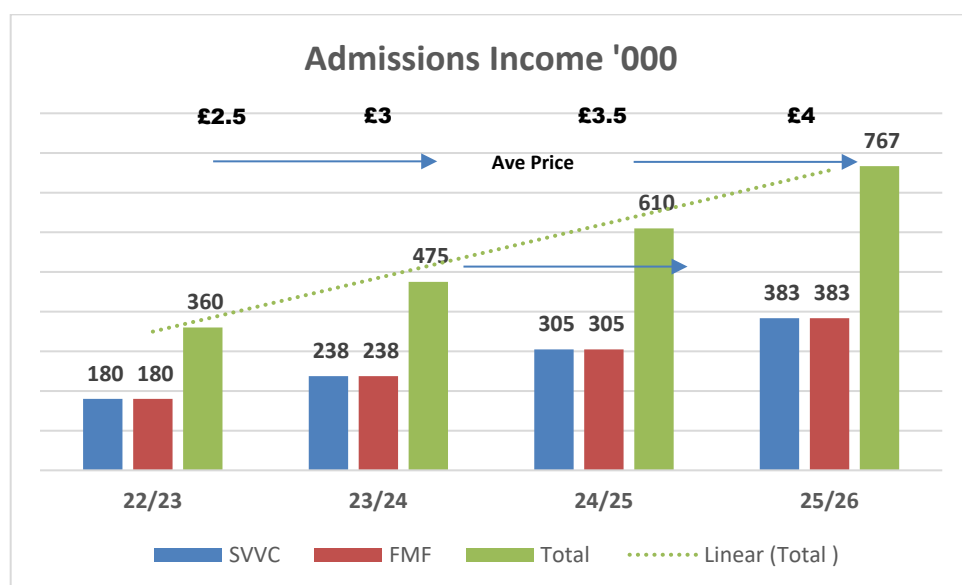


Table 2
Fees and charges proposed increases subject to SMBC annual budget setting process.

3.2 We will benchmark fees against comparable visitor experiences in the West Midlands, with a proposal for future visitor fee increases to come to Cabinet in for 23/24 budget setting. Until then, we have factored in an increment in average fee charges of 50p per year until 25/26.

3.3 Event ticket charges are treated separately to visitor fee charges (see events business plan). These fees are set by the events team as part of the event planning process, depending on the offering and comparable offerings. This flexibility in event ticket fee setting was previously agreed by Cabinet.

3.4 Increasing Visitor Income at Forge Mill Farm

Forge Mill Farm will achieve an increase in visitor income through:

- Farm animals that are looked after to the highest of welfare standards, and accessible to visitors **(22/23 – increase farm animals)**
- Visitor journey through the self-guided ‘farm tour’ that is interactive and educational for all ages **(22/23 – new interpretation and education points)**
- Farm ‘experiences’ with interactions with animals facilitated by Forge Mill Farm staff **(22/23 – new interaction spaces staffed by animal welfare apprentices and trained animal welfare volunteers).**

- Straw maze barn for children with farm craft activities for visitor days **(22/23 – new farm craft area staffed by craft apprentices and volunteers).**
- Farm Activity Barn and Play Area **(planned for 23/24)**
- Recognising one of the USP for the farm is the ability to engage urban youngsters in animal care and husbandry **(22/23 – a targeted approach to engage young people who do not have access to / knowledge about farms).**

3.5 Increasing Visitor Income at Sandwell Valley Visitor Centre

Sandwell Valley Visitor Centre will achieve an increase in visitor income:

- Victorian Walled Garden with vegetables and plants grown and sold at Sandwell Valley **(22/23 – renewed garden, inclusive interpretation, and volunteer led maintenance of the gardens)**
- Heritage buildings showcasing the old blacksmiths, antique equipment, Victorian garden infrastructure, and greenhouse working rooms **(22/23 – heritage buildings refreshed and accessible, new interpretation and heritage tour experience).**
- Interactive Rabbit Village with and animal welfare education **(22/23 – Rabbit Village piloted, and petting / animal welfare experience staffed by Animal Welfare Apprentices and trained volunteers)**

4.0 Increase in Secondary Spend - Approach

4.1 Food and Beverage Catering

4.2 The current Tea Rooms at Sandwell Valley Visitor Centre is the only current food and beverage offering at Sandwell Valley (excluding the Burger Bar concessions outside the adventure playground and away from the main visitor centre building).

4.3 **The Tea Rooms are regularly used by visitors, but not currently achieving full cost recovery or surplus. The reasons and approach to address these in the 22/23 business plan:**

4.3.1 There will be a model around staffing levels to meet the varied customer demand at different times of the year **(22/23 strategy – to adopt a digital rota system and the use of additional bank staff to flex up and down depending on demand times).**

4.3.2 There will be adequate systems or processes in place for stock control, just in time ordering, and menu planning that achieves a 'gross profit' **(22/23 – Electronic Point of Sale system in place for stock take and 'gross profit' analysis on each product sold, reduction in waste).**

4.3.3 The menu will be refreshed to meet modern day café customer needs **(22/23 – new menu adopting 'best practice' from other successful country park / farm cafes).**

- 4.3.4 There will be marketing / targeting to different groups outside of peak times – running groups, parent / toddler groups, OAPs **(22/23 – a targeted approach to marketing our café offer to specific groups with specific deals).**
- 4.3.5 The previous ticketed model only allowed access to the Tea Rooms via reception, which is also not always visible to passing footfall **(22/23 – the courtyard will have open and free access to the public on visitor days on a ‘market courtyard’ type set up).**
- 4.3.6 There are no ‘grab and go’ coffee options at either Forge Mill Farm or Sandwell Valley Visitor Centre **(22/23 – addition of ‘pop up’ coffee bar huts to service hot drinks and cakes to walkers and visitors who do not want to enter the buildings).**
- 4.3.7 There is no adequate kitchen/food preparation facility, increasing staff time in food preparation and preventing scalability on foods that can be sold in our other outlets such as cakes in the shops **(22/23 – refurbish current kitchen facilities and an outbuilding currently used as food preparation into a fit for purpose kitchen).**
- 4.3.8 Forge Mill Farm does not currently have a café option for visitors: but does see high demand for this, given the numbers of visitors and the distance from Sandwell Valley Tea Rooms **(22/23 – scope and develop a café offering for visitors to open in spring 23/24).**

4.4 This approach is intended to:

- 4.4.1 Achieve full cost recovery for catering offerings at Sandwell Valley and produce a surplus for contribution to achieving the net zero target within 3 years.
- 4.4.2 It is recognised this is the start of the modernisation/customer focussed improvements. Putting the infrastructure, systems, and model in place to deliver a quality catering offering to our visitors will be the start, with the following possibilities from 23/24:
- **If successful**, this will keep a larger portion of surplus within SMBC and allow a similar model for other park’s for pop up cafes / coffee bars.
 - **If partially successful**, this will allow adjustments to be made in the delivery model.
 - **If unsuccessful**, and there is a decision not to further proceed with an inhouse model, there is the option to scope outsourcing these catering units.

4.5 Shops

- 4.5.1 There are two shops: one at Sandwell Valley Visitor Centre and another at Forge Mill Farm. Years preceding the pandemic, the shops offered a range of locally grown or sourced produce, meat, and products. The shops currently have an eclectic offering and are not achieving full cost recovery/surplus. The reason and approaches to address in the 22/23 business are:
- 4.5.2 22/23 Restock based on the core principles of what both shops will sell:

- Locally grown or sourced seasonal produce (veg, fruit, meat, from Sandwell Valley and local farms).
- Products that are locally sourced and match the visitor offering at Sandwell Valley.
- Gifts and memorabilia related to the visitor offering at Sandwell Valley and Sandwell heritage/history.
- To support local businesses and micro-entrepreneurs.
- Products that meet the demands of walkers and dog owners, who visit Sandwell Valley in their tens of thousands each year.

4.5.3 Farm Shop at Forge Mill Farm offering locally grown / sourced produce and products **(22/23 – relaunch farm shop offering with new products and a business model that delivers a surplus).**

4.5.4 Visitor Shop at Sandwell Valley Visitor Centre offering locally grown / sourced produce and products and products for dogs and walkers **(22/23 – relaunch visitor shop with new products and a business model that delivers a surplus).**

4.6 Open Courtyard free to access to the public, with access to the tea rooms, Visitor Shop, Coffee Bar, Pop Up Shops, and Courtyard events and activities **(22/23 – pop up shops for local businesses / micro entrepreneurs to replace old farm pens, and additional seating and courtyard activities to attract walk ins).**

4.7 Open free to access to the public for the farm shop and coffee bar and picnic area at Forge Mill Farm **(22/23 – refurbish entrance and open picnic area / children’s play area to attract footfall and planned visitors to the shop)**

5.0 Increase additional income: venue hire, grants, concessions, and events

5.1 Venue Hire

5.1.1 Sandwell Valley Visitor Centre and the land on Sandwell Valley are prime locations for high quality venue hire – meetings and training to large scale conferences, events and weddings.

5.1.2 We currently have sporadic bookings for meeting room and private event hire, but this is a very small income stream of c.14k (2021).

5.1.3 Our approach to increasing venue hire income is to address the following:

- Current meeting rooms and venue hire spaces require modernisation **(22/23 – small investment into installing WiFi, meeting room tech, and refresh of these spaces).**
- Current reception/shop area, courtyard entrances, and courtyard and are not easily set up and set down as event spaces **(22/23 – relocation of shop and some investment into pop up event infrastructure, allowing use of these spaces for hire).**

- Although Lightwoods House has the necessary licences for wedding hire, Sandwell Valley sites do not **(22/23 – wedding licence / alcohol sale licences to be secured)**
- We will clarify and package the ‘offering’ marketed or targeted to organisations, venue and event hire companies, and the community **(22/23 – clear offering and a calendar of dates/times the various spaces are available).**

5.2 Concessions and Contracts

5.2.1 Sandwell Valley currently has a number of concessions and contracts in place for additional income. These are not currently set at current market rates, which will be addressed as contracts come to retender dates.

5.2.2 Our 22/23 plan is to address the following:

- Tender contracts due to expire Apr 22 at current market rates.
- Tendering a 3-year contract on the high ropes, with the option to consider other management options of this in future.
- Ensuring that current land rental agreements and contracts for fairs / attractions are negotiated at current market rates, full cost recovery (inc. ground works and electricity) and a surplus contribution to SMBC.

5.3 Grants

5.3.1 We do not currently have a funding strategy in place for Sandwell Valley. We do have a Countryside Stewardship Grant, which will reduce over the next three years **(22/23 – as part of the Master Plan scoping for Sandwell Valley, all potential funding streams and grants will be considered).**

5.3.2 Applications have been made in 2021, with decisions expected in Jan/Feb 2022. We will work with finance in Jan 22 to understand previous grant applications to support capital and revenue for Sandwell Valley.

5.4 Events Income

5.4.1 Events have been a significant source of income for Sandwell Valley, and this has traditionally been allocated as part of ‘admissions income’ and not able to be quantified in financial terms as an income stream itself. These events range from small (i.e. children’s craft activities) to large (i.e. ‘Santa at The Valley’).

5.4.2 The recent ‘Christmas at The Valley’ events trialled some evening events, an enhanced christmas experience offering to complement ‘Santa’, and a new premium experience of ‘Bedtime at The Farm’.

5.4.3 The approach to increase event income and measure this as commercially viable income in itself will be to:

5.4.4 Large seasonal events to be managed as part of the events team (inc within the events business plan 22/23), each event with its own income/budget that is designed to generate a surplus.

5.4.5 The surplus for these events – if run in partnership with Sandwell Valley, rather than a straight ‘venue hire’ – will be split between current events budget and Sandwell Valley budget, with 80% being allocated to Sandwell Valley. This ensures the operational structure for Sandwell Valley is commercially viable for the income and outputs outlined in this plan, and that professional event experience and infrastructure is used to deliver these events at scale and achieving a surplus.

5.4.6 The large-scale events currently scheduled to be run in 22/23 in this way (included in the events business plan and budget 22/23) are:

- Easter at The Valley
- Halloween at The Valley
- CWG Live Site at The Valley
- Open Air Cinema/Theatre/Music at The Valley
- Christmas at The Valley

5.4.7 Smaller ticketed events will be planned and managed by the operational team at Sandwell Valley to increase visitor income, enhance visitor experience, and bring in additional income (not currently projected within the income targets). A full schedule of these are currently being planned for 22/23, but examples are:

- Bedtime / Lambing / Farming experiences at Forge Mill Farm
- Market days at Sandwell Valley
- School holiday activity programmes

5.4.8 In addition to this, there will be non-ticketed event attractions/entertainment that will drive ‘footfall’ to both sites – converted into visitor income and secondary spend. Examples of this include Falconry Displays, Bug and Reptile Displays, face painters, entertainers, and other activities.

6.0 Providing an education offering to schools, colleges and the community

6.1 Sandwell Valley is well placed to deliver an education offering at both sites during term time. At present, these are ‘dead days’ in terms of visitor income.

6.2 Forge Mill Farm currently has a partnership with Sandwell College, providing room hire and animal care tasks for their animal welfare course. However, this agreement only encompasses venue hire costs to Sandwell College at the present and there is scope to renegotiate and expand this offering both to Sandwell College and Dudley College. **(22/23 – we will renegotiate the Sandwell College agreement to extend the service to working**

with our farm animals as well as room hire. This will increase income and establish Forge Mill Farm as the Animal Welfare Education Venue of ‘choice’ for the immediate vicinity; we will also appoint an Education and Engagement Coordinator to support this transition and deliver on the education visits).

- 6.3 The current ‘Park and Countryside Rangers’ job roles are intended to be education focussed. However, there is currently no professional line management of this team to deliver education packages, and the education element / opportunity of their role has not been implemented. **(22/23 – we will appoint an education and outreach team, so that Park Rangers are able to transition to focus on nature reserves development).**
- 6.4 The education visits income is currently minimal (3.4k 21/22). However, there is a need for education visits that meet national curriculum requirements – with scalability to serve schools across the West Midlands in the long term. We currently have no specific offering packaged that aligns with the national curriculum, yet with the delivery of this business plan will have the infrastructure, expertise and capacity to do so **(22/23 – we will appoint a consultant to work with us and the new education and outreach team to design an offering for school visits that links to the national curriculum; we will package this and pilot for 22/23 a programme of educational visits targeted schools in Sandwell initially).**

7.0 Delivering on social value and SMBC corporate objectives

We will work with our stakeholders to develop a social value action plan for Sandwell Valley for 22/23 that contributes to our economic, educational, health, social care, environmental, and employability outcomes.

8.0 Rebrand, Relaunch and Market Sandwell Valley

- 8.1 Sandwell Valley as a ‘brand’ has been impacted by the pandemic and a lack of visible improvements into both sites. However, this is still considered by residents and stakeholders as ‘jewel in the crown’ of Sandwell and one that has great potential. **(22/23 – we will design a comms and marketing plan for our planned visitor experiences in 22/23 that maximises the use of social media, our current support for Sandwell Valley, and brings awareness to those residents and people in neighbouring boroughs who are not aware of the offering at Sandwell Valley)**
- 8.2 There is a need to consult more widely and fully with stakeholders – including local residents – about the longer-term options for Sandwell Valley, building on our 22/23 plans. **(22/23 – as part of the master scoping, we will set up ways to consult with local residents and other stakeholders on the longer-term scoping for Sandwell Valley developments, including the sites and opportunities not planned for 22/23).**
- 8.3 There is confusion in the current branding / marketing of Forge Mill Farm and Sandwell Valley Park Farm because of the transition of animals away from ‘park farm’ and the lack of investment into the Victorian gardens and current heritage experiences available. **(22/23 – in preparation for our relaunch, we will rename Sandwell Valley Park Farm, Sandwell**

Valley Visitor Centre, and give a distinct branding for both sites that reflect our offering; we will also scope the 'Sandwell Valley' brand as part of our master scoping in 22/23).

8.4 Marketing for events and activities at Sandwell Valley is sporadic and often last minute. This means we are not always maximising potential partners, visitors, income, and community benefit from these events and activities, and it is not clear what the offering is for the 'season' at Sandwell Valley **(22/23 – as part of the planned relaunch of Sandwell Valley Visitor Centre and Forge Mill Farm we will produce a schedule of activities and events for the year, as well as conducting an advertising campaign and a microsite for Sandwell Valley linking through from the SMBC and Visit Sandwell Websites).**

9.0 2030 Master Plan Draft

9.1 Jon Sheaf Associates were commissioned to complete a Draft Master Scoping completed in Jan 2020. This draft has not been progressed to consultation and not yet been put forward to Cabinet for approval. Sandwell Valley requires a long-term master plan that encompasses:

- Sites not included as a focus in this 22/23 business plan.
- Further investment into Forge Mill Farm.
- Options around the use of building and land assets across sites.
- The future maintenance and development of the nature reserves.
- Next steps for the master plan.

9.2 We will develop a timeframe and consultation plan to achieve a Master Plan for Cabinet consideration in 2023.

Appendix B: Lightwoods House 22/23 – 25/26 Summary

Approved as part of 22/23 budget setting.

10.0 Summary

1.1 Since its full opening in October 2017, Lightwoods House and Park has become a popular and well-used community hub and function venue. It has been revived due to its National Heritage Lottery Fund-supported renovation and now holds a wide variety of activities both in the House as well as in the Park that attract a broad range of people.

1.2 The House has developed a strong group of volunteers who assist in the maintenance of the House and Park; delivery of community and public events as well as those commercial activities that will contribute towards the long-term financial sustainability of Lightwoods.

1.3 Lightwoods House has multiple facets:

1.3.1 Room and Venue Hire

- Three rooms of differing sizes that can be hired individually or concurrently for a wide range of uses, from classes and workshops to parties and weddings
- The Shakespeare Garden that can also be used for public and private events
- Private hire office: available for meeting; use for wedding preparation etc
- Venue hire facilities for Wedding packages

1.3.2 Leased Spaces (Long Term Rental Leases)

- Leased Tearoom: the kitchen, servery area and former Community Lounge are leased by a tenant caterer, who pays rent on the space as well as commission on gross turnover. Also has exclusive access to the Tearoom, which does not form part of the current lease.
- Leased nursery rented by an external provider
- Leased offices: four offices are leased to tenants.

1.3.3 Open space park with various facilities including a Skatepark; Play Area, Basketball Court

1.3.4 Lightwood's House Run Events: including christmas events

1.4 The original Business Plan set a target of Lightwoods being cost-neutral and self-sustaining when NHLF funding ceased in December 2021. This has not been possible and NHLF funding was extended to December 2022 following severe disruption in delivery of the Action Plan due to the Covid Pandemic.

1.5 This Business Plan sets out the detailed plan for 2022/23 and sets out the three-year horizon to get to cost neutral/surplus by 25/26.

2.0 Current Position

2.1 This business plan addresses several factors that have previously impacted the development at Lightwoods to a self-sustained financial position:

- 2020-22: COVID-19 resulted in full closure with loss of room hire income; postponement or cancellation of weddings and consequent deferred/lost income; deferred kitchen rent; inability to take new bookings e.g. for high-end events such as weddings
- Reduction in class hire due to reluctance of attendees to return in person, making classes unviable for tutors
- The Business Plan originally submitted to HLF in 2013 lacks the clarity needed to achieve a self-sustained position and 2022 – 2030 ambitions.
- Office rental charges and venue hire fees significantly below market rate.
- Kitchen lease (expires August 2022) permits use of Tearoom but does not include it in rent. This requires a retender process. The current arrangements utilise 46% of floorspace at Lightwoods House, but only accounts for 17% of the rental income.
- Lack of suitable provision for families/children i.e. core Park users by cafe.
- Longstanding infrastructure issues e.g. obtaining Wi-Fi; card machine; electric points in Shakespeare Garden.

2.2 Net expenditure is currently budgeted at £135k (2021/22 budget Appendix A).

2.3 £482k of capital monies from HLF match funding from SMBC remains available for House and Park improvements

2.4 NHLF funding expires in December 2022 - £201k remained in the budget and capital monies were permitted to be reallocated, focusing on the extension of the House and Park Manager's post for a further year and the delivery of the Activity Plan.

2.5 The 2022/23 Business Plan will implement the following to recalibrate the Lightwoods model and achieve a self-sustained (net zero) position:

- 2.5.1 Increase income from room hire, allowing for continued community benefit through class hire etc but creating a viable model for hosting large private functions.
- 2.5.2 Increase office rents through an independent evaluation, to achieve market value and greater income for SMBC.
- 2.5.3 Revalue and retender the café/catering offer – inclusive of, but not limited to, evaluation of rent charges; inclusion of all areas used; putting lease and catering contract out to tender. The timeline for this is:

- a. Extension of current lease to current tender until Dec 31st 2022, to allow additional time for the tender process (May 22).
 - b. Review of tender value by an independent catering consultancy and rental evaluation surveyers (May 22)
 - c. Tender live on intend: (June 22)
 - d. Tender selection process: (July 22)
 - e. Tender awarded: (Aug 22)
 - f. Winning tender takes control of lease or continues with new lease (1st Jan 2023)
- 2.5.4 Strengthen the wedding offer with coherent catering package add-ons, establishing links with recommended suppliers, and incorporating referral/commission arrangements where possible.
- 2.5.5 Increase secondary spend through provision of 'The Garden Shed' snack cabin and refreshments at events; utilise capital monies to enhance catering facilities in the Park and Garden, with the focus centring on families and other core Park users.
- 2.5.6 Increase and enhance public events programme in collaboration with Events Team – Lightwoods House staff assisted by Volunteer Support Group.
- 2.5.7 Remodel Lightwoods staffing in conjunction with staffing at Sandwell Valley to achieve scalability and commercial viability.
- 2.5.8 Deliver key points of NHLF Activity Plan.
- 2.5.9 Deliver against Corporate Outcomes of Vision 2030.

3.0 Increase income from room hire

4.0 We will increase the fees and charges for room hire at Lightwoods House to achieve full cost recovery (agreed by full council in 22/23 budget setting):

Room	Current Charge	22/23 New Charge (reduced rate)	22/23 New Charge (Peak Times)
Long Room (whole)	56.65	59.00	100.00
Long Room Bandstand End	30.90	32.00	55.00
Long Room Aviary End	25.75	27.00	45.00
Chance Room	20.60	21.50	40.00
Weatherhead Room	15.45	17.00	30.00

- 4.1 Peak times refers to where additional staff are required for opening and closing the building, and servicing bookings: this includes Saturday and Sunday, and parties that require additional staff outside of these times.
- 4.2 We will procure and use a venue hire software solution to automate and manage our venue bookings – alongside venue bookings across parks and Sandwell Valley. This will reduce administration time, increase audit trails and governance around bookings, and provide live data to drive venue sales activity.

4.3 We will incorporate the venue hire for Lightwoods into a sales strategy for Sandwell Valley, sponsorship and concessions for events, and venue hire across parks.

5.0 Increase Office Rents

5.1 We will commission an independent evaluation of the rental space and propose new rates for negotiation when the current leases expire.

5.2 We will review and update the terms of the lease to include any additional costs of rental, currently borne by SMBC (i.e. rates, car parking fees, additional storage space, room hire).

6.0 Revalue and retender the café/catering offer

6.1 The current lease agreement with a catering provider expires in August 2022.

6.2 We will commission an independent valuation of the rental space and catering offering and tender out to the market by end of May 22. We will procure a provider that includes the following:

- Achieving market value for the space rented out.
- Enhancements to the catering offering, to serve both regular and target new customers coming to Lightwoods House and Park.
- Family friendly facilities, including provision for children.
- Catering facilities (either through the provider or use of the facilities outside of hours) for weddings, venue hire, and events.

7.0 Enhance wedding offer and increase income

7.1 Lightwoods has steadily developed as a wedding venue, with a flexible approach, an affordable package, and positive feedback. The Long Room, Chance Room, and Bandstand are licenced for ceremonies. The Shakespeare Garden and Marquee are included in the venue hire package.

7.2 There is a capacity issue with Sandwell Registry Office not always able to meet the offsite demand of wedding ceremonies at Lightwoods House. We will work with Sandwell Registry Office and external partners to meet the demand for wedding ceremonies at Lightwoods House.

7.3 We will increase the additional wedding hire income with from providing a licenced bar, catering partnerships, and wedding infrastructure hire. This will include commercial partnership with external companies to enhance the offering to wedding hire packages and increase the additional income SMBC receives from this type of formal partnership.

7.4 We will re-design and relaunch our wedding offering, including:

- Establishing a clear 'brand' for weddings at Lightwoods House.
- A wedding offering 'micro-site' to promote this specifically.
- Enhance the sales capacity to increase wedding bookings, through arrangements with an external company, or as part of our venue hire sales strategy for all park's venues.
- Deliver several 'wedding showcase' days to promote the Lightwoods offering.

7.5 We will scope the future potential of expanding our wedding package offering to other prime locations in Sandwell – including Sandwell Valley.

8.0 Increase secondary spend

8.1 There was a commission completed pre-covid which delivered a bespoke catering hut for external sale of coffee and cakes. This was planned to be an addition / and separate to the offering within the café run by the current leaseholder (grab and go offering/additional offering capacity in peak times).

8.2 We will implement pilot the use of this catering hut in the summer period (including the CWG events programme at Lightwoods House) in 22/23.

8.3 We will scope the potential future delivery of the catering hut, either as an inhouse model – combined with Sandwell Valley and other parks catering – or as an outsourced model.

9.0 Increase and enhance public events programme in collaboration with Events Team

9.1 Lightwoods currently has regular and well-attended events, such as a Christmas Market, Father Christmas at Lightwoods, theatre and several film nights per year.

9.2 We will increase these events in number and surplus generation, by:

- Incorporating the design and delivery of events to the SMBC events team, reflecting the business plan approach for Sandwell Valley.
- Promoting Lightwoods House and Park as an event location for external hire, through our events offering and application process for external events (through the events governance framework).
- Running a core set of annual events, including:
 - Cinema, Live Theatre and Live Music at Lightwoods House
 - Halloween at Lightwoods House
 - Christmas at Lightwoods House
 - Markets (such as farmers markets / food festivals)
- The business model for events is to deliver small scale events:
 - 22/23: 6 events (@ 1k income per event)
 - 23/24: 12 events (@ 1k income per event)
 - 24/25: 12 events (@ 1.5k income per event)
 - 25/26: 24 events (@ 1.5k income per event)

10.0 Remodel Lightwoods staffing in conjunction with staffing at Sandwell Valley

10.1 Lightwoods House currently operates in isolation to our operational teams responsible for other parks locations (i.e. Sandwell Valley). This increases the risk of a 'single point of failure',

with a dependency on an isolated team and does not achieve the economies of scale in ways of working, processes, and systems.

10.2 The 22/23 business plan for Sandwell Valley and changes to operational, catering, and visitor services management resource and processes presents an opportunity to address this issue, whilst retaining a permanent onsite coordinator presence.

10.3 We will transition the following functions for Lightwood's House to the operations roles based in the Sandwell Valley team:

- 1..1 Health and Safety and facilities management functions.
- 1..2 Administrative functions.
- 1..3 Coordination of rotas and visitor services roles (including volunteers).

10.4 We will transition the events coordination and planning for events at Lightwood's House (including approvals for external events) to the SMBC events team, and the governance framework for events.

10.5 We will recruit a Lightwoods House Coordinator to fill the gap left by the vacant role of Lightwood's House Manager, who will coordinate the day to day activities and supervise event delivery, event staff, and venue hire activities.

11.0 Financial Summary

11.1 Total budget allocation for 22/23 carries forward with the same figures from 21/22, with expected savings for Lightwoods to be made of 27k (from HLF funding for coordinator post).

11.2 The budget and income targets are based on modest assumptions detailed within this plan (below), with an uplift on the income target from 21/22 of 27k.

11.3 Operationally, the budget and income targets will be managed and monitored in two ways:

- Corporate budget (set as SMBC budget for 22/23)
- Business Plan Stretch Target (a trial business plan approach based on increased income with the assumptions below)
- The Business Plan Stretch Budget will be monitored against a quarterly performance dashboard on income by the Director of Borough Economy, Service Manager, and Finance Business Partner. This will allow us to remain ambitious and ensure the viability of savings over 3 years, whilst also working to the Plan A budget requirements within current corporate governance checks and balances.

Budget Profile – towards net zero/surplus within three years

	Corp Budget Stretch Target				
	21/22	22/23	22/23	23/24	24/25
Rental Income		35,000	37,000	48,500	48,500
Venue Hire Income		39,720	39,720	79,440	79,440
Wedding Hire Income		12,750	12,750	25,500	38,250
Additional Income		22,020	44,040	68,760	89,280
Total Income	80,500	109,490	133,510	222,200	255,470
Total Direct Employee Expenses	131,800	131,800	131,800	131,800	131,800
Total Premises Costs	56,500	56,500	56,500	56,500	56,500
Total Suppliers & Services (Civic Events)	38,000	38,000	38,000	38,000	38,000
Total Expenditure	226,300	226,300	226,300	226,300	226,300
Total Surplus	-145,800	- 116,810	- 92,790	- 4,100	29,170
Annual Saving Reduction		- 28,990	- 53,010	- 88,690	- 33,270

Income Profile – towards net zero/surplus within 3 years

	Corp Budget Stretch Target				
	21/22	22/23	22/23	23/24	24/25
TOTAL Income Assumptions	80,500	109,490	133,510	222,200	255,470
Rental Income	32,000	35,000	37,000	48,500	48,500
Catering Contract	6,500	6,500	6,500	18,000	18,000
Nursery Rental Contract	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000
Office Rental Contract (3 offices)	10,500	10,500	10,500	10,500	10,500
Accupuncture Office Contract	5,000	5,000	5,000	5,000	5,000
Office 4 vacant		3,000	5,000	5,000	5,000
Venue Hire Income	-	39,720	39,720	79,440	79,440
<i>Capacity Sales</i>		<i>10%</i>	<i>10%</i>	<i>20%</i>	<i>20%</i>
Chance Room		9,000	9,000	18,000	27,000
Weatherhead Room		6,960	6,960	13,920	20,880
Long Room (Combined)		23,760	23,760	47,520	71,280
Wedding Hire Income		12,750	12,750	25,500	38,250
<i>Capacity Sales</i>		<i>10%</i>	<i>10%</i>	<i>20%</i>	<i>30%</i>
Events/Concessions/Additional Income	-	22,020	44,040	68,760	89,280
Bar Income		2,520	5,040	7,560	10,080
Concessions Hut Income		13,500	27,000	43,200	43,200
Events Income		6,000	12,000	18,000	36,000
<i>Events and ave income per event</i>		<i>6*1,000</i>	<i>12*1,000</i>	<i>12*1,500</i>	<i>24*1,500</i>

Venue Hire Income Assumptions

- Assumes room hire is available for an average 40 weeks of the year.
- Assumes an average actual hire based on average prices (i.e. 10% capacity for Corporate Budget 22/23)

	Hire Fees/Hour	
	WD	WE
Chance Room	21.5	40
Weatherhead Room	17	30
Long Room - Bay End	32	55
Long Room - Aviary End	27	45
Long Room combined	59	100

	Income	Hours
10%	39,720	1,008
20%	79,440	2,016
30%	119,160	3,024
40%	158,880	4,032
100%	397,200	10,080

Wedding Hire Income Assumptions

- Assumes wedding hire is available for an average 10 weeks of the year.
- Assumes an average actual hire based on average prices (i.e. 10% of capacity for corporate budget 22/23)

	Hire Fees/Hour	
	M-T	F-S
Wedding Full Hire (Ave)	1,500	2,250

	Income	Weddings
10%	12,750	7
20%	25,500	14
30%	38,250	21
40%	51,000	28
100%	127,500	70

Bar Income Assumptions

- Assumes bar income only from the number of weddings projected (i.e. 7 weddings for 22/23 corporate budget targets).
- Assumes average guests for weddings at 60 people wedding.
- Assumes average spend per head at £10 per person.
- Assumes an average gross surplus (after cost of sale) of 60% (below industry standard).
- Assumes NO bar income from events or other venue hire (i.e. parties) – scope to achieve additional bar income from this.

Catering Income Assumptions

- Assumes only 50 days of pilot activity in 2022/23 (summer days and some peak event days).
- Assumes an average of 90 customers per day @ £3 average spend per customer.
- Costs already included in cost of sale / staff budget for 22/23.

Event Assumptions

- Assumes 6 events @ £1,000 surplus per event (after cost of sale) for 22/23.
- Increase in events / average surplus per event for next three years.

Additional Income Streams – Not Included in Projections

- Wedding infrastructure hire and additional spend – i.e. catering partnerships
- Events additional spend / external events hire
- Venue infrastructure hire (i.e. projector / audio / visual facilities)
- Anticipated rental contract increases following re-evaluation

Appendix C: Environment Response Team Pilot

Approved as a pilot in 21/22 and 22/23 budget setting.

1.0 Summary

- 1.1 The initial Bagnall Way / St Paul's Crescent Case Study (Nov 2022) showed that a multi-team approach was able to resolve a long-standing significant 'hot spot' of fly tipping, overgrowth, land clearance and repair.
- 1.2 The Case Study showed that the site would have been unable to resolved to an acceptable standard for community use by one team (i.e. street cleansing), as much of the fly tipping had been embedded within overgrowth. The site had also become a health hazard and the overgrowth was making much of the alleyway and surrounding paths inaccessible to older people and people with disabilities. Without clearance, the fly tipping would also likely worsen with more people littering an already heavily littered area.
- 1.3 The Case Study involved a team of grounds operatives, various specialist equipment, and urban forestry operatives. The result was 26 tipper loads of rubbish waste and 23 tipper loads of green waste removed, and the site was cut back and repaired to ensure it could easily be accessed and maintained by street cleansing and grounds operatives in future.
- 1.4 Similar sites exist across the borough that require a detailed multi-team clean up so that it can be maintained by routine street cleansing and grounds maintenance.
- 1.5 The Environment Response Team Pilot is designed to identify and target sites that require a detailed clean up. This includes:
 - 1.5.1 Identifying the reasons why the site has become this way.
 - 1.5.2 Engaging residents, community groups, litter watch, and other services in addressing these reasons (i.e. bins, signage, enforcement).
 - 1.5.3 Cleaning up the site using the Environment Response Team, with access to multi-discipline skills and equipment: removing waste, cutting back to ensure future access, cleaning up and beautifying where possible. Community partners (i.e. litter watch, community payback) will also be used to complement this work where possible.
 - 1.5.4 Engaging residents and ward members in the promotion of the clean-up of the site and to empower community ownership for ensuring the issues are addressed (i.e. fly tip reporting).
 - 1.5.5 Handing back the site to the routine maintenance teams (grounds and street cleansing), ensuring this is on street cleansing / grounds maintenance routes and schedules.

- 1.6 The Environment Response Team Pilot will sit within the Parks and Grounds Service and will run from Jan 22 – Aug 22 and has been funded through reserve allocation from 21/22 underspend in Borough Economy.
- 1.7 The work of the Environment Response Team will not replace business as usual (BAU) works required by Grounds, Street Cleansing, or the Fly Tip / Graffiti Removal teams.
- 1.8 The work of the team will be evaluated at various stages throughout the pilot, with a final evaluation at the end of the pilot with recommendations. KPIs monitoring the impact of this teams work will be included in the Cabinet Member Scorecard.

2.0 Environment Response Team

- 2.1 The core team will be made up of:
 - 2.1.1 Dedicated Supervisor to allocate, coordinate, and evaluate the work of the team.
 - 2.1.2 Community Engagement Coordinator to support engagement with residents, community groups, other services and partners. This includes addressing the root causes of the issues with the site (i.e. installing bins, liaising with enforcement colleagues, new signage).
 - 2.1.3 Six grounds operatives with training in multi-discipline skills and access to specialist equipment. Additional grounds operatives will be allocated on a needs basis for the works through overtime allocation from the pilot budget.
 - 2.1.4 Allocation of additional resource from specialists within the grounds service or other departments where needed (i.e. urban forestry).
 - 2.1.5 Allocation of additional support from community volunteers, litter watch, community payback, and other community groups.

3.0 Environment Response Team Work Programme

- 3.1 The EET Work Programme will consist of:
 - 3.1.1 Large sites identified as requiring a deep clean up (i.e. community open spaces / large walkways).
 - 3.1.2 Small sites identified as requiring a deep clean up (alleyways / smaller open spaces).
 - 3.1.3 Major thoroughfares into the borough.
 - 3.1.4 All key roundabouts.
- 3.2 The programme of work will be decided by a steering group consisting of the (Interim) Service Manager for Parks & Grounds, Grounds Operations Manager,

Service Manager for Waste, and Cabinet Member's for Environment, and Tourism and Culture on a monthly basis from July 2022.

- 3.3 The criteria for deciding on the programme of works will be:
- 3.3.1 The site has significant waste and overgrowth that cannot be quickly or easily addressed through 'business as usual' services.
 - 3.3.2 The site is visible to the public and/or used by the community.
 - 3.3.3 The site has environmental health, accessibility, and/or safety issues because of the waste and overgrowth.
- 3.4 Work will be spread across the six towns, ensuring that all communities who require it benefit from the pilot.
- 3.5 Ward members will be able to nominate sites within their ward for ERT work through the portal. The criteria (3.3) will be used to determine whether this is allocated to BAU works or ERT works. The current impact on the community and health and safety impacts will determine the order of priority for sites.

4.0 Outputs and Timeline

- 4.1 Outputs for RRET pilot are:

Large Sites	c. 24 (6 in each Town)
Small Sites	c. 90 (15 in each Town)
Roundabouts	Number TBC
Thoroughfares	Number TBC

- 4.2 Evaluation Measures for the pilot are:

- Number of sites cleared up.
- Total tonnages of waste / green waste cleared.
- Numbers of volunteers engaged.
- Cost per site.

- 4.3 The Pilot Timeline is:

Milestone	Date	Officer Leads
Cabinet Briefing	4 th Jan	Service Manager
Members Briefing	19 th Jan	Service Manager
Press Launch	24 th Jan	Completed
ERT in place	10 th Jan	Completed
ERT Pilot Partners Briefed and Engaged	17 th Jan	Completed

Jan sites allocated	10 th Jan	Completed
Members nominations open for sites from Feb	20 th Jan	Completed
Feb – July sites allocated	31 st Jan	Completed
Monthly pilot review with Cabinet Leads	Month End	Service Manager
Final Pilot Evaluation report to Cabinet Leads	1 st Aug	Cabinet

Appendix D: Events Governance Framework (Summary)

**Approved as part of the Improvement Plan in response to the
Grant Thornton Value for Money Report.**

1 Summary

- 10.1 SMBC proactively supports well run, safe, and accessible and inclusive events on council owned land. Events are managed directly by SMBC and through an application process for other organisations.
- 10.2 SMBC does this in the following way:
- An events team and infrastructure to process, advise, and support event applications for internal and externally run events.
 - An events application and decision-making process that is fair and transparent, and proportionate to the event size and type.
 - Providing access to council owned land for approved events (including parks, council owned buildings, and town centres).
 - Ensuring fees and charges are proportionate to the size and type of event.
- 10.3 This events governance framework details the type of events SMBC supports, the decision-making process, the application process, and the terms of conditions of bookings.
- 10.4 This events governance framework will be reviewed annual by the Director of Borough Economy.

11.0 Events

- 11.1 'Events' in this process refer to activitiesⁱⁱ that take place on SMBC owned land or property, organised for people to enjoy. This can include:
- Activities (i.e. crafts, sports, dance)
 - Entertainment (music, theatre)
 - Fairs
 - Fetes
 - Selling (farm markets, craft stalls)
 - Charity Events (fundraising, challenges)
 - Celebration (christmas events, street parties)
 - Civic (remembrance Sunday)
 - Awareness (LGBT+ walk, Breast Cancer Awareness activity)
- 11.2 Events are organised by a range of groups and individuals, and will include:
- SMBC Events Team (Inc. Sandwell Valley, Lightwoods events)
 - Internal services (i.e. public health events, libraries, museums activities)
 - Residents (i.e. street parties, 'friends groups' events)
 - Community groups ('friends groups' events, local clubs)
 - Charities
 - Commercial businesses (fairs, event companies, concerts)

11.3 The events governance framework classifies events in the following way:

- Commercial (making a profit from the event)²
- Community (not making a profit from the event)
- Internal (organised by SMBC departments)

11.4 Event decision making categories are classified as:

- Events under 500 people
- Events over 500 people
- Events over 5,000 people

Small activities and events that require a room hire / pitch hire only, and do not require Safety Advisory Group review, are treated separately as a ‘venue hire only booking’ (Appendix A).

12.0 Event Fees and Charges

12.1 Event Fees

Event Type	Commercial Fee	Non Commercial Fee
Small Event or Sports Activity	Venue Hire Only	Venue Hire Only
Up to 249 people	£346	£56
250 – 499 people	£578	£115
500 – 999 people	£1,157	£230
1,000 – 1,999 people	£2,317	£463
2,000 – 4,999 people	£5,968	£694
5,000+ people	Spec Price	Spec Price

Event Fee Includes	Event Fee Does Not Include
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Administration costs of processing the event paperwork - Cost of representatives to assess safety measures in place - Cost of checks of paperwork and verification documents - Cost of Safety Advisory Group (SAG) assessment - Cost of land use for one day (subject to premium surcharge) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Equipment or event infrastructure (hire from council available if required) - Road closure / traffic management costs - Parking restrictions or parking provision - Event management support or on-site safety management - Reparation of damage to soft surfaces

² Charities running events for ‘profit’ (i.e. fundraising activities), will be subject to commercial fees and charges.

Fee Type	Fee	
Event Infrastructure & Equipment	Various charges based on option: gazebo, stage, PA system, barriers, etc..	
Event Management Support (per hour)	£54.15	£84.15
Event Fast Track Application Fee	£50	£150
Premium Land Hire: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Town Centre High Streets - Green Flag Parks - Sandwell Valley Showground 	10% surcharge	20% surcharge
Indoor Venue Hire: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Council room hire - Sandwell Valley Venue Hire - Lightwoods Venue Hire - Museums Venue Hire - Libraries Venue Hire - Sports Venue Hire 	Various: Charged in addition to event fee, based on hourly/daily rate for indoor venue.	
Other Fees: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Traffic Management Orders - Parking Suspensions - Level of indemnity/reinstatement - Refuse services - Electricity - Water - Licencing 	Various charges based on option.	

12.2 Discounts and Fee Waivers

There will be some occasions when an event organiser is unable to afford the fees associated with an event; in these cases, the event organiser will be signposted to small grants, such as Awards for All.

13.0 Event Decision Making Process

13.1 Event Decision Making Categories

Event Type	SAG	Resident Consultation	Event Approval
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Small events or sports activities	No	No	- Automatic - If does not meet all conditions, manual approval required
Events Below 500			
Events Below 100 People	Only if triggers SAG	No	- Event Manager Approval
Events Above 100 People	Yes	Notification of event, if temporary impact	- Event Manager Approval - Service Manager Approval
Events Above 500 People			
Events Above 500 people – limited community impact	Yes	Notification of event, if temporary impact	- Service Manager Approval - Director Approval
Events Above 500 People – Community Impact	Yes	Resident impact assessment	- Service Manager Approval - Director Approval - Cabinet Member Consultation
Events Above 5,000 People			
Events Above 5,000 People (one day)	Yes	Resident impact assessment	- Director Approval - Cabinet Member Approval
Events Above 5,000 People (multiple days)	Yes	Resident impact assessment	- Director Approval - Cabinet Approval

13.2 Decision Making Framework

13.2.1 SMBC views well run and safe events on council owned land as a positive benefit for the community and local economy. Well organised and accessible events have the power to engage residents in both the organisation and participation in activities, that would otherwise not be possible.

13.2.2 To ensure this positive impact on the community is maximised, decisions for event approvals will be made on the following basis:

- Links to the SMBC Corporate Plan.
- The financial impact the event may have on the local authority.
- The community impact the event may have on residents.
- The reputational impact the event may have on the local authority.

13.2.3 Most events that take place on council owned land have little to no negative impact on residents. Unless these types of events do not comply with SAG requirements or have a negative financial or reputational impact on the local authority, these will usually be automatically approved by the decision maker within the delegated authority in 4.1. This is on the basis that the council can service the event (i.e. process the applications, consider the SAG review, and fulfil an event booking).

13.2.4 Some events may have a temporary impact on residents. Examples of these events may include:

- A walk or sports event that uses the highways, involving a temporary road closure or 'rolling' road closure.
- A music event in a park that runs until 9pm, involving some additional noise for residents.
- A large gathering of people in a park or town centre, which may involve both or either temporary road closures, parking restrictions, and traffic at the start and end times of the event.
- Events that have the potential to result in some Anti-Social Behaviour.

13.2.5 In the cases where an event is deemed to have a potential impact on residents (including noise), the event organisers (including SMBC), will be required to mitigate these. This will include the following:

- All approved events will be published on the SMBC website.
- Events that have a limited impact: residents who are may be impacted will be notified by the event through social media; it may be a condition of booking that residents directly impacted by the event are notified in writing by the event organiser.
- Events that have the potential for a greater level of impact (including the perception from residents that they may be impacted) will be required to conduct a resident impact assessment and associated communications.
- Sandwell Valley and Dartmouth Park will have a resident forum that meets with the Director of Borough Economy and the Service Manager twice a year. This group will be engaged in communications about the annual schedule of events, and the mitigations to reduce impacts on residents.

13.3 Resident Impact Assessment

13.3.1 The purpose of a resident impact assessment is to:

- Consider the potential impacts of the event on local residents.
- Put in place mitigations to reduce these impacts.
- Engage residents in the mitigations to reduce these impacts (this may be in writing, online, through residents' groups, or a meeting).

13.3.2 The types of mitigations will vary, but can include:

- Additional security requirements, to deter anti-social behaviour that may arise from an event.

- Additional parking restrictions and traffic management measures to ensure residents can easily access and exit the area they live in.
- Free tickets to a ticketed event, as a thank you for additional noise – for example, a music event that runs until 9pm.

13.3.3 A resident impact assessment does not mean that the event approval is dependent on all residents agreeing to the event. The decision maker(s) should take account of the resident impact assessment and either:

- Require the event organiser to increase the mitigations planned.
- Make changes to the nature / programme / logistics of the event, if the mitigations necessary are not possible with the current plan.

14.0 Safety Advisory Group

14.1 A decision about whether an event should be approved by SMBC, is always dependent on the event organiser satisfying the conditions set by the Safety Advisory Group (SAG).

14.2 The Safety Advisory Group is set up to review and consider the safety element of an event, which includes:

- Any mandatory safety documentation (risk assessment, relevant safety certificates, relevant licences, relevant qualifications).
- The event has met the safety threshold required for the size of the event (SMBC requires 'The Purple Guide for events')
- Adequate security measures are in place (including advice and engagement with West Midlands Police, if required).
- Traffic management plans are adequate and in place.

This is not an exhaustive list, and the SAG Terms of Reference are attached Appendix (B).

14.3 All events that trigger a SAG related question on their event application, will be reviewed by SAG (either through digital review, or at a scheduled SAG meeting). An example of this is where an event only has 100 people – yet includes higher risk activities, such as a triathlon through the borough.

14.4 SAG advise will usually result in events been approved, subject to conditions that must be met by the event organiser.

15.0 Commercial Activities at Events

15.1 Events on council owned land are sometimes run by commercial ventures. These can include:

- Event companies (such as music promoters, sports providers)
- Fairs and Circuses
- Performance Companies

- Conferences and Convention Providers
- Charities running for profit / fundraising events

15.2 Events will be considered commercial if the event organiser is making (or intending to make) a profit or surplus from the event (including fundraising). In these cases, a commercial fee may be applied to the event, even if the event is run by a not for profit organisation. This is to ensure that SMBC can continue subsidising non-commercial events and achieves ‘full cost recovery’ for events that take place on council owned land.

15.3 Some non-commercial events will want to carry out some commercial activities at their event, such as allowing concessions or fairs. This must be included in the original event application and the following may be required:

- Commercial activities within a non-commercially run event may incur additional charges (depending on the nature and extent of the commercial activity).
- Commercial activities will need to meet the same conditions and will be considered in the same way as the event itself (i.e. a fair or concession provider within an event, would need to meet the same safety requirements of the event).
- Depending the land used for the event and the time / nature of the event, there may be restrictions applied by SMBC on the event provider’s commercial activities (i.e. an ice cream concession may not be allowed in some parks for events, because of an agreement that may already be in place for that park).

16.0 Decision Making Timescales

Event Type	Application before event	Decision from application
Small Activities and Events	20 Working Days	Within 10 working days
Events Under 500 People	3 Months	25 Working Days
Events Over 500 People	3 Months	25 Working Days
Events Over 5,000 People	6 Months	2 Months
Urgent Events (requires additional fee and can only be considered for events with no community impact)	20 working days	Within 10 working days

17.0 Event Booking Process and Documents

17.1 Event Booking Process

SMBC will use EventApp to automate some of the administration processes and to ensure a one stop shop for making an application to run an event on council owned land. This provides a clear audit trail of event application decision making and communications. Only applications made through EventApp will be considered by SMBC. The current application questions used on EventApp are attached in Appendix (C).

17.2 Documents

Documents required as part of an event application depend on the type of event and whether they follow the Purple Guide (events below 5,000) or the Blue Guide (events above 5,000), but may include:

- Standard SMBC Terms & Conditions (attached, appendix ())
- Fee payment and invoice
- Event Application
- SAG Report (when required)
- Marketing and Social Media Conditions
- Sample Risk Assessment
- Relevant sections of Purple Guide (i.e. confirmation of medical services procured)
- Recommended suppliers (minimum specs required for suppliers used by event organisers – i.e. minimum wage payments, training requirements)
- Copies of relevant licences (i.e. bouncy castle)
- Sample Event Management Plan
- Dependent on the event size and type, may require:
 - o Traffic Management Plan
 - o Fire Risk Assessment
 - o Fire performer / SFX risk Assessment method of working
 - o Medical Specification
 - o Challenge 25 policy (for alcohol sale)
 - o Premise Licence
 - o Ingress & Egress Policy
 - o TTRO applications
 - o Parking plan
 - o Ticketholder information
 - o Noise Management Plan
 - o Eviction policy
 - o Safeguarding policy
 - o Showman's guild licence
 - o Ride safety documentation
 - o Inflatable safety documentation
 - o Staff welfare policy
 - o CAA Licence & permission to fly
 - o Drone operator policy
 - o Adverse weather plan
 - o Waste management plan
 - o Sustainability policy
 - o Marketing and social media plan
 - o Search policy
 - o Security Schedule
 - o Security and Stewarding Policy and Procedure
 - o Show stop procedure
 - o Counter terrorism plan
 - o Covid mitigation plan
 - o Adventure sports Licences

- PLIs from suppliers
- Residents Communications
- Catering registrations/local authority registrations
- Performing animal licenses
- Animal movement certificates
- Animal movement and welfare policy
- Cash handling procedures
- Additional site mapping
- Drug and Alcohol welfare policy
- Water safety policy inc temp, algae, open water safety
- Water sports registrations
- Staff Welfare Policy
- Camping and Caravanning license
- Industry registrations
- Allergy information
- COSHH
- Build and break method of working statements
- Evacuation Procedure
- Local Transport Plan
- Parade route Planning
- Services CT scanning
- Crowd Management Policy

17.3 Document Retention Policy

Documents provided to SMBC will go through the EventApp system. A digital back up of these documents and the event application will be retained securely for a minimum of 5 years following an event and will comply with relevant aspects of the GDPR regulations.

17.4 Event Marketing and Promotion

17.4.1 The event marketing and promotion for an event on council owned land can only begin once:

- a decision to proceed has been agreed
- a signed booking agreement is in place
- a resident impact assessment has been completed (if required)
- payment of any event fees (or an agreed deposit) has been made

17.4.2 SMBC does not automatically endorse an event approved to take place on council owned land with its logo or marketing support (i.e. posting on our events page or promoted through SMBC social media). Event organisers will be able to request use of the SMBC logo, and/or postings on SMBC social media channels, as part of their application.

17.5 Signed Booking Agreement

Most events will be small and require an online signing of the standard terms and conditions within the booking agreement (attached Appendix (D)). Some larger and more complex

events may require a specific contract, with a schedule of specific conditions and agreements in place.

18.0 Banned Events

SMBC will not accept applications or approve events that include the following:

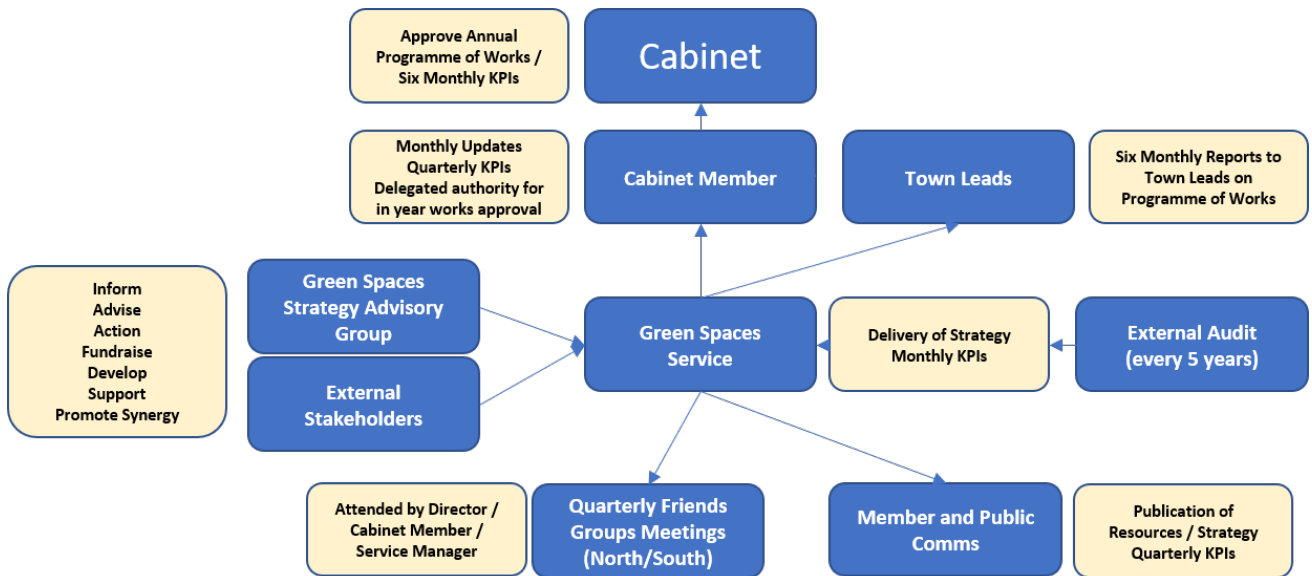
- The use of animals as performers (i.e. circuses). This does not include events that promote animal welfare or raise awareness of farm activity (i.e. 'Farm to Town' events, or 'Dog Shows'), if they follow the animal welfare standards within 'The Purple Guide'.
- Events that have previously breached terms and conditions, and these have not been resolved with remedial actions (i.e. safety conditions not met, booking payments not made, ground reparations not made).
- Events that directly conflict with the Equality and Diversity Policy of SMBC, intentionally prohibit certain groups from attending without a valid reason (i.e. under 18's will not be able to attend an event that is not age appropriate is acceptable, whereas excluding children or older people because the event organiser does not like them, would not be acceptable).
- Events that promote hate speech or promulgate falsehoods that have the potential to harm others (i.e. an anti-covid vaccine convention on council owned land).
- Commercial activities (or any events) that use child labour or do not pay the minimum wage and adopt staff welfare standards (the use of volunteers would be acceptable, but forcing somebody to work for below minimum wage, when it is considered work – i.e. a for profit catering unit or fair – would not be acceptable).

Appendices (available on request / on the council website):

- Event Governance Framework – Process Map (Appendix A)
- SAG Terms of Reference (Appendix B)
- Event Application Questions (Appendix C)
- Event Standard Booking Agreement (Appendix D)

Appendix E: Green Spaces Strategy Governance Framework

Governance Visual – Green Spaces Strategy Review, Audit, and Implementation



Appendix F: Green Spaces KPIs

KPI	Frequency	Baseline	23/24 Target	23/24 – 25/26
Parks and Gardens Quality and Value Scores	Annual	2018 Parks and Gardens Scores	TBC	TBC
Playgrounds Quality and Value Scores	Annual	May 2022 Scores (TBC)	TBC	TBC
Green Spaces Sample Quality and Value Scores (Amenity Green Spaces / Green Corridors / Allotments)	Annual	2018 Sample Quality Scores	TBC	TBC
Nature Reserves Quality and Value Scores	Six Monthly	2018 Sample Scores	TBC	TBC
Green Spaces Hectars per 1,000 people	Green Spaces Audit 2025	3.64	N/A	For measurement
Playgrounds per 1,000 people	Green Spaces Audit 2025	1.34	N/A	For measurement
Improvement Plans in Place				
Parks and Gardens	Annual	NA	All sites with very poor / Poor Scores	All sites with Fair Scores
Playgrounds	Annual	NA		
Green Spaces	Annual	NA		
Playing Pitches	Annual	NA		
Nature Reserves	Annual	NA		
Allotments	Annual	NA		
Community Engagement				
Registered Friends Groups	Annual	NA	All friends groups registered	TBC
Total Friends Groups Fundraising	Annual	NA	NA	NA
Total Friends Groups Volunteering Hours	Annual	NA	NA	NA
Registered Green Space Volunteers	Annual	NA	NA	TBC
Register Green Space Volunteer Hours	Annual	NA	NA	TBC
Key Project Deliverables and Programme of Works				
Programmes of Works Completed by %	Monthly / Quarterly	TBC	TBC	TBC
Tree indicators to be agreed following audit / strategy	Monthly / Quarterly	TBC	TBC	TBC
Key project progress (to be listed with RAG status)	Monthly / Quarterly	TBC	TBC	TBC

Appendix G: Friends Groups Ways of Working and Agreement Draft (for consultation)

- 1.1. Sandwell Council has been working with Friends of Parks Groups for a number of years for the benefit of the Borough's parks and open spaces. At present there are 14 Friends Groups listed on the Council website, of which 4 have a live link to a website for the group.
- 1.2. Friends Groups play a vital role in the overall development and management of parks and open spaces both at a national and local level. Sandwell currently has 14 parks which have achieved Green Flag status, and an active friends group is a requirement to achieve this award.
- 1.3. Officers within the parks section work with the groups in a variety of ways, including:
 - Attendance at meetings
 - Advice on fundraising and event activity
 - Responding to concerns
- 1.4. The Friends Groups deliver a broad range of multiple benefits to both the local communities and to parks and open spaces, and it is vital that the Council supports this valuable activity in a coherent, consistent and transparent way. Some of the ways that Friends Groups can support our green spaces are listed below:
 - organise events such as: bulb and tree planting, clear-up days, picnics,
 - health and nature walks and maybe a summer community festival
 - research the history of the park and produce a pamphlet
 - apply for grants for some of the things above
- 1.5. The partnership work is not currently governed by formal agreements, and this may lead to inconsistency in terms of both the support provided to groups, and also in the understanding of the role of the Council and that of the Friends Groups.
- 1.6. There is no government guidance in relation to friends of parks groups. The [National Federation of Parks and Green Spaces](#) is an umbrella organisation supporting over 7,000 groups across the UK, and has the stated aim: To amplify the voices of Friends Groups across the UK.
- 1.7. The National Federation runs the Parks Community UK website which provides a 'one-stop shop' of information compiled by and for Friends Groups. This website aims to support Friends' groups across the country to feel better equipped and more confident in their active involvement with their local green space.
- 1.8. The site was originally set up by the [Friends of Lordship Rec](#) in London with Lottery grant funding via [NESTA](#) (an innovation agency for social good) of £145,000 (from Sept 2018 to March 2021) as part of the 'Rethinking Parks' programme. The purpose of this fund was to find and replicate the best ideas and models available for the overall management, maintenance and development of parks. In April 2021 the PCUK team and work was integrated into the NFPGS.
- 1.9. The [Green Flag](#) award scheme has a [toolkit](#) for the development of a Friends of Park Group.

- 1.10 The COVID pandemic has resulted in increased usage of parks and open spaces and this coupled with the need to continuously improve services for residents has initiated a focus on the development of a refreshed approach to the partnerships with Friends of Parks groups in Sandwell.
- 1.11 The Green Spaces Audit 2018 highlighted the need to address quality and value scores and issues for all green spaces – not just those with Green Flag status and active friends groups. Friends groups and community engagement are key to the delivery of the Green Spaces Strategy and a more formal and transparent working relationship will help to increase the activity and number of friends groups, the diversity and representation of all residents, and the contribution to the improvement plans for green spaces at borough, neighbourhood, and local level.
- 1.12 The Parks assets are currently under review and this will also require an efficient and effective approach to support for Friends Groups as proposals to refurbish assets are progressed. The assets in parks refer to both buildings and fixed equipment.
- 1.13 As outlined above the Council provides a variety of support and engages in a range of partnership working arrangements with Friends Groups. Parks officers roles are not dedicated solely to the support of Friends Groups. The role also manages park improvement projects, and manages day to day issues within the Parks service. This refreshed approach to supporting Friends Groups will provide a sustainable approach to improve outcomes and provide support in a more efficient and effective way.
- 1.14 The proposed approach will move away from multiple separate meetings with officers present, to meetings held on a collective basis. It is proposed that Sandwell be split into North and South areas and meetings will happen quarterly with all friends group in those areas, attended by the Director of Borough Economy or Service Manager, and the Cabinet Member for Leisure and Tourism.
- 1.15 These meetings will be the only meetings formally recognised and supported by the Council. The main objective remains to see parks and open spaces flourish through the hard work and efforts of Friends and other volunteers.
- 1.16 The reporting of operational day to day issues will remain primarily through the Council's website. The online booking system will support events.
- 1.17 To provide clear and consistent support to the valuable resource of local park and open space Friends Groups in Sandwell the following outline provides the framework and timeframe proposed for consultation with the current groups over the coming 16 weeks:

Dates	Actions
June 14th 2022	Draft of proposed friends group agreement and refreshed approach approved by Cabinet Member.
June 15th 2022	Consultation letter and date for consultation session sent to all current Friends Groups.
June 22nd	Cabinet approval of new approach and agreement as part of Green Spaces Strategy and Business Plan 22/23 – 25/26.

June – August	Update of council information and resources to support friends groups / friends groups to sign agreement and ways of working.
September 2022	Implementation deadline of new arrangements, with first North/South friends group meetings taking place.

Appendix I: Green Spaces Quality Scores 2018 – 209 Sample Green Spaces

Town	SITE NAME	QUALITY SCORE (2018)	Quality Rating	VALUE SCORE (2018)	Value Rating (2018)
Oldbury	Ashes Road Open Space	18	Very Poor	25.2	Poor
Oldbury	Barnford Hill Park	61	Fair	47.3	Poor
Oldbury	Birchley Sports Ground	27	Poor	29.6	Poor
Oldbury	Birchley Sports Ground (Newbury Lane)	34	Poor	30.2	Poor
Oldbury	Brades Green Open Space	44	Poor	43.1	Poor
Oldbury	Broadwell Park	32	Poor	32.8	Poor
Oldbury	Canal Side Open Space	21	Poor	29.4	Poor
Oldbury	Dudley Road Walkthrough	10	Very Poor	24	Poor
Oldbury	Embassy Road Play Area	13	Very Poor	40.6	Poor
Oldbury	Grafton Road Playing Fields	34	Poor	35.6	Poor
Oldbury	Hartlebury Road Amenity Space	27	Poor	26.5	Poor
Oldbury	Hill Top Road Open Space	20	Poor	29.8	Poor
Oldbury	Langley Park	43	Poor	45.4	Poor
Oldbury	Lion Farm Playing Fields	26	Poor	36.5	Poor
Oldbury	M5/Tame Road Open Space	29	Poor	41.3	Poor
Oldbury	Norfolk Road Open Space	29	Poor	31.9	Poor
Oldbury	Norman Road Walkthrough	29	Poor	35	Poor
Oldbury	Old Park Lane Open Space	9	Very Poor	39	Poor
Oldbury	Queensway Open Space	36	Poor	42.5	Poor
Oldbury	Rattle Chain Urban Forest	8	Very Poor	41.3	Poor
Oldbury	Titford Lane Open Space	18	Very Poor	40.8	Poor
Oldbury	Titford Pools	14	Very Poor	34.6	Poor
Oldbury	Tividale Park	34	Poor	42.1	Poor
Oldbury	York Road Open Space	31	Poor	38.3	Poor
Rowley Regis	Angela Avenue Open Space	30	Poor	29.2	Poor
Rowley Regis	Ashtree Mound Playing Fields	27	Poor	28.5	Poor
Rowley Regis	Barn Close Open Space	20	Poor	26.3	Poor
Rowley Regis	Bearmore Playing Fields	44	Poor	34	Poor
Rowley Regis	Bearmore Road Open Space	34	Poor	30.8	Poor
Rowley Regis	Brickhouse Farm Open Space	34	Poor	37.3	Poor
Rowley Regis	Brickhouse Open Space	26	Poor	37.9	Poor

Rowley Regis	Britannia Park	46	Poor	40.2	Poor
Rowley Regis	Bury Hill Park	43	Poor	61.5	Fair
Rowley Regis	Chatsworth Road Open Space	16	Very Poor	38.8	Poor
Rowley Regis	Codsall Coppice	33	Poor	37.2	Poor
Rowley Regis	Corngreaves Public Open Space	42	Poor	48.5	Poor
Rowley Regis	Corngreaves Road Open Space	20	Poor	41.3	Poor
Rowley Regis	Corngreaves Walk Embankment	33	Poor	23.1	Poor
Rowley Regis	Darbys Hill Open Space	22	Poor	28.8	Poor
Rowley Regis	Darbys Hill Quarry Open Space	28	Poor	29.6	Poor
Rowley Regis	Fairway Avenue Amenity Greenspace	6	Very Poor	21.5	Poor
Rowley Regis	Grace Mary Open Space	23	Poor	27.7	Poor
Rowley Regis	Haden Hill Park	71	Good	64.8	Fair
Rowley Regis	Mary MacArthur Gardens	51	Fair	33.1	Poor
Rowley Regis	Moor Lane Open Space	29	Poor	42.7	Poor
Rowley Regis	Mousesweet Brook LNR	41	Poor	53	Fair
Rowley Regis	Mousesweet Brook/River Stour SLINC	19	Very Poor	45.8	Poor
Rowley Regis	Rowley Hall Open Space	20	Poor	29	Poor
Rowley Regis	Rowley Hills Strategic Open Space - Portway Road SOS	24	Poor	65.4	Fair
Rowley Regis	Rowley Regis Cemetery	57	Fair	44.8	Poor
Rowley Regis	Springfield Estate Embankments	28	Poor	38.8	Poor
Rowley Regis	St Lukes Church	25	Poor	30.8	Poor
Rowley Regis	The Knowle SOS	16	Very Poor	53.1	Fair
Rowley Regis	Timbertree Crescent Open Space	18	Very Poor	24.4	Poor
Rowley Regis	Timbertree Open Space SLINC	7	Very Poor	40.2	Poor
Rowley Regis	Warrens Hall Farm SOS	24	Poor	58.5	Fair
Rowley Regis	Warrens Hall Park SOS	50	Fair	63.5	Fair
Rowley Regis	Warwick Road Open Space	26	Poor	42.1	Poor

Rowley Regis	Waterfall Lane SINC	32	Poor	49.4	Poor
Rowley Regis	Woburn Road Amenity Greenspace	40	Poor	40	Poor
Rowley Regis	Wrights Lane Open Space	19	Poor	40.4	Poor
Rowley Regis	Wylde Crescent Open Space	34	Poor	25.6	Poor
Smethwick	Basons Lane Playing Fields	27	Poor	27.3	Poor
Smethwick	Black Patch Park	13	Very Poor	37.1	Poor
Smethwick	Bridge Street Amenity Space	32	Poor	43.9	Poor
Smethwick	Fowler Close Open Space	36	Poor	31.7	Poor
Smethwick	Galton Valley Canal	57	Fair	53.9	Fair
Smethwick	Galton Valley Heritage Centre	47	Poor	52.9	Fair
Smethwick	Galton Valley Play Area	51	Fair	39.6	Poor
Smethwick	Harry Mitchell Park	39	Poor	32.3	Poor
Smethwick	Lewisham Park	49	Poor	50	Fair
Smethwick	Lightwoods Park	66	Good	60.5	Fair
Smethwick	Londonderry Lane Amenity Space	38	Poor	30.6	Poor
Smethwick	Londonderry Playing Fields	28	Poor	36	Poor
Smethwick	Merry Hill SLINC	8	Very Poor	29.6	Poor
Smethwick	Montague Road Open Space	45	Poor	32.3	Poor
Smethwick	Roebuck Lane Open Space	19	Very Poor	36.3	Poor
Smethwick	Smethwick Hall Park	37	Poor	34.4	Poor
Smethwick	Smethwick Summit	48	Poor	53.3	Fair
Smethwick	St Johns Recreation Ground	36	Poor	29.5	Poor
Smethwick	St Pauls Cemetery	45	Poor	31.3	Poor
Smethwick	The Maltings Open Space	36	Poor	31	Poor
Smethwick	Thimblemill Brook	37	Poor	35.4	Poor
Smethwick	Tollhouse Way Amenity Area	60	Good	30.8	Poor
Smethwick	Unett Street Open Space	47	Poor	34.4	Poor
Smethwick	Uplands Cemetery	51	Fair	31	Poor
Smethwick	Victoria Park (Smethwick)	57	Fair	49	Poor
Smethwick	Warley Woods	69	Good	74.6	Good
Smethwick	West Smethwick Park	58	Fair	45.4	Poor
Tipton	Beaumont Close Open Space	30	Poor	38.1	Poor
Tipton	Bilston Road Open Space	18	Very Poor	39.4	Poor
Tipton	Bloomfield Road Amenity Space	20	Poor	37.7	Poor
Tipton	Brierley Lane Open Space	19	Very Poor	37.5	Poor
Tipton	Bullers Open Space	20	Poor	38.1	Poor

Tipton	Central Avenue/Upper Church Lane	21	Poor	38.3	Poor
Tipton	Coneygre Canal Green Space	9	Very Poor	40.2	Poor
Tipton	Coneygre Youth Centre	45	Poor	36.5	Poor
Tipton	Coronation Gardens	36	Poor	39.7	Poor
Tipton	Dudley Road Amenity Space	36	Poor	27.9	Poor
Tipton	Farley Park	46	Poor	30.2	Poor
Tipton	Furnace Parade Open Space	27	Poor	36.9	Poor
Tipton	Great Western Street	26	Poor	43.1	Poor
Tipton	Haines Branch Canal	30	Poor	39.4	Poor
Tipton	Hall Lane Open Space	16	Very Poor	24.4	Poor
Tipton	Jubilee Park	46	Poor	34.2	Poor
Tipton	Kerr Drive Open Space	28	Poor	41.9	Poor
Tipton	Laybourne Park	33	Poor	26.3	Poor
Tipton	Lichfield Street Open Space	11	Very Poor	39.4	Poor
Tipton	Powis Avenue Open Space	37	Poor	26.7	Poor
Tipton	Princes End Branchline Walkway	13	Very Poor	40.6	Poor
Tipton	Sheepwash Urban Park	55	Fair	54.6	Fair
Tipton	Standbridge Way Amenity Space	19	Very Poor	37.7	Poor
Tipton	Tibbington Open Space	17	Very Poor	43.8	Poor
Tipton	Tibbington Playing Fields	15	Very Poor	39.4	Poor
Tipton	Tipton Cemetery	67	Fair	26.7	Poor
Tipton	Tipton Linear Park	36	Poor	39.6	Poor
Tipton	Union Street Open Space	33	Poor	38.8	Poor
Tipton	Upper Church Lane/Powis Avenue Walkthrough	25	Poor	24.2	Poor
Tipton	Victoria Park (Tipton)	64	Good	63.2	Good
Tipton	Weddell Wynd Open Space	17	Very Poor	41.3	Poor
Tipton	Wednesbury Oak Open Space	35	Poor	25	Poor
Tipton	Wednesbury Oak Play Area	38	Poor	39.4	Poor
Wednesbury	Balls Hill Open Space	46	Poor	32.3	Poor
Wednesbury	Black Horse Open Space	33	Poor	27.1	Poor
Wednesbury	Blakedon Road Open Space	34	Poor	30.2	Poor
Wednesbury	Bradley Locks	20	Poor	39	Poor
Wednesbury	Brickhouse Lane Open Space	26	Poor	31.9	Poor
Wednesbury	Brunswick Park	61	Fair	57.6	Fair
Wednesbury	Church Hill Open Space	39	Poor	35.7	Poor
Wednesbury	Coronation Road	27	Poor	42.3	Poor
Wednesbury	Ebenezer Street Open Space	45	Poor	26	Poor

Wednsbury	Friar Park Playing Fields	34	Poor	32.7	Poor
Wednsbury	Goldicroft Playing Fields	24	Poor	32.9	Poor
Wednsbury	Hawkes Lane Open Space	33	Poor	28.3	Poor
Wednsbury	Hill Top Park	44	Poor	38.5	Poor
Wednsbury	Hydes Road Pool	44	Poor	50.8	Fair
Wednsbury	Kent Road Playing Fields	31	Poor	24.6	Poor
Wednsbury	Lakeside Open Space	27	Poor	39.8	Poor
Wednsbury	New Gas Street Open Space	27	Poor	37.9	Poor
Wednsbury	Nobury Road Open Space	24	Poor	40	Poor
Wednsbury	Norman Deeley Playing Fields	45	Poor	32	Poor
Wednsbury	Ridgeacre Branch Canal Walkthrough	29	Poor	46.9	Poor
Wednsbury	River Tame Corridor Hydes Road Playing Fields	38	Poor	41.3	Poor
Wednsbury	River Tame Corridor Johnson Road (Wednesbury)	26	Poor	47.5	Poor
Wednsbury	River Tame Corridor North (Wednesbury)	30	Poor	46.9	Poor
Wednsbury	Sandy Lane Open Space	28	Poor	43.1	Poor
Wednsbury	Tame Avenue Open Space	31	Poor	42.7	Poor
Wednsbury	Walton Road Amenity Space	24	Poor	27.5	Poor
Wednsbury	William Green Road Open Space	31	Poor	42.5	Poor
Wednsbury	Wood Green Cemetery	52	Fair	36.5	Poor
Wednsbury	Worleys Wharf Open Space	19	Very Poor	42.3	Poor
Wednsbury	Wyntor Lane Open Space	31	Poor	25.4	Poor
West Bromwich	Beaconview/Walsall Road Open Space	39	Poor	45.1	Poor
West Bromwich	Biddleston Grove Open Space	26	Poor	39.4	Poor
West Bromwich	Billhay Lane Amenity Space	8	Very Poor	42.1	Poor
West Bromwich	Brackendale Drive Playing Fields	35	Poor	21.9	Poor
West Bromwich	Brooklands Open Space	37	Poor	21.9	Poor
West Bromwich	Charlemont Farm Playing Fields	48	Poor	46.3	Poor
West Bromwich	Constance Avenue Open Space	21	Poor	36.3	Poor
West Bromwich	Dartmouth Park	75	Good	74.1	Good
West Bromwich	Delta Gardens	15	Very Poor	44	Poor
West Bromwich	Denbigh Crescent Open Space	36	Poor	24.4	Poor
West Bromwich	Firtree Drive Open Space	43	Poor	23.5	Poor
West Bromwich	Forge Mill Farm	59	Fair	66.5	Good
West Bromwich	Forge Mill Lake & Nature Reserve	66	Fair	78.4	Good

West Bromwich	Garden of Remembrance	61	Fair	37.3	Poor
West Bromwich	Gorse Farm Wood	43	Poor	37.6	Poor
West Bromwich	Greets Green Playing Field	31	Poor	36	Poor
West Bromwich	Hall Green Open Space	18	Very Poor	40.6	Poor
West Bromwich	Hamblett's Open Space	47	Poor	30.6	Poor
West Bromwich	Haypitts Woods	28	Poor	22.7	Poor
West Bromwich	Hill Farm Bridge Fields	26	Poor	42.7	Poor
West Bromwich	Hobhouse Close Play Area	30	Poor	28.3	Poor
West Bromwich	Holly Wood & Pasture	44	Poor	49.6	Poor
West Bromwich	Kenrick Park	56	Fair	45.5	Poor
West Bromwich	King George V Playing Fields	60	Fair	57.3	Fair
West Bromwich	Ladbury Grove Open Space	41	Poor	23.5	Poor
West Bromwich	Lily Street Open Space	31	Poor	28.1	Poor
West Bromwich	Lindsey Road Open Space	43	Poor	28.5	Poor
West Bromwich	Longleat Spinney	38	Poor	27.3	Poor
West Bromwich	Lyng Park	42	Poor	24.6	Poor
West Bromwich	Manor House	49	Poor	20.5	Poor
West Bromwich	Marsh Lane Open Space (Proposed play area)	37	Poor	31.9	Poor
West Bromwich	Maud Road Open Space	23	Poor	24.6	Poor
West Bromwich	Menzies Open Space	31	Poor	37.5	Poor
West Bromwich	Navigation Lane Amenity Space	35	Poor	42.1	Poor
West Bromwich	Newton Road Playing Fields	38	Poor	28.3	Poor
West Bromwich	Oak House	67	Fair	38	Poor
West Bromwich	Oakwood Park/Jesson Playing Fields	46	Poor	31.1	Poor
West Bromwich	Okehampton Drive Play Area	34	Poor	28.1	Poor
West Bromwich	Poppy Drive Open Space	34	Poor	36	Poor
West Bromwich	Ray Hall Pastoral Land	31	Poor	49.5	Poor

West Bromwich	Red House Park	66	Fair	50	Fair
West Bromwich	Redwood Road Open Space	49	Poor	29.2	Poor
West Bromwich	Ridgeacre Branch Canal SINC	17	Very Poor	20.4	Poor
West Bromwich	Sandwell Park Farm	68	Good	72.5	Good
West Bromwich	Sots Hole Wood	52	Fair	28.6	Poor
West Bromwich	Stone Cross Open Space	30	Poor	41.5	Poor
West Bromwich	Sussex Avenue Open Space	24	Poor	45.1	Poor
West Bromwich	Swan Pool/Priory Wood	71	Good	75.3	Good
West Bromwich	Tamebridge Walkthrough	23	Poor	35.8	Poor
West Bromwich	Tanhouse Avenue Amenity Space	29	Poor	29.2	Poor
West Bromwich	The Grove Open Space	40	Poor	23.8	Poor
West Bromwich	Tildasley Street Amenity Space	29	Poor	25	Poor
West Bromwich	West Bromwich Cemetery	48	Poor	37.5	Poor
West Bromwich	West Bromwich Crematorium	65	Fair	59.9	Fair
West Bromwich	West Bromwich Parkway SINC	30	Poor	38.8	Poor
West Bromwich	Whitecrest Open Space	41	Poor	40.4	Poor
West Bromwich	Wilderness Lane SLINC & SINC	18	Very Poor	40.6	Poor

Appendix J: Green Spaces Audit 2018 Household Survey Summary of Findings

Understanding the Demand

A key component of the Green Space Audit has been consultation with local communities and other providers. This has provided the opportunity to make an assessment of existing patterns of use, to explore ideas for improvement and to provide data to complement other parts of the audit such as quantity and quality assessments. In addition to comparing the findings of the latest survey with the previous surveys carried out in 2006 and 2011, the questionnaire has also generated qualitative consultation to explore key issues that arise and comparisons have been made later in this report to the results of the quantity, quality and value assessments that have been carried out.

Household Survey

Summary of findings

- 1315 valid surveys were returned, of which 74.5% were paper copies.
- A greater proportion of respondents are visiting green spaces within Sandwell Borough than in 2013, increasing from 93.4% to 96.4%, and respondents are visiting more frequently, with respondents visiting weekly or more often increasing from 51.7% to 67.9%.
- Most frequently used/visited green spaces:
 - Sandwell Valley Country Park was the most frequently visited green space, being mentioned twice as much as the second most visited (19.1% compared with 10.8% for Warley Woods). It was also the most popular for events.
- The majority of respondents travel to green spaces on foot, usually for less than 10 minutes.
- The main use of green spaces was walking, with passive uses being more popular than active.
- Overall average quality ratings for green spaces was 7.3 out of 10. Warley Woods was rated highest with a score of 8.8.
- Just under 4 in 10 (39.0%) of respondents considered that the quality of their most visited space had improved, with a slightly greater proportion (40.1%) stating that quality had stayed the same. The proportion of respondent that thought quality had improved had fallen by a third since 2013 (from 60% to 39%).

- Respondents wanted there to be more refreshment and general facilities such as toilets and for green spaces to be safer with less antisocial behaviour.
- Green spaces across Sandwell:
- The biggest barriers for all respondents were antisocial behaviour and lack of time while barriers for current non-users were not feeling safe and age/illness/disability.
- Nearly 2 in 3 (64.2%) thought there was the right quantity of parks. Over 4 in 10 considered there to be sufficient outdoor sports facilities, provision for play and allotments and community gardens. However, a greater proportion of respondents considered that there was insufficient provision for these types of green space.
- Satisfaction is fairly high for parks and green spaces, with 68.8% of respondents satisfied/very satisfied. However, satisfaction is lower for other types of provision, with all with less than half of respondents satisfied/very satisfied.
- The most important issues for respondents were standards of litter clearance and feelings of personal safety but these were rated poorly in terms of performance. The issues with the best performance were general standard of maintenance and provision of flowerbeds, trees and shrubs.
- Over half of respondents (56.9%) felt that green spaces contributed to their health and well-being and cited benefits such as a place to relax and contributing to a better local environment
- Respondents were in favour of all sources of funding except for increased charges for park facilities, which was opposed/strongly opposed by 55.6% of respondents.
- More respondents preferred fewer green spaces of higher quality than more, low quality spaces.
- Respondent profile:
- There was a larger proportion of female respondents (62.2%)
- Younger respondents were the most underrepresented age group (16-24).

- BME respondents were underrepresented compared with the population of Sandwell, particularly Asian and Asian British respondents.
- A third of respondents (33.0%) had a long term illness or disability.

Desired Improvements:

Theme	Number of mentions	% of comments	% of total respondents
Refreshment facilities (e.g. café, tearoom, prices)	100	13.1	7.6
Safety and Security (e.g. less antisocial behaviour, CCTV, no alcohol)	90	11.8	6.8
Facilities (e.g. toilet, community space)	79	10.3	6.0
Litter (e.g. bins, clearance, broken glass)	75	9.8	5.7
Children's Play Area (improvements, maintenance)	74	9.7	5.6
General Maintenance (e.g. grass cutting, paths)	69	9.0	5.2
Events and Activities	63	8.2	4.8
Car Parking/Charges	53	6.9	4.0
Seating and shelter	53	6.9	4.0
Dog control (e.g. fouling, on lead, dog areas)	51	6.7	3.9
Planting and wildlife (more flowers, trees and shrub management)	47	6.1	3.6
Onsite and security staff (e.g. park wardens, patrols)	37	4.8	2.8
Outdoor sports and exercise facilities	28	3.7	2.1
Lighting	11	1.4	0.8
Accessibility (e.g. for disabled people)	5	0.7	0.4
Information (e.g. signage)	3	0.4	0.2
Public transport	1	0.1	0.1
Total	765	-	-

Category	Too Little	About Right	Too Much	Total
Parks and green spaces	436 (35.1%)	798 (64.2%)	9 (0.7%)	1243
Outdoor Sports Facilities	499 (52.5%)	444 (46.6%)	7 (0.7%)	950
Provision for Play	512 (53.1%)	444 (46.1%)	8 (0.8%)	964
Allotments and Community Gardens	438 (57.5%)	317 (41.6%)	7 (0.9%)	762

