January 2016
Update
# Harlow Town Park Management Plan 2015 to 2020

Updated January 2016

## Document History

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<tr>
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<th>Author</th>
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<td>30/3/15</td>
<td>V1 – Final version of Management plan – Included in Green Flag application for Harlow Town Park March 2015</td>
<td>Alison Fox – Regeneration Project Manager</td>
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<tr>
<td>25/1/16</td>
<td>January 2016 update</td>
<td>Alison Fox – Regeneration Project Manager &amp; Mike Levett, Education and Volunteer Officer</td>
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Harlow Town Park - In Summary

Harlow Town Park is a well-used and popular 164 acre park situated in the Netteswell ward at the heart of Harlow District. As the park is situated within walking distance of both the town centre and the train station, the park is a natural thoroughfare between those two locations of Harlow. It is one of the largest urban parks in Britain and occupies a large area of a Green wedge close to the town centre.

From a historical perspective, Harlow Town Park is an outstanding example of post-war landscape architecture, planned and delivered over many years. The park was part of the master plan prepared for the town by Sir Frederick Gibberd in 1947, as one of several post-war “New Towns”, and it aspired to be a self-contained, balanced community set within a pleasant living and working environment. The original principal for the Town Park and its environs within the Gibberd master plan was that of “Uncommitted Space”, whereby options for the use of land were left open rather than attempting to forecast exactly how it should all be used. Gibberd chose the valley of Netteswell Cross because of the irregularity of contour and attractiveness of character to give a basic form for the Town Park. It was, and still is, original Essex countryside, comprising of a forked valley with a historic hamlet, Netteswell Cross, at its heart. A key element of importance is the planned nature of the park and its development, which was led by specific plans, a totally new facility and not based around an old established landscape as with many other public parks.

From the initial classification of uncommitted space, a more detailed master plan was developed, under Gibberds control, by Bodfan Gruffydd whilst he was a full time landscape architect within Harlow Corporation. Using the detail identified by Gruffydd, Harlow Council worked on the delivery of the park, accepting that it would also need to change in the light of future developments and local demand.

Several significant historic features were incorporated sensitively within the New Town landscape elements of the design. These include:

- folding valleys;
- stream course;
- former hedgerows;
- gravel pits.

The seamless incorporation of Netteswell Cross within the park boundaries is a unique feature of the original Town Park design and attractively combines the history of old Harlow with the “brave new world” objectives of the creation of the New Town. The park plays a significant role in the heritage of both old Harlow and Harlow New Town and is a valued resource by the local community and by those who travel into the town to use the park.

Designated in 1993, the Town Park is now covered by a Conservation Area, which embraces Spurriers House (a small Victorian residence with stables and a lodge house), Pets Corner, the Water Gardens, Specimen Gardens, and other original Town Park features.

To the north of Edinburgh Way (A414) is an extension to the formal areas of the Town Park, included in the park in 1980’s. This is part of the Harlow Marshes Local Nature Reserve, an area of natural and semi-developed marsh and woodland area along the Stort Valley Navigation which attract and provide homes for a wide variety of wildlife.
Within the park there are many areas of horticultural interest and themed gardens including well stocked shrub gardens, herbaceous borders, themed shrub beds and a large collection of trees. The main areas of the park are summarised below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Park Area</th>
<th>Description</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Showground</td>
<td>This is an open area of close mown grass including some areas that are fenced as paddocks for Pets Corner. There are scattered mature specimen oak trees, many of which mark original field boundaries. The showground provides the town with a large open space on which to hold events, including visiting fairs, circuses and as a site for the formally annual Town Show (annually held until 2009), the fireworks display and similar seasonal events.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spurriers House</td>
<td>The setting of the Victorian Spurriers House is one of the key historic elements within the Town Park. As part of the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) regeneration project, the buildings that were added around the original house including the former toilets and cafe are to be demolished and the house will be refurbished. The ground floor of the house will be leased out as a cafe and the upper floor will be two rented flats. A new Education &amp; Learning Centre will be constructed on site of the former cafe providing a base for educational work for all ages within the Town Park.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pets’ Corner</td>
<td>One of the most popular areas of the park for family visits, receiving approximately 90,000 visitors per year. The site provides an opportunity to view a wide variety of animals at close range.                                                                                             As part of the HLF regeneration project, refurbishment work will be carried out on many of the buildings, a new events barn will be built and a second entrance to the complex created. Pets’ Corner was closed between February and October 2015 for the HLF funded refurbishment works to be carried out.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bandstand</td>
<td>The bandstand was constructed in 1973. Free concerts were regularly held here between 1973 and 1981 and other events held until 1991.                                                                                                               The bandstand is currently underused as a facility. The HLF regeneration project will refurbish the bandstand building.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Walled Garden (former nursery site)</td>
<td>The walled garden was one of three plant nurseries for the town. Prior to the start of the HLF regeneration project it was in a very overgrown state and was derelict. However, work by the Town Park volunteers and others have begun to restore this area so that it will become a working walled garden to be used as a base for the park volunteers and as part of the educational package within the park.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stream Course</td>
<td>The stream is a natural feature which was incorporated into the design of the original New Town leading from the Water Garden through Spurriers Core to Edinburgh Way. It is used for educational activities such as pond activities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Area</td>
<td>Description</td>
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<td>-------------------------------------------</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sensory Garden</td>
<td>A small scented garden that opened in 1984 in the memory of Mrs Millicent Bach. This was restored by the Town Park volunteers through planting of replacement shrubs and refurbishment of the boundary fence and seating. It was reopened in June 2015.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family Area including the Adventure Playground</td>
<td>Comprising the north-east quadrant of the main areas of the park which is contained by mature trees. The area includes the now disused pitch and putt golf course, the Adventure Playground, the war memorial adjacent to the main car park and a square levelled field owned by Burnt Mill Academy Trust for recreational/educational use. The play area has recently undergone refurbishment and is a very popular attraction within the park.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paddling pool</td>
<td>Dating back to the 1960’s. This is a very popular facility that is open for a 8 to 10 week period in the summer for supervised informal use by families.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skate park</td>
<td>The state-of-the-art facility was designed by Freestyle Skateparks with significant input from the local skate boarding community and other stakeholders such as Town Park User Group. The 650sq metre park boasts moulded concrete obstacles such as a bowl, quarter pipes, banks, hips, blocks and rails.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Look-out Hill</td>
<td>The HLF regeneration project has restored the vistas across the park northwards from Look-out Hill, by removal of overgrown trees and shrubs. A new path and seating will encourage visitors to enjoy new views towards Spurriers House and beyond.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Specimen Garden</td>
<td>This was conceived as a demonstration garden for the new residents of the New Town to view different plants for use in domestic settings. A new pedestrian path will pass through this area, linking the Town Centre with park facilities such as Pets Corner and Spurriers House.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cherry Orchard</td>
<td>This area of the park was planted in the 1970’s with cherry trees. The HLF project includes removal of old, diseased and dying trees with new ones, restoring the original planting layout.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newfoundland Garden</td>
<td>Created in 1997, to mark 50 years of Harlow New Town and 400 years of the creation of Newfoundland, Canada this garden consists of a collection of planting beds on a grass bank filled with Newfoundland native trees and shrubs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Water Gardens</td>
<td>This is a popular and attractive area of the park which has three interlinking ponds crossed by a Bridge designed in the 1960’s as part of the New Town designs for the park. A sculpture of Pisces is located in the main pond.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
A major restoration of this garden was undertaken of this garden in 2015 as part of the HLF funded works.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rhododendron Dell</td>
<td>As part of the HLF regeneration project, much of the planting in this garden is being renewed with Rhododendron, Hydrangea and Azaleas and two new beds are being added.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peace Wood</td>
<td>Old Ordnance Survey maps show this area as a Gravel pit but since then the area has changed to a mixed native woodland of Ash, Oak and Hawthorn. New paths have been installed as part of the HLF project and native shrubs such as Field Maple, Dog Rose and Crab Apple have been planted in 2015 by volunteers to diversify the biodiversity of the woodland.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spurriers House Garden</td>
<td>A rose garden with a Field Maple planted and dedicated to the Queen to celebrate her Diamond Jubilee.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outdoor Gym Area</td>
<td>Newly installed in 2015, the outdoor gym provides a range of equipment over two areas that encourage exercise within the park.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stort Valley Meadows</td>
<td>Including the area south of the river near the Burnt Mill Lock area and the Moorhen Pub, the Stort Valley Meadows are part of Harlow Marshes Local Nature Reserve and access to this area has recently been improved by the creation of a new path system as well as habitat improvements such as the creation of a new pond overlooked by a bird and ditch clearance work. Harlow Conservation and Greenteam volunteers regularly undertake practical conservation on site.</td>
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Introduction

The purpose of this Management Plan is to provide a clear vision and framework for the management and maintenance of Harlow Town Park. It highlights the current activity that is taking place and identifies the short term and longer term priorities for activity in order to achieve the vision along with the resources that are required. Where possible existing resources available for delivery within the Town Park are identified and gaps in funding are highlighted.

Harlow Council is managing all its services within limited budgets which are likely to become more constrained. The Management Plan is part of the process of creating a sustainable plan for the park which clarifies the priorities and established the funding requirements and where appropriate seeks to identify sources of funding to deliver the priorities.

The plan covers the period 2015 to 2020 and has a detailed action plan for this period. The original document was written in March 2015 by Harlow Council’s Regeneration Team. It will be reviewed and updated each year prior to the submission for the Green Flag Award for the park is made.

The Vision for Harlow Town Park:

The vision for Harlow Town Park was identified as part of the HLF funding development phase.

The vision is:

“To amplify the awareness, appreciation and enjoyment of Harlow Town Park, a vast and valued, iconic “New Town” parkland, connecting its historical, social and ecological qualities; restoring and adopting its unique collection of features and styles for today’s park users”

Delivering the Vision via the Heritage Lottery Funding (HLF) regeneration project:

The vision of Harlow Town Park will be achieved through the careful consolidation of the unique and special character of each of the park areas which together form the Town Park. In 2012 Harlow Town Park was awarded Heritage Lottery Funding (HLF) and Big Lottery Funding to regenerate the project. This HLF regeneration project, (which amounts to over £2.8million) is currently underway. It will deliver an inspirational, high quality landscape that will create a sustainable legacy for future generations to enjoy. The restoration project will conserve and safeguard the historical and cultural significance embodied within the site, building on the demonstrable sense of ownership felt by generations of Town Park users.

The HLF regeneration project will provide a series of routes through the Town Park that will coherently link this unique historic mosaic, and connect it with key locations beyond its boundary. To draw visitors, external signposting and entrances will be made more legible, and vistas improved. Signage and interpretation boards will be added around the park to enable the park to be explored by a wider audience. Interpretation will exploit the social, cultural, ecological and historical resources in the park and will be accessible by all visitors and for educational purposes.

The landscaping works will restore existing planting and improve the setting of the incorporated historic buildings within the park. The works will be complemented by an appropriately unified palette of furniture throughout the park.
The capital works will refurbish key buildings within the park including Spurriers House which will enable the ground floor to be leased as a cafe, and the Bandstand. Pets Corner and its surrounding area will be redeveloped to include a new Learning Centre and Events Barn and refurbishment of the animal housing.

Note – the above was written in early 2015. The HLF funded landscaping contract was completed in August 2015 and the capital works is due to be completed in early 2016.

This Management Plan outlines the current activity that is taking place both as that which is funded through the HLF regeneration project and the activity that is taking place outside of the HLF and is part of the normal management and maintenance activity of the Town Park.

Introduction to the January 2016 update:

Updates on the progress made during 2015 have been added to this document to demonstrate the progress that has been made in achieving this Management Plan and responds to the feedback provided by the Green Flag judge on the position of the park at his inspection.

At the end of each update section progress during 2015 is rated red – not done, amber- being implemented, green- completed. During 2015 we have achieved 21 Green, 60 Amber and 15 Red.

Summary of Year- 2015.

A vast amount of activity took place in Harlow Town Park during 2015. Both the Landscaping and Capital Works contracts of the Heritage Lottery Funded project were implemented during the year meaning that the park saw extensive changes which have resulted in an improved space for people to enjoy. The Landscaping contract has provided new planting areas and new paths across the park and has restored the Water Garden area of the park as a key focal point for the park. The Capital Works contract has seen improvements being made to Pets’ Corner (including the erection of a new Events Barn and a Learning Centre which will provide much needed space to enhance the education programme), the Bandstand and Spurriers House (which will enable the ground floor to be used as a cafe).

The improvements achieved through the above contracts have been supported by a series of projects undertaken by Harlow College students (either as course projects or week long work experience programmes). The students have:

a) Constructed bat boxes that have been erected across the park
b) Painted the inside of the bandstand
c) Laid paving and constructed a series of five raised beds in the Walled Garden

In addition the Education and Volunteer Officer has developed a strong programme of volunteering and activities within the park. There are now over a hundred people registered as Town Park volunteers whose hard work is supporting the maintenance and upkeep of the park.

The Education and Volunteer Officer has also led monthly guided walks and fortnightly health walks which have help the public appreciate the various features and habitats within the park.

In December, the following email was received by the Education and Volunteer Officer which reflects much of the positive feedback that has been received about the work within the park:
I’m just e-mailing to say how wonderful the park is looking. I walk through regularly with the dogs and think it is terrific. I have been unable to make the walks on Saturday mornings recently, so thought I would just write to let you know. It is a wonderful facility for Harlow, and seems to be very well used and appreciated. The money seems to have been well spent, and I can’t wait to see it in the summer. The new paths, the seating areas, and especially the water gardens, are looking marvellous, and will continue to improve as the grasses grow. That is not to mention the new signs, seating and the rubbish bins.

Well done to all who have been part of the planning and execution, it is much appreciated.’

The Structure of the plan

This plan has been divided into key headings that summarise the various aspects of the management of the Town Park that creates a quality open space. The headings of the chapters relate to the headings that the Green Flag award is assessed against. This has been chosen for ease of reference.

Each of the main chapters are divided into three main sections followed by a section that summarises the progress that has been made during 2015 in relation to the aims for the chapter:

- **Where we are now?** – This summaries the current position and activity that is taking place within the park relating to the heading.
- **Where we want to get to?** – This refers to policies and plans that outline the vision and aims for the Town Park. One of the main document referred to in this section is the Town Park Conservation Plan. This was written in 2011 as part of the development phase of the HLF funding application. Other documents are also referred to which are documents that outline’s Harlow Council policies and priorities relevant to the chapter.
- **How we will get there?** An Action Plan outlining key actions and the teams responsible for delivering them and the expected timeframe for delivery.
- **January 2016 update** – A summary of activity that has taken place during 2015 that helps demonstrate the progress being made. At the end of this section the Action Plan in the “How will we get there?” section is updated for reference.
A Welcoming Place

Where are we now? (March 2015)

Entrance and access

Entrances, particularly from the town centre, are not very welcoming or easily visible and do not provide orientation or other information. However, work is currently underway to address this through the HLF regeneration project. The following is due to be implemented by Autumn 2015:

- Entrance signs to be designed and erected
- A range of fingerposts signs are to be erected within the park directing people to the key features across the park
- improved paths layouts
- improvements to path surfaces to make them more even
- a new footpath within the showground that follows the current desire line used by commuters walking to the train station

Signs to the park

The Town Park has no one dominant entrance that is used to access it, rather there are many entrances and exits. This makes it difficult to signpost to the park from outside the park. However, there is also poor signage from key locations from within the town, including the train station and town centre. Signs are needed for those accessing the park on foot, by bike and by car and need a car park. Signs are needed to direct people to alternative car parks around the park when the School Lane car park is full.

Signage within the park

As part of the HLF regeneration project a design guide and palette for street furniture of the park. This reflects the heritage of the park. This will be used for all future street furniture that is put in the park to create a coherent feel across the park.

As part of the HLF regeneration project a series of fingerposts will be erected across the park. In addition, the Council is adding a few additional signs in order to help direct people from the Greyhound carpark to the toilets near Pets Corner. This is to help address the issue of the Greyhound toilets being closed and will now not be refurbished under the HLF project due to budget constraints.

Interpretation Boards

Currently the park lacks interpretation points to aid people's appreciation of the park. There are existing interpretation boards all of which are of a standard format, giving some background to the park and a map. These are located near car parks and other entrance points.

As part of the HLF regeneration project a series of new interpretation boards are being introduced at entrances and at key features around the park. These will highlight the conservation and heritage features of the park.

Notice Boards

The Education and Volunteer Officer and Town Park volunteers have erected several notice boards across the park to aid communication to park users about the progress of the HLF
regeneration project and the events that are taking place in the park such as the guided walks and events taking place at the showground, the bandstand and Pets Corner. The number of people who book events such as the guided walks as a result of seeing them advertised via these notice boards is evidence of how valuable this form of communication is proving to be.

**Park Furniture**

Additional benches are being added to the park as part of the HLF regeneration project.

**Public access to the park**

**Vehicular access**

Provision was made for car parking in the original planning of the park which met the car ownership requirements of the era. As a result the park has good access by road. Few could have foreseen the growth of car ownership that has been experienced. The park's success as a public amenity has ensured it continues to experience a good reputation as a positive place for recreational activity. This has given rise to a dramatic increase in visitor numbers; many of whom wish to access the park via cars.

Within the park itself, there are car parks at the following locations:

- School Lane car park
- Spurriers House
- A disable carpark at the top of the showground via fifth / Velizy Avenue.

But parking does not meet the demand experienced in periods of high demand.

**Public Transport**

**By foot**

Harlow Town Park is within easy walking distance from key public transport hubs within the town. It is:

- a three minute walk from Harlow Town Train Station
- a short walk from Harlow Bus Station located within the town centre

It is also easy walking distance from residential areas that surround the park.

However, accessing the park from the train station and town centre involves crossing two very busy main roads. The underpass is not obvious. The park would benefit from additional safe pedestrian crossings from the station and town centre.

The park would benefit from additional directional signage from the surrounding areas of the park to increase accessibility.

**By Bus**

The Town Park is within walking distance from Harlow Bus Station located with the town centre.

The nearest bus stops to the Town Park are located at First Avenue and Fifth Avenue.
All services operate regularly throughout the week. Additional information on the bus services can be found at the bus operating companies websites¹.

**By train**

Harlow Town Park is a three minute walk from Harlow Town station. Harlow Town is on the London Liverpool Street to Cambridge and Stansted line.

The line is currently operated by Abellio Greater Anglia. Details regarding the timetable can be found via the train company’s website.

**By cycle**

New cycle racks are being added to the park as part of the HLF regeneration project.

With its location to the “Sustrans” route 1 national cycle route and Harlow’s extensive cycle ways Harlow Town Park is easily accessible for bike users.

¹ [www.arrivabus.co.uk](http://www.arrivabus.co.uk) and [www.firstgroup.com](http://www.firstgroup.com)
Where do we want to get to?

The following is taken from the Conservation Management Plan of the Town Park and relates to **Access and Circulation**.

"Local, regional and national transport strategies promote the use of sustainable transport wherever possible in place of the car. Opportunities exist to improve known and new links with public transport facilities and routes outside of the park.

Entrances, particularly those from the town centre, are not very welcoming or easily visible and do not provide orientation or other information. Addressing this should be a key priority for future improvement plans.

Opportunities exist to improve surfacing and parking layout to improve access for pedestrians and promote more sustainable forms of transport e.g. cycling and public transport.

The original layout of paths, planting areas and entrances should be restored as far as this is compatible with current and future needs for access, changed patterns of use and function and future demands. However, access around parts of the park is difficult for some user-groups due to undulating topography. Opportunities are present to improve access, but prominent interventions may be detrimental to the character of the park and its historic integrity and therefore should be influenced directly by particular access issues. Ad hoc initiatives to improve access should not be allowed.

Directional signage within the park is minimal at present. Good signage can provide clear information on the nature and extent of the park, its heritage features, facilities and access information. The signage strategy should also include information on adjoining roads, through routes and links to long distance routes such as the Stort Valley Way footpath.

These measures will promote the role the park can play in providing complementary activities and facilities to those enjoyed by users of the town centre, Stort Navigation, and as alternative to adjacent attractions."

The following policies relate the access and circulation:

A1 – To provide improved **directional signage** to and within the park and to other destinations and facilities beyond the boundary of the park.

A2 – Improve and promote **links with surrounding public open space** and countryside and with all forms of public transport.

A3 – Raise the profile of the **main entrances** to the park, especially those from the town centre

A4 – Introduce a more legible hierarchy of **routes through the park** and an improved sense of orientation

A5 – Improve **visibility, accessibility and lighting levels along primary routes** within the park. Aim to achieve DDA compliance where necessary and deliverable, and where this would not adversely affect the historic fabric / heritage value of the site.
### How will we get there? (Action Plan 2015 to 2020)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action Nu</th>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Lead</th>
<th>Timeframe</th>
<th>Estimated cost and budget</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Access and circulation</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Add a series of fingerposts signs across the park to aid direction to key facilities around the park including toilets and key attractions such as Pet's Corner</td>
<td>Harlow Council – Regeneration Team</td>
<td>Autumn 2015</td>
<td>HLF funding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Improve the signage to the park from key locations within the town</td>
<td>Harlow Council – Regeneration Team</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Add a series of interpretation boards across the park</td>
<td>Harlow Council – Regeneration Team</td>
<td>Autumn 2015</td>
<td>HLF funding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Public access to the park</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Signs are needed to direct people to alternative car parks around the park when the School Lane car park is full.</td>
<td>Harlow Council</td>
<td>by 2020</td>
<td>No funding identified as yet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Install &quot;no vehicular access&quot; signs on entrances not leading to car parks.</td>
<td>Harlow Council</td>
<td>by 2020</td>
<td>No funding identified as yet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Install additional car parking facilities and extend overflow car parking for School Lane</td>
<td>Harlow Council</td>
<td>by 2020</td>
<td>No funding identified as yet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Review the access of the park from the key bubs of the town to create safe and signed pedestrian crossings.</td>
<td>Harlow Council</td>
<td>by 2020</td>
<td>No funding identified as yet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Install addition cycle racks within the car park as part of the HLF regeneration project.</td>
<td>Harlow Council – Regeneration Team</td>
<td>Autumn 2015</td>
<td>HLF funding</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
A Welcoming Place – January 2016 update

January 2016 - Where are we now?

Entrance and access:

The following progress has been made during 2015 through the Heritage Lottery Funded project:

- 12 new fingerpost signposts have been erected across the park
- 4 Welcome signs have been erected to the Showground (Edinburgh Way & Fifth Avenue), School Lane & Tanyard Place car park entrances. These outline the history of the park and highlight park facilities to visit.

- New tarmac paths have been created as follows:
  - From the park entrance opposite Sainsbury’s, and through the Specimen Garden giving direct access to the park from the Town Centre. This has proved to be very popular and is well used by park users.
  - To Lookout Hill from existing paths by the paddling pool which leads to good views over the Water Garden and the rest of the park and towards the Hertfordshire Hills. This has followed the original design idea of allowing access to this feature.
  - Through the showground from the Edinburgh Way entrance to the Fifth Avenue entrance providing new surfaced path from the Town centre to Harlow railway station and to Pets’ Corner through the new paddocks. This has proved to be popular with commuters as it provides a surfaced path from what was an existing desire line.

- Path surfaces have been improved in the Water Garden and Spurriers Core. A tar and chip surface has been laid over a tarmac surface improving the setting of the Water Garden.
- Path improvements – in addition to the above work carried out through the HLF funding, the Council’s Property and Facilities section has funded replacing worn out sections of path surfaces with a new tarmac surface along the Park Lane to Pets’ Corner toilets route, (a well-used path by commuters and visitors to Pets’ Corner).
**Signs to the park:**

New fingerpost signs have been installed within the park that provide directions to both the Town Centre and the Train Station. This helps to increase the link between the park and these key locations within the town.

Negotiations between Harlow Council’s Regeneration Team and Essex County Council’s (ECC) Highways department are taking place to investigate the possibility of ECC funding and installing new signage from areas such as the Train Station and Town Centre. This will provide visitors to Harlow with clear directions as to how to reach the Town Park and key locations within the town. It is hoped that this will be secured in 2016.

**Interpretation boards**

A series of interpretation boards have been installed at the following locations. The content is being finalised and will be installed in early 2016.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Content</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Specimen Gardens</td>
<td>History as a demonstration garden for the New Town Park</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Wildlife and tree species</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Water Garden bridge</td>
<td>History – watercress beds to 1960’s landscaped garden; Pisces Sculpture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Wildlife- residential and summer visitors (birds)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peace Wood</td>
<td>History of wood</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Town Park volunteers work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Wildlife- trees, moths and snowdrops</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lookout Hill</td>
<td>Part of the original design for the New Town Park</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Paddling pool</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Rhododendron Dell</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Wildlife- Bats, Swallows and Swifts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bandstand</td>
<td>History of the bands that have played at the facility</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pets’ Corner</td>
<td>History of the facility</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Key animals &amp; wildlife, Getting involved (volunteering)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spurriers House</td>
<td>History of the previous owners</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Wildlife- Bats</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Notice boards**

Additional wooden notice boards have been erected next to Spurriers House and Walled Garden and in the Specimen Garden. These were erected by volunteers and provide regular updates on the project and park events.

Welcome boards have also been erected at the following entrances:

- Edinburgh Way entrance sign to Show Grounds;
- Fifth Avenue entrance sign to Specimen Gardens;
- Park Lane Entrance to Greyhound shelter
- Tanyard Place car park by paddling pool.
Park furniture

26 benches have been installed across the park as part of the HLF improvement works.

Volunteers have refurbished benches due for relocation to Pets Corner and around the rest of the park. They have also refurbished existing benches in landscaped gardens adjacent to Spurriers House.

18 litter bins have been installed across the park as part of the HLF improvement works. Volunteers have repainted bins in the landscaped area adjacent to Spurriers House.

Public access to the park

A rack of 5 cycle stands has been installed at Spurriers House.

Negotiations are continuing with Essex County Council about further cycling provision across the park.

How will we get there? January 2016 update

red – not done, amber- being implemented, green- completed.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No</th>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Lead</th>
<th>Timeframe</th>
<th>Estimated Cost</th>
<th>January 2016 progress</th>
<th>Status</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Access and circulation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Add a series of fingerposts signs across the park to aid direction</td>
<td>HDC</td>
<td>Autumn 2015</td>
<td>HLF Funding</td>
<td>Installed December 2015</td>
<td>Green</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>to key facilities around the park including toilets and key</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>attractions such as Pets' Corner</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Improve the signage to the park from key locations within the town</td>
<td>ECC</td>
<td>Jan 2017</td>
<td>ECC</td>
<td>Negotiations with ECC ongoing</td>
<td>Amber</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Add a series of interpretation boards across the park</td>
<td>HDC</td>
<td>Autumn 2015</td>
<td>HLF Funding</td>
<td>Boards have been installed but the content</td>
<td>Amber</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>of the interpretation boards are to be</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>finalised.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Public access to the park</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Signs are needed to direct people to alternative car parks around</td>
<td>HDC</td>
<td>by 2020</td>
<td>No funding</td>
<td>Not done</td>
<td>Red</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>the School Lane car park when the School Lane car park is full.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>identified</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Install &quot;no vehicular&quot;</td>
<td>HDC</td>
<td>by 2020</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Not done</td>
<td>Red</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Access signs on entrances not leading to car parks.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Funding identified as yet</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>--------------------------</td>
<td>---</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Install additional car parking facilities and extend overflow car parking for School Lane</td>
<td>HDC</td>
<td>by 2020</td>
<td>No funding identified as yet</td>
<td>Not done</td>
<td>Red</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Review the access of the park from the key hubs of the town to create safe and signed pedestrian crossings.</td>
<td>HDC, ECC</td>
<td>by 2020</td>
<td>No funding identified as yet</td>
<td>Negotiations with ECC Highways have begun</td>
<td>Amber</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Install additional cycle racks within the car park as part of the HLF regeneration project.</td>
<td>HDC, ECC</td>
<td>Autumn 2015</td>
<td>HLF Funding</td>
<td>5 new cycle racks have installed at Spurriers House. ECC have agreed to fund and locate additional cycle racks across the park as part of a wider town wide programme. Still to be installed</td>
<td>Amber</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Healthy, safe and secure

Where are we now? (March 2015)

Promoting healthy activities through the park:

The park provides plenty of opportunities to for people to engage in healthy exercise, both informally and through organised group activities. The park is used for a wide range of informal healthy activities within the park including taking gentle walks, pram walks, training runs, dog walking, informal games of football and other ball games as well as the activities undertaken at the Skate Park.

Outlined below are some of the healthy activities that are organised within Harlow Town Park.

New Outdoor Gym:

A new outdoor gym facility has been provided in the Town Park on the land next to the cycle track near the top of the old pitch and putt. The gym will incorporate a number of different workstations aimed at giving residents a full workout whilst enjoying the beauty of Harlow Town Park. This facility has been funded by a £44,200 grant from the Harlow Health Centre Trust which is funding both the new equipment and a programme of activities. The activities will be delivered via a range of partners and it is intended to target some of the sessions to women to address the under representation of women that participate in organised sport.

A recent Facebook post (March 2015) posted by Harlow Council promoting the new outdoor gym reached 22,000 people within 24 hours. This illustrates the demand for this type of facility in the local area.

Parkrun

In 2014 a new weekly Parkrun began in Harlow Town Park that is organised by an independent group of volunteers working under the umbrella of the national charity “parkrun”. The Park Run has average of 100 runners participating each week and has had over 150 participants at some events.

Healthy walks

Currently, the Education and Volunteer Office leads monthly walks with a theme in the park. Themes have included a focus on the trees and wildlife that can be found in the park and the history of the park (such as the remembrance walk). They provide a great opportunity for local people to stretch their legs walking in the park whilst informally learning about the park and its features.

The number of participants that attended each of the monthly themed guided walks are listed below:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date of walk</th>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Numbers attending</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5/10/14</td>
<td>Trees of the Town Park</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11/11/14</td>
<td>Remembrance walk</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6/12/14</td>
<td>Tree-mendous Walk</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10/1/15</td>
<td>Winter wonder</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27/1/15</td>
<td>Holocaust memorial Day Peace Walk (and tree planting)</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14/2/15</td>
<td>Birds of the park</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14/3/15</td>
<td>Stort Valley walk</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It is hoped that these monthly walks can be extended in 2015 to include a series of healthy walks which would include an element of brisk walking and gentle warm up exercises, which may attract a wider audience.

**Cycle Routes:**

Running through the park area series of cycle routes that are linked to the National Cycle Routes

**Orientation Trails:**

Chigwell and Epping Orientation Club have laid out an orientation trail through Harlow Town Park.

**Boot camp and Tai Chi exercises:**

"Essex Boot Camp" run exercise sessions with a personal trainer at least three times per week in the Town Park.

Tai Chi exercises are delivered at the Bandstand and on Spurriers forecourt each Saturday.

**Harlow Urban Games**

Every year since 2011, the Urban Games event takes place in the Town Park Skate Park area, attracting between 600 and 1,000 young people. The event combines BMX, skating, scooter and mountain bike events along with taster sports sessions and activities promoting health and wellbeing.

**Angling licences:**

The Stort Valley Angling Society license the fishing activity that takes place along the Stort Valley Navigation.

**Supporting people's health and wellbeing through volunteering activity in the park:**

An extensive programme of practical volunteering opportunities takes place in the park. These include:

- Getting involved in practical gardening and maintenance tasks on sites such as the Sensory Garden and Specimen Garden
- Caring for the animals at Pets Corner.

These volunteering activities provide both positive physical and mental health benefits for those participating. The mental health benefits arise from working as a team, being involved in a community focused activity and working in the outdoors. Whereas the physical health benefits
result from undertake physically demanding work such as digging and other practical gardening tasks or mucking out the animals.

**Safe and secure**

The safety of all park users is of highest importance to all the stakeholders involved in the management of the park. Kier Harlow Operational Team undertake Risk Assessments of the park and have Health and Safety policies covering all their operations in the Town Park.

**Inspection of play equipment**

All play equipment is inspected annually. The last inspection of the play equipment in the Town Park took place in April 2014. The issues raised by the inspection are incorporated into a capital works programme to be undertaken over the following year. As a result of the 2014 survey, the Town Park Adventure Playground has a new zip wire and safer surfaces.

Within the Town Park there are several facilities that require regular inspections to insure that they are safe and well maintained. The table below outlines the inspection regime for the various facilities across the park.

**Inspection regime table:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Park facility</th>
<th>Responsible body</th>
<th>Inspection regime</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Play equipment</td>
<td>Kier Harlow Operational Team</td>
<td>All playgrounds visually inspected twice a week inspection sheet completed. A monthly inspection is carried out to check all equipment is working and safe. Annual independent inspection to ensure all equipment is compliant with appropriate safety standards. Issues raised by the public are encourage to be reported to Contact Harlow. Enquiries regarding the playground are dealt with within 5 working days. Reported broken glass will be removed within 1 working day. Dangerous equipment will be inspected and made safe within 1 working day.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Park Infrastructure / street furniture (including bins, benches, fences, footpaths and walls)</td>
<td>Harlow Council – Street Scene</td>
<td>Residents are encouraged to report incidents of vandalism and damage via Contact Harlow. Tickets are then raised with Kier Harlow to remedy. Kier Harlow are responsible for ensuring that all street furniture is clean and serviceable.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graffiti removal</td>
<td>Harlow Council – Street Scene</td>
<td>Residents are encouraged to report graffiti to Contact Harlow. Graffiti should be removed within 1 working day.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pets’ Corner</td>
<td>Pets’ Corner Manager</td>
<td>Manager / staff undertakes daily inspections. Order urgent repairs. Planned maintenance schedules developed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Risk</td>
<td>Keir Operational</td>
<td>Kier Harlow regularly review their Health and</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
assessments &
health and safety
policies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>team</th>
<th>Safety and Risk Assessments.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pets’ Corner</td>
<td>Pets’ Corner undertakes its own risk Assessments and has its own Health and Safety Policies.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Organisers of events run at the park are responsible for undertaking their own Risk Assessments.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Dog fouling**

All street litter and dog waste bins are now dual use bins because dog waste is no longer classified as hazardous waste. Therefore dog waste can be put into any of the Council bins.

Pet's Corner run dog training classes which help encourage responsible dog ownership in the park. The Friends of Pet's Corner also run an annual Dog Show which celebrates responsible dog ownership.

**Graffiti removal**

Residents are encouraged to report graffiti to Contact Harlow. Kier Harlow Ltd will remove the graffiti from Harlow Council owned land/property within 14 working hours of receiving the report. Obscene and racist graffiti will be removed more quickly.

**Lack of drinking water available**

It has been identified that the park lacks access to drinking water currently. This is to be addressed through the HLF regeneration project which will provide additional toilet facilities near Pets Corner and the new cafe that will be operated in the ground floor of Spurriers House.

**Helping park users feel safe**

The Community Safety Team regularly patrol through the park and when aware of issues are able to increase their patrols in the area.

Currently there are staff and Volunteers from Pet's Corner and Keir Harlow staff that operate within the Town Park. The Education and Volunteer Officer regularly visits site and once at week leads volunteer tasks on site. He wears a badged uniform to help him be identified by the public.

Once the HLF regeneration capital works is complete, the Education and Volunteer Officer will be based at the Learning Centre. this will help provide an additional staff presence within the park and help people feel safer.

**HLF regeneration project helping create a safer park**

The work undertaken through the HLF regeneration project will help to create a safer park. The landscaping contract is renewing and restoring handrails and knee rails. New benches are being installed and the Town Park volunteers are restoring existing benches that are in poor condition. New paths are being created through the park that allow easier access and circulation and the park. Sight lines are being improved through clearance of overgrown vegetation areas.

**Ensuring the safety of staff working in the park**

There is a number of Harlow Council and Kier Harlow staff that work out of the park either on a short term basis or being based within the park. This includes the Pet's Corner staff and volunteers, the Education and Volunteer Officer who will be moving from a base at the Civic Centre to operating out of the new Learning Centre once it is opened in September 2015. Risk
Assessments and Health and Safety Policies need to be reviewed regularly to ensure that practices are safe.

**Where do we want to get to?**

Harlow Council's Corporate Plan for 2014/15 to 2016/17² includes several strands that relate to ensuring the Town Park is a Healthy, safe and secure place, including:

A clean and green environment
- Harlow to be kept clean and litter free with well-maintained green spaces.
- Harlow to be a great place to live with people feeling safe and secure and where people from different backgrounds get on well.

Regeneration and a thriving economy
- High quality cultural and sporting events and attractions for residents and visitors to experience, with a range of places for visitors to stay.

Wellbeing and social inclusion
- Local people having good health and wellbeing with the Council playing a leading role in tackling the underlying root causes of poor health and the issues that affect wellbeing.

Harlow Council's service standards for street scene services such as graffiti removal and street furniture are outlined on Harlow Council's website.³

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³ [http://www.harlow.gov.uk/street-cleaning](http://www.harlow.gov.uk/street-cleaning)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Action Nu</strong></th>
<th><strong>Action</strong></th>
<th><strong>Lead</strong></th>
<th><strong>Timeframe</strong></th>
<th><strong>Estimated cost and budget</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Promoting healthy activities through the park</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Install the <strong>new outdoor gym</strong> and start delivering a programme of healthy activities for local people including a series of events targeting women who are under-represented in physical activities.</td>
<td>Harlow Council – Community Wellbeing Team and Harlow Health Centre Trust</td>
<td></td>
<td>Existing grant of £44,200 awarded by Harlow Health Centre Trust</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Continue to deliver a programme of <strong>monthly walks</strong> around the park that in future could include both themed informal learning and healthy walks.</td>
<td>Education and Volunteer Officer</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td>Within the HLF Activity Plan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Continue to <strong>promote the range of healthy activities</strong> taking place within the park through the new Town Park quarterly events and activities leaflet</td>
<td>Harlow Council – Comms Team and Education and Volunteer Officer</td>
<td>On a quarterly basis</td>
<td>HLF Activity Plan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Continue to <strong>promote a range of volunteering opportunities</strong> in the Town Park that support health and wellbeing benefits for local people including through the quarterly events and activities leaflet and the Town Park Volunteering leaflet.</td>
<td>Education and Volunteering Officer and Pets Corner</td>
<td>On going</td>
<td>HLF Activity Plan and Pets Corner existing budgets</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>A Safe and Secure park</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Review and update as appropriate Health and Safety policies relating to all staff operating within the park including Kier Harlow staff, Pet’s Corner staff and the Education and Volunteer Officer who will be located at the Learning Centre once it has opened.</td>
<td>Harlow Council – Regeneration Team, Community wellbeing Team and Kier Harlow</td>
<td>Spring 2016</td>
<td>Existing budgets</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Monitor the effectiveness of the current inspection and street scene arrangements to ensure that they continue to work effectively</td>
<td>Harlow Council – Street Scene Team</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td>Existing budgets</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Provide access to drinking water through the HLF regeneration project via new toilets provision and the cafe at Spurriers House.</td>
<td>Harlow Council – Regeneration Team,</td>
<td>Autumn 2015</td>
<td>HLF funding</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Healthy, safe and secure – January 2016 update

January 2016 - Where are we now?

Implementing the HLF project Activity Plan:

During 2015 the Town Park Education and Volunteer Officer (EVO) has implemented a varied programme of activities that support the theme of “Healthy, Safe and secure”. The EVO is working to deliver the HLF Activity Plan, which was approved in 2014 and covers the 5 year period to 2019. It is funded by £123,500 from the HLF project and contains many activities that will ensure the park provides a healthy, safe and secure environment for all visitors. The Activity Plan includes the following aims:

1. To provide better access and better facilities so that more people will visit the park and be inspired by their experiences there;
2. To broaden the range of visitors and users and encourage all to discover the facilities of the park, its story & heritage value;
3. To work with other organisations to deliver a range of events and activities that attract new audiences and help sustain the park for the future;
4. To work with other agencies to improve volunteer capacity and encourage a broader range of people to participate;
5. To improve the skills level and job satisfaction of all employees, contractors and volunteers;
6. To deliver high quality formal and community learning activities.

The EVO works in partnership with many partners including the Council’s Sports and Leisure Policy and Development Officer, Pets’ Corner staff and other park stakeholders.

A new quarterly events and activities leaflet has been produced for the Town Park that promotes the park as a healthy, safe and secure place and highlights the wide variety of activities taking place within the park.

Highlights of 2015 that supported the park being a healthy, safe and secure place included the following:

New outdoor gym

The gym is designed to help improve local resident’s health and well-being and provides more free facilities for all to enjoy in Harlow Town Park. The gym is located over 2 locations with the site located on land opposite the top of the old pitch and putt course focusing on equipment designed to improve core strength. Equipment in the core strength area installed in 2014 includes a set of triple pull-up bars, a sit-up bench, a step box multi-gym, a chest press/pull down, a swingalong, a set of hurdles, a set of parallel bars and a balance beam.

The second site installed in 2015 located close to the Adventure Playground includes equipment designed to provide a cardiovascular workout such as a recumbent bicycle, hand bike stem, exercise bicycle and a strength wheel.
In November 2015, the Town Park ParkRun celebrated its first year of operation. The Council issued the following press release on the subject which illustrates its popularity and contribution to fitness levels in Harlow:

**Extract of Press release celebrating Harlow Park’s ParkRun’s first birthday**

‘A running craze which has taken Harlow by storm and helped over 1,000 people stay fit celebrates its first birthday on Saturday 14 November 2015.

Harlow parkrun – a free, timed 5km run which takes place in Harlow Town Park every Saturday morning – has been a real hit in Harlow. In less than a year over 1,300 individuals have participated and almost 6,000 total runs have been reached. The event currently averages 108 runners per week and this figure is rising. It is hoped that the event on Harlow parkrun’s first birthday will smash its record attendance of 154 which has been reached twice before.

The event, which was initially launched with funding from Harlow Health Centres Trust and Active Essex, with support from Harlow Council and Active Harlow, is now totally managed by a dedicated team of volunteers. There is a core team including an Event Director …… and Run Directors who are supported by approximately 20 volunteers every Saturday morning’.

It is proposed to establish a Junior ParkRun in 2016 on Sunday mornings at the Town Park- this will be a weekly timed 2km run for children between 4 and 14 years old.

**Healthy Walks**

The monthly guided walks have continued to be popular, with over 154 attendees during 2015 averaging 12 people per walk. Each walk, led by the EVO, lasts for 1.5 hours, and enable the participants to enjoy a healthy activity in a social and secure environment.

Some of the comments received from those attending are as follows:

- ‘It was a very interesting, informative morning - well done and thank you’.
- ‘Just to say I really enjoyed the Tree Walk. I've always loved trees and found it really interesting.’
- ‘The walk yesterday was really enjoyable’
- ‘I really enjoyed the walk to the museum last weekend. It is surprising how often I have walked that way without knowing of any of the history. Thank you.’
- ‘Thank you very much for today’s walk which was very refreshing!’

A fortnightly weekday Healthy Walks programme has been established since August 2015 lead by the EVO with support from the Council's Leisure Apprentice. Numbers have been low, despite contacting the GP referral service and contacts within the NHS. Total numbers attending were 27 (to 11.12.15), with an average of 3-4 people per walk.

Comments received include:

- ‘Just to say I have really enjoyed the walks thanks to you.’

It has been agreed to rebrand the walks as ‘Social Strollers’. These will be held at the same day and time from January 2016 and will be remarked to see if the new name will attract in new attendees.
Cycle routes

A cycle event held in Park in August 2015 attracted over 100 participants.

The EVO had a meeting with the volunteer director at Hub and Spoke Harlow Cycle Club. Hub and Spoke was established by Essex County Council to promote cycling by encouraging people to start riding via led rides and various courses. The EVO is awaiting responses on proposals for Hub and Spoke to run a number of family friendly cycle events at the Town Park during 2016.

Orienteering Trail

Chigwell & Epping Forest Orienteering Club have produced a revised Orienteering map for the Town Park with funding from the HLF Activity Plan. A review of the existing map showed it to be out of date, and consultation has also taken place with Harlow Outdoor Centre on the route and markers.

Boot Camp & Tai Chi

Boot Camp activities details are advertised in the quarterly Events and Activities programme for the Town Park and continue on site.

Informal contact has been made with representatives of the Harlow Chines Community Association about providing a Tai Chi programme in the park, and a response is awaited.

Supporting people’s health & wellbeing through volunteering activity in the park:

Volunteering opportunities can offer increased opportunities for people’s health and wellbeing. This can increase participant’s health, reduces social exclusion and loneliness, which is enhanced by social events such as BBQ’s and Christmas socials. Social interaction is enhanced by team working and mental health improved by working outdoors.

The Town Park can offer a variety of volunteering opportunities as follows:

- Daily: Pets’ Corner volunteers
- Weekly & monthly: Town Park volunteers
- One off: Corporate/ School/ Special Interest group volunteers.

2015 was a very successful year for volunteering at the Park. Over 100 volunteers registered as volunteers at various tasks with 1,099 hours/ 75 volunteer days completed. All volunteer tasks were under the supervision of the EVO or other qualified supervisors, (who were employed when the EVO was not available due to leave or other commitments). Highlights of the volunteer year included:

Town Park volunteers (Thursday group):

This group is based at the Walled Garden. Tasks undertaken in 2015 included:

- Restoration of the Sensory Garden leading to reopening of site by Deputy leader of the Council in June 2015. This involved healthy activities such as pruning of shrubs and erection of a metal arch on site and making the area cleaner and safer by sweeping paths and improving sight lines by clearing back vegetation.
- Restoration of the Circular, Rose and Rockery Gardens adjacent to Spurriers House and in the Specimen Garden which involved the refurbishment of benches and bins improving the appearance of this area;
• Planting of 50 metres of Beech and Hawthorn hedge along Park Lane to mark National Tree Week involving healthy activities such as digging and planting and removal of ivy from hedges.

Town Park volunteers (weekend group).

This group meets once a month on a Saturday afternoon working from the Walled Garden. Tasks undertaken included:

• Restoration of the Newfoundland Bridge – painting skills
• Reopening of path and improvements to raised bed adjacent to Greyhound car park- improving safety and security of this part of the site
• Walled Garden- clearance of vegetation and preparation of new raised beds- in preparation for possible use by those with mental health and other issues.

Education volunteering:

Education provision is an equally important part of the EVO responsibilities, and this has been developed during 2015.

• A volunteer assisted the EVO to run pond dipping activities at Pets Corner events.
• Two volunteers from the Essex Bat Group assisted with bat box making, erecting 21 bat boxes across the park and lead two very popular Bat Walks during 2015. The bat boxes had been constructed by Harlow College Engineering students in their workshops.

Corporate volunteering:

Office staff from the Pearson headquarters located adjacent to the park undertook the following tasks:

• Maintenance of the Millennium Clock and its adjacent seating. Restoring this neglected area of the park has opened up this area ensuring it is safe and secure for use.
• Stort Valley Meadows- willow clearance from ditches improving the habitat for wildlife and making the area more welcoming to visitors.

The following comment was received from the Pearson’s contact:

‘Most of the staff attending live locally so were keen to do something in the area’.

Other volunteer groups:

During 2015 the following volunteer projects have taken place helping to ensure that the park is well maintained and secure. Most of the work involved was physically hard work helping to improve the participants’ fitness.

• National Citizens Service: 12 volunteers aged from 15 to 17 completed 3 tasks painting bridges, benches and clearing vegetation from paths during the Summer holidays which encouraged greater participation from this group in park activities. Comment received was: ‘It’s been a pleasure volunteering my time’
• Harlow College students work experience - internal decoration of bandstand, laying paving constructing raised beds in the Walled Garden. (See case study)
• Heart 4 Harlow- 13 Passmore Academy students and their teachers repainted the Newfoundland Garden bridge.
• Over 50 volunteers from the Harlow Greenteam, Hertfordshire midweek group, Town Park volunteers and Epping Forest Country Care raked up cuttings from the orchid meadow and removed Himalayan Balsam from the Stort Valley Meadows.
• 6 Harlow Conservation Volunteers undertook ditch clearance on the Stort Valley Meadows and Woodland Management in Peace Wood.

Pets’ Corner volunteers:

It was a difficult year to encourage volunteers on site at Pets’ Corner as for most of the year the facility was closed due to the refurbishment of the site. However volunteers continued to work on site alongside Pets’ Corner staff, undertaking a variety of daily operation tasks such as mucking out the stables, animal care and small scale site maintenance.

Town Park & Pets Corner volunteers are recruited from enquiries of the public, Harlow Volunteer Centre and Employability. This volunteering opportunity has been further promoted through the production of a Town Park Volunteering Leaflet which was funded through then HLF Activity Plan.

Supporting volunteers:

Training opportunity has been provided for the volunteers associated with the Town Park. Some of the Town Park volunteers have attended one day courses relating to gardening and horticulture at Writtle College.

Twice a year social events are organised by the EVO as a ‘thank you’ and appreciation of their support and hard work over the previous six months.
Case Study- Harlow College Students Work Experience

Harlow Council was approached by Harlow College to look into work experience placements for their decorating and construction students. It was agreed that students would undertake the interior redecoration of the bandstand as well as laying paving and the construction of raised beds in the Walled Garden. The decorating work would complement the exterior improvements to the bandstand undertaken under the HLF project, whilst the construction work in the Walled Garden would assist with the development of the site for future local community horticultural uses. Funding for tools and materials for both was achieved through the HLF Activity Plan.

Over 80 construction students undertook a week’s work experience on these projects over a three week period in October 2015.

Town Park Users Group (TPUG):

This group, of local residents and stakeholders, meets quarterly to assist Town Park staff with advice and comments on the Town Park. In 2015, four meetings were held with an average attendance of 10 people. The group contributed their time towards park management issues including assisted with the revisions to the site map which has been included in the quarterly events and activities leaflet and reviewing site maintenance.

Safe & secure:

The Town Park is generally considered to be a safe and secure place to visit although there have been areas of the park in the past that have been less welcoming due to overgrown vegetation or poor signage and site furniture leading to a uncared for image. These points have been addressed by the HLF Capital scheme and work completed by the Town Park and other volunteers on site.

Survey feedback:

In August 2015 a Visitor Survey, (‘Town Park- have Your Say’) was completed. Comments received during the survey about the park relating to Health, Safe and Secure included:

- “Have always loved it from when I first moved here 16yrs ago. Since having kids we venture up more often and I attend parkrun every week which is fabulous. All in all, the park is lovely and a fab way to escape an ever growing town.”
"The town park has always been an absolutely wonderful place for all residents of the town. The free and beautiful resource should be treasured always."

The main reasons for visiting the park were as follows, with those activities relating to Health shown in bold, are as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Walking</td>
<td>69.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pets’ Corner</td>
<td>58.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enjoying the wildlife/flowers/trees</td>
<td>44.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bandstand events</td>
<td>43.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Relaxing</strong></td>
<td><strong>40.4%</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meeting friends</td>
<td>36.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Play</strong></td>
<td><strong>33.0%</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family outing</td>
<td>35.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Showground events</td>
<td>31.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Dog Walking</strong></td>
<td><strong>25.5%</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Keeping fit / improving health</strong></td>
<td><strong>25.5%</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stort Valley Meadows</td>
<td>12.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Guided Walks</strong></td>
<td><strong>5.3%</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Refreshments/snacks/meals</td>
<td>10.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Culture</td>
<td>8.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (please specify)</td>
<td>19.1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Inspection of play equipment:**

The Adventure Playground was inspected weekly. An example of the inspection sheet is provided as Appendix 5.

The Skate Park and the Adventure Playground are inspected annually. The inspection sheets are provided as Appendix 6 & 7.

Improvements to the Adventure Playground in 2015 have included the installation of the Trojan Ant Hill Climber (See photo) and the Kompan Super Nova.

**Helping park users feel safe:**

Regular patrolling by the Community Safety team, EVO and others has helped to make the park feel safer, and regular inspections of play equipment and other site furniture occur (see other chapters of the Management Plan for further details regarding this).

The EVO has reported any unsafe issues that he has noticed during his regular walkabouts of the park ensuring that repairs are ordered quickly. Regular walkabouts have taken place between staff from Harlow Regeneration Team, Landscape and Biodiversity Team and Kier as part of the handover of the HLF landscaping contract handover.

Regular quarterly walkabout inspections of the park are being introduced in 2016 with representatives from Kier, Regeneration Team Landscapes and Biodiversity Team and Property And Facilities Team.
HLF regeneration project helping create a safer park:

The HLF Capital works have also contributed to a safer park in the following ways:

- Restoring handrails and knee rails including low level railings to Park Lane boundary and around Water Garden. These have increased the visibility of the street furniture and improved access around the park.
- Clearance of vegetation between Walled Garden and Pets Corner leading to improved sight lines and safety in this area.
- Replacement of poor standard benches with new equipment leading to safer seating.
- Better signage around the park leading to the increased feeling of security by visitors.
- New steps to Edinburgh Way improving access to the park from this entrance.
- New paths through Specimen Garden and Showground allowing for easier and safer access for visitors to the park (see photo below).

In addition to this an internal Capital bid has been submitted for additional lighting in the Showground area of the Town Park.

Ensuring the safety of staff:

Pets’ Corner’s health and safety procedures and policies were reviewed and updated prior to the site being reopening in October 2016 to take into account the changes that the refurbishment introduced to their working practices.

Once the HLF works has been completed, the EVO and Pets’ Corner Manager will be located in the new offices at Spurriers House. Risk Assessments to ensure that good and safe working practices are adopted will be undertaken.

Event Risk Assessments:

Relevant Risk Assessments for the following events have contributed to a safer and secure site:

- **Annual Dog Show** organised by the Friends of Pets Corner in early September held in the paddock area of Pets Corner and attended by over 100 people.
- **Pets’ Corner Nativity Play** held in mid-December 2015, around the new Events Barn and attended by over 500 people.
- **Firework display** in November 2015 attended by over 500 people;
- **Linkfest** and other events held at the bandstand and regular **Fairs** in the Showground.
### How do we get there? January 2016 update

**red** – not done, **amber**- being implemented, **green**- completed.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Lead</th>
<th>Timeframe</th>
<th>Estimated Cost</th>
<th>January 2016 progress</th>
<th>Status</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Promoting healthy activities through the park.</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9a</td>
<td>Install <strong>new outdoor gym</strong></td>
<td>HDC</td>
<td>2015</td>
<td>Existing grant of £44,200 awarded by Harlow Health Centre Trust</td>
<td>Two phases of Outdoor gym installed</td>
<td><strong>Green</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9b</td>
<td>Delivery of healthy activities for local people including series of events targeting women under represented in physical activities</td>
<td>HDC</td>
<td>Healthy activities Summer 2015 onwards</td>
<td>Healthy walks programme established Summer 2015; looking at Buggy walks and other activities for women once ‘This Girl Can’ Active Harlow programme survey completed (launched 2015)</td>
<td><strong>Amber</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9c</td>
<td>New action 2106 – Deliver a series of cycling events in and around the park</td>
<td>HDC + Hub &amp; Spoke</td>
<td>Spring 2017</td>
<td>Possibly Hub &amp; spoke</td>
<td>Discussions taking place to establish more cycling events in the parks</td>
<td><strong>Amber</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9d</td>
<td>New action 2016 – Create new orienteering trail through the park</td>
<td>HDC &amp; CHIG</td>
<td>Spring 2017</td>
<td>HLF Activity Plan</td>
<td>Chigwell &amp; Epping Forest Orienteering Club have produced a revised Orienteering map for the Town Park with funding from the HLF Activity Plan. Events to launch this are planned for 2016.</td>
<td><strong>Amber</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Continue delivery of <strong>monthly walks programme</strong></td>
<td>HDC</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td>Within the HLF Activity Plan</td>
<td>EVO leads Monthly themed guided walks and fortnightly health walks.</td>
<td><strong>Green</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Promote healthy activities through Town Park quarterly <strong>events and activities leaflet</strong></td>
<td>HDC</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td>Within the HLF Activity Plan</td>
<td>4 leaflets produced in 2015</td>
<td><strong>Green</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Continue promoting range of <strong>volunteering</strong> opportunities supporting health and wellbeing through quarterly events and activities leaflet and Volunteering leaflet.</td>
<td>HDC</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td>Within the HLF Activity Plan</td>
<td>Leaflet produced and volunteering actively promoted. Strong programme of volunteering taking place throughout the park.</td>
<td><strong>Green</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### A safe and secure park.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Task Description</th>
<th>Responsible Party</th>
<th>Deadline/Details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Review and update <strong>H&amp;S policies</strong> within park as appropriate, (including relating to all staff operating within park)</td>
<td>HDC &amp; Kier</td>
<td>Spring 2016, HDC existing budgets, Pets’ Corner H&amp;S policies updated October 2015 as part of preparation to reopen to the public after the refurbishment. Risk assessments undertaken for all events held in the park.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Monitor the effectiveness of the current <strong>inspection and street scene arrangements</strong> to ensure that they continue to work effectively.</td>
<td>HDC</td>
<td>Ongoing, Existing budgets through review of the transfer from Kier, EVO reports any unsafe issues that he notices. Quarterly inspection walkabouts have been introduced between Harlow Council staff and Kier to check for any unsafe issues.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Provide access to <strong>drinking water</strong> through the HLF regeneration project via new toilets provision and the cafe at Spurriers House.</td>
<td>HDC</td>
<td>Autumn 2015, HLF funding, Being implemented through provision of toilets- available once cafe opened (anticipated Easter 2016)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Well maintained and clean

Where are we now? (March 2015)

Grounds Maintenance arrangements:

Joint Venture with Kier Harlow to deliver the Grounds Maintenance within the Town Park

Harlow Council entered into a Joint Venture arrangement with Kier Group Plc in 2007 to revitalise and transform the way its Building Maintenance and Environmental Services are delivered. The arrangement with Kier Harlow is due to continue until January 2017. Kier Harlow are responsible for delivering the street scene, grounds maintenance and pest control arrangements for the Town Park to the service specifications agreed within the contract.

The Grounds Maintenance Service Specification outlines the service levels required to be delivered by Kier Harlow and is included as Appendix 1.

A "Frequently Asked Questions" publication outlining the service standards that the public can expect from the Kier grounds maintenance contract is available on the Harlow Council website at the link below.

http://www.harlow.gov.uk/landscapes

The park is managed in line with the Council's policies on recycling and pesticide use.

The management regime of the conservation areas of the park are in accordance with the specification for other ornamental areas within Harlow Town Park. Whilst intending to attract wildlife the maintenance is envisaged to be that of all usual gardens.

Kier operate to an annual work programme which includes the timing of scheduled grounds maintenance for the Town Park. In addition to the standard specification for grounds maintenance an increased level of service has been agreed for the Town Park. This means that the grass is cut on a more regular basis that in other open space and grass cuttings are removed from site.

There is also the equivalent of a full time gardener that is employed by Kier Harlow to undertake additional work within the Town Park. This allows for additional weeding and for work to maintain the beds annual pruning of beds. However, this resource is not always available for the park.

Future arrangements for the grounds maintenance of Harlow Town Park:

In March 2015 a number of measures to improve the maintenance of the town's green open spaces this year were announced. The measures (covering the whole town) are:

• Four additional ride-on grass cutting machines and operatives for six months adding to the existing team.

• A four-person strimming and weed spraying team to tackle obstacles and areas difficult to cut by machines.

• An additional month of grass cutting resources to respond to the early or late grass growing season.
• An additional hard surface weed spray to increase town-wide spraying from two occasions per year to three to help stop weeds establishing themselves alongside highways, verges and footpaths.

These four key measures have been made possible by making efficiency savings as part of the Kier Harlow Ltd contract. These savings from delivered efficiencies have resulted in a reinvestment to provide additional resources for grass cutting, strimming and weed spraying this year.

The Kier Joint Venture contract is in place until January 2017. Harlow Council has begun the procurement exercise to replace this contract.

**Town Park maintenance budget**

As part of the HLF regeneration project funding there is an allowance for the management and maintenance of the Town Park. This funding is in place for five years. A decision needs to be made on how this funding should be best used. This decision will need to be linked into the new arrangements that are made for grounds maintenance provision in Harlow as a result of the end of the Kier Harlow Joint Venture. A further issue that needs to be linked into this is the potential for creating a ring-fenced budget for the Town Park that allows the incomes from all sources within the Town Park (such as car parking fees, rent for cafe and flats and other licensing fees etc) to be utilised as a Town Park budget. A feasibility study would need to be undertaken to ensure that this option would enable the park to operate on a financially sustainable footing in the long term. However, given all the above factors, the future management and maintenance of Harlow Town Park needs to be agreed. Potential grounds maintenance options that need to be explored include:

- Introducing a variation to the Kier Harlow contract to provide an enhanced service
- Procuring additional external resources
- Employing a gardener for the Town Park directly

Whatever the future arrangements that are agreed for the Town Park after January 2017 (when the existing Joint Venture Agreement with Kier Harlow comes to an end), care must be taken to ensure that suitable grounds maintenance arrangements for the Town Park to ensure that the park is well maintained.

**Town Park volunteers supplementing the Kier Harlow service:**

The Harlow Town Park volunteer groups supplement the grounds maintenance work undertaken by Kier by undertaking additional work to maintain the park and as a result help increase the standards achieved in the park. Care is taken to ensure that work undertaken by the volunteers is additional to the Kier contract. This means that it is ensured that the volunteers work in different areas of the park to that of any planned ground maintenance work that is due to take place.

The Kier contract states that the rose beds within the Town Park are maintained on an annual basis. This will be enhanced by the Town Park volunteers who will do additional work on the rose beds such as deadheading and pruning.

**HLF regeneration project landscaping contract:**

Budget constraints resulting in limited resources available for the maintenance of the park have resulted in the park becoming neglected and overgrown over the past few years. This will be partly addressed by the landscaping improvements that are being implemented as a part of the HLF
regeneration project. The HLF landscape contract is undertaking extensive landscape maintenance to the several key areas of the park restoring many of the park’s features.

However, the HLF regeneration project has also faced budget constraints. As a result several areas of the park that it was hoped to be restored through the HLF regeneration project have had to be removed from the project. The majority of the areas that lie outside the HLF regeneration project are on the outlying areas of the park.

The Landscaping contract of the HLF regeneration project includes a one year maintenance obligation tie in for the work undertaken within the contract.

Litter and Waste Management:

Litter Bins:

Litter bins are serviced under the Kier partnership contract by the Harlow Operational Service Team.

Litter within the Park is removed as required, with litter bins being emptied a minimum of three times per week. All litter collected is disposed of via a licensed contractor.

The litter bins are washed out and disinfected once annually between the months of October and March. The contract states that any damage that is caused to the bins or bin liners which renders the bin to be non-functional results in the bin being repaired or replaced.

Eleven additional bins will be added to the park as part of the HLF project located across the park. The diagram below illustrates the design of the bins that are to be located around the park. The addition of the lid to the bins ensures that the litter is restrained and reduces the risk of vandalism.

Poop Scoop bins:

As a poop scoop area Harlow Town Park has been equipped with dog faeces waste bins. As a hazardous waste the poop scoop bins are emptied by a contractor who is able to meet the appropriate requirements with regard to the handling and disposal of this type of waste. Dog poop bins are serviced once a week or twice a week where it is necessary to ensure sufficient capacity.

As part of a Town-wide policy dog waste is co-mingled.
Any litter is to be removed at each maintenance visit and disposed of appropriately.

Within the Town Park there are no litter recycling facilities within the Town Park. Harlow Council does not currently separate out recyclables from litter collected in public areas.

**Horticultural waste;**

Green waste arising from the horticultural maintenance undertaken by the Kier Partnership contract within the Town Park is transported just over 1.5 miles away to a specialist licensed green waste recycling facility where it is shredded, composted and screened. Upon completion the resulting material is a valuable organic product capable of being used as a mulch or soil conditioner.

Leaf litter is collected on an annual basis from the Town Park.

During 2014/15 the Landscape Contract of the HLF regeneration project is being undertaken. The majority of the horticultural waste that is created as a result of this contract is being chipped and put down as path covering either in Peace Wood or as tree protection.

Any horticultural waste that is created by the Town Park volunteers is composted. The volunteers have undertaken a large amount of ivy removal as part of their tasks. Ivy is not an ideal composting material if it is the dominating material to be composted. At present the ivy cuttings are in a composting heap. However, over the coming year suitable sustainable solutions to the disposal of the ivy will be investigated.

The farm yard manure generated from the animals kept at Pets Corner is collected and taken weekly to allotments across the town on a weekly basis.

**Buildings Management and maintenance:**

**Park buildings and Structures**

Harlow Council's Property and Facilities team are responsible for the maintenance and upkeep of the main buildings within the Town Park. The buildings are inspected on an ad hoc basis and site staff report any maintenance issues spotted to the Property and Facilities team, who inspect and order appropriate repairs.

**Spurriers House**

Spurriers House is owned by Harlow Council. It has previously been used to provide office accommodation for community organisations (the final tenant being MIND) and two commercially let flats on the first floor. As part of the HLF regeneration project the building will be renovated to provide a cafe facility within the town park and two commercially let flats. The 1960’s extension to the building will be demolished as part of the HLF capital works. This will restore the buildings heritage features returning it to its original 1850’s state.

Once the capital works are completed, the ground floor will be operated as a cafe under a lease arrangement with Harlow Council. A tender process is to take place to choose a cafe operator. It is intended that this will be under a repair and maintenance lease.
Additional work will be required to ensure that flats are brought up to a suitable standard once the HLF capital works has been completed as they have not been included within the HLF regeneration project.

**Pets’ Corner**

Pets’ Corner comprises of a series of buildings that provide housing for the various animals that reside at the facility. This includes the previous stable buildings of Spurriers House and several buildings that were built in the 1960s. Harlow Council is responsible for the maintenance and upkeep of the buildings at Pets’ Corner. The HLF is restoring and refurbishing many of the Pets Corner’s buildings including the stables and shop area.

The HLF project is also introducing several new features within Pets’ Corner including a second entrance to help increase the through flow of visitors into the park and a new events barn that will enable Pets’ Corner staff to run demonstrations under cover.

**Bandstand**

Harlow Council owns the Bandstand within the park and has a lease arrangement with the GPCA who run events from it.

The HLF regeneration project is restoring the bandstand through repairs to the roof, the lighting and the concrete frontage.

**Greyhound Toilets**

It was hoped that the Greyhound toilets would be able to be refurbished and become a visitor centre as part of the HLF funded regeneration project. But due to the budget constraints this has not been possible. Currently, the Greyhound toilets are boarded up and not used.

Over the coming year Harlow Council will investigate the feasibility of leasing out the building to a potentially a community group that can operate the buildings as a community resource. However, if this is not realistic this building will be demolished rather than leave this unsightly unused building in the park.
Where do we want to go to?

The Conservation Management Plan for the Town Park includes the following section on the Function and Character of the park:

“Harlow Town Park makes a significant contribution to the identity and character of Harlow and is a major asset to the town. Pets Corner, Spurriers House, specimen trees and lawns, streams and water features, Look-out Hill, and informal walks punctuated by viewpoints, themed gardens and planting, natural marsh grassland nature reserves are the numerous and defining features of the park, which all make an important contribution to its use and function. Site character varies throughout the park, reflecting the historic and periodic development of the Town Park. The individual character of these themed areas should be maintained and enhanced to increase community use and enjoyment in the park.

Restoration, renewal and repair should be based on historic precedent, adapted to current and future needs and aspirations. Historic character and style should refer to the park’s original Masterplan’s key themes and concepts using compatible materials, plants and techniques. Conversely, features incompatible with the period in character, scale and style (such as the cafe and toilet block extensions to Spuriers House) should be removed or phased out according to a committed long term strategy. The impact of new uses, facilities and other modern introductions, present and planned, should be minimised and should always be subservient to the historic design.”

The following policies relate to this:

F1 – To restore and strengthen the park’s identity as a whole
F2 – To reinforce the local variations in character in each of the “themed” gardens
F3 – To introduce required new facilities without compromising the character, quality and special features of the park
F4- To interpret the site’s social, landscape and park heritage

The Conservation Management Plan for the Town Park includes the following section on the Built Heritage and Infrastructure of the park:

“The reinstatement of appropriate settings for the key buildings within the park – Spurriers House and built features such as the Bandstand and toilet block within Nettleswell Cross, Water Gardens and ponds, should be a key conservation principle as they make, or have the potential to make an important contribution to the park.

Historic hard landscaping features should be repaired and restored, and where appropriate, replaced, according to historic precedent. Special regard should be paid to historic construction techniques and styles revealed on the site, such as the cobbled edges of the Water Garden, a technique repeated throughout the park. White railings which also occur throughout should be restored or replaced, and any new additions should adopt their design.

The water features throughout the park are a key contribution to the ecological and aesthetic value of the park.
Existing site furniture has been added over a period of time without reference to any long-term plan, resulting in inconsistency in design and quality. It will be important to the future quality of the park to rationalise park furniture throughout the site. Materials, designs and the colour palette used for site infrastructure, lighting and furniture should as far as possible be compatible historically. Careful consideration should also be made to the location of new site furniture and should not just be replaced. Many benches, once positioned to enjoy views of the park now look out towards completely blocked views or are overshadowed by mature trees.”

The following policies relate to this:

B1 – Repair and protect the existing original structures, features, walls, ponds, rockwork and built heritage structures using materials and methods appropriate for the original structures and which retain their significance.

B2 – Reinstate lost features where their loss has led to the erosion of quality and significance. Either replace with a replica or a reinterpretation of the original feature.

B3 – High quality, accessible interpretation of the park’s built heritage should be provided.

B4 – Install an appropriate and accessible co-ordinated suite of furniture and lighting structures to protect and enhance the park’s heritage and character and to provide a quality visitor experience.

B5 – To use variable colours and levels of lighting to highlight special features within the park such as ornamental planting, specimen trees or architectural features.
### How will we get there? (Action Plan 2015 to 2020)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action number</th>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Lead</th>
<th>Timeframe</th>
<th>Estimated cost and budget</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Grounds Maintenance arrangements</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Monitor carefully the Partnership Agreement with Kier Harlow over the</td>
<td>Harlow – Council – Landscapes and Biodiversity Team</td>
<td>Ongoing to January 2017</td>
<td>Within existing budgets</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>next 18 months until the contract comes to an end to ensure that there</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>continues to be a good standard of grounds maintenance delivered within</td>
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<td></td>
<td>the Town Park.</td>
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<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Monitor the impact of the reinvestment arrangements for the Kier Harlow</td>
<td>Harlow – Council – Landscapes and Biodiversity Team</td>
<td>Ongoing to January 2017</td>
<td>Reinvestment budget</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Joint Venture arrangements that are being implemented as part of the</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>budget constraints in April 2015</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Explore the options for the longer term grounds maintenance arrangements</td>
<td>Harlow Council – Regeneration Team</td>
<td>Summer 2015</td>
<td>Potential to create a Town Park</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>for Harlow Town Park noting that:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>sustainable income that is ring fenced</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- The Kier Harlow Joint Venture Agreement comes to an end in January</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2017.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Decisions need to be made about the management and maintenance</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>funding that is available via the HLF funding.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Options to be explored include:</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- introducing a variation to the Kier Harlow contract to provide an</td>
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<td></td>
<td>enhanced service</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- procuring additional external resources</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- employing a gardener for the Town Park directly</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Ensure that whatever future arrangements that are put in place to</td>
<td>Harlow Council</td>
<td>Ongoing New arrangements being</td>
<td>Harlow Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>replace the existing Kier Harlow Joint Venture Arrangements that they</td>
<td></td>
<td>introduced January 2017</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>provide appropriate ground maintenance standards for the Town Park.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Litter and waste management</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>Litter bins are to be serviced as part of the Kier Harlow contract:</td>
<td>Kier</td>
<td>ongoing until the end of the</td>
<td>Existing budgets</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- litter bins serviced 3 x per week</td>
<td></td>
<td>Kier contract (January 17)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Dog poop bins serviced 1 to 2 times per week</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>Green waste from the Town Park recycled via Harlow contract</td>
<td>Kier</td>
<td>ongoing until the end of the</td>
<td>Existing budgets</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Kier contract (January 17)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>Monitor the HLF regeneration project landscaping contractors to ensure</td>
<td>HLF contractor</td>
<td>on-going until the end of the</td>
<td>HLF funding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>the</td>
<td></td>
<td>HLF contract</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Continued appropriate approach to green waste, such as using chippings created from tree disposal are being used as path surfaces</td>
<td>HLF Landscaping contract (Autumn 2015)</td>
<td></td>
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<td>---</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>Add 11 additional litter bins with lids to the park as part of the HLF regeneration project</td>
<td>HLF contractor</td>
<td>Autumn 2015</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>Investigate suitable ivy disposal solutions for ivy cuttings produced as part of the Town Park Volunteers’ ivy removal tasks</td>
<td>Education and Volunteer Officer</td>
<td>Spring 2016</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Buildings Management and maintenance:**

|   | As part of the capital works of the HLF project, Spurriers House will be renovated to restore the heritage features and preserves the fabric of the building. | Harlow Council – Regen Team | Autumn 2015 |
| 25 | Clarify the Cafe lease repair arrangements and future maintenance arrangements | Harlow Council – Property and Facilities | 2015 onwards |
| 26 | Undertake the repairs to the two flat at Spurriers House repair arrangements and future maintenance arrangements | Harlow Council – Property and Facilities | 2015 onwards |
| 27 | Clarify the lease and repair and future maintenance arrangements for the two flats in Spurriers House | Harlow Council – Property and Facilities | 2015 onwards |
| 28 | Investigate the possibility of leasing out the Greyhound toilets to a community group as a community resource. If this is not feasible arrange for the building to be demolished. | Harlow Council – Property and Facilities and Regeneration Team | Spring 2016 |

Existing HLF budgets c

Potential income stream from a community group to operate the building. Demolition costs from Property and Facilities budgets
Well maintained & clean – January 2016 update

January 2016 - Where are we now?

Grounds maintenance arrangements:

The current contract for the provision of services by Kier Harlow Ltd expires on 31 January 2017. During 2015 discussions continued with Kier over the Joint Venture arrangements for the Town Park. In December 2015 it was announced:

‘Front-line services including, but not limited to, housing repairs and maintenance, repairs to Council buildings, street cleaning, grass cutting and pest control, which have been operated by Kier Harlow Ltd, will be transferred to a Local Authority Trading Company (LATC) wholly owned and set up by the Council.

The changes will be funded by existing approved budgets at no extra cost to Council Taxpayers, Council tenants and Council leaseholders.’

Town Park maintenance budget:

Blakedown will maintain areas landscaped under the HLF contract for one year following completion of the works. This will expire in August 2016. It has already been agreed that Kier will be responsible for all grass cutting in the park from April 1 2016.

SEETEC project explored:

It had been hoped that SEETEC (an organisation that supporting unemployed people to gain skills to get into sustainable employment) would be able to deliver a project that would support the grounds maintenance of the Town Park through the use of a team of unemployed people.

Detailed discussions with SEETEC were undertaken during the year and a Service Level Agreement was due to be signed. However by late November 2015, due to national spending cuts, it was clear that this option would not happen.

Case Study: SEETEC.

Founded in 1984, Seetec is one of the UK’s largest and most experienced providers of Government funded Welfare to Work and skills training programmes.

The Town Park was approached by the Placements Manager (Community Work Placement) to discuss the viability of a scheme based at the Town Park. Seetec have worked on similar sites in Essex and Bedfordshire. A project was suggested whereby SEETEC would undertake a large amount of grounds maintenance work at the Town Park through a team of 15 unemployed people who would be lead by an experienced supervisor employed by SEETEC. The Council saw an opportunity for areas outside the HLF capital works at the Park to have a substantial, sustainable grounds maintenance uplift which could not be a achieved through volunteer input alone.

A Service Level Agreement was drawn up and was due to be signed and SEETEC were in the process of recruiting a Supervisor, when unfortunately, the future of the scheme became uncertain following the government’s Autumn budget review. By late November 2015 the project stalled. We have made it clear that we would be open to revisiting this project in the future if funding became available.
Other options are currently being explored to increase the maintenance of the park to ensure the work undertaken by the HLF project is protected. Part of the HLF regeneration project funding allowed for an increased maintenance budget for the Town Park. A revenue bid for additional £26k per year for Town Park maintenance will be submitted which would fund an additional gardener or increased maintenance. In addition to this bid, the option of ring fencing the income achieved through the facilities within the park, such as the rent for the new cafe and car parking will be explored during 2016.

Town park volunteers supplementing the Kier Harlow service:

Town Park volunteers enhanced the Kier Harlow work in the Park by activities such as weeding, dead heading and pruning roses in the Rose and Sensory Garden.

Town Park volunteers pruning roses and shrubs in the Rose Garden next to Spurriers House

HLF regeneration project landscaping contract:

Landscaping improvements completed under the HLF project are:

- Restoration of the Water Garden- tree and shrub removal, desilting of the ponds, repair of the cobble slopes, repainting of the Pisces sculpture and replanting with herbaceous and other shrub species.

  Desilting of middle pond in the Water Garden March 2015

- Restoration of the Walled garden and Pets Corner boundaries including tree, shrub and ivy removal, replanting with herbaceous species.

  Ivy removal off Pets’ Corner boundary wall (by volunteers), ready for replanting of herbaceous shrub border by contractors.

- Specimen Garden - removal of dead and dying trees, creation of a new path and Winter Garden and new tree planting.

  New Winter Garden in the Specimen Garden with Silver Birch and Dogwood planting, Autumn 2015.

- Cherry Orchard - removal of dead and diseased trees and replanting with Cherry tree species.
Rhododendron dell - tree and shrub removal and replacement with rhododendrons, azaleas and hydrangeas. Creation of two new beds;

Lookout mound- creation of paved area with benches and bins.

Extensive winter and summer bulb planting across the park.

Peace Wood- upgrade of path system, new handrails for steps.

Other ground maintenance initiatives:

Other landscaping improvements have included:

- **Walled Garden Community Horticultural Project** – Harlow College construction students laid paving and constructed raised beds in the Walled Garden as part of their work experience in October 2015. This work adds to the new Polytunnel that was erected by Writtle College to support the Land Based Studies course undertaken at Pets’ Corner. The aim is to establish this area as a community horticultural project which members of the local community can use the area to get involved in a variety of horticultural projects. During 2015 visits were made to other community horticultural schemes such as the Growing Concern project (for people with Learning Disabilities) in Kent to build an understanding about such schemes can be successful. During 2016 the community horticultural project within the Walled Garden will be developed and links will be developed with local mental health and learning disabilities groups to explore how they can utilise the raised beds.

Raised beds and paving constructed by Harlow College students, partially filled with woodchip and sterilised soil infill by the volunteers as preparation for the raised beds to start being used in 2016.
• **Restoring part of the wall of the Walled Garden**
  - Part of the wall had been severely damaged by tree roots and Kier undertook the replacement of this section by matching bricks with the original 1950’s ones.

  ![Matching section of wall built by Kier.](image)

• Path from Park Lane to Pets’ Corner- sections of this path have been repaired by Whitbread with funding from the Council’s Properties and Facilities.

**Litter & Waste Management:**

**Litter bins:**

• 18 additional bins were installed across the park as part of the HLF project.
• 4 new bins have been installed along the new path across the Showground by the Council’s Landscaping department
• 3 animal shaped bins have been installed at Pets’ Corner funded by the Friends of Pets’ Corner.

**Horticultural waste:**

The HLF created by the landscaping works was used in Peace Wood for the surfacing of existing paths, enhancing the woodland setting and allowing greater access to the Wood.

![New wood chipped paths, Peace Wood](image)

Ivy removed by volunteers from across the park was stacked in the Walled Garden as it could not be composed. This is currently being addressed by converting it for woodchips for resurfacing paths across the park and for use in the Walled Garden raised beds.

**Buildings management and maintenance:**

**Park buildings and structures:**

The Council’s Property and Facilities Team are responsible for the management and maintenance of the following buildings within the park:

• Spurriers House
• Pets’ Corner
• Bandstand
• Pets’ Corner toilets
• Former Greyhound toilets
• Walled Garden walls.
In addition to this the paddling Pool and pump house is maintained by the Council’s Community Safety Team.

The lease terms associated with the new Spurriers House café and refurbished flats will impose internal repair and maintenance obligations on the cafe operator and tenants of the flats. The Councils Property & Facilities Team will monitor compliance with these tenant obligations, reserving the right to step in if necessary. Responsibility for the repair and maintenance of the building structure and exterior will remain with the Council.

The Council’s existing revenue budget will fund repairs and maintenance of the Town Park buildings. As part of the Council long term maintenance strategy a full stock condition survey is being completed to ascertain future capital and revenue funding requirements. The results of this survey will be fed into the Council Asset Management Plan and be used for financial planning purposes.

The Council have also implemented a quarterly Town Park inspection regime in order to identify buildings and landscaping defects. The results of these inspections will be carefully reviewed and where necessary repair works will be planned and commissioned.

Under the current arrangements Council Officers report repair and maintenance issues through to Kier Harlow,(the Councils maintenance partner). Kier Harlow address any such issues, drafting in specialist surveyors or contractors where necessary. Kier Harlow also run an emergency response service so that the Councils Town Park Tenants and members of the public can report out of hours emergency repairs for immediate attention.

**Spurriers House:**

As part of the HLF project, the ground floor of the House is being converted to a park café, and during 2015 this work continued with major works such as rewiring, replacement of facias, gutters and other external features in keeping with its setting within a Conservation Area. The 1960’s extensions were demolished restoring the House to its 1860’s appearance. The building work is behind schedule due to contractual issues but it is hoped that these will resolved early 2016.

A tender was issued for the running of the café in 2015, which resulted in a preferred bidder being appointed, subject to legal issues being resolved. The preferred bidder has a track record in operating similar park facilities in Hertfordshire. The aim is have the facility operating from late Spring 2016.

The first floor of Spurriers is to be let as two commercially let flats, possibly managed by the café operator on behalf of Harlow Council. Additional work is required to bring these flats up to a suitable standard, which has been delayed due to HLF building works.
The single floor extension at the rear of Spurriers will be used as office accommodation for the Pets’ Corner Manager and Education and Volunteer Officer. Once building works are completed fitting out of the offices will commence.

**Learning Centre:**

A new Learning Centre for Pets Corner and the Town Park was constructed on the site of the former 1960’s café which has now been demolished. This is built from a sustainable straw bale construction and will be heated by a wood pellet boiler. It will be used by the EVO and Pets’ Corner staff for educational use, backed up with the production of an Education pack for the Park, completed by Groundwork Hertfordshire in 2015.

Progress on this has been delayed by delays to HLF building works. Once the building is available it will be fitted out and maintenance requirements will be agreed with the Council’s Property and Facilities Team. Additional funding has been secured for fitting out both the Learning Centre and staff offices at Spurriers House from the Council’s Capital budget.

**Pets’ Corner:**

During 2015 major redevelopment occurred at Pets’ Corner (via the HLF project), resulting in the closure of the facility from February to October. The old stables were restored, with one being used as a new Shop for Pets Corner, and a new Events Barn constructed, allowing staff to run demonstrations such as sheep shearing undercover.

A main and new second entrance to Pets’ Corner was created to help with the through flow of visitors, opening up the rear of Spurriers House and reconnecting the stables with the House. New hand washing facilities have been installed at each of the new entrances ensuring that visitors are positively encouraged to wash their hands at the end of their visit.
A key aspect of the work at Pets’ Corner was the creation of new drainage channels around the site that ensure that the site meets appropriate zoo licence standards in its daily cleaning operations. A new water pump was also installed that enable the Pets’ Corner staff to hose the floor surfaces with appropriate water pressure.

**Bandstand**

Major restoration of this facility was undertaken as part of the HLF works, with the repairs to the roof, new lighting and the concrete apron at the front renewed, along with the creation of new decking. The decking covers the stream that passes the bandstand preventing the public from falling in whilst enjoying the events at the bandstand.

![Bandstand decking nearing completion, January 2016](image)

Harlow College students began the major redecoration of the interior of the bandstand as part of their work experience.

![Bandstand renovation works underway, Summer 2015](image)

**Pets’ Corner toilets:**

The toilets are cleaned daily under contract by Kier Harlow.

**Former Greyhound toilets:**

These facilities have been closed and due to budget constraints could not be renovated under the HLF project. Options are being considered for enabling the buildings to be used for an alternative community use. In January 2016 expressions of interest were sought from groups who wanted to refurbish the facility to bring this building back into use. However, if the option of leasing the building to a community group is not possible the building will be demolished to prevent it continuing to be an eye soar within the park.

**Changing Places Disabled access toilets:**

The Changing Places Consortium launched its campaign in 2006 on behalf of the 1/4 of a million people who cannot use standard accessible toilets. This includes people with profound and multiple learning disabilities, motor neurone disease, multiple sclerosis, cerebral palsy, as well as older people. To use the toilet in safety and comfort, many people need to be able to access a Changing Places toilet which has enough space and the right equipment, including a height adjustable changing bench and a hoist.
It has been realised for some time that the existing toilet facilities within the park do not provide appropriate facilities for disabled use. In 2015 funding of £85,000 was secured from Essex County Council for an all-inclusive toilet within the park. A feasibility study is currently being commissioned with the aim of having a facility on site in 2016.

**How do we get there? (January 2016 update)**

- **red** – not done, **amber**- being implemented, **green**- completed.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No</th>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Lead</th>
<th>Timeframe</th>
<th>Estimated Cost</th>
<th>January 2016 progress</th>
<th>Status</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Monitor the agreement with Kier over the next 18 months until contract comes to an end to ensure good standards of maintenance at the Town Park.</td>
<td>HDC</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td>Within existing budgets</td>
<td>Close monitoring continues</td>
<td>Amber</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Monitor the impact of the reinvestment arrangements for the Kier Harlow Joint venture arrangements as part of the budget constraints in April 2015</td>
<td>HDC</td>
<td>January 2017</td>
<td>Reinvestment budgets</td>
<td>Close monitoring continues</td>
<td>Amber</td>
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<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Explore options for longer term grounds maintenance for the Park.</td>
<td>HDC</td>
<td>by 2020</td>
<td>Uplift funding as part of HLF project &amp; park income ring fencing</td>
<td>During 2015 the option of a SLA with SEETEC to undertake grounds maintenance in the park was explored but unfortunately was pulled in November 2015.</td>
<td>Red</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Ensure whatever future arrangements put in place to replace existing Kier agreements that they provide good maintenance standards for the Town Park.</td>
<td>HDC</td>
<td>Ongoing – new arrangements being introduced January 2017</td>
<td>HDC budgets for introducing new arrangements</td>
<td>On going negotiations</td>
<td>Amber</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Litter and waste management:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No</th>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Lead</th>
<th>Timeframe</th>
<th>Estimated Cost</th>
<th>January 2016 progress</th>
<th>Status</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>Litter and waste management</td>
<td>Kier</td>
<td>Ongoing until Jan 2017</td>
<td>Existing Budgets</td>
<td>Completed</td>
<td>Green</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>Green waste from the Town Park recycled via Harlow contract.</td>
<td>HDC</td>
<td>Up to 2020 (including new arrangements)</td>
<td>No identified budget</td>
<td>Not achieved.</td>
<td>Red</td>
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<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>Monitor HLF landscaping contractors to ensure</td>
<td>HDC</td>
<td>Autumn 2015</td>
<td>HLF funding</td>
<td>Completed</td>
<td>Green</td>
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<tr>
<td>No.</td>
<td>Task Description</td>
<td>Responsible Authority</td>
<td>Timeframe</td>
<td>Funding Source</td>
<td>Status</td>
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<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>Add 11 additional litter bins installed as part of the HLF works.</td>
<td>HDC</td>
<td>Autumn 2015</td>
<td>HLF funding</td>
<td>Completed</td>
<td>Green</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>Investigate suitable ivy disposal for ivy cuttings produced as part of the volunteers ivy removal task.</td>
<td>HDC</td>
<td>EVO (HDC)</td>
<td>Existing HLF funding</td>
<td>New trial of woodchipping ivy and using as path surfacing and raised bed infill.</td>
<td>Amber</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Buildings management and maintenance:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Task Description</th>
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<th>Funding Source</th>
<th>Status</th>
<th>Color</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>HLF works- Spurriers House renovated to restore historical features and preserve fabric of building</td>
<td>HDC</td>
<td>Autumn 2015</td>
<td>HLF funding</td>
<td>Restoration works to Spurriers House has taken place as part of the HLF capital works. Still to be completed Jan16.</td>
<td>Amber</td>
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<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>Clarify cafe lease repair arrangements and future maintenance arrangements.</td>
<td>HDC</td>
<td>Spring 2016</td>
<td>HDC existing budgets</td>
<td>Ongoing discussions with café operator regarding the lease. Further work to ensure income ring fenced for park</td>
<td>Amber</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>Undertake the repairs to two flats at Spurriers House, repair arrangements and future maintenance agreements.</td>
<td>HDC</td>
<td>2016</td>
<td>HDC Property and facilities funding</td>
<td>Delayed due to delay in HLF works being completed</td>
<td>Red</td>
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<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>Clarify the lease and repair and future management arrangements for the two flats in Spurriers House.</td>
<td>HDC</td>
<td>2016</td>
<td>HDC Property and facilities funding</td>
<td>Once the repairs to the flats are completed the lease arrangements will be investigated</td>
<td>Red</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>Investigate the possibility of leasing out Greyhound toilets for community use, if not feasible arrange for the building to be demolished</td>
<td>HDC</td>
<td>2016</td>
<td>HDC existing budgets</td>
<td>Expressions of interest tender out Jan 2016.</td>
<td>Amber</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Sustainability

Where are we now? (March 2015)

Environmental management practices adopted in the park:

Adopting the Conservation Plan:

The Conservation Plan for the Town Park outlines the approach that the regeneration project is taking to the landscaping contract that is currently being undertaken. The following is an extract which outlines the approach that the HLF regeneration project is taking to sustainability practices within the park:

"The removal, replanting, pruning and management of trees, shrubs and other plants should have strong regard to historic precedent, but the renewal of the horticultural fabric needs also to respond robustly to the challenges of reduced or fluctuating labour / resources in response to economic conditions, changing uses over time and a sometimes less respectful clientele. The priority for horticultural restoration should be for the historic design framework of the park to survive: planting detail can generally evolve.

In restoring planting styles, throughout the park, focus should therefore be on retaining the intended character and scale of the original design, but the actual type of planting could change over time. To retain the historic structure, planting should be developed and improved within existing or historically planted areas, rather than creating new areas.

The park occupies a unique river valley location; north-facing and so relatively open to cold winds. This creates a need for particularly robust planting species and varieties to be grown successfully. Climate change will have an effect on the success of planting schemes over time. The natural presence of water across the site is a key feature contributing to the, aesthetic and ecological value of the park.

Parks are uniquely dependent on enlightened and consistent management and skilled upkeep towards clear ideals, and it is essential that there should be a long term commitment to programmes for renewal and redevelopment to ensure a diverse age range, suitable species selection and co-ordinated approach to replacement of trees and planting in the long term. Above all staffing should be sufficient in calibre and consistent in number (and personnel if achievable); appropriately equipped and well managed.

New planting and trees are particularly vulnerable to anti-social or inappropriate behaviour. If investment in rejuvenation and replanting within the park is to be sustainable, proposed planting must not only be appropriate to the historic development of the park and suitable for today’s uses as mentioned above, but new planting needs to be supported by adequate levels of management and surveillance to discourage damage resulting from site misuse or localised vandalism.

All these factors need to be addressed by extensive rationalisation of the planting, including the concentration of labour-intensive display planting where it can be best appreciated, make the greatest impact and can be well cared for."

Environmental Management improvements through the HLF Landscaping contract:

The landscaping contract being delivered under the HLF regeneration project is implementing a variety of environmental improvements which will help make the park more sustainable. These include:
A managed tree succession programme:

A managed tree succession programme is being adopted as part of the landscaping contract. This will extend the longevity of the overall tree stock within the park. It includes:

- Trees across the park that have been identified as in poor condition, failed or dying are being removed
- Lower limbs that may be at risk of being knocked or damaged are being rationalised
- A programme of tree planting is taking place which will add more trees to the park overall than that which are removed. This is being closely monitored but there will be at least 90 new trees planted.

Within the Cherry Orchard the original character is being retained by removing the older, dead, dying and diseased trees and replacing them with new trees.

At Peace Wood a programme of ivy removal is taking place which will increase the sunlight in the wood which will increase the biodiversity on the ground and increase the “Ecotones” of the area.

The Education and Volunteer Officer lead a tree planting exercise in Peace Wood to commemorate the Holocaust Day in January 2015. Participants planted 60 native species of tree during the event.

Tree Protection measures

As part of the planning permission conditions for the HLF regeneration project, tree protection measures are being implemented and monitored via an independent Arboriculturalist, with monthly reports being submitted to the Planning Authority for approval. The tree protection measures being adopted include appropriate sustainable practices are adopted such as putting tracking routes in all areas that are being worked on which are close to trees. This ensures that the tree roots are not compromised or trees are damaged through poor practices.

Chipping used for paths

Where trees are being removed, they are being chipped and reused as path surface and tree protection surfacing. In particular, the chipping is being used as path surfacing in Peace Wood.

Increasing the range of species

The plant diversity is being increased in the park by stripping out invasive species such as the Himalayan Balsam and replacing it with a greater range of species that will create a green “ecotone” which will attract better habitats for wildlife.

The ponds in the Water Gardens have been de-silted. The area where the silt has been moved to in order to allow the silt to dry will be planted with a mixture of grass and wildflower seed. This will introduce a new habitat in the park that hopefully will attract pollinators and other insects.

New areas of long grass are being introduced in the park with the aim of increasing the habitats within the park. They will be used as an educational resource within the park allowing students to study different habitats. The first new area is within the Spurriers Core area where the grass is being left long during 2015. This area will be monitored to see whether new species take up occupation. Notices informing the public of the purpose behind the long grass area will be put up and a path will be taken through the area to encourage the park users to engage with this new habitat.
The Water Gardens will be replanted with a variety of plants including native aquatic species.

The use of sustainable materials within the HLF project:

Re-use of hard materials on site

Where possible, hard materials, such as concrete flag paving and cobbles, are being reused on site in the park.

Street furniture materials

The new street furniture such as benches and bins that are being added to the park are made from managed sustainable timber sources.

Straw Bale construction of the Learning Centre

The new Learning Centre that is being built as part of the HLF regeneration project will be a straw bale construction made by Modcell. This innovative building will be a carbon-negative construction, utilising the excellent thermal insulation qualities of straw bale construction to form prefabricated panels. It will create a super-insulated, high-performance, low energy ‘passive’ building with double glazing.

Straw Bale construction is a modern method of construction that is not adopted within mainstream constructions site currently in any scale. This is partly due to the difficulties of getting mortgages on homes built with this type of materials. However, there have been recent changes which should enable this to become a more common material. The Construction students at Harlow College are not currently exposed to live examples of this type of innovative construction. It is therefore hoped that arrangements can be made for some of the construction students to be able to come onto site to observe the installation of the Straw Bale Learning Centre to increase their awareness of this method and knowledge of how it is installed. Perhaps as a result they will be able to access employment linked to projects that use this type of construction in the future.

Pellet Boiler heating for Pets Corner and the Learning Centre

A Pellet Boiler is being installed to heat Pets Corner and the Learning Centre. This biomass heating system will use wood based pellets, which effectively can be considered as waste wood and a renewable source of energy. They have low CO2 emissions especially compared to gas and coal fuels. Therefore this is a very sustainable source of heating that is being installed as part of this build.

Recyclable temporary information hoardings

During the six months construction period of the capital works between April and September 2015 four large temporary hoarding banners will be erected that will be made of 100% recyclable PVC

4 http://www.modcell.com/about-us/
free material printed with latex ink. This will ensure that the banners will be more sustainable and preventing them being an item that just gets added to landfill after the works has been completed. The hoardings are being designed to provide information on the regeneration building work that is taking place and to highlight some of the history of the buildings that are being restored.

**Environmental Management practices adopted by Kier**

Outside of the HLF regeneration project the park is maintained by the Kier Harlow Joint Venture Agreement. The park is managed in line with the Council's policies on recycling and pesticide use.

The management regime of the conservation areas of the park are in accordance with the specification for other ornamental areas within Harlow Town Park. Whilst intending to attract wildlife the maintenance is envisaged to be that of all usual gardens.

**Use of pesticides and herbicides**

The policy of Harlow Council is that the use of pesticides and herbicides should be kept to a minimum, and only used if absolutely necessary. The use of Glyphosate herbicide has in the past been used to suppress weeds in large shrub bed areas. It is inactivated when it comes into contact with soil, it is not easily leached and is unlikely to contaminate ground water. Glyphosate is generally considered by experts to be harmless to the environment.

Kier Harlow Ltd only use government approved herbicides and our teams are certificated to apply pesticide properly and safely. All the chemicals are securely stored according to regulations and we maintain careful records and use signs when it is appropriate to do so.

Harlow Council has moved to increase the use of green recycled green waste and other materials as a mulch, reducing the need for the use of herbicide, and only generally being used to spot-treat problem perennial weeds. To reduce the need for chemical application horticultural techniques and actions are used in the first instance reducing applications.

**Use of Peat**

Harlow Council is committed to reducing the quantity of peat that is used within our parks and open spaces, without compromising the quality of our procured plants.

In 2008 the Council trialled the use of summer bedding plants and shrubs bought in a specially blended 25% reduced peat compost. The success of this trial led to an increase of the quantity of non-peat material that is incorporated into the growing medium to between 35 and 40%.

Harlow Council has also reviewed the location of the plant suppliers to reduce the number of road miles that these plants have to travel.

The Town Park volunteers do not use peat when working in the park.

**Green waste and recycling**

Green waste arising from the horticultural maintenance within Harlow Town Park is transported just over 1 ½ mile away to a specialist licensed green waste recycling facility, where it is shredded, composted and screened. Upon completion the resulting material is a valuable organic product capable of being used as a mulch or soil conditioner.

No bonfires are allowed in the park preventing air pollution.

**The use of sustainable materials**
Renewable Green Oak:

The use of renewable green oak that has been grown in Harlow Council’s managed woodland – Pardon Wood – has in recent years been used in various projects throughout Harlow. The aim is to use green oak where appropriate for projects within the park. In the Town Park it has been used to create the Art Sculpture Trail along the River walk by the Stort navigation. The use of this local material enabled Harlow Council to reduce the cost of the project, provide work for local people, and reduce the cost of transportation.

Where do we want to get to?

The Conservation Management Plan for Harlow Town Park includes the following policies that demonstrate where we want to get to in relation to achieving the sustainability for the park. These are outlined below and should also be linked to the actions in the Harlow Biodiversity Action Plan.

With regard to horticulture the following policies apply:

**P1** To retain high quality mature tree canopy and structural shrub planting

**P2** – Strategic removal and pruning of some trees and shrubs to lessen the effect of excessive shade and dry soil, allowing groundcover planting to establish

**P3** – New historically appropriate shrub and perennial planting, to improve distinction of themed planting areas

**P4** – Retail some high quality open grass areas for informal recreation, events and to complement the themed garden setting

**P5** – Develop and implement a long-term management and cyclical tree renewal/planting strategy

**P6** – Concentrate high maintenance display planting to key areas, to reflect historic garden design, issues of sustainability and resource availability such as watering requirements

**P7** – Allow for consistent number of staff and personnel, adequately equipped, skilled and well managed

The Harlow Biodiversity Action Plan has the following actions that relate to the Town Park:

- Encourage the reduction of pesticide and fertiliser application wherever possible.
- Ensure that at least 10% of each park are managed specifically for wildlife
- Review contract specifications for the ground maintenance of area of this target habitat and, where appropriate and practical, encourage management that will encourage wildlife generally.
- Encourage the inclusion of wildlife friendly habitat into new landscape or development plans and proposals
- Develop a range of broad practical species related initiatives that will encourage an expansion of the biodiversity found in the Park, for example, deadwood piles for invertebrates and erecting nest boxes for bats, birds and wildfowl.
- Consider, where appropriate and practicable, the increased use of native species in new or existing landscape planting, or non-native species that are known to have associated wildlife value.
- Support where appropriate and practicable, **local and national initiatives**, for example national tree week, or any action that may increase the available habitat for wildlife in parks and open spaces.
- **Protect key species** found in the Town Park.
- Ensure all **contractors are aware** of the presence of protected or national target species and, where appropriate and practical, consider altering maintenance specifications in order to protect specific local, regional or national target species.
- Ensure that specific wildlife areas have appropriate **interpretation** and or / leaflets in order to promote the positive image of wildlife areas and encourage a **greater understanding of their value**.
- Developing areas within the park that will **both encourage wildlife and provide educational opportunities**.

How will we get there? (Action Plan 2015 to 2010)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action Nu</th>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Lead</th>
<th>Timeframe</th>
<th>Estimated cost and budget</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>HLF regeneration project Environmental Management practices</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>Closely monitor the HLF regeneration project contracts to ensure that the implement appropriate sustainable practices</td>
<td>Harlow Council – Regeneration Team</td>
<td>Contracts due to be completed Autumn 2015. The Landscaping contract has a one year tie in which will also need to be monitored</td>
<td>Existing budgets</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31</td>
<td>Ensure that monthly independent Arbioculturalist reports are submitted to the Local Planning Authority to ensure that the tree protection measures are implemented appropriately</td>
<td>Harlow Council – Regeneration Team</td>
<td>Contracts due to be completed Autumn 2015.</td>
<td>Existing budgets / HLF funding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32</td>
<td>Introduce new wildflower areas to the park to increase the habitats found in the park</td>
<td>Harlow Council – Regeneration Team</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td>HLF Funding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33</td>
<td>Increase the variety of species found across the park through the introduction of appropriate planting of new species as part of the HLF regeneration project landscaping contract</td>
<td>Harlow Council – Regeneration Team</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td>HLF Funding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34</td>
<td>Monitor the installation of the new Straw Bale Learning Centre as part of the HLF regeneration project capital build contract</td>
<td>Harlow Council – Regeneration Team</td>
<td>Autumn 2015</td>
<td>HLF funding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35</td>
<td>Facilitate Harlow College Construction Students to have</td>
<td>Harlow Council –</td>
<td>Autumn 2015</td>
<td>Existing resources</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>36</td>
<td>Monitor the installation of the Pellet Boiler to heat the new Learning Centre and Pets Corner as part of the HLF regeneration project capital build contract</td>
<td>Harlow Council – Regeneration Team</td>
<td>Autumn 2015</td>
<td>HLF funding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>37</td>
<td>Design and install 100% recyclable hoardings to be put up on the buildings that are being renovated as part of the HLF regeneration capital build project</td>
<td>Harlow Council – Regeneration Team</td>
<td>April 2015 to Autumn 2015</td>
<td>£300 POD improving Harlow’s image funding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>38</td>
<td>Ensure that the Town Park volunteers and Land Based students continue to adopt environmental sustainable practices including composting, not using peat and reusing and recycling as far as possible.</td>
<td>Education and Volunteer Officer</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td>HLF funding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>39</td>
<td>Undertake further tree planting activities as part of volunteering opportunities</td>
<td>Education and Volunteer Officer</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td>HLF funding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40</td>
<td>Continue to develop a programme of activities that raise awareness of and link into the various habitats within the park, including bat, bird and other species specific walks and events.</td>
<td>Education and Volunteer Officer</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td>HLF funding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41</td>
<td>Develop a range of broad practical species-related initiatives that will encourage an expansion of the biodiversity found in the Park, for example, deadwood piles for invertebrates and erecting nest boxes for bats, birds and wildfowl.</td>
<td>Education and Volunteer Officer</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td>HLF funding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Environmental management practices adopted under the grounds maintenance contract with Kier</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>42</td>
<td>Encourage the continued reduction of pesticide and fertiliser application wherever possible.</td>
<td>Harlow Council – Landscaping and Biodiversity Team</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td>Existing Kier Harlow Joint Venture Funding until January 2017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>43</td>
<td>Ensure that at least 10% of the park is managed specifically for wildlife.</td>
<td>Harlow Council – Landscaping and Biodiversity Team and Education and Volunteer Officer</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td>Existing Kier Harlow Joint Venture Funding until January 2017 and HLF funding</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Sustainability – January 2016 update

January 2016 - Where are we now?

Environmental management practices adopted in the park:
Environmental management improvements through the HLF Landscaping contract:

A managed tree succession programme:

During Winter 2014/15 a selected tree removal programme was undertaken whereby 90 trees in poor condition, falling or dying were removed. Prior to any tree removal, a well-received guided walk (attended by 50 local people in October 2014) took place which outlined the reasons for the tree removal programme.

Following the tree removals a programme of tree planting took place. At least 90 trees were planted across the park. A further tree planting programme of over 200 beech and hornbeam whips took place in December 2015 as part of National Tree Week, rejuvenating an old hedge along Park Lane.

Ivy removal was also undertaken by Town Park and Harlow Conservation Volunteers as part of the biodiversity improvements to Peace Wood.

Chipping used for paths:

Woodchips from the Town Park were used for park surfaces in Peace Wood, mulching shrubs in the Sensory garden and other planted areas and the Walled Garden.

Increasing the range of species:

Invasive Himalayan Balsam was removed by volunteers on the Stort Valley Meadows and along the stream in Spurriers Core and the Water Garden. The margins of the ponds in the Water Garden were planted with suitable species.

An area of amenity grass of 500 square meters near School Lane was removed in Summer 2015 and replaced with relocated turves from a verge on the A414 which included Bee Orchids and other wildflowers.

A further two smaller areas (in the Cherry Tree garden and the Newfoundland Garden grassed area) have been identified as possible locations where bee orchids may be growing. These will be marked out in 2016 to see if the further wildflower areas can be created within the park.

The Specimen Garden has had swathes of naturalised bulbs previously planted in it. This area will be monitored in Spring 2016 to check whether they have been disturbed as a result of the landscaping works that took place during 2015. If necessary additional planting will take place to replace disturbed bulbs. It is hoped to add further naturalised bulb planting areas of the park in future. Naturalised bulbs fit in well with the maintenance regimes of the park as once they die down the areas can continue with normal grass cutting regimes, whereas special arrangements are required to managed the wildflower areas (including organising volunteers to cut the grass on an annual basis).
Native Black Poplar cuttings are being grown in the Walled Garden and will be replanted in the Stort Valley Meadows area of the Town Park, helping the preservation of these rare trees in the Harlow area.

**Use of sustainable materials within the HLF project:**

**Reuse of hard materials on site:**

Hard materials such as cobbles were reused where possible in the relaying of the cobbled edges of the Water Garden. Rubble from old paths in the Walled Garden have been used as infill in the raised beds in the Walled Garden.

**Straw bale construction in the Learning Centre:**

This was installed in the Summer of 2015. A small internal viewing window been created so that visitors can see this sustainable building technique.

**Pellet boiler heating for the Learning Centre:**

This was installed in November 2015 and is currently being commissioned for use in the Learning Centre.

**How will we get there? (January 2016 update)**

red – not done, amber- being implemented, green- completed.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No</th>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Lead</th>
<th>Timeframe</th>
<th>Estimate Cost</th>
<th>January 2016 progress</th>
<th>Status</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>Closely monitor the HLF project contracts to ensure implementation of appropriate sustainable policies.</td>
<td>HDC</td>
<td>Autumn 2015</td>
<td>Existing budgets</td>
<td>All plants that were not used as part of the Landscaping Contract were used by the volunteers within the park. Materials from both contracts that would have otherwise have gawn to landfill have been donated to Pets’ Corner and the Town Park volunteers.</td>
<td>Green</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31</td>
<td>Ensure monthly independent arboriculturalist reports submitted to ensure Tree protection measures implemented</td>
<td>HDC</td>
<td>Autumn 2015</td>
<td>HLF Funding</td>
<td>Monthly arboriculturalist monitoring visits undertaken for both contracts and reports submitted to planning department.</td>
<td>Green</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32</td>
<td>Introduce new wildflower areas to park</td>
<td>HDC</td>
<td>2016</td>
<td>HFC and HLF funding</td>
<td>New wildflower areas introduced by relocating a verge area with bee orchids.</td>
<td>Green</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32</td>
<td>Introduce additional</td>
<td>HDC</td>
<td>New</td>
<td>Via</td>
<td>The naturalised bulbs</td>
<td>Amber</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Action Number</td>
<td>Action Description</td>
<td>Action</td>
<td>Monitor</td>
<td>Action Details</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>b</td>
<td>naturalised bulb areas to park</td>
<td></td>
<td>Volunteer</td>
<td>planted in the Specimen Garden will be monitored. Potential new areas for naturalised bulb planting areas to be investigated.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33</td>
<td>Increase variety of species across park through new HLF planting</td>
<td>HDC</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td>New planting of shrubs in Spurriers Core, Water Garden &amp; Specimen Garden. Restoration of Sensory Garden with new shrubs.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34</td>
<td>Monitor installation of new Straw Bale Learning centre</td>
<td>HDC</td>
<td>Autumn 2015</td>
<td>Installed.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35</td>
<td>Facilitate Harlow College students to have access to Straw bale build</td>
<td>HDC</td>
<td>Autumn 2015</td>
<td>Not happened. Timing of installation of Straw Bale construction was during College summer holidays and could not be arranged at short notice.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36</td>
<td>Monitor installation of pellet boiler</td>
<td>HDC</td>
<td>2015</td>
<td>The Pellet Boiler has been installed but as at January 2016 is yet to be commissioned.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>37</td>
<td>and install recyclable hoardings as part of HLF build project</td>
<td>HDC</td>
<td>2015</td>
<td>Not done. Due to delays with Build Contract.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>38</td>
<td>Ensure volunteers and students continue to adopt composting, not using peat and recycling as far as possible</td>
<td>HDC</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td>Being implemented.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>39</td>
<td>further tree planting activities as part of volunteering opportunities</td>
<td>HDC</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td>Being implemented - National Tree Week and further tree planting opportunities in Winter 2015/6</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 40 | Continue to develop programme of activities raising awareness of various habitats within the park | HDC | Ongoing | 2 well attended Bat Talk and Walks organised with Essex Bat Group following construction (by Harlow College students) and erection of 21 bat boxes. Several of the monthly guided walks during the year were around themes raising awareness of the parks habitats and species (birds,
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Environmental management practices adopted under grounds maintenance contract with Kier.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>41</td>
<td>Develop range of broad practical species related initiatives encouraging expansion of biodiversity within park</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>42</td>
<td>Encourage continued reduction of pesticide and fertiliser application wherever possible.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>43</td>
<td>Ensure that at least 10% of the park is managed specifically for wildlife</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Conservation and Heritage

Where are we now? (March 2015)

As a result of gaining the HLF funding for the regeneration of the park, there is extensive work currently being undertaken to conserve and preserve the features of the park. The landscape of the park is being restored and managed to help retain the key original 1960’s design of the park. The capital building works is supporting the restoration of key historical buildings ensuring that heritage of the park is preserved for future generations. In addition, existing ongoing activity within the park helps to conserve the park’s features. Details are outlined below.

Conservation of the park:

Horticultural and Habitat Features

The following extract from the Conservation Plan highlights the importance of the ecology and natural features of the Town Park:

"The site has potential for increasing biodiversity interest, in particular within existing mature planted areas. The creation of higher value wildlife habitats within the park would increase ecological value. Future developments and site management should seek to enhance these aspects, but the overarching principle should be that wildlife should benefit from the park, rather than the park be designed for the needs of wildlife.

As far as other objectives allow, every opportunity should be taken to retain and conserve wildlife habitat and species to provide year round food sources for invertebrates, birds and small animals”.

The landscape of Harlow Town Park provides a range of planting that is balanced with the cultivation of herbaceous perennials, shrubs and trees.

The Town Park is divided into distinct garden areas, each of which has its own landscaping features which as a whole provide a breadth of biodiversity within the park. Key features of each of the garden areas are described below.

Water Gardens

Located to the south of Park Lane the ornamental Water Gardens provide a contrasting landscape of aquatic and marginal plants. The garden provides a haven for wildfowl and wildlife. The pond is stream fed and therefore relies on a sustainable source of water rather than being mains fed. Historically this area was used for cultivated cress beds.

Extensive refurbishment and management of this garden area is being undertaken as part of the HLF landscaping works. Prior to the work commencing this area was popular and attractive, but unfortunately, had become very overgrown to the extent that key features of the garden could not be seen. The HLF landscaping works involves undertaking a major clearance programme of the overgrown planting that blocked views and access to paths. There will be extensive replanting of the beds surrounding the pond using more moisture loving to suit the underlying ground conditions resulting from the hydrology of the area.
Taking advantage of the extensive work that is being undertaken around the Water Garden area, the ponds are being de-silted by the HLF landscaping contractor. The silt that is removed from the ponds is being moved to an area of the park where it will be allowed to dry. Once dried it will be grassed over and landscaped. This will prevent the silt from being transported away from the park.

As a consequence of the de-silting work the coy carp fish that are currently in the ponds are to be removed. These fish are not a native species and it is likely that they will have predated many other species in the pond. The fish will not be replaced after the de-silting of the pond has taken place and as a result, it is expected that a greater level of biodiversity will return to the pond after the water is reinstated such as sticklebacks whose eggs will arrive back on the feet of birds.

**Sensory Garden**

Towards School Lane / Park Lane at the rear of Spurriers Lodge entrance is the Sensory Garden. The garden is made up of individual beds planted with a collection of rose bushes and standards with a range of mixed perennials and shrubs regarded for their stimulation of the senses. A brick wall and wooden rail fence surround the garden. Set within the garden are two memorial benches and several totem pole wooden sculptures.

**Town Park Volunteers restore the Sensory Garden**

Starting in the Summer of 2014, the HLF weekly volunteer group has undertaken a major programme of works to improve this garden. They have improved the sight lines both into the garden and from within the garden by removing some of the denser planting that surrounded the garden. This allows a greater sense of safety and pleasant views from the benches into the park, whilst still sitting away from the main through routes of the park. The volunteers have cleared the beds and will be introducing a greater variety of colour to the garden through spring bedding plants providing visitors with a wider array of sensual experiences. The volunteers have also added colour to the garden by painting the wooden sculptures and trellis feature with a colour stain. This garden will continue to be an area that the Town Park volunteers maintain.

It is intended that the completion of the restoration of this garden area by the Town Park volunteers will be celebrated in the Summer of 2015 with an event that will highlight the work of the volunteers and to help publicise the value of this area of the park.

**Specimen garden**

Mixed shrub beds can be found in various locations within the Park. Towards the Park Lane side of the park are themed shrub' beds, planted up with collections of shrubs of interest. This original purpose of this area of the park was educational as it provided park users ‘take home’ ideas and a menu of plants that could be used in their own gardens within Harlow New Town.

**Walled Garden**

The former Council nursery site adjacent to Pets Corner is being restored so that it can be used as a centre of horticultural use within the park. Writtle College has worked with Pets Corner and the Education and Volunteer Officer to erect a polytunnel on the site. The site has been cleared of
vegetation and damaged fencing by students on the Level 1 Land Based studies and the Town Park volunteers.

The Land Based students and Town Park volunteers have taken part in a project to take cuttings of **native Black Poplars** from a former Council nursery at Gilden Way. They will be replanted out in known locations of Native Black Poplars. This will help ensure the preservation of these rare trees in Harlow.

**Rhododendron Dell**

The Rhododendron Dell is an original feature garden of the Town Park. This garden is being restored as part of the HLF Regeneration Project. The existing overgrown planting has been thinned out and new plants have been added to the existing beds. Two new additional beds are being added to extend the feature garden.

**Arid Garden / Millennium Maze / Newfoundland Garden**

The Arid Garden is situated to the east of the School Lane entrance leading from First Avenue. The area provides an important collection of Cherry Trees and mixed shrub planting through a landscaped setting. At the eastern end of the park is the Millennium Maze that was installed in 2000 and the Newfoundland Garden that was planted in 1997 to celebrate the 50th anniversary of Harlow New Town. The Newfoundland Garden is planted with a mix of native shrubs and trees to be found in Newfoundland, Canada.

**River Stort Marshes**

The Harlow Marshes, present as a result of the River Stort, lie to the north of the Town Park.

According to Essex Wildlife Trust the Town Park Ditches (Harlow Park Marsh) plays a fundamental role for the long term survival of wildlife in the local area. Marshgate Springs has both marshland and mature woodland habitats. Marshland is found on the flat area next to the railway line. A network of ditches help drainage across the reed and sedge beds, which support birds such as sedge and reed warblers. Grasshopper warbler has also been heard in past years. The mature woodland includes oak and hornbeam as its main trees, with some ash, hazel and willow. In late Spring bluebells and wild garlic are in flower.

Harlow Council supports a week volunteer team known as the “Green Team” which helps to manage this area of the park on a weekly basis.

**Harlow's Biodiversity Action Plan:**

Harlow Council manages several wildlife habitats and species within the Town Park and in the wider Harlow Marshes Local Nature Reserve. It does this in consultation with the Harlow Biodiversity Partnership and Harlow Conservation Volunteers and contributions from other local wildlife groups and interested individuals.

Harlow has adopted the Essex Biodiversity Action Plan and produced a local Action Plan to protect the local habitats and species. The local Biodiversity Action Plan for Harlow contains individual action plans for 18 habitats and 14 species. The Action Plans for Public Parks and Amenity Open spaces includes the following
actions which are relevant to the management of the Town Park:

- Encourage the **reduction of pesticide and fertiliser** application wherever possible.
- Ensure that at least 10% of each park are **managed specifically for wildlife**.
- Review **contract specifications** for the ground maintenance of area of this target habitat and, where appropriate and practical, encourage management that will **encourage wildlife generally**.
- Encourage the inclusion of **wildlife friendly habitat** into new landscape or development plans and proposals.
- Develop a range of broad **practical species related initiatives** that will encourage an expansion of the biodiversity found in the Park, for example, deadwood piles for invertebrates and erecting nest boxes for bats, birds and wildfowl.
- Consider, where appropriate and practicable, the **increased use of native species** in new or existing landscape planting, or non-native species that are known to have associated wildlife value.
- Support where appropriate and practicable, **local and national initiatives**, for example national tree week, or any action that may increase the available habitat for wildlife in parks and open spaces.
- **Protect key species** found in the Town Park.
- Ensure all **contractors are aware** of the presence of protected or national target species and, where appropriate and practical, consider altering maintenance specifications in order to protect specific local, regional or national target species.
- Ensure that specific wildlife areas have appropriate **interpretation** and or / leaflets in order to promote the positive image of wildlife areas and encourage a **greater understanding of their value**.
- Developing areas within the park that will **both encourage wildlife and provide educational opportunities**.

**Supporting the local habitats and wildlife:**

A series of activities and projects are being run in the park that are promoting awareness of the various habitats, species and wildlife to be found in the Town Park, which include the following:

**Supporting a bat population in the park**

A survey for bats was undertaken to check for their presence in the buildings that work is to be undertaken as part of the HLF regeneration project in order to ensure that appropriate mitigating action was taken to protect this protected species.

The Education and Volunteer Officer is running a series of events that are helping support the bat population of the park in partnership with the Essex Bat Group. In the February 2015 Half Term a bat box building event was held which 15 people attended. This was a great intergenerational activity as several of the attendees were Grandparents and their Grandchildren. Participants were able to build a bat box whilst learning about bats.

In April 2015 a bat box erecting event is being held in the park, which again will be run in partnership with the Essex Bat Group. The aim will be to erect a series of bat boxes across the park to encourage safe habitats for bats to roost. Further events will also include a bat walk.

Linked to the above events is a partnership that has been formed with both Harlow College and the Sir Charles Kao University Technical College (based in Harlow). Students from both of these
educational establishments are involved in the design and making of a bird and bat boxes flat pack kits and completed boxes. This project has enabled the students to develop design and manufacturing skills whilst undertaking a 'real life' work experience opportunity. It is hoped that the students will produce enough boxes that they can also be distributed to local primary schools and other groups that are can erect them as new roosting habitats.

Supporting the birds within the park

Bird and owl boxes will be erected in the park as part of the HLF regeneration project.

All vegetation clearance is being undertaken mindful of nesting seasons.

The Education and Volunteer Officer has ran a guided walk on the birds of the park to help people appreciate the variety of species found in the park.

Monthly guided walks – highlighting differing species and habitats of the park

The Education and Volunteer Officer has lead monthly walks around the park, several of which have highlighted the various species and habitats that the park, such as tree identification, bird watching and a walk in Stort Meadows by the river. It is intended that these monthly walks will continue to regularly include themes that highlight the differing habitats within the park.

Pond dipping – encouraging an awareness of stream species

the Education and Volunteer Officer ran a pond dipping activity for children attending the National Play Day and as a children's activity in the summer of 2014. The children participating were encouraged to identify the species that they caught and to return them safely back into the water.

Protecting Badgers

Badger sets have been identified within the local area. The risk of disturbing these animals has been highlighted to the contractors operating within the park in order to minimise the threat to this protected species.

Tree planting

The Education and Volunteer Officer will undertake a programme of tree planting with the Town Park volunteers that ensures that suitable trees and planted in appropriate places across the park.

In January 2015 he ran a Holocaust Memorial Peace Walk with those participating planting 60 trees in Peace Wood.

New wildlife habitats

New areas of long grass and wild flowers are being introduced in the park with the aim of increasing the habitats within the park that will hopefully attract pollinators and increase diversity of species. They will be used as an educational resource within the park allowing students to study different habitats. The first new area is within the Spurriers Core area where the grass is being left long during 2015. This area will be monitored to see whether new species take up occupation. Notices informing the public of the purpose behind the long grass area will be put up and a path will be taken through the area to encourage the park users to engage with this new habitat.
Pets' Corner

Pets’ Corner opened in 1966 and is home to a variety of animals. It now has a zoo licence. It has a large selection of traditional farm animals, more exotic animals such as Reindeer, Llamas and Alpacas whilst still keeping with the visitor’s favourites’ of rabbits, guinea pigs and chickens and ducks. As part of its Rare Breeds Programme, Pets’ Corner looks after different species of rare breeds including Red Poll cattle and Essex pigs.

Pets’ Corner runs educational activities that support people’s appreciation of the animals.

Conserving the park’s Heritage

The HLF regeneration project is restoring some of the original park features in order to conserve and enhance the park. This includes restoring and replacing the metal knee rails around the beds and reinstating the concrete features around the park reflecting the original 1960s feel as well as reinstating the cobbles around the ponds in the Water Gardens.

A design style and colour palette has been introduced to be adopted throughout the park.

The heritage buildings of the park:

Spurriers House

The HLF regeneration project is undertaking extensive refurbishment of Spurriers House through the capital works contract. This includes the demolition of the 1960’s unsightly extensions to the building which formed the redundant toilets and the cafe kiosk. This will restore Spurriers to its original 1860s layout, providing greater space to enable people to appreciate its historical features. The ground floor of Spurriers House will become a cafe for the park, and this will enable far greater public access to this historical building. Interpretation boards on the history of the building and what is known about who lived there will be created to display both on the outside and inside of the building. There will also be a new heritage leaflet created for the park which will feature Spurriers House.

Pets’ Corner

Pets’ Corner opened in May 1966. It continues to be a very popular family attraction in the park. However, the buildings and the internal environment have become generally run down and it is restricted from developing further due to the limited space, poor access and unsuitability of the building structures. Pets’ Corner have used the stable areas of Spurriers House, mostly recently for storage and office space as they became unsuitable for visitors. The facilities were poor and included a "portacabin" toilet facility.

The HLF regeneration project is undertaking extensive refurbishment of Pets’ Corner which includes the demolition of the stables to make a cafe courtyard, a new entrance, a new events barn that will allow outdoor demonstrations and repairs to the roof of the animal pens. Linked to the work that is being undertaken by within the existing Pets’ Corner area a new Learning Centre will be added that will create facility to run educational programmes and other events.
Bandstand

The Bandstand, (a rare 1970’s example) has seen a variety of bands play on it over the years including Hawkwind, Thin Lizzy, 10cc, Judas Priest, Fairport Convention and the Bay City Rollers. Music events still take place at the bandstand but are now limited to about 4 times per year. The Bandstand has become run down and is in need of improvement and consolidation, to reduce vandalism, offer better facilities and to encourage greater use. The bandstand is being restored as part of the HLF regeneration project which will be completed by Autumn 2015.

Greyhound Toilets

The toilets located at the Greyhound car park was hoped to be part of the HLF regeneration project. However, due to budget constraints this has not been possible. Currently these toilets are boarded up and closed. They are unsightly in their current state. A decision is required on the future of this building. The feasibility of whether the option of leasing this building to a community group as a possible community resource needs to be investigated. If it is not feasible, arrangements need to be made to demolish this building.

Sculptures

As a “sculpture town”, Harlow’s heritage is strongly linked to the many sculptures located across the town. The Harlow collection includes several pieces of national significance. The Harlow sculpture trail is managed by the Harlow Art Trust.

The following sculptures have been located in or around the Town Park (as illustrated by the detail of the Sculpture Trail leaflet):

3- Aphrodite (This sculpture was located near Park Lane. However, it was vandalised beyond repair in 2008)
19 – Leah Manning Mural (located at the Leah Manning centre)
23 – Two Children on a rock
62 - Pisces
Pisces

The main sculpture in the park is “Pisces” which is located in the Water Gardens. This is a 1973 piece stainless steel maquette by Jesse Watkins. As it was too large to be displayed in a gallery it was shown at the Water Garden in the Town Park. As it fitted so well with its surroundings, it was retained by Harlow District Council after the exhibition.

The extensive landscaping clearance being undertaken as part of the HLF regeneration project in the Water Gardens has opened up the views of this iconic sculpture (that in many ways has come to symbolise Harlow Town Park). This will ensure that it continue to be an essential heritage feature in the park.

As demonstrated by the fate of the Aphrodite sculpture, sculptures are at risk from vandalism and damage. The Pisces piece has greater protection as it is located within the Water Garden and surrounded by water.

The researching and preserving the heritage of the park:

The history of the park has been researched as part of the development of the funding bid for the HLF regeneration project. A detailed timeline has been created that demonstrates the activity that was taking place in the park historically. This is available on Harlow Council’s website.5

Further research has been undertaken regarding the history of Spurriers House, particularly in relation to William Cox who lived in the house during the Victorian era and was a Member of Parliament. Over the past year research has been undertaken by the local Young Historians group supported by the Education and Volunteer Officer.

This historical research into the history of the park will be utilised in several different ways that will help increase the awareness and understanding of the history of the park by local people. For instance it will be:

Incorporated into the Education Pack that is being produced which will be available for local schools to use and will support the national curriculum relating to local history and local geography.

- Included on temporary hoardings that are being designed to help inform the public about what is taking place as part of the HLF regeneration project whilst highlighting the importance of the history of the key buildings that are being restored.

• Included in the series of leaflets and interpretation boards that are being produced and installed for the Town Park which will help the public to appreciate the various aspects of the park’s heritage as well as the cultural and natural aspects.

Promoting the heritage of the park through interpretation

In November 2014 a Remembrance Walk through the park took place that provided a history of the park and its surroundings that focused on the names on the World War One Memorial located at near the Greyhound Pub within the park. Research was undertaken on the individuals named and the history of the local area that highlighted aspects such as the fact that several of the soldiers had worked at the Marine manufacturers located in Burnt Mill area just outside the park.

A series of interpretation boards and leaflets are planned as part of the HLF regeneration project that will help to engage people’s interest in the heritage features of the park and to help increase people’s understanding of the value of the key features within the park.

This will include:

• A series of interpretation boards located around the park including inside and outside of the new cafe operating out if the ground floor of Spurriers House
• A Heritage Trail leaflet
• Guided walks with a heritage theme
• The Education Pack that is being produced for local schools will feature a section on the local history of the park.
Where do we want to get to?

The Conservation Plan for the Town Park includes the following policies that demonstrate the vision of where we want to get in relation to the conservation and heritage of the Town Park.

The Conservation Management Plan includes the following in relation to Ecology and natural features of the park:

"The roots of biodiversity lie in geodiversity, through its influence on soils, topography, hydrology and hence habitat. Of particular note in the park are the Harlow Marshes present as a result of the Stort River.

The site has potential for increasing biodiversity interest, in particular within existing mature planted areas. The creation of higher value wildlife habitats within the park would increase ecological value. Future developments and site management should seek to enhance these aspects, but the overarching principle should be that wildlife should benefit from the park, rather than the park be designed for the needs of wildlife.

as far as other objectives allow, every opportunity should be taken to retain and conserve wildlife habitat and species to provide year round food sources for invertebrates, birds and small animals.

There is considerable scope for improvement in the interpretation of the park's natural features to provide an understanding of the park's ecological assets. This could take the form of on and off-site information and educational or cultural events".

With regard to Ecology and natural features the following policies apply:

E1 – Safeguard existing biodiversity interest in the park

E2 – Enhance existing biodiversity interest and ecological links within the park where compatible with heritage values

E3 Interpret the site's ecological heritage

E4 – Work with local interest groups to promote and develop the site's ecology – carefully managed to prevent the dominance of any single special interest group.

The Conservation Management Plan includes the following in relation to Horticulture aspects of the park:

"The removal, replanting, pruning and management of trees, shrubs and other plants should have strong regard to historic precedent, but the renewal of the horticultural fabric needs to respond robustly to the challenges of reduced or fluctuating labour / resources in response to economic conditions, changing uses over time and a sometimes less-respectful clientele. The priority for horticultural restoration should be for the historic design framework of the park to survive: planting detail can generally evolve.

In restoring planting styles throughout the park, focus should therefore be on retaining the intended character and scale of the original design, but the actual type of planting could change over time."
To retain the historic structure, planting should be developed and improved within existing or historically planted areas, rather than creating new areas.

The park occupies a unique river valley location; north-facing and so relatively open to cold winds. This creates a need for particularly robust plant species and varieties to be grown successfully. Climate change will have an effect on the success of the planting schemes over time. The natural presence of water across the site is a key feature contributing to the, aesthetic and ecological value of the park.

Parks are uniquely dependant on enlightened and consistent management and skilled upkeep towards clear ideals, and it is essential that there should be a long-term commitment to programmes for renewal and redevelopment to ensure a diverse age range, suitable species selection and co-ordinated approach to replacement of trees and planting in the long-term. Above all staffing should be sufficient in calibre and consistent in number (and personnel if achievable); appropriately equipped and well managed.

New planting and trees are particularly vulnerable to anti-social or inappropriate behaviour. If investment in rejuvenation and replanting within the park is to be sustainable, proposed planting must not only be appropriate to the historic development of the park and suitable for today’s uses as mentioned above, but new planting needs to be supported by adequate levels of management and surveillance to discourage damage resulting from site misuse or localised vandalism.

All these factors need to be addressed by extensive rationalisation of the planting, including the concentration of labour-intensive display planting where it can be best appreciated, make the greatest impact and can be well cared for."

With regard to horticulture the following policies apply:

**P1** To retain high quality mature tree canopy and structural shrub planting

**P2** – Strategic removal and pruning of some trees and shrubs to lessen the effect of excessive shade and dry soil, allowing groundcover planting to establish

**P3** – New historically appropriate shrub and perennial planting, to improve distinction of themed planting areas

**P4** – Retail some high quality open grass areas for informal recreation, events and to complement the themed garden setting

**P5** – Develop and implement a long-term management and cyclical tree renewal/planting strategy

**P6** – Concentrate high maintenance display planting to key areas, to reflect historic garden design, issues of sustainability and resource availability such as watering requirements

**P7** – Allow for consistent number of staff and personnel, adequately equipped, skilled and well managed

The Conservation Management Plan for the Town Park includes the following relating to Views and Visual quality.
"Views across the site to the Stort Valley Corridor are a key asset, being highly significant to the park. Views contribute to the special sense of place experienced by visitors to the park and integral to the original Town Park designs. It is therefore of importance that the restoration and protection of these views should be a priority so that the park can once again make the most of its unique location. Wherever possible, key views between different parts of the park should be enhanced by high standards of maintenance and removal or screening of unsightly elements, such as the railings and blue furniture around Spurriers House. The park is characterised by a network of paths and mounds, punctuated by points of interest such as viewpoints, built features, walls, steps, ponds and planting. It is important that this level of complexity and intricate detail is not lost through incremental repairs over time. Any future developments should be of high quality to protect or enhance the visual quality and special characteristics of the park as a key asset to Harlow.

The following policies relate to Views and Visual Quality:

V1 – Maintain and enhance existing views to key focal points through vegetation management.

V2 – Thin trees to create visual connections between entrances from the surrounding area and revitalise historic features or facilities within the park, to attract visitors.

V3 – Strategic removal, thinning or reduction of trees and shrubs to re-open views.

V4 – Remove inappropriate features where possible, or plant trees and shrubs to screen undesirable views.

V5 – Maintain and improve the visible quality of the park through ensuring that all repairs use appropriate methods and materials.

The Conservation Management Plan for the Town Park includes the following section on the Built Heritage and Infrastructure of the park:

"The reinstatement of appropriate settings for the key buildings within the park – Spurriers House and built features such as the Bandstand and toilet block within Netteswell Cross, Water Gardens and ponds, should be a key conservation principle as they make, or have the potential to make an important contribution to the park.

Historic hard landscaping features should be repaired and restored, and where appropriate, replaced, according to historic precedent. Special regard should be paid to historic construction techniques and styles revealed on the site, such as the cobbled edges of the Water Garden, a technique repeated throughout the park. White railings which also occur throughout should be restored or replaced, and any new additions should adopt their design.

The water features throughout the park are a key contribution to the ecological and aesthetic value of the park.

Existing site furniture has been added over a period of time without reference to any long-term plan, resulting in inconsistency in design and quality. It will be important to the future quality of the park to rationalise park furniture throughout the site. Materials, designs and the colour palette used for site infrastructure, lighting and furniture should as far as possible be compatible historically. Careful consideration should also be made to the location of new site furniture and should not just be replaced. Many benches, once positioned to enjoy views of the park now look out towards completely blocked views or are overshadowed by mature trees."
The following policies relate to the Built Heritage and Infrastructure of the park:

B1 – **Repair and protect the existing original structures**, features, walls, ponds, rockwork and built heritage structures using materials and methods appropriate for the original structures and which retain their significance.

B2 – **Reinstate lost features** where their loss has led to the erosion of quality and significance. Either replace with a replica or a reinterpretation of the original feature.

B3 – High quality, accessible **interpretation of the park’s built heritage** should be provided.

B4 – Install an appropriate and accessible co-ordinated **suite of furniture and lighting** structures to protect and enhance the park’s heritage and character and to provide a quality visitor experience.

B5 – To use variable colours and levels of lighting **to highlight special features** within the park such as ornamental planting, specimen trees or architectural features.
### How will we get there? (Action Plan 2015 to 2020)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action nu</th>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Lead</th>
<th>Timeframe</th>
<th>Estimated cost and budget</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Conserving the park's habitats:</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>44</td>
<td>Monitor closely the implementation of the HLF funded landscaping contract to ensure that all work is undertaken appropriately. Work will include: -restoring the Water Garden -extending the Rhododendron Dell</td>
<td>Harlow Council – Regeneration Team</td>
<td>Autumn 2015</td>
<td>HLF funding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45</td>
<td>Support the Town Park volunteers to help restore areas of the park including the completion of the Sensory Garden by Summer 2015, the restoration of the Spurriers House Garden and the Walled Garden</td>
<td>Education and Volunteer Officer</td>
<td>ongoing</td>
<td>Existing HLF budget</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>46</td>
<td>Support the conservation of the River Stort Marshes through the Green Team volunteers and Harlow Conservation Volunteers</td>
<td>Harlow Council – Biodiversity and Landscapes Team</td>
<td>ongoing</td>
<td>Existing Council budget</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>47</td>
<td>Continue to support the implementation of the Harlow Biodiversity Plan</td>
<td>Harlow Council – Biodiversity and Landscapes Team</td>
<td>ongoing</td>
<td>Existing Council budget</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Supporting local habitats and wildlife:</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>48</td>
<td>Undertake a series of activities to help protect the bat population in the park including erecting new bat boxes</td>
<td>Education and Volunteer Officer</td>
<td>Autumn 2015</td>
<td>HLF funding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>49</td>
<td>Continue the monthly guided walks around the park including some on themes that help people to appreciate the various habitats and species found in the park.</td>
<td>Education and Volunteer Officer</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td>HLF Funding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50</td>
<td>Run activities that support the existing habitats and support people’s appreciation of the habitats of the park such as pond dipping, tree planting and volunteer tasks.</td>
<td>Education and Volunteer Officer</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td>HLF Funding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>51</td>
<td>Create new habitats by leaving areas for long grass and creating wildflower areas.</td>
<td>Harlow Council – Regeneration Team and Education and Volunteer Officer</td>
<td>Spring 2017</td>
<td>Existing HLF budget</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Promoting and preserving the heritage features of the park:**
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Task Description</th>
<th>Responsible Team</th>
<th>Start Date</th>
<th>Funding Source</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>52</td>
<td>Repair and restore Spurriers House, Pets Corner and the Bandstand as part of the HLF funded regeneration project</td>
<td>Harlow Council – Regeneration Team</td>
<td>Autumn 2015</td>
<td>HLF funding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>53</td>
<td>Establish a cafe on the ground floor of Spurriers House that will enable the public to appreciate the heritage of the building.</td>
<td>Harlow Council – Regeneration Team</td>
<td>Spring 2016</td>
<td>HLF funding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>54</td>
<td>Produce and publish an Education Pack that highlights the heritage aspects of the Town Park</td>
<td>Education and Volunteer Officer</td>
<td>Autumn 2015</td>
<td>HLF Funding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>55</td>
<td>Design and place around the park a series of interpretation boards that help people to appreciate the heritage features of the Town Park.</td>
<td>Harlow Council – Regeneration Team</td>
<td>Autumn 2015</td>
<td>HLF funding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>56</td>
<td>Design and install temporary hoardings that are erected whilst the capital build contract of the HLF regeneration project takes place whilst highlight the heritage of the buildings being restored</td>
<td>Harlow Council – Regeneration Team</td>
<td>Autumn 2015</td>
<td>HLF funding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>57</td>
<td>Design and produce a series of leaflets including a heritage trail leaflet that helps people to appreciate the heritage features of the Town Park</td>
<td>Harlow Council – Regeneration Team</td>
<td>Autumn 2015</td>
<td>HLF funding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>58</td>
<td>Explore the option of leasing the Greyhound toilets to a community group. If this is not feasible arrange for the demolition of this redundant building.</td>
<td>Harlow Council – Property and Facilities and Regeneration Team</td>
<td>March 2016</td>
<td>Existing budgets</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Conservation & Heritage – January 2016 update

January 2016 - Where are we now?

Conservation of the Park:

Water Garden:

Extensive refurbishment has been undertaken in this area under the HLF landscaping contract, which has revealed the original 1960's layout and design. Trees have been removed which has opened up views across the Garden from the adjacent Lookout Hill. The three ponds were drained and dredged and replanted with aquatic plants at the pond margins, and marsh loving plants planted at the top of the garden in the boggy area.

The sloping banks of the ponds constructed from cobbles had suffered from severe erosion and this feature has been restored. The Pisces sculpture in the centre of the pond has been cleaned and restored as a central feature.

Sensory Garden:

The restoration of this garden, undertaken by the Town Park volunteers, was completed in June 2015 when the garden was officially reopened.

Specimen Garden:

Areas of the Specimen Garden being restored in 2015 by the Town Park volunteers include the rockery and hedgerow along Park Lane. Bulbs and shrubs have been planted in the rockery reflecting the layout of the feature and the gappy, ivy infested hedgerow has been replanted with beech, hornbeam and hawthorn whips.

Walled Garden:

The former Council nursery site is in the process of being restored in order that it can become a centre of horticultural use within the park. During 2015 ivy was removed from the walls revealing the original 1950's brick pattern. Part of the wall was also repaired by Kier Harlow.

Both the Town Park volunteers and the Harlow College students have undertaken extensive vegetation clearance in the Walled Garden during 2015 enabling a large polytunnel to be erected by Writtle College. This has been used as a temporary sheltered area for volunteers and participants of the guided walks and other activities during the year. During 2016 the polytunnel will start to be used for horticultural activity. Next to the polytunnel a series of five raised beds
surrounded by paving have been constructed by Harlow College Construction students as part of their work experience in the park. These are gradually being filled by the Town Park volunteers ready to start being used in Spring 2016.

The Native Black Poplar cuttings have continued to do well and are waiting replanting in the Stort Valley Meadows area of the Town Park, helping the preservation of these rare trees in the Harlow area.

**Rhododendron Dell:**

This feature has been restored with new rhododendron, hydrangea and azaleas being planted as part of the HLF landscaping works. Two new beds were creating linking this area with the rest of the park.

**Newfoundland Garden/ Millennium Maze:**

The wooden bridge has been repainted by the Town Park volunteers and Passmores School, restoring the bridge to its former glory. The Millennium Maze was restored by Pearson office staff.

**River Stort Marshes/Stort Valley Meadows:**

The GreenTeam and Harlow Conservation Volunteers have removed willows from ditches across the site increasing the biodiversity of this area and helping to restore these historic features.

In September 2015 volunteers from various local groups (including the GreenTeam, Harlow Conservation volunteers, and the Town Park Volunteers) were involved in a hay making exercise across the Stort Valley Meadows. The volunteers spent the day racking and clearing the hay after it had been cut.

**Harlow Biodiversity Action Plan:**

The Town Park has contributed to the implementation of the Harlow Biodiversity Action Plan in a number of ways including the erection of bat boxes across the Park, growing of Native Black Poplars and the reopening of ditches on the Stort Valley Meadows.

**Supporting the local habitats and wildlife:**

**Supporting a bat population in the park:**

During 2015 a number of different activities took place that supported the bat population within the park.

- In February half term a bat box building event was held in the park which was attended by 15 people.
- Harlow College engineering students undertook a project designing and building 21 bat boxes for the park.
• In April a bat box erecting event was held were the 21 bat boxes built by the Harlow College students were put in trees across the park.
• During the summer two Bat Talk and Walk events were held attended by over 60 people. Members of the Essex Bat Group talked about the lifecycle of the bat and explained the various bats species that have been found in the park. Participants were then given bat detectors to listen to bats as they walked through the park.

In addition the following activities supporting local habitats and wildlife were carried out in 2015:

• Guided Walks held on Winter Birds in the park attended by 11 people;
• Pond dipping activities using the stream during the National Playday attended by over 100 people. Native wildlife such as Sticklebacks, Water Louse, Water Boatman and other animals were found.
• Tree planting - 90 new trees were planted as part of the HLF landscaping project. Over 200 native hedgerow species planted as part of the hedgerow restoration.
• New wildlife areas in Spurriers Core & bee orchid relocation area near School Lane.
• Guided tour of Pets Corner highlighting some of the rarer and more unusual animals.

Conserving the parks heritage:
The design style of olive grey and white has been adopted across the park where feasible. Bins and railings were repainted in olive grey in the Circular Garden next to Spurriers House and the metal knee rails were repainted in their original white across Spurriers Core and new ones installed off Park Lane and the Water Garden in the original style.

Spurriers House:
Spurriers House has been reconnected to the former stables (now Pets’ Corner) by the demolition of 1960’s buildings restoring it to the original 1860’s layout. The ground floor is being restored to a café.

Research has continued by the Education and Volunteer Officer about the history of the House from its construction in 1860’s through to its restoration in 2015, with assistance from members of the public, Harlow Civic Society and relatives of occupants in the 1930’s

Pets’ Corner:
Work at Pets’ Corner has included the repainting of the 1860’s stable block, replacing the cobbles around the duck pond in the centre of the site and installation of a new knee rail around the central green area. The new Events Barn and Learning Centre will assist with educational provision allowing greater understanding of the heritage and conservation value of the site.

Bandstand:
The bandstand was restored to its former glory by extensive roof repairs, repainting of the walls and the interior, and new landscaping to improve its setting.
All of these features will have interpretation boards which as currently being drafted outlining their conservation and heritage value, and will be part of the proposed Heritage Trail to be produced in partnership with the Harlow Civic Society in 2016.

The Education Pack, produced by Groundwork Hertfordshire, will be available for use in the new Learning Centre and has sections on the history of the park and Pets’ Corner.

**How do we get there? (January 2016 update)**

red – not done, amber- being implemented, green- completed.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No</th>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Lead</th>
<th>Timeframe</th>
<th>Estimated Cost</th>
<th>January 2016 progress</th>
<th>Status</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>44</td>
<td>Monitor closely the landscaping work of restoration of the Water Garden &amp; Rhododendron Dell</td>
<td>HDC</td>
<td>Autumn 2015</td>
<td>HLF Funding</td>
<td>Work completed.</td>
<td>Green</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45</td>
<td>Support Town Park volunteers in their restoration work</td>
<td>HDC</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td>Existing HLF budget</td>
<td>Volunteers continue to work on restoring features across the park. Sensory Garden completed, Spurriers House Garden completed and Walled Garden ongoing.</td>
<td>Amber</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>46</td>
<td>Support the conservation of the Stort Valley Marshes by GreenTeam and Harlow Conservation Volunteers</td>
<td>HDC</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td>HDC existing budget</td>
<td>ongoing - many tasks held there during 2015</td>
<td>Amber</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>47</td>
<td>Continue to support implementation of the Harlow Biodiversity Plan</td>
<td>HDC</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td>HDC existing budget</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td>Amber</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>48</td>
<td>Undertake series activities to help protect bat population and erect bat boxes</td>
<td>HDC</td>
<td>Autumn 2015</td>
<td>HLF funding</td>
<td>Series of events held during 2015 to support the bat population. Additional bat boxes to be erected in Stort Valley Meadows during 2016.</td>
<td>Amber</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>49</td>
<td>Continue monthly guided walks to help appreciate various habitats in park</td>
<td>HDC</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td>HLF funding</td>
<td>Ongoing activity</td>
<td>Amber</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50</td>
<td>Run activities supporting existing habitats such as pond dipping, tree planting, volunteer tasks</td>
<td>HDC</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td>HLF funding</td>
<td>ongoing - 2 pond dipping events, 2 tree planting events held.</td>
<td>Amber</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>51</td>
<td>Create new habitats by leaving areas long grass</td>
<td>HDC</td>
<td>Spring 2017</td>
<td>HLF funding</td>
<td>ongoing – Spurriers Core &amp; orchid relocation areas.</td>
<td>Amber</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Promoting &amp; preserving heritage features of park</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>52</td>
<td>Repair &amp; restore Spurriers House, Pets’ Corner &amp; bandstand as part of HLF project</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>HDC</td>
<td>Autumn 2015</td>
<td>HLF funding</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Most of the capital work is complete at January 2015. Handover expected in February 2016.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>53</td>
<td>Establish café at Spurriers House to enable public appreciate heritage of building</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>HDC</td>
<td>2016</td>
<td>HLF Funding</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Working with preferred operator after tender exercise completed. Once HLF capital works completed the ground floor of Spurriers will be leased to operator who will initially fit it out. Cafe expected to open late Spring 2106.</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>54</td>
<td>Produce and publish Education pack highlighting heritage features of park</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>HDC</td>
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<td>HLF funding</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Pack produced and to be published / launched when Learning Centre completed</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>55</td>
<td>Design and place interpretation boards across park helping people appreciate heritage features of park</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>HDC</td>
<td>2016</td>
<td>HLF funding</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>New Boards have been erected but awaiting permanent insert interpretation boards on heritage / nature</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>56</td>
<td>Design temporary hoardings whilst capital works showing heritage of buildings being restored.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>HDC</td>
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<td>HDC funding</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>not completed due to other work pressures</td>
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<tr>
<td>57</td>
<td>Design and produce series of leaflets including heritage trail for Town Park</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>HDC</td>
<td>2016</td>
<td>HLF funding</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>ongoing- draft produced and being discussed with Harlow Civic Society</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>58</td>
<td>Explore options of leasing Greyhound toilets to community group</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>HDC</td>
<td>2016</td>
<td>Existing HDC budgets</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>Tender issued January 2016 requesting expressions of interest from community groups in restoring and using building.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Community Involvement

Where are we now? (March 2016)

There is a high level of community involvement in the Town Park, with active engagement by the local community in the educational and recreational opportunities that the site provides. There is also a high level of community involvement in the running of park, with opportunities for people to be involved in a variety of ways ranging from organising of individual events or under taking practical tasks, to involvement in managing the park.

Public consultation:

The views of park users and potential park users are essential in ensuring that the park is managed appropriately.

Over the past few years Harlow Council has undertaken the following consultation exercises with the public and the main groups using the Park.

HLF consultation process:

An extensive programme of community engagement was undertaken during the HLF project development phase, particularly between September 2011 and March 2012. During this consultation the views of over 1,100 local residents and park users were gathered and the results helped shape the HLF regeneration project. Consultees were asked to consider their priorities for the park out of the following themes;

- Park infrastructure
- access and information
- Restoring heritage features
- Nature, conservation and education
- A beautiful park
- Visitor facilities

The two highest themes emerged as nature, conservation and education and restoring heritage features.

In April 2012 a further consultation exercise gave people the opportunity to comment on whether they supported the restoration proposals within the HLF scheme. More than 98% of respondents confirmed their full support for the planned improvements, conservation and restoration within the park.

Key findings from the above consultation exercise included the following:

- The park is a popular and cherished green space within the town, of great importance to the lives of the town's residents and regular visitors, many of whom have had a close association with the park over many decades.
- Improvement of visitor facilities were a key priority for the majority of users, with the facility most in need of improvements being the toilets.
- Protecting and enhancing the natural environment within the park, increasing access to the park and high quality park management and maintenance were also important to respondents.
- A consistently high priority was the restoration of key New Town Park heritage feature.

During 2015 it is intended to undertake a further consultation exercise to gauge views of park users.

Community involvement in the management of the park:

Extensive opportunities exist for the public to be involved in the management of the park, including helping organise particular activities that take place within the park and getting involved in practical
ways that ensure the smooth running of the park. Funding from the HLF regeneration project has secured additional capacity building and support, not least in the funding of the Education and Volunteer Officer post for five years. This will enable the current level of community involvement to be supported, and that additional opportunities are created for people to be involved in the running of the park.

Outlined below are some of the ways that the community is currently involved in the management of Harlow Town Park.

**Town Park Users Group**

The park is supported by the Town Park Users Group (who were established in 1999), which is involved in the planning and management of the park. There are approximately 30 members of the group, with usually around twelve members attending each bi-monthly meeting. The group is used as a sounding board on management and maintenance issues regarding the park. Representatives from both Harlow Council and Kier Harlow attend the meetings, ensuring that any problems can be identified and together they can look for ways that the service can be developed and improved in the future. The group were key consultees in the development of the Town Park Masterplan as part of the development of the HLF submission and continue to be involved in the implementation of the HLF project.

**The Friends of Pets Corner**

The Friends of Pets Corner committee members meet six times a year. The group undertakes fundraising and publicity activities for Pets Corner as well as running Fun Days throughout the year.

The Friends’ aims are to support, promote and develop the work of Pets’ Corner, and to promote for educational, social and therapeutic purposes the welfare and availability of exotic, domestic and livestock animals to the people of Harlow and the surrounding areas.

**GPCA - a registered charity running the park events:**

GPCA (Great Pardon Community Association) has a licence agreement with Harlow Council to run events on the Town Park Showground and Bandstand. The GPCA also ran the cafe kiosk located at the Pets Corner buildings until these were closed as part of the preparation for the HLF capital building works taking place in the park from March 2015. The GPCA run a wide variety of events including fairs, circuses, Country and Western weekends, Monster Truck events. They also facilitate local community groups to be able to use the park for their events such as the National Play day and local charity sponsored events.

The GPCA has been a key consultee in the development of the HLF regeneration project and continues to be consulted on the progress of the landscaping and capital works as they are implemented. The GPCA have fed back comments and made suggestions about how some of the aspects of the regeneration project will work in practice for them. This has lead, where appropriate, to changes being made to the contract and design. For instance, it has been recognised that the original design of the path across the showground would cause practical difficulties in ensuring that vehicles using the showground would not damage the new footpath. As a result, a reinforced
weight bearing area of the footpath has been created that will enable vehicles to cross the path within a limited area at the lower part of the path.

Volunteers within the park:

The Education and Volunteer Officer started in post in June 2014. Since then, he has developed several active groups of volunteers that are supporting the management of the park in differing ways. A "Thank You" event was held at the Pets Corner Education Room for the various volunteers for the Town Park in December 2014. This was attended by over 30 volunteers from the groups based in the park including the Town Park volunteers, Town Park User Group, Pets Corner and The Friends of Pets Corner.

Thursday Volunteers:

Every week a group of volunteers have undertaken practical gardening and maintenance tasks across the park. This group is ever expanding in numbers, with 60 on the list and an average of 10 volunteers attending each week. One of the key areas that the Thursday Volunteers have been involved in is the transformation of the Sensory Garden (see case study on page 42). They have also helped clear the extensive ivy coverage from trees and walls across the park, planted bulbs and plants, cleared vegetation, and painted and restored seats and fencing around the park.

Over the coming year and beyond, it is planned that this volunteer group will continue to be involved in practical maintenance across the park, including projects in the Newfoundland garden and bedding schemes. Through their hard work and dedication this group has proved to be an invaluable practical help within the park which has made a big impact.

Weekend Volunteers:

Once a month, a weekend volunteer activity is run within the park. This group has not attracted the numbers of the Thursday volunteers, but enables a wider pool of volunteers to get practically involved in the upkeep of the park.

The Green Team and Harlow Conservation Volunteers:

Harlow Council's Landscaping team support the Green Team volunteers that undertake weekly volunteering tasks on the Stort Valley Marsh areas of the park. On average there are 7 volunteers attending each week.

Harlow Conservation Volunteers also undertake tasks in the Stort Valley Marshes area of the park.

Young Historians

A group of Young Historians have supported the HLF regeneration project by researching the history of the Town Park. In particular they have researched the history of William Cox, the last owner of Spurriers House.
Pets' Corner volunteers

Pets Corner has a strong group of about 25 volunteers who support the daily practical and animal husbandry activities of looking after the animals at Pets Corner. They also support the running of events held at Pets Corner.

ParkRun volunteers

A core group of about 6 volunteers organise the 5km free timed weekly ParkRun that began in the Autumn 2015. As everyone who participates in the ParkRun is encouraged to volunteer and help run the event, there have been over 100 additional volunteers who have helped steward the event. On average each volunteer helps support three park runs over a year.

Urban Games

Every year since 2011, the Urban Games event takes place in the Town Park Skate Park area, attracting between 600 and 1,000 young people. The event combines BMX, skating, scooter and mountain bike events along with taster sports sessions and activities promoting health and wellbeing. This event has been facilitated by Harlow Council Community Wellbeing Team who have sourced external funding and coordinated the event, but it relies on a pool of 20 volunteers (including young people) who run and judge the competitions.

CanalAbility

On the edge of the Town Park is the River Stort Navigation. Located just at the edge of the park is the base for CanalAbility a local charity that provides canal boat activities for disabled and able people which is supported by volunteers.

Education:

The park has great future potential for high quality interpretation to enable visitors to learn more of the full significance of the site’s heritage; be it history, design, planting or wildlife. There is also scope for more formal learning and teaching opportunities for those studying or wishing to learn about related areas.

Linking the Town Park into the local educational offer

Links are being built between the Town Park and local educational establishments of all levels, from nursery schools to further education, resulting in mutual benefits for both the park and for the schools and colleges. The potential exists for educational establishments to get involved with the park in many ways, from direct teaching within the park to reinforce curriculum learning to practical projects that support learning whilst delivering tangible benefits to the park.

Currently, the range of educational activities linked into the park include the following:
Educational packs are in development:

As part of the Activity Plan within the HLF project, Groundwork Hertfordshire have been employed to develop education packs for the park. They will create resources that local schools and early year years settings can use to deliver aspects of the national curriculum by using the natural features and facilities of the park. The education packs will provide resources linked to both Pets Corner and the wider park. The packs will be available from Summer 2015 with the launch linking in with the opening of the new Learning Centre that is being built as part of the HLF regeneration project.

The packs are being developed in consultation with local schools. Local primary schools have been encouraged to complete an on-line survey about their current usage and potential future usage of the park. Two school consultation events were also ran that enabled feedback from school representatives on the potential content of the education packs to ensure that they meet teachers' requirements.

The intention is for the education packs to be able to be used by local schools both as self-led activities as well as activities led by staff from Pets Corner and the Education and Volunteer Officer utilising the new Learning Centre.

Pets' Corner education offer:

Pets' Corner offers a variety of educational packages for a range of ages, linked to the national curriculum. Comprising of guided tours around the farm, meeting the animals and activities delivered in the Pets' Corner classroom. In addition to outreach activities where the animals are taken out into local schools, Pets Corner also offer the following packages at the Pets Corner site:

- **Nursery package**: one hour visit with a maximum group of 16 nursery children. Includes a 30 minutes guided tour by one of our trained staff around the farm and 30 minutes of meet the animals.
- **Schools package A**: 45 minutes guided tour by one of Pets Corner trained staff around the farm meeting many of our larger animal residents. Groups of over 15 children will be split to ensure that only a maximum of 15 children are on the tour at any one time.
- **Schools package B**: One and a half hour visit, which includes a guided tour by one of Pets Corner trained staff around the farm meeting many of our larger animal residents plus classroom activities, which includes meeting some of our smaller animal residents.

**Partnership with Writtle College to provide Land Based Studies**

Pets Corner also works in partnership with Writtle College to provide Land Based studies to pupils from three local schools. Currently six students each from Passmores, Stewards and Aspire Academy are trained in Animal Husbandry and Horticulture at Pets Corner.

**Linking local college students into the HLF regeneration project**

The HLF capital build contract is utilising several innovative building techniques, in particular the use of straw bales for the Learning Centre and the pellet boiler as the heating for Pets Corner and the Learning Centre. Straw Bale construction is a modern method of construction that is not adopted within mainstream constructions site currently in any scale. This is partly due to the difficulties of getting mortgages on homes built with this type of materials. However, there have
been recent changes which should enable this to become a more common material. The Construction students at Harlow College are not currently exposed to live examples of this type of construction. It is therefore hoped that arrangements can be made for some of the construction students to be able to come onto site to observe the installation of the Straw Bale Learning Centre to increase their awareness of this innovative method of construction and knowledge of how it is installed. Perhaps as a result, they will be able to access employment linked to projects that use this type of construction in the future.

It is also hoped that Harlow College painting and decorating students will be involved in the decorating of the inside of the bandstand as practical work experience for their course. Both these opportunities will help use the capital works linked to the HLF regeneration project into the local college’s offer. It creates an opportunity to provide real life work experience examples that build the students awareness of innovation methods of construction and support the work in the Town Park.

**Bat Boxes – work experience for college students and opportunities for community involvement**

The town park offers an ideal habitat for bats with the combination of the trees and water providing excellent sources of food. Bat Boxes are being put up in the park as part of the HLF regeneration scheme. A whole programme of community involvement has been designed around putting bat boxes up in the park. The programme is designed to get people involved as volunteers and as part of educational opportunities, raise awareness and understanding of bats and their habitats and as a cheap and effective way of introducing bat boxes into the park.

In February half term 2015, the Education and Volunteer Officer rang a bat box building event in partnership with Essex Bat Group, which 15 people attended. This was in fact a great intergenerational event as several grandparents came with their grandchildren. Whilst the participants built their bat boxes the representatives from the Essex Bat Group were able to talk about bats and their habitats, building the participants understanding of the species.

**Engineering students from Harlow College** who are studying for their Engineering Foundation degree, are designing and producing bat boxes that will be put up in the Town Park. This is being run as a real life work experience opportunity for the students, whereby the students are tasked with delivering the bat boxes to the Council’s brief, within budget and to a tight timescale. The four students involved will be responsible for managing the whole project including designing the boxes and ensuring that they achieve the maximum number of boxes with the materials provided, utilising their engineering machining skills to cut out the components and fit the boxes together.

Second Year Engineering students Matt, Zoe and Stephanie with their mentor Ray Hawkins and Alison Fox, Regeneration Projects Manager from Harlow Council
These bat boxes will be erected in the park at a **bat box erecting event**, where members of the public will be encouraged to help erect the boxes. This event will again be run in partnership with the Essex Bat Group who will be able to talk to those attending about bats and their habitats.

In Autumn 2015, a **bat walk in the park** is planned that enable people to listen out for and watch bats.

**Monthly themed guided walks – combining exercise with informal learning**

The Education and Volunteer Officer has organised monthly themed guided walks around the park. These walks have each had differing themes ranging from a focus on the wildlife found in the park to the history of the park. These walks allow local people to combine the exercise of walking around the park with an informal learning opportunity. The Education and Volunteer Officer has lead several of the walks himself and shared his knowledge on the biodiversity of the landscape by identifying the trees and birds found in the park. Local people who have some specialist knowledge have also lead some of the walks, ensuring variety in style and breadth of subjects covered on the walks.

In April 2015, a representative from Writtle College is leading the Guided walk and highlighting some of the plants in the park.

In November 2014, as part of the World War One Centenary commemorations, a walk was held that focused on the lives of those men named on the war memorial located within the town park near the Greyhound Pub and highlighting what life around the park would have been like at the outbreak of the war.

**A good range of facilities that meets local needs**

The breadth of facilities within the park ensures that the Town Park caters for all the local community needs. For instance the following parts of the park meet the following community needs:

**Harlow Skate Park**

Harlow Skate Park is a 650 sq. m. concrete floodlit skate park. The facility features a skate bowl, speed hump, blocks, steps, quarter pipes and banks. The facility is very popular with the predominant audience being teenagers, though it does attract children as young as 6 and adults aged 40+.

**Adventure Playground**

The adventure playground is a popular facility amongst families and older children offering a range of adventurous but safe opportunities for children to play and be active.

**Harlow Outdoor Gym**

The new Harlow Outdoor gym is a free open access facility for residents to use for the purpose of exercise. There are 8 workstations. The facility mainly targets residents aged 14+ and aims to promote healthy lifestyles.
Paddling Pool
The Town Park paddling pool is open during the summer holidays and is a very popular facility for younger children and young families.

Harlow Bandstand
The bandstand plays host to a number of events throughout the year. The facility caters for a number of audiences and over the years household names such as Chas ‘n’ Dave, Thin Lizzy, The Boom Town Rats, Bucks Fizz and more have all played there. There are a number of annual events that currently take place such as Rock School, Linkfest and a Country & Western event among others. The events attract a wide range of audiences.

Stort Meadows
The Stort Meadows provide relaxing space to walk and explore nature.

New and improved facilities within the park
The HLF regeneration project will improve many of the park facilities including Pets Corner, creating a new cafe space at Spurriers House, improving the toilet provision around Pets Corner and Spurriers core and improving the management of many of the garden areas of the park.

New cafe at Spurriers House
As part of the HLF regeneration project, the ground floor of Spurriers House will be developed into a cafe facility. Expressions of interest will be sought for potential cafe operators during 2015. The cafe will create a relaxing space in the middle of the park where local people can meet and relax.

Improving the provision of toilets within the park
Toilets facilities were highlighted as a priority for park users during the consultation exercise for the development phase of the HLF project. As part of the HLF project, improvements are being made to the toilets near Pets Corner. Unfortunately, due to the budget constraints, the proposed refurbishment of the Greyhound toilets is not able to be undertaken as part of the HLF project. However, there is a possibility that this building is leased to a community group as a community facility. There is also a possibility that portable toilets are located near the Adventure Playground to meet the identified need.

Reclaiming the Walled Garden
The Walled Garden is in the process of being restored. It had become very overgrown and in a poor state of repair. Through the hard work of the Town Park volunteers the site has been cleared. Writtle College staff have erected a polytunnel so that the site can be restored to be used for horticultural training.
Where do we want to get to?

The Harlow Town Park Conservation Management Plan sets out the following policies in order to achieve the vision for the Community and Learning aspects of the park:

C4- Increase the diversity and numbers of users of the park.

C5 – Increase involvement of volunteers in the park.

The Town Park Activity Plan refers to the following actions to ensure that there is continued community involvement and consultation with town park users;

- Target consultation activities towards known under represented user and non-user groups
- Ensure ongoing evaluation of user and non-user groups to address under representation.
- Improve direct involvement in physical projects and management within the park.
- Develop partnerships with local groups to provide appropriate information for visitors
- Work with youth groups to identify engagement opportunities within the park.
- Continue dialogue with Access Partners throughout the implementation phase.
- Increase opportunities to accessible information about the park for all.
- Develop and implement signage throughout the park. Crate and action an interpretation strategy.
- Keep standards of maintenance and management high.
- Collate visitor counts and undertake trend analysis.
- Keep detailed and up to date records.
## How will we get there? (Action Plan 2015 to 2020)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action Nu</th>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Lead</th>
<th>Timeframe</th>
<th>Estimated cost and budget</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>C4 - Increase the diversity and numbers of users of the park</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>59</td>
<td>Undertake a survey of at least 100 park users</td>
<td>Harlow Council – Regeneration Team</td>
<td>Survey of 100+ park users completed by Autumn 2015</td>
<td>HLF Activity Plan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60</td>
<td>Target consultation activities towards known under represented user and non-user groups</td>
<td>Harlow Council – Regeneration and Community wellbeing Team</td>
<td></td>
<td>HLF Activity Plan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>C5 – Increase involvement of volunteers in the park</strong></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 63        | Improve direct involvement in physical projects and management within the park by continuing to provide opportunities for people to participate in practical gardening and maintenance activities within the park including:  
- the weekly Thursday volunteer group  
- the monthly volunteer group | Education and Volunteers Officer                                                      | on going                            | HLF Activity Plan                  |
| 64        | Increase the level of volunteering at the town park                   | Education and Volunteers Officer                                                      | Year 1                              | HLF Activity Plan                  |
| 65        | Ensure that local wildlife groups continue to be consulted and engaged with the activities within the Town Park. | Education and Volunteers Officer                                                      | On going                            | HLF Activity Plan                  |
| 66        | Continue to support and build the capacity of the Town Park User Group | Education and Volunteers Officer                                                      | On going                            | HLF Activity Plan                  |
| 67        | Work with youth groups to identify engagement opportunities within the park. |                                                                                       |                                     |                                    |
| 68        | Review annually the opportunities to fund and facilitate events such as the | Harlow Council –                                                                       | Annually with the                   | External Funding of                |
| Urban Games that attract participation by young people as volunteers to support the running of the event | Community Wellbeing Team | event taking place each Summer if funding / resources is sourced | £2,500 required each year to fund this event each year. |

**Education**

| 69 | Continue to build the links between the Town Park and local educational institutions of all levels | Education and Volunteers Officer | Ongoing | HLF Activity Plan funding |
| 70 | Publish and promote new educational packs to local schools | Education and Volunteers Officer |
| 71 | Once the new Learning Centre is open, develop a schools educational offer | Education and Volunteers Officer |
| 72 | Build links with Harlow College to enable the park to offer students "live briefs" for student projects and work experience opportunities. | Education and Volunteers Officer | On going | HLF Activity Plan |
Community Involvement – January 2016 update

January 2016 - Where are we now?

Community involvement in the management of the park:

Town Park Users Group (TPUG):

TPUG assisted the EVO in 2015 with the redesign of the new park map for use in the Events & Activities Leaflet, and provided valuable feedback with its layout and features to be included.

The Friends of Pets’ Corner

During 2016 The Friends of Pets’ Corner raised over £9k via fundraising activities and donations. The Friends ran the following activities:

- Quiz Night at the Leah Manning Centre
- Easter Monday Fun Day
- Paws for Health Dog show
- Catering at Rainbow Services BBQ
- BBQ lunch for Town Park volunteers
- Sheep shearing & craft fair
- Fun Dog Show
- Christmas raffle draw
- Christmas Nativity

Volunteers within the park:

A second ‘thank you’ event was held in the Walled Garden for various volunteers in the park which 30 people attended. Following the official reopening of the Sensory Garden in June 2015 volunteers were rewarded with a BBQ.

A smaller social event (attended by 20 people) was held in the polytunnel at the Walled Garden in December for volunteers as an appreciation of their time given for the Town Park.

As well as the 2 social events training has been arranged for the two groups of Town Park volunteers at Writtle College – these consist of one day courses on horticultural subjects such as pruning or introduction to gardening, which were well received by the volunteers.

Over 100 volunteers have now been registered as volunteers at the Park> Volunteers are referred from a variety of sources including self-referral, the Town Park volunteering leaflet, National Citizens Service, corporate volunteering events (such as Pearsons) etc. The varied and numerous
projects undertaken by the volunteers during 2015 were outlined in update section on Health and Wellbeing.

**Education:**

In November 2015 Pets’ Corner has produced its Education Strategy that outlines the full extent of its educational offer and its plans for the next five years to achieve its vision for educational provision based at Pets’ Corner.

Strong links have been developed with local educational establishments during 2015 including the following:

- **Production of the Education Pack**- Groundwork Hertfordshire completed the Town Park Education Pack. This included two consultation events in July 2015 for Early Years and Primary School teachers building awareness and links with local schools. The final version of the pack incorporated comments and feedback from Harlow Council staff and local teachers was produced by November 2015. We are now awaiting completion of the Learning Centre so that training events can be run for staff and local teachers. The education pack is key to the Learning Centre’s educational offer for local schools.

- **Partnership with Writtle College to provide Land Based Studies** – After a successful pilot year, Pets’ Corner is now (from September 2015) delivering Land Based Studies to local Academy 14-16 year old students on a 3 days per week basis. This is delivered in partnership with Writtle College and will lead to a BTEC Level 1 qualification. The units are mainly animal care based with an element of Health and Safety, environment, life skills and Horticulture (the later based at the Walled Garden-former Nursery Site adjacent to the Pets’ Corner site). In addition the Land Based Studies course supports the provision of alternative educational provision and work based learning based at Pets’ Corner. Pets’ Corner intends to continue to develop its educational offer based around its delivery of the Land Based studies with the introduction of a Level 2 course for post 16 year olds.

- **Partnership with Harlow College** – Several projects took place during the year involving students from Harlow College including:
  - **Construction students**- Over three weeks in October 2015 over 50 students from Harlow College’s construction academy undertook a week’s work experience within the Bandstand and Walled Garden area of the Town Park. The students undertook work that supported the development of a project to enable the Walled Garden to become a community horticultural space. The students laid paving and built raised beds which will be used by the Land Base Studies students in future along with other community groups. Other students redecorated the inside of the bandstand. The students were assessed and supervised by their College teachers and the EVO.
  - **Engineering students** – As highlighted in the original Management Plan in 2015 students from the engineering department undertook a project designing and producing bat boxes that were erected in the Town Park.
• **Graphic Design students** have also completed a project to design promotional materials for the Town Park. Students were encouraged to explore the park produce new designs for the park. Council Officers provided the students with feedback on their designs at various stages throughout the module. One student has been commissioned to produce designs for promotional material for Pets’ Corner’s 50th anniversary as a result of this exercise. Work from the other students may be incorporated into future designs at the Town Park.

![](https://example.com/images/graphics.jpg)

*Above is a selection of the graphic designs that the students produced for the Town Park*

- **Guided walk around the park for Harlow College lecturers and staff** – As part of the College’s Wellbeing Day (Summer 2015) the Harlow Council Regeneration Projects Manager led a guided walk around the park for staff and lecturers highlighting the park’s history, the HLF funded regeneration work that was being undertaken and raising awareness of the opportunities that the park could have for staff to utilise the park within the courses they deliver. Links were made with the Graphic Design department as a result of this guided walk.

Three members of Pets’ Corner staff and the EVO undertook Level 3 Education & Training (formerly PTLLS) training provided at Writtle College. The staff were assessed on a micro teaching session and submitted 3 assignments towards achieving this award (results are currently awaited).

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**Case Study: Essex Bat Group (EBG) involved in Educational work in Town Park**

Contact was made with the EBG at a Pets’ Corner event in 2014. The EBG are a voluntary organisation and a partner group within the Bat Conservation Trust. Two of their volunteers were keen to promote bats within the Town Park and the EBG were subsequently commissioned by the EVO to provide 2 Bat Talk and Walks in the Town Park in the Summer of 2015. This was after 21 bat boxes (made by Harlow College students) were erected across the park in Spring 2015 by the EBG and local residents.

The Talk and Walks were well received and attended by over 60 people. The EBG gave a talk in the Walled Garden, which provided an ideal location using old park benches as seating. Six species of Bat were recorded on the walk and it has resulted in a greater awareness of bats within the Town Park for local residents and it is planned to repeat these events in 2016.

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**Monthly themed Guided Walks**

The EVO has organised monthly Guided Walks which are held on Saturday mornings from 10.00-11.30am. They have been held on a number of themes, with the following attendances:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Month</th>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>No. of attendees</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>January 2015</td>
<td>Winter Wander</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February 2015</td>
<td>Birds of Town Park</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 2015</td>
<td>Stort Valley Meadows</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 2015</td>
<td>Plants of Town Park</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 2015</td>
<td>Heritage Walk</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 2015</td>
<td>Stort Valley Wildflowers</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July 2015</td>
<td>Park to Museum Walk</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August 2015</td>
<td>Gardens of the Town Park</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September 2015</td>
<td>Fruits of the Town Park</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 2015</td>
<td>Pets’ Corner Tour</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November 2015</td>
<td>Discover Winter Trees</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December 2015</td>
<td>Winter Wander</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total attendees</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>154</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This resulted in an average of 12-13 people per walk. A senior Horticultural lecturer from Writtle College lead the April walk on Plants of the Park, a local conservation volunteer lead the Stort Valley Wildflower walk in June, and Pets’ Corner staff led the October walk around the facility.

New and improved facilities within the Park:

New café – Spurriers House

Site visits were made to Raphael’s Park in Romford, East London (where a restaurant and kiosk are operated following HLF restoration works) and Cedars Park, Hertfordshire (which operates from a former Orangery) so that Town Park staff could get an indication of how such a facility could operate in Harlow. Both operations work well with the local community and the preferred bidder for Spurriers café manages a facility locally which is well used by the local community as well as running it as a commercial concern. It is hoped to have the Spurriers Café operational by late Spring 2016.

Improving toilet provision within the park:

The provision of toilet facilities at the Park were again raised during the Town Park Survey in August 2015, a typical comment was:

‘Generally the park is good but a bit of investment is needed in toilets’

Some negative impressions of the park included the lack of toilet provisions. Spurriers Café will increase toilet provision within the park but these will be limited to café users. Signage within the park has improved so the toilets are now clearly shown on maps and on fingerposts.

Discussions are commencing on improving the existing toilet provision adjacent to Pets’ Corner and the Council has secured funding for a Changing Places disability toilet, so provision is likely to be increased, however existing budget constraints makes it difficult to progress beyond these plans.

Reclaiming the Walled Garden:

The Walled Garden continues to be restored as a community horticultural resource, much of it undertaken by the local community volunteers. The original plans for the Walled Garden within the HLF funded Capital Works were not undertaken due to budget constraint. However, the raised beds and paving built by the Harlow College students mark an important milestone in the
development of this area as a community resource. Now that the HLF works are being completed it is planned to concentrate on this facility. An amended Planning Application is being submitted for Walled Garden seeking to reuse several metal containers that have been relocated to the park as either storage or additional teaching space. The plan is to camouflage the containers by cladding them in order to create a more sensitive appearance. A capital bid for this has been submitted to the Council and if this is successful, it is intended that this work will be completed during 2016.

How will we get there? (Update January 2016)

red – not done, amber- being implemented, green- completed.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Lead</th>
<th>Timeframe</th>
<th>Estimate Cost</th>
<th>January 2016 progress</th>
<th>Status</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>59</td>
<td>Increase the diversity and numbers of users of the park</td>
<td>HDC</td>
<td>Autumn 2015</td>
<td>HLF Activity Plan</td>
<td>the Town Park Survey (August 2015) had a total of 104 surveys completed on line.</td>
<td>Green</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60</td>
<td>Undertake a survey of at least 100 park users</td>
<td>HDC</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td>HLF Activity Plan</td>
<td>On going activity. The strong links built with Harlow College has encouraged greater use of the park by young people through their coursework being linked to the park. Talks on the Town Park were given to the Harlow Blind Group and Harlow Alzheimer’s Group.</td>
<td>Amber</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>61</td>
<td>Target consultation activities towards under represented user and non-user groups</td>
<td>HDC</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td>HLF Activity Plan</td>
<td>Visitor numbers are recorded for events held in the park. However, difficulties exist in collecting figures on general numbers visiting the park due to numerous entrances to the park.</td>
<td>Red</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>62</td>
<td>Collate visitor counts and undertake trend analysis</td>
<td>HDC</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td>HLF Activity Plan</td>
<td>ongoing- comments noted from public on events and activities such as guided walks etc.</td>
<td>Amber</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>63</td>
<td>Ensure on going evaluation of user and non-user groups to address under representation</td>
<td>HDC</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td>HLF Activity Plan</td>
<td>Over 50 weekly volunteer tasks and 12 monthly tasks held during 2015 with over 100 volunteers registered with te</td>
<td>Amber</td>
</tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>64</td>
<td>Increase the level of volunteering at the Town Park</td>
<td>HDC</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td>HLF Activity Plan</td>
<td>Ongoing- new groups such as Passmores Academy &amp; Heart 4 Harlow undertook volunteer work. The National Citizens Service increased the number of tasks they undertake on site from 1 to 3.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65</td>
<td>Ensure local wildlife groups continue to be consulted and engaged with Town Park activities</td>
<td>HDC</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td>HLF Activity Plan</td>
<td>Essex Bat Group involved in Bat Talk &amp; Walks: Harlow Conservation Volunteers undertook conservation management work at Peace Wood.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>66</td>
<td>Continue to support and build capacity for TPUG</td>
<td>HDC</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td>HLF Activity Plan</td>
<td>ongoing- meetings held regularly with group.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>67</td>
<td>Work with youth groups to identify engagement opportunities within park</td>
<td>HDC</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td>HLF Activity Plan</td>
<td>Increased engagement with National Citizenship Service and Harlow College resulted in better engagement by young people wit the park activities.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>68</td>
<td>Review annually opportunities to fund &amp; facilitate events such as Urban Games that attract young people as volunteers to run event</td>
<td>HDC</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td>HLF Activity Plan</td>
<td>Worked with Epping Forest Health works with young people to run Dog Show event</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Education**

<p>| | | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>69</td>
<td>Continue to build links between Town Park and local educational institutions of all levels</td>
<td>HDC</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>70</td>
<td>Publish and promote new educational packs to local schools</td>
<td>HDC</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>71</td>
<td>Once new Learning</td>
<td>HDC</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Centre is open; develop schools educational offer</td>
<td>Activity Plan</td>
<td>Centre</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>72 Build links with Harlow College to enable park to offer 'live briefs. For student projects and work experience opportunities</td>
<td>HDC Ongoing</td>
<td>Over 50 Construction and Engineering students involved in work experience projects at the park during 2015.</td>
<td>Amber</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Marketing

Where are we now? (March 2015)

The park has high visitor numbers (Pets’ Corner averages 90,000 visits per year), but there is scope to:

- improve the range of visitors
- increase their length of stay
- Encourage visitors to explore other less well visited parts of the park such as the Stort Valley Meadows, Specimen Garden and Look Out Hill

This will be achieved by raising the profile of the Town Park within Harlow and improving the facilities on site, such as the creation of a cafe through improvements via the HLF regeneration project.

Marketing and promoting the Town Park

It is acknowledged that the park would benefit from a more coordinated approach to marketing as currently there is not an overarching marketing plan for Harlow Town Park. However, since the Park was awarded the HLF lottery funding in 2012 and especially since the Education and Volunteer Officer has been in post, a more coordinated approach has been taken to promoting the park. These have included:

- Dedicated webpages for the Town Park and Pets’ Corner have been introduced to Harlow Council website\(^6\) and on the Visit Harlow website\(^7\)
- A new quarterly leaflet highlighting the upcoming events has been designed
- Promoted via a variety of media such as press releases, social media and posters.

A recent Facebook post (March 2015) posted by Harlow Council promoting the new Outdoor Gym facility reached 22,000 people within 24 hours. This illustrates the potential audience that Social Media is able to reach.

The HLF regeneration project

The council was awarded HLF lottery funding for regenerating the park in 2012. Since then the public has been updated on the progress being made in implementing the project through a structured communications strategy which has included:

- Regular press releases
- Articles in the council newsletter Harlow Times
- Social media outlets
- Updates posted on the new noticeboards located around the park
- Publicity through the new Visitor Information Point at the Town Bus Station
- Email updates to previous attendees at events and activities
- Information that is given at the monthly guided walks lead by the Education and Volunteer Officer

Posters have been put up around the Pets Corner site informing the public of the temporary close of Pets Corner. Press releases and information on the Harlow website has also been provided about the temporary closure of Pets Corner.

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\(^6\) [http://www.harlow.gov.uk/townpark](http://www.harlow.gov.uk/townpark)
Signage and interpretation:

Interpretation at the Stort Valley Meadows

The Stort Valley Meadows area of the Town Park has an interpretation board that highlights information about the pollard and popular trees located in that part of the park. Information about this area of the park is included in a leaflet about Harlow Marshes.

Harlow Sculpture Trail leaflet

The Town Park features in the Harlow Sculpture Trail leaflet that highlights the many sculptures that are located around the town. The detail from the trail map below highlights the following sculptures that are located within the park:

- Aphrodite
- Leah Manning Mural
- Two Children on a rock
- Pisces

HLF project will provide improvements to signage and interpretation

Entrances, particularly those from the town centre, currently need improving as they are not that welcoming or easily visible and do not provide orientation and navigation to other features or other information. The park also has the potential for high quality interpretation to enable visitors to learn more of the full significance of the site’s heritage; be it history, design, planting or wildlife. This
issue is being addressed as part of the HLF regeneration project, which is currently being implemented. A series of a series of interpretation boards and fingerposts have been commissioned that will address this weakness.

By Autumn 2015 the following will have been added to the park:

- 10 additional finger post signs to be erected across the park
- 4 Welcome signs at Entrances to park at the following locations:
  - Edinburgh Way entrance to the Showground
  - Fifth Avenue new entrance to Specimen Gardens
  - Park Lane entrance to Greyhound car park
  - New residential development entrance
- 8 Interpretation boards at the following locations:
  - Specimen Gardens
  - Water Gardens
  - Peace Wood
  - Lockout Hill
  - Greyhound Car Park
  - Bandstand
  - Pets Corner
  - Spurriers House
- 2 Notice boards within Pets Corner

The design of the Fingerpost Signs which are to be erected within the park during 2015.

Welcome Board design to be erected in the park during 2015.
The development of self-guided trails such as a Heritage Trail and Tree Trail with accompanying leaflets will encourage visitors to explore the wider park and learn of its history and significance.

During the HLF funded capital build works that are taking place at Pets Corner, Spurriers House and the bandstand during 2015, **banner hoardings** are to be designed and erected providing background information on both the work being undertaken and the history of each of these park features.

New **community notice** boards have been erected across the park. These have been used to promote activities and events taking place within the park and to provide regular updates on the progress of the HLF project.

**Events**

**New Events and Activities leaflet**

Harlow Council has designed and produced a new quarterly events and activities leaflet that highlights the range of events being held in the Town Park. It includes a map of the park, an events calendar with symbols for the various activities and a short update on the progress of the HLF regeneration project. The intention is that this leaflet will be produced on a quarterly basis and hopefully will lead to a wider audience for the events in the park. The leaflet is available on the Council website, and is distributed at key locations around the town.

**GPCA events**

Harlow Town Park is already an important venue for a number of community, sporting and commercial events. The main large scale events run in the park (at the Showground) are delivered as part of a Service Level Agreement with the registered charity Great Parndon Community Association (GPCA).

Recent events have included:

- Fireworks Display – 18,000 people
- Circus (up to twice per year) – c. 2,000 people per event
- Fun Fair (up to 4x per year) – c. 2,000 people per event
- Other shows such as Monster Trucks – up to 5,000 people.

GPCA also run 3 music events each year:

- Country in the Park – a one day country and western themed festival, usually held in August each year which attracts up to 2,000 people and has a national audience;
- Battle of the Bands – local band completion held each July which feeds into LinkFest in the Park – a two day festival in August each year attracting up to 6,000 people over 2 days.

The Showground and park are also home to a range of other large scale community and sporting events such as Race for Life, Sport Relief Mile, 5k Cross Country Race (Harlow Running Club), Santa Fun Run (St Clare Hospice), Remembrance Day Parade (Royal British Legion). These events typically attract up to 500 people.

These events are promoted via a range of medium including adverts in the local papers and magazines such as the Harlow Star, Gazette, CM20 magazine, Harlow Times and school
magazines such Primary Times. Much of their advertising is via the internet and Social Media outlets which they have found to be more effective that producing newsletters and leaflets.

The walks and activities that are run by the Education and Volunteer Officer are advertised via a variety of mediums including:

- posters on the notice boards located around the park
- on the Council's website events listings page
- press releases
- E-bulletins to a growing list of interested members of the public
- email alerts to local networks of organisations whose members can help raise the profile of the events of the park
- social media including the Council's twitter account

Pets’ Corner and the Friends of Pets’ Corner hold a series of events and activities throughout the year which include lambing events, Easter Fun Days, animal experience days and craft days, dog show and a Christmas Grotto. These are promoted through the Council website, the Friends of Pets’ Corner, Social Media and posters and leaflets. Pets’ Corner is temporarily closed whilst the capital build works for the HLF regeneration work is taking place. In order to raise awareness of this a series of press releases and posters and social media campaigns has been undertaken including an article in the March edition of the Harlow Times.

Pets’ Corner typically receives around 25 visits per year from school and nursery group for educational activities. Once Pets’ Corner is reopened after the refurbishment work as part of the HLF Capital Build work has been completed, the educational offer at Pets Corner and the new Learning Centre will be actively promoted to local schools with the aim of increasing the number of school visits to the park, using the Parks new educational pack that is currently being developed.

The Annual Urban Games that takes place at the skate park within the park is promoted through a series of posters, press releases, social media etc.

National Play Day event
To coincide with the National Play Day, Rainbow Services have organised a play day event in the park that attracts 1500 visitors each year. The event brings together a wide range of local children's organisations that put on activities for children in the park. This is promoted through a series of posters using national templates, press releases, social media, Harlow Times etc.

ParkRun

In 2014 a new weekly ParkRun began in the park that is organised by an independent group working under the umbrella of the “Parkrun” an over 100 runners each week and is supported by approximately 20 volunteers per week. It is promoted by their own website and social media as well as through local sports groups. Harlow Council has supported this event by promoting it through the Town Park events leaflets and an article in the December 2014 Harlow Times (the Council magazine delivered to all Harlow households).

8 http://www.parkrun.org.uk/harlow/
Where do we want to get to?

Allen Scott’s draft Management Plan that was produced in 2012 outlines a series of policies for Harlow Town Park that provide clear direction of what we want to achieve for the park. The following policies that relate to marketing aspects of the park:

C1 Raise the public profile of the park so that more residents and visitors are aware of the facilities and heritage features.

C2 Enhance user facilities (café, toilets) to attract and retain visitors

A1 To provide improved directional signage to and within the park and to other destinations and facilities beyond the boundary of the park.

A3 Raise the profile of the main entrances to the park, especially those from the Town Centre.

C3 Promote facilities and spaces on site to support a programme of cultural and heritage events, education, interpretation and information appropriate to setting and to support other such events and services offered within the town.

How will we get there? (Action Plan 2015 to 2020)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action Nu</th>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Lead</th>
<th>Timeframe</th>
<th>Estimated cost and budget</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>C1 Raise the public profile of the park so that more residents and visitors are aware of the facilities and heritage features.</td>
<td>Harlow Council – Comms &amp; Regen Teams</td>
<td>By September 2015</td>
<td>Existing resources</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>73</td>
<td>Develop a Marketing Strategy for Harlow Town Park to include:</td>
<td>Harlow Council – Comms &amp; Regen Team</td>
<td>On going</td>
<td>Existing resources</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Branding for marketing material for printed and physical materials and</td>
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<td></td>
<td>online materials and social media.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>74</td>
<td>Develop pre-site information on the Council Website Town Park Pages</td>
<td>Harlow Council – Regen team &amp;</td>
<td>December 2015</td>
<td>HLF Activity Plan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>and the Visit Harlow website with updates on progress of the HLF</td>
<td>Regen Team</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>project and events and activities taking place within the park.</td>
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<tr>
<td>75</td>
<td>Develop a dedicated Website for the Town Park – Harlow Town Park.org</td>
<td>Harlow Council – Regen team +</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Town Park Users Group</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>76</td>
<td>Continue to release regular and timely press release updates on the</td>
<td>Harlow Council – Comms Team</td>
<td>On going</td>
<td>Existing resources</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>progress of the HLF project especially in relation to the temporary</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>closure of Pets Corner during the capital works and the promotion of</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>key events held in the park.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>77</td>
<td>Promote activities taking place and updates on the progress of the HLF</td>
<td>March 2016</td>
<td></td>
<td>Existing resources</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project</td>
<td>Description</td>
<td>Start Date</td>
<td>Owner</td>
<td>Funding Source</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Publish an updated version of the Management Plan for Harlow Town Park on the Council website.</td>
<td>April 2015</td>
<td>Harlow Council – Comms Team</td>
<td>Existing resources</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide regular updates on the progress of the HLF Regeneration project on the community notice boards located within the park.</td>
<td>Monthly updates</td>
<td>Harlow Council – Regen Team</td>
<td>Within existing budgets</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Include articles on the progress of the HLF project in the Harlow Times (Council quarterly magazine to local residents)</td>
<td>March 16</td>
<td>Harlow Council – Comms Team</td>
<td>Within existing budgets</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Create and circulate community newsletter on the progress of the HLF project and highlighting the activities and events taking place within the park</td>
<td>March 16</td>
<td>Harlow Council – Regen Team</td>
<td>HLF Activity Plan</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**C2 Enhance user facilities (café, toilets) to attract and retain visitors**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Start Date</th>
<th>Owner</th>
<th>Funding Source</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Deliver the HLF regeneration project landscape and capital build contracts which will enhance the town park facilities in order to attract visitors</td>
<td>Autumn 2015</td>
<td>Harlow Council – Regen Team</td>
<td>HLF funding</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**A1 To provide improved directional signage to and within the park and to other destinations and facilities beyond the boundary of the park.**

**A3 Raise the profile of the main entrances to the park, especially those from the Town Centre.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Start Date</th>
<th>Owner</th>
<th>Funding Source</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Erect signs, interpretation boards as part of the HLF project</td>
<td>Autumn 15</td>
<td>Harlow Council - Regen Team</td>
<td>HLF funding</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Erect directional signs to new Outdoor Gym</td>
<td>December 2015</td>
<td>Harlow Council – Community Wellbeing team</td>
<td>Health funding for outdoor gym</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Design and erect information hoardings to be placed on Pets Corner, Spurriers and the Bandstand for the duration of the capital build contract.</td>
<td>March 15 to September 15</td>
<td>Harlow Council – Regen Team and Comms Team</td>
<td>HLF Funding</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**C3 Promote facilities and spaces on site to support a programme of cultural and heritage events, education, interpretation and information appropriate to setting and to support other such events and services offered within the town.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Start Date</th>
<th>Owner</th>
<th>Funding Source</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Promote the Educational Pack and resources that are currently being developed to local schools to encourage them to use the park through: Direct promotional material Harlow Council website</td>
<td>Sept 15</td>
<td>Harlow Council – Educational and Volunteer Officer</td>
<td>HLF funding</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promote the monthly walks which the Education and Volunteer Officer runs on a monthly basis that highlight</td>
<td>On going</td>
<td>Harlow Council – Educational</td>
<td>HLF Funding</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Progress made on the HLF project and the key heritage and natural features of the park.</td>
<td>and Volunteer Officer</td>
<td>HLF Funding – Activity Plan</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 88 | Develop a series of leaflets that including trail leaflets that allow people to navigate around various features of the park whilst developing an understanding of the heritage, key features, and natural features of the park. Leaflets to include:  
- Site leaflet  
- Heritage  
- Plant hunter  
- School nature trial | Developed in a staggered way up until 2019 | Harlow Council – Education and Volunteer Officer |
| 89 | Development of the new Learning Centre as a central resource for information regarding the features and heritage of the park. | Learning Centre will open Autumn 2015 and developed as a resource over the following year | Harlow Council – Education and Volunteer Officer |
| 90 | Investigate the potential for digital media, podcasts and audio guides being created for the park linked to the series of leaflets that are being created. | Ongoing up to 2019 | Harlow Council – Education and Volunteer Officer |
| | | | HLF Funding – Activity Plan |
January 2016 - Where are we now?

Marketing & Promoting the Town Park:

During 2015 the profile of the Park was raised within Harlow by continued production of the quarterly events and activities leaflet and regular email updates on events issued by the EVO to interested individuals.

Regular press releases were issued for activities relating to the Town Park. Press releases as well as updates on the progress of the HLF funded works were issued to promote events such as Harlow College student work experience activities, Harlow ParkRun first birthday, Pets’ Corner reopening. Many of the press releases have been picked by the local media who have ran stories regarding the park.

The Council also used social media to promote activities and events at the Park. Social media such as Twitter and Facebook has proved to reach large numbers of people very quickly. Over five hundred people visited the site within the first hour of opening and an estimated two thousand people visited Pets’ Corner on the first day that Pets’ Corner reopened in October. This footfall would have been generated through social media as we were unable to promote this earlier as it was unclear whether the building work would have been completed to an acceptable level prior to the day before the opening.

Case study: Harlow Town Park press releases:

Harlow ParkRun first birthday November 2015:

‘Harlow parkrun – a free, timed 5km run which takes place in Harlow Town Park every Saturday morning – has been a real hit in Harlow. In less than a year over 1,300 individuals have participated and almost 6,000 total runs have been reached. The event currently averages 108 runners per week and this figure is rising. It is hoped that the event on Harlow parkrun’s first birthday will smash its record attendance of 154 which has been reached twice before’

Pets’ Corner reopening, October 2015:

Quote from press release:

“\textit{The reopening of Pets’ Corner is a very special day for residents, for staff and for volunteers and I am delighted that people can once again enjoy this hugely popular facility. Staff and volunteers have been working hard to get the facility ready to reopen and this is great news as we begin the October half-term‘.}

The HLF regeneration project:

Monthly updates summarising progress of the HLF works have been put on the noticeboards around the park and on the Council’s website throughout the year. Quarterly newsletter updates have also been issued from the two contractors on site (Bolt and Heeks and Blakedown).

Posters regarding Pets’ Corner’s closure were erected at the entrance of Pets’ Corner.
Updates on the progress of the refurbishment works at Pets’ Corner have been regularly put on the Friends of Pets’ Corner webpage.

Regular updates summarising the progress of the HLF works and other activities have been included in the Council’s staff weekly newsletter (WIS) which has raised the profile with staff, councillors and their families.

**Signage and Interpretation:**

A ‘house style’ for the interpretation boards has been agreed upon after several initial versions. The interpretation boards will include the new design of the map of the park which has evolved over the year as part of the development of the park events leaflet. The content of the interpretation boards is being finalised and will be erected during 2016.

A design was also agreed for the finger posts erected around the site, as well as welcome boards and noticeboards. Boards at the entrances have made these more welcoming and advise visitors that they are in the Town Park.

Work commenced on the production of a self-guided Heritage Trail by the EVO with initial consultation with the Harlow Civic Society in December 2015.

**Events:**

During 2015, the Town Park events and activities leaflet promoted many events in the park- for instance the current leaflet, from January- March 2016 promotes 43 different events. These range from the weekly Parkrun and volunteer events to larger events such as the Fun Fair.

This leaflet is marketed to nearly 100 interested individuals on a ‘blind email’ circulation, some of who are coordinators for community groups which helps to promote the park. The leaflet and regular email updates has resulted in good attendances on events such as the monthly guided walks.

The Greater Parndon Community Association (GPCA) continued to run a number of events at the bandstand as part of their Service Level Agreement with the Council. These are promoted via a range of mediums such as on Facebook and other social networks sites.

The Friends of Pets’ Corner also ran a number of well attended events in 2015, promoted via their Facebook page, and helped to promote progress with the HLF improvements to Pets’ Corner and responding to queries.

ParkRun continues to be popular and is well promoted by the volunteers running the event through their website and social media and via the Harlow Times (the Council magazine delivered to all Harlow households).
Educational activities:

Educational activities during 2015 were difficult to organise due to the redevelopment of Pets’ Corner (as the site was closed for building works) from February to October and due to building work across the site. This will greatly improve during 2016 with the opening of the Learning Centre.

Pets’ Corner staff have successfully promoted the Land Based Studies courses that they deliver to local schools and Academies resulting in an increase in student numbers and the number of Academies using the course.

The EVO ran a number of events for pre-school children, with the Council’s Community Development Worker for Educational Attainment. These were promoted well through play schemes across the district with up to 100 parents and children attending each of the 2 events organised.

The National Play Day was held in August 2015 on the Showground which thanks to good publicity attracted nearly 100 people.

How do we get there? (January 2016 update)

red – not done, amber- being implemented, green- completed.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Lead</th>
<th>Timeframe</th>
<th>Estimated Cost</th>
<th>January 2016 progress</th>
<th>Status</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>73</td>
<td>C1 raise the public profile of park so that more residents and visitors are aware of the facilities and heritage features</td>
<td>HDC</td>
<td>2016</td>
<td>Existing resources</td>
<td>Park leaflets branding agreed and used for Events &amp; Activities leaflet and Volunteer leaflet Pets’ Corner adopted agreed animal information signage style. Further work still required to adopt agreed style for online materials.</td>
<td>Amber</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>74</td>
<td>Develop pre-site information on Council website</td>
<td>HDC</td>
<td>On going</td>
<td>Existing resource</td>
<td>The Town Park pages on the Council’s website have been updated. Monthly updates of progress of the HLF funded works and links to the Activity leaflet have been published.</td>
<td>Amber</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>75</td>
<td>Develop a dedicated website for the Town Park- Harlow Town Park.org</td>
<td>HDC</td>
<td>On going</td>
<td>Existing resource</td>
<td>still discussing this issue with Communications team</td>
<td>Red</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>76</td>
<td>Continue to release regular &amp; timely press releases on HLF project progress especially in</td>
<td>HDC</td>
<td>On going</td>
<td>Existing resource</td>
<td>14 press releases issued during 2015 on Town Park</td>
<td>Amber</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>77</td>
<td>Promote activities taking place and updates on progress on Park in Harlow Times</td>
<td>HDC</td>
<td>On going</td>
<td>Existing resource</td>
<td>During 2015, each of the quarterly editions of Harlow Times had an article on the Town Park in it.</td>
<td>Amber</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>78</td>
<td>Publish and updated version of the management Plan for the Town Park on the Council website-</td>
<td>HDC</td>
<td>On going</td>
<td>Existing resource</td>
<td>Management Plan is published on the Council's website.</td>
<td>Green</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>79</td>
<td>Provide regular updates on progress with HLF project on community noticeboards within the park</td>
<td>HDC</td>
<td>On going</td>
<td>Existing resource</td>
<td>Monthly updates were published on the noticeboards across the park.</td>
<td>Green</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>80</td>
<td>Include articles on progress of HLF project in Harlow Times</td>
<td>HDC</td>
<td>On going</td>
<td>Existing budgets</td>
<td>Spring edition of the Harlow Times included an article on the progress being made at Pets' Corner.</td>
<td>Green</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>81</td>
<td>Create and circulate community newsletter on progress of HLF project and highlight events and activities taking place</td>
<td>HDC</td>
<td>On going</td>
<td>Existing budgets</td>
<td>Regular articles on Town Park progress and activities have been published in the local newsletter, Netteswell Neighbour.</td>
<td>Amber</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>C2- Enhance user facilities (café, toilets) to attract and retain visitors</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>82</td>
<td>Deliver the HLF regeneration project landscape and capital works which will entrance town park facilities in order to attract visitors.</td>
<td>HDC</td>
<td>Autumn 2015</td>
<td>HLF Funding</td>
<td>Pets’ Corner redevelopment completed and facility reopened; learning Centre and café still to be completed and opened as at January 2016.</td>
<td>Amber</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A1 To provide improved directional signage to and within park and to other destinations and facilities beyond the park.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A3 Raise the profile of the main entrances to the park, especially those from the Town Centre.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>83</td>
<td>Erect signs, interpretation boards as part of HLF project</td>
<td>HDC</td>
<td>Autumn 2015</td>
<td>HLF funding</td>
<td>Interpretation boards have been erected. Content still to be finalised and fitted.</td>
<td>Amber</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>84</td>
<td>Erect directional signs to new Outdoor Gym</td>
<td>HDC</td>
<td>Autumn 2015</td>
<td>HLF funding</td>
<td>HLF signage show direction to new Outdoor Gym</td>
<td>Green</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Design and erect new information hoardings to be placed on Pets Corner, Spurriers and bandstand for duration of Capital bid contract</td>
<td>HDC 2015 HDC funding</td>
<td>not done due to time and financial constraints</td>
<td>Red</td>
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<tr>
<td>85</td>
<td><strong>C3</strong> Promote facilities and open spaces on site to support programme of cultural and heritage events education interpretation and information appropriate to setting and support other such events and services offered within Town.</td>
<td><strong>86</strong> Promote education pack and resources currently being developed to local schools to encourage them to use park through direct promotional material on Council website.</td>
<td>HDC Sept 15 HLF Funding</td>
<td>Delayed due to Learning Centre not completed (January 2016) but pack content agreed.</td>
<td>Amber</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>87</strong> Promote monthly walks run by EVO highlighting progress made on HLF project and key heritage and Natural Park features.</td>
<td>HDC HLF Funding</td>
<td>12 well attended walks held monthly in 2015</td>
<td>Amber</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>88</strong> Develop series of leaflets including trail leaflets allowing people to navigate around park features whilst understanding of heritage key features, natural features of park. To include site, heritage, plant hunter, school nature trail leaflets</td>
<td>HDC 2019 HLF Funding</td>
<td>Staggered approach. Events and volunteering leaflet produced. Heritage leaflet content drafted 2015 in partnership with Harlow Civic Society.</td>
<td>Amber</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>89</strong> Development of new Learning Centre as central resource for information regarding features &amp; heritage of park</td>
<td>HDC 2016 HLF Funding</td>
<td>Awaiting completion of Learning Centre.</td>
<td>Amber</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>90</strong> Investigate potential for digital media, podcasts and audio guided being created for park linked to series leaflets being created</td>
<td>HDC 2019 HLF Funding</td>
<td>Harlow College Graphic Design students suggested some Apps designs for the park. Further work required to investigate this further.</td>
<td>Red</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Management

Where are we now? (March 2015)

Harlow Council's investment in the town park

Harlow Council is the main landowner of Harlow Town Park and as a consequence has the lead responsibility for maintaining and managing the park.

Harlow Council recognises the importance of Harlow Town Park to the local population and its significance as a key recreational green open space in the centre of the town.

The Council continues to demonstrate its long term commitment to the park through its substantial investment (both in revenue and capital) and by investing staff time and resources from across departments of the Council.

The HLF funding has enabled a significant investment to be made in the park that would not have otherwise have been possible. As a result a major programme of landscaping and capital build works to the key features of the Town Park is being undertaken. Funding for additional staffing resources and investment in community resources are also included as part of the HLF funding. This has enabled the Education and Volunteer Officer for the Town Park to be employed for five years and for resources that promotion of the understanding of the conservation and heritage of the park will be able to be developed. The post of Education and Volunteer Officer is highly valuable for the park as it provides a strong driving presence within the park that allows continuity over a five year period.

The Council has also committed additional staffing resources to the Town Park for the period that the HLF capital works and landscaping contracts are being implemented. This is to ensure these contracts are closely monitored and to support their delivery. As a result a six month part time (0.5FTE) secondment post has been created dedicated to support the HLF regeneration project. This post is in addition to the Regeneration Project Manager who is responsible for the delivery of the HLF regeneration project contracts.

However, both the part time six months secondment post and the Regeneration Project Manager are time / task limited resources that are available to support the Town Park. Once the HLF funded regeneration contracts have been completed they will be withdrawn as resources focusing on the Town Park. This is due to take place in September 2015. Until this point the additional staff resources will aim to deliver as much of this Management Plan as possible.

This does mean that staffing resources dedicated to delivery within the Town Park will be reduced in years two to five of this management plan.

In addition to the staffing resources outlined above, the following staff are have responsibility for delivery of services within the Town Park.

The manager of Pets’ Corner has a team of three staff who look after the animals and support the delivery of educational and outreach programmes delivered by Pets’ Corner.

Other Council Officers are also involved in delivering aspects of their service within the Town Park such as the Landscapes and Biodiversity Team (landscaping issues), Property and Facilities (managements of assets such as buildings) and Environmental Health (street scene provision) and Community Wellbeing (licences for the showground events delivery).
Whilst the HLF funded regeneration project contracts are being implemented the Regeneration Project Manager is the lead officer for the Town Park Management Plan. Once the HLF funded contracts have been completed it is planned that the responsibility for the delivery of the remaining aspects of the HLF project in the town park is transferred to the Community Wellbeing Team. It is envisaged that the responsibility for this Management Plan is transferred to that team at that point.

**Town Park Officer Group**

The Harlow Council Town Park Officer Group has recently been reinstated after becoming dormant. This group provides strategic oversight and direction to the Council’s delivery in the Town Park. The group improves communication between departments delivering services within the park and ensures a more joined up approach. The Officer Group is responsible for monitoring and reviewing the progress being made on this Management Plan.

**Financial resources and funding**

The HLF funding is limited. The project has not been able to deliver the full extent of the capital and landscaping works that it was hoped to due to budget constraints. As a result, a reduced programme of works is being delivered and care is required to ensure that the work comes within the budget available. It is difficult to see at this stage where the significant investment could come from that would enable the outstanding investment to take place.

This sits against a background of budget constraints within Harlow Council which have an impact on the resources available for services including the Town Park. In March 2015 changes to the service delivered by Kier Harlow were announced as part of a budget saving exercise.

As outlined in the "Well maintained" chapter of this document decisions need to be made over the coming year regarding how to fund the future management and maintenance of the Town Park to ensure that it is financially sustainable. The argument is repeated here for ease of reference.

**Decision of the future management arrangements**

As part of the HLF regeneration project funding there is an allowance for the management and maintenance of the Town Park. This funding is in place for five years. A decision needs to be made on how this funding should be best used. This decision will need to be linked into the new arrangements that are made for grounds maintenance provision in Harlow as a result of the end of the Kier Harlow Joint Venture. A further issue that needs to be linked into this is the potential for creating a ring-fenced budget for the Town Park that allows the incomes from all sources within the Town Park (such as car parking fees, rent for café and flats and other licensing fees etc.) to be utilised as a Town Park budget. A feasibility study would need to be undertaken to ensure that this option would enable the park to operate on a financially sustainable footing in the long term.

However, given all the above factors, the future management and maintenance of Harlow Town Park needs to be agreed. Potential grounds maintenance options that need to be explored include:

- Introducing a variation to the Kier Harlow contract to provide an enhanced service
- Procuring additional external resources
- Employing a gardener for the Town Park directly

Whatever the future arrangements that are agreed for the Town Park after January 2017 (when the existing Joint Venture Agreement with Kier Harlow comes to an end), care must be taken to ensure
that suitable grounds maintenance arrangements for the Town Park to ensure that the park is well maintained.

**External funding**

Where possible external funding will be sought to support the management of the Town Park. For instance, where appropriate funding contributions will be sought through planning agreements under Section 106 conditions.

**Monitoring and review of the Management Plan**

This Management Plan is designed as a working document that will guide the development of the Town Park over the next five years. During 2015-2016 the major activity is taking place within the park due to the implementation of the HLF regeneration project capital and landscaping works. It is important that a review is undertaken once this work is complete to understand the key priorities that are still outstanding after the main work has been completed. It is therefore planned to undertake an review of this Management Plan will take place in October 2015 which will involve the key stakeholders responsible within Harlow Council for delivering this Management Plan and as a result an update of this plan be produced by the end of January 2016.

As a working document the plan will be monitored by the Town Park Officer Group 6 monthly and reviewed annually to ensure that the proposed actions are being delivered on time. Any new issues that need to be addressed and any challenges that are preventing the plan being delivered should be identified and solutions proposed.

**Green Flag Assessments:**

As well as regular review by the Town Park Officer group to ensure that this plan is being delivered, the annual Green Flag judging will provide an independent review of the Town Park. Weaknesses that are identified as part of the Green Flag assessment will be addresses as part of the annual review.

**Where do we want to get to?**

The key aims relating to the management of the Town Park are:

- To develop a financially sustainable model for the Town Park to ensure that it continues to deliver a quality provision
- To achieve Green Flag Award status to demonstrate that the park is well managed and maintained.

**How will we get there? (Action Plan 2015 to 2020)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action Nu</th>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Lead</th>
<th>Timeframe</th>
<th>Estimated cost and budget</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>91</td>
<td>An additional part time post dedicated to supporting the delivery of the HLF funded regeneration project capital and landscaping contracts will be funded by the Council for six months.</td>
<td>Harlow Council - Head of Community Wellbeing</td>
<td>April 2015 to September 2015</td>
<td>Existing Regeneration Team budget</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>92</td>
<td>Clarify who will be the lead officer responsible for the delivery of this Management Plan once it is handed over to Community Wellbeing (after the HLF funded contracts are completed).</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>93</td>
<td>Explore the options for the longer term grounds maintenance arrangements for Harlow Town Park noting that: - The Kier Harlow Joint Venture Agreement comes to an end in January 2017. - Decisions need to be made about the management and maintenance funding that is available via the HLF funding. Options to be explored include: - introducing a variation to the Kier Harlow contract to provide an enhanced service - procuring additional external resources - employing a gardener for the Town Park directly</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>94</td>
<td>Ensure that whatever future arrangements that are put in place to replace the existing Kier Harlow Joint Venture Arrangements that they provide appropriate ground maintenance standards for the Town Park.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


**Management – January 2016 update**

**January 2016 - Where are we now?**

**Harlow Councils investment in the Town Park:**

The EVO is now in the second year of the five year contract and this will be enhanced by the relocation of the post to the rear of Spurriers House where office accommodation will be shared with the Pets’ Corner Manager. This is scheduled for Spring 2016.

A six month part time (0.5FTE) Project Manager post was created from April to September 2015 which was then extended to December 2015. The Project Manager and the Regeneration Projects Manager were responsible for the delivery of the HLF regeneration project contracts. Both these posts were funded by Harlow Council outside of the HLF funding.

It has been agreed that the Regeneration Projects Manager will continue to manage the EVO rather than transfer this responsibility to the Community Wellbeing Team. This will provide additional continuity especially as the delivery of the Town Park Management Plan and the HLF monitoring requirements will continue to be the responsibility of the Regeneration Projects Manager and EVO.

**Town Park Officer Group:**

The first meetings of this reformed group was held in 2015 which provided strategic oversight and direction for the Council’s delivery at the Town Park. Where appropriate other park key stakeholders such as the cafe operator and the GPCA will be invited to attend these meetings in the future to ensure information and future plans are shared and to highlight possible joint working opportunities.

A subgroup of the Officer Group focusing on the grounds maintenance of the park has formed involving representatives from the Regeneration Team (the Regeneration Projects Manager and the EVO), the Landscaping and Biodiversity Team and Kier Harlow. This group met throughout the year to discuss the grounds maintenance issues relating to the park and to agree the handover of maintenance of the HLF funded landscaping contract to Kier Harlow.

It has been agreed that the Grounds Maintenance along with representatives from Property and Facilities will undertake quarterly inspections of the park to highlight ongoing issues and to agree ways maintenance issues.

**Decision on the future management arrangements:**

2015 has been a very busy and intense year in managing activity in the Town Park due to the complexities of the two HLF contracts. As a result the main focus has been on ensuring that the contracts have been completed to appropriate standards and enabling the public to have access to the park facilities with the least disruption. The landscape contract has been successfully completed and the capital works contract is drawing to an end. It is hoped that the contractors will be off site by Spring 2106. Once the works have been completed and the new facilities are established, it will be important to consolidate and review the park facilities to consider the future management arrangements of the park.

It had been hoped that the Seetec project (whereby a team of unemployed people would undertake grounds maintenance work in the Town Park whilst gaining work experience to enable them to get into sustainable employment) would be a future way of supporting the grounds maintenance of the
park. However, this option stalled in November 2015. We are now reviewing the options on how to support the grounds maintenance of the park in the future. However, the option of ring fencing the income achieved through the Town Park facilities will still be explored along with identifying the additional management and maintenance funding for the par.

During 2016 negotiations will continue to take place regarding replacing the Kier Harlow contract with the Local Authority Trading Company and ensuring that the grounds maintenance of the Town Park is safeguarded within the new arrangements.

**External funding:**

During 2015 funding of £85k has been achieved through Essex County Council’s Changing Places project for a new disabled toilet to be located within the park.

The Friends of Pets’ Corner submitted an application to the Tesco’s Community Action Fund in November 2015 for funding for a picnic area for Pets’ Corner. The proposed picnic area will provide a much needed area with benches for visitors to Pets’ Corner to have lunch which is located in a suitable located near to Pets’ Corner (something that schools considering arranging visits have requested in the past). The result of this funding application is expected in March 2016.

Funding of £1k was paid to the Town Park budget for the running of the fortnightly health walks in the park.

Harlow Town park bandstand has been included in a regional application for HLF funding. If successful this funding will seek to increase the usage of the bandstands in the region and develop joint marketing options. Harlow Council has sent a letter of support for the bid.

Where appropriate, external funding will continue to be sought to support the ongoing work of the Town Park.

**Monitoring & review of the Management Plan:**

Progress on achieving the actions within this Management Plan has been reviewed in order to produce this update.

Responses to the 2015 Green Flag judge comments have been incorporated into this document and are included as a table at the end of this document.
How do we get there? (January 2016 update)

**red** – not done, **amber**- being implemented, **green**- completed.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nu</th>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Lead</th>
<th>Timeframe</th>
<th>Estimated Cost</th>
<th>January 2016 progress</th>
<th>Status</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>91</td>
<td>An additional part time post dedicated to supporting delivery of HLF project will be funded by Council for six months.</td>
<td>HDC</td>
<td>2015</td>
<td>HDC budget</td>
<td>Project Manager in post for 9 months in total.</td>
<td>Green</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>92</td>
<td>Clarify who will be lead officer for delivery of this Management Plan after HLF funded contracts are completed</td>
<td>HDC</td>
<td>2015</td>
<td>HDC budget</td>
<td>The Regeneration Projects Manager and the EVO will continue be responsible for this</td>
<td>Green</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>93</td>
<td>Explore options for long term grounds maintenance arrangements for Town Park</td>
<td>HDC</td>
<td>2016</td>
<td>Potential to create a Town Park sustainable income that is ring fenced</td>
<td>Initial discussions taken place. Further work on this is required.</td>
<td>Amber</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>94</td>
<td>Ensure whatever future arrangements put in place to replace existing Kier contract that they provide appropriate ground maintenance standards for Park</td>
<td>HDC</td>
<td>2016</td>
<td>HDC budgets</td>
<td>Negotiations are ongoing</td>
<td>Amber</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>