

Report title	Proposed Management Plan and maintenance updates
Report author	Helen Wilson, Deputy Green Spaces Manager
Department	Green Spaces, Environmental Services
Exempt?	No
Exemption type	N/A
Reasons for exemption	N/A

Purpose of report:

To update on maintenance operations and to recommend that the Committee approve the production of a Green Spaces Management Plan specific to Englefield Green.

Synopsis of report:

To cover issues relating to ditches, nettles, maintenance schedules for the grassed area and the Section 27.4 (d) request for a costed management plan for the green.

Recommendation(s):

- i. **TO RESOLVE: Volunteers rake meadow hay arisings to encourage wildflower and discourage nettle and grass growth.**
- ii. **TO RESOLVE: Contractors complete overseeding in Autumn 2023/Spring 2024 at a cost no greater than £2000 from Englefield Green's earmarked reserves.**

1. Context and background of report

- 1.1 To address the requests at the previous Committee for information about the management of nettles, ditches and the grassed areas with schedules to perform specific operations. Also in answer to a Section 27.4 (d) request from Cllr Gates to produce a costed 3–5 year management plan.

2. Maintenance Updates

- 2.1 Ditch and nettle maintenance
- 2.2 In September the meadow and wildflowers on the ditch were strimmed as part of the scheduled annual meadow cut.

2.3 The nettles were cut as part of this operation. The in-house team have no capacity to rake and collect arisings.

2.4 **Grass care schedules**

2.5 The cricket club:

2.6 The cricket club maintains the Cricket Square to their own schedule.

2.7 In the last week of September, the Cricket club soiled and reseeded the Cricket Square.

2.8 The club were reminded by Officers that the use of ropes and road pins was not permitted to protect the emerging grown and that another method should be employed.

2.9 In-house operations:

2.10 The RBC Grounds Maintenance (GM) team cut the outfield weekly and the wider amenity grass approx. every 3 weeks. The ditch meadow is cut annually in September as described above.

2.11 Contracted grass care:

2.12 Officers can arrange for Overseeding to be completed in autumn/spring. This is likely to cost approx. £2,000 which would be payable from Englefield Green earmarked reserves.

2.13 Adding weed killer or fertiliser is not recommended and would not fall in line with our Sustainable Planting Policy.

2.14 **Woodland Management**

2.15 In accordance with the approved Woodland Management Plan, works will continue to remove holly, laurel and Rhododendron ponticum from the west woodland to open the woodland floor and encourage understory species at a cost not exceeding £4000, from Englefield Green earmarked reserves.

2.16 The detail of this work from our Tree Officer is as follows:

The work is to fell approx. 50 trees working from the edge of the glade in a northly direction targeting all holly, laurel, and rhododendron in this area.

All other trees will be retained, however if any are dangerous, this will be noted and reported to the tree officer who will decide if any action is required.

All arising will be chipped on site. Any timber to be stacked as habitat away from paths and the base of trees.

All stumps are to be treated preferably with eco plugs or similar, approved method.

2.17 **Borough-wide Green Spaces Management Plans**

- 2.18 These plans will be written as operational reference guides by experienced and qualified Green Space Officers and other relevant officers. The management plans will be drafted in consultation with relevant stakeholders. One plan will be written specifically for Englefield Green.

It will cover all issues mentioned as listed below in the Section 27.4 (d) request by Cllr Gates;

Wildflower planting

Bulb (Bluebell) planting

Clearing Culverts

Drainage (Vertidrainage)

Scarifying (Rotoraking)

Weed Treatment/Herbicide

Manual weeding ditches (nettles)

Reseeding grass

Fertilizer

Repair muddy walkways

Tree report (outside of Englefield Green Woodland area)

Tree planting (outside of Englefield Green Woodland area)

Furniture/ signage inspections

Installation of matrix paving at benches

- 2.19 It will also cover all other grounds maintenance issues and pressures relating to the Green as covered by this Committee and in line with CABE* Space guidance.
***CABE = Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment**

- 2.20 This guidance document can be found here:

[A guide to producing green space and park management plans
\(parkscommunity.org.uk\)](http://parkscommunity.org.uk)

- 2.21 The production of a carefully considered plan will enable better, holistic management of Englefield Green going forward to industry standards and Officers will consult on the contents of the Plan with the Committee.

3. Policy framework implications

- 3.1 Corporate Business Plan, Sustainable Planting Policy

4 Resource implications/Value for Money

- 4.1 The maximum cost of the above autumn/winter operations to the grassed areas and woodland management will be £6,000 which will be funded by Englefield Green earmarked reserves.

5. Legal implications

None stated

6. Equality implications

- 6.1 The Council has a duty under Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 (as amended) which provides that we must have due regard to the need to;
- a) eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act;
 - b) to advance equality of opportunity;
 - c) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share protected characteristics.
- 6.2 The work proposed in this report is not anticipated to have a positive or negative impact on any one with a protected characteristic because of the characteristic they have. It is therefore considered that an equalities screening is not required.

7. Environmental/Sustainability/Biodiversity implications

- 7.1 The adoption of a Management Plan will have Sustainability and Biodiversity at its core in terms of its recommendations to maintain the site.

8. Timetable for Implementation

- 8.1 The borough-wide management plans will be written over the next 2/3 years with Englefield Green's Management Plan due to be drafted during 2023/2024
- 8.2 The woodland management and grassed area operations if approved are to be completed by Spring 2024.

9. Conclusions

- 9.1 The 'Englefield Green – Green Space Management Plan' will be a live document and key reference point for this Committee, Greenspaces Officers and the Operations team. Officers will bring the outline document to the next committee meeting in January 2024.
- 9.2 It will fall in line with wider council priorities and strategies, and it will be based on stakeholder consultation, in-house expertise and expected resources.
- 9.3 We will base management plans on CABI Space* guidance.