



Murray Park Management Plan

January 2022 – December 2023



Murray Park Management Plan 2022-23: Foreword

Murray Park is an important space for local people and visitors. The London Borough of Richmond upon Thames will maintain and manage the park to the highest standards in accordance with our strategic principles and policies.

This management plan is based on the use of an audit of the park following central government guidance known as PPG 17. This is explained within this document but the approach is based on common sense. We believe that it is important to get the simple things right. Is the green space clean and tidy? Is the grass cut? Are the trees and shrubs well maintained? Is any graffiti removed effectively and quickly?

Working with local communities to deliver the highest quality of service is top priority and it is hoped that this document will provide a framework for continuing and improving dialogue. The site will be maintained appropriately and the local community will be consulted on any proposed changes or improvements to facilities and infrastructure. In particular, the borough works closely with the Friends of Murray Park. We actively encourage suggestions about all aspects of the park.

Parks Officers, working closely with colleagues in Continental Landscapes and using a partnership approach, regularly monitor the park. Members of the local community are also encouraged to let us know their impressions about the level of maintenance as well as their ideas. It is hoped that the resulting observations and ideas will result in continually improving management and maintenance practises.

Whilst the Council is open to the changing needs of the local community with regards to facilities within any of the borough’s parks, Murray Park is a long established local green space that is well maintained. Major changes to the park or its facilities are not envisaged. The action plan at the end of this document reflects this perspective.

The current financial situation will inevitably have a detrimental effect on the resources available to improve and maintain the borough’s parks and open spaces. The borough will continue to work closely with its partners to maintain standards. In addition we will need to look for additional ways of funding to maintain and improve the boroughs parks, one of our most valuable assets.

Contents

Section	Contents	Page
1	Introduction	1
2	National Context	1
3	Relationship to Council Aims & Objectives	2
4	Site Description	5
5	Audit of Facilities	11
6	Vision and Objectives for the park	16
7	Management of the park	16
8	Achievements and Action Plan	22

1. Introduction

1.1 This Management Plan for Murray Park provides guidance for the management and any relevant development of the park. It utilises the methodology outlined in the Government’s Planning Policy Guidance note 17 (PPG 17) in order to audit the state of provision of features and facilities on the site.

The Plan includes an Action Plan, which we aim to achieve within the remit of current budgets. The Plan has been drafted for a broad audience interested in the development of the park namely:

- The Friends of Murray Park and borough residents;
- The Parks and Open Spaces Service;
- Other services and departments within the London Borough of Richmond;
- Elected members, ward councillors and portfolio holders;
- National agencies;
- Local businesses; and
- Partners and contractors

1.2 The Plan will run from January 2022 to December 2023. An interim progress update will be undertaken in January 2023.

2. National Context

2.1 Parks are managed areas of the green environment providing opportunities for a range of formal and informal leisure, passive and active sport, recreation and play.

2.2 The significance of parks, open space and countryside provision is clear:

- There are an estimated 27,000 public parks in Britain, visited an estimated 2.6bn times each year (Common Select Committee, 2016).
- There is an estimated 85,847 hectares of Publicly accessible green space in Great Britain, 73,400 in England. (*Natural capital accounts containing information about green spaces in urban areas*, Office for National Statistics, August 2019)
- 17.99% of Greater London is designated Public Open Space; with 3.5% Local Parks and Open Spaces & 5.2% Metropolitan Parks (GiGL, 2019).

2.3 It is widely recognised that the provision of high quality ‘public realm’ facilities such as parks can assist in making an area as an attractive place to live and work, and can result in a number of benefits in terms of economic development and regeneration. A local park can also play a part in promoting healthy living as a place for people to exercise.

2.4 The benefits of safe and accessible parks and open spaces can be summarised as:

Social

- providing safe outdoor areas for all members of the local population
- providing opportunities for community events, voluntary activities and charitable fund raising
- providing easily accessible recreation as an alternative to other more chargeable leisure pursuits

- providing opportunities to improve health and take part in a range of outdoor sports and activities
- providing an educational resource or outdoor classroom

Economic

- adding value to surrounding property, both commercial and residential, thus increasing local tax revenues for public services
- contributing to attracting visitors, including using parks as venues for events
- encouraging tourism into the area
- helping to create an attractive local image
- helping to reduce social exclusion and its associated costs to society

Environmental

- providing habitats for wildlife as an aid to local biodiversity
- helping to stabilise urban temperatures and humidity
- absorbing pollutants in the air and ground water
- providing opportunities for the recycling of organic materials
- providing opportunities to reduce transport use through the provision of local facilities, and by providing walking and cycling routes through urban areas

3. Relationship to Council Aims and Objectives

The Council recognises that its parks and open spaces contribute to the:

- overall vision and priorities of the Council
- quality of life of local people
- physical, social and economic regeneration of the borough
- greening, attractiveness and biodiversity of the area

Accordingly this Management Plan and the Parks and Open Spaces Service are guided by and are in agreement with the aims, objectives and principles of the following plans and strategies. These can be found at: www.richmond.gov.uk

3.1 Richmond’s Community Plan 2016-2020

The Community Plan describes the Council’s vision for the borough and outlines the steps that will be taken, through partnership working, to achieve this vision. The vision is for a borough where:

- Local people are engaged and involved in their communities.
- A vibrant and sustainable community and voluntary sector helps residents play a full role in community life.
- The local character of the environment is protected and development is high quality and compatible with local character.

- Our towns and local centers are attractive, viable for businesses and contribute positively to the quality of life of residents and visitors.
- People can live as independently as possible in the local community with good health and wellbeing.

For further details of the Community Plan please visit: www.richmond.gov.uk

3.2 **Parks and Open Spaces Strategy 2011**

Our borough has the largest area of public open space per head of population of any London borough. We have a local and national reputation for quality and leadership in the delivery of excellent parks. To ensure the quality of our parks and open spaces remains at a high level, following public consultation, we developed a series of strategic principles by which the parks will be managed:

The strategic principles are as follows:

1. Parks and Open Spaces will be a sustainable legacy for future generations.
2. Parks and Open Spaces will continue to define our borough.
3. Parks and Open Spaces will enrich the life, health and wellbeing of residents and visitors.
4. The Council will lead in the delivery of excellent Parks and Open Spaces services.
5. Parks and Open Spaces will offer positive experiences to all visitors.
6. Through innovation, the future development of Parks and Open Spaces services will be ensured.
7. Increased community participation in Parks and Open Spaces will be encouraged and supported.
8. Parks and Open Spaces will be celebrated as centres of excellence.

3.3 **Local Biodiversity Action Plan for Richmond**

The main aims of the plan are:

- To conserve and where possible enhance Richmond’s variety of habitats and species, in particular those which are of international or national importance, are in decline locally, are characteristic to Richmond or have particular public appeal, which can raise the profile of biodiversity
- To ensure that Richmond residents become aware of, and are given the opportunity to become involved in conserving and enhancing the biodiversity around them
- To raise awareness and increase stakeholder involvement in maintaining and where possible, enhancing species and habitats of importance

The Local Biodiversity Action Plan can be found online here: https://habitatsandheritage.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/Biodiversity-Action-Plan-Richmond_compressed.pdf

3.4 Parks Improvements

The Council have a commitment to continued improvement in our Parks and Open Spaces by improving existing infrastructure and developing and installing new facilities. The Council continues to have a cyclical investment programme to ensure that parks and playgrounds are up to standards, this includes £300k a year for park improvements and £150k for play. One aim of the management plan is to maintain the gains that we have achieved in previous years.

The Council list all major improvement projects on our webpage, which can be found here:

https://www.richmond.gov.uk/services/parks_and_open_spaces/parks_improvements_and_conservation/latest_parks_updates

4 Site Description

4.1 Outline History of Murray Park

Before it became a public open space in 1914, Murray Park had been a pleasure ground for close on 200 years. Sometime between 1725 and 1738, Archibald Campbell, Lord Islay, later Third Duke of Argyll, purchased the 10 acres together with numerous other parcels of land to create his country estate in England at Whitton.

He laid out the northern half of the ground (between what is today Murray Park Hall and Whitton Dene) as a formal garden. He then demolished a winged mansion that occupied the centre of the ground and built a Palladian style villa and offices for his mistress, Mrs Elizabeth Ann Williams, who was the mother of his illegitimate son.

The southern section of the ground (from today’s Murray Park Hall to Kneller Road) was the gated entrance to the estate filled with the exotic trees for which Campbell was famous, including an avenue of cedar trees leading to his own villa situated between today’s Runnymede Road and Rydal Gardens; only one cedar survives here to this day. Many rare trees from this site were donated to the newly formed Kew Gardens in the mid-18th century. The Whitton Dean estate (as Murray Park was then known) survived until 1850 when the Whitton Park estate was reformed by the Gostling-Murrays and when its story became lost to our local history.

In 1914, the local community was concerned at the risk of losing community recreation land because of the increasing expansion of suburban housing development in the area. Donations were called for and the land that is now Murray Park was bought by public subscription for £4,000. At the opening of the new public park, each child who attended was given a celebratory cup, one of which is on display in Twickenham museum.

In 1994 a garden historian confirmed this was the site of a lost formal garden. The President of the Garden History Society had been making a study of Twickenham gardens clearly influenced by Alexander Pope and had not realized the example in present Murray Park. Also of great interest was that Campbell had laid out this garden for his own mistress at the same time he was so doing for the King’s mistress, Henrietta Howard, at Marble Hill.

If an archaeological survey were to be carried out, it might reveal traces of the meanders and serpentines, the hippodrome shaped lawn, the amphitheatre, groves and irregular walks of this once ‘new fashionable garden’. Indeed, the great storm of 1987 brought down a large tree close to the hedge along Whitton Dene revealing an underground brick chamber that once fed the ornamental pond.

In 2014, local residents and supporters of Murray Park were inspired to organise a centenary celebration of the ‘birth’ of the park and formed the Friends of Murray Park.

4.2 General Information

4.2.1 Land Tenure

The site is owned by the London Borough of Richmond and is managed by the Parks and Open Spaces Service.

The enabling acts which confer the specified powers to the Council to administer and maintain the land are listed below:

- Open Spaces Act 1906;
- Local Government Act 1972; and
- Local Government, Planning & Land Act 1980.

4.2.2 Location

Murray Park is situated in Whitton, in the west of Richmond-upon-Thames borough on the northern boundary with Hounslow, half a mile from Twickenham Stadium. The rectangular park’s boundaries are shared with Whitton Dene to the north and Kneller Road to the south, a footpath to the west and residential gardens to the east.

4.2.3 Access

Murray Park has six entrances – three on the boundary with Kneller Road, two from Whitton Dene and one on the Southern side of the hall.

The park is free and open facility at all times with fully inclusive access to local residents and visitors to the area.

4.2.4 Local Transport

Train: Hounslow rail station is a 9 minute (0.4 mile) walk from the western Whitton Dene gate on the site’s northern boundary, via Whitton Road, Park Road and Millwood Road.

The station is on the Hounslow Loop Line main line in Travel card Zone 5. The station is typically served by eight South Western Railway services each hour, with additional services at peak times. Stopping routes include the Hounslow Loop from London Waterloo or Weybridge to London Waterloo services.

Whitton rail station is a 10 minute (0.5 mile) walk from the central entrance on Kneller Road, the park’s southern boundary.

The station is on the main line from London Waterloo to Reading in Travel card Zone 5. The station is typically served by four South Western Railway services each hour, with additional services at peak times. Stopping routes include the Hounslow Loop from London Waterloo or Windsor and Eton Riverside to London Waterloo services.

Bus: There are several bus stops near the park on Whitton Road and Whitton Dene served by multiple services. The H22 (The Bell, Hounslow to West Middlesex hospital), the 481 (Kingston to West Middlesex Hospital) stops at Kneller Road bus stop (at the junction of Nelson Road and Seaton Road), a 2 minute (0.1 miles) walk

from the eastern entrance on Kneller Road. The 281 (Hounslow station to Tolworth Tower, Surbiton) stops at Whitton Church bus stop which is 4 minutes' walk from the western Kneller Road entrance. The 110 (Hounslow to Hammersmith) stops at the junction of Hounslow Road and Whitton High Street, 7 minutes' walk from the main entrance.

London Underground: Hounslow East underground station is a 24 minute (1.2 mile) walk from the park. Hounslow bus station is a 3 minute walk from the station; where you can catch the 281 bus towards the park.

4.2.5 Landscape & Topography

The park's landscape is level, very open and mostly amenity grassland with scattered trees, mostly towards the boundaries. A tarmac path around the entire perimeter links the entrances and play area with facilities for all ages near the southern boundary and a 'trim trail' of fitness equipment around the perimeter path; a spur from the southern boundary path goes to a skate park, outdoor table tennis table and a full-sized Multi Use Games Area. There are daffodil beds towards the northern boundary which is formed of a hedge. There is another linear daffodil bed along the southern boundary just inside the railings along Kneller Road. A wildflower meadow is on the triangle south of the hall.

Halfway along the western boundary stands Murray Park Hall, a community hall that replaced the estate's riding house. The hall is served by the widest footpath within the park. The car park is served by the narrow access track which runs outside the park boundary and is a shared rear access for the houses in Colonial Avenue. The car park is managed by the Council's Facilities team.

4.2.6 Listed Historic Buildings

There are no listed buildings within the park.

4.2.7 Ecology

Mostly amenity greenspace, the site's interest is mainly in the mature trees, hedges and wildflower meadow areas.

4.2.8 Facilities

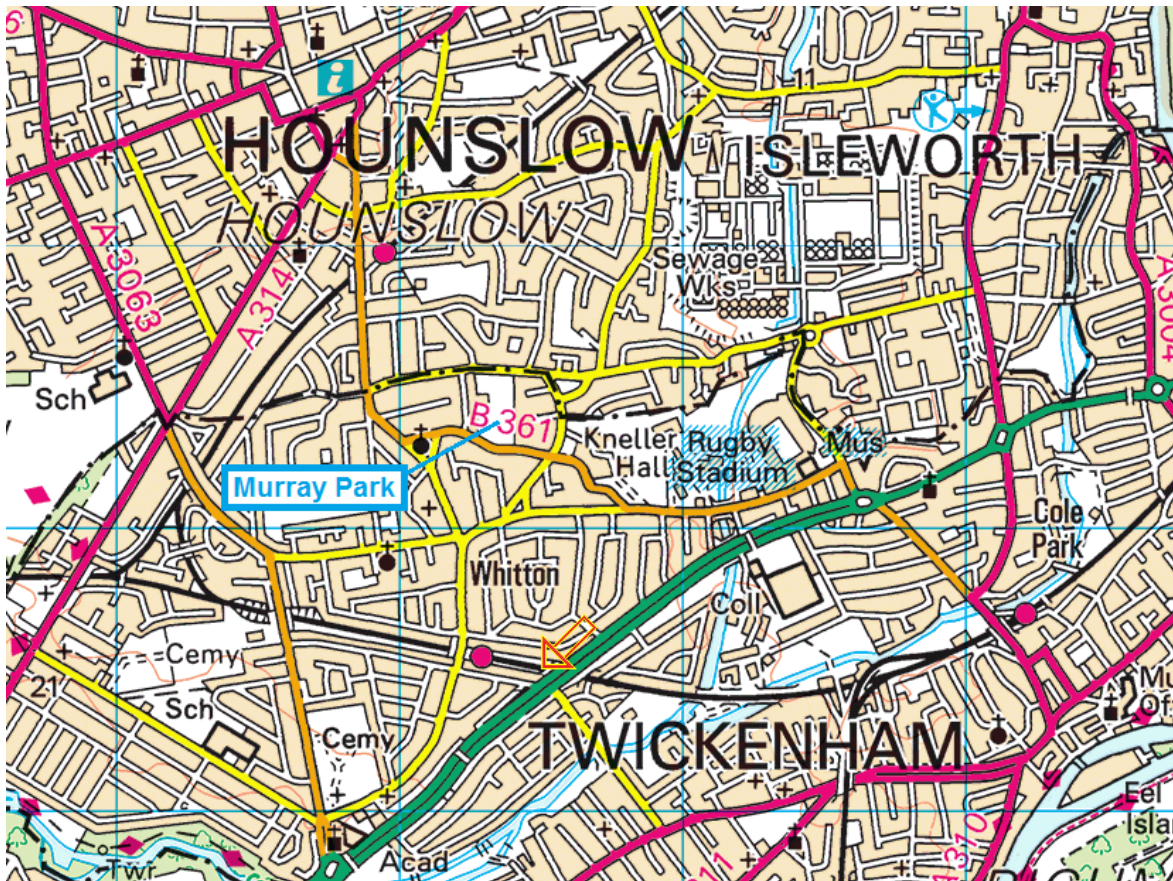
Murray Park contains the following facilities:

- One children's play area equipped and maintained in accordance to ROSPA guidelines
- A small skate park
- Outdoor table tennis table
- Chess/drafts table
- Multi Use Games Area
- Youth shelter
- Outdoor fitness equipment 'trim trail', with joint funding from the Rugby World Cup 2015 Legacy Fund.

- Community hall which can hold up to 100 people plus small self-catering kitchen.

4.2.9 Maps and Plans

Map 1: Location map of Murray Park



Map 2: Plan map of Murray Park



Map 3: Aerial photo of Murray Park



5. Audit of facilities

5.1 The main reasons for undertaking a Local Assessment are:

- to plan positively, creatively and effectively in identifying priority areas for improvement and to ensure, as much as possible, that there are appropriate types of parks and open spaces required;
- to work towards ensuring an adequate provision of high quality, accessible green space to meet the needs of the community;
- to identify the gap between current and desired levels of need and demand, quality and quantity of provision;
- To assist in achieving standards such as the Green Flag Award and London in Bloom.

5.2. Desirable Outcomes of the Local Assessment

A local assessment of green space will enable planning to be effective and achieve key outcomes required by National Planning Policy Framework

These are:

- provision of accessible, high quality park space for sport and recreation that meet the identified needs of residents and visitors;
- provision of a park that is ‘fit for purpose’ – the right type in the right place;
- to provide an appropriate balance between new provision and enhancement of existing provision;
- Setting locally derived provision standards.

5.2.1 It is intended that this management plan helps to achieve these outcomes in terms of providing an analysis of existing provision and a plan to effectively maintain and, where appropriate, develop the facilities and infrastructure of the Common and Fields.

5.2.2 In addition, it produces a series of actions which will help to achieve the standards laid down for Green Flag Award parks:

- A welcoming place;
- Healthy, safe and secure;
- Well-maintained and clean;
- Environmental management;
- Biodiversity, landscape and heritage;
- Community involvement;
- Marketing and communication; and
- Management.

5.3 Methodology

The methodology used was prescribed in the Government’s Planning Policy Guideline note 17 (PPG17) for the provision of public open space. This consisted of a review of the following key areas of provision:

- Main entrance;
- Boundaries;
- Roads, paths, cycleways and access;
- Parking;
- Information available;
- Planted areas;
- Grass areas;
- Cleanliness;
- Provision of litter bins;
- Seating;
- Children’s play space;
- Buildings including toilets;
- Health and safety;
- Nature conservation value; and
- Access for people with disabilities.

5.3.1 Main Entrance

The south-western entrance to the site, from Kneller Road, can be considered the main entrance. It has a pedestrian gate and vehicle gate for authorised vehicles and access to Murray Park Hall. It has an information board and is very close to the playgrounds.

5.3.2 Boundaries

The southern boundary with Kneller Road is low bow top fencing, light grey in colour. The northern boundary is a high hedge, as is predominantly the western boundary except for a section of traditional black railings at the southern end. The eastern and western boundaries is a combination of hedge, chain link fencing. This section would benefit from some improvement.

5.3.3 Roads, Paths, Cycleways and Access

The main perimeter path connects the entrances along the southern boundary and links in the playgrounds, skate park and MUGA. There is an outdoor gym ‘trim trail’ along the perimeter of the main paths. The paths are used by pedestrians and cyclists. There is a vehicle access gate at the south-eastern corner of park.

5.3.4 Parking

There is only parking within the site to serve the Hall. There is parking on Kneller Road and Whitton Dene adjacent to the site; this is in Controlled Parking Zone R but this only applies on Twickenham rugby and event days which can be checked on the Council's [website](#).

5.3.5 Information

Information relating to Murray Park is available on the parks section of the Richmond Council website: www.richmond.gov.uk, and on the Friends of Murray Park website: <https://e-voice.org.uk/fomp/>

The park's signage is attractive and durable giving appropriate contact details. It uses easily understandable symbols to deter users from inappropriate and anti-social behaviour.

5.3.6 Cleanliness

Litter and dog fouling are not frequent problems on the site. Where issues are reported, the Council works with its enforcement officers and wardening contractor to liaise with and educate irresponsible dog owners.

5.3.7 Planted Areas

The boundaries of the sites include sections of mature hedge.

An annual meadow has been sown outside of Murray Park Hall, totalling 190 square metres. Swathes of bulbs have also been planted along the Whitton Dene side of the park which are well established. Improving biodiversity within Murray Park is something that the Council and Friends Group aspire to, as and when opportunities become available.

There are also swathes of bulbs along the Kneller Road side of the park.

5.3.8 Scenic Quality

Murray Park's mature landscape gives it good local landscape value, especially through the mature trees. It is designated as Other Open Land of Townscape Importance under the Local Plan and will be protected and enhanced as such. It is also within an area the Local Plan considers most in need of further tree planting and succession planning for the mature trees should be considered.

5.3.9 Grass Areas

Most of the area is amenity grassland which is in fairly good condition. Some holes and bare areas need attention.

5.3.10 Provision of Litter Bins

Provision of litter bins is sufficient and in key areas at entrances, along the main perimeter paths and within the play area.

Dog waste can now be disposed of in normal litter bins and these bins are emptied daily by the Council's street cleansing contractor.

5.3.11 Seating

There are eight benches and a picnic bench in the park, within the playground area and around the perimeter path. More may be desirable and the Council will work on this with the Friends.

5.3.12 Children's Play Space

The playground is in good condition and have appropriate signage and has a wide range of challenges for children of all ages. The play area was upgraded in 2014, with new equipment installed.



Play area, Murray Park

5.3.13 Buildings, including toilets

Murray Park Hall dates prior to 1928 when it was built to replace Whitton Park' Riding House.

It is maintained and booked out by the Council's Facilities Management team and in October 2018 was repainted as part of a community event in the park involving the Council, the Friends group, the Met Police, charities and businesses. The Metropolitan Police used the hall occasionally for drop in sessions for members of

the public prior to the pandemic, but these sessions are not yet restarted at January 2022

A Montessori School currently uses the hall four mornings per week, and there are occasional party bookings, but there is availability for weekday evening and weekend events.

The hall itself can seat 100 people theatre-style or 80 seated to eat. There is a small self-catering kitchen and toilets;

The hall is in need of major improvements.

In 2021 and 2022 the Friends of Murray Park is in negotiations with the council to take over management and operation of the hall.

The toilets are not currently available to other park users but opening them at peak times is an aim of the Friends of Murray Park.



The hall being painted as part of a community day in partnership with the Metropolitan Police (25th October 2018).

5.3.14 Health and Safety

The paths and the playground are in good condition and present no obvious dangers to members of the public.

5.3.15 Nature Conservation Value

The mature trees offer considerable biodiversity value and used by bats and owls. The meadow areas offer opportunities to bees and other pollinators.

5.3.16 Access for people with disabilities

The tarmac paths are in satisfactory condition and no built facilities are inaccessible for those with mobility difficulties. Thought was given in the most recent play area refurbishment to ensure that most play is accessible to all.

6. Vision and Objectives for the park

6.1 Vision for Murray Park

In line with the wishes of the local community, voiced through the Friends of Murray Park, the future vision for the park is:

To be an excellent multi-use local park we are all proud of, playing a positive role for local users and the environment

6.2 Aims and Objectives for Murray Park

- To be as good as the best multi-use local parks as evaluated by the Council’s Parks User surveys.
- To answer the varying needs of different user groups, with no single group dominating to the detriment of others.
- To appeal to users in the local vicinity, who live within walking distance.
- To ensure a positive, visible role for flowers and trees to enhance users’ well-being and support habitats for bees, butterflies and birds.
- To be an uplifting place to visit, improving the quality of local users’ lives and being a good neighbour to those who live near the park.
- To keep the park as good as it can be, somewhere we can be proud of.

7. Management of the park

7.1 Introduction

This section sets out guidelines and general principles to be followed in delivering the vision and objectives outlined above.

7.1.1 The Council’s Parks and Open Spaces Service

The Parks Service is overseen by the Head of Culture, assisted by the Parks Service Manager. It is made up of three teams:

- The Operations team is responsible for liaising with contractors and monitoring the parks. The team includes a parks operations manager, a parks officer, an ecology officer and a support officer.
- The Development team which is responsible for consultation and the planning and initiation of projects. The team consists of a group of local expert consultants coordinated by the Service Manager and assisted by the parks officer.
- The Arboricultural team is responsible for all street trees and arboricultural work in council-managed parks and open spaces, as well as assisting with

planning issues. The team consists of a manager, four tree officers and a support officer.

We value diversity and are committed to delivering a service that puts equality of opportunity as a priority.

Management of the park needs to deliver high standards of maintenance of all aspects of the soft and hard landscaping of the park within existing revenue budgets. Developments have been funded by major borough-wide capital investment Parks Improvement Programmes between 2005 and 2010 and between 2012 and 2018. There is additional capital budgets to maintain equipment in their current state.

7.1.2 Delivery Partners

The Council works and consults with the Friends of Murray Park. This assists the Council to work in harmony with users’ and residents’ views and ensure direct local input into the management of the park.

For parks maintenance, a new Framework approach was introduced from April 2013, with services split into separate lots. The current contract started in February 2018 and is split into seven lots. In broad terms maintenance will be carried out by the contractors’ operatives who are specialist in the relevant areas, thus achieving high and consistent standards. As a framework, the contracts will also be available for other authorities and organisations in London and the south-east of England.

Parks Framework contract: February 2018 – February 2021 (renewed March 2021 – 2025)

Following an open and thorough procurement process that began in spring 2017, contractors were appointed to seven service areas to start 36 month contracts in February 2018 (now renewed to 2025). Evaluation was on an 80% cost and 20% quality basis.

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|---------------------|
| 1 Amenity Landscape Management | 5 Parks Patrol |
| 2 Arboriculture Management | 6 Events Management |
| 3 Oak Processionary Moth management | 7 External Planting |
| 4 Play Inspection & Maintenance | |

Procurement was written in an output style with built-in quality measures and performance indicators, and qualifying contractors to design excellent services using their knowledge and experience.

Relevance to Murray Park

Continental Landscapes are the main grounds contractor, undertaking amenity management (grass cutting, shrubs, hedges, sports bookings and pitch maintenance), small works (hard landscaping, infrastructure and furniture installation, etc.) plus undertaking play inspection and maintenance. They also undertake parks cleansing alongside existing street cleansing and graffiti removal to create a joined-up operation.

KPS are the arboricultural contractor, working closely with the Council’s tree team who undertake inspections and specify works, with Bartlett Tree Experts undertaking Oak Processionary Moth management.

Events in parks are managed by The Event Umbrella, a company who specialise in managing outdoor events in the public sector.

Park patrols are undertaken by Parkguard, a company specialising in education, support services and enforcement in parks and open spaces.

7.2 A Welcoming Place

The following management regimes all play a part in ensuring that Murray Park continues to be a welcoming area.

7.2.1 Graffiti removal

As a part of our aim to make the Borough safe, green and clean we are committed to reducing and removing graffiti. The full details of the borough’s commitment to the prompt removal of graffiti can be viewed at: www.richmond.gov.uk

There is an agreement with the Council’s street cleansing contractor, Continental Landscapes Ltd, to manage the removal of all graffiti within five working days. Where the graffiti is offensive it will be removed within one working day of notification.

7.2.2 Signage

Signage will be kept clean and will be regularly inspected. Any necessary repairs will be carried out promptly.

7.2.3 Pathways

All paths will be inspected annually with defect monitoring throughout the year. Any necessary repairs will be carried out as promptly as possible.

7.3 Healthy, Safe and Secure

The following management regimes all play a part in ensuring that the park continues to be a healthy, safe and secure place.

7.3.1 Community Safety

All contractors working in the park undertake an important role in terms of a visible staff presence and structure their maintenance work accordingly. All contractors are uniformed and wear highly visible clothing.

Parkguard regularly patrol the park between Thursday afternoon and Sunday evening. In addition the local Police Safer Neighbourhood team regularly visits the park.

The park is currently included in a Public Spaces Protection Order designed to reduce anti-social behavior in public places in the borough, effectively replacing the open space byelaws. For example, barbeques, fires and fireworks are prohibited;

bicycles must not cause a hazard, nuisance or damage; drones are prohibited; and smoking is prohibited in any enclosed play or sports area. More details can be found on the Council's website. www.richmond.gov.uk

7.3.2 Dogs

The Council and their contractors make efforts to educate dog owners to be responsible for their dog's waste as the dangers of humans coming into contact with dog faeces are well known.

Signage clearly indicates that dog mess should be picked up and disposed of by those walking their pets.

The Council is currently in the process of phasing out dog bins and replacing these with multi-use bins. All general waste bins can be used to dispose of dog waste.

The Council has a Public Spaces Protection Order in place to regulate dog control. With regard to Murray Park these prohibit fouling, limit an individual to walking a maximum of four dogs (unless in possession of a licence or permit issued separately) and require dog walkers to ensure their dog is under proper control. The Council and Friends Group may look at co-ordinating a dog fouling awareness campaign as part of the parks customer service satisfaction survey, which takes place every two years.

7.4 Clean and well maintained

The following regimes are designed to ensure that the park is clean well maintained.

7.4.1 Horticulture

Grass surfaces within the park are mainly classed as amenity grass.

Amenity turf is those areas used for general recreation and formal and informal sports and can include wide-open spaces or those areas planted with trees and shrubs. The height of this grass is kept between 20 and 60mm throughout the year with adjustments for sports pitches where required by the governing body.

The level of maintenance will depend on the level of use, with increased repairs, fertilising, and scarifying of those areas subject to heavy wear. Most repair works to turf are carried out in the autumn or spring, with areas either re-turfed or seeded.

Grass edges, whether they are against paths, fences or walls will be cut at the same time as the rest of the grass using strimmers in most areas. Grassed areas by the park's northern, eastern and western boundaries are left to grow long to provide habitat for wildlife.

7.4.2 Trees

Trees within parks are subject to inspection by suitably qualified and experienced arboriculturalists in order to identify and remedy any unacceptable risks to people using the sites. An example of this is the prophylactic treatment of oak processionary moth or the removal of trees that are extensively decayed compromising their structural integrity.

Tree pruning is only carried out where necessary for risk management purposes or where formative pruning is necessary; this approach allows Richmond's parks to retain a natural landscape with well-formed specimens. Where there is a particular characteristic by way of species composition, size or natural distribution the Council seeks to maintain this through selecting appropriate replacement and new trees. All tree works are in accordance with our Tree Management Policy.

Richmond Council encourages the Friends of Murray Park to consider the tree population within parks and to communicate with the Parks and Open Spaces team in order to make improvements and ensure that there is continuity in the way that the trees are managed. In 2021 some new trees were planted; they were blessed by the local parish vicar and the Friends group is to provide funding for signs about them.

7.4.3 Cleansing

The collection of litter is extremely important in maintaining the appearance of the park and has a direct effect upon how people treat and respect the site. Litter is collected on a daily basis by the park cleansing contractors.

The contractors carry out litter picking, emptying of litterbins and the sweeping / blowing of paths. This applies to all surfaces, paths, lawns and beds.

When the park has high numbers of visitors and large amounts of litter are expected the cleansing contractors will carry out additional visits to empty the bins. The full litter bags will be collected and removed from the site on the same day. In addition, the bins are cleaned and disinfected quarterly to avoid an unsightly accumulation of dirt.

7.4.4 Park Furniture and Fittings

The grounds contractors ensure that all furniture is clean and will check benches, notice boards and bins on a regular basis. Items will be cleaned as needed. Repairs will be requested by contractors on a Defect Report and carried out promptly. Any single replacement or repair will match the existing furniture, so that the style of the seat remains consistent.

Playgrounds and fitness equipment are inspected once a week by the contractor and any hazards identified are dealt with accordingly. In addition, there is an annual inspection to ensure that the playground meets ROSPA standards.

7.4.5 Hard Surfaces

Hard surfaces will be kept clean, with litter swept from surfaces regularly by the grounds maintenance team.

Hard surfaces will be maintained in a weed free state (with spot treatment weed spraying only where absolutely needed between March and November). Paths will be kept in a good state of repair, all paths being inspected annually and any repairs ordered to be carried out between March and November.

Drains and gulleys will be inspected regularly by staff and contractors on site.

7.5 **Environmental Sustainability**

The following regimes are designed to ensure that the park is managed in a sustainable way.

7.5.1 **Recycling green waste**

The Council's ground maintenance contractor takes all green waste to Townmead recycling centre.

7.5.2 **Pesticides**

The use of pesticides will be minimised as much as possible in the interests of nature conservation and ecology. An Integrated Weed Management policy has been developed to assist decision-making.

7.5.3 **Biodiversity**

The Friends group, the Parks team and contractors are working together to diversify this amenity greenspace for wildlife.

An annual wildflower bed has been sown outside of Murray Park Hall. It is intended to maintain the mature trees, hedges and consider habitat creation within the park's edges and corners. Tree lines and hedges are important aids to navigation for bats and form areas where pipistrelles like to feed. Areas of long grass will encourage wildflowers to self-seed and to provide habitats and food for insects, including bees, butterflies and moths which in turn provide food for bats and birds.

Spring bulbs have been planted in various places and further planting is being considered, along with the introduction of bird and bat boxes if appropriate.

We will work to the guidelines as set out in our Nature Conservation Policy Statement.

7.6 **Community Involvement**

This is crucial to the management of the park. Engagement with the local community is carried out by working with the Friends.

The Friends of Murray Park have already done much to engage in and promote the park through regular meetings and events. The Friends recently produced a vision plan for further discussion with the Council with plans to be integrated into this plan as they are agreed.

7.6.1 **Parks Events**

The Council encourages the hire of parks to appropriate organisations. The Friends and ward councilors are consulted before permission is granted for any new event. An evaluation process is held after each event.

Events are held in accordance with the Parks and Open Spaces Events Policy found at: www.richmond.gov.uk

A number of Fun Days and Community Days have been held by the Friends group in recent years.

7.7 Marketing

Promotion and marketing of Murray Park is carried out using a range of measures, including the Council’s website and publicity literature, to ensure that local people and visitors to the borough are aware of the facility. The Friends group has a website and a Facebook page to raise the profile of the park. <https://e-voice.org.uk/fomp/> and <https://www.facebook.com/FriendsofMurrayPark/>

7.7.1 Entrance Signage

A corporate style of signage for Richmond’s parks and open spaces was launched in 2007. It was designed to be attractive and informative.

7.7.2 Internet

Information about the park is available on the council’s website: www.richmond.gov.uk

Information on the Friends of Murray Park can be found on the following link: <https://e-voice.org.uk/fomp/>. They also have [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#) accounts

The Friends group can be contacted at: friendsofmurraypark@gmail.com.

7.7.3 General Promotion

In order to create community awareness for all of its facilities, the Parks and Open Spaces Service regularly produces articles and press releases about activities and facility development.

8. Achievements and Action Plan

8.1 Achievements

Changes and improvements made at Murray Park during 2020-21 were:

- Permissions for the Metropolitan Police to use part of Kneller Hall as a Community Hub
- Hedge creation along the Eastern border of the park
- Community ‘pop up’ café authorized but on hold due to pandemic
- Approval to host a Junior Parkrun on Sundays

8.2 Action Plan

Item of work and location	Year		Timing	Resources
	2022	2023		
Additional tree planting and design of a new historical	Y		Spring 2021 to Spring 2022	Parks Team & Friends of Murray Park

interpretation board on the site's historical trees.				
Youth services to gain access to hall to be used on a fortnightly basis	Y		Ongoing	Parks Team
Plant swathes of blue bells beneath the major trees to add spring colour to the park		Y	Autumn 2021	Parks Team, Continental Landscapes & Friends of Murray Park
Review the provision of seating in the park with a view to increase	Y	Y	Ongoing	Friends of Murray Park & Parks Team
Replenish the annual meadow which is outside of the hall	Y		Spring 2022	Parks Team & Continental Landscapes

8.2.1 Development and Renewal

As indicated previously, while the section is open to changing demands from the local community with regards to facilities within any of the borough's parks, major changes to or developments of the parks facilities are not envisaged. The major challenge is to maintain high standards of maintenance and to plan for effective repair and renewal of the major elements of a park's hard landscaping or infrastructure e.g. path system.

8.2.2 Community Engagement

The Parks team will continue to work with the Friends of Murray Park. We are committed to being receptive to concerns and suggestions voiced individually or through community groups.

8.3 Operational Commitments

This is presented in tabular form and includes the most important elements of the day to day maintenance of a park, grass cutting, trees and shrubs, litter collection and maintenance of parks furniture. Monitoring and inspection duties are included. Biodiversity management and initiatives are also included in this section.

Element	Action	Frequency
Grass Maintenance	Kept to a height of between 20mm & 60mm Designated long grass areas are to be unmown and left long all year.	As required to maintain length; average 16-18 cuts per year
Tree maintenance	Inspection Replanting	Every three years minimum As necessary
Shrub Maintenance	Kept weed free Mulching	Monthly Annual

	Pruning	As required, dependent on species
Litter collection	Collection and emptying	Daily
Cleansing	Cleaning of public toilets and drinking fountain	Daily
Graffiti	Removal of obscene/offensive	Within 24 hours
	Removal of other	Within 5 working days
Parks furniture	Clean and paint	When necessary
	Repair/replace	When necessary
Monitoring of contract	Monitoring	Every three months
Playground inspection	Visual inspection	Fortnightly as with ROSPA guidelines
	Detailed inspection	Monthly
	ROSPA standard	Annual
Infrastructure	Inspection	Annual
	Clearance of paths	When necessary
Biodiversity opportunities and actions	Installing bulbs, shrubs, plants, deadwood piles	Ongoing

8.4 Conclusion

This Management Plan is not ‘set in stone’. It provides a framework and guidelines that enable the London Borough of Richmond upon Thames to manage the site to a high standard in a sustainable way. The Council is open to the changing needs of local communities and will continue to work closely with the Friends of Murray Park. The Plan will run from January 2022 to December 2023, with an interim progress update in January 2023.