

3.2.1 Developing management plans

- The increasing demands on green spaces and their complex function and interaction for a diverse range of activities makes a site management plan increasingly valuable.
- Site management plans help ensure effective use of resources and activities.
- A site management plan is a key element of securing recognition for achievement and attracting additional resources.

Managing a green space today demands much more than horticultural care. Green space managers often manage people's use, and sometimes misuse, of the space. The increasing role and demand for green spaces in supporting the success of communities makes a site management plan increasingly valuable.

Management plans are useful for all green spaces, whatever their size, ownership or type. They help to ensure that the green space strategy is actually delivered on the ground, rather than remaining a document on the shelf. The primary purpose of creating a site-management plan is to aid efficient and effective management of a green space, over a specified time. The plan might also support the following:¹⁰

- Consultation, involvement and consensus
- Continuity and capacity, including training
- Preparation for change
- Information and recording
- The development of a framework for decisions

- Standard setting
- Strategic planning
- Action planning
- The upholding of design principles

The plan should identify ambitions and expectations, such as improved facilities and more visitors, and provide a way of measuring progress and address the following questions.

- Where are we now?
- Where do we want to be?
- How will we get there?
- How will we know when we have arrived?

Management plans are a key element of the assessment for the Green Flag Awards Scheme. Most funding bodies, such as the Heritage Lottery Fund, also require a management plan in place to secure grant funding.

¹⁰ A Guide to Producing Parks and Green Space Management Plans, CABE Space

Tools for success

- **A Guide to Producing Parks and Green Space Management Plans**
 - This guide explains the principles and process to create a management plan for publicly accessible parks and green spaces.
www.cabespace.org.uk/publications
- **Raising the Standard – The Green Flag Award Guidance Manual** This is for anyone who manages green spaces – not just those who are applying for a Green Flag Award and provides useful background information on the management and maintenance organised around the eight criteria of the Green Flag Awards. The manual is available from the Civic Trust and costs £40. www.greenflagaward.org.uk
- **Living Places: Caring for Quality – Good Practice Guidance** reports on research about the way local authorities are improving their management of public space. It includes questioning tools to help improve management.
www.odpm.gov.uk/cleanersaferegreener
or email sales@ribabooks.com

In practice

Management plans deliver success

Oldham's Parks and Countryside Service has been evolving its own house style of management plan, to satisfy the judging process of the Green Flag Award. Staff in the Service had experience of certain management planning approaches, which they found useful but which they felt did

not satisfy Green Flag Award requirements. They also had a management plan based on Heritage Lottery Fund principles, but they felt it was too detailed. So they looked at how other authorities had succeeded in gaining the Green Flag Award and how they had written their management plans.

As a result of this, they put together a plan-writing team. On parks sites, the team consisted of the head of service and the operational manager, and on countryside sites it was the head ranger and site-based management staff. A small number of staff took the lead in bringing together information, remaining faithful to the house style. Key stakeholders were then consulted and involved – such as 'friends of' groups and front-line staff (gardeners, information centre staff, etc.) – and specialists were brought in as necessary.

