

# The Parks Trust Strategic Plan

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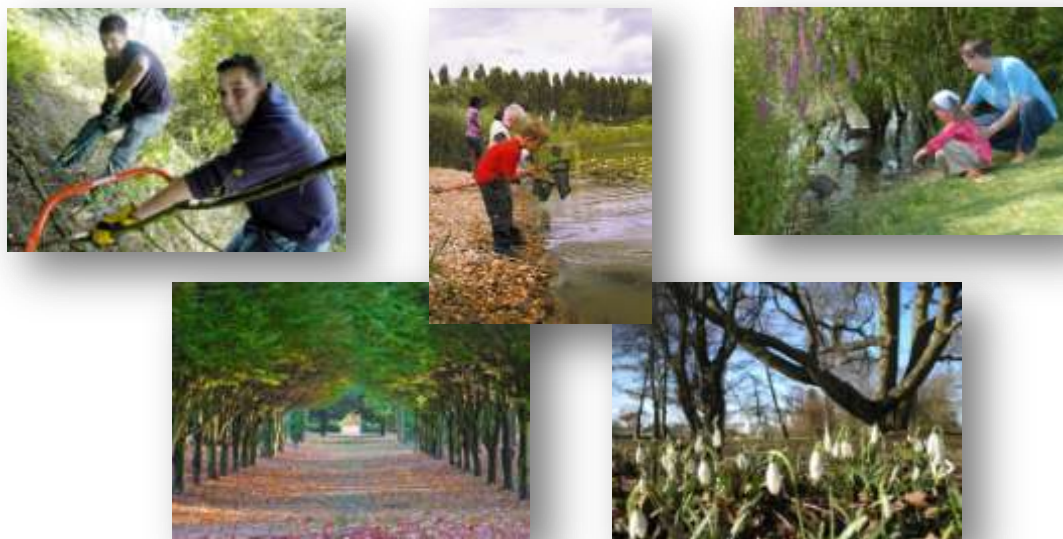
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## INTRODUCTION

The Parks Trust is the independent charity that owns and cares for many of Milton Keynes' parks and green spaces. This adds up to 4,500 acres – about 20 percent of the new city area – and comprises river valleys and water meadows, ancient woodlands and new plantations, lakes, ponds and streams, parks, play areas, and sports grounds; around 80 miles of landscape alongside the main roads (but not the roundabouts!); and many sculptures, including the world famous concrete cows.



*Figure 1: Selection of images showing the use and variety of our parks and landscapes*

Like many things in Milton Keynes, the Parks Trust's creation broke new ground. In most places parks are owned and managed by the local council, but the founders of Milton Keynes wanted to be sure that such a the city's unique green landscape would be managed and protected forever, without having to compete for funds with other council priorities.

When the parks and landscape were transferred to the Trust in 1992, the charity was endowed with a £20 million property and investment portfolio which we have grown to £70 million plus. The income from this portfolio pays for the vital work of nurturing and enhancing the landscape. We are entirely self-financing.

The Trust's parks and green spaces add greatly to the quality of life and the environment in Milton Keynes. We manage them for recreation and amenity and to provide essential 'ecosystem services', such as managing surface water, preventing flooding, maintaining air quality and conserving biodiversity.

We continually improve our parks by providing new facilities, increasing biodiversity and enhancing wildlife habitats. We also work with developers, the Homes and Communities Agency and Milton Keynes Council to bring more green space into our stewardship as Milton Keynes continues to grow.

We organise over 200 events in the parks each year, provide environmental education programmes for hundreds of schools and support a team of around 180 volunteers.

We carefully manage our diverse investment and property portfolio and look to develop other income streams, in ways that are compatible with our values, in order to fund our work of looking after the parks in perpetuity.

The Parks Trust is a charitable company limited by guarantee and is governed by a Board of Trustees who are also directors of the company. The Board sets the strategic direction of the Trust and ensures that the Charity is properly managed and complies with all relevant legislation. The Trustees have a duty under charity law to ensure that the Trust's assets and resources are only used to further the Trust's charitable objects which are:

- To provide, maintain and equip green spaces in and around Milton Keynes
- To advance public education and
- To provide facilities for leisure and recreation.

The Trust employs around 40 staff led by the Chief Executive, David Foster. Our staff structure (shown at appendix 2) is made up of a number of teams, the largest being our Operations Team, responsible for the physical management of the green space, including letting contracts, and supervising our contractors and overseeing our Direct Works team. Our Community Team delivers our education and events programme. They coordinate our volunteers and support and arrange other community involvement activities. We also have a Finance and Administration Team; a Commercial Manager to look after our commercial property and a Communications Team. We have a large and loyal team of contractors and professionals and specialist consultants many of whom have been working in partnership with the Trust since we started in 1992. We have a farming partner who manages our farming enterprise on 700 acres of grazing land.

## CONTEXT

It is now over 40 years since Milton Keynes was designated as a new town, and many of the city's parks and landscaped areas that were passed to the Trust's in 1992 were established in the 1970s and 1980s. The 30 to 40-year old landscapes require significant investment to manage them as they mature and age, including re-spacing maturing trees in densely-stocked plantations (thinning); replacing blocks of shrubs that are becoming weak and untidy and rebuilding and repairing structures and hard surfaces that are wearing out. The plan for the new city retained significant areas of ancient woodland, old meadows, hedgerows and sites of archaeological value and these too were incorporated into the network of parks that became the Trust's. These areas and features all need careful conservation management. We continue to take on recently landscaped areas, including new children's play areas. Our wide-ranging portfolio of parkland requires an intelligent and flexible approach to each landscape type and situation.

The population of Milton Keynes is becoming increasingly diverse. There are many residents who have been here for many years and for whom our parks and landscapes are familiar and much loved. In many cases it was the city's green environment that attracted them to move here. They have seen how the landscape responds to our management, how operations such as coppicing and thinning are essential to keep the city's environment safe and attractive and they have learnt about how areas of our linear parks are designed to flood. But the way the park system was intended to operate and how the Trust manages its land is less familiar to residents who have arrived here more recently. We have to help them understand the way we work and the geography of the city.

Other demographic changes will present us with different considerations. What will older people want and need in our parks? What will younger people require? How will people from different ethnic backgrounds see and want to use the parks? We have to respond to these changes and work to promote awareness and appreciation of the parks and of our work. Our aim is that all people in Milton Keynes see, enjoy and value the Trust's parks as their parks.

The Trust has always had a strong relationship with the successors to the New Town Development Corporation – initially the Commission for New Towns and most recently the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA). We have worked in close partnership with these agencies and taken substantial areas of green space from them since 1992 as they performed their lead development body role in Milton Keynes. However, the HCA's role is now changing and in line with the Government's 'localism' agenda it is proposed that the Agency's development role and remaining land assets will be transferred to Milton Keynes Council. This should provide us with a new opportunity to work collaboratively with the Council on the strategic management of all the green space in Milton Keynes.

We will also need to understand and respond to the changing nature of local government. The way that Council green spaces and other areas of the public realm in Milton Keynes that are not in the Trust's ownership are managed are set to change. This may present opportunities for the Trust to take on these areas, realising potential benefits such as economies of scale in operations, increased income generating possibilities and career progression for staff. Potentially it would also be for the greater good of Milton Keynes if more (or even all) of the parks and open spaces came under the Trust. However, the continuing scarcity of public funds will present significant challenges and the Trust will be called upon to help find imaginative solutions to the problem of how to maintain these areas well, whilst reducing the burden on public finances.

The Trust has always been aware of the important social, economic and environmental functions the city's parks and landscapes serve in Milton Keynes and the contribution they make to its continuing success. The role of 'green infrastructure' is now widely recognised and there is an increasing body of work available that quantifies and demonstrates how it contributes to the quality of life and the achievement of sustainable development. Also, the concept of 'ecosystem services' is gaining momentum, leading to greater recognition of the role of parks and green space networks in providing essential 'life support' systems; such as contributing to the physical and mental health of citizens,

conserving and providing space and habitat for biodiversity, cooling the city, managing surface water and mitigating climate change. We will continue to promote and take up opportunities to better understand and measure these roles, functions and services as we adapt to a changing climate.

The city continues to expand and new parks and landscapes continue to be laid out. In contrast to days when the new city and its park network was led by a single development corporation, the development process is now more diverse and led by a wider range of organisations, many of them from the private sector. The Trust has built up a good working relationship with both Milton Keynes Council as the planning authority and with most of the developers, many of whom have expressed a preference for new parks and landscaped areas be transferred to the Trust when they are complete. We will continue to seek to influence the planning and development process to promote the expansion of the city's parkland network in accordance with our charitable objectives. We will also engage in and respond to the regeneration agenda as some of the city's older estates are considered for renewal. The Trust's land could play an important role in facilitating some of these regeneration plans as they come forward.

The Trust has always sought to work for the greater good of Milton Keynes. We will continue to do so in ways that are consistent with our charitable objectives, the terms of our constitution and charity law. Our charitable objectives are:-

- To provide, maintain and equip parks, gardens, landscaped areas, woodlands, green spaces, playing fields, playgrounds and recreational amenity spaces
- To advance public education with particular regard to horticulture, arboriculture, wild plants and wildlife
- To provide or assist in the provision of facilities for recreation or other leisure time occupation.

This Strategic Plan sets out our vision and priorities for our parks and our work in the coming years. It shows how we will play our part in making Milton Keynes a great place to live and work and one of the most successful cities in the country. We have some big but achievable ideas of how we'd like to see things in 20 years' time and we have set out a clear plan of the things we need to do over the next three years.

Our achievements against the targets set in the previous strategic plan can be found in appendix 1.

## OUR VISION

Our vision is that Milton Keynes will be renowned for its much-loved, inspirational parks and thriving landscapes; and The Parks Trust will be financially and environmentally sustainable.

## OUR STRATEGY

To work towards this vision our strategy is to:

1. Manage our parks and landscapes to a high standard and with an ecological approach that will increase their richness, variety and biodiversity. We will be clear on the functions that each piece of landscape performs and manage it appropriately, according to balanced objectives.
2. Adapt the landscape, as it continues to mature and evolve, to enhance the character, attractiveness and environment of Milton Keynes.
3. Make the Trust financially sustainable for the long term by carefully managing and building our income generating asset base and taking a balanced approach between funding current and future needs.
4. Involve and engage the local community in our work and seek and respond to their opinions and suggestions. We will build positive relationships with the local community and maintain their trust, understanding and support.
5. Introduce features and facilities into the parks that meet the needs and aspirations of residents and visitors.
6. Work collaboratively with others, particularly Milton Keynes Council, parish councils, voluntary organisations and others, for the greater good of the city.
7. Take on the ownership of new parks and landscapes and apply the benefits of our model and way of working as the city continues to grow and as its older areas are regenerated.
8. Raise awareness, understanding and appreciation of the parks and the wider environment in order to increase active participation, promote responsible behaviour and create a sense of ownership.
9. Maintain a strong positive reputation for the high standards we achieve in all that we do. Help people to understand who we are and what we do and position ourselves as one of the leading managers of urban green space. Build upon our reputation so that our work and its contribution to the wellbeing and economy of the city is valued and recognised.

# HOW WE SEE THINGS IN 10 OR 20 YEARS' TIME

## 1. Our parks and landscape

### 1.1. High quality parks and thriving landscapes

Our green estate will continue to be in good condition and managed to a high standard that is widely recognised as being exemplary and makes a significant contribution to the quality and sustainability of life and the environment in Milton Keynes.

### 1.2. The extent of our green estate

The Trust will be custodian of a more extensive green estate than today. It is likely we will have taken on significant additional land in Milton Keynes from developers, the Homes and Communities Agency and the Council. The network of green infrastructure in and around the city will have been enhanced by the Trust's acquisition of strategically important land that links green spaces into a continuous network and will have enabled landscape-scale projects (for example along the River Great Ouse) to be achieved.



Figure 2: Current picture of green space in MK

### 1.3. *The changing landscape*

The landscape will have matured and changed, and now provides a stunning setting for the city.

The Trust will have managed the maturing landscape to maintain and open up views and sight lines, creating a green, forested cityscape that generally has an open feel about it and is accessible. Denser sections of vegetation will generally be associated with sites that are managed for conservation and habitat values.

Areas of landscape where the planting was no longer appropriate, particularly dense planting and use of inappropriate species around bus stops, underpasses, car parks and on the boundaries of neighbouring properties, will have been remodelled in a planned and systematic way.



*Figure 3: Tree trimming*

### 1.4. *The variety of parks and facilities*

Campbell Park will be a major regional attraction with a visitor centre, play area and open air events space. It will be better connected to the rest of the city centre so people can move seamlessly between the shopping area, theatre district and the park.

Willen Lake will continue to attract over a million visits each year and will be enhanced with a new watersports centre, café and public toilets as well as new commercial leisure attractions.

Other parkland areas will have new features and facilities too. For example, Furzton Lake will have a café, toilets and information point; Howe Park Wood an environmental study centre and small coffee shop.

### 1.5. *Biodiversity and the Historic Environment*

The Trust will be making a significant and measurable contribution to national and local Biodiversity Action Plan targets. More of our land will be managed primarily for wildlife than currently and the habitats on our land will continue to be in favourable condition or will be improving as a result of our management. Our landscape management and conservation activities will be helping to maintain or increase the populations of priority species recorded on or around our land.

We will be custodians of a mosaic of different landscape types and habitats. Our priority biodiversity sites such as Stony Stratford Nature Reserve, the Floodplain Forest at Old Wolverton and our three ancient woodlands and areas of semi-natural grassland will be widely recognised for their increasing biodiversity value and the Trust's best-practice conservation management. Across our strategic network of green



*Figure 4: Bluebells at Shenley Wood*

infrastructure in and around Milton Keynes, the features and assets that support wildlife, such as lakes and ponds; reedbeds; old hedgerows and ditches; plantation woodlands; thickets of scrub and patches of long grass; will be managed in ways that conserve and enhance their value for biodiversity.

The ancient monuments and other historic features on our land will be managed in ways that respect and preserve their historic interest. This includes sites such as the Medieval village earthworks and old walls at Manor Farm, Wolverton and The Toot, Shenley; the areas of Ridge and Furrow along the Ouzel Valley; and old boundary-marker veteran trees, such as those at Kingsmead Spinney and Shenley Wood.

Sites such as these will have a good standard of on-site interpretation and programmes of 'walks and talks' to explain their significance and value to local people. Some may also have small visitor centres where this is commercially viable.

### **1.6. Productive landscapes**

We will continue to run a successful and viable agricultural enterprise which, through its sustainable livestock grazing regime, will be a key part of the way we manage our grasslands in an ecological way. The enterprise will continue to enhance our reputation for innovation and resourcefulness.

We will have found more ways of achieving sustainable forms of production on our green estate that run in harmony with its use as parkland and landscaping for the city, such as cricket bat willows, timber production, crop growing, apple juice, firewood, and honey. This will be an inherent part of providing a quality green environment for people to enjoy.



*Figure 5: Cattle and sheep grazing*

### **1.7. Planning and development**

Milton Keynes will be a larger city, with the areas currently identified for growth having been built up. The Trust's green estate will have expanded into these areas and the impacts of the new developments on the Trust's existing land, in particular the landscaped grid road corridors, will have been well planned and well managed through the Trust's guidance and participation.

The Parks Trust, Milton Keynes Council and other land owners will be guided by an Open Spaces Strategy that we will have developed together. All the major parks in Milton Keynes will have coherent management plans and be managed according to clear, balanced objectives that meet the needs of the community and the environment.

The important role of the parks and landscaping in Milton Keynes will be enshrined in the Council's planning policies, neighbourhood plans and other planning documents and policies. The role of the Trust in managing the landscape will be widely recognised and we will have a strong influence on the design of new landscapes and on any policies affecting green infrastructure in Milton Keynes.

## **2. Community engagement**

### **2.1. Involving People**

People in Milton Keynes will regard the parks and the Trust as theirs; they will refer to 'our parks' managed by 'our Parks Trust'. To this end more people will be more involved in the way we manage and use our land and they will be encouraged and helped to give us their opinions and suggestions and play an active part in the Trust. Some local people will be engaged as volunteers who will be undertaking a wide variety of tasks for the Trust and we will continue to be an exemplar in volunteer management. Others will interact with us more informally – perhaps taking part in surveys, attending events, commenting on proposals, taking part in competitions, or suggesting improvements to their favourite park.

People in MK will value and respect their parks and anti-social behaviour problems such as littering will be relatively minor issues.

### **2.2. Active parks**

The parks will be alive with people as well as wildlife. Our programme will include a wide range of events organised by the local community and promoters. Festival and event organisers will seek out our parks as venues and our focus will be more on facilitating other people's events rather than organising our own events directly.

The events programme will be enjoyed locally and some events will have national recognition.

Our parks will host numerous regional, national and international events including arts festivals, cricket, BMX, trials biking, cycling, all terrain boarding and angling.

The contribution the parks will be making towards improving the physical and mental health of the people of MK, towards the quality of life of people living here, and to the economic success of the city will be better understood and recognised. The green space in Milton Keynes will be a key part of the Milton Keynes brand.



*Figure 6: Great Linford Waterside Festival*

### **2.3. Environmental education**

Every school in MK will be actively engaged in environmental education programmes with the Trust and each school will have an affinity with a park. Each school age child will have several sessions with the Trust during their schooling. As a result children in MK will be more aware and have more understanding of their local environment than those from other parts of the country.

Changing demographics will mean that older people will be supporting our work in greater numbers and we will be providing more environmental education programmes, events and activities aimed at this constituency.

We will collaborate with higher education institutions and other partners such as RSPB, and they will help validate our work, gather evidence of the effectiveness of what we do and enable us to speak with authority. The Trust will have a partnership with the University for Milton Keynes which will be developing a reputation as the place to study landscape management.



*Figure 7: An Education Session*

#### **2.4. Public art**

There will be many more art installations and art activities in the parks and Campbell Park will have a national reputation as an 'art park' with a huge number of sculptures, community based art workshops, performances, temporary exhibitions and shows. Downloadable 'art trails' around Milton Keynes will be popular and will encourage people to explore our parks and seek out our collection of sculpture.



*Figure 8: Onwards and Upwards with sculptor*

### **3. Building and running the business**

#### **3.1. Financial**

The Trust will have become more financially sound with a Net Asset Value of around 22 times the average annual revenue expenditure. The Trust's assets will be diversified so that the Trust's work is not impaired by any significant falls in the performance of any one asset class. The Trust will be well regarded as a landlord and companies will be pleased to be tenants of the Trust knowing that their rent is helping to pay for the management and improvements of the parks and landscape.

The Trust will continue to be active in property development as a means of generating long term value for the Trust to invest in the Milton Keynes parks and landscape. Some areas of the Trust's green estate that were contributing little to green infrastructure needs of the city will have been sensitively developed in order to fund improvements to the remaining green space.

#### **3.2. The way we work**

The Trust's governance arrangements will continue to be sound with a high performing board that sets the strategic direction of the Trust and effectively monitors performance of the business.

The Trust's office will be fit for purpose, an efficient and sustainable building, welcoming to the public, laid out in a way that promotes good communications and team work.

The Trust will hold and utilise good management information within and linked to its Geographical Information System (GIS). This will be a vital tool in monitoring and planning our maintenance and land management activities as well as enabling us to make selected data accessible online to people enquiring about our land and our work. We envisage that many of the enquiries we receive about whether we own a piece of land will be dealt with online in this way.



*Figure 9: Campbell Park Pavilion*

The GIS will also help in running our business by enabling us to: accurately predict our management costs and match our liabilities to our investment strategy; demonstrate value for money; demonstrate we are carrying out our activities in a more environmentally sustainable manner; and model the effect of any changes we might wish to make to the way we manage our land or any changes taking place around us such as legislation and the climate. There are also likely to be other new technologies available that we can use that will transform aspects of our work – we will have explored and embraced these technologies where they meet our business needs.

We will have continued to improve our environmental performance and the way we run the business will be considered to be sound.

### **3.3. Looking outside Milton Keynes**

The Trust will be part of a mutually supportive network of local land management trusts. We will provide advice and support to others wanting to establish similar models in their area. All this will help build the reputation of The Parks Trust as an exemplar in landscape management beyond Milton Keynes.

### **3.4. Our People**

The Trust will be recognised as a good, fair and forward thinking employer – respected for the way we develop and value our people. It will be a rewarding place to work and we will attract, develop and retain high calibre staff.

We will continue to have a strong partnership with our landscape contractors. They will value the long term relationship they have with us. Many will have young apprentices coming through their ranks whilst also retaining a core workforce whose experience with the Trust enables them to undertake work for us with limited supervision.



*Figure 10: Direct Works Team*

The Trust's Direct Works Team can respond to issues quickly and will continue to train young people some of whom will have gone on to establish their own contracting businesses and be tendering for work with the Trust.

Volunteers will make an even bigger contribution to the Trust's work and will be better integrated into the Trust. They will be ambassadors for the Trust and we will ensure the contribution they make is recognised.

Our Board will continue to be effective and dynamic with a small turnover of trustees each year. As each trustee retires the succession planning will mean that an appropriate mix of skills and experience will be maintained. Recruitment of trustees will be effected through an open and transparent process and the Trust board will be a highly respected institution in Milton Keynes.

### **3.5. Communications and reputation**

Milton Keynes will be known nationally and locally for having wonderful parks and green spaces. They will be highly valued by the city's residents, workers, local businesses and visitors to the city.

Our reputation, in and around Milton Keynes, remains positive and awareness and understanding of the Trusts' work has improved. The majority of residents know who The Parks Trust is and what we do. Our parks and the work of the Trust will be valued for its contribution to the quality of life and economy of Milton Keynes. People will be proud to be associated with the Trust.

The Trust is now seen as a leading agency managing urban and semi urban green space in the country. We will be known as a Centre of Excellence for land management and will provide advice on best practice to others. The media will seek the Trust's opinion on park and landscape management issues.

All of the Trust's parks will be recognised as belonging to The Parks Trust through clearly branded signage.

# **OUR THREE YEAR ACTION PLAN**

## **1. Our parks and landscape**

### **1.1. High quality parks and thriving landscapes**

1.1.1. We will continue our core activities to manage and maintain our green estate to a high standard with a combination of contractors on three year (or longer) term contracts, contractors on specific one off contracts, contractors on day works rates, and through our direct works team.

1.1.2. We will progressively be making changes to the term contracts specification so as to:

- Review areas of short grass for suitability and appropriateness and assess such areas to see if they can be maintained as rough, long or other grass cutting specifications, (including potentially hay areas). The aim of these actions would include; reducing the carbon footprint, offering a diversity of grassland type, improving biodiversity attributes, increasing haylage and hay production and increasing the attractiveness of the city's landscapes.
- Increase the quantity of our grassland cut for hay/haylage. Currently this stands at 112 hectares and in three years' time we hope to have increased this by 10% to 123 hectares.
- We will let some contracts for six year terms (traditionally we have let contracts for three year terms) and evaluate the benefits of this approach to the Trust and to our contractors.
- Be more pro-active regarding the management of plantation understory, with the aim of offering more depth of vision, encouraging herbaceous layers and multi age-class and size systems, while promoting better plant health.

1.1.3. Over the next three years we will prepare Site Management Statements as follows:

- Year 1: Grid road corridors, Stony Stratford Nature Reserve, Ouzel Valley
- Year 2: Ouse Valley, Loughton Brook environs (e.g. Tattenhoe, Loughton, Bancroft); Caldecotte Brook environs
- Year 3: Furzton Lake, Lodge Lake, Caldecotte and Willen Lakes, Linford Manor and Stonepit Field.

Site Management Statements will set out broadly how we intend to manage an area of land and what objectives we are seeking to achieve. They will contain an introduction to the site, a brief history/background of the site (setting the scene), management objectives, management actions, conservation factors (including referral to BAP), public and visitor interface issues.

- 1.1.4. We will produce more detailed Site Management Plans/implementation plans for other sites including:
- Year 1: Stony Stratford Nature Park, Walton Lake
  - Year 2: Manor Farm Floodplain Forest; Linford Wood, Howe Park Wood, Shenley Wood
  - Year 3: Campbell Park
- 1.1.5. We will continue to manage the Trust's 424 hectares of developing semi-mature plantations to ensure that upper canopy trees are appropriate in spacing, species and location. We will also encourage different age classes to develop in the lower canopies while managing the understory and ground flora appropriately.
- 1.1.6. We will develop our thinking on how to manage and reduce litter in our parks and reduce the current expenditure on litter collection. In 2011 this stood at around £240k pa and is increasing. Over the next three years our aim is to reduce the tonnage and cost of litter collection/disposal per hectare of land owned by the Parks Trust. We would also aim to decrease the amount of rubbish sent to landfill by re-directing it for recycling.
- 1.1.7. Our litter policy will inform our management of litter and will include educational activities with schools, recruiting and supporting additional local volunteers, press campaigns and partnership projects with Neighbourhood Action Groups and Parish Councils.

## **1.2. *The extent of our green estate***

- 1.2.1. During the course of the plan there will be very significant changes at Milton Keynes Council and the Homes and Communities Agency particularly concerning the ownership and management of their land. We will seek to position the Trust so we can contribute to new arrangements that are to the benefit of Milton Keynes.
- 1.2.2. Over the next three years we plan to take long leases and receive endowment payments (commuted sums) for approximately 133 hectares of additional parkland (subject to confirmation and agreement). This will increase not only the area of our green estate but also the character and type of land the Trust maintains, in particular it will include more play areas and incidental spaces in residential zones. However the timing of any transfers remains uncertain as the options for what should be done with all of the Homes and Communities Agency's land in Milton Keynes are, at the time of writing, being considered by government. Because of the uncertainty our budget assumes no land transfers will take place in the next three years. As and when transfers do occur we will increase our revenue expenditure by 3.5% pa of the commuted sum received while reviewing staffing levels to cope with extra levels of work.
- 1.2.3. We will continue to discuss the transfer of land from Milton Keynes Council and have made it clear we are well positioned to take on some of their estate provided satisfactory terms can be agreed. We anticipate that we will be invited to develop and run the new country park at Stanton Low as the Council has previously passed a resolution to this effect. If this happens we will prepare a clear plan for its implementation and management and ensure that we fully understand the implications for the Trust before making any formal commitment.
- 1.2.4. We will seek opportunities to extend the green infrastructure network in Milton Keynes and should land near ours come up for sale we will consider acquisition.

### **1.3. The changing landscape**

1.3.1. We will continue to modify and improve target areas of landscape. We are budgeting to spend £90k per annum on such improvements but if additional funds become available this will be a priority area for additional spending. The target areas will be:

- around bus stops, underpasses and car parks that have become too secluded and have too little natural surveillance so that some people feel uncomfortable using them;
- adjacent to the Trust's more naturalistic landscapes where the more ornamental planting is incongruous (e.g. where grid roads interface with the river valleys and with ancient woodlands);
- where the planting is no longer attractive or healthy;
- where the current landscape/planting scheme is unsuitable such as vigorous prickly shrubs next to footpaths and inappropriate large growing trees adjacent to properties;
- where the current landscape closes off attractive vistas such as those into parkland and school playing fields and other open space from grid roads.

### **1.4. The variety of parks and facilities**

1.4.1. Campbell Park - Open Air Theatre. We plan to carry out major improvements to the open air theatre to make it easier and more cost effective to use. This will include a permanent stage, increasing the capacity of the amphitheatre, fencing and hedges to enable better people management and ticketing for performances.

1.4.2. Campbell Park - circular pond and midsummer axis. We have commissioned the design of a major piece of sculpture for this area which we hope to install in 2012. We will work with the Cenotaph Trust to promote the project and secure the funds required and then commission the installation. Once installed we will manage the project to ensure it is well used, understood and valued and that it enhances Campbell Park and the city.

1.4.3. Campbell Park – events plateau. We will develop our plans for a café and play area in this section of the park and by the end of the three year plan period we hope to have assembled the land we need and have clear and achievable plans in place.

1.4.4. Howe Park Wood Study Centre. We will prepare plans and secure the funds and planning permission necessary to build a small study centre at Howe Park Wood that can be used for environmental education purposes and be hired out for community and other uses.

1.4.5. Furzton Lake. We will seek opportunities to develop visitor facilities at Furzton Lake adjacent to the Watling Street car park. These will probably require some form of enabling development which may be brought forward in conjunction with developments at The Bowl.

1.4.6. Willen Lake and Newlands. We will work with other stakeholders including the Bedford and MK Waterway Trust and MKC to undertake a feasibility study into the establishment of a canal arm from the Grand Union in Campbell Park through the Newlands grid square and into Willen Lake. This may also kick start a new masterplan to be produced for this area that will set out how we might bring forward a major redevelopment and exploit the commercial leisure potential that exists in this area.

1.4.7. All the above improvement projects will require their own individual project budgets and project monitoring arrangements. While they are at the feasibility stages then they will each have an allocated 'pre-development' sum agreed to enable them to be worked up.

## **1.5. Biodiversity and the Historic Environment**

1.5.1. We will promote our Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP), which sets out how we will conserve and enhance the wildlife habitats and species on our land. The BAP will help us to demonstrate how we are contributing to local and national BAP targets and generate greater awareness and support for our conservation work. By taking a strategic approach we will be able to achieve a significant uplift in grant aid through applications to schemes such as the Environmental Stewardship programme.

1.5.2. We will implement the priority actions in the BAP, the highlights of which will be:

- Continued and improved management of semi-natural habitats, including: ancient woodland; grasslands; scrub; ponds; streams and watercourses; reedbeds; and veteran trees.
- Creation of new wildlife habitat at the Manor Farm Floodplain Forest and enhancement of existing habitats through projects such as: translocating seed and turves from semi-natural woodland to enhance the ground flora of plantations; wildflower enrichment of grassland by strewing hay taken from more species-rich areas and adjusting cutting and grazing regimes; and revising management cycles to improve habitat linkage between networks of ponds.
- Targeted actions to conserve populations of rare, nationally declining and/or protected species, including: Creation of 'wild bird cover' plots in suitable locations to provide seed during the winter and breeding periods; creation of habitat 'piles' and hibernacula for reptiles and amphibians; provision of nesting boxes for birds and bats and artificial holts for otters; targeted habitat management for butterflies and bumblebees (e.g. rotational scrub management, encouraging specific food plants, etc).
- Improved recording, monitoring and data storage and increase data sharing with others, particularly with the Buckinghamshire & Milton Keynes Environmental Records Centre and local amateur recording and natural history groups. We will systematically build up our records on the priority habitats and species found on our land and link these records to our Geographical Information System so we are better able to quantify the extent of the resource and map the locations. We will use this information to prepare strategies for the management of key habitats, in particular our semi-natural grasslands, ponds and hedgerows.

1.5.3. We will report annually on the progress towards meeting the objectives and targets in our BAP.

1.5.4. We will continue to manage the Scheduled Ancient Monuments in our ownership in a sympathetic way that helps protect and preserve individual features, consulting with English Heritage and the local authority as required and needed.

## **1.6. Productive landscapes**

1.6.1. Agriculture. During this plan period we will review the 10 year agreement we put in place with our farming partner in 2006 and at the appropriate time extend or renegotiate it. We plan to

make more hay or haylage from our grassland to feed to our livestock in the winter months. The grazing and hay/haylage regime will be guided by our strategy for grasslands in accordance with the objectives in our Biodiversity Action Plan. We will explore opportunities when they occur to acquire additional land that can be farmed and enhance the profitability of our farming enterprise.

- 1.6.2. Sale of Parks Trust produce. We will pursue any opportunity that arises during the plan period to brand and promote the lamb and beef produced from our agricultural enterprise under our own name to the public.
- 1.6.3. Cricket Bat willows. We will continue to nurture our willows. Over the next 3 years we intend to harvest around 200 and to plant a further 500 Cricket Bat Willow sets.
- 1.6.4. We will continue to support the volunteer group managing our cider apple orchard and help them bring the cider they make to the market.
- 1.6.5. We will install additional beehives on our land in discrete locations and find outlets for Parks Trust honey.
- 1.6.6. We will continue to develop markets for our timber products and capitalize on the growing firewood market. We will explore the feasibility of investing in a firewood processing plant. We will also test the feasibility of producing wood chips from our surplus wood and the viability of installing a wood chip boiler at one of our properties.

## **1.7. *Planning and development***

- 1.7.1. Neighbourhood, regeneration and other local area plans. We will participate in the process of preparing neighbourhood plans, local regeneration strategies or any equivalent local planning work undertaken by Milton Keynes Council and/or parish councils in order to promote the Trust's charitable objects and interests. We will promote green infrastructure values and opportunities. Wherever possible we will adopt a flexible and balanced approach in line with our own stated policies and objectives where these democratically-led plans and strategies propose changes to our green estate.
- 1.7.2. The Local Development Framework (LDF) and other statutory plans. We will monitor and participate in consultations on the preparation of the Milton Keynes LDF, in particular the Site Allocations, Development Management and Central Milton Keynes development plan documents, and any other statutory plans or policies that may affect the Trust's land or business activities. As part of this work we will work with the Council to identify in these plans (where appropriate) those areas of the Trust's green estate that contribute little to the green infrastructure needs of the city and where sensitive forms of built development will be suitable in order to generate funds to deliver improvements to our other parks and green spaces.
- 1.7.3. New developments and planning applications affecting Trust land. We will continue to work with Milton Keynes Council, the Homes and Communities Agency and developers to manage the impacts of the growth and development of Milton Keynes on the Trust's green estate. Most of the planned major developments adjoin existing Trust land or will create new green estate that is nominated to come to the Trust when it is completed (see also Section 1 above). Many of the major developments require new road links, redways, footways and bus stops in the landscaped grid road corridors. We will work to ensure these impacts are well planned, well managed and well implemented.

## **2. Community engagement**

### **2.1. Involving people**

- 2.1.1. We will attend community events within Milton Keynes to help raise the profile of the Trust and engage with local residents who may not already have been exposed to our work.
- 2.1.2. We will host 'Community Pit Stops' alongside the Community Rangers to engage with local residents, helping to address a variety of issues like anti-social behaviour, dogs in the park and fire safety. As well as targeting hot spots for these issues, we will concentrate on having pit stop's within new parkland giving new residents the opportunity to discover the Trust's work.
- 2.1.3. Inclusivity. We will ensure everybody in Milton Keynes has the opportunity to volunteer with The Parks Trust if they desire. In particular, we will take measures to promote volunteering to groups who are currently under-represented (i.e. ethnic minorities, people with disabilities).
- 2.1.4. We will promote volunteering with The Parks Trust to a wider range of community groups to encourage a volunteering from more sectors of the community. This will include having volunteering displays at appropriate, multi-cultural events e.g. World Picnic, Filipino Festival and promoting volunteering opportunities with special features in community newsletters and magazines.
- 2.1.5. Corporate Volunteering. We will promote practical volunteering sessions to local businesses as a healthy and enriching way to team build. We will request a donation in turn for organising the project.
- 2.1.6. We will continue to nurture strong relationships with local businesses/organisations and will set up regular annual or bi-annual volunteer work parties with them.
- 2.1.7. We will endeavour to forge lasting and meaningful connections between specific organisations and selected (local) sites or projects. For example organising projects for Open University staff in and around Ouzel Valley Park.
- 2.1.8. We will train one or two of our existing practical volunteers to assist the Volunteers Coordinator in leading corporate tasks.
- 2.1.9. We will seek to identify new areas of volunteering to support the work of The Trust and way to provide new opportunities and roles for volunteers.
- 2.1.10. We will develop involved projects for graduates and family groups to manage which would contribute to our environmental data. These might include visitor information surveys, botanical surveys, water-testing etc.
- 2.1.11. Personal Development and support for Volunteers. We will organise training opportunities for volunteers. These will most often be in practical or conservation skills but also in First Aid, manual handling and health and safety training for example.
- 2.1.12. For certain volunteers we will conduct annual reviews to assess how they are progressing in their roles and any areas which can be improved. This is not appropriate for all volunteering roles as some are relatively undemanding (e.g. Practical volunteers) but should be applied to creative volunteers, education volunteers, patrolling rangers and rover rangers.
- 2.1.13. We will maintain our Investors in Volunteers standard.

- 2.1.14. Community and Family Volunteering. We will identify areas of our estate which are abused through vandalism and litter and work with local residents, the community team and our community ranger team to address the situation through awareness raising, practical tasks, surveys and educational activities.
- 2.1.15. We will ensure that we provide people with opportunities for two-way communication and access to information about the Trust. We will make it easier for people to meet the Trust 'face-to-face' though Public Open Meetings with q&a sessions, neighbourhood events community pit stops and briefings as appropriate.
- 2.1.16. We will instigate regular communications with parish councils so that they are kept up to date with news and information about the Trust.
- 2.1.17. We will establish affinity groups for park users with special interests such as dog walkers, walkers, cyclists, parents and photographers so that we can develop stronger relationships with them, keep them informed of relevant activities, seek their opinions so that they can help to shape future activities and encourage them to act as advocates for the Trust.

## **2.2. Active parks**

- 2.2.1. We will continue to promote the parks as a resource for sustaining a healthy lifestyle in partnerships with other organisations such as cycling, walking and orienteering groups.
- 2.2.2. We will promote the benefits of alternative areas of parkland as venues for event locations for licensed activities including: Furzton Lake, The Tree Cathedral and Caldecotte Lake.
- 2.2.3. We will encourage other agencies and partners to develop and deliver organised events in the parks through the school holidays. We will actively work with these organisations to ensure that a full programme of events is provided.
- 2.2.4. We will link neighbourhoods with their local park areas and encourage community groups to run local events in their park areas using 'Holding events in the Parks' as a guide. These will include nature walks, quiz trails, family fun days and fetes.
- 2.2.5. We will engage with under-represented diversity groups in the park. Events such as The World Picnic will become an annual event in the diversity calendar attracting audiences of 5,000 and will be recognised beyond Milton Keynes.
- 2.2.6. We will hold at least 1 large event each year for young people attracting more than 2,000 people. This will include working with young people to identify areas of interest and encourage their participation in the planning and delivery of any events.
- 2.2.7. We will have regular recreational activities taking place within our parks coordinated by us with the majority being delivered by recreational volunteers such as Parks and Run, Women's Walking Network and Easy Riders.
- 2.2.8. We will develop links with the corporate sector to encourage more commercial activity in the parks. We will encourage companies to book our corporate offer of tailor made packages that could include practical tasks, nature walks and activities, team challenges, games, and BBQ's.
- 2.2.9. We will proactively seek event sponsorship from companies. This will be particularly relevant for larger scale events e.g. open air cinema, open air theatre, walking festival, cricket, urban sports festival.

- 2.2.10. We will offer hospitality for companies at events. Linked with sponsorship or corporate engagement, e.g. open air cinema, open air theatre, cricket, World Picnic.
- 2.2.11. We will attract large concerts to Campbell Park by promoting Campbell Park to events companies who can offer events such as Proms in the Park and music concerts.
- 2.2.12. We will develop The Parks Trust Walking Festival. We will develop a programme of walks promoted regionally and nationally for at least 500 participants and link up with local hotels. This will be further developed to include cycling activities.
- 2.2.13. We will grow the May Day Festival to become an annual event attracting audiences of 2000 people promoting local crafts, bands and dance groups.
- 2.2.14. We will build a regional/national reputation for Parks Trust events such as Open Air Cinema, World Picnic and the Walking Festival.
- 2.2.15. The Green Estate will host numerous national and international sporting events. e.g. cricket, cycling, BMX, angling, model car racing or bowls.
- 2.2.16. We will investigate opportunities for new licensed activities for underused areas of parkland such as the disused motocross site at Pineham.
- 2.2.17. We will raise the public profile of The Parks Trust through high quality branded materials. Banners will be displayed at all events and large licensed activities, e.g. fireworks, open air cinema. We will also raise awareness of the events taking place in the parks internally with Trust staff, Trustees and volunteers through a regular e-newsletter.

### **2.3. Environmental education**

- 2.3.1. We will continue to encourage primary schools to attend educational sessions in the parks. We will contact all primary schools using a range of media and support them to attend educational sessions in the parks. We will also develop a range of new activities including a programme of educational activities linked to our farming enterprise, habitats sessions linked to the National Curriculum and a range of early years activities. We will also ensure that our mainstream activities are constantly reviewed and refreshed to meet changing curriculum standards.
- 2.3.2. We will continue to develop educational activities for secondary schools. These will include a water safety education programme in partnership with the Water Safety Education Group, a work experience programme which is promoted to local secondary schools and a range of programmes and activities based on the BTEC and GCSE curriculums in partnership with the Operations Team.
- 2.3.3. We will encourage Extra-Curricular Learning through developing a series of activities to support extra-curricular learning such as shuffle days, special educational needs groups and extended schools and promote to providers and we will offer continuing professional development for teachers which will encourage schools to use their own premises for outdoor learning.
- 2.3.4. We will develop activities to support tertiary education including raising awareness of what The Trust can offer to colleges such as project work and field trips and offer training / information days to lecturers, offer work experience opportunities for 18+ students through seasonal rangers, apprenticeships and work placements with our direct works team and developing links with the Open University to offer project and research opportunities for students.

- 2.3.5. We will develop activities based on the Forest Schools principle and Identify at least 4 Forest School sites in partnership with the Operations Team and where appropriate, develop natural outdoor classroom facilities at these sites. We will work with schools to identify suitable school sites and encourage schools to deliver Forest School activities in their own grounds and we will secure a stock of Forest School resources for use by Parks Trust staff and volunteers.
- 2.3.6. We will continue to develop awareness of the Trust within the community of Milton Keynes through educational activities such as walks and talks to community groups to promote the natural history and value of open space in Milton Keynes. We will develop a range of new power point presentations using expertise from other staff at The Trust including pruning, tree identification and woodland management and we will train at least 2 more volunteers to deliver talks to community groups.
- 2.3.7. We will continue to deliver our programme of Adult Education activities using expertise from The Parks Trust and visiting providers.
- 2.3.8. We will continue to support community youth groups with educational activities by developing and offering activities to community youth groups towards the achievement of merits such as Scouts, Guides and Duke of Edinburgh. We will also continue to offer educational activities and resources to children who are home educated particularly developing new activities for children studying for GCSEs.
- 2.3.9. Professional Development. We will ensure that our educational activities keep up to date with changes in educational practice to ensure that the activities offered are appropriate and professional. We will ensure that promotional leaflets are updated annually and include new sessions. And we will attend at least two secondary education conferences per year to promote activities with this age group. We will continue to attend Sustainable Educators Group to keep up to date with what other providers are offering and we will attend at least 3 coordinator meetings per year to promote educational activities. We will also offer a series of Teacher Training days to raise awareness of the educational activities available. We will also maintain our Quality Badge Award and look for other opportunities to accredit our work.
- 2.3.10. Educational Bases. We will work with partners to secure the use of other educational facilities to facilitate our delivery such as the George Amey Centre and Bradwell Abbey and we will work on the development of a purpose built education facility at Howe Park Wood.
- 2.3.11. Website. We will regularly update the Education area of our website and make it more accessible and interactive. We will add at least 10 new downloadable activities onto the website each year and we will investigate the development of a Parks Trust children's page with lots of interactive educational content. We will also explore opportunities with social media to encourage more community involvement with educational programmes, particularly linked with our Biodiversity Action Plan.
- 2.3.12. We will continue to develop and promote special activities which may be seasonal or specialist in nature such as geology sessions at Stonepit Field, Crafty Christmas or Fungi walks to encourage schools to visit parks that they may not have been to at different times of the year.
- 2.3.13. We will continue to promote The Parks Trust through our educational activities and will engage with school audiences through promotional activities such as the annual sunflower competition. We will explore other promotional activities during other seasons e.g. a pumpkin growing competition. We will evaluate the impact that our educational activities are having on schools, their students and wider audiences through market research activities.

## **2.4. Public Art**

- 2.4.1. We will continue to implement the public art plan for Campbell Park and work in partnership with MK Gallery and MK Theatre to seek funding for, develop and implement an annual public art programme.

### **3. Building and running the business**

#### **3.1 Financial**

3.1.1 We are seeking to build the long term financial sustainability of the Trust whilst at the same time maintain our land to a high standard and do all the other things set out in the preceding pages. To do this requires us to strike an appropriate balance between the healthy tension that exists between our aspirations to do more and spend more money and the need to grow the net asset value of the Trust in real terms. Our financial strategy (see appendix 6) sets out how we are going to achieve this.

3.1.2 Over the life of this plan this requires us to:

- Work to the budget set out at appendix 6 which includes keeping base expenditure down to £5m pa (adjusted for inflation).
- Put in place plans that will enable the Trust to secure additional capital receipts of £12.5m by 2019. This will largely come from the sensitive development of some areas of the Trust's green estate that are contributing little to green infrastructure needs of the city and which have been identified using clear and comprehensive criteria.
- Work towards securing additional endowments (for additional areas of park and landscape) of £26.6m by 2021.
- Invest the remainder of the property loan in suitable commercial property and property developments so as to maximize the growth in capital value of the property portfolio. We will also have to renegotiate the loan and the hedging arrangements we have in place.

3.1.3 We will continue to generate income from our green estate and explore ways to increase this and make it more sustainable. This will include consideration of:

- Plans for further introduction of car parking charges at some of our car parks.
- The development of a Green Burial site for ashes interment at Newlands Tree Cathedral
- Small scale commercial facilities for visitors at some of our busier parks including Furzton Lake and Howe Park Wood
- Supporting the redevelopment of Greenleys rugby club by Wolverton Football club (our tenants) to help them make this a viable and income generating facility
- Helping the water sports clubs (our tenants) at Caldecotte Lake become more financially sustainable.

3.1.4 Property development and asset management. Our national commercial property portfolio will be well managed and diversified in line with our property strategy. We will continue to respond to opportunities to invest in property development in order to secure good quality investments and a blended total return of 8% or more per annum above inflation.

3.1.5 We will carefully monitor the performance of our non-property investments, managed by Schroders and discuss with them each quarter any changes that might be necessary to our strategy and the tactics.

### 3.2 *The way we work*

3.2.1 We aim to continuously improve our efficiency and effectiveness and during this plan period we intend to put in place a plan to:

- modernise our office and our use of technology and the way we work.
- systematically gather and utilise management information to enable us to better understand our costs, model our longer term liabilities and financial requirements and measure and report on our efficiency.

This is likely to require some organizational changes, a degree of cultural change, and significant investment in technology in order to be successful and currently we have not budgeted for this.

3.2.2 We will follow our Environmental Policy (see appendix 7) in which we make a firm commitment to minimize any negative impact on our activities, follow our biodiversity policy in the way we manage our land, invest in renewable energy projects, follow a green purchasing policy, raise environmental awareness, reduce waste, recycle and overall to reduce our carbon footprint.

3.2.3 An area of our operation where we should be able to make significant gains is in the application of our Geographical Information System (GIS). During the course of the plan we will:

- Continue to develop the GIS and to innovate on the way this can be utilised to handle and apply information on the Trust's sites and environmental assets to underpin our management and maintenance activities and project planning.
- Maintain and expand site, asset and environmental data linked to or held within the GIS to support the Trust's operational needs.
- Develop spatial data-sharing relationships with key partners, including: Milton Keynes Council; Homes and Communities Agency; Internal Drainage Board; Buckinghamshire & Milton Keynes Environmental Records Centre.
- Investigate the application of hand-held devices (e.g. smart phones) to enable staff working in the field to access site data and land asset management information through the GIS via remote connection to the servers in the office. To roll this out, if cost efficient.
- Propagate the use of the GIS and its applications within the Trust, such as through customising the user interface according to the specific business need and providing support and training to staff (e.g. Reception staff to have access to Parks Trust land ownership and key grounds maintenance information via the GIS portal to help them handle enquiries more efficiently).
- Establish a means whereby the public can view key map-based data via the Trust's website, probably utilising (through links and overlays) a commercial (free-to-access) Internet mapping service (e.g. Google maps).

3.2.4 Health and safety. We will continue to dedicate sufficient staff time and expertise to ensuring our health and safety policy is diligently followed. We will ensure the culture throughout the organisation remains one that treats health and safety very seriously and this will include improving our reporting to the board and identifying a Trustee who will be supported to become the health and safety champion on the board.

3.2.5 We will keep the governance arrangements under review and evaluate the performance of the Board and of Trustees. We will ensure we have an appropriate mix of skills and experience on the board and that we have clear succession plans in place.

### **3.3 *Looking outside Milton Keynes***

3.3.1 We will play an active part in the developing network of Parks Trusts and endowed land based charities with the aim of learning from others, growing the reputation of the Trust and finding more efficient ways of responding to enquiries from people all over the world who are interested in our approach.

### **3.4 *Our People***

3.4.1 There will be a need to recruit more operational staff over the next three years as the Trust takes on additional land particularly as many of the new sites are within residential areas (often including play areas) that will require more intensive monitoring and staff presence per hectare compared to many of our existing more extensive parks. The increase in staff numbers will be commensurate with the additional land and obligations taken on and funded through the income raised from the endowment funds that the Trust will take to cover the maintenance obligations. The expansion in our staff capacity will be geared towards maintaining adequate and effective staff presence and responsiveness to the public and to ensure our high standards are kept up.

3.4.2 We will continue to invest in staff training and development. In support of the delivery of our Biodiversity Action Plan, we will provide training for our staff and contractors in habitat management and the actions necessary to identify and conserve priority and protected species. In most cases we will deliver this training by employing our regular ecological consultant to run practical training sessions on our own land.

3.4.3 In April 2011 we undertook some team building work with the management team. Over the next three years we plan to roll this out to other staff so as to:

- encourage more collaborative working
- achieve greater alignment around the Trust's vision and values
- put in place any cultural change that may be necessary in order to achieve more flexible and more efficient working practices.

### **3.5 *Communications and reputation***

3.5.1 We will continue to produce engaging and high quality print and online publications and promotional literature that enhances awareness of the Trust's activities and reflects the high standards of all work undertaken by the Trust.

3.5.2 We will strengthen relationships with other Milton Keynes' agencies and businesses, for example MKC, HCA, DMK, Invest Milton Keynes, MK Theatre and Gallery, The Stables, to cost-effectively, extend the reach of the Trust's promotional activities and engage new audiences. Specifically to identify activities and events with other agencies that will garner national interest, helping to enhance the reputation of Milton Keynes by promoting its positive attributes, build pride and remind people of the Trust's contribution to the city's success.

- 3.5.3 The brand and brand guidelines will be reviewed to ensure they are applied consistently across all of the Trust's materials including all online communications, print publications, signage, vehicles and uniforms.
- 3.5.4 We will provide a timely and accurate press office function for regional, national and specialist media:
- ensuring that media information and imagery is easily accessible
  - developing the Trust's digital and social media platforms
  - identifying opportunities in the national media to promote our parks
  - monitoring and evaluating media coverage to inform future media activities and ensure high levels of positive coverage have been maintained. We will raise awareness of who we are and what we do by ensuring that on-going media activity is balanced to represent all areas of the Trust's work across corporate activities, community and landscape operations.
  - targeting both national and local print, broadcast and electronic media.
  - building upon existing relations with local media and increasing regional and national media contacts.
- 3.5.5 The Trust's reputation will be enhanced through special campaigns to support key activities such as the Trust's 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary, litter and safety, site improvements and other developments.
- 3.5.6 We will complete the branding of the first tier of priority parks with signs, in accordance with the signage strategy and adhering to the new family of Parks Trust branded signs. The first tier of parks includes: Campbell Park, Willen Lake, Furzton Lake and Caldecotte Lake.
- 3.5.7 We will facilitate the application of the Trust's signage and branding for third party use on land currently or potentially owned and managed by the Trust.
- 3.5.8 A suite of print and on-line materials that showcase our parks will be produced.
- 3.5.9 We will continue to develop The Parks Trust's website so that it embraces new technology, making it as easy as possible for people to gain access to up-to-date and accurate information about the Trust. We will endeavor to provide information targeted to meet users' needs – events, parks, planned works and policies. We will introduce more interactive elements and improve awareness of all areas of the Trust's work and individual parks. Specifically, we aim to provide a greater variety of downloadable information to encourage and enhance visits to individual parks and provide greater interaction on the Trust's website.
- 3.5.10 We will continue to develop The Parks Trust's social media presence through appropriate platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and Flickr.
- 3.5.11 We will develop an effective communications contacts database for promoting the work and products of the Trust. With at least 1,000 contacts on the events mailing list. We will reach new audiences with the events programme and promote this more consistently to Parish Councils, community mobilisers, schools and new residents.
- 3.5.12 We will assess current levels of awareness by repeating the market research survey undertaken in 2006 in order to inform and prioritise future activities.

3.5.13 We will evaluate the impact that our educational activities are having on schools and wider audiences, through market research activities and wherever possible we will seek to identify and respond to the changing needs and aspirations of society.

## ***APPENDICES***

- 1. Review of achievements against previous plan***
- 2. Governance structure***
- 3. Indicative list of new Parks Trust Green Estate***
- 4. Financial strategy***
- 5. Summary of the three year action plan***
- 6. Environmental Policy***

## **Appendix 1. Review of achievements against the previous strategic plan's targets**

	<b>Heading in strategy</b>	<b>The three year action plan</b>	<b>Progress at 15 April 2011</b>
1	Animating the Parks	Develop an events strategy which considers the mix of events in terms of the size and nature. More effort will go into organising large scale events and supporting the community to deliver events.	Done and on-going
2	Animating the Parks	Explore the opportunity to develop links with the corporate sector and encourage more commercial activity in the parks	Done and on-going
3	Animating the Parks	Develop a 10 year public art programme for Campbell Park in partnership with others including the Public Art Unit of the Culture Team. The Trust will contribute significantly towards the delivery of the Public Art Strategy and Cultural Strategy	10 year plan in place - implementation slow due to slow down in s.106 and other funding available
4	Animating the Parks	Develop a partnership with Milton Keynes Public Art Unit and The Gallery in order to progress the vision for Campbell Park	Done and on-going
5	Animating the Parks	Develop plans to establish facilities including toilets and refreshments in the larger parks to enhance their attraction and their accessibility to those with a diverse range of abilities	Done and on-going. Plans in hand for study centre/toilets/cafe at Howe Park Wood and Campbell Park. Trials bike track built and opening this month. Car park at Middleton constructed and café enhanced at Willen Lake. 'Goliath' due to open at Willen Lake. Model railway installed at Caldecotte.
6	Business Development	Strengthen the relationship with MK Council, MKP and other agencies and developers as the city grows. Work with these partners and others to develop a green space strategy for the city and surrounding area	Done but more to do.
7	Business Development	Develop a business plan for professional consultancy engaged in teaching, sharing learning and developing the Parks Trust model for the benefit of Milton Keynes and other communities	Currently we are undertaking a modest amount of consultancy work but it would be a distraction to develop it further at this time.
8	Business Development	Initiate a sustainability audit to identify the Trust's overall performance according to acknowledged sustainability criteria	Done but more to do.
9	Business Development	Seek to acquire additional open space where this shows potential to form landscapes of value and inspiration to communities and where acquisition is supported by appropriate income	On-going programme of new open spaces being transferred to the Trust with endowments, now at the 3.5% rate.

10	Communication	Put in place a phased programme to install signs at key locations in the green estate	Signage audit and strategy done and first batch of new signs installed. More on their way as funds allow.
11	Communication	Prepare a plan for the development of one or more 'centres' and for the Campbell Park Pavilion	Plans for Howe Park cottage and Campbell Park all being worked up.
12	Communication	Publish results of research into perceptions of Milton Keynes' green estate and the Parks Trust and use this to revise the communications strategy	Results published and comms strategy being revised.
13	Communication	Undertake further research to monitor the success of the communications strategy and inform future activities to increase the awareness of the Trust and its activities	Further research undertaken and results are informing our work.
14	Communication	Consider how best to report on plans and achievements and a public meeting at which an annual report is presented will be tried	One public meeting held. Another planned for 2011.
15	Community Involvement	Develop a relationship with a higher education facility, establishing a research project in land management based on the green estate	Various pieces of research done and more underway with Cranfield and Bedford Universities.
16	Community Involvement	Prepare and commence implementation of a business plan to establish at least one study centre within the parks	Working on plan for Howe Park Wood study centre. £200k secured for it. Other plans being developed for Campbell Park.
17	Community Involvement	Develop a curriculum-based programme for interaction with school classes at times in the education system optimal to maximising benefit to schools	We have a rolling programme which is in line with the strategy approved by GEC and quarterly report made to GEC on achievements.
18	Community Involvement	Support the development of three friends groups.	Friends of Stony Riverside Parks operating well. Another embryo group starting at Bancroft.
19	Community Involvement	Attain 'Investors in Volunteers' status	IIV attained
20	Community Involvement	Develop a 'welcome pack' introducing the Trust for all new residents and work with Milton Keynes estate agents so that it appears in all new homes	Welcome pack prepared and being distributed.
21	Landscape Management	Establish a training scheme/apprenticeship scheme and support and encourage our contractors to participate in it.	Scheme established and operating successfully.
22	Landscape Management	Develop a peer review system to assess and comment on the quality of management of the Trust's green estate.	Made little progress on this despite some useful work. May need to re-evaluate whether this is a 'holy grail'.

23	Landscape Management	Prepare a clear, concise and simple management plan for each specific area of green space. Each plan will set out the purposes of that landscape and how the Trust will maintain it and enhance it for the benefit of the users and for the ecology of the city.	Not done and still needs doing.
24	Landscape Management	Identify 'problem areas' within the grid road corridors and prepare a rolling programme of site-specific improvements to address these.	Done in part - more to do on this.
25	Landscape Management	Prepare a business plan for the establishment of a small direct labour force which will enable the Trust to respond quickly and cost-effectively to incidents and landscape problems. The Trust will recruit and train people who will be supported to establish their own businesses having trained on the job with the Trust.	Direct works team recruited, trained and equipped. Working well.
26	Productive Landscape	Research and develop markets for its timber produce and focus on minimising waste and maximising value. Markets may be internal, where the Trust uses its timber products, and external where timber products are focused on demand from others.	Reviews undertaken of cricket bats, woodchip, and firewood enterprises. Further work being done on exploiting potential of firewood sales and also hiring out labour and plant.
27	Productive Landscape	Increase the proportion of its grasslands used for agriculture, mindful of the need to enhance biodiversity and the potential to achieve this through grazing.	No figures yet - we need GIS for this. Scope for progress on this is limited but it is an aspiration that we hope to be able to demonstrate some progress on in the three year period.
28	Productive Landscape	Develop a business plan for the farming enterprise and enter into a partnership with one or two local farmers.	Farming enterprise operating well.
29	Productive Landscape	Initiate a 'brand' of farm produce associated with good quality products arising from high standards of husbandry	Tried but decided we cannot make it financially viable at the moment.

## **Appendix 2. Governance structure**

### **The Board**

The Trust is governed by a board of Directors who are also Trustees. The main purpose of the Board is:

1. To set and monitor the strategic direction of the charity and to ensure that our strategy is aligned with the values and mission of the Trust.
2. To ensure the Trust is properly managed and complies with all relevant law and has the resources, policies and structures necessary to be effective and ensure the highest standards of corporate governance.
3. To approve all major decisions, policies and the financial statements.
4. To ensure that appropriate protection, systems and checks remain in place to mitigate exposure of the Trust to major risks.
5. To determine the way the Trust is governed and monitor, guide and authorise the work of its sub-committees.

We have three sub-committees:

#### ***The Executive Management Committee whose role is to:***

1. Guide the Chief Executive on matters to do with strategy, business management and the formulation of policy.
2. Take decisions on planning matters, and property acquisitions and disposals.
3. Formulate strategy prior to it being submitted to the Board for ratification.
4. To be responsible and accountable for the Trust's investment strategy, including the strategy for the Trust's commercial property portfolio.
5. Set the framework and high level parameters within which the Operations Committee will prepare its budgets and plans.
6. Consider proposals for investment in specific projects and ventures and the terms of any future adoptions of green space or any other leases to be taken on by the Trust.
7. Recommend any changes needed to the governance arrangements of the charity.
8. Review the performance of the Chief Executive and agree the Chief Executive's salary/terms and conditions.

#### ***The Audit Committee whose role is to:***

1. Oversee the financial regulations, financial systems, policies and procedures.
2. Review the half yearly management accounts and monitor the integrity of the end of year financial statements.
3. Appoint and meet the auditors annually and ensuring any recommendations are actioned.
4. Monitor the risk register and the management/mitigation of risk including the Trust's procedures for detecting fraud.
5. Ensure the Trust's insurance cover is appropriate.

6. Scrutinise expenditure and the detailed financial management of projects.

***The Operations Committee whose role is to:***

1. Take an overview of the Trust's green estate and ensure it is well managed, promoted, animated and interpreted.
2. Make recommendations to the Executive Management Committee on the budget requirements of the green estate.
3. Consider proposals for the Trust to take on additional green spaces.

In addition sub groups are established as and when needed to advise the Board, but not to take decisions on behalf of the Board.

New Trustees are taken through an induction process that explores where they can best contribute their skills and experience and informs them about the responsibilities of charity trustees as well as giving them an understanding of the Trust's work and its procedures. Trustees are provided with training opportunities, charity commission briefings and other information about good charity governance from time to time.

All the Trustees are members of the company and the Trust pays indemnity insurance for the Trustees which has been confirmed by the Charity Commissioners to be within the Charity Regulations.

### **Appendix 3. Indicative list of new Parks Trust Green Estate September 2011 – March 2015**

<b>Site/Feature</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Area (hectares)</b>	<b>Transferor</b>	<b>Date (Earliest) (Subject to confirmation)</b>	<b>Indicative endowment sum (Subject to agreement &amp; confirmation)</b>
Oxley Park East - open spaces, play areas and SUDS	Oxley Park East	5.380	HCA	Sep-11	£275,212
Caldecotte Lake - Site E & Promontory	Caldecotte Lake	0.55	HCA	Oct-11	£37,577
Shenley Wood - new SUDS	Shenley Wood	7.534	HCA	Jan-12	£250,000
Ashlands (open space/ponds)	Ashlands	7.4	HCA	Jan-12	£600,000
Tenby Grove, Kingsmead - strip of grass adjoining	Kingsmead North	0.766	Persimmon Homes	Jan-12	£44,883
Magna Park swales/ linear park Phases 1/2a	Magna Park	6.213	Gazeley	Jan-12	£375,643
Broughton Atterbury wetland/open space	Broughton	5.6	HCA	Mar-12	£723,114
Residual strips and spaces along west edge of Broughton Brook Linear Park and housing development/adopted highways	Broughton	0.3	HCA	Mar-12	£38,738
Residual strips of land around outside of employment side adjoining H6 & V11	Broughton	0.67	HCA	Mar-12	£64,887
Strip of open space between Cavan Way/Kemsley Crescent & Ferry Meadows Close	Broughton	0.6	HCA	Mar-12	£58,107
The Glebe - open space/linear park extension between Dean Forest Way and Broughton Brook	Broughton	3.05	HCA	Mar-12	£393,839
Middleton - land around allotments & paddocks/community orchard	Middleton	9.599	HCA	Mar-12	£424,710
Broughton Gate Open Spaces. Play areas and linear park extension	Broughton	10.256	HCA	Mar-12	£2,436,294
Brooklands Meadows Linear Park Phase 1 (inc. Play area)	Brooklands	8.674	Places for People	Apr-12	£1,552,883

Site/Feature	Location	Area (hectares)	Transferor	Date (Earliest) (Subject to confirmation)	Indicative endowment sum (Subject to agreement & confirmation)
Brooklands Ridge Phase 1	Brooklands	6.859	Places for People	Apr-12	£680,161
Kidderminster Walk open space & play area	Broughton	1.2	HCA	Apr-12	£216,934
Linear park extension, east side of brook between Tanfield Lane & Milton Road	Broughton	2.23	HCA	Apr-12	£287,954
Milton Road circus open space	Broughton	0.9	HCA	Apr-12	£116,215
New playing fields site & linear park extension north of Tanfield Lane bridge	Broughton	1.8	HCA	Apr-12	£232,429
Residual strips at edge of H7	Broughton	0.15	HCA	Apr-12	£14,527
Kingsmead South SUDS corridors	Kingsmead South	2.400	HCA	Apr-12	£200,000
Monkston Park - new play provision in Ouzel Valley LP	Monkston Park	-	HCA	Apr-12	£70,460
Monkston Park - various areas of open space	Monkston Park	1.549	HCA	Apr-12	£75,426
Oxley Mead SSSI	Oxley Park West	3.8	Persimmon Homes	Apr-12	£165,473
Ashlands - miscellaneous minor open spaces within housing area	Ashlands	0.306	HCA	Aug-12	£55,228
Central linear park extension with SUDS	Tattenhoe Park	2.63	HCA	Sep-12	£339,605
Eastern Linear Park extension with SUDS	Tattenhoe Park	1.78	HCA	Sep-12	£229,847
Incidental Open Space in centre of development	Tattenhoe Park	0.3	HCA	Sep-12	£54,234
Landscape bund on north-west boundary	Tattenhoe Park	0.4	HCA	Sep-12	£38,738
Landscape bund on south-west boundary	Tattenhoe Park	0.7	HCA	Sep-12	£67,792
Western Linear Park extension with SUDS	Tattenhoe Park	2.78	HCA	Sep-12	£358,974
V1/H6 transportation corridor near Westcroft	Westcroft	9.320	HCA	Sep-12	£232,429
Newlands un-adopted access road and adjoining area of woodland	Newlands	1	HCA	Apr-13	£96,846
Western Expansion Area 10. Phase 1 Open spaces and play areas	WEA	6.055	Gallagher	Dec-13	£1,434,475

Site/Feature	Location	Area (hectares)	Transferor	Date (Earliest) (Subject to confirmation)	Indicative endowment sum (Subject to agreement & confirmation)
Western Expansion Area 10. Phase 1. Landscape zone around balancing pond	WEA	2.53	Gallagher	Dec-13	£275,138
Brooklands Meadows Linear Park Phase 2	Brooklands	0.6	Places for People	Mar-14	£384,000
Marginal land along west side of Oakgrove adjoining Ouzel Valley Linear Park	Oakgrove	1.7	HCA (Crest Nicholson)	Mar-14	£164,637
Residual land in brook corridor south of Coachway development	Brook Furlong	2	HCA	Mar-15	£193,691
Brooklands Ridge Phase 2	Brooklands	9.077	Places for People	Mar-15	£513,000
Oakgrove. Landscape & Open Space, 1 <sup>st</sup> Phase of development	Oakgrove	0.5	Crest Nicholson	Mar-15	£100,000
Cricket ground/playing fields/local park open space	Tattenhoe Park	4.33	HCA	Mar-15	£559,122
<b>TOTALS</b>		<b>133.5</b>			<b>£14,433,222</b>

## **Appendix 4. Financial Strategy**

1. We have agreed to set the base level of annual expenditure at £5m and the intention is not to increase this in real terms for the foreseeable future. The actual level of expenditure will be reviewed annually, taking into account the following:
  - 1.1. cost and price inflation
  - 1.2. additional income generated
  - 1.3. capital receipts
  - 1.4. the size of deficits or surpluses
  - 1.5. the growth in the net asset value of the Trust in real terms
  - 1.6. any increase in expenditure needed to maintain additional land taken under management
2. The Trust's long term target is to increase its net asset value (net worth) to a level at which the Trust can have a high level of confidence that annual expenditure can be securely funded in perpetuity with minimal risk. For financial modelling purposes, on the advice of our investment managers, we are using 4.5% as the target, long term annual total return above inflation, for our whole investment portfolio, including property. On this basis and with of £5m of annual operating expenditure, the target NAV will be £110m. The NAV of the Trust at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2011 was £74m; a shortfall of £36m against this target.
3. Every £250k increase in annual expenditure will mean that the target NAV will need to be increased by £5.5m (i.e. £250k x 22), to maintain the target NAV in real terms.
4. We have adopted a total returns target which assumes any cash deficit will be funded from growth in NAV, with a minimum of 85% of our total expenditure to be funded by cash income (i.e. income not from capital growth or new capital receipts).
5. The Trust will be guided by our investment managers on the mix of investments across all non-property asset classes to give the best chance of delivering the long term real return target. Commercial property will remain a key asset class.
6. The Trust will keep cash funds available to take advantage of market opportunities and will consider switching investments between property and equities to take advantage of market movements, where it is prudent to do so.
7. To achieve the target for real growth in NAV we are looking for we will:
  - 7.1. Set a target of 4.5%, average return above RPI from all of our non-property investments managed by Schroders.
  - 7.2. Set a target of 8% average annual total return above RPI from our property portfolio. Continue with our strategy to improve the quality and value of the property. The total investment in property is currently set at £60m. This will include investment in the purchase and forward funding of suitable development projects.
  - 7.3. Continue to borrow up to 50% of the value of our property assets (LTV). All borrowings will be secured against the value of our property assets and will be ring fenced. In order to protect the Trust against future interest rate rises all loans will be at fixed interest rate or SWAPs will be put in place.
  - 7.4. We will also secure additional endowments as we take on additional land. These sums will be calculated on the basis of the sum that is required to cover the annual cost of maintenance given a 3.5% annual return. We will continue to ring fence all capital receipts from endowments, sale or value created through the development of land currently designated as green space.
  - 7.5. Maximise income generating opportunities from the green estate

- 7.6. Generate cash from development opportunities that exist within the green estate in line with the agreed policy for The Acquisition, Disposal or Development of Land.
- 7.7. Supplement the returns from our property and non-property investment portfolios by operating income, grants, and donations.

<b>Targets for implementation of the financial strategy</b>	
Target total return for non-property portfolio	4.5% real (i.e. above RPI)
Target total return for property portfolio	8.0% real
Target total return for cash	2.0 % real
Target for growth in operational income	In line with inflation
Target for capital receipts	£12.5m by 2019
Target additional endowments	£26.6m by 2021
<b>Year<sup>1</sup> in which Trust will be <i>financially sustainable</i><sup>2</sup></b>	<b>2025</b>
Net annual revenue costs at this date will be	£8.0m
Net asset value at this date will be	£179m

<sup>1</sup> This date is derived from the Trust's long term financial model into which the target returns and receipts were input. Inflation was assumed to be 2.5%; the Trust's costs were inflated at 3.3% p.a; and the £30m property investment loan extended for a further five years.

<sup>2</sup> *financially sustainable* in this case means when the Trust's net asset value is capable of funding the Trust's annual revenue expenditure with a 4.5% annual return.

## **Appendix 5. Summary of three year action plan**

Action	Point Number	Report on Action
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### **Our Parks and Landscape**

Review our grassland management and increase proportion cut for hay. Let some term contracts for 6 years and evaluate.	1.1.2.	
Produce site management statements and detailed management plans for different sites.	1.1.3./1.1.4.	
Manage and reduce litter costs	1.1.6./1.1.7.	
Position the Trust so it is not disadvantaged by changes to MKC and HCA.	1.2.1.	
Take leases and receive payment for 133ha of additional parkland	1.2.2.	
Respond to opportunities to extend green estate	1.2.3.	
Modify and improve target areas with the budgeted £90K pa.	1.3.1.	
Carry out improvements to the Theatre area in Campbell Park	1.4.1.	
Facilitate the regeneration of the Circular Pond and Midsummer Axis in Campbell Park	1.4.2.	
Develop plans for a Café and play area in the events plateau of Campbell Park	1.4.3.	
Prepare for plans and secure funding for Howe Park Wood Study Centre.	1.4.4.	
Develop facilities for visitors to Furzton Lake	1.4.5.	
Work with MK Waterway Trust and MKC on the feasibility of a canal arm from Campbell Park to Willen Lake.	1.4.6.	
Promote the Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP)	1.5.1.	

Implement the priority actions in the BAP and report annually on the progress	1.5.2./1.5.3.	
Continue to manage Scheduled Ancient monuments.	1.5.4.	
Review the 10 year agreement with the farming partner that was established in 2006.	1.6.1.	
Pursue opportunity to sell Parks Trust produce	1.6.2.	
Continue to produce willow for cricket bats.	1.6.3.	
Support the volunteers managing the cider apple orchard and making cider	1.6.4.	
Install new beehives for honey production	1.6.5.	
Develop and exploit markets for timber products and firewood.	1.6.6.	
Participate in regeneration with MKC and parish councils.	1.7.1.	
Monitor and participate in consultations on the preparation of MK LDF.	1.7.2.	
Work with MKC and HCA to manage developments affecting Trust land.	1.7.3.	

### **Community Engagement**

Attend community events in MK to raise awareness of the Trust	2.1.1.	
Host "Community Pit Stops" to liaise with local residents	2.1.2.	
Promote volunteering and ensure everybody has the opportunity to volunteer.	2.1.3. / 2.1.4.	
Promote corporate volunteering to local businesses for team building purposes.	2.1.5./2.1.6.	
Train existing volunteers to assist the volunteer's coordinator with tasks.	2.1.8.	
Identify new ways and areas for volunteers to support the Trust.	2.1.9.	

Develop projects for graduates or families to contribute to environmental data.	2.1.10.	
Annual reviews for certain volunteers to review progress and improvements.	2.1.12.	
Maintain our Investors in Volunteer standard.	2.1.13.	
Promote communications and information about the Trust through meetings and events.	2.1.15.	
Instigate communications with Parish Councils,	2.1.16.	
Establish affinity groups for park users with special interests.	2.1.17.	
Promote parks for healthy lifestyles with other organisations.	2.2.1.	
Promote alternative parkland as venues for events.	2.2.2.	
Encourage other agencies and community groups to deliver events in the parks.	2.2.3./2.2.4.	
Engage with under-represented diversity groups in the parks.	2.2.5.	
Hold at least one large event for young people every year.	2.2.6.	
Have regular recreational activities in the parks	2.2.7.	
Develop links to encourage more commercial activities in the parks.	2.2.8.	
Seek sponsorship from companies for large events.	2.2.9./2.2.10.	
Attract large concerts to Campbell Park.	2.2.11.	
Develop the Parks Trust Walking festival.	2.2.12.	
Grow the May Day Festival into a large annual event.	2.2.13.	
Build a national reputation for our large events.	2.2.14.	
Host national and international sporting events.	2.2.15.	

Investigate opportunities for new licenced activities in underused areas of parkland.	2.2.16.	
Raise the profile of the Trust through branded material.	2.2.17.	
Continue to encourage primary schools to attend education sessions.	2.3.1.	
Continue to develop educational activities for secondary schools.	2.3.2.	
Encourage and support extra-curricular learning.	2.3.3.	
Develop activities to support tertiary education.	2.3.4.	
Develop activities and sites based on the Forest schools principle.	2.3.5.	
Raise awareness of the Trust in communities through educational activities.	2.3.6.	
Continue to deliver Adult Education courses.	2.3.7.	
Support community youth groups and home educated children with educational activities	2.3.8.	
Ensure that our educational activities are up to date with current education practices.	2.3.9.	
Work with partners to use other educational facilities.	2.3.10.	
Regularly update the education area of the website and make it more accessible.	2.3.11.	
Develop and promote special activities which may be seasonal or specialist.	2.3.12.	
Promote the Trust through educational activities.	2.3.13.	
Continue to implement the public art plan for Campbell Park.	2.4.1.	

### **Building and running the business**

Build long term financial sustainability for the Trust whilst maintaining standards in line with financial strategy.	3.1.1/3.1.2.	
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Explore ways to increase income from the Green Estate in a sustainable way.	3.1.3.	
Develop and maintain national property portfolio and respond to investment opportunities.	3.1.4.	
Monitor the performance of our non-property investments.	3.1.5.	
Modernise office and way we work and use technology.	3.2.1.	
Make significant gains in the application of GIS	3.2.2.	
Continue to dedicate staff time to ensure health and safety policy is followed.	3.2.3.	
Keep governance arrangements under review and evaluate the Board and Trustees.	3.2.4.	
Collaborate with other similar charities outside MK.	3.3.1.	
Continue to invest in staff training and development to support the BAP.	3.4.2.	
Undertake team building work to encourage greater collaboration.	3.4.3.	
Increase awareness and reputation of the Trust.	3.5.1.	
Review branding and ensure consistency.	3.5.3.	
Improve the Trust's reputation through special campaigns to support Trust activities.	3.5.6.	
Complete branding (signs) for the first tier parks,	3.5.7.	
Facilitate the application of the Trust's signage for third party use on Trust land.	3.5.8.	
Produce print and on-line materials to showcase the parks.	3.5.9.	
Develop the website so that it is up to date with accurate information	3.5.10.	
Continue to develop a presence on social media platforms.	3.5.11.	

Develop communications contacts database to use for promotion distribution.	3.5.12.	
Repeat market research taken in 2006 and act on findings.	3.5.13.	
Evaluate impact of educational activities within schools through market research and act on findings,	3.5.14.	

## **Appendix 6. Environmental Policy**

The Parks Trust exists as much for future generations as it does for this one and therefore sustainability is a key consideration in everything we do. We will follow this policy in a way that is consistent with building a financially sound business. Our policy is to undertake a range of actions and behaviours, as follows:

### **1. The way we work**

- Minimise any negative impact of our activities.
- Monitor our gas, electric and water usage and seek to reduce the amount of energy and water used year on year.
- Minimise the number of vehicle miles (where it is practical to do so) undertaken on Trust business and facilitate and encourage environmentally friendly means of transport by our staff.
- Review our investment policy and practices and seek opportunities to pursue socially responsible investing strategies and try to ensure that we do not invest in stocks that have a detrimental effect on the environment.

### **2. The way we manage our land**

- Follow the policy contained in 'Our Commitment to Biodiversity' and implement a 'Biodiversity Action Plan'
- Incorporate our aspirations for greater sustainability and specific targets into our new (2011/12) strategic plan.
- Specify and manage landscape contracts in ways that achieve good environmental practices and outcomes
- Seek to minimise the use of chemicals by using mechanical means of controlling for example, weeds where chemicals are used we will comply with relevant legislation and best practice guidelines.
- Further investigate the scope for growing and harvesting wood for fuel including wood chip from coppice.
- Develop proposals for investment in renewable energy projects.
- Take steps to better quantify the contribution our green estate makes to carbon reduction.

### **3. Procurement, resources and materials**

- Purchase vehicles, goods & services with the least environmental impact
- Purchase timber and other products from independently accredited, sustainable sources

**4. Environmental awareness, education and communication**

- Ensure that staff are environmentally aware and apply this policy in practice
- Continue to invest in environmental education programmes
- Evaluate the impact of our environmental education programme and learn lessons and make improvements.

**5. Waste and recovery**

- Reduce waste at source
- Re-use and repair materials
- Recycle materials that cannot be reused