

# How to... improve management and maintenance

This short guide on improving management and maintenance in parks is based on the work we have completed with projects funded by the HLF / BIG Parks for People programme. To develop an effective management and maintenance plan, parks need to:

- Understand their current strengths and weaknesses;
- Produce a plan to achieve the targets; and
- Assess visitor satisfaction levels.

## Understanding current strengths and weaknesses

To develop an effective plan to improve management and maintenance, parks need to understand the existing situation. This involves an assessment of the park which should include:

- Current staffing levels
- Current costs
- Description of the park
- Wider community context

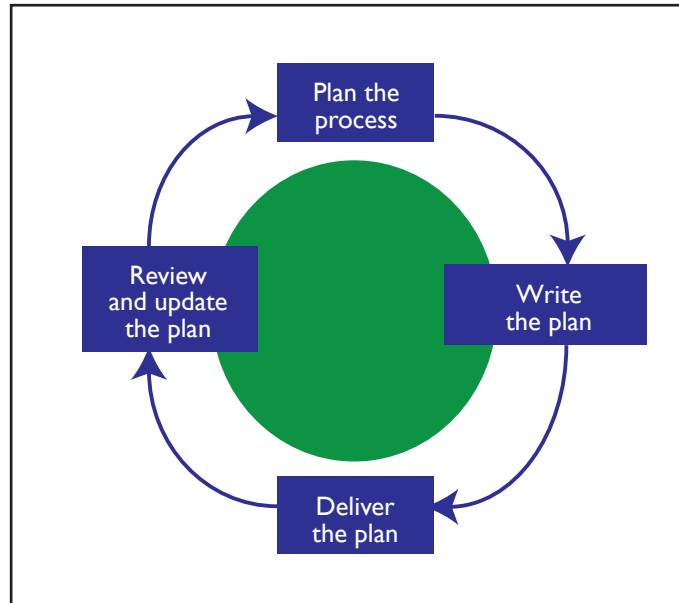
To achieve Green Flag status parks need to carry out an assessment of the park against the criteria; this will identify areas where the park is currently meeting the standard, and areas of weakness.

Green Flag Criteria	Analysis of existing situation of issues	Action plan / recommendations
A welcoming place		
Healthy, safe and secure		
Well-maintained & clean		
Sustainability		
Conservation & heritage		
Community involvement		
Marketing		
Management		

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### Developing a management and maintenance plan

A management and maintenance plan should not be a static document; it should be a continuous process of review, as indicated in the diagram:



Parks should make sure they spend time planning the plan; do they have the time, skills and information available to produce it.?

The plan should include aims, objectives and targets for how the park intends to improve management and maintenance.

A detailed action plan showing activities, deadlines, resource requirements and responsibilities is essential to ensure that the aims are achieved.

If the plan includes any increased revenue implications then it's also good practice to get the plan signed off and supported by the appropriate budget holders.

### Assessing visitor satisfaction levels

To ensure that the management and maintenance plans are having an impact on visitor satisfaction, parks should regularly consult users. Before the plan is implemented carry out a survey to assess current satisfaction levels, and repeat this on a regular basis to determine whether satisfaction is increasing or decreasing. Review the plan in light of the findings.

Case Study: Hale Park in Halton has increased its staffing and improved the quality of facilities in the park. As a result they have held Green Flag for two years. They have used GreenStat to measure satisfaction levels and have seen this increase from 42% satisfied to 70% satisfied. The maintenance team have also seen an increase in the number of reports of minor vandalism and graffiti, as people now have higher expectations about the standard of the park.

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## Top tips

Projects have identified the following critical success factors to successfully improving management and maintenance in parks:

- Start thinking about management and maintenance before starting the project;
- Consider maintenance implications of all improvement work – you may be able to reduce maintenance burdens through innovative design;
- Employ on-site dedicated staff;
- Improve responsive maintenance frequency;
- Produce different versions of the plan for different audiences;
- Engage volunteers in maintenance duties;
- Develop apprenticeship or work placement schemes;
- Carry out regular inspections;
- Educate park users on “do’s and don’ts of park use”.