

Resident Questions for Housing Area Panel

Reference Number: 3.3

Department	Housing
Date question raised	22/10/2022
Week of Area Panel	12/12/2022
Area in city	North
Star rating applied by residents	3
Deadline for officer response	16 th November 2022
Name of officer responding	Robert Walker
Officer job title	Head of Operations, City Parks City Environment (Cityclean & Cityparks)

Resident Question

Title of Question	Poor maintenance of verges, pavements and parks
Issue:	The city's verges, pavements and parks are not being properly maintained.
Background:	<p>There is a citywide issue of trees not being pruned, grass not being cut, and weeds not being removed from pavements, and parks not being maintained. These areas are meant to be maintained regularly but are not.</p> <p>Residents gave examples of various spots in the area which have been neglected and poorly maintained, and some spots that are causing access issues, obstructions, and injuries and risk of injury to residents:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bank at Davey Drive, Hollingdean: overhanging brambles causing injury to people in wheelchairs and children in pushchairs. Residents were told the bank would be cleared every 2 months but this has not happened. • Grass-cutting in Wild Park: the grass was cut near a pedestrian crossing, and the wet grass was left strewn across the crossing, rather than being cleared. A resident nearly slipped on this. • Elm tree removal in Wild Park: Elm trees were removed from Wild Park as they had Dutch Elm Disease. However, the diseased trunks have been left, causing concern of further spread of the disease. A massive hole has been left on the tarmac road, which is posing a danger to adults and children walking and playing in the area. • Wild Park: seating and benches have been removed without warning, and not replaced. <p>Wild Park: the monument at Wild Park is not being maintained. The area was cleared by volunteers years ago, and the Council</p>

	promised that the area would be regularly maintained. However, the area around the monument is completely overgrown and inaccessible, and the monument is covered in graffiti
Action requested by residents:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Residents want to know why the Council is allowing the city to fall into disrepair, and why it is not properly maintaining its streets, green areas and parks. Residents want to know why the Council are taking so long to resolve these issues across the city, particularly areas that have been reported as needing immediate action and attention. Residents want to know if the Council can use Community Payback to tackle the problem of backlogs and lack of staff needed to maintain the city.

Officer Response

Officer contact details:	robert.walker@brighton-hove.gov.uk
Officer Response:	<p>Currently we have grass growing as if it was a spring flush, in November. At the same time it is raining heavily. This means staff are still cutting grass when they would ideally be carrying out winter maintenance such as cutting back woody overgrowth onto the highway.</p> <p>Cutting long grass in wet conditions leads to grass deposits on pavements, these should however be cleared by the staff if they are significant.</p> <p>At Wild Park as part of the Rainscape project we hope we can get the roadway surface fixed at the entrance of the park. I do not know what specific benches are being referred to at Wild Park but generally park benches are only removed when they have become unsafe and are not normally replaced unless by a donated bench, if they are donated and we have the donors details we will contact them.</p> <p>Following on from Covid where we fell behind with work. We have also had difficulty filling vacancies and we continue to be short of staff which means some work has fallen behind.</p> <p>With regard to the elm tree as long as the trunk is removed before next year's elm disease season it does not pose a risk. The high risk and need to remove quickly is during the beetle breeding season.</p> <p>The amount of vegetation growing in the pavements is largely the result of stopping the use of glyphosate, this has been compounded by recruitment difficulties meaning that the posts that were created to manually remove the weeds were not all filled.</p> <p>The Council has taken measures to address these problems, increasing pay for the lowest paid workers which means that we</p>

	<p>are now getting more applicants for jobs and earmarking some money to deal with the crumbling infrastructure in the parks.</p> <p>There has been difficulty in identifying a contractor to maintain the bank at Davey Drive. Works have been carried out to clear the bottom 3m of the bank of brambles and install weed suppressant fabric in the spring.</p> <p>The second phase of planting through the fabric was delayed due to a dry Spring and planned for the Autumn/Winter period.</p> <p>In the Summer it was noted that there was some encroachment from the brambles higher up the bank and some of the fabric lifted in the wind. Also, a strip of wild flowers, which included a few self-seeded brambles, has grown through along the front adjacent to the wall over the Summer months. This was cut back by City parks in August 2022.</p> <p>The second phase of works is to clear the brambles that are encroaching, restore missing section of landscape fabric and remove the plants adjacent to the wall. The contractor has programmed the works in January. They are due to complete these works and install a low wooden fence 1m from the wall to help keep the brambles to the upper portion of the bank. Native shrubs will be planted in the cleared areas of the bank in February to further reduce opportunities for re-encroachment of the brambles and provide increased biodiversity and improved appearance of the bank. A 1m wide strip of wildflower turf will be laid adjacent to the wall to provide a low growing soft edge to the bank.</p> <p>The smaller area directly on the corner of Davey Drive and Upper Hollingdean Road and the adjacent steps leading to Roedale Court was not accessible to the machinery and only cut back last Winter. Works to dig out the brambles from the first 2m of the bank, leaving the Rose of Sharon plants is being procured and works are expected to be completed by Spring. Following these works we will be investigating if it is possible to install a strip of wild flower turf or low planting to reduce encroachment by the brambles in these areas.</p>
Action:	N/A
Start date:	N/A
End date:	N/A

