

SERVICE DESCRIPTION FORM

Department: Environmental Services	
Service: Parks and Countryside	
Income	(£000s)
Fees and charges	878
<p>The Service's main income from charges is from interments and the sale of burial lairs. The charges for these are reviewed annually and compare favourably with charges being applied by adjacent local authorities. The Grounds Maintenance Significant Trading Operation (STO) raises income from external contracts at the MOD bases and some smaller contracts. Other minor income is from Funfair and circus bookings.</p>	
Description:	
<p>The Parks and Countryside Service provides the following functions across Moray:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Management and maintenance of all Council Parks, open spaces and amenity areas.• Ranger services and outdoor access (including Core Path Planning) <p>The Parks element of the service includes the management and maintenance of:- manages and maintains:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- 775 hectares of parks & gardens, playing fields, burial grounds, council housing schemes, road verges and other general amenity space with squads operating out of four depots.- 134 fixed outdoor play areas are maintained and inspected to EU standards to ensure safe areas of play are provided for all users.- 210 hectares of mostly community/amenity woodland , including programmed felling and thinning operations of commercial plantations, when required.- 220,000 summer bedding plants per annum from the Elgin Nursery for planting in Council parks and gardens and for community groups to purchase for local displays. <p>All grounds maintenance works are provided under a Significant Trading Operation (STO) which also carries out contract works, won in competition, for the MOD bases at Kinloss and Lossiemouth and for some private housing association and other agencies/organisations. The STO has a responsibility under the Local Government in Scotland Act 2003 to break even over a three year rolling period.</p> <p>The Service is also responsible, under the Council's statutory duty for Burial of the Dead - Burial Grounds (Scotland) Act 1855, for interments in 65 burial grounds/churchyards throughout Moray.</p> <p>The Ranger service consists of 2 Rangers who operate Moray wide providing Ranger Services(including school talks/trips etc) and undertaking countryside footpath maintenance and inspection. A high percentage of their work is concentrated on the Speyside Way Long Distance Route for which the Council has a statutory duty under the Countryside (Scotland Act 1967 for the section in Moray.</p> <p>The Outdoor Access function involves the development of the Council's Core Paths Plan and the maintenance and monitoring of developed paths. The Council has</p>	

statutory responsibilities under the Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003. These include, in addition to the Core Path Plan, upholding access rights and supporting a Local Outdoor Access Forum.

Other service areas include management and maintenance of War Memorials and all parks & gardens infrastructures, park events, horticulture advice, biodiversity, training projects, landscape/play area design and sport pitch/facility maintenance, tree works on behalf of other Council Departments/Sections and assistance to Roads staff in the event of emergencies (eg Flooding)

Outcomes / impacts:

The Parks and Countryside service contributes to the output requirements under the Single Outcome Agreement's Outcome Delivery Plan for:-

- Moray is firmly established as one of Scotland's top visitor destinations
- Sustainable Transport

The service also contributes to the following 'Best Value for Moray' Key Outcomes:-
Moray residents have easier access to key services via sustainable modes of transport

- Improving pedestrian and cyclist facilities
- Promoting sustainable transport, to reduce the impact on the environment

Our local people live in an attractive natural and built environment that is sustainable and enhanced for future generations

- Maintaining the cleanliness of parks, public open spaces and streets

The elements of the services provided under legislation are identified above, but in addition there are major health and safety Duty of Care responsibilities on the Council towards all users of public parks, open spaces, developed and promoted countryside paths etc.

Although there is no statutory responsibility for the Council to develop the Core Path Plan, the Scottish Government's expectation is that the local authority would take the lead on this.