



**STRONGER  
FAIRER  
GREENER**



# Inside an Award-Winning Parks Services

Jennie Judd – Head of Parks Services



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#WorkingForCardiff  
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# City of Cardiff / Local Authority

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Capital City of Wales.

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Population of Cardiff: 383,900.

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Population of Cardiff City Region: Over 1.5million.

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Most diverse city in Wales with over a quarter of the population belonging to an ethnically diverse group.

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More than 80 different languages used across the city.

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240k people work in Cardiff with 70k of these commuting into the city from elsewhere.

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Large student population: approx. 45k Higher Education and University.



# City of Cardiff / Local Authority

## 28 Wards

- 79 Elected Members.

## Leader & Cabinet Model

- Corporate Plan - Delivering a ***Stronger, Fairer, Greener*** Cardiff
  - A Great Place to Grow Up
  - A Great Place to Grow Older
  - Supporting People Out of Poverty
  - Safe, Confident & Empowered Communities
  - A Capital City that Works for Wales
  - One Planet Cardiff
  - Modernising and Integrating our Public Services



# Service Overview

1,600 hectares of land managed.

- 513 named Parks and Green Spaces.
- Formal / Informal Parks / Sports Pitches & Conservation Sites.
- Highways land management.
- Income generating Housing, Cardiff Castle, Harbour etc.

135.5 FTE – Management, Technical, Supervision & Operational.

- 70% non income generating.
- 30% income generating.



# Parks Services

Grounds  
Maintenance.

Playground Team.

Arboriculture.

Coed Caerdydd.

Nursery &  
Conservatory

Assets & Land  
Management  
Team.

Parks Planning.

Allotments.

Parks Programme  
& Landscape  
Team.

Bute Park.

Flat Holm.

Business Support,  
Bookings &  
Events Team.

Operations &  
Governance  
Team.

Urban Rangers.

Community  
Rangers.



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# Budget Overview

## 2026 / 27 Budget

Expenditure **£9.670m**

Income (**£3.164m**)

**Net £6.506m**

**£6.6m** Employee related

**£1.5m** Premises related

**£800k** Transport related

**£770k** Other



# Grant Funding Opportunities

**2026 / 27**

- **£2.1m** Local Places for Nature (2025 / 2027).
- **£1.4m** National Lottery Heritage Grant Flat Holm Island.
- **£346K** National Lottery Northern Woodland Project.
- **£55k** Welsh Government – Allotment Services.
- **£9k** National Forest Landscape – Invasive Species.
- **£63k** English British Cricket Board – Pitch Improvements.
- **£200k** One Planet Cardiff Grants.  
*INNS, Food Composting, Green Waste, Rainwater Harvesting systems.*

**£4,173,000**



# SPF / Capital / Section 106

**2026 / 27**

- **£1.5M** SPF – Playgrounds & Park Restoration Projects.
- **£120K** Capital Playground
- **£100K** Capital Teen Sport
- **£200k** Capital Asset Renewal
- **£220k** Capital Green Flag Parks
- **£1.4M** Section 106 – remaining pot £4-6M
- **£3.1M** Construction / Consultation Costs

**£6,640,000**



# Three Year Parks Programme



Playground refurbishment.



Wheeled Sports – Skate Parks, BMX Tracks & Pump Tracks.



Outdoor Sports – Calisthenics, Exercise, Agility & Parkour.



Programme is 100% fee earning – anticipated outturn is 320k 2026/27





# SPLOTT PARK PLAY AREA,

PUZZLE AND GAMES THEMED PLAY AREA DESIGNED TO ENCOURAGE IMAGINATION PLAY & PROVIDE PLAY FOR WHEEL CHAIRS, TRIKE'S, BIKES, AND PLAY EQUIPMENT FOR ALL AGES AND ABILITIES.



## PRIOR CONDITIONS

The former tarmac surfaced and dated play area suffered from anti social behaviour (partly due to its location in an enclosed area of the park), minimal play & accessible equipment, and lacked inspiration for a central park in Tremorfa. The site was ear marked for Social Prosperity Funding, following Consultation from local Councillors & the public.

Several Public consultation events were undertaken in 2023 at the STAR hub which requested equipment for all ages, accessible equipments, location in the back of the park. In addition, Cardiff Councils brief lacking in play value/ imagination, access

## NEW DESIGN

Puzzle/games themed play area for all ages and abilities, re-located within SploTT Park in a more visible location and contained new path connections. Construction costs, including the demolition of the former play areas, cost £371,842.51. Construction took 6 months to complete, from 28th January to 17th July 2025. The design included:

- 1) Concrete giant jig saws, domino seating, dice, and concrete toddlers house, designed to last 30+ years, more difficult to vandalise, and offer unique play.
- 2) New toddlers area for wheeled play and imagination play, using a childrens car mat as the theme
- 3) New central mound with tube slides and other climbing apparatus;
- 4) Central Dice and domino themed seating area, new entrance, and maintenance gate access;
- 5) Junior & teenage area consisting of a multiunit, swings, seesaw, wheelchair accessible roundabout, and climbing features. The swings will also contain accessible swings and toddlers swings.
- 6) Cable way ('Zipline').

# HAILEY PARK MULTIUSE GAMES AREA, LLANDAFF NORTH.

**NEW GAMES AND SPORTS FACILITY AT HAILEY PARK, LLANDAFF NORTH, TO REPLACE AN EXISTING CONCRETE BASKETBALL AREA. THE DESIGN WAS BASED UPON CONSULTATION WITH LOCAL SCHOOLS AND RESIDENT ASSOCIATION.**

## NEW DESIGN

New Sport and Games area designed to encourage all ages and abilities to participate.

Traditional rectangular high fenced Multi Use Games areas tend to be dominated by 1 game, limiting their use.

Following HERPark (MSFG) research by Cardiff Council & Cardiff University in 2025, notable feedback from the study revealed 80% of teenage girls requested more areas for seating in parks to 'hang out' and an overall feeling standard MUGA's weren't designed for them. Traditional MUGA's tend to be more popular with teenage boys, discouraging other park users.

As a result of the above research & consultation, 4 separate areas of activity were designed in an open layout, with an organic steel fence rebounding stray balls, and several low concrete seat walls with text of former male & female Welsh Sports Stars that grew up in the area and likely used Hailey Park as a child. The idea was to create a separate area for seating and passive recreation, a competitive area, and a practice area providing different options, rather than a space being dominated by one game/activity.

The following 4 areas of sport/games were:

1) Practice area: Multiple games for practicing skills selected by teenagers. This included: Tennis wall, netball, rugby throwing practice, football tennis, goal keeper walls, and passing drills for hockey/football.

2) Competitive Games Area: Half court Basket Ball, Full court Volley Ball, and Panna Goal (small goal for football).

3) 'Hang out' space: Circular yellow seating for meeting/hanging out, following a request from Teenage girls. A separate concrete seat wall provides seating for groups or individuals.

4) Calisthenics/Exercise: Series of pullups, dip, monkey bars, incline bars for a small workout.

The project was completed in summer 2026 at a total cost of £300,000



DESIGN

# EXERCISE AREAS.

AREAS DESIGNATED FOR CALISTHENICS, AROBIC, AND AGILITY EXERCISE USING BODY WEIGHT TRAINING IN AN OUTDOOR ENVIRONMENT.



## NEW EXERCISE AREAS

A new Calisthenics and Agility area at Victoria Park (Canton) was designed and implemented during the 2025/26 programme, the largest group outdoor exercise area in Cardiff. The project was initially identified by local Cllrs and a personal trainer/resident who raised concern with the lack of outdoor exercise areas in Cardiff, which became more apparent during Covid 19. The area includes a series of powder coated steel bars, tire flips, jumping stone blocks, and rubber soft surfacing & ground marking for agility exercise. All require little maintenance except Cardiff Council Safety inspections, & painting/sweeping/pressure washing build-up. The facility is designed to target all muscle groups, create movement, balance, stretching, and cardiovascular exercise whilst benefiting from the outdoor environment such as light/UV, fresh air, environmental psychological benefits (Biophilia), 'earthing', and social interaction. The park becomes an extension of the gym area, such as circular running loop/paths, and open lawn/grass.

Construction cost £55,973.15, and was built between 1st May 2025 to 4th July 2025.

**2024-26 PROGRAMME**

# Cardiff Barrage MUGA & Calisthenics Park



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# Green Flag

21 Green Flags across Cardiff.

- 1 Heritage Award.

22 Community Green Flags.

Capital Investment – 100k, S106, LNP & Grant.

2026 Forward Plan

- Pause in expanding the main scheme.
- Continue to invest / developing existing sites.
- Heritage Award application Roath Park and Flat Holm.



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# Apprenticeships

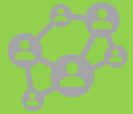


## *Recruit, Train and Retain!*

- **Seven Apprenticeships.**
- Three-year scheme - day release.
- **Funded from the Parks revenue account.**
- Maintains skills, supports succession planning and flexible early retirement applications.
- **Provide learning exchange opportunities:**
  - *Stuttgart, Nantes, Holland, National Botanic Gardens and Kings Trust.*
- **90% retention rate – access to further training and career opportunities.**



# Volunteering



Well established network of volunteers since **1989**.



**2025/26** volunteer hours target of **19,469** exceeded expectation by **23,243 (19%)**.



Monetary value of **£287k** (National Living Wage).



## Volunteering Benefits



Adds capacity / gets work done.

Provides opportunities for inclusion (BAME).

Supports health and wellbeing of individuals.

Engenders ownership and civic pride.

Helps to reduce anti-social behaviour.

Enhances grant funding opportunities & investment.

Delivers environmental improvements.

Working Time Credits.

Provides pathways into employment.



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# Priorities & Responding to Change

## Parks Blue & Green Spaces Strategy.

- Partnership Working & Collaboration.
- Community engagement – BAME.
- Environmental, Economic & Health Impact Study – Cardiff University.

## Responding to Climate Change.

- Adaptation – future access / socially deprived communities.
- Urban Cooling.
- Protecting our heritage ‘Collections’.
- Sustainable Horticulture.
- Carbon neutral service – new depots, fleet & equipment, new ways of working.

## Financial Resilience & Service Sustainability.

Commercial Strategy – Nursery & Conservatory Functions.

Feasibility Study – partnership arrangements (Bute Park Visitor Centre & Nursery), (NRW Shared Office / Depots).

Reviewing recharge rates & income.

Master Plan – Forest Farm, commercialisation.

## Allotment Strategy 2027.

- Develop a 5-year strategy.
- Digitalisation.
- Expanding sites / opportunities
  - 3,457 lettable plots – 2,355 waiting list.
- Sustainable water use.
- Managing expectation.

## Digitalisation – Parks Services.

- Operational / Strategic decision making.
- Max resources and opportunities.
- 18,775 Customer & Member enquires.
- Self serving / improved customer interface, Apps, Bot chats etc.

## Parks Playground Strategy.

- Develop a 5-year strategy.
- Destination sites.
- Intergenerational leisure / play venues.
- Financial resilience.
- Emerging priorities.
- Responding to demands & needs.



# Priorities & Responding to Change

## Coed Caerdydd Project.

- 155,500 trees planted since 2021.
- Partnership Working & Collaboration.
- Engaging with private landowners.
- Early intervention of engineering project.
- Developing our Tree Guardian network.
- Expanding Tree Nursery, propagation of champion trees.
- Max. Tree Donation Fund & Corporate.

## Heat Mapping - Trees.

- Working with Arb Innovators.
- City-wide Ash Dieback initiative.
- GIS heat mapping, aerial photography.
- Link into Arbortack system.
- Risk register – regeneration, target range, condition of tree stock.

## Service Improvement Plans.

APSE Service Review of key functions.

- Cabinet & Scrutiny Engagement.
- Under resourced areas / at capacity.
- Outsourcing service.
- More volunteers requires more staff.
- Review our recharge rates.



# What is it like to be an Award-Winning Service?

- Demanding - expectations are high!
- Constantly under scrutiny – held to account.
- Everyone is committed to delivering a **Stronger, Fairer, Green** Cardiff.
- Committed, professional, high performing Team.
- *‘Charged with the greatest responsibility..... to care for some of the most vulnerable people in our communities who rely upon us.’*
- Despite all the Challenges, Risk & Pressures..... it is still a privilege!
- We continue to deliver, perform and do right by our communities.



# APSE Winners 2025

Best Service Team  
Parks, Grounds & Horticultural  
Services!

