

The Green Flag Standards

There are eight themes and 27 assessment criteria that Green Flag sites must satisfactorily meet, in order to attain, and retain, a Green Flag, and these are as follows: -

1. A Welcoming Place

This section focuses on the overall impressions of the site, for any member of the community approaching and entering the park. It needs to be a welcoming place and one that both invites and draws people into it. This means creating a space which, through its visual appearance, range of facilities, standards of maintenance and ease of access, makes people feel that they are in a cared-for place.

Features of particular importance are: -

1. A welcoming site.
2. Good and safe access for all users.
3. Good signage to and information panels in the park.
4. Equal access for all members of the community.

2. Healthy, Safe, and Secure

This section looks at how well managers understand their users' needs, encouraging them to enjoy healthy activities, using appropriate, safe to-use facilities.

In order to support visitors feeling personally safe and secure, relevant issues must be addressed in management plans and implemented on the ground. New issues that arise must be addressed promptly and appropriately.

Particularly important issues are: -

5. Appropriate provision of quality facilities and activities.
6. Equipment and facilities must be safe to use.
7. The park or green space must be a secure place for all members of the community to use or traverse.
8. Control of dogs and dog fouling must be adequately addressed.

3. Well Maintained and Clean

For aesthetic as well as health and safety reasons, issues of cleanliness and maintenance must be addressed. This includes elements of litter and other waste management issues being adequately dealt with, grounds, buildings, equipment and other features being well

maintained and having policies on litter, vandalism and maintenance in place, in practice, and regularly reviewed.

Issues of cleanliness and maintenance must therefore be adequately addressed, in particular: -

9. Litter and Waste Management.
10. Horticultural Maintenance.
11. Arboricultural Maintenance.
12. Building and Infrastructure Maintenance.
13. Equipment Maintenance.

4. Environmental Management

The Green Flag Award seeks to ensure that the way the site is managed has a positive impact on the environment, locally and globally, both now and for the future. Where choices can be made for future procurement, landscaping or buildings, they should aim to minimise energy and resource consumption and waste, and design in benefits to the local and global environment. Policies should seek to eliminate the use of peat and chemicals to control pests and as fertilisers.

Horticultural and arboricultural decisions should reflect an understanding of the impacts of climate change. Specifically: -

14. Managing Environmental Impact.
15. Waste Minimisation, with waste plant material in the park being recycled.
16. Chemical Use should be minimised and justified.
17. Horticultural peat use should be eliminated.
18. Climate Change Adaption Strategies developed and implemented.

5. Biodiversity, Landscape, Conservation and Heritage

Attention should be paid to the appropriate management and conservation of natural features, wildlife and flora; landscape features; and buildings and structures. Their particular character and requirements should be identified and appropriate management strategies put in place to conserve and enhance them.

Particular attention should be paid to the conservation and appropriate management of: -

19. Management of Natural Features, Wild Fauna and Flora.
20. Conservation of Landscape Features.
21. Conservation of Buildings and Structures.

These features should serve their function well without placing undue pressure on the surrounding environment.

6. Community Involvement

Management of the Park should actively pursue the involvement of members of the community who represent as many park user groups, stakeholders and local residents as possible. The extent to which the Council understands the community it seeks to serve will be examined, along with how actively and appropriately it involves members of the community in making decisions about the site's development, provides opportunities for active participation in site projects, and ensures that there is appropriate provision of recreational facilities and activities for all sectors of the community.

Management should be able to demonstrate:

22. Community Involvement in Park Management and Development.

23. Appropriate levels of provision of recreational facilities for all sectors of the community.

7. Marketing and Communication

Managers need to understand the key benefits of the site and how they use this information to promote it appropriately. They should understand who the main user groups are, could be or should be, and use a fitting range of interpretation and engagement techniques to communicate with them.

This basis ensures that appropriate facilities, events and activities can be offered and most effectively promoted, and a solid foundation for development now and in the future, is formed through having: -

24. Marketing and Promotion strategies in place, in practice and regularly reviewed.

25. Appropriate Information Channels.

26. Appropriate Educational and Interpretational Information

8. Management

A Green Flag Award application must have a management plan or strategy in place which clearly and adequately addresses all the above criteria and any other relevant aspects of the park's management.

The plan must be actively implemented and regularly reviewed: -

27. A Management Plan that delivers the financially sound management of the Park.