



Councillor Luthfur Rahman
Executive Member
for Skills, Culture & Leisure

The Rt Hon Rishi Sunak MP
Chancellor of the Exchequer
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Dear Chancellor of the Exchequer

In March 2020, all of our lives changed. In the face of a global pandemic, the value of parks became more clearly evident than ever before and the Government regularly called for people across the nation to make use of parks, to boost their physical and mental wellbeing.

Our Parks team and more than 100 voluntary groups that they support in Manchester have worked tirelessly to provide safe access to the green lungs of the city. The number of people visiting our parks has risen by more than 30 per cent and the pressure to keep them clean and safe has risen accordingly, with an extra 78,487 bags of litter collected compared to last year.

We have found new ways to support children and young people, providing vital activity for more than 250 children with special educational needs and their families and access to digital trails which have racked up a total of 6,370km - the equivalent of walking from Manchester to the Himalayas.

In short, our parks have been a lifeline for the people of Manchester at what has been an incredibly challenging period for our communities.

The value of parks is well documented and recognised, but little support has been provided to ensure that they can continue to operate safely. There is a further challenge for the future of our parks, given the necessary reduction in income-generating activity like events and hospitality, combined with the cost of additional protective measures to continue to provide safe access to residents. The pressures incurred by higher visitor numbers and adapted ways of working have resulted in a funding gap of 20 per cent within this financial year, with unknown challenges still to come.

I ask that you give recognition to our parks colleagues, our forgotten key workers who have worked tirelessly to provide safe spaces that have been essential to the health and well-being of the nation. To help keep our staff, volunteers and visitors safe and our parks and green spaces open, I ask that you commit to providing the necessary support required to bridge the funding gap which has been caused by the twin pressures of reduced incomes and increased costs.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Luthfur Rahman', written in a cursive style.

Councillor Luthfur Rahman OBE
Executive Member for Skills, Culture and Leisure