



Bristol Parks Forum

representing resident led
park groups and citywide organisations
involved in protecting and improving
Bristol's green spaces

BPF Statement to Cabinet Meeting 16 December 2011

Support for Bristol Parks and Green Spaces Strategy

The Bristol Parks Forum endorsed and supports the Bristol Parks and Green Spaces Strategy. We agreed to the values that were set out and to the criteria that were to be used to determine whether or not existing land could be considered for disposal.

We insisted that any sale of land should be based on the application of these principles and not driven by targets for capital receipts.

Disposals

Officers have now re-evaluated each of the sites proposed for disposal after the public consultation and determined, by application of the criteria in the Parks and Green Spaces Strategy, that four of the candidate areas should now not be sold off. For other sites they have suggested that the decision be deferred while further information (notably on flood risk) is assessed. We congratulate the officers on the way they have carried out this very difficult task.

Cabinet has said it is minded to overturn the officer's recommendations on some sites, we agree that it is right that Cabinet should make this decision having considered all the views expressed to it, including those of the Scrutiny Commission.

There was a deal of disagreement at Wednesday's Quality of Life Scrutiny Commission on the level and effectiveness of consultation that took place during both the stakeholder and public consultation. The consultation has highlighted certain areas that while not required to be retained on strict application of the Parks and Green Spaces Strategy criteria, they are still highly valued by the community in the surrounding areas.

Overall the consultation has captured views, however it has become apparent that some areas have been incomplete. Bristol Parks Forum recommends that any decision on these need to be delayed until all information is available and complete has been taken into consideration by Cabinet. They need to ensure that they fully understand the complete set of views on each site before making a decision (and also demonstrate that they understand these). Based on the time taken by the Quality of Life Scrutiny Commission to review each of their chosen examples sites this would equate to two weeks work. Cabinet need to have invested that amount of time before they make decisions. This cannot be done properly before Christmas.

Any outstanding issues that are causing a deferral in a decision are resolved and a decision taken within a quarter. Once these decisions have been taken the focus needs to be on the improvement of the existing green spaces and that a method of prioritisation is agreed and prioritisation done to ensure that the most needy areas are addressed.

The cabinet should restate that the future of remaining green spaces within the city are protected for the next twenty years.

Planning

In areas where backland site development is proposed, clear stipulations must be made on the conditions of sale to ensure that suitable development is undertaken.

Areas proposed for development now have to be considered through the planning process, it is then that issues expressed in the consultations that relate to planning (such as increases in traffic) should be considered. Local people and Councillors will also have a further say in how these sites are developed. For some sites this process may conclude that development is not possible.

Land Sale

When land is put up for sale then notification needs to be given to all stake-holders including local park groups, residents associations and residents who have been involved in the consultation process so they are well aware of what is happening.

Land sale should only be done when the best possible value can be obtained.

Budget Review

The myth that Bristol City Council owned many acres of land of 'undeveloped land' that were not of value to the community has now been firmly squashed. It is also clear that the amount of money that is available for the improvement of the city's parks from the sale of these spaces is significantly less than was anticipated at the time the strategy was adopted. We support the view of the Quality of Life Commission that the budgeting for the strategy should be reviewed to consider additional funding sources that have become available. It is now the responsibility of all Councillors to work with Park Groups and others to find sources of income to fill this gap.

Knowle West

Lastly the AGSP proposals for the Knowle West Regeneration Framework (4.2 h) state that it "applies its own financial arrangement for green space disposals and investments." We call on the Cabinet to ensure that the 70:30 split adopted for the rest of Bristol is mirrored as a minimum requirement within the area. We accept that revenue raised by disposals will be reinvested within the area, and not throughout the city as for other disposals.

Bristol Parks Forum Committee

15th December 2010

info@bristolparksforum.org.uk

www.bristolparksforum.org.uk

Bristol Parks Forum

Bristol Parks Forum was established by Bristol Parks as an umbrella organisation for community park groups and organisations in the city with an interest in their local parks and green spaces.

The forum is supported by Bristol City Council but acts independently and is the only 'community voice' that is dedicated to all of Bristol's green spaces. The forum's three main roles are to:

- offer an opportunity to share ideas and experience
- act as a consultation body for the Bristol Parks service and other agencies
- influence decision-making, including the allocation of resources

Bristol Parks Forum <http://www.bristolparksforum.org.uk>