



# Bristol Parks Forum

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

## BRISTOL CITY COUNCIL

Full Council - 22 November 2011

### Cross Party-working group for Parks and Green Spaces

Bristol Parks Forum Committee welcomes the support for the Parks and Green Spaces Strategy given in the report from the Cross Party Working Group.

The P&GSS and subsequent AGSP process, was designed to rectify 25 years of budget cuts and underinvestment in our parks and green spaces. Its aim was to prevent a further slide into dereliction for many of them; we would be alarmed if the Council decided to bring a halt to this process and the improvements of the last 5 years.

We make the following comments:

1. We are pleased that the report confirms all party support for the vision and objectives set out in the Strategy.
2. We urge the Full Council to agree that, as proposed by the report, 100% of any money raised from disposals should go to Bristol's parks and green spaces.
3. We are very concerned by the shortfall in funding shown by the report. The report suggests that a minimum of £84m is required to achieve even a 'fair' standard for Bristol's parks but predicts an income of only £42.9m.
4. Projected funding from the 'Core Parks budget' over the 20-years of the Strategy has reduced from £10m shown in the figures agreed in 2008 to £1.7m in this report. We call on the Council to reinstate the funding that appears to have been lost.
5. The report suggests that a further £1.2m will be received from S106, we are concerned that even this figure is unlikely to be achieved given the current trend for the Development Control Committees to let developers off their S106 obligations. We call on those committees to ensure that the maximum possible level of contributions for parks & green spaces is achieved.
6. We note that the assumed income from CIL is based on 27% of the total CIL income going to Bristol Parks. We hope that Councillors will ensure that at least this percentage is achieved when decisions are made on CIL distribution in the future.

Again we are concerned that claims of financial hardship from developers will lead to Development Control Committees allowing CIL contributions to be reduced.

7. We believe that all P&GSS sites that are not listed for disposal (whether in the original Cabinet list or following the review based on this report) should be listed as important green space in the Site Allocations DPD document. This would give these spaces a further level of protection through the planning process.
8. Given the current Government's plans to 'simplify' the planning system it seems to us more important than ever that Bristol's Development Framework Site Allocations DPD is adopted as soon as possible. We hope that the process of referring decisions on disposals to Neighbourhood Partnerships will not further delay the Site Allocations DPD document. We call on the Council to ensure that if necessary additional NP meetings are called so that the current timetable can be met. In any event we do not think NPs will be able to give sufficient time to this important issue in their regular meetings.
9. From our attendance at the early meetings of the Cross Party Group we were pleased to see that the Councillors were taking time to ensure that they fully understood the P&GSS and AGSP process and the background to it. Given the heated debates that had preceded the setting up of the group we were pleased to observe the constructive nature of the discussions.
10. We are pleased that clarity has now been achieved over the level of s106 funds currently held, which had erroneously been suggested as sufficient to fund the necessary improvements to parks.
11. Now that representatives of all parties have a full understanding of the background to the P&GSS and are aware of the true financial position, we hope that the 4 political parties can agree to stop using the issues of Bristol's parks and green spaces to score political points. We call on all parties to work together to ensure that all parts of the City have high quality green spaces and to explore ways in which the funding gap identified in the report can be closed.

Bristol Parks Forum Committee  
21st November 2011  
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### **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 [www.bristolparksforum.org.uk](http://www.bristolparksforum.org.uk)