

Bristol City Council

# **Parks and Green Space Strategy**

## **Manual for Assessing Quality**

Updated July 2007



# Introduction

## Quality assessments

- provide a basis for assessing the quality of individual sites against a consistent methodology, this being detailed in this guidance manual.
- enable the quality of sites to be gauged in relation to one another,
- enable an overview of all sites' quality to be collectively considered, across the city or, within specified areas,
- in conjunction with other criteria, enable relative priorities for the attraction of investment and improvement through planning, design or management, and
- provide a basis for ongoing monitoring and review.

## Criteria for assessment

- The criteria used in this assessment reflect those of the *Green Flag* criteria that relate specifically to quality, in conjunction with embracing quality considerations known to apply to many sites throughout Bristol.

## Approach to Assessment

- Any assessment will be a 'snapshot' consideration of quality on the day the assessor visits the site. Where possible the assessor must make allowance for his/ her own 'mood' at the time which may be influenced by factors like whether the sun is shining or whether the maintenance contractor has just paid a visit.
- Greenspace Quality Assessments are seen as a valuable way of enabling assessors to familiarise themselves with each green space whilst considering all issues that have a bearing on current condition and in relation to aspirations for potential future quality. The process should be handled in conjunction with other complementary processes, such as the preparation of risk assessments and management plans, without being distracted by them.

## Assessing Condition and Maintenance Categories

- In assessing 'Condition' (Cyclic Maintenance) (as opposed to Maintenance -annual maintenance), consideration is to be given to the physical state of elements; structural considerations may well apply. Anything beyond relatively low cost maintenance, that is, items where deterioration has reached a point where capital rather than revenue investment is required, must be considered here.
- When considering 'Maintenance' (annual maintenance) items, the assessor needs to make a 'snap-shot' judgment of how each element stands in relation to the standard laid out, for each item, in the current maintenance contract document. When considering grass maintenance, allowance must be made for each grass management area as specification types range from fine recreation grass areas to conservation grass areas which are cut twice annually. Where items are not the subject of contract defined maintenance, but standards still require to be assessed, some guidance is given under the appropriate headings.

## Existing and Potential Quality

- When considering sites, assessors must, in conjunction with scoring a green space's current quality, estimate its potential score. This would represent what could be achieved, were the site to become the subject of full capital funding and optimum



- The assessor should score in relation to a standard to aspire to 'in an ideal world' and given full funding. Any tendency to depress the calibration of 'Excellent' on the scale in relation to the most he/ she might hope to be able to afford in the context of current budgets, must be resisted. So too should be any thought to 'hold down' scores in resigned acceptance of the social pressures associated with the site context. Ultimately the hope is that high quality facilities will assist and sustain the regeneration of an area and its sense of self esteem. It will be vital for the assessor to raise his/ her sights to the equivalent of level of a *Green Flag*, or equivalent award in respect of quality.
- Assessors will need to gauge which score applies in each case ( 1 for Poor, 2 for Fair, 3 for Good and 4 for Excellent, or as shown ). Some guidance is given below, based on what typically may apply for 'Excellent' or 'Poor' as extremes. Some or all of the description given may apply. Whilst the principles can be applied throughout, other considerations may apply as circumstances will vary from site to site.

Excellent: User experience beyond expectation. This is our theoretical aim we may achieve ground breaking best practice/services for some or all of the features on our Green Flag sites. This is the ideal world given unlimited funds.

Good: Users should be more than satisfied with facilities and services, they should have a positive impression of Bristol's Parks and Green Spaces.

Fair: Minimum acceptable standard, "utility grade".

Poor: This is an unacceptable standard and requires corrective action. The user is likely to wish to complain.

- Assessors will refine their approach to calibrating scores with experience and through establishing their own benchmarks for each level of standard. Initially, it is recommended that early assessments are performed with a colleague, each assessor independently gauging and scoring a site before comparing notes and negotiating differences to a score both regard as reasonable. It may be wise to repeat this process after a number of solo assessments to check that neither assessor has strayed away from consistency.
- To provide external calibration from a non technical user prospective, members of the Bristol Parks Forum have undertaken Site Quality Assessments GEN on sample sites. The sample reflected the wide variety and location of Parks and Green Spaces sites. Their scores were comparable to those undertaken by Bristol Park's technical officers.

## Future Quality Assessments

- Assessment should not be regarded as a 'one off' as future monitoring and review will enable sites' progress or decline to be plotted. Future assessments may also enable some gauging of the effect of any capital improvement or change in the way a site is managed.
- Experience gained by assessors in the use of both guidance manual and assessment form, will be valuable, and should be fed back to the Parks Service Manager with a view to further improvement.

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# Section A: Generic

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- G1. Setting and Containment of Green Space Site
- G2. Entrance
- G3. Boundaries, Peripheral
- G4. Boundaries, Internal
- G5. Access Paths/ Hard Paved Surfaces
- G6. Grass Areas
- G7. User Experience
- G8. User Information
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G20. Overall Impressions

Also, linked to Supplementary Section B:

G21. Potential supplementary categories

## Assessment Forms

The form to be used for all elements of this section of the assessment is 'Form GEN'.

# Section B: Supplementary

## Contents

- S1. Horticulture
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- S3. Trees
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- S6. Children's Play
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- S11. Sports Surfaces, All Year (Hard/ Artificial)
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## Assessment Forms

The forms to be used for each element of this section are indicated at the beginning of each element's guidance. They are referenced SUP, followed by the number of the element, as indicated.

# G1. Setting and Containment

- Form **GEN** is to be used for this and other generic sections.

## G1.1.1 - Setting and Containment of site

- This initial category enables a judgement to be made on the quality of a site's setting and locational context. In considering this, account should be taken of the surrounding land use(s), and whether their presence contributes positively or negatively to the quality of the park, as an amenity within the community.
- Houses with street frontages that front onto a green space are bound make for a positive and safe feeling for the user. (*St Andrews Park is an optimum example with house fronts facing all four of its edges*). Conversely, housing or other land uses that 'turn their back' on a green space will make for a negative outlook, one that is not overlooked, and in its worst conspires a site to remaining a 'backlands site'. (*e.g. Doncaster Road Park, Southmead*. Abutting commercial uses that do not address the park will also contribute to isolation. (*e.g. Western Drive Industrial Estate which abuts Hengrove Park*).
- The presence of shops or other 'High Street' uses facing onto a green space will also increase the degree to which its quality is seen as contributing to that of the area within which it is set. (*Barnard Park lies across the road from Crow Lane Shops and increases the sense that this is the hub of the Henbury community*).
- An association with, or linkage to, other open space use, such as abutting playing fields or other informal open space will also contribute to the inherent quality of a site within its surrounding area. Such continuity will enable users to enjoy sites in sequence and extend the overall quality of their experience. In a different way, the extension may be a visual rather than physical one, but this too can increase the site's green setting quality, especially within a built-up environment. (*In this way, Canford Cemetery, which abuts Canford Park serves to visually 'extend' the actual size of the park*).
- Visual impact: Industry that visually impacts upon the site. (*e.g.1. the scale of a large industrial unit such as that of Matthew Clark on Whitchurch Lane contributes to the rather dank feel of the southern side of Hengrove Park. e.g.2. the dominance of industrial premises along the southern edge of Ridgeway Playing Fields.*) However, in considering potential scores, account must be taken of any opportunities for potential softening or screening of industrial units from within the green space.

- Guidance:

Excellent:

- Positive contribution of greenspace's setting.
- Houses with street frontages that front onto a site.
- Presence of abutting greenspace extending the green setting of the site.

Poor:

- Negative contribution to greenspace's setting.
- Rear aspects of residential or commercial properties.
- Buildings or industrial premises that visually impact upon the site.

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## G2. Entrances

- Form **GEN** is to be used for this and other generic sections.

### G2.1.1 - Entrances: Status/ Clarity of Hierarchy

- This will only apply on larger green spaces where a first time user will be unable to see the whole of the site upon arrival.
- Consideration must be given to the **collective contribution of all entrances** to the site, taking into account the nature of the site's character and use.
- The significance of entrance **design** in supporting a sense of entrances' status/ hierarchy needs to be considered in conjunction with **G2.1.3 - Design Quality and Attractiveness (below)**.

Much will depend upon the character and nature of the site. A formally designed entrance will be more relevant to a formally laid out park, a Victorian example of which is *St George Park*. At the other extreme, green spaces may be inherently informal and open in character. This may well be the case for those that (irrespective of designation) will be regarded as 'village greens' such as *Redland Green* and *Shirehampton Green*, or 'common land' such as *The Downs*, *Highridge Common* and *Horfield Common*, which by their nature tend to be open along each edge. Where the latter applies, it could well be appropriate to mark high, avoiding 'penalising' a site which by its nature is openly accessible.

The scale and historically, the degree of ornamentation associated with the design of main entrances in relation to subsidiary ones can also be a factor in enabling visitors to gauge their relative importance and orientate themselves once within the green space.

- Irrespective of site type, the emphasis needs to be on assessing the **overall clarity** of entrance provision, and generally in gauging the **sense of entrance**, and how legible it is likely to be to users. Some sites, notably 'backlands' sites may suffer from no obvious announcement of a green space's presence whatsoever. It may just be down to local knowledge a path in a gap between houses happens to lead to what may be quite a significant facility. (e.g. *Hillfields*, *Sea Mills* and *Muller Road Recreation Grounds*).

- Guidance :

Excellent:

- Hierarchy of main and subsidiary entrance points immediately clear.

Poor:

- Status of entrances confused. No sense of 'main entrance' at all.
- 'Unofficial' entrances apparent.

### G2.1.2 - Entrances: Location

- This will apply variably according to the size and nature of greenspace, but characteristics should still be applicable for a small site with just two entrance points. Whilst judgement will be needed as to what is a reasonable number and distribution of entrance points for a particular site, the points below may generally assist.
- Consideration should also be given to the **appropriateness**, or otherwise of entrances. On some sites, 'unofficial' entrances may be apparent in the form of gaps created in peripheral fences and hedgerows. The interest here is whether they are indicative of a

lack of overall structure to a site's access network, or whether they are 'holes' in a site's enclosure, that would lead to tension with surrounding residents if formalised.

- Guidance :

Excellent:

- Optimum combination of main and other entrances.
- All entrances in the right place in relation to facilities within the park and links externally either to other green space or local public amenities (shops, library, etc) or transport (railway station, bus stops). (e.g. *Hengrove Farm Community Woodland Park's S. E. entrance links directly to Walsh Avenue shops*).

Poor:

- Accesses generally irrationally located. Very limited access due to site being substantially 'landlocked' by built development.
- Some inappropriate entrances.

### G2.1.3 - Entrances: Design

- The entrance(s) to green space will provide first time visitors' with their first impression, and design can contribute enormously to it being a good one. Ideally, entrances should be a welcoming experience that announces the presence of the green space and invites the visitor in. Irrespective of materials (gates, barriers, bollards, piers and threshold paving, etc, as appropriate) and degree of formality, whether period or contemporary in style, entrance design should be in harmony with that of the green space as a whole and sympathetic to character. The use of ornamental planting may also contribute to the attractiveness of the entrance or the space just within.
- Only formal or defined gateways should be considered, as open edged sites will have this aspect of design dealt with under **G3.1.1 – Boundaries, Peripheral: Design**. Therefore, write 'N/A' over the score box where true gateways as such do not apply.
- Scale and treatment appropriate will vary according to the size and nature of green space, but principles should still apply for a small site with just two entrance.
- Guidance:

Excellent:

- Main and other key entrances, give very positive first impression.
- Design in keeping with character of park and area within which set.
- Design reflects hierarchy described in **G2.1.1** above.
- Materials choice consistent with local character and detailing.

Poor:

- Main and other key entrances give an extremely negative first impression.
- Entrance design is not at all in keeping with character of park or area within which it is set.
- Design does not reflect hierarchy described in **G2.1.1** above.
- Materials choice inappropriate in relation to local character and detailing.

### G2.2.1 - Entrances: Condition

- Only formal or defined gateways should be considered for their condition, as open edged sites will have this aspect of condition dealt with under **G3.2.1 – Boundaries, Peripheral: Condition**. Therefore, write 'N/A' over the score box where true gateways as such do not apply.

- In assessing condition (as opposed to maintenance), consideration is to be given to the physical state of gates, piers and threshold paving. Anything beyond relatively low cost maintenance, that is, items where deterioration has reached a point where capital rather than revenue investment is required, must be considered here.

- Guidance:

Excellent:

- Main and other key entrances, in extremely good state and contributing strongly to park's infrastructure.
- Metal or timber gates new or recently restored and sound.
- Stone or brick piers sound.
- Threshold paving intact, even and with no patching.

Poor:

- Main and other key entrances, in extremely poor condition and failing to contributing at all to park's infrastructure.
- Metal gates deeply corroded and pitted; timber gates rotten or loose joints.
- Piers with loose or missing stone- or brick-work and crumbling pointing.
- Very poor state contributes to overall feel of unarrested decline.
- Threshold paving with settlement hollows, cracks, etc. Considerable patching.

### **G2.3.1 - Entrances: Maintenance**

- Again, only formal or defined gateways should be considered for their maintenance, as open edged sites will have this aspect of condition dealt with under **G3.3.1 - Boundaries: Maintenance**. Therefore, write 'N/A' over the score box where true gateways as such do not apply.

- Guidance:

Excellent:

- Main and other key entrances maintained to highest standard.
- Gates recently repainted. Pier pointing sound.
- Threshold paving well swept and clear of litter and debris.
- Generally very clean and tidy.

Poor:

- Main and other key entrances in very poorly maintained state.
- Gates with flaking and faded paint.
- Threshold paving full of litter and debris.

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## G3. and G4. Boundaries, Peripheral and Internal

### G3. Boundaries, Peripheral

- Form **GEN** is to be used for this and other generic sections.
- On a site, which due to its open character should remain open (*e.g Clifton and Durdham Downs, 'Greens', like Redland and Shirehampton*), an unenclosed boundary is the appropriate one and scoring its quality is just as relevant as for sites enclosed with walls or railings.
- Some sites may be enclosed/ partially enclosed by built elements such as railings, fences or walls which define domestic back gardens, industrial premises, school grounds, etc. Their contribution must also be taken into account in conjunction with a green space's own boundary treatments, as they are likely to have a significant impact upon how the overall site looks. Their quality will vary in relation to how effective they are in providing an attractive edge to the green space. (*Horfield Common and Willmott Park are examples of green spaces where residential garden fences contribute to defining their boundary. Ridgeway, Hengrove Park, Crox Bottom and Mina Road Park are examples of sites where fences around industrial premises provide part of the boundary treatment. Willmott Park and Monks Park are examples of sites abutted by the boundaries of school grounds*).
- Where green space sites are partially or substantially enclosed, this may include brick or stone walls, railings, fences, hedges or nothing at all, or a combination of all these. Therefore, the overall score should be an average one that reflects their collective contribution.
- When considering boundaries' contribution, account will need to be taken of the nature of the site and its setting (local character and abutting land use) as this will have a significant bearing on the appropriateness and effectiveness of each type of boundary treatment or determine whether it should remain open.
- Formal boundaries will be more relevant to formally laid-out green spaces. (St George, Victoria or St Andrew's Parks are examples of Victorian Parks where formality in boundary and entrances contribute to character and use).
- Irrespective of site type, the emphasis needs to be on assessing how strongly the boundary treatment contributes to its overall sense of quality. Where a site boundary is open, but would contribute more to local character, or increase user safety, were it to be enclosed (e.g. by railings), this should be reflected in the potential scoring.

#### G3.1.1 - Boundaries, Peripheral: Design quality and attractiveness

- This will apply irrespective of whether a site is enclosed or open at its boundaries.
- Judgement will be needed as to the appropriateness of design in relation to the site's context. 'Kee Klamp rails', and sagging and breached chain link fencing are examples of materials that contribute to a very poor boundary. Rows of boulders, though aimed at making a site 'tank-proof', convey a strong sense of degradation and visually imply 'community under seige'.
- Guidance:  
Excellent:

- The boundary treatment, irrespective of whether the site is enclosed or open, contributes strongly to a very positive first impression and, to the green space's overall sense of quality.
- Design is in keeping with the character of the green space and the area within which the site is set, whilst materials use is appropriate to the local character and detailing.

Poor:

- The boundary treatment contributes to an extremely negative first impression.
- Its design is not at all in keeping with the character of the park or the area within which the site is set.
- Materials use is inappropriate in relation to local character and detailing, and contributes to the general sense of degradation and low quality.

### **G3.2.1 - Boundaries, Peripheral: Condition**

- In assessing condition (as opposed to maintenance), consideration is to be given to the physical state of boundaries. Anything beyond relatively low cost maintenance, that is, items where deterioration has reached a point where capital rather than revenue investment is required, must be considered here.
- Stone or brick walls, will, in time require consideration for rebuilding of maintenance has been progressively overlooked. This will apply once remedy has passed the point where re-pointing alone will stabilise; i.e. the mortar of bedding joints crumbled from weathering and exposure to frost, resulting in the loss of bond between courses. Individual pieces of stone and bricks may also be missing.

- Guidance:

Excellent:

- All boundaries, whether enclosed or open, are in an extremely good state and contribute strongly to the park's infrastructure.
- Metal railings or timber fencing has been newly or recently restored and are sound.
- Stone or brick walls are all sound.
- Hedges are all well managed.

Poor:

- All boundaries are in an extremely poor condition and contribute negatively to the green space's infrastructure.
- Metal railings have become deeply corroded and pitted; timber fencing is rotten and many pales are either missing or 'patch' repairing detracts significantly from an intact overall treatment.
- Post and rail fencing has been bashed by vehicles; concrete posts have sheared and timber posts split.
- Walls have loose or missing stone- or brick- work, and crumbling joints.
- Gaps are apparent in hedges.
- Open grass edges are deeply rutted with vehicle encroachment.
- Dilapidated chain link is in need of replacement with a more permanent material.
- A very poor general state contributes to overall feel of unarrested decline.

### **G3.3.1 - Boundaries, Peripheral: Maintenance**

- Guidance:

Excellent:

- All boundaries, whether railings, fencing, walls, or open grass edges maintained to highest standard.
- Railings recently repainted.

- Stone or brick walls maintained adequately with appropriate colour/ mix of mortar.
- Peripheral hedges / shrubs recently pruned to shape/ hedge laid, and are free from of litter and debris.
- Cutting of grass edges, appropriate to the nature of the site regularly performed.

Poor:

- All boundaries are in a very poorly maintained state.
- Railings with flaking and faded paint.
- Timber fencing in need of re-staining.
- Stone or brick walls neglected, e.g. weeds colonising mortar joints, early frost damage, to a point that **G3.2.1 – Boundaries, Peripheral: Condition** criteria in danger of applying.
- Peripheral hedges/ shrubs have become shapeless without regular pruning/ hedge laying and are full of litter and debris.
- Grass maintenance has not been appropriately performed.

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## G4. Boundaries, Internal

- Form **GEN** is to be used for this and other generic sections.
- Where separate areas within a green space are required to be separately enclosed (for children’s play, dog-free areas, sports facilities, etc) it is particularly important that their boundary treatments are appropriate in relation to the site character.
- Consideration must be given to the contribution of boundaries, given the nature of the site and its setting (including the local character and abutting land use), as this will have a significant bearing on the type of boundary treatment. It may also determine if the inclusion of any internal boundary is appropriate. This will certainly apply in respect of a green space which is inherently open in character. (*The play area adjacent to Observatory Hill on Clifton Down, has remained unenclosed due to the open character of the landscape of The Downs Conservation Area within which it sits*).
- The emphasis needs to be on assessing how strongly a green space’s internal boundary treatment relates to that of its main boundary, and its contribution to an overall sense of unity.
- Low scores should also take account of where railings have been installed with insufficient regard to their integration with other park features (*e.g. Railings around play area in Avonmouth Park*).

### G4.1.1 - Boundaries, Internal: Design Integration, quality and attractiveness

- Guidance:

Excellent:

- The boundary treatment contributes strongly to the green space’s overall sense of quality.
- Design and alignment are in keeping with character of park and area within which set, and contribute to the integration of the activity contained.
- Materials choice is consistent with local character, and detailing compatible with that elsewhere within site.
- Alignment sits well in the landform. (*e.g. Fencing around Rawnsley Park Play Area*).

Poor:

- The boundary treatment contributes negatively to the green space's overall sense of quality.
- Design is not at all in keeping with character of park or the area within which it is set.
- Boundary treatment in conjunction with the organisation of the activity it contains, contributes to a feeling that the combined feature has been 'plonked' with little regard to integration of design or alignment.
- Materials use is inappropriate in relation to local character and detailing elsewhere within site.
- The boundary treatment contributes to a general sense of degradation and low quality. Sagging and breached chain link fencing exemplify some of the worst cases.

### G4.2.1 - Boundaries, Internal: Condition

- In assessing condition (as opposed to maintenance), consideration is to be given to the physical state of internal boundaries. Anything beyond relatively low cost maintenance, that is, items where deterioration has reached a point where capital rather than revenue investment is required, must be considered here.

- Guidance:

Excellent:

- All internal boundaries are in an extremely good state and contribute strongly to the park's infrastructure.
- Metal railings or timber fencing has been newly or recently restored and are sound.
- Stone or brick walls are all sound.
- Hedges are all well managed.

Poor:

- All internal boundaries are in an extremely poor condition and contribute negatively to the green space's infrastructure.
- Metal railings have become deeply corroded and pitted; timber fencing is rotten and many pales are either missing or 'patch' repairing detracts significantly from an intact overall treatment; walls have loose or missing stone- or brick-work, and crumbling pointing; gaps are apparent in hedges; dilapidated chain link is in need of replacement with a more permanent material.
- A very poor general state contributes to overall feel of unarrested decline.

### G4.3.1 - Boundaries, Internal: Maintenance

- Guidance:

Excellent:

- All internal boundaries, whether railings, fencing, walls, or hedges maintained to highest standard.
- Railings recently repainted; stone or brick walls maintained adequately; hedges recently pruned to shape/ laid, and are free from of litter and debris.

Poor:

- All internal boundaries are in a very poorly maintained state.
- Railings have flaking and faded paint; timber fencing is in need of re-staining; stone or brick walls have been neglected, e.g. weeds colonising mortar joints, early frost damage, to a point that **G4.2.1 - Boundaries: Condition** criteria is in danger of applying; hedges have become shapeless without regular pruning/ laying and are full of litter and debris.

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## G5. Access Paths/ Hard Paved Surfaces

- Form **GEN** is to be used for this and other generic sections.
- This section relates purely to access within the green space rather than access to it. It should embrace consideration of all accessible surfaces whether path routes across a site, or grass or hard paved surfaces within it.

### G5.1.1 - Access Paths/ Hard Paved Surfaces: Network Design/ Layout

- The use of paving materials throughout a green space will have a significant bearing on how its overall quality may be regarded. Given that all will use paths and paved surfaces to get around a site or pass through it, the appropriateness of the material(s) in which they have been finished will be prominent in users' overall impressions. Design of these elements, including materials choice, should be sympathetic to the character, degree of formality, and setting of a greenspace. Landscapes whose character is predominantly rural or semi rural, *such as the Dundry Slopes, Crox Bottom, Stockwood Open Space or Lawrence Weston Urban Fringe*, would be in danger of being urbanised were they to receive paving more suited to an urban setting. In the context of historic restoration, paving materials selection must again respond to the historic character of each site. Generally, materials selection should respond to the individual nature of the site, and whilst in most cases, 'special' requirements may not apply, a consistent use of the same material and detailing should be expected to be applied throughout.
- Where areas of paving were designed for, or have become associated with, particular uses, their construction and design must be suitable. (*e.g. St Peter's Square in Castle Park, used for events, markets and fairs*)

- Guidance:

Excellent:

- Clear sense of route hierarchy.
- Logical and suitable for purpose.
- All routes serve points of access and features within park directly (without necessarily requiring paths to be in a straight line).
- Appropriate to character and setting.
- Unified/ consistent use of materials throughout.
- No patching.
- Well defined edges.
- Routes that will bear heavy vehicles and equipment appropriately constructed.

Poor:

- Desire lines worn in grass where user routes overlooked.
- Path system badly in need of rationalization; redundant path sections still in place in spite of access points they once served having been stopped up, or the reason they were once there (e.g. former facility) having been removed.
- Inappropriate to character and setting.
- Proportions of space impactful to visual quality of setting and inadequate for purpose.
- Inconsistent use of materials throughout. 'Hotchpotch of different materials'.
- Considerable patching.
- Undefined edges.
- Routes that will bear heavy vehicles and equipment inadequately constructed.

### **G5.1.2 - Access Paths/ Hard Paved Surfaces: Access for Disabled People**

- Assessment should relate to the Site Access Audit, particularly in the context of compliance with the Disability Discrimination Act.
- Where local topography (e.g. *Brandon Hill Park*) significantly constrains provision of optimum gradient, this should be taken into account without penalty score.
- Guidance:
  - Excellent:
    - Disabled access survey done and whole site confirmed as compliant with BCC Access Standard.
  - Good:
    - Appropriateness apparent. (e.g. No formal access survey done, but gradients look within standard, and ready alternative in each case to steps, smooth surface for wheelchairs, etc.
  - Average:
    - Most, but not all of site accessible by disabled people; sufficient to enable adequate experience of site as a whole.
  - Poor:
    - Site access for disabled people substantially limited, with little or no opportunity for entry. Inadequate or no disabled access apparent.

### **G5.2.1 - Access Paths/ Hard Paved Surfaces: Condition**

- Guidance:
  - Excellent:
    - All paths and hard paved surfaces in extremely good state and contributing fundamentally to park's infrastructure.
    - All paths in smooth and consistent state, with no settlement dips or cracks, no mossy patches or encroaching weed growth.
  - Poor:
    - Significant settlement dips and cracks apparent.
    - Trip hazards.
    - Mossy patches and encroaching weed growth contributing to surface deterioration.
    - Poorly drained areas.
    - Ill defined edges.
    - Very poor state.
    - Much patching evident that contributes to overall feel of unarrested decline. At worst, surface condition appears derelict. e.g. *Eastville Park former tennis court*.

### **G5.3.1 - Access Paths/ Hard Paved Surfaces: Maintenance**

- Guidance:
  - Excellent:
    - All paths maintained free of litter, leaf fall, debris and dog fouling.

Poor:

- Significant presence of litter, leaf fall, debris and dog fouling.
- 

## **G6 - Grass areas**

- Form **GEN** is to be used for this and other generic sections.

### **G6.1.1 - Grass areas: Provision**

- Guidance:

Excellent:

- Grass areas contribute positively to the overall quality of the site.

Poor:

- Grass areas contribute very poorly to the overall quality of the site.

### **G6.2.1 - Grass areas: Condition**

- Guidance:

Excellent:

- Full coverage of grass as appropriate to each of its maintained forms.
- No bare patches or significant weed infestation.
- All areas evenly and smoothly graded to profile.
- Neat edges.

Poor:

- Significant area of bare soil.
- Compacted worn areas.
- Significant weed infestation. Rutted areas.
- Areas where ground has locally settled leaving ungraded hollows.
- No distinct edges to grass area.

### **G6.3.1 - Grass areas: Maintenance**

- Guidance:

Excellent:

- All grass areas evenly cut and maintained free of litter, leaf fall, debris and dog fouling.
- Free of weeds, moss and algae.

Poor:

- All areas cut below standard. Significant presence of litter, leaf fall, debris and dog fouling.
  - Insufficient control of weeds, moss and algae.
-

## G7. User Experience

- Form **GEN** is to be used for this and other generic sections.

### G7.1.1 - User Experience: Safety, 'Feel'.

- The degree and frequency of human activity will have a significant bearing on a site's 'self-policing feel'. This may be in the form of regular official presence, that is, of the City Council or its contractors. This would readily apply to a green space with a contractor's depot such as St. Andrew's Park or Victoria Park. Otherwise, a generally high level of user activity should be conducive to a sense of a green space being 'self-policed'.
- A generally safe 'feel' may also arise from a site being overlooked by surrounding uses, notably houses and their streets that front onto it as opposed to turn their backs on it. This is the traditional association that parks have with neighbouring residential areas as exemplified with the *N. and W. edges of St George Park, the W, S and E edges of Victoria Park*, and, one of the best examples, *St Andrew's Park*, which is surrounded by house fronts.
- The fact that a site may front onto a busy street, again with plenty of passers by, will also be reassuring to anyone who might otherwise feel vulnerable.
- Where greenways, whether strategic footpaths or cycleways, pass through a site as they do at *Newtown Park and Victoria Park*, it will result in a more people passing through.
- Users may also be comforted by good visibility along path routes. This should not unduly limit the use of trees and shrubs, but judgement is needed in relation to how people will feel subject to density of tree canopy and proximity and height of nearby vegetation, walls, etc. It will also be important to gauge visibility in relation what is reasonable to expect for the nature and character of a green space; e.g. It is reasonable to expect woodland paths to weave between trees. Whilst much can be remedied with regular tree management, an assessment should take into account where a location associated with risk, has become deeply shaded by overlapping and dense tree canopies.
- Concern may also arise where visibility is limited by high walls or encroaching vegetation which result in hiding places.

- Guidance:

Excellent:

- Frequent official presence.
- Site well overlooked by houses.
- Generally good visibility along path routes.
- Well used walking/ cycling route passes through site.
- Generally well used, much activity throughout.
- Opportunities for escape.
- Green space not in part of the city particularly or recently associated with crime.

Poor:

- Rare official presence.
- Infrequently used, little activity.
- Site not overlooked, or surrounded by backs of houses, at worst 'Backlands'.
- Generally poor visibility along path routes.
- No adjacent busy route and no busy route passing through.
- Green space in part of the city particularly or recently associated with crime.
- Limited opportunities for escape.

### G7.1.2 - User Experience: Abuse, 'Feel'

- This involves gauging the relative association the site has with willful damage, anti-social behaviour, etc.
- Evidence of vandalism will be apparent with graffiti, damage, broken glass, etc.
- Any association with drug taking is likely to have been apparent from local knowledge, with evidence apparent from discarded needles.

- Guidance:

Excellent:

- No significant vandalism apparent.
- No known association with drug taking.
- No association with motorcycle intrusion.
- No record of removal of fly tipped material.
- No association with rough sleeping.
- Site generally free from dog fouling.

Poor:

- Significant level of vandalism.
  - Association with drug taking.
  - Regular motorcycle intrusion apparent.
  - Abandoned burned-out vehicles. Fly tipping.
  - Rough sleeping.
  - Dog fouling.
- 

## G8. User Information

- Form **GEN** is to be used for this and other generic sections.

### G8.1.1 - Signage and Interpretation: Provision

- **Signage** should be provided in a way that announces the site's presence, and welcomes users. The incorporation of the site's name, one that is recognised by local people, will reinforce its significance within the community. Integral community information boards may be applicable for green spaces that enjoy the support of active 'Friends of ...' groups. Where a sign contains an integral community notice board, it will be important to establish that the information it contains is regularly refreshed, preferably by a local 'Friends of ...' group, with current material. All signs should provide a current contact number and, where appropriate provide information on facilities and their booking.
- Signage is part of a green space's furniture, and attention should be given to how it contributes to site unity and character. Corporate Parks Service or *Legible City* format should apply unless specific design requirements of a green space over-ride.
- All signage should be well located, particularly in relation to entrances distributed appropriately in relation to the size and nature of the green space.
- **Directional information**, including 'You are here' maps and finger posts, information monoliths, etc will be appropriate to large sites with internal points of interest and activities. Well located finger posts, that direct visitors efficiently to points of interest or facilities, should be deployed at key junctions within the site. Locations should be optimum and adequate in number, in relation to entrances and path junctions within the park.

- **Interpretation** should be provided, where a site 'has a story to tell', i.e. its history, flora and fauna, geology, etc., Board design should be integrated within the character of the site and in relation to other site furniture, and locations should be appropriate in relation to what it is that is being interpreted. The process of drafting its content should ideally have involved local community/ park/ interest groups (e.g. *Malago Valley Conservation Group*).

- Guidance:

Excellent:

- All greenspace signs well located in relation to entrances, all directional information at key junctions (large sites), interpretation appropriately integrated.
- Adequate number of items to inform visitors.
- Design/ selection of furniture well integrated.
- Information on site/ facilities helpful, up to date, and includes contact(s)

Poor:

- Items non existent or poorly located.
- Inadequate number of items to inform visitors.
- Design/selection of furniture poorly integrated.
- Lack of up-to-date information on site/ facilities/ contact(s).

### **G8.1.2 - Signage and Interpretation: Information for disabled people on relative accessibility**

- Information about the accessibility of a green space and its facilities for disabled people must be considered in the context of current Disability Discrimination legislation. Judgement will be needed as to the need for information, as on small, uncomplicated sites, or those which are flat or with gently sloping paths, provision may be unnecessary. However where sites include difficult conditions for disabled people, by virtue of topography, information that describes the nature of access should be available.

- Guidance:

Excellent:

- Clear information provided in line with current guidance on the use of font size, braille, etc.

Poor:

- No information available.

### **G8.2.1 - Signage and Interpretation: Condition**

- Signage, including directional information, and interpretation boards must be structurally sound, and their fixtures intact and effective. Maintenance access ironmongery must be kept free from corrosion. Interpretation Boards must be kept weatherproof against deterioration of artwork.

- Guidance:

Excellent:

- All items sound and fixtures intact and effective.
- Display material remains weather protected.
- Up-to date.

Poor:

- Signage/ display system structure unsound.
- Fixtures broken loose and ineffective or otherwise vandalised.
- Display case not weatherproof with resultant damage to contents.

### **G8.3.1 - Signage and Interpretation: Maintenance**

- Guidance:

Excellent:

- Well maintained and free from graffiti.
- Interpretation material kept fresh, replacing faded visual material and ensuring text still relevant.

Poor:

- All features poorly maintained.
- Substantial graffiti apparent.

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## **G9. Site Furniture**

- Form **GEN** is to be used for this and other generic sections.

### **G9.1.1 - Seats/ Picnic Tables/ Litter Bins/ Dog Bins: Adequate number and location**

- The target interval in current guidance for resting places is 100 metres within 'urban and formal landscape', but this may be relaxed to 200 metres for 'urban fringe and managed landscapes and 300 metres for 'rural and working landscapes'. This is aimed at ensuring that all users are able to enjoy passing through or circulating around the whole site with the opportunity to pause at points on the way. Seats should be located for optimum appreciation of the site and its setting, particularly in respect of key views within the site, or to landmarks further afield. They should also enable users to choose between sunny or shady positions. Furniture should be integrated rather than appearing to have been 'plonked'.
- Litter bins should be provided where helpful to the user in a way that is accessible without being visually obtrusive. This may be at green space entrances or junctions of paths. Dog bins may best be located adjacent to entrances where users are likely to leave deposit bags upon departure.
- Guidance:

Excellent:

- Sufficient furniture of each type in relation to size and nature of site.
- Interval of seats adequate.
- Seats/ Picnic Tables located for enjoyment of setting or distant views.
- Seats in choice of sunny or shady positions.
- Picnic tables appropriately located within space in which to linger and relax.
- Furniture locations well integrated.
- All bins perfectly located in relation to entrance/ exit points or path junctions, in the case of larger sites.

Poor:

- No provision at all or insufficient number in relation to size and nature of site.
- Interval of seats inadequate.
- Seats/ Picnic Tables poorly located for enjoyment of setting or distant views.
- Furniture 'plonked'. Bins poorly located.

*(Reference Bristol City Council Environmental Access Standard, August 2001 P 24, Section 5.2.6).*

### **G9.1.2 - Site Furniture: Design/ Selection**

- All items of site furniture, including seats, picnic tables, litter bins and dog bins, each being visually prominent elements, will be important to an overall sense of quality. They should have also be chosen for their design appropriateness to the green space setting, whilst being sufficiently robust to withstand the anticipated level of use/ abuse. Selection should be consistent throughout, avoiding a 'hotch potch' of individual styles.
- Whilst appropriate to have a range of seat heights, and provide some with armrests, the style applied should remain the same throughout a site and be consistent with that of other furniture.
- User comfort must be a factor, and furniture proportions should be such that it is suitable for use by disabled people. It should be possible for disabled people to sit with their non-disabled companions.
- The paved bases of furniture should be inobtrusive, finished in a sympathetic material and smoothly finished. Where located beside paths, their paved bases should ideally be finished in the same material. They should also be set back sufficiently (min 600mm) to avoid the feet of seated people coming into contact with path users. A firm, stable area (1 metre X 1 metre), that is flush with the path, should be available for wheelchairs to park alongside at least some seats and tables.

- Guidance:

Excellent:

- Design optimum for user comfort.
- Suitability for disabled people, and people with impairments.
- All furniture within site to same design style.
- Robust and sufficiently vandal resistant in relation to context.

Poor:

- Design provides inadequate user comfort.
- Unsuitable for disabled people, and inadequate for people with impairments.
- 'Hotpotch' of furniture selection.
- Inconsistent use of furniture.

*(Reference Bristol City Council Environmental Access Standard, August 2001 P 25, Section 5.2.9).*

### **G9.2.1 - Site Furniture: Condition**

- Guidance:

Excellent:

- All furniture sound and firmly founded.
- No vandalism apparent.
- Metalwork paint finish and timber staining in good condition.

Very Poor:

- All furniture unsound and loose in ground.

- Significantly damaged by vandalism including fire.
- Metalwork paint finish and timber staining in very poor condition.

### **G9 3.1 - Site Furniture: Maintenance**

- Guidance:

Excellent:

- All furniture well maintained. No missing seat slats.
- All bins regularly emptied.

Very Poor:

- All furniture poorly maintained. Many missing slats.
- Bins have not been emptied. Smells apparent.

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## **G20. Overall Impressions**

- Form **GEN** is to be used for this and other generic sections.

### **G20 - Holistic View of Site**

- Most of the assessment process inevitably involves looking at elements that contribute to the quality of a green space in a focused way. However, it is particularly important to establish an overview of a site's existing and potential quality. Consideration must be given to the general design quality of a site, the degree to which it has an overall sense of unity, integrity, identity and character, and the contribution it makes in respect of its own immediate setting. Generally assessment should be made as to how comprehensively fulfills its purpose, notably in respect of its layout, the appropriateness and compatibility of the uses and activities it contains, and how well circulation links access points with key points and experiences within. There must also be an holistic view of the site's inherent condition, in conjunction with assessing how it performs in respect of the management and maintenance it receives.

- Guidance:

Excellent:

- Extremely well designed and coherently laid out.
- Fully fit for purpose.
- Condition excellent condition. Extremely well managed and maintained.

Good:

- Adequately designed and laid out.
- Generally fit for purpose.
- Generally good condition. Generally well managed and maintained.

Fair:

- Moderately designed and laid out.
- Moderately fit for purpose.
- Fair condition. Moderately well managed and maintained.

Poor:

- Poorly designed and laid out.
- Insufficiently fit for purpose.
- Condition very poor. Very poorly managed and maintained.

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# Section B: Supplementary

## Contents

- S1. Horticulture
- S2. Nature Conservation
- S3. Trees
- S4. Woodlands
- S5. Water
- S6. Children's Play
- S7. Buildings
- S8. Toilets
- S9. Sports Pitches, Seasonal
- S10. Sports Bowling Greens and Infrastructure
- S11. Sports Surfaces, All Year (Hard/ Artificial)
- S12. Sports Pavilions/ Changing Rooms
- S13. Permanent Works of Art

## Assessment Forms

The forms to be used for each element of this section are indicated at the beginning of each element's guidance. They are referenced SUP, followed by the number of the element, as indicated.

# S1. Horticulture

- Form **SUP 1** is to be used for this section.
- An appreciation of what is reasonable to integrate by way of horticultural interest must be based on the site's character and setting, and the nature of its design. For instance, formal treatments would not be expected in an informal landscape or vice versa. The horticultural content needs to respond to the overall design 'language' of the site, whilst taking into account the constraints and opportunities associated with its uses.

## S1.1.1 - Horticulture: Layout and Quantity

- In period designed formal parks, optimum horticultural treatments should be informed by historic research which should identify appropriate restoration, or guide the integration of any more contemporary approach.
- The form of plantings should be authentic to the spirit of what was originally intended for the park. However this must be translated into something that responds to potential user concerns about safety in the event of visibility becoming restricted. The original plantings associated with the gateways of many original Victorian parks were intentionally arranged, including in respect of species height, in a way that prevented any view into the site until the point of entry. The intention was that the full glory of the park within was withheld from the visitor until arrival at the threshold. In most current contexts the emphasis will need to be much more on creating a welcoming sense of entrance that immediately puts users at ease with what they will experience.
- The quantity of horticultural content should be appropriate to the scale and character of the site. The investment should also be applied in a considered rather than arbitrary or ad hoc way, ensuring that its effect is optimum, for instance in relation to entrances or focuses within the green space.
- A green space's horticultural must enrich users' experience through contributing to its overall coherence and 'legibility', whilst reinforcing its overall attractiveness.
- Where a site currently has no horticultural content, but where its integration would contribute appropriately to quality enhancement, this proposal should be made on Form **S21**.

- Guidance:

Excellent:

- Horticulture contributes authentically to historic restoration. Features compatible with historic layout.
- Horticulture integrated rather than arbitrary or ad hoc.
- Horticulture contributes strongly to overall impression of green space.

Poor:

- Horticultural content out of keeping with character of park.
- Horticulture arbitrary or ad hoc.
- Lack of horticulture contributes significantly to a poor overall impression.

## S1.1.2 - Horticulture: Plant selection

- In the restoration of period designed formal parks, plant selection should be informed by historic research, with reference to original plant lists where available. More contemporary selection should still be considered in relation to what was originally intended for a historic

park, with a view to securing its integration and justifying any deviation from authenticity. Such justification may apply in respect of planting to retain visibility at entrances or in ensuring a 'safe feel' within the park.

- Plant selection should certainly respond to the character of a green space. It should contribute to its overall unity and design style, whilst providing an impression that a park's plants are part of a valuable collection.
- Selection should be in a considered and coherent, rather than arbitrary or ad hoc way, with plants being considered as part of a composition rather than in isolation. The composition should take into account the compatible and complementary use of plants, notably in respect of colour (flower, foliage, stem), texture (form and leaf). Seasonal interest throughout the year should be a consideration for 'permanent' plantings. Certainly plant selection should be the result of creativity, rather than the application of 'standard' lists, or the use of what is readily available from a limited nursery search, or left over at the end of the planting season.
- Plant selection must also be sustainable. Each part of each green space will pose different considerations in choosing plants that will thrive. Conditions including sun and shade, and vulnerability to frost, will need to be taken into account. In some contexts, resistance to, and robustness in relation to, potential vandalism may well be a factor.

- Guidance:

Excellent:

- Contributes authentically to or compatibly with historic restoration.
- Responds to character and setting.
- A coherent, composed and interesting plant collection.
- Sustainable species content.

Poor:

- No planting content within site designed for its integration.
- Out of keeping with character and setting.
- Arbitrary or ad hoc.
- Unsustainable species content.

### **S1.2.1 - Horticulture: Condition**

- An important aspect of assessing a green space's horticultural quality will relate to the condition of all plantings. They need to be considered for the strength of their form, as poor form may be the result of a lack of maintenance, remedy of which may involve drastic pruning, or at worst replacement. Related to this will be consideration of vigour and health which is likely to be influenced by a combination of management and conditions, including for nutrition, under which the plant is growing, and any evidence of pests and diseases.

- In considering the overall impression of plant beds, it will be important to ensure that there are no gaps or variability in how all plants contribute within the overall composition.

- Guidance:

Excellent:

- Strong and consistent form, structure.
- No gaps or variability across the contribution of individual plants.
- All plantings vigorous and healthy.

Poor:

- Empty plant beds, significant gaps between plants, or variability in form and structure.
- Significant poor vigour and health apparent.

### S1.3.1 - Horticulture: Maintenance

- All plants should be pruned in a way that is appropriate to the species, and in a way that is sufficient to retain good form and promote continued vigour. All plants, particularly roses, should also be kept free from pests and diseases.
- Plant beds should be completely weed free, as apart from their visually degrading effect, weed growth will compete with ornamental plants for nutrients, and that will result in poor condition. They must also be free from litter, debris, etc. The line of grass edges of beds should be kept to the form originally indicated. All hard paved or board edges must also kept up to standard.
- The mulch levels of beds must also be maintained to standard, to suppress weed growth, retain natural moisture, and present a consistently well finished appearance. Associated with this must be an appropriate degree of cultivation, particularly to ensure soil aeration when compacted.

- Guidance:

Excellent:

- Regular pruning apparent.
- No weed growth, litter, debris, etc. apparent.
- Cultivation and mulching up to standard. Edges very well maintained.

Poor:

- No recent pruning carried out.
- Significant weed growth, litter, debris, etc apparent.
- Cultivation and mulching not up to standard. Edges in poor state.

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## S2. Nature Conservation

- Form **SUP 2** is to be used for this section.
- In most cases, it is recognised that this supplementary section is one of the most difficult for a non specialist to carry out. Assessors are therefore urged to seek advice from a Nature Conservation Officer, who will be able to gauge the level of support needed.
- Bristol has a rich wildlife heritage with a great diversity of sites, species and habitats of significance at an international, national and local level. Many of these wildlife sites are managed by Bristol Parks.
- Wildlife and wild spaces are found throughout Bristol, forming an integral part of the fabric of the city, bringing pleasure and inspiration to many people and adding to the attractiveness and liveability of the city. Clearly, nature conservation is about the interrelationship between people and wildlife.
- Peoples' association with wildlife is a complex but essential consideration, with recreational use and intrinsic visitor experience key measures.
- The quality of any one site in providing a wildlife habitat (s) is equally complex, with 'conservation status' the appropriate key measure.

### S2.1.1 - Nature Conservation: Use

- The quality of recreational use within a site is related to the quality and variety of habitats present. However, many other site factors will be relevant (relating to general access provision and its quality across the whole site). Whilst it is considered important to describe the quality of site use relevant to the quality of wildlife habitats, it is readily acknowledged that these considerations could (and perhaps should) form part of a generic assessment of quality across the whole site **Generic - G20. Overall Impressions**, whether related to wildlife or not.
- Consideration of user provision within a green space must be given with full understanding of criteria associated with Bristol's main habitat types, notably woodland, grassland and wetland. In this respect, the degree and nature of recreational use of any habitat type needs to consider:
  - a) the capacity of each habitat to accommodate visitors.
  - b) the relative applicability of site conditions, including: ecological fragility, size, location, topography, demand, which can vary across a single site.
  - c) existing and potential use.
- Public use of habitat types is diverse including walking, cycling, jogging, fishing, water sports, a place for relaxing, as a short cut, as a through route, a place to find and see wildlife etc. Equally, inappropriate use will harm wildlife quality e.g. damage caused by motorbikes and uncontrolled access leading to a proliferation of desire lines causing excessive trampling of ground vegetation and general disturbance, including of wildlife.
- Access is covered in **Generic - G5 - Access Paths/ Hard Surfaces**. Where it is provided, by way of footpaths, bridleways, cycle routes, etc, it must be compatible with the wildlife value or biological function of the habitat type. For some habitat types, public access is not appropriate, principally due to steep slopes or ecological fragility, and where this is the case, a site should not be 'marked down'; its contribution may be more to users senses - sight, sound, etc rather than providing physical access.
- Signage and interpretation is covered in **Generic - G8 - User Information**.

Excellent::

- Formal access network (footpaths, bridleways, cycle routes etc.) avoids disturbance/harm to sensitive ecological areas.
- Degree and nature of access, design and materials appropriate in relation to habitat sensitivity.
- Formal footpath network has prevented the proliferation of desire lines.

Poor:

- Formal access network (footpaths, bridleways, cycle routes etc.) impactful upon sensitive ecological areas.
- Degree and nature of access, design and materials inappropriate in relation to habitat sensitivity.
- Poorly routed formal footpaths and proliferation of informal 'desire lines' have resulted in considerable erosion of habitat quality.

### S2.1.2 - Nature Conservation: User Experience

- Whilst important here, to user experience in the context the quality of wildlife habitats, this must be done in conjunction with the generic assessment of the quality of the site as a whole in **Generic - G7. User Experience** and in relation to an holistic view of a green space's quality, in **Generic - G20. Overall Impressions**.
- The quality and variety of habitats within a green space must have a significant bearing upon the overall user experience and must be considered in conjunction with generic

topics, notably including **Generic - G5. Access Paths/ Hard Surfaces**. Among the considerations will be the appropriateness and compatibility of the treatment of a feature such as a footpath to the 'natural' character of a site, and in relation to the sensitivity of its habitat(s).

- Intrinsic visitor experience is not easily quantified, in that it reflects a more personal relationship between user and site, and one that changes with the seasons.
- A green space that is rich in habitats, including woodland, trees, scrub, hedgerows and long grass, will be associated, particularly between April and June, with the presence of birds the amount and diversity of which will be in proportion to the quality of the habitats. Bird song will notably contribute to richness in experience. The volume and pitch of song will be a factor of population size and species, whilst its variety will relate to species diversity. The absence of bird may be due to the poor quality or inappropriateness of management, or regular disturbance by dogs or the intrusion of motorbikes, etc.
- The attractiveness, interest, and 'welcome feel' of a green space's woodland is important, both in respect of how it appears when viewed externally, and in terms of its appeal when passing through it. This is invariably a function of its maturity, quality, and consistency along with visual diversity, all of which owe much to the quality of its management. The size of trees largely irrespective of species, visual diversity, presence of other habitats and vertical structure (mix of mature trees, sub-canopy, shrubs, ground layer) are all factors in this. Factors that will contribute to the attractiveness include:
  - Presence of numerous large and/ or old trees of considerable character,
  - Network of well managed glades and/ or rides, giving an open and diverse character, with fine views 'into' woodland from paths,
  - Woodland structure with well developed canopy, sub-canopy, shrub, and field layer ,
- Young woodlands would typically score low for visual interest principally because of their immaturity. To compensate for this, the assessor should take into account the intrinsic quality of areas that yet to mature. This should involve consideration of the contribution of their design quality in respect of 'fit' with context, diversity in native species, and interest in layout and form.
- The attractiveness of a green space to users will also owe much to the amount and diversity of flora and fauna; the presence of species
- The contribution of grassland must also be a factor in evaluating the nature conservation contribution to user experience, and this will need to be assessed during the spring and summer. Attractiveness of grassland will be evident from the proliferation of meadow flowers and variety of grass species. The sight of butterflies, and sound of grasshoppers and crickets, will also be a good gauge but this will be subject to suitable weather at the time of the assessment.
- The presence of water in the many forms described in **Supplementary - S5. Water**, within a green space will bring considerable user interest, particularly when associated with nature conservation. The variety of vegetation both in water and on its edges will contribute visual interest whilst contributing to the diversity of a particular habitat. Water may also be associated with the presence of birds such as heron, kingfisher, etc, as well as dragonflies, damson flies, tadpoles, etc during early spring and summer months.
- Guidance:
  - Excellent:
    - Site looks and feels very 'natural'.
    - Considerable presence of birds and diversity in species.
    - Considerable volume and variety in bird song.
    - Established/ mature woodland extremely attractive, interesting and welcoming.
    - Young woodland well designed. Fits context, diverse use of species and interesting layout and form.

- Grassland contains diversity and large amount of meadow flowers and a variety of grasses. Presence of butterflies, grasshoppers and crickets.
- Wetland habitats/ water bodies associated with native vegetation and particular attraction of interesting bird species, dragonflies, etc.

Poor:

- Site looks and feels very 'unnatural'
- Lack of birds and diversity in species, or at worst, absence of birds.
- Limited volume and variety in bird song.
- Established/ mature woodland lacking in interest and diversity, and unwelcoming.
- Young woodland out of context and lacking in interest and diversity.
- Grassland lacking in meadow flower content and a variety of grasses. No significant presence of butterflies, grasshoppers or crickets.
- No wetland habitat or water bodies.

## S2.2 - Nature Conservation: Ecological Condition (Management) - Whole Greenspace

- The condition of semi-natural habitat types will be determined via an assessment of their 'Conservation Status' which will consider:
  - the presence and abundance of indicator species
  - the significance and rarity of species present
  - the quality of management appropriate to semi-natural woodland type.
- However the assessment methodology is yet to be determined, and evaluation will need to proceed on a provisional basis. Review will be appropriate once the criteria defining 'conservation status' have been determined. This section of the guidance will then be updated.
- In scoring a site, it will be important to objectively consider just how the management of a site is enabling its ecological condition to flourish, and to what extent it is holding it back. In this respect, analysis of the difference between existing and potential scores will be revealing.
- In looking at a green space, the ecological condition of all its habitats must be considered in relation to one another, and in respect of their overall contribution. The amount of consideration that needs to be given to a particular habitat will depend upon its significance as a habitat, and the degree to which it has been 'improved'. (e.g. *'unimproved' grassland is inherently much more valuable than amenity turf*). A site may have a range of semi-natural habitats, including woodland, scrub, grassland and wetland, but also other natural features such as hedgerows and rock faces.
- Consideration must be given to whether ecological condition can be raised with sensitive management, and reflected in scoring, whilst being realistic in the case of an inherently low value site about its potential. In most respects transformation by comprehensive large scale habitat creation is likely to be inappropriate. Where the assessor feels there is potential for species or habitat enhancement schemes, this may be recorded under **Section S 21 Potential Supplementary Features** subject to measures' appropriateness to the capacity and character of the site. In this way, even a limited ecological contribution, achieved through more sensitive management, can enrich a site for wildlife. (e.g. *In this way wildlife has come to flourish more in St Agnes Park with the introduction of more sensitive management, even though much of the site is amenity turf*).
- The potential of a site which is inherently extremely ecologically valuable, but whose quality is being suppressed by inappropriate management, must also be recognised. (e.g. *More sensitive management of the areas of wet meadow at Eastwood Farm would raise quality considerably*).
- Many green spaces have significant areas of grassland cut as amenity turf (e.g. *playing pitches or otherwise recreational open space*). The wildlife value of such areas of 'improved' grassland dominated by rye grass is typically low. However, not all areas of

grassland cut as amenity turf have low wildlife value (as indeed not all areas of grassland left long or on a meadow cut has a higher wildlife value). The assessment will consider the quality of all grassland as a habitat for wildlife. Clearly amenity turf will, subject to such exceptions tend to score low.

- For management of a green space's habitat(s) to be optimum in maximising the amount and variety of wildlife, irrespective of their respective rarity or value, operations must be appropriate in relation to habitat type, well timed and sufficiently relevant.
- In considering aspects of how ecological condition may be raised by management, it is important to take into account the contribution which can be made by specific measures. These may add to what can be achieved through management operations to stimulate wildlife activity. They may also be introduced, on sites with limited physical scope, perhaps due to their limited size or urban use/character to mitigate against limitations.
- The approach to determining overall site quality for nature conservation will need to take into account the relative quality of all habitats present. Guidance is given on: **Woodland (S2.2.2), Grassland (S2.2.3), Heathland (S2.2.4), Water (S2.2.5), Parkland Trees (S2.2.6), Scrub (S2.2.7), Hedgerows (S2.2.8), Built Structures (S2.2.9), Amenity Planting including shrubs, herbaceous plants, etc (S2.2.10) Bare Rock and Earth, including cliffs and scree slopes (S2.2.11) and Underground Voids including caves and cellars (S2.2.12)**, which represent the full range of expected habitat types found in Bristol.
- The approach to determining overall site quality for nature conservation will need to consider the relative quality of all habitats present including habitat creation and small scale physical measures noted above. The assessor will determine those habitats that are 'significant' within a site (considering their contribution to site quality for wildlife), and score each according to the criteria below. The overall score for the site will be the mean score based on the number of habitats evaluated, plus the scores for habitat creation and small-scale physical measures. Guidance is given on woodlands and grassland plus habitat creation and small-scale physical measures taken to improve wildlife quality. For some sites, other habitats will need to be evaluated (e.g. water, heathland, hedgerows etc) this should be done based on the principles given below.

### **S2.2.1 - Nature Conservation: Ecological Condition (Management) - Woodland**

- Fundamentally, woodland management operations need to be appropriate to the woodland type (e.g. ancient semi-natural, wet woodland, mixed deciduous) reflecting soil type, age of woodland, past management etc.
- Detailed knowledge of the woodland type and its management needs are required. All management options should be based on a defined management plan that aims to maximize habitat quality (which will be balanced against other uses of the woodland with priorities set according to the value of the habitat and the demands of use).
- An ongoing programme of management is vital to the maintenance and of the quality of habitats. Operations must be performed in a way that avoids damage to trees to be retained, shrubs or ground flora. So too must damage, from water logging or compaction to soil as a medium for sustaining healthy future growth be avoided. Management includes:
  - Thinning to encourage ground flora, and avoid visual monotony.
  - Re-spacing to maximise results from natural regeneration,
  - Selective felling to 'open up' structure, encourage natural regeneration, avoid inappropriate dominance of 'exotic' species, develop shrub and ground flora, and re-structuring to improve growth rates,
  - Selection of specimens for retention, for their quality, to improve visual interest, and encourage ground flora to develop.
  - Management of rides and glades to create visual diversity and habitat value,

- Retention of dead wood,
- Encouragement of native tree species with particular regard to local provenance,
- protecting soils,
- Shrub layer management for diversity.

- Guidance:

Excellent:

- Woodland management plan in place.
- Woodland is excellent wildlife habitat
- Management appropriate to woodland type.
- Woodland condition exemplifies optimum habitat type.
- Ongoing programme of management.
- Selection of specimens for retention, for their quality, to improve visual interest and encourage ground flora to develop.
- Management of rides and glades to create visual diversity and habitat value.
- Retention of dead wood.
- Encouragement of native species with particular regard to local provenance.
- Protecting soils.
- Shrub layer management for diversity.

Poor:

- No woodland management plan in place.
- Woodland is poor wildlife habitat.
- Management inappropriate.
- Neglect of woodland detracts significantly from habitat contribution.
- No ongoing programme of management.
- At worst, no adequate management being undertaken.

### **S2.2.2 - Nature Conservation: Ecological Condition (Management) - Grassland**

- Fundamentally, grassland management operations need to be appropriate to the grassland type (e.g. acidic, wet, calcareous, neutral). This requires a careful understanding of the grassland type and hence management inputs. Amenity turf will be evaluated but will typically score low due to its poor quality for wildlife.

- Guidance:

Excellent:

- Semi-natural grassland management plan in place.
- Grassland is excellent wildlife habitat.
- Management appropriate to the grassland type.
- Semi-natural grassland is an excellent example of habitat type.

Poor:

- No grassland management plan in place.
- Grassland is poor wildlife habitat or poor example of habitat type.
- Management inappropriate particularly in respect of grassland type.
- Neglect of grassland detracts significantly from habitat contribution.
- At worst, no adequate management being undertaken.

### **S2.2.3 - Nature Conservation: Ecological Condition (Management) - Heathland**

- Guidance:

Excellent:

- Heathland management plan in place.
- Heathland is excellent wildlife habitat.
- Management appropriate to the habitat type.
- Heathland is an excellent example of habitat type.

Poor:

- No heathland management plan in place.
- Heathland is poor wildlife habitat or poor example of habitat type.
- Management inappropriate to the habitat type.
- Neglect of heathland detracts significantly from habitat contribution.
- At worst, no adequate management being undertaken.

### **S2.2.4 - Nature Conservation: Ecological Condition (Management) - Water**

- Guidance:

Excellent:

- Water management plan in place.
- Water is excellent wildlife habitat.
- Management appropriate to the habitat type.
- Water is an excellent example of habitat type.

Poor:

- No water management plan in place.
- Water is poor wildlife habitat or poor example of habitat type.
- Management inappropriate to the habitat type.
- Neglect of water detracts significantly from habitat contribution.
- At worst, no adequate management being undertaken.

### **S2.2.5 - Nature Conservation: Ecological Condition (Management) - Parkland Trees**

- Parkland trees can make a significant contribution to the wildlife value of greenspace. Species choice is appropriate with native trees generally favoured over exotics, although age of the tree is probably the most significant factor in determining value for wildlife. Old trees and especially veterans (Typically native trees) often provide valuable habitat in the form of rot pockets, dead wood, nooks and crannies, shattered limbs, deep ribbed bark, etc. that provide niche habitats for a range of plants and animals including fungi, lichens, birds, bats, invertebrates, etc. *The population of veteran trees at Ashton Court supports a nationally important population of invertebrates that rely on dead wood; this has been recognised by the designation of part of the estate as a Site of Special Scientific Interest.*
- There is an important association between parkland trees and other habitats such as woodland and grassland in supporting a diverse range of inter-related habitats.
- Trees that are good for wildlife through their decaying/ rotting sections, cracks, holes, etc. or, as standing or fallen dead wood, may also pose health and safety considerations for risk assessment. The ivy that clings to trees may also provide good habitat.

- Guidance:

Excellent:

- Site predominantly comprises native tree species and/ or has many mature and veteran specimens.
- Tree population provides good habitat for birds, bats and invertebrates.

Poor:

- Site predominantly comprises non-native tree species of low wildlife value and/ or trees that are predominantly young or early mature.
- Tree population provides little or no habitat value for birds, bats or invertebrates.

### **S2.2.6 - Nature Conservation: Ecological Condition (Management) - Scrub**

- Guidance:

Excellent:

- Scrub management plan in place.
- Scrub is excellent wildlife habitat.
- Management appropriate to the habitat type.
- Scrub is an excellent example of habitat type.

Poor:

- No scrub management plan in place.
- Scrub is poor wildlife habitat or poor example of habitat type.
- Management inappropriate to the habitat type.
- Neglect of scrub detracts significantly from habitat contribution.
- At worst, no adequate management being undertaken.

### **S2.2.7 - Nature Conservation: Ecological Condition (Management) - Hedgerow(s)**

- Guidance:

Excellent:

- Hedgerow management plan in place.
- Hedgerow(s) excellent wildlife habitat.
- Management appropriate to the habitat type.
- Hedgerow(s) excellent example of habitat type.

Poor:

- No hedgerow management plan in place.
- Hedgerow(s) poor wildlife habitat or poor example of habitat type.
- Management inappropriate to the habitat type.
- Neglect of hedgerow(s) detracts significantly from habitat contribution.
- At worst, no adequate management being undertaken.

### **S2.2.8 - Nature Conservation: Ecological Condition (Management) - Built Structures**

- Guidance:

Excellent:

- Built structure(s) habitat management incorporated in overall management plan.
- Built structure(s) habitat excellent wildlife habitat.
- Management appropriate to the habitat type.
- Built structure(s) habitat excellent example of habitat type.

Poor:

- No Built structure(s) habitat management incorporated in overall management plan.
- Built structure(s) is poor wildlife habitat or poor example of habitat type.
- Management inappropriate to the habitat type.
- Neglect of built structure(s) detracts significantly from habitat contribution.
- At worst, no adequate management being undertaken.

### **S2.2.9 - Nature Conservation: Ecological Condition (Management) - Ornamental Borders**

- Guidance:

Excellent:

- Ornamental border(s) management, as habitat, incorporated in overall management plan.
- Ornamental border(s) excellent wildlife habitat.
- Management appropriate to the habitat type.
- Ornamental border(s) excellent example of habitat type.

Poor:

- No ornamental border(s) management, as habitat, incorporated in overall management plan.
- Ornamental border(s) poor wildlife habitat or poor example of habitat type.
- Management inappropriate to the habitat type.
- Neglect of ornamental border(s) detracts significantly from habitat contribution.
- At worst, no adequate management being undertaken.

### **S2.2.10 - Nature Conservation: Ecological Condition (Management) - Rocks/ Cliffs/ Bare Earth**

- Guidance:

Excellent:

- Management of rocks/ cliffs/ bare earth, as habitat, incorporated in overall management plan.
- Rocks/ cliffs/ bare earth represent excellent wildlife habitat.
- Management appropriate to the habitat type.
- Rocks/ cliffs/ bare earth excellent example of habitat type.

Poor:

- No management of rocks/ cliffs/ bare earth, as habitat, incorporated in overall management plan.
- Rocks/ cliffs/ bare earth poor wildlife habitat or poor example of habitat type.
- Management inappropriate to the habitat type.
- Neglect of management of rocks/ cliffs/ bare earth detracts significantly from habitat contribution.
- At worst, no adequate management being undertaken.

### **S2.2.11 - Nature Conservation: Ecological Condition (Management) - Caves/ Cellars/ Underground**

- Guidance:

Excellent:

- Management of caves/ cellars/ underground, as habitat, incorporated in overall management plan.
- Caves/ cellars/ underground represent excellent wildlife habitat.
- Management appropriate to the habitat type.
- Caves/ cellars/ underground excellent example of habitat type.

Poor:

- No management of caves/ cellars/ underground, as habitat, incorporated in overall management plan.
- Caves/ cellars/ underground poor wildlife habitat or poor example of habitat type.
- Management inappropriate to the habitat type.
- Neglect of management of caves/ cellars/ underground detracts significantly from habitat contribution.
- At worst, no adequate management being undertaken.

### **S2.3. - Nature Conservation: Maintenance**

- Maintenance of a greenspace for nature conservation must be considered in conjunction with management, dealt with above. Particular attention must be given to the appropriateness of the current maintenance regime for grassland, scrub, etc in relation to the habitat type, with mind to the context of a site's inherent character, and to any user views expressed.
- The general maintenance of woodland and water is dealt with **under G4.3.1A - Woodland: Maintenance** and **S5.3.1 - Water: Maintenance** respectively.
- A nature conservation approach to maintenance can make a significant contribution to how the overall quality of a green space may be seen. Where conservation-guided specifications have been introduced for grassland, particularly where it is known to be species rich, (*e.g. areas of The Downs, Crox Bottom, and the lower part of Arnall Drive Open Space, Henbury*), meadows are appreciated for their profuse and diverse native flowering before being cut in the late summer. In other contexts, the introduction of appropriate regimes of stock grazing may be considered.
- Assessment must also take into account compliance with the current grounds maintenance specification, with all operations including grass cutting, removal of arisings and regular litter clearance, being undertaken as measured and at the right time of the year. Evidence that things are not as they should be may be in the form of bramble encroachment and high proportions of ruderal weeds in grassland. For some green spaces, a review of maintenance may be appropriate, and should be taken into account when scoring potential. Where a site is not being maintained in an optimum way, either for optimum nature conservation practice, or for fullest user enjoyment, a change of prescription may be appropriate.

- Maintenance measures must also achieve an appropriate balance within a site, both in respect of securing an equilibrium between wildlife habitats and in responding to the green space character and use. Inadequate maintenance, or non at all will contribute much to a site's sense of neglect or abandonment. Scrub which tends to be invasive by nature, though representing important habitat, particularly for birds, may suppress or impact upon other habitats, notably grassland, if unchecked. There can also be an over-reliance upon the 'one-off ' use of 'scrub bashing' volunteers as an alternative to a properly managed programme of scrub management.

### **S2.3.1 - Nature Conservation: Ecological Maintenance - Woodland**

- Guidance:

Excellent:

- Woodland (s) maintenance in compliance with grounds maintenance contract specification.
- Woodland (s) maintenance optimum for managed habitats and fully appreciated by users.
- Appropriate to green space character and use. Site feels well cared for.

Poor:

- Woodland (s) maintenance not in compliance with grounds maintenance contract specification.
- Woodland (s) maintenance inconsistent with good habitat management and the subject of user concerns.
- Inappropriate to green space character and use. At worst, green space appears neglected or abandoned.

### **S2.3.2 - Nature Conservation: Ecological Maintenance - Grassland**

- Guidance:

Excellent:

- Grassland maintenance in compliance with grounds maintenance contract specification.
- Grassland maintenance optimum for managed habitats and fully appreciated by users.
- Appropriate to green space character and use. Site feels well cared for.

Poor:

- Grassland maintenance not in compliance with grounds maintenance contract specification.
- Grassland maintenance inconsistent with good habitat management and the subject of user concerns.
- Inappropriate to green space character and use. At worst, green space appears neglected or abandoned.

### **S2.3.3 - Nature Conservation: Ecological Maintenance - Heathland**

- Guidance:

Excellent:

- Heathland maintenance in compliance with grounds maintenance contract specification.
- Heathland maintenance optimum for managed habitats and fully appreciated by users.
- Appropriate to green space character and use. Site feels well cared for.

Poor:

- Heathland maintenance not in compliance with grounds maintenance contract specification.
- Heathland maintenance inconsistent with good habitat management and the subject of user concerns.
- Inappropriate to green space character and use. At worst, green space appears neglected or abandoned.

### **S2.3.4 - Nature Conservation: Ecological Maintenance - Water**

- Guidance:

Excellent:

- Water maintenance in compliance with grounds maintenance contract specification.
- Water maintenance optimum for managed habitats and fully appreciated by users.
- Appropriate to green space character and use. Site feels well cared for.

Poor:

- Water maintenance not in compliance with grounds maintenance contract specification.
- Water maintenance inconsistent with good habitat management and the subject of user concerns.
- Inappropriate to green space character and use. At worst, green space appears neglected or abandoned.

### **S2.3.5 - Nature Conservation: Ecological Maintenance - Parkland Trees**

- Guidance:

Excellent:

- Parkland Tree (s) maintenance in compliance with Arboricultural contract specification.
- Parkland Tree (s) maintenance optimum for managed habitats and fully appreciated by users.
- Appropriate to green space character and use. Site feels well cared for.

Poor:

- Parkland Tree (s) maintenance not in compliance with Arboricultural contract specification.
- Parkland Tree (s) maintenance inconsistent with good habitat management and the subject of user concerns.
- Inappropriate to green space character and use. At worst, green space appears neglected or abandoned.

### **S2.3.6 - Nature Conservation: Ecological Maintenance - Scrub**

- Guidance:
  - Scrub maintenance in compliance with grounds maintenance contract specification.
  - Scrub maintenance optimum for managed habitats and fully appreciated by users.
  - Appropriate to green space character and use. Site feels well cared for.

Poor:

- Scrub maintenance not in compliance with grounds maintenance contract specification.
- Scrub maintenance inconsistent with good habitat management and the subject of user concerns.
- Inappropriate to green space character and use. At worst, green space appears neglected or abandoned.

### **S2.3.7 - Nature Conservation: Ecological Maintenance - Hedgerow(s)**

- Guidance:
  - Hedgerow(s) maintenance in compliance with grounds maintenance contract specification.
  - Hedgerow(s) maintenance optimum for managed habitats and fully appreciated by users.
  - Appropriate to green space character and use. Site feels well cared for.

Poor:

- Hedgerow(s) maintenance not in compliance with grounds maintenance contract specification.
- Hedgerow(s) maintenance inconsistent with good habitat management and the subject of user concerns.
- Inappropriate to green space character and use. At worst, green space appears neglected or abandoned.

### **S2.3.8 - Nature Conservation: Ecological Maintenance - Built Structures**

- Guidance:
  - **Built Structures** (s) maintenance in compliance with grounds maintenance contract specification.
  - **Built Structures** (s) maintenance optimum for managed habitats and fully appreciated by users.
  - Appropriate to green space character and use. Site feels well cared for.

Poor:

- **Built Structures** (s) maintenance not in compliance with grounds maintenance contract specification.
- **Built Structures** (s) maintenance inconsistent with good habitat management and the subject of user concerns.
- Inappropriate to green space character and use. At worst, green space appears neglected or abandoned.

### **S2.3.9 - Nature Conservation: Ecological Maintenance - Ornamental Borders**

- Guidance:

- **Ornamental Borders** (s) maintenance in compliance with grounds maintenance contract specification.
- **Ornamental Borders** (s) maintenance optimum for managed habitats and fully appreciated by users.
- Appropriate to green space character and use. Site feels well cared for.

Poor:

- **Ornamental Borders** (s) maintenance not in compliance with grounds maintenance contract specification.
- **Ornamental Borders** (s) maintenance inconsistent with good habitat management and the subject of user concerns.
- Inappropriate to green space character and use. At worst, green space appears neglected or abandoned.

### **S2.2.10 - Nature Conservation: Ecological Maintenance - Rocks/ Cliffs/ Bare Earth**

- Guidance:

- **Rocks/ Cliffs/ Bare Earth** (s) maintenance in compliance with grounds maintenance contract specification.
- **Rocks/ Cliffs/ Bare Earth** (s) maintenance optimum for managed habitats and fully appreciated by users.
- Appropriate to green space character and use. Site feels well cared for.

Poor:

- **Rocks/ Cliffs/ Bare Earth** (s) maintenance not in compliance with grounds maintenance contract specification.
- **Rocks/ Cliffs/ Bare Earth** (s) maintenance inconsistent with good habitat management and the subject of user concerns.
- Inappropriate to green space character and use. At worst, green space appears neglected or abandoned.

### **S2.3.11 - Nature Conservation: Ecological Maintenance - Caves/ Cellars/ Underground**

- Guidance:

- **Caves/ Cellars/ Underground** maintenance in compliance with grounds maintenance contract specification.
- **Caves/ Cellars/ Underground** maintenance optimum for managed habitats and fully appreciated by users.
- Appropriate to green space character and use. Site feels well cared for.

Poor:

- **Caves/ Cellars/ Underground** maintenance not in compliance with grounds maintenance contract specification.
  - **Caves/ Cellars/ Underground** maintenance inconsistent with good habitat management and the subject of user concerns.
  - Inappropriate to green space character and use. At worst, green space appears neglected or abandoned.
-

## S3. Trees

- Form **SUP 3** is to be used for this section.
- Bristol has many fine trees that contribute so much to improving the appearance of our urban areas and in helping to clean the air, screen unsightly development and bring wildlife into the city. The trees in our green spaces are significant defining features in their own right and are typically a significant component of the overall design objectives for the park or area of green space. Parkland trees include 'traditional' specimen trees i.e. large dominant trees; avenues of trees typically alongside formal paths and driveways and clumps of trees intended to provide visual interest.

### S3.1.1 - Trees: Design

- Trees are an integral part of a designed landscape, and careful consideration is needed to select the right type of tree, for the right location and for them to be managed to express the overall design objectives of a site.
- Given the longevity of trees, the original design of a park may be several hundred years in the case of our Heritage Estates or more 'recent' reflecting Victorian, Edwardian or more contemporary designed green space. Certainly, tree planting has been subject to fashions over the years. In the 1700s formal grand avenues were prevalent (with some still surviving in Bristol such as the lime avenue at Kingsweston), in the 1800s more picturesque / romanticized planting favoured and in the late 1800s - early 1900s exotics were commonly planted in a formal design. Planting since the 1950s has typically been much more ad hoc, imposing groups of trees and more random planting within landscapes without consideration in respect of the design contribution.
- The significance of an holistic approach to design, and, in the case of historic landscapes, one that is based on research of how the design of a site has evolved is now recognised. Restoration projects, such as those funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund, are enabling correction of the mistakes of the recent past.
- The overall tree planting design for any site should have coherence, consistency and represent an appropriate response to the character of the area within which the green space is set.
- An otherwise high scoring site will be let down by a preponderance of poor quality, ad hoc and insensitive modern planting.

- Guidance:

Excellent:

- Tree population makes a positive and significant contribution to the attractiveness and visual interest of the site.
- Sensitive planting design coherent, consistent and appropriate to character of site and context.. Historically appropriate.
- Tree planting contributes to the overall integrity and unity of a greenspace design.
- Numerous impressive trees of great size, attractive form, character, and significant age (veteran or near veteran).

Poor:

- Tree population makes little or no positive contribution to the site, and detracts from/ impacts upon landscape quality.
- Insensitive tree planting. Ad hoc, feels and accentuating unplanned nature of green space. Historically inappropriate.
- Trees out of scale with green space (small trees in a big space).
- Species choice inappropriate leading to a fussy and jarring 'look' to the site.

### S3.2.1 - Trees: Condition (Management)

- Specimen trees typically need individual management throughout their lives if they are to: contribute positively to landscape quality, be reasonably safe in relation to public access, maintain condition and long-term health, and maximise their wildlife value.
- Typical management operations include formative pruning in young trees removing, e.g. weak forks, crown lifting over paths and boundaries, crown thinning to alleviate shade and nuisance, felling and replacement planting. More recent management approaches have been focused on maximising wildlife value by retaining dead wood (standing and fallen).  
**See S2.2.5 Nature Conservation: Ecological Condition (Management) - Parkland Trees**
- It is desirable that objectives and management prescriptions are defined for parkland trees via an asset survey and tree or site management plan.

Excellent:

- Evidence that tree management is appropriate and effective and preferably to an agreed plan (including having tree survey):
  - a) trees are in excellent condition, without significant faults (that are either an immediate safety concern, or would become one if left untreated),
  - b) trees are causing no significant nuisance to site users or neighbours,
  - c) management works have enhanced (or maintained) amenity value, and
  - d) ongoing programme of new and replacement planting and age structure is varied (yet remains coherent from a design perspective).

Poor:

- No evidence of regular tree management and / or management is ad hoc and inappropriate:
  - a) trees are in poor condition with significant faults that are either an immediate safety concern, or would become one if left untreated.
  - b) trees are causing significant nuisance to site users and neighbours,
  - c) management has harmed visually amenity (e.g. ugly pollarding), and
  - d) little or no consistency in structure of new or recent planting.

### S3.3.1 - Trees: Maintenance

- Tree condition is largely determined by the effectiveness of long-term management interventions as described in **S3.2.1** above. Clearly there is a relationship between the level of maintenance and the resulting condition of individual trees. In this context, maintenance is an assessment of the effectiveness of annual response type works in keeping the trees in good visible health and condition.
- Excellent:
  - No standing dead trees.
  - Low branches have been pruned to keep paths clear of paths and at sufficient height to allow mechanical grass cutting beneath the canopy.
  - No evidence of vandalism (no broken branches, bark stripping or damage to young trees).
  - Epicormic growth around base of trees regularly removed (at least every three years - as relevant to site).
  - Young trees properly staked, maintained and watered (no evidence of drought stress)
- Poor:
  - Several standing dead trees.

- Low branches impeding use of paths, and interrupting grass cutting beneath the canopy.
- Significant vandalism apparent (e.g. broken branches, snapped trees, bark stripping ring barking and damage to young trees).
- Epicormic growth around base of trees several years old, leading to loss of definition to base of tree and contributing to feeling of neglect.
- Young trees inadequately staked (poor specification, natural disturbance or vandalism) or not staked at all.
- Unmaintained.
- Drought stress indicates lack of watering.

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## S4. Woodland

- Form **SUP 4** is to be used for this section.
- Woodlands can make a significant contribution to the quality of our parks and green spaces and in providing for quality of life. Green spaces with woodland are recognised for being desirable for recreation whilst providing important wildlife habitat. People also attach a deep cultural significance to green space with woodland, especially in an urban area. Woodland sites also tend to be associated with a diversity that is reflected in their underlying geology, age and management over the years. Some of the city's best woodlands, in terms of size and quality, are within its historic estates. However, the importance of more local 'community woodlands', is recognised as particularly important to local people. A gauge of this is the level of interest apparent from local groups interested in their protection and management.

### S4.1.1 - Woodland: Design and Use

- The woodlands of a green space, are important, through the landscape structure they bring, to a site's overall landscape character and setting.
- In period designed formal parks, the scale and character of woodland should be informed by historic research that will guide appropriate restoration, or steer the integration of any appropriate more contemporary approach.
- The design arrangement and mature scale of a woodland must be in harmony with the character of the greater landscape within which it is set.
- A well laid out woodland should be attractive and provide interest to the user, through incorporating a variety in experience, through containing glades and spaces with views within and externally. The size of trees, individually and collectively, is a strong factor in establishing interest, but consideration must be given to the three dimensional contribution of all vegetation including the shrubs and ground layer. The achievement of a balanced age structure is important, but where trees are old, or classed as 'veteran' (e.g. *Ancient pollard oaks at Ashton Court Estate*) they are bound to be a particular source of interest.
- The arrangement of main paths and rides must also be conducive to a safe feel. The overall path network must be designed to be sufficient to provide appropriate access for user enjoyment without resulting in excessive trampling throughout. Care will be needed in ensuring that areas are not unduly attractive to incompatible activities such as illegal motor-biking and drug taking. The assessor should also make allowance for areas of woodland that by their nature access cannot be promoted. This will permanently apply to extremely steep areas, or those containing particularly sensitive habitats. It may also be necessary to exclude visitors from newly planted areas pending their establishment. Assessment of the actual provision of access paths and signage and interpretation is covered under **Generic - G5. Access Paths/ Hard Paved Surfaces**, and **Generic - G8. User Information, respectively.**

- Consideration must also be given to a woodland's ability to absorb recreational activity ranging from walking and jogging to horse riding and mountain biking. The degree to which this may happen will depend upon a woodland's capacity to absorb human activity in relation degree of maturity, area size, topography and wildlife habitat sensitivity.

- Guidance:

Excellent:

- Strong woodland contribution to overall landscape structure, character and setting of the greenspace.
- Woodland design positively enhances overall green space diversity and quality.
- Woodland design appropriate in respect of scale and structure when mature, species, and shape.
- Attractive and interesting.
- Design for access with views, and recreation, enriches user experience, is compatible with habitat protection and in harmony with landscape character.
- Safe feel. Welcoming to visitors.

Poor:

- Weak woodland contribution to overall landscape structure, character and setting of the greenspace.
- Woodland fails to enhance overall green space diversity and quality.
- Woodland design inappropriate in respect of scale and structure when mature, species, and shape.
- Insufficiently attractive and lacking in user interest.
- Woodland largely featureless, monotonous and unwelcoming to visitors.
- Poor for access and views, and recreation provision that contributes negatively to user experience, is incompatible with habitat protection, and inappropriate to landscape character.
- Feels insufficiently safe. Unwelcoming to visitors.

#### **S4.2.1 - Woodland: Condition (Management)**

- Woodlands are managed via silvicultural interventions appropriate to their biological function, age and uses / values. Woodland management in Bristol is typically multiple objective reflecting recreational value, wildlife, landscape quality and to a degree timber value.
- The biological function and age of woodland is highly relevant i.e. wet woodland will have different management needs to mixed deciduous woodland, and newly planted woodland will have differing management needs to mature woodland.
- It is desirable that objectives and management prescriptions are defined for woodland via a woodland or site management plan.
- Typical management interventions (silvicultural operations) relevant to woodland in Bristol include thinning, re-spacing natural regeneration, coppicing and selective felling.
- In some woodland, non-intervention may be the most appropriate management prescription i.e. natural processes are allowed to continue without interference. This may be appropriate in 'more remote' or inaccessible areas where dead trees can fall naturally, where natural regeneration occurs and where scrub is developing into woodland.

- Guidance:

Excellent:

- Woodland is the subject to a current and appropriate management plan. Evidence of management that is appropriate to woodland type, age and uses / values:
  - **Establishment phase**
    - effective weed control around trees
    - effective levels of stocking
    - effective growth rates
    - vandalism not evident or effectively corrected
  - **Young woodland**
    - Ongoing programme of thinning, re-spacing natural regeneration and re-structuring to improve growth rates, select for quality, improve visual interest, encourage ground flora to develop, manage for timber quality where appropriate.
    - Manage rides as appropriate to create visual diversity and habitat value
  - **Mature woodland**
    - Ongoing programme of thinning and selective felling to 'open up' structure, improve growth rates of retained trees, encourage natural regeneration, develop shrub and ground flora, manage rides, retain dead wood, manage for timber quality where appropriate.

Poor:

- No woodland management plan in place. Evidence that management is inappropriate (most likely due to neglect) and is harming woodland character / uses / values:
  - **Establishment phase**
    - No effective weed control around trees
    - Stocking patchy (less than 50% survival)
    - Growth rates poor
    - Much vandalism evident
  - **Young woodland**
    - No evidence of silvicultural interventions: densely stocked area in need of thinning and woodland monotonous as a result. Poor quality trees retained and suppressing higher value trees.
    - Rides where present not managed leading to poor visual diversity at woodland edge.
  - **Mature woodland**
    - No evidence of regular and appropriate silvicultural interventions: mature woodland with little of no natural regeneration, poorly developed ground flora, dense unattractive woodland, individual trees prone to windblow, poor quality trees retained at expense of quality timber trees.
    - Rides where present not managed leading to poor visual diversity at woodland edge.

### S4.3.1 - Woodland: Maintenance

- Woodland maintenance must also be assessed in a way that is distinct from long-term management or silvicultural interventions. Maintenance both within woodland and associated with its edges, typically includes regular or annual operations needed to keep woodlands attractive and safe.

- Guidance:

Excellent:

- No significant litter,
- No fly tipping,
- Paths clear of overhanging or obstructing vegetation,
- Rides and path edges cut and maintained,
- Boundary trees effectively managed to avoid unreasonable nuisance to neighbours; and
- Tree-related hazards effectively managed to minimise risk of injury /damage to site users and on adjacent land;

Poor:

- Significant accumulation of litter, both recent and old,
- Significant problem of fly tipping, being both highly visible and old,
- Main access routes obstructed by low branches / side branches that significantly obstructs use,
- Defined rides / path edges not maintained,
- Boundary trees overhang adjacent land causing unreasonable and significant nuisance to land owners, and
- Evidence of significant number of tree-related hazards within falling distance of access routes (dead trees, large amounts of dead wood, part root torn trees)

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## S5. Water

- Form **SUP 5** is to be used for this section.
- Support from a technical officers in the Environmental Quality Unit or Environmental policy and Protection, should be sought where more specialist assessment is needed.

### S5.1.1 - Water: Layout and Quantity

- The 'natural' use of water in its variety of forms - ponds, lakes (*e.g. Eastville Park, St. George Park, Crox Bottom and Malago Vale Open Space*), rivers, streams, marshes, etc, can contribute immensely to the quality of the human experience of a greenspace. So too can features associated with it, such as dams/ wiers (*River Frome/ Henry Slead's Stream*), waterfalls, rills, etc.
- Man-made water features can also enrich the experience in a range of ways - ponds (*e.g. Canford Park*), paddling pools (*e.g. St Andrew's Park*). They may well be elements in the landscape that a designer has exploited, in conjunction with a sites topography, to accentuate its drama and interest. It will be important for the use of water to be incorporated in a way that sits appropriately within the landform rather than arbitrarily and 'unnaturally' located in a way that will not be sustainable without technical intervention. Alternatively, features may have been artificially introduced within the historic landscape for a 'cultural' purpose; in this respect dew ponds, such as those in Ashton Court Estate once provided a source of water for livestock.
- Recreationally, the use of water may, formally or informally, provide opportunities for activity, such as boating (*once the case in Eastville and St George Parks*) or angling.
- Certain types of water body, most particularly 'natural' ones, may also provide valuable habitats for wildlife, although in being part of an overall ecosystem, their ecology should not be considered in isolation. An holistic view must take into account any assessment made under **SX: Nature Conservation** and **SX: Woodland**
- Guidance :

Excellent:

- Strong contribution to the character and overall impression of the site and its setting.
- Enrichment of the user experience.
- Creation of a resource for active or passive enjoyment.

Poor:

- Weak contribution to the character and overall impression of the site and its setting.
- Enrichment of the user experience negligible.
- Opportunity for active or passive enjoyment unexploited.
- Water feature unsustainable and inappropriately located.

### **S5.1.2 - Water: Plant Selection and Associated Wildlife Interest**

- Aquatic planting should be introduced in a way that is appropriate to the design, character and ecology of the part of the green space within which a water body is set. As elsewhere, aquatic plants, including marginals will, through their seasonal colour (foliage and flower), form, texture, and positioning, contribute immensely to the overall attractiveness of the site.
- Where contributing to a 'natural' setting, where nature conservation principles should prevail, the emphasis should be on achieving results through ecologically guided management rather than the introduction of species. Where intervention must be involved, the emphasis must be on the use of native species in a way that is compatible with habitats to be created.
- A well balanced approach that is in harmony with the ecology of a site and its setting will enrich visitors' experience through the attraction of fauna (birds, fish, mammals, etc). It may also enhance a site's value for education through opportunities for pond dipping, etc.
- Guidance :

Excellent:

- Plant selection appropriate to design, character and ecology.
- Water associated with considerable wildlife interest.

Poor:

- Plant selection inappropriate to design, character and ecology.
- No apparent association with wildlife interest.

### **S5.1.3 - Water: Use**

- It is important that both active and passive uses of, and recreation on, water are in harmony with the green space and its other uses, including for wildlife.
- The visual value of water in green space will be particularly significant to users. It will be a key element in making a park attractive to the user, whilst bringing greater diversity to what can be experienced. The movement of water, in conjunction with activities with which it is associated, will result in increased green space animation. Conversely water has for long been associated with tranquility that 'escapees' from urban living will value.
- Guidance :

Excellent:

- Multiple active and passive use and recreation in harmony with green space and its other uses.

Poor:

- Uses incompatible with other green space uses and unsympathetic to its setting.

### S5.2.1 - Water: Condition

- Where water circulation or filtration is achieved artificially with the use of plant, the condition of technical equipment, including pumps, must be taken into account. Physical condition may also be a consideration in respect of dams, weirs, sluices, etc.
- Information for users relating to any specific inherent risks should have been dealt with under Generic section **G8 User Information**. However, it will be important to deal with any manageable risks here, where unmitigated hazards are apparent.
- Silt levels will be a factor when considering the quality of rivers and streams and in basins including lakes and ponds, where deposition will build up and periodic dredging necessitated. Once siltation has reached a point where it is simply a maintenance matter of clearing out a full silt trap, 'Condition' criteria apply as more drastic action will be involved.
- Where water bodies are man-made, and the subject of artificial retention, the condition of the containing material must be considered in respect of its apparent physical, including waterproof, state. An apparent drop in the level of water in a lake or pond may be an indicator of leakage, where water levels are artificially controlled by dams, weirs etc. However allowance must be made for seasonal fluctuation in man-made basins, such as swales, where water levels may be expected to rise and fall.

- Guidance:

Excellent:

- Technical plant in perfect working order.
- Associated infrastructure management for user safety.
- Retention structure sound and waterproof. Liner/ membrane intact and waterproof.
- Silt at normal manageable level.

Poor:

- Technical plant has failed.
- Retention structure has cracks or is subsiding resulting in leakage.
- Significant concerns requiring action in respect of associated infrastructure safety.
- Liner/ membrane no longer waterproof and likely to have been punctured.
- Considerable build up of silt and urgently dredging required.

### S5.3.1 - Water: Maintenance

- In considering the association of water with the quality of the human experience, its condition, notably in how it looks and smells, and in its inherent chemistry will be vital. Where contamination is suspected, it may be appropriate to seek advice and testing from specialist colleagues as indicated above.
- The appearance of water courses, lakes and ponds is important to users' general impression of a green space, and the negative effect of tipped material, including supermarket trolleys, rubbish, litter, fishing tackle discarded by anglers, etc is significant. Bird fouling may also become associated with specific areas. It will also be important to ensure that management of aquatic vegetation is not overlooked.
- Whilst generally dealt with under **S1.2.1 - Horticulture: Maintenance**, and **SXXX. - Trees: Maintenance**, particular attention should be given to the maintenance standard of vegetation within the immediate corridor associated with rivers and streams and the periphery of lakes and ponds. Without management, regenerating tree, scrub and weed growth may well be at the expense of a flourishing herb layer, and diversity in habitat particularly associated with water. Excessive tree shade will also be a factor in suppressing the appearance of flora.

- Guidance:

Excellent:

- Water and banks/ retaining structures clean and healthy.
- Banks and adjacent landscape kept free of invasive and excessively shading vegetation.
- Clear of weeds, algae, etc.
- Water flowing freely.
- Clear of tipped material, supermarket trolleys, rubbish, litter, etc.
- Silt at normal manageable level.

Poor:

- Water and banks/ retaining structures dirty and appears contaminated.
  - Banks and adjacent landscape choked with invasive and excessively shading vegetation.
  - Substantial weed growth. Algae much in evidence.
  - Water flow sluggish or at worst stagnant.
  - Considerable presence of tipped material, supermarket trolleys, rubbish, litter etc.
  - Silt levels have built up to a point where dredging rather than simple silt trap clearance is involved.
-

## S6. Children's Play

- Form **SUP 6** is to be used for this section.
- Support from the Children's Play and Youth Officer should be sought where more specialist assessment is needed.

### S6.1.1 - Children's Play: Setting and Location

- Children's play provision should not be seen purely in terms of equipment. Indeed, the best sites for children are generally acknowledged to be those that are in an attractive landscape setting, whether the emphasis is a 'natural' one or a designed one. Apart from being popular with children, such a setting will be more conducive to a longer stay by supervising carers who will enjoy the pleasant surroundings and facilities. The interest of both children and carers will be sustained for a longer period if the quality of the overall experience is right. An optimum setting whether as a part of a formal layout or an informal one, whether within a park, an informal greenspace or a housing landscape, will attract children and their carers, at best functioning as a key destination or 'honeypot'.
- An 'natural' or attractively designed landscape setting will also be a more stimulating environment for play, particularly where children may be able to interact with the landscape, learning from natural experiences. This will add 'play value'. See also **S3.1.4 - Children's Play: Play Value**, below.
- In practical terms, the best location will be one that is accessible to all, including disabled carers and children, and has a safe 'feel'. See **S3.1.2 - Children's Play: Supervision and Safety/ Abuse 'Feel'**, below.
- Given that children should not be exposed to excessive periods of exposure to the sun without skin protection, play areas should, ideally provide shaded options.
- Guidance:
  - Excellent:
    - Highly play value attributable to setting alone.
    - Attractive and stimulating play environment that will sustain interest in children and carers alike.
    - Shaded area option.
  - Poor:
    - Negligible play value attributable to setting.
    - Unattractive and unstimulating play environment that will not sustain interest.

### S6.1.2 - Children's Play: Accessibility and Inclusion

- Optimum play provision must be based on best practice in respect of Accessibility, notably in the context of Disability Discrimination Act. Compliance with the standard required will include access to and within the play location as well as to each item of equipment it contains.
- Information for users/ carers relating to any specific access considerations should have been dealt with under Generic section **G8 User Information, G8.1.2 - Signage and Interpretation: Information for disabled people on relative accessibility**.
- Where access is unavoidably limited or difficult as a result of inherent topographical constraints, this should be taken into account without penalty score. However, for locations where this does apply, information should be available to users/ carers beforehand, either in the form of literature, or at entrances.

- Play provision, as with green space provision as a whole, is for all sections of the community, regardless of ethnic origin or social standing, and those who manage the site must be confident that principles are, at all times translated into practice.

- Guidance:

Excellent:

- Optimum access, including for disabled users/ carers, to and within play location.
- Optimum access, including for disabled users/ carers, to all items of play equipment.
- Sense of inclusiveness apparent at all times.

Poor:

- Poor access, including for disabled users/ carers, to and within play location.
- Poor access, including for disabled users/ carers, to all items of play equipment.
- Significant doubts about inclusiveness being apparent at all times.

### S6.1.3 - Children's Play: Supervision and Safety/ Abuse 'Feel'.

- This should be considered in conjunction with any overall green space assessment carried out under **G7.1.1 User Experience: Safety Feel**. Whilst generally covered by this for the site as a whole, principles should still be applied under this section in a more focused way for play.

- Attention should also be given to the degree of any official Parks Service presence, or that of its contractors. In limited instances on key sites (*e.g Blaise Castle Estate and Hengrove Park*), a more focused presence may be available, at least during the summer months. (*At Blaise this may be a combination of dedicated Play Worker and Parks Ranger; at Hengrove, whilst there is a year-round staff presence, seasonal play supervision may also be available*). A high general level of public activity will also be a significant factor in 'background' passive supervision.

- A generally safe 'feel' may also arise from a play location's proximity to regular activity, perhaps (for instance, housing that overlooks or a busy street - in each case without being too close). The nearby presence of CCTV may also be of comfort to children/ carers.

- In respect of child safety, a dog free environment should be provided. Notwithstanding the importance of creating the setting described, visibility into, and out of, a play location must be adequate to ensure that children/ carers do not feel threatened.

- Guidance:

Excellent:

- Frequent official presence.
- High level of public use. Adjacent to busy path.
- Site well overlooked. High visibility into and out of play location. CCTV nearby.
- High in 'safe feel'. Opportunities for escape.
- Dog free. No dog fouling.
- No known association with serious risk including crime, drugs use, motorcycle intrusion, etc.

Poor:

- No frequent official presence.
- Low level of public use. Remote from busy path.
- Site not overlooked. Visibility into and out of play location extremely restricted. No CCTV nearby.

- Low in 'safe feel'. Limited opportunities for escape if 'cornered'.
- Not dog free.
- Acknowledged association with serious risk including crime, drugs use, motorcycle intrusion, etc.

### S6.1.4 - Children's Play: Play Value

- Clearly, a key element of measure of the quality of a play location to children will be play value. This may be considered in relation to the range of equipment provided on a site, and what it represents in respect of 'thrill' to users. It may also be assessed in terms of how much it stimulates children's imagination, as opposed to items of equipment that represent adult devised features or themes that leave little or no scope for alternatives in young minds. Social play will also be valuable to children, and the degree to which this may happen can be a factor of the design of individual play items, how they are arranged in relation to one another, or indeed, how the overall play area has been configured. There may also be some significance in seating arrangements and the scope for interaction between children and their carers.
- Children's awareness of their environment will also be heightened through the provision of a setting of trees that provide a softening and calming green foil for their exploration of both 'natural' and artificial materials. 'Natural' materials including the careful integration of stone, timber, play quality sand, etc, will also enhance this experience.
- The presence of planting that is safe for play may also provide an opportunity for children's interaction with and discovery of 'natural' elements. Willow and Bamboo, which are safe for play are acknowledged to yield this value, as they are robust enough (once established) to 'come back' after a mauling. However in plant selection, designers must be aware of the need to avoid plants that are toxic, cause irritation, or, at worst result in injury (e.g. through their thorns). It will also be important to retain visibility within and into and out of play areas, and this should limit selection to plants that won't exceed, or that can be readily maintained at, a maximum 1.5 metres in height.
- The provision of a play environment that stimulates children's senses, notably in respect of smell, sight (colour) and touch (tactile surfaces) will contribute considerable value.
- It may also be possible to gauge play value by observing how long a play location generally sustains children's interest. This may vary from up to 10 minutes (poor) up to 1 hour (moderate), 3 hours (good) and more than 3 hours (excellent).
- Optimum provision for a range of age groups and interests may also include complementary provision for wheeled sports such as skateboarding and bmx biking.
- Guidance:
  - Excellent:
    - Large amount and range of play equipment.
    - Play equipment and setting stimulating to children's imagination.
    - Equipment design and play layout conducive to social interaction.
    - Play environment sensually stimulating.
    - Setting of trees.
    - Play involves experience of 'natural' elements.
    - Children's interest typically sustained for more than three hours.
    - Complementary wheeled sports provision (skateboarding/ bmx biking) integrated.
  - Poor:
    - Number and range of play items extremely limited.

- Play equipment and setting unstimulating to children's imagination.
- Equipment design and play layout not conducive to social interaction.
- Play environment sensually unstimulating.
- Setting bleak, open and without trees.
- Play does not involve experience of 'natural' elements.
- Children's interest barely sustained.
- Complementary wheeled sports provision (skateboarding/ bmx biking) not integrated.

### S6.2.1 - Children's Play: Condition

- Given the purpose of a play site, particularly in respect of safety, assessment of its condition is particularly important; it must, at all times be fit for its purpose. Apart from inspection of the equipment in relation to the standards it must continue to meet, careful attention must be given to the state of all paved surfacing. Safety surfacing in its variety of forms, must continue to perform in relation to critical fall heights. All paved surfacing, trims and edges, must be smooth and even, and without any trips. Damage may be apparent where it has resulted from frost heave, subsidence or settlement, or in the case of rubber crumb safety surfacing, where vandalism has accelerated deterioration.
- The condition of a play site's enclosing features and gateway must also be seen as a crucial part of its overall fitness for purpose, in being a robust defence against intrusion, notably in respect of dogs or other hazards. The condition of such an internal boundary is dealt with under Generic item - **G4.2.1 - Boundaries, Internal: Condition.**

- Guidance:

Excellent:

- Play site intact.
- All paved surfacing remains as laid, with no damage, subsidence or settlement.
- Play safety surfacing retains integrity and fitness for purpose.
- Loose fill has not degraded and specified level maintained.
- All equipment in perfect order.
- Paintwork remains fresh, without damage or deterioration.

Poor:

- Play site in poor state.
- Surfacing the subject of damage, subsidence or settlement.
- Play safety surfacing has lost its integrity and is no longer fit for its purpose
- Loose fill has degraded and/ or well below specified level.
- Equipment requires replacement or major refurbishment.
- Paintwork shows significant damage or deterioration.

### S6.3.1 - Children's Play: Maintenance

- Guidance:

Excellent:

- All equipment usable. No fire damage. No superficial impairment.
- Safety surfaces smooth and without worn patches, even and level.
- Loose fill 'fluffy', free-draining, and evenly spread to correct depth. No weed or moss.
- Carpet surfaces intact and have sand brushed into weave.
- All equipment usable and clean.
- Fence lines straight and fences vertical. Gates close without banging.
- Signage clean and legible.

- Paintwork bright and with no chips or scratches.
- Equipment clean. Graffiti free. No vandalism. Free from litter and leaves. Bins empty.

Poor:

- Equipment taken out of use.
- Safety surfaces rough and worn in patches, uneven and not level.
- Loose fill heaped, or with hollows of shallow cover over hard base. Weeds and moss present.
- Carpet surfaces torn and with no evidence of sand having been brushed into weave.
- Fence lines crooked and fence panels leaning. Gates do not close.
- Signage damaged and information illegible.
- Paintwork dull, chipped and scratched.
- Equipment dirty. Extensive offensive graffiti. Vandalism apparent. Presence of litter and leaves. Bins full.

## S7. Buildings

- Form **SUP 7** is to be used for this section.
- This section deals with the assessment of the quality of buildings that lie within green space. However, more specialist buildings are dealt with in separate sections; **S8 Toilets** and **S11 Sports Pavilions/ Changing Rooms**
- The assessment will involve consideration of a building's structural condition, its general external and internal physical state and the adequacy, particularly in relation to current standards, of its services and plant.
- Support from the Technical Services Manager (Andrew Searle on Tel: 92 23780, at time of writing), should be sought where more specialist assessment is needed. He will be able to advise on how this level of assessment compares with the more rigorous approach through Asset Management Planning, and whether any more focused advice is required from a Structural Engineer, Building Surveyor, Civil Engineer, or Mechanical & Electrical Engineer.

### S7.1.1 - Buildings: Location and Design Context

- Through their location, buildings can make an extremely positive contribution to a green space and its setting. At best a building may be 'pivotal' within a site's overall layout, perhaps acting as a focal point. *(This is certainly the case with the houses of historic sites such as Ashton Court, Blaise Castle and Kingsweston Estates; unfortunately the equivalent for Oldbury Court was demolished in the 1960s).* A building's location may exploit a site's topography to full effect *(e.g. Cabot Tower, in Brandon Hill Park is perhaps the epitome of this. The chimney at Trooper's Hill is an example of a 'landmark' industrial structure).* They may also be located to take full advantage of a feature of the park. *(e.g. Boathouse at Eastville Park).*
- The location of a building within a greenspace may have been constrained by its function. Alternatively, locational considerations may have inspired a change in use that reflects current market, in conjunction with an intention to bring use into a green space and extend its animation. *(e.g. In recent years, Ashton Court Mansion and Kingsweston house have become associated with conferences, weddings, etc.).*
- A particularly poor location will be one that does not support any sustainable use, perhaps due to its remoteness from other park activity. A building occupying such a site is also more likely to be vulnerable to vandalism through the absence of round the clock

surveillance. (*Stratford Mill, in Blaise Castle Estate is probably the city's most notable example*).

- The sensitive design of a building may reinforce, or contribute to, the character of a greenspace. (*e.g. Irrespective of the adequacy, or otherwise, of the accommodation within, the toilets at Fishponds Park are complementary to the site's character*). However, inappropriate design, including in respect of scale, form, use of materials, may significantly impair or detract from it (*e.g. Toilets at Sea Walls*).
- A building should also be considered for how well it sits within its context, particularly in relation to landform considerations, or in respect of its spatial contribution, perhaps as a focus within a landscape space, or as a feature on the edge of it. This may apply in a formal sense, in relation to vistas (*e.g. Kingsweston House*) or in conjunction with gateways (*e.g. Henbury Lodge to Blaise Estate on Henbury Hill, or those at each entrance to Ashton Court Estate*). Otherwise, the contribution may be a more informal one (*as with the contribution of estate cottages at Ashton Court and Blaise*).

- Guidance:

Excellent:

- Positive contribution as focus or 'landmark'.
- Location optimum for building use and in relation to green space layout.
- Location appropriate to function, including accessibility to users.
- Sustainable location. Use and access. Not unduly vulnerable to vandalism.
- Design contributes positively to character of site and setting.
- Building sits well in its context.

Poor:

- Contributes negatively, detracting from setting and character.
- Location poor in relation to building use and within green space layout.
- Location inappropriate to function. Remote for users.
- Location unsustainable for effective use and access. Extremely prone to vandalism.
- Design detracts from or significantly impairs character of site and setting.
- Building sits poorly in relation its context.

### **S7.1.2 - Buildings: Design and Use**

- There are a number of key design considerations. A building should be fit for its current and projected purpose, use and service provision. It should also be accessible, notably in the context of current disability discrimination legislation and the standards that arise from it. The internal layout, including circulation and spaces for each activity must be ergonomically adequate. The environment for use must also be comfortable for each activity accommodated.
- Externally, the design (as opposed to siting, dealt with above) of the building should respond to its context (character and setting). This should be reflected in how it looks (including in respect of proportions, elevational articulation, detailing and use of materials)
- Materials should reflect the characteristics, including colour and texture of materials, notably including natural ones, already present (*e.g. in stone/ brick walls*) in the green space. If materials do not match those used elsewhere on site, they should have been selected for their compatibility with the setting. However, attention should be given to the degree to which the overall building design, detailing and use of materials creatively respond to vulnerability associated with site and context.
- Of prime importance in assessing a building's contribution to a green space, must be its ability to satisfy a function that is directly relevant to its overall use(s). (*e.g. Blaise Castle Visitor Centre, Hengrove Park Play Building, Canford Park Tennis/ Bowls Buildings*). Café/ refreshments buildings, toilets, sports/ changing buildings may also be integrated to

serve green space users' needs. Otherwise, a building's use may be complementary to, or compatible with green space use(s). (e.g. Blaise Castle House Folk Museum, Ashton Court Mansion's use for conferences and weddings).

- In assessing a potential score, consideration should be given to the possibility of alternative uses for an existing building, or in relation to a new purpose designed building should it prove viable. Similarly, it may be appropriate to consider relocation of the function to more compatible existing/ new building location elsewhere on site.

- Guidance:

Excellent:

- Internally and externally fit for its current and projected purpose, use and service provision, and meets current standards, including in respect of access.
- External design, detailing and use of materials in harmony with green space context and appropriate to character and setting.
- Building function directly relevant to, or complementary to/ compatible with, green space use.

Poor:

- Internally and/or externally not designed for its current purpose, and/ or does not comply with current standards, including in respect of access.
- External design, detailing and use of materials inappropriate to green space context, character and setting.
- Building function irrelevant to, or non complementary to/ incompatible with, green space use.

### S7.2.1 - Buildings: Condition

- The first thing to note is that this assessment of condition is intended to be a 'broad brush' exercise to gain a strategic level view of how much of a factor the condition of this particular element is to the overall quality of the greenspace. It is not expected here to assess with the rigour of either a detailed survey, as would be the case, as part of the Asset Management Plan, or a risk assessment. However, where this work has been recently carried out, the overall outcome should influence the assessors scoring here.
- A building in **excellent** condition will be in a state comparable to that when it was first constructed. It would also have a life expectancy of at least 25 years before any significant refurbishment is likely to be required. There is no equivalent scoring grade within the *Asset Management Plan*, as considerations only tend to apply once the property is no longer regarded as a new building; i.e. typically after the first five years.
- Therefore, a building in **good** condition is likely to require work to address deterioration beyond simple repairs after a period of 5 years. This is described in the *Asset Management Plan* as *Grade A - Good - 'performing as intended and operating efficiently'*.
- A building that is in **moderate** condition will require essential improvement works to address deterioration in the next 3-5 years. This is described in the *Asset Management Plan* as *Grade B - Satisfactory - 'performing as intended but exhibiting minor deterioration'*.
- One in **poor** condition is likely to require these works within the next 3 years to prevent serious deterioration. The *Asset Management Plan* splits this into *Grade C - Poor - 'exhibiting major defects and/ or not operating as intended'*, and *Grade D - Bad - 'life expired and/ or serious risk of imminent failure'*. Where a building is found to be in a serious condition which is reflected in a high health and safety risk assessment, it should be closed and secured immediately.

- Of immediate concern must be a building's structural integrity, wind and weather tightness, conformity with health and safety legislation, and its fitness for purpose, use and service provision.
- The general physical state of a building externally and internally must also be a prime factor. The degree to which a building is weatherproof, or the extent its damage from weathering over a period of time, will provide an important basis for evaluation. Protection from damaging weather (rainwater ingress, wind, etc) must be considered a higher priority than internal decorative order, as the latter cannot be addressed before the former has been effectively remedied.
- Careful consideration must be given, in assessing the condition of each element of the building, to gauge whether deterioration has exceeded a point where remedy can be achieved with routine maintenance. In this respect, metal and timber windows frames that can no longer be brought up to standard with preparation and painting, will require replacement, their poor condition has resulted from substantial, rather than superficial, corrosion or rotting respectively.
- Particular attention should also be applied to the condition of its plant (i.e. electrical wiring, switches, fusing, etc; fire protection and security system; heating; water, including hot water supply; and foul drainage).
- Whilst the maintenance of a building is dealt with below, its maintainability may need to be considered here. Given that health risks will relate to the ease, or otherwise with which maintenance may be performed, assessment must be given to the degree to which condition considerations have come to predominate, to the point where remedy exceeds simple cleaning.

- Guidance:

Excellent:

- Building in optimum, 'as new' structural condition and generally sound. Typically under 5 years old.
- External brickwork and pointing sound.
- Attention limited to routine maintenance.
- Building weatherproof.
- Mechanical and electrical plant is compliant with current standards.
- Free from vandalism.

Good:

- Performing as intended and operating efficiently. (*AMP - Good*)
- Likely to require work, after a 5-year period to address deterioration beyond simple repairs.

Fair:

- Performing as intended but showing minor deterioration. (*AMP - Satisfactory*)
- Essential improvement works likely to be needed in 3-5 years to address deterioration.

Poor:

- Showing major defects and/or not operating as intended (*AMP - Poor*).
- Likely to require work within the next 3 years to prevent serious deterioration.
- Life expired and/or serious risk of imminent failure (*AMP - Bad*).
- Imminent or urgent closure. High health and safety risk.
- Building in serious structural condition and requires substantial reconstruction or removal.

- External brickwork and pointing has deteriorated to the point where reconstruction necessary.
- Action needed exceeds routine maintenance.
- Building has suffered from extensive weathering.
- Mechanical and electrical plant is non-compliant with current standards, and unsafe for use.
- Significant vandalism to structure and building fabric. Boarded up as unsafe.

*Note: AMP - Asset Management Plan*

### S7.3.1 - Buildings: Maintenance

- Monitoring of the standard of maintenance of a building internally and externally is vital to protecting such a valuable investment, and in the interests of avoiding substantial future capital expenditure that would be required to put things right. Inadequate maintenance may well have accelerated deterioration into poor condition, and whilst that may have been considered above, consideration must also be given under this heading.

- Guidance:

Excellent:

- Building in optimum order and the subject of a regular maintenance regime.
- Building weatherproof.
- External paintwork fresh and effectively protecting surfaces against weathering.
- Mechanical and electrical plant, including lighting and hand driers. Evidence of regular routine maintenance (through test certificates).
- Evidence of annual gas safety checks.
- Evidence of regular fire protection checks, including fire extinguisher inspection.
- Security systems, including alarms functional. Locks sound.
- External and internal surfaces clean, and free of damage and graffiti. No litter.

Poor:

- Building in poor order and not the subject of regular maintenance.
- Building not weatherproof.
- External paintwork flaking and faded, and failing to protect surfaces against weathering.
- Mechanical and electrical plant, including lighting and hand driers, has not been maintained up to standard.
- External and internal surfaces dirty, and the subject of damage and graffiti. Significant litter apparent.

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## S8. Toilets

- Form **SUP 8** is to be used for this section.
- This section deals with the assessment of the quality of public toilets that lie within green space, even though their management may be the subject of separate administration. Those which are located in pavilions, where they are not serving a public function are assessed in conjunction with the pavilion rather than dealt with separately here.
- The assessment will involve consideration of a toilet building's structural condition, its general external and internal physical state and the adequacy, particularly in relation to current standards, of its services and plant.

- Support from the Technical Services Manager (Andrew Searle on Tel: 92 23780, at time of writing), should be sought where more specialist assessment is needed. He will be able to advise on how this level of assessment compares with the more rigorous approach through Asset Management Planning, and whether any more focused advice is required from a Structural Engineer, Building Surveyor, Civil Engineer, or Mechanical & Electrical Engineer.

### S8.1.1 - Toilets: Location and Design Context

- Whilst unlikely to be 'pivotal' within a site's overall layout, or even a focal point, an attractively designed building within which toilets are accommodated, should make an extremely positive contribution to a green space and its setting.
- The location of the toilet building should be sensitively integrated in relation to a greenspace's main characteristics, including landform, tree and other planting structure, etc. Typically toilet blocks may be 'absorbed' within a space's planted edge or associated with the site's boundary treatment (*e.g. The Fishponds Park toilet forms part of the boundary enclosure in conjunction with the wall and railings*).
- A building should be fit for its purpose, use and service provision. It should also be accessible, notably in the context of current disability discrimination legislation and the standards that arise from it. A fundamental aspect in considering toilet block location should be accessibility, notably in the context of current disability discrimination legislation. Provision should reflect convenience and ease of access, particularly for wheelchair users, and a building position must therefore be considered in relation to path circulation and access points.
- Whilst important that toilet buildings are integrated within a site's landscape 'structure', rather than obtrusively 'stand alone', they must not be so surrounded by vegetation that passing supervision will not be effective. Arrangements should also be such that anti-social behaviour, including vandalism, cannot take place 'around the back'. (*The now substantially damaged toilets in Canford Park, though close to the main entrance, exemplify this*).
- Existing toilet buildings have, over the years, been typically provided with function rather than aesthetics in mind. However, the sensitive design of a building may reinforce, or contribute to, the character of a green space. (*e.g. Irrespective of the adequacy, or otherwise, of the accommodation within, the toilets at Fishponds Park are complementary to the site's character*). However, inappropriate design, including in respect of scale, form, use of materials, may significantly impair or detract from it (*e.g. Toilets at Canford Park, Sea Walls*).

- Guidance:

Excellent:

- Positive contribution to green space character and setting.
- Sensitively integrated. Aesthetically appropriate. Building sits well in its context.
- Optimum accessibility that meets standards for all users. Logically linked to path network.
- Optimum 'passing supervision' of all 'open' building sides. No hidden space 'around the back'.
- Location not unduly vulnerable to vandalism.

Poor:

- Negative contribution to green space character and setting.
- Obtrusive. Building 'out of place'.
- Inconveniently located and/ or with limited accessibility that fails to meet current standards.

- Limited 'passing supervision' of building location. Building obscures areas vulnerable to anti-social behaviour, including vandalism.

### **S8.1.2 - Toilets: Building Design and Use**

- There are a number of key design considerations. A building should be fit for its current and projected purpose, use and service provision. It should also be accessible, notably in the context of current disability discrimination legislation and the standards that arise from it. The internal layout, including circulation and spaces for each activity must be ergonomically adequate. The environment for use must also be comfortable for each activity accommodated.
- Externally, the design (as opposed to siting, dealt with above) of a building should respond to its context (character and setting). This should be reflected in how it looks (including in respect of proportions, elevational articulation, detailing and use of materials)
- Materials should reflect the characteristics, including colour and texture of materials, notably including natural ones, already present (e.g. in stone/ brick walls) in the green space. If materials do not match those used elsewhere on site, they should have been selected for their compatibility with the setting. However, attention should be given to the degree to which the overall building design, detailing and use of materials creatively respond to vulnerability associated with site and context.
- Of fundamental importance in assessing a toilet building's contribution must be a consideration of how efficiently it performs as a toilet for green space users, in relation to current standards. This may include an assessment of the adequacy of male/ female/ disabled people's provision and whether or not there are any baby changing facilities.
- Where a building that contains toilets, also accommodates other public functions, perhaps as a visitor centre or café, and/or staff functions such as office space, consideration should reflect the overall facility.
- Internal, as well as external, access and circulation must meet current standards, notably in the context of current disability discrimination legislation.

- Guidance:

Excellent:

- Building internally and externally fit for its current and projected purpose, use and service provision, and meets current standards, including in respect of access.
- External design, detailing and use of materials in harmony with green space context and appropriate to character and setting.
- Toilet building provision fully meets all users' needs.
- Adequate amount of provision for male and female users and disabled people. Baby changing facilities.
- Building provision that includes toilets, in conjunction with other uses, including visitor centre, café, etc. fully meets all users' needs.

Poor:

- Building internally and/or externally not designed for its current purpose, and/ or does not comply with current standards, including in respect of access.
- External design, detailing and use of materials inappropriate to green space context, character and setting.
- Toilet building provision inadequate in relation to needs.
- Inadequate amount of provision for male and female users and disabled people. No baby changing facilities.
- Building provision that includes toilets, in conjunction with other uses, including visitor centre, café, etc. fails to meet all users' needs.

### S8.2.1 - Toilets: Condition

- The first thing to note is that this assessment of condition is intended to be a 'broad brush' exercise to gain a strategic level view of how much of a factor the condition of this particular element is to the overall quality of the greenspace. It is not expected here to assess with the rigour of either a detailed survey, as would be the case, as part of the Asset Management Plan, or a risk assessment. However, where this work has been recently carried out, the overall outcome should influence the assessors scoring here.
- A toilet in **excellent** condition will be in a state comparable to that when it was first constructed. It would also have a life expectancy of at least 25 years before any significant refurbishment is likely to be required. There is no equivalent scoring grade within the *Asset Management Plan*, as considerations only tend to apply once the property is no longer regarded as a new building; i.e. typically after the first five years.
- Therefore, a toilet in **good** condition is likely to require work to address deterioration beyond simple repairs after a period of 5 years. This is described in the *Asset Management Plan* as *Grade A - Good - 'performing as intended and operating efficiently'*.
- A toilet that is in **moderate** condition will require essential improvement works to address deterioration in the next 3-5 years. This is described in the *Asset Management Plan* as *Grade B - Satisfactory - 'performing as intended but exhibiting minor deterioration'*.
- One in **poor** condition is likely to require these works within the next 3 years to prevent serious deterioration. The *Asset Management Plan* splits this into *Grade C - Poor - 'exhibiting major defects and/ or not operating as intended'*, and *Grade D - Bad - 'life expired and/or serious risk of imminent failure'*. Where a toilet is found to be in a serious condition which is reflected in a high health and safety risk assessment, it should be closed and secured immediately.
- Of immediate concern must be a building's structural integrity, wind and weather tightness, conformity with health and safety legislation, and its fitness for purpose, use and service provision.
- The general physical state of a building externally and internally must also be a prime factor. The degree to which a building is weatherproof, or the extent its damage from weathering over a period of time, will provide an important basis for evaluation. Protection from damaging weather (rainwater ingress, wind, etc) must be considered a higher priority than internal decorative order, as the latter cannot be addressed before the former has been effectively remedied.
- Careful consideration must be given, in assessing the condition of each element of the building, to gauge whether deterioration has exceeded a point where remedy can be achieved with routine maintenance. In this respect, metal and timber windows frames that can no longer be brought up to standard with preparation and painting, will require replacement, their poor condition has resulted from substantial, rather than superficial, corrosion or rotting respectively.
- Particular attention should also be applied to the condition of its plant (i.e. electrical wiring, switches, fusing, lightning, etc; water supply; water supply, including hot water, and foul drainage).
- Whilst the maintenance of a toilet building is dealt with below, its maintainability may need to be considered here. Given that health risks will relate to the ease, or otherwise with which maintenance may be performed, assessment must be given to the degree to which condition considerations have come to predominate, to the point where remedy exceeds simple cleaning. Condition considerations will apply where cubicle doors, and their locks have been damaged and require replacement. They may also apply where the need for the significant refurbishment of tiled surfaces is evident; i.e. where tiles have cracked, been smashed, come loose, or where extensive re-grouting is required, before effective cleaning can be carried out.

- Guidance:

Excellent:

- Building in optimum, 'as new' structural condition and generally sound. Typically under 5 years old.
- External brickwork and pointing sound.
- Attention limited to routine maintenance.
- Building weatherproof.
- Mechanical and electrical plant is compliant with current standards.
- Free from vandalism.
- Building secure.

Good:

- Performing as intended and operating efficiently. (*AMP - Good*)
- Likely to require work, after a 5-year period to address deterioration beyond simple repairs.

Fair:

- Performing as intended but showing minor deterioration. (*AMP - Satisfactory*)
- Essential improvement works likely to be needed in 3-5 years to address deterioration.

Poor:

- Showing major defects and/or not operating as intended (*AMP - Poor*).
- Likely to require work within the next 3 years to prevent serious deterioration.
- Life expired and/or serious risk of imminent failure (*AMP - Bad*).
- Imminent or urgent closure. High health and safety risk.
- Building in serious structural condition and requires substantial reconstruction or removal.
- External brickwork and pointing has deteriorated to the point where reconstruction necessary.
- Action needed exceeds routine maintenance.
- Building has suffered from extensive weathering.
- Mechanical and electrical plant is non-compliant with current standards, and unsafe for use.
- Significant vandalism to structure and building fabric. Boarded up as unsafe.

*Note: AMP - Asset Management Plan*

### **S8.3.1 - Toilets: Maintenance**

- Monitoring of the standard of maintenance of a building internally and externally is vital to protecting such a valuable investment, and in the interests of avoiding substantial future capital expenditure that would be required to put things right. Inadequate maintenance may well have accelerated deterioration into poor condition, and whilst that may have been considered above, consideration must also be given under this heading.
- Cleanliness must, at all times be a feature of maintenance acceptability. This should involve an inspection of all wcs, urinals, wash basins, etc, and a check that all fixtures, including hand driers, are intact and usable. Where such equipment is not provided, soap, towels, toilet roll holders and toilet paper must be readily available. All external and internal surfaces should be clean and free from damage and graffiti. There should be no litter.
- Guidance:

Excellent:

- In optimum order and the subject of a regular maintenance regime.
- Weatherproof.
- External paintwork fresh and effectively protecting surfaces against weathering.
- Mechanical and electrical plant, including lighting, is the subject of evidence of regular routine maintenance (through electrical test certificates).
- Evidence of annual gas safety checks.
- Evidence of date of last fire protection check, including inspection of fire extinguishers and alarms. Clearly signed escape routes from hazards.
- Security systems, including alarms functional. Locks sound.
- Externally and internally clean and free of damage, litter and graffiti.
- WCs and wash basins clean. Soap, towels and toilet paper available.

Poor:

- In poor order and not the subject of regular maintenance.
- Not weatherproof.
- External paintwork flaking and faded, and failing to protect surfaces against weathering.
- Mechanical and electrical plant, including lighting, has not been maintained up to standard. No evidence of test certificates.
- No evidence of recent fire protection check, including inspection of fire extinguishers and alarms. Escape routes not clearly signed and blocked or hazardous.
- Security systems, including alarms inoperative. Locks have failed or are vulnerable.
- Externally and internally dirty and the subject of damage, litter and graffiti.
- WCs blocked or soiled, and wash basins dirty. No soap, towels and toilet paper.

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## S9. Sports Pitches, Seasonal (Grass)

- Form **SUP 9** is to be used for this section.
- In considering the quality of green space, the contribution of all its component uses must be taken into account, and in this respect, provision for formal seasonal sports played on grass pitches will be particularly significant. Across the city, sports include football, rugby, cricket that are played in parks and recreation grounds, in schools grounds and within private sector facilities. Hockey has now substantially moved onto synthetic turf pitches (STPs) covered in **S11. Sports Surfaces, All Year (Hard/ Artificial)**. **S10 Bowling Greens and Infrastructure** deals with Bowling greens.

### S9.1.1 - Sports Pitches, Seasonal: Location and Integration

- The degree to which pitches have been integrated within a greenspace will have a strong bearing on the degree to which their contribution is a positive one. Much of this will be judged on how landform has been handled in relation to reasonably level graded area required for each sport. A crude use of terracing (e.g. Netham Park) is likely to emphasise an artificial treatment that offers little by way of integration, although ground modeling that sympathetically absorbs playing pitches may still address sports use in an honest way, perhaps through providing banks for informal spectator use. The bold use of topography may also enable a dramatic pavilion site.
- Consideration should be given to how pitches are orientated for optimum player comfort and visibility during the winter season as the sun moves whilst play is in progress. In this respect optimum pitch alignment is east-west.
- The strong use of vegetation, particularly trees, is able to bring spatial structure to a playing field's setting and bond it with that of the green space as a whole. The provision of a good 'structure' of trees in this way will reduce pitch exposure to the elements and

improve player/ spectator comfort. It may also serve to neutralise advantage arising from the prevailing wind direction.

- In assessing the appropriateness of the location of pitches within sites, attention must be given to how they lie in relation to surrounding land uses, notably in respect of dwellings, or other uses within the park. Whilst there is no firm indication of minimum distance between pitches and adjacent property, judgement must reflect the likely tension to residents arising from nuisance associated with the activity or from anti-social player behaviour. The assessor may be aware of any recent history of complaints. In the case of cricket the boundary must fall short of any other green space activity, to minimise risk in respect of injury by ball. Another factor in gauging the compatibility of pitches with their surroundings will involve the consideration of how close they may be to highways, as this to may involve some assessment of safety risk.

- Guidance:

Excellent:

- Pitch(es) in optimum location within park.
- Pitch(es) well integrated/ 'absorbed' within setting.
- Optimum pitch orientation in relation to sun.
- Sheltered location conducive to high playability and user comfort.
- Compatible with and no nuisance to adjacent residents.
- Compatible/ safe in relation to other greenspace activities.
- Changing facilities within FA distance requirements.

Poor:

- Pitch(es) in inappropriate location within park.
- Pitch(es) intrusive to setting.
- Pitch(es) inappropriately orientated in relation to sun.
- Exposure to poor weather associated with low playability and user discomfort.
- Incompatible with and resulting in significant nuisance to adjacent residents.
- Incompatible/ unsafe in relation to other greenspace activities.
- Changing facilities do not comply with FA distance requirements.

### **S9.1.2 - Sports Pitches, Seasonal: Use**

- A pitch should be suitable for its purpose. It should also be able to sustain being used for two full competitive games per week, in line with Sport England's criteria for viable use without loss of condition to a point that it falls below league standards. Scoring of this must be considered in relation to **S9.2.1 - Sports Pitches, Seasonal: Condition** and **S9.3.1 - Sports Pitches, Seasonal: Maintenance** below.
- Margins, without obstruction, around the entire edge of a pitch must also be sufficient in relation to standards laid down by the National Governing Body (NGB) for the sport(s) applicable to each location. An over-run area is vital to player safety, and its edge may be marked by railings, to hold back spectators, as required by the requirements of certain leagues.

- Guidance:

Excellent:

- Pitch(es) utilized to maximum carrying capacity.
- Pitch(es) size, including safety margins, meet national governing body (NGB) /Sport England standards.

Poor:

- Pitch(es) underexploited in relation to maximum carrying capacity.

- Pitch(es) size, including safety margins, below national governing body (NGB) /Sport England standards.

### S9.2.1 - Sports Pitches, Seasonal: Condition

- For a pitch to be fit for its purpose, it must be level and even in all dimensions, within the tolerances laid down by each sport's national governing body. Surface consistency, avoiding localized depressions and hollows, is vital to quality in play as it is to the reduction of player injury.
- The principal reason given by league officials for matches being postponed is pitch waterlogging. Scoring in relation to the degree to which poor pitch drainage applies on a site may be dependent upon the assessor's own knowledge of how a pitch performs in wet weather over a period of time. As an indicator, a good pitch drainage system will enable surface water apparent after heavy rain to have fully drained away within four hours. The presence or absence of a subsurface drainage system, whether piped (French drainage), together with surface drainage systems, including sand banding or sand slitting, may be confirmed by records. However, its effectiveness can only be borne out by observation of its performance under extremely wet conditions. Consideration must also be given to presence of any significant compaction that may at least compromise the effectiveness of drainage.
- Good soil texture must also be important to a playable grass surface, in sustaining a consistent quality of growth across the sward whilst remaining permeable to rainwater. This is particularly important in Bristol where so many sites are associated with underlying heavy shrinkable clay conditions, which tend to hold surface water if artificial measures are not sufficiently effective in conducting it away. Related to this is the need for topsoil to be of a depth sufficient for healthy grass establishment.
- An even grass coverage throughout the playing season must also be a feature of high quality pitch provision. In this respect, careful consideration should be given to areas of the pitch which are most vulnerable to wear, notably both goal mouths and within the centre circle. To this end, a key factor in the establishment of a consistent sward must be a grass mix of species including those which are durable that are able to sustain season long play.

- Guidance:

Excellent:

- Pitch(es) fit for purpose.
- Pitch(es) flat and level with no settlement/ subsidence.
- Fully effective pitch surface drainage system.
- Presence of fully operational subsurface drainage system.
- No compaction to impede free drainage.
- Soil texture free draining and conducive to consistent grass sward.
- Topsoil of depth sufficient for healthy grass establishment.
- Even grass coverage. No excessive wear in goalmouths/ within centre circle.
- Hard wearing grass mix.

Poor:

- Pitch(es) unfit for purpose
- Pitch(es) undulating with localised hollows and evidence of settlement/ subsidence.
- Pitch(es) poorly drained, holding water for over four hours following heavy rainfall.
- No subsurface drainage system.
- Visible compaction resulting in substantially impeded drainage.
- Soil texture high in clay content and not conducive to free drainage.
- Topsoil of insufficient depth for healthy grass establishment.
- Uneven grass coverage with sward 30% or less throughout. No grass cover in goalmouths/ within centre circle; at worst, a 'mud bath'.

- Grass mix unsuited to purpose and contributing significantly to high level of wear.

### S9.3.1 - Sports Pitches, Seasonal: Maintenance

- Guidance:

Excellent:

- Even surface throughout including in areas of intense use.
- Regular spiking and aeration that is apparent with a free draining surface.
- Regular rolling has ameliorated frost heave and stimulated denser grass growth.
- Harrowing has eradicated divots and clods.
- Clear of weeds, moss and algae.
- Sward healthy, fertile and free from pests and diseases.
- Sward coverage consistent and no less than 90% in goalmouths/ within centre circle.
- No thatch build up due to regular scarification.
- Grass cut to optimum length, including for line markings.
- All pitch markings to correct dimensions, visible from both directions, square and straight.
- Posts upright, soundly installed and safe. Well painted. Sockets covered when posts removed.
- No dog fouling apparent. No litter or glass, debris or stones and excess weeds.
- No damage to surface from illegal vehicle intrusion.
- Sight screens and score boards clean and well painted.
- Irrigation system in use. Sward kept appropriately moist during dry spells.
- Cricket sight screens and score boards clean and paintwork in good order. Cricket squares free of worm casts.
- No thatch build up requiring scarification.

Poor:

- Uneven surface notably in areas of intense use.
- Spiking and aeration not recently performed and surface holding water.
- Rolling not recently performed. Frost heave apparent. Denser grass growth not stimulated.
- Divots and clods throughout.
- High weed, moss and algae content.
- Sward unhealthy and in need of fertilization. Pests and diseases apparent.
- Sward coverage inconsistent and less than 30% in goalmouths/ within centre circle.
- Thatch build up indicating lack of scarification.
- Grass length inappropriate, and unsuitable for clear line markings.
- Pitch markings incorrectly dimensioned, not clearly visible from both directions, and neither square or straight.
- Posts not upright or soundly installed and are unsafe. Posts inadequately painted. Sockets left uncovered when posts removed.
- Significant dog fouling apparent. Presence of litter or glass, debris, stones and excess weeds.
- Significant damage to surface from illegal vehicle intrusion. Scorching from burned out cars.
- Cricket sight screens and score boards dirty and in need of painting. Wormcast within cricket squares.
- No irrigation system and not regularly manually watered. Sward suffering from drought.

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## S10. Sports Bowling Greens and Infrastructure

- Form **SUP 10** is to be used for this section.

Green and Surrounds:

- In considering the quality of green space, the collective contribution of all component uses including Bowling Greens and their associated infrastructure, will be particularly significant.

Boundary of Bowling Green(s):

- This should be considered in relation to **Generic - G4. Boundaries, Internal.**

Building(s) associated with Bowling Greens:

- This should be considered in relation to **Supplementary - S12. Sports Pavilions.**

### S10.1.1 - Sports Bowling Greens: Location and Integration

Green and Surrounds:

- The degree to which a Bowling Green along with its associated infrastructure, including buildings and enclosure, has been integrated within a greenspace will have a strong bearing on the degree to which their contribution is a positive one. Much of this will be judged on how the facility 'sits' within its context, notable in respect of landform and how it is set spatially within the greater landscape. The crude use of terracing and enclosure by coniferous hedge (*e.g. Willmott Park*) is likely to emphasise an artificial treatment that offers little by way of integration.
- The setting of Bowling Greens is important to their attractiveness. They may be enclosed by hedges. Nearby trees may also soften as long as they are not so close as to impede wind flow that is conducive to a disease free environment; the risk of root damage to greens must also be eliminated.
- In assessing the appropriateness of the location of a Bowling Green within a site attention must be given to how vulnerable it may be to intrusion and vandalism. A site that is remote, or 'tucked away' from regular public activity will be more at risk than one that is overlooked.
- In considering use of the green space as a whole, consideration should be given to how well located the Bowling Green is in relation to general access into a site. A negative contribution may be apparent if the facility 'pinches' an access corridor into a green space, or breaks green space continuity. (*e.g. Both these considerations apply at Willmott Park*)
- Guidance:

Excellent:

- Green(s) in optimum location within park.
- Green(s) well integrated/ 'absorbed' within setting.
- Sheltered location conducive to user comfort.
- Facility overlooked or adjacent to regular public activity.
- Facility does not block green space access and does not break landscape continuity.
- Green not unduly vulnerable to vandalism.

Poor:

- Green(s) in inappropriate location within park.

- Green(s) intrusive to setting.
- Exposure to poor weather associated with user discomfort.
- Facility not overlooked or adjacent to regular public activity.
- Facility blocks constricts main green space access and breaks landscape continuity.
- Green extremely vulnerable to vandalism.

Boundary of Bowling Green(s)/ Building(s):

- This should be considered in relation to **Generic - G4. Boundaries, Internal.**

Buildings associated with Bowling Greens:

- This should be considered in relation to **Supplementary - S12. Sports Pavilions.**

### **S10.1.2 - Sports Bowling Greens: Design and Use**

Green and Surrounds:

- A Bowling Green should be suitable for its purpose. It should also be able to sustain the level of use expected in relation to national governing body (NGB) guidelines and in relation to projected club fixtures.
- Ditch and surrounds to Bowling Green to standard laid down by national governing body for Outdoor Bowling.

- Guidance:

Excellent:

- Green(s) fully utilized in relation to NGB standards/ club capacity.
- Green(s) size, including ditch and surrounds meet NGB standards.

Poor:

- Green(s) underutilized in relation to NGB standards/ club capacity.
- Green(s) size, including ditch and surrounds do not meet NGB standards.

Boundary of Bowling Green(s)/ Building(s):

- This should be considered in relation to **Generic - G4. Boundaries, Internal.**

Buildings associated with Bowling Greens:

- This should be considered in relation to **Supplementary - S12. Sports Pavilions.**

### **S10.2.1 - Sports Bowling Greens: Condition**

Green and Surrounds:

- For a Bowling Green to be fit for its purpose, it must be level and even in all dimensions, within the tolerances laid down by the national governing body. Given the precision involved with this sport, the grass surface must be consistently true throughout, without depressions or hollows however slight that would result in unprompted deviation of the bowl.
- A fully effective drainage system is a fundamental requirement for a bowling green that can be relied upon throughout the playing season. Scoring in relation to the degree to which poor green drainage applies may be dependent upon the assessor's own knowledge of how a green performs in wet weather over a period of time. A good green drainage system will enable surface water apparent after heavy rain to be effectively

drained. The presence of a subsurface drainage system may be confirmed by records. Consideration must also be given to the presence of any significant compaction that will compromise the effectiveness of drainage.

- Good growing media will be important to a playable grass surface, in sustaining a consistent quality of growth across the sward whilst remaining permeable to rainwater. Media must also be of a depth sufficient depth and texture for the healthy establishment of fine grass suitable for Bowls use.
- An even grass coverage throughout the playing season must also be a feature of high quality provision. In this respect, careful consideration should be given to any areas of the green which are most vulnerable to wear. To this end, a key factor in the establishment of a consistent sward must be a grass mix of species including those which are durable and of a fine texture that are able to sustain season long play.
- The periphery to the green, which incorporate ditch and bank surrounds in conjunction with timber, plastic or concrete channels, must be considered integrally.
- Guidance:

Excellent:

- Green(s) fit for purpose.
- Green(s) flat and level with no settlement/ subsidence.
- Fully effective green surface drainage system.
- Presence of fully operational subsurface drainage system.
- Bowling Green ditch and surrounds free draining, straight and compliant with NGB standards.
- No compaction to impede free drainage.
- Growing media free draining and conducive to consistent grass sward.
- Irrigation fully effective.
- Growing media of depth and texture sufficient for healthy grass establishment.
- Even grass coverage. No localized wear.
- Appropriate grass mix.
- Score boards safe and sound.
- Irrigation system/ manual watering kit in fully functional condition.

Poor:

- Green(s) unfit for purpose
- Green(s) undulating with localised hollows and evidence of settlement/ subsidence.
- Green(s) poorly drained, holding water for over four hours following heavy rainfall.
- No subsurface drainage system.
- Bowling Green ditch and surrounds drainage impeded, not straight and falls short of NGB standards.
- Visible compaction resulting in substantially impeded drainage.
- Growing media texture high in clay content and not conducive to free drainage.
- Irrigation ineffective.
- Growing media of insufficient depth and texture for healthy grass establishment.
- Uneven grass coverage. Patches of wear.
- Inappropriate grass mix.
- Score boards not safe and sound.
- Irrigation system/ manual watering kit out of order.

Boundary of Bowling Green(s):

- This should be considered in relation to **Generic - G4. Boundaries, Internal.**

Buildings associated with Bowling Greens:

- This should be considered in relation to **Supplementary - S12. Sports Pavilions.**

### S10.3.1 - Sports Bowling Greens: Maintenance

- Guidance:

Excellent:

- Even surface throughout.
- Regular spiking and aeration evident from free draining surface.
- Regular rolling has ameliorated frost heave and stimulated denser grass growth.
- Clear of weeds, moss, algae and worm casts.
- Sward healthy, fertile and free from pests and diseases. Well fed indicated by good dark green colour.
- Sward coverage consistent.
- Grass cut to optimum length for bowls, and free of ribbing. No thatch build up.
- No loose surface debris able to disturb bowl roll.
- Scarify to prevent or remove thatch.
- Facility area free from dog fouling, litter, glass, debris, stones, etc.
- Score boards clean and well painted.
- Irrigation system in use. Sward kept appropriately moist during dry spells.

Poor:

- Uneven surface.
- Spiking and aeration not recently performed and surface holding water.
- Rolling not recently performed. Frost heave apparent. Denser grass growth not stimulated.
- High weed, moss and algae content.
- Sward unhealthy and in need of fertilization. Pests and diseases apparent.
- Sward coverage inconsistent.
- Grass length inappropriate for bowls. Thatch buildup evident and due to a lack of scarification.
- Loose surface debris that will impede bowl roll.
- Dog fouling, litter, glass, debris, stones, etc evident within facility area.
- Score boards dirty and in need of painting.
- No irrigation system and not regularly manually watered. Sward suffering from drought.

Boundary of Bowling Green(s)/ Building(s):

- This should be considered in relation to **Generic - G4. Boundaries, Internal.**

Building(s) associated with Bowling Greens:

- This should be considered in relation to **Supplementary - S12. Sports Pavilions.**

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## S11. Sports Surfaces, All Year (Hard/ Artificial)

### S11.1.1 - Sports Surfaces, All Year (Hard/ Artificial): Location and Integration

- Form **SUP 11** is to be used for this section.
- The degree to which hard and artificial sports surfaces, their enclosure with fencing/ railings and, where appropriate, floodlighting, have been integrated within a greenspace, will have a strong bearing on the degree to which their contribution is a positive and harmonious one. Much of this will be judged on how a facility 'sits' in the landform, within the landscape space in which it is set, or in relation to any buildings.

- Consideration should be given to how a facility is orientated for optimum player comfort and visibility during the winter season as the sun moves whilst play is in progress. In this respect optimum pitch alignment is east-west.
- Such facilities tend not to be associated with exposed sites, but where they are, the strong use of vegetation, particularly trees, is able to bring spatial structure to a facility's setting, and bond it with that of the green space as a whole. The provision of a good 'structure' of trees in this way will reduce a facility's exposure to the elements and improve player/ spectator comfort. It may also serve to neutralise advantage arising from the prevailing wind direction.
- In assessing the appropriateness of the location of a facility within a green space, attention must be given to how they lie in relation to surrounding land uses, notably in respect of dwellings, or other uses within the park. Whilst there is no firm indication of minimum distance between pitches and adjacent property, judgement must reflect the likely tension to residents arising from light spillage from floodlighting, nuisance associated with the activity or from anti-social player behaviour. The assessor may be aware of any recent history of complaints.
- Changing facilities are covered in **S12 Sports Pavilions**. They should be in close proximity to the facility and may be associated with complementary built sports provision, such as a sports hall and swimming pool.
- Given the high capital investment of synthetic pitch installation, their integration within a site that has a frequent and conspicuous management presence is increasingly important given their vulnerability to vandalism.

- Guidance:

Excellent:

- Facility in optimum location within park.
- Facility well integrated/ 'absorbed' within setting.
- Optimum facility orientation in relation to sun.
- Sheltered location conducive to high playability and user comfort.
- Compatible with and no nuisance to adjacent residents.
- Compatible/ safe in relation to other greenspace activities.
- Appropriate changing facilities in close proximity.
- Close association with complementary sports facilities.

Poor:

- Facility in inappropriate location within park.
- Facility intrusive within setting.
- Facility inappropriately orientated in relation to sun.
- Exposure to poor weather associated with low playability and user discomfort.
- Incompatible with and resulting in significant nuisance to adjacent residents.
- Incompatible/ unsafe in relation to other greenspace activities.
- No changing facilities in close proximity.
- Not associated with complementary sports facilities.

### **S11.1.2 - Sports Surfaces, All Year (Hard/ Artificial): Use**

- All weather pitches should be suitable for their purpose.
- A multi-use games area (MUGA) should, in particular, be able to sustain use to the maximum carrying capacity associated with the specification of its surface. The need to maximise play arises from the need to secure a return on such a high investment, and exploit its use for a whole range of sports.

- Scoring of use capacity for use should be considered in relation to **S9.2.1 - Sports Pitches, Seasonal: Condition** and **S9.3.1 - Sports Pitches, Seasonal: Maintenance** below.
- Margins, without obstruction, around the entire edge of the actual playing surface must also be sufficient in relation to standards laid down by the National Governing Body (NGB) for the sport(s) marked for play in each location.
- Guidance:
 

Excellent:

  - Pitch(es) utilized to maximum carrying capacity.
  - Pitch(es) size, including safety margins, meet national governing body (NGB) /Sport England standards.

Poor:

  - Pitch(es) underexploited in relation to maximum carrying capacity.
  - Pitch(es) size, including safety margins, below national governing body (NGB) /Sport England standards.

### **S11.2.1 - Sports Surfaces, All Year (Hard/ Artificial): Condition**

- The surface condition of an all weather pitch, whether hard or artificial, must, at all times, be fit for its purpose across the entire playing area, particularly in respect of player safety.
- Traction must be consistent throughout, and the surface must be level and even, without any localized depressions and hollows. Installation should have been within the tolerances laid down by each sport's national governing body, and in the case of synthetic surfaces, in compliance with manufacturer's own specification and performance standard.
- All weather pitches must by their purpose be playable throughout the year irrespective of seasonal conditions. Hard surfaces must fall appropriately to drain, and be free from depressions where water may collect. Drainage gullies must be clean and free of debris which might obstruct flow. Synthetic pitches must have their own integral drainage system appropriate to the type of surface installed that absorbs rainfall as it falls and immediately conducts it away.
- In the case of synthetic turf pitches, performance must also be assessed in respect of how a particular surface performs in relation to its sport use, including ball bounce.
- Where any significant damage occurs to synthetic turf pitches, prompt remedy will be vital to prevent vandalism or the effects of weather penetration including damage by frost action.
- Guidance:
 

Excellent:

  - Pitch(es) fit for purpose.
  - Appropriate depth of synthetic turf carpet pile.
  - Pitch(es) flat and level with no settlement/ subsidence.
  - Fully effective pitch drainage system.
  - Surface laid within tolerances laid down by each sport's national governing body
  - Surface compliant with manufacturer's own specification and performance standard.
  - No vandalism.
  - No tears in, or disintegration of synthetic turf carpet.
  - Hard surface has good traction and is free from surface spalling.

Poor:

- Pitch(es) unfit for purpose.
- Depth of synthetic turf carpet pile inadequate in relation to use.
- Pitch(es) undulating with localised hollows and evidence of settlement/ subsidence.
- Drainage system ineffective.
- Surface not within tolerances laid down by each sport's national governing body,
- Surface not compliant with manufacturer's own specification and performance standard.
- Vandalism unaddressed and surface particularly vulnerable to further damage.
- Synthetic turf carpet torn and or disintegrating.
- Hard surface smooth and slippery. Worn surface. Spalling due to age and wear.

### S11.3.1 - Sports Surfaces, All Year (Hard/ Artificial): Maintenance

- Guidance:

Excellent:

- Even surface throughout including in areas of intense use. No areas of concentrated wear.
- Sand filled synthetic surface kept topped up with evenly brushed in sand.
- Surface free from slippery weed, algae, etc encroachment. All pitch markings to correct dimensions, clearly visible, square and straight.
- Surface swept clean and free from litter, leaves, glass, debris, etc.
- No dog or bird fouling apparent.
- Posts, netball rings, etc soundly installed and safe. Nets intact.
- All metalwork, railings/ fencing, posts, movable goals, etc well painted.
- No damage arising from unofficial use. No vandalism.

Poor:

- Uneven surface notably in areas of intense use. Areas of concentrated wear.
- Sand filled synthetic surface not topped up with sand or sand unevenly brushed in.
- Surface has slippery weed, algae, etc encroachment.
- Surface not swept and covered in litter, leaves, glass, debris, etc.
- Pitch markings incorrectly dimensioned, not clearly visible, and neither square or straight.
- Posts, netball rings, etc not soundly installed and unsafe. Nets damaged.
- All metalwork, railings/ fencing, posts, movable goals, etc inadequately painted.
- Significant dog and bird fouling apparent.
- Damage arising from unofficial use. Vandalism.

## S12. Sports Pavilions/ Changing Rooms

- Form **SUP 12** is to be used for this section.
- This section deals with the assessment of the quality of sports pavilions that lie within green space. A pavilion may cater for a single sport, such as cricket, or a range of sports. It may function seasonally or throughout the year. The building may also accommodate a number of complementary functions, including toilets, changing rooms, booking facilities and staff related uses.
- The assessment will involve consideration of a building's structural condition, its general external and internal physical state and the adequacy, particularly in relation to current standards, of its services and plant.
- Support from the Technical Services Manager (Andrew Searle on Tel: 92 23780, at time of writing), should be sought where more specialist assessment is needed. He will be able to advise on how this level of assessment compares with the more rigorous

approach through Asset Management Planning, and whether any more focused advice is required from a Structural Engineer, Building Surveyor, Civil Engineer, or Mechanical & Electrical Engineer.

### **S12.1.1 - Sports Pavilions/ Changing Rooms: Location and Design Context**

- Through its location and design, a building can make an extremely positive contribution to a green space and its setting. At best it may be a focal point within a site's overall layout. (*This is certainly the case with the large pavilion at Bristol University's sports complex at Coombe Dingle*). In occupying a key focal position within the landscape, with a 'commanding' view over pitches, a building should draw full effect from a site's topography in conjunction with its setting and character. It may also sit at the edge of a space within which playing fields are set. In each case, a building should be considered for how well it sits within its context, particularly in relation to landform considerations, or in respect of its spatial contribution, perhaps as a focus within a landscape space, or as a feature on the edge of it.
- The sensitive design of buildings may reinforce, or contribute to, the character of a greenspace. (*e.g. Again, Bristol University's sports pavilion at Coombe Dingle*). However, inappropriate design, including in respect of scale, form, use of materials, may significantly impair or detract from it.
- A fundamental aspect in considering buildings' location should be accessibility, notably in the context of current disability legislation. Provision should reflect convenience and ease of access, particularly for wheelchair users, and the position of a building must therefore be considered in relation to path circulation and access points.
- Whilst important that buildings are integrated within a site's landscape 'structure', rather than obtrusively 'stand alone', they must not be so surrounded by vegetation that passing supervision will not be effective. Arrangements should also be such that anti-social behaviour, including vandalism, cannot take place 'around the back'.
- Existing buildings have, over the years, been typically provided with function rather than aesthetics in mind. Sensitive design may reinforce, or contribute to, the character of a green space, whereas, inappropriate design, including in respect of scale, form, use of materials, may significantly impair or detract from it.
- Guidance:
  - Excellent:
    - Positive contribution as focus. Design contributes positively to character of site and setting. Sensitive integration. Aesthetically appropriate. Building sits well in its context.
    - Location optimum for pavilion use and in relation to green space within which set.
    - Location appropriate to function, including accessibility to users and views over sports activity.
    - Optimum location for use and access that meets standards for all users. Logically linked to path network.
    - Optimum 'passing supervision' of all 'open' building sides. No hidden space 'around the back'. Not unduly vulnerable to vandalism.
    - Building sits well in its context.
  - Poor:
    - Negative contribution to green space character and setting. Insensitive design and poor location detract from, or significantly impairs, character of site and setting. Obtrusive. Building 'out of place'.
    - Location poor or inconvenient in relation to building use and in relation to green space in which set.

- Location inappropriate to function. Remote for users. Limited views only of sports activity.
- Location unsuited to effective use and access. Limited accessibility that fails to meet current standards.
- Limited 'passing supervision' of building location. Building obscures areas vulnerable to anti-social behaviour, including vandalism.
- Building sits poorly in relation its context.

### **S12.1.2 - Sports Pavilions/ Changing Rooms: Design and Use**

- There are a number of key design considerations. A building should be fit for its purpose. Changing facilities must be adequate, including in respect of size standards, to meet the needs of all users (male/ female/ disabled people/ officials). It should also be accessible, internally and externally, notably in the context of current disability discrimination legislation and standards that arise from it. The internal layout, including circulation and spaces for each activity must be ergonomically adequate. The environment for use must also be comfortable for each activity accommodated. Where a building also contains other public functions, perhaps a visitor centre or café, and/or staff functions such as office space, consideration should reflect the overall facility.
- Externally, the design (as opposed to siting, dealt with above) of the building should respond to its context (character and setting). This should be reflected in how it looks (including in respect of proportions, elevational articulation, detailing and use of materials).
- Materials should reflect the characteristics, including colour and texture of materials, notably including natural ones, already present (e.g. in stone/ brick walls) in the green space. If materials do not match those used elsewhere on site, they should have been selected for their compatibility with the setting. However, attention should be given to the degree to which the overall building design, detailing and use of materials creatively respond to vulnerability associated with site and context.
- In assessing a potential score, consideration should be given to the appropriateness of a new building should it prove viable and relevant in relation to projected future sports use.

- Guidance:

Excellent:

- Building internally and externally fit for its current and projected purpose, use and service provision, and meets current standards, including in respect of access.
- Building function directly relevant to, or complementary to/ compatible with, green space use.
- External design, detailing and use of materials in harmony with green space context and appropriate to character and setting.
- Building and each separate aspect of its provision fully meets all users' needs.
- Adequate amount of provision for male and female users and disabled people. Baby changing facilities.

Poor:

- Building internally and/or externally not designed for its current purpose, and/ or does not comply with current standards, including in respect of access.
- Building function irrelevant to, or fails to be complementary to/ compatible with, green space use.
- Internal and external building design unsuited to its current purpose, and fails to comply with current standards, including in respect of access.
- External design, detailing and use of materials inappropriate to green space context, character and setting.
- Building and each separate aspect of its provision fails to meet all users' needs.

### S12.2.1 - Sports Pavilions/ Changing Rooms: Condition

- The first thing to note is that this assessment of condition is intended to be a 'broad brush' exercise to gain a strategic level view of how much of a factor the condition of this particular element is to the overall quality of the greenspace. It is not expected here to assess with the rigour of either a detailed survey, as would be the case, as part of the Asset Management Plan, or a risk assessment. However, where this work has been recently carried out, the overall outcome should influence the assessors scoring here.
- A building in **excellent** condition will be in a state comparable to that when it was first constructed. It would also have a life expectancy of at least 25 years before any significant refurbishment is likely to be required. There is no equivalent scoring grade within the *Asset Management Plan*, as considerations only tend to apply once the property is no longer regarded as a new building; i.e. typically after the first five years.
- Therefore, a building in **good** condition is likely to require work to address deterioration beyond simple repairs after a period of 5 years. This is described in the *Asset Management Plan* as *Grade A - Good - 'performing as intended and operating efficiently'*.
- A building that is in **moderate** condition will require essential improvement works to address deterioration in the next 3-5 years. This is described in the *Asset Management Plan* as *Grade B - Satisfactory - 'performing as intended but exhibiting minor deterioration'*.
- One in **poor** condition is likely to require these works within the next 3 years to prevent serious deterioration. The *Asset Management Plan* splits this into *Grade C - Poor 'exhibiting major defects and/ or not operating as intended'*, and *Grade D - Bad - 'life expired and/or serious risk of imminent failure'*. Where a building is found to be in a serious condition, one that is reflected in a high health and safety risk assessment, it should be closed and secured immediately.
- Of immediate concern must be a building's structural integrity, wind and weather tightness, conformity with health and safety legislation, and its fitness for purpose, use and service provision.
- The general physical state of a building externally and internally must also be a prime factor. The degree to which a building is weatherproof, or the extent its damage from weathering over a period of time, will provide an important basis for evaluation. Protection from damaging weather (rainwater ingress, wind, etc) must be considered a higher priority than internal decorative order, as the latter cannot be addressed before the former has been effectively remedied.
- Careful consideration must be given, in assessing the condition of each element of the building, to gauge whether deterioration has exceeded a point where remedy can be achieved with routine maintenance. In this respect, metal and timber windows frames that can no longer be brought up to standard with preparation and painting, will require replacement, their poor condition has resulted from substantial, rather than superficial, corrosion or rotting respectively.
- Particular attention should also be applied to the condition of its plant (i.e. electrical wiring, switches, fusing, etc; heating; water supply, including hot water; foul drainage).
- Whilst the maintenance of a building is dealt with below, its maintainability may need to be considered here. Given that health risks will relate to the ease, or otherwise with which maintenance may be performed, assessment must be given to the degree to which condition considerations have come to predominate, to the point where remedy exceeds simple cleaning. Condition considerations will apply where toilet cubicle doors, and their locks have been damaged and require replacement. They may also apply where the need for the significant refurbishment of tiled surfaces is evident; i.e. where tiles have cracked, been smashed, come loose, or where extensive re-grouting is required, before effective cleaning can be carried out.

- Guidance:

Excellent:

- Building in optimum, 'as new' structural condition and generally sound. Typically under 5 years old.
- External brickwork and pointing sound.
- Attention limited to routine maintenance.
- Building weatherproof.
- Mechanical and electrical plant is compliant with current standards.
- Free from vandalism.

Good:

- Performing as intended and operating efficiently. (*AMP - Good*)
- Likely to require work, after a 5-year period to address deterioration beyond simple repairs.

Fair:

- Performing as intended but showing minor deterioration. (*AMP - Satisfactory*)
- Essential improvement works likely to be needed in 3-5 years to address deterioration.

Poor:

- Showing major defects and/or not operating as intended (*AMP - Poor*).
- Likely to require work within the next 3 years to prevent serious deterioration.
- Life expired and/ or serious risk of imminent failure (*AMP - Bad*).
- Imminent or urgent closure. High health and safety risk.
- Building in serious structural condition and requires substantial reconstruction or removal.
- External brickwork and pointing has deteriorated to the point where reconstruction necessary.
- Action needed exceeds routine maintenance.
- Building has suffered from extensive weathering.
- Mechanical and electrical plant is non-compliant with current standards, and unsafe for use.
- Significant vandalism to structure and building fabric. Boarded up as unsafe.

*Note: AMP - Asset Management Plan*

### **S12.3.1 - Sports Pavilions/ Changing Rooms: Maintenance**

- Monitoring of the standard of maintenance of a building internally and externally is vital to protecting such a valuable investment, and in the interests of avoiding substantial future capital expenditure that would be required to put things right.
- Inadequate maintenance may well have accelerated deterioration into poor condition, and whilst that may have been considered above, consideration must also be given under this heading.
- Guidance:

Excellent:

- In optimum order and the subject of a regular maintenance regime.
- Weatherproof.
- External paintwork fresh and effectively protecting surfaces against weathering.

- Mechanical and electrical plant, including lighting, is the subject of evidence of regular routine maintenance (through electrical test certificates).
- Evidence of annual gas safety checks.
- Evidence of date of last fire protection check, including inspection of fire extinguishers and alarms. Clearly signed escape routes from hazards.
- Security systems, including alarms functional. Locks sound.
- Externally and internally clean and free of damage, litter and graffiti.

Poor:

- In poor order and not the subject of regular maintenance.
- Not weatherproof.
- External paintwork flaking and faded, and failing to protect surfaces against weathering.
- Mechanical and electrical plant, including lighting, has not been maintained up to standard. No evidence of test certificates.
- No evidence of recent fire protection check, including inspection of fire extinguishers and alarms. Escape routes not clearly signed and blocked or hazardous.
- Security systems, including alarms inoperative. Locks have failed or are vulnerable.
- Externally and internally dirty and the subject of damage, litter and graffiti.

## S13. Permanent Works of Art

- Form **SUP 13** is to be used for this section.
- This section deals with the assessment of the quality of works of art (including statuary, pieces of art, murals, etc) that lie within green space. Whilst freestanding works should receive specific consideration, consideration should also be given to where the work of an artist has been integrated within constructed features (*such as the ceramics set within the gate piers to Rawnsley Park*), or, where the work of an artist has provided elements of infrastructure, including hard and soft landscape elements such as railings and gateways (*e.g. Bellevue Gardens 'Elephant and Tiger Gateway'*).
- The assessment will involve consideration of each work's general physical state and the adequacy, particularly in relation to current standards, of any services or plant it contains (*e.g. Water supply to Kate Malone's 'Fish Drinking Fountain' in Castle Park*).
- Support from the Senior Public Art Officer (Jonathan Banks on Tel: 92 2306, at time of writing), should be sought where more specialist assessment is needed. Advice may be sought, subject to a time charge from Senior Building Conservation Surveyor, Central Support Services (Garry Reeder, on Tel: 90 37459 at time of writing), who tends to specialise in statuary, etc. He will be able to advise in how this level of assessment compares with the more rigorous approach required by Asset Management Planning.
- It will also be necessary to seek advice from the artist/ craftsman, where contactable, just as it is when actually commissioning any maintenance or repair.

### S13.1.1 - Works of Art: Location and Design Context

- Through their location, works of art can make an extremely positive contribution to a green space and its setting. A specific work may act as a focal point within a site's overall layout. (*e.g. The Statue of King William III in Queen Square*). Such a central location may relate to the significance of the work, as it may act as a 'pivot point' where paths radiate; a 'landmark' within a green space may also act as a meeting place and aid visitors' orientation (*e.g. all this applies in the case of the War Memorial in Fishponds Park*).
- The impact of a work will owe much to its location within a green space, and as with a building, how well it 'sits' within the site. An arbitrary location will reduce its visual

contribution and significance. *(In this respect, the Queen Victoria Jubilee Fountain in Canford Park feels only weakly 'anchored' in its position part way along the north eastern peripheral path, with the path passing behind rather than in front of it).*

- A work should also be considered for how well it harmonises with its context, particularly in relation to landform considerations, or in respect of its spatial contribution, perhaps as a focus within a landscape space, or as a feature on the edge of it. *(Walter Jack's Bridge between the ponds in the ornamental gardens in Brandon Hill Park is completely 'at one' with its setting).*
- The sensitive integration of a work may contribute both to, the character of a greenspace and the diversity of its 'atmosphere'. *(e.g. The range of diverse but complementary pieces of art within Castle Park contribute significantly to public interest, and help bring cohesion to a more contemporary park).*
- Consideration must also be given to the suitability of the site in which a work is set in respect of how it may be enjoyed by green space users. In certain contexts, it may be appropriate to have works that are in less prominent locations that are 'discovered' by visitors. Conversely it will be more realistic, on urban sites associated with vandalism, to expect works to be placed in more overlooked locations.

- Guidance:

Excellent:

- Positive contribution to green space as focus or 'landmark'.
- Logical positioning in relation to path nodes and spaces.
- Contributes positively to character of site. Integrated and in harmony with setting.
- Locations not vulnerable to vandalism.

Poor:

- Weak contribution to green space. Not an appropriate focus within green space.
- Arbitrary positioning in relation to path nodes and spaces.
- Inappropriate location in relation to character of site.
- Location not integrated and 'jars' with setting.
- Locations extremely vulnerable to vandalism.

### **S13.1.2 - Works of Art: Creativity and Integration**

- A work of art (as opposed to its siting, dealt with above) must respond to the location within which it is set, particularly in how it 'fits' in respect of local character. This should be reflected in how its appearance (including in respect of scale, proportions, detailing and use of materials).
- Materials can either reflect, or contrast with the physical characteristics, (including colour and texture of materials), already present in the green space. However, any inappropriate or inadequately integrated work of art is likely to impair or detract from the overall quality of a green space. In considering the design and detailing of a work, account should be taken of its robustness and how well it is likely to resist vandalism.

- Guidance:

Excellent:

- Visual contribution, detailing and use of materials complementary to green space context and appropriate to character and setting.

Poor:

- Visually inappropriate to green space context, character and setting.

### S13.2.1 - Works of Art: Condition

- The first thing to note is that this assessment of condition is intended to be a 'broad brush' exercise to gain a strategic level view of how much of a factor the condition of this particular element is to the overall quality of the greenspace. It is not expected here to assess with the rigour of either a detailed survey, as would be the case, as part of the Asset Management Plan, or a risk assessment. However, where this work has been recently carried out, the overall outcome should influence the assessors scoring here.
- A work in **excellent** condition will be in a state comparable to that when it was first installed. However this will need to be gauged against what should be expected in relation to its agreed lifespan, as the brief for this will vary from one commission to another. However, life expectancy is extremely difficult to apply without considerable judgement as deterioration rates will vary according to the nature of the piece and the durability of its material and installation. There is no equivalent scoring grade for excellent in the *Asset Management Plan*, as considerations only tend to apply once the work is no longer regarded as 'new'; i.e. typically over the first five years.
- A work in **good** condition is likely to require work to address deterioration beyond simple repairs typically (but not necessarily, depending on relative material and detailing durability) after a period of 5 years. The equivalent in the *Asset Management Plan* is *Grade A - Good - 'performing as intended and operating efficiently'*.
- A work that is in **moderate** condition will typically require essential improvement works to address deterioration. The equivalent in the *Asset Management Plan* is *Grade B - Satisfactory - 'performing as intended but exhibiting minor deterioration'*.
- One in **poor** condition is likely to require these works within the next 3 years to prevent serious deterioration. The *Asset Management Plan* splits this into *Grade C - Poor - 'exhibiting major defects and/ or not operating as intended'*, and *Grade D - Bad - 'life expired and/or serious risk of imminent failure'*. Where a work is found to be in a serious condition which is reflected in a high health and safety risk assessment, it should, where possible in communication with the artist, be removed immediately.
- For large installations, including statues and memorials, primary concern must be the structural condition, particularly in the context of health and safety legislation.
- The degree to the condition of a work is continuing to sustain its protected from the long-term effects of weathering will provide an important basis for evaluation. The protection of vulnerable joints from rainwater penetration, where freeze-thaw action can accelerate deterioration, will be a factor where stone or brick construction is involved.
- In assessing the condition of each element of the work, careful consideration must be given to whether deterioration has exceeded a point where remedy can continue to be achieved through routine maintenance alone.
- Guidance:
  - Excellent:
    - Optimum structural condition and generally sound. Typically under 5 years old.
    - All construction, including joints in stone- and brick- work remains sound and weather proof.
    - Plant (e.g. water circulation, filtration, etc to fountains, lighting) fully operative.
    - Free from vandalism.
    - Attention limited to routine maintenance.

Good:

- Equates to *Asset Management Plan* - Grade A - 'Good' - 'Performing as intended and operating efficiently'.

Fair:

- Equates to *Asset Management Plan* - Grade B - 'Satisfactory' - 'Performing as intended but exhibiting minor deterioration'.

Poor:

- Embraces *Asset Management Plan* - Grade C - 'Poor' - 'Exhibiting major defects and/ or not operating as intended', and Grade D - 'Bad' - 'Life expired and/ or serious risk of imminent failure'.
- Work in serious structural condition and requires substantial reconstruction or removal.
- All construction, including joints in stone- and brick- work has deteriorated to a point where reconstruction has become inevitable.
- Work has suffered from extensive weathering.
- Plant (e.g. water circulation, filtration, etc to fountains, lighting) unserviceable.
- Significant vandalism to or deterioration in structure. Boarded up as unsafe.
- Action needed exceeds routine maintenance.

### **S13.3.1 - Works of Art: Maintenance**

- Monitoring of the standard of maintenance of a work is vital to protecting such a valuable investment, and in the interests of avoiding substantial future capital expenditure that would be required to put things right. Inadequate maintenance may well have accelerated deterioration into poor condition, and whilst that may have been considered above, consideration must also be given under this heading.
- All surfaces of a work should be clean and free from damage and graffiti. There should be no litter.
- Guidance:

Excellent:

- Optimum order and the subject of a regular maintenance regime.
- All construction, including joints in stone- and brick- work remains sound and weather proof.
- External finishes, including paintwork kept fresh.
- Plant associated with fountains, lighting, etc the subject of evidence of regular routine maintenance (through test certificates).
- Surfaces clean, free of damage and graffiti. No litter.

Poor:

- Work in poor order and not the subject of regular maintenance.
- Deterioration from weathering apparent.
- External paintwork flaking and faded.
- Plant associated with fountains, lighting, etc not regularly serviced.
- Surfaces stained, damaged and covered in graffiti. Significant litter apparent.

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