



Bristol Parks Forum

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

Statement to Full Council 7th September 2010

Area Green Space Plans - Ideas and Options Papers

The Parks & Green Spaces Strategy was adopted in February 2008 with cross party support; that is by a Labour administration, which at that period was supported in office by the Conservative members, and following support from a Conservative led Scrutiny Commission in January 2008. It is being implemented in 2010 by a Lib-Dem administration.

We are concerned at the tone of some of the questions that have been submitted to this Council meeting by Councillors. It is clear from the Area Green Space Plan documents that the principles set out in the adopted strategy have been followed in proposing land for disposal.

The strategy sets out quantity and distance standards, so quite rightly there are no proposals for disposal in areas where these standards are not met, such as Bishopston & Redland.

It was always inevitable that spaces considered by the plan to be 'low value' would be considered to be high value by some members of the community. By way of this consultation everyone in Bristol has the chance to have their say, and we are sure that as a result of the arguments put forward some of these areas will be withdrawn from the list. This is an 'Ideas and Options Paper' not a firm proposal.

We believe that the Cabinet will properly consider all the views expressed in the consultation when finalising the list of spaces for disposal in December. We are pleased that these important decisions will be taken at an open public meeting and not behind closed doors.

We call on all Councillors, and especially Party Leaders, to reiterate their support for the P&GSS and the AGSP process and to encourage their constituents to respond, not only on the proposed disposals, but also on the investment plans for parks in their area which aim to give Bristol the high quality parks that its residents deserve.

Further Information:

The Bristol Parks Forum continues to support the Parks and Green Spaces Strategy. BPF worked with the council for a number of years on the drawing up of the P&GSS and accepted that the P&GSS would be part funded by disposals of Low Value land.

It was particularly important to us that this 20 year strategy had the support of all three main parties and that all were committed to the principle that 70% of the money raised from any sale of 'low value' land would 'ring fenced' for spending on parks.

It must be remembered that at the time that we started discussions on the P&GSS in 2007, there was no policy of public consultation on the disposal of green space and no overall strategy for parks. Deals were being done with developers or even other Council Departments that nibbled away at green areas.

This is demonstrated by the fact that a number of areas originally included on the P&GSS maps are excluded from the AGSP because disposal had already been agreed (eg Four Acres Road Open Space and Huntingham Road Open Space where it is stated 'The planning consents for the residential development of both these spaces pre-dates the Parks and Green Space Strategy.'). Other spaces have been saved from disposal by implementing the standards, the AGSP states in respect of Marsh Lane in Barton Hill for example 'The site had been identified for sale and development prior to the Area Green Space Plan process, but this has been reassessed in light of the adopted standards'.

The adoption of the final Area Green Space Plans will make it extremely difficult for the Council or developers to take further land in the future. The investment plans will also give clear priorities for capital spending to improve Bristol's parks. This will assist in applications for external grants and ensure that Section 106 money can be released and spent appropriately.

We would also like to take this opportunity to congratulate the Council on its decisions to acquire Stoke Park and to designate Grove Wood as a Local Nature Reserve. These will be important additions to Bristol's publicly owned accessible green space.

Bristol Parks Forum Committee

5th September 2010

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Bristol Parks Forum

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

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

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

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