

AGENDA ITEM 7C

BRISTOL CITY COUNCIL Full Council 22 November 2011

REPORT TITLE: Cross Party-working group for Parks and Green Spaces

Ward(s) affected by this report: Citywide

Strategic Director: Graham Sims – Strategic Director, Neighbourhoods and City Development

Report author: Ron Stone Chair of the Cross Party working group

Contact telephone no.

**Report signed off by
Executive Member:**

Purpose of the report:

To report on the findings of the cross party-working group on the review of the Parks and Green Space Strategy and Land declared as surplus sites.

Recommendations to full council:

1. The recommendation of the cross party working group are that the report be noted.
2. That Council recommend to Cabinet either option 3a or 3b (see below) as Council preferred options.

A report will go to Cabinet following full Council with the following items for decision.

1. Agree that the 30% of land sales that would have been allocated corporately will now be spent on green space infrastructure costs across
2. Agree the Incentive Scheme to progress land sales for the benefit of Neighbourhood Partnerships as exemplified in appendix B
3. Cabinet to consider two options on Land declared as surplus to parks requirements with potential disposal for development (Surplus sites) as discussed as part of the Cross Party working group. The two options for consideration are:
 - a. That all surplus sites are deferred to Neighbourhood Committee to decide if sites should be disposed of or not.
 - b. That the list of surplus sites that all members of the working group discussed and felt had significant local interest, should be referred to Neighbourhood

Committee for recommendation / decision on disposal or not

The background:

1. The cross party working group was set up at the end of May 2011 and it was agreed by all parties that they would review the Strategy, finance and funding, review consultation results on surplus sites and make recommendations at the end. The terms of reference are attached as Appendix A.
2. The cross party working group consisted of Councillor Ron Stone (Chair), Councillor Tess Green, Councillor Mark Weston and Councillor Gary Hopkins. A range of Officers supported the group and the Parks Forum attended the earlier meetings when the Strategy was being reviewed, they didn't attend when surplus sites were being discussed. Avon Wildlife Trust were invited to discuss the issues of conservation and wildlife with the group. Members of the group undertook weekly or fortnightly meetings, 20 in total from May 2011 – Sept 2011, and also visited a number of sites; everyone has put a substantial amount of time and investment into this work.
3. The agreed work programme consisted of:
 - a. Scene –setting to ensure all elements of the Strategy are looked at
 - b. Issues around financing of the Strategy and how they can be resolved
 - c. The Site Allocations programme and how this will impact the work
 - d. The consultation process - 2006 to 2010
 - e. The disposals process, the impact it will have on investment and the role Neighbourhood Committees might play.

Outcomes of reviewing the Work Programme

A) Scene-setting / elements of the Strategy.

4. During the course of the four-month review of work there were a numbers of areas where all parties were in full agreement. These were:
 - i. The Parks and Green Space Strategy vision and objectives are acceptable
 - ii. All members agreed that tackling and eradicating equalities issues which affect access to parks and green spaces in Bristol should be a high priority in planning for improvements.
 - iii. All members agreed that whatever level of green space disposal and investment in remaining parks and green spaces is agreed, there needed to be a citywide strategic funding arrangement.
 - iv. There was general agreement that if the funding gap to meet the delivery of the Strategy's minimum standards was significant, then the working group would consider what adjustments might need to be made to allow improvements to be delivered
 - v. All parties agreed that a minimum of 70% of money raised from any land sales should be invested back into parks and green spaces.

- vi. That officers had followed instructions from Cabinet and those set out in the Strategy. However there were some varying interpretations. In particular the cross party working group wanted to make clear some of their interpretation on backland sites differed.

B) Finance and Funding Streams

5. The working group reviewed the New Homes Bonus and Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) in detail and agreed that no new money was likely to be available from the New Homes Bonus for parks and green spaces. The group also believed that whilst CIL might raise more money, the potential impact of this on the overall Strategy funding shortfall was limited. The amount of money available from CIL will also depend on other spending pressures across the Council. For illustrative purpose the working group, when looking at projections of income for CIL, worked on the basis that the historic level of S106 achieved for parks and open spaces 27%, (the section 106 officer stated that the current 27% already was above the national norm) would be maintained through CIL over the remainder of the Strategy. Apportionment of CIL will be agreed at a later stage based on corporate priorities.
6. The original assumptions of the cost of delivering the Strategy (based on 2009 prices) were that £107m would be required to achieve the quality standard. £33m would be required for maintenance over the lifetime of the Strategy. Based on discussions in the group achieving a fair (lower) quality standard would need approx £64m plus maintenance of £20m.
7. The projected amount of funding available from CIL has been estimated at £10.5m for capital provision and £5.4m for maintenance. Officers estimated that there is a further £2.8m still to come through S106 for capital provision providing that CIL and income from surplus sites are available officers' project that a further £17.9m of grant funding can be leveraged over the remaining life of the Strategy. £1.7m from Parks budgets would also be available. These figures can be seen in detail in Appendix B, which shows an estimated total of £32.8m for capital provision over the remaining life of the Strategy.
8. The projected income from surplus sites based on the sites that Cabinet retained in December 2010 and based on the sites listed in Option B going back for a Neighbourhood Committee recommendation, with an assumption that the majority won't go forward to be sold means the potential level of income from surplus sites is approx £10.0m.
9. Even with all the projections being achieved, there will still be a shortfall in achieving the fair (lower) standards
10. The working group agreed a new Incentive Scheme based around three principles:-
 - a. 100% of income generated from land sales is now being proposed to be used for green space infrastructure.
 - b. Within that 100%: Up to 70% of income will be ring fenced for

Neighbourhood Partnerships with the remainder to be held centrally for strategic decision-making.

- c. Neighbourhood Partnerships will benefit from the full 70% of income if Committees follow the original officer recommendations that went to Cabinet in Dec 2010 but less if they diverge from these

An example of the scheme can be seen in Appendix C

B. Site Allocations and impact

Members reviewed and discussed with site allocation staff the impact of this review and agreed that they would try to complete their work by September to fit with the next stage of the Site Allocation process. 'Members have reviewed and discussed with officers the impact of this review on the Site Allocations Document. The Site Allocations Document is now expected to be available for public consultation from early in the New Year. The content of the Site Allocations Document will depend on the outcome of the Cabinet decisions on the Area Green Space Plan Sites.'

C. Consultation.

11. The working group looked at the consultation that had been carried out prior to the Strategy being agreed in February 2008 through to the Area Green Space Plans and Site Allocations document consultations in 2010.
12. The working group were happy with the consultation process and then went on to look at the feedback on each of the surplus sites in more detail.

D. Surplus sites

13. There were 65 sites or parts of sites that were proposed as surplus sites. The sites that had been taken out by officers (3) and Cabinet (7) were not re-examined and were taken as agreed. However Neighbourhood Committees will be asked to re-confirm the decision made by Cabinet.
14. The working group reviewed 2 sites that had been identified as of interest to school provision and agreed that Abingdon Road open space (Ridgeway playing fields) and Begbrook Drive open space should go to provide new school capacity (CYPS).
15. There are 4 sites that have been deferred by Cabinet pending a more detailed plan. These sites are
 - a. Crow Lane Open Space
 - b. Muller Rd Rec / Downend Park Farm
 - c. Lockleaze Open Space
 - d. Briery Leaze Open Space (PROW designated this site as TVG)Further consultation will take place at the Neighbourhood level when detailed plans are available.
16. The rest of the sites (49) were then broken down in numbers of feedback received including numbers on petitions.

17. The numbers varied from 6 feedback comments on a site to 2,566 comments (including petition signatures). The group felt that the sites fell into two categories,
- i) sites that have significant local interest
 - ii) Sites that received less public comments and meet original recommendations for potential disposal for reinvestment.

Of the 49 sites the working group agreed that the surplus sites which fell into i) significant local interest are (11):

- a. Portway Tip (Daisy field)
- b. Small Lane, Snowdon road open space
- c. Bracey Drive open space
- d. Rear of Urmston House, Hareclive Road (North Valley Walk)
- e. Arnall Drive Open Space
- f. Arnall Drive Open Space (north)
- g. Elderberry Walk (this is a split site and this relates to the area nearest the road)
- h. Plummers Hill Open Space
- i. Sturminster Close
- j. Gill Avenue V Delebare Avenue (as per Cabinet decision)

It was agreed by all parties that these sites should go back to Neighbourhood Committees for discussion and a recommendation, which then would be considered by Cabinet for a final decision alongside the funding incentive scheme. The working group members varied in their recommendation and only one site had cross party agreement

18. The area where the working group has a split view (2/2) is on the following 38 sites. The working group agree that these sites are identified as ii) sites who received less public comments and meet original criteria for potential disposal for reinvestment.

However the split is based on who makes the final recommendation /decision. At one point there was a majority agreement on the way forward. This then changed and the final view of the group is, the Conservative Party and the Labour Party want all sites to go back to Neighbourhood Committees for decision, as they felt it was best to give local people the decision on the future of their parks and green spaces. The Liberal Democrats and the Green Party feel that because they have spent the last 4 months looking in detail at the Strategy, funding and consultation results that these 38 sites should be re-confirmed as surplus sites - as per the Cabinet decision in Dec 2010. This would then ensure that funding is achieved without further delay to invest back into the city's green spaces and improve provision for all.

SITE	No of Comments and petition signatures
Land at rear of Merrimans Drive,	6
Longcross Woodland	6
Moorend Gardens	7
Moorgrove	7
Napier Square Park	7
Sherrin Way (Billand Close)	8
Huntingham Road/ Keble Avenue (Four Acres?)	9
Willmott Park North , Hartcliffe	11
Willmott Park South, Hartcliffe	11
Cook Street Open Space	12
Withywood Park (Paybridge Rd)	12
Henacre Open Space	13
Broomhill Road/Emery Road	13
Brentry Hill	15
Hazelbury Road Open Space	16
Tranmere Road	18
Terrell Gardens	18
Fonthill Park	19
Belroyal Avenue	21
Furber Road	22
Gladstone Street	24
Trym valley	28
Burnbush Close	40
Ladman Road and Bus Terminus	48
Gillebank Close	54
Ladman Road and Bagnell Road	57
Maple Close	59
Duchess Way O/S	61
Bath Road (3 Lamps)	63
Broomhill Park .	73
Craydon Road, Triangle, Stockwood	83
Newbridge Road, Open Space	88
Bonville Rd Open Space	89
Dovercourt Road Open Space	89
Allison Avenue	96
Salcombe Road	465
Blackthorn Close Open Space, (North Valley Walk)	185+1000 general petition
Elderberry Walk site to be linked with dunmail	Petition was put into site allocation based on Dunmail site

Legal Comments Stephen McNamara Head of Legal Service

The constitutional responsibility for decisions concerning property is an executive one. The Cabinet should consider very carefully any recommendations of council and the views of the cross party working group. Expenditure of Capital receipts derived from land sales will need to be justified as against other statutory need.

Financial Comments Peter Robinson Service Director Finance

Projected Capital receipts over the life of the strategy are potentially £10m. Changing the 70% allocation to parks to 100% means approximately £3m would not be available for funding other Council priorities: Schools, Transport etc.

Access to information (background papers):

Minutes of the meetings including detail of the discussions on Wildlife

Parks

Green and Space Strategy

Previous Cabinet and QOL of life reports

CROSS PARTY WORKING GROUP - PARKS AND GREEN SPACES: 31 MAY 2011

Action notes

Present:

Councillors: Cllr Barbara Janke, Cllr Garry Hopkins, Cllr Ron Stone, Cllr Mark Weston,
Cllr Tess green

Officers: Tracey Morgan, Richard Fletcher, Ian Pagan

“Scene setting” / working arrangements for future meetings

1. Membership and substitution

It was agreed that membership of the Working Group should be as set out above. Members should be asked to nominate permanent substitutes who can attend meetings when they are unable to do so.

2. Chairing arrangements

It was agreed that Cllr Stone be Chair of the Working Group

3. Terms of reference

The Leader proposed that the terms of reference of the Working Group should be ;

- to consider all aspects of the parks and green spaces strategy and how best to move matters forward

In that connection the approach would be ;

- to provide members of the Working Group with full information, to enable them to ask questions thereon and to record all relevant comments and responses

During discussion it was agreed that the Working Group should review the development of the strategy since 2008 and before and the principles which underpin it. This would include looking at the financial arrangements including the proposed land disposals, the outcome of public consultation thereon , the views of the neighbourhood partnerships and implications for the local development framework.

4. Communication strategy

Meetings would take place in private session and members would be expected to keep discussion of the issues within the Working Group. Members would only make public statements on matters discussed by the Working Group, where the Group was informed and following liaison with the relevant officer(s), to ensure clarity/accuracy of the facts .

Corporate Communications would be asked to assist with any formal public

statements / press releases from the Group

5. Taking evidence

It was the intention that a range of individuals / external partners etc would be invited to attend the working group from time to time to provide information, and answer questions, in support of the review.

6. Frequency/dates of meetings

Richard Fletcher explained that the parks & green spaces strategy was closely linked to other drivers and work programmes including the site allocations timetable, being led by Strategic Planning, and the Schools Plan. A speedy review of the proposals for area green spaces was therefore desirable with a view to getting agreed decisions on the future the various sites by Xmas 2011.

The role of the community infrastructure levy was significant and it was agreed that Sarah O'Driscoll should be asked to produce a briefing paper for members thereon, prior to the next meeting

It was proposed and agreed the meetings should take place weekly on Fridays at 5.00pm, commencing on 17 June and be limited to 2 hours.

7. Work programme

It was agreed that the first meeting on 17 June should be a "scene setting" session and for members to be briefed/updated on the following core information :

- issues around financing of the area green space proposals and how they can be resolved (S.106 Officer to provide briefing plus paper on community infrastructure levy)
- the site allocations policy and how this will impact
- the consultation process (from the beginning)
- the disposals process and the impact which it will have on financing and investment

The work programme for subsequent sessions to be derived from these initial discussions

Appendix B

Projected income over the remaining life of the strategy

Funding Streams	Provision
Section 106 monies in the Bank	1,594,000
Section 106 potential over 2 years as its phased out	1,200,000
Parks Core Budget	1,700,000
External Grant funding	17,850,000
Projected CIL funding	10,556,500
Potential income from surplus sites based on 100%	10,000,000
TOTAL	42,900,500

APPENDIX C

Example of A TYPICAL NHPS and changes to the percentages depending on what gets sold

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K
	Individual site values	TOTAL Land Values	30% of max land value would go back centrally to support NHPS that have no land sales or have no CIL and for strategic infrastructure	Value remaining (70%)	% of the remaining 70% that the NHPS would achieve due to decisions not to dispose of particular sites.	Amount that would go back to NHPS	% going back centrally if land not being declared surplus	Additional amount of income that would go back centrally based on land not being declared	TOTAL amount to be spent in the NHP	Total amount to be distributed centrally to support NHPS that have no land sales or CIL
Total estimated value of all sites that have been identified as surplus		4,000,000								
<u>SITES referred back to Neighbourhood Partnerships</u>										
SITE A valued at	1,500,000									
If Site is disposed of then the max land value is		4,000,000	1,200,000	2,800,000	100%	2,800,000			2,800,000	1,200,000
If site is not disposed of then the max land value is		2,500,000	750,000	1,750,000	63%	1,102,500	37%	647,500	1,102,500	1,397,500
SITE B valued at	500,000									
If Site is disposed of then the max land value is		4,000,000	1,200,000	2,800,000	100%	2,800,000			2,800,000	1,200,000
If site is not disposed of then the max land value is		3,500,000	1,050,000	2,450,000	88%	2,156,000	12%	294,000	2,156,000	1,344,000
SITE C valued at	250,000									
If Site is disposed of then the max land value is		4,000,000	1,200,000	2,800,000	100%	2,800,000			2,800,000	1,200,000
If site is not disposed of then the max land value is		3,750,000	1,125,000	2,625,000	94%	2,467,500	6%	157,500	2,467,500	1,282,500