



Bristol Parks Forum

*Campaigning to protect and enhance all public green space
in the City of Bristol.*

See our Vision for Parks & Green Spaces at

www.bristolparksforum.org.uk/vision

Dear Barrs Street/Debenhams Team.

Pre-planning application consultation on Barrs Street/Debenham proposals – response from Bristol Parks Forum.

The Bristol Parks Forum is writing to respond to the above consultation.

Firstly, can I apologise for the late submission of this response, I hope that it can still be taken into consideration.

Thank you for the time you took in explaining the proposals to me, and listening to our general concerns at the event next to the site.

The Bristol Parks Forum is the only community voice dedicated to all publicly owned parks and green spaces in Bristol. We work with Bristol City Council to ensure our spaces are well looked after and to help local groups to enhance their green space. Further information about the Forum can be found at <http://www.bristolparksforum.org.uk/>

Our Approach

Our response to the application has been driven by the following considerations.

1. Increased importance of parks and green spaces to people and wildlife
2. Increased recognition of the health and well-being benefits of parks and green spaces.
3. Declarations of climate and ecological emergencies by the City Council
4. Recognition that in some areas the lack of green space, or the increased use of existing parks and green spaces has, and will increasingly have, a negative effect on the health and well-being of our City and its inhabitants.

5. There is a need to ensure that developments contribute to sustainable communities, with a full range of services and facilities in support of new homes. Services in this context can include new parks and green spaces.

The importance of parks and green spaces, is now better understood than ever. Publicly accessible parks and green spaces are critically important in times such as during the Covid-19 pandemic when they were used by many people to improve their health and well-being. These areas are also important for their role in providing areas which can be used for activities such as play, nature education, foraging for food, running, walking, walking the dog, socialising and learning new skills etc.

Our response:

We understand that the intention is to apply for Outline Planning Permission shortly.

The areas around Broadmead generally have, and will be subject to significant change as parts move from functioning as a retail hub, to a more mixed-use purpose.

Part of that change involves the provision of very significant numbers of homes in and around the nearby existing parks and green spaces at Castle Park and St James Priory.

We believe that in addition to providing improvements to existing parks, it is time for a change in the way green spaces are provided in this area to support people's health and well-being.

Any developments should address both the Climate and Ecological Emergencies, and green spaces can play an important part in this.

It is our strong belief that existing green spaces will not be able to support the needs of the new residents due to arrive and live in the whole area.

Castle Park and St James Park are both heavily constrained in terms of area.

It is in our view time to look at new green spaces (not just public realm) in the Broadmead area.

Typical public realm designs to us can at times be solely concentrated on providing benefits to humans.

We question whether such designs can provide benefits to wildlife in the same way as biodiverse green space can.

Add to this the benefits in terms of climate change amelioration of more varied vegetation.

We of course appreciate that your site is itself space limited.

We broadly welcome the principles of the design of the re-instated Barrs Street in the centre of the development, as part of a potential greener corridor between Castle Park and St James Barton.

We ask that the design even at this early stage identifies what wildlife species the designs are likely to attract, in addition to working through the habitat related Biodiversity Net Gain process.

We also ask that provision is made for safe play within the same area, as far as is possible.

If you have any questions on our response, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Yours sincerely,

Len Wyatt
Chair

For Bristol Parks Forum
30th June 2023