



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 Bristol Local Plan Team

BRISTOL LOCAL PLAN PUBLICATION STAGE REGULATION 19 CONSULTATION – RESPONSE WITH REPRESENTATIONS FROM THE BRISTOL PARKS FORUM. PART A – ORGANISATIONAL DETAILS AND COVERING LETTER

The Bristol Parks Forum is the only community voice dedicated to all publicly accessible and 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 organisational details in line with Part A of the relevant forms is:

My details are: Mr Len Wyatt, Chair of the Bristol Parks Forum

Organisation: Bristol Parks Forum

Address: xxxxxxxx

Email: info@bristolparksforum.org.uk

The number of representations: 47

Our Approach:

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

- Increased importance of parks and green spaces to people and wildlife
- Increased recognition of the health and well-being benefits of parks and green spaces
- Declarations of climate and ecological emergencies by the City Council
- The ongoing housing crisis
- The outcomes of our Vision for Bristol Parks and Green Spaces in 2030.

The Vision outcomes include parks and green spaces which are:

- Excellent in terms of quantity and quality.
- Available in all areas of the city.
- Places that have a positive influence on our well-being.
- Hubs of activity that empower local communities.
- Recognised for their value to the city.
- Free to access.
- Places where wildlife thrives.
- Places where our heritage is protected and explored.

We have concentrated on providing representations on the wider implications of policies, designations and allocations, rather than specific sites.

We have considered the implications of the Plan on our membership and their parks and green spaces, but where appropriate have commented on policies which have implications beyond those interests.

Our comments are designed to ensure better compliance with policies and frameworks as far as we can understand them and of course, our vision – all to contribute to solutions to the multiple crises we have before us.

We have made comments on areas of policy such as design, trees and food growing and allotments, but we are very much aware of organisations such as Bristol Civic Society, Bristol Tree Forum and various allotment-based groups and associations which have far more detailed knowledge of their areas of interest than we do.

This has meant that we have concentrated on supporting positive aspects of those policies, rather than offering suggestions for improvements to approaches or wording.

Our preparations for this consultation.

In preparing this reply, we have consulted our membership of over 70 groups spread across Bristol. (<http://www.bristolparksforum.org.uk/parks-forum-members/>). They represent a wide range of types of parks and green spaces, from large, formal parks; to nature reserves; play spaces; community gardens and pocket parks; and those that have multiple types of green space within their boundaries.

This consultation process has been achieved by distributing information on the Local Plan to help groups respond, by holding meetings when required, and asking for comments from groups to be included in our own response.

We support the comments of individual groups in our Forum about how their individual parks and green spaces are shown on Policy Maps and in Development Allocations.

The Bristol Context

Bristol is rightly proud of its parks and green spaces.

The City Council's consultation document on the 2023 Parks and Green Space strategy provides the following information about the Parks and Green Spaces within the Council's remit:

440 Parks and Green Spaces
17 million visits per year
700 hectares of woodland
129 Playgrounds
60 Sites of Nature Conservation Interest.
£330,000 per year of stored carbon.
£361m per year the monetary value of physical and mental health benefit

The actual equivalent statistics for the whole of Bristol including non-Council land would be much higher.

The Council, along with other organisations, regardless of the limitations of resources for various reasons, has sought to keep their invaluable resource in good condition, and accessible to all.

However, there have been a number of trends in the way public space generally is planned, provided, managed and used, which concern us. These include:

- A blurring of the distinction between public and privately owned space, to the point where it is difficult to understand what can or cannot be accessed.
- An increasing use in new developments of hard surfaced public realm, especially in central Bristol, rather than more natural and wildlife friendly designs.
- A very significant increase, both current and future, in the number of people in some areas, without an equivalent increase in the amount of available parks and green spaces to support those people.

I would be grateful if our letter could be linked to the representations we have made for the Inspector and the Examination as it provides value background.

If you have any queries or questions, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Yours sincerely,

Len Wyatt
Chair

For Bristol Parks Forum
26 January 2024