



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 Local Nature Recovery Team and West of England Metro Mayor.

Consultation on Local Nature Recovery Toolkit – response on Priorities and Possible Measures for nature recovery.

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

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 consultation 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 Bristol City Council and other local government organisations.

The importance of parks and green spaces, is now better understood than ever. Publicly accessible parks and green spaces are extremely important for both people and nature in terms of health and well-being. We have also seen how critically important local parks and green spaces – i.e. within walking distance - have been for local communities 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, running, walking, walking the dog, socialising and learning new skills, or simply just somewhere quiet in the fresh air to relax away from everyday stresses etc.

Our response:

We welcome the work done so far in delivering this initiative, which while legally required, is also a critical contribution to our area's response to the Climate and Ecological Crises.

Our comments below relate solely to the priorities and measures set out in Priorities 25 to 29.

We believe that the document, as it stands now, can be significantly improved to benefit the health and well-being of people and wildlife in urban areas.

We appreciate that the Local Nature Recovery approach emphasises wildlife, and that is to be welcomed. However, we feel that in urban areas wildlife and people are now so dependent upon each other, that it is almost impossible to separate the health and wellbeing of one from the other.

This is especially true in the more densely populated city areas. Bristol itself, is likely to see a significant increase in the number of people living in parts of the city, especially the Central Area.

The number of additional people likely to be living in Central Bristol in new developments is expected to be in the thousands; in addition to those already using the few existing green spaces in the Central Area.

Bristol Parks Forum aims to work with all relevant parties to enable a new large, multifunctional public park to be created in Central Bristol.

Pocket parks and existing parks with improved nature conservation value, have their place, but cannot provide the same benefits to people and wildlife as large parks or green spaces can.

With this in mind we call on the West of England Combined Authority and North Somerset Council to change the Biodiversity Priority (Technical Version) Code 26 to either

- a) Have a new measure which states "Create new large multifunctional parks and green spaces, prioritising areas with least local access, highest vulnerability to the urban heat island effect and air pollution; and significant housing development."

Or

- b) Change the existing Measure to read "create parks and green spaces prioritising areas with least local access, highest vulnerability to the urban heat island effect and air pollution; and significant housing development"

We would like to be kept informed of progress of the initiative via the info@bristolparksforum.org.uk email address,

We have copied this response to:

Jon James, Head of Service, Natural and Marine Environment, Bristol City Council; and

Richard Fletcher, Parks Services Manager, Bristol City Council

Becky Belfin and Rosie Jackson, Nature Conservation Officers, Parks Service, Bristol City Council

Kit Beaumont, Ecological Emergency Officer, Parks Service, Bristol City Council.

We will be forwarding a copy on to the new Chair of the City Council and the Committee responsible for Parks and Green Spaces in the Council, once they have been appointed.

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

Yours sincerely,

Len Wyatt

Chair

For Bristol Parks Forum Committee

13 May 2024