



# Bristol Parks Forum

Campaigning to protect and enhance  
public green space in the City of Bristol.  
See our Vision for Parks & Green Spaces at  
[www.bristolparksforum.org.uk/vision](http://www.bristolparksforum.org.uk/vision)

To:

Cllr Rob Bryher  
All members of Bristol City Council Planning A Committee

Cllr Tony Dyer  
Cllr Andrew Brown  
Cllr Stephen Williams  
Cllr Martin Fodor  
Bristol City Council

cc: Richard Fletcher, Head of Parks and Green Spaces, BCC  
[policycommittees@bristol.gov.uk](mailto:policycommittees@bristol.gov.uk)  
[democratic.services@bristol.gov.uk](mailto:democratic.services@bristol.gov.uk)

By email only – 22<sup>nd</sup> April 2026

Dear Councillors

Bristol Parks Forum wishes to complain that the Bristol City Council Parks and Green Spaces Strategy and the open space standards contained within it (PGSS) have not been taken into consideration in the decision making process for the Princess Street Tower Planning Application, nor Cabot Gate application.

At the Bristol Parks Forum meeting on Saturday 18<sup>th</sup> April, members resolved that the Forum should write to the Council raising our concerns, that Bristol City Council is failing to take account of the adopted Bristol City Council Parks and Green Spaces Strategy and Standards in its decision making processes.

It was also agreed that we support the concerns of the Victoria Park Action Group – the Parks Group that works to protect and enhance Victoria Park.

Given the timescale of the Planning Committee A meeting, which is further considering the Princess Tower Planning Application, we are writing to all the members of the Committee directly.

The Council's strategy is an adjunct to the Local Plan and as such should have been given due weight by officers and Councillors when assessing and deciding on whether or not to approve this planning application.

From the documents provided by the Council through its Planning Portal and Planning Committee web pages, we can see no evidence that the PGSS has been used to determine sufficiency of additional green space nor of typography. We note that there are proposals for small bits of green space, even a pocket park, but this does not provide the green open space necessary for the health and welfare of new residents in this area.

The Council cannot rely upon existing local parks, not least because it is already recognised that these are already heavily used. Local residents have clearly explained this as well as how untenable it is to add more and more residents into an area without providing either additional green space nor funding for enhancement of existing green spaces.

There seems little point the Council adopting policies that are expected to form an integral part of the Council's decision making processes, including planning decisions, if the Council's own decision makers ignore them.

We are concerned that on top of this, the Planning Committee has not looked at other considerations regarding public green spaces. Development impacts on biodiversity, and the agreed council strategies on blue green infrastructure, ecological and climate emergencies are being ignored by planning committee if they fail to ensure sufficient additional public green spaces of a good quality is included in site developments.

This failure is not the sole preserve of this application decision, it is happening across the board, even where Masterplans and Supplementary Planning Documents are being drawn up.

The Parks and Green Spaces Strategy has clear guidance on Distance, Density and Quality. These must work together. It is unacceptable to consider that a public park such as Victoria Park is within the Distance consideration, but not consider the Density and Quality impacts. In the particular instance of Victoria Park it is situated within the area designated by the Council as Inner Urban which has a higher minimum density standard (m<sup>2</sup> per person) than that designated Central Area. Therefore, the green space standard that applies where the development in question is relying upon a park in another area, as is this case, should be applied.

It should also be noted that the Density standards are **minimum** and not maximum requirements.

The Planning application for Cabot is another case in point.

The nod at public parks and green spaces are primarily a pocket park, hedge and tree buffer, and a bit of a wildlife area. Whilst these may all have value at one level, the overarching need for a decent sized area of park and green space for residents' health and well-being is being generally overlooked.

The constant repetition that the public realm is a benefit overlooks the fact that much of this is not green space and does not contribute to the Parks and Green Spaces Strategy commitments nor the other related policies, strategies and plans related to the green outdoors.

In the case of Cabot Gate, existing parks – St Paul's Park and Castle Park - are expected to take on the role of "park provision" without any consideration as to how that meets the PGSS, as in the case of Victoria Park.

The allocation of funds through planning obligations seemingly doesn't recognise the high value of good quality (remember a PGSS commitment) open space with the woefully small amounts of monies suggested.

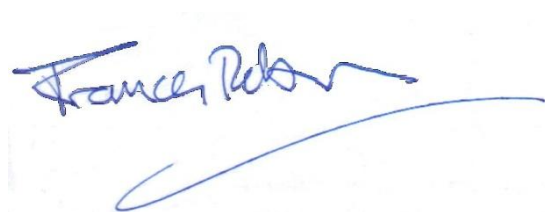
We would remind Bristol City Council in general and Planning Committees in particular, where such planning obligation funds are sought, that the 2026/27 budgetary provision from Bristol's Council Tax receipts for Parks, Leisure and Environment (not just Parks alone) is merely 1 penny in the pound – i.e. 0.1% and is currently a standstill budget – which in reality means that since everything costs more, then the only outcome will be that the Parks Service will be able to do less.

We would also remind Bristol City Council that Bristol's Parks and Green Spaces provide our "natural health service". This is not fanciful, but proven through a large number of research reports on the benefits for health and well-being – both physical and mental - of parks provision. Parks are key in the delivery of the wider imperatives within the Ecological and Climate Emergency strategies, the Blue Green Infrastructure, Keeping Bristol Cool etc.

Successive Council administrations have adopted these strategies.

We are concerned to see that these strategies are actually used to inform and advise officers and councillors across Bristol City Council, and used to implement sound decisions which meet the Parks and Green Spaces needs of current communities whilst ensuring that developments and other proposals not only do not compromise that but also provide addition and enhancement in a meaningful rather than tokenistic way.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Frances Robertson', with a long, sweeping underline stroke extending to the right.

Frances Robertson  
Bristol Parks Forum Committee

Please reply to: [info@bristolparksforum.org.uk](mailto:info@bristolparksforum.org.uk)