



To: Frances Robertson;
Bristol Parks Forum Committee

Reply to Tony Dyer, Leader's Office
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Email Leader@bristol.gov.uk
Date 01 June 2026

Dear Frances, Bristol Parks Forum,

Thank you for taking the time to write to Bristol City Council in relation to the Princess Street and Cabot Gate applications, and the importance of the council's Parks and Green Spaces Strategy (PGSS).

Bristol's parks and green spaces are a significant part of the city's landscape, offering a wide variety of benefits ranging from recreation and culture, to supporting sustainable food growing and renewing wildlife habitats. The quality, distance and quantity of parks and green spaces are integral to our vision for all communities to feel that parks are accessible, safe, fun and rich in nature and wildlife.

The existing and emerging Local Plans have policies which are protective of existing open spaces of public value. The emerging Local Plan has a policy for open space provision so the open space standards in the PGSS 2024 are to be had regard to under this policy.

We assess planning applications against national and local planning policy. While PGSS isn't a statutory document used for planning assessments, it is an important consideration for our overall approach to planning for green spaces in the city. The Parks and Green Spaces Strategy can feed into the development of Local Planning Policy and our new Local Plan. The Strategy is a material consideration but is of limited weight in comparison to our Local Plan, Regeneration Frameworks and national planning policy.

Specific applications

In relation to Princess Street, we assessed the application against the guidance contained in our Urban Living SPD [Urban Living SPD: Making successful places at higher densities](#). Page 40 of the SPD sets out standards for providing sufficient outdoor space. We also assessed the application against the Whitehouse Street Regeneration Framework which has amongst its aims to create new green infrastructure, play space and green space. [\(Public Pack\) Whitehouse Street – Appendix A\(ii\) Final Framework Agenda Supplement for Cabinet, 07/03/2023 16:00](#) (page 72).

In relation to Cabot Gate, the application is an outline application and therefore the exact amount and arrangement of amenity space will be determined at the Reserved Matters stage. The Urban Living SPD requires amenity space to be provided at a minimum of 5sqm for 1-2 person dwellings, with an additional 1sqm for each additional occupant. Based on the proposal for 600 beds the proposal has included through the adjacent east parcel additional external amenity space through a high-quality public realm. This includes opportunities for

semi-private or private uses such as a Multi-Use Games Area (MUGA) or similar, further enhancing the offer for resident students.

Quantity, Quality and Investment

The previous Parks and Green Spaces Strategy (2008) contained unrealistic standards around creating new green spaces across the city. This would have been equivalent to five Castle Parks for a stable population, ignoring the additional needs caused by population growth.

The current Parks and Green Spaces Strategy is more attainable and based on projecting space per person based on robust population projections.

Our revised quantity standards better reflect the long-term growth of the city's population. While this means we can't maintain the quantity standards to the unrealistic 2008 levels, we can use them to drive forward a net gain in green space across the 15-year period.

We appreciate that parks will be serving a larger population and are therefore investing to ensure they can support more people than ever to visit parks and stay for longer, and take part in activities which make them happier and healthier.

We continue to try and use a One Council, One City, Many Communities approach to focus our limited resources, including parks and green spaces, on delivering in areas of high inequality. We work with developers to maximise the opportunities for investment and improvements in the public realm and green spaces and will continue to do so through planning decisions.

We hope that this answers your concerns and the context in which the Parks and Green Spaces Strategy is used to support planning decisions, particularly in the context of Princess Street and Cabot Gate.

Yours sincerely,

Cllr Tony Dyer
Leader, Bristol City Council

Councillor Stephen Williams
Chair, Public Health and Communities Committee

