

St Philips Marsh Masterplan

Big Park Campaign

- A consultation on the latest version of this Masterplan was published last month with a deadline for comments of 28th July
- No “big park” included and the two small green spaces they refer to as parks do not seem to even meet the PGSS minimum standard for central / inner Bristol
- There is great reliance on Sparke Evans Park as a multi use park to be enhanced. This park is only 2.3 hectares.
- This area will have potentially 10,000 homes* – therefore potentially 25,000 residents as well as workers and visitors
**student accommodation is listed separately in the land use summary so it implies that that figure does not include the students living there too*

What the Masterplan says:

Blue and Green Infrastructure

The majority of respondents expressed concern that overall open space provision will be insufficient for the projected population, with calls for larger parks, more public squares, and greater integration of green infrastructure into the public realm. The retention of Sparke Evans Park and the carrying forward of the green corridor from the previous engagement round were welcomed. Accessibility groups raised the importance of designing parks that are fully accessible ...

Vision Statement

The River Avon, Feeder Canal and Sparke Evans Park will become the defining elements of the neighbourhood, shaping its spatial structure and identity. These blue and green assets will be celebrated and enhanced, providing ecological corridors, active travel routes and spaces for recreation and social gathering



A comprehensive network of high-quality green spaces, parks and public realm will encourage social interaction and foster community bonds. The early delivery of community uses and facilities will play a vital role in establishing the identity and character of St Philip's Marsh from the outset.

Illustrative view of the District Centre along Feeder Canal

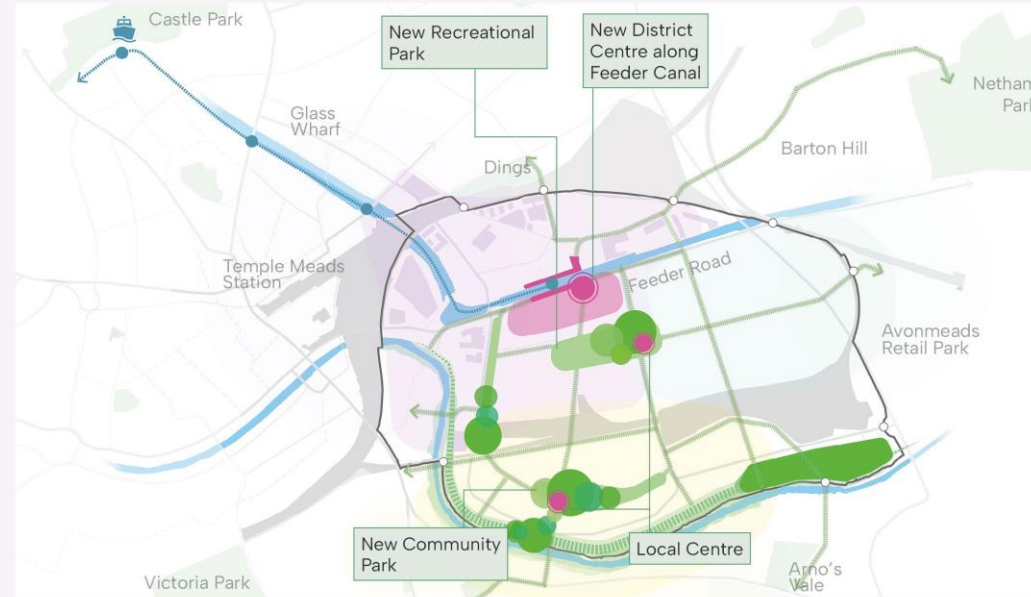
Place Principles

Quality Open Spaces

Bristol's natural beauty is one of the qualities that defines the city most strongly, and St Philip's Marsh already holds three of its most significant assets: the River Avon, the Feeder Canal and Sparke Evans Park.

The regeneration will weave these into a hierarchy of parks, squares and pocket spaces, with every resident and worker within a five-minute walk of open space. Green streets will connect them, carrying green infrastructure and SUDS. Tree canopy coverage will increase to at least 25% of the site, supporting biodiversity and bringing nature into daily life.

04 Distribute a range of open spaces



Spatial Intent:

St Philip's Marsh will be structured by a network of parks, squares and pocket spaces that bring every resident and worker within easy reach of green and outdoor space. The parks are positioned so that each cluster has direct access to a major green space, with three anchors across the site: an enhanced Sparke Evans Park to the south-east, a new Recreational Park in the northern cluster bridging the mixed-use area and the employment area, and a new Community Park in the south-west.

These parks overlay the green street network, so that they can be reached on foot and by bike through the same Active Travel routes that connect the rest of the neighbourhood.

Each park sits close to a Local Centre or the District Centre, so community uses, open space and daily life reinforce one another.

How proposals deliver this Key Move:

- Contributing to the network of open spaces so every resident and worker has green space within easy reach, including the enhanced Sparke Evans Park, the new Recreational Park in the northern cluster and the new Community Park in the southern cluster.
- Linking parks into the green street network so they are accessible through Active Travel routes.
- Locating community uses and other services around parks and open spaces, so the outdoor space is activated by everyday life.
- Increasing tree canopy coverage, contributing to biodiversity net gain, and incorporating SUDS within parks, squares and pocket spaces.
- Prioritising early delivery of key open spaces.



04.05 The Illustrative Masterplan and the Future of St Philip's Marsh

“each cluster has
access to a major
green space ...”

05.01

Character Areas

As an area that was once marshland, the integration of water-sensitive landscape and planting throughout the public realm will be a defining characteristic of St Philip's Marsh, reinforcing both its ecological ambition and its connection to the landscape that shaped it.

Access to nature will define each character area differently, whether through the enhancement or introduction of ecological landscapes or the creation of new recreational green spaces.

Streets with soft landscaping and SUDS will connect the character areas, forming a continuous green network.

05.04.02

Fruit Market Neighbourhood

Community park: A Community Park is to be delivered in this area, located close to the level change. The park will help navigate the topography while providing areas for play, flexible outdoor spaces for gathering and sports, and landscaped areas for ecology and biodiversity. The park will help integrate this area with the Riverside Community and contribute to the health and wellbeing of residents.

05.04.03

Parkside Neighbourhood

Relationship with Sparke Evans Park:

Development should positively address Sparke Evans Park, with active frontages and main entrances providing natural surveillance to create a safe edge and a direct relationship with the park.

Relationship to the St Philip's Marsh Railway Depot:

The northern edge of this area is adjacent to the St Philip's Marsh Railway Depot. Development should provide green ecological buffers along this boundary, offering screening and acoustic mitigation while maximising opportunities for biodiversity and habitat creation.

06.03

Housing

Considerations

Access to amenities and sustainability

Homes should be situated in areas with good access to open space, services, public transport and social infrastructure. The Masterplan distributes residential development to ensure that new and existing green spaces and water bodies (Sparke Evans Park, the River Avon and Feeder Canal) are within a five-minute walk.

06.05

Infrastructure Safeguarding

Considerations

Should the [railway] depot be released for development, residential-led or workplace development would be supported. The scale of the site offers the potential for a significant number of new homes or employment floorspace, and any development should integrate with the surrounding character areas and enhance connections to the wider neighbourhood.

Redevelopment would also present the opportunity to deliver an east-west linear park, bringing the character areas together and contributing to the network of green infrastructure across the area, supporting biodiversity and ecological connectivity.

06.08

Education

The [possible primary] school's setting next to Chapel Park supports outdoor learning and connects children with the green and blue infrastructure of St Philip's Marsh.



Eye-level illustration showing Chapel Park. A key plan below the sketch indicates that the viewpoint is from the south-east corner of the park, looking north-west. Residential buildings front the park, overlooking the open space. Within the park, children play on a natural boulder play area and on open lawns. The park also includes pollinator-friendly flowering plants, a natural stepping-stone path, and ecological gardens planted with native species.

07.09.04

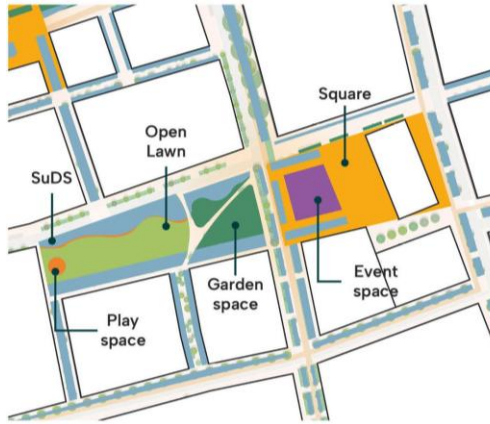
Chapel Park

A new recreational park should be located in the north cluster, in close proximity to the District Centre, acting as a focal point for community life.

The park will be well-activated, bringing together a range of services and mixed uses at its edges.

Key features should include:

- A minimum dimension of 50m in one direction.
- Good aspect with the layout designed for appropriate sunlight provision.
- Play facilities for different age groups.
- Soft landscape areas for informal recreation.
- Water-sensitive planting and SuDS basins to improve planting and flood resilience, reflecting the marsh character of the area.
- Flexible spaces that accommodate community events and gatherings.
- Active frontages, community facilities, workplace and ground floor uses overlooking the park.
- Strong connections to existing communities north of the site, enhancing green space provision for these established neighbourhoods.
- Integration with surrounding streets and the public realm.
- Appropriate lighting after sunset and clear sightlines throughout the space



A key plan describing the programming for the Recreational Park with a large open lawn to the west, sustainable urban drainage systems around the perimeter of the park, garden spaces towards Albert Crescent. East of Albert Crescent an event space and square are proposed.

Our view on Chapel Park

The total area of this “park” would be smaller than College Green which is 13,014 sq metres or approximately 1.3 hectares, and about the size of one and a quarter football pitches!

Our calculations from their scale drawing is that the maximum size of the orange, purple and green areas in total would be 200 x 50 metres (at its widest) or 1 hectare. For comparison The Centre in Bristol is approximately 200 x 35 metres

Within that they expect multiple forms of play, presumably including being the primary school’s playground, a formal garden space, an ecological area (one native planted flower bed), event space for neighbourhood events, a “square” aka not green space but hard surface and the frontages of the flats. Nowhere for formal sports nor food growing.

07.09.05

Fruit Market Park

A new park should be located in the south of St Philip's Marsh, addressing existing topographical barriers through a considered landscape approach.

Key features should include:

- A minimum dimension of 50m in one direction.
- Good aspect with the layout designed for appropriate sunlight provision.
- Community-focused facilities including play areas for children and urban food growing.
- Native wildlife planting that enhances biodiversity and creates habitat corridors.
- Flexible lawns for informal recreation, sports and community events.
- Landscape terracing or other design interventions that navigate site topography and create accessible connections.
- Water-sensitive planting and SuDS basins to manage surface water and improve flood resilience, reflecting the park's proximity to the River Avon.
- Strong links to the River Avon corridor, enhancing the blue-green network.
- Connections to existing communities to the south, improving access to quality open space for these areas.
- Appropriate lighting after sunset with passive surveillance from adjacent development and clear sightlines throughout.



Fig 07.45 Bird-eye view of Fruit Market Park

Bird's-eye view illustration of the Fruit Market Park. A key plan below the sketch indicates that the viewpoint is above the western corner of the park, looking east. The image shows gentle slopes across the park that help navigate level changes. Residential buildings frame the park on all sides, with entrances opening onto the park edge. Two larger play spaces are located along the northern edge of the park, while a large central lawn provides space for leisure and recreation. An active travel corridor with a segregated cycleway runs along the base of the park from east to west.



Our view on Fruit Market Park
The total area of this “park” could be about the same size as College Green which is 13,014 sq metres or approximately 1.3 hectare, Our calculations from their scale drawing is that the Fruit Market Park would be an equilateral triangle of 100 metre sides

Bristol Parks and Green Spaces Strategy

Minimum provision guideline – Central and Inner Bristol

As well as maintaining an overall citywide quantity standard, we are introducing standards for a specifically defined Central and Inner Urban zone:

Area/Zone	Supply of open space with current population (m ² per person)	Supply of open space because of predicted population increase (m ² per person)	Minimum provision standard (m ² per person)
Central	12.02	7.28	7.75
Inner Urban	13.13	11.48	11.53
Citywide	33.37	29.17	29.25

The standard is set as a minimum amount of open space a resident should have access to and therefore is expressed in m²/person. We have set a standard based on the expected population growth in Bristol over the next 15 years, aiming to introduce new green space in areas where this growth will be highest.

To reach our minimum standards, we have established the following aspirations for new open space in these zones:

Area/Zone	Combined new open space for recreation provision
Central	2.9 hectares
Inner Urban	1 hectare

This strategy seeks to encourage and guide the development of new spaces in regeneration areas – identified in the Local Plan – rather than specifically outline sites for development. It is most likely that opportunities will be created in parts of the city centre, Temple Quarter, St Philip's Marsh and Frome Gateway.

A full outline of our approach to provision standards can be read in our [Provision Standards Review report](#).

Bristol Open Space provision standards
“We have set out that new green spaces should be a minimum size of 0.2 hectares to be included in our quantity standards.”

To put that into perspective according to BCC Pinpoint Map, St James Barton Roundabout Amenity Area is 0.35 ha !!

No new development should be looking at anything that small let alone about half that size!

To meet the Central Bristol requirements in the PGSS for 25,000 residents the space needed is 7.75 m² per person – i.e. $7.75 \times 25,000 = 193,750$ m². Divide that by 10,000 to get hectares and that gives you =19.375 hectares compared with the 2.3 total in the 2 new parks proposed.

Add in Sparke Evans (though we don't think you should) and you get 4.6 – still somewhat short of 19 ha.

Bristol Open Space provision standards

Open space: Definition and supply

Definition

The standards for open space for recreation are applicable to defined types of space. The definition is not always clear cut but open spaces for recreation include the city's public parks, playing fields and children's play spaces and formal spaces which have become recreational such as historic burial places. They are open spaces which are always publicly accessible and available for use by everyone in the city; to sit and experience nature or a visual attraction, for informal and formal sports activities, children's play, events and cultural activities. Open space for recreation would be focussed primarily on recreation and activity – whether it be passive use or active use and ideally would allow for more than one use at any given time and those uses should be able to take place independently. It is open spaces of this sort to which the strategy relates and which form the basis for open space standards.

Space that is public realm, in contrast, is primarily to provide an attractive outdoor environment in a way that directly responds to a built environment's primary function or use. Public realm is not included in this strategy as it not considered to be open space for recreation, as it generally provides an attractive outdoor environment in a way that directly responds to a built environment's primary function or use.

...sites not considered as open space for recreation...

1.6 Incidental Residential Green Space:

Green space that is associated with housing, but which is publicly accessible and maintained. The 'test' for what is publicly accessible is one that involves a gauge of whether a non-resident user of that space would feel to be intruding into residents 'defensible space'. If a site fails this test, it will fall outside the scope of this typology.

Bristol Parks Forum – summary of our draft response to the St Philips Marsh Masterplan Consultation

The Masterplan has insufficient parks and green spaces provision

- There will clearly be no space for nature to thrive, for local people – the new community – to escape their small apartments and breathe in clean air, enjoy tranquillity, or watch nature.
- No spaces for formal or informal sports; nowhere to kick a ball about for an informal game of footie, and definitely no space for neighbourhood rounders or similar.
- No growing spaces, nowhere to keep cool as Bristol heats up in the ever-increasing heatwaves
- This is an inadequate proposal for homes with no access to decent green space.
- There is precious little evidence of the SPD meeting the PGSS minimum standards let alone makes sufficient provision for the new communities who will be living and working there.

A big public park is needed in St Philips.

- A park that everyone can access, feel welcome and belong
- A park big enough to have a small copse, woodland area not stressed manicured street trees. A place where you can learn about trees, take bark rubbings, watch wildlife, keep cool in the summer.
- A park with plenty of plants and flowers for a wide range of wildlife – bees, butterflies, hoverflies, beetles etc
- A park where birds can nest and breed safely and you and your family can learn their song and watch them thrive
- A park where the kids can play safely – ensure they can get out and get some exercise
- A park where you can gather with your neighbours and friends
- A park to walk your dog in