



Bath & North East Somerset Green Space Strategy

Appendix E Policy Context

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Policy Context

October 2006

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04/10/06

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1.0 Introduction

This policy review has been carried out as part of the development of a Green Space Strategy for Bath and North East Somerset Council in order to understand the current national and local policy context. The report does not include a review of legislation relating to greenspace management, since it is assumed that the authority is aware of the legislative framework within which it operates.

The national policy review has been structured into four sections focusing on strategic planning, green space management, regeneration and community involvement. The local policy review has considered Bath and North East Somerset Council corporate policy, strategic planning and greenspace management.

Key documents within each of these areas have been summarised and reviewed and their relevance to the Green Space Strategy discussed both in terms of planning and service delivery aspects.

2.0 National Policy Review

This section of the report discusses and considers the national policy context with regard to the Green Space Strategy.

2.1 Strategic Planning

2.1.1 Council of Europe Recommendation No. R(86)11

The Council of Europe Recommendation No. R(86)11 of the Committee of Ministers to Member States on Urban Open Space contains the following statement which, whilst not policy clearly sets out the value of urban green space to much wider quality of life issues.

“Urban parks and green spaces are an essential part of the urban heritage and infrastructure, being a strong element in the architectural and landscape character of towns and cities, providing a sense of place and engendering civic pride. They are important for enabling social interaction and fostering community development. Public green spaces help to conserve natural systems, including carbon, water and other natural cycles, within the urban environment, supporting ecosystems and providing the contrast of living elements in both designed landscapes and conserved wildlife habitats within our urban settlements. Parks and green spaces are supportive of social and economic objectives and activities. In particular the provision of public parks helps to reduce the inequalities, poor health and social exclusion in deprived areas and reduces the inherent tension between the many social and ethnic groups who form the wider community. Providing for the recreational and leisure needs of a community assists the economic revival of cities, increasing their attractiveness as a place for business investment, to live, work and take our leisure”

Comments
This statement sets out clearly the benefits of urban parks and green spaces and their potential contribution to social, cultural and economic regeneration as well as to the notion of sustainable cities, biodiversity and health. All of these issues are extremely relevant to current national agendas and this statement points the way to a more central role for urban green space in addressing many issues of urban society.

2.1.2 Town & Country Planning Act 1990

Central to the functioning of the land use planning system is the primary legislation provided in the Town & Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended). This identifies who is responsible for decision-making (the processing and determination of applications for permission to develop land, property or buildings) and indicates how development proposals are to be determined.

Comments
This provides the central legislative framework for the land use planning system and is a core reference with regard to the Green Space Strategy.

2.1.3 Planning Policy Guidance

Within the legislative framework provided by the various Planning Acts, the Government has issued a number of Planning Policy Guidance Notes (PPGs) which outline the way the planning system should respond and help achieve wider Government policy aims and objectives, particularly those where the land use planning system may play a key part. Such objectives are broadly identified as sustainable development, a prosperous economy, reducing the need to travel, economic growth, and social inclusion, alongside the need to protect and enhance the natural and built environment.

Under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, Planning Policy Guidance notes are gradually being replaced by Planning Policy Statements (PPSs). The Statements provide the same level of guidance as PPGs, but are meant to be more concise and will be supported by good practice guides and supplementary reports.

A number of PPGs and PPSs cover specific matters, which relate to the use of land. However, not all PPGs and PPSs are relevant to this Study; as a result, we have only reviewed those that we consider to be of particular relevance, these include:

- □ PPS 1 Delivering Sustainable Development
- □ PPG 2 Green Belts
- □ PPS 9 Biodiversity and Geological Conservation
- □ PPS 12 Development Plans
- □ PPG 17 Sport and Recreation

PPS 1 Delivering Sustainable Development (2005) sets out the Government's overarching planning policies on the delivery of sustainable development through the planning system. Key principles relate to the integration of environmental, economic and social objectives, promotion of policies, which reduce energy use and the need to travel, high quality design in new developments, inclusive access for all and community involvement.

Specific reference is made to the need to improve the built and natural environment in and around urban areas and rural settlements, including the provision of good quality open space. Moreover, the Government advocates that new developments should optimise the potential of a site and should sustain an appropriate mix of uses, including green and other public space.

PPG 2 Green Belts (1995) states the Government's intentions in respect of Green Belt policy, in particular, it reaffirms the specific purposes of designating land in Green Belts, includes objectives for the use of such land, confirms the protection of Green Belts and maintains a presumption against inappropriate development within these areas.

The guidance notes that once Green Belts have been defined, the use of land in them has a positive role to play in:

- Providing opportunities for access to the open countryside for the urban population and specifically for the provision of outdoor sport and outdoor recreation near urban areas
- Retaining attractive landscapes and enhancing landscapes near to urban areas
- Improving damaged and derelict land around urban areas
- Securing nature conservation interests
- Retaining land in agricultural, forestry and associated uses

The guidance stresses the need for permanence in respect of Green Belt designation and advocates that their protection should be maintained as far as can be seen ahead.

PPS 9 Biodiversity and Geological Conservation (2005) sets out the Government's policies in respect of nature conservation, with an emphasis on conserving, enhancing and restoring England's biological and geological features and linking this to the Government's overall objective of delivering sustainable development. The Statement specifically recognises the important part that biodiversity and geological conservation can play in other aspects of development and regeneration and in particular, green space provision.

PPS 12 Local Development Frameworks (2004) sets out government guidance on the preparation of SPDs and suggests that they should be included as part of the LDF, but they will not be subject to independent examination and will not form part of the statutory development plan. However, the SPD should be subject to extensive community involvement during its preparation.

The guidance advises that SPDs may take the form of design guides, area development briefs, masterplans or issue based documents (e.g. developer contributions towards community facilities).

PPS12 states that an SPD must be:

- Consistent with national and regional planning policies as well as policies in development plan documents
- Cross referenced to the relevant local planning policies, which it supplements
- Reviewed on a regular basis when the planning policies to which it relates are updated.

PPS 12 further stipulates that the process by which the SPD has been prepared must be made clear and a statement of conformity with the statement of community involvement must be published with it.

PPG 17 Planning for Open Space, Sport and Recreation (July 2002)

This provides the most recent and up-to-date guidance on the consideration of open space, sport and recreation matters in relation to the land use planning system. The previous version of the guidance issued in 1991 placed great emphasis upon the quantity of provision and relating the provision to a nationally agreed standard, 'the six acre standard' (i.e. six acres (2.43 hectares) per 1000 population). The replacement guidance places more emphasis on the quality of open space, rather than the quantity and the development of provision standards specific to the needs of the local area.

Revisions to the guidance recognise the importance that sport and recreation play in the quality of life for people. Furthermore, it highlights that sport and recreation are fundamental to delivering broader Government objectives such as the urban renaissance, promotion of social inclusion, community cohesion, health and well being, as well as more sustainable patterns of development. As such, local authorities are required to prepare an open space strategy.

In terms of managing and planning for the provision of open space, PPG17 identifies (at paragraph 1) that it is essential for local authorities to know and understand the needs of local communities. In so doing it advises that local authorities should undertake robust assessments of both the existing and future needs of communities.

As a standard, it suggests that assessments should include an audit of existing open space, including:

- sports and recreational facilities
- the use of existing facilities
- access in terms of cost and location
- opportunities for new facilities and open spaces

Emphasis is placed upon assessing the qualitative nature of provision as well as quantitative issues, as this will allow authorities to identify the potential for increased use of existing open space through better design, management and maintenance

Good quality audits are identified as a key component of future development plan strategies and policies, as they enable local authorities to identify specific needs as well as qualitative and quantitative deficiencies and emphasis of provision. As such they provide the starting point from which to establish an effective strategy for sport and recreation as well as effective land use planning through the creation of effective policies in local plans.

Where effective policies are in place, paragraph 5 identifies that the audit can be used to resolve potential conflicts that arise between different uses and users of sport and recreation facilities.

Section 2 of the Guidance note advocates that local authorities should establish their own local standards, although the guidance does not go so far as to identify how these should be quantified. It does indicate that local standards should include:

- a quantitative element, to assess how much new provision may be required;
- a qualitative component to assess whether existing facilities may be enhanced; and
- an accessibility measure.

At paragraph 18, the guidance notes that under use of facilities does not indicate a lack of need but may result from the poor quality of facilities in an area. As such, the guidance suggests the enhancement of existing facilities and the use of planning obligations to secure improvements, where there is an identified need.

A number of general principals are listed at paragraph 20 for the provision of new sports and recreational facilities. These include, inter alia:

- promoting accessibility by walking, cycling and public transport and ensure facilities are accessible for people with disabilities
- locating intensive forms of use where they can promote town centre vitality and viability
- avoiding loss of amenity or biodiversity
- improving quality through good design
- adding to and enhancing the existing range of facilities;
- considering security and personal safety
- meeting regeneration needs of areas and social inclusion

In considering these principals, a number of general criteria can be applied to the provision of new facilities. These include:

- locating major generators of travel and activity in central locations where they can be accessible to a range of public transport modes;
- where local facilities are proposed these should be in locations that are well served by public transport;
- best use should be made of urban fringe land where there is an absence of land within the urban area to meet provision. Again such locations should be accessible and well related to public transport provision.

Planning obligations are discussed at paragraph 33, which states that these tools should be used to remedy local deficiencies in the quantity or quality of local open space provision. In so doing, the guidance again highlights the need for a good quality assessment of need and an audit of facilities, to set local standards to justify planning obligations.

Current Government policy on the use of planning obligations is provided in the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister Circular 05/2005 Planning Obligations, July 2005 which has superseded the earlier Department of the Environment Circular 1/97 on this subject. Circular 05/2005 advises that planning obligations (or “s106 agreements”) should only be entered into where they are:

- i relevant to planning;
- ii necessary to make the proposed development acceptable in planning terms;
- iii directly related to the proposed development;
- iv fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind to the proposed development; and
- v reasonable in all other respects

The guidance advises that otherwise acceptable development should never be refused if an applicant is unable, or unwilling, to offer benefits and should never be permitted because of unnecessary, or unrelated, benefits offered by an applicant.

Comments

Those Planning Policy Guidance notes and their replacement - Planning Policy Statements, as discussed above are of direct relevance to the development of the Green Space Strategy.

2.1.4 Open Space Planning in London, Llewellyn-Davies Planning / London Planning Advisory Committee (1992)

One of the most quoted publications regarding classification of open space and creation of hierarchies is the Open Space Planning in London report (LPAC 1992). This represented the second revision of the open space hierarchy originally included in the Greater London Development Plan of 1976. It has further been refined in 1999/2000 and a fuller consideration of the hierarchy is set out in section 5 below.

As with other quantitative approaches critics have pointed out the omission of qualitative criteria in determining such a hierarchy. Issues of character, quality and value are not taken into account, if they are then a different picture is painted. Also the LPAC system defined its own typology of forms of open space that others have sought to refine see typology section below.

Comments

The GDLP / LPAC system was noted for its consideration of accessibility issues by considering the severance effects of major roads and transportation corridors and not using straight line walking distances to calculate catchment.

This and later guidance is important in determining accessibility and hierarchies of green space in Bath and North East Somerset.

2.1.5 Accessible Natural Greenspace In Towns And Cities. A Review Of Appropriate Size And Distance Criteria, English Nature (1995)

This guidance for strategic open space planning focusing on natural and semi-natural green space was published by English Nature in 1995. English Nature suggests that accessible natural green spaces have an important role to play in improving quality of life in urban areas. The 1995 report reviewed the available scientific literature and concluded that natural green space in urban areas should be governed by a hierarchy of size and distance criteria.

English Nature subsequently adopted the Accessible Natural Greenspace Standards (ANGSt) model and published “A Space for Nature” to promote them.

The ANGSt model set the following standards;

- “No person should live more than 300m from their nearest area of natural green space of at least 2 ha in size
- Provision of at least 1 ha of local nature reserve per 1000 population
- There should be at least one accessible 20 ha site within 2 km from home
- There should be one accessible 100 ha site within 5 km
- There should be one accessible 500 ha site within 10 km”.

Comments

The Accessible Natural Green Space model developed by English Nature provides suggested standards for the quantity of provision of natural green space in urban areas in order to provide a balance of different types of provision.
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2.1.6 Assessing Demand for Open Space in London, WS Atkins / London Planning Advisory Committee (2000)

This document seeks to review the existing approaches to assessing demand for open space and to establish an appropriate basis for assessing the requirement for open space in the future.

The research concentrated on green open space in London which is currently used for recreation and amenity purposes, which is primarily in public ownership and freely accessible. It highlights the uneven distribution of open spaces between London Boroughs, the importance of cross boundary provision and how standards have traditionally been used to protect these resources from development but also to encourage more open space to be provided in areas where there is a deficiency.

In considering the current policy context it was noted that the original PPG 17 requires local planning authorities to develop their own standards for provision, to identify areas of deficiency and protect open space with recreational or amenity value. However, the research indicated that London Boroughs typically relied on the LPAC hierarchy of open space and other established national standards, such as the NPFA 6 Acre Standard, rather than drawing up locally based standards.

The report identifies that the factors which determine the requirement for open space are complex and dynamic. Open space and leisure facility planning is not simply a function of identifying and responding to current expressed demand but that demand for open space is also a function of supply, accessibility and quality of provision. Consequently, a fixed standards are not effective in this respect and are not responsive to changing demographic and socio-economic patterns, changing lifestyles, patterns of mobility and leisure participation. It was also found that different user groups associated with different aspects of open space within London had different and conflicting views regarding the connectivity of open spaces. Environmentalists, walkers and cyclists were typically interested in the flow within and between open spaces which was often in opposition to the views of local community

based organisations who wished to preserve and maintain open spaces and parks as self contained 'islands'.

The publication reviewed the current approaches to assessing demand for open spaces and considered alternative approaches based on social-economic and cultural trends. It was found that approaches which combine demand with travel distance have tended to replace planning methods based on simple per capita standards. It was also noted that while the LPAC (or equivalent) hierarchy of open space was a common method of planning open space provision in London and reflects the way people use open space in relation to distance it does not accurately reflect other factors that affect demand such as the quality of open space, population structure, the needs of different groups and accessibility factors.

The report concludes that the use of quantitative standards should be included as one element of an ongoing programme to enhance the quality and use of open space for different types of activity which can be modified in relation to changing patterns and needs. The way forward which is advocated in this report is a broad management framework for open space where greater emphasis is placed on issues of quality rather than quantity of provision.

Any assessment of demand for open space should be based on an understanding of the current usage, references and trends and planning authorities should undertake an assessment of current usage and non-use as the basis for any open space strategy. This should be used as a basis for forecasting demand with reference to need, changing populations and aspirations associated with open space.

Comments
While this publication and the research which supports this document is focused on London Boroughs it provides a useful model that can be applied to help develop the Greenspace Audit and Strategy for Bath and North East Somerset.
In assessing demand, current patterns of usage should be identified along with an identification of the non-users and any barriers to participation. Information about travel time and distance through consultation should be used to inform the Green Space Strategy along with the findings relating to the quality of provision.

2.1.7 The Six Acre Standard, National Playing Fields Association (2001)

In 2001 the National Playing Fields Association (NPFA) published its revised revision of its 6 Acre Standard, a quantitative methodology which only looks at outdoor play space not all open space provision.

*“outdoor playing space is not the same as public open space;
... it is a significant component”*

NPFA (2001)

The standard is designed for both existing provision and to guide the scale of provision in new development. It is very much targeted at outdoor play, games, sport and other physical recreation and aims to be flexible enough to be applied when

assessing playing pitch requirements, preparing a recreation strategy, designing new developments or producing policies for a development plan.

There is a danger however that it's interpretation is taken too literally or expanded into areas it was not designed for.

“it may be used as a crutch by planners, who may come to depend on it and avoid rigorous thinking from first principles”

NPFA (2001)

Comments

The Six Acre Standard is a quantitative standard of provision for formal recreation provision which can be used as a benchmark in setting local standards of provision.

2.1.8 Rethinking Open Space, Kit Campbell, (2001)

Contemporary with the Urban Parks Forum Public Parks Assessment was the publication of *Rethinking Open Space - Open space provision and management: A way forward* (Campbell 2001). Campbell's work sets out a frightening overall conclusion.

“The key overall conclusion from this study is quite simple the way in which most Scottish local authorities approach the planning of open space is fundamentally flawed” [sic]

Campbell, K (2001)

Campbell refers again to the over-reliance on simple quantitative standards to the expense of issues of quality. Where qualitative methods are used they are applied authority wide with a lack consideration of local distinctiveness and neighbourhood. Also Campbell refers to the lack of ability of authorities to break down inter departmental boundaries and to produce complimentary and inter linked strategies based on community values, needs and expectations.

What Campbell's work also brings out is the need to consider different types of open space (see also DTLR 2001b) and the need for a standardised typology to give guidance on this issue.

Whilst Campbell supports the need for open space strategies he points out the fact that such documents are only of any value when they are implemented on the ground through effective management and maintenance coupled with support from the community.

Strategy preparation must:

- “seek to involve local people at appropriate points in the process
- take account of other relevant pre-existing plans and strategies
- involve a wide range of agencies in the public, private and voluntary sectors
- result in a useful corporate database
- be based on facts and data on open space
- include clear and realistic objectives
- be designed to deliver agreed outcomes’.

Campbell (2001)

Comments

This publication argues that quantitative standards of open space provision have taken precedence over the quality of provision. It is also recommended that different types of open space are considered within a standardised open space typology.

Where green space strategies are developed Campbell suggests that these documents should be produced with the involvement of the local community and delivered through an effective management regime. It is suggested that preparation of green space strategies should include a number of key elements if they are to be effective.

This document provides some useful pointers about the process of developing a green space strategy and the development of local standards and as such is a useful reference for the Green Space Strategy.

2.1.9 Good Practice Guide, Providing For Sport And Recreation Through New Housing Development, Sport England (2001)

This guide is aimed at planners, sports development and leisure officers, developers and others involved in the housing development process and replaces advice in Planning Obligations for Sport and Recreation – A guide for Negotiation and Action published in 1993 by the Sports Council.

It gives advice on how sport and recreation provision can successfully be achieved in conjunction with new housing and covers the following issues;

- *“pursuing a strategic approach at local authority level*
- *the need to link the corporate strategy and Best Value work of authorities with the process of negotiating new and refurbished sports facilities*
- *joint working between sport and leisure professionals and land use planners within authorities*
- *the provision of good quality local justification for what is sought from developers and other applicants for planning permission”*

The guidance suggests that providing for sport and recreation through new housing development is a six stage process. Each of the stages is outlined below;

- 1 *“development of a clear local sports strategy, complemented by a regularly updated sports action plan detailing facility and management needs*
- 2 *preparation of locally-justified assessments of facility and management costs, and systems to ensure fair and equitable developer contributions*
- 3 *the approval of appropriate policies in development plans, and the use of supplementary planning guidance to give details of how contribution schemes operate*
- 4 *the use of a team approach at local authority level in the negotiation process*
- 5 *the use of a template (checklist) against which the content of planning obligations can be assessed*
- 6 *development of accountable and transparent procedures for negotiating planning obligations incorporating, at the same time, effective monitoring and review”.*

This guide complements other advice recently published by Sport England, notably in its Best Value tool kit for sports which includes;

- Planning Policies For Sport (1999)
- Planning Across Boundaries (1999)
- Guidance On Modernising Community Sports Facilities (2000)

In addition, the guide provides references to other useful reference publications and details of some of the other funding bodies who may contribute to the delivery of sports facilities.

Comments
This is a useful reference document in considering how sport and recreation provision can be provided through developers as part of the planning process. It is of relevance in considering how any new facilities identified through the development of the Green Space Strategy could be delivered.

2.1.10 Assessing Needs and Opportunities – A Companion Guide to PPG17, ODPM (2002)

Further guidance entitled ‘Assessing Needs and Opportunities – A Companion Guide to PPG17’, was published by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) in September 2002.

The Guide reflects the Government’s policy objectives for open space, sport and recreation, as set out in PPG17 and described above.

The Guide seeks to build examples of existing good planning practice, sets out how local authorities can use the planning system to help deliver accessible, high quality and sustainable open spaces which meet local needs and are valued by local communities (Reference paragraph 1.5).

The Guidance stresses the fact that the delivery of a network of high quality open spaces depends on creative urban and landscape design, effective management, as well as good planning.

In many areas the guidance suggests that improvements to the quality and accessibility of existing open space will be the key to delivering the aims of PPG17, rather than new provision.

The value of open space is considered to depend on two key aspects:

- the extent to which it meets the identified needs of the local community:
- the wider benefits for people, wildlife, biodiversity and the wider environment.

The Companion Guide discusses the differences between urban and rural areas, with the suggestion that residents in rural areas cannot expect to have access to the same range of facilities, as those living in urban areas. Accordingly, the guidance advises that local authorities may have to prepare different standards for urban and rural areas to reflect these differences.

Five key attributes underpin all open space and recreational facilities, as set out in the Guidance:

- Accessibility – if an area is not accessible it will be of no value to those who wish to use it. However, the guidance acknowledges the importance inaccessible open space can make to the appearance and environmental quality of an area.
- Quality – the guidance points out that quality relates to fitness for purpose and this requires clarity as to what the purpose is.
- Multi functional – many open spaces are used for a variety of activities and thus the guidance suggests that this can cause problems when undertaking audits.
- Primary purpose – to avoid confusion caused by (3) above, it is suggested that each open space is identified once in an audit and its primary function recorded.
- Quantity – usually measured as amount of provision; although the guidance advises that it may be possible to address a deficiency in open space provision by improving the quality or specification of existing facilities.

The Guidance advises that although accessibility and quantity are delivered and protected by planning; and quality, multi functionality and primary purpose are initially delivered through good design, all five attributes are sustained by good management and maintenance.

The Guide indicates how local authorities can:

- a. Establish the wishes of their local communities and apply their provision standards in a way that is equitable to both developers and local communities.
- b. Promote a consistent approach across different facility types.

Moreover, it also provides a framework for determining the need for planning conditions or the negotiation of planning agreements.

Comments
The guidance provides detailed information about methodologies for undertaking each of the stages of a green space audit and strategy and is a key document in developing a Green space Audit and Strategy for Bath & North East Somerset.

2.1.11 The Urban Green Spaces Task Force (2002)

Following the Urban White Paper, an Urban Green Spaces Task Force was established to develop proposals to improve urban parks, play areas and green spaces. It reported in 2002 and set out 52 recommendations to Government.

The Task Force's report, *Green Spaces, Better Places* begins by emphasising the diverse value of urban open spaces and highlights the decline in quality of many urban parks and green spaces and states that action is urgently required if they are to deliver their many benefits. The authors argue that parks and open spaces have the potential to make a major contribution to urban regeneration by enhancing the environment, facilitating social inclusion, contributing to healthy living and providing educational opportunities.

The Task Force's first recommendation relates to providing high quality green spaces to meet the needs of people in disadvantaged areas. They also recommend that green space planning should be put at the heart of urban regeneration.

Notwithstanding the potential of urban parks and green spaces, the Task Force identified significant obstacles to realising this potential. Most importantly the authors report that a majority of urban green spaces have suffered neglect and decline as a result of significant under investment over the past 15-20 years.

Background research for the report also found that some sectors of society, particularly people over 65, those with disabilities, ethnic minorities, women and 12 to 19 year olds, are using open space less than others.

The Task Force was also concerned at the declining standards of park maintenance arising from the loss of horticultural skills and the declining status of parks staff.

The Task Force argued that realising the potential of urban parks and open spaces requires increased capital funding (some £100 million in each of the next five years), more partnerships between the private sector, local authorities and communities, better skilled staff, improved statistics, better planning and more Government support.

Comments
"Green Spaces, Better Places" signalled the start of a renaissance for urban green space and provides some clear recommendations for central and local government on a way forward. As regards strategic planning it provides a comprehensive review of issues and some sound recommendations for every local authority to update or develop a green space strategy.

2.1.12 Green Space Strategies, A Good Practice Guide, CABE Space (2004)

CABE Space published this good practice guide to Green Space Strategies in 2004. The document is structured around the following sections;

- *“What is a green space strategy?”*
- *Why prepare a green space strategy?*
- *What is involved in preparing a green space strategy?”*

Also covered are the issues of green space audit methodology and community involvement along with a bibliography and a list of key contacts.

Comments
The guidance is a useful reference in defining the scope and contents of a green space strategy. The publication includes a number of local authority case studies to illustrate key issues.

2.1.13 Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004

In December 2001, the Government issued a Green Paper - Planning: Delivering a Fundamental Change - as a consultation document, seeking to promote planning as a positive tool and as a process which adds value to communities through encouraging high quality development in the right places to meet local needs, better design and better community involvement. The culmination of 18 months of review and amendment was the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Bill, which was granted Royal Assent on 14 May 2004 and which came into force in September 2004.

One of the key elements of the reforms is the use of Local Development Frameworks (LDFs) to replace the present system of Structure Plans, Local Plans and UDP's. LDFs will incorporate a Local Development Scheme (LDS), which will detail the proposals for preparing Local Development Documents (LDDs).

LDDs will comprise:

- Development Plan Documents
- Supplementary Planning Documents
- Statements of Community Involvement
- Annual Monitoring Report

The Development Plan Documents must include a core strategy, proposals map and area action plans.

Area action plans will need to be prepared for key areas of change, which might include detailed site-specific proposals and other non-statutory guidance such as development briefs.

Comments

This legislation established the Local Development Framework and Local Development Documents as the replacement to the Unitary Development Plan (and other local plans). The Green Space Strategy will contribute to the development of the LDF and as such the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 is a key reference.

2.2 Greenspace Management

2.2.1 Improving Urban Parks, Play Areas and Open Spaces, Department of Transport Local Government and the Regions (2002)

Improving Urban Parks, Play Areas and Open Spaces sets out the findings of the research carried out to inform the work of the Urban Green Spaces Task Force and was commissioned to fill gaps in existing information identified in the Urban White Paper and the 1999 report by the House of Commons Environment, Transport and Regional Affairs Committee on Town and County Parks. The research was undertaken in 2001 by the Department of Landscape at the University of Sheffield.

The research sought to;

- *“provide reliable information about the different users of urban green space and how they use different types of green space*
- *determine the frequency and extent of use of urban green space and any variation by geographical location and different types of users*
- *provide a picture of the range and nature of activity and facilities offered*
- *investigate the expectations of users of urban green space*
- *develop a typology of open spaces*
- *examine the ways in which open spaces contribute to enhancing quality of life*
- *examine the barriers to use of urban green space and identify key factors that would encourage greater use*
- *assess current local authority approaches to the planning, provision, management and maintenance of urban green spaces and opportunities for improving standards*
- *identify and evaluate a range of innovative models for managing and maintaining urban green spaces*
- *develop new approaches for the management and maintenance of urban green spaces that promote effective community involvement”*

The research found that urban green spaces plays an important role in the quality of life of local people through both it's existence and contribution to the landscape and

also as an important recreational facility. In addition, urban green spaces were shown to provide significant economic, social and community benefits and act as a catalyst for wider community initiatives.

The under representation of some groups of people among users of urban green spaces reflects the wider social exclusion of groups in society. Access for the disabled and the elderly, the different cultural needs of ethnic minority groups and the changing lifestyles and needs of children and young people may all contribute to low levels of use of urban green space.

Design was recognised as being a significant element in addressing barriers to use and the research noted that the design process should be seen as an ongoing process to problem solving that should be part of managing and solving problems in urban green space.

The report noted a real change in local authorities to involving local people and community based organisations in parks management and in the most effective services this was seen as a mainstream activity. However, it was noted that partnership working between local authorities and other organisations and agencies was less well developed in the United Kingdom than other countries.

In terms of a strategic approach the report also suggested that local authorities should adopt a holistic view of the overall green space resources, recognising the important contribution of all green space to the quality of life of local people. Effective tools to achieve this could include green space audits incorporating qualitative and quantitative information, green space typologies that drive policy, green structure plans and green space strategies. Again, the United Kingdom was deemed to place less emphasis on the strategic planning of green space than other parts of Europe.

Allied to the lack of strategic approaches to green space planning was the fragmentation of responsibility for green space management which was shown to be a barrier to effective management and maintenance and community involvement. It was noted that the changing roles which would be required to accommodate more effective ways of working would also require new skills and a “new breed of green space professional”.

In conclusion, the report suggested that information on urban green space needs to be collected more effectively and that a common green space typology along with a typology of users of green space could contribute to more reliable and consistent data collection at a national and local level.

Comments

This is a comprehensive and significant publication based on research that clearly demonstrates the importance of parks to quality of life and the significant economic, social and community benefits of urban green spaces.

For the first time extensive research data was published about the different users of parks and urban green spaces and the barriers that face different groups of people in society. In addition, the publication identifies ways in which these barriers to use can be addressed for specific groups.

The report advocates a strategic approach to green space planning and management. This publication also suggests that service delivery should not be fragmented and that there is a rational management structure and that there are clear lines of responsibilities for green space management and maintenance.

2.2.2 Living Places: Cleaner, Safer, Greener, Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, (2002)

This document sets out the government's response to the Urban Greenspaces Task Force report *Green Spaces Better Places*, wrapped up in a wider report about the public realm and the government's recognition of the role that this plays in creating sustainable, liveable towns and cities.

"Successful, thriving and prosperous communities are characterised by streets, parks and open spaces that are clean, safe attractive – areas that local people are proud of and want to spend their time (in)." p5

It is also the result of cross department working over six areas of government who have an involvement in or responsibility for the public realm.

In terms of the production of a green space strategy there are some interesting sections to note as follows.

"Over the next five years the Government will lead in developing an effective national framework for urban parks and greenspaces. It will implement new planning policy that puts green spaces at the heart of our objectives for achieving a renaissance of towns and cities." p39

This document framed the establishment of CABE Space with responsibility to:

- i). Champion the vital role of urban parks and green spaces in improving quality of life and delivering urban renaissance.*
- ii). Work closely with relevant government departments and agencies, voluntary organisations and funding providers to improve co-ordination and delivery of programmes and initiatives.*
- iii). Advocate the need for higher priority and resources for parks and green spaces at national, regional and local levels, and provide advice on*

funding issues.

iv). Strengthen existing and promote and stimulate new partnerships for improving green spaces involving the voluntary and private sectors and local groups.

v). Promote and develop skills and training needs for delivering and supporting improvements.

vi). *Carry out research and develop information, quality standards and good practice.*

Key partners to work alongside CAGE Space include GreenSpace (formerly the Urban Parks Forum), Groundwork, the Improvement and Development Agency and the Green Flag Award scheme. The latter is a significant move and shows that the government is clearly interested in how to benchmark quality of greenspace.

Comments
<p>The report contains a clear indication that the government wants all local authorities to produce Greenspace Audits and Assessments. It also reinforces the message of PPG17 and its companion guide when referring to effective land use planning.</p> <p>Beyond strategies there should be related service level agreements, quality standards and targets for local authority parks services. This will be 'enforced' through the Comprehensive Performance Assessments (CPA) for district authorities. It is intended that CAGE Space will produce new indicators for parks as well as working with the Audit Commission on the CPA frameworks.</p>

2.2.3 Public Parks Assessment, GreenSpace (2003)

The Public Parks Assessment, commissioned jointly by the DTLR, Heritage Lottery Fund, English Heritage and the Countryside Agency, for the first time assessed the overall standard of parks and green spaces in the United Kingdom. The main purpose of the study was to establish the level of need in relation to all public parks and to create a database of local authority owned public parks.

Data was gathered on the condition of parks and green spaces and the levels of revenue expenditure on these site over the past 20 years. The research found that across the UK there were 27,000 public parks covering 143,000 hectares, maintained at a cost of £630 million annually. It was also estimated that there are 1.5 million park visitors annually.

While parks were generally well valued by local people, the study showed that generally urban parks were in decline with local authority parks budgets reduced by 20% over the last 20 years and a cumulative revenue expenditure deficit of £1.3 billion. It was considered that the quality of parks and green spaces was becoming more polarised with the good parks getting better and the poorer parks getting worse and in the most deprived areas these trends were further exaggerated. Historic parks were also considered to have fared worse than recreational open spaces.

While under funding was a major factor in determining quality it was noted that there were other issues that affected the management of parks and green spaces. The research identified that "park authorities who operate a strategy are by far the most successful at ensuring that good park stocks continue to improve".

Comments

The Public Parks Assessment demonstrated that parks and green spaces were well used local amenities despite a significant and sustained decline in investment and quality over the last 20 years. It was recognised that there were some good examples of high quality parks and that these examples were typically where the management practices and strategies were effective.

2.2.4 Parks and Squares: Who Cares? CABE Space (2004)

This document reports on the findings of a nationwide survey of what constitutes a good park. A vast majority of the public, 91%, believe that parks and public spaces improve people's quality of life. The research provides an insight into the issues the public feel need to be addressed in order to improve or maintain the standard of parks and how they want their local authorities to deliver these standards.

A number of factors were identified that contributed either positively or negatively to the overall image of parks and green spaces. A domino effect was also discovered showing that no particular issue, whether positive or negative, was isolated or static. The document centres on '*seven factors that public spaces have got to get right*';

1. *"Maintenance and management*
2. *Community resource*
3. *Space for nature*
4. *Leisure and recreation*
5. *Design quality and cultural heritage*
6. *Health and well-being*
7. *Local economy"*

The overall findings show that there is a huge demand for good quality, well maintained and well designed parks and public spaces. The major issue is how to interpret these findings into producing the standard that the public require.

Comments

This document established that parks are seen as an important asset for local people and can make a positive contribution to quality of life. The research found that local people judge the value of parks and green spaces by a number of factors and that good quality parks are managed in a holistic manner.

2.2.5 Living Places - Caring for Quality, Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (2004)

Living Places - Caring for Quality was published by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister in 2004 and examines how local authorities and other organisations are delivering improved standards in the better management of public space.

The research identified four key barriers to better practice;

- *“A lack of coordination*
- *Weak use of regulatory powers*
- *Uncoordinated investment*
- *The priority generally given to maintenance”*

Caring for Quality suggests that long term management and maintenance is exacerbated by *“too many hands all trying to do their best with limited and declining resources, with little coordination between efforts and few attempts to question the rule books which guide key public services”*.

Overall the document suggests that it is possible to identify a common set of aspirations for public space. Public space should be;

- *“Clean – a clean and well cared for place*
- *Accessible – a place that is easy to get to and move through*
- *Attractive – a visually pleasing place*
- *Comfortable – somewhere that is pleasant to spend time in*
- *Inclusive – a place that is welcoming to all*
- *Vital and viable – a place that is well used in relation to it’s predominant function(s)*
- *Functional – a place that functions well at all times*
- *Distinctive – somewhere that makes the most of its character*
- *Safe and secure – somewhere that feels safe from harm*
- *Robust – a place that stands up well to the pressures of everyday use”*

Comments
Caring for Quality identified a series of barriers that prevent public space managers from achieving better standards. The documents also contains a set of standards or aspiration for all public spaces.

2.2.6 Is The Grass Greener...? Learning From International Innovations In Urban Green Space Management, CABE Space (2004)

This document was published by CABE Space in 2004 and considers the experiences of 11 international cities, across 5 continents, in managing and developing their green spaces and identifies common issues faced by English local authorities.

The document follows and draws upon some of the key findings of the Urban Green Spaces Taskforce which are listed below;

- *“Greenspaces being poorly maintained suffering from uncoordinated development and maintenance activities*
- *Greenspaces being insecure because of perceived high crime rates*
- *Lack of a coherent approach to their management*
- *Greenspaces offering little to their users with a lack of facilities and amenities*
- *Poor design which is unwelcoming and often uses poor quality materials”*

The report considers the fundamental issues facing English practice in managing and developing greenspaces and compares this with international case studies. The fundamental issues identified are;

- *“Understanding urban greenspace*
- *Aspirations for high quality urban green space*
- *Responsibilities for urban green space management*
- *The coordination and resourcing of management responsibilities*
- *Delivery of urban green space maintenance and reinvestment*
- *The application of management practices to local contexts*
- *The outcomes from urban green space management practices”*

Key findings include;

- *“The need to establish a coherent management strategy to cope with the diversity of green spaces*
- *Green space aspirations need to be considered within the broader context of other relevant policy areas*
- *Successful greenspace management depends upon a long term commitment to green spaces, not restricted to a single party agenda*
- *Community participation in green space management is beneficial*
- *The coordination of management responsibilities is probably more important for the quality of management and green spaces than the formal distribution of those responsibilities*
- *A clear statutory basis for green space management can be beneficial to ensure at least a statutory minimum quality is achieved, however it is more important to have the political will to use the powers or to find other means to deliver high quality green space management*
- *The quality of the working relationships between those with responsibility for green space management is the most important factor in affecting the better coordination of responsibilities and intervention*
- *Coordination is most effective when key responsibilities are unified under clear lines of management responsibility and externally through a single point of contact*
- *There is significant potential in exploring supplementary sources of funding*
- *The importance of clearly defined and properly resourced maintenance plans as tools for structuring, coordinating and delivering maintenance routines*
- *There is no single best way of organising maintenance routines*

- *The delegation of some responsibilities to the operational level is desirable if maintenance routines are to be flexible to respond to the changing demands of users*
- *Individual green spaces have different management needs and the most successful cities acknowledge and understand those differences and actively plan for them*
- *Enforcement action should feed back into green space management systems*
- *Effective and comprehensive monitoring systems will require considerable effort to ensure they are appropriate to local circumstances*
- *The importance of monitoring user's interactions and satisfaction with green spaces and their management"*

Comments

This is a very comprehensive document supported by extensive research into the weaknesses of greenspace management in this country and examples of good practice internationally. Consideration is given to a diverse range of factors that affect the quality of green space management and a number of key findings have been made under these headings.

2.2.7 Raising the Standard, The Green Flag Award Guidance Manual, L. Greenhalgh & A. Parsons (2004)

The Green Flag Award Manual originally written in 1996 was updated in 2004 and is the Guidance Manual for judges and applicants for the Green Flag Award.

The Green Flag Award is based on 8 key criteria;

- *"A Welcoming Place*
- *Healthy, safe and Secure*
- *Clean & Well Maintained*
- *Sustainability*
- *Conservation and Heritage*
- *Community Involvement*
- *Marketing and Management"*

The assessment comprises a desk based exercise to consider the management plan and other documentation guiding the site's management as well as a field assessment.

The manual includes guidance on good management practice and policy and includes case studies to illustrate examples of good practice against particular criteria. The guide also signposts sources of useful and relevant reference material.

Comments

The manual provides relevant guidance on best practice listed under each of the award criteria and is of relevance to key sites within the study area that may be appropriate for submission under this quality award scheme.

2.2.8 A Guide to Producing Park and Green Space Management Plans, CABI Space (2004)

This publication was written by Green Space and Community First Partnership in 2004 following dialogue with a number of organisations and feedback from Green Flag Award applicants and judges where it was suggested that applicants to the award were experiencing difficulties in producing good management plans.

The guide's primary purpose is to;

“encourage wider use of the management plans by dispelling the myth that the creation of a site management plan is an exceptionally difficult task that can be undertaken only by an expert”.

The guide suggests that the key sections of a site management should include;

- *“Where are we now?”*
 - *Introduction*
 - *Policy context*
 - *Site description*

- *Where do we want to get to ?*
 - *Vision*
 - *Assessment & analysis*
 - *Aims & objectives*

- *How will we get there?*
 - *Work / action plan*
 - *Finance & resources*

- *How will we know when we have arrived?*
 - *Monitor & review”*

The guide is illustrated with a number of local authority case studies which were reviewed as part of the research that contributed to this publication.

Comments

This document provides comprehensive guidance on the management planning process and to producing management plans for greenspaces. It is recognised as important guidance in the production of site specific management plans and the management planning process which is key to improving green space quality.

2.2.9 Policy Note : Preventing Anti-Social Behaviour in Public Spaces, CABE Space (2004)

This policy note published by CABE Space describes the issues relating to anti-social behaviour in parks and greenspaces and suggests that there are solutions other than increasing physical security measures. CABE Space suggests that increasing physical measures or “target hardening” is not always effective and can also have undesirable effects resulting in the “fortification of the urban environment”.

In considering the case for place making and improving public spaces the study looked at the experiences of park managers, local authorities and community groups involved in improving public spaces. It was found that effective approaches included;

- *“Rapid response to vandalism*
- *Providing a presence on site by park keepers and wardens*
- *Providing open views and vistas*
- *Engaging the community in the process of reclaiming public spaces”*

In conclusion, CABE Space recommends that green space managers should invest in good design, staffing and maintenance of public space and use physical security measures selectively and only as part of a co-ordinated approach.

Comments

The document suggests that a comprehensive approach is required to effectively address the issue of anti-social behaviour and ensure that public spaces remain attractive places to visit.

2.2.10 Parkforce, CABE Space (2005)

In September 2005 CABE Space published Parkforce and together with the Local Government Association called for all local authorities to sign up to the Parkforce Pledge to show their commitment to their parks;

- *“we recognise the value of having staff on site during daylight hours in every significant park across our borough*
- *we are committed to finding ways of developing and sustaining our investment in the people who care for these spaces*
- *we see our Parkforce as an integral part of the wider neighbourhood management team who share responsibility for making our community a safe, popular and beautiful place to live”.*

The document published recent research that showed that people who rarely used parks were deterred by dog fouling (68%), vandalism and graffiti (57%) and poor maintenance (44%). CABE Space suggest that on site staff can address all these problems helping to encourage more people back into parks.

A survey conducted in 2004 found that *“nine out of ten London women said that regular foot patrols by police, community wardens or park attendants would make them feel safer in parks”*.

This research supports the recommendations on the Urban Green Spaces Taskforce report which suggested *“bringing back park rangers and dedicated gardening staff back into parks”*.

The publication also includes a number of case studies and *“reports from the frontline”* from park wardens, rangers and gardeners about the reintroduction of staff into parks and the associated benefits.

Under the Parkforce banner CABI Space ran a competition in summer 2006 to find Britain’s best park keepers.

Comments

Parkforce clearly sets out the benefits that having on site staff can bring in making parks and green spaces feel more welcoming and in helping to reduce levels of vandalism and damage. This follows the trend over the past two decades for on site staff to be removed or replaced by area based maintenance teams.

2.2.11 The Park Keeper, English Heritage (2005)

Published at the same time as Parkforce, this document from English Heritage describes the changing role of the park keeper from their first introduction in the mid 19th Century to the present day.

The role of park keeper has changed considerably with today’s park management teams combining the *“traditional function of groundskeeper and guardian, with strategic planning and design, recreation and fitness, community liaison and outreach, wildlife management and more”*.

The document covers the following areas;

- *“The work of the park keeper*
- *The provision of park keeping services*
- *The park keeper and the community*
- *The demise of the park keeper*
- *The role of the park keeper today”*

In looking at staffing levels at London Parks in 1899 and 1902 it is interesting to note that some parks such as Victoria Park and Battersea Park each employed around 100 staff.

In considering the role of parks staff today, the document highlights the very different social environment in which staff work where rangering, visitor welcome, outreach and community liaison and interpretation are key skills. It is also suggested that the massive amount of new investment in parks nationally, largely but not exclusively through the national lottery has spurred local authorities to consider how to protect that investment and the presence of on site staff seems to offer a cost effective solution.

Comments

This document charts the historical rise and decline and recent renaissance of the park keeper. Despite a very different role today from the park keepers of the mid and late 19 th Century, the publication concludes, like Parkforce, that on site staff make a positive and cost effective contribution to the overall visitor experience.
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2.2.12 Recognising Innovation and Imagination in Open Space Management, Institute of Leisure and Amenity Management (2005)

This document was first published in 2001 and revised in 2005 and sets out to demonstrate how imagination and innovation can place parks and green spaces at the centre of local communities.

The document provides background information and details about the Institute of Leisure and Amenity Management (ILAM), Open Space Innovation Award and gives examples of good practice from applicants and winners of the award.

The Open Space Innovation Award is based around five criteria;

- *“How the scheme met it's original objectives and the range of partnerships formed*
- *Funding sources utilised*
- *Local community involvement*
- *Long terms goals and management processes*
- *Areas of innovation”*

Each of the winners of the award are featured as a case study as well as applicants who were considered to have excelled against a particular award criteria.

Comments

This publication is a useful reference guide regarding the management and maintenance of parks and greenspaces including a number of key aspects of good practice identified through a number of winners of the award and other case studies.

2.2.13 Urban Parks - Do You Know What You're Getting For Your Money? CABE Space (2006)

CABE Space commissioned The Department of Landscape at the University of Sheffield, GreenSpace and the Chartered Institute of Public Finance (CIPFA) to carry out a research project with eight local authorities to establish whether simply providing more resources would automatically improve green space quality.

The research found that most of them didn't have comprehensive figures showing how much they were spending on their parks and few of them had a clear idea of

what quality they were trying to achieve. It also found that the authorities participating had difficulty providing answers to many of the questions posed. Many local authorities don't appear to have robust management data about their parks and therefore

“it's impossible to take a strategic approach to improving the quality of the service delivered to local people. It's impossible to know if the service is run efficiently or whether the public money spent on the service is being well spent”.

The key findings from this research are listed below'

- *“The importance of assessing the existing quality of parks and green spaces, and to set clear and measurable aspirations for future quality*
- *The difference between cutting budgets and making efficiency gains is not always appreciated*
- *Increases in national funding do not necessarily lead to more resources at a local level*
- *The level of local importance does not always carry through the decision-making hierarchy, with parks and urban green spaces slipping down the agenda as financial decision-making moves onto a higher and more strategic level. At this level, parks and urban green space services don't seem to be able to compete with education, social services, transport and crime reduction*
- *The importance of a corporate strategy and a strategic approach*
- *Some local authorities are gathering useful data and managing strategically*
- *Strategic planning is fundamental for the effective use of resource”*

Comments
This research raised some fundamental issues around green space management and quality within a local government context. It found that many local authorities do not have accurate data about the quality of their green spaces or gather financial information in a way that underpins effective green space management. The findings of this publication are important with regard to the development of the Green Space Strategy for Bath and North East Somerset.

2.2.13 Enhancing Urban Green Space, National Audit Office (2006)

In response to a select committee report, the Government set up a taskforce to identify the reasons for decline and recommend steps to bring about improvement of urban green space.

The report outlines the importance of urban green space and the measures including new funding and establishment of CABA Space that have occurred to turn around the previous two decades of decline. Annual spend on parks and green spaces in England is £700m and the report identifies the three main risks in terms of achieving better value for money as;

- Resources need to be targeted better
- More modern and innovative procurement approaches are needed
- Capacity and skills need strengthening

It found that most local authorities and green space managers consider the decline in green spaces to have halted and customer satisfaction levels are increasing, although there is some widespread variation. While local authority spending has increased on green spaces it has not increased as fast as spending on other environmental and cultural services. However, local authority data on spending is often unreliable and there is no link to green space quality.

With regard to green space strategies the report found that many local authorities have started the process to undertake green space audits and wider strategies. However, it found that the quality of strategies varied widely.

The key recommendations from the report are shown below;

- *“Quality targets need to be better focused to drive up performance where it is needed and to be owned more locally*
- *More needs to be done to improve the status and skills of green space managers*
- *More practical help needs to be provided to enhance community engagement in urban green space projects*
- *More needs to be done to identify the most efficient and effective ways of sustaining urban green space*
- *Planning for urban green space needs to be strengthened”*

Comments
<p>This is one of the most significant publications on urban green space in recent years and suggests a holistic approach to the planning, management and maintenance of these assets is required if their full potential is to be realised.</p> <p>The development of a Green Space Strategy is in accordance with this publication. However, the report also highlights other issues that are important in providing high quality green spaces that can be sustained in the future. These issues include leadership and having champions for green spaces and ensuring that there are robust management systems in place.</p>

2.2.14 Making contracts work for wildlife: how to encourage biodiversity in urban parks, CABI Space (2006)

This publication considers how parks and green spaces can be better managed with respect to conserving and enhancing biodiversity. It is a practical guide that draws upon case studies from this country and other countries in Western Europe. The publication discusses changes that can be made to grounds maintenance specifications and contracts that will help deliver more diverse landscapes that support biodiversity. It identifies common landscape types, their potential contribution to biodiversity and measures that may be taken to improve this variety of life.

The documents suggests that *“starting with small and phased changes, appears to be an effective strategy for delivering longer-term and bigger change, in terms both of gaining public acceptance for change and also of trying out new and different ways of management and building skills and experience for both client and contractor”*.

Comments

This document is a useful reference with regard to the development of the Green Space Strategy. It provides practical advice about improving green spaces for biodiversity and is of direct relevance if Bath and North East Somerset Council were to consider changing the primary purpose of any green spaces towards more semi-natural provision.

2.3 Regeneration

2.3.1 Your Parks, The Benefits of Parks and Greenspace, GreenSpace, (2004)

Your Parks highlights the value of parks and greenspaces and the benefits that they bring. The document is set out under a number of headings making the information easy to digest with plenty of visual breaks in the text. The core of the document focuses on;

- *“The Urban Environment*
- *Community*
- *Ecology*
- *Education*
- *Play*
- *Sport and Recreation*
- *Healthier Lives*
- *Economy”*

Your Parks informs people involved in delivering park and greenspace services of the great diversity that they bring. It concludes that towns and cities are an inevitable part of the future and therefore it must be ensured that components of the urban infrastructure, which includes that of public parks and greenspace, are conserved, expanded and improved. If this is not done cities in the future will be left unsustainable lacking in charm, beauty and character, and depleted of community, nature, wildlife and sense of place.

Comments
This document describes the contribution of parks and green spaces to a number of key issues that affect quality of life. As such the findings and conclusions contained within this document are relevant to the Green Space Strategy in that it is demonstrated that parks can address cross cutting issues and should be included in other policies and strategies that seek to address these issues.

2.3.2 Creating Successful Neighbourhoods, Lessons And Actions For Housing Market Renewal, CABE (2004)

This report is a reflection on the progress of the Pathfinder programme and looks forward to challenges that lie ahead. The main areas of the report are;

- To revisit the key actions outlined in the 2003 report and revise them to reflect the current status of Pathfinder proposals
- Identify the challenges remaining for Government, Pathfinders, local authorities and their partners in the context of the seven key actions
- Through case studies, showcase good practice occurring in the Housing Market Renewal areas and share ideas and approaches put forward by the Design Task Group

The report highlights the need for a continued commitment to the long-term objective of transforming neighbourhoods through design, sustainable development and valuing heritage. This is achieved through a series of key actions;

1. Realise the scale of the opportunity
2. Positively address heritage as an asset
3. Create places of distinction
4. Recognise the value of design and its role in renewal
5. Adopt policies and tools to deliver high quality urban neighbourhoods
6. Place sustainable development at the heart of thinking and action
7. Get ready to meet the challenge

Each of the above has a series of subsections, including key action points, detailed case studies and visual aids. CABE have concluded in this report that Pathfinders are at the cutting edge of new thinking about how to manage and change urban environments. However, there is still some way to go. Yet it is clear that if the lessons and actions outlined in this report are applied much more widely, in future there is a potential to bring lasting and sustained positive change to the neighbourhoods and communities going through the renewal process.

Comments
While the document concentrates on Housing Market Renewal it considers the factors that affect the establishment and maintenance of sustainable communities and the role of greenspace within this is recognised.

2.3.3 Does Money Grow on Trees? CABE Space (2005)

This publication describes the role of urban parks and green spaces in bringing social environmental and economic benefits to towns and cities and suggests these areas have complex linkages. The report illustrates the contribution of good quality green spaces in terms of the desirability for local residents and businesses drawing on research from Europe and North America using a range of case studies from across the country.

The research concluded that *“the case studies show that there is a positive relationship in value associated with residential properties overlooking or being close to a high quality park. These premiums associated with the park do vary according to the type of park, the layout of property, the nature of the location and to some extent the nature of the local population and the type of property involved”*.

Comments
The document provides evidence to suggest that good quality parks and green spaces have an impact on the desirability of an area and both residential and commercial property values.

2.4 Community Involvement

2.4.1 Involving Young People in the Design and Care of Urban Spaces, CABA Space (2004)

This guide is aimed at a wide variety of people involved in improving or designing public space including landscape architects, regeneration agencies and young people. Through the use of sixteen case studies it explores the creative and constructive ways to involve children and young people in public space and sets out some of the key issues that projects may face. The publication is laid out using a variety of images showing young people’s involvement in each of the case studies followed. Alongside which are stated a number of key points related to each individual case study providing a guide for use by other similar projects.

The research that was undertaken for the production of this guide shows that children and young people are both willing and able to get involved in the design and development of public space. CABA Space believe that all children and young people should be valued as important members of their community and they need to be supported and encouraged to take on a more powerful and responsible role.

Comments
This document emphasizes that children and young people are legitimate users of green space and have an important role to play in the management and regeneration process. Participation in green space improvement projects can develop young people’s skills and encourage their participation in their local area.

2.4.2 No Particular Place to Go? Children, Young People and Public Space, Worpole, K. (2004)

This document seeks to provide an overview of the initiatives relating to children’s and young people’s needs and the use of public space. It considers the wider regeneration context and issues currently affecting young people, looks at examples of good practice in Europe and how young people are involved in improving public spaces. Finally the document provides ten guiding principles for public space strategies.

Comments
This document provides a comprehensive review of the issues and young people’s initiatives with regard to green spaces. The report advocates the meaningful engagement of children and young people in improving their local environment and the wider public realm and the case studies provide some informative examples of this process.

3.0 Local Policy Review

This section of the report considers the local policy context for Bath and North East Somerset and the surrounding region and the linkages with the Green Space Strategy.

3.1 Corporate Policy

3.1.1 Access Policy, Bath & North East Somerset Council (1996)

The access policy contains eight fundamental principles set out below;

“Bath and North East Somerset Council in accordance with its vision and values:-

- *“is committed to equal, independent access for all service users and employees to all of its services and facilities*
- *is committed to the goal of creating a "barrier-free" environment which is accessible to all*
- *will seek to ensure its own buildings are fully accessible and will seek effective solutions to the issue of improving access in listed buildings*
- *will seek to ensure Council information is accessible by provision in alternative formats*
- *will promote the concept of "good access benefits all" both internally to all Council departments and externally to building professionals, interested groups, public agencies, businesses and the general public*
- *will appoint member(s) of staff to implement and review this policy and to reflect the differing needs of the urban and rural areas e.g. an Access Officer to take responsibility for each area*
- *will demonstrate commitment to improved levels of access and facilities in all relevant policy considerations, joint working with other agencies and resource allocation*
- *will seek to promote access improvements in the wider community through its planning and licensing decisions”*

Comment
The Access Policy identifies the council’s commitment to making all facilities accessible to all. This framework should inform the development of the Green Space Strategy.

3.1.2 Equalities Policy, Bath & North East Somerset Council (1996)

The equalities policy contains eleven fundamental principles set out below;

“Bath and North East Somerset Council, in accordance with its vision and values:-

- is committed to equality of access for Disabled people to society’s resources and to participation in its decision making process
- as a local authority and major employer is committed to equality of opportunity for Disabled people within its workforce, in its services and their deliver

- is committed to promoting and understanding of Disability as an equality issue
- will identify and remove any practices and procedures which disadvantage Disabled People
- will seek to redress the effects of segregation, social and economic disadvantage, marginalization and stereotyping of Disabled people when reviewing, planning and developing policies and services
- will accord high priority to the promotion of Disability equality and the elimination of Disablism, in all relevant policy considerations and resource allocation
- is committed to undertaking positive action to redress the inequalities faced by Disabled people in the past and recognises that the majority of Disabled people experience simultaneous oppression (e.g. Disabled women, elderly black people)
- recognises that a Disability equality perspective will be incorporated into all equal opportunities initiatives
- accepts the social model of disability as the definition of a disabled person
- Disability – Bath and North East Somerset Council will adopt the definition of Disability accepted by the national and international representative organisations of Disabled people, i.e. British Council of Disabled People and Disabled People International :-
 - The disadvantage or restriction of activity caused by a contemporary social organisation, which takes little or no account of people who have impairments, and thus excludes them from participation in the mainstream of social activity" (UPIAS, 1976)
 - This definition is not very easy to understand and communicate. it therefore suggested that the Council should develop this paraphrased definition
 - Disability is not caused by the individual Disabled person's particular impairment, but the way in which society fails to meet their needs
- Disabled People The term "Disabled people" will be adopted by the Council as the acceptable term to describe this group, and is based on the "social model" of Disability, thus including people with physical and sensory impairments, learning difficulties, and mental / emotional distress”

Comment

<p>The Equalities Policy is a comprehensive policy statement that shows the commitment of the authority to addressing equalities issues. Disabled people and minority ethnic groups are likely to be less frequent visitors to parks and green spaces and this policy should be used to inform the Green Space Strategy. It is particularly relevant with regard to consultation and participation in the development of the strategy as well as its later implementation.</p>
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3.1.3 Environmental Policy, Bath & North East Somerset Council (1997)

Bath and North East Somerset Council has a corporate Environmental Policy which was adopted by the Policy and Resources Committee on 16 June 1997. The Environmental Policy covers the following areas;

- a. The council's corporate responsibility
- b. Protect and enhance the natural and historic environment
- c. Protect and enhance the built environment
- d. Encourage healthy living
- e. Raise awareness of environmental issues
- f. Monitor and minimise pollution
- g. Lessen the impact of transportation
- h. Reduce environmental damage resulting from the use of energy and resources

An Environmental Checklist has been prepared to identify the scope of the environmental impact of all service areas and support the Environmental Policy.

Comment

The Environmental Policy identifies the need to protect and monitor all aspects of the environment. It makes specific reference to parks and green spaces.
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3.1.4 Biodiversity Action Plan, Wildthings (2000)

The Wildthings Partnership was set up in 2002 to deliver the Local Biodiversity Action Plan for Bath & North East Somerset. The partnership is led by Bath & NE Somerset Council and key partners include, English Nature, BRERC, Avon Wildlife Trust, Environment Agency and the Cam Valley Wildlife Group.

The initial phase of the plan was based on 7 key themes, including Council Owned land and Habitat & Species. The Council owned land plan sets out to establish and maintain a biologically rich network of Council managed land with particular regard to national, regional and local biodiversity targets.

In 2006 the Wildthings Action Plan Process moved into its second phase with the publication of a series of species and habitat action plans designed to contribute to the 2010 Global Biodiversity Challenge. The aim is to encourage joined up working to deliver real action for wildlife.

The document notes that Bath and North East Somerset is an extremely varied area with respect to the diversity of landscapes. The area contains many species which are highly valued by wildlife conservation bodies and the general public. There are 48 species recorded in this BAP that are in the UK BAP.

The BAP identifies which green spaces have designations for nature conservation including SSSIs, SINCs and SLINCs.

The BAP links to the Bath and North East Somerset Local Plan (to be replaced by the subsequent Local Development Framework) and contains specific performance indicators.

Comment

The Biodiversity Action Plan and the Local Plan identify green spaces with nature conservation value and designations and are important documents to inform the Green Space Strategy.

3.1.5 Better for Everyone: The Community Strategy for Bath and North East Somerset - The Bath & North East Somerset Local Strategy Partnership, 2004 – 2014

The community strategy developed by the Local Strategic Partnership contains five shared ambitions for the authority area;

- *“Be distinctive*
- *Be inclusive*
- *Be creative*
- *Be safe*
- *Be sustainable”*

Under ‘be distinctive’ the strategy recognises the value of greenspace and landscape and the World Heritage Site designation within Bath. The Community Strategy recognises the contribution of green spaces;

“Our area is also fortunate in the range and quality of its public parks and open spaces.”

There is a key link under ‘be safe’ where there are statements referring to anti-social behaviour which links in to the safety initiatives in parks.

Finally under “be sustainable” there is reference to the need to *“develop an indicator of the effects our activities (including use of energy) have on the world’s resources.”* Implicit within this is the need for the authority and thus the parks service to develop a sound approach to environmental management.

Comment
<p>The Community Strategy clearly recognises the high quality of parks and green spaces within Bath and North East Somerset and the contribution these make to the character of the area and local distinctiveness.</p> <p>The Community Strategy also identifies the importance of community safety and adequately addressing anti-social behaviour issues and perceptions of safety are likely to be a barrier to the use of green spaces for some people. The strategy also identifies the need for sustainability and within this, the approach to environmental management needs to be addressed. The strategy also identifies the importance of the wider issues of environmental management which are linked to, and can impact upon, green space management.</p>

3.1.6 A Local Cultural Strategy for Bath and North East Somerset (2002)

This document makes specific reference to the value of parks and open spaces in relation to the culture of Bath and the wider authority.

“Our parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty are havens of peace, as well as providing one of the best children’s playgrounds in the South

West..... There is a sense of place about Bath & North East Somerset that makes people want to live here, work here and visit.”

There are five themes of the strategy are listed below;

- Uniqueness – recognising and emphasising local distinctiveness and place
- People taking part – promoting access, participation and enjoyment of cultural activities for all
- Renaissance – culture and cultural activity integrated in economic development, regeneration, community planning
- Environment, city and countryside – making best but sustainable use of green spaces and building links between city, town and country
- Broadening lives and minds – culture in health and lifelong learning

The strategy recognises the value of parks and green spaces to the culture of Bath by providing informal and formal recreation and leisure opportunities, learning opportunities, venues for cultural events and activities.

The action plan contained within the Cultural Strategy identifies a number of key tasks which are linked to green space management;

- *Develop a series of self-guided cultural walks, paths and trails, linking different parts of the authority*
- *Promote and increase outdoor cultural events and activities:*
 - *Parks cultural events season*
 - *Sports events*
 - *Family cultural events”*
- *Encourage greater use of open spaces for cultural activities*
- *Consider use of new park ranger scheme to increase the value of open spaces for residents and visitors*

Comment
<p>The Cultural Strategy recognises the importance of formal and informal leisure activities that are undertaken in parks and green spaces. Along with such activities these spaces also provide the venues for learning and cultural events and activities.</p> <p>Some key actions with regards to green spaces are identified which need to be recognised in the development of the Green Space Strategy for Bath and North East Somerset.</p>

3.1.7 Get Active: Draft Vision for Sport and Active Leisure, Bath & North East Somerset Council 2005 – 2010

The purpose of the Get Active vision is to:-

- *“Create a framework to increase physical activity levels in Bath and North East Somerset by at least 1% per year.*
- *Create a platform on which a wide range of partners can join together to create a more coordinated and inspired approach to the delivery of sport and active leisure in the area.*
- *Raise awareness of the role that sport and active leisure can play in developing the economic and social health of the area”.*

The document has an overarching aim of increasing participation and 6 key themes set beneath this;

Key Theme 1: Improving Health through Physical Activity

Key Theme 2: Towards Inclusion

Key Theme 3: PE and School Sport

Key Theme 4: Developing Community Sport

Key Theme 5: Fit for Purpose Facilities

Key Theme 6: Encouraging Sports Events and Festivals

Within the descriptive text beneath these themes are potential links to Royal Victoria Park through the use of the park for health walks; through youth participation in ‘extreme sports’ since the park has a large skate park; through the opportunity to play tennis and bowls; and finally through the opportunity to be a venue for community sports events.

Comment
This document proposes improved physical activity levels for the population of the area. Parks and green spaces are an important aspect of achieving this and the Green Space Strategy will therefore address this.

3.1.8 Community Safety Audit, Bath & North East Somerset Community Safety & Drug Partnership (2005)

This is the third audit undertaken and was carried out to provide an accurate picture of crime and disorder, and measures to address these issues, in the Bath and North East Somerset area.

The audit has been undertaken to provide baseline data to inform the review of the Community Safety Strategy which was last published in 2002.

The audit considers all aspects of community safety and has obtained its data from a number of sources including public consultation, police statistics and census data.

Comment

Perceptions of personal safety are likely to be a significant barrier to the use of parks and green spaces particularly among particular demographic and minority groups. This Audit identifies a number of aspects of crime that occur within parks and green spaces and these findings need to be used to inform the development of the Green Space Strategy.

3.2 Strategic Planning

3.2.1 Cherishing Outdoor Places – A Landscape Strategy for Bath, Bath and North East Somerset Council (1993)

The landscape strategy was developed by Bath and North East Somerset Council developed to promote the better protection, enhancement and long term management of the city’s outdoor spaces and landscape features. The Landscape Strategy identifies areas and features of high importance to the local distinctiveness of the area.

This document has been supplemented by a Landscape Character Assessment of the rural areas within the authority area produced in 2003. This document has been adopted as a Supplementary Planning Document.

Comment
The Landscape Strategy is a useful reference to inform the development of the Green Space Strategy.

3.2.2 Regional Planning Guidance for the South West (RPG 10) Government Office for the South West (2001)

RPG 10, prepared by Government Office for the South West, provides a regional spatial strategy to guide local authorities in the preparation of their local development plans. The Guidance stresses the need to adopt an integrated policy approach in respect of economic, social and environmental issues, in accordance with PPS1. The guidance acknowledges the importance of Bath’s unique historic environment with specific policy guidance, PSS9: Bath. This guidance recognises the direct relationship between quality green space and economic well being of the area. It also recognises the relationship between improving quality of life and supporting biodiversity (paragraph 4.3).

Under Policy QE4: Greenery, Urban Greenspace and Public Spaces there is an emphasis on the need for local authorities to prepare green space strategies. More specifically local authorities are required to ensure there is adequate provision of accessible, high quality urban greenspace and protection of key features, such as parks, footpaths, river valleys, canals and open spaces, as well as identifying the need for new linkages between these areas and between new urban green space and the wider countryside.

Comments
The preparation of the Green Space Strategy accords with the Regional Planning Guidance. This guidance is being replaced with a Regional Spatial Strategy.

3.2.3 Local Plan Revised Deposit Draft (2003)

The Local Plan is the primary basis for deciding planning applications. It sets out policies which guide how and where development should take place up to the year 2011.

It influences where people live and work and what facilities are available to them. It therefore helps to achieve the development that is needed whilst at the same time protecting and enhancing local character and the environment.

“Policy BH.15 - Development which harms the openness and character of Visually Important Open Spaces, as shown on the Proposals Map, will not be permitted”.

Policy BH.15 above seeks to safeguard the contribution that open spaces make in terms of their contribution to local character. The nature of such sites varies as they may be public open space, recreational areas, playing fields, open fields, the grounds of large properties or amenity areas. Some are open to public access and others are privately owned. The purpose of the designation is to protect visual amenity value.

Comment
<p>The Local Plan sets out the most up to date policies of Bath and North East Somerset Council with regard to land use planning and development in the authority area. It includes a specific policy related to the prevention of any development which harms the openness and character of visually important open spaces. The Plan also contains policies requiring the provision of children’s play areas, sports facilities and other recreational space within new development.</p> <p>The Local Plan is currently under review and will be replaced with the new Local Development Framework. The Green Space Strategy and detailed audit of quantity, quality and accessibility of green spaces in the District will inform the Local Development Framework and any Supplementary Planning Documents.</p>

3.2.4 Forest Plan, The Forest of Avon (2002)

The Forest Plan is a non-statutory plan that sets out the vision for the Avon Community Forest, explains what community forests are, describes the area, outlines proposals and priorities and suggests how the Plan will be delivered. The draft plan was first produced in 1994 and this document was adopted in 2002 by the local authority partners and national agencies following an extensive review in 1999 / 2000.

The forest area covers 57,300 hectares of which 35% of the area is urban or not in agricultural use. There are over 864,000 resident within the forest area of within 8 Km of its boundaries.

The Forest of Avon covers 4 unitary local authority areas including Bath and North East Somerset, Bristol, North Somerset and South Gloucestershire. Approximately three quarters of Bath and North East Somerset is within the forest area.

The Forest of Avon was developed partly in response to the poor quality of the landscape in some areas of the county which were identified in the Avon County Structure Plan and supplementary planning guidance including the Avon Landscape Strategy (1988).

The Forest Plan proposes a number of forest strategies which “*aim to conserve and enhance the best landscapes and to significantly improve those of lower quality through tree and woodland planting*”. The plan sets out a number of aims and proposals under the following broad headings;

- Community
- Landscape
- Woodlands and Forestry
- Agriculture
- Archaeology and Local History
- Informal Recreation and Leisure
- Countryside Sport and Outdoor Recreation
- Development
- Education
- Arts and Culture
- Employment and Economy

The plan identifies first and second order priorities which are listed below;

“i) Creating well designed woodland:

- *Of at least 20 hectares in size with full public access and incorporating public open space*
- *On smaller sites with full public access: immediately adjacent to housing, connected to other woodland sites and/ or part of a recreational path network;*
- *On sites which are on damaged or reclaimed land*

ii) Securing access to, and good management of, existing woodlands which meet the criteria above

iii) Creating or re-opening good quality walking/ cycling/ riding networks for leisure, recreation and/ or commuting

iv) Securing involvement in the Community Forest by a wide range of local communities, especially those presently socially excluded from their environment. This involvement will aim to focus on awareness raising, education, training and empowerment

v) Securing financial and in-kind investment from local businesses and external sources to support major restoration and recreation projects leading to environmental regeneration and to develop a woodland economy

Second order priorities include:

i) Creating woodland on sites other than those in priority 1 where there are significant landscape, heritage and / or biodiversity gains

ii) Securing landscape, heritage and bio-diversity benefits on the non-wooded parts of the Community Forest where opportunities are presented by new development or on agricultural land or reclaimed land, including hedgerow restoration”.

Comment

The Forest Plan has been adopted by Bath and North East Somerset Council as one of the partner authorities in the community forest. The plan is a significant document which sets out a vision of a higher quality landscapes comprising a mosaic of different land uses but with greater overall tree and woodland cover.

The plan is a comprehensive document which focuses on a broad range of outcomes including tourism, sport and recreation and the local economy. Any proposals within the Green Space Strategy, particularly those relating to the creation of new green space or change of primary purpose, will need to be consistent with the vision and aims of the Forest Plan.

3.2.5 Planning and the Forest of Avon – A Guide for Developers (Draft), Bath and North East Somerset Council (2003)

The Forest of Avon is one of 12 Community Forests in England. It covers just over 57,000 hectares across the four unitary areas of which 5,145 hectares are in Bath & North East Somerset.

The document sets out relevant planning policies and provides advice as to how these policies will be applied and describes how developers can contribute to the initiative.

Comment

This document is a useful reference to inform the development of the Green Space Strategy.

3.2.6 City of Bath World Heritage Site Management Plan Summary (2003 – 2009)

The City of Bath is one of only 23 World Heritage Sites in the UK and 754 world wide. The World Heritage Site covers the entire city and some of the surrounding landscape.

The status does not confer any additional statutory protection or financial support. It does however show the international significance of the area and the need to ensure that it is managed appropriately. In considering any planning applications within the area, the local authority must use this document as a material consideration.

The City of Bath was designated as a World Heritage Site in 1987 and was recognised as

“a place of outstanding universal significance for its architecture, town planning, landscape, archaeological remains and its role as setting for social history”

The document also recognises the value of the green spaces to the setting of the city

“The landscape is an integral part of the architecture of the 18th century city”

It specifically mentions the “blending of buildings and natural environment” which began with the Royal Crescent. This era was the beginning of the Picturesque movement and ensured that the landscape is at the heart of Bath and is important for its “aesthetic beauty and drama.”

The plan aims to provide a framework to conserve the cultural heritage assets of the World Heritage Site which includes protection of landscape and natural assets.

The plan contains what it describes as 3 over arching objectives and 45 topic based objectives. A requirement of the plan is that any restoration is carried out to the highest standard, “using materials, design and workmanship appropriate to the character of the site...”

Comment

This management plan again identifies the value of green spaces to the setting of the city and is an important document in the development of the green space strategy.

3.2.7 The Mendip Hills and You – The Mendip Hills AONB Management Plan, The Mendip Hills AONB Partnership (2004)

The Mendip Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) was designated in 1972 and covers 198 square kilometres within the local authority areas of Bath and North East Somerset Council, North Somerset Council, Sedgemoor District Council, Mendip District Council and Somerset County Council.

The Mendip Hills comprise a range of hills which are predominantly limestone and consist of steep craggy slopes, a distinctive south facing escarpment and a gently undulating plateau. The settlements of Chew Stoke, Blagdon, Compton Martin and East and West Hamptree lie within the AONB.

In 2000 with the Countryside and Rights of Way Act, the Government introduced even better protection for AONBs including improved arrangements for managing them. All local authorities that are responsible for AONBs have to publish a Management Plan that sets out how they will care for the AONB.

“The plan addresses many of the issues that are affecting the area now, but it also considers longer term trends for the area as a whole. It provides a vision for the AONB – a ‘peep into the future’ for what the Mendip Hills should be like, and how they should look, in 25 years time”.

The plan is structured around ten themes. Within each of these sections there is a description of the current situation, a vision for the future, objectives setting out how that vision will be achieved and policies which show how the objectives will be translated into action. The themes are listed below;

- ☐ You and the landscape
- ☐ You and biodiversity
- ☐ You and trees, woodland and forestry
- ☐ You and the heritage
- ☐ You and agriculture

- You and recreation, access and tourism
- You and community, settlement and development
- You and transport
- You and quarrying
- You and communication and interpretation

The management plan summarises the local policy context and has reference to Bath and North East Somerset Council policies. The plan also includes a list in indicators to help monitor the change in the quality of the AONB.

Comment
The Mendip Hills Management Plan sets out a vision for the future of the AONB area which includes the southern area administered by Bath and North East Somerset Council. The Green Space Strategy should reflect the vision, objectives and policies set out in this document. Any revision to the management plan should include reference to the (adopted) Green Space Strategy.

3.2.8 Living, Working and Enjoying - Summary of the Cotswolds AONB Management Plan, Cotswolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Partnership (2005)

The Cotswolds AONB covers 2,038 square kilometres, making it the largest of the 41 AONBs in the country and was designated in 1966 and extended in 1990. This gives the area national and international status as worthy of special protection.

The management plan was been published in 2005 by the Cotswolds AONB Partnership on behalf of the 17 local authorities and other partners that are responsible for the AONB. The AONB area covers the north and eastern part of the Bath and North East Somerset Council administrative area including the area immediately adjacent to the urban area of Bath.

The management plan sets out in detail how the AONB will be managed in future and the action that will be taken to keep the area special. The plan covers a twenty year period although it will be reviewed in details every five years.

The Vision for the Cotswold AONB is:

“Our vision is that the very special nature of the Cotswolds will be conserved to benefit future generations. This will be achieved through careful management of essential changes that ensure Cotswold communities stay vibrant. It requires people and organisations committed to conserving and enhancing this inspiring area with its very special physical character and lifestyle bound together by its wonderful limestone”.

The primary purpose of the Management Plan is to conserve and enhance the natural resource of the AONB. To achieve this the plan is structured around ten topic areas which are grouped into two themes;

1. Natural characteristics

- Landscape and geology
- Biodiversity
- Historic environment
- Sustainable resources

2. Activities

- Living and working in the Cotswolds
- Farming and rural land use
- Forestry, woodland and trees
- Tourism, recreation and access
- Transport
- Planning and development

Under each of these topic areas the management plan describes the key issues and how these issues will be addressed by the partners in the implementation of the plan.

Comment

The Cotswold AONB Management Plan, like that of the Mendip Hills AONB Plan, sets out a vision for the future of the AONB area which includes land within the Bath and North East Somerset Council boundary.

The Green Space Strategy should reflect the vision and objectives set out in this document. Any revision to the management plan should include reference to the (adopted) Green Space Strategy.

3.2.9 Rural Landscapes of Bath and North East Somerset - A Landscape Character Assessment, Bath and North East Somerset Council (2003)

This document identifies and describes the component features and characteristics of the landscape within Bath and North East Somerset. This has been done through a landscape character assessment which is the process of dividing up the landscape into parcels of land with common characteristics

The assessment was undertaken following the Countryside Commission guidelines published in 1987 and 1993 and more recent guidance by the Countryside Agency. As such, the assessment is a base-line survey of the character and condition of the landscape of the area in 2002.

Consultation on the draft Landscape Character Assessment was undertaken May and July 2002. The responses were analysed and comments were taken into account in the preparation of the final document. The document was approved as Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) to the Development Plan on 17 February 2003.

The Landscape Character Assessment acknowledges the designations of the Cotswold and Mendips Hills AONBs, the Forest of Avon and green belt area within the council administrative area. The assessment reviewed five previous landscape assessments, each covering part of the Bath and North East Somerset council area, that have been undertaken between 1988 and 1997.

The assessment classified a total of 18 distinct landscape character areas, ranging in size from Bickley Wood Gorge at less than 1 square kilometre to Chew Valley at 67

square kilometres. The variations in size are said to be dictated by the extent of the features and characteristics which make up the character areas.

Comment
<p>This is a detailed assessment of the character of the rural landscapes within the Bath and North East Somerset area. It shows a complex landscape with 18 distinct character areas and provides a snapshot of the condition in 2003. Repeat assessment would be able to provide an indication of any change in quality or trends in the quality of the landscape.</p> <p>The development of the Green Space Strategy should reflect the findings of the landscape character assessment particularly with regard to any proposed changes in the primary purpose of green spaces.</p>

3.3 Greenspace Management

3.3.1 Bath & North East Somerset Play Policy, Bath & North East Somerset Council, July (1999)

This policy sets out Bath & North East Somerset Council's understanding of play and confirms its commitment to ensuring that quality play environments are available to all its children. The policy is underpinned by the principles outlined in the Council's statement of vision and values and its equality policies.

In addition, the Council endorses Articles 31 and 12 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. Article 12 requires that:

'State Parties shall assure to the child who is capable of forming his or her own views the right to express those views freely in all matters affecting the child, the views of the child being given due weight in accordance with the age and maturity of the child.'

The document aims to be a practical working tool and therefore should be referred to whenever decisions about play need to be made. It is therefore applicable to all forms of children's services whose objectives include the provision of play opportunities.

It recognises that a significant number of the Council services have an impact on children's play. Therefore, although the process of the play policy development was initiated by Youth and Community Services, the policy is intended to be a corporate policy, 'owned' and implemented across a number of Council services.

Comment
The Play Policy is a useful reference and should be referred to in the development of the Green Space Strategy.

3.3.2 Parks Service Charter (2002)

The Parks Service has a charter setting out its service delivery standards which are shown below;

"The Parks Service will

- Ensure that all staff are polite, helpful and courteous at all times*
- Ensure that staff are clearly identifiable at all times*
- Treat all customers in a respectful manner*
- Aim to ensure that our Parks and open spaces are safe places to visit and are maintained to the highest possible standards within available resources*
- Regularly inspect all play areas and complete all repairs as soon as practicable*
- Seek the views of customers, conducting at least one major survey annually and others on an ongoing basis, to facilitate continuous improvement*
- Aim to provide facilities which will enhance the local community for future generations*
- Deal with and respond in writing to complaints within 15 days of receipt*
- Work with our suppliers and customers to continuously review our use of*

materials and equipment to reduce our impact upon the environment both locally and globally

- *Develop in partnership with the local community and Businesses a detailed events calendar to encourage community involvement”.*

Comment

The findings of any consultation undertaken as part of the development of the Green Space Strategy should be considered with respect to the existing service standards. It may be necessary to review the service standards as a result of these findings.

3.3.3 A Playing Pitch Assessment for Bath and North East Somerset, PMP (2003)

Consultants PMP were appointed to produce an authority wide playing pitch assessment. Key areas of the study included;

- Analysing the current level of pitch provision within the of Bath & North East Somerset Council area
- Assisting the Council in meeting the requirements for playing pitches in accordance with the methodology developed by Sport England in conjunction with the National Playing Fields Association (NPFA) and the Central Council for Physical Recreation (CCPR)
- Providing information to inform decisions and determine future development proposals in Bath & North East Somerset

The report presents the key findings arising from survey work and consultation and highlights areas of concern and opportunity. The document provides the current picture, methodology, supply and demand and key actions, recommendations and priorities for the future.

Comment

The Playing Pitch Strategy is an important document in understanding the supply, demand and latent demand for playing pitches for the major pitch sports within the authority area. The findings of the strategy will need to be considered in the development of the Green Space Strategy.

3.3.4 Royal Victoria Park Events Policy, Bath and North East Somerset Council (2004)

The Events Policy for Royal Victoria park was adopted by the Education, Youth, Culture and Leisure Overview and Scrutiny Panel on 29th November 2004. This is currently under review. The framework focuses on the health and safety plus noise issues arising from events in the open spaces within Royal Victoria Park and sets out a suggested framework to limit the impact of future events.

“The Council, as manager of the land on which events are held, is responsible for the provision of a safe and healthy environment. It has an obligation to eliminate any dangers that may be present for the duration of the events and will take all reasonable precautions to eliminate such dangers.”

The authority also has an Annual Events Meeting to consider any other applications or events outside the agreed framework.

The framework is also clear on its ethical stance in that the authority will not grant permission for an event to organisations or allow any advertisements which are either directly involved with or associated with particular activities.

Comment

The Events Policy provides a framework for the delivery of events in Royal Victoria Park. The findings of any consultation undertaken during the development of the Green Space Strategy may be a useful reference in the review of the Events Policy.

3.3.5 Market Research Report Green Spaces, Bath and North East Somerset Council (2004)

This is an extremely comprehensive report which brings together a number of surveys with additional research carried out in August 2004.

There are a number of statistics that illustrate the importance of open space to the local population;

- *“The majority of the research that was conducted showed that parks and open spaces within the area had high levels of satisfaction*
- *It was believed that the high levels of satisfaction could be attributed to two main factors – high levels of usage and good quality parks and open spaces*
- *The access requirements of the residents of Bath to parks and open spaces were generally being met*
- *Royal Victoria Park is seen as the ‘jewel’ of green space provision in the area and that there is demand for more similar provision in other areas of the authority*
- *There is a perception that a majority of the time and budget of the parks department is spent in Bath in general and in Royal Victoria Park in particular”.*

Comment

The market research is very useful baseline data which will inform the development of the Green Space Strategy.

3.3.6 Pesticide Management Policy

The council has a Pesticide Management Policy and a Code of Practice and Guidance on the Safe Use of Pesticides. The Pesticide Management Policy includes a Pesticide Management Strategy which is summarised below;

- *“Consider non-chemical alternatives*
- *Reduce to a minimum pesticide usage*
- *Use pesticides which pose the lowest acceptable risk (to the user, public and environment)*
- *Ensure pesticides are applied in a safe and proper manner*
- *Withdraw pesticides which appear on the MAFF Red List or EU Black List*

- *Withdraw the use of pesticides which pose unacceptable hazards to human health or the environment (as identified by UK regulatory authorities)”*

The authority has also adopted a hierarchy of controls to eliminate or reduce the risks from chemical pesticides.

The Code of Practice and Guidance on the Safe Use of Pesticides requires that where pesticides are used only those on the Council’s Approved list may be applied.

Comment

The Pesticide Management Policy governs the use of pesticides on parks and green spaces as such is part of a wider approach to environmental management. Maintenance standards are likely to affect the quality of green spaces which is a key element of the Green Space Strategy.
