



**Bishopston, Cotham and Redland Neighbourhood Partnership
Wednesday 25th January 2012**

Report of: Rob McGovern: Area Environment Officer

Title: Prioritising investment for the Bishopston, Cotham and Redland Parks Improvement Plan

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Recommendations

1. Note background
2. Note the process followed
3. To approve the Bishopston, Cotham and Redland Improvement Plan Priorities

Part 1: Background

1. At the Neighbourhood Partnership meeting of 24th March 2011 it was agreed to engage with officers to produce a set of investment priorities as part of a Parks Improvement Plan for green spaces in the Bishopston, Cotham and Redland Neighbourhood Partnership. Officers were directed to work with the park groups representing the open spaces in the area (Redland and Cotham Amenities Society, Redland Green Community Group, Friends of St Andrew's Park and Friends of Horfield Common) to produce this list of investment priorities.
2. The Parks Improvement Plan will help the Neighbourhood Committee guide spending for open spaces in the area and ensure money is spent effectively and efficiently.

Part 2: Process

3. Officers initially met with the park groups to discuss the framework for building priorities around, focussing upon the Neighbourhood Partnership as a whole on a strategic level to identify overall priorities (see Part 3) in which investment should be categorised. Once these key strategic priorities had been formulated, the park groups prepared a list of specific improvements, which they then consulted on through their groups. This consultation included on-line surveys, notices in the parks and, in the case of Horfield Common, an open consultation event.

4. We would like to thank the individual park groups for committing to and carrying out this work and all those that took part in the consultation.
5. Officers met once again with park groups on 21st November where the groups fed back the information that had emerged. It was also agreed to split priorities into short-term and longer term aspirations.

Part 3: Green Space Investment Priorities

6. Four key strategic priorities are recommended:
 - Play and exercise
 - Wildlife/ flora and fauna
 - Boundaries
 - Infrastructure (benches, footpaths etc)
7. For the full list of priorities please see Appendix 1. The individual investment ideas were constructed by the relevant Parks Group. In the meeting of the 21st November Parks Officers and the Parks Group member discussed short term , but not long term aspirations. Because of this Officer comments have been attached within Appendix 1 for the Neighbourhood Committee to consider.

Part 5: The Ardagh

8. There is currently an ongoing project focussing upon the Ardagh Sports complex. The Friends of Horfield Common have submitted a number of proposals some of which relate to the Ardagh. It is advised that the Committee await the outcome of the current project before agreeing specific priorities connected to the Ardagh. However, priorities relating to the other parts of the common may be agreed. The list of priorities given by the Friends group is given in Appendix 2.
9. When there is greater clarity on the future of the Ardagh facility an amended list of investment proposals will be submitted. For example, should the Council agree a lease on the site in a future, a business case would be required of the applicant(s) and alternative proposals may be made. The Committee will then have the opportunity to agree with these or not and also to decide where these sit in terms of priority with proposals for sites across the Partnership area.

Part 4: Equalities considerations

10. An equalities impact assessment has been carried out on the recommended priority list and has been submitted to the Equalities and Communities Cohesion Officer. It is not expected to raise any concerns.

Bishopston, Cotham and Redland Parks Improvement Plan spending priorities.**Short Term Key Priorities**

Site	Priority	Officer comments
Cotham Gardens	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. Improve benches/seating within the park 5. Wildflower planting, particularly around the commemorative Oak 6. Bird boxes 7. Interpretation boards and signs 8. New planting schemes 9. Remarking the hard-surface with activities such as hop-scotch 	Priorities have been discussed through with Parks Officer and are appropriate.
Horfield Common	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extend the dog free area around the playground (near the Ardagh) • Marking/signage on the road to slow traffic 	Priorities have been discussed through with Parks Officer and are appropriate. This could also be part of improvement works project currently underway for the play area.
Redland Green	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 11. Increase the range of play equipment 12. Wildflower planting in the Dell 13. Suitable wildflower planting around the edges and boundaries to soften these boundaries 14. Interpretation boards 15. Bird boxes 16. Rationalise signage of cycle path 	Priorities have been discussed through with Parks Officer and are appropriate.
St Andrew's Park	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Basketball hoop with a hardsurface • Drinking fountains 	BCC are not currently introducing new or reinstalling existing drinking fountains due to high maintenance costs. The Neighbourhood Committee should be aware that such a feature would be expensive to maintain.

All Priorities

Play and Exercise

Site	Priority	
Neighbourhood Partnership wide	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Provide and maintain all play facilities to a good standard across the Neighbourhood Partnership 	This is in line with Bristol's Parks and Green Space Strategy
Cotham Gardens	Improve use of tarmac area within fenced area with pavement marking for games eg hotscotch	
Horfield Common	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Children's play area – refurbishment and/or replacement/extension on its current site There is not support for moving this into the Ardagh site as there is concern regarding visibility, (particularly in the evenings) and reducing the sports facilities available. 2. Mark out a running track/distance around the paths in the park to encourage fitness 3. Put up clear 5mph signage on the track next to the children's play area 4. Put cycling/walking shared signage on pathways where relevant 	See comments under the short term key priorities for priorities relating to play.
Redland Green	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Keep play ground in a good state of repair 2. Enhance existing playground facilities 3. Provide robust exercise equipment for adults and older children 4. Provide Open Air exercise equipment for adults 5. Consult parents of younger children on size of tarmac area outside the fenced play area 	Work has been carried out in consultation with the community over the tarmac area and should feed into any work carried out in this area. Cllr Townsend is the contact point for this.
St. Andrew's Park	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Replace/ refurbish play equipment as required. 2. Provide a basketball hoop on tarmac at top of play area. 	

Wildlife, flora and fauna

Site	Priority	
Cotham	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Investigate using the area under the commemorative Oak tree to plant wildflowers and allow 	

Site	Priority	
Gardens	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> grass to grow long 2. Relocate the existing roses into the bare beds next to the fence at the top end of the park and grass over the island flower bed area to create additional usable space for picnics and games. 3. More tree planting 4. New planting scheme behind sundial and play area 5. Tree management: crown lifting of Holm Oak needed. 6. Bird and Bat Boxes. 7. Information panels. 	
Horfield Common	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Sort out the pond at the bottom of the common. The gate has recently been fixed but it is so overgrown that it is not wildlife friendly. Ensure that this is maintained. 2. Extend the current children's play area to include a larger section of grass which can provide a dog-free area and leave the cuckoo flower which grows there naturally to grow (cut annually). 3. Plant wildflower seeds (available for free) at the bottom end of the common on the far side of the 'ditch' area & also alongside the wall to the recently completed Horfield & Concorde Lodge sites. 4. Install Nest Boxes and Bat boxes (these could be made by the local community) 	
Redland Green	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Put up bird and bat boxes 2. Prevent further unilateral removal of trees without prior consultation with RGCG 3. Enhance woodland areas (plant wild flowers ,replace lost trees) 4. Enhance the ecological value of Redland Green Capital expenditure/ maintenance 5. Introduce meadow areas to marginal parts of the Green 6. Develop a Conservation Plan to look after rare species (e.g. rare Goldilocks buttercups) 7. Effective consultation with the local community on all changes affecting Redland Green Strategy and policy 8. Use Bristol Parks to provide corridors to discontinuous country habitats 9. Provide Information Boards on Flora and Fauna 	<p>2. Friends of Groups should be involved in a range of activities in their respective parks and will be closely involved in works within the space. Sometimes urgent action needs to be taken with trees if there is a risk to the public and drawn out consultation may hamper this. The Council do require autonomy to act if there is a risk to Health and Safety.</p> <p>7. This is not necessarily a priority that belongs within a 'Parks Improvement Plan' as it does not directly relate to specific capital investment. Consultation is always carried out when new features are proposed within a park. It is expected in the future that Park Groups will become more involved in this process as a way of expanding interest throughout the community for such consultations.</p>
St Andrew's	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Develop an area of shade loving plants. 	Would need to be in an appropriate area

Site	Priority	
Park		that does not conflict with other uses.

Boundaries

Site	Priority	
Cotham Gardens	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Hedge along back of Elmgrove Road houses needs further work. 2. Fences need painting. 3. Fence to Bannatyne's car park needs repair. 	
Horfield Common	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Make sure that the site enables disabled users access (including toilet facilities) 2. Consider installing a (winding) path across the common (between the car park & Horfield Lodge wall, via the seating area) to enable disabled users to move around the whole common without needing to go up to the main road 	
Redland Green	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Remove inappropriate over-engineered structures 2. Increase planting to boundary with St Oswalds Rd 	<p>1. The new steps that were introduced were designed to be DDA compliant and have improved access into the space for people with mobility issues. It is advised that this should be retained. There is potential to improve the appearance of the steps with appropriate planting and to improve access in to the area of 'dead space' that has been cut off.</p>
St Andrew's Park	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Enhance entrance to Bowls Club. 2. Provision of gates at all entrances, with top priority for the two Effingham Road and upper Melita Road entrances 3. Traffic calming adjacent to entrances, preferably as part of a wider 20 mph zone around the Park. 	<p>3. Traffic calming was part of the original AGSP Ideas and Option Paper. The Highways team would need to be involved and lead on any such project to identify the need and type of calming measures.</p>

Infrastructure

Site	Priority	
Neighbourhood Partnership wide	1. Explore giving priority right of way to pedestrians on shared pedestrian/cycle paths	
Cotham Gardens	1. Benches on Lovers' Walk Maintenance cleaning and concrete hardstanding under bench	
Redland Green	1. Maintain surface of existing paths 2. Improve lighting 3. Cut back hedges to improve visibility 4. Negotiate access to existing toilets 5. New bench to replace one at St Oswalds Road end	
St. Andrew's Park	1. Provide a drinking fountain; 2. Support programme of occasional art installations; 3. Reduce screening and enhance entrance to Bowls Club [work has started]; 4. Install waymarker, self powered LED lights on main paths across the Park; 5. Notice Board for FoSAP, located close to the cafe.	1. See comments for drinking fountain within the short term key priorities section.

Appendix 2

Proposals put forward for the Ardagh to date.

Please refer to Section 9 in the main body of the report.

Site	Priorities for Play and exercise	Officer comments
Horfield Common (Ardagh)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Children's play area – refurbishment and/or replacement/extension on its current site 2. There is not support for moving this into the Ardagh site as there is concern regarding visibility, (particularly in the evenings) and reducing the sports facilities available. 3. Resurface the tennis courts in the Ardagh so that they are good, level tarmac grass-roots quality provision. 4. This is considered to be urgent by all those who use the tennis court facilities as the gravel surfaces (as well as those which are uneven) mean that it is increasingly difficult to play on (balls do not bounce predictably and surfaces are dangerous for running on). 5. Replace tennis nets within the Ardagh site (this is part of the existing contract but is not being fulfilled). 6. Re-line all of the tennis courts (this is part of the existing contract but is not being fulfilled). 7. Undertake basic court maintenance e.g clearing leaves (this is part of the existing contract but has not been being fulfilled in recent years). 8. Put up signage which states the opening times of the site (8.30am requested on Saturdays and Sundays as currently opening times are inconsistent). 9. Put up signage making clear that there are public conveniences available within the site so that there is no need to cross the main road from the children's play area to use those at Tesco. 10. Establish good quality junior provision/coaching to get the sport off the ground for young people at this venue. 11. Establish a running club 12. Advertise the site's availability for private hire. 13. Develop 5-a-side football, basketball and netball provision. 14. Mark out a running track/distance around the paths in the park to encourage fitness 15. Put up clear 5mph signage on the track next to the children's play area 16. Put cycling/walking shared signage on pathways where relevant 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Clarity would be is needed on how many tennis courts should be retained bearing in mind other proposals put forward e.g 5-a-aside football. 5. (6 & 7)What is within and not within the existing contract is still being considered by BCC after issues have been raised by FoHC. 9. There are currently no public conveniences on this site.
Site	Priorities for Infrastructure	Officer Comments

Horfield
Common
(Ardagh)

1. Reinstate a park keeper to look after the common

2. Award the bowling club a lease so that they can continue to open up the pavilion to Community groups, and achieve funding to support this.
3. Support plans for the site to become a 'hub site', owned by and supported by BCC for Bowls & Tennis (encourage local coaches to participate).
4. Open a café facility in the park to encourage use throughout the year
5. Reopen the pitch and putt facility with staff on site

2. The Council cannot commit to (pre) awarding a lease to an organisation. This would depend on whether this is in the best interests of the facility and/or whether there are competing requests for a lease by other organisations.
3. The site is not currently a Beacon Site for tennis according to the Lawn Tennis Association; these have been set for the foreseeable future. However FoHC have been advised by the Park service that if relevant evidence was gathered the LTA could be approached to amend this.