

Communities Scrutiny Commission

23rd November 2021



Report of: Stephen Peacock, Executive Director Growth and Regeneration

Title: New Parks and Green Space Strategy

Ward: All

Officer Presenting Report: Richard Ennion, Horticultural Service Manager - Parks

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Recommendations:

To note process being applied to renew the Parks and Green Space Strategy.

The significant issues in the report are:

The current [Parks and Green Space Strategy](#) (PGSS), which was produced in 2008, set out an ambitious 20-year plan for ensuring that people have access to good quality parks and green spaces of different types, close to where they live.

The PGSS is being renewed ahead of its 2028 life in response to three categories of change:

- A: Policy context
- B: Health agenda
- C: Financial sustainability

In developing the new PGSS a Project Board and Project Steering Group have been established, alongside themed Workstreams.

Timeline for adoption of a new PGSS:

- Engagement workshops via an 'appreciative Inquiry' approach: January – March 2022
- Consultation draft: June – September 2022
- New PGSS: from October 2022 (subject to Key decision timetable)

1. Summary

This report:

- Sets out the need for a new Parks and Green Space strategy (PGSS)
- Sets out the Plan and Governance arrangements to renew the PGSS
- Highlights key dates leading to an approved replacement PGSS after September 2022 (subject to key decision timetable).

2. Context

2.1 Parks and Green Space Strategy, 2008

The current PGSS was adopted in 2008. The full document is available [here](#) alongside public research undertaken to inform the strategy available [here](#).

The current PGSS considers all green spaces for which there is legitimate public access and which provide recreational benefit (around 1,556 ha). The 2008 strategy considers five different types of space

- children and young people's space,
- formal green space,
- informal green space,
- natural green space, and
- active sports space.

The current strategy excludes council-owned green space such as allotments and grazing land and also space that is for private use - gardens, communal private gardens, balconies, roof gardens etc.

As well as setting out plans and policies for these types of space, the current strategy gives provision standards for Quality, Quantity and Distance to accessible parks / greenspace.

See Appendix 1 for summary of Standards and Progress.

2.2 Why renew PGSS now?

The decision to renew the existing strategy ahead of its nominal 2028 review date is in response to:

A: Policy context / significant change-drivers

These include:

[Bristol One City Plan](#) Target for 'Everyone has access to excellent quality green space within a 10-minute walk from their home'

[One City Ecological Emergency Strategy](#) and [BCC Ecological Emergency Action Plan](#): 30% of land managed for nature

[One City Climate Emergency Strategy](#): '[Bristol is] carbon neutral and climate resilient by 2030.'

City Growth Plan: accommodating 70,000 plus new residents and demand for parks / green space

B: Contribution parks / green space to public health

There is increasing awareness of the public health benefit from access to Parks and Green Space, highlighted in policy mapping at a national and local level -see Appendix 2: Parks and Public Health Policy review.

Recent Natural Capital Accounts produced by Vivid Economic's Greenkeeper modelling – see Appendix 3, has identified approximately **17 million** annual visits to Bristol's parks and greenspace. This equates to **£385 million** annual benefit to the City, of which **£361 million** is public health benefit, equivalent to an average health and wellbeing value of £21.25 per visit to a Bristol park.

The potential public health benefit of Bristol's parks, modelled by providing 123 [Green Flag award](#) parks across the city, could increase annual visits to parks from **17 million** to **24 million** and deliver an additional **£156 million** annual health value.

Bristol's green spaces are worth:

- £390m per year in gross benefits to local communities - based on est 17.2m visits a year.
- £366m per year results from health benefits - composed of improvements to mental wellbeing (61%) and increases in the quantity and quality of life from physical activity (33%).
- The value of a single visit for health and wellbeing is an average of £21.25.

Vivid Economics, 2020

C: Financial sustainability plan – status quo service and ambition costs

Investment in parks has not met the ambition costs of the 2008 PGSS, for a number of reasons (Appendix 1).

Austerity measures since 2008 have cut the parks budget further, see [BCC Cabinet 2018](#), Public Report Pack 'Parks and Green Spaces – future funding model 2018-2020' pages 16-60.

Also see Bristol Future Parks report Scrutiny 21 November 2021.

Going forward, a new financial sustainability plan is required that set out the cost and investment required to sustain the current service and meet the ambition set out in the new PGSS.

2.3 Approach to developing a new PGSS

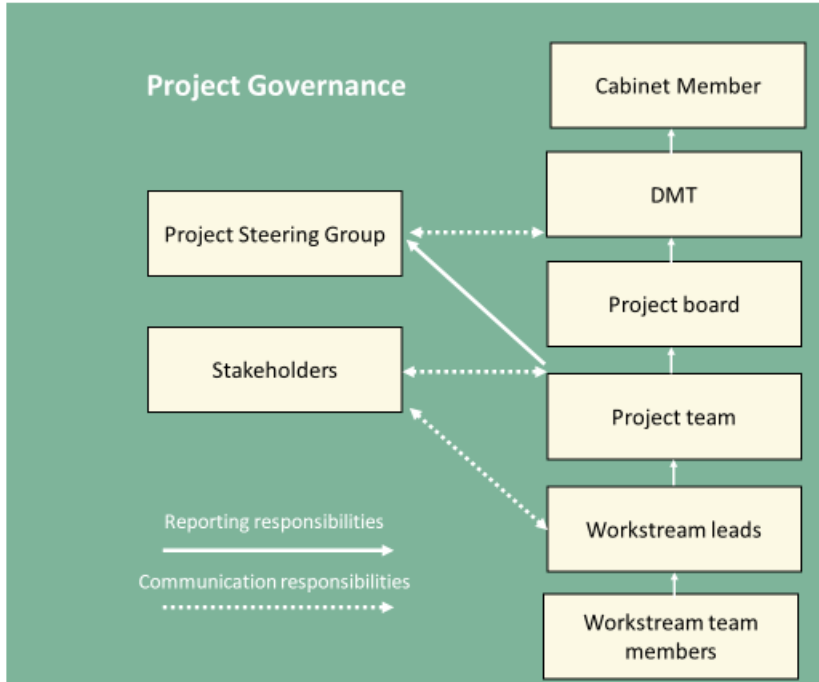
2.3.1 Key issues to address

Key issues for the new PGSS to respond to, include:

- Ecological emergency: **protecting and enhancing nature now and in the future**
- Climate change: **adapting to extremes in weather and moving towards a net zero carbon future.**
- Reducing health inequality: **Ensure all local neighbourhoods support healthy lifestyles**
- Inclusive placemaking and contextual safeguarding: **ensuring parks are welcoming, accessible, and safe for all to share.**
- Sound financial stewardship: **creating new and innovative ways to generate income from Parks to ensure their sustainable management.**

2.3.2 Governance

The following governance arrangement is in place. The PGSS project Board has now met for the first time.



2.3.3 Workstreams

The following workstream are in place, reflecting seven key themes to be addressed in the new PGSS:

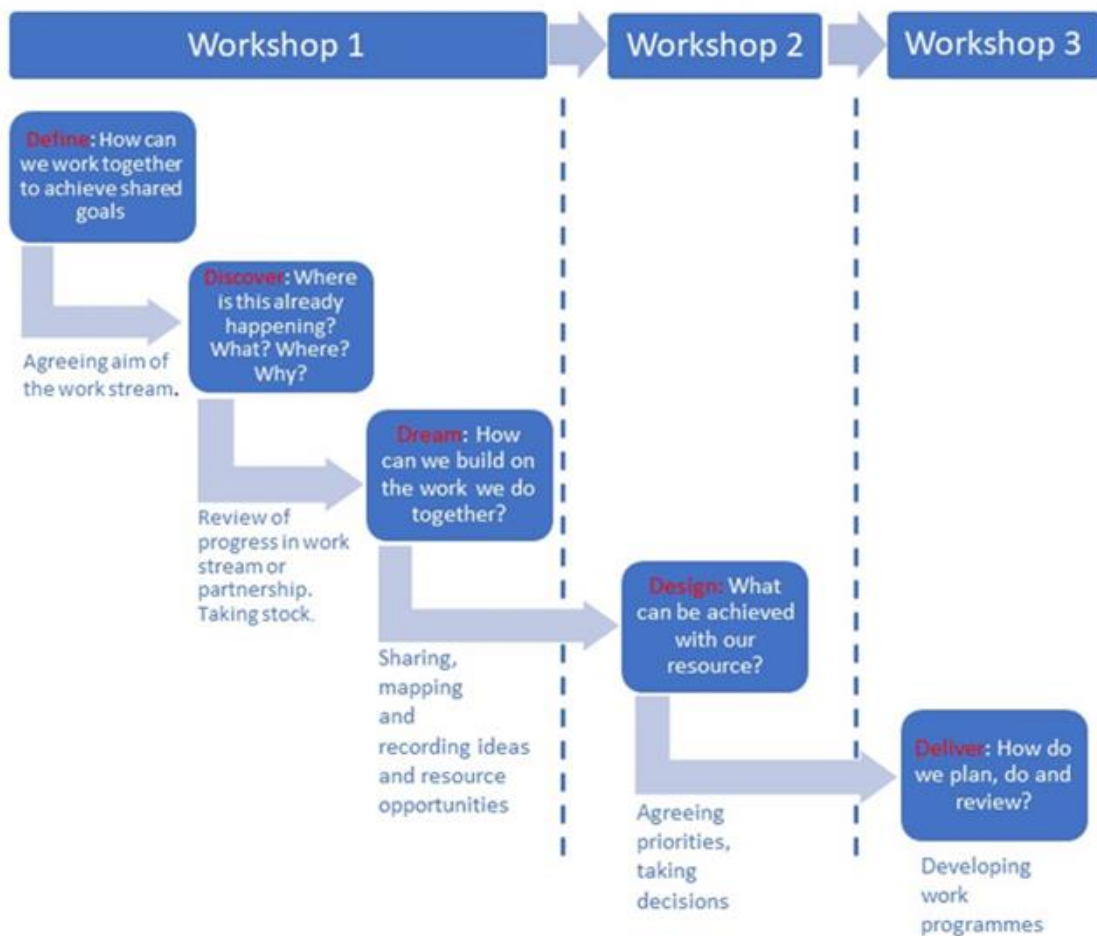
- Health
- Communities
- Green Infrastructure / Green Grid
- Climate and Food
- Heritage
- Children and Young People
- Nature Recovery

A Financial Sustainability workstream is working across all themes to reflect baseline and ambition costs, as these emerge.

2.3.4 Engagement Plan

A series of workshops are planned for January – March 2022. These will follow an ‘appreciative Inquiry’ approach, following the 5-D’s method: ‘Define, Discover, Dream, Design and Deliver’.

Participants will reflect key stakeholder input across the seven key themes identified above.



2.3.5 Key dates

January – March 2022 – Engagement ‘appreciative Inquiry approach

June – September – Consultation draft

October 2022 – adopted new PGSS (subject to key decision timetable)

2.3.6 Draft Vision and Mission statements

In association with the Bristol Future Parks approach, draft new PGSS Vision and Mission statement have been prepared. This will be tested during the PGSS engagement process:

Vision

A city where everyone benefits from excellent quality parks and green spaces.

Mission

We will work together with Bristol’s citizens to nurture excellent quality, nature-rich, attractive and enjoyable parks and green spaces in every part of Bristol.

3. Policy

1. **Empowering and Caring:** Work with partners to empower communities and individuals, increase independence and support those who need it. Give Children the best possible start in life.
2. **Fair and Inclusive:** Improve economic and social equality, pursuing economic growth which includes everyone and make sure people have access to good quality learning, decent jobs and homes they can afford.
3. **Well Connected:** Take bold and innovative steps to make Bristol a joined up City, linking up people with jobs and each other.
4. **Wellbeing:** Create healthier and more resilient communities where life expectancy is not determined by wealth or background

4. Consultation

a) Internal

The following BCC teams are involved in developing the new PGSS:

- Sustainable City
- Children commissioning and Communities
- Neighbourhoods and Communities.
- Safer Communities
- Strategic City Planning
- Housing and Landlord Services
- Place shaping
- Public Health
- Property management

b) External

Lists are being drawn up to invite key stakeholders to the engagement workshops planned for January – March 2022 (as 2.2.3 above).

5. Public Sector Equality Duties

- 5a) Before making a decision, section 149 Equality Act 2010 requires that each decision-maker considers the need to promote equality for persons with the following “protected characteristics”: age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation. Each decision-maker must, therefore, have due regard to the need to:
- i) Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct prohibited under the Equality Act 2010.
 - ii) Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not share it. This involves having due regard, in particular, to the need to --
 - remove or minimise disadvantage suffered by persons who share a relevant protected characteristic;
 - take steps to meet the needs of persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are different from the needs of people who do not share it (in relation to disabled people, this includes, in particular, steps to take account of disabled persons' disabilities);
 - encourage persons who share a protected characteristic to participate in public life or in any other activity in which participation by such persons is disproportionately low.
 - iii) Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not share it. This involves having due regard, in particular, to the need to –
 - tackle prejudice; and
 - promote understanding.
- 5b) < Insert a note on how the public sector equality duties are relevant to the proposals and how these duties have been taken into account in developing the proposals. Where an equality impact assessment has been undertaken, summarise its findings here and provide link to full document, or include the equality impact assessment as an appendix. Where no equality impact assessment has been undertaken, give reasons why not>.

Appendices:

1. PGSS, 2008: standard, progress, SWOT
2. Parks and Public Health Policy
3. Natural Capital Accounting – baseline and ambition

LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985

Background Papers:

*<It is a statutory requirement to list papers used to prepare the report but not ones already published.
If none insert “none” here>*