

Statement: PS14.01

Cabinet – 5 MARCH 2024

Re: Agenda item 14 - Parks and Green Spaces Strategy

Statement submitted by: Len Wyatt Chair of Bristol Parks Forum

1. Parks and Green Spaces Strategy

We welcome the finalisation of the Strategy; and the emphasis it provides on the importance of the benefits that Bristol's Parks and Green Spaces provide.

We are pleased to see that there is an improved emphasis in parts of the Strategy to support working with and empowering communities; and references to both Friends of Parks Groups and Your Park to achieve this.

This aligns well with our ongoing work to strengthen relationships within and outside the Bristol Parks Forum.

As an aspirational document there are, of course, many things to do to achieve the outcomes required, especially in terms of being able to fund the necessary changes; and maintain them in the longer term. To this end the Forum will continue to work with the Council and other organisations on initiatives to find the best ways to enable that funding to be accessed.

We note that there is an additional emphasis on food growing in parks and green spaces. As can be seen from a number of community gardens in Bristol's parks there are many benefits to this happening. However, care is needed to pick the right site, in the right context, so that potential conflicts with the existing functions of that park, or part of park are avoided.

We note that in the Report to the Cabinet, in Annex A2 there is a series of maps which give an idea of the current situation in terms of the Green Space Provision standards across Bristol.

It is clear from these maps and statements in the Strategy that more parks and green space is needed in the central areas of Bristol. A large, green park, in addition to smaller areas will be critical to the development of the St Philips site. Noting that the strategy states that the Council has developed a **minimum** standard of provision, a large green park would deliver across many of the key Parks and Green Spaces Strategy's Priority Themes and Key Actions and Outcomes. We note an aspirational figure is quoted in the Strategy of 2.9ha new open space in the Central Area/Zone; and 1 ha in the Inner Urban Area/Zone.

Finally, we would draw the Council's attention to potential improvements (see below) that can be made in the general approach of consultations, which have been developed from a number of recent consultations.

We believe these can be carried out, relatively simply. The changes would mean that organisations, such as ourselves, do not have to use so many resources to try to enable people to find their way around the consultation; and to respond more effectively.

The improvements are:

- Ensure that the introduction to the consultation/questionnaire, clearly states all of the changes involved;
- Ensure that supporting information or further detail is included as an Annex to the main document(s), not just shown within the questionnaire.
- That there is a PDF version of the survey available on request so that, if necessary, people can read the whole survey, rather than skip between pages.
- That it is made clearer how people can save a copy or request a copy of their response once completed, before they submit it.
- That in addition to reporting on the points raised by respondents, that evidence is provided as to how those points were treated in relation to the final version (eg: whether those points were taken on board and changed the text, or if not the reasons why).

2. Bid to WECA Green Recovery Fund

The Bristol Parks Forum welcomes the bid for funds. We welcome the fact that it contains a bid for revenue funding to support the longer-term benefits that the projects could deliver.