



people spaces places



Cheltenham Green Space Strategy Stakeholder Workshop Report May 2009



CHELTENHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL

Parks, People and Wildlife –

An Outline Green Space Strategy for Cheltenham

2009-2024

Stakeholder Workshop Report

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1. Introduction

This brief report summarises the evening workshop that forms an important part of the consultation process that will lead to the production of a Green Space Strategy for Cheltenham Borough Council.

Overall 31 people took part in the event which was held at the Pump Rooms in Pittville Park on Wednesday 13th May 2009. The delegates for the event were drawn from across Cheltenham and represented a wide variety of partners both within and beyond the Council, a full list of those that attended is set out at appendix A.

The event was exercise based and delegates were divided into six groups for the purposes of the deliberations of the issues under consideration.

A series of presentation inputs and exercises were undertaken and the results of these are presented below.

Some key issues that arose on the evening were

- The vision for green space needs to encompass variety / diversity, well maintained / high quality, wildlife / biodiversity, accessibility, heritage and fun!
- In terms of types of space there was felt to be insufficient allotment provision which is borne out by other parts of the strategy
- The authority has the potential to apply for more Green Flag Awards in the future and a range of number of applications was suggested with an average of 8 sites
- The issue of walking distance to sites backed up the modelling work done in the strategy
- There was a significant amount of interest shown by groups wanting to become more engaged in the future and an overall movement towards more partnership working would be welcomed

2. Welcome

Rob Bell, Assistant Director of Green Environment welcomed the delegates and introduced the event.

3. Scene Setting

Ian Baggott of CFP gave a presentation addressing the approach adopted toward achieving a green space strategy for Cheltenham. He outlined the processes and investigations undertaken and reported on a series of findings from a variety of consultative exercises. Ian's slides are included in appendix C later.

4. Exercises

Three exercises were organised that reflect three vital elements of a strategic approach to green space. By working through these exercises the organisers sought to air these issues and reach an accommodation among those present as to the essential elements of vision; quantity, quality and accessibility; and community participation. The results for each session are presented below. Workshop materials – briefing notes etc. are included in appendix B to this report.

4.1. Exercise 1: A collective vision

Delegates were asked to construct a short vision statement by assembling key words that they would like to see reflected in an overall vision for green space in Cheltenham.

The time allocated for this exercise was short and the outputs varied – all groups, however, produced powerful views of the value of green space. In some cases a short statement was produced in others a series of clusters of similar issues were assembled as follows:

Team	Vision components
1	a) "Access for all to a variety of spaces and activities" b) "A variety of spaces for a variety of uses for a variety of people"
2	"We want people to have fun in diverse, vibrant and well-maintained open spaces in which the whole community takes pride"
3	"In 2015 the parks and green spaces in Cheltenham will be of high quality, biodiversity rich, safely accessible, free from the fear of crime, with an interesting mix of activities for all ages"

4	a) high quality-accessible-varied-safe-attractive-interesting-enjoyable b) networked-well managed and resourced-sustainable-bio diverse-eco friendly c) Community-families-Cheltenham-for everyone-world (visitors) d) productive land-education-green-natural-fun
5	Sustainable; diverse in use and users; bio-diverse and wildlife; heritage protected; food security and community agriculture; well-maintained; space and aesthetics; connectivity “Protect our heritage, promote food production, bio-diversity, sustainability for access and enjoyment for all”
6	Welcoming/child friendly; community agriculture, football friendly; places to play and relax; bio-diverse; accessible; community involvement; permaculture; economic asset

4.2. Exercise 2: Quantity, quality and accessibility

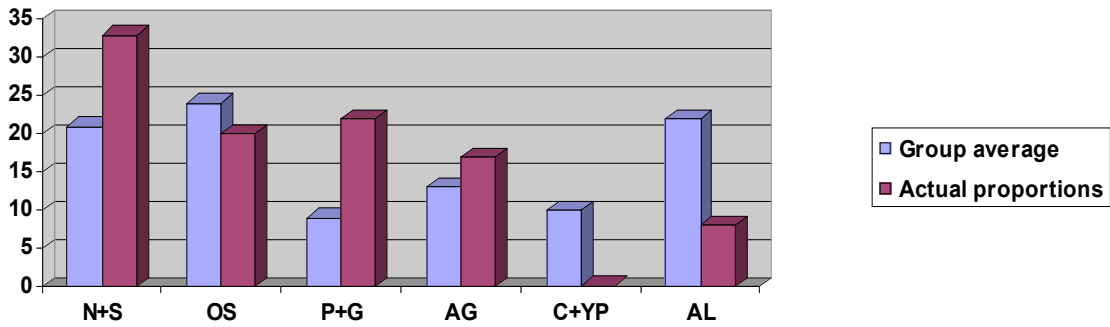
This exercise was undertaken in three distinct parts.

4.2.1. Quantity

Groups were asked to consider six types of green space and arrive at a collective decision of what proportions of each they would like/expect to see in a neighbourhood. One group was unable to reach agreement over the proportions and the averages have been adjusted accordingly. The group results together with the current Borough proportions as a comparison are as follows:

Types of green space	Group average	Actual proportions
Natural and semi natural	21	33
Outdoor sports facilities	24	20
Parks and gardens	9	22
Amenity green space	13	17
Provision for children and young people	10	0.1
Allotments	22	8
Total	99*	100.1*

* Rounding errors



A comparison of the group estimates against actual proportions

There are a number of significant disparities between the actual proportions of different types of space and the group assessment of the desirability of proportions of space. Part of this may be accounted for by technical issues – for example the means of calculating play facilities, the small land take associated with play areas and their presence in other green spaces.

The desire for allotments space may be more significant as there appears to be a general view that provision of this facility should be increased.

4.2.2. Quality

Each group was asked to consider the nature of quality in green space and give an estimate for the numbers of Green Flag Award Scheme winners they would ideally like to see in their neighbourhood and the Borough in general. The current number of Green Flag Award holders in the Borough is three – Hatherley Park, Naunton Park and Montpellier Gardens.

The results from the groups:

No. of GFA sites per . . .	Team 1	Team 2	Team 3	Team 4	Team 5	Team 6	Average
Neighbourhood	1					1	1
Borough	3	15	13	11	0	6	8

Many groups were unable to assess this question from the perspective of the neighbourhood and one group thought the concept of Green Flag Award inappropriate and unacceptable. However, the view overall was that eight GFA spaces is about right for the Borough.

4.2.3. Accessibility

Groups were given a description and images of three spaces of differing significance – Borough, Neighbourhood and Local. Each group was asked to arrive at a collective view of how long they thought it reasonable to be asked to walk to each of these spaces.

Post it notes from each group were applied to a timeline and a series of clusters revealed the following average times for each space.

Borough significance – it was thought that approximately 20 minutes was about right to walk to a site of borough significance
Neighbourhood significance – It was thought approximately 15 minutes was about right to walk to a site of neighbourhood significance
Local significance – It was thought approximately 10 minutes was about right to walk to a site of local significance

Note: The figures above match the responses from user surveys within the borough.

4.3. Exercise 3: Community participation

In the final exercise, groups were given a series of cards with various community groups within Cheltenham named on them. Community participation, engagement, involvement is often promoted as an essential element of good practice and effective public policy. This participation though can have a variety of meanings and implications. The task here was to place the named groups on a “Ladder of Participation” that set out the workshop’s view of the degree of participation enjoyed by different groups.

Four rungs were presented on the ladder – the highest level of participation one of community control; the lowest form of participation that of being in receipt of information.

The intention of the exercise was to get the workshop to think about the nature and degree of participation that was being offered to community groups in Cheltenham and to assess whether in particular cases this should be extended or restricted.

The results from each group varied and perhaps unsurprisingly a clear and consistent message didn’t emerge.

Most people regarded the majority of community groups as participating in green issues to the extent of being either consulted or kept informed. A number of teams placed organised “Friends of” groups in the higher, partnership level of participation (in one case Friends of Hatherley and Friends of Naunton Park were thought to participate from a position of autonomy and community control).

However, there was a view expressed that a number of groups should have their degree of participation enhanced to greater (and more meaningful) levels of participation. Greater degrees of participation were thought to be appropriate (and sought) for: Cheltenham Permaculture Group; Living Streets; Vision 21; Friends of Naunton, Pittville and Hatherley Parks; Cheltenham Connect; FOLK; Springfield Park Watch; University Allotment Society; Pittville Area Residents Association; Bio-fuel Watch; and the Cheltenham Youth Football League.

5. Closing remarks

The workshop was brought to a close by Councillor Paul Massey, Cabinet Member for Green Environment, who thanked the participants and set out a timetable for the adoption of the strategy by the Council.

The workshop closed at 9.00 pm

Appendix A – List of Attendees

name		organisation
Saira	Hill	Health and wellbeing partnership
Lorna	Robson	Hatherley Park Watch/Friends of Hatherley
Julius	Marstrand	Friends of Leckhampton Hill & Charlton Kings Common
Rebecca	Dobson	Vision21
Pat	Thornton	Cllr- St Peters
Rob	Bell	Cheltenham Borough Council
Andy	Hayes	Hesters Way Partnership
Meyrick	Brentnall	Friends of Naunton Park
Steve	Mattos	Cheltenham Youth Football League
Tony	Kinmond	CBC Allotment Site Wardens
Adam	Reynolds	Cheltenham Borough Council
John	Cook	King George V Parkwatch
Owen	Parry	Cheltenham Borough Council
Cathy	Green	The One Tonners
Barbara	Driver	Cllr- Lansdown
John	Rees	Cheltenham Borough Council
Richard	Geary	Cheltenham Borough Council
Fiona	Clarke	Friends of Pittville Park
Cherry	Lavell	Cheltenham Tree Group
Fiona	Warin	Cheltenham Borough Council
Celia	Wear	Hesters Way Partnership
Karen	Smith	GCC Youth Service
John	Newbury	Living Streets
Chris	Ryder	Cllr- Charlton Kings/Cheltenham in Bloom
Paul	Massey	Cllr - Swindon village
Karen	Radford	Cheltenham Borough Council
Mike	Bush	Cheltenham Permaculture Group (vision 21)
Stuart	Manton	Cheltenham Connect
Dee	Hodson-Wright	Cheltenham Connect
Wilf	Tomaney	Cheltenham Borough Council
Tony	McNamara	Cheltenham Borough Council

Appendix B – Workshop Briefing Notes

Cheltenham Green Space Strategy

Visioning Workshop

Wednesday 13th May 2009

Exercise 1 – A Vision Statement

Briefing note

A simple vision statement is one of the outputs we are looking for from today's event.

a) Please spend a few minutes jotting down on post it notes words that you think should appear in any vision for green space in Cheltenham. Do this individually please.

This part of the exercise should take about 5 minutes.

b) When you have a collection of suitable words, make a selection in your group of those words that will go forward and rearrange them into a vision statement.

Please take about 10 minutes for this part of the exercise.

Cheltenham Green Space Strategy

Visioning Workshop

Wednesday 13th May 2009

Exercise 2 – Quantity, Quality and Accessibility

Briefing note

a) Quantity

Look at the images of different types of green space on the sheet in your envelope. Each image represents one of the categories outlined in the record sheet which you will also find enclosed.

These spaces are representative of the different types of green space you may find in a neighbourhood.

Through discussion within your group please indicate on your sheet what percentage of a neighbourhood's greenspace should ideally be apportioned to the different spaces.

If you could make the totals add up to a hundred that would be great.

The time allowed for this part of the exercise is **10 minutes**

Cheltenham Green Space Strategy

Visioning Workshop

Wednesday 13th May 2009

Exercise 2 – Quantity, Quality and Accessibility

Briefing note

b) Quality

Green Flag Award is the nationally recognised quality standard for greenspace. Cheltenham currently holds three GFAs: for Hatherley Park, Naunton Park and Montpellier Gardens.

For this part of the exercise please talk in your groups about your future aspirations for quality sites.

How many sites in Cheltenham you would like to see hold Green Flag Awards in the future?

The time allowed for this part of the exercise is **10 minutes**

Cheltenham Green Space Strategy

Visioning Workshop

Wednesday 13th May 2009

Exercise 2 – Quantity, Quality and **Accessibility**

Briefing note

c) Accessibility

In your envelope you have a sheet that outlines three green spaces of differing significance (labelled A, B and C). Please read these descriptions / scenarios and in your groups consider the following question:

How long on average do you think it reasonable that people should spend walking to each of the spaces?

In your groups and for each space, write a time in minutes on a post it note and indicate which space it represents by adding A, B or C.

When you have completed all three times for the spaces as a group, please stick the post its on the timescale provided.

The time allowed for this part of the exercise is **10 minutes**

Cheltenham Green Space Strategy

Visioning Workshop

Wednesday 13th May 2009

Exercise 3 – Engaging Communities

Briefing note

One of the priorities for the Council in its strategic approach to greenspace is continuing to build a relationship with its users and residents.

It is often the case that the degree of involvement of local residents with their local green spaces varies. Some spaces might be under the direct control of community groups. Other spaces have a lower degree of input from residents; others still have active friends' groups who play a role in the management of their space.

The ladder denotes differing degrees of participation from direct community control at the top, to real and equal partnership one rung down, to a consultative relationship below that and at the bottom of the ladder a relationship that involves receiving information – the level of active involvement is greater the higher up the ladder you go.

A Ladder of Involvement

What degree of involvement is appropriate and is this being achieved?

a) You have a series of cards with the names of local organisations on them. Please discuss in your group where you think these should be placed on a “ladder of participation” which is provided – what is the level of their participation? We would like you to make an assessment of the **current situation** that community groups find themselves in by placing the cards at the appropriate place on the ladder.

b) Then we would like you to indicate if you would like to see this change and if so where they **should be** on the ladder. Draw in the desired new position with a marker pen arrow.

The time allowed for this exercise is **20 minutes**

Appendix C – Presentation slides