

**CHELTENHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL  
CABINET 21 July 2009  
Draft Green Space Strategy  
Appendix A**

**CHELTENHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL  
Parks, People and Wildlife –  
An Outline Green Space Strategy for Cheltenham**

**2009-2024**

**Policy review**

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**Policy review**

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## 1. National policy

### 1.1 Planning Policy Statement 1: Delivering Sustainable Development (PPS1) (2005)

This document outlines the government's approach to planning for sustainable development. The key principles within PPS1 aim to produce planning outcomes that deliver economic, social and environmental objectives that improve the quality of people's lives. PPS1 makes specific reference to the preservation of open space as a vital component of sustainable development:

*"The Government is committed to protecting and enhancing the quality of the natural and historic environment, in both rural and urban areas. Planning policies should seek to protect and enhance the quality, character and amenity value of the countryside and urban areas as a whole. A high level of protection should be given to most valued townscapes and landscapes, wildlife habitats and natural resources. Those with national and international designations should receive the highest level of protection.*

*The condition of our surroundings has a direct impact on the quality of life and the conservation and improvement of the natural and built environment brings social and economic benefit for local communities. Planning should seek to maintain and improve the local environment and help to mitigate the effects of declining environmental quality through positive policies on issues such as design, conservation and the provision of public space" (PPS1,p.7).*

Comments
The competing and conflicting demands of physical development and conservation are clear, yet the goal of sustainable development remains at the heart of government planning policy and the role and function of green space is central to this agenda.

### 1.2 Planning Policy Guidance

Within the legislative framework provided by the various Planning Acts, the Government has issued a number of 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 (PPGs) 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.

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

This Planning Policy Guidance provides detailed 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' (six acres (2.43 hectares) per 1000 population). PPG17 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.

The guidance further recognises the importance that sport and recreation play in the quality of life for local people. Furthermore, it highlights that sport and

recreation are fundamental to delivering broader Government objectives such as the promotion of social inclusion, community cohesion, health and wellbeing, as well as more sustainable patterns of development. As such, local authorities are required to prepare an open space strategy.

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.

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.

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.

<b>Comments</b>
Cheltenham BC has completed a green space audit which was based upon the guidance set out in PPG17 and the Companion Guide. The Green Space Strategy draws upon this earlier work and sets out a vision for green space in the borough and realistic recommendations for delivering this vision.

#### 1.4 National Audit Office (2006) Enhancing Urban Green Spaces

This report noted that policies and practices established by government and other bodies had halted the decline in urban green spaces after decades of neglect. It explores the strategic importance of green space and its management within primarily local authorities and sets out a series of recommendation for what it sees is an improving position but not one that is not yet given sufficient prominence.

It promotes the extension of good work around:

- i) Quality – the Green Flag Award scheme is afforded particular compliment
- ii) Strategy – although it notes that there were (at the time of their survey) still many local authorities who had not undertaken audits of the quality of their green space or had not developed strategies for its protection, enhancement and effective management

- iii) Prominence – although it noted the lack of green space champions within authorities and particularly local strategic partnerships

Comments
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The development of a green space strategy reflects the recommendations of the National Audit Office report which advocates the pursuit of quality and strategic thinking in the enhancement of green space by local authorities. The issue of the prominence of green space expertise at a strategic organisational level is perhaps one that might be given additional focus.
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### 1.5 Green Space Strategies, A Good Practice Guide, CABE Space (2004)

CABE Space published this good practice guide to Green Space Strategies in 2004 and is currently in the process of revising the document. 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
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The Green Space Strategy Guide was used as a reference during the planning and delivery of the Cheltenham Green Space Audit and the Green Space Strategy.
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### 1.6 Accessible Natural Green Space 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 2 ha of local nature reserve per 1000 population
- There should be at least one accessible 20 ha site within 2 km

- There should be one accessible 100 ha site within 5 km
- There should be one accessible 500 ha site within 10 km”.

Comments
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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. The Green Space Strategy has measured the current levels of provision in Cheltenham against this standard.
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### 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
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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. However, more recent guidance in the form of PPG17 and its Companion Guide suggests that local standards should include qualitative and accessibility measures.
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### 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 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”*

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’.

<b>Comments</b>
<p>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.</p> <p>Where green space strategies are developed Campbell suggests that these documents should be produced with the involvement of the local community and delivered a 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.</p> <p>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 good reference for the Cheltenham Green Space Strategy.</p>

### 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 Audit and Strategy for Cheltenham could be delivered.

#### 1.10 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 green spaces. Cheltenham is moving toward this in its approach to management planning for green spaces and its pursuit of the Green Flag Awards as a key target.

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

This document was published by CABI 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".*

<b>Comments</b>
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<p>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.</p>
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### 1.12 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.

<b>Comments</b>
This document established that parks and greenspaces 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.

1.13 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 although last updated in 2004 represents the most recent guidance for the Green Flag Award – the national quality award for greenspaces. The Award criteria cover a broad range of issues and reflect industry and visitors perceptions of what constitutes a good quality greenspace. The Green Flag Award is of relevance to the Cheltenham Green Space Strategy since the authority has achieved the Award for Hatherley Park, Montpellier Gardens and Naunton Park

1.14 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”*

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

#### 1.15 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.

<b>Comments</b>
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.

### 1.16 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 sites 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”.

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

### 1.17 Policy Note : Preventing Anti-Social Behaviour in Public Spaces, CABA Space (2004)

This policy note published by CABA 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. CABA 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.

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

#### 1.18 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 currently 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 its 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
<p>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.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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.</p>

1.19 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 parks 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*

As part of this new approach the government has created a new unit for greenspace called CAGE Space under the Commission for Architecture and the built Environment. In relation to parks and green spaces, the Unit will:

- 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.*

A number of early priorities have been identified for the unit and these include:

- “launching an awareness raising campaign to promote the value and importance of quality parks and green spaces.*
- commissioning a research and information development series – to include work on funding needs for urban parks and green spaces and their economic and social benefits and opportunities.*
- launching a good-practice programme and develop networks for sharing information.*
- implementing and managing an enablers scheme.*
- working with key partners to develop quality standards and measurable targets.”*

Key partners to work alongside CAFE Space include GreenSpace (formerly the Urban Parks Forum), Groundwork, 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

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.

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 CAFE Space will produce new indicators for parks as well as working with the Audit Commission on the CPA frameworks.

#### 1.20 Parkforce, CAFE Space 2005

In September 2005 CAFE 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%). CAFE 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.

Comments
Parkforce clearly sets out the benefits of 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 and poor maintenance. This follows the trend over the past two decades for on site staff to be removed or replaced by area based maintenance teams.

### 1.21 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 19<sup>th</sup> 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 <sup>th</sup> Century, the publication concludes, like Parkforce, that on site staff make a positive and cost effective contribution to the overall visitor experience.

## 1.22 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 to look 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.

<b>Comments</b>
While the document concentrates on Housing Market Renewal it does consider the factors that affect the establishment and maintenance of sustainable communities and the role of greenspace in this role is recognised.

## 1.23 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”*.

<b>Comments</b>
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 prices.

#### 1.24 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.

<b>Comments</b>
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 Cheltenham 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.

### 1.25 Manual for Streets – DfT (2007)

Manual for streets is Government guidance for practitioners involved in the planning, design, provision and approval of new residential streets, and modifications to existing ones. It aims to increase the quality of life through good design which creates more people-orientated streets. Considers the beneficial impacts of tree planting and landscape on traffic management and the creation of quality places.

### 1.26 Design for Play – A guide to Creating successful play spaces – Sport England, DCMS & Dept for Children Schools and Families (2008)

Design for Play is designed to help those involved in commissioning and designing places for play put play value at the heart of provision. It shows how to design good play spaces, which can be affordably maintained, which give children and young people the freedom to play creatively, and yet still allow them to experience risk, challenge and excitement.

### 1.27 Its Our Space – Cabe Space (2007)

Its Our Space is intended to help those involved in a public space project for the first time. It gives examples of great outdoor spaces led by community groups and highlights lessons from their experiences. It seeks to inspire people to demand better places and in doing so challenges users of this guide to think carefully about leaving a legacy of excellence in the projects that emerge.

### 1.28 CABA website – [www.cabe.org.uk](http://www.cabe.org.uk)

The Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment (CABA) is a Government sponsored organisation with the objective of improving quality of life through design. CABA advises on well-designed buildings, places and spaces. The website has plenty of examples of best practice and is home to CABA's sister organisation CABA Space – which deals with the commissioning and design of public space.

### 1.29 Start with the Park – CABA (2005)

Start with the Park is a good practice guide for those involved in the processes of sustainable growth and renewal in England. It is particularly relevant to the creation and care of green spaces in housing growth areas and housing renewal areas. It is designed to inspire strategic decision-makers working in local delivery and partnership bodies, local and regional authorities, government departments and other national agencies, private developers, housebuilders and registered social landlords and community and voluntary sector groups.

### 1.29 How to Create Quality Parks and Open Spaces – ODPM (undated)

This guide is for those involved in planning, designing, managing, maintaining or using parks and green spaces. It gives an introduction to strategic elements of improving parks and green spaces and explains how it is necessary to use a holistic approach to improving these areas. It provides practical options for achieving better services and signposts where more information and guidance are available.

### 1.30 By Design – DTLR & CABE (2000)

By Design was published to promote higher standards in urban design and provide sound, practical advice to help implement the Government's commitment to good design

### 1.31 Better Places to Live By Design – DTLR (2001)

Better Places to Live By Design aims to promote deeper thought and greater flair from those entrusted with creating better places to live. Following on from *By design - a guide to better urban design*, this draws together the principles of good urban design as they relate to the residential environment to help move the practice of good design forward. It focuses on the attributes that underlie successful residential environments in order to provide guidance on implementing the new approach to planning for housing. It includes consideration of the role of landscape and green space in creating high quality living environments.

### 1.32 Building for Life – CABE (2008 edition)

Building for Life is the national standard for well-designed homes and neighbourhoods. It promotes design excellence and celebrates best practice in the house building industry. The Council is required to assess all housing schemes larger ten units against the 20 Building for Life criteria embody a vision of functional, attractive and sustainable housing. Criteria include considerations of access to green space, design quality of public space and maintenance of public space.

### 1.33 Various Conservation Area Character Appraisals and Management Plans SPD – CBC (2007 – 2009)

The appraisals provide an assessment of the character of conservation areas or their parts. This appraisal provides the basis for an accompanying management plan which gives guidance on how the preservation or enhancement of the conservation area can be achieved. It also provides a sound basis for development control and other decisions made by local authorities - such as the design of highways or the appropriateness of the design of new buildings or open spaces. There are seven Conservation Areas each with their own appraisals, the largest – the Central Conservation – has been split into 19 character areas, each with its own appraisal.

#### 1.34 Development on Garden Land and Infill Sites in Cheltenham – SPD – CBC (2009)

Every year, a significant number of planning applications are submitted for development on the gardens of existing properties in Cheltenham. By its very nature, garden land development takes place within established neighbourhoods which often have a particular character. Gardens, and in particular back gardens, have an important role in promoting biodiversity through their role as wildlife habitats and corridors. They are also important to the health and well-being of communities. Back gardens of sufficient size are valuable for play, for gardening and growing produce, and for the general enjoyment of a property.

The purpose of the SPD is to help ensure that only well-designed garden land and infill schemes in the right places get the go-ahead. It is also about helping make poor quality applications a thing of the past. The document gives clear guidance as to what sort of development on garden land and infill sites is and is not acceptable. It :-

- Explains the factors which influence decisions on garden land/infill applications such as character, layout and amenity;
- Explains the process followed in deciding applications; and
- Sets out what applicants need to do.

#### 1.35 Urban Design Compendium Vols 1 & 2 – HCA (2007 edition)

The Urban Design Compendium is a two volume guide to urban design best practice and project delivery. Includes consideration of issues such as access to green space and design quality.

#### 1.36 Every Child's Future Matters – Sustainable Development Commission (2007)

Every Child's Future Matters explores the influence of the environment on children's wellbeing and is written for everyone designing and delivering services that impact on children's lives. The evidence set out demonstrates that children's environmental wellbeing – their daily experience of living and learning in the environment around them, and their options and opportunities for experiencing a healthy environment in the future – is a critical factor in their overall wellbeing.

#### 1.37 Spaceshaper – A users guide – CABE space (2007)

Spaceshaper is a practical toolkit for use by anyone involved in designing or commissioning public space provision to measure the quality of public space before investing time and money in improving it. The User's Guide explains how Spaceshaper works and outlines practical steps to plan your workshop. It shows how Spaceshaper has been used elsewhere and the lessons you can learn from others' experience.

## 2. Regional and Sub Regional Policy Context

### 2.1 Regional Spatial Strategy (2006-2026)

The Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) identifies the Joint Core Strategy area for the accommodation of significant growth over the 20 year period of the plan; this includes

- Urban extensions
- Growth of urban areas and market towns
- Development within the green belt
- Delivery of major infrastructure to support growth identified

In addition to the growth agenda the RSS requires:

- Protection and enhancement of natural landscapes including avoiding loss and damage to natural environments
- Confronting climate change
- Providing networks of green spaces for people to enjoy
- Development of a green infrastructure plan and delivery programme
- Support for biodiversity
- Access to food produced locally
- Encouraging exercise
- Managing and mitigating flood risk

Comments
The RSS is a major driver for the production of both green space and green infrastructure strategies.

### 2.2 Gloucester, Cheltenham and Tewkesbury Joint Core Strategy (in progress)

In July 2008 the Councils of Cheltenham, Gloucester and Tewkesbury agreed to prepare a Joint Core Strategy (JCS) for inclusion within each local planning authorities' local development framework. The JCS will be a spatial plan, allocating land for development and other uses, but also influencing via planning policy issues such as accessibility to green spaces, health and well being. Some of the key themes the JCS will need to address are

- Addressing the effects of climate change and putting in place adaptation measures
- Protecting and enhancing high quality landscapes
- Protecting and enhancing biodiversity
- Ensuring communities have access to active play and amenity facilities
- Contribution to general health and well being of communities by improving quality and accessibility of existing green spaces
- Setting a strategy for the delivery of strategic green infrastructure

Work to date on the JCS has identified gaps in the evidence base that the green space strategy addresses and thus this document will again link in to high level strategic land use planning.

<b>Comments</b>
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The JCS forms a key driver for the green space strategy and the direct link into such an influential document is critical for the future of green space in the borough.
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### 2.3 Cotswolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Management Plan (2008-2013)

The plan sets out a series of objectives for the Cotswolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) which the Board wishes to see achieved. These represent the Board's current view of what it considers are the most important management actions which should be pursued, and which also reflect the views and aspirations of a multiplicity of stakeholders with an interest in the AONB.

<b>Comments</b>
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The AONB occupies much of the land on the eastern side of the borough and as such is a key consideration when looking at wider access to the countryside and also in strategic land use planning.
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### 2.4 Gloucestershire County Health & Well Being Strategy

Launched in October 2008 by the Gloucestershire Health & Community Wellbeing Partnership the strategy will direct associated developments during the period 2008 - 2018. The strategy identifies 10 key themes that are being taken forward by individual subgroups, relevant themes for green spaces include

- Reducing Obesity (by increasing physical activity),
- Active & Healthy Ageing,
- Improved Emotional Health & Wellbeing (by promoting the great outdoors)

<b>Comments</b>
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Parks and open spaces have a huge contribution to make towards tackling health inequalities including the provision for organised and recreational sport, health walks, family based leisure, gardening schemes, healthy eating / allotments etc
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### 2.5 Asset Management Plan

A joint county council and borough council plan which seeks to align property and business objectives.

### Comments

The significance in relation to the green space strategy is around service delivery (better maintenance of property, better use of property) and disposal of assets e.g. green space.

### 2.6 Gloucestershire Biodiversity Action Plan, (2000 – 2010)

As with other Biodiversity Action Plans (BAPs) this document includes habitat action plans and species action plans that need to be carefully considered. It also sets out key objectives in relation to management, promotion and development of green space for biodiversity.

### Comments

The BAP and the biodiversity audit will be key documents when considering how green space could be managed and developed to enhance biodiversity.

### 2.7 Gloucestershire Conference Sustainable Community Strategy(2007 – 2017)

This strategy sets the current and future challenges affecting Gloucestershire and agrees the framework for action over the next 10 years. The strategy has five broad themes, those of relevance to the Green Space Strategy are;

**Aim 1 – a place where the future matters:** make efforts to address climate change and take annual action to enhance, protect and cherish our environment.

**Aim 4 – a place where people want to live:** improving opportunities for play year on year.

### Comments

Protecting the natural and built environment in the face of climate change and the challenges posed by economic growth is seen as a future challenge for the strategy.

### 2.8 Gloucestershire Local Area Agreement (2007 – 2008)

The Gloucestershire LAA is an agreement between the government and a partnership of local public and voluntary organisations, which sets a range of improvement targets. The LAA is built around 5 themes, the one of relevance to the Green Space Strategy is the Natural and Built environment block, the key issues of this block are;

- Ensuring resilience as far as possible to withstand future climate challenges
- Using South West Nature Map for identification of the best areas in the county to conserve, create and connect wildlife habitats at a landscape scale

- Considering the urban natural environment and the connectivity between green corridors and people’s engagement in nature as intrinsic elements of strong and healthy communities.

Another indicator is *to increase accessible and linked ‘wildlife friendly’ green space within 400m of neighbourhood urban communities* which will be monitored through the proximity of urban ‘wildlife friendly’ corridors to local neighbourhoods.

<b>Comments</b>
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The Green Space Strategy will need to ensure it takes on board the LAA aspirations and will need to assess the deliverability of the accessibility standard.
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### 2.9 Local Transport Plan (LTP2)

The County Council has developed a transport strategy up to 2026, in line with the timescale for the Regional Spatial Strategy. The short-term strategy is to make best use of existing infrastructure with the medium to long-term strategy focussing more on investment.

Modelling suggests that on its own, an increase in road capacity will not deliver the strategic objectives and that investment in alternatives is essential. Building on successes to date, a principal element of the longer-term strategy is to provide a ring of 1000-space park and ride sites around Cheltenham and Gloucester.

Safe routes to schools, the removal of barriers to cycling and walking, improvements to the public realm and addressing community safety concerns will all be important themes designed to ensure that people have real choices.

In summary this is seen as a balanced strategy, which focuses on improving transport infrastructure and road safety. The aim is to improve overall transport capacity to deliver future development needs and to improve the quality of life for everyone in the county.

<b>Comments</b>
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Green spaces and particularly green corridors have the opportunity to offer safe and alternative transport routes for cyclists and pedestrians.
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### 3. Local Policy Context

#### 3.1 Our Future, Our Choice, Cheltenham's Sustainable Community Strategy (2008-2011)

This strategy sets out an aspirational long term sustainable vision for Cheltenham over a 20 year period and will influence all other plans and strategies produced by Cheltenham's Strategic Partnership's partner organisations, including the Local Development Framework.

The strategy identifies 4 key aims, 3 underlying principles and 9 longer term ambitions and an annual action plan, those of relevance to the Green Space Strategy are as follows:

- **The principle of tackling climate change** – ensure the natural environment is resilient to the changing climate and weather extremes
- **Promoting a strong and sustainable economy** - Cheltenham's parks and gardens are recognised as important visitor attractions and the ambition is to ensure continued and sustained investment in tourism infrastructure
- **Building healthy communities and supporting older people** - a survey showed that a slightly higher than average percentage of adults participated in physical activity and the ambition is to encourage even greater levels of walking and cycling and use of open spaces as important factors in improving health and well being of residents.
- **Focus on young people and children** - investing in better recreation opportunities for young people
- **Investing in environmental quality** - potential development pressures on areas of open space, including private gardens and the potential loss of urban wildlife is identified as a concern. People view the formal parks and gardens as being of particular importance, however the strategy also recognises that maintaining and creating new spaces needs to be considered within the context of sustainable management, particularly concerning planting schemes and responding to impacts of climate change. The strategy also highlights the promotion of quality design in the public realm and an action is to invest in the cleanliness and maintenance of open spaces. New development should be seeking to improve biodiversity and parks and open areas should be managed to reduce resource use and encourage wildlife.
- **Promoting walking and cycling**
- **Investing in arts and culture** – encouraging the promotion of innovative and creative use of open spaces.

It also states:

*Lying at the foot of the Cotswold Hills, Cheltenham is often regarded as a garden town. Its parks, gardens and tree-lined boulevards have been nationally recognised as some of the best in the country. But these spaces are not evenly distributed across the borough and there are pockets of communities that are not within walking distance of green spaces.*

Comments
This document forms a key driver for the Green Space Strategy.

### 3.2 Cheltenham Local Plan (July 2006)

The plan recognises the importance of green spaces within the town and contains a number of policies which seek to protect existing open spaces within the town, enhance and improve their management to provide for improved facilities for recreation and nature conservation and provide new green features where appropriate. As such, development on public and private green space, where it makes a significant contribution to the town, casual play space and amenity space within residential areas is not permitted (*GE1 Public Green Space and GE2 Private Green Space, RC4 Casual Play Space, RC5 Development of Amenity Space*).

The local plan sets the local standards for the provision of outdoor playing space for youth and adult outdoor playing space provision (1.85 - 1.96 hectares) and for children's outdoor playing space provision (0.6 - 0.8 hectares). The Playing Pitch Assessment which informed the local plan identified a deficit in the provision of such facilities and as such, local plan policy *RC 2 Youth and Adult Outdoor playing facilities* seeks to protect existing facilities, unless its loss can be justified or re-provided for elsewhere. In addition the council also seeks for the provision of additional facilities.

Policies *RC6 Play Space in Residential Development* and *RC 7 Amenity Space in Housing Developments* provide for the provision of play and amenity space within new residential developments. Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) documents have been produced which set out the Council's approach to planning obligations towards the provision of new play and amenity space or commuted sums towards the maintenance of existing facilities.

Comments
The Local plan recognises that the distribution of public parks, gardens and recreation grounds does not provide equal opportunities for access to public green space for all residents and the council will pursue opportunities to secure additional land for use as public green space ( <i>RC8 New Public Green Space</i> ).

### 3.3 Our Business Plan (2007-2010)

This annual plan sets out how the council plans to deliver the aims set out in Cheltenham's Sustainable Community Strategy. Green space issues are largely covered under Aim 7, investing in environmental quality.

This stresses the need for action to improve cleanliness and maintenance in public spaces; that new development improves biodiversity; and that our parks and open areas are managed to reduce resource use and encourage wildlife. It also emphasises the need to ensure that natural environmental assets are resilient to climate change and weather extremes. There is a commitment to working in partnership to conserve and enhance biodiversity, recognising its value in underpinning sustainable communities. The completion of the Green Space strategy is mentioned as a measure of success, along with ensuring that 3 parks have Green Flag Award status by 2010. Under Aim 10 there is a commitment to tackling climate change by reducing the carbon footprint of the council and climate change proofing our key strategies, services and premises.

<b>Comments</b>
This document takes forward annual actions from the wider sustainable community strategy. In future the business plan will be informed by the targets, monitoring and evaluation of the Green Space Strategy.

### 3.3 Allotment Strategy (2005-2015)

The vision of the allotment strategy is to ensure a thriving network of allotments and community gardens available to as many parts of the community as possible. The action plan was set out under 5 key areas

- effective management
- infrastructure
- promotion of allotments and community gardens
- protection and provision of allotments
- health and safety / environment

In four of the key areas the action plan is being delivered.

<b>Comments</b>
A key area for attention is in protection and provision of allotments where current demand far exceeds supply.

### 3.4 Civic Pride (2006 – 2026?)

The Civic Pride project is the Council's twenty year vision for Cheltenham, as set out in the sustainable community strategy, and states:

*“We want Cheltenham to deliver a sustainable quality of life, where people, families, their communities and businesses thrive; and in a way which cherishes our cultural and natural heritage, reduces our impact on climate*

*change and does not compromise the quality of life of present and future generations.”*

Through celebrating the borough’s heritage, the aim of Civic Pride is to secure Cheltenham’s longer-term economic success within the context of our 20 year vision.

The land use planning framework for the project is set out in an already adopted Supplementary Planning Document that will sit within Cheltenham’s Local Development Framework. (Cheltenham Civic Pride Urban Design Framework SPD July 2008)

<b>Comments</b>
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The project has a significant link to the green space strategy through its desire to produce a “high quality and imaginative public realm”.
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### 3.5 Climate Change Strategy (2005)

This strategy has an overarching aim of making Cheltenham a carbon neutral borough. The main objectives are to raise awareness of climate change, and to propose measures to reduce emissions and help us adapt to the inevitable consequences of climate change.

A key links in to the green space strategy is around emissions from CBC activities and two targets that are important are:

- 5% reduction target for operational buildings such as the nursery, sports pavilions etc
- 1% reduction target for fleet vehicle use, used for green maintenance activities

A second key area is climate change and natural environmental impacts where the document indicates that the green space strategy will need to consider new approaches to managing green space within the changing climate, including exploring the scope for more low maintenance and drought tolerant planting.

<b>Comments</b>
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As stated in the document, the green space strategy will need to consider new approaches to managing green space within the changing climate, including exploring the scope for more low maintenance and drought tolerant planting.
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### 3.6 Community Safety Strategy (in production)

Cheltenham Community Safety Partnership has produced a strategic assessment to provide knowledge and understanding of community safety problems. As well as producing offender and victim profiles the work has also shown that the perception of crime and the fear of becoming a victim of crime are at conflict with the reality of the situation.

The strategy is still in production however the proposed strategic priorities are:

- To reduce the number of victims of crime in the Cheltenham CSP area, year on year until 2011.
- Reduce the incidents of anti-social behaviour.
- Reduce alcohol and drug misuse; the targeting of under-age drinking.
- Reduce incidents of violent crimes - especially harassment
- Supporting work to build stronger communities
- Reduce the number of sexual offences/Victims - Protection of those U20 yrs/U16 yrs

<b>Comments</b>
In the household survey for the green space audit the two biggest barriers to greater use of green space after lack of time were anti social behaviour and fear of safety. So whilst the assessment work has suggested that such fears may be unfounded there is still an issue to be addressed.

### 3.7 Comparative Site Assessment (in progress)

This is an in-house evidence based document which is intended to inform the strategic environmental assessment process and the preparation of the Core Strategy and any subsequent site allocation DPD's. A comprehensive assessment of over 100 potential development sites has been undertaken across the borough, including a number of greenfield sites. The assessment is based upon a standard methodology to ensure that a consistent approach is adopted, which looks at social, environmental and economic aspects of the site, including existing and potential biodiversity value of sites.

<b>Comments</b>
This assessment may be able to identify certain sites which could play a role in the Green Space Strategy.

### 3.8 Conservation Area Appraisals(2007/08 – 2012/2013)

The appraisals provide an assessment of the character of conservation areas or their parts. The appraisal provides the basis for an accompanying management plan which gives guidance on how the preservation or enhancement of the conservation area can be achieved.

<b>Comments</b>
Green spaces make significant contributions to conservation areas and the designation also places management restrictions upon those spaces.

### 3.9 Cultural Strategy (2002-2006)

Whilst an out of date document this version contained some specific actions relating to green space

- The production of management plans for key parks, open spaces and nature reserves
- To enhance the townscape of the central area
- To widen opportunities to experience the landscaped environment and protect and conserve wildlife habitats
- To develop plans to create more environmentally diverse open spaces
- To develop and establish green corridors to link urban open spaces with the countryside

<b>Comments</b>
The authority does not plan to replace the cultural strategy but is working on a county wide approach.

### 3.10 Neighbourhood Management

This is a pilot project aiming to build on neighbourhood policing work and is focussed on the Leckhampton Inspector Neighbourhood Area (INA). Cheltenham is broken down into four police INAs which are in turn broken down into smaller communities. The pilot focuses on multi agency working around community safety.

<b>Comments</b>
The connection to green space is around the barriers to use and the effects of anti social behaviour in parks and open spaces.

### 3.11 Play & Free time Strategy

This is currently being updated and rewritten through the Cheltenham Children & Young People's Partnership with approval in spring 2009. Having a live strategy is a pre-requisite of a 3 year Big Lottery Award that the authority has received, but the strategy is also relevant in that it should analyse existing play space provision and identify the future development needs for new and improved play spaces in order to ensure that all young people have access to a range of free, open access play spaces in which they can have fun, be safe, learn skills, build confidence and develop their creativity.

<b>Comments</b>
Once produced this strategy will have a key link in to the Green Space Strategy around the provision of play space in its widest context.

### 3.12 Playing Pitch Strategy (out of date)

The strategy had a vision to provide an appropriate distribution of a range of quality outdoor sports facilities by 2020 which will sustain a growing sporting community and provide opportunities for participation for all the residents of the borough.

Beneath the vision sat a number of objectives:

- Provide usable, accessible and viable sports facilities
- Work with neighbouring authorities to provide facilities
- Improve opportunities for access to outdoor facilities
- Improve health and wellbeing of residents
- Assist development of local clubs to meet their needs and aspirations
- Identify and maintain adequate resources to ensure improvements of outdoor sports facilities are sustained.

It also looked at key pitch sports and set out the key issues relating to each as follows:

#### **Football:**

- Quality of playing surfaces and availability of changing accommodation has resulted in senior football not having access to enough pitches of appropriate quality.
- None of the pitch sites have the capacity to accommodate more matches without substantial investment in pitch quality and ancillary facility improvement.
- Research has identified a current shortfall of three mini soccer pitches.

**Cricket:**

- CBC sites are of poor quality with limited use.
- Standard of pitches inhibiting the development of junior cricket on local park grounds.
- Research has recommended investment in quality cricket squares at Swindon Village and the Burrows creating cricket centres in the north and south of the borough.

**Rugby:**

- Analysis indicates that there is a current need for an additional three senior, and two junior, pitches within the borough.

**Comments**

As part of the production of the GreenSpace Strategy a review of the action plan of the Playing Pitch Strategy has been carried out to ensure that any outstanding issues are carried forward.

**3.13 Sustainability Appraisal (Draft 2008)**

The appraisal has produced a set of Sustainability Objectives that the Joint Core Strategy should seek to address.

These objectives are to:

1. Protect, restore, create and enhance habitats, species and sites of wildlife or geological interest
2. Reduce contribution to climate change, and improve the resilience of people, businesses and the environment to the unavoidable consequences of climate change
3. Support households and businesses in reducing their carbon footprint and the use of natural resources
4. Reduce water use and conserve and improve water resources
5. Protect the floodplain from development likely to exacerbate flooding problems from all sources
6. Reduce the need to travel and maximise the use of sustainable modes of transport
7. Improve soil quality
8. Protect and enhance landscape character
9. Protect and enhance distinctive townscape quality and historic heritage
10. Minimise the volume of waste created and promote the waste hierarchy (reduce, reuse, recycle)
11. Improve air quality, reduce noise and light pollution and reduce the amount of contaminated land
12. Ensure the availability of employment land and premises to secure future prosperity
13. Support the economy by helping new and existing businesses to fulfil their potential
14. Support the vitality and viability of city and town centres as retail, service, leisure and learning destinations

15. Integrate sustainable construction principles and standards into all development schemes
16. Reduce inequalities in wellbeing and opportunity
17. Improve the physical and mental health and wellbeing of local residents, with good access to community health facilities
18. Ensure the availability of housing land and premises including affordable housing to meet local need
19. Minimise development on open space and green spaces
20. Maximise opportunities for the creation of new and enhancement of existing open spaces
21. Reduce crime and the fear of crime
22. Encourage everyone to participate in local decision making
23. Minimise development on green field land by maximising appropriate use of previously developed land and buildings
24. Support the development of accessible education, skills and learning, to meet the needs of both employers and the working population
25. Protect and enhance the cultural heritage of individual settlements

<b>Comments</b>
These objectives have been taken into consideration in the production of the Green Space Strategy.