

Southampton's Green Space Strategy Summary and Action Plan

Information from Southampton City Council about Southampton's Parks and Green Spaces

Green spaces great places



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		Schools and Civic spaces have not been included	



1. Foreword

Good quality green spaces are an essential part of Southampton's future that offer a wide variety of facilities and activities for the whole community. They are the 'green lungs' of the city and make Southampton a unique place to live and visit.

We have heard from many people and received some very positive feedback that clearly show that the people of Southampton care for their parks and green spaces. It is therefore essential that we continue to care for and protect our green spaces so that future generations are also able to enjoy them.

Green spaces are at the heart of many communities and it is essential that they remain so. By continued community involvement we can make our green spaces sustainable and I would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone that help to manage our green spaces and encourage those of you that don't to get involved.

Our recent Green Flag Award successes show that investment in parks is underway and working. However we must continue to reinvigorate all our green spaces so that Southampton can continue to be the 'Green City' of the south.

I am thrilled to endorse the Southampton Green Space Strategy "Green Spaces Great Places" and believe it is an important document that will enable us to prioritise where there is a need for improvement and guide planning policy to ensure green spaces are protected into the future.

Cllr Phillip Williams
Cabinet Member for Housing and Local Services

Vision

The 20 year vision for Southampton's parks and green spaces;

"Southampton will be recognised as the regional Green City, with a range of fine parks and open spaces that are easily accessible, represent good value for money and delivered in partnership with the local community for everyone to enjoy."



Executive Summary

Recognising the value of our parks and green spaces

Southampton is very lucky to have had a network of great green spaces right across and into the heart of the city for well over 150 years. It is a fantastic “Green City” with a good spread of quality parks and green spaces across the city that attracted over 17 million visits by local residents in 2006. The current high levels of satisfaction with the parks service, delivered at a relatively low cost, indicates a good value for money service reflecting the general recognition by residents that parks and green spaces are one of the city's best assets.

This document highlights that parks and green spaces are playing an increasingly important role in developing the city economy, promoting health and wellbeing, green transport links, improving biodiversity in the city, helping communities come together and get involved as well as assisting in addressing the effects of climate change.

In reviewing our green spaces we have also recognised that just over 20% of the total area of the city is covered by green space managed by the city council and that some areas of green space fall below expectations. In developing a green space strategy there are proposals to establish a Southampton standard for the different types of green space with a goal of generally raising the quality, where possible the quantity and improving access to a variety of parks and green spaces. This will be increasingly important as Southampton continues to develop and grow.

Initial research and feedback has highlighted that there is a need to address the overall quantity and quality of our green spaces. The distance from your home to a good quality green space is important and the current provision has been mapped. However more work on how locally accessible green spaces are in terms of distance from your home is proposed. In some areas of the city we appear to have a high provision in terms of quantity but the green spaces are of a low quality standard.

Encouraging more active community and neighbourhood involvement in the management and maintenance of a park or green space is a key feature of the draft strategy. Successful Southampton examples of proactive friends groups and societies achieving increased resources are highlighted and suggested as possible case studies for other areas of the city to follow.

The document outlines a number of recommendations to address concerns about anti-social behaviour in parks. Nationally there is growing support for encouraging more people into parks and having staff visible and based in the parks as being the most effective way to encourage appropriate behaviour and deter anti-social behaviour. The strategy also supports Play Services in improving the quality and provision of play facilities for children and young people.

This strategic action plan is the first part of the ongoing dialogue in developing a much more detailed and long term vision for Southampton's parks and green spaces. The aim of this publication is to establish the basis for decision making over the next 1-5 years. Early priorities for improvements are identified in section 6. It is part of the ongoing consultation with local people and we will be continuing to seek feedback from Southampton residents about the proposals so we can ensure they reflect the current needs and the improvements most important to you. Appropriate consultation will be taken over the next 1-5 years to make sure all are involved with the final Green Space Strategy. Evidence will be collected and collated within the Green Space Technical Document and this will be regularly updated on the web site. For more information go to www.southampton.gov.uk/gss.

2. The value of Southampton's parks **Why we have parks**

“Time and again, perceptions of the value of the local area and confidence in its future have been enhanced because of the physical improvements to the park. It has been an important factor in increasing confidence to stay in the area rather than to relocate elsewhere. By contrast, under-investment over previous decades in parks and green spaces has deterred investment in the area. Investing in green spaces reverses this spiral decline enhancing the social, economic and environmental well-being of our communities”

Paul Morrell CABI Commissioner

Definition Of Green Space

Southampton has a wide variety of green spaces. This strategy is concerned with all publicly accessible green space owned by the Council, including parks, recreation grounds, cemeteries, housing green space, highway green space and natural green space as well as the facilities and play areas within these spaces. The strategy also touches on other green space, such as privately owned green space (especially where it has public access) and more restricted spaces such as school fields and allotments. Green space is any area that provides “green” features such as grass or trees or shrubs.

Records of parks and green spaces in Southampton date back into the thirteenth century, however by the middle of the nineteenth century specifically designed and laid out parks were being constructed in the centre of the city. These parks fitted in with Southampton's former Spa status and provided all classes of people with areas to restore their health and wellbeing. Parks were also seen as areas to encourage social cohesion, where all social classes could visit.

150 years on and Southampton's green spaces are still fundamentally about health and wellbeing, although there are now many other reasons for protecting and enhancing our green spaces. They are often focal points for the community, promoting active citizenship and providing safe areas for children and young people to play, grow and mature. Their value in improving the economy is now being recognised by the business community, with increased interest in building near to green spaces and the higher value attached to properties overlooking green spaces.

Despite their positive contribution to society and the city's economy the funding for green spaces has gradually decreased, through reducing resources, over the past 20 – 30 years. A lack of recognition of parks services in the Government's annual standard spending assessment for local authorities combined with the fact that the provision of public parks services is a non statutory service have all contributed to their declining condition and status.

This strategy aims to assist in helping rediscover the wider value of Southampton's parks and green spaces, providing a positive way forward in safeguarding these key resources that will have a significant impact on the quality of the local environment for future generations.



The added value of parks to Southampton

The contribution that well managed parks and green spaces make to the overall streetscene of Southampton, to the physical and mental well-being of residents and visitors and their value in developing the local economy should be clear to everyone. CABE Space (the governments advisor on public space) identifies seven key areas of contribution which are applicable to Southampton.

1. Economic Value

As Southampton increasingly competes with other regional cities for investment, the presence of good parks, gardens and other public spaces becomes a vital business and marketing tool. Companies want to relocate to places with good quality local environments that are attractive to their employees and customers. Properties close to good quality parks and green spaces attract higher property values. This provides an overall economic gain to the city where there are more opportunities for developments close to high quality green spaces.

2. Social Dimension of Parks

Southampton's green spaces are used by a wide variety of the community. Many use green spaces to socialise and often meet other like minded people. People have picnics, walk dogs, go to events and all are welcome. Dog walkers often see the green spaces at times of the day when many others do not. They are the eyes and ears in the early morning and late afternoon and play an important role in the management of green space. However, there are areas where it is not desirable for dogs to roam. These are already clearly marked in most green spaces and include children's play areas and education land. In 2005 new legislation came into being enabling the Council to formalise "dog control". The Council is therefore looking into how to apply this legislation, which overrides byelaws and any previous legislation on dog fouling. Full public consultation must be undertaken before any dog control orders are put in place. The Council's proposals will therefore be published within the next 12 months.

3. Health and Wellbeing

Relaxing or participating in active exercise in a park or green space is an effective way to tackle poor health in an urban area. Southampton's Health and Wellbeing Partnership has adopted the term "Fit for Life" as one of its cross cutting themes and green spaces can assist in addressing a number of the local priorities identified in the well being plan. There are concerns regarding mental and physical fatigue given the stressful lives that many now lead. Each year the economy loses millions of working days through stress-related employee absence. Access to good-quality, well-maintained public spaces can help to improve both physical and mental health by encouraging us to walk more, to play sport, or simply to enjoy a green and natural environment. The Active Southampton action plan builds on the work started in the Southampton Parks Project and encourages the use of parks and green spaces for a culture of physical activity.



4. Climate Change and Biodiversity

The exact impact that climate change will have in Southampton over the next 20 years is not fully known however it is clear that any significant increase in hard surfacing and the reduction in green spaces in the city will lead to higher temperatures than in the surrounding countryside. This is known as the ‘heat island effect’. Southampton’s many parks and green spaces – whether in public spaces or private gardens – can help to redress this imbalance. Green spaces bring many important environmental benefits to urban areas, including the cooling of air, storage of water, reducing the risk of flooding and the absorption of atmospheric pollutants.

Whilst there is no definitive view of the effects of climate change, we are expecting more extremes of weather with warmer wetter winters and drier hotter summers. This will impact on maintenance regimes and we are already working towards adapting design and planting in green spaces to minimise this impact. Research and work on this will continue into the future. Southampton is also committed to an urban canopy initiative, which will ensure that large canopy trees are planted back into the city. These will help to reduce city temperatures, hold up rain fall thus helping to reduce flooding and help to improve air quality.

Southampton needs to be part of the wider picture with regards to climate change. It will only be through many small changes in many cities, towns and villages that the effects of climate change will be diminished. Green Spaces in Southampton therefore have a definite role to play in reducing the effects of climate change and making the city a more pleasant place to live.

5. Movement in and Between Spaces (Green Grid)

Southampton has had a network of greenways since the 1980’s. These are ribbons of open spaces which follow stream valleys through the city. They form valuable breaks in built-up areas or between built development, with the primary purpose of improving biodiversity and acting as a “green lung” buffer between buildings. These greenways provide a good basis on which to improve access between Southampton’s open spaces and the surrounding countryside outside of the City. There are opportunities to develop a green grid, with green routes for walking & cycling, which contribute towards the sustainable transport plan for movements around the city. This aspiration links with the recently adopted Rights of Way Improvement Plan and should ensure that people walking in Southampton can do so in a pleasant environment away from cars wherever possible.

Cycling in green spaces is recognised as a major issue for many users. The main issue appears to be with the conflicts between those walking, those wishing to use green space to commute on bicycle, those wishing to use the green space for leisure cycling with their families, and the local byelaws. In order to address these issues it is recommended that a wider public consultation is undertaken, within the life of this strategy, with the aim of providing clarification on the legality of, and solutions to, cycling in green spaces.

6. Improving Safety

A recent survey in Southampton showed that an overwhelming 84% said they either felt safe or very safe in the parks (during the day) and only 5% said that they did not feel safe. However, children and young people, for example, are often prevented from using our parks because of their parents’ fears about crime and lone women often feel vulnerable in public green spaces. Physical changes to, and better management of public space in Southampton are helping to allay these fears. Such changes can help everyone to make the most of public spaces.



7. Benefits for Children and Young People

Every Child Matters, the Government agenda for improving services for children and young people, published in 2003, identified five outcomes that are important for every child and young person. These outcomes have been taken up in the Southampton Partnership document “Children and Young Peoples Plan for Southampton”.

The Southampton play strategy reflects the growing national trend to recognise and develop more natural playful spaces with higher overall play value rather than the traditional fixed play equipment areas. Integrating play into the parks and green space landscapes also encourages more mixed age play and provides a seamless link into the wider parks and green spaces. Work is underway to develop a play area improvement action plan that mirrors the three parks categories (City, District and Local see p16), so that joint play/park improvements can be delivered. Green Spaces support the aims and aspirations of the Children and Young Peoples Plan for Southampton and the Play Strategy in the following ways.

Be healthy.

Green spaces provide a wide range of free and accessible places for children and young people within Southampton to take part in formal and informal sports and fitness activities.

Stay safe.

Play opportunities should challenge and stimulate children's abilities but not threaten their survival or well-being. Varied and stimulating places for play, will continue to be provided, that recognise children's need to encounter and manage risk and challenge. In addition to the traditional equipped play areas parks and green spaces also provide a wide range of natural features, such as undulating

grassland, woodlands, water / wet areas, playing pitches, areas for solitude, areas for meeting friends which encourage and stimulate play in a safe and natural environment. Where play equipment is provided it complies with the latest health and safety guidance. Play areas are regularly inspected and hazards are cleared, such as broken glass and litter. Where graffiti is offensive it is removed within 24 hours of being reported.

Enjoy and achieve.

Green spaces can provide opportunities for young people to experience learning beyond a formal setting which stimulates their interest in the natural environment and encourages their curiosity.

Make a positive contribution.

Young people are encouraged to get involved and express their views when changes to parks and green spaces are being considered. However this is a challenging user group to obtain feedback from and a future action in the strategy seeks to improve how engagement with young people in planning our green spaces can be more effectively delivered. Young people can also get involved practically through schemes like the Junior Neighbourhood Wardens, friends of the parks groups and specific users groups which help build self esteem and confidence.

Achieve economic well being.

Parks and green spaces contribute to achieving a vibrant and prosperous city, which in turn helps create more local work opportunities for Southampton residents. There are direct work placement opportunities and training schemes for young people to experience work in the parks service. These provide specific opportunities as a career starting point for a number of Southampton students.

Why we need a strategic Action Plan

Having a strategic approach to managing our green spaces helps to identify the links with other local objectives that green space provision can help deliver, including health, planning, regeneration, transport, recreation, children's services and education, social services and the environment. The future management of green spaces in Southampton will need to consider their importance in supporting wider objectives including the economic growth of the city.



By adopting a strategic approach to Southampton green spaces it should help to :

- Develop a shared vision
- Generate political and inter-departmental support for green spaces
- Lead to the creation of a comprehensive policy framework for protecting, enhancing and creating green spaces
- Define the value and role of green spaces in meeting corporate and community aims
- Make sure that green spaces enhance the quality and diversity of the environment as well as promoting civic pride and social inclusion
- Ensure that the green space network meets local needs – now and in the future
- Involve voluntary and community groups in green space provision and management
- Allocate resources in a way that maximises the value of capital investment and revenue expenditure

In order to develop some of the benefits outlined above, the strategy aims to provide a framework that is appropriate for Southampton's green spaces that classifies spaces and sets standards for their quality, quantity and accessibility. This will enable better needs assessment and resource prioritisation to target improvements and funding to achieve higher quality parks and green spaces for all the community. The classification, standards and prioritisation process also enables better targeting of council funding and greater leverage in terms of external sources. The key work required to do this is summarised in the form of an action plan at the end of this document.

3. About the strategy

Southampton's Green Space Strategy is made up of two documents. These are the Southampton Green Space Strategic Action Plan and the Southampton Green Space Technical Document. The action plan describes what is needed to be done to move the strategy forwards and the technical document is the evidence base where all the results of the actions are maintained for use in future policy making.

Aims of the green space strategic action plan

The City of Southampton Strategy includes a requirement for the city to “have a varied and exciting cultural landscape and be known for its innovative and creative businesses, leisure opportunities and fine parks and open spaces”. Recognising the contribution that well managed parks and open spaces can make to the achievement of this 20 year vision, the following key aims have been developed:

i. To provide a network of high quality green spaces contributing to a unique sense of place

It has been recognised that there needs to be a series of parks and green spaces across the city providing a variety of experiences for everyone to easily access. The collective green spaces will be seen as a major positive influence on establishing Southampton as the Green City in the region. Information on the green space quality, quantity and accessible distance contained in the strategy will be used in shaping future planning decisions.

This can be achieved by:

- agreeing the range of different types of parks and green spaces across the city and agreeing a “Southampton” standard.
- ensuring that good quality green spaces are accessible to all communities.

ii. To promote active community involvement and improved access for citizens and visitors

Green Spaces are for people and in Southampton we want to put people at the heart of the service. The technical document has highlighted examples of good work already being undertaken to include local people in the design, maintenance and management of the green spaces and this will be expanded over the coming years (see Chapter 4 People in Parks of the technical document). Busy green spaces are safer spaces and the importance of increasing the visible presence in parks in particular (and some green spaces) has been highlighted at national and local level.

This can be achieved by:

- maximising the opportunities for local people to take an active role in the management and development of their green spaces
- ensuring the needs of different sections of the community are clearly recognised and provided for
- listening to the aspirations of local communities and friends groups for their green spaces.
- encourage informal use of green spaces for such activities as sports (not on formalised pitch/court), picnics, dog walking, etc
- Clearly identify green spaces where performances and events can take place and ensure they are fully promoted.
- Exploring opportunities to encourage people to congregate in areas of green space, such as seats that people can arrange themselves, board games areas or arts markets.

iii. To establish the contribution parks make in developing the city economy and cultural opportunities

The close proximity of good quality parks and green spaces has been shown to positively affect the value of property and this in turn boosts the economic prosperity of the city. There is an opportunity to develop parks as event spaces, boosting the city's economy and promoting the cultural experience. There are a number of 'hidden gem' green spaces in Southampton that many Southampton residents are not aware of or do not appreciate are on their doorstep.

This can be achieved by:

- highlighting and raising the profile of the significant contribution made by green spaces to the economic, health, social and cultural development of the City and the region.
- developing a marketing / communications plan as part of the development of the Southampton brand to promote the wide variety of green spaces that we have in Southampton and highlighting seasonal special features more effectively

iv. To achieve attractive and sustainable green spaces in the city

Southampton has a fantastic mix of formal parks and gardens through to Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI's) and local natural spaces. Further work to develop a more cohesive green grid network for people and wildlife to move around the city is required. There are a series of targets to achieve in terms of increasing biodiversity and sustainability that will enrich the city and potentially lead to increased resources. There are also a series of significant and positive actions that parks and green spaces can contribute towards reducing the impact of climate change in Southampton:

This can be achieved by:

- developing, promoting and demonstrating the importance of the natural environment and improving biodiversity citywide.
- developing a series of practical green space adaptations that will positively contribute towards reducing the impact of climate change in the city and lead to more sustainable environments.
- developing a green grid across the city

v. To maximise value for money and resources available

The current level of service reflects a low cost high quality service, however there are significant concerns about the current infrastructure standards and the challenge is to build on the current value for money position to ensure that future services can be sustained. There is a need to attract other resources to support the core funding through external grants, community volunteering, partnerships and sponsorships.

This can be achieved by:

- exploring new funding sources and identifying partnerships for targeted projects
- developing opportunities for volunteer working.
- exploring new opportunities for attracting income

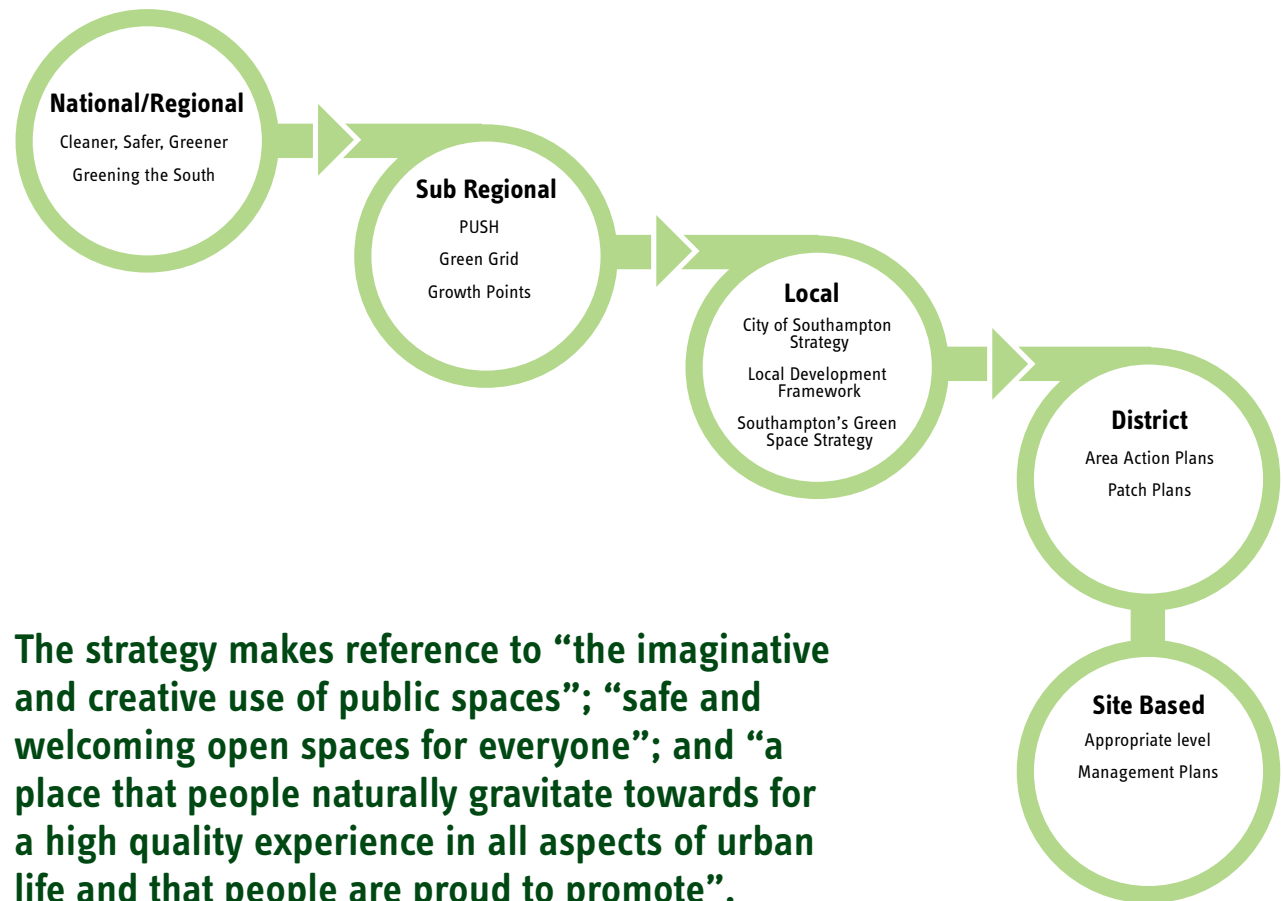
Scope of strategy

Southampton's Green Space Strategic Action Plan has national and regional links. At a national level it fits into the Governments Cleaner, Safer, Greener agenda. At a regional level it links to the Partnership for Urban South Hampshire (PUSH) and the emerging infrastructure plan that has come from this partnership. In line with the information coming out of the PUSH infrastructure study this action plan advocates a Green Grid approach to ensure there are green links across the city and to the wider countryside in Hampshire. It promotes the use of local urban green spaces, reducing the pressure on the potentially more sensitive habitats in the countryside, whilst recognising the greater links through to areas such as The New Forest, Country Parks and other Hampshire green spaces which are important as wildlife corridors.

The City of Southampton strategy was adopted by the Southampton Partnership in 2007. This sets out a vision and aspirations for Southampton over the next 20 years.

There are six key objectives:

- People proud of their city and making a positive contribution
- Learning and innovation at its heart
- A dynamic business environment
- An attractive, sustainable and stimulating environment
- Imaginative arts and cultural opportunities
- A unique sense of place



At a Local level this action plan follows closely the goals of the City of Southampton Strategy and feeds into the Local Development Framework as part of protecting green spaces across Southampton. Southampton City Council is currently working on its Local Development Framework. This new style development plan will consist of a folder of documents and will include the Core Strategy containing the general principles for development in the city. The principles proposed include improving the accessibility and quality of open space, protecting and enhancing the natural environment, ensuring there is enough quantity of different types of green space and creating sustainable neighbourhoods.

The strategy will be used as an evidence base to underpin the emerging policies coming out of the LDF. It will provide evidence for the Core Strategy and address the Council's responsibilities to take the guidelines under PPG17 forward. It will feed into the Allocations plan and the standards will inform the Development Control Policies Document, the resulting Planning Obligations Supplementary Planning Document and The City Centre Action Plan.

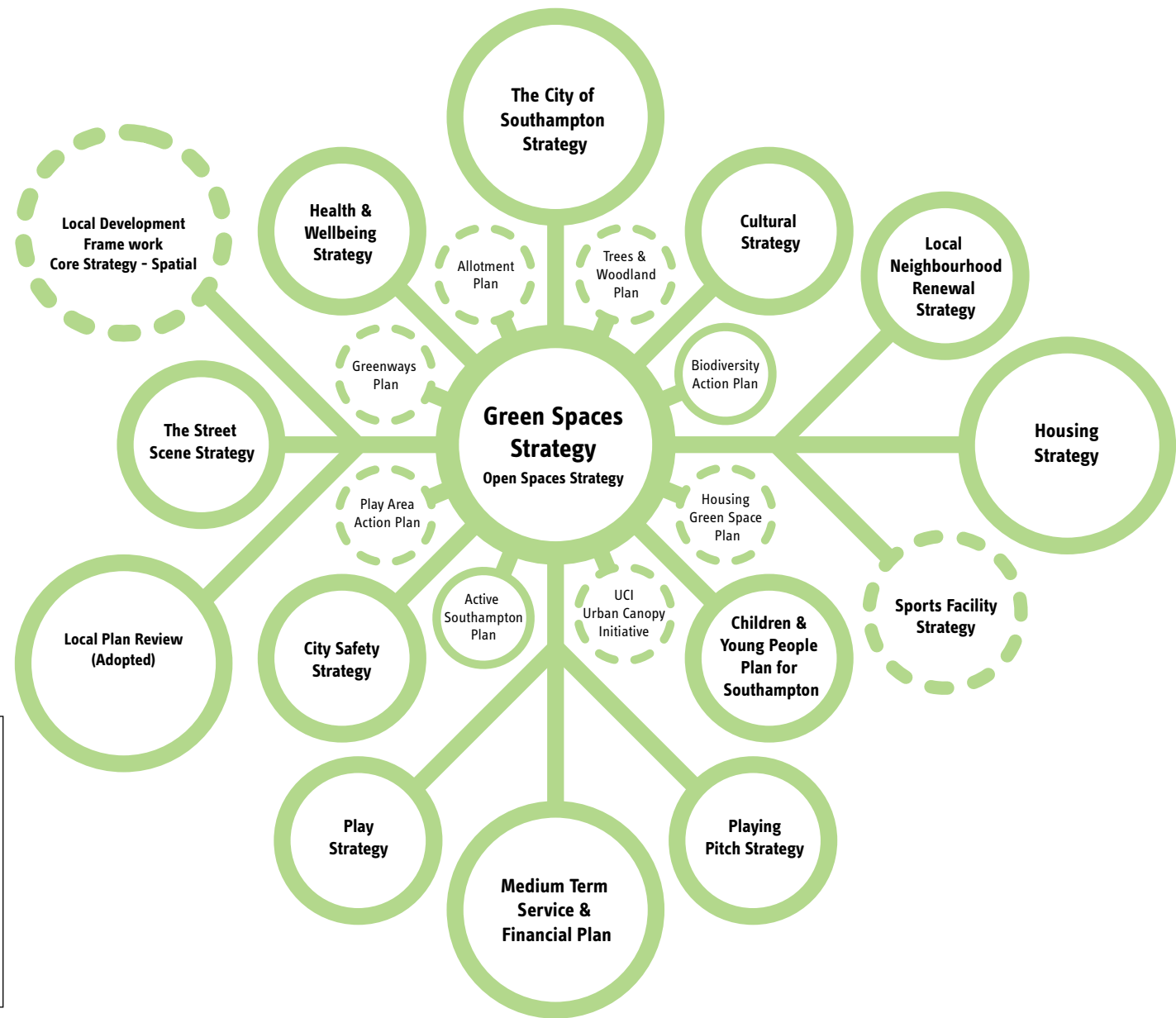
It is envisaged that this action plan will be a continuously evolving document reflecting the nature of land management in general and customer feedback. The key steps needed to move this action plan forward over the next few years are summarised in this document. The recommendations outlined in the action plan will be refined into policy and implemented.

The action plan outlines a broad framework of types of spaces that recognise the diverse but distinct elements of the green grid network. These will be enhanced over the coming years with more detailed surveys to provide even greater clarity over prioritisation of resource allocation.

With the current high level of overall satisfaction with parks and green spaces (84% in 2006) the short term actions are targeted at improving those categories of green space that were identified early in the process as obviously falling below the relevant Southampton standard. In order to address some of these issues as quickly as possible, over £300,000 of capital funding has been made available for early win projects. This will increase the chances of achieving Green Flag and biodiversity targets for 2010 contained in the Local Area Agreement.



Linked strategies



Supporting this action plan is the Southampton Green Space Technical Document that provides the detail and background about Southampton's green spaces. The technical document includes information on data collection and interpretation along with an evidence base for the recommendations that include; setting standards for green spaces in terms of quantity and quality; agreeing protection levels; encouraging more community involvement; promoting positive behaviour in parks; current resources and long term funding of green spaces; engaging young people; increasing biodiversity and the role for parks and green spaces in climate change mitigation. The key steps needed to gain this evidence over the next few years are summarised at the end of this document as an action plan. The action plan will enable the evidence to be refined into policy and implemented through the planning process aligning it with emerging policy in the Local Development Framework.

In developing the strategy, there has been extensive technical and customer research/ analysis.

Technical: Mapping of all green spaces onto GIS database
Value assessment of spaces & benchmarking
Auditing Open Spaces (Global to Local)
Quality assessment
Professional knowledge of staff

Customer: Satisfaction surveys
Feedback from friends groups
Previous research
Equalities Impact Assessment

To obtain a copy of the detailed technical document please write to:

Southampton City Council
Open Spaces Team
Town Depot
Albert Road North
Southampton SO14 5AT

Or email parks@southampton.gov.uk or visit www.southampton.gov.uk/gss and follow the links to the Green Space Strategy document

The action plan will be maintained on the Council website so that ongoing progress can be readily viewed. Appropriate consultation will be undertaken as necessary and the feedback will be collated and reviewed and used to develop the technical document. A focus on the actions required to progress the parks and green spaces over the next 1 - 5 years will be the first priority. However during this period more detailed work will be undertaken to ascertain the order of investment needed over a 20 year period to address the infrastructure investment gap that is highlighted in this document. Progress of the action plan will be monitored through the councils performance management system on a quarterly basis and through the scrutiny panel system.

4. Where are we now?

Residents and visitors to Southampton often tell us that the parks and green spaces are one of the things they like best about the city.

Here are some facts you may not know about green spaces in Southampton:

- Just over 20% of the total area of Southampton is made up of green spaces that are managed by the council
- Southampton has 49 parks, 23 allotments, 8 greenways, over 20,000 individual grass and shrub plots making up amenity green spaces and over 80 other green spaces that make up around 1,140 Hectares of land
- There were estimated to be over 17million visits to the parks by local residents in 2006/7.
- The staff that look after these spaces are dedicated to achieving continuous improvement and have contributed to an increase in customer satisfaction in the parks from 68% to 84% in just 6 years.
- There are currently over 15 active friends of... groups helping to manage, raise funds for and maintain parks and green spaces in Southampton.

Recent trends

Although satisfaction is high with parks and open spaces, as the service is non-statutory, funding for these spaces has been on a downward trend for several years. This has led to a managed decline of standards and failing infrastructure in some areas of the parks and green spaces. This situation is not unique to Southampton and is a concern in many parts of the country. Audit Commission figures show a 35% reduction in revenue budgets for urban parks from 1988 to 2005 and the Public Park Assessment by the audit commission in 2001 highlighted a loss of features in parks and a decline in maintenance standards .

We now have an opportunity in Southampton to set local standards to ensure that improvements to our parks and green spaces are prioritised and planned appropriately.

Quantity and distribution

Southampton's parks and green spaces range in size from a triangle of grass at the corner of the road to large areas such as the Common and Sports Centre. They provide everything from a space for a deck chair to artificial ski slopes, play, golf and wildlife watching. They have rare species of plants and animals, champion trees, listed monuments and sporting facilities.

Mapping all of Southampton's green spaces has enabled us to look at what provision there is in the city for different types. The three plans attached at the end of this document show differing buffer zones based on the walking distance in the travel access standard for each green space type. It should be noted that major barriers have not been taken into consideration when presenting these maps, but it is recognised that the river, railway and major roads can significantly reduce the accessibility of green spaces to some of the population. Future work on determining provision will be undertaken to include such barriers.

Map 1 shows the green space broken down into its individual types when following the hierarchy. This gives a broad overview of the distribution of different types of green space across the city. Large gaps along the south can be put down to the extensive dock land in this area.

Map 2 shows buffer zones around the City Parks and District Parks. It can be seen that the distribution of these two types of parks is on the whole central to the city, and this is to be expected as they are types of parks that should draw people into the city centre and provide an amenity for both residents and visitors to the city. There is a clear lack of this type of provision in the east of the city, with little opportunity to rectify this within the city boundary. However, parks such as Royal Victoria Country park in Eastleigh do go some way to improve this situation.

Map 3 Shows the Local Park provision, amenity green space where it is over 0.1 ha in size, sports spaces and nature green spaces. This gives a good picture of where this type of provision is lacking, however, it must be remembered that for some people the City and District parks will also be their local park and therefore gaps would be filled by these types of green space. Overall there is a good distribution of green space within walking distance to most peoples homes.



National standards and PPG 17

There is a requirement from the government that all planning authorities undertake an audit of open space following Planning Policy Guidance 17 (PPG17). Southampton City Council carried out an audit of open spaces in 2005 following PPG17 guidelines, and categorised Southampton's parks and green spaces into their predominant use. However, as spaces are often used for more than one purpose, prioritising resources based on their predominant use is difficult. In accordance with PPG 17, Southampton has developed some local standards. One of these is a categorisation of the green spaces in the city which reflects each of the space's multifunctional use. PPG17 provides 10 categories for open spaces, however it is proposed in this strategy to use only 5 categories. There are 3 park types (City, District, Local), Amenity Green Space and then all Other Green Space. This simplified hierarchy enables standards to be established that are relevant to the size and catchment area of the different types of green space as well as giving a structure for management plans and an ability to upgrade spaces to ensure each type is appropriately distributed across the city.

"The Government believes that open space standards are best set locally. National standards cannot cater for local circumstances", Planning Policy Guidance 17, p.6

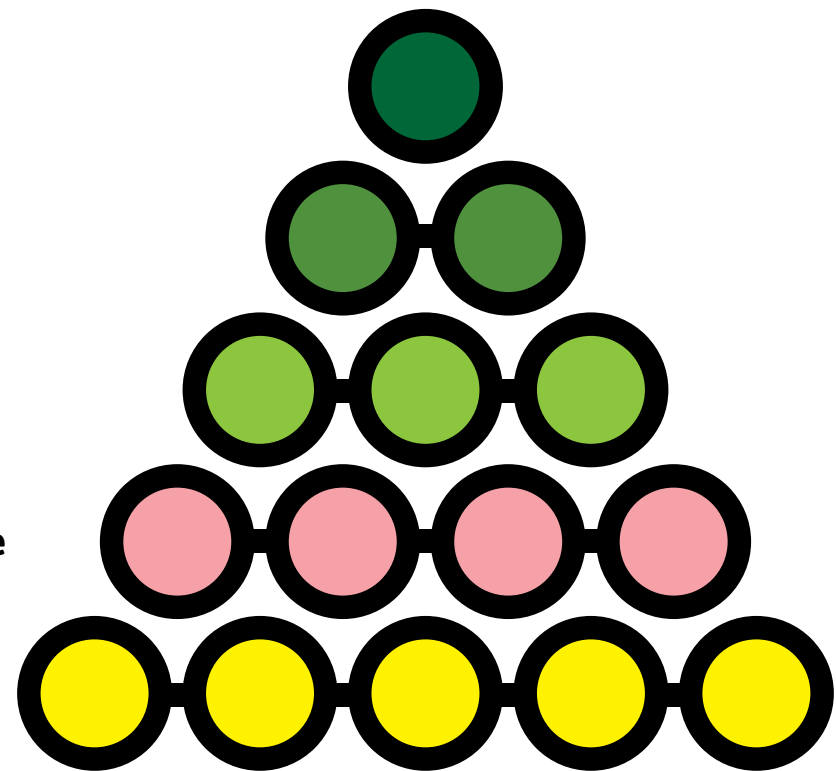
City Parks

District Parks

Local Parks

Amenity Green Space

Other Green Spaces





Categories of green space in Southampton

In order to be able to set and apply the local standards, Southampton is proposing to adopt the following classification of green spaces: (there are more details on the criteria for the categories in the technical document)

- **City Parks (destination parks)** – that attract people from outside Southampton and may have national importance, have a range of facilities and features. They include Central Parks (Grade II Listed park), Southampton Common (SSSI), Sports Centre, Mayflower Park, Weston Shore (SSSI)
- **District Parks** – attract people from across the city, have a number of facilities and features and hold neighbourhood events. They include Mayfield Park, Riverside Park, St James' Park, Mansel Park
- **Local Parks** – used by the local community, with limited facilities. They include Queens Park, Town Quay and Cuckoo Lane, Olive Road Rec, Aldermoor Road, Bakers Drove, Millbrook Rec, Green Park, Redbridge Wharf, Cedar Lodge, Shirley Pond, Freshfield Road, Freemantle Lake Park, Little Mongers Park, Mount Pleasant, Lawn Road, Portswood Rec, Daisy Dip, Mansbridge, Octavia Road, Donkey Common Frogs Copse, Deep Dene, Bitterne Manor, Northam Bridge Parks, Hum Hole, Sports Zone Local Park, Freemantle Common, Veracity Ground, Peartree Green, Archery Rec, Butts Road Rec, Sullivan Road Rec, Hinkler Green, Abbey Hill, Northam Doorstep Green, Blechynden Park, Platform Park, Chessel Bay, Thornhill Park
- **Amenity Green Space** – Used by the immediate local community this green space usually connects to or is adjacent to the homes of the residents using it. - Major areas of Amenity Green Space include; Harefield Estate, Thornhill Estate,

Weston Estate, Millbrook Estate, Lordswood Estate, Asylum Green, Romsey Road Roundabout.

- **Other Green Space** – These include sports areas, woodlands and natural spaces, cemeteries, allotments, civic spaces, school grounds and privately owned publicly accessible spaces. Sites include the Golf Course, the Greenways, Harefield woods, St Mary's Extra cemetery, 23 allotments sites, Bitterne precinct, over 80 schools, Marlhill Copse etc.

Improving Parks and Green Spaces

The identification of each park and green space in one of the above categories is then linked to the Southampton quality standards being set for each type (see next section on standards). As part of the ongoing quality audit there will be an assessment of where green spaces sit within each type and the aim of the strategy is to generate a positive upward direction of travel for the green spaces, local parks become better local parks or even district parks and onwards up to city park status. Areas of under provision for certain types of green space will be targeted to identify opportunities for upgrading appropriate sites to increase the quality and facilities to enable greater access in areas of under provision, for example where there is an over provision of amenity green space, it may be appropriate to look at upgrading this to local park status to ensure there is enough provision of this type of green space. Also where the environment around a green space changes, the hierarchy gives scope for green space to move upwards, for instance if a significant amount of redevelopment occurs next to a local park it may be appropriate to upgrade this park to a district park. The hierarchy will therefore be one of the key ways of prioritising green space for funding that is extra to the revenue provided by the Council (ie planning obligations, grant bids).

5. Southampton Standards

The Council is currently custodian of green space that makes up around 20% of the total area of the city. This land is free for all to use and it is therefore very important that we get local standards right to ensure we can maintain and protect them for future generations. Local standards enable us to do this by giving a base level to work to for accessibility, quantity, quality and protection that ensures all green spaces are suitable for their purpose, improved regularly and appropriately funded. The standards are used in conjunction with each other to build a picture of a particular green space and to show where it needs improvement.

It is proposed to use the standards presented on the next few pages when assessing green spaces in relation to the hierarchy. They reflect the uniqueness of Southampton and therefore do not rely on more broad brush national standards. It is proposed that over the next 3 to 5 years that they are aligned with and adopted into the emerging LDF following the appropriate public consultation. In the mean time they will be used to help improve the Neighbourhood Services Division service and to prioritise parks and green spaces for improvement.

Accessibility

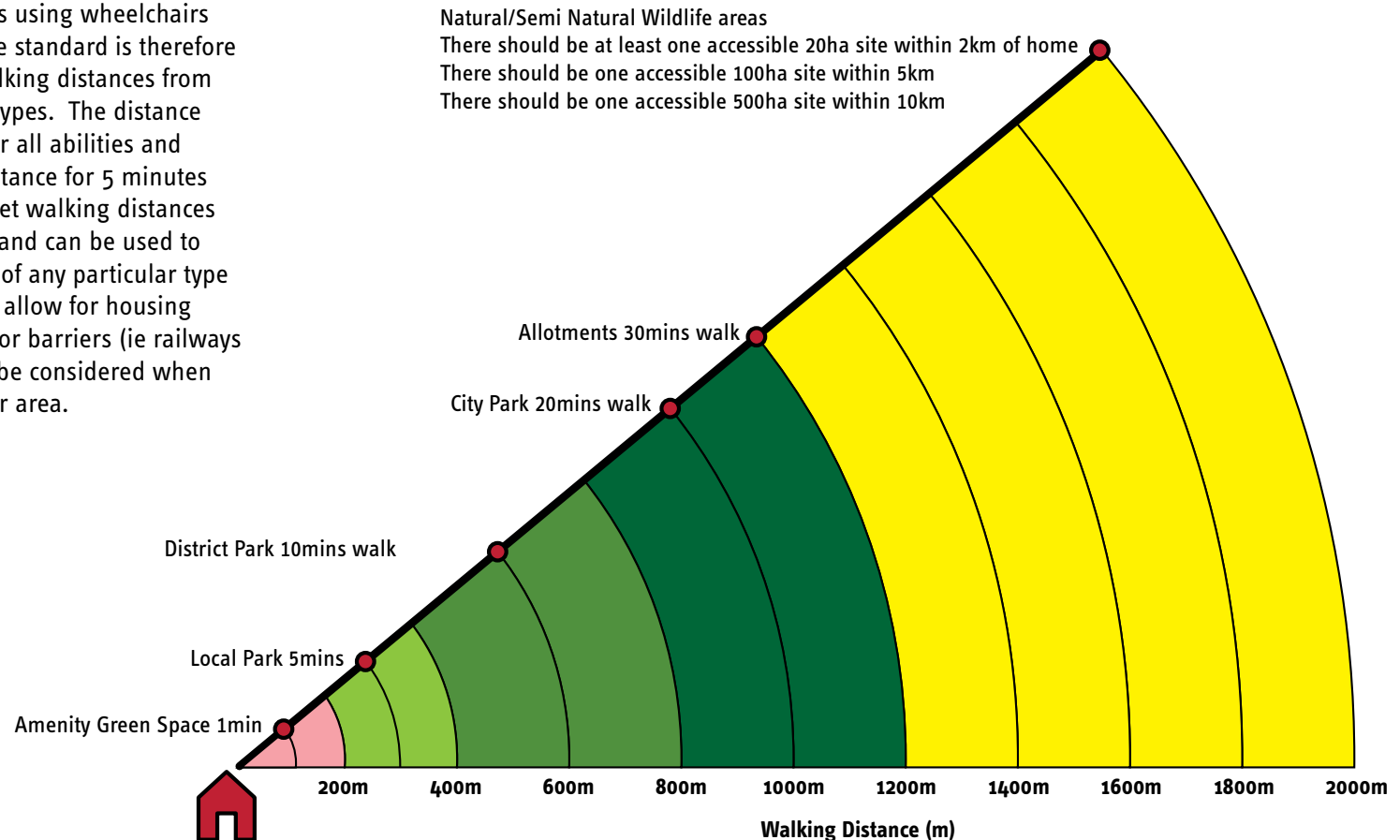
There are three themes to accessibility; ease of access when travelling to the green space, physical access onto the green space and a more general aspiration to provide an equality of use for all members of society.

As a standard has to be measurable it is only appropriate to set standards for travelling to and physical access to green spaces.



Travel access

The usual way of travelling to green spaces, and in particular local green spaces, is by walking (this term is used in a broad sense and includes using wheelchairs and other walking aids). A distance standard is therefore proposed based on reasonable walking distances from home to some of the green space types. The distance is an average making allowance for all abilities and therefore has been set at 300m distance for 5 minutes walk. The diagram shows the target walking distances for different types of green spaces and can be used to establish whether there is enough of any particular type in your area. However, it does not allow for housing densities, population levels or major barriers (ie railways and rivers) and these will need to be considered when looking at provision for a particular area.



Green networks

Clear standards

Active involvement

Increasing usage

Raising quality



Physical access on site

Physical access to and within a site is important and has been based on the Sensory Trust guideline “By all reasonable means: inclusive access to the outdoors for disabled people”. These guidelines deal principally with paths and routes and are defined primarily in terms of physical access, and predominantly in relation to people with mobility impairments.

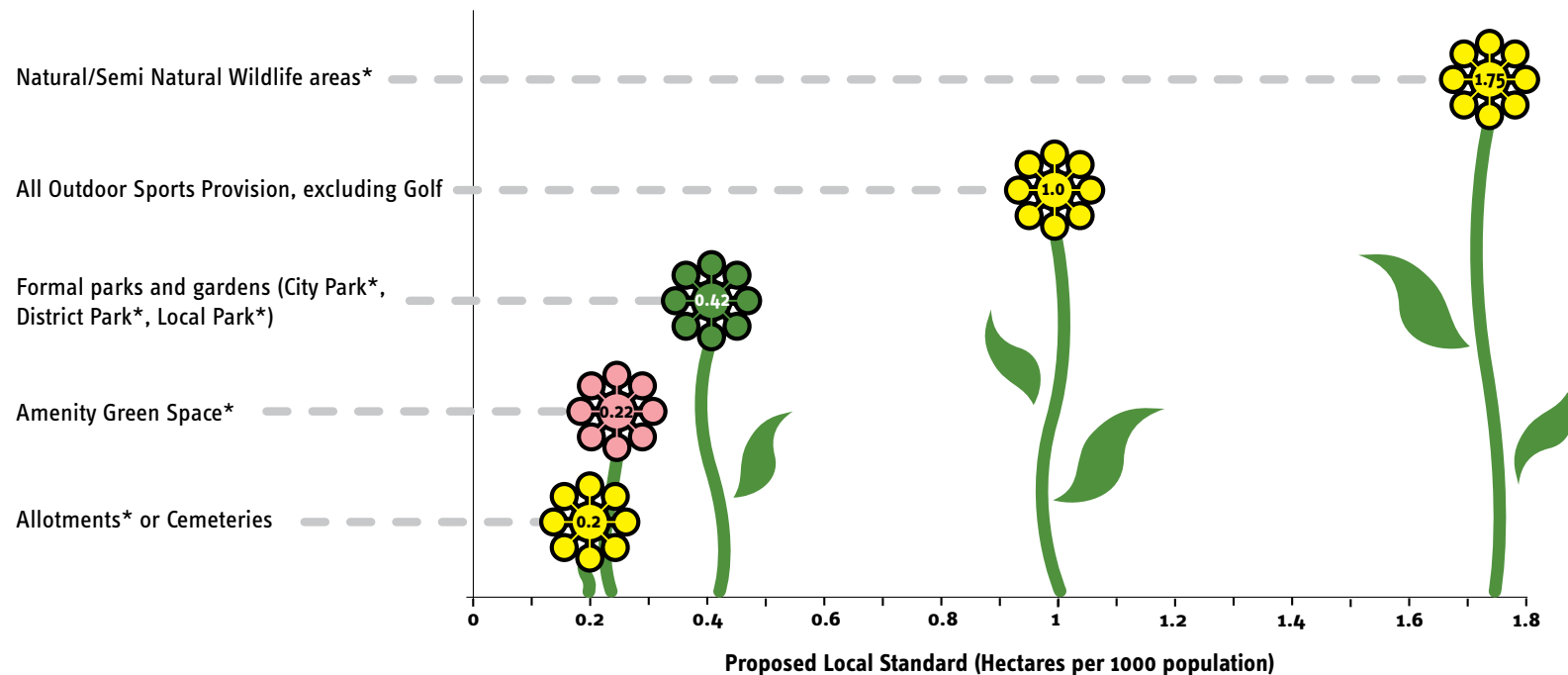
The overriding principle is one of “Least Restrictive Access” to outdoor spaces which helps raise the standard of access overtime. Green space access will be categorised following the principles set down in Appendix 1 of the Sensory Trust document. Where full accessibility is not available (ie because of steep slopes in river valleys or because of sensitive nature conservation areas) over a whole site it is generally accepted that fully accessible “honey pot” areas are appropriate to enable an appreciation of the site.

Table 2 of the Sensory Trust guideline “By all reasonable means: inclusive access to the outdoors for disabled people” is summarised below:

Standard	Definition
Ideal	Includes standards such as: No physical barriers, non-slip well drained hard paths, no surface breaks, Path gradients less than 1:20, passing places at least every 50m, resting places every 100m
Zone A	
Provides access for most people, especially those with mobility impairments	Includes standards such as: No steps higher than 15mm, some loose stones in footpath, paths at least 1m wide, path gradient no more than 1:10, passing places every 150m, resting places every 150m. Zone A – City Park, some District Parks, Sports
Zone B	
Provides access for many people, especially those with mobility impairments	Includes standards such as: No steps higher than 40mm, some stones, occasional tree roots, potholes and short stretches of rutting on paths, paths at least 900mm wide, path gradient no more than 1:10, passing places not formalised but at least one passing opportunity every 150m, resting places at least every 1000m. Zone B – District Park, Some Local Parks, Some Sports, cemeteries and Churchyards
Zone C	
Provides access for some people, especially those with mobility impairments	Includes standards such as: No steps higher than 100mm, larger loose stones, occasional tree roots potholes and short stretches of rutting on paths, paths at least 900mm wide, natural gradients not limited, passing places not formalised but should be at least one passing opportunity every 150m, resting places not formalised. Zone C – Local Park, Amenity Green Space, Woodlands and Nature areas, Allotments, some cemeteries and churchyards.

Quantity Standard

There is little opportunity to increase green space in Southampton. A very small amount of new green space may become available through development of some of the brown field sites, but generally there are no areas where new green space can be provided. The proposed quantity standards are therefore based on the current local provision of green space and could be used to ensure there is no loss in the future.



*Green Space types that constitute 'amenity open space' in the Southampton City Council supplementary planning guidance for Planning Obligations.

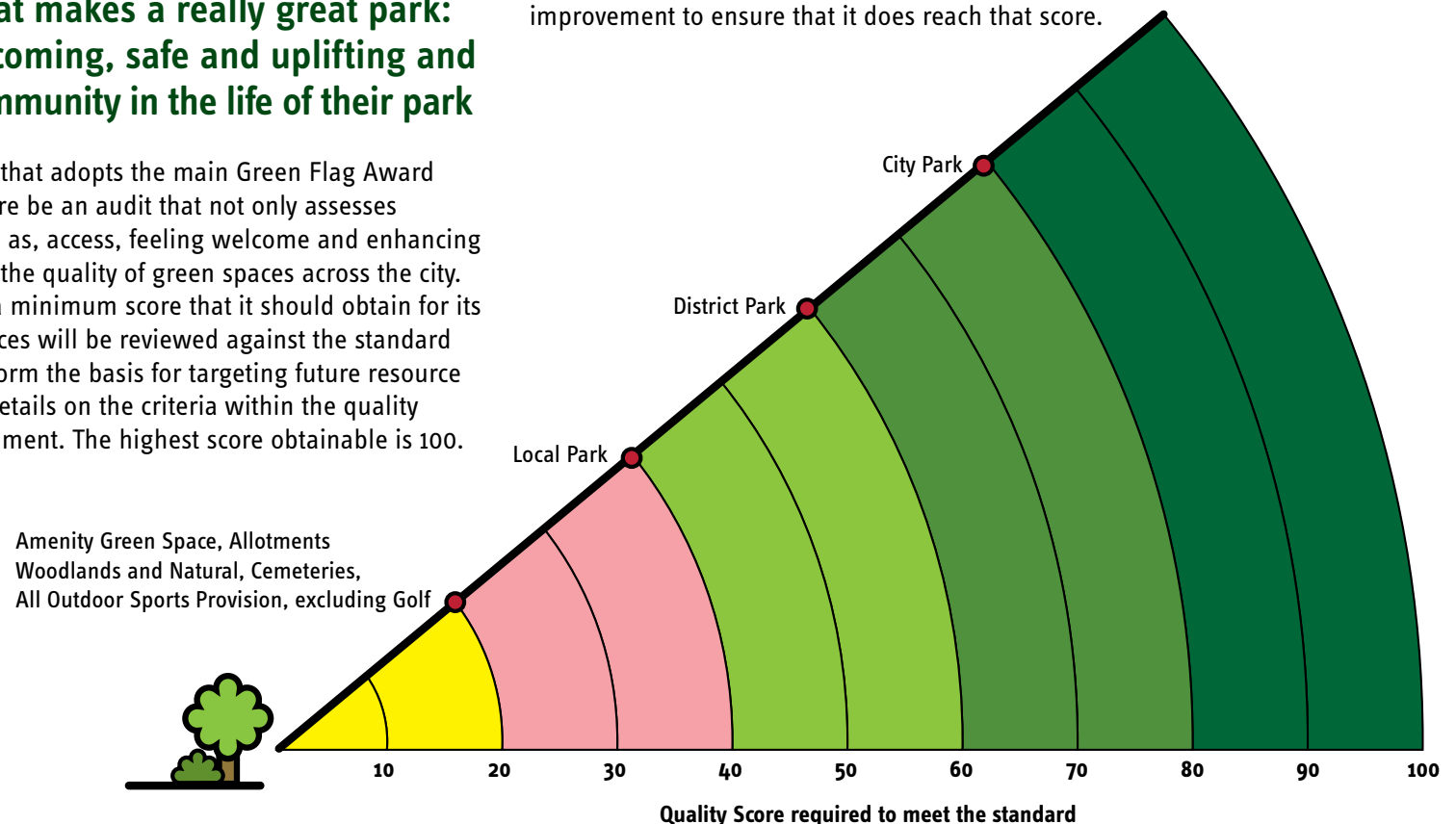


Quality Standard

The Green Flag Award scheme helps to drive up standards and raises people's expectations. The award criteria concentrate on what makes a really great park: somewhere that feels welcoming, safe and uplifting and which involves the local community in the life of their park

A quality standard has been proposed that adopts the main Green Flag Award criteria as its basis. This would therefore be an audit that not only assesses facilities but also includes such criteria as, access, feeling welcome and enhancing biodiversity. It could be used to assess the quality of green spaces across the city. Each green space would be allocated a minimum score that it should obtain for its type. The audited parks and green spaces will be reviewed against the standard for that type of site and this will help form the basis for targeting future resource allocation for improvements. For full details on the criteria within the quality standard please see the technical document. The highest score obtainable is 100.

For example it would be expected that a local park when audited would get a score of at least 40, however, it could get a score of up to 100 and be an outstanding quality local park. If it scores less than 40 then it would be prioritised for improvement to ensure that it does reach that score.



Protection grades

Southampton City Council is committed to providing 16300 new homes by 2026, not all of which will have their own gardens. This places increased pressure on green spaces not only due to their increased use, particularly by those with no gardens, but also as areas with potential for development. Although the Local Plan Review does currently protect a number of sites under planning policy CLT3, it does not protect all green space. In addition to this it does not address the issue of poor quality under used space. As part of this action plan it is proposed that a protection rating for all parks and green spaces is developed along the lines of the following table. This will ensure that all green spaces are valued and the most important spaces have the highest levels of protection. This will safeguard the future of a significant number of green spaces, however it also provides scope for dialogues to take place over pieces of amenity green space that have low amenity value and that may be suitable for either conversion into a different type of green space or for development that could generate income to improve other green spaces and/or other improvements for the local area. The protection levels proposed will underpin the policies being taken forward in the LDF.

Level	Definition
Protect	This is green space that is viewed as so vital to the life of the town's residents that it should be protected from all development, except where the proposal is for the direct improvement of the site for its management (ie operational buildings) or community use (ie interpretation centre, toilets). For example City, District and Local Parks, woodlands and nature areas, some sports. most allotments
Replace	The total area currently set aside as this green space type is desirable to keep, but its distribution across the city or area is not optimised. Development of this type of green space (either to provide a different type of green space or in some cases as built development) would be allowed where it is over provided. Where built development is allowed it would be with the condition that the green space is replaced (by the developer) by similar provision in an area where it is underprovided. For example some amenity green space, some sports, some allotments
Reconfigure	This is green space which is currently fragmented, for example in housing estates. These could be built on where redevelopment or regeneration of the area would enable this type of green space to be reconfigured to give larger areas of continuous land and improve its quality for recreational purposes and ease of management. There could be some loss of total area to ensure the quality of the retained green space. For example some amenity green space
Convert	Green Space which has low quality and low use and therefore is of little amenity value. This type of green space could be considered for alternative uses such as a different green space type or could be developed to generate income to improve other nearby green spaces following public consultation. For example some highways verges



Planning obligations and green spaces

The Green Space Strategy will assist planners as an evidence base when deciding planning applications to ensure that the amount of green space in an area is kept within local standards. The strategy will inform them of the protection level of any given green space and enable them to make appropriate decisions on proposed development in these areas.

It is generally accepted that there is little opportunity for significant new green space within Southampton outside of development sites therefore developers will be encouraged to provide on-site provision wherever possible. However, quality should not be reduced just to provide quantity and where the only green space that can be provided on site is to non-adoptable standard the Council will seek to secure financial contributions to improve local and city wide green space for use by the new residents.

The intention is to seek approval of the local standards and green space categorisations in order for them to be adopted in a policy within the emerging LDF. The Supplementary Planning Document for Planning Obligations will outline the contributions that developers must make when carrying out developments in the city. Current standards based on previous Local Plans and the Hampshire Structure Plan will remain in place until the Development Control document is adopted this is likely to be in 2012. It is the intention of this document to work closely with Planning Policy to ensure that new standards are adopted through the Development Control DPD process.

In the meantime a review of the cost per metre squared for park improvements is being undertaken. These more accurate costs will be used to update the existing Planning Obligations.

It is important that new development does not significantly impact on the green space. The strategy will therefore seek to address this issue by getting larger new developments to include green space within their design. It will therefore be an aspiration to have a policy within the Planning Obligations SPD for all new developments with a net increase in the population of 1000 or more to provide, where appropriate, on site green space. For example where local green space has capacity for sustaining a population increase then an off site contribution may be considered, however, where local green space is unable to sustain any further population increase then on site provision would be expected. Any on site provision will be laid out at the expense of the developer and in most cases adopted by the Local Authority. On adoption a commuted sum will be payable for maintenance based on a period of 10 years. However as stated above this will need to go through the Development Control DPD process before it can be adopted and will have no legal weight before this time.

Where a contribution is made towards off site provision, money will be allocated to the nearest green space, from an agreed list, in need of improvement and a proportion may go towards improving the network of district and city parks depending on the size and location of the development. The Green Space Strategy action plan outlines where priorities for improvement will be in the short term and a quality assessment in the medium term will enable further prioritisation. (In the meantime allocation of the contribution will be determined on a case by case basis.)

6. Action plan

The Southampton Green Space Strategy Consultation Draft was widely circulated for consultation with the public in June 2008. The consultation was in the form of a questionnaire attached to the document and made available on the Council web site. The feedback from the consultation was on the whole very positive with no major issues raised from any of the respondents. Respondents clearly value green spaces and see them as a key asset for the city.

As part of the consultation people were asked to prioritise their top five recommendations from a list of twenty. As a result the twenty recommendations within the consultation draft have been refined into the following action plan, giving 10 objectives, each with detailed actions. The objectives reflect the five aims of this strategy and ensure their implementation over the next 5 years. The remaining recommendations from the consultation document have been incorporated into the Technical Document.

The contribution that well managed parks and green spaces make to the overall streetscene of Southampton, to the well-being of residents and visitors, and their value in developing the local economy has been explained in this document. This action plan, in conjunction with the technical document, is part of the ongoing dialogue in developing a much more detailed and long term vision for Southampton's parks and green spaces. The aim of this publication is to establish the basis for decision making over the next 1-5 years. Southampton is very lucky to have had a network of great green spaces right across and into the heart of the city for well over 150 years but recently the trend has been for a reduced level of resources leading to a decline in some of the parks and green spaces

infrastructure – despite the increase in satisfaction levels. It is a fantastic “Green City” with a good spread of quality parks and green spaces across the city and we are keen to make sure this continues for future generations. The early priorities for improvements are outlined below and we will continue to consult with the public to ensure their views are taken into consideration.

The following recommendations will ensure that the aims and objectives of this action plan can be achieved. They will be delivered by working with key stakeholders such as Planning, Play Services, Youth Services, Rights of Way Team, parks and green space users and other groups involved in shaping parks and green spaces.



i. To provide a network of high quality green spaces contributing to a unique sense of place

1	Quality audit all parks to identify gaps and highlight areas for improvement			
Ref	Actions	Benefits	Measures of Success and Timescales	Financial and Other Resources
1.1	Develop and carry out a quality audit of all parks and green spaces based on Green Flag criteria	Gaps in provision will be indentified and areas in need of improvement highlighted. Information will feed into individual management plans	49 parks complete by 2010 All other green space complete by 2012	Funding required to employ consultant to carry out audits. Project management
1.2	Use audit data to assess what investment will be required over the next 15 to 20 years in order to sustain and improve green spaces	Clear understanding of what resources will be required in order to sustain and improve green space.	Detailed breakdown of funding required to; • sustain green spaces for the next 20 years by 2013 • improve green spaces over the next 20 years by 2013	
1.3	Use audit data to prioritise parks and green space for allocation of future funds.	When funds are made available we know where they can be most effectively spent to achieve improvement in quality	A parks prioritisation list is developed by 2011 A green space prioritisation list is developed by 2013	
1.4	Produce a map identifying potential amenity green space for alternative land use, based on its quantity and quality. (Alternative use as green space will be top priority, built development will be considered where it will improve an area and/or can generate funds for reinvestment/maintenance of other green space. Public consultation will be undertaken before any green space is used for alternative purposes.)	We will have a clear indication of where there is surplus, low quality green space that can be changed to a different land use. Green space will be fully utilised.	First draft by 2009 Full map on the corporate geographical information system (GIS) by 2013	

i. To provide a network of high quality green spaces contributing to a unique sense of place

2	Target 5 key parks and green spaces to improve over the next 1-3 years to improve distribution of higher quality spaces (Action 1)			
Ref	Actions	Benefits	Measures of Success and Timescales	Financial and Other Resources
2.1	St James' Park will be improved through capital funding, increased community involvement and Parks for People Lottery funding grant (if successful)	Greatly improved park for local residents and visitors in an area of the city with otherwise limited park facilities.	Parks for People lottery bid result in October 2008. If successful implemented improvements by 2011 Obtain Green Flag by 2011	Parks for People bid for £1.1m (total project £1.5m with £190k + match funding)
2.2	Riverside Park, Portswood Park (recreation ground), and Weston Shore will be improved through capital funding, increased community involvement and other external grants.	Local residents and visitors to the north and east of the city will have much improved facilities to use	Riverside Park will maintain its Green Flag Award status annually Portswood Park will obtain Green Flag Award status by 2011 Weston Shore will obtain Green Flag Award status by 2010	Riverside, Section 106 – tennis court and capital for Cafe Portswood, Sita - Grant £10k Weston Shore – Local Area Agreement capital
2.3	The Southampton Common will be improved through capital funding; joint working with Natural England will be undertaken to enhance the SSSI.	Local residents and visitors to the centre of the city will have much improved facilities to use	Maintain Green Flag Award status annually Obtain Favourable Status for SSSI by 2012	Section 106 Forestry Grant LAA Grant

i. To provide a network of high quality green spaces contributing to a unique sense of place

3	To Improve 15 parks and green spaces through targeted use of developer contributions. (Action 2)			
Ref	Actions	Benefits	Measures of Success and Timescales	Financial and Other Resources
3.1	Compile list of 15 top priority green spaces for improvement based on funding availability and need.	Ensure that improvements are targeted to areas with funding allocated.	List is produced by 2009	Officer Time
3.2	Carry out improvements to 15 green spaces by instigating projects for each.	Residents will have better green space facilities within close walking distance to them	15 green spaces will have improved facilities by 2011	Section 106 Capital money

i. To provide a network of high quality green spaces contributing to a unique sense of place

4	To produce management plans for key parks and green spaces. (Action 5)			
Ref	Actions	Benefits	Measures of Success and Timescales	Financial and Other Resources
4.1	Produce management plans for 5 City Parks and 4 District parks plus 20% of the local parks, (This includes the re-writing of the 20 year Common Management and Maintenance Plan.)	The aims and objectives for the parks will be outlined and actions identified for the next 5-10 years. Will also assist in Green Flag applications	Publish management plans by 2010	Possibly outsource to consultancy

ii. To promote active community involvement and improved access for citizens and visitors

5	To ensure people continue to feel safe in our parks. (Action 7)			
Ref	Actions	Benefits	Measures of Success and Timescales	Financial and Other Resources
5.1	Develop a range of safety improvements for example park watch schemes (council staff, police, community support officers and friends groups sign up to increase visibility in the parks)	Improve perception of safety in parks and encourage more people to use parks	Two park watch schemes set up by 2012	Staff to support park watch groups for administration and attending meetings.
5.2	Implement 'safer by design' modifications to shrub beds, borders and lighting where appropriate.	More people use and feel safe in the parks.	Perception of safety improves (on site user surveys)	Capital for shrub bed modifications and lighting improvements Staff or consultants to carry out site user surveys

ii. To promote active community involvement and improved access for citizens and visitors

6	To improve the quality of green spaces by getting local communities actively involved. (Action 12)			
Ref	Actions	Benefits	Measures of Success and Timescales	Financial and Other Resources
6.1	Increase the number of Friends groups across Southampton	Local people involved in shaping the future of their green space, promoting a sense of ownership and pride in the area, making them more sustainable.	Friends group in place for at least 15 green spaces by 2012.	Staff time to support friends groups. Financial and staff support for friends groups to hold events.
6.2	Establish and adopt a methodology for consulting with all user groups including young people, older people, access groups and minority groups	Green space improvement projects will be better informed and designed by consulting with a wide range of groups.	A methodology is produced and adopted by 2013	
6.3	Promote the use of GreenSTAT to encourage more online feedback	Improve customer feedback on the parks service and individual parks.	Increased use of GreenSTAT by 2009	Ongoing funding for GreenSTAT licence (approx. £4,000 pa).

ii. To promote active community involvement and improved access for citizens and visitors

7	To clarify certain legal issues relating to green spaces (General)			
Ref	Actions	Benefits	Measures of Success and Timescales	Financial and Other Resources
7.1	To produce proposals for public consultation following the Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act 2005 on areas within green spaces where it is appropriate to promote greater control of dogs	This will make the position with regards to dog control clear to park users. On the spot enforcement where owners act irresponsibly and/or allow their dogs to become out of control.	A proposal following The Dog Control Orders (Procedures) Regulations 2006 is ready for public consultation by 2010	
7.2	To produce proposals for public consultation to clarify areas within green spaces where it is appropriate to allow cycling for leisure and cycling for commuting.	Clarify the situation with regards to cycling in green spaces and ensure that the public are aware of where it is appropriate to cycle.	Proposals produced by 2010	
7.3	To clarify and register all green spaces owned by SCC and to enforce, where appropriate, where adjacent property boundaries have encroached.	It will clarify SCC ownership of green space and ensure it is retained in public ownership.	All green space is registered by 2013 Encroachments are successfully enforced and green space is returned to public use	Capital available
7.4	To investigate and provide solutions to reduce the ability of people to take motorbikes onto green spaces.	Reduce damage to green spaces and its biodiversity and make users feel safer.	Viable solutions to restrict motorcycle use are trialled by 2012	

ii. To promote active community involvement and improved access for citizens and visitors

7	To clarify certain legal issues relating to green spaces (General)			
Ref	Actions	Benefits	Measures of Success and Timescales	Financial and Other Resources
7.5	To investigate and provide solutions to reduce fly-tipping on green spaces.	Green spaces become cleaner, increased satisfaction with cleanliness. Possible financial reward if LAA stretch targets are met.	Reduce number of incidents city wide by 20% by 2010	LAA funding
7.6	To prepare proposals for public consultation identifying which local byelaws, for green spaces, need updating.	This will clarify to the public what restrictions there are in green spaces and will provide a realistic fine for enforcement purposes.	Proposals are produced by 2013	
7.7	To review the green spaces which are most at risk from traveller encampments, and implement on site solutions	This will reduce the risk of travellers using public open space for encampments. It will reduce public spending on getting such encampments evicted.	Solutions are implemented on 5 sites by 2011	Capital funding
7.8	Use the evidence gathered above to produce a "Respect Southampton's Green Spaces" guide.	This will be an easy to read document clarifying what restrictions there are in green spaces and giving clear guidance for users on responsible use of green space.	Booklet in general circulation by 2013	

iii. To establish the contribution parks make in developing the city economy and cultural opportunities

8	To inform future planning policy on the provision of green space. (General)			
Ref	Actions	Benefits	Measures of Success and Timescales	Financial and Other Resources
8.1	Update Planning Obligations Supplementary Planning Guidance to reflect the evidence shown within the Green Space Strategy.	Developers will have a clear indication of the amount of green space they need to provide or the financial contribution they will need to make in its place. Planners will have robust evidence to base section 106 agreements on. New developments in the city should impact less on the existing green space.	Commence process in 2009, and the amenity Open Space section of the Planning Obligations SPG is re-written by 2012	
8.2	The Green Space Strategy is aligned with and maintained as an evidence base which feeds into the Local Development Framework (LDF) guiding policy.	It will provide robust evidence for the LDF and provide more accurate data to base policy on.	Evidence incorporated into the LDF by 2013	

iv. To achieve attractive and sustainable green spaces in the city

9	To establish a Green Grid network linking key green spaces and providing 'green routes' for people and wildlife. (Action 17)			
	Actions	Benefits	Measures of Success and Timescales	Financial and Other Resources
9.1	Produce a map showing all the existing green links between strategic green spaces, for wildlife, walking and cycling. (Taking into consideration the green travel plan, the ROWIP, the active travel plan, cycle routes plan, etc.)	The map will be used to identify gaps and routes that need to be developed to ensure a green grid within the city and into wider region	Map produced in GIS by 2011	Surveys, rerouting services, highways input, Section 106 planning obligations
9.2	Prioritise the key routes to develop/improve e.g. Itchen Navigation, Monks Brook, Weston to Thornhill.	Enables effective spending of funds when available	A priority list of key routes, highlighted on the map, produced by 2012	Surveys, rerouting services, highways input, Section 106 planning obligations
9.3	Create Green Grid Implementation Plan to include funding, highways issues, private land use, tree planting, tree protection etc in order to fully establish green grid	Having established existing routes the implementation plan will focus on reducing gaps	Green grid implementation plan is produced by 2013	Surveys, rerouting services, highways input, Section 106 planning obligations

v. To maximise value for money and resources available				
10	To ensure that high quality green spaces continue to be well maintained in the future. (Action 18)			
	Actions	Benefits	Measures of Success and Timescales	Financial and Other Resources
10.1	Invest in ongoing horticultural training for Open Spaces staff and explore new ways of attracting young people to a career in horticulture.	A highly trained, more motivated and knowledgeable work force. Retain more quality staff, more trainees interested in working at Southampton	Improved age profile of workforce by 2011 Increase number of NVQ's and work placements	Project management Training budget
10.2	Review service promises and apply them across the City green space provision, with a view to improving grounds maintenance, focussing on the basics of grass cutting, litter, fly tipping and dog fouling.	Cleaner, safer, greener green spaces.	Service promises document available by end 2009.	



The action plan is already underway and starting to show benefits for communities in Southampton. One achievement to date has been a successful stage 1 bid to secure Parks for People lottery funding to improve St James' Park. Subject to completion of the stage 2 application by October 2009, a park improvement and refurbishment project totalling £1.5 million will take place. Around £1.1 million of this will be funded by Parks for People, a joint Heritage Lottery Fund and Big Lottery programme.

Nichola Caveney from the Friends of St James Park said; "Local people who love St James' Park are so excited to be involved in such an important project for the area. We are delighted that this award will give this much loved park the investment it needs. We are confident that the improvements will breathe new life into the heart of the community and we can't wait to get started!"



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INVESTOR IN PEOPLE