

# Open space strategies

## Best practice guidance



**MAYOR OF LONDON**



CABE is the government's advisor on architecture, urban design and public space. As a public body, we encourage policymakers to create places that work for people. We help local planners apply national design policy and advise developers and architects, persuading them to put people's needs first. We show public sector clients how to commission projects that meet the needs of their users. And we seek to inspire the public to demand more from their buildings and spaces. Advising, influencing and inspiring, we work to create well-designed, welcoming places.

CABE Space is a specialist unit within CABE that aims to bring excellence to the design, management and maintenance of parks and public space in our towns and cities.

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# Foreword

One of the principal aims of any public authority is to improve quality of life. Hard to measure, yet universally understood, it is about placing greater importance on improving the experience of living in our cities, towns and villages.

Wherever we live, our neighbourhood should be somewhere we want to be and are happy to belong to. Our open spaces are key to this, meeting a range of social, environmental and health benefits as well as making areas more attractive. That is why creating, protecting and enhancing these spaces is such a vital part of making neighbourhoods more attractive and more joyful places in which to live.

We also have to recognise that, important as the immediate benefits are to communities, the decisions we make about the places where we work and live today will long outlast us. Good, proactive management of our open spaces today will leave a real legacy for those who come after us.

Our approach should be to integrate open spaces into the heart of our physical environment, through both partnership working and effective community involvement. Our design and planning policies should seek to create an urban realm that places great importance on leisure and creativity. Creating and maintaining high-quality open spaces is central to this idea.

To achieve this requires joined-up thinking and working across occupations and organisations. We are therefore delighted that CABE Space and the Greater London Authority have pooled their resources and knowledge to produce this guide. We are confident that it will help all those creating neighbourhoods to make them vibrant, healthy and sustainable places as well as lively and beautiful places in which to live.



**Boris Johnson**  
Mayor of London



**Baroness Andrews**  
Parliamentary Under Secretary of State  
Communities and Local Government

# Introduction

Great parks, squares and streets make for a better quality of life. A network of well-designed and cared-for open spaces adds to the character of places where people want to live, work and visit. Open spaces also provide the vital green infrastructure that enables us to deal with floods or mitigate and adapt to climate change while providing wildlife habitats, sporting facilities or beautiful parks.

Open space is now firmly part of statutory and community planning processes. Comprehensive planning policies for open space are fundamental to social inclusion, community cohesion, health and well-being. A shared, strategic approach to open space maximises its potential to contribute to a more inclusive and sustainable future at local, regional and national level.

This document offers clear, practical guidance to local authorities and their stakeholders on how to prepare an open space strategy. For local authorities that have already completed an open space strategy, it also gives guidance on delivering, monitoring and reviewing a strategy (see figure 1). There are also examples of strategies in action from around England, reflecting different themes.

Drawing on five years of CABE Space enabling support for local authorities across England, advising public sector clients commissioning open space strategies and other public realm projects, CABE Space and the Mayor of London have updated earlier CABE Space guidance (*Green space strategies: a good practice guide*, 2004) and combined it with an update of the guidance for London (*Mayor's guide to preparing open space strategies: best practice guidance of the London Plan*, 2004). In September 2008, we consulted on a draft of this new guidance. A full list of those who responded is included in Appendix F. Many suggestions from consultees have been incorporated into this, the final document.



Birmingham Victoria Square © English Heritage

**Figure 1: The strategy cycle**



The document provides a single guide for England as well as forming the best practice guidance of the London Plan (consolidated with alterations since 2004) published in 2008, where creation of an open space strategy is required by policy 3D.12. Some specific elements apply only to London. Equally, some will not apply in London such as references to parish councils. Whatever point you are at with your strategy, we hope this guidance helps you put high quality open space at the heart of your authority's aspirations and achievements.



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### Why produce an open space strategy?

The benefit of preparing a strategy is the protection and creation of a network of high-quality open spaces that can:

- reinforce local identity and civic pride
- enhance the physical character of an area, shaping existing and future development
- improve physical and social inclusion, including accessibility
- provide connected routes between places for wildlife, recreation, walking and cycling, and safer routes to schools
- protect and enhance biodiversity and ecological habitats
- provide green infrastructure and ecosystem services
- provide for children and young people's play and recreation
- raise property values and aid urban regeneration
- boost the economic potential of tourism, leisure and cultural activities
- provide cultural, social, recreational, sporting and community facilities
- protect and promote understanding of the historical, cultural and archaeological value of places
- contribute to the creation of healthy places, including quiet areas
- provide popular outdoor educational facilities
- promote the opportunities for local food production
- help mitigate and adapt to climate change
- improve opportunities to enjoy contact with the natural world.

The strategy's action plan should chime with the vision set out in the overarching sustainable community strategy (SCS), promoting community involvement, greater use of public open space, and more effective cross-departmental and partnership working.

It is also an essential management tool and the basis for producing promotional materials. Without a clear strategy, it is difficult to prioritise, spend and plan resources and, crucially, to show how much open space is valued and make the case to funders for increased resources.

### Scope of strategy

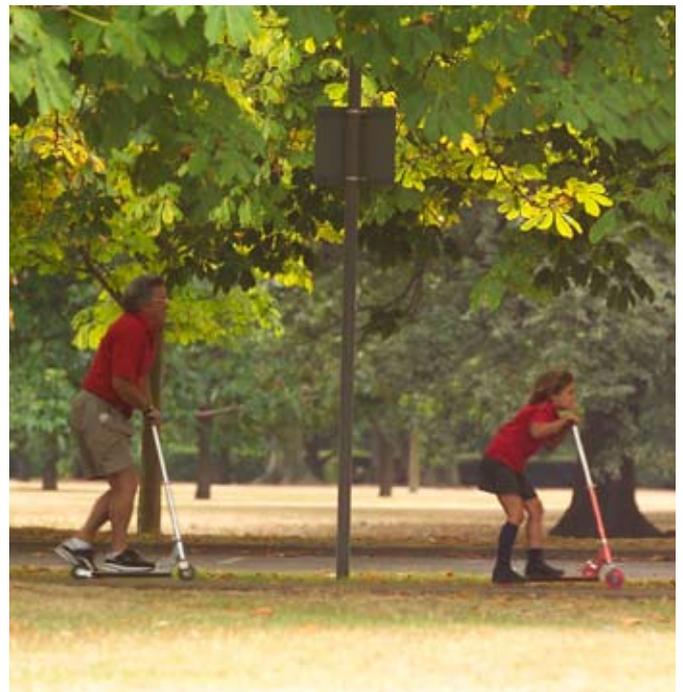
Open space is multi-functional so your strategy should reflect a widely shared vision. It is not just for the parks and planning departments. Many stakeholders should be consulted and involved.

The basic aim is to understand supply and demand for open spaces, to identify deficiencies, to secure new provision, and to improve quality through better management. The spatial elements of the open space strategy will also feed into the local development framework (LDF) and can be a material consideration in the determination of planning applications.

Figure 2 (overleaf) shows how an open space strategy relates to key corporate documents such as the sustainable community strategy and issues like regeneration, health, biodiversity and crime and disorder. The action plan should set out when any associated strategies, covering allotments or trees, for example, will be developed.

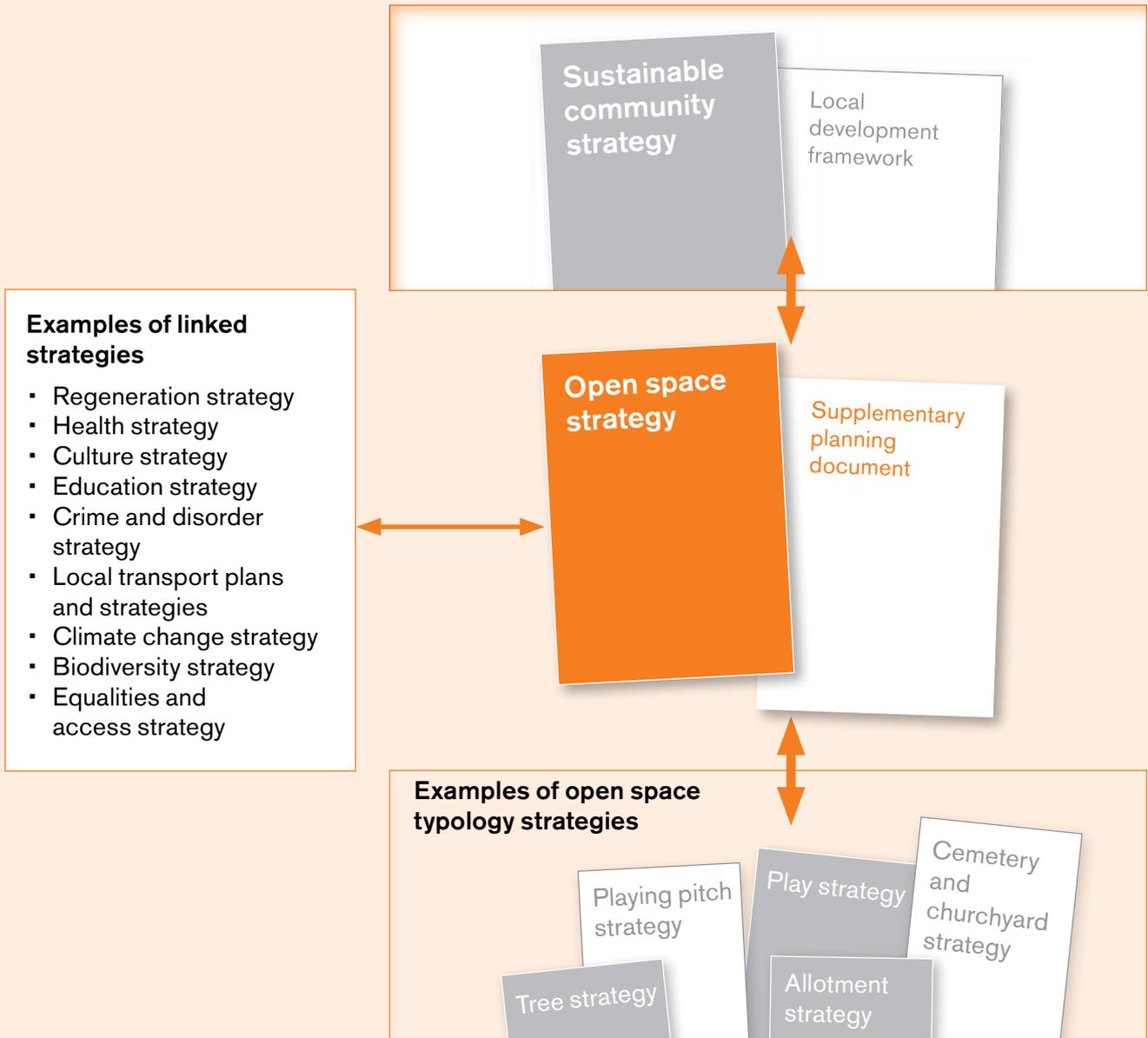
The Mayor of London, for example, has published best practice guidance on preparing a play strategy and is working with partners to develop guidance for tree strategies.

We recommend that all types of open spaces (except private gardens) are considered, irrespective of ownership and public access.



**Figure 2: Relationship of an open space strategy to other strategies**

An open space strategy should make reference to a range of other corporate strategies within a local authority. In turn, a range of more focused strategies may be produced to expand further on certain types of open space or uses within open spaces



### Who prepares it?

It is critical that an open space strategy is the result of a collaboration of many partners, with the planning and open space management staff of a local authority taking the lead. You need input from a number of council departments, including leisure, housing, highways, education and culture. Collaboration can build better relationships between council departments and raise the profile of open space within a local authority.

Other tiers of government such as county councils, town councils and parish councils should be involved as well as organisations like charitable trusts that own or manage open spaces.

Specialist input from disciplines like ecology and environmental protection is required. Expertise and data is also available from organisations such as the Environment Agency, Sport England, Play England and Natural England, and from biological record centres and regional and local groups.

The community's needs and aspirations must be at the heart of any open space strategy and it is important to engage with them at each stage to identify and deliver local priorities.

The local strategic partnership (LSP) brings local authorities together with key partners including the police, health services, local businesses and the community and voluntary sectors. Liaise closely with your LSP and if possible identify a champion for the strategy within the LSP.

### Policy context

The overall national policy context is now set out in the Sustainable Communities Act 2007 which promotes the sustainability of local communities through a broad agenda for partnership working at the local level, including the development of sustainable community strategies (SCSs) and the negotiation of local area agreements (LAA).

In addition, the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 introduced a new spatial planning system, comprising regional spatial strategies (RSS) and local development frameworks (LDFs). Since 2004, there has been a process of replacing planning policy guidance notes (PPGs) with planning policy statements (PPSs). These highlight the importance of open space in the spatial planning process. The main PPSs and PPGs for open space are listed in Appendix B.

The most relevant national planning policies are contained in PPG17: *Planning for open space, sport and recreation* (2002). The government is due to commence a review of PPG17 in 2009 as part of its process of streamlining national planning policy.

Section 40 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 places a statutory duty on all public authorities to conserve biodiversity. An open space strategy that incorporates biodiversity as a key theme will enable the local authority to demonstrate that it is complying with the act

New national initiatives of relevance include:

- **Homes for the future, more affordable, more sustainable** (Communities and Local Government 2007) sets out the government's plan for three million new homes by 2020 which includes the ongoing programme of housing growth and housing renewal. The importance of good-quality parks and open spaces is emphasised
- **Healthy weight, healthy lives – a cross-government strategy for England** (Department of Health 2008) highlights the importance of open space in encouraging people to adopt healthier and more active lifestyles
- **National play strategy for England** (Department for Children, Schools and Families 2008) puts forward a vision for play which includes making parks and open spaces attractive and welcoming to children and young people
- **Building schools for the future (BSF) and the Primary capital programme** recognise how important school grounds are in meeting the educational, recreational and social needs of young people and the wider community
- **The children's plan: building brighter futures** (Department for Children, Schools and Families 2007) aims to make England a better place for children and young people and includes recommendations to create more child-friendly public spaces
- **Manual for streets** (Department for Transport, 2007) provides guidance on the design of residential streets, promoting increased consideration of the 'place' function of streets for pedestrians and cyclists

- **Lifetime homes – lifetime neighbourhoods** (Communities and Local Government 2008) is a national strategy on housing, services, facilities and environments for an ageing society
- **Communities in control, real people, real power** (Communities and Local Government July 2008) promotes stronger community participation and involvement, in particular giving a stronger voice to young and older people
- **Community infrastructure levy (CIL)** is a charge that local authorities will be empowered, but not required, to levy on most types of new development. The definition of infrastructure for CIL purposes could include flood defences, play areas, parks and other green spaces. Draft regulations for CIL are due to be published for consultation in 2009.

Local authorities need to give consideration to relevant European directives and conventions, specifically:

- The UK is a signatory of the European Landscape Convention. This encourages public authorities to adopt policies and measures for protecting, managing and planning all landscapes throughout Europe. The framework for implementation in England, produced by Natural England with Defra and English Heritage, can be seen at [www.landscapecharacter.org.uk](http://www.landscapecharacter.org.uk)
- There is growing evidence that noise and soundscape quality influence use and enjoyment of open spaces. The Environmental Noise Directive 2002/49/EC requires the identification and protection of 'quiet' areas. The Environmental Noise Regulations 2006 (as amended) require protection of quiet areas in agglomerations, and open space strategies will play a key role.

Regional initiatives are also relevant. Many regional spatial strategies (RSS), including the London Plan, contain policies on open space networks and green infrastructure and there is an increasing number of sub-regional green infrastructure strategies across the country. Green infrastructure is a multifunctional network of green spaces and other natural elements such as waterways, lakes and coastline that provide a range of social, environmental and economic benefits. A green infrastructure strategy sets out an integrated approach to the delivery, protection and enhancement of this network. In London, the Mayor produces statutory strategies on other relevant issues, including biodiversity and ambient noise.



© Natural England / Doorstep Greens

Housing growth and housing market renewal (HMR) policies have an impact on open space. In some designated housing growth areas, it is a requirement of the government funding that a green infrastructure strategy is produced and these should be co-ordinated with local open space strategies. Figure 3 illustrates the hierarchy of strategic open space planning which provides the strategic context to an open space strategy

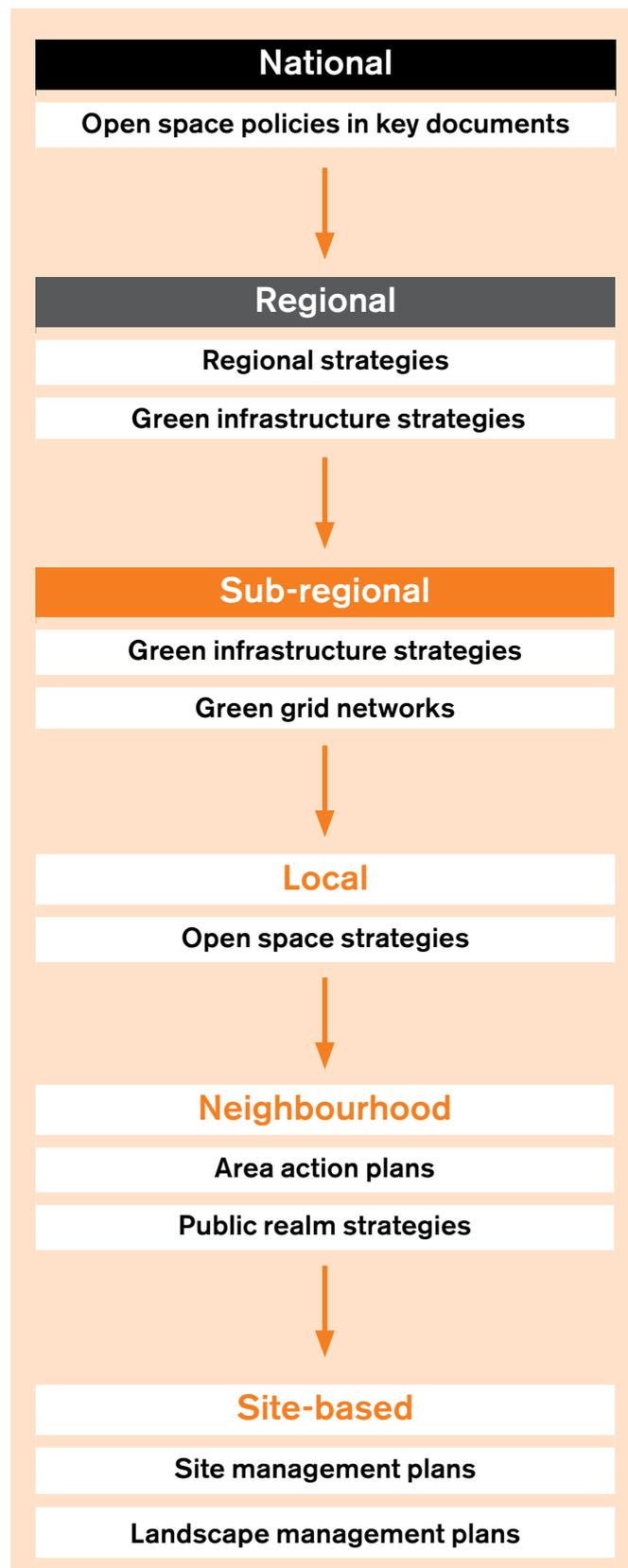
The CABE Space publication *Start with the park* (2005) provides guidance for successful placemaking and the creation and care of green spaces in areas of housing growth and renewal.

The London Plan sets out the spatial planning framework for London. Its policies aim to ensure that London authorities:

- realise the value of open space and green infrastructure
- protect London's green belt, metropolitan open land and local open spaces, and support regional and metropolitan park opportunities
- support the creation of networks of strategic open space such as green chains and green corridors
- create new open space in areas of deficiency and promote improvement to existing provision
- require boroughs to prepare open space strategies to protect, create and enhance all types of open space in their area
- ensure that children have safe access to good-quality, well-designed, secure and stimulating play and informal recreation provision
- protect and improve biodiversity, tackling deficiencies in access to nature
- protect and promote trees, woodland, and geodiversity
- improve access to the countryside and the quality of the landscape in the urban fringe.

**Figure 3: The hierarchy of strategic open space planning**

An open space strategy should relate to other strategies at different scales



# Linking open space to green infrastructure planning

## Thurrock open spaces strategy 2006-2011

[tinyurl.com/cy88bu](http://tinyurl.com/cy88bu)

### **A strategy with strong council member support that continues to contribute to a wider sub-regional approach to open space planning.**

Thurrock in Essex is at the heart of Thames Gateway, a key area for growth and regeneration in the East of England. Thurrock council's core strategy consultation documents set out an ambitious vision for sustained economic growth, increase in local employment, minimal homelessness and high-quality urban and rural character, including a strengthening of its green grid network of multi-functional greenspace.

Thurrock's OSS, together with its green infrastructure framework plan and its biodiversity study, provided critical research for the Thurrock green grid strategy (TGGs). These four documents have been badged as a suite of related reports. They are an excellent example of providing a strong evidence base for a strategy that is being embedded in council policy as an SPD.

The TGGs is short and easily comprehensible. It is very clear about the key drivers for a green grid in Thurrock: the proposed increases in urban development and population, climate change and increased flood risk, and the deficiencies in the open space identified by the OSS. The TGGs maps green grid and biodiversity opportunities and provides a theoretical example of how the green grid could be applied locally. The SPD will provide actual delivery actions. It has also informed the Thurrock design guidance, a study setting out the principles for developer contributions to the green grid.

Member support for the OSS and the green grid has been very important. The green grid is seen as strategic infrastructure for Thurrock's future, not just 'cleaning and greening'. The TGGs was considered by the LDF working group and adopted by cabinet. Funding for the research and studies has been in part from LDF planning delivery grant, with some external funds from Natural England.

The TGGs has been developed in the context of the wider South Essex green grid (SEGG) using its own technical research to tackle overarching themes and principles laid out in this and other strategic plans including the Greening the Gateway plan, Thames Gateway interim plan and Essex county plans.

TGGs provides a finer grain framework than SEGG and gives expression to the aspirations of a wide range of partners and Thurrock's own communities via its community strategy. Aimed firstly at planners and developers, it also makes a difference to community delivery because it provides the bigger picture.

Funding has been sought from CLG for the Thames Gateway Parklands project, which aims to unlock the potential of South Essex's green space in relation to the ambitious development proposals.

Strong and informed officer support driving both the research and strategy direction in step with the emergence of the SEGG in 2005 has set a pace and style of work that made high-quality outputs possible. The strategies are not treated as static: they are used to inform future work at council, sub-regional or regional level and to maintain consistency in the face of the complexity of overlapping initiatives.

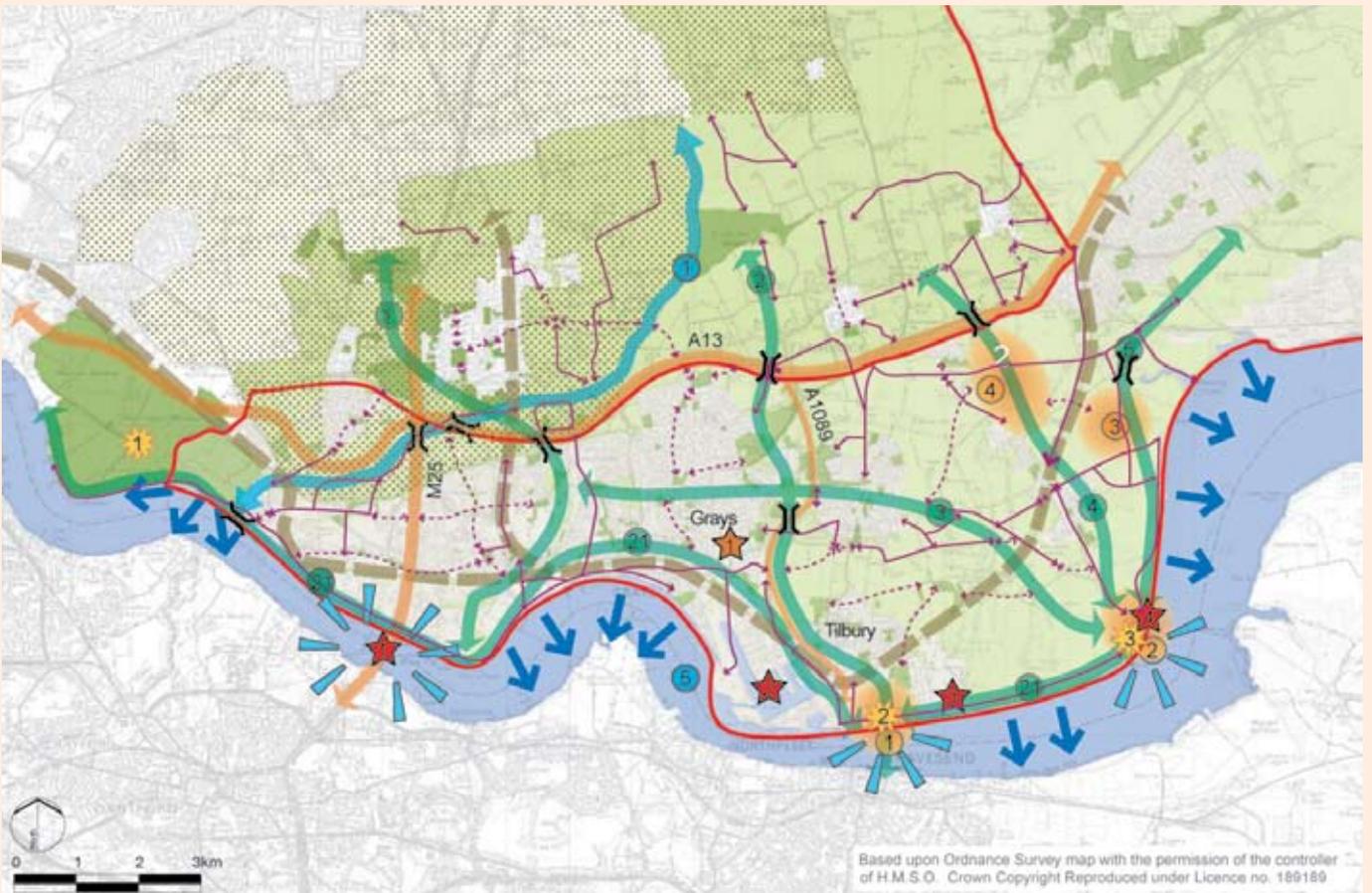
© Polly Braden



Birdwatchers at Rainham Marshes, the RSPB's wildlife reserve

Thurrock Strategic Area Framework

© Thames Gateway South Essex Greengrid



# 1

# Prepare

**‘Open space strategies work best when they are championed by elected members. This helps secure resources, maintain momentum and ensure adoption’**



**Figure 4: Stages in preparing an open space strategy**

We recommend a six-stage process. Overall this work may take up to two years, not including individual local authority approval timescales. Some stages and activities can run in parallel. Where an existing strategy is being updated, the timeframe can be shorter.

Stage 1: Prepare the scoping study and brief	Outputs	Timescale
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ secure elected member support</li> <li>■ define the scope and purpose of the strategy</li> <li>■ develop the management structure for strategy preparation</li> <li>■ determine resources for strategy preparation</li> <li>■ review work undertaken to date and the relationship to other plans</li> <li>■ secure availability and use of GIS</li> <li>■ agree engagement and communication strategy</li> <li>■ determine draft vision, initial aims/objectives and timetable.</li> </ul>	scoping report, to include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ preliminary vision, aims and objectives</li> <li>■ work programme consultation strategy</li> </ul>	2-3 months
Stage 2: Review the context	Outputs	Timescale
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ review national, regional and local context</li> <li>■ identify key characteristics of the area</li> <li>■ review current management and funding of open spaces.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ summary of local open space context</li> </ul>	1-2 months
Stage 3: Understand the supply	Outputs	Timescale
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ identify all open spaces</li> <li>■ categorise open spaces by function and size</li> <li>■ do an on-site audit of open space.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ GIS database of open space data and key information</li> </ul>	3-4 months
Stage 4: Understand demand and need	Outputs	Timescale
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Take an inclusive approach to understanding demand and need</li> <li>■ consider existing demographic and similar information</li> <li>■ review existing consultation information and find out how consultations are done</li> <li>■ consult and survey to assess demand and need.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ summary of demand and need</li> </ul>	2-3 months
Stage 5: Analyse and identify objectives	Outputs	Timescale
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ analysis of supply and demand</li> <li>■ set standards for quantity, quality and accessibility</li> <li>■ identify deficiency areas and opportunities for redressing them</li> <li>■ update themes, aims, objectives and vision in light of analysis</li> <li>■ identify priorities for open space improvements.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ draft planning and management policies for open space</li> <li>■ local standards for quantity, quality and accessibility</li> </ul>	2-3 months
Stage 6: Prepare the strategy and action plan	Outputs	Timescale
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ prepare draft strategy</li> <li>■ prepare action plan</li> <li>■ consult on both</li> <li>■ complete and adopt strategy.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ draft strategy and action plan</li> <li>■ public consultation final strategy</li> </ul>	4-6 months

# Stage 1

## Prepare the scoping study and brief

Thorough preparation and good project management skills are essential. They ensure clarity of purpose and scope, and the management structures and resources you need.

You need to:

- secure elected member support
- define the scope and purpose of the strategy
- develop the management structure for strategy preparation
- determine the resources for strategy preparation
- review work undertaken to date and its relationship to other plans
- secure the availability and use of a geographic information system (GIS)
- agree the engagement and communication strategy
- determine the draft vision, initial aims, objectives and timetable.

It will take two to three months to produce a scoping report with a work programme highlighting what needs to be done, by whom and by when. This may also form the basis of a brief for any consultants.

### Secure elected member support

Open space strategies work best when they are championed by elected members. Strong member support helps secure resources, maintain momentum and ensure the strategy's adoption. One or more councillors, for example the cabinet member with responsibility for parks or planning (or both), should be closely involved and they should work with officers to gain the support of other portfolio holders who could assist with the development and delivery of the strategy. Open space strategies require political decisions, and early support from elected members will avoid later delays and indecision.

### Define the scope and purpose of the strategy

It is crucial to understand:

- the type and size of open space the strategy will cover
- what the strategy aims to achieve
- the timescale the strategy will cover
- what the status of the strategy will be
- how the strategy will link with other strategies.

The companion guide to PPG17 recommends (and the London Plan requires) that all open spaces (except for private gardens), irrespective of ownership and public access, should be included in an assessment, as a basis for setting comprehensive local standards for open space. The strategy should act as a vision for all open spaces. Particular types of open space requiring associated strategies need to be considered at this stage, too.



## 'At the outset you need to consider the availability of skills and resources and identify who should be involved in the strategy'

### Develop the management structure for strategy preparation

The key participants are parks and planning officers with support at director level. Contributions are needed from other departments dealing with:

- property
- housing
- highways and transport
- economic development
- regeneration
- environmental protection, ecology and wildlife
- access and inclusion
- education
- play
- sustainability
- young and older people.

Drawing on these departments, form a steering group with a chair and a lead project officer. The chair is likely to be a senior staff member such as a head of service. The lead project officer should have overall responsibility for the day-to-day progress of the strategy, ideally on a full-time basis. The steering group should report regularly to members on progress. Try to involve external organisations that own, manage or regulate open spaces, such as the Environment Agency, the Forestry Commission, wildlife trusts, registered social landlords, or parish councils.

### Determine the resources for strategy preparation

Strategy development involves sustained effort and occasional intensive work. At the outset you need to consider the availability of skills and resources and identify who should be involved in producing the strategy. This is a great opportunity to develop in-house skills and knowledge like strategic thinking and writing skills, and build key relationships with other departments.

If in-house resources are limited you will need to consider using consultants. Local knowledge is important and local authorities should lead on strategy preparation, employing consultants for specific tasks. Consultants will need a detailed brief and sufficient time to complete the work. The consultants should provide regular progress reports to the lead local authority officer.

### Review the work undertaken to date and its relationship to other plans and strategies

The process needs to be integrated with other data collection, public engagement, and plan and strategy making. Find out what information already exists about open spaces. Possible data sources include:

- audits/surveys/monitoring of previously adopted strategies, for example parks or play strategies, access audits, wildlife habitat surveys
- regular surveys of attitudes towards open spaces
- usage surveys of particular parks or playing fields
- minutes of community forums
- LDF evidence base and consultations
- general surveys of public satisfaction with local authority services
- local environmental quality surveys in line with national indicator 195
- noise mapping and surveys, aircraft flight paths
- cross-boundary surveys and strategies with adjacent local authorities and other organisations.

The review should gather quantitative data related to use of open spaces and qualitative data on the factors that may encourage use and barriers to use.

Information on the changing nature of the resident population and development plans, particularly in areas of housing growth, is important. Examine the relationship between the open space strategy and other plans and strategies. Further detail on the relationship between open space strategies and other local authority strategy documents is shown in figure 2. An open space strategy will provide the evidence base for open space policies within the LDF, and any decision to adopt an open space strategy as a supplementary planning document (SPD) needs to be made early on.

Also consider whether any relevant studies or strategies are under way or are proposed. Consult adjacent authorities to establish what work they may have done in preparing an open space strategy and any cross-boundary issues. This most commonly involves the use of larger open spaces in adjacent local authority areas, although in some areas joint open space strategies are being carried out where significant housing growth spanning two authorities is planned.

The data collected from this stage should be summarised, verified by the steering group and made available to all working on the strategy.

### Secure availability and use of GIS

GIS is the recommended method of recording and analysing data about open spaces. It should be designed to record basic factual detail and more qualitative information from the site audits, and can allow information to be updated as a result of planning or management interventions. Using GIS allows the open space network to be considered as a whole and assists with analysing green infrastructure functions and connectivity. Other data or mapping may be available such as aerial photography. The aim is to create as comprehensive a picture as possible of the current provision of open space.

There are two key aspects to creating a robust GIS dataset – digitising site boundaries and populating the associated attribute table for each site. The site boundaries should be snapped to Ordnance Survey Mastermap data or other data providers. The data in the associated attribute table should include as a minimum:

- site name and ID
- area (size in hectares)
- type of open space
- public open space category
- details of owner/manager
- facilities (comprehensive asset inventory as appropriate)
- access points
- planning policy designations.

Subsequent audit data will provide a qualitative assessment, including individual and overall scores, which can be used as a monitoring tool.

Existing GIS should be examined and decisions taken as to how open space data can best be integrated. You will need to consider who has the skills to use GIS and how they can be brought into the strategy team. Other organisations may have relevant GIS datasets, for example on ecology, flood risk or heritage assets.

Accompanying documentation that describes how and when the data was collected and how the GIS layer was created, otherwise known as metadata, is also essential to ensure the dataset's continued use and value.

Standards have been defined for both the creation of GIS data and metadata, and are worth sourcing. Data creation standards cover categories such as accuracy, completeness and processes for updating data, while the metadata standards cover factors such as descriptions of your data, data type and its geographic coverage. The Association for Geographic Information can help with the use of GIS. See [www.agi.org.uk](http://www.agi.org.uk)

GiGL (Greenspace Information for Greater London) is London's open space and biodiversity records centre. It is the data custodian for many organisations in the capital, including the boroughs and the Greater London Authority. GiGL collates, manages and makes available many local and regional datasets, including data on the public open space hierarchy and associated areas of deficiency. See [www.gigl.org.uk](http://www.gigl.org.uk). Information on Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation in London is also available from Wildweb. [www.london.gov.uk/wildweb](http://www.london.gov.uk/wildweb)

## Agree the engagement and communication strategy

Engagement and communication with key stakeholders and the wider community all through the strategy process is vital.

Key stakeholders interested in open space are likely to include sports clubs, friends' groups, local wildlife groups, community groups and parish councils. Engagement should also attempt to reach people left out of standard consultation approaches or who may not use open spaces at all or may use them only in limited ways.

Groups like disabled people are more likely to have formal representation through local access forums. Some authorities have been successful in bringing less organised groups into the process, holding focus groups of older people or teenagers, or finding ways to engage homeless people and street drinkers.

There are significant benefits to having a planned, ongoing, inclusive approach to community engagement. Approaches, methods and marketing messages must be realistic and timed appropriately. Your engagement plan and timetable will need to take into account other council processes and policies such as the statement of community involvement produced to accompany an LDF.

Key stages where community engagement may be necessary include:

- the announcement of the intention to produce a strategy
- a visioning workshop
- verification of the identification, extent and names of sites
- identification of issues to be appraised in the quality audit
- the assessment of demand and need
- identification of key issues and objectives
- review of the draft strategy.

See also stage 4 for a review of consultation techniques.

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## Determine the draft vision, initial aims, objectives and timetable

What are the issues you face and the specific aims and objectives for your open spaces? What is your vision for them? Thinking about this can be a useful way of engaging stakeholders early on.

Many local authorities initiate their open space strategy with a visioning workshop, involving both councillors and stakeholders. This can help build public and political support, raising awareness, identifying local demand and helping to determine priorities. Above all, embarking on a strategy should reflect a corporate commitment to enhance the quality of life through better open spaces, and a stakeholder workshop can make this public.

This stage of work should conclude with a publicised statement, endorsed by the council, explaining the intention to produce an open space strategy, the overall vision, its scope, the timetable and the opportunities for public engagement.

# The big picture – how open space helps deliver corporate objectives

## Walsall green space strategy 2007-2012

[tinyurl.com/crqyqa](http://tinyurl.com/crqyqa)

### **Developing a green space strategy allowed the council to fully recognise the value of green space to local life and its own corporate ambitions.**

Walsall has significant areas of deprivation and one in five people suffers from long-term illness. The council had launched a drive to improve the quality of life and deliver community aspirations. Its five corporate objectives are:

- a better-quality environment
- healthy, safe and secure
- raising the standard
- listening to and engaging with people
- achieving excellence.

The role of open spaces in meeting these objectives began to be understood more when evidence was needed for its SPD on open space, sport and recreation, adopted in 2006. The council commissioned external consultants to audit and assess the borough's open spaces. This showed that Walsall was well served for green space but the distribution and quality was very variable and more investment was needed to bring specific sites up to an acceptable standard.

Developing a green space strategy was the next step. The strategy details the framework by which green space will have a clear part to play in delivering the corporate objectives. The five-year action plan focuses on:

- identifying investment priorities for capital and revenue
- enabling community and voluntary group participation in green space provision and management
- establishing a cross-directorate mechanism linking policy and strategy at all levels to the work on green spaces
- setting an annual service plan and an individual performance management process.

Delivery is targeted according to local need in each of Walsall's nine local neighbourhood partnership areas (LNPs). Twenty five premier green spaces have been identified, with at least two from each of the LNP areas. The aim is to improve their quality scores within five years through an investment programme and the production of individual site management, maintenance and development plans. Three of these plans have been produced since 2007 and are now guiding the production of the next set of plans.

The strategy has already led to some specific improvements and successes:

- Green Flag Awards have been won by Palfrey Park (2007 and 2008) and Willenhall Memorial Park (2008).
- In partnership with friends' and user groups, the council has secured external funding for key improvements to its most significant parks and green spaces and is bidding for £650,000 over three years from the authority's capital programme.
- Green space champions are being appointed, one of whom will sit on the LSP board; a target of 60 per cent customer satisfaction was set for 2008/09; and borough-wide play and allotment strategies have followed the main green space strategy.
- The strategy has become a key document in guiding the formulation of area action plans (AAPs). Links have been established with the council's regeneration directorate and green space service officers attend AAP and project regeneration group meetings to ensure that green spaces and the green space strategy are incorporated into this level of planning.

© Walsall Council



Council green space staff celebrate Palfrey Park receiving a Green Flag in 2007/08

© Walsall Council



## Stage 2

# Review the context

Now you need to review national, regional and local legislation, policy and guidance, and produce a summary of how this relates to the open space network in your area.

You need to:

- review the national, regional and local context
- identify the key characteristics of the area
- review the current management and funding of open spaces.

This stage should take one to two months.

### Review the national, regional and local context

The main national planning policy and guidance for this stage is listed in Appendix B. See also the *Policy context* section above.

The review should also take into account existing council strategies, in particular the sustainable community strategy (SCS). See figure 5.

### Figure 5: other relevant strategies

- allotment and food-growing strategy
- biodiversity action plan
- carbon reduction strategy
- climate change adaptation and mitigation strategy
- crime and disorder strategy
- cultural strategy
- equalities schemes and equality impact assessments
- existing open space, green space or parks strategy
- health inequalities strategy
- housing strategy
- landscape character assessment plans
- noise strategies and action plans
- play strategy
- public realm strategy
- rights of way improvement plans
- sport strategy
- transport strategy
- tree and woodland strategies.



© Whisky bottle / Alamy

Open spaces can play an important role in planning resilience to extreme weather events

### Identify the key characteristics of the area

The specific geological, historic and cultural landscapes of open spaces define the character and qualities of an area. Sometimes there is a significant legacy of distinctive Victorian parks that create positive perceptions of an area. Landscape character assessments and/or townscape assessments are useful tools here.

Map relevant national, regional and local open space designations and protected areas of land, for example sites of special scientific interest (SSSIs), sites of local or regional importance for nature conservation, statutory local nature reserves, areas of outstanding natural beauty (AONBs), green belt land, registered historic landscapes and major development opportunity sites.

Compile a profile of the borough's population (residents, workforce and visitors) from the most recent census. This will enable you to take account of any growth and intensification of use and will identify any priority areas.

Incorporate all this data into your dataset.

### Review the current management and funding of open spaces

Resources for open spaces are often limited. Your open space strategy must be informed by a thorough understanding of:

- management arrangements and costs
- revenue budgets
- capital budgets
- monies received from section 106 agreements and CIL
- monies received from external sources such as the Heritage Lottery Fund.

Do not forget open spaces outside the local authority's ownership that are likely to be subject to different management and funding regimes.

There is a chronic skills shortage in the parks and green space sector. Workers are also under pressure to develop new skills that help meet users' needs more effectively and efficiently. So this is the time to identify any skills shortages that the strategy needs to address.

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# Stage 3

## Understand the supply

The next stage is to produce a full analysis of existing open space, collated in a database of sites with associated information. This is a key piece of the evidence base for open space planning policies.

You need to:

- identify all open spaces
- categorise open spaces by function and size
- do an on-site audit of open spaces
- produce datasets and key information.

This stage should take three to four months.

### Identify all open spaces

Identify all open spaces within the local authority area regardless of ownership and the extent of public access, except private gardens. In some areas it may be appropriate to set minimum size thresholds for different typologies of open space. However, particularly in dense urban areas, small sites may be valuable locally and should be included in the assessment.

### Figure 6: PPG 17 typology

**Parks and gardens** – including urban parks, country parks and formal gardens.

**Natural and semi-natural urban green spaces**

- including woodlands, urban forestry, scrub, grasslands (for example, downlands, commons and meadows), wetlands, open and running water, wastelands, and derelict open land and rock areas (for example, cliffs, quarries and pits).

**Green corridors** – including river and canal banks, cycleways and rights of way.

**Outdoor sports facilities** (with natural or artificial surfaces and either publicly or privately owned)

– including tennis courts, bowling greens, sports pitches, golf courses, athletics tracks and school and other institutional playing fields.

**Amenity green space** – (most commonly but not exclusively in housing areas) including informal recreation spaces, green spaces in and around housing, domestic gardens and village greens.

**Provision for children and teenagers** –

including play areas, skateboard parks and outdoor basketball hoops, and other more informal areas (for example, hanging out areas, teenage shelters).

**Allotments, community gardens and city (urban) farms**

**Cemeteries and churchyards**

**Accessible countryside in urban fringe areas**

**Civic spaces** – including civic and market squares, and other hard-surfaced areas designed for pedestrians.



Upton, Northampton © Ivor Samuels



You will probably need to refer to local authority records, maps and aerial photographs, in addition to making site visits. Give each space a name and a reference number and transfer all the data to your dataset. The data should be presented in map form and summarised in a series of tables, by ward if possible. On-site staff can help with this process.

### Categorise open spaces by function and size

It is useful to categorise open space by function such as play space or sports facility so that deficiencies can be identified. PPG17 sets out a typology of open spaces, reproduced in figure 6, based on function. Recognising the importance of multi-functional open spaces, PPG17 suggests the typology is used to identify the primary function of spaces and adapted to local variations as needed. This refinement should be done by adding sub-categories to each of the types, which will provide consistency to maintain a coherent strategic context, facilitate cross-boundary working and allow benchmarking between authorities.

It should, however, be recognised that most open spaces serve a variety of functions, particularly in urban areas. For large sites with more than one primary function, it may also be useful to consider sub-dividing the sites into parcels to identify their different functions, which can then be related to standards. In such cases, keep a single site category that sets out the primary function and ensure that the dataset incorporates site and parcel polygons.

The larger an open space, the more varied the potential for recreational opportunities and the further people will travel to visit. It is therefore also useful to categorise open spaces by size.

The London Plan sets out a hierarchy of public open spaces, shown in figure 7, that should be applied in London and may be applicable in other metropolitan areas. This provides a consistent approach across London for identifying broad areas of deficiency in provision.

### Do an on-site audit of open spaces

You need information about the nature and quality of each open space that will provide a comparative assessment across the local authority area. This provides a snapshot of quality in time and can be used as the basis for future monitoring. The audit should also cover issues known to concern users such as vandalism, dog fouling and lack of security, reflecting any previous consultations. It may be an opportunity for public engagement. Some authorities involve community groups and individuals in undertaking the audit work although it is important to ensure consistency so anyone involved should be properly briefed and trained in the survey methodology.

There are no standard or national quality survey criteria for open spaces although the Green Flag Award standard provides a national quality benchmark for green spaces. Its eight criteria are:

- a welcoming place
- healthy, safe and secure
- well-maintained and clean
- sustainability
- conservation and heritage
- community involvement
- marketing
- management.

Adapt the Green Flag criteria to audit other public spaces such as civic spaces. *Raising the standard, the manual of the Green Flag Award* (2004) has more details.

Some local authorities use the ENCAMS local environmental quality criteria covering specific maintenance issues such as litter, dog fouling or graffiti.

Audits should also summarise noise-mapping evidence or, where this is not available, describe major noise sources, and identify sound features of special interest such as flowing water.

**Figure 7: London's public open space hierarchy**

Open space categorisation	Size guideline	Distances from homes
<p><b>Regional parks</b> Large areas, corridors or networks of open space, the majority of which will be publicly accessible and provide a range of facilities and features offering recreational, ecological, landscape, cultural or green infrastructure benefits. Offer a combination of facilities and features that are unique within London, are readily accessible by public transport and are managed to meet best practice quality standards.</p>	400 hectares	3.2 to 8 kilometres
<p><b>Metropolitan parks</b> Large areas of open space that provide a similar range of benefits to regional parks and offer a combination of facilities and features at the sub-regional level, are readily accessible by public transport and are managed to meet best practice quality standards.</p>	60 hectares	3.2 kilometres
<p><b>District parks</b> Large areas of open space that provide a landscape setting with a variety of natural features providing for a wide range of activities, including outdoor sports facilities and playing fields, children's play for different age groups and informal recreation pursuits.</p>	20 hectares	1.2 kilometres
<p><b>Local parks and open spaces</b> Providing for court games, children's play, sitting-out areas and nature conservation areas.</p>	2 hectares	400 metres
<p><b>Small open spaces</b> Gardens, sitting-out areas, children's play spaces or other areas of a specialist nature, including nature conservation areas.</p>	Under 2 hectares	Less than 400 metres
<p><b>Pocket parks</b> Small areas of open space that provide natural surfaces and shaded areas for informal play and passive recreation and that sometimes have seating and play equipment.</p>	Under 0.4ha	Less than 400 metres
<p><b>Linear open spaces</b> Open spaces and towpaths alongside the Thames, canals and other waterways, paths, disused railways, nature conservation areas, and other routes that provide opportunities for informal recreation. Often characterised by features or attractive areas that are not fully accessible to the public but contribute to the enjoyment of the space.</p>	Variable	Wherever feasible

Greenspace Scotland suggests five themes that represent what people think their green spaces should be in their guidance document *Green space quality – a guide to assessment, planning and strategic development* (2008):

- accessible and connected
- attractive and appealing
- biodiverse, supporting ecological networks
- promote activity, health and well-being
- have community benefits.



© Joe Miles / CABE

The audit needs to supplement rather than duplicate existing data and be manageable, given resource availability. It needs to provide sufficient information about open spaces to make strategic decisions. Some local authorities have the resources and time to score all the individual components of an open space; others prefer a more generalised approach.

Inclusive design is a key part of the audit. Inclusive design includes access for disabled people, proximity to public transport, and car parking provision, but goes beyond this to include a measure of how useable and welcoming the space is. See CABE's *Inclusion by Design – equality, diversity and the built environment* (2008).

This is a good opportunity to carry out a detailed access audit on sites to ensure that disabled people have easy and equal access in line with the Disability Discrimination Act 2005.

Your audit should include a qualitative assessment of the features present within the open space, which is generally a score on a one to five or one to ten range, reflecting condition and quality. Scores may, with care, be aggregated to give an overall indication of quality to allow ranking of sites.

As well as assessing the quality of the site, the audit needs to consider its wider values, both existing and potential, based on an understanding of how it is used, its history and cultural associations and its role in the wider physical context. Typical questions to consider in a value audit include:

- what are the site's recreational values?
- what are its cultural and historic values?
- what are its sustainability and ecological values (for managing the effects of climate change, for example)?

The auditors should also make an overall qualitative judgement about the open space and its potential for improvement in quality and function and say how they think its value could be enhanced.

### **Produce the datasets and key information**

The output from this stage should be a dataset of all the open space in the local authority area and a succinct but comprehensive report of the supply and quality of open space. This will begin to identify the key issues for the strategy, including the mapping of deficiency in quality, the resources and skills required, and a preliminary assessment of the potential for improvements.

# Building the evidence for investment in quality

## Bristol parks and green spaces strategy 2008-2013

[www.bristol.gov.uk/parkstrategy](http://www.bristol.gov.uk/parkstrategy)

**With one of the highest ratios of green space per head of population in the country, but one of the lowest spends, Bristol created a parks and green spaces strategy based on highly detailed evidence to support robust decision-making about the prioritisation of land use and investment.**

The strategy sets out an ambitious 20-year plan to ensure that people have access to good-quality parks and green spaces of different types, close to where they live. It contains service management policies and a set of standards for quality, distance and quantity. The evidence base came from a very thorough technical analysis of the supply of green space, and extensive research to understand customer demand.

A key component of the technical analysis was the on-site quality assessment, which considered site condition, provision of facilities and level of maintenance. Sites were assessed using a methodology that scored them on a one to four (poor, fair, good or excellent) basis. Generic criteria, (such as safety, accessibility and how welcoming the site is, applied to all sites and specific criteria such as biodiversity, horticultural excellence and play value) were used for particular sites – all based on the national Green Flag Award criteria. They were also scored for their potential, giving a gap score between their current quality and their potential quality. A detailed manual for assessing quality has been produced to show how the scores were derived and to ensure that future assessments are carried out in the same way for comparison.

The quality assessment found an average quality level across Bristol of two (fair), with the lowest quality often in the most deprived areas. Customer research included a survey of local people, an online discussion forum, and targeted

workshops with specific green space users, including schools in order to understand the needs of children and young people. In addition, because the strategy contained new council policy, an equalities impact assessment was carried out. The research found that people's main concern was about quality and that issues associated with poor maintenance were the main barriers to using green spaces, particularly for many of the equalities groups.

The results of the technical analysis and customer research led the council to set their quality standard at 'good', level three. The policy aims to raise the quality of all green spaces to this minimum standard within the next 20 years, with a particular focus on the most deprived areas. Although the council recognises that quantity, quality and distance need to be considered holistically, Bristol prioritised the quality standard over the distance and quantity standards, because this is what affects people's satisfaction with parks and green spaces most.

One of the main causes of poor quality was found to be poor design. A design guide has been created, providing guidance for park managers, developers and planners.

Improvements required to bring all spaces across the city up to their 'good' standard was costed at £87 million in capital funding. A robust investment model was developed as part of the strategy identifying sources of funding for the different types of space and sets out strategic priorities for investment. The need for increased revenue budgets for maintenance was also identified and Bristol has adopted a formula that allows a proportion of capital secured to be put into a maintenance fund. A five-year capital investment programme was drawn up and will be part of the strategy review in 2013.

A key source of funding in Bristol will be through section 106 contributions from developers. The evidence base provided by the green space strategy and the ambitious quality standard has allowed Bristol to increase its planning obligations for green spaces, ensuring that new development contributes to the creation of a high-quality network of green spaces across the city.

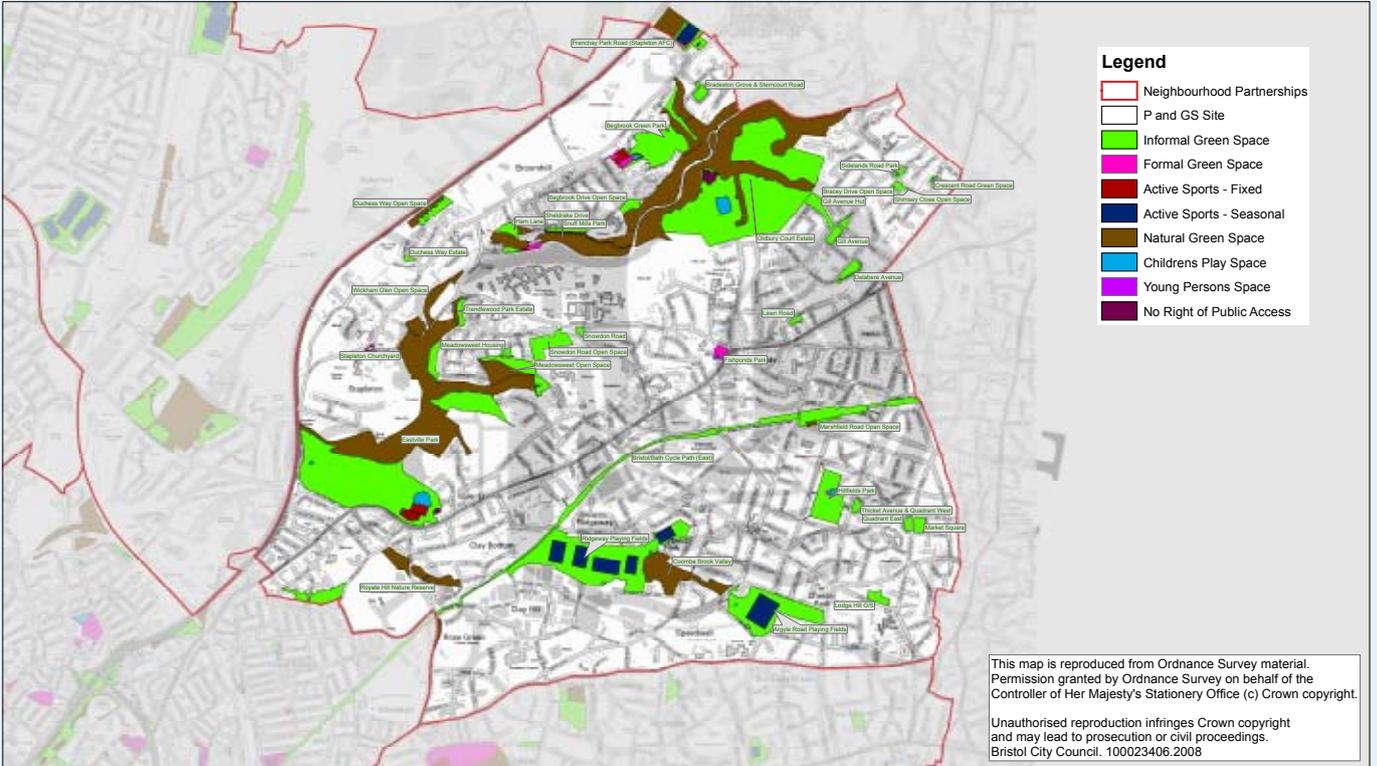
© Bristol City Council



Blaise Castle Estate is a 650-acre Grade II listed parkland and has won a Green Flag Award.

Bristol created a locally relevant typology of open spaces and carried out a detailed mapping process to understand supply.

© Bristol City Council



# Stage 4

## Understand demand and need

As well as knowing what open spaces exist now, you need an overview of local demand for different types of open space. This will provide robust evidence to support open space policies.

You need to:

- take an inclusive approach to understanding demand and need
- consider existing demographic and similar information
- review existing consultation information and find out how consultations are done
- consult and survey to assess demand and need
- produce a summary of results.

This stage should take two to three months. Some of the work can be done in parallel with stage 3.

### Take an inclusive approach to understanding demand and need

People experience public open space differently according to who they are and their social, cultural and economic background. Some may even feel unable to use open space because they do not feel welcome or safe, or the space does not have important facilities such as accessible public toilets. Others may feel that they are only able to use spaces at certain times or when other types of user are not present.

### Consider existing demographic and similar information

Ensure that the demographic profile includes information on the different strands of equality including age, gender, race and ethnicity, religion, sexuality and disability. Other aspects of deprivation and exclusion come into it too, such as homelessness, unemployment, or being travellers.

Demographic profiles, details of planned developments, attitude and use surveys can all give important evidence to map out changing demand and need.

### Review existing consultation information and find out how consultations are done

Now is the time to further review data collated at the outset of the study, consultations undertaken to date and existing consultation mechanisms. It may also be timely to canvass local people about their willingness to get more actively involved in their open spaces through volunteering or friends' groups. You need to think about how this will be followed up by action. It is important to manage expectations when consulting the public and for people to know where to find out the results of the exercise.



© Andy Hendry

## Consult and survey to assess demand and need

Think widely and creatively about how to establish the evidence base of demand and need. There are practical steps to investigating physical barriers and obstacles to access that could involve local access forums or other user groups like older people. Investigate perceptual barriers and opportunities to open spaces among different groups:

- why they use or do not use spaces
- the patterns of use during the day, week and seasonally
- what they use spaces for and what they would like to use them for
- whether they feel welcome in different types of space
- the distance people will travel and their views on the nature of routes to and from spaces
- the facility needs of different groups (teenagers or those with young children, for example).

What methods will you use to get this information? Some to consider are:

- consultative forums and workshops
- general questionnaire surveys
- focus groups
- citizens' panels
- face-to-face interviews with people in open spaces or elsewhere.

Most local authorities have established mechanisms for regularly consulting their communities. Data on the demand and need for open space can be gleaned from these consultations. Reaching people who may have been excluded from existing consultation methods is important. There may be good practice occurring in other departments that you could try.

However, more specific data is likely to require tailored questionnaires. Questions may be added to wider surveys or questionnaires distributed with council newspapers. Web-based questionnaires can enable rapid data collation although care needs to be taken not to exclude people who do not use the internet.

Consultation with focus groups and key stakeholder groups, such as allotment holders or sports associations, are a useful way of exploring issues in greater depth and may be particularly useful in probing the concerns of hard-to-reach groups. The Mayor of London has published supplementary planning guidance on planning for equality and diversity (2007) that provides tools for promoting equality, and on accessibility (2004) that provides advice on achieving high standards of accessibility and inclusion.

The conclusion of this stage will be a statement about the demand and need for different types of open space, taking into account future changes in population and land use, deficiency areas and the needs of particular groups.

**'Reaching people who may have been excluded from existing consultation methods is important'**

# Stage 5

## Analyse and identify objectives

This is a critical stage, when all the information from the assessment of supply and demand, together with an understanding of the national, regional and local context, is analysed and used to shape the strategy.

You need to:

- analyse supply and demand
- set standards for quantity, quality and accessibility
- identify deficiency areas and opportunities for redressing them
- update themes, aims, objectives and vision in light of analysis
- identify priorities for open space improvements.

You will produce a set of draft planning and management policies that will be incorporated into the draft strategy, including local standards for quality, quantity and accessibility.

**This stage should take two to three months.**

### Analysis of supply and demand

An important aim of an open space strategy is to ensure there is a range of accessible, high-quality and inclusive open spaces available to everyone and to identify where new open space is needed and the type of such provision. This is assessed by comparing supply to demand over the strategy period and taking into account benchmark standards. It will be an important input to local development documents and policies and provide the evidence base for obtaining section 106 or CIL monies, so it must be robust and carefully argued.

Open space that has existing or potential value should be protected from inappropriate development. The open space network is particularly important in metropolitan areas, especially London, as it provides the green infrastructure that makes cities liveable. The key issue for open spaces in these areas will be how to improve quality and accessibility, and how to redress deficiencies in provision.

Where an assessment suggests that an open space is no longer needed for its current use, the first step should be to consider whether there are deficiencies in other types of open space in the area, such as allotments and burial grounds. In all cases a robust approach should be applied before releasing a site for development, and it is recommended that all the following criteria are considered:

- all functions that open space can perform have been considered and the loss of the open space would not have an adverse impact on the ability of the wider area to achieve these functions
- the open space is not protected by a planning or statutory designation, nor is it of historic, ecological or landscape significance
- the open space does not form part of, nor has it the potential, to create a link between spaces
- the open space does not contribute to or have the potential to contribute to the character or the amenity of the area
- there is no identified open space deficiency in the area and its loss does not create one
- the community has been consulted and the proposal for an alternative use is widely supported
- there is no net loss of biodiversity or increase in an area of deficiency in access to nature



© Mark Ellis and Ashley Bringham, ICD Photography

## ‘Poor quality or under use are not reasons for considering open spaces for other uses’

- other statutory authorities, such as the Environment Agency, do not identify the open space as providing a significant ecosystem service.

Where there are planned proposals for comprehensive redevelopment, reconfiguring the open space should provide an opportunity to improve the quality and accessibility of the open space. In London, where there is a demonstrable need for that open space, the need should be met within the local catchment area and replacement open space should be of equivalent or better size and quality. Unless an assessment of needs demonstrates otherwise, replacement open space should be for the same type of open space and facilities (see London Plan para 3.307).

Poor quality or under use are not reasons for considering open spaces for other uses, nor should they be taken as indicating an absence of need in an area. Paragraph 15 of PPG17 and Sport England provide further policy tests for considering playing fields and these should also be applied (see *Towards a Level Playing Field*).

Where a decision is made to dispose of open space for development, the income from the sale of the land should ideally be invested in improving the quality of the remainder of the public open space estate.

### Set standards for quantity, quality and accessibility

Open space standards provide an easy-to-use, transparent foundation for the negotiation of planning agreements, providing planning authorities with a robust method for assessing the type, amount, location and quality of provision needed in an area. To this end, standards should be set out in an SPD. Local standards may be challenged so they must be evidence-based and well argued.

Quantity, quality and accessibility standards need to be set for each typology of open space. It is desirable, but not always possible, for each set of standards to apply throughout a local authority area. Areas with a mix of urban and rural settlements may require more than one approach, most commonly to distance

thresholds. Urban residents should ideally be able to walk to most forms of provision, but in rural areas it is likely to be impractical to provide all types in sparsely populated areas. Open space standards should cater for local circumstances such as differing demographic profiles and the extent of existing built development in an area.

The best way to set out standards is:

- quantity standards: area of open space per thousand population
- quality standards: a description of the required design and management standards, including inclusive design standards
- accessibility standards: a distance threshold (for example, 400 metres) that takes into account any physical barriers to movement and the location of entrances to open space.

In recent years, accessibility as a term has become more closely attached to the assessment of access for disabled people to sites and services to meet the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act 2005. In this guidance the term accessibility is used in line with existing national guidance, such as PPG17, to mean the proximity of open space to residential population.

### Quantity standards

From the site audit and mapping exercise, add up the total area by typology. GIS will give site areas provided that there are layers with the appropriate polygons. Calculate the quantity of provision by population, by typology and for different local areas. Wards can be used to define local areas but it may be more appropriate to use areas defined by existing barriers to access such as railways, main roads or waterways. In areas where there are distinct settlement areas, these will form the appropriate areas for analysis.

The quantity of open space should be expressed as the area per thousand population for the local authority as a whole and for individual local areas. This helps make comparisons with other similar local authority areas. The use of local level data can also enable comparisons of provision within a local authority area. In authorities that contain predominantly urban local areas and predominantly rural local areas, it may be appropriate to distinguish these to make the comparisons more meaningful at an authority level.

Compare the quantity of provision with the results of the demand assessment, checking whether people feel there is enough open space in their local area, and the accessibility assessment. Bear in mind that people's perceptions of the amount of open space are strongly affected by the quality and accessibility of their local spaces so do not necessarily provide an accurate measure. A suitable quantity standard can be set, based on this analysis but it will also require a political and professional judgement based on local conditions alongside the evidence.

Quantity standards should be seen as minimum standards not absolutes. If the provision standard is set lower than the quantity of provision in some areas, this does not automatically imply there is a surplus of open space. For example, the open space may provide green infrastructure functions, or form part of a key link.

The strategy should consider whether there is increasing demand for allotments, relate this to supply and set a standard. The Local Government Association has published good practice guidance for the management of allotments and provides a model for an allotments strategy.

In London, the Mayor has published supplementary planning guidance on providing for children and young people's play and informal recreation.

## Quality standards

Quality standards should set out design and management standards for different types of open space. They should be an aspiration for existing spaces where improvements are needed and a requirement for new ones, provided by developers.

The audit data should be considered in spatial terms and in tandem with other data, for example:

- is there any evidence of vandalism in particular neighbourhoods?
- are the poorest quality parks grouped or dispersed across the area?
- are larger parks generally considered to be of a higher quality than smaller parks?
- is there any correlation between areas of multiple deprivation and supply or quality of open spaces?

Quality standards should relate to the criteria used in the quality audit carried out on-site. The audit scores can be used to provide a local benchmark of quality, based on the score of a site deemed to be of good-quality such as a Green Flag Award winner.

The Green Flag Award criteria provide the basis for a quality standard for green spaces and can be adapted to suit other open spaces.

Sport England provides quality standards for sports facilities, including access for disabled people, and Play England has information on what makes a quality play space.



© Stephen McLaren



### Accessibility standards

Your accessibility standards will help identify areas with open space deficiencies. Standards should be set for the provision of public open space and for access to specific typologies of public open space.

One methodology is to identify catchment areas from user surveys, taking the distance that 75 per cent or 80 per cent of users have travelled to reach the sites. Rationalise the results into a limited number of walking, cycling distances, and for larger open spaces, the public transport and/or driving distances. The simplest approach is to adopt five, 10, 15 or 20-minute travel times and convert them into distances using typical walking, cycling, public transport or driving speeds.

We recommend a more detailed assessment where possible to identify significant barriers that could reduce the effective accessibility of a public space. These could be railway lines or major highways or particular local street patterns and their relationship with entrance gates. The most accurate approach would include an assessment of actual walking distances if time and resources permit.

The London Plan sets standards for the accessibility of each category of open space as shown in figure 7. National organisations that promote accessibility standards for specific typologies of public open space include Natural England and the Woodland Trust.

### Natural green space

Natural England is promoting the accessible natural green space standard (ANGSt). Most green spaces, corridors and linear access routes, such as rights of way, can provide access to the natural environment, and adopting ANGSt is a key mechanism for planning this provision. ANGSt recommends that everyone should have access to a quality natural green space of:

- at least two hectares within 300 metres' walking distance of their home
- at least 20 hectares within two kilometres
- at least 100 hectares within five kilometres
- at least 500 hectares within 10 kilometres
- one hectare of local nature reserve per 1,000 population.

Improving access to nature is promoted in the London Plan. The Mayor has mapped the deficiency areas, which are defined as being more than one kilometre actual walking distance from an accessible site of metropolitan or borough importance for nature conservation. A London Plan implementation report on tackling the deficiencies provides guidance on ways to improve access to nature and lists priority opportunities to address areas of deficiency. The London boroughs should incorporate this work into their open space strategies.

The Woodland Trust has developed the woodland access standard (WASSt), which complements ANGSt. It recommends that everyone should have access to a woodland of at least two hectares within 500 metres of their home and of at least 20 hectares within four kilometres.

# A new appetite for allotments

## Blackburn with Darwen open space strategy 2006-2009

[tinyurl.com/cna3mw](http://tinyurl.com/cna3mw)

**An open space strategy has led to significant improvements for Blackburn's allotments. New funding streams have been secured and improvements are now directed by a new allotments forum containing all the relevant stakeholders.**

A cluster of pressing issues, including obesity, heart disease, food security, food air miles, the recession, climate change and sustainability is pushing allotments up the agenda for local authorities.

Blackburn with Darwen began to understand the real potential of its allotments and the need to be more proactive when the process of preparing its open space strategy got under way. Previously, the council's approach to its allotments had been at arm's length, mainly concerned with rent collection. There was mistrust between allotment associations and the council, and little communication.

Allotments became one of the 10 open space types in the authority's final open space strategy document, each of which features a vision, objectives, policies, indicators for monitoring and a case study. A baseline of 2004/05 was set for monitoring progress towards measurable targets for 2008/09.

The process of producing the strategy had raised the need for action on the borough's allotments and the opportunity for new funding. The council's regeneration department had responsibility for the actions in the strategy relating to allotments, but day-to-day oversight rested with the council's property department. An allotment regeneration project was devised and European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) funding secured. This gave impetus to

the creation of an allotments forum that could also get involved in implementing the open space strategy. The steering group comprised the council, Capita and Blackburn and District Allotment Association. As a result of this groundwork, six allotment sites have been improved using the ERDF funding and 10 neglected plots have been brought back into use.

The strategy committed to nominating an allotments officer. This, together with the creation of the forum that helps co-ordinate other OSS actions, has improved communications significantly and made allotments much more visible, with increased priority, on the council's agenda. More sites than set by the OSS 2008/09 target have had facilities improved and there has been an increase in the number of plot holders, with eight sites now fully occupied.

Galvanising more thinking and action on allotments at the point of devising the OSS has enabled much more than improvement of specific allotment sites. The allotments regeneration steering group is using the Local Government Association's *Growing in the community* to review management arrangements and identify other funding streams available for future works. The clarity of responsibility and the involvement of the forum have brought about a streamlined, inclusive approach to winning further improvements and making certain that the investment is maintained.

The targets in Blackburn with Darwen's OSS include increasing the number of Green Flags from one in 2004/05 to five in 2007/08, which was achieved a year early. Other targets relate to increasing satisfaction in community surveys, number of friends' groups and number of sites with management plans. The approach to allotments bears out the range of achievements that are possible from a well-structured, consistent strategy. The physical improvements are one thing. Just as valuable is the new spirit of collaboration between allotment holders and the council.

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Aerial view over Darwen

© Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council



Towpaths form important green routes for leisure walking

© Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council



Blackburn with Darwen's strategy raised the profile of allotments within the borough.

### Identify deficiency areas and opportunities for redressing them

Deficiency of particular types of open space should be illustrated by maps showing the different types of open space, the relevant accessibility criteria and the areas that are deficient in open space.

Be as specific as possible. When areas of open space deficiency are identified, think carefully about the feasibility and location of new provision. If the audit of open spaces considers all non-built space, unused or derelict land that might be converted to open space can be identified. Other solutions might include:

- negotiating public use of private open spaces
- organising dual use of school playing fields, for example through the Building Schools for the Future (BSF) programme
- creating open spaces or shared space in areas currently used as part of the highway using *Manual for streets* guidance
- creating public open spaces and play spaces within new developments
- improving the quality and accessibility of existing open spaces
- improving access routes and rights of way between open spaces
- improving the range of facilities in and functions of existing open spaces
- protecting and improving biodiversity and people's engagement with the natural environment
- improving links between open spaces and green infrastructure functions.

### Update themes, aims, objectives and vision in light of analysis

Make sure your strategy has a clear focus on the most important issues, negotiated and verified through public consultation and engagement with key stakeholders, including councillors. Links with key corporate priorities such as regeneration, health, education and social inclusion need to be articulated clearly to embed the strategy in cross-cutting agendas. Key objectives might include:

- raising greater funds for management
- achieving two or more Green Flag Awards consistently

- increasing the use of parks by under-represented groups
- protecting open spaces
- improving the quality of open spaces
- improving provision in areas of deficiency
- improving access and facilities for older and disabled people
- improving general standards of horticulture
- improving opportunities for local food growing
- adapting open spaces for climate change
- marketing open spaces to encourage greater awareness and use
- developing more and larger friends' groups
- increasing the number of dedicated staff in key parks
- reducing the number of crimes in open spaces
- reducing the amount of anti-social behaviour in open spaces.

### Identify priorities for open space improvements

An open space strategy is not simply a planning document; it should also set aspirations for greater investment or a reallocation of resources to meet new priorities. The strategy should make clear the implications for resourcing and identify potential sources of funding, including:

- revenue funding for management and maintenance
- capital funding from developers through section 106 agreements
- external funding, for example, from the Heritage Lottery Fund
- assessing the potential for obtaining management monies from surrounding landowners, for example in terms of business improvement districts (BIDs)
- calculating the total costs of the desired levels of management
- reassessing management arrangements, including contracts, fees and charges
- investigating the potential role of the community in management and fundraising
- considering trust status for some parks
- identifying priorities for filling staffing gaps and where improving skills of existing staff is needed to improve quality of open spaces.

**‘Creating public open spaces  
and play space with  
new developments can  
address deficiency’**



# Creative ways to overcome shortage of open space

## An open spaces strategy for the London Borough of Tower Hamlets 2006-2016

[tinyurl.com/czxycb](http://tinyurl.com/czxycb)

**This strategy is meeting ambitious standards for open space in a dense inner London borough by finding novel ways of creating new public space.**

It would be hard to find a more densely populated or ethnically diverse part of London than Tower Hamlets, the area to the east of the City and one of the five boroughs hosting the 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games.

Despite the recent growth of the City and Canary Wharf and potential benefits from the Olympics' legacy, the borough has significant challenges. The borough has a lot of high-rise housing and large areas of multiple deprivation, and the population is young and growing rapidly. Looking forward, this is expected to drive up residential and employment densities in an already densely populated borough over the next decade. In the face of such pressure, current open space is over-stretched, much is of poor quality and there are significant barriers to access.

It was against this background that Tower Hamlets adopted its 10-year open spaces strategy (OSS) in 2006 with several clear messages: that there would be an ambitious standard for the quantity of open space and that existing open spaces would be upgraded in quality and accessibility to cope with demand.

Council officers believe that the OSS has been hugely significant in moving open space up the political agenda and gaining over £5.5 million from the Council's capital programme, section 106 negotiations and Play Pathfinder funding. 'The OSS is a very successful tool; I refer to it a lot,' said one.

Particularly helpful is the strategy's well-organised *Way forward* section linking work on open spaces to the quality of life indicators for local people contained in the borough's community plan.

The OSS is having real impact on a number of core council documents. The interim planning guidance contained in the first LDF draft emphasises the importance of providing good-quality open space and, most significantly, sets out the standard of 1.2 hectares of open space per 1,000 people. The strategy has helped significantly in negotiations with developers, and in regeneration areas has improved the amount and quality of open space and access to it and reduced losses to housing.

For example, in Aldgate the density of development has made it impossible to reach the stated standard, so the council has concentrated on making the public realm accessible, distinctive and safe. The OSS is also influencing the Olympic Park legacy process, to improve the public realm connections between Victoria Park, the Greenway and open space in the south-east of the borough.

The OSS also had a major influence on Tower Hamlets' new policy on play and sports provision, approved in 2007. *Play matters in Tower Hamlets: a strategic framework for planning play* and the OSS helped the council secure Wave 1 Play Pathfinder grants of £2.75 million. Children in this inner-urban environment can now enjoy more natural play using rocks, tree trunks and grass, and the borough has provided good practice case studies for the Play England, DCMS and DCSF publication *Design for play: a guide to creating successful play spaces*, August 2008.

The capital budget for park improvements in 2008/09 was around £4 million, to include a new footbridge over the Regent's Canal linking two parks. Since the adoption of the OSS, the majority of the parks assessed as poor quality have been upgraded and play provision has been improved.



© scenticireland.com / Christopher Hill Photographic / Alamy

Tower Hamlets' open spaces are highly fragmented and many busy roads create local barriers to access



© H.G. Esch photography

Tower Hamlets has been innovative in harnessing the recent growth in Canary Wharf to deliver new areas of open space for all



© Natural England / Doorstep Greens

Green space within housing areas provides important amenity space for residents

# Stage 6

## Prepare the strategy and action plan

This is about presenting the strategy in an accessible and clear format and ensuring that everyone is supportive and signed up to delivering the strategy actions.

You need to:

- prepare the draft strategy
- prepare the action plan
- consult on both
- complete and adopt the strategy.

This stage should take four to six months.

### Prepare the draft strategy

The draft strategy should contain:

- a revised vision for open spaces
- a brief summary of the national, regional and local context
- the results of the audit
- a description of local needs and demand
- a statement of key issues to be addressed
- a spatial plan or series of plans outlining the spatial strategy
- strategic policies related to both planning and management
- an action plan.

The draft strategy should be succinct, have a robust evidence base and be well argued and provide clear policies for planning and managing open spaces. Concise, well-written and well-presented strategies are the foundation of effective marketing, making the case for investment in open spaces and raising awareness. The most important information should be made available on the council's website.

The draft strategy should also include a statement about the intended status of the strategy within the LDF, for example as an SPD.

### Prepare the action plan

The action plan can be an integral part of the strategy so that each theme of the strategy has an action section, or it can be a separate section or document.

There are advantages in the action plan being a separate document:

- it can cover a shorter time period than the strategy
- it can more readily be kept up to date, adjusted and reviewed while the broad direction of the strategy is maintained, until it itself requires a review
- it is easier to prioritise actions, assess resource requirements, achieve economies of scale and monitor delivery if actions are grouped in one place
- if the strategy is to be adopted as an SPD, it is not necessary for it to contain a delivery plan, particularly on items that relate to non-planning matters.

© Andy Hendry / www.newcenturypictures.co.uk



The action plan may need to have a shorter time frame than the strategy because:

- local authorities generally set budgets annually, but are likely to have a medium-term financial plan over a three-year period
- authorities enter into local area agreements (LAAs) or other partnership arrangements over the shorter term
- grants and sources of funding may vary over time
- it is more difficult to predict income streams (such as section 106 agreements or the CIL) over the long term.

In order to give more certainty to resource availability, we suggest that your action plan covers a period of five years but is reviewed and updated annually.

An action plan should be SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and time-specific). Agree with your partners who will implement each action, whether these are different services within the local authority or external partners. It is also important to agree who is to lead on each project and take responsibility for delivery.

The action plan should include the following:

- actions
- relevant policy
- leadership/responsibility
- partners involved
- start and completion dates
- indicators/measures of success
- estimated cost (capital and revenue)
- funding sources.

There are unlikely to be enough resources to do everything right away so the action plan should include a limited number of priorities for the first year or so. As you make progress, new priorities will emerge and may be added as the action plan is reviewed. Decide on your priorities by assessing:

- the conclusions and recommendations of the strategy
- the opportunity for quick wins that get results and publicity
- resource availability and funding opportunities
- local political priorities
- the priorities of other programmes such as the LAA, multiple area agreement (MAA) or LDF, to which actions in the open space strategy could contribute.

Priorities might include:

- proposals for maintaining and updating the GIS
- improving management of the worst-performing open spaces
- proposals for dealing with deficiencies in provision and quality
- publicity and awareness programmes to encourage and broaden use of open spaces
- the adoption of key planning policies in LDFs
- the timetable for producing associated strategies
- the timetable for monitoring and review.

### Consult on the draft strategy and action plan

A formal consultation should ensure the full support of members, officers, key stakeholders and the community. Include:

- regional authorities
- adjacent local authorities
- parish councils
- user groups
- friends' groups
- voluntary organisations
- local access groups
- significant land owners, such as housing associations and utility companies
- national bodies such as Sport England, English Heritage, Environment Agency and Natural England
- police
- the general public.

A response should be made and a record kept of all the consultation responses.

### Complete and adopt the strategy

Revise your draft strategy in light of the consultation comments. The final document should be endorsed and formally adopted by the council. If the strategy is to be adopted within the LDF as a development plan document, the relevant additional adoption process will need to be followed.

You now have a clear plan for what you aim to do and why. In the next section we offer guidance on how to ensure effective delivery of the strategy actions.

# Acting on climate change

## Bournemouth Borough Council

### green space strategy 2007-2011

[tinyurl.com/cukkoc](http://tinyurl.com/cukkoc)

**Bournemouth's experience demonstrates just how important an ambitious open space strategy can be in ensuring improved inter-departmental working and visibility to members in tackling the impact of climate change.**

If anything is likely to need cross-service understanding and collaboration, it is local government's response to climate change adaptation and mitigation. Bournemouth's experience demonstrates just how important an ambitious open space strategy can be in ensuring improved inter-departmental working and visibility to members in this important area.

Bournemouth's green space strategy articulates deliberately high aspirations in a number of specific areas, including nature conservation and global warming. It is a forward-thinking approach that places the GSS pivotally, covering a wide range of environmental topics. Its five-year work programme makes a point of identifying links with other departments' plans and strategies. It is already bearing fruit in terms of inter-departmental working and is speeding up the evolution of a truly cross-service strategy that will be a key focus of the review in 2011.

Global warming and sustainability is one of 14 action areas set out in the GSS. Leisure services staff have been able to influence their colleagues elsewhere who are tasked with Bournemouth's global warming and sustainability policies. This goes well beyond the funding, planning and management of open space and is setting the agenda for the core documents of the local development framework (LDF) and the climate change community action plan.

As a result, there is more widespread understanding of how funding GSS activity, such as carbon offsetting through woodland planting, can make a difference to climate change. It has helped secure

heathland mitigation funds for new heathland creation from the capital contributions paid by a development close to the Dorset heathlands special protection area. The reasons for the global warming actions are set out in the GSS in a way that is easy to understand for those not familiar with climate change effects, adaptation and mitigation.

In response to a commitment in the GSS to increase deciduous tree cover, a tree strategy has been prepared identifying areas in which to increase woodland and broadleaved elements in coniferous woodland. In turn the LDF will incorporate the need for habitat corridors and a species list for planning applications that takes into account drier, hotter weather and habitat enhancement for wildlife. Since production of the GSS, the leisure services department has taken on oversight of all mowing in housing, highways and parks maintenance. With the work being done by the same team, it is easier to fulfil the GSS's commitment to establishing a more varied grass sward, and there is evidence of increased wildlife, soil moisture and savings on fuel consumption.

The nursery manager has been trained in the design of bedding schemes to showcase environmental issues like food production and the need for minimal watering. Half of all plants used across the borough are grown from seed and there is a move towards peat-free bedding plant production. Council greenhouse boilers are being converted to biofuel to be provided in part from clippings derived from green space management.

Significant strides are being made on the GSS's commitment to improve access to the countryside, develop sustainable transport and develop multi-user links. Bournemouth succeeded in a bid as part of the Sustrans/Connect2 proposal that won the £50 million Big Lottery Fund people's millions competition. It will part-fund one link and has led to closer working with the highways department resulting in a 15-year plan for the transformation and promotion of Bournemouth as a 'cycling town'.

Leisure services is leading and collaborating on a range of activities, from strategic planning across the council to detailed, practical implementation of the GSS in a way that vindicates ambition and imagination in an area of growing significance.

Bournemouth's green space strategy anticipated a need to establish more tree cover to react to climate change

© Bournemouth Borough Council



Changing climate will affect how all public spaces are used and managed, including beaches and parks

© Angie Sharp / Alamy





# 2

# Deliver

**‘A strategy should have a wide range of people and organisations signed up to it, taking responsibility for its delivery, monitoring and review’**

## 2 Deliver

**The point of a strategy is to get things done. You have put a lot of time and effort into thinking things through, agreeing what it is all for and deciding on the course of action. The key issues now are:**

- promoting the strategy
- managing implementation and delivery
- delivering through the planning system
- delivering through community engagement
- delivering through improvements, management and maintenance
- resources for delivery.

### Promoting the strategy

When the council adopts the strategy, there is a great opportunity to promote it through a launch event. Media interest will centre on what it will mean for the local community. A launch should emphasise what is going to happen next and could be held in a venue that will be improved in the short term. Inviting partners helps develop networks, and reminds people of their progress and the rewards of getting involved.

### Managing implementation and delivery

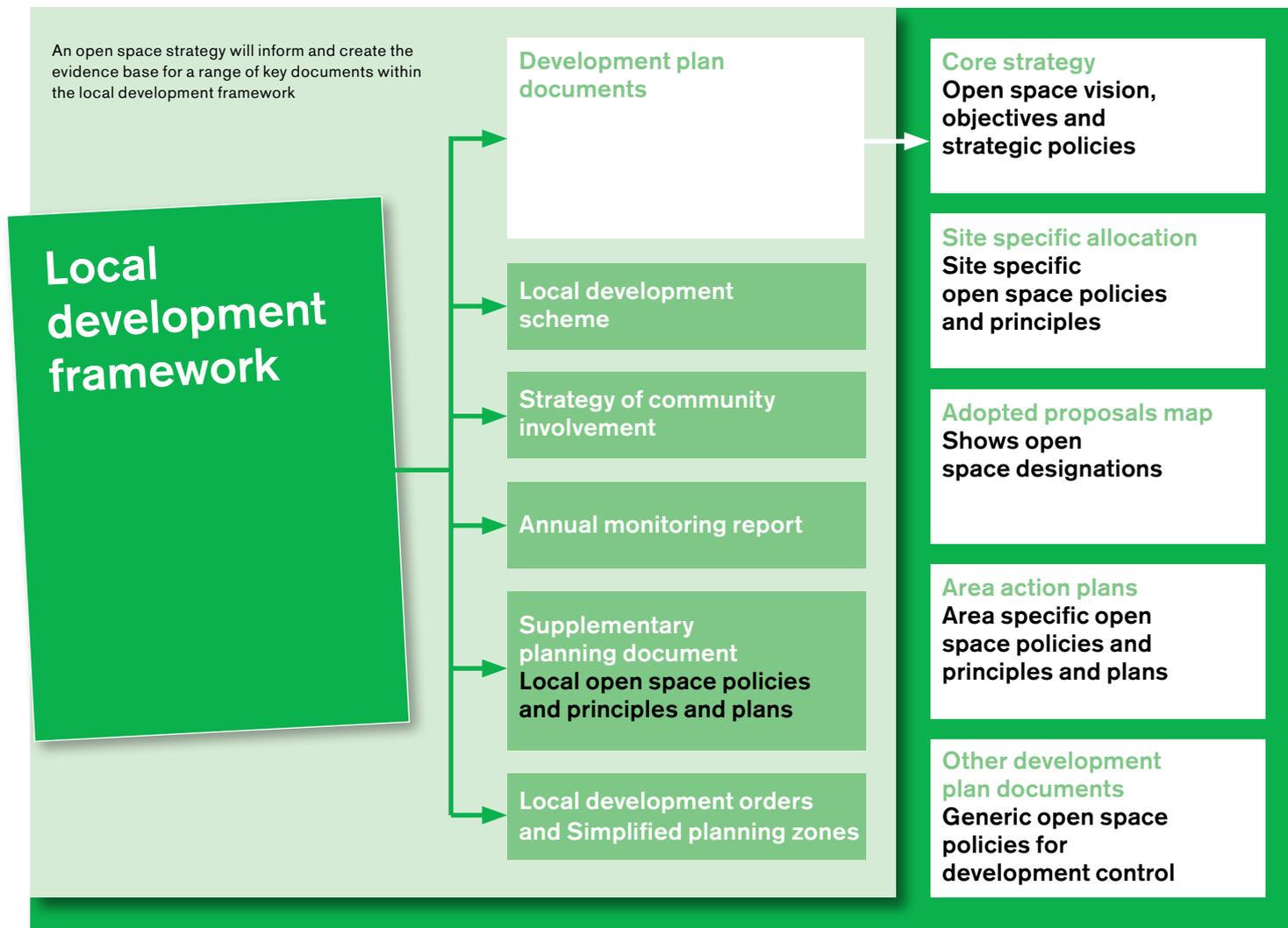
Remember, this should be a strategy that a wide range of people and organisations have signed up to, taking responsibility for its delivery, monitoring and review. The ongoing partnership may evolve to co-opt new skills, but the core group that understands the local issues, priorities and agreed actions of the strategy should continue to remain committed to its delivery.

### Delivering through the planning system

Incorporating an open space strategy into the LDF is increasingly important as it brings the status of a statutory document. The strategic issues and appropriate policies affecting open space in the area should be included in the LDF as illustrated in figure 8 and below:

- An over-arching policy that protects the value of the open space network and green infrastructure functions and seeks to address deficiencies in quality, quantity and accessibility should be included in the core strategy
- Requirements for new open spaces, or improvements to existing open spaces, should be identified in the site specific allocations documents
- The quantity, quality and location of open space provision should be included in AAPs and potential locations for new open space should be provided and improvements made
- Policies for the protection of open space including the local quantity, quality and accessibility standards for open space should be included in development control policy documents
- SPDs should incorporate open space considerations in more detail, including design guidelines for the creation of new open spaces, quantity, quality and accessibility standards and the up-to-date capital and maintenance costs to be applied when commuted payments are to be collected. Detailed consideration of funding local infrastructure, including open space, is often dealt with in a separate developer contributions SPD
- The action plan should cross-reference the LDF where this is seen to be the mechanism for implementing parts of the strategy. In this way, the action plan will act as part of the delivery mechanism for the LDF. Delivery of outcomes is increasingly important in demonstrating the soundness of the LDF.

**Figure 8: Integrating open space strategies and the local development framework**



### Delivering through community engagement

Involving the community in the design, implementation, monitoring and operating phases can bring wider benefits, but should not be viewed as a cheap option. Communities need support and guidance, but time and effort will pay long-term dividends. Parish councils, friends' groups, special interest groups and sports clubs will be useful starting points.

Adapt the techniques for engagement to the needs and aspirations of the different preferences, backgrounds and ages of people in the community. Techniques range from planning for real exercises,

involving 3-D models, and exhibitions, to less resource-intensive techniques such as newsletters, briefing workshops and meetings with friends' groups and residents associations.

Artwork, logo design, and park and garden naming competitions/projects with children and young people are all good ways to stimulate creative thinking and generate interest and ownership. Art workshops engage people in designing and constructing artworks to improve local environments. Community arts projects are particularly useful with young people to enable them to express

their creativity, build confidence, develop skills, and cultivate a sense of identity and community pride. Audio guides and listening walks can help people identify wildlife and other features, and increase overall appreciation of spaces.

A useful tool for understanding different perceptions of the quality of an open space is Spaceshaper, available from CABI Space. A young person's version will be available during 2009.

### Delivering through improvements, management and maintenance

The strategy should act as an effective management tool. Many of the strategy actions will be delivered over time through refocusing resources for management and maintenance, tackling priority issues and making efficiency savings through improving management practices. Tools, such as the performance management framework for parks services – Towards an excellent service (TAES), are invaluable in driving organisational improvements, and encourage taking a strategic approach to managing a network of spaces. The Green Flag Award self-assessment tool can be used to prioritise improvements within particular sites, highlighting which aspects need to be improved in order to work towards attaining the Green Flag Award standard.

### Resources for delivery

We advocate making a realistic assessment of the resources needed against those available to deliver the strategy. It is also useful to estimate the cost of the entire strategy to make the case for additional funds. This needs to be handled carefully, ensuring that costs are justified by a clear indication of the resulting improvement in quality.

Staff time and skills required are often underestimated. Sufficient human resources must be available or projects will run the risk of not being delivered on time or to the quality required.

Some of the principal resources available to assist with delivery are set out below and in Appendix C.

### Local authority resources

Both capital and revenue budgets will be needed. Local authorities usually operate a corporate plan that sets out corporate priorities. Associated budgets may be included within the corporate plan, or in a related financial plan. These plans usually last for three to five years, depending on spending cycles, and are generally reviewed annually. Projects in the first year represent a firm commitment, while those in later years are less committed and subject to change. It is very important that open space strategy priorities are transferred into the local authority's corporate plan to gain high-level officer and member commitment and resources. These plans are usually translated into departmental actions and budgets.

### Provision of open space or funding through the planning process

The LDF should set the standard for open space provision and management, together with the quality of the public realm that should be provided within new development. The LDF can also provide a mechanism for negotiating developer contributions for provision in an alternative location(s) by setting out the circumstances where this would be appropriate. Where the facilities are predominantly for the benefit of the new development, this should also include a commuted maintenance sum when a developer hands over responsibility for long-term maintenance to a local authority or a third party, such as a parish council or trust.

© Stephen McLaren



# Local development framework status makes all the difference

## Torbay greenspace strategy 2006-2016

[tinyurl.com/dgyqqk](http://tinyurl.com/dgyqqk)

**Pioneering an approach that combines strategic planning with operational management in one supplementary planning document, Torbay shows how working jointly across council departments can lend greater weight to a strategy.**

Timing has been crucial in securing the strategy's invaluable status as a supplementary planning document (SPD). The greenspace strategy was being developed at the same time as planners were working on the LDF. Torbay's leisure department staff became part of that process, developing good working relationships with the strategic planners. As a result, the strategy now has legal weight and a higher profile and planning obligations mean that every planning application makes a contribution (£200,000 to date) to the main priorities of the strategy, especially play areas and youth facilities. Trigger points, normally occupation of a percentage of houses, enable draw down from section 106 funds. These developer contributions are essential to implementing the strategy at a time when the council's finances are under pressure.

The strategy's status as a planning document meant a formal process of consultation was required during its development. This began with publication of a summary in 2005, followed by consultation on a draft green space strategy in the summer of 2006. After this, a full report and summary was made available for consultation together with a statement explaining how the earlier consultation had been taken into account.

As part of the LDF, the strategy also underwent a sustainability appraisal and an appropriate assessment had to be carried out to assess the strategy's likely impacts on European designated sites.

The strategy articulates the council's vision of providing and maintaining high-quality green spaces with equal access and opportunity for all, while protecting and enhancing the local environment. It forms the basis for the future planning to do this, but is also very much a working document for the council's parks service.

From the outset, Torbay recognised that its approach to the management of its parks and green spaces had been based on past practice, and when it came to allocating resources it had no clear outcomes to achieve.

The council needed to find out two things if it was to start to manage its green space estate effectively: the nature, distribution and quality of the spaces; and what local people thought of the service and what they wanted from it.

Council staff conducted a full audit of all the sites (over 300), scoring these against the criteria that local people said were important to them. From this they developed a league table that told them where investment was needed most.

At the same time they ran a visioning session with key stakeholders, which resulted in a change of emphasis from primary investment in the main tourist sites, towards more investment in local parks, and more local participation in these. As a result the council now has several best practice examples of community involvement in developing and managing local parks.

Greenspace Torbay was set up, an umbrella body of friends' groups that is now one of 15 partnerships on the culture and environment board of the local strategic partnership. This body will also help to implement Torbay's greenspace strategy.

© Torbay Council



Torbay's coastline provides areas for recreation

© Nicole Collomb



Cockington Country Park is managed by the Torbay Coast and Countryside Trust



**‘Parish councils, local volunteers or community groups can help deliver projects in the action plan’**

Provision or contributions are usually secured through a section 106 agreement which will specify how the commuted sum is to be spent, and usually a time limit for spending it. The local authority should be able to demonstrate where such funds have been spent.

In addition, the government is considering allowing local planning authorities to collect a community infrastructure levy (CIL) from developers to contribute to strategic infrastructure needs. This could include an element for open space where this is locally deficient. As this mechanism is introduced, it will be important to ensure that specific open space projects are identified and included.

#### **Local area agreements**

If local authorities are successful at meeting targets set in LAAs, financial rewards should be received from government. Where open space projects have played a part in achieving a target, financial rewards should be recycled to deliver further actions.

#### **Commercial activities**

One approach may be the development of commercial activities such as catering operations within open space. The revenue funding should be ring-fenced to improving open space provision and management.

#### **External resources**

The open space strategy will provide the detailed framework for supporting funding applications, providing the evidence that the project is a priority and is supported by local people.

A number of potential sources of funding that were available at the time of producing this guidance are listed in Appendix C. Try to keep up to date with funding opportunities, criteria for eligibility and potential partnerships.

There may be opportunities for the joint funding of initiatives with other partner organisations, and contributions can be made through funding or skills and expertise.

The private sector has demonstrated its willingness to fund and support projects, either on a one-off basis or through long-term involvement.

#### **Support in kind**

Voluntary organisations have an important role to play. Parish councils, local volunteers or community groups can help deliver projects in the action plan and demonstrate the level of community support and involvement to funding organisations. Many funders accept support in kind from community groups as match funding for grant monies.

© David Cowland



# 3

## Monitor and review



**‘The trick is to keep a steady course, making the most of the investment of time and effort’**

**You need to keep an eye on whether the strategy is having the effect you are aiming for over time or whether it should be updated as a result of changing circumstances. The monitoring and review procedures, specified in the strategy, would usually include detailing:**

- key performance indicators
- who will be responsible for monitoring which indicators
- how frequently the strategy and the action plan will be reviewed.

### Indicators

Indicators may measure inputs (for example, how much is spent on a project), outputs (for example, measured improvement in quality or the number of additional children's play areas) and outcomes (what has made a difference on the ground to stakeholders, how that difference is perceived and whether the impact has been sustained). While harder to measure, outcomes are increasingly favoured as a more meaningful method of assessing achievement.

Set a minimum number of headline indicators necessary to judge the success of a strategy and whether the strategy requires review. Make use of relevant indicators already monitored by a local authority. It is helpful to link indicators to the national indicators for local authorities and local authority partnerships, the SCS and LDF annual monitoring report indicators. Importantly, indicators will also help in understanding how the open space strategy can contribute to the wider agenda.

Many authorities use the site quality audit scores to measure improvements over time, repeating the exercise at agreed intervals and updating the GIS data accordingly.

### National indicators

The government sets national indicators for local authorities and local authority partnerships that relate directly and indirectly to open space. They focus on improving outcomes for local people, local businesses and local places, rather than on processes, institutions and inputs. The national indicators are the only indicators against which local authorities' performance, alone or in partnership, will be reported to central government. They will therefore be the only measures against which government can agree targets with a

local authority or partnership, through LAAs. LSPs at the single tier or county council level agree with central government up to 35 designated targets for their area. Similarly, MAAs may agree to use measures from the national indicator set. Or they may use measures from outside the set that they feel better describe their sub-regional priorities.

The national indicators with the most relevance to open space strategies include (current national indicator number):

- NI15 - overall/general satisfaction with local area
- NI18 - adult participation in sport and active recreation
- NI188 - planning to adapt to climate change
- NI189 - flood and coastal risk management
- NI195 - improved street and environmental cleanliness (levels of graffiti, litter, detritus and fly-posting)
- NI197 - improved local biodiversity (proportion of local sites where positive conservation management has been or is being implemented)
- NI199 - children and young people's satisfaction with parks and play areas.

### Participation of local people

These indicators should be supplemented by targeted consultations and surveys to gauge the level of use or user satisfaction with open spaces or specified projects. Surveys can take place at the start and finish of projects, with the results collected, analysed and fed back to community groups and residents. As one way of collecting data to monitor the national indicators, local authorities undertake place surveys. It may be possible to supplement this with user satisfaction questions on open space in the area.

### Review

Review your action plan every year. This will align with local authority capital and revenue budget setting and form the basis for securing funding for the next period.

The open space strategy itself is a longer-term document. The trick is to keep a steady course, making the most of the investment of time and effort put into it. Your monitoring will suggest when it is time for some new ideas, but with a sound strategy it is unlikely that you will need to review it more frequently than three to five years.

# A beacon for valuing open space

## Darlington open space strategy 2007-2017

[tinyurl.com/chxzf8](http://tinyurl.com/chxzf8)

**An open space strategy in Darlington has led to a new strategic focus for open space, investment in deprived areas and an improvement in residents' satisfaction with parks and open spaces.**

Darlington's open space strategy has been instrumental in raising the profile of open spaces within the council.

Previously there was not a department responsible for all open space. A new strategic focus was required with a clear location within the authority. A new parks and countryside service was created. The team were used to working in a policy and strategy context, aware of current national thinking and guidance and experienced in gathering evidence to state the case for open space. The new head of service began to work closely with elected members to promote the role of people working in green spaces.

The council is now developing a new countryside rangers service that will operate across all types of green space. The focus of their role will be education, events and raising awareness.

Council officers from a wide range of service areas sat on the steering group for the OSS alongside external partners and stakeholders. The key criterion for the involvement of council officers was that they lead on the development or delivery of other key strategies. This ensured that they fed in not only what their particular strategy said in relation to open space but also how implementation was evolving and how open space could feed into future revisions of the policy they worked on.

In Darlington some key changes have taken place as a result of this new willingness to understand the role of open space in achieving important goals.

A central objective is reducing the effects of inequality, and the restoration or regeneration of open space is seen as a way of addressing the issue. Accessibility to quality green space is a major theme of the open space strategy, and particular areas of the borough were identified as being deprived not only in economic or health terms but also in terms of access to quality green space.

The authority has targeted its play builder bid at these areas. Ten play areas are being refurbished, a reflection of the importance of open space to young people, the main theme of the local area agreement.

The council's second Heritage Lottery Fund bid was for The Denes, a seven-hectare historic linear park. The park includes formal sports provision and children's play and wildlife areas. It serves one of the town's more deprived areas and was identified by the strategy as in need of restoration.

In 2003 the council recognised that residents' satisfaction with parks and open spaces was low at 66 per cent. They began to improve the quality of the parks and open spaces through a four-pronged approach: redesigning service delivery, physical improvements, an education campaign and community engagement, and enforcement action.

These changes made a real difference. Residents' satisfaction with parks and open spaces increased to 77 per cent in 2006/07, putting the Council among the top performers in England. Darlington achieved beacon status for better public places in 2008, in part due to the approach of the open space strategy.



©Alan Barber

Darlington's new countryside rangers service will operate across all types of green space



©Alan Barber

Darlington's strategy has helped deliver an improvement in residents' satisfaction with parks and open spaces

# Appendix A

## References

All CABE and CABE Space publications cited here and in the text may be downloaded from [www.cabe.org.uk](http://www.cabe.org.uk). Similarly, publications of the Mayor of London can be downloaded from [www.london.gov.uk](http://www.london.gov.uk)

*Accessible London, The London Plan Supplementary Planning Guidance*, Mayor of London, 2004

*Adapting public space to climate change: public space lessons*, CABE Space, 2008

*Designing and planning for play: public space lessons*, CABE Space, 2008

*East London Green Grid Framework, The London Plan Supplementary Planning Guidance*, Mayor of London, 2008

*Greenspace Quality – a guide to assessment, planning and strategic development*, Greenspace Scotland, 2008, [www.greenspacescotland.org.uk](http://www.greenspacescotland.org.uk)

*Growing in the community, a good practice guide to for the management of allotments*, 2nd edition, Local Government Association, 2008, [www.lga.gov.uk](http://www.lga.gov.uk)

*Guidance for Local Authorities on Implementing the Biodiversity Duty*, DEFRA, 2007, [www.defra.gov.uk](http://www.defra.gov.uk)

*How to create quality parks and open spaces*, ODPM, 2005, [www.cleanersafergreener.gov.uk](http://www.cleanersafergreener.gov.uk)

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*Inclusion by Design – equality, diversity and the built environment*, CABE, 2008

*It's our space – a guide for community groups working to improve public space*, CABE Space, 2007

*Land in limbo – making the best use of vacant urban spaces: public space lessons*, CABE Space, 2008

*Lifetime Homes, Lifetime Neighbourhoods: a national strategy for housing an ageing society*, DCLG, 2008, [www.communities.gov.uk](http://www.communities.gov.uk)

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*Manual for streets*, DoT, 2007, [www.dft.gov.uk](http://www.dft.gov.uk)

*National Indicators for local authorities and local authority partnerships: handbook of definitions*, DCLG, 2008, [www.communities.gov.uk](http://www.communities.gov.uk)

*Paying for parks – eight models for funding green space*, CABE Space, 2006

*Planning for equality and diversity in London, the London Plan Supplementary Planning Guidance*, Mayor of London, 2007

*Providing for children and young people's play and informal recreation, the London Plan Supplementary Planning Guidance*, Mayor of London, 2008

*Southern City, London Ambient Noise Strategy*, Mayor of London, 2004

*Start with the park – creating sustainable urban green spaces in areas of housing growth and renewal*, CABE Space, 2005

*Raising the standard, the manual of the Green Flag Award* (updated), Liz Greenhalgh and Andrew Parsons, The Civic Trust, 2004, [www.greenflagaward.com](http://www.greenflagaward.com)

*The London Plan (Consolidated with Alterations since 2004), Spatial Development Strategy for Greater London*, Mayor of London, 2008

*Trees in Towns II – a new survey of urban trees in England and their condition and management*, Chris Britt and Mark Johnston, DCLG, 2008, [www.communities.gov.uk](http://www.communities.gov.uk)

*Urban parks – do you know you're getting value for money?*, CABE Space, 2006

# Appendix B

## Open space in national planning policy

The following national planning policy documents are relevant to open space planning and can be downloaded at [www.communities.gov.uk](http://www.communities.gov.uk).

**PPS1: Delivering Sustainable Development, 2005** promotes the delivery of spatial plans that go beyond traditional land use planning to bring together and integrate policies for the development and use of land with other policies and programmes which influence the nature of places and how they can function' (paragraph 30).

**The supplement to PPS1: Planning and Climate Change, 2007** sets out how the spatial planning system should contribute to tackling climate change. It recognises 'the contribution to be made from existing and new opportunities for open space and green infrastructure to urban cooling, sustainable drainage systems, and conserving and enhancing biodiversity' (paragraph 24).

**PPS3: Housing, 2006** seeks to create sustainable, inclusive, mixed communities that 'provide, or enables good access to, community and green and open amenity and recreational space (including play space) as well as private outdoor space' (paragraph 16).

**PPS6: Planning for Town Centres, 2005** recognises that 'well-designed public spaces and buildings, which are fit for purpose, comfortable, safe, attractive, accessible and durable, are key elements which can improve the health, vitality and economic potential of a town centre' (paragraph 2.19).

**PPS9: Biodiversity and Geological Conservation, 2005** promotes a strategic approach to the conservation, enhancement and restoration of biodiversity and geology in both urban and rural areas.

**PPS11: Regional Spatial Strategies, 2004** sets out the government's policy for spatial planning at the regional and sub-regional level.

**PPS12: Local Spatial Planning, 2008** sets out the requirements of the spatial planning approach to be delivered through the LDF. 'Spatial planning provides a means of safeguarding the area's environmental assets, both for their intrinsic value and for their contribution to social and economic well being' (paragraph 2.6).

**PPG15: Planning and the Historic Environment, 1994** recognises that 'our understanding and appreciation of the historic environment now stretches beyond buildings to the spaces and semi-natural features... for example, the pattern of roads and open spaces and the views they create within historic townscapes may be as valuable as the buildings' (paragraph 6.2).

**PPG16: Archaeology and Planning, 1990** sets out the government's policy on how archaeological landscapes and remains should be preserved and recorded.

**PPG17: Planning for Open Space, Sport and Recreation, 2002** states that 'local authorities should undertake robust assessments of the existing and future needs of their communities for open space, sports and recreational facilities' (paragraph 1).

**The companion guide to PPG17, 2002** recommends a strategy approach and sets out ways that local authorities can undertake assessments and audits of open space. Included in its guiding principles for assessment is the need to define the 'extent to which open spaces meet clearly identified local needs and the wider benefits they generate for people, wildlife, biodiversity and the wider environment' (paragraph 2.1).

**PPS25: Planning and Flood Risk, 2006** highlights the importance role that open space can play in flood storage.

# Appendix C

## Funding sources

Please note that this is not a definitive list and other funding sources may be available both now and in the future.

### **Big Lottery Fund**

*Myplace* – aims to deliver world-class youth facilities driven by the active participation of young people (programme runs until 30 September 2009).

*Changing Spaces* – an environmental programme focusing on community spaces, local community enterprise and access to the natural environment. The programme is being delivered in partnership with Groundwork UK, Natural England and Mind (programmes run until 2010 and 2012).

[www.biglotteryfund.org.uk](http://www.biglotteryfund.org.uk)

### **Natural England**

*Access to nature* – aims to encourage people from all backgrounds to understand, access and enjoy the natural environment. Grants from £50–500K are being awarded for projects that address in particular those who face social exclusion or those who currently have little or no contact with nature. The scheme is managed by Natural England and every region has an access to nature advisor who can help.

[www.naturalengland.org.uk/leisure/grants-funding/default.htm](http://www.naturalengland.org.uk/leisure/grants-funding/default.htm)

### **Heritage Lottery Fund**

*Heritage Grants* – offer grants of more than £50,000 for projects that help conserve the national, regional or local heritage (rolling programme).

*Parks for People* – a three-year joint initiative between the Heritage Lottery Fund and the Big Lottery Fund helps restore and regenerate public parks and gardens, including squares, walks and promenades (final round deadline 31 August 2009).

*Landscape Partnerships* – support schemes of between £250,000 and £2 million led by partnerships of local, regional and national interests that aim to conserve or restore areas of distinctive landscape character.

*Young Roots* – offers grants of £5,000–£25,000 to organisations involving young people aged 13–20 (up to 25 years with special needs) in projects about their heritage – developing skills, building confidence and promoting community involvement (rolling programme).

[www.hlf.org.uk](http://www.hlf.org.uk)

### **English Heritage**

English Heritage has a number of grant schemes to help the protection and promotion of historic buildings, sites and landscapes.

*Historic buildings, monuments and designed landscapes grant scheme* - grants for urgent repairs or other work required to prevent loss or damage to important architectural, archaeological or landscape features.

[www.english-heritage.org.uk](http://www.english-heritage.org.uk)

**Entrust**

ENTRUST regulates the Landfill Communities Fund (LCF) on behalf of HM Revenue & Customs. As a regulator, ENTRUST does not fund any work itself.

This tax credit scheme enables operators of landfill sites to contribute money to enrolled environmental bodies (EBs) to carry out projects that meet environmental objectives contained in the landfill tax regulations.

[www.entrust.org](http://www.entrust.org)

**Football Foundation**

*Facilities Scheme* – provides money to develop new or improved facilities for community benefit, such as changing rooms or clubhouses, grass or artificial pitches and multi-use games areas.

*Community Grants* – provide funding for projects that use football and sport to contribute to educational attainment and closing the skills gap, tackling health inequalities and social exclusion.

Community funding is also provided via the 'small grants' scheme for projects that aim to increase participation by both players and volunteers in grass roots football by supporting the costs associated with providing new activity.

[www.footballfoundation.org.uk](http://www.footballfoundation.org.uk)

**Sport England**

*National Investment* – Sport England works with and invests in a range of nationally funded partners. These include national governing bodies of sport, plus partners with expertise in areas such as coaching, equity and volunteering. Investment is prioritised in 31 sports, comprising 10 UK priority, 10 English priority and 11 development sports.

*Community Investment Fund (CIF)* – grants over £10,000 available to community sport projects that help to support Sport England's work to get more people involved in sport, and help them stay involved throughout their lives, with a focus on hard-to-reach groups.

[www.sportengland.org](http://www.sportengland.org)

**Sustrans**

Greenways for the Olympics and London (GOAL) aims to improve the lives of all who live in or visit London by creating a safe and attractive environment for walking and cycling.

[www.sustrans.org.uk](http://www.sustrans.org.uk)

# Appendix D

## Glossary of terms

**Accessible natural greenspace standard (ANGSt)** is a national assessment framework, developed by Natural England for use outside London, to plan and prioritise the quantity and accessibility of natural green space for the benefits it brings to people's quality of life.

**Area action plans (AAPs)** are development plan documents that provide a planning framework for an area of significant change or conservation.

**Area of outstanding natural beauty (AONB)** is an area designated for its landscape quality, which can include landform and geology, plants and animals, landscape features and the history of human settlement over the centuries.

**Building Schools for the Future (BSF)** is a government investment programme to rebuild or renew every secondary school in England over a 10–15 year period.

**Business improvement districts (BIDs)** are a concept that was originally developed in the USA for increasing investment within defined areas of cities, such as the town centre. This is achieved through changes to local taxation, based on a supplementary rate levied on businesses within that defined area.

**Carbon reduction strategies** explain how an organisation is going to reduce its carbon dioxide emissions through a range of measures that address heating and lighting of buildings, powering equipment, procuring goods and services, sending waste to landfill, and staff and visitor travel.

**Community infrastructure levy (CIL)** is a new mechanism to deliver investment into local infrastructure. The levy will be a standard charge decided by local planning authorities and levied by them on new development.

**Core strategy** sets out the key elements of the planning framework for a local authority area. It should include a spatial vision and strategic objectives for the area.

**Development control policy documents** describe the criteria against which a local planning authority will assess planning applications and in some instances set out the information that an applicant will need to provide.

**Development plan documents (DPDs)** are statutory planning documents produced by local planning authorities that together form the local development framework.

**Ecosystem services** are environmental processes that produce resources utilised by humans such as clean air, water and food.

**Equality impact assessment** identifies the potential impact policies, services and functions have on staff, customers and residents in the context of anti-discrimination legislation.

**Geodiversity** describes the natural processes and variety of rocks, fossils, minerals, landforms and soils that shape the landscape.

**Geographic information system (GIS)** is an information system for capturing, storing, analysing, managing and presenting data that is spatially referenced.

**Green belt** is a land use designation given to the countryside that lies adjacent to urban areas and is protected from development.

**Green Flag Award** is a national quality standard for parks and green spaces in England and Wales.

**Green infrastructure** is a network of connected, high-quality, multi-functional open spaces, corridors and the links in between that provide environmental services and multiple benefits for people and wildlife.

**Growth areas/points** are areas identified by the government for new housing development to accommodate future population growth, as outlined in the government's sustainable communities plan.

**Housing market renewal (HMR)** is a government programme to rebuild housing markets in areas of housing market weaknesses.

**Local area agreements (LAA)** are contracts between central government and a local area (local authorities and local strategic partnerships), which set the priorities for a local area and identify funding streams.

**Local development framework (LDF)** is a portfolio of local development documents that together provide a framework for delivering the spatial planning strategy for an area.

**Local strategic partnerships (LSP)** are non- statutory partnerships between public bodies, private business and the voluntary and community sectors to coordinate the contribution that each can make to improving local facilities. They are responsible for developing and driving the implementation of community strategies and local area agreements.

**Metropolitan open land** is strategic open land within the area covered by the London Plan.

**Multiple area agreements** are contracts between central government and a group of local authorities/local strategic partnerships, which set the priorities for a designated area and identify funding streams.

**Planning policy statements (PPS)** are prepared by government to provide guidance to local authorities and others on planning policy and the operation of the planning system. They explain the relationship between planning policies and other policies that relate to development and land use.

**Regional spatial strategies (RSS)** is a development strategy for a region for a 15- to 20-year period. An RSS informs the preparation of local development documents, local transport plans, and sub-regional strategies and programmes that relate to land use.

**Section 106 agreement** is a legally binding agreement between a local planning authority and a land developer that places obligations on the developer that will minimise the impact of the development on the local community and provide community benefits. Obligations can include providing funds for traffic-calming measures, new play facilities, public art, tree planting, cycle paths, meeting places and affordable housing.

**Sites of special scientific interest (SSSI)** are sites identified for the importance of their geological features and wildlife habitats.

**Spaceshaper** is a practical toolkit, developed by CABI Space, to measure the quality of a public space before investing time and money in improving it.

**Statement of community involvement (SCI)** is a document detailing how local authorities propose to ensure that local communities and stakeholders can get involved with the planning process in their area.

**Supplementary planning document (SPD)** is a piece of guidance supplementing the policies and proposals in development plan documents.

**Sustainable community strategy** is a strategy prepared by a local authority, through a local strategic partnership, setting out a long-term vision for promoting and improving the economic, social and environmental well-being of an area.

**Woodland access standard (WASt)** is the Woodland Trust's strategy to ensure that everyone has woodland that is within easy reach of where they live. The standard applies to both urban and rural areas.

# Appendix E

## Useful contacts

### Funding organisations

#### Big Lottery Fund

1 Plough Place  
London EC4A 1DE  
Tel: 0845 039 0204  
[www.biglotteryfund.org.uk](http://www.biglotteryfund.org.uk)

#### Heritage Lottery Fund

7 Holbein Place  
London SW1W 8NR  
Tel: 020 7591 6000  
[www.hlf.org.uk](http://www.hlf.org.uk)

#### Environment Agency

Rio House  
Waterside Drive  
Aztec West  
Almondsbury  
Bristol BS32 4UD  
Tel: 08708 506506  
[www.environment-agency.gov.uk](http://www.environment-agency.gov.uk)

#### Sport England

3rd Floor Victoria House  
Bloomsbury Square  
London WC1B 4SE  
Tel: 020 7273 1551  
[www.sportengland.org](http://www.sportengland.org)

#### Football Foundation

30 Gloucester Place  
London W1U 8FF  
Tel: 0845 345 4555  
[www.footballfoundation.org.uk](http://www.footballfoundation.org.uk)

#### Sustrans

2 Cathedral Square  
College Green  
Bristol BS1 5DD  
Tel: 0117 926 8893  
[www.sustrans.org.uk](http://www.sustrans.org.uk)

### Parks and landscape

#### Countryside Management Association

Writtle College  
Lordship Road  
Writtle  
Chelmsford  
Essex CM1 3RR  
Tel: 01245 424116  
[www.countrysideassociation.org.uk](http://www.countrysideassociation.org.uk)

#### Landscape Design Trust

Bank Chambers  
1 London Road  
Redhill  
Surrey RH1 1LY  
Tel: 01737 779 257  
[www.landscape.co.uk](http://www.landscape.co.uk)

#### Country Parks Network

C/o Natural England  
John Dower House  
Crescent Place  
Cheltenham  
GL50 3RA  
Tel: 01242 521381  
[www.countryparks.org.uk](http://www.countryparks.org.uk)

#### Landscape Institute

33 Great Portland Street  
London W1W 8QG  
Tel: 020 7299 4500  
[www.landscapeinstitute.org](http://www.landscapeinstitute.org)

#### ENCAMS

Elizabeth House  
The Pier  
Wigan WN3 4EX  
Tel: 01942 612621  
[www.encams.org](http://www.encams.org)

#### Royal Horticultural Society

80 Vincent Square  
London SW1P 2PE  
Tel: 0845 260 5000  
[www.rhs.org.uk](http://www.rhs.org.uk)

#### GreenSpace

Caversham Court  
Church Road  
Reading RG4 7AD  
Tel: 0118 946 9060  
[www.green-space.org.uk](http://www.green-space.org.uk)

**Royal Parks**

The Old Police House  
Hyde Park  
London W2 2UH  
Tel: 020 7298 2000  
[www.royalparks.org.uk](http://www.royalparks.org.uk)

**Community issues****Black Environment Network**

1st Floor  
60 High Street  
Llanberis  
Wales LL55 4EU  
Tel: 01286 870715  
[www.ben-network.org.uk](http://www.ben-network.org.uk)

**Groundwork UK**

Lockside  
5 Scotland Street  
Birmingham B1 2RR  
Tel: 0121 236 8565  
[www.groundwork.org.uk](http://www.groundwork.org.uk)

**Common Ground**

Gold Hill House  
21 High Street  
Shaftesbury  
Dorset SP7 8JE  
Tel: 01747 850820  
[www.commonground.org.uk](http://www.commonground.org.uk)

**National Society of Allotment  
and Leisure Gardeners**

O'Dell House  
Hunters Road  
Corby  
Northamptonshire NN17 5JE  
Tel: 01536 266 576  
[www.nsalg.org.uk](http://www.nsalg.org.uk)

**Federation of City Farms and  
Community Gardens**

The Green House  
Hereford Street  
Bristol BS3 4NA  
Tel: 0117 923 1800  
[www.farmgarden.org.uk](http://www.farmgarden.org.uk)

**Nature conservation****BTCV**

Sedum House  
Mallard Way  
Doncaster  
Oxfordshire OX10 0EU  
Tel: 01302 388 883  
[www.btcv.org.uk](http://www.btcv.org.uk)

**Wildlife & Countryside Link**

89 Albert Embankment  
London SE1 7TP  
Tel: 020 7820 8600  
[www.wcl.org.uk](http://www.wcl.org.uk)

**Natural England**

1 East Parade  
Sheffield S1 2ET  
Tel: 0114 241 8920  
[www.naturalengland.org.uk](http://www.naturalengland.org.uk)

**Wildlife Trusts**

The Kiln  
Waterside  
Mather Road  
Newark  
Nottinghamshire NG24 1WT  
Tel: 01636 677711  
[www.wildlifetrusts.org](http://www.wildlifetrusts.org)

**Royal Society for the Protection of Birds**

The Lodge  
Potton Road  
Sandy  
Bedfordshire SG19 2DL  
Tel: 01767 680551  
[www.rspb.org.uk](http://www.rspb.org.uk)

## **Sports and play**

### **Fields in Trust**

2d Woodstock Studios  
36 Woodstock Grove  
London W12 8LE  
Tel: 020 8735 3380  
[www.fieldsintrust.org](http://www.fieldsintrust.org)

### **Play England**

National Children's Bureau  
8 Wakley Street  
London EC1V 7QE  
Tel: 020 7843 6300  
[www.playengland.org.uk](http://www.playengland.org.uk)

### **ISPAL**

Abbey Business Centre  
1650 Arlington Business Park  
Theale  
Reading  
Berkshire RG7 4SA  
Tel: 0844 418 0077  
[www.ispal.org.uk](http://www.ispal.org.uk)

### **PLAYLINK**

72 Albert Palace Mansions,  
Lurline Gardens,  
London SW11 4DQ  
Tel: 020 7720 2452  
[www.playlink.org](http://www.playlink.org)

## **Cemeteries and churchyards**

### **Institute of Cemetery & Crematorium Management**

ICCM National Office,  
City of London Cemetery,  
Aldersbrook Road,  
Manor Park,  
London E12 5DQ  
Tel: 020 8989 4661  
[www.iccm-uk.com](http://www.iccm-uk.com)

## **Waterways**

### **British Waterways**

64 Clarendon Road  
Watford  
Hertfordshire WD17 1DA  
Tel: 01923 201120  
[www.britishwaterways.co.uk](http://www.britishwaterways.co.uk)

## **Accessibility and inclusive design**

### **Centre for Accessible Environments**

70 South Lambeth Road  
Vauxhall  
London SW8 1RL  
Tel: 020 7840 0125  
[www.cae.org.uk](http://www.cae.org.uk)

### **Open Spaces Society**

25a Bell Street  
Henley-on-Thames  
Oxon RG9 2BA  
Tel: 01491 573535  
[www.oss.org.uk](http://www.oss.org.uk)

### **Living Streets**

31-33 Bondway  
London SW8 1SJ  
Tel: 020 7820 1010  
[www.livingstreets.org.uk](http://www.livingstreets.org.uk)

### **Sensory Trust**

Watering Lane Nursery  
Pentewan  
St Austell  
Cornwall PL26 6BE  
Tel: 01726 222900  
[www.sensorytrust.org.uk](http://www.sensorytrust.org.uk)

## Heritage

### **The Civic Trust**

Essex Hall  
1-6 Essex Street  
London WC2R 3HU  
Tel: 020 7539 7900  
[www.civictrust.org.uk](http://www.civictrust.org.uk)

### **The National Trust**

32 Queen Anne's Gate  
London SW1H 9AB  
Tel: 01793 817400  
[www.nationaltrust.org.uk](http://www.nationaltrust.org.uk)

### **English Heritage**

1 Waterhouse Square  
138-142 Holborn  
London EC1N 2ST  
Tel: 020 7973 3000  
[www.english-heritage.org.uk](http://www.english-heritage.org.uk)

### **The Association of Gardens Trusts**

70 Cowcross Street  
London EC1M 6EJ  
Tel: 020 7251 2610  
[www.gardenstrusts.org.uk](http://www.gardenstrusts.org.uk)

### **Garden History Society**

70 Cowcross Street  
London EC1M 8EJ  
Tel: 0207 608 2409  
[www.gardenhistorysociety.org](http://www.gardenhistorysociety.org)

## Trees and forests

### **Arboricultural Association**

Ampfield House  
Romsey  
Hampshire SO51 9PA  
Tel: 01794 368717  
[www.trees.org.uk](http://www.trees.org.uk)

### **Tree Council**

71 Newcomen Street  
London SE1 1YT  
Tel: 020 7407 9992  
[www.treecouncil.org.uk](http://www.treecouncil.org.uk)

### **England's Community Forests**

c/o South Yorkshire Forest Partnership  
4 Park Square  
Newton Chambers Road  
Chapelton  
Sheffield S35 2PH  
Tel: 0114 257 1199  
[www.communityforest.org.uk](http://www.communityforest.org.uk)

### **Trees for Cities**

Prince Consort Lodge  
Kennington Park  
Kennington Park Place  
London SE11 4AS  
Tel: 020 7587 1320  
[www.treesforcities.org](http://www.treesforcities.org)

### **Forestry Commission**

Silvan House  
231 Corstorphine Road  
Edinburgh EH12 7AT  
Tel: 0131 334 0303  
[www.forestry.gov.uk](http://www.forestry.gov.uk)

## Rural issues

### **Field Fare Trust**

Volunteer House  
69 Crossgate  
Cupar  
Fife KY15 5AS  
Tel: 01334 657708  
[www.fieldfare.org.uk](http://www.fieldfare.org.uk)

## **Environmental education**

### **Learning through Landscapes**

Third Floor  
Southside Offices  
The Law Courts  
Winchester  
Hampshire SO23 9DL  
[www.ltl.org.uk](http://www.ltl.org.uk)

## **National government**

### **Department for Communities and Local Government**

Eland House  
Bressenden Place  
London SW1E 5DU  
Tel: 020 7944 4400  
[www.communities.gov.uk](http://www.communities.gov.uk)

### **Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs**

Eastbury House  
30-34 Albert Embankment  
London SE1 7TL  
Tel: 08459 33 55 77  
[www.defra.gov.uk](http://www.defra.gov.uk)

### **Department for Culture, Media and Sport**

2-4 Cockspur Street  
London SW1Y 5DH  
Tel: 020 7211 6200  
[www.culture.gov.uk](http://www.culture.gov.uk)

### **Department for Transport**

Great Minster House  
76 Marsham Street  
London SW1P 4DR  
Tel: 020 7944 8300  
[www.dft.gov.uk](http://www.dft.gov.uk)

# Appendix F Consultation respondents and acknowledgements

Alan Barber  
Bournemouth Borough Council  
Bureau Veritas Acoustics & Vibration Group  
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English Heritage  
Environment Agency  
Fields in Trust  
Forestry Commission London Region  
Greater London Authority Environment Team Noise  
Haringey Federation of Residents Associations  
Haringey Friends of Parks Forum  
Institute for Sport, Parks and Leisure (ISPAL)  
Kensington Housing Trust  
Landscape Institute  
London Borough of Hammersmith & Fulham  
London Borough of Hounslow  
London Borough of Newham  
London Borough of Southwark  
London Borough of Tower Hamlets  
London Borough of Wandsworth  
London Parks and Green Spaces Forum  
Metropolitan Police Authority  
Milton Keynes Council  
Natural England  
Play England  
Positive Soundscapes Project  
Rainham & South Hornchurch Green Belt Action Group  
Southampton City Council  
Transport for London Cycling on Greenways  
Walsall Council  
Woodland Trust

## **CABE Space enablers**

Annie Coombs  
Richard Copas  
Tony Fullwood  
Bob Ivison  
Nerys Jones  
Andy McNab  
Sid Sullivan  
Richard Welburn  
Peter Wilkinson

# Acknowledgements

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This report offers practical guidance to local authorities and their stakeholders on how to prepare, deliver, monitor and review an open space strategy. It draws on CABE Space's five-year history of support across England to those producing open space strategies. It reflects the latest thinking on the role of open space in tackling climate change and improving the quality of people's lives. It includes best practice examples from around the country showing the value and practical benefits of a strategic approach to open space. Developed jointly with the Greater London Authority, this document provides a single guide for England and best practice guidance of the London Plan. The guide will be of use to anyone preparing an open space strategy, including local authority planning and open space management staff. It will also be of use to local authority departments dealing with leisure, housing, highways, education and culture.

1 Kemble Street  
London WC2B 4AN  
T 020 7070 6700  
F 020 7070 6777  
E [enquiries@cabe.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@cabe.org.uk)  
[www.cabe.org.uk](http://www.cabe.org.uk)

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and the Built Environment

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Greater London Authority  
City Hall  
The Queen's Walk  
London SE1 2AA

[www.london.gov.uk](http://www.london.gov.uk)  
enquiries 020 7983 4100  
Minicom 020 7983 4458

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