



St George Green Space Investment Plan

'Green Space for Everyone'

Introduction

This plan is part of the Area Green Space Plan (AGSP) for St George and is linked to the Council's Parks & Green Spaces Strategy (P&GSS). It has been produced following extensive consultation including:

Consultation on the P&GSS in 2007

Stakeholder sessions 2008 & 2009

Consultation on AGSP Ideas and Options 2010

Workshop Sessions Summer 2011

The P&GSS can be seen at www.bristol.gov.uk/parkstrategy

The AGSP Ideas and Options are at www.bristol.gov.uk/agsp

The draft plan was discussed at the St George NP Environment Sub-Group meeting in October 2011 and adopted by the St George NP on Tue 6th December 2011.

Overall View of Green Space in St George - Setting the Scene

For the purpose of putting this plan together and for the 2011 workshop sessions green spaces in St George have been considered in four groups.

A St George Park

This is a large traditional Victorian park in the west of St George. It has a play area which was re-built in 2009. A small café kiosk installed in 2011. A wheels park which attracts people from a large area. A lake with a tree covered island. There are many mature trees and some more recently planted. Tarmac paths, benches and litter bins are set out as expected in a traditional park. There is a car park near the main entrance and some flower beds. Most of the grassed areas are on slopes running down to the central area with the lake, play area and site of the bandstand, which was removed many years ago. There are tennis courts and a bowling green.

This space is very popular and used by many different groups for many different activities. There

has been some conflict between users of the lake for fishing and those who are interested in wildlife and want to use the lake for relaxing walks.

As with many urban parks there has been some anti-social behaviour and some minor crime with a few more serious incidents.

B Northern Green Spaces

Hudds Vale, Plummers Hill, Meadow Vale, Rodney Rd & Primrose Lane.

These spaces are mostly informal green space and have had little or no investment in recent years. Meadow Vale has a surfaced area with basket ball hoops and full size goal posts. The entrances are generally not clearly marked. There are very few benches or bins. There are some paths crossing the site.

The main user group are dog walkers, but local residents also use the spaces for informal kickabouts and for children to run around. Meadow Vale particularly is used as a shortcut.

C Central Area

Meg Thatchers, Furber Rd & Colebrook Road

Meg Thatchers is two separate spaces separated by a privately owned area of woodland. There is some informal space but much of the sites are woodland or scrub. There used to be a children's play area on part of the site but this was removed several years ago.

Furber Rd is the other side of and adjacent to the busy Kingsway. It is a flat grassed area that could be described as a wide road verge. There is a hedge on one boundary. Local residents often park on the grass, others object to this. A separate smaller area off Furber Rd has some trees.

Colebrook Rd is mostly informal grass but it does have a run down play area.

Again the main user group are dog walkers and young people using the spaces as kick-about areas.

D Southern Spaces

Troopers Hill, Dundridge Park, River Avon Trail & Magpie Bottom.

This area is dominated by natural green space with many woodland areas. Troopers Hill Local Nature Reserve is an area with heathland and acid grassland and is one of the most important natural habitats in the City. There are also woodland areas at Troopers Hill and in the Conham Valley which forms part of Dundridge Park.

There is an informal space at Troopers Hill Field which also has a small play area.

Dundridge Park is a much larger area of grassland and this hosts four full size football pitches and one training pitch. There is also a car park and a small fenced children's play area. Adjacent to the car park is a pavilion for the use of the football clubs.

To the south-east of Dundridge woodland runs down to the Conham Valley, here the Stradbrook can be followed upstream to Magpie Bottom. This is another area of natural green space which spans the stream and therefore the Bristol / South Glos boundary. Magpie Bottom is owned and managed by South Glos Council.

The River Avon Trail now has a well surfaced path but suffers from unsafe road crossings particularly where it joins Crews Hole Rd for a short section and the footpath is on the wrong side of the road. Bristol City own the footpath all the way to Hanham Lock.

Walking is the main activity on these spaces (with or without a dog) Troopers Hill LNR and many of the woodland areas are also natural play areas. Dundridge is a very popular football venue and this can lead to parking problems. The play areas are well used. The River Avon Trail is part of a long distance route from Pill to Bath and beyond. It is also used by cyclists, many commuting to Bristol City Centre.

Strategic Aims for St George

The following aims are not intended to be in order of priority. A schedule of Projects will be put together to achieve these aims, see below.

Any works carried out will take due note of the Equalities Act and will use all reasonable means to provide access for disabled people.

Children's Play

The AGSP Ideas and Options document highlighted the fact that significant parts of St George do not have play areas within the distance standard of 450m set in the P&GSS. The document suggested that this should be addressed by adding four new play areas at the following locations:

- Plummers Hill
- Rodney Rd
- Either Meg Thatchers or Furber Rd
- Primrose Lane

Through the consultation process it has become clear that there is local resistance to the introduction of play areas into Plummers Hill or Rodney Rd. On the other hand there is a strong demand for a play area at Meadow Vale to be close to the nursery school.

There is demand for play areas at both Meg Thatchers and Furber Rd and it has been pointed out that although these spaces are relatively close geographically they are separated by the Kingsway which is a very busy road with traffic often travelling in excess of the speed limit.

There was very little response to any of the consultations from residents near Primrose Lane or Colebrook Rd, further consultation is needed before any decisions can be taken regarding these spaces.

Aim CP1

To create new play areas on the following sites:

- Meadow Vale
- Furber Rd
- Meg Thatchers
- Primrose Lane (tbc following further consultation)

The areas at Furber Rd and Meg Thatchers are to be complementary spaces to provide differing play experiences. It is envisaged that Furber Rd will be a more traditional type with a fence to keep it dog free while that at Meg Thatchers will have more natural looking features and designed to encourage the use of the surrounding woodland for play.

Aim CP2

To retain and improve existing play areas at:

- St George Park
- Troopers Hill Field
- Dundridge
- Colebrook Road (tbc following further consultation)

At Troopers Hill more facilities are required for very young children and the existing slide needs replacement. Dundridge Park needs facilities for children aged 6 to 12 and consideration needs to be given to moving the play area nearer to the car park.

Plans for all the play spaces will be the subject of further detailed consultation and will be incorporated into the overall management plan for the green space.

Aim CP3

Enhance the use of other green spaces for play where it can be included as part of other works. eg provision of 5-a-side goal posts on informal green space; consideration of play opportunities when planning tree works etc. The issue of dog fouling also needs to be addressed as part of any plans. (See also Aim SG9).

Aim CP4

All play areas to be provided with adjacent seating areas with, where possible, trees to provide shade. This could include picnic benches in some spaces.

Aim CP5

Larger play areas to have public toilets and a café / kiosk providing refreshments near-by. This is currently provided at St George Park, though the public toilets are too far from the play area. Opportunities will be explored for introducing a café and public toilets at Dundridge in the pavilion and the options reviewed for other spaces.

Teenage Provision

The main focus for teenage provision on green space in St George is the wheels-park in St George Park. This is a very popular facility attracting users from a wide area. New designs have been drawn up for the site by Body English with funding provided by the Neighbourhood Partnership.

The AGSP Ideas and Options programme suggested the provision of a Multi Use Games Area (MUGA) in St George Park. This was supported in the consultation but there was agreement that it should be located next to the wheels-park rather than on the disused bowling green. It was argued that the bowling green should be retained for possible future restoration and in the interim for use as a kick about area.

The Ideas and Options document also suggested installation of a MUGA in Dundridge Park, this was not a popular idea and there were many objections. It was noted that both Dundridge and Troopers Hill are used as meeting places by young people. It is also clear that the wheels park at St George Park is used by teenagers from this area.

There was however support for the introduction of improved facilities for teenagers at Meadow Vale. A skate park was suggested but it was agreed that the decision as to what facilities were required should be taken by the users to promote 'ownership' of the site. The facility would be located on the existing hardstanding area.

The following teenage facilities are therefore to be provided:

Aim T1

Wheels-park St George Park – to be improved in partnership with Body English

Aim T2

MUGA St George Park – to be provided adjacent to the wheels-park

Aim T3

Meadow Vale – new facilities to be installed, choice of facility and design to follow consultation with young people locally.

Aim T4

To provide additional teenage facilities in the south of St George if a scheme can be developed that has the support of residents. This will also need to take into account facilities provided in Brislington and in South Glos.

Formal Green Space

The only space in St George that is recognised as formal green space in the Council's P&GSS mapping is at St George Park. This means that the east of St George is deficient in formal green space according to the distance standards set out in the P&GSS.

The Ideas and Options document suggested that formal green space should be introduced at the following sites:

- Rodney Rd
- Troopers Hill Field
- Dundridge

There was little or no support for these proposals during the consultation and indeed many people objected, mainly on the grounds that the spaces should have a more natural feel. These proposals will not therefore be pursued.

The section of the River Avon Trail passing the flats on the site that used to be Butler's Tar Works (now Butler's Close, Butler's Walk etc) has many of the features of a formal green space and is increasingly being used as such. The river path along this section is now a good quality surfaced path. Some areas of the grass between the path and the river are being regularly mown by residents and a memorial bench has been installed. This area is currently shown as informal green space, with natural green space at the river edge.

There was also demand for a small formal area with trees, benches and planted beds to be introduced at Meadow Vale.

St George Park is a very well used space and there is support for more formal planting and for improving the existing park furniture. There is also strong support for reinstating the bandstand with one of traditional appearance.

It is acknowledged that a significant area in the north-east of St George will remain outside the 600m standard for access to formal green space set out in the P&GSS. Formal space could be provided at either Primrose Lane or Colebrook Rd. Further consultation is required to see whether this would gain support. It should also be noted that residents in this area are likely to be frequent users of facilities in Kingswood. Although it is outside the 600m target distance Kingswood Park may fulfil the requirement for formal green space for some residents.

Aim FS1

To manage the area of the river path adjacent to the housing at Butler's Walk / Butler's Close as formal green space, while continuing to acknowledge the natural river edge and the importance of the river itself for wildlife. Additional benches and dog waste / litter bins to be installed.

Any work here needs to take account of flooding that occurs most winters.

Aim FS2

To install a small formal space within Meadow Vale with seating, trees (eg flowering cherry) and sensory flower beds.

Aim FS3

To enhance the quality of the formal space features in St George Park including increasing the number of flower beds, ensuring there are sufficient litter and dog waste bins and maintaining benches to a high standard.

Aim FS4

To review the use of the lake for fishing and develop an action plan to resolve the current conflict between fishermen and other users and reduce anti-social behaviour around the lake.

Aim FS5

To reinstate a traditional style bandstand in St George Park

Aim FS6

To carry out further consultation to establish whether there would be support for a formal space being created at either Primrose Lane or Colebrook Rd

Aim FS7

To review the paths in St George Park. To improve drainage and surfacing where necessary. To review use of the paths by cyclists and to provide cycle calming measures where necessary. To provide some lighting.

Aim FS8

To improve the appearance of the entrances to St George Park to better reflect the park as a high quality space.

Aim FS9

Provide signage within St George Park to give directions to facilities and entrances. Signs to include interpretation, eg to illustrate wildlife and the history of the park.

Natural Green Space

The majority of the natural green space in St George is situated along the Avon Valley as described under Area D above.

Another important natural space is Magpie Bottom. Although over 50% of this space is in St George it is owned and managed by South Glos Council.

Parts of St George Park are managed as natural green space and the lake also provides a habitat for waterfowl. The island on the lake is valued by the community as a wildlife haven.

Meg Thatchers also has areas of natural woodland. The two areas here are separated by privately owned woodland and there is support for the idea of linking the two publicly accessible areas by obtaining access rights through the private area. This could increase the area of natural green space.

The consultation demonstrated that people value these spaces and want them protected. Improved management for wildlife is high on the list of people's priorities. There was a strong feeling that better links should be created between spaces and that while existing paths on the sites should be kept clear of undergrowth and maintained to easily passable they should not be tarmaced or over improved.

There are no proposals to change the designation of any of the existing natural green space.

Aim NS1

Additional natural green space to be provided at Meg Thatchers subject to negotiations with the existing landowner.

Aim NS2

Wildlife Management Plans to be produced for all natural green spaces to set out how the sites can best be managed for both people and wildlife. These plans to be incorporated into the overall management plans for the spaces and implemented.

Aim NS3

Footpaths in natural green space to be improved and better maintained, while retaining the countryside feeling where possible. Better links to be provided between spaces by providing new paths if necessary. Entrances to be welcoming but where possible to prevent motorcycle access.

Aim NS4

To improve the management of St George Park lake and the island for wildlife.

Aim NS5

All green spaces to be assessed to consider the potential for creating wildlife areas on parts of the space.

Aim NS6

To consider the potential for additional tree planting in all works to green space in St George and tree planting to be encouraged where ever possible.

Aim NS7

To work with South Glos Council to ensure that Magpie Bottom is maintained as natural green

space available to all residents of St George.

Informal Green Space

Informal green space is mapped in all of the green spaces in St George except St George Park. Historically these spaces have had little investment and maintenance has been little more than grass cutting and clearing litter and fly tipping.

Apart from those spaces having investment under the headings of other types of space described above there are no large scale plans for these spaces.

The overall aim is to give them a more 'cared for' appearance.

Aim IS1

To introduce seating, litter and dog waste bins in all sites.

Aim IS2

To improve entrances to make the sites more inviting and to address particular access issues. Where necessary barriers will be put in place to prevent access by cars and to prevent and discourage motorbikes while allowing access for wheelchairs and child buggies.

Aim IS3

To be explore opportunities for tree planting, while ensuring that areas used informally for sport are not obstructed.

Aim IS4

Footpaths to be improved and better maintained with better links provided between spaces.

Aim IS5

To review boundaries and repair / replace fencing as necessary.

Organised Sport Space

Investing in sport is a strategic decision based on city wide criteria.

Facilities for organised sport are provided at the following locations in St George

Football - Dundridge Park

Tennis - St George Park

Bowls - St George Park

All these facilities are well used, there are no plans to to change these arrangements.

At both Dundridge and St George the pavilions provided for the sport clubs are in need of modernisation.

There is a second disused bowling green at St George Park. While at present there is insufficient demand for this to be brought back into use there was a strong feeling at the consultation that this option could be kept open. The suggestion in the AGSP Ideas and Options for using this as a site for a MUGA was strongly rejected. It is possible that this could be converted for use for some other sport in the short to medium term.

Aim OS1

To improve or rebuild the pavilion at Dundridge. This could be part of a larger project to provide public toilets, a small café and a community meeting room. Consideration will also be given to improving the car park.

Aim OS2

To improve or rebuild the pavilion at St George Park. This would be part of a larger project to provide public toilets and could incorporate a café to replace the kiosk with a larger facility.

Aim OS3

To consider alternative uses for the second bowling green at St George Park.

Aim OS4

To ensure tennis courts at St George Park are available for all during daylight hours.

Other Issues applicable throughout St George

The following are strategic aims that apply to all spaces.

Aim SG1

To establish a network of walking routes between spaces with suitable signing / way-markers. This would also include links to spaces in adjoining areas and especially natural green spaces south of the River Avon such as St Annes Wood, Nightingale Valley and Eastwod Farm.

Aim SG2

To produce Management plans for all green spaces. These will set out the details of projects to achieve the aims of this plan and also address maintenance issues such as frequency of grass cutting.

Aim SG3

To introduce community notice boards and interpretation boards in all spaces to make local residents more aware of local events and also of the history of the spaces. Interpretation is particularly important for St George Park to show its Victorian heritage and along the River Avon to highlight the importance of the industrial history of the area.

Aim SG4

Work to be carried out in conjunction with BCC highways to improve safety of road crossings at access points to green spaces.

Aim SG5

To provide adequate public toilets for the most used spaces. Currently the only public toilets are at the entrance to St George park, these are to be retained. Additional public toilets could be provided as part of the improvements to the pavilions at St George Park and Dundridge. Options for other spaces are to be considered.

Aim SG6

To provide facilities for cyclists where appropriate including bike stands. The designation of any paths across green space as part of a cycle route will only be done after consultation with other users and where measures can be put in place to avoid conflict with other park users.

Aim SG7

To provide adequate and safe car parking where appropriate. Green spaces in St George are mostly used by local people arriving on foot. There is demand for car parking at St George Park, for football at Dundridge and from dog walkers at several spaces.

Aim SG8

To ensure all structures in green spaces are maintained to a high standard and are safe. This includes the two chimneys on Troopers Hill.

Aim SG9

To take action to address the issue of dog fouling on green space. The target will be for dog waste bins to be provided in all spaces. The Neighbourhood Partnership will also support any local or national campaigns on the issue and work with BCC to increase visits from Dog Wardens. In addition consideration will be given in preparing management plans to the provision of dog free or 'dogs on leads' areas. Such areas should not be restricted to just Children's Play areas. Children should be able to play safely in all green spaces without the risks presented by dog mess.

Projects to Achieve These Aims

The above aims will be implemented through a series of projects. Some projects will focus on particular spaces, some cover the whole of St George. They might cover one or several of these aims.

A schedule of projects will be produced to be read alongside this plan. This schedule will be available on the web and will be updated regularly to show progress. It will be a 'live' document with opportunities for new projects to be introduced and for projects to be split or merged to best take advantage of funding opportunities. The schedule will also be used to monitor spending.

Park groups will have a vital role in making this plan happen. As well as ensuring that projects have local support they are able to access funds from the Lottery and other funding providers that are not available to the City Council.

The Neighbourhood Partnership will work to encourage the formation of more park groups in St George.

For each project the Neighbourhood Partnership will ask for a volunteer 'resident champion' to help move the project forward. For spaces with organised park groups then the resident champion would be expected to be a member of the group.

The Champion's role will be to work with Bristol Parks and others to finalise the project details. They will also need to work with the Community Development team and the Neighbourhood Engagement team to carry out any further consultation and to seek external funding. They will also work with Bristol Parks to finalise application to the Neighbourhood Committee for the allocation of Section 106 money or other money devolved to the Neighbourhood Partnership.

Once funding is in place then the champion will work with Bristol Parks to ensure that the project is delivered in a reasonable timescale. The champion will give regular updates to the Environment Sub-Group for inclusion in the project schedule.

Setting Priorities

Projects listed in the schedule will be shown as high, medium or low priority. Priority will be assessed by the Environment Sub-Group as projects are added to the schedule, based on the feedback from the various consultations. High priority projects should take precedence when the Neighbourhood Committee considers the allocation of money, however, if sufficient funds are available low priority projects may be allocated money if this will enable them to take advantage of any external funding that becomes available for a particular type of project.

It is envisaged that money will be provisionally allocated to high priority projects at an early stage so that they can seek other funding in the knowledge that funds will be available. The sum allocated will be reviewed at least annually as the project progresses. If the final funding requirement is less than that allocated then the excess will be reallocated.

The tables below show the target spending profile for green spaces in St George both by area and by type of facility. This refers only to the allocation of money devolved to the Neighbourhood

Partnership not money obtained from external grants.

Total spending allocated to projects will be monitored against this profile. It is not expected that spending in any one year will match the profile. 'Overspend' will not prevent projects going ahead if funding opportunities become available. However, the Environment Sub-Group will look for opportunities to increase spending in any areas with an 'underspend'.

Spending Profile

Area	Target Spend Percentage
A St George Park	30%
B Northern Spaces	25%
C Central Spaces	20%
D Southern Spaces	25%

Facilities	Target Spend Percentage
Children's Play	20%
Teenage	15%
Natural Space	20%
Organised Sport	10%
Park Furniture	20%
Access & Signing	15%

Reviewing the Plan

The project schedule referred to above will be in the 'ownership' of the Environment Sub-Group and will be reviewed at its regular meetings. An annual update will be provided to the Neighbourhood Partnership which will highlight any issues that are obstructing progress.

This investment plan will be reviewed and updated at least every five years. The Neighbourhood Partnership can request an earlier review in the event of any major change in City Wide or National policies that impact on the plan.

Note:

This plan together with the percentages for target spend as above was adopted by the St George Neighbourhood Partnership on 6th December 2011.

Minutes of the meeting including notes of the discussion can be seen at:
https://www.bristol.gov.uk/committee/2011/ne/ne014/1206_mins.pdf