

Area Green Space Plan - St George East and West

Consideration of the value of Furber Rd Open Space prior to identifying it in the Area Green Space Plan for potential partial disposal for development.

Notes of meeting held 10th June 2009. To be considered as part of the Area Green Space Plan consultation process.

Introduction

- The Parks and Green Space Strategy was adopted by Bristol City Council in February 2008 with a clear aim to improve the city's accessible green spaces - providing new facilities, providing them where they are needed across the city and arresting the decline resulting from decades of under investment.
- One of the funding methods adopted by the Strategy was to sell some green space and reinvest 70% of money raised back in to improving more important spaces.
- Area Green Space Plan ideas and options papers, currently out for consultation until October 29th 2010, identify where potential disposal spaces are.

How were potential disposal spaces identified:

- The Parks and Green Space Strategy set out how potential disposal spaces should be identified. The minimum open space provision standards adopted by the Strategy were applied and a range of value criteria also considered.
- The value criteria, as set out in the Strategy are given below:

Community value

This is an assessment of a site's value to the local community based on both feedback from local people and knowledge of changes taking place in the area.

| Factor | Example of type of considerations |
|--------------------------------|--|
| Level of use | Current use and potential for improved use |
| Community views of the space | Does the community think it's important and why? Views of different groups will be considered. Is there a sense of community ownership of the space? |
| Community involvement | Is there a group or potential group who are involved in the care of the site? |
| Equalities considerations | Does it have any features that are particularly important to specific equalities groups? |
| Educational significance | Is it currently used by schools? Is there the potential for it to act as an 'outdoor classroom'? |
| Demographic change | Could it meet the needs of any changes to the local population? |
| Level of anti-social behaviour | Does the space contribute to an ASB issue? How much does it affect the local community? Is it possible to reduce it? |
| Events | Does it hold events or could it? |

Custodial value

These are values which are largely fixed and will only be affected by external influences such as new housing being built alongside. They are intrinsic values of the site

| Factor | Example of type of considerations |
|------------------------------------|--|
| Local context and significance | What other spaces there are nearby and how close? Would a community be disadvantaged if this space wasn't here? Is it a focus for the community? Is it a backland site? |
| Accessibility | How accessible is the site in terms of getting to it or around it? Is it part of a greenway/cycle route/PROW? Does the space offer opportunities for those with poor mobility which other spaces nearby don't, therefore disadvantaging them by its removal – particularly in terms of assessing its topography? |
| Landscape significance | To what degree does it contribute to urban landscape character? Does it contribute to important views and vistas both to and from it? Does it include water as a feature? |
| Nature conservation significance | Is it an important habitat? Is it protected or does it have protected species? Does it have veteran trees? Is it a wildlife corridor? Does it have a watercourse? Does it have geological interest? |
| Archaeological/Historical interest | Does it have any features of significance to the locality/city? Significant social link with the past? Is it protected or registered? |
| Legal status | Is it common land, village green or under an Act of Parliament? |
| Economic value | Does it contribute to or reduce property values? Does it add to economic regeneration? |
| Sustainability significance | Contribution to adaptation for climate change? Trees providing shade and temperature reduction? Good location to help control/ameliorate potential flooding? |

Applying the value criteria

- The process identified 'low' value sites, not 'no' value sites. All sites are likely to have some value under the criteria set by the Strategy. With identified low value sites, some of course will be of lower / higher value than others.
- The value criteria were judged holistically. That is, if when considered together there is not enough evidence that the site is high value to preclude it from being recommended for consultation, then it can be included. Should further consultation reveal such information then it is possible to remove a site from consideration.
- It was clear that different values could be attached to different parts of green spaces and this has led to partial site disposals being put forward.
- A scoring mechanism or value threshold has not been used.
- The value assessment is informed by comment or observation from a range of council professionals. It isn't necessary to speak to all relevant officers in each case. Officers approached included planners, highways engineers, water/drainage engineers, ecologists, arboriculturalists, archaeologists, the council's legal team, landscape designers, urban designers, sports development workers, pollution control officers and play officers.
- The process and information used followed a similar approach to that used by Development Management to help determine planning applications. That is, existing information regularly brought to bear on planning and development decisions is also used here. For example, value was informed by whether the land is covered by a planning designation which itself recognises importance, such as Site of nature Conservation Interest (SNCI). An ecologists view is then sought.
- External stakeholders were also consulted including community members. Presentation of potential disposal sites to community stakeholders drew a cautious response with a reluctance amongst most, but not all, respondents to endorse disposals. Some had a clear 'no disposal' perspective and some felt that a debate needed to be had about subsequent investment.
- When considering comments from community stakeholders officers were looking for the importance and function of a site to be distinct and unique from those of other spaces in the local area.
- The process identified sites or parts of sites that were considered low value, recreational open space but which have not been identified as disposal sites. This can arise for example because sites are protected by Green Belt planning policy, are owned by a third party, are compromised by the presence of overhead or underground services or are protected by covenants.
- The development potential of disposal sites would need to be further established through development plan or development management processes - that is, further investigations might reveal that a site is not suitable for development. For example an intrusive ground survey might reveal ground conditions that make development not viable.
- The Strategy set out a policy to "Develop and redesign some backland sites to provide frontages of houses looking onto the site - in so doing create a community focal point and improve feelings of personal safety". In these instances a disposal is informed by a low value assessment but the backland principle is the overriding factor. The positive attributes of introducing limited, and controlled, development are well known and in one or two cases this positive benefit has been a strong factor in putting forward a partial disposal.

Furber Rd OS value assessment

This assessment was considered by Parks and Estates officers with input from officers from Strategic Planning Policy and Corporate Property Services. Its use was to aid discussion. It was used together with aerial and ground photographs and also GIS information which allows layers of information to be added or removed in real time on a projected site map. On the basis of this information and the way it is applied, the PGSS Board made a decision that the site should go forward for consultation as a low value green space.

Area Green Space Plan - Value Assessment

Neighbourhood Partnership area: St George East and West
Site name: Furber Rd O/S
Date: 10th June 2009

| Value criteria | Evidence |
|---|---|
| Local context | This is a small (one plot) open space close to the city boundary. It is across the road from a larger (but still small) open space. The larger space has the best recreational potential. Although there is a general lack of open space locally this space is not needed to meet the PGSS standards for distance or quantity either now or in 2026 using population projections based on the SHLAA. The nearest significant space in Bristol City Council ownership is Dundridge Playing Fields 750m. However, closer and within S.Glos is Magpie Bottom - a large accessible open space. This is available for public use and will be proposed for inclusion into the AGSP as publicly accessible open space. The larger Furber Rd site is likely to be proposed to hold a children's playground and it is not thought that the community will be disadvantaged by the smaller site being declared surplus. |
| Accessibility | The space is directly accessible from the road. It is not part of a through route but a cul-de sac. There are no PROW or green routes associated with the space |
| Landscape significance | The site is a green verge on the highway and holds little landscape significance and is not designated as a Prominent Green Hillside. Landscape Architects have raised no objection. |
| Nature conservation significance | The site is not subject to any planning designation relating to protection of wildlife. Ecologists have not raised objection. |
| Archaeological / historic interest | There are no known archaeological constraints. |
| Legal status | The land is not common land or village green. There are no legal barriers to disposal, the council holds the land title. |
| Economic value | There are no known economic regeneration implications. |
| Sustainability significance | The site offers the opportunity to provide tree cover. There are no flood risk issues. |
| Level of use | No on site surveys have been carried out. The site has limited recreational use and the larger area to the north offers a more suitable and well used recreational space. |
| Community views of space | Stakeholders have advised of the larger site being used for kickabout very regularly. |
| Community involvement | There are no community groups connected to this space. |
| Equalities considerations | Informal kickabout often takes place on part of this site - this part is being retained. |
| Educational significance | Contact with local schools indicate that the space is not used for education purposes. |
| Level of ASB | Does not appear to have any serious issues. |
| Events | No evidence that events have been held on the site in the past, but the larger component may be suitable for future events. |