

Oxford City Council

Green Spaces Strategy

Summary of public consultation on the Draft Green Spaces Strategy

January 9th – February 21st 2012

Appendix 5



	Summary of comments	Response
Generic	1. Public Transport: There needs to be a greater emphasis on public transport and emerging cycle strategy	1. Additional information on the emerging Cycle Strategy and improvements to green corridors for cycling, walking and horse riding has been added.
	2. View Cones: The strategy needs to reference 10 view cones identified in Local Plan	2. View cones are now referred to throughout the strategy.
	3. “Blue Space” The strategy needs to mention the importance of “blue space” in particular the Oxford Tow Path and Thames Path	3. As part of the open space network as recognised in PPG17 inland waterways and river and towing paths are important and have been included in the strategy.
	4. Previous Strategy: There needs to be a summary of what was achieved and what should be carried forward from the previous strategy.	4. A section on the previous strategy is included.
	5. Green Belt: The importance and existence of the Green Belt needs to be included, emphasising the possibility of opening up links	5. Green belt is now referenced and its importance to the City of Oxford.
	6. Flexibility: Generic aims need to be flexible to local situations	6. This is noted
	7. Costs: Need to be estimated	7. Costs/resources included in action plan
	8. It needs to mention to increase green space planting can take place on roofs, walls, balconies in streets etc	8. This is not a Green Infrastructure Strategy, we are working with the County on the development of a Green Infrastructure Strategy
	9. Tourists and Visitors The strategy needs to set aims and objectives which targets the specific needs of tourists and visitors	9. Tourists and visitors needs are now included
	10. Diversity and Underrepresented groups needs more coverage throughout the strategy. The strategy could aid in delivering Defra’s Outdoor For All plan	10. Diversity and underrepresented groups now covered, including a reference to Defras Outdoor For All Plan.

	11. Lack of public consultation in preparation of strategy	11. Customer satisfaction surveys from 2000 – 2011 used as well as results from The Place Survey and Talkback Panel. The steering group choose to use this information to produce a draft to start the main consultation with, this approach worked as it enabled respondents to provide detailed useful contribution to the strategy
	12. Strategy is non-spatial	12. Further work was undertaken with URS and additional spatial data is now included with the strategy.
	13. The Strategy needs to reiterate relevant 'saved polices' from the Oxford Local Plan 2001-2016 inc. Policy SR10 Creation of Footpaths and Bridleways, SR8 Allotments,	13. Referenced.
	14. The strategy needs to reference Policy CS17 (Infrastructure and developer contributions), CS18 (Urban design, Townscape character and the historic environment) CS21 (Green spaces, leisure and sport) and CS12 (Biodiversity) of the Core Strategy.	14. Referenced.
	15. The document has an overconcentration on playing fields and parks to the almost total exclusion of any other form of green space such as fields and green corridors. Include an analysis of the value of the differing types of green spaces	15. Blue space referenced, green corridors strengthen and access to green belt included.
	16. Each park or green space should have a "value assessment" performed	16. In 2011 an asset audit was completed, but no value assessment was derived. Value assessment is now include in the action plan.
	17. How this strategy will be monitored and reviewed	17. There is now a section on monitoring and review that includes setting up a review panel with external stakeholders.
	18. Diagram on how the Green Spaces Strategy fits with other local and national polices can be improved	18. Diagram improved

	19. Oversight of omitting any reference to equestrians and their needs throughout the strategy	19. Equestrian needs have now been referenced.
	20. It is imperative that a clear distinction be drawn between profit making uses of the parks and community uses of the parks	20. Agree and we hope this is clear in the strategy.
	21. The whole attitude of the Draft Green Spaces Strategy with its 6 Aims seems to be that the Parks and Green Spaces of Oxford are solely for people	21. We have strengthened the section on biodiversity, sustainability and heritage.
	22. I have read through the full draft Green Spaces Strategy document and consider it to be one of the most useful Oxford City Council policy documents which I have ever read.	22. Acknowledged.
<p>Aim 1: To establish a quantity standard of green space provision to ensure that Oxford has an agreed amount of green spaces to meet existing and future needs of residents, workers and visitors</p>		
Aim 1	<p>1. The Quantity Standard: The standard is out of date, it needs to be reviewed taking into account new census data. It needs to be via urban village as well as typology. The strategy needs to be clear how it will meet quantity targets. At the moment it conflicts with planning documents.</p>	1. The Scott Wilson. (2005 text update 2007). Oxford City Green Space Study has been updated by the same company, now known as URS.
	<p>2. Allotments: The whole section on Allotments needs to be re-written to take into account:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The importance of allotments and how they help achieve all aims of the strategy • All the various benefits of allotments • A commitment to open disused allotments • A commitment to set the standard at 1:61 not lower it to 1:125 • Produce an allotment plan/strategy • Link with the Oxford Foodprinting Project 	<p>2. The Allotment section has been updated and comments acknowledged including a section on the importance and benefits.</p> <p>In accordance with national guidance the standard has moved away from linking to population, to accessibility. We have committed to working with the Oxford & District Federation of Allotment Associations to produce an action plan. We cannot commit to open disused allotments as explained in the strategy.</p>

Aim 2: To ensure everyone living, working and visiting in Oxford has easy access to open space		
Aim 2	1. Diversity and underrepresented groups needs more coverage regarding accessibility	1. Section strengthened.
	2. Aim 2 needs to make more specific recommendations about where access and connectivity to green space can be improved	2. The strategy is not site specific; this level of detail about accessibility to sites will be in site management plans. Connectivity between green space is now included
	3. There does not seem to be any action around identifying enhancements to the public right of way network	3. Now included
Aim 3: To achieve high quality green spaces across Oxford, including spaces that are nationally recognised for their quality and attractions		
Aim 3	1. Consultation has consistently shown that the three main issues to cause concern to respondents are <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • poor lighting • poor toilet facilities • poor security 	1. In the past consultation has shown that customers would like to see infrastructure improved including: Play Areas (These have been re-furbished) Toilets (Successful capital bid in 2012) Pathways and fencing (Successful capital bid in 2012) Pavilions (Successful capital bid in 2012) There is now an objective to improve parks infrastructure.
	2. Has an analysis of the standard of medium and small parks been done? If so incorporate in the strategy.	2. The action plan now includes site audits to be included in the annual monitoring report.
	3. It is not readily apparent what the definitions of small, medium and large parks are. It is also unclear how this objective relates to the Oxfordshire Rights of Way Improvement Plan, nor the Local Transport Plan. It is also unclear why the objective focuses only on access to parks, and does not consider access to green spaces other than parks.	3. This has now been improved and hopefully clearer in the strategy.
	4. In terms of standards, the council may wish to think about applying for Country Parks Accreditation in particular for Shotover Country Park	4. Now included in action plan.

Aim 4: To promote the central role that green spaces play in contributing to the city's biodiversity, sustainability, heritage and culture		
Aim 4	<p>1. Biodiversity: Biodiversity section needs to included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Include a paragraph on Conservation Target Areas (CTAs) and Biodiversity Action Plans (BAPs) and their delivery • Make clear that Port Meadow is part of the internationally designated SAC • The identification and eradication of invasive species • Sympathetic, riparian, habitat management is required for protected species such as otters and water voles • Work with all relevant partners, including the Environment Agency on the RSPB Future scapes initiative • Worrying decline of pollinators needs to be addressed • The bio-diversity of spaces should be enhanced, not just at Country Parks, Nature Reserves or SSSI's, but in all green spaces 	1. The section on biodiversity has been improved and strengthened and these points.
	2. More detail on native trees and a clear statement of how the City Council intends to increase the amount of accessible woodland in the city.	2. The Oxford City Council Tree Management Plan (Tree Policy) March 2008 – Reviewed December 2011 is referenced which includes more detail on tree management.
	3. Climate Change: Greater emphasise on how the strategy can help mitigate and adapt to climate change. Make clear the distinction between climate change mitigation and service adaption	3. Climate change mitigation and service adaption have been separated with clear actions on how the service can help to achieve both.
	4. Develop a countryside access strategy	4. The Green Space Strategy includes access to the countryside and it is not believed that we need a separate countryside access strategy.
	5. Cultural gateways such as community events, art and sculpture, music and debate are all available via our green space. Reference emerging cultural strategy.	5. Aim four now includes culture which provides further detail.
	6. Reduce the amount of grass in parks which is unfriendly for wildlife, and requires energy and labour to maintain, seek to plant wildlife friendly plants	6. While we need to balance user needs reference is made to improving the parks and open spaces for

		wildlife by changing planting, cutting and management regimes.
	7. Aim 4 to include the contribution green spaces make to the landscape of Oxford.	7. Included.
	8. There should be an Oxford Biodiversity Strategy and a Hydrological Strategy. The effect of flash flooding needs consideration. City urgently needs a Strategic Drainage Plan.	8. These are going to be part of the A Sustainability strategy for Oxford 2011 – 2020 referenced in the strategy. The Oxford Biodiversity Strategy is currently being written. A Hydrological Strategy and drainage plan is outside the scope of this strategy.
	9. A key aim of the strategy should be to drastically reduce the use of water in parks	9. A section on water conservation is now included.
	10. There should be many more dog bins and notices in green spaces that are not formal parks.	10. The service constantly reviews and welcomes views on where dog bins are required.
	11. The strategy needs an aim: To promote the important role that green spaces play in protecting and enhancing Oxford's historic environment and heritage assets and their settings. There would be value undertaking an audit of archaeological sites on council managed open space. There may also be value in relating the Historic Landscape Characterisation data to the open space and urban village maps to see what patterns emerge. Add sentence 'Avoid new planting on historic earthworks and within sensitive view cones'. add sentence 'Support the identification of further heritage assets in managed open space by further non intrusive survey'.	11. The section on heritage has been strengthened and references The Oxford Heritage Plan. Archaeological audit included in action plan along with relating the Historic Landscape Characterisation data to the open space and urban village maps.
	12. The Oxfordshire Biodiversity Action Plan has a good summary of the Lawton Review. The concept of "more, bigger, better, joined" needs to be captured, setting out a commitment not only to protect designated areas, but to sets out our commitment to identifying areas to create new habitats, enlarge existing ones, improve the management of sites so that they may become designated and joining them up in line with the Lawton review.	12. The Lawton Review referenced and the objective strengthen to include comments

Aim 5: To promote the central role that green spaces play in contributing to the city's health and well-being		
Aim 5	1. The strategy needs to reference the emerging health and wellbeing strategy being produced Oxfordshire County Council	1. Referenced.
	2. Provides the potential to increase the number of Green Gyms and health walks	2. Now included in the action plan.
	3. Expand on the Opportunities for and from the Education Sector. Add sentence 'Support Community Archaeology and History Projects'	3. Sentence included.
Aim 6: To support community cohesion and community involvement in the design and stewardship of green spaces		
Aim 6	1. Aim 6 widely welcomed	1. Acknowledged.
	2. This section needs a specific objective for customer consultation	2. An objective set on gathering good quality customer consultation included.
	3. Reduce the present bureaucratic burden on volunteers	3. Volunteers are covered by Oxford City Council if they have signed a Volunteer Agreement, completed a risk assessment and have a permit to work. These are a necessity for the safety of volunteers. Parks Development Officers will always help with paperwork.
	4. Countryside volunteers programme needs more support	4. Support provided for volunteers.
	5. It would be sad for the life of the city if the needs for status as a city with 'nationally recognised' green spaces takes priority over Oxford being a city where its green spaces are fully exploited to deepen and extend community.	5. The importance of parks and green spaces being for the community is evident in the strategy. The national standards are just a way of providing quality parks for the people and visitors of Oxford.
	6. Volunteers sometimes (whilst full of enthusiasm) quite often have little expert ecological knowledge and need council staff support and guidance.	6. Training will be offered where possible to increase the skills base of volunteers.

	7. Encouraging work with schools should be given high priority	7. Section on schools improved
	8. Aim 6 should include 'design' before 'stewardship as involvement in design at the start is essential to achieving community commitment and to engage stewardship	8. Included.
National standards	1. ANGSt standard set by Natural England needs to be meet and exceeded	1. Steering group and review panel to consider.

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