Green space strategies

a good practice guide

CABE SPACE

Contents

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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 3

Introduction 4

1. What is a green space strategy? 5
Scope 6
Aims and objectives 7
Policies, proposals and action plan 8
Monitoring and review 8

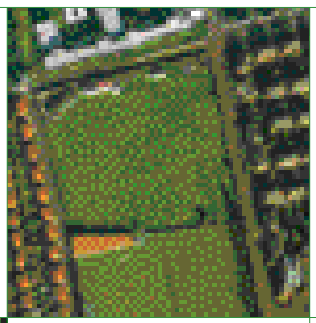
2. Why prepare a green space strategy? 10
Establishing a shared vision 12
Responding to changing planning policy and guidance 14

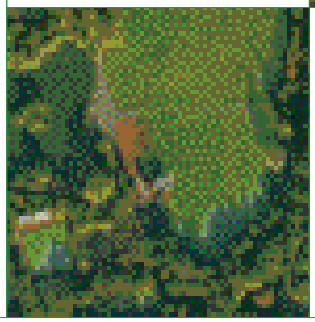
3. What is involved in preparing a green space strategy? 17
Stage 1: Preliminary activities 18
Stage 2: Information gathering and analysis 21
Stage 3: Drafting the strategy 30

Checklist: What is included in a green space strategy? 33

Annex 1 — Key references 34
Annex 2 — Green space audit methodology 35
Annex 3 — Community involvement 37
Annex 4 — Useful contacts 40

CABE Space and its advisory role 42





Front cover – *Courtesy of Simmons Aerofilms Ltd*

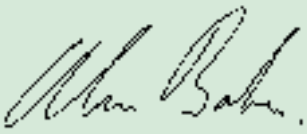
Foreword

I am very pleased that, at last, there seems to be a real interest in improving England's impressively large stock of urban parks and green spaces. Politicians, both national and local, are beginning to appreciate the value of these public places to the well-being of people living in our towns and cities. They can see that their aim of encouraging inward investment, sustainable communities and healthy lifestyles depends on high quality greenspaces, near to where most people live. No part of the public realm is so important to such a wide range of people; the park that provides a toddler's first taste of freedom should also be a welcoming place for the elderly to socialise.

It is claimed that around 2.5 billion visits are made to public parks annually. Yet these precious places are only a part of the tapestry of green spaces woven into our urban fabric. Recreation grounds, riverside walks, play areas, cemeteries and allotments are part of this rich matrix. But many of our parks and green spaces today are not very welcoming. We have seen a significant reduction in the resources dedicated to maintaining such places, and a decline in their quality. The challenge for politicians, planners and managers is not simply to reverse the trend of the last thirty years but to reinvigorate parks and green spaces with new features and facilities and with activity and community support that will put them at the centre of an urban renaissance, as well as at the centre of the life of communities. This cannot be done without a plan.

There is growing evidence that those local authorities that have published a comprehensive strategy are better able to make progress towards improving their green assets than those that have not. Not all strategies do all that they should, however, and getting them right, along with attracting political and popular support, is a major piece of work.

I am delighted that CABE Space has attracted some of the most knowledgeable and experienced specialists in this field to help develop strategic approaches that incorporate the best current practice, not least in involving planners and landscape managers in developing the local standards for quality, quantity and accessibility now advocated in official planning guidance. Making the case for better parks and green spaces has never been easy. It needs joined-up thinking to provide a platform for new partnerships and initiatives and to gain political support. CABE Space, part of the Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment, is carrying out its brief to champion parks and green spaces. I hope this guidance will help all those who share our vision for making diverse, attractive and well-managed networks of green spaces an integral part of our urban environment and the way we choose to live.



Alan Barber, CABE Commissioner

Introduction

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1 The Peter Pan themed play area at the Diana Memorial Playground, Kensington Gardens London provides a multi-sensory play environment for children of all abilities
Photography by Alan Barber

2 Cycling in Vondelpark, Amsterdam. Where possible strategies should coordinate with green travel plans
Photography by Peter Neal

Green space is a vital part of the public realm. Attractive, safe and accessible parks and green spaces contribute positive social, economic and environmental benefits, improving public health, well-being and quality of life.

The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) says, 'Public spaces are a barometer of a community. As human beings we respond positively and instinctively to places that are welcoming. We want to spend time – and money – in such a community. But all too often, we experience places that are unwelcoming, unkempt and difficult – or even dangerous – to use.'[1] The Government is committed to action to make public spaces cleaner and safer to help build thriving, cohesive communities.

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The standard of a local authority's management and upkeep of the green spaces in its care is a very public indicator of its broader performance. A piecemeal, reactive approach to providing and maintaining green space will deliver few, if any, benefits. High quality, well-used spaces are possible only if those responsible for their planning, management and improvement think strategically. Councils are responsible for producing green space strategies that set out the vision and the detail of the design, provision and enhancement of the parks and public spaces in their care.

This guide is designed to steer authorities through the process of drawing up effective strategies based on clear assessments of stakeholders' needs and wishes. It will help provide a blueprint for working in partnership with other landowners and managers and with local communities to deliver excellent parks and green spaces now and in the future. It is aimed primarily at local government but its good practice advice will be useful to anyone with responsibility for the planning, design and maintenance of green spaces.

The guidance draws on the principles of the Government's Planning Policy Guidance Note 17 (PPG17) and will help authorities contribute to national objectives for better public spaces. This is not just a planning document, however; green space issues cut across most local authority functions and a sound strategy will help achieve corporate objectives for improvement to environment, recreation, leisure and social regeneration. Strategic joined-up thinking about green space benefits everyone.

1 *Living Places: Cleaner, Safer, Greener.* ODPM, October 2002 (www.odpm.gov.uk) p. 6.

What is a green space strategy?

A green space strategy sets out an authority's vision for using its green space and the goals it wants to achieve, plus the resources, methods and time needed to meet these goals.

A green space strategy forms part of a suite of key council documents. It is a comprehensive, council-wide document, which should directly contribute to delivering the council's corporate aims and objectives set out in the community strategy. Other more detailed strategies, such as tree strategies and sports strategies, will feed into the green space strategy. Strategies should be succinct and easily digested but detailed enough to enable decision making, assessment of plans, resource allocation and the setting of priorities. Useful principles for producing strategies are set out by the Improvement and Development Agency (IDeA) established by and for local government in 1999, see www.idea-knowledge.gov.uk

A successful green space strategy should:

- support national, regional and local policy objectives;
- contribute to the wider objectives of the council including improvements to the economy, housing, education, health, culture, planning, transport, regeneration, biodiversity, the environment and the public realm;
- be based on a clear assessment of the local community's current and future needs and opportunities, and of design, management and maintenance processes;
- support preparation of the local development framework by recording the location and characteristics of existing parks and green space, remedying any deficiencies and making strategic links between networks of spaces;
- establish an action plan that sets out design, management and maintenance principles, and an implementation programme that includes monitoring and review procedures;

	IDeA step		CABE Space stage
1	Process	Agree a common language	Stage 1: Preliminary activities
2	Purpose	Agree what the strategy is for	Stage 1: Preliminary activities
3	Current Reality	Analyse the way things are now	Stage 2: Information gathering and analysis (assessing supply and demand)
4	Future possibility	Declare the way you would like things to be	Stage 3: Drafting the strategy (vision, objectives and policies)
5	Drivers of change	Identify the areas of activity that will deliver the future possibility	Stage 3: Drafting the stategy (action plan)

Figure 1. Steps to developing a great strategy

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- identify investment priorities to ensure that capital and revenue funds are allocated to meet performance standards;
- provide the basis for forming partnerships during the preparation of the strategy and as part of the long-term management and maintenance of the parks and green spaces, recognising that there can be no 'one size fits all' policy.

1 Fishing in Vondelpark, Amsterdam
Photography by Peter Neal

2 Cathedral Gardens, Millennium Quarter, Manchester
Photography by Alan Barber

1 Scope

3 Rugby players at Riverside Park, Chester-le-Street (Green Flag Award winner) *Photography by Kevin Gibson*

4 Cemeteries and other burial grounds should be included in a comprehensive green space strategy *Photography by Peter Neal*

It is vital to agree the scope of the strategy at the outset. The focus of this document is green space. The Government's planning policy guidance sets definitions for open space and clarifies the distinction between green spaces and civic, or hard, spaces.

Planning Policy Guidance Note 17: Planning for Open Space, Sport and Recreation (PPG17)[2] states that,

Open space should be taken to mean all open space of public value, including not just land, but also areas of water such as rivers, canals, lakes and reservoirs which offer important opportunities for sport and recreation and can also act as a visual amenity.

It is important to define clearly what the green space strategy will cover and to understand the distinction between a green space strategy and an open space strategy. There are many examples of strategies with subtle yet significant differences in their terms of reference. Some strategies focus on core elements of green space, including parks, sports grounds and play areas. Others are more comprehensive in their inclusion of other amenity areas, allotments, cemeteries and churchyards, woodlands and nature conservation areas. Open space strategies will also include civic spaces and other public spaces in the urban realm. This is the approach taken by the Greater London Authority (GLA) in their *Guide to Preparing Open Space Strategies – Best practice guidance.*

PPG17 and the final report of the Urban Green Spaces Taskforce[3] define the different types of green space and civic space that are common in urban environments. The typology used in PPG17 is recommended to provide consistency.

A comprehensive green space strategy should therefore include, as appropriate, the following categories of green spaces:

- parks and public gardens
- natural and semi-natural spaces (including wastelands and derelict open land)
- green corridors
- outdoor sports facilities
- amenity green spaces
- provision for children and young people
- allotments, community gardens and city farms
- cemeteries, churchyards and other burial grounds
- accessible countryside in urban fringe areas.

Although some of these green spaces are commonly covered by sub-strategies, such as allotment, play and sports strategies, it is good practice to reduce the number of strategies and draw them together under one over-arching green space strategy.

The geographical extent of the strategy should also be agreed at the outset. Ideally, the strategy should be developed in collaboration with adjoining authorities and its remit should extend beyond the local authority boundary to ensure it takes in significant adjacent parks, green spaces and communities. This is particularly important in more rural areas, where people may have to travel further to facilities. Consultation is important to identify which spaces people use outside the study area.

2 Planning Policy Guidance Note 17: Open Space, Sport and Recreation. ODPM, July 2002 (www.odpm.gov.uk).
3 Green Spaces, Better Places. The final report of the Urban Green Spaces Taskforce. DTLR, 2002 (www.odpm.gov.uk).

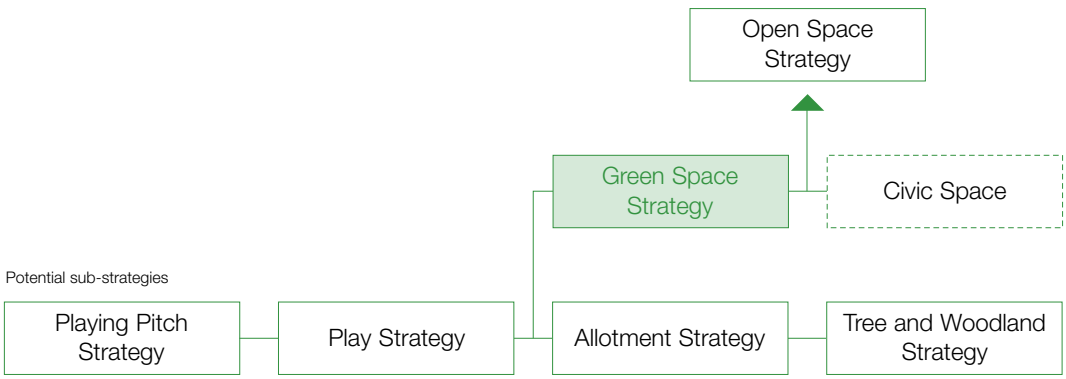

Figure 2. Relationship between open space and green space strategies

Aims and objectives

A strategy's broad aims and objectives are to:

- generate political and inter-departmental support for parks and green spaces and establish clear lines of responsibility;
- develop a vision shared by politicians, officers, key partners, stakeholders and communities;
- define the value and role of parks and green spaces in meeting corporate and community aims;
- create a comprehensive policy framework for the protection, enhancement, accessibility and use of parks and green spaces;
- make sure that green spaces enhance the quality and diversity of the environment, the life of local communities and promote civic pride and social inclusion;
- ensure that the green space network meets the needs of local people, now and in the future;
- provide a framework for resource allocation that maximises funding to support improvements from internal revenue budgets and external funding opportunities;
- create a framework for voluntary and community groups to participate in green space provision and management.

5 Allotments encourage healthy lifestyles, they contribute to the green fabric of urban areas and are managed by local people
Photography by Peter Neal

6 Westerpark, Amsterdam
Both the passive and active recreation needs of local people should be met
Photography by Peter Neal

Policies, proposals and action plan

7 Green space should respond to local culture. Mughal Gardens, Lister Park, Bradford (Green Flag Award winner) *Photography by Alan Barber*

8 Vacant and disused space should be considered in a comprehensive strategy *Photography by Peter Neal*

The strategy needs to be practical and deliverable with clearly measurable targets and outcomes. It should include a statement of policies and recommendations to shape the future planning, design, management and maintenance of parks and green spaces. The strategy should:

- establish a framework for capital and revenue investment priorities and activities; and
- include an action plan, setting out an agreed programme of activity with identified delivery agents.

The strategy must go through a full consultation process before completion and needs to be endorsed by the full council before publication.

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Monitoring and review

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The strategy must be kept up to date and continue to meet its aims, as well as fulfilling the council's corporate objectives and local planning policies. This means monitoring and reviewing it regularly. Updating the action plan annually in line with capital and revenue spending plans is recommended, with a review of the entire strategy on a three- to five-year cycle.

The strategy should:

- set out monitoring and review procedures;
- define performance targets against which the strategy and action plan will be monitored;
- relate to the council's Best Value review and the preparation of service and delivery plans.

Beacon Council for Improving Urban Green Spaces

The high standard of the parks and open spaces in Bexley has been achieved by consistent strategic planning, commitment by council members, and prudent financial management. In addition, joined-up working, responsiveness to the community and a corporate belief in the sustainable development of the local natural environment, contribute to the success.

Bexley Council has a clear and simple strategy that demonstrates leadership support and a clear vision of the role and benefits of green spaces, and how they could be improved. The vision is supported and shared by green space users, and is backed up with well thought out programmes and initiatives. The Parks Strategy has been in place for three years and is linked to other strategies including Local Agenda 21.

The strategic context for Bexley Council's approach to urban green spaces can also be found in its community strategy action plan, which outlines its corporate commitment under the theme 'Caring for our environment.'

It has strong consultation mechanisms, regularly seeking and taking on board the public's views (users and non-users of parks).

In preparing the Parks Strategy the Council undertook a wide-ranging public consultation exercise between July and October 1998. As a consequence the strategy emphasised community priorities:

- keeping heritage landscapes;
- protecting wildlife;
- consultation and community involvement;
- tackling basic problems (litter, dog mess, and vandalism);
- improving visitor attractions, information and events.

To keep in touch with users' concerns and interests, the authority repeated the main survey with the residents panel in Spring 2001, expanding on the original by including questions to assist in identifying linkages that impact on quality of life issues and the use of outdoor sports facilities.

For many years Bexley Council has actively encouraged and fostered 'friends' and conservation groups to help develop parks and open spaces and care for the local environment. It has also developed strong links with many public, private and voluntary sector organisations.

9 Bexley's Parks Strategy identified the need to improve visitor attractions and events. Hall Place Gardens (Green Flag Award winner)
Courtesy of Bexley Heritage Trust

Why prepare a green space strategy?

1 Well planned and designed activities for young people are essential
Courtesy of The Countryside Agency/Doorstep Greens

2 The 'green gym'; green spaces provide a healthy setting for informal exercise. Bitts Park, Carlisle (Green Flag Award winner)
Photography by Charles Hedley, Sue Oliver and Gill Burns

3 Green Flag Award holder Willen Lake Park, Milton Keynes provides a fully accessible landscape for recreation and wildlife conservation
Photography by Anne Robinson

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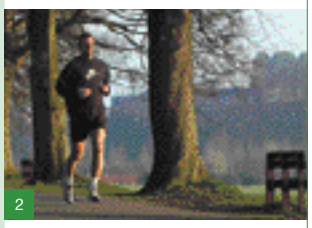
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3

Good quality green spaces are an essential element of urban neighbourhoods and make a profound contribution to the quality of life of communities. They offer many economic, social and environmental benefits. Approaching their planning and management strategically will maximise the value of capital investment and revenue expenditure.

A green space strategy offers an opportunity to improve parks and green spaces. Its benefits include:

- reinforcing local identity and enhancing the physical character of an area, so shaping existing and future development
- maintaining the visual amenity and increasing the attractiveness of a locality to create a sense of civic pride
- raising property values and aiding urban regeneration and Neighbourhood Renewal
- boosting the economic potential of tourism, leisure and cultural activities
- securing external funding and focusing capital and revenue expenditure cost-effectively
- providing a wide variety of cultural, social and community facilities, including seasonal activities such as fairs, festivals and concerts
- protecting the historical, cultural and archaeological heritage
- illustrating the contribution to health agendas eg. Reducing stress levels, by providing formal and informal recreational facilities
- providing popular outdoor educational facilities for schools and academic institutions
- improving physical and social inclusion including accessibility, particularly for young, disabled and older people
- offering alternative routes for circulation, including networks for walking and cycling and safer routes to school
- raising air quality and moderating extremes of temperature
- protecting and enhancing levels of biodiversity and ecological habitats
- providing environmental infrastructure to improve water quality and flood control.

Making the case for funding

Doncaster Council's Green Space Strategy has helped attract millions of pounds of funding for the town's green areas.

Before 2000 the town's various green space service areas had suffered from heavy budget cuts, leading to a decline in the quality of provision and a reluctance to adopt and develop new green space, even in areas of deficiency. Doncaster was not unique in this respect; the Urban Parks Forum's Public Parks Assessment 2001 identified this as national problem.

In 2001, Doncaster Council's Best Value review of active recreation services, which included all green space services, found that cuts in excess of £1 million, which represents more than 30 per cent, had been made to the budgets for the grounds maintenance, countryside and landscape teams.

The audit results showed the service was below an acceptable standard. Using the audit and public consultation results, the Best Value review recommended extensive changes.

The new approach to green space planning resulted in better local service delivery, the creation of Community First (matching the Government's agenda for Neighbourhood Renewal) and a budget increase of £850,000 thanks to the Fundamental Expenditure Review.

As a deprived area, Doncaster has had access to extensive external funding. Before the strategy, however, the Council sought designated funding, such as City Challenge and SRB, in a reactive way. Although substantial improvements were delivered in these areas, many parts of the Borough's green space remained deficient and neglected and often improvements were not sustained in the long term. A planned approach to green space allowed the authority to identify and fund priority areas in need of new or improved green space.

To date, all priority projects have secured the funding they need. Linking this with Section 106 planning obligations, it is estimated that more than £65 million will have been invested in green space provision and improvements by the Council or its partners in the area during the five-year improvement plan period.

Establishing a shared vision

4 Hands on planning sessions with key stakeholders contribute to creating a shared vision
Photography by Nicole Collomb

For local authorities, communities and organisations responsible for large land holdings, there are clear political and corporate advantages in preparing green space strategies. With the benefit of strong leadership, strategies can help to fulfil community strategies and enhance civic and social pride.

To create the shared vision central to any green space strategy it is important to:

- secure senior support, with a political champion at cabinet and chief officer level;
- work with the members of the Local Strategic Partnership to help meet their core objectives;
- form a cross-departmental partnership team responsible for preparing and then implementing the strategy;
- engage stakeholders during the strategy's development and ensure ownership by the council at the approval stage;
- integrate it with other corporate strategies, including health, education, culture, housing and social inclusion;
- appreciate the potential of green space to help meet other strategic objectives;
- involve the community at each stage of strategy preparation and in the monitoring and reviews.

A shared approach to strategic thinking

Bridgnorth Council's Open Spaces Strategy was as much about process as product. The strategy development process brought the following benefits:

- All services met around a table for the first time to discuss land management and strategic planning – resulting in a review of Section 106 and land adoption procedures. The project steering group included planning (local plan and development control), cultural services, countryside services, the GIS manager, an elected member, the works department, The County Wildlife Trust and the County Council.
- The strategy was linked to corporate thinking – it informed work on Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA) and Best Value. It also fed into the revision of the Local Plan and provided the framework for new Supplementary Planning Guidance on green space.
- It raised awareness of the need for strategic thinking in the parish and town councils (the major land managers in this rural district), by means of consultation, information dissemination and a workshop.
- It brought increased revenue funding for the countryside service.

A key element was that the authority took a partnership approach to resourcing the strategy, appreciating the input that it needed to fit a short timescale, working alongside consultants. This approach produced much greater ownership of the end result.

5 Involving a wide range of stakeholders creates ownership of the strategy
Courtesy of Bridgnorth District Council

6 Castle Gardens, Bridgnorth
Courtesy of Bridgnorth District Council

Responding to changing planning policy and guidance

7

Government guidance is increasingly focusing on interdisciplinary urban issues underpinned by a strategic approach to the provision of urban green space.

Towards an Urban Renaissance, the final report of the Urban Taskforce in 1999,[4] recommends a strategic approach to providing open space, which covers provision, design, management, funding and maintenance. *Our Towns and Cities*, the Government's Urban White Paper, published in 2000[5], acknowledges that 'well-managed public open spaces … are vital to enhancing the quality of urban environments and the quality of our lives' and identifies 'the need for a strategic approach to the management and improvement of the local environment' to deliver an urban renaissance.

The Public Parks Assessment[6] identifies that 'park authorities who operate a strategy are by far the most successful at ensuring that good park stocks continue to improve.' The Biodiversity Strategy for England also recognises the potential for green spaces to enhance quality of life through contact with nature close to where people live.[7]

The Beacon Council scheme[8] identifies excellence and innovation in local government. The scheme exists to share good practice so that Best Value authorities can learn from each other and deliver high-quality services to all. Round Three theme, 'Improving Urban Green Spaces', highlighted the need for green space strategies.

Beacon Councils – Principles for Quality Parks Services Delivery

The following principles underpin the parks and green spaces services of councils that gained Beacon Council status for this theme.

- Commitment to address the needs of all sections of the community including the young, older people, disabled people and other disadvantaged groups and targeting areas of deficiency and social exclusion.
- Strategies for identifying and achieving improvements to local green spaces. These are linked to corporate objectives and broader strategies and priorities such as community strategies, sustainable development plans, regeneration and planning.
- A consultative approach, working in close partnership with local people, local business and national partners to develop and implement projects for improving urban green spaces.
- Imaginative approaches to planning, designing and creating urban green spaces as well as attracting funding.
- A focus on improving management and maintenance to tackle issues such as crime and safety, dog fouling, litter, vandalism and graffiti, by using sustainable management techniques and materials, tree planting and soil management.
- Clear and measurable standards and mechanisms for continuous monitoring and review of service delivery.

4. Routledge for DETR, June 1999, p. 59.
5. Our Towns and Cities: The future, Urban White Paper. DETR, November 2000, pp. 74 and 67.
6. Urban Parks Forum, May 2001, p. 83 (www.hlf.org.uk).
7. Working with the Grain of Nature: A biodiversity strategy for England. DEFRA, October 2003, p. 58.
8. www.idea.gov.uk.

8

National planning guidance sets out clear expectations for local authorities to take a strategic approach to green space:

- PPG1: General Policies and Principles[9] seeks an integrated approach to the provision of green space within the planning system. 'In preparing their development plans,' it states, 'local planning authorities should consider the land-use requirements of various types of social provision,' which includes the 'effective use of land within urban areas … whilst protecting open space, playing fields and green spaces in cities and towns.' (paragraph 24) PPG1 will be superseded by Planning Policy Statement 1: Creating Sustainable Communities in 2004.
- PPG3: Housing[10] argues for a more sustainable approach to residential development, attaching particular importance to the 'greening' of residential environments. 'Greening initiatives can enhance quality, assist the permeability of land for storm drainage and contribute to biodiversity' (paragraph 52).
- PPG9: Nature Conservation[11] promotes the conservation of biodiversity and natural features, both in towns and cities and in the wider countryside. It requires local planning authorities to prepare policies for the protection of species and habitats through a network of sites (paragraph 15) and to encourage landscaping measures to enhance biodiversity on new or existing green spaces, including brownfield land (paragraph 19). PPG9 is undergoing a review at the end of 2004 to take account of recent legislation.
- PPG17: Planning for Open Space, Sport and Recreation 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). Importantly, this should be undertaken in advance of any proposals to build on or over open space, to demonstrate that they are surplus to requirements. This assessment should consider all the possible functions of open space (paragraph 10).
- The Companion Guide to PPG17[12] sets out ways that local authorities can undertake local assessments and audits of green 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).
- Regional Planning Guidance, outlined in PPG11,[13] sets out policies that affect the work of a number of local authorities by coordinating development across a specific region. Authorities should establish 'regional targets, where appropriate, for … strategic green open spaces in the urban areas' (paragraph 10.2). And, 'for this urban renaissance to be realised there will need to be adequate provision of suitable open and other green spaces, particularly in areas of high housing density' (paragraph 2.36).

Changes to the development plan process to be introduced under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Bill include a requirement for the preparation of a local development framework with increasing emphasis on delivering sustainable development. Planning Policy Guidance notes are set to become Planning Policy Statements as part of these changes.

The local development framework will guide the delivery of the spatial planning strategy for the area. It should build on policies set out nationally and regionally, taking into account local needs and variations. Green space strategies should contribute to the development plan documents and should become important supplementary planning documents within this process.

9. Planning Policy Guidance Note 1: General Policies and Principles. ODPM, August 2001 (www.odpm.gov.uk).
10. Planning Policy Guidance Note 3: Housing. ODPM, March 2000 (www.odpm.gov.uk).
11. Planning Policy Guidance Note 9: Nature Conservation. DoE, 1994 (www.odpm.gov.uk).
12. Assessing Needs and Opportunities: A Companion Guide to Planning Policy Guidance Note 17. ODPM, September 2002 (www.odpm.gov.uk).
13. Planning Policy Guidance Note 11: Regional Planning. ODPM, October 2000 (www.odpm.gov.uk).

7 Green space should be integrated within housing areas to provide important contact with nature for residents
Photography by Peter Neal

8 PPG17 assessments should include flexible sports facilities such as multi-use games areas. East Wickham Open Space. (Green Flag Award winner)
Photography by Alison Leyshon

9 Linking green spaces into a network promotes biodiversity providing movement corridors for both people and wildlife. Trafford Ecology Park. (Green Flag Award winner)
Courtesy of Groundwork and Lindsey Howard

Creating sustainable communities: greening the gateway

The Thames Gateway Green Space Strategy, published by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister in 2004, is a statement of intent outlining a high-level approach to the environment in which the more detailed sub-regional and local strategies and action plans for the Thames Gateway should fit. It provides a clear indication of the way in which greening the Gateway can help in delivering sustainable communities. It sets out the Government's vision for the landscape of the Thames Gateway and the positive contribution that the network of green open spaces should make to the quality of life for all those who live and work there.

The document promotes the role of an environmental infrastructure to contribute to the anticipated growth in the Gateway region. It sets the functional attributes including: shelter, a setting for development, landscape character, heritage, improved air quality, water resource management, waste management, accessible wildlife, increased biodiversity, recreation, health and fitness, social inclusion, education, training, employment and green routes.

It also establishes core principles for future development of advanced planning, knowledge and understanding, inclusiveness and integration, local character and distinctiveness, protection of designated sites, habitat creation, dynamic landscape change and community involvement.

10 Local landscape character as found in the Thames Gateway, should contribute to a functional and cohesive green infrastructure within which new development can be located
Photography Peter Neal

What is involved in preparing a green space strategy?

There are three broad stages in drawing up a strategy:

Stage 1: Preliminary activities – These provide a foundation for the preparation of a successful strategy and investment in these will pay dividends later.

Stage 2: Information gathering and analysis This work is essential to provide the objective and subjective data necessary to make informed judgments and agree priorities.

Stage 3: Strategy production – This involves preparing a consultation draft and a final strategy drawing on consultation responses, and gaining adoption by the council.

Stage 1: Preliminary activities	Outputs	Timescale
▪ Secure political support ▪ Establish a strategy group ▪ Establish arrangements for cross-boundary working ▪ Identify links with other council strategies ▪ Review previous work/existing data ▪ Define a preliminary vision ▪ Prepare a strategy framework report ▪ Define the scope of works and programme ▪ Identify resources ▪ Appointment of consultants	▪ Preliminary vision ▪ Prepare a strategy framework report ▪ Scope of work/brief	2-4 Months

Review and Sign-Off

Stage 2: Information gathering and analysis	Outputs	Timescale
▪ Review national, regional and local policy ▪ Analyse demographic characteristics of the area ▪ Establish landscape/townscape/visual and ecological characteristics of the strategy area ▪ Establish the spatial planning context of parks and green space ▪ Assessment of supply including site audits and assessments ▪ Assessment of needs and demand including consultation ▪ Identify local standards ▪ Definition of priorities ▪ Identify skills	▪ Area profile ▪ Site audits ▪ Demand analysis ▪ Local standards ▪ Priority projects	6-8 Months

Review and Sign-Off

Stage 3: Strategy production	Outputs	Timescale
▪ Update preliminary vision statement ▪ Prepare green space framework plan ▪ Prepare draft policies ▪ Preparation of action plan ▪ Consultation of draft strategy ▪ Finalise the strategy	▪ Framework plan ▪ Draft strategy/ implementation plan ▪ Final strategy	6-8 Months

Review and Sign-Off

Figure 3. The Process

Stage 1: Preliminary activities

1 A cross departmental working group will help steer the process and link the strategy to core corporate objectives *Photography by Nicole Collomb*

2 Gosforth Central Park, Newcastle (Green Flag Award winner), is highly respected and well used by the local community, and meets the aspirations set by Newcastle's strategy *Courtesy of NCP Community Photography and Amanda Watson*

It is important to set up the structure and the support necessary to develop and implement the strategy. This first stage will establish the political, officer and stakeholder framework to develop the strategy. The principal tasks will be to analyse existing data, review management structures and responsibilities, define a preliminary vision and define a strategy framework, identifying an agreed scope of works, a programme for strategy preparation and resources.

This stage involves achieving the following elements.

- **Securing political support**
  It is vital to secure political support for the preparation of a green space strategy and its implementation, monitoring and review before starting on the strategy. Preliminary work must concentrate on the strategic and corporate context, and make clear how a green space strategy will support the council's corporate objectives.

  Officer, key partner, stakeholder and community support is essential at all stages of strategy development and where appropriate the Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) should be involved from the outset.

- **Establish a strategy working group**
  Strategy preparation does not belong to a single council service – a joint approach is required between all relevant services. These are primarily the environment/parks/leisure/recreation and planning and regeneration departments. The group may also include representatives from other departments such as economic development, housing, education, health, culture and transport. A strategy group charged with the responsibility to prepare the document may also need to involve representatives from other councils in two-tier authorities. The group will need a clear structure and a project manager to coordinate its work and to report to chief officers and the responsible cabinet member.

- **Consider setting up a cross-boundary liaison group**
  The strategy will have to deal with cross-boundary issues. If a suitable mechanism is not already in place, the authority should establish a liaison group with neighbouring authorities to tackle issues such as flood management, shared recreation provision and creating wider frameworks for green links and ecological corridors.

- **Identify links with other council strategies**
  The aims and objectives of all council strategies should cascade down to the strategies under them. The green space strategy should aim to meet the relevant objectives of the over-arching community strategy. It should also relate directly with other core corporate strategies that may include culture, education, housing and community safety. In turn, the objectives of the green space strategy should be directly linked with more detailed strategies such as sports, allotment and play strategies.

- **Review previous work/existing data**
  A lot of baseline information is often already available although it may be held by several departments. The scope of available data, including condition and ecological surveys, data on supply and demand, resident/user surveys, capital and revenue budgets and management structures, should be identified to avoid duplication and help develop an understanding of current provision and information gaps. The review will help identify any new information needed.

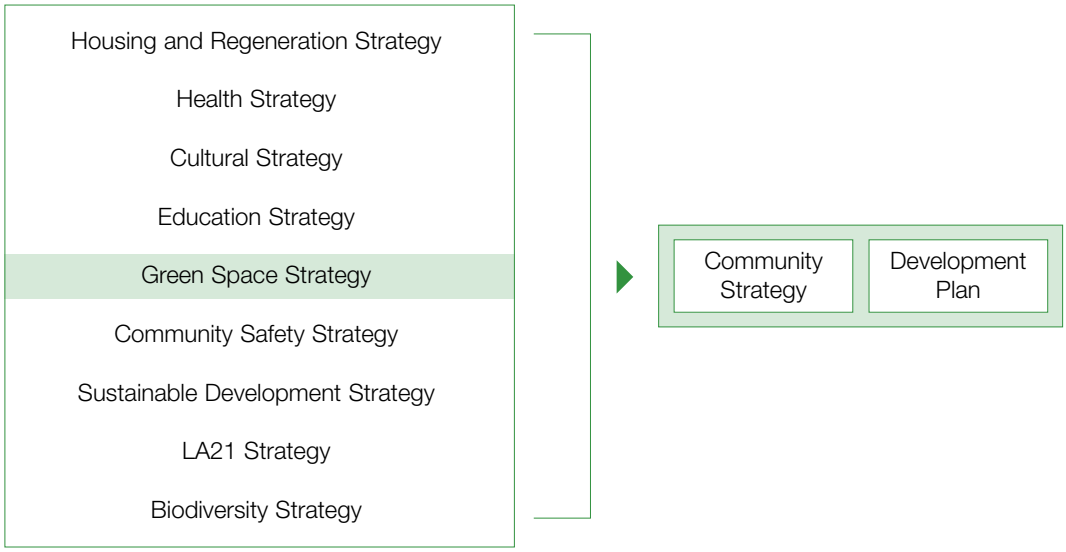


Figure 4.
Relationship with corporate strategies

- **Define a preliminary vision**

  At the start of the preparation of the strategy, a set of aims and objectives must be drawn up, along with a preliminary vision for parks and green spaces. The value of a focused vision statement is that it can define a collectively agreed long-term outcome that meets social, economic and environmental wishes, taking into account the physical characteristics of an area and its future potential.

  A typical vision statement will commit an authority to maintaining:

  A network of high quality spaces which enhance quality of life, build on and respect the best elements of the past, support sustainability and ecology, meet the needs of residents and visitors, engender local pride, make the best use of land and help to boost land values.

  The preliminary vision should include an overview of the current provision and key issues affecting parks and green spaces. A workshop for members, officers, key partners and stakeholders, informing the preparation of a strategy framework report, could be beneficial. Those involved should be reminded that this is preliminary work and that the findings will develop during the more detailed phases of the strategy's preparation.

Sample Vision Statements

The London Borough of Southwark's vision for its open space aims:

To develop the extent and quality of public open space in Southwark, in order to accelerate regeneration, encourage social inclusion, improve community health, enhance biodiversity, provide educational opportunities, and enhance the quality of life of those people who live, work and visit the Borough.

A vision for Newcastle's green spaces, developed by the city's consultative forum states:

Newcastle's green spaces belong to local people. They should be cherished, accessible, safe and clean – managed for the future and there for everyone to enjoy.

The London Borough of Barking and Dagenham's vision, prepared in May 2003, says:

By 2020 we will provide a well-connected system of attractive parks and green spaces that are managed and maintained to satisfy the diverse needs of all members of our communities, provide the context for continuing development and contribute to our social, environmental and economic well-being.

3 Public consultation should be handled by staff with the right skills and experience
Courtesy of The Countryside Agency/Doorstep Greens

- **Prepare a strategy framework report**
  The strategy working group should agree the development and production process and the scope of the final strategy. These should be outlined in a framework report, which should:

  - Define the scope of works and programme
    It is important to agree a scope of works and programme for the strategy's preparation and have it approved by council members. The programme will set out tasks and secure commitment to the resources and timescale. The strategy will normally take 12-18 months to prepare, depending on resource availability and how far the scope of work dovetails with other initiatives and Best Value exercises. The working group should report progress to members regularly and raise any issues that need corporate review and decisions.

  - Identify resource needs
    The working group needs to detail the financial resources, staff time and skills required to carry out the strategy. It may be possible to secure external funding for specific activities; for example, regeneration funds may contribute to area-based audit and consultation exercises. It is important to consider the availability of in-house skills and knowledge at the outset and identify any gaps. A joint approach with relevant service departments may help in meeting any skills shortfall. For example, the planning department may be able to contribute Geographical Information System (GIS) mapping skills and demographic analysis, while direct services may be able to outline practical issues that will need to be considered within the action plan.

    Skills needed to produce a comprehensive green space strategy may include:

    - project management
    - urban design and planning
    - landscape architecture
    - ecology and conservation
    - public consultation
    - financial management
    - landscape management.

  - Consider appointing consultants
    It is worth considering a combination of in-house resources and consultants as this can help shorten timescales, enhance internal skills and contribute an external view to the process. Consultants may be appointed to undertake significant or discrete tasks set out in the strategy framework, but should form an integrated part of the strategy group to ensure that a local knowledge base and wider expertise are shared openly across the entire team.

Stage 2: Information gathering and analysis

This second stage of preparing the strategy involves information gathering and analysis, in line with the requirements of PPG17. The most effective way to collate this information is via a geographic information system (GIS), which is a particularly useful tool for recording information and analysing data having layers of common reference. Data sets should include:

- national, regional and local policy context;
- demographic profile of the population and its distribution;
- landscape/townscape/visual characteristics of the area;
- ecological resources including designations;
- heritage resources including designations;
- spatial planning context including major development and regeneration initiatives and public transport/cycle/pedestrian networks;
- supply of parks and green space, including accessibility, quantity and quality;
- demand for parks and green space;
- existing levels of capital and revenue expenditure allocated to specific green spaces.

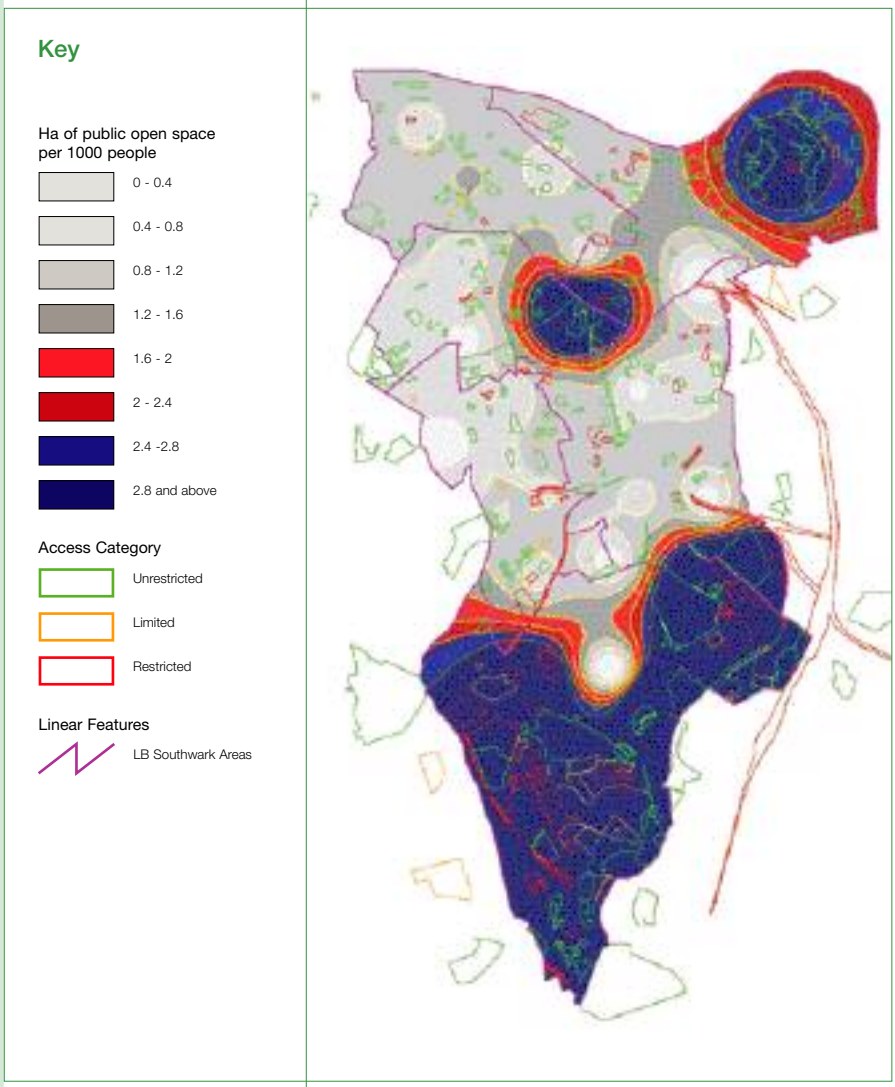
This data will help to set local standards for the type, location, quantity, quality and accessibility of parks and green spaces, to identify gaps in provision and to define priorities for investment.

Information should be gathered and compiled in line with emerging national objectives for data compatibility as well as matching any in-house adopted formats. Further advice on the application of GIS is provided in section 10.3 of the PPG17 Companion Guide.

The information gathering stage of the work should draw together the following elements.

- **National, regional and local policy**
  Do a review of national, regional and local planning objectives in order to demonstrate potential links between these and other corporate strategies and initiatives addressing, for example, the economy, health, education and the environment.

4 The green space of Greenwich in London includes a designated World Heritage site *Courtesy of Simmons Aerofilms Ltd*



Map 1. London Borough of Southwark, open space strategy, open space per 1000 population

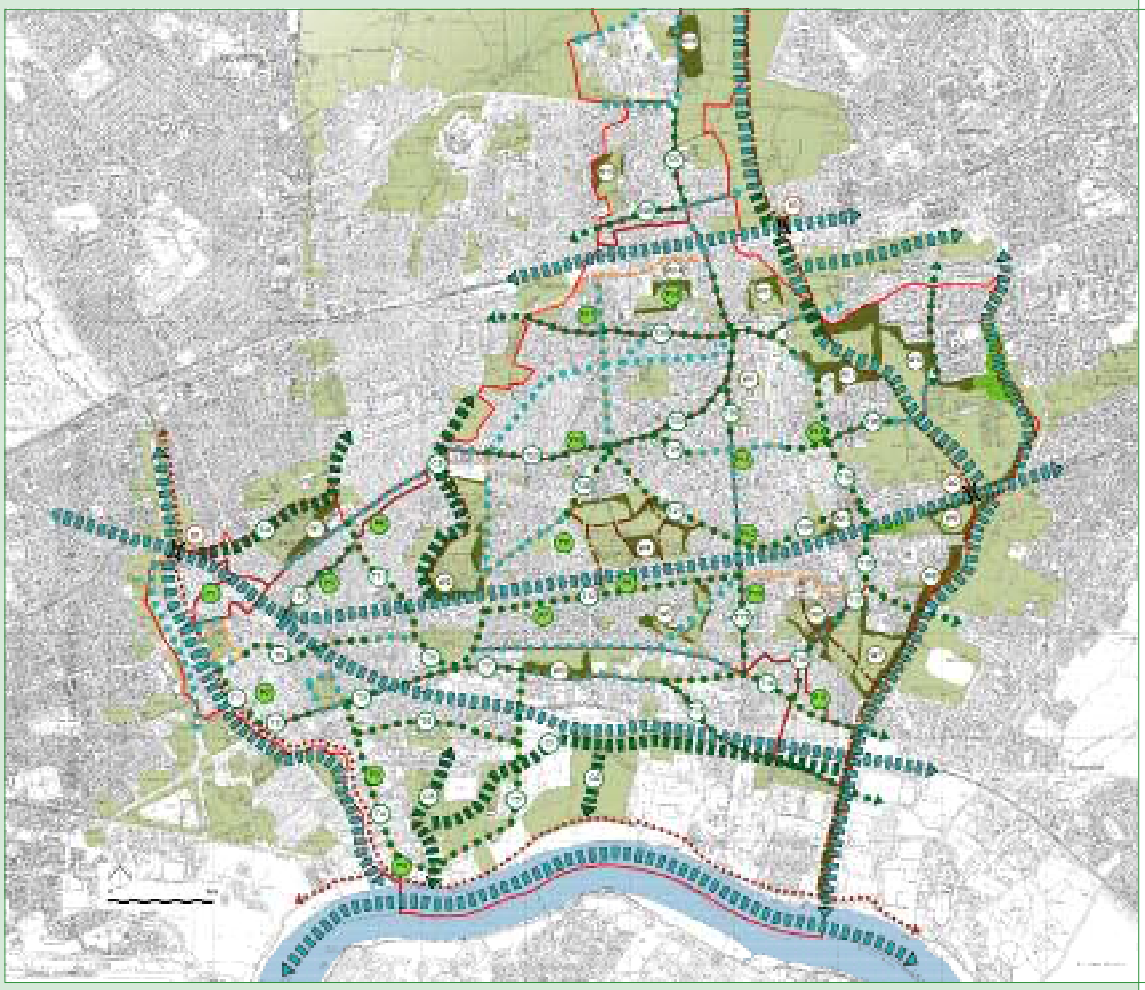
This plan produced in a Geographic Information System clearly illustrates areas of high and low open space provision
Courtesy of Scott Wilson

- **Demographic profile**
  Produce a demographic profile of the communities in the strategy area, ward by ward, based on the 2001 Census. The profile should include the following information:
  - population and age structure
  - percentage of children, retired, people with disabilities
  - ethnicity
  - percentage of people (or households) without cars
  - percentage of people without gardens
  - deprivation indices

  If the authority does not hold full population and socio-economic statistics, they are available from National Statistics Online at www.statistics.gov.uk

- **Landscape/townscape/visual characteristics**
  List what is distinctive about the strategy area, based on an understanding of its historic development and areas or features of historic significance, defining its character and identifying areas for protection or enhancement. Note any potential for the creation of new character areas. One method of identifying the character and assessing the qualities of place is the Placecheck approach. Developed by the Urban Design Alliance (UDAL), it helps identify improvements needed in an area and focuses people on working together to achieve them. This is an effective way to empower local residents to make a difference to their environment. Information on Placecheck can be found at www.udal.org.uk/placecheck.htm

Landscape character assessment



Map 2. London Borough of Barking and Dagenham Parks and Green Spaces Strategy

Proposed outline landscape framework and parks and green spaces development strategy
Courtesy of Landscape Design Associates (Based upon the Ordnance Survey map with the permission of the controller of H.M.S.O. © Crown Copyright. Reproduced under Licence No. 189189)

The Borough began the Strategy by preparing a scoping study that drew together existing data in the Borough and identified users' needs and aspirations. This document was used to justify funding for the preparation of the Strategy and for employing consultants.

The Strategy is one of the first of a new breed of parks and green space strategies in scope, process, content and approach. It re-established the links between borough-wide spatial planning for green spaces and the delivery of physical improvements, thanks to a broad, cross-departmental approach combining planning, design, development, delivery, management, maintenance and funding of parks and green spaces. It includes:

- a review of the national, regional and local policy context, and of management and funding options;
- a landscape framework plan with a parks and green space development plan;
- a quality audit of parks and green space;
- a vision statement;
- strategic goals;
- an implementation and delivery strategy; and
- monitoring and review procedures.

The landscape framework plan enables park and green space issues to be handled strategically at the planning level through to the detailed level of green space management. It is intended to encourage a transformation of the overall environmental quality - the 'greening' - of the Borough, by connecting the network of parks and green spaces, river corridors, woodland and tree lined streets, closely associated with a comprehensive footpath and cycle network.

5

- **Ecological resources**
  Record biodiversity and ecological characteristics and identify areas for protection or enhancement and the creation of new areas of biodiversity. Habitats, species and sites of nature conservation importance are well-documented for most areas and should be available from local Biological Record Centres and/or Wildlife Trusts. These data sets should be integral to the local biodiversity action plan (LBAP). Initial guidance on the availability of LBAPs can be obtained from the UK Biodiversity Partnership at www.ukbap.org.uk

- **Spatial planning context**
  Prepare a land cover plan, preferably in GIS, with information on existing and proposed land uses including river corridors, lakes, ponds, wetlands, grasslands, woodlands in public and/or private ownership and human use features such as agricultural land, recreational land, residential, employment and industrial areas, roads, footpaths and cycle ways, as well as key development sites and regeneration areas. The green space typology contained in PPG17 is recommended and will ensure consistency with the Government's work to develop generalised land use data. ODPM can supply information on the National Land Use Database, details of which can be found at www.nlud.org.uk

- **Supply of parks and green space**
  A desk-top study will provide a useful starting point for understanding the provision of parks and green space. Document the type, size and distribution of existing parks and green space using the recommendations of PPG17 as a starting point (Annex D of PPG17 gives audit guidelines), and pick out areas of deficiency and poor accessibility. This analysis should help set local standards.

  A site-based qualitative evaluation of existing parks and green space should also be carried out using a tailor-made assessment proforma. The amount of information collected will be dependent on timescale and the resources available. It is important to define an appropriate content and level of detail for these audits to ensure that data collection is not unnecessarily detailed or time-consuming. It may be useful to test the audit methodology in a pilot area before proceeding across the entire strategy area. As a minimum, audits should include information on size, facilities, quality, function (recreational and non-recreational), levels of use and accessibility.

  Annex 2 provides further information on audit methodology and content.

  Many councils will have carried out ecological site audits to meet the requirements of PPG9, to identify non-statutory sites of nature conservation interest to complement the national network of designated sites. This information may be incorporated into the wider green space audit.

  Final results should be published in both bar-chart form and GIS map format for ease of understanding and use.

  If the authority does not have up-to-date sub-strategies for sports or play, audits of these facilities are also needed. Playing fields and sports facilities audits should be carried out with reference to PPG17 and Sport England guidelines.[14] This process must identify areas of under- and over-supply and the quality of facilities, along with current and predicted demand.

- **Demand for parks and green space**
  Public consultation to assess demand for parks and green space should be planned carefully. It should provide an overview of public attitudes to inform the strategy and give a baseline for performance measurement. The consultation process should also be seen as part of a wider process of community involvement in green space regeneration.

  The consultation plan should start with a review of any previous consultation and existing consultative mechanisms, such as residents panels, user groups and Local Strategic Partnerships. This will aid decisions on effective consultation techniques and timing, and help focus consultation on key issues or areas. Consultation must include those who do not currently use parks and green spaces, and those who may be hard to reach through usual feedback methods, such as older people, young people, people with disabilities and ethnic minority groups.

  Where there is little baseline data about community attitudes to green space issues, it may be cost- and time-effective to add questions on parks and green space to currently programmed surveys such as those used by councils to help set budget priorities. Alternatively, a more focused approach could be to commission a green space survey by telephone or through the local press.

  More qualitative methods, such as focus groups or workshops, will help to explore issues in more detail. Whatever consultation methods are used, it is important to include information about what will happen next and how people can continue to be involved. There is more guidance on community involvement in Annex 3.

- **Existing funding and management regimes**
  The strategy process provides an opportunity to review existing funding and management regimes.

  Current internal and external funding should be assessed. Levels and distribution of existing revenue and capital expenditure should be identified across the strategy area. It is also important to identify potential new or alternative funding sources including developer contributions from Section 106 agreements. Annex 4 lists potential funding organisations.

Individual site management plans are essential for major parks and green spaces and the strategy should identify which sites have dedicated plans and which will need them in the future. The procurement process for grounds maintenance contracts should also be reviewed alongside specific management activities. The CABE Space publication *Green space management plans – a good practice guide* will assist the process.

When the information-gathering stage is complete, the next step is to analyse the data. The analysis stage should include the following elements.

14. Towards a Level Playing Field: A guide to the production of playing field strategies. Sport England, 2002 (www.sportengland.org).

5 Wildlife and formal parks need not be mutually exclusive; water features in particular, will attract a variety of wildlife, even in more formal settings *Photography by Peter Neal*

6 Green Pennant Award winner Old Bakehouse Millennium Green, Morpeth: Community involvement at an early stage in strategy planning will help ensure policies meet the users' needs *Photography by Jim Soames, Brian Harle and Bridget Gubbins*

7 Consultation should be inclusive and engage a diverse range of users *Courtesy of The Countryside Agency/Doorstep Greens*

The impact of community involvement

Stockport Council's Valuing Green Space Strategy recognises that in order for green space management to develop and be responsive to people's current and future needs, there must be involvement and support from the community.

The Valuing Green Space Strategy sets down the authority's commitment to 'extensive consultation with customers, community action planning and the building of effective partnerships with communities.'

Stockport's Parks and Recreation Service has a dedicated community development team whose role is to develop and support local involvement in green space management. The team links up with over thirty 'friends' groups, numerous groups of young people and the Stockport Communities in Green Space Forum.

All of these groups have proven that partnerships with the community promote benefits such as increased ownership and sustainability, a more positive use of green space, enhanced facilities and services, attraction of funding and resources, and continuous improvement of green space and its management.

The Valuing Green Space Strategy's focus on community involvement does not only inform the community development team's work. It has also promoted a community development approach in all functions of service delivery. A key example of this was the realignment of the Parks and Recreation Service with the Grounds Maintenance operations to form a dedicated management structure for parks and open spaces. This has created area-based teams to manage and maintain green space that provide direct assistance to users, both individuals and groups.

8 Brinnington Park, Stockport (Green Flag Award winner), provides a wide range of facilities that respond to local needs, particularly those of young people
Courtesy of Stockport Metropolitan Borough Council

Setting local standards

Local standards should be set for quantity, quality and accessibility of green space, based on demographic data, and from the assessment of supply and demand. Standards will serve as a yardstick, as a basis for benchmarking and to assess the need for on-site green space provision in a proposed development (usually achieved using a planning condition) or the need for a developer to contribute to the provision or enhancement of off-site spaces or facilities (usually achieved through a Section 106 agreement). Local standards can also be used to highlight deficiencies in quality and quantity and to help forecast future needs and priorities.

Quantity standards

These are used to assess the amount of green space needed in an area. Local standards for quantity can be measured against, but may not match, national guidance. This includes: the National Playing Field Association's (NPFA) Six Acre Standard for active sport and recreation; Sport England's Towards a Level Playing Field methodology that assesses potential playing-pitch demand; and English Nature's ANGSt model for defining standards for accessible natural green space.

Quality standards

These determine, as objectively as possible, whether existing green spaces need improving. They are aspirational for existing provision and requirements for new provision. A national measure of quality in parks and open spaces is provided by the Green Flag Award scheme. Councils are strongly recommended to manage all of their parks and green spaces in accordance with the Green Flag standard, as outlined in Raising the Standard, the guide to the Green Flag Award scheme (updated 2004) available at www.greenflagaward.org.uk

Best Value Performance Indicator 199 (BV199) provides a recognised methodology for assessing standards of maintenance and cleanliness. Details at www.leq-bvpi.com

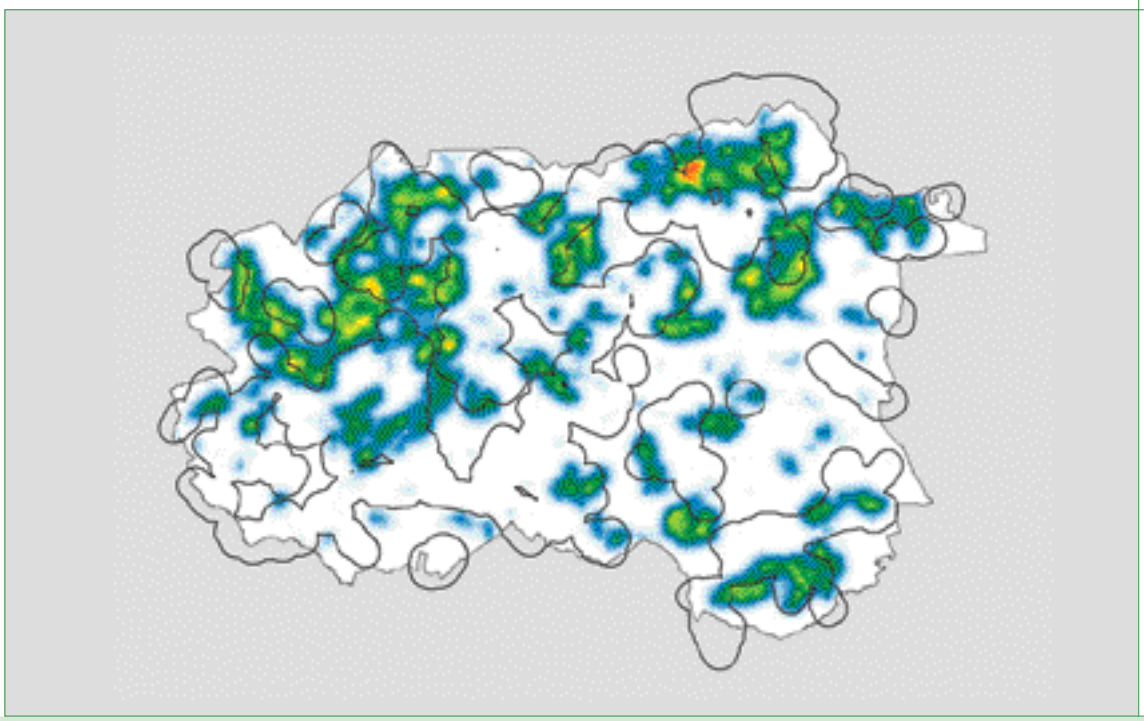
Accessibility standards

These are locally defined distance thresholds, used to set the catchment area for each type of green space. The London Planning Advisory Committee's (LPAC) Open Space Hierarchy of park provision sets distance thresholds for defined green space types, and these should be adapted to fit the local context outside London. Public consultation should inform local standards, to ensure local validity.

Detailed advice on applying provision standards and assessing values is set out in the PPG17 Companion Guide (chapters 7 and 10).

Map 3. Wakefield Metropolitan District Council: Natural areas greater than 2 hectares with a 500 metre catchment

Geographic Information Systems can clearly identify accessibility to green space in relation to population density
Courtesy of Wakefield Metropolitan District Council Parks and Public Realm Section



- **Establishing priorities**
  Analysis of all the data should lead to priority setting, including improving existing green spaces, providing new spaces and scheduling investment in parks and green spaces. A bespoke scoring system will help identify the requirements and opportunities to improve existing spaces. The priorities will be driven partly by political imperatives, corporate objectives set in other strategies, availability and allocation of funding, community needs, and development and regeneration opportunities. The value of each space is also an important consideration in setting priorities.

- **Value**
  The value of green space can be assessed by considering the site context, the level and type of use and the wider benefits the space provides. An assessment of value in relation to quality, quantity and accessibility helps set priorities for improvement, protection or disposal of green space. A site with high value but of low quality, for instance, could become a priority for improvement and one with high value and high quality should be protected. However, a site of low value and quality with poor accessibility may be best considered for another purpose.

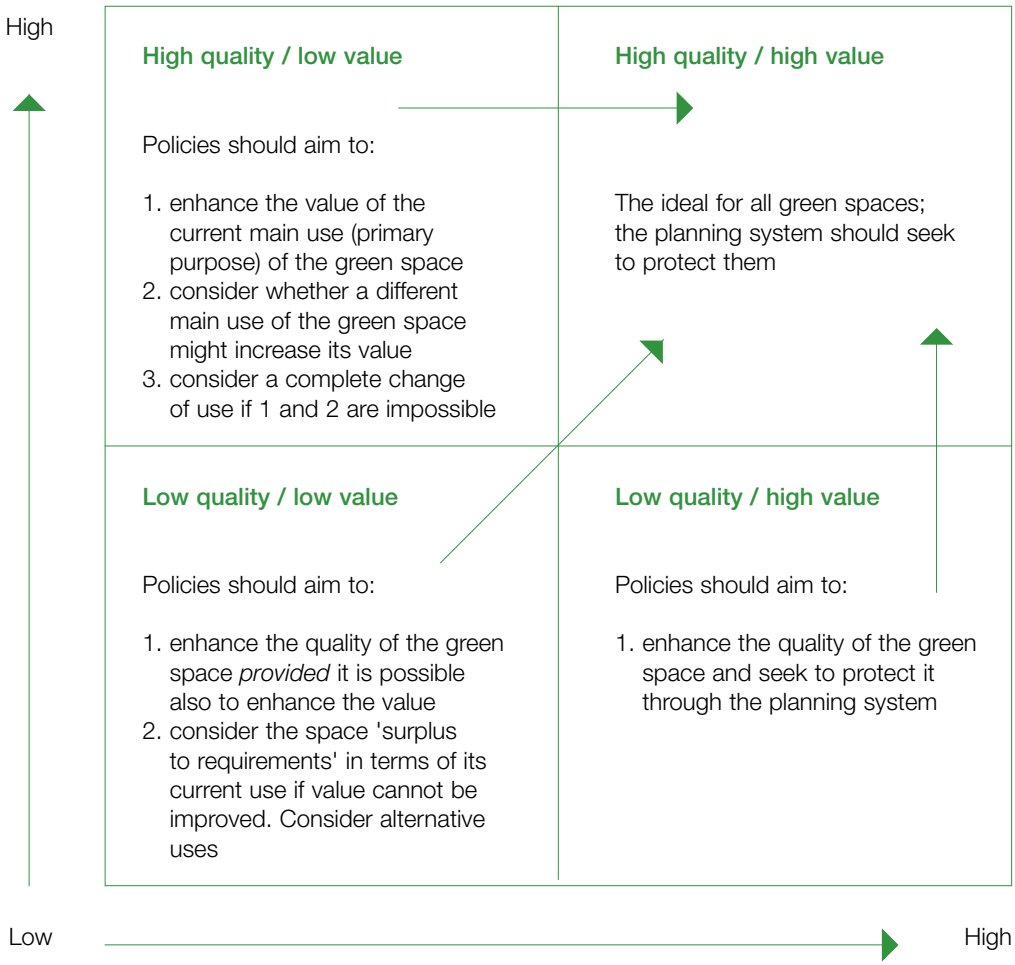


Figure 5. Quality and value assessment. Green spaces can be evaluated to fall within, or somewhere in between, the 4 categories. For each category, policy options are listed. The arrows show the ideal direction to bring about positive change, (adapted from diagram in Chapter 10, 10.27 – PPG17 Companion Guide)

Identifying skills

The strategy's aims can be met only with good management and sufficient staffing with the right mix of skills. The strategy process provides an opportunity to assess human resources and identify any skills gaps. The skills needed to implement the strategy action plan may include:

- parks management (including general management skills such as staff management, strategic thinking and an understanding of the political and policy context);
- grounds maintenance and horticulture;
- landscape architecture and planning;
- landscape management;
- contract and project management;
- financial administration and accounting;
- countryside management;
- asset and facilities management;
- public relations, marketing and events management;
- community liaison and support;
- nature conservation;
- tree and woodland management;
- play, sport and recreation management;
- IT skills including website development.

9 Improvements in green space management will require a mix of skills. Environmental education, event planning and public relations may be needed to fully realise the potential of these assets. Ogden Water, Calderdale. (Green Flag Award winner) *Courtesy of Calderdale Council*

10 Tree and woodland management require particular specialist skills. Epping Forest. (Green Flag Award winner) *Photography by David Woodfall & Clive Totman*

Stage 3: Drafting the strategy

Map 4. Newcastle City Council, proposed linked open spaces plan for Newcastle

Newcastle's Parks and Green Space Strategy includes a plan for linking open spaces across the city through a network of green routes *Courtsey of Green Space Strategy Team, Newcastle City Council*

This third stage in the preparation of a green space strategy involves pulling together the findings of the previous two stages and drawing up a draft strategy for public and stakeholder consultation. This will lead to the final version of the strategy that will be adopted by the council.

The final strategy should be concise, written in plain English and supported by detailed information in the form of annexes where appropriate. The text should be inspirational and lead with a comprehensive understanding of green space issues and opportunities. It should clearly make the case for investment, stating how it will enhance local identity, respect historic context and set defined policy objectives and implementation targets. In short, the strategy should be both a policy and an action document.

The drafting stage will update the preliminary vision, identify links with corporate objectives and include a landscape framework plan. Key recommendations for the development, management, maintenance and funding of parks and green space should follow and be supported by a detailed action plan and programme. This stage comprises the following tasks.

- **Update the preliminary vision statement**
  The preliminary vision statement should be revised to reflect the information and analyses carried out to date. It should set the main aspirations and intended outcomes of the entire strategy.

- **Prepare the framework plan**
  The vision statement should be developed into a framework plan that draws together the key themes of the strategy. This provides a spatial overview of the vision and proposals and provides a direct point of reference to the development planning process. The main framework plan may include the following information:

  - existing parks and green space (by type)
  - proposed new parks and green space (by type)
  - existing and proposed play areas and sports facilities
  - key pedestrian and cycle links
  - main wildlife corridors
  - landscape character and quality
  - relevant planning designations and initiatives
  - areas of environmental infrastructure (such as flood storage, bio-mass production and bio-remediation).

  The framework plan may need to be backed up by more detailed area-based proposals linked to the action plan. *Green space management plans – a good practice guide* is available from CABE Space at www.cabe.org.uk

- **Draft aims, objectives and policies**
  The strategy should lead with a set of over-arching aims, which are then translated into a series of realistic objectives and policies, setting the context for the long-term achievement of the strategy. These objectives should be concise, provide a clear focus for the action plan, and mesh with the objectives of other corporate plans and strategies.

- **Prepare an action plan**
  The action plan describes in detail the steps, personnel and timescale for achieving the strategy's aims. It should relate directly to the Best Value review process and to service delivery plans. An action plan can take the form of a table, and should include as a minimum:

  - actions
  - by whom
  - by when
  - estimated cost (capital and revenue)
  - funding sources (secured and unsecured)
  - performance indicators.

  Individual actions may need to be expanded into more detailed, site-specific activities.

- **Specify monitoring and review procedures**
  The strategy's implementation will need to be monitored to assess whether its objectives are being met or if it needs updating as circumstances change. The action plan should be reviewed annually and the strategy should be reviewed against corporate policy, performance criteria and targets every three to five years. The Audit Commission sets national performance indicators for green space, see www.audit-commission.gov.uk. These should be supplemented with tailor-made local performance indicators, such as measuring levels of use and user satisfaction with green spaces. The Green Flag Award criteria can be applied as a measure of quality, with a space achieving the Award providing a good benchmark for other sites. In using this national standard as a local performance indicator, improvements can be prioritised across the network of green space.

- **Consult on the draft**
  A consultation exercise is needed to ensure that the strategy has the full support of members, officers and the community. This should obviously include statutory consultees and organisations involved in parks and green space issues, such as Sport England, the Environment Agency, English Nature, English Heritage, the Countryside Agency, but also:

  - adjacent authorities;
  - user groups (including 'friends' groups, sports clubs etc);
  - voluntary organisations;
  - community groups;
  - schools;
  - businesses;
  - the general public.

This exercise commonly uses questionnaires, public displays and focus groups. It may be worth setting up a permanent consultative network that can continue monitoring the long-term implementation of the strategy. See Annex 3 for information about community consultation.

- **Finalise the strategy**
  The results of the consultation will inform the final amendments to the strategy, which is then ready for adoption by the council. The launch of the final strategy should be well publicised and the document made available as widely as possible.

  Once adopted, the strategy should become the reference point for all the council's decisions in relation to the design, development, management, maintenance and funding of parks and green spaces. The strategy should also be considered as part of wider strategic planning, development and service delivery activities. Policies relating to development planning should be incorporated into statutory development plan documents and the strategy adopted as supplementary planning guidance.

11 Green space strategies can make a significant contribution to urban renaissance
Photography by EDAW/ Dixi Carillo

12 The action plan should identify historic elements that should be restored
Photography by Peter Neal

13 Measuring levels of use by different age groups over time can be a good indicator of improvement
Photography by Peter Neal

Creating positive change in service delivery

Sheffield Council's long-term Parks Regeneration Strategy was first published in 1993. It was jointly commissioned by the City Council and Sheffield Wildlife Trust.

The strategy proposed major changes in the way parks and green spaces are managed. It heralded a shift in the thinking behind the delivery of a parks and green space service.

The key policy recommendations of the Sheffield Parks Regeneration Strategy were updated in 1999 following city-wide consultation.

In summary, the Sheffield Parks Regeneration Strategy policy priorities are:

- working in partnership with others to raise the profile of public parks and green spaces;
- improving management for people, wildlife and heritage;
- working with communities to review and determine service standards;
- enabling groups and individuals to contribute actively to the service;
- developing the ranger service to support activities;
- making the best use of existing resources;
- securing additional resources to improve the service.

14 Award winning Peace Gardens, Sheffield created in 1998 as the first part of 'The Heart of the City' regeneration project *Courtesy of Sheffield City Council*

Checklist: What should be included in a green space strategy?

The following is a checklist of items that should be included in a green space strategy. It should not be seen as prescriptive or entirely exhaustive, although it does give an overview of the key elements.

1. Strategic context

- ☐ overview of relevant national, regional and local policies and initiatives
- ☐ spatial planning context
- ☐ local character/area profile
- ☐ review of corporate strategies and objectives
- ☐ relationship of green space strategy to other strategies and initiatives.

2. Supply Analysis

- ☐ identification of green spaces and their functions
- ☐ definition of existing provision based on appropriate green space typology audit and assessment of existing provision, both quantitative and qualitative
- ☐ playing field audit and other audits as required, e.g. play spaces
- ☐ assessment of existing capital and revenue funding of green space.

3. Demand Analysis

- ☐ socio-economic and demographic structure of area
- ☐ assessment of survey information to identify needs and aspirations of community, views on existing provision and current barriers to use
- ☐ assessment of mechanisms for community involvement
- ☐ assessment of user numbers, using tools such as the ILAM Model Customer Survey Questionnaires for Managers of Public Parks.

4. Analysis of issues, opportunities and priorities

- ☐ analysis of supply and demand (quantitative, qualitative and accessibility)
- ☐ identification of catchment areas and deficiencies
- ☐ establishment of local standards for quality and quantity
- ☐ assessment of value
- ☐ prioritisation of issues and areas for improvement
- ☐ identifying human resources and skills.

5. Strategy aims, objectives and policies

- ☐ vision statement
- ☐ key aims, objectives and policies
- ☐ green space framework plan.

6. Action plan

- ☐ actions, timescales and delivery agents
- ☐ identification of existing and potential funding
- ☐ performance indicators
- ☐ monitoring and review arrangements.

Annex 1 – Key references

Accessible Natural Green Space Standards in Towns and Cities: A review and toolkit for their implementation. English Nature Research Report 526, English Nature, 2003

Assessing Demand for Open Space in London, London Planning Advisory Committee, 2000

Assessing Needs and Opportunities: A Companion Guide to PPG 17, Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, 2003

Benchmarking and Performance Indicators for Best Value. A customer focused means of assessing the value of parks and open spaces, KMC Consultancy and ILAM, 1999

Better Services for Local People: A guide for councillors, IDeA Publications, July 2002

The Community Planning Handbook, Nick Wates, Earthscan Publications, 2000

Green Spaces, Better Places. The final report of the Urban Green Spaces Taskforce, Department of Transport, Local Government and the Regions, 2002

Guide to Preparing Open Space Strategies: Best practice guidance, Greater London Authority, 2004

ILAM Model Customer Survey Questionnaires for Managers of Public Parks, Nick Reeves, ILAM, 2002

Living Places: Cleaner, safer, greener Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, 2002

More than Swings and Roundabouts: Planning for children's play, Children's Play Council, 2002

Natural Communities, English Nature, RSPB, The Wildlife Trusts, 2002

No Particular Place to Go? Children, young people and public space, Ken Worpole, Groundwork UK, 2003

Our Towns and Cities: The future – delivering an urban renaissance, Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions, 2000

Parks and Green Space: Engaging the Community, Urban Parks Forum, 2002

Planning obligation, ODPM circular 01/97

Planning Policy Guidance 17: Planning for Open Space, Sport and Recreation, Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, 2002

The Public Parks Assessment Urban Parks Forum, 2001

Quality of Life Capital: Managing environmental, social and economic benefits, Countryside Agency, English Heritage, Environment Agency, 2001

Raising the Standard, The Manual of the Green Flag Award (updated), Liz Greenhalgh and Andrew Parsons, The Civic Trust, 2004

Recognising Innovation and Imagination in Open Space Management, Ian Baggott, Lucy Roper, 2001

The Register of Parks and Gardens: An introduction, English Heritage, 1998

The Six Acre Standard, National Playing Fields Association, 1993

Sustainable Communities: Building for the future, Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, 2003

Towards a Level Playing Field: A guide to the production of playing field strategies, Sport England, 2002

Trees and Woods in Towns and Cities: How to develop local strategies for urban forestry, National Urban Forestry Unit, Wolverhampton, 1999

Trees or Turf: Best Value in Managing Urban Green Space, National Urban Forestry Unit, Wolverhampton, 1998

The Use of Conditions in Planning Permission, ODPM circular 11/95

Value of Parks and Open Spaces: Social inclusion and community regeneration, Local Government Association, 2001

Working with the Grain of Nature: A biodiversity strategy for England, Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, 2002

Current CABE Space guidance and research documents can be found at www.cabe.org.uk

Annex 2 – Green space audit methodology

The purpose of an audit of green spaces is to find out the location, quantity and quality of all the green spaces in a particular area.

The key to successful auditing of green spaces is to be clear from the outset how the information will be analysed and used. There is no point collecting information that will not be used – although it is easy for this to happen. Audits provide a snapshot of each space rather than a detailed analysis. The assessment should be broad and the date and time of the audit should be recorded, as it will have a bearing on the results. The assessor must be professionally competent, ideally someone with training in landscape design and management. For the sake of consistency, the same person or team should assess all of the local authority's green spaces where possible.

A customised form, drawn up by the surveying authority, should be used to evaluate the quality of green space, assessing its design and structure, management and maintenance and its value to people. Baseline information on typology, location, planning designations, size and facilities should be recorded, along with the date of survey. Annex D of PPG17 provides a potential checklist of criteria. There are various existing audit forms to assess green space that can provide some guidance, though many of these are designed for detailed site assessments. They include the Green Flag Award score sheet and the Institute of Leisure and Amenity Management's (ILAM) checklist to assessing sites in Benchmarking and Performance Indicators for Best Value.

On the audit form, individual criteria are best grouped under a set of categories, with several questions in each one. The form should provide cumulative scores for each category and a succinct set of headings for the graphic and spatial presentation of the results from the audit process. Key headings and criteria should be established, which may include the following.

1. **Access**
   - Are entrances well located and accessible?
   - Are entrances welcoming?
   - Does the infrastructure meet the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act? (see www.disability.gov.uk/dda)
   - Does signage communicate effectively?

2. **Landscape quality**
   - Is the space a rich and stimulating environment?
   - Is there a variety of scales of space?
   - Are the space's boundaries attractive?
   - Is the space's structure understandable with a clear focus and orientating features?

3. **Facilities**
   - Is the furniture well designed and located?
   - Are the facilities appropriate to the space's size and location?
   - Are buildings well designed and located? (see www.dqi.org.uk)
   - Are there special features that give the space local distinctiveness?

4. **Maintenance**
   - Is the space clean and free from litter and dog fouling?
   - Are the fabric, furniture and buildings well maintained?
   - Is the planting well maintained?
   - Are grass areas well maintained?
   - Are areas managed for wildlife habitat value appropriately maintained?

5. **Management**
   - Is the level of management appropriate to the size and nature of the space?
   - Are staff based on site?
   - Is there information on how to contact management services?
   - Is there information on events and activities?
   - Is there evidence of community involvement?

6. **Security and safety**
   - What is the sense of personal security in the space?
   - What are the levels of vandalism?
   - Is there evidence of anti-social behaviour?
   - To what extent is there self-surveillance from surrounding areas or through pedestrian traffic?

7. **Natural heritage**
   - To what extent are areas managed as natural habitats?
   - Are nature conservation objectives communicated effectively?
   - Is there evidence of sustainable management practices?

8. **Cultural heritage**
   - Is the historic landscape structure well conserved?
   - Are historic buildings and features appropriately conserved?
   - Is there evidence of cultural activities such as art or theatre?

9. **Education**
   - Is there interpretation of elements in the space?
   - Are educational activities carried out (e.g. by schools or rangers)?

10. **Health**
    - Is there an appropriate level of sports/exercise facilities?

11. **Responses to people**
    - Does the space meet the needs of, or encourage use by, elderly and young people, children, people with disabilities, diverse cultures, families?

Each criterion can be scored on a scale from 1 to 5, with 1 representing Poor and 5 Excellent. Where a question is not relevant, it should be omitted so as not to skew the results; for example, the question about buildings may be irrelevant to a wild open space. From the resulting figures, a summary total between 1 and 5 can be produced for each of the ten main categories.

The results can be illustrated in bar-chart form showing a hierarchy of parks and open spaces, based on individual aspects such as access or landscape quality or based on a combined score to give an overall picture.

A useful way of providing a quality standard against which to compare green spaces is for the local authority to identify a park or several different types of green spaces in their area or nearby that will serve as the benchmark for quality. This will then form the standard against which the assessment is made. The best comparator will probably be a green space with a Green Flag Award (award holders can be found at www.greenflagaward.org.uk).

Annex 3 – Community involvement

Developing a public consultation plan

1.0 Introduction

Understanding demand for green space is a fundamental part of any green space strategy, but is often overlooked in favour of simple analysis of provision. Over recent years, many councils have begun to consult with their communities on site-specific issues but few have looked at how to take this to a higher level, that of district/borough/city-wide strategic consultation. Strategic consultation can be difficult. While people can identify with their local areas and can easily express views about their most-used parks or play areas, obtaining their views about levels or quality of provision in areas they never visit is less straightforward.

This annex focuses on the analysis of public needs through consultation. It does not cover consultation with officers, members and other green space providers.

2.0 Context

The consultation must be tied to the strategy's objectives. Much public consultation is quantitative and focuses on spatial planning issues, i.e. the amount of provision in a given area. Consultation is also often viewed as a one-off exercise and not as part of a process of engagement and involvement of the community. This misses an opportunity to find out what improvements local people would like and what barriers there are to greater use, who does not use parks and why, the perceived quality of current provision, how well the council and other organisations manage, maintain and develop open space, where investment is needed and so on.

3.0 Delivery

In developing a consultation plan, several key questions must be asked:

- Why is the council drawing up the strategy?
- Which council services are involved and what are their views on community consultation and involvement?
- What previous consultation has there been on parks and green spaces and in related services or areas?
- Are there any geographic or demographic communities that have been consulted more than others?
- What styles of consultation have worked well?
- What groups and organisations have regular dialogue with the authority on green space and related issues?
- Does the authority have existing forums that can be used in the timescale?

Understanding what has gone before – what worked and what did not, who should and who should not be involved – will help to define the best approaches to use. Drawing up a consultation plan will help with decisions on the best methods to engage people at each stage. The plan should flexible enough to respond to any issues that arise.

3.1 Previous consultation

A review of previous consultation will help to answer questions such as:

- Where has consultation taken place and on what issues?
- What methodologies were used and how successful were they?
- Who typically gets involved (and who does not)?
- What issues relating to green space have been identified to date and have these been addressed?

3.2 Where to look

- Community strategies
- Cultural strategies
- Sport and recreation strategies
- Community safety strategies
- Youth strategies
- Biodiversity action plans and nature conservation strategies
- Local Agenda 21 strategies
- Health strategies
- Leisure strategies
- Play strategies
- Citizens panels
- Park-specific consultation
- Park user surveys
- Regeneration partnerships and programmes
- Best Value reviews
- Local plan/UDP consultation
- Market towns initiative
- Green travel plans.

Any of the above may provide key information that could be supplemented in the green space consultation. For example, if a youth survey has identified lack of outdoor leisure provision as an issue, then the green space strategy consultation might need to identify what types of provision are needed and where.

3.3 Methodologies

Quantitative research

Quantitative methods such as surveys are useful for gathering baseline data, especially where there is little previous consultation data on green space issues. Questions on quantity, quality and accessibility of space are essential but a questionnaire could also cover travel methods and travel time to frequently used spaces and sites used outside the study area.

The key is to ask questions that relate to other aspects of the strategy process. Questions on the amount of provision relate to the quantitative audit of supply; questions on perceptions of quality relate to the qualitative audit; and questions about travel and barriers relate to the accessibility audit. Linking audits and consultation therefore, helps to triangulate research methodologies to gain a true picture of green space provision in a given area.

A survey can also be used to gauge willingness to participate in further consultation or to be kept informed (see feedback below).

Consulting interested groups and organisations needs special consideration. Can a questionnaire be used across a wide range of groups or will more qualitative approaches with a smaller number of groups provide better information?
If a questionnaire is planned, will data be gathered to complement or compare to a household survey?

Feedback

Participants should be told why the strategy is being produced and what will happen next. Managing expectations is vital to maintaining community support.

For example, will a summary report be available? Will it be posted to them or available on a website? Where will the final strategy be displayed if members of the public wish to view it?

Will there be further opportunities in future to take part in developing or achieving the strategy? Can people be kept informed about events and activities in parks?
Can people participate at a local level such as through a ‘friends’ group?

Qualitative research

Qualitative methods are useful for consulting established groups or to follow up initial survey work. For example, a workshop could focus on an issue arising from the survey. Qualitative research can also form a starting point to inform a survey, such as using a focus group to identify issues for a questionnaire.

Depending on resources, qualitative consultation can range from small workshops to large, all-day action-planning events. You could consider training local people to do some of the consultation, which will build local skills and capacities.

4.0 Resources

A consultation plan must also identify resources for the process. The authority’s vision and its approach to creative and innovative techniques will dictate these resources. The time and energy that people are willing to devote to consultation are the main factors that will decide its success.

5.0 Key principles

- Be honest – avoid hidden agendas. Let people know the purpose of the consultation and what will happen to their views, and do not raise expectations unnecessarily.
- Be transparent – be clear and consistent.
- Agree boundaries and limitations – is there ever a blank sheet of paper?
- Let people define their own level of involvement – give them the chance to become more engaged if they want.
- Process can be as important as product – a well-run consultation exercise can secure support and future involvement as well as data to inform the strategy.
- Motivate and enthuse – stir up interest and channel it correctly.
- Use skilled facilitators in qualitative exercises.
- Accurately record and report all consultation to participants and decision makers.
- Ensure opportunities for feedback and continued involvement.
- Plan the consultation process – resources, roles and timescales.
- Combine methods or develop new ones.
- Think about barriers to participation – try to make the process accessible.
- Evaluate the process – if it is to be repeated, identify what worked well and what did not.
- Try to strike a balance between talking to just a small number of enthusiasts and consulting too wide a constituency.

Below is a checklist of organisations, groups and key stakeholders to consider in strategy consultation. Further useful checklists and consultation techniques can be found in *The Community Planning Handbook* by Nick Wates.[15]

National organisations and statutory consultees

- ☐ Sport England
- ☐ English Nature
- ☐ English Heritage
- ☐ Environment Agency
- ☐ Countryside Agency
- ☐ Children's Play Council
- ☐ Garden History Society
- ☐ Civic Trust

Local statutory consultees

- ☐ Local Strategic Partnerships
- ☐ Town and parish councils

Local groups and organisations

- ☐ Access and disability groups
- ☐ Allotment associations
- ☐ Archaeological groups
- ☐ Business associations
- ☐ Civic societies
- ☐ Community associations
- ☐ County gardens trusts
- ☐ Cultural/ethnic groups
- ☐ Environmental groups
- ☐ 'Friends' of parks groups
- ☐ 'Friends' of cemeteries groups
- ☐ Groundwork trusts
- ☐ Local history and conservation groups
- ☐ Playgroups
- ☐ Police and community safety groups
- ☐ Religious/faith groups
- ☐ Schools
- ☐ Senior citizens groups
- ☐ Sports clubs
- ☐ Tenants and residents associations
- ☐ Town centre managers
- ☐ Walking and cycling groups
- ☐ Wildlife groups
- ☐ Women's Institute groups
- ☐ Youth groups

15. Earthscan Publications, 2000.

Annex 4 – Useful contacts

Funding organisations

Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF)
7 Holbein Place
London SW1W 8NR
Tel: 020 7591 604-2/3/4/5
www.hlf.org.uk

New Opportunities Fund (NOF)
1 Plough Place
London EC4A 1DE
Tel: 020 7211 1800
www.nof.org.uk

Living Spaces
PO Box 2014
Reading
Berkshire RG4 7XU
Tel: 0845 600 3190
www.living-spaces.org.uk

Sport England
3rd Floor Victoria House
Bloomsbury Square
London WC1B 4SE
Tel: 0845 850 8508
www.sportengland.org

Football Foundation
The Football Foundation
30 Gloucester Place
London W1U 8FF
Tel: 0845 345 4555
www.footballfoundation.org.uk

Environment Agency
Kings Meadow House
Kings Meadow Road
Reading
Berkshire RG1 8DG
Tel: 0870 850 6506
www.environment-agency.gov.uk

Parks and landscape

GreenSpace
(formerly Urban Parks Forum)
Caversham Court
Church Road
Caversham
Reading
Berkshire RG4 7AD
Tel: 0118 946 9060
www.green-space.org.uk

Institute of Leisure and Amenity Management (ILAM)
ILAM House
Lower Basildon
Reading
Berkshire RG8 9NE
Tel: 0870 845 8475
www.ilam.co.uk

Landscape Institute
33 Great Portland Street
London W1W 8QG
Tel: 020 7299 4500
www.l-i.org.uk

Community issues

Black Environment Network (BEN)
1st Floor
60 High Street
Llanberis
Wales LL55 4EU
Tel: 01286 870 715
www.ben-network.org.uk

Common Ground
Gold Hill House
21 High Street
Shaftesbury
Dorset SP7 8JE
Tel: 01747 850 820
www.commonground.org.uk

Groundwork UK
Lockside, 5 Scotland Street
Birmingham B1 2RR
Tel: 0121 236 8565
www.groundwork.org.uk

Federation of City Farms and Community Gardens
The GreenHouse
Hereford Street
Bristol BS3 4NA
Tel: 0117 923 1800
www.farmgarden.org.uk

NSALG
O'Dell House
Hunters Road
Corby
Northants NN17 5JE
Tel: 01536 266 576
www.nsalg.org.co.uk

Nature conservation

BTCV
Conservation Centre
163 Balby Road
Doncaster DN4 0RH
Tel: 01302 572 244
www.btcv.org

Royal Society for the Protection of Birds
The Lodge
Sandy
Bedfordshire SG19 2DL
Tel: 01767 680 551
www.rspb.org.uk

The Wildlife Trusts
The Kiln
Waterside
Mather Road
Newark
Nottinghamshire NG24 1WT
Tel: 0870 036 7711
www.wildlifetrusts.org

Sports and play

Children's Play Council
National Children's Bureau
8 Wakley Street
London EC1V 7QE
Tel: 020 7843 6016
www.ncb.org.uk/cpc

National Playing Fields Association
Stamley House
St Chad's Place
London WC1X 9HH
Tel: 020 7833 5360
www.npfa.co.uk

PLAYLINK
72 Albert Palace Mansions
Lurline Gardens
London SW11 4DQ
Tel: 020 7720 2452
www.playlink.org.uk

Waterways

British Waterways
Willow Grange
Church Road
Watford
Herts WD17 4QA
Tel: 01923 201 120
www.britishwaterways.co.uk

Accessibility and inclusive design

Sensory Trust
Watering Lane Nursery
Pentewan
Cornwall PL26 6BE
Tel: 01726 222 900
www.sensorytrust.org.uk

Centre for Accessible Environments
70 South Lambeth Road
London SW8 1RL
Tel: 020 7840 0125
www.cae.org.uk

Living Streets
31-33 Bondway
London SW8 1SJ
Tel: 020 7820 1010
www.livingstreets.org.uk

Open Spaces Society
25a Bell Street
Henley-on-Thames
Oxfordshire RG9 2BA
Tel: 01491 573 535
www.oss.org.uk

Heritage

English Heritage
PO BOX 569
Swindon SN2 2YP
Tel: 0870 333 1181
www.english-heritage.org.uk

Garden History Society
77 Cowcross Street
London EC1M 6BP
Tel: 020 7608 2409
www.gardenhistorysociety.org.uk

The Civic Trust
Essex Hall
1-6 Essex Street
London WC2R 3HU
Tel: 020 7539 7900
www.civictrust.org.uk

The Association of Gardens Trusts
70 Cowcross Street
London EC1M 6EJ
Tel: 020 7251 2610
www.gardenstrusts.org.uk

Trees and forests

Arboricultural Association
Ampfield House
Romsey
Hampshire SO51 9PA
Tel: 01794 368717
www.trees.org.uk

Forestry Commission
231 Corstorphine Road
Edinburgh EH12 7AT
Tel: 0131 334 0303
www.forestry.gov.uk

The National Community Forest Partnership
Ayton House
Roberts End
Hanley Swan
Worcester WR8 0DX
Tel: 01684 311 880
www.communityforest.org.uk

Tree Council
71 Newcomen Street
London SE1 1YT
Tel: 020 7407 9992
www.treecouncil.org.uk

Trees for Cities (formerly Trees for London)
Prince Consort Lodge
Kennington Park Place
London SE11 4A5
Tel: 020 7587 1320
www.treesforcities.org.uk

Rural issues

Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra)
Nobel House
17 Smith Square
London SW1P 3JR
Tel: 08459 335 577
www.defra.gov.uk

Field Fare Trust
Volunteer House
69 Crossgate
Cupar
Fife KY15 5AS
Ian Newman & Alison Rae
Tel: 01334 657 708
www.fieldfare.org.uk

Environmental education

Learning Through Landscapes
Third Floor
Southside Offices
The Law Courts
Winchester
Hampshire SO23 9DL
Tel: 01962 846 258
www.ltl.org.uk

CABE Space and its advisory role

1 Brunswick Square, Brighton
Photography by Mathew Frith

CABE Space was established in 2003, as part of the Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment (CABE), which champions the quality of our buildings and spaces. It was set up by CABE at the request of Government, following the recommendations of the Urban Green Spaces Taskforce. CABE Space aims to bring excellence to the design and management of parks and public spaces in our towns and cities and the aims of CABE Space are set out in detail in the Government's report *Living Places: Cleaner, safer, greener*.[16] CABE Space is funded by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) and supported by the Department of Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS).

Evidence from a range of sources, including the Public Parks Assessment (2001) and the Beacon Council process, shows that preparing green space strategies leads to better planning, management and design of green space. The Government wants to encourage councils and their partners to adopt a strategic approach to managing their green network and set CABE Space the task of developing and managing a Strategic Advisory Scheme, which encourages and assists local authorities to pursue much higher standards of planning, design and management of their parks and public spaces. Through the scheme, individuals and/or organisations with specific public space expertise and a proven track record are assigned to support local authorities in developing or updating their green space strategies.

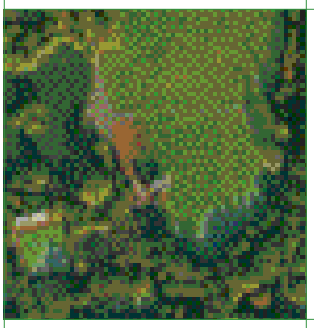
Each advisory project will be tailored to the needs of the individual authority and can include support and guidance on:

- Outlining the purpose and content of a green space strategy
- Defining visions and building partnerships
- Establishing leadership, clear lines of responsibility and management structures
- Brief preparation and selection of consultants
- Defining and assessing the types and distribution of green space
- Stakeholder consultation and community involvement
- Design standards and quality indicators
- Using performance indicators and measurement techniques
- Allocation of resources and prioritisation of projects.

Advisory support assists and guides local authorities in the preparation of their strategies, although the responsibility for undertaking the work lies with the authority itself. Advisors are usually assigned to a project for between five and fifteen days, depending on the scale and scope of work required.

For more information, contact the CABE Space Enabling & Delivery Team on 020 7070 6700 or see www.cabe.org.uk

16. Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, October 2002.



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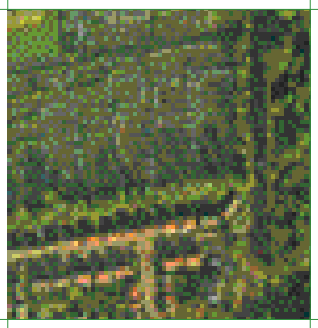
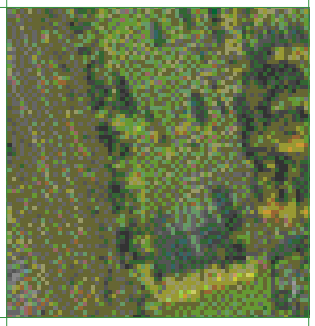
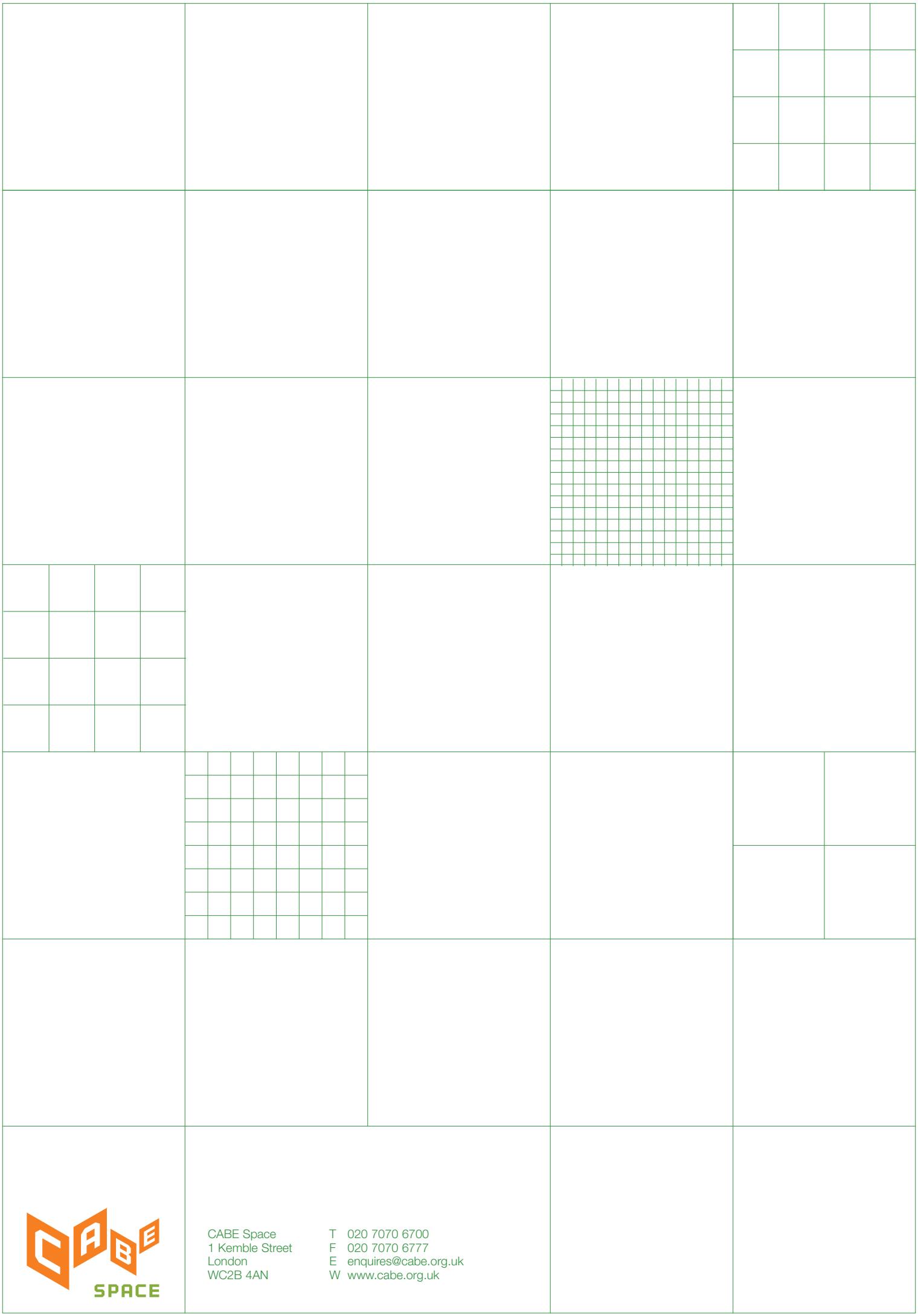
Thanks also to all those local authorities who contributed good practice in the form of case studies.







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