

29 October 2010

Tel: 0117 924 7 8 7 2

Dear Sir/Madam,

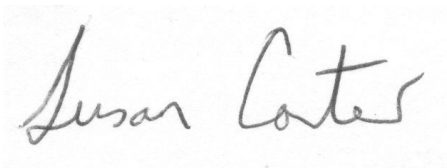
## AREA GREEN SPACE PLAN IDEAS AND OPTIONS

1. I am writing on behalf of the Ramblers' Bristol Group to comment on the fourteen documents setting out ideas and options for Area Green Spaces Plans. The Ramblers is Britain's walking charity, dedicated both to working for better quality walking environments and to encouraging more people to walk. We have over 900 members in the Bristol Group.
2. As a Group, we do not have detailed comments on the 14 documents and are not therefore submitting questionnaires (though some of our members have done so individually). In general we are pleased that the Council is adopting a strategic and consultative approach to the management of its green spaces. We welcome the recognition in the 2008 Parks and Green Spaces Strategy that people need green spaces close to where they live, and that many types of green space are valuable for people's health and general well-being. We understand that green spaces require management to fulfil their potential and that the Council needs to consider carefully where its resources may best be applied. We welcome the many ideas for improved management in the documents that are the subject of the current consultation.
3. We are, however, concerned about the overall impact of the proposals, especially in Henbury, Southmead and Brislington. As the 2008 Parks and Green Spaces Strategy and the Bristol Development Framework Core Strategy (Publication Version) both recognise, the city's 'green infrastructure' is a priceless asset which needs to be maintained, protected and enhanced. While it may have been right in 2008 to propose the sale of 'low value' green space to pay for improvements elsewhere and to provide additional funds for other Council services, recent events suggest this policy requires review. In particular, account should be taken of:
  - **Public reactions.** Many of the green spaces identified as of low value are clearly prized by local communities for a wide range of activities. Taken together with the proposed site allocations on which consultation is currently taking place, there would be a huge loss of open space in some parts of the city. One of our members, Vicky Bremner, has submitted a detailed illustrated dossier about the impact on Henbury and Southmead which shows this very clearly. The Friends of Victory Park in Brislington have also been in touch with us about the overall impact there.
  - **Core strategy connectivity proposals.** The Core Strategy recognises the importance of connectivity in the strategic green infrastructure network. This is very important for walkers and Council-owned green spaces have a vital part to play.
  - **Removal of housing targets.** The Government's decision to abolish regional housing targets means there is less need to identify sites for housing in the city.
  - **The 'Big Society'.** Bristol residents have long been involved in raising funds for capital improvements in their local parks and in helping to manage them. This is an obvious area

where the 'Big Society' could do more. Instead of selling irreplaceable assets, the Council could harness the current wave of popular support and encourage imaginative fund-raising and practical involvement.

4. We should be grateful if you would take these comments into account.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Susan Carter". The signature is written in dark ink on a light-colored background.

Susan Carter  
Environment and Planning Officer