

A Parks and Green Space Strategy for Leeds

the Leeds Initiative

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Foreword

In recent years, Leeds has become one of the most vibrant and successful cities in the UK. Leeds is recognised as the regional capital of the Yorkshire and Humberside region and has been hugely successful in encouraging business to invest here. It is also crucially important that Leeds is seen as an attractive place to live, visit and work, and our parks and green spaces are a key factor in achieving this.

We all need places for relaxation and escape, for exercise and recreation, and our parks and green space provide this. They also help to build a sense of community. This is why they always score at the top of what people regard as important, whether they live in Leeds or are just visiting.

The development of the Parks and Green Space Strategy has already helped raise the profile, and the parks renaissance programme has seen an extra £3.7 million invested over 2005 to 2008. We all know however, that there is still a huge amount of work to do and we are therefore delighted to publish this Strategy.

[Leader of the Council and Executive Member for Leisure]

Key Themes

This Strategy sets out the key priorities to 2020 in achieving a vision where *quality, accessible parks and green spaces are at the heart of the community, designed to meet the needs of everyone who lives, works, visits or invests in Leeds, both now and in the future.*

The Strategy is centred on the following themes and key aims:

- 1. Places for People:** To engage the community in promoting parks and green spaces as accessible places for everyone to experience and enjoy
- 2. Quality Places:** To provide good quality parks and green spaces that are well managed and provide a range of attractive facilities
- 3. Sustaining the Green Realm:** To plan for the development of new, and to protect existing parks and green spaces that will offer lasting social, cultural and environmental benefits for the people of Leeds
- 4. Creating a Healthier City:** To promote parks and green spaces as places to improve health and well-being and prevent disease through physical activity, play, relaxation, and contemplation
- 5. An Enabler for Regeneration:** To promote liveability and the economic benefits of quality parks and green space provision as an integral part of major regeneration projects
- 6. Delivering the Strategy:** To engage partners in supporting and delivering the Parks and Green Space Strategy

The themes set out the overriding aims of the strategy, but are not exclusive or self-contained. There are also broader strands that cut across each theme, for example biodiversity which is about the sustainable management of the living environment, which in turn enhances the physical and mental well-being of people's lives.

It is important to recognise that there is a considerable amount of work that is ongoing in sustaining and delivering improvements to parks and green space. This strategy seeks to acknowledge this, but also importantly identify key challenges and priorities in addressing them that will require specific commitments from the Council as the lead agency in this sector.

Introduction

For a number of years now the council has been committed to the strategic management of its parks and green spaces, and this document is a chance to outline the achievements so far and put in place a way of ensuring that the key aims and objectives can be met.

The Strategy looks at the contribution made to priorities nationally and locally, and how it fits within the Leeds Cultural Strategy. Early on, the different types of parks and green space are set out so that this is clearly understood. We carried out a considerable amount of consultation during the development of the Strategy and this is summarised along with key issues raised

The heart of this document focuses on the themes and key aims of the Strategy supported by a set of key proposals. Where possible, examples have been set out to illustrate how an approach could be adopted elsewhere.

The aims and key proposals form a framework for the action plan setting key priorities and timescales for delivery. The action plan will be regularly reviewed and updated as the Strategy is implemented.

Policy Context

A Brief History Of Parks

Difficult living and working conditions in highly built up areas accompanied by increased alcohol consumption prompted Richard Slaney (MP for Shrewsbury) in 1833 to call for a Select Committee to consider 'open spaces .. as public walks .. to promote the health and comfort of the inhabitants.....public walks would not only promote the health and morality of the people, but would be beneficial to the wealth of the country.' The first municipal park was laid out in Birkenhead by Joseph Paxton in 1845.

Many other public parks were adapted from former private estates acquired by local authorities. Roundhay Park, Temple Newsam Estate and Lotherton Hall Estate are good examples of this in Leeds. The 1930s and 40s saw emphasis on 'fit to fight' and the provision of recreation and sports grounds.

Spatial planning policy in the 1960s contributed to many examples of poorly configured areas of green space that had limited recreational value. During the 1980s and 1990s, Parks, as a non-statutory service, were targeted for cost savings and Compulsory Competitive Tendering (CCT) contracts that only considered grounds maintenance. This meant that resources for parks infrastructure such as buildings, paths and benches were diverted elsewhere. Management activity was focused on implementing the CCT legislation and managing contracts and specifications.

Policy in the late 1990's and early 21st Century on affordable housing and the development of city centre living space has resulted in dwellings with little or no gardens. In one sense

we have turned full circle and issues that prompted Richard Slaney to call for more parks are relevant today in many urban areas, and particular within city centres.

The Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) is at the forefront of organisations championing the improvement of the UK's parks and have committed £250 million through its Urban Parks Programme. This programme to invest in parks is the start of a long journey to rectify the 30 years of steady decline in capital and revenue funding. Leeds has especially benefited from £8.2 million HLF money that was invested into Roundhay Park and £5.5 million into the restoration of Kirkstall Abbey and the Estate. Currently there are planned bids for Beckett's Street Cemetery and Middleton Park.

The Urban Parks Forum conducted a national public parks assessment in 2001, and noted that there were some 27,000 parks covering 143,000 hectares with around £630 million being spent on their upkeep annually. However it noted that there had been dramatic cuts in revenue expenditure, estimated cumulatively at £1.3 billion over a 20 year period to 1999.

Following the final report of the Urban Green Spaces taskforce, 'Green Spaces, Better Places' and the government response in 2002, 'Living Places, Cleaner, Safer, Greener,' CABE (Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment) Space was established.

Since 2003, CABE Space has been gathering evidence that demonstrates how green spaces can offer lasting economic, social, cultural and environmental benefits. They have also highlighted many issues including the need for workforce development and an increase in skills profiles, the need for site based staff, attitudes to risk, how quality parks can influence behaviour and the need for evidence based performance management. This has seen an increase in the national profile and importance of parks and green space, however, many of the funding issues remain.

National Priorities

National priorities, including those reflected in the Local Government Performance Framework, can be summarised as follows:

- Raising standards for all **children and young people** and enabling every child to achieve his or her potential
- Creating **healthier communities** where people have healthier lifestyles and where health inequalities for all age groups are reduced
- Encouraging **sustainable communities**, that is communities that have the right conditions for increasing employment and wealth and improving the quality, cleanliness and safety of local areas
- Developing **safer and stronger communities**
- Meeting local **transport** needs more effectively

Local Priorities

The Leeds Initiative is the City's strategic partnership and published the Vision for Leeds 2004 to 2020, the Leeds Community Strategy, setting out the following 3 aims:

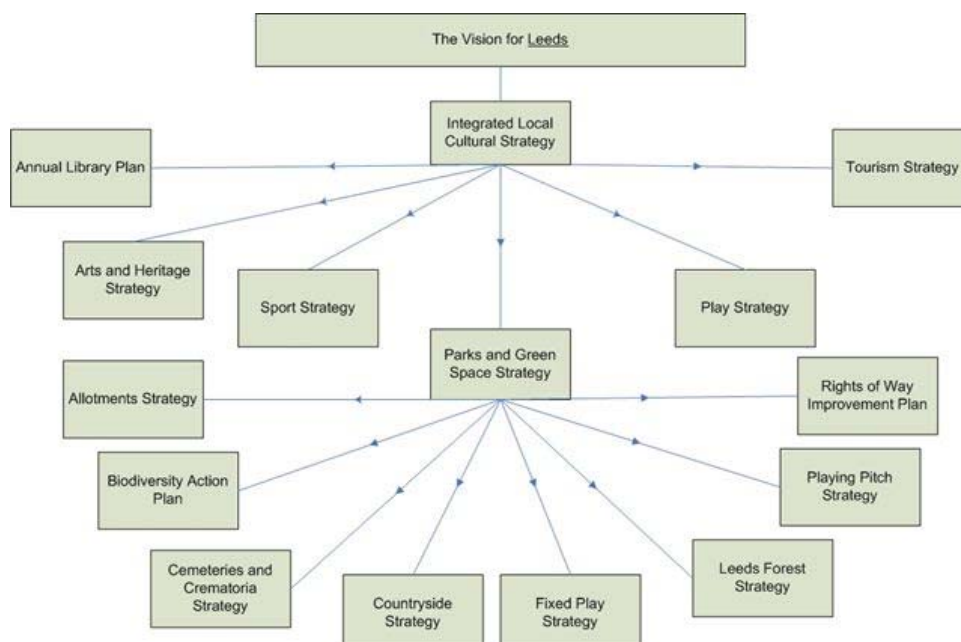
- **Going up a league as a city** - making Leeds an internationally competitive city - the best place in the country to live, work and learn, with a high quality of life for everyone
- **Narrowing the gap** between the most disadvantaged people and communities and the rest of the city
- **Developing Leeds' role as the regional capital** - contributing to the national economy as a competitive European city, supporting and supported by a region that is becoming increasingly prosperous

The objectives of the Vision for Leeds are focussed around 8 themes.

- **Cultural life** – a city with a vibrant and distinctive cultural life
- **Enterprise and the economy** – promoting Leeds as the regional capital
- **Environment city** – a reputation for environmental excellence
- **Harmonious communities** – a rich mix of cultures and communities
- **Health and wellbeing** – creating a healthy city
- **Learning** – a leading centre of learning, knowledge and research
- **A modern transport system** – safe, sustainable and effective transport – meeting people's need to get about while affecting the environment as little as possible
- **Thriving places** – a place of many parts

Cultural Strategy Links

The Parks and Green Space Strategy links to the local Cultural Strategy and in turn there are key plans and strategies that are linked to the Parks and Green Space Strategy as illustrated below.



Parks and Green Space: Type, Distribution and Access

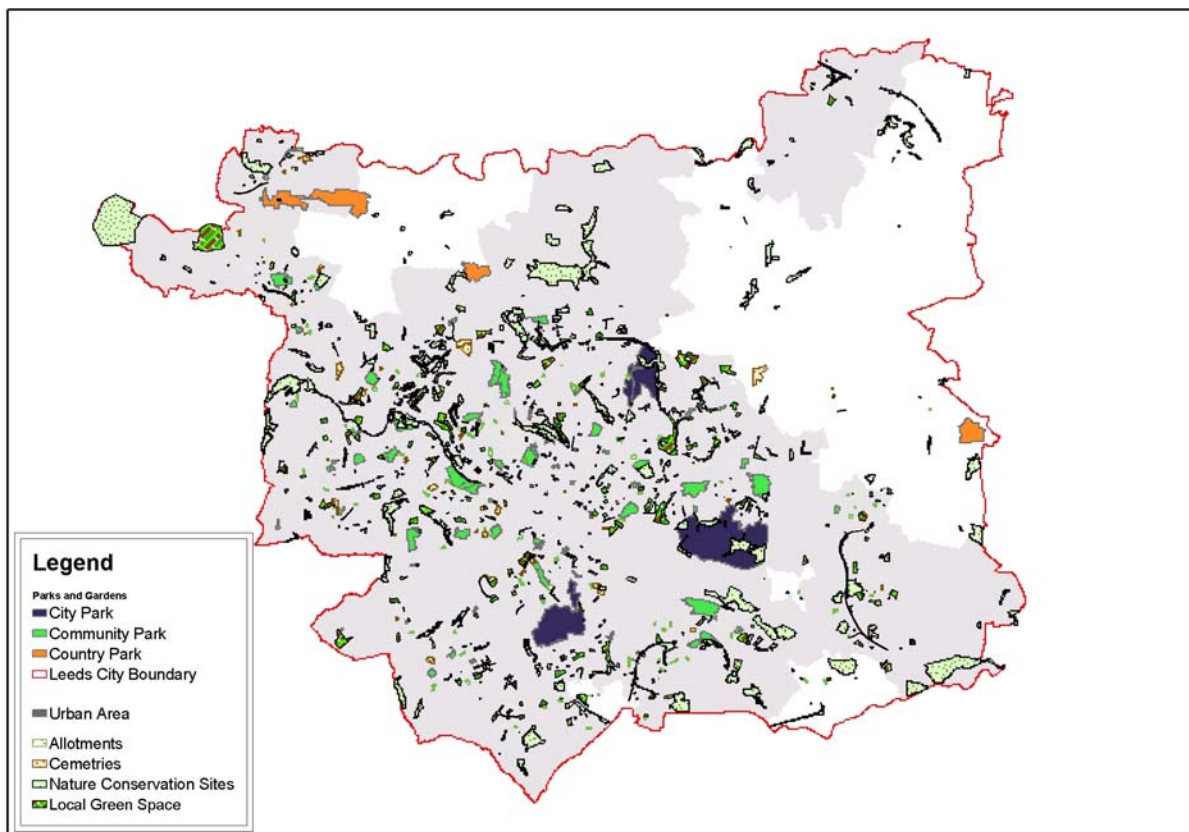
What do we mean by Parks and Green Space?

This Strategy mainly considers land owned by Leeds City Council and which is available for public access, although it does recognise the importance of green belt land as part of the landscape, often accessible via the public rights of way network. Similarly, private gardens can, and do provide areas for relaxation, places for children to play and opportunities for exercise. Appendix 1: Parks and Green Space Typology on page 54 provides a detailed definition and description.

Parks and Green Space Distribution

The diagram below provides an illustration of parks and green space distribution in Leeds.

The analysis and table of figures presented in Appendix 2: Analysis of Parks and Green Space Distribution, relates to publicly managed parks and green space, with the exception of the public rights of way network and some nature conservation sites which may be on private land.



Quality and Accessibility

During the development of the Parks and Green Space Strategy the importance of assessing quality was identified as an issue. The Green Flag Award Scheme represents the national standard for parks and green spaces across England and Wales, and in 2004 the Parks and Countryside Service devised a programme to assess 146 of its sites on a

rolling 3 year programme against these standards. This involved a commitment to train over 50 Green Flag judges from within the Service to conduct judging for the award scheme at other Local Authority sites and to use this knowledge and experience to conduct assessments in Leeds' parks.

The Green Flag Award Scheme

The award scheme is primarily focussed on managing and promoting parks and green spaces for the benefit of users and is assessed on the following criteria:

A welcoming place	how to create a sense that people are positively welcomed in the park
Healthy, safe & secure	how best to ensure that the park is a safe & healthy environment for all users
Clean & well maintained	what people can expect in terms of cleanliness, facilities & maintenance
Sustainability	how a park can be managed in environmentally sensitive ways
Conservation & heritage	the value of conservation & care of historical heritage
Community involvement	ways of encouraging community participation and acknowledging the community's role in a park's success
Marketing	methods of promoting a park successfully
Management	how to reflect all of the above in a coherent & accessible management plan or Strategy and ensure it is implemented

Assessments Using the Green Flag Criteria

The award criteria are applicable to a range of sites, including parks, cemeteries, nature areas and woodland. An audit has been carried out of sites which could be considered appropriate for Green Flag assessment, and a 3 year programme of assessment established against the Green Flag criteria.

The following table summarises parks and green spaces managed by Leeds City Council.

Category	Number
City Park	4
Country Park	3
Community Park	73
Recreation Grounds	91
Local green space	370
Cemeteries, Disused Churchyards & other Burial Grounds	75
Natural and semi-natural green spaces	322

Targets and Results

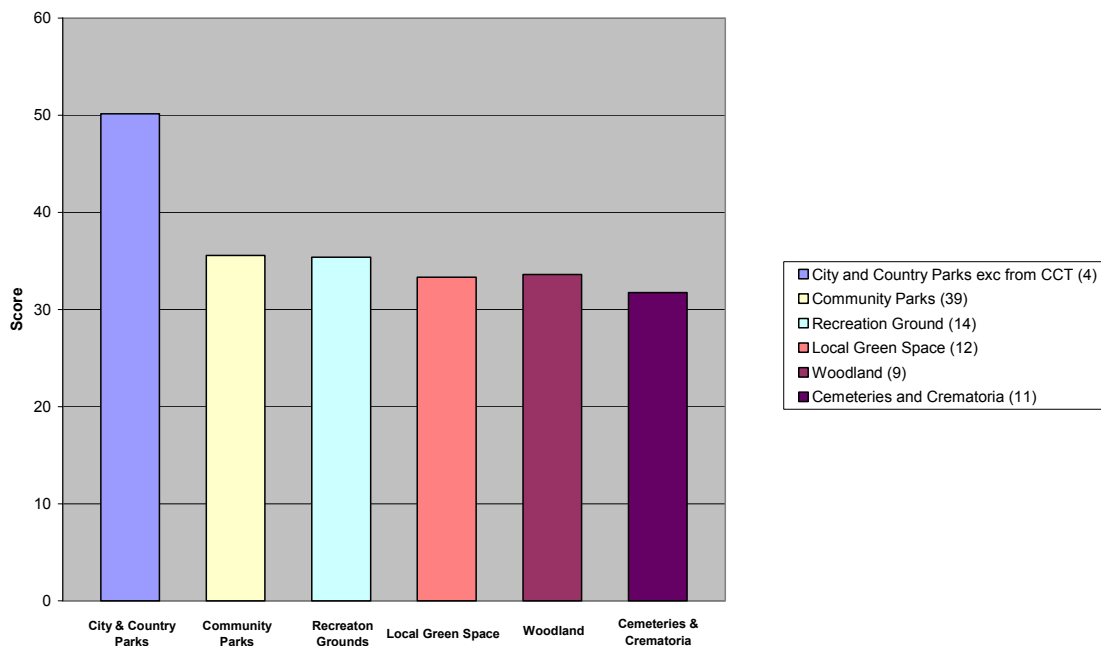
The % of Parks and Countryside sites assessed that meet the Green Flag Standard:

Year	Target	Result
2004/05	10%	10.8%
2005/06	12%	13.0%
2006/07	14%	15.6%
2007/08	17%	17.0%
2008/09	19%	
2009/10	21%	
2010/11	23%	

The assessment approach is used as a local performance indicator that is published in the Leeds Local Area Agreement and the above table indicates available targets and results.

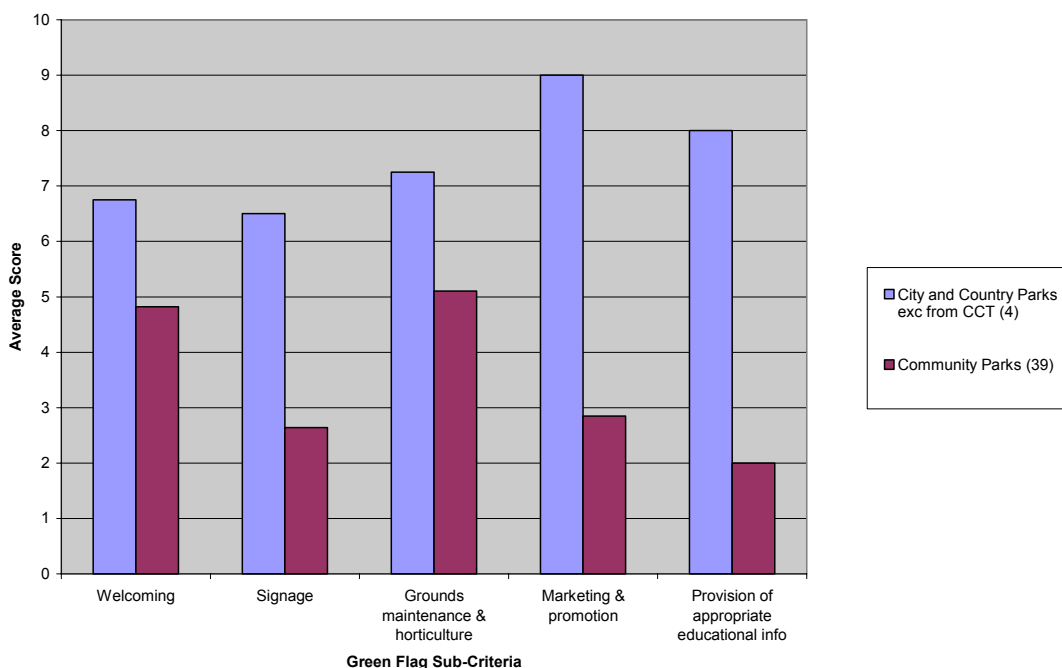
The Green Flag Standard recognises good quality, well-managed parks and green space. It should not be regarded as a standard where only a few prestige sites can hope to achieve it. In this context, the results in 2004/05 and 2005/06, whilst exceeding the target, underline the issues prevalent in our parks as the majority of sites fall below the standard. The following analysis therefore considers the Green Flag assessments in more detail.

Average Score from 2004 and 2005 Green Flag assessments



This graph using the 2004 and 2005 assessment is particularly interesting in that it not only highlights differences in standard between types of green space, but also shows how major parks, not subject to Compulsory Competitive Tendering (CCT) in the 1980s and 1990s compare to community parks that were part of CCT. In general the major parks achieve the standard (a score of 49), whereas community parks are well below the standard on average. One of the key reasons for this, is that non-CCT parks continued to have on site staff based at them throughout CCT, thus retaining the sense of pride and skills required to sustain standards.

Issues Identified in Community Parks from 2004 and 2005 Green Flag assessments



By looking at some of the Green Flag criteria in more detail, it is possible to illustrate that many of the issues in community parks are concerned with what makes them attractive places to visit, such as being welcoming, signage, marketing and promotion and educational information. These were not normally items which would have been included in Compulsory Competitive Tendering grounds maintenance contracts, and therefore were not capable of having any attention or resources spent on them.

Analysis of Parks and Green Space Catchment and Usage

The Leeds Regeneration Plan 2005 – 2008 identified that around 150,000 people in Leeds (almost 20% of the population) live in areas officially rated as among the most deprived in the country. Many of these are in the inner-city areas, but there are also pockets of deprived neighbourhoods in the outer areas. These areas suffer high levels of unemployment, low income, poor housing, poor health, family breakdown, low educational achievement and high crime rates. A key factor in regenerating these areas will be access to good quality parks and green spaces where there are a range of facilities and activities, which are in a safe environment for all the community.

A survey asking about parks usage was conducted in 2004 and 2005 to 30,000 households, targeting adults and a further 4,500 targeting children and young people. A third survey conducted in 2006 means that around 100,000 households have been surveyed over a 3 year period. The survey asks respondents to identify which park they normally visit, how they get there, and what they think about their local park. This provides valuable information on parks that are the most popular and resident's ideas on how their parks can be improved.

Visits

Visits	2005	2004
Use a park	86%	92%
Visit daily	18%	15%
Visit once or twice a week	37%	35%
Time spent 30 mins to 1 hour	42%	42%
Time spent 1 to 2 hours	34%	35%

This table demonstrates that the overwhelming majority of Leeds residents visit a local park during the year, with 55% of respondents in 2005 indicating that they visit daily, or once or twice each week. From the data, most people spend time at the park, rather than passing through as 76% stay from between 30 minutes and 2 hours. If the visit profile above is extrapolated to the Leeds population as a whole, this represents nearly 60 million visits to parks each year.

Based on an average assessment of the 2004 and 2005 surveys, Roundhay Park is the most visited park in Leeds by some margin, followed by Woodhouse Moor then Temple Newsam Estate. Pudsey Park and Horsforth Hall Park in terms of visits actually are more popular than Golden Acre Park. This demonstrates the value of community parks as they are often visited more frequently than City/Country Parks. A table setting out visits is in Appendix 4: Visits to Parks in Leeds on page 59.

Reason to Visit

For adults surveyed the reason to visit is indicated below. This highlights the importance of parks and green spaces to the health, wellbeing and obesity agendas.

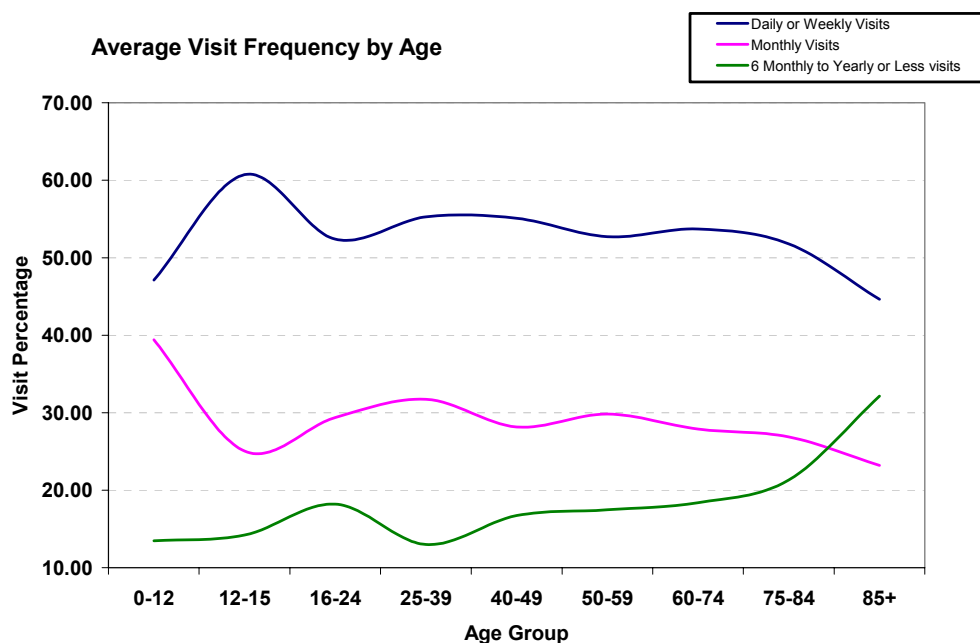
Reason to Visit	No. of Visits	
	2005	2004
To exercise	30.6 million	21.5 million
To contemplate / relax	24.8 million	19.5 million
To take children to play	22.8 million	20.0 million

Young people's reasons for visiting parks and green spaces

Young people, aged 12 to 17 mainly visit for the following reasons.

Reason to Visit	No. of Visits	
	2005	2004
Exercise	2.9 million	1.3 million
Play sport/games	2.6 million	2.1 million
Meet friends	2.5 million	2.2 million

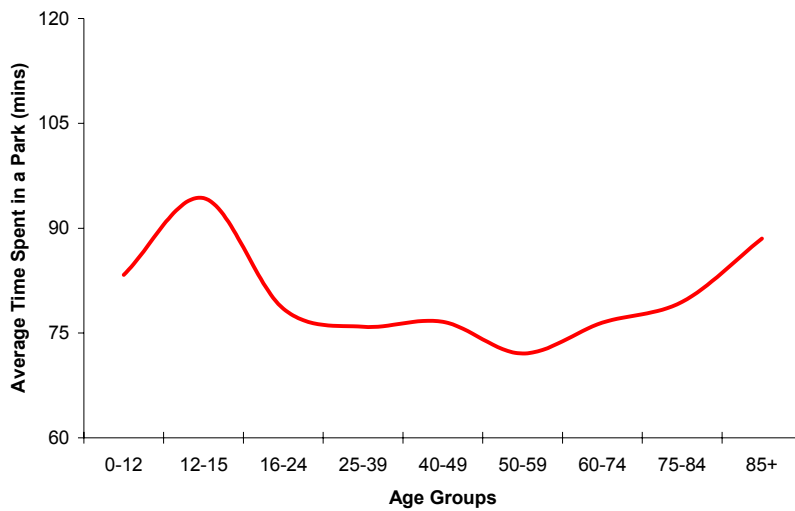
Age Profile of Visitors



On closer examination by age, a greater percentage of 12-15 year olds visit the park more regularly than in any other age group. There is a dip in visit frequency for the 16-24 age group before a fairly consistent visit profile until people reach 75 years and older.

Duration of Visit

Average Time spent in a Park

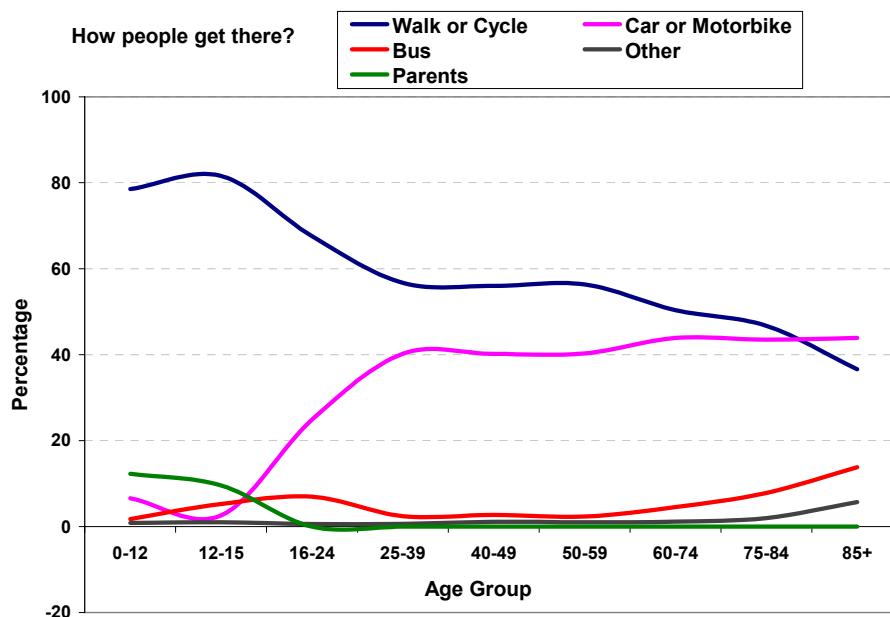


People in the 12-15 age bracket spend most time at the park when they visit. There is a steady decline in time spent when visiting as people get older, particularly noticeable in the 50-59 age bracket. It is however interesting to note that the time spent when a visit takes place increases as people reach old age, particularly from 75 years and older.

How People Get There

Transport Method	2005	2004
Walk	54%	53%
Car	38%	43%
Bus	4%	4%
Cycle	3%	3%

This table demonstrates that well over half of people either walk or cycle to the park they normally visit.



Whilst it may not be a surprise that a higher proportion of young people get there by walking or cycling, it is interesting to note that from around age 50, the proportion of older people who choose to walk starts to decline quite rapidly.

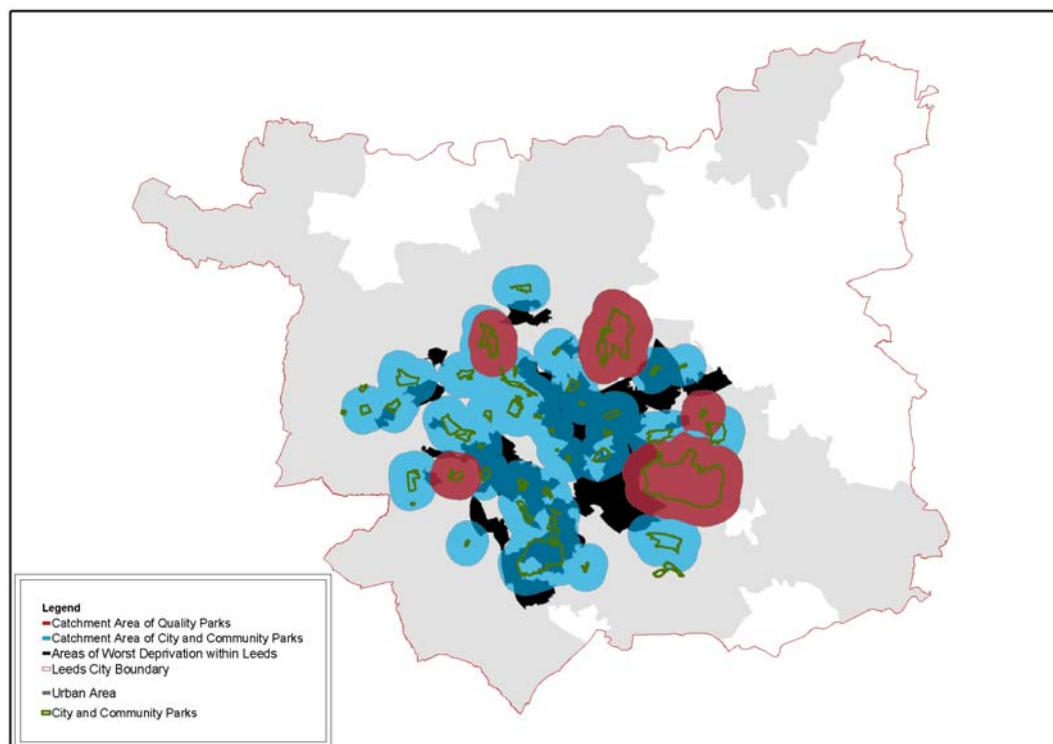
Ethnicity

The resident surveys enabled respondents to indicate ethnic origin and some analysis was conducted. Whilst a higher proportion of certain ethnic groups visit certain parks, the issues identified are universal regardless of ethnicity.

Assessment of Need Against Provision

The asset register of publicly accessible land for recreation and conservation along with the resident surveys and Green Flag assessments make an important contribution to the assessment of need against provision. Once completed the PPG 17 audit and needs assessment, will provide a comprehensive parks and green space map of the city, including a quality assessment based on the Green Flag Standard, and consultation results that demonstrate the value to the local community. This process will also reveal areas of deficiency where quality green space is not accessible, as well as being used to inform planning policy.

The map below illustrates access to parks and green spaces in the catchment area of the lowest 10% of deprived areas.



Consultation – What you told us

In 2003 'Towards a Parks and Green Space Strategy' was published. This was a consultation document which set out the main issues in relation to parks and green spaces within the Leeds metropolitan boundary. The purpose of this document was to determine whether the right issues were identified, whether there were other issues which needed to be included and what thoughts people had on how these issues should be addressed.

In May 2004 a consultation event was held at The Venue (Leeds College of Music) to allow stakeholders / partners to further discuss their thoughts on issues facing the parks and green spaces of Leeds. There was an opportunity to listen to the speakers and to participate in a question and answer session with the panel.

Over the summer of 2004, a series of focus group sessions were held with various groups where contact through other means was limited. These included 'friends of' groups, environmental groups, sports groups, black, minority and ethnic groups, women's groups and disabled groups.

In 2005 the results from the above consultation were used in a series of stakeholder workshops which focused around each of the five emerging themes:

- Places for People
- Quality Places
- Sustaining the Green Realm
- Creating a Healthier City
- Supporting Regeneration

The purpose of these sessions was to look at the emerging objectives to be addressed in the Strategy and to identify specific actions to achieve them. After this extensive consultation, work began on writing the Strategy and when the five themes had been developed, further stakeholder workshops were held in 2006 to look at each of the themes individually. This process was building on the workshops held the previous summer, as well as looking at developing the action plan which would act as a delivery tool for the Strategy.

Following on from the launch of the draft Parks and Green Space Strategy for Leeds in December 2006, a seminar was held at the Town Hall in February 2007 to discuss the priorities and the five emerging themes set out in the Strategy (see appendix 1 for summary of the discussion).

The development of the Strategy has also been informed by the residents survey sent to adults, young people and children which over three years has reached 103,000 people. The analysis of the results has given an extensive picture of what Leeds residents think of their local parks and green spaces and has already been used as an evidence base to access funding and target improvements.

What you like about parks

Our City Parks and Country Parks are well liked. They are clean, with a good range of facilities, horticultural features and good levels of information and are well signed. Some comments that were made during consultation include:

“All aspects of Temple Newsam create a gem of a green space - I could not live in the area if I couldn't escape the urban sprawl so easily.”

“Golden Acre Park is a quite outstanding park, and obviously highly valued, both by local residents and those from further a field.”

This comment sums up the overall picture across Leeds with the main issues to be addressed on infrastructure in some Community Parks, Recreation Grounds and Local Green Space.

“Large parks and open spaces are generally very good. Local facilities ‘badly’ need attention.”

What you don't like about parks

Toilet facilities need to be better, information and signage need improving, the quality of facilities overall needs to be improved and there are issues over control of dogs and dog fouling. A comment during consultation:

“Generally local parks are of good standards, and we use many of them. Unfortunately, the toilet facilities are not good in many of them, and small children often need them. The only other problem sometimes found is the amount of dog mess.”

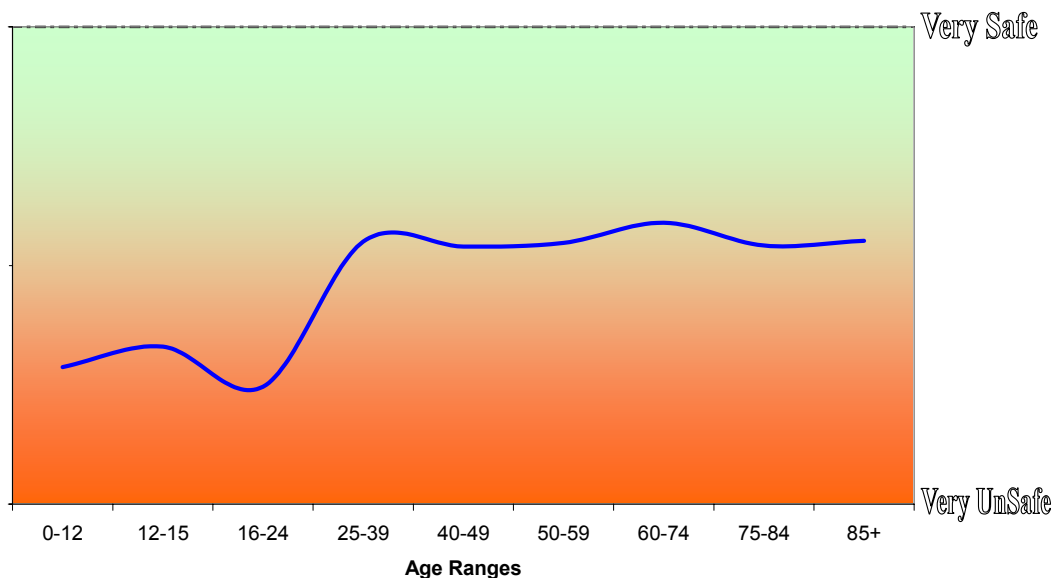
There were also many comments made about parks needing more of a staff presence on site, which would not only make park users feel reassured, but such resources could deal with day to day issues that occur such as graffiti, broken glass and litter. The need for investment, particularly in community parks is also clear where paths, fences, benches and shrubs are in need of replacement.

Do you feel safe?

	Adults		Young People	
	2005	2004	2005	2004
'Very Safe', 'Safe' or 'Never thought about it'	83%	81%	76%	68%
'Unsafe' or 'Very Unsafe'	17%	19%	24%	32%

The data highlighted in this table indicates that over 80% of adults who visit a park or green space do not regard safety as an issue. However, there remains an issue with those who do indicate they feel 'unsafe' or 'very unsafe.' Perhaps it is more significant that more young people feel 'unsafe' or 'very unsafe,' although the data in 2005 reveals fewer people than in 2004 feel this way. The main reason stated is often fear of intimidation from other youths.

Perception of Safety in Parks



The above graph illustrates the issue in relation to age. In the age groups 12-15 the most common reason stated for feeling unsafe was lighting, albeit by 8% of the group. In the 16-24 age group the most common reason for the lowest safety perception was stated as 'gangs', stated by 54% of this group.

Why you don't go at all

Although most people who responded said they did visit a park or green space, there were some people who stated they didn't. There were various reasons given for why people didn't visit, which are outlined below. These figures are based on 400 responses to the 2004 survey.

- Feel unsafe (nearly 25% of reasons given)
- Too far away (over 20%)
- No time (nearly 16%)
- Don't have children or dogs (nearly 11%)
- Cleanliness, unattractive or unsuitable (nearly 9%)
- Dog control / mess (nearly 6%)

This comment sums up what a lot of people feel about safety:

"I am afraid to use any park alone while I am alone. It is some years since I walked through the park and felt intimidated by groups congregating there - no doubt they were harmless, but I felt uneasy."

Access to suitable parks or green space remains an issue, particularly locating something suitable within walking distance.

Overall, many people who don't use parks are older – more than 40% are over 60.

Young People

In terms of satisfaction ratings, 'toilets' scored the lowest followed by 'facilities,' 'disabled facilities,' 'lighting,' and 'signage'. In general ratings are higher for 'city' and 'country' parks, with real issues identified in community parks, recreation grounds and local green space.

Other facilities or services young people would like

This table summarises responses young people volunteered to a question 'What other facilities or services would you like to see in your park or open space specific to your needs?'

Facilities / Services	Percentage
Toilets	43%
Sports Pitches, kickabout areas	20%
Skate parks	14%
Cycling facilities	7%
Tennis	7%
Basketball	5%

Perhaps the question may have contributed to the responses, but 'toilets' were the most popular choice. It is worth noting that over 23% of young people indicate that the length of time visited is over 2 hours. Many of the other facilities indicated are in line with the City Council's Fixed Play Strategy which recognised the need for more facilities for young people. Since the Strategy was developed we have built 18 skate parks and 25 teen zones in Leeds.

When asked about joining the 'Friends of the Park' scheme 47% of the 617 respondents in 2004 stated they would be interested in joining a group.

Children

We sent surveys to 2,500 children aged 5 to 11 and almost 50% responded. Results from the 2005 survey:

- Over half thought the park they visit looks 'good', with only 7% that it looks 'bad'
- 42% thought play equipment was 'good' with 15% 'bad'
- Just over a third thought safety was 'good,' with over 16% who thought it was 'bad'

Although the vast majority of children stated that they did visit a park, around 3% stated they didn't, with the main reasons as follows:

- Cleanliness / vandalism
- Too far away
- Unsafe



Older People

As a direct result of comments received during the consultation period for the draft version of this document a focus group session was held with the Older People's Reference Group. The main requirements highlighted by this group in relation to parks and green spaces are:

- site based gardeners (as staff presence acts as a deterrent to vandals)
- better access for older and disabled people
- more recreational facilities for older people (these currently target the young)
- more comfortable seating for older people
- clean accessible toilet facilities.
- more litter bins including those used for dog waste
- more notices by entrances to parks.
- better transport links and support to get to local parks as well as the main parks such as Roundhay Park
- better advertising of big events such as summer music festivals
- protection of smaller green spaces, including cemeteries.
- more green space in the city centre

Challenges

The strategy has involved many stakeholders in a number of events along with a wide reaching resident survey and assessment against the Green Flag standard. The themes themselves are suggestive of the key challenges faced and the following section sets this out in more detail.

1. Places for People

Putting people first. This about telling people what is on offer and that in many cases it is free, and also about looking at quality facilities that enhance visitor experience, and where there is a cost, to provide value for money. Fundamentally it is about marketing parks and green spaces more effectively. The lack of staff presence in many parks also remains a problem.

2. Quality Places

Improving the condition of parks and green spaces. This is particularly true of community parks, which receive a large number of visits from local people. Areas of concern relate to features that make a park or green space worthwhile to visit. The decline in horticultural skills has been identified as a national issue and this is also true in Leeds.

3. Sustaining the Green Realm

Access to quality green space. This is a particular issue in areas of deprivation where often there is a lack of quantity as well as quality, for which a green space audit and needs assessment will provide further information. Access to burial space is also an issue which needs a long term resolution.

The importance of parks and green space in adapting to climate change. With hotter summers and more frequent extreme weather events predicted, parks and green space can play an important role in adapting to climate change and reducing the effects of surface water run-off, particularly in dense urban environments.

4. Creating a Healthier City

People need to be more healthy. Parks and green spaces provide opportunity for freely accessible physical activity, primarily walking, that have proven benefits to health. Parks and green space should be at the forefront of thinking to introduce people to physical activity of a broad nature from participation in formal sport to informal recreation.

5. An Enabler for Regeneration

Increasing the quantity of parks and green space in the City Centre. Despite the huge investment by developers in the city centre, the amount and quality of green space has not kept pace. This is a particular challenge given that many of the dwellings do not have gardens and therefore access to green space should be addressed to ensure the sustainability and attractiveness of city centre living for a diverse range of prospective residents, visitors and workers.

Increasing the quality and where necessary, quantity of parks and green space in regeneration areas. These include West Leeds Gateway (of which West Leeds Country Park and Green Gateways initiative encompasses this), EASEL, Aire Valley, Beeston Hill and Holbeck.

Introduction to Parks and Green Space Strategy Themes

Six key themes have emerged during the process to provide a context and describe the importance of parks and green spaces to our communities. Each theme considers how issues can be addressed by setting clear objectives and desired outcomes. Principally, the themes provide a framework for an action plan setting out how key partners and stakeholders can help implement the Strategy.

The themes are as follows:

- 1. Places for People**
- 2. Quality Places**
- 3. Sustaining the Green Realm**
- 4. Creating a Healthier City**
- 5. Supporting Regeneration**
- 6. Delivering the Strategy**

Where relevant, links to the Green Flag Standard are made to highlight how the Strategy addresses these criteria.

The key proposals around the 6 themes form a framework for the action plan which indicates actions and timescale.

Theme 1: Places for People

The aim of this theme is: *To engage the community in promoting parks and green spaces as accessible places for everyone to experience and enjoy*



- 1.1. Parks and green spaces are places for people. For people to visit, to relax in, for recreation, and for the community to come together for events and activities.

Links to the Green Flag Standard

- **A Welcoming Place**

The overall impression for any member of the community approaching and entering the park or green space should be positive and inviting, regardless of the purpose for which they are visiting.

- **Healthy, Safe and Secure**

The park or green space must be a healthy, safe and secure place for all members of the community to use. Relevant issues must be addressed in management plans and implemented on the ground. New issues that arise must be addressed promptly and appropriately

- **Clean and Well Maintained**

For aesthetic as well as Health and Safety reasons, issues of cleanliness and maintenance must be adequately addressed

- **Community Involvement**

Management should actively pursue the involvement of members of the community who represent as many park or green space user groups as possible.

- **Marketing**

A marketing Strategy in place, in practice and regularly reviewed, as well as good provision of information to users about management strategies, activities, features and ways to get involved. The park or green space should be promoted as a community resource.

- 1.2. The assessments carried out against the Green Flag Standard thus far have revealed issues with regard to visitor experience, particularly at community parks. These include signage, the provision of interpretative and educational information, along with well maintained paths and benches, and clear sightlines, which is a key issue in accessing parks and green spaces. The household survey also revealed some issues about factors influencing visitor experience. The comments below,

which were provided in response to the household survey illustrate some of the issues.

“More information and signage is needed. Our parks need to be cleaner, have more toilets, and have good places to eat.”

“Paths need repairing, better seating, bins and a new café; they need to look good to give pleasure to the public.”

Proposal 1: We will consult with the community to ensure our parks and green spaces have appropriate information and facilities that make them good places to visit

- 1.3. It is important that as our parks and green space develop and improve, and provide a richer visitor experience, that people are made aware of what is on offer and do not base their understanding on past perceptions. Marketing is therefore a key element of successful implementation of this Strategy.
- 1.4. Use of the internet is increasing. In October 2000, 40% of adults had accessed the internet in the previous 3 months, by October 2005 this was 65% of adults. Implementing electronic government (IEG) is a national priority, and providing information and access to booking and payments on-line is likely to become increasingly important for parks and green space users during the life of this Strategy.

Proposal 2: We will aim to increase awareness and provide information and opportunities to access services

- 1.5. Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act means that each local authority should take account of the community safety dimension in all of its work. The Council has developed the ‘ParksWatch’ service whereby staff on patrol monitor the activities of visitors as well as working with the Leeds Community Safety partnership (including the Police) on a number of operations. The number of site based gardeners has increased. A number of facilities have been developed for young people which act as diversionary activities.

Proposal 3: We will work with partners in developing facilities and action to promote community safety in our parks and green spaces

- 1.6. Parks and green spaces can provide a valuable resource for education, covering many subjects for all ages and abilities. They can provide outdoor classrooms for schools, colleges and universities and opportunities for work-based training.

Proposal 4: We will promote parks and green space as places for education and learning

- 1.7. Parks and green spaces are increasingly being recognised as spaces for events and activities. This can vary from large events such as ‘Party in the Park’ attracting 60,000 visitors, to small events organised by the community. During 2005, 600 events and activities took place in Leeds parks and green spaces, providing the opportunity to build stronger, more cohesive communities. It should also be recognised that some parks in Leeds represent regional tourism destinations, and

therefore marketing should consider the opportunities that they bring in the context of both the Cultural and Tourism Strategies.

- 1.8. The importance of managing events and activities is also important to ensure public safety and compliance with licensing regulations. As well as the opportunities and benefits that events and activities bring, there are also challenges to ensure that parks and green spaces have staff available at weekends and therefore, traditional working patterns and practices need to be reviewed. An example of where the Parks and Countryside Service has adapted to develop a visitor services function is at Roundhay Park.

Proposal 5: We will promote and support well managed events and activities

Proposal 6: We will promote City and Country parks as visitor attractions, attracting people to Leeds as a place to visit, live, work and do business

Theme 1 example (a) – Roundhay Park – In the past, the management emphasis at Roundhay Park was primarily directed towards the maintenance of the physical assets. The introduction of the visitor and retail function has seen the development of educational initiatives, retail opportunities, and event management, giving a much more holistic approach to the advancement of the visitor experience.

A Visitor and Retail Manager leads a team of staff dedicated to making each and every visit to Roundhay Park an enjoyable and enriching experience. The Visitor Manager works closely with schools to deliver high class educational projects for visiting school parties, alongside a comprehensive programme of educational activities targeted at all sections of the community. Improved accessibility is also a key theme and the introduction of free mobility scooters has greatly increased access to the park. Communication and information has improved dramatically with the introduction of leaflets, new signage and regular engagement with local groups. The development of a dedicated visitor centre in 2007 will further enhance this function.

Retail opportunities have been actively pursued including the provision of improved catering facilities and the development of better public facilities, both directly delivered and in conjunction with partners from the private sector. Examples include the introduction of a road train to move people around the park and improvements to Lakeside Café.

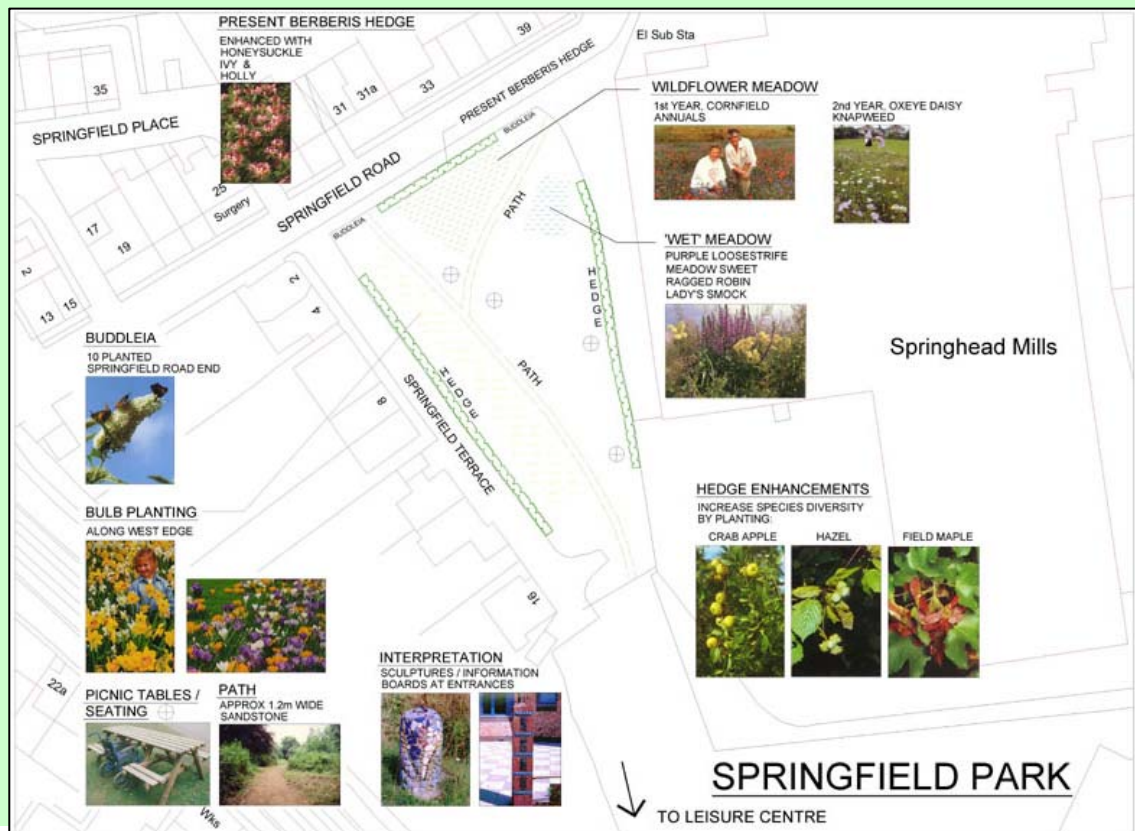
Safety and security is another key theme and the introduction of a park ranger service has been a great success. The park is now staffed from early morning to dusk, 365 days per year, with publicised phone contacts on all park signage to ensure easy access to this service.

Event management has been developed to ensure Roundhay Park is a safe and welcoming environment for a full range of both community and commercial events ranging from sponsored walks through to major pop concerts. The Visitor and Retail Team take a very pro-active role in ensuring each and every event is well organised and well run.

- 1.9. Two key national priorities have already been highlighted, namely *developing safer and stronger communities* and *encouraging sustainable communities*. Local parks and green space are vital in achieving these priorities. Community engagement is vital because it is important to understand the needs of the community and to aspire to match that with provision. It is also important because of the opportunities for the community to get involved in contributing to the development of their local green space.
- 1.10. People need to get involved – whether in a voluntary capacity or as part of a local ‘friends of’ group. We learned from the household surveys that 26% of adults in 2004 indicated that they would consider becoming a member of a ‘friends of’ group representing 119 sites, and in 2005 this was again 26% (over 1,300 people) representing 142 sites. The majority of people interested (53%) were aged 25-49, with 12% aged 18 – 24 with the remaining 35% aged 50 or over. There was also considerable interest shown by young people in becoming a ‘friends of’ member – from the 2004 survey, nearly 47% expressed an interest in representing 87 sites. The participation of ‘friends of’ groups and volunteers is vital as can be shown by the fact that countryside rangers and tree wardens are working with 63 Groups making up a total of 871 volunteers working 4,396 volunteer days within the Parks and Countryside Service each year.
- 1.11. It is important that ‘friends of’ groups are properly constituted, and promote mutual respect between parks and green space professionals who have overall management responsibility, and members of each group. Often groups are formed in response to specific issues and then they develop into working in partnership to deliver improvements. There are many opportunities for volunteers to undertake projects or deal with some of the basic problems, but this cannot replace the role of the management function to ensure maintenance standards and that health and safety considerations are upheld.
- 1.12. There are organisations actively involved in caring for the environment with education and community involvement being key elements in their work. Many of these organisations actively utilise volunteers and also receive grant aid to support this work. They include Meanwood Valley Urban Farm, Farming & Wildlife Advisory Group (FWAG), Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB) (Fairburn Ings), Middleton Equestrian Centre and British Trust for Conservation Volunteers (BTCV). A more detailed description is provided in **Appendix 3: Organisations that receive grant aid from Leeds City Council** on page 58.

Proposal 7: We will guide and influence public agencies, private landowners and community groups to work within the parameters of the Parks and Green Space Strategy

Theme 1 example (b) - Springfield Park in north-west Leeds used to be maintained as a grassed public open space, but has been transformed in partnership with the local community. This was achieved by installing recreation facilities including paths, park furniture, informal play space, picnic tables and interpretation, and additional planting to encourage species diversity. The scheme has also involved the introduction of new habitats for biodiversity namely wildflower meadow and wet meadow.



Proposal 8: We will engage with communities and encourage and enable people to get involved in developing our parks and green space

- 1.13. A key area of transformation is for parks and green spaces being seen as 'places for people' rather than just areas to maintain and keep clean. This transformation will require an increasing role for marketing and communication, in terms of the way sites are presented, increased media coverage and many more people in parks.
- 1.14. The rewards are expressed very well in the following extract from correspondence from a Morley resident:

I thought I would take the time to write to you, thanking you for the beautiful park in Morley. I can remember times as a young boy before I started school, sitting on the park benches with my grandmother, in glorious sunshine looking at all the immaculately tendered flower beds, the fresh green grass, the trees, and other people sitting on the grass with picnics. They are fantastic memories. I never thought I would see the parks looking so splendid again, that is, until recently.

I feel that my children will now have those memories, as I take them through the park, and sit with them on the same bench as my grandmother did with me. I feel

so proud when work colleagues comment on how they have recently been to Morley and can't believe how nice the parks are, right in the centre of town. I just wanted to make sure that the people who have worked so hard to create the parks, know that their efforts are greatly appreciated. You are a credit to Leeds, and I want you to know, that if some mindless yob throws litter on the grass, or someone lets their dog foul the area, most of us are as annoyed as yourselves, so please don't lose patience.

Thank you all very much for what you have done to our town, you should be very proud at what you have helped to create.

Summary of Proposals for Theme 1: Places for People

Strategic aim: *To engage the community in promoting parks and green spaces as accessible places for everyone to experience and enjoy*

- 1 We will consult with the community to ensure our parks and green spaces have appropriate information and facilities that make them good places to visit
- 2 We will aim to increase awareness and provide information and opportunities to access services
- 3 We will work with partners in developing facilities and action to promote community safety in our parks and green spaces
- 4 We will promote parks and green space as places for education and learning
- 5 We will promote and support well managed events and activities
- 6 We will promote City and Country parks as visitor attractions, attracting people to Leeds as a place to visit, live, work and do business
- 7 We will guide and influence public agencies, private landowners and community groups to work within the parameters of the Parks and Green Space Strategy
- 8 We will engage with communities and encourage and enable people to get involved in developing our parks and green space

Theme 2: Quality Places

The aim of this theme is: *To provide good quality parks and green spaces that are well managed and provide a range of attractive facilities*

- 2.1. Delivering quality is not only about dealing with day to day issues, but is also about the long term improvement and development of the quality of parks and green spaces through a sustained programme of capital investment. Providing a quality service also requires a workforce that has the range of skills to meet the changing needs of users, and for Community Parks this includes site based gardeners. The management of parks and green spaces is about both long term and day to day management of resources and operations to deliver quality places for people to use.

Links of this theme to the Green Flag Standard

- **Healthy, Safe and Secure**

The park or green space must be a healthy, safe and secure place for all members of the community to use. Relevant issues must be addressed in management plans and implemented on the ground. New issues that arise must be addressed promptly and appropriately

- **Clean and Well Maintained**

For aesthetic as well as Health and Safety reasons, issues of cleanliness and maintenance must be adequately addressed

- **Management**

A management plan or strategy in place which reflects the aspirations of Local Agenda 21 and clearly and adequately addresses all relevant aspects of the park or green space's management. The plan must be actively implemented and regularly reviewed. Financially sound management of the park or green space must also be demonstrated.

- 2.2. Like most other Parks authorities one of our key issues is the need for capital investment and sustained revenue funding. The Best Value Review of the Parks and Countryside Service in December 2001 explored comparisons between Leeds and Core Cities¹ in terms of the direct cost of maintenance of Community Parks. The comparison showed that the average spend per hectare for Leeds was £1,874 compared to a mean of the other Core Cities of £6,500. On this basis, extrapolating the Service's net revenue budget of approximately £15million would mean that in order to fall in line with the average for the Core Cities the net budget would need to be £53.5million.
- 2.3. In Leeds, before Compulsory Competitive Tendering (CCT) in 1988, there were around 1,000 frontline staff in the Parks and Countryside Service doing many skilled and traditional gardening jobs. The CCT era from 1988 to 1998 saw a reduction in the number of skilled staff to around 370. The impact in financial terms of this reduction is around £11million annually in staff costs alone.

Proposal 9: We will develop an investment strategy to maximise opportunity for sustained investment in our parks and green space

¹ The 8 English Core Cities include: Birmingham, Bristol, Leeds, Liverpool, Manchester, Newcastle, Nottingham and Sheffield

- 2.4. There are particular issues with regard to the provision and maintenance of bowling greens and facilities. These include distribution and usage of facilities, access to bowling greens and facilities, quality of facilities, management arrangements and the level of subsidy.

Proposal 10: We will develop an outdoor bowls strategy to seek ways to promote and manage bowls facilities in a sustainable way

- 2.5. Badly designed, neglected areas of green space can often become a target for anti-social behaviour, concerns over safety, and a spiral of decline. However, research by CABI Space² has highlighted that good quality design and management can transform areas into popular community spaces. Some of the issues of anti-social behaviour are still apparent in parks and green spaces in Leeds. One comment sums up the feelings of many people in the 2005 survey:

“Due to the increase in vandalism over the years and the lack of park wardens parks have become no go areas for young women, toddlers and pensioners. They have been taken over by thugs, vandals and druggies.”

- 2.6. The above comment is fairly typical. Many people who visit parks feel that these areas are neglected, and because of the lack of site based staff, issues such as dealing with litter, graffiti and vandalism do not get attended to straight away. This in turn can lead to an escalation of anti-social behaviour and creating areas where people do not feel safe to go. The CABI Space ‘Parkforce’ campaign which commenced in 2005 aims to see on-site staff caring for every significant English urban park during daylight hours.
- 2.7. Leeds was one of the first authorities to back the Parkforce campaign and the Service is pursuing funding for on site gardeners. Following the Parkforce campaign, there are 32 gardeners in place at 36 sites. There are also 21 sites that have been identified that need a gardener. **Appendix 5: Site based gardeners** on page 60 provides more information.

Proposal 11: We will aspire to a site based gardener at all our community parks to improve quality and promote a greater feeling of safety

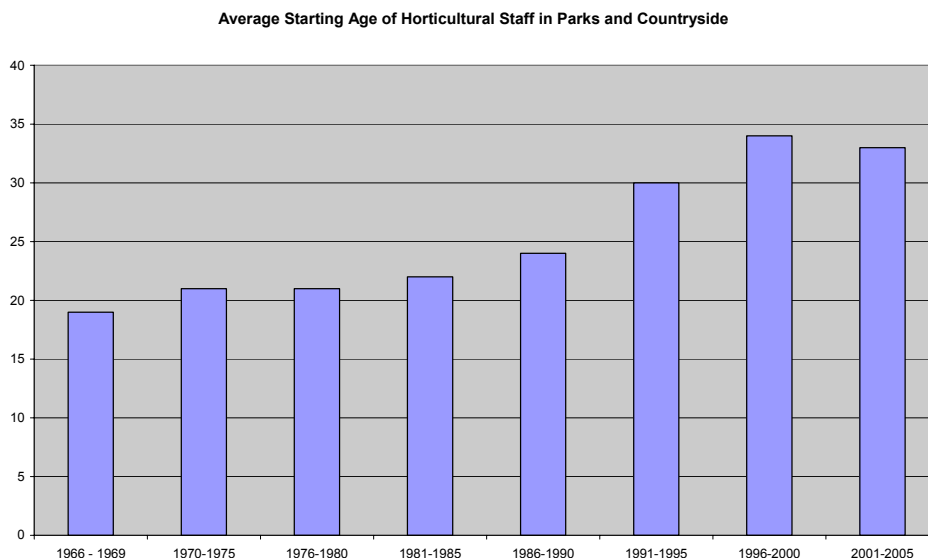
- 2.8. So, what does the current workforce profile look like? The following table profiles age of horticultural staff assessed in September 2006.

Age Group	Percentage
19 or under	1.2%
20-29	14.5%
30-39	20.9%
40-49	32.7%
50-59	22.9%
60+	7.8%

- 2.9. Nearly two-thirds of staff are over the age of 40, with only 1.2% of staff aged 19 or under and 15.7% of staff up to the age of 29. This is in partly due to the fact that

² Decent parks? Decent behaviour?

since 1980 the age of new starters has risen considerably as illustrated in the graph below.



- 2.10. The loss of key ‘green’ skills is not unique to Leeds, and organisations like CABE Space, the Royal Horticultural Society and Green Space are also highlighting these issues on the national stage. A number of initiatives are already underway and for Leeds this will mean attracting more people to consider a career relating to parks and green space, or for our existing staff to improve their skills. In association with regional colleges offering courses in horticulture and environment, an initiative to attract people who have changed career and now wish to work in horticulture is underway and this will provide an opportunity to experience working in public parks and green spaces. A further project with Park Lane College is underway to enable existing staff within the Parks and Countryside Service to improve their skills, by offering a range of educational courses from Level 2 to Foundation Degree. The Service is also working in partnership with education colleagues on the following project.

Proposal 12: We will seek to enable people equipped with the skills and training to lead and manage the implementation of the Parks and Green Space Strategy

Theme 2, example (a) - Kinaesthetic Learning Project

Kinaesthetic means learning through hands on experience, rather than more traditional school lessons and enables those who may marginally underachieve to maximise their potential and to re-engage with education. Following the Tomlinson report, the Government has recognised the need to maximise this potential in young people, especially with those who do not learn well in the classroom environment. The Government intends that this recognition will result in all school children being offered the opportunity of taking a vocational diploma course from 2013; however in Leeds, due to the partnership between the Parks and Countryside Service and South Leeds City Learning Centre, with Joseph Priestley

College and partner schools, this opportunity has already been provided for schools in the South Leeds schools partnership. It is planned that this experience will be used to inform and develop the city-wide provision anticipated in 2009.

The current model employs the two-year route as previously reported and enables young (14 year old) kinaesthetic learners to achieve either an Edexcel Level Two BTEC First Certificate or Diploma in Countryside and Environment or Horticulture. These awards are the equivalent of either 2 or 4 GCSEs at Grade A-C respectively. The model is now in place and running successfully with 26 learners who carry out practical work within the Service whilst also undertaking theoretical learning within a Virtual Learning Environment. In the first year students spend 1 day a week based at Temple Newsam Park and the second year of the course is based at Middleton Park. At these sites they learn from carrying out a range of horticultural related tasks as well as engaging in a development of their academic knowledge of the environment.

- 2.11. Within the Parks and Countryside Service there are also issues with regard to representation of women, black and minority ethnic and disabled employees as the following table illustrates.

Employee Type	Percentage
Female	14.1%
Black and minority ethnic	1.7%
Disabled	5.0%

- 2.12. Some of the barriers to employment within the Parks and Countryside Service include the perception that the job is about handling large machinery. Working hours could also be a barrier, for example early start times, which may not fit in with work / life balance or family and domestic responsibilities. Also in some cultures, gardening is seen as a menial manual job with no career prospects. There are of course a whole range of employment opportunities within the Service that need promoting as positive career options.
- 2.13. The Service has been working with partners from horticultural and green space organisations to discuss the key challenges relating to parks and green space with the objective of raising the profile of the Service nationally whilst also increasing local awareness of both the Service and the career opportunities available. Activities include:
- Chelsea Garden 2004 and 2006 – both projects sought to promote local authority horticulture and green skills receiving sponsorship from local developers.
 - Award finalists in 2006 for three Horticulture Week awards and the CABESpace Parkforce Awards.
- 2.14. There is a commitment by national government to increase the quality of parks and green spaces via the Public Service Agreement (PSA) process. The liveability section of PSA8 states that ‘by the end of 2008, to increase to 60% the proportion of local authority districts with at least one park or green space that meets Green Flag Award standards.’
- 2.15. In Leeds this standard has already been met, and as at 2006, there were Green Flag awards for Golden Acre Park, Lotherton Estate, Roundhay Park, Temple Newsam Estate and Pudsey Park. There is an intention to submit Chevin Forest Park and Kirkstall Abbey Estate for Green Flag in 2007. The National Audit Office

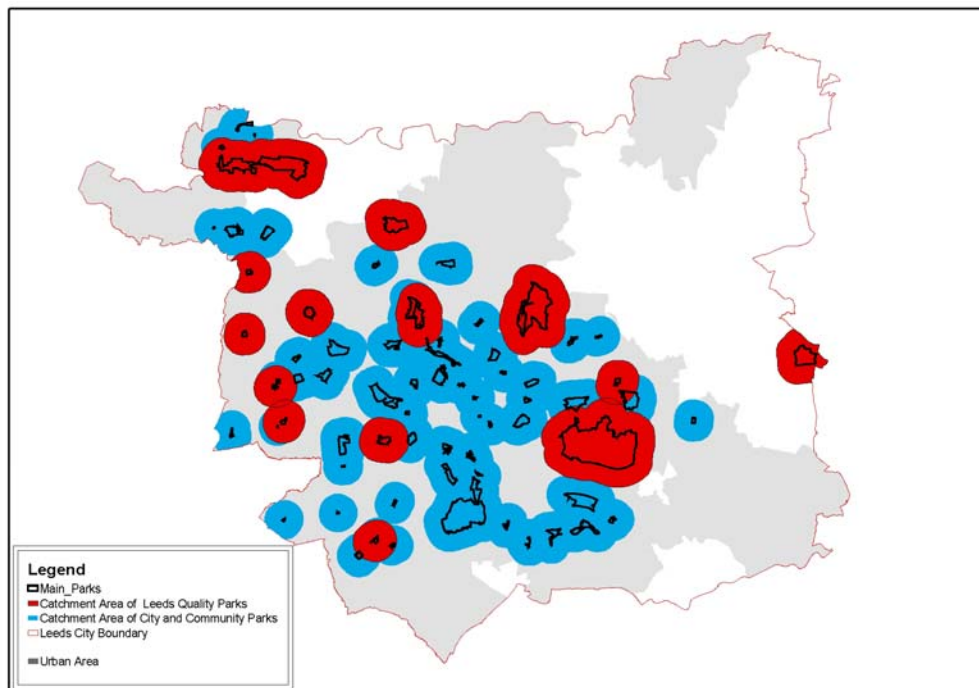
report on 'Enhancing Urban Green Space,' highlighted the risk that in the short term the Green Flag Award scheme may actually widen the gap by making good parks better by diverting already scarce resources away from poorer parks. This has not been the case in Leeds, and there is no intention to submit any further parks or green spaces for the award, unless specific funding streams require it.

- 2.16. The Green Flag assessment programme is discussed in the introductory section of the document, and to accompany this, a Leeds Quality Parks Standard is being introduced during 2006 to recognise those parks that meet the Green Flag standard, but will not be put forward for the award itself. This will include a logo and flag as illustrated that will be visible at parks that have met the standard for the field based assessment. As at 2006, Calverly Park, Chevin Forest Park, Manston Park, Meanwood Park, Micklefield Park, Scatcherd Park, Westroyd Park, Western Flatts Park, and Wharfemeadows are Leeds Quality Parks.

Proposal 13: We will aim to improve all our parks and green spaces as measured against the Green Flag standard for field based assessment

Proposal 14: We will aspire to achieve all our community parks to meet the Green Flag standard for field based assessment by 2020

- 2.17. The map below illustrates general access to community parks and those in red are parks which have achieved either the Green Flag Standard or have been assessed as Leeds Quality Parks.



- 2.18. As indicated within the Green Flag assessment process, a management plan is also an important element in delivering quality places. It is important that any management plan is appropriate and relevant to the site in question, is embedded within the aims of the Parks and Green Space Strategy and is communicated to all relevant stakeholders.

Summary of Proposals for Theme 2: Quality Places

Strategic aim: *To provide good quality parks and green spaces that are well managed and provide a range of attractive facilities*

- 9 We will develop an investment strategy to maximise opportunity for sustained investment in our parks and green space
- 10 We will develop an outdoor bowls strategy to seek ways to promote and manage bowls facilities in a sustainable way
- 11 We will aspire to a site based gardener at all our community parks to improve quality and promote a greater feeling of safety
- 12 We will seek to enable people equipped with the skills and training to lead and manage the implementation of the Parks and Green Space Strategy
- 13 We will aim to improve all our parks and green spaces as measured against the Green Flag standard for field based assessment
- 14 We will aspire to achieve all our community parks to meet the Green Flag standard for field based assessment by 2020

Theme 3: Sustaining the Green Realm

The Aim of this Theme is: *To plan for the development of new, and to protect existing parks and green spaces that will offer lasting social, cultural and environmental benefits for the people of Leeds*

- 3.1. A decision taken during the development of this Strategy was to market test 'streetscene' verges and incidental areas around council housing. Land with recreation or conservation value was excluded from this process and any land that met the following criteria was transferred to the ownership of one service within the Council:
- Where there are recreational facilities e.g. playing pitch, bowling green or playground
 - It is a 'pocket park'
 - Where there is recreational potential if managed appropriately and for example involves local community groups or partner organisations
 - It is a woodland area
 - It is a nature conservation site
- 3.2. Although seemingly an internal process, managing land as described above as a single green estate does have many benefits in terms of developing use for recreation by working with the community.

Links to Green Flag Standard

- **Sustainability**

Methods used in maintaining the park or green space and its facilities should be environmentally sound, relying on best practices available according to current knowledge. Management should be aware of the range of techniques available to them, and demonstrate that informed choices have been made and are regularly reviewed.

- **Conservation and Heritage**

Particular attention should be paid to the conservation and appropriate management of natural features, wildlife and fauna, landscape, buildings and structural features.

- 3.3. An important consideration in the preparation of a Strategy for the future management of green space in Leeds is the land use planning context at both national and local level. Planning Policy Guidance 17 (PPG 17), published by ODPM in 2002, states the need for Councils to:
- undertake a robust assessment of existing and future needs of the community for open space, sports and recreation facilities as detailed in a Companion Guide to PPG 17 'Assessing needs and opportunities'
 - place importance on the setting of local standards for the provision of open space, sports and recreation facilities underpinned by quantitative, qualitative and accessibility considerations
 - adhere to the clear guidance issued on the basis upon which planning decisions affecting playing fields should be made

- make greater use of planning obligations in new developments to secure new, improved open space, sport and recreation facilities neighbourhood area in the city

Proposal 15: We will aspire to parks and green space for recreation or conservation owned by the Council to be managed as a single green estate

- 3.4. Green space remains under increasing pressure from developers and there are some that would argue that parks are not untouchable. Playing pitches are still a target for development. The Playing Pitch Strategy has highlighted the need to work with Education Leeds and the Private Finance Initiatives (PFIs) on the accessibility issues with both programmes. The provision of new green space is largely opportunistic and is generally cost prohibitive as the land would have to be purchased at building land rates. This is a particular issue within the city centre where there is limited green space and a trend towards hard landscaping in favour of new green space.
- 3.5. The Leeds Unitary Development Plan (UDP) (Review) 2006 protects the basic green space resource and helps to ensure that its amenity and recreational value to the community is taken fully into account in considering any proposals for development. The overall objective is that all sections of the community should be able to enjoy good access to the recreational and amenity benefits of green space, irrespective of where they live.
- Policy N2 defines the hierarchy of green spaces, each with a minimum target level of provision based on accessibility to a catchment area:
 - Local Amenity Space - for immediate local needs and to be provided on development sites at a standard of 0.2 hectares per 50 dwellings pro-rata
 - Local Recreation Areas – providing for local informal recreational needs of older children and adults – 2.8 hectares within 400 metres of where people live
 - Neighbourhood & District Parks – providing for a community as a whole
 - Major City Parks
 - Policy N3 resulted from a district-wide analysis of green space undertaken for the Leeds UDP (Review) 2006 which revealed 4 inner-city areas where green space is virtually absent
 - Policy N4 explains the rationale we use for securing contributions, as planning obligations, from new housing developments towards green space
 - Policy N5 which identifies certain sites where it is proposed that the Council and/or other agencies will aim to provide new green spaces, largely carried forward proposals from earlier Local Plans and tend to be located in the outer areas, unrelated to the Priority N3 areas

- 3.6. New planning legislation means that the Leeds UDP (Review) 2006 will be replaced by a new type of statutory development plan - the Local Development Framework (LDF). Like the current Leeds UDP (Review) 2006, the LDF will contain similar green space policies.
- 3.7. Setting out the value of green space to the community is important as parks and green space are a vital factor in fostering sustainable communities, places that people like to live in, and want to stay in.

Proposal 16: We will safeguard and improve parks, playing fields, natural green space and children's play areas

- 3.8. There is a clear link between quality parks and green spaces and land value. CABE Space research³ demonstrates that houses adjacent to improved green space added 5 to 7 percent premium to house prices. Good quality parks and green spaces do not only benefit people who live there – they can attract businesses and employers who recognise the benefits of the natural environment in promoting a positive and vibrant image, and they attract investors and jobs. Employees feel more relaxed and less stressed if they travel through and work within a natural environment, which in turn increases productivity and reduces sickness levels. A thriving natural environment can also bring employment and training, in areas such as nature conservation, horticulture, arboriculture, community work, environmental education and landscaping.
- 3.9. Parks increase the biodiversity and sustainability of urban areas, absorbing noise, providing drainage systems and essential habitats. Leeds has a wealth of wildlife, and from the household surveys, we know that people want to see more birds, wild flowers, butterflies, trees and mammals and these species need spaces to live. The Leeds Biodiversity Action Plan has specific plans for 4 habitats and 6 species and many of our spaces are protected to help ensure that wildlife is there for the future. These include 8 local nature reserves, 116 local nature areas, and 43 sites of ecological or geological interest.
- 3.10. Parks and green space help counter pollution that make cities unbearable and unsustainable. They promote the feel of an ecologically sensitive city and provide havens for many birds, animals and wild flowers, and serve as the green 'lungs' for our city. In these times of climate change, parks and green spaces in densely populated cities and city centres are being seen as 'heat sinks,' which will help to alleviate high temperatures in dominant concrete surroundings. Parks and green space also play a vital role in flood risk management in terms of drainage and run-off by providing porous surfaces and water storage areas for 'sustainable urban drainage schemes' which can have dual functions for wildlife and/or recreation. The development of the Leeds Forest Strategy will provide a framework for future woodland and tree planting which will help to counter pollution by removing harmful particles and carbon dioxide from the air by 'carbon fixing' whereby trees lock up carbon as they grow, store it in maturity or within timber products, and finally release it when the wood rots or is burnt.

Proposal 17: We will use our parks and green spaces in adapting to climate change based on an understanding of which specific proposals will have the greatest impact

³ Does money grow on trees

Proposal 18: We will encourage conservation and biodiversity to flourish within the green realm

Proposal 19: We will promote and develop green corridors for recreation, conservation and transport

- 3.11. Leeds City Council elected to become a Burial Authority in 1846 and since that date has established 22 Cemeteries throughout the City. In addition, since 1905, 3 crematoria have also been established. As such, the authority must provide burial and Cremation facilities for the Citizens of the Council.

Proposal 20: We will seek ways to provide and manage burial space in a sustainable way

Summary of Proposals for Theme 3: Sustaining the Green Realm

Strategic aim: *To plan for, develop new and protect existing parks and green spaces that will offer lasting social, cultural and environmental benefits for the people of Leeds*

- 15 We will aspire to parks and green space for recreation or conservation owned by the Council to be managed as a single green estate
- 16 We will safeguard and improve parks, playing fields, natural green space and children's play areas
- 17 We will use our parks and green spaces in adapting to climate change based on an understanding of which specific proposals will have the greatest impact
- 18 We will encourage conservation and biodiversity to flourish within the green realm
- 19 We will promote and develop green corridors for recreation, conservation and transport
- 20 We will seek ways to provide and manage burial space in a sustainable way

Theme 4: Creating a Healthier City

The Aim of this Theme is: *To promote parks and green spaces as places to improve health and well-being and prevent disease through physical activity, play, relaxation and contemplation*

- 4.1. It is estimated that by 2020 half of all children could be obese. Studies suggest that there is more scope to increase children's activity levels (and decrease their levels of obesity) by encouraging more outside play in green space than there is in formal sport.
- 4.2. There is increasing evidence to show that regular access to the natural environment is important for children's development by encouraging outdoor play and improving concentration and behaviour. For adults too, one in six of whom is diagnosed as suffering from anxiety or depression each year, natural space has a restorative effect, improving the ability to cope with stressful situations and improved concentration and work output. (Natural England Health Campaign).
- 4.3. This is further supported by research carried out by Bristol University for The Countryside Recreation Network in February 2005. The research demonstrated that contact with the natural world can benefit mental and physical health. Access to a quality green environment not only benefits health in preventative terms, but speeds recovery and plays a vital part in our mental well-being. The research identified that nature can be enjoyed at 3 different levels – by viewing it as from a window, by being in the presence of nearby nature, or through active participation. Our parks and green spaces provide this contact where it is needed most, in our cities, and therefore everyone benefits. Imagine what our cities would be like in the absence of trees, natural areas, wildlife, and places for recreation. This should help us realise the importance that parks and green space play in our lives, often without us being conscious of it.
- 4.4. Professor Roger Ulrich, A&M University, Texas, looked at the effects of commuting through built-up urban areas compared with driving through routes lined with greenery. He found that employees were more effective if they passed through natural scenery on their way to work and were more relaxed in the evening following a similar drive home. Just five minutes looking at a green space had an impact on the nervous system by lowering blood pressure and reducing stress. His findings support the view that green space and nature should be promoted in cities to help lessen the stresses of daily living. In the absence of green space in the city centre companies will want to relocate to places that are close to quality parks and green space or where such provision is at the heart of the development, for example at Thorp Park in East Leeds and the White Rose Office Park in South Leeds.

Proposal 21: We will promote and publicise the health and well-being benefits of parks and green spaces

Theme 4, example (a) - city centre developments – private garden spaces have been developed, with somewhere for staff to sit.

Although there are two small pocket parks, or public squares (Merrion Street Gardens and Park Square), there is a distinct lack of green recreational space within walking distance of the main apartment and office accommodation in Leeds.

There are examples where new developments are including gardens and seating areas where visitors and employees can sit and relax in the open air, Trevelyan Square just off Boar Lane is one example that provides a small garden bounded on four sides by business premises and a Hotel. A neatly maintained garden in the central square comprises of a fountain, shrubs and grass, and a small seating area.

There is a similar area located at Crofts Court, just off Infirmary Street.

- 4.5. The Government white paper 'Choosing Activity' identified that the relative proportion of deaths from cancers, coronary heart disease (CHD) and stroke has risen, and they now account for around two-thirds of all deaths. In both men and women and in all age groups, low educational attainment is associated with higher levels of inactivity, and the proportion of people engaging in physical activity declines with age and particularly after the age of 35. The cost of inactivity in England is estimated by the Chief Medical Officer to be £8.2 billion annually. This excludes the contribution of physical inactivity due to overweight and obesity, whose overall cost might run to £6.6–£7.4 billion per year. The World Health Organisation estimates that depression and depression-related illness will become the greatest source of ill-health by 2020. Parks and green space are therefore vitally important in addressing these issues, and access to quality sites for all is key to this.
- 4.6. The Department of Health recommendations are that adults should participate in 30 minutes of moderate physical activity on at least five days per week and that all young people should participate in physical activity of at least moderate intensity for one hour a day. In 1998 nationally, only 37% of men and 25% of women met this recommendation.
- 4.7. The health agenda nationally, tends to be focused on participating in sporting activities or visiting a sport centre, however in Leeds, there are around 4 million visits to sports centres, but around 60 million resident visits to parks. The number one reason people visit is to exercise and in 2005, this represented over 30 million visits. Around 25 million visits are to contemplate or relax. The majority of people get there by healthy means - 57% either by walking or cycling.
- 4.8. Keeping active reduces the risk of death from coronary heart disease, of developing diabetes, high blood pressure, obesity and certain cancers and helps maintain health and independence in older adults. Dr William Bird⁴ in particular highlights the importance of walking as an accessible and effective means of moderate exercise and the following points help demonstrate this:
 - Walking to parks and green spaces is an important form of exercise

⁴ Natural Fit: Can Green Space and Biodiversity Increase Levels of Physical Activity? Dr William Bird Oct. 2004

- Initiatives around getting people active (particularly in Scandinavia and Australia) have demonstrated that walking has been the most successful means of achieving this
- Public rights of way are of key importance, but often stiles can be a real physical barrier to the elderly and there is therefore a design issue
- As an illustration of the impact of physical activity, if 60 men, 61 years or older were encouraged to be physically active then 1 life would be saved each year as a result
- For children, simply having access to the outdoors and informal play space can significantly increase levels of physical activity
- Safety is a greater issue for women in green space and therefore initiatives need to be aware of this

4.9. Leeds has or is developing significant partnerships supporting Childhood Obesity, Physical Activity, and also a Food Strategy. There is also an emerging supporting strategy for older people in Leeds 'Older Better,' with an ambition of a life worth living where older people are respected and included, their contributions are acknowledged and they are enabled to remain independent and enjoy good mental and physical health. This is a key focus in the Local Area Agreement in relation to the Healthier and Communities and Older People block. The role of parks and green space provision in this agenda is at an early stage, but the potential benefits to health as outlined above, are significant.

4.10. The appointment of a Physical Activity Manager in partnership with Primary Care Trusts in 2005 is leading to the development of a Physical Activity Strategy for Leeds. A key piece of work to inform the Strategy is a detailed survey of around 35,000 households in order to gauge current levels of activity, to include active living (such as household work, gardening and walking the dog) and active travel (walking and cycling), as well as sport and active recreation. The full results of the Active Places survey conducted by Sport England will be available early in 2007. The Leeds survey will be conducted in autumn 2006, and is intended to enable issues to be identified at a more local level as part of an accurate and detailed picture of physical activity throughout Leeds.

4.11. The Strategy supports active travel and recognises the opportunity that could be provided by sustainable travel routes through parks and green spaces. A good example of this is the West Leeds Country Park and Green Gateways Initiative. The initiative has mapped out and is developing parks, countryside and public rights of way that encircle the conurbation of West Leeds with a view to joining these areas, providing route ways, information, interpretation and leaflets.

Proposal 22: We will contribute to the West Yorkshire Local Transport Plan by providing sustainable transport routes in parks and green spaces

4.12. The Parks and Countryside Service developed a series of 'Health Walk' routes at Roundhay Park and Temple Newsam for people of all ages to enjoy and was launched in October 2005 to coincide with Leeds Fitness Week. Information boards detailing the walks have been put in place, as well as leaflets and markings to signify the routes. Since then the scheme has been extended to 5 community parks; Armley Park; Horsforth Hall Park; Micklefield; Western Flatts; and Woodhouse Moor, with plans underway to extend the scheme to a number of other parks and green spaces.. In addition to this, the Ranger Service contributes towards the Health and Well Being agenda by organising various activities such as

themed walks and practical tasks such as shrub clearing to encourage people to take a greater interest in their natural surroundings.

Proposal 23: We will promote the health messages of walking and seek to develop health walk routes in our parks and green spaces

Proposal 24: We will provide opportunities for active recreation within parks and green spaces

Summary of Proposals for Theme 4: Creating a Healthier City

Strategic aim: *To promote parks and green spaces as places to improve health and well-being and prevent disease through physical activity, play, relaxation and contemplation*

- 21 We will promote and publicise the health and well-being benefits of parks and green spaces
- 22 We will contribute to the West Yorkshire Local Transport Plan by providing sustainable transport routes in parks and green spaces
- 23 We will promote the health messages of walking and seek to develop health walk routes in our parks and green spaces
- 24 We will provide opportunities for active recreation within parks and green spaces

Theme 5: An Enabler for Regeneration

The Aim of this Theme is: *To promote liveability and the economic benefits of quality parks and green space provision as an integral part of major regeneration projects*

- 5.1. Given the range of regeneration activity underway and future plans for further regeneration in the City, there is a real opportunity in the next few years to 'put the park first'. This should recognise the important part played by quality and accessible parks and green spaces with a range of facilities and activities which:
 - attract businesses to invest
 - encourage people to live in the area
 - play a central role in promoting community cohesion
- 5.2. Redevelopment and regeneration projects offer the chance to decide whether our existing spaces meet community need, and ensure that new developments do not repeat previous mistakes. Parks and green spaces need to be planned for at the heart of the development rather than as an afterthought on a piece of otherwise unusable land. We will need to create new spaces, link existing ones together and protect what is valued and special. High quality parks and green spaces help with jobs and tourism, link communities and create an attractive place to live and work. They break down social barriers and help pull communities and people together, and make neighbourhoods better places to live. They are probably the most accessible form of community facility that any city has and this is evidenced by the surveys showing that there are over 60 million visits each year by around 90% of Leeds residents.
- 5.3. There are areas in the city that are benefiting from investment, these include:
 - City centre – a major area of development
 - Aire Valley – a major £250 million regeneration programme covering a large industrial area to the south east of Leeds city centre
 - East and South East Leeds (EASEL) regeneration initiative – an important housing led scheme covering 1,700 hectares with a population of almost 79,000 people.
 - West Leeds gateway – a regeneration scheme focusing on parts of Armley, Farnley and Wortley
 - Beeston Hill and Holbeck Regeneration
- 5.4. Major regeneration initiatives provide the opportunity to consider green space, which often is poorly configured and has little recreation value. In these circumstances, sometimes having less green space that is of better quality and is more accessible to the whole community can be more desirable than large, low quality inaccessible areas. A further key issue is that of linkage so that areas of green space are seen as corridors for people and wildlife rather than as 'islands.' It is therefore important that emerging Area Action Plans (at a local level) place parks and green spaces at the heart of regeneration. The Parks and Countryside Service must also play a leading role in the context of Leeds Renaissance at a strategic level and there is a real need to ensure that there is more green space in the extended City Centre as well as more green links from the centre to the surrounding urban areas.

Proposal 25: We will consult with the community and seek ways to increase access to quality parks and green space in areas of deprivation

Theme 5, example (a): West Leeds Country Park and Green Gateways Initiative

A good example of an holistic approach to green space management in an area of the city is the West Leeds Country Park and Green Gateways initiative. The initiative has mapped and is developing parks, countryside and public rights of way that encircle the conurbation of West Leeds with a view to joining these areas, providing route ways, information, interpretation and leaflets. Capital works will be identified and implemented during 2007 and 2008 to further improve the linkages, and a West Leeds Country Park Officer is being appointed to work with community and volunteer groups. The West Leeds Country Park and Green Gateways trail covers 20 miles and starts and finishes at Granary Wharf in Leeds City Centre. The full link through the southeast part of West Leeds conurbation involves the use of parks and green space areas as stepping stones that are linked by ginnels and roads through the residential and commercial areas.



The Aims of the initiative are to develop the West Leeds country park and green gateways to ensure:

- Suitable and sustainable green space availability
- Quality recreational areas
- Diverse wildlife habitats

- Strong community involvement

The desired outcomes are:

- Provide an opportunity for people to improve health through physical exercise in the natural environment
- Increase the number and variety of plants and wildlife
- Enhance environmental education opportunities
- Support regeneration, making the area a more attractive place to live, work and invest

The initiative has involved wide consultation with 66 community groups and organisations and highlights the purpose and function of a range of sites and routes, including private land and considers related issues of access and importance of effective linkage between key sites. It also highlights heritage features such as Kirkstall Abbey, nature reserves such as at Rodley, semi-natural ancient woodlands and wildflower meadows rich in flora and fauna, urban parks such as Calverley Park and the Leeds Liverpool canal and river Aire.

Proposal 26: We will promote access to parks and green space by seeking to expand the West Leeds Country Parks and Green Gateways initiative to other areas of the city

- 5.5. John Ruskin, the Victorian artist, writer and social critic stated that ‘the measure of any great civilisation is in its cities, and a measure of a city’s greatness is to be found in the quality of its public spaces, its parks and its squares’. A survey of city centre living in Leeds conducted in 2005 by the School of Geography, University of Leeds found that 60% of residents are 30 or under, only 5 residents were under 18 and only 11 over the age of 60. The most common reason stated which would make residents leave the city centre was ‘lack of green space’ – 200 out of 500 respondents rated this as ‘very important’ and a total of 73% ‘very important’ or ‘quite important.’ Other reasons included ‘having children,’ ‘inadequate living space’ and ‘lack of convenient shops.’

Proposal 27: We will aspire to developing a city centre park during the life of this strategy

Proposal 28: We will aspire to increase access to green space within the core city centre area

- 5.6. Green space is also valuable to people who work in urban areas. Whilst not located in city centre areas, Arlington Business Parks have demonstrated the value of a brand designed around green space, which command city centre rental values, and the White Rose Office Park in Leeds is a good example of this. Green space needs to be recognised as a positive benefit within commercial city centre development, whereas in the recent past the focus on design is often on the building and not necessarily on the green space around it.
- 5.7. There is clear evidence to support the case that good quality parks and green spaces make a positive impact on economic regeneration. This includes research

by CABI Space, research conducted in the USA as well as work conducted locally as part of developing the Strategy. The following conclusions can be drawn:

- There is increased expenditure enjoyed by local businesses as a consequence of the attraction of greater numbers of people
- Raised property prices that accompany a valued amenity
- Park and green space improvements have brought a sense of renewal and confidence to the prospects of the local area
- There are commercial benefits that go along with open space provision, in terms of creating an environment which is attractive to buyers
- Improvements to green space can attract tourists and new business
- They are an important quality-of-life factor for businesses choosing where to locate facilities and for well-educated individuals choosing a place to live
- They offer recreational opportunities for at risk youth, low-income children, and low-income families
- In Leeds, parks and green space are regarded as important but in need of improvement
- As an illustration of the health benefits, it is estimated that a park in a major town has a £4.4 million annual benefit to the economy as a whole, and £910,000 to the NHS; a 3Km footpath has a £1 million benefit to the economy and £210,000 benefit to the NHS

5.8. There is also evidence however that where parks and green space are allowed to deteriorate, this can have a negative impact on economic regeneration.

Proposal 29: We will promote the economic value of good quality parks and green space

Proposal 30: We will develop the concept of parks as community hubs

Theme 5, example (b) - green space on top of buildings – [put this near climate change stuff]

'Rooftop Parks'

One of the pressures experienced by a thriving and prosperous city is the value of land and space within its city boundary. The inclusion of recreational green space is often given little regard and its value to the community is underestimated. Development land will always command a premium in the city centre but there are alternative ways to green the city and provide green recreational space. One example in Leeds is located on the 5th floor of the Leeds General Infirmary, originally designed for use by patients and their families, the rooftop garden provides an opportunity to relax and meet with friends and family in a space where the calming influence of plants and gardens can be experienced.

An example of more elaborate proportions is proposed for a development in south Bristol, where a warehouse conversion proposes to provide its new tenants with an outdoor running track, barbecue area and garden, on the 1 acre roof. Another famous example is the Kensington Roof Garden, which is a sizeable rooftop garden with streams, ducks, fountains, planting and recreational areas.



Theme 5, example (c) – ‘The Big Dig’ in Boston is a linear park on top of a major highway

‘The Big Dig’ in Boston, USA

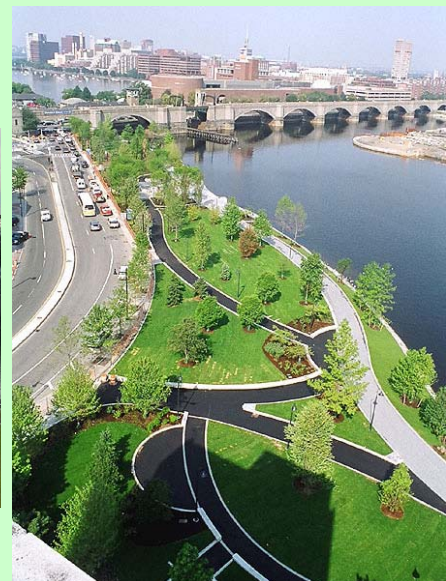
In the late 1950s a major new arterial road network was opened in Boston Massachusetts, hailed as the solution to traffic congestion it cut a swathe across the City at a time when the value of green space and city parks was perceived of little consequence.

Just over 20 years later in 1972 the debate regarding this arterial route centred around the impact it had on the city and suggestions were made that it should be buried, releasing the land above for other uses.

It took a further 20 years to develop a series of plans and visions, all culminating in an initiative that became known as ‘The Big Dig.’ In 1990 the Secretary of State, George Schultz approved the construction of the underground highways and that if acceptable, open space and development balance should be created over the ‘Big Dig.’

This was one of the first examples where linked linear green space would be created in a Public-Private Partnership through a detailed consultation exercise with user groups. More than 350 people took part in two public events called Creative Community Conversations about the future of the parks that would be developed above the ‘Big Dig.’

The Project reached substantial completion on January 13th, 2006. Finish work on the Big Dig and surface restoration will continue until spring 2006. Construction of the parks will continue into mid-2007, with the project creating more than 120 hectares (300 acres) of landscaped and restored open space, including over 45 parks and major public plazas.



Summary of Proposals for Theme 5: An Enabler for Regeneration

Strategic aim: *To promote liveability and the economic benefits of quality parks and green space provision as an integral part of major regeneration projects*

- 25 We will consult with the community and seek ways to increase access to quality parks and green space in areas of deprivation
- 26 We will promote access to parks and green space by seeking to expand the West Leeds Country Parks and Green Gateways initiative to other areas of the city
- 27 We will aspire to developing a city centre park during the life of this strategy
- 28 We will aspire to increase access to green space within the core city centre area
- 29 We will promote the economic value of good quality parks and green space
- 30 We will develop the concept of parks as community hubs

Theme 6: Delivering the Strategy

The Aim of this Theme is: *To engage partners in supporting and delivering the Parks and Green Space Strategy*

- 6.1. Delivering the Strategy will take a concerted, committed effort by the Council and a range of partners. Partner organisations are hugely important to the process as they can help to access funding, promote the use of parks and green space, develop and harness the commitments of volunteers and contribute to the management of parks and green space. Potential partners include:
- Major funding organisations such as the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF), Green Leeds etc.
 - Local businesses
 - ‘Friends of’ and other community groups
 - The Education sector
 - Voluntary organisations
 - Environmental organisations
 - The Health sector
 - The West Yorkshire Police
 - The Leeds Initiative and District Partnerships
- 6.2. In many cases organisations already carry out a huge range of activities that contribute to parks and green space issues in Leeds. The development and delivery of the Parks and Green Space Strategy for Leeds is therefore an opportunity to promote and manage the activity of all partner organisations in a co-ordinated way.

Proposal 31: We will establish a parks and green space forum that will meet annually to consider progress on the strategy

Summary of Proposals for Theme 6: Delivering the Strategy

Strategic aim: *To engage partners in supporting and delivering the Parks and Green Space Strategy*

- 31 We will establish a parks and green space forum that will meet annually to consider progress on the strategy

Appendix 1: Parks and Green Space Typology

The following table is based on Planning and Policy Guidance 17 (PPG17), and provides a description and purpose of what is meant by each type of park and green space.

Category	Description and Purpose
Parks and Gardens	
City Parks	Lie on the edge of the city and within. These sites attract local urban communities and visitors from a wide catchment area that includes other areas of the city and beyond.
Country Parks	Lie in the countryside (green belt area) and attract local village communities and visitors from a wide catchment area.
Community Parks	That serve surrounding local communities
Recreation Grounds	Areas of green space that allow formal and informal recreation and often contain playing pitches and play areas
Local Green Space	Opportunities for informal activities close to home or work or enhancement of the appearance of residential or other areas
Natural and semi-natural green spaces	Including woodland, heathland, grassland, wetlands and scrubland in urban and countryside areas
Green Corridors	River and canal banks. Road and rail corridors. Cycling routes, pedestrian paths within towns and cities. Rights of way and permissive paths. Used for walking, cycling or horse riding, whether for leisure purposes or travel, and opportunities for wildlife migration.
Outdoor Sport Facilities	Tennis courts, bowling greens. Sports pitches (including artificial surfaces). Golf courses, Athletics tracks. School playing fields and other institutional playing fields. Other outdoor sports areas.
Amenity Green Space	For domestic gardens and other private incidental space within the urban sphere not included as "local green space" as described above
Provision for Children and Young People	Play areas. Skateboard parks, outdoor basketball goals. "Hanging out" areas (including teenage shelters).
Allotments, Community Gardens and Urban Farms	Opportunities for those people who wish to grow their own produce as part of the long-term promotion of sustainability, health and social inclusion.
City (Urban) Farms	
Allotments and Community Gardens	
Cemeteries, Disused Churchyards and other Burial Grounds	Places for quiet contemplation and burial of the dead, often linked to the promotion of wildlife conservation and biodiversity.
Cemeteries and other burial grounds that are maintained	
Disused cemeteries that function as wildlife havens and have maintained public access	
Grass verges and displays	This refers to segmented green space too small for informal play alongside roads in residential areas, hanging baskets along with isolated bedding displays and trees in containers (planters). Grass verges depending on their length, width and degree of separation from other green spaces could be construed as forming a green corridor.
Public Rights of Way (PROW) and permissive paths	To provide the means to link parks and green spaces and create new routes to ensure the paths network does not become fragmented. Cycling routes, pedestrian paths within towns and cities. Used for walking, cycling or horse riding, whether for leisure purposes or travel and opportunities for wildlife migration.
Countryside	Any land that is not urban and is accessible via public rights of way or permissive paths

It is also recognised that the concept of 'Green Infrastructure' is important and is defined as follows. Green Infrastructure is the physical environment within and between cities, towns and villages. It is the network of open space, waterways, woodlands, green corridors and open countryside that brings many social, economic and environmental benefits – including nature conservation, recreation, landscape and opportunities for development.

Appendix 2: Analysis of Parks and Green Space Distribution

Parks and Gardens

Category	Number	Area (Ha)	Acres
City Parks	4	740	1,829
Country Parks	3	277	684
Community Parks	73	641	1,584
Recreation Grounds	91	407	1,006
Local Green Space	370	472	1,166

Natural and Semi-natural Green Spaces

Category	Number	Area (Ha)	Acres
Nature conservation sites e.g. SEGI, LNA, LNR and SSSI	156	3,499 ⁵	8,646
Woodlands and plantations	166 ⁶	1180 ⁷	2,916

Outdoor Sport Facilities

Category	Number
Tennis Courts	112
Bowling Greens	78
Playing Pitches	
Football	227
Rugby Union	7
Rugby League	36
Cricket	18
Golf Courses (184 Ha/455 Acres)	4

Provision for Children and Young People

Category	Number
Play areas	144
Skateboard parks	19
Meeting places	13
Multi-use games areas	25

Allotments, Community Farms and Urban Farms

Category	Number	Area (Ha)	Acres
Allotments	99	95	235
Community Farms	1		

⁵ This figure includes 1532 hectares managed by LCC and is included within parks and gardens

⁶ 93 of these sites are within the boundary of parks and gardens

⁷ 690 hectares are included within the boundary of parks and gardens

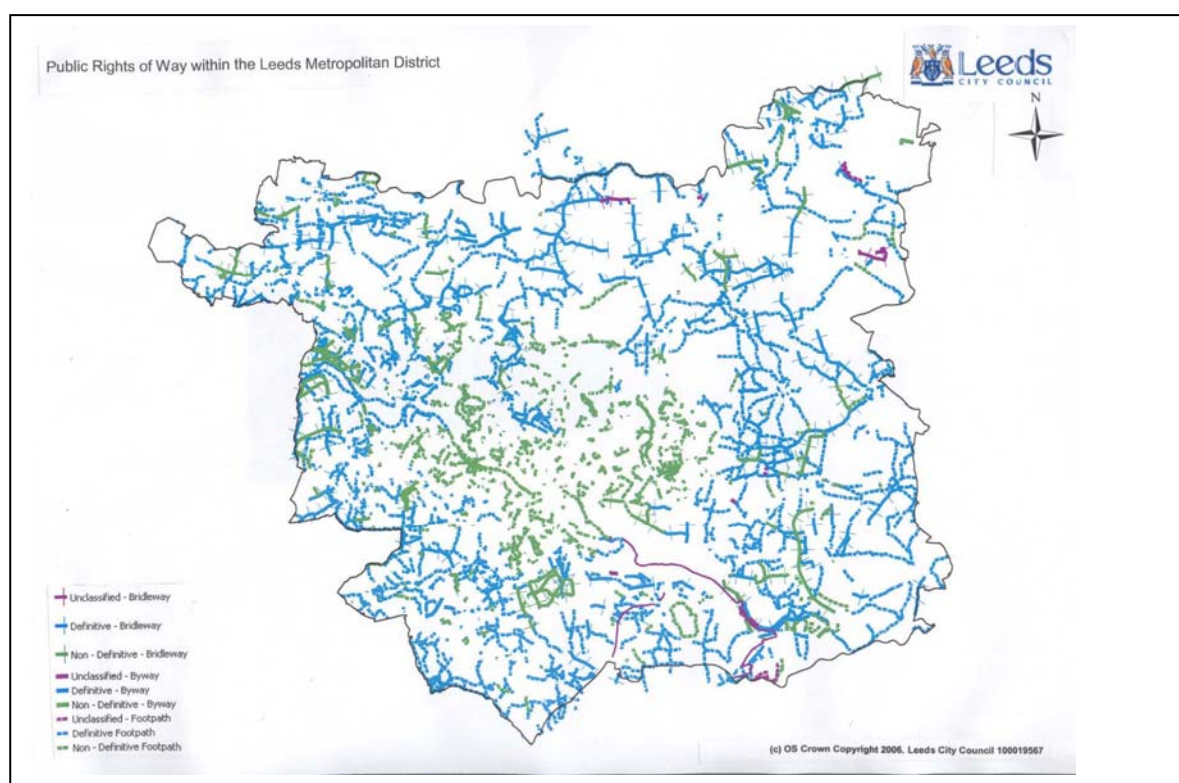
Cemeteries, Disused Churchyards and other Burial Grounds

Category	Number	Area (Ha)	Acres
Cemeteries	21	82	203
Crematoria	3	15	37
Disused churchyards	51	18	44

Public Rights of Way

Category	Number	Km
Public Footpath	1048	636
Public Bridleway	203	168
Byway Open to All Traffic	10	9

The following map illustrates Public Rights of Way in Leeds



Appendix 3: Organisations that receive grant aid from Leeds City Council

The following table sets out organisations that receive a supplier grant, and briefly describes what they do.

Organisation	Description
Meanwood Valley Urban Farm	Meanwood Valley Urban Farm focuses on training young people and people with learning difficulties, the emphasis being on horticulture, animal care and social skills. In addition the farm maintains a number of rare breeds, grows organic vegetables, has organic allotments and educates the visitor on sustainable living.
Farming & Wildlife Advisory Group (FWAG)	FWAG focuses its attention on helping farmers to pursue a more eco-friendly form of agriculture whereby intensive farming systems can co-exist with the development of areas conducive to wildlife. The group also work in conjunction with farmers to enable organised groups (Adults and/or school children) to visit farms and understand what farming is about.
Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB) (Fairburn Ings)	The RSPB maintain a large wetland site at Fairburn Ings that is important for waterfowl and waders, farmland birds and other wildlife. The reserve is a designated Local Nature Reserve, much of which is owned by Leeds City Council (LCC) and managed in partnerships a local centre for nature conservation and environmental education, attracting 65,000 visitors a year and around 3000 children on school visits. Building on this site the RSPB and LCC have a shared vision for a network of sites throughout the Lower Aire Valley linking the M1 to the A1 to create a regional scale green space centred around a new wetland reserve on the former St Aidans open cast coal site.
Middleton Equestrian Centre	Middleton Equestrian Centre provides riding facilities for the disabled and those without disabilities. Training is also given in horse riding skills and the Centre utilises a number of volunteers to run the facility.
British Trust for Conservation Volunteers (BTCV)	BTCV specialises in training volunteers and community groups in practical conservation and are actively involved in the Green Gym ethos revolving around physical endeavour on our green space areas to improve health.

Appendix 4: Visits to Parks in Leeds

City/Country parks are highlighted in **BOLD**.

Park	Visits (average for 2004 and 2005)
<u>Roundhay Park</u>	6,469,307
Woodhouse Moor Park	2,983,692
<u>Temple Newsam Estate</u>	2,394,422
Pudsey Park	2,368,578
Horsforth Hall Park	2,150,480
<u>Golden Acre Park</u>	1,894,611
<u>Middleton Park</u>	1,696,457
Tarnfield Park	1,485,556
Bramley Park	1,444,937
Meanwood Park	1,325,891
Springhead Park	1,166,023
Manston Park	1,060,638
Cross Flatts Park	1,050,919
Wharfemeadows Park	1,039,658
Farnley Hall Park	906,871
Calverley Park	854,495
Micklefield Park	813,690
Rothwell Country Park	742,616
East End Park	722,258
Potternewton Park	718,418
Western Flatts Cliff Park	710,465
Dartmouth Park	701,540
Scatcherd Park	666,754
Nunroyd Park	657,976
Armley Park	611,042
<u>Otley Chevin Country Park</u>	554,774
Burley Park	550,285
<u>Kirkstall Abbey Estate</u>	477,755
<u>Lotherton Hall Estate</u>	336,881

Appendix 5: Site based gardeners

There are site based gardeners (as at November 2006) at the following sites; Barley Hill Park; Becketts Park; Bramley Park; Burley Park; Calverley (Victoria) Park; Churwell Park; Cross Flatts Park; Dartmouth Park; Drighlington Park; East End Park; Farnley Hall Park; Gildersome Park; Gotts Park; Harehills Park; Holbeck Moor; Horsforth Hall Park; Hunslet Moor; Lewisham Park; Lovell Park; Lowry Road / Westerton Road Recreational Area; Manston Park; New Farnley Park; Nunroyd Park, Guiseley; Potternewton Park; Pudsey Park; Rothwell Country Park; Scatcherd Park / Scarth Gardens; Springhead Park; The Hollies; Tyersal Park; Western Flatts Cliff Park; Wetherby Ings and Harland Way; Wharfemeadows Park, Otley; Woodhouse Moor Park; Woodhouse Ridge; and Woodlesford Park.

The following 21 sites are still identified as needing a gardener: Armley Park; Banstead Park; Bramley Falls Wood Park; Chapel Allerton Park; Chevin Forest Park; Cranmore Recreation Ground; Grove Hill Park, Otley; Grove Road Recreation Ground; Halton Dene - Primrose Valley; Holt Park; Hunslet Lake; Kirk Lane Park; Meanwood Park; Micklefield Park, Rawdon; New Wortley Recreation Ground; Post Hill; Rodley Park Recreation Ground; Stanningley Park; Tarnfield Park, Yeadon; Westroyd Park; and Whinmoor Park, Coal Road. To provide on site gardeners at each of these sites would need an additional annual revenue budget in the region of £600,000.

Appendix 6

The Natural England ANGSt model

Natural England is the statutory body that champions the conservation and enhancement of the wildlife and natural features of England. It does this in the urban environment as well as the open countryside. Among other priorities in the urban environment, Natural England has worked for a number of years to promote the provision of natural green space and, in 1996, it adopted its current Accessible Natural Greenspace Standards (ANGSt) model. The ANGSt model has its origins in a paper by Box and Harrison (1993), published in *Town and Country Planning*. In this paper the case for standards was made based on a review of the functions and values of natural greenspace as a provider of experience of nature to local communities, and to improve the environment and protect its biodiversity. This work was further developed by Harrison et al (1995) in a research report, published by Natural England, entitled *Accessible Natural Greenspace in Towns and Cities: A Review of Appropriate Size and Distance Criteria* which subsequently became the basis for ANGSt. This report reviewed the available scientific literature and concluded that provision of natural greenspace in urban areas should be governed by a hierarchy of size and distance criteria.

Natural England subsequently adopted these standards and published the leaflet *A Space for Nature* to promote them. The ANGSt model requires:

- that no person should live more than 300m from their nearest area of natural
- greenspace of at least 2ha in size;
- provision of at least 1ha of Local Nature Reserve per 1,000 population;
- that there should be at least one accessible 20ha site within 2km from home;
- that there should be one accessible 100ha site within 5km;
- that there should be one accessible 500ha site within 10km.

The standards were justified in the following ways:

- everyday contact with nature is important for well-being and quality of life;
- everyone should be able to enjoy this contact, in safety, without having to make any
- special effort or journey to do so;
- natural greenspace in towns and cities can play an important part in helping safeguard
- our national treasure of wildlife and geological features;
- accessible natural greenspaces give everyone an excellent chance to learn about
- nature and to help protect it in practical ways.
- adequate provision of vegetated areas helps to ensure that urban areas continue to
- function ecologically.

Accessible Natural Green Space
Standards in Towns and Cities: A Review and Toolkit for their Implementation

Allotments, 61, 72
 Beckett's Street Cemetery, 3
 Biodiversity, 1, 28, 31, 41, 42, 43, 58, 67, 71, 77
 CABE, 3, 33, 34, 41, 52, 64, 70
 CCT, 2, 8, 33
 Children, 3, 5, 9, 10, 15, 16, 17, 19, 28, 35, 40, 41, 43, 44, 47, 52, 53, 61, 71
 City centre, 3, 20, 21, 40, 44, 46, 50, 52, 53, 55, 74
 Climate change, 21, 41, 53
 Community park, 8, 9, 10, 16, 18, 21, 24, 33, 36, 37, 38, 47, 68
 Conservation, 5, 6, 14, 31, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 55, 58, 59, 61, 67, 71, 72, 75, 77
 Consultation, 2, 14, 15, 16, 20, 52, 54, 65
 Creating a Healthier City, 1, 15, 21, 23, 44, 49, 72
 Delivering the Strategy, 1, 23, 56, 57, 75
 Economy, 4, 31, 53, 67
 Golden Acre Park, 10, 36, 62
 Green Flag, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 14, 21, 23, 24, 32, 36, 37, 38, 39, 67, 68
 Health, 1, 2, 3, 9, 10, 21, 27, 43, 44, 46, 47, 49, 52, 53, 58, 61, 71, 72, 73
 Heritage, 6, 32, 43, 52, 71
 History of parks, 2
 HLF, 3, 56, 67, 68, 71
 Kirkstall Abbey, 3, 36, 52, 62, 68
 Leeds Cultural Strategy, 2
 Leeds Initiative, 4, 56, 64, 65, 72
 Lotherton Hall, 2, 62, 68
 Marketing, 9, 24, 25, 28, 30, 68
 Middleton Park., 3, 35
 Older people, 13, 20, 47
 Parks renaissance, 1
 Places for People, 1, 15, 21, 23, 24, 30, 64
 Public rights of way, 5, 47, 51, 58, 72
 Quality Places, 1, 15, 21, 23, 32, 38, 67
 Recreation, 1, 2, 14, 18, 24, 28, 31, 39, 40, 41, 44, 47, 49, 50, 55, 58, 67, 72, 73, 74, 75
 Regeneration, 1, 22, 50, 52, 53, 55, 74, 75
 Roundhay Park, 2, 3, 10, 20, 26, 36, 42, 47, 62, 68
 Sustainable, 1, 3, 4, 26, 30, 41, 47, 49, 51, 61, 65, 66, 71, 73
 Sustaining the Green Realm, 1, 15, 21, 23, 39, 43, 70
 Temple Newsam, 2, 10, 35, 36, 47, 62, 68
 Themes and key aims, 1
 Transport, 3, 4, 20, 49, 55, 73, 75
 Vision for Leeds, 4
 Vision for Strategy, 1
 Young people, 3, 9, 13, 15, 17, 18, 25, 27, 30, 35, 46, 61, 65

Strategic Framework and Action Plan

Proposal	Action	Timescale ¹
1.0 Places for People	<i>To engage the community in promoting parks and green spaces as accessible places for everyone to experience and enjoy</i>	
1. We will consult with the community to ensure our parks and green spaces have appropriate information and facilities that make them good places to visit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Produce a consultation plan that sets out guidelines to ensure inclusive consultation and involvement in parks and green space development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Short Term
2. We will aim to increase awareness and provide information and opportunities for everyone to access services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a Marketing and Communication Strategy for parks and green spaces Develop web content to maximise the use of the internet as an information resource and to enable requests and bookings for services Achieve and sustain level 4 and level 5 of the equality standard 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Short Term Short Term Medium Term
3. We will work with partners in developing facilities and action to promote community safety in our parks and green spaces	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitor and review site based gardeners and report success against the target of all community parks having a site based gardener Evaluate increasing the role and scale of 'Parks Watch' Review staff working patterns to target staff presence at time of peak visitor occupancy Develop a system and associated cost/benefit analysis to calculate cost and impact of anti-social behaviour against alternative preventative measures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Short Term Short Term Medium Term Medium Term
4. We will promote parks and green space as places for education and learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote parks and green spaces as learning environments / outdoor classrooms Develop the kinaesthetic learning programme Develop a signage and interpretation plan and implement Develop respect for parks and green spaces Improve play facilities through implementing the Fixed Play Strategy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Short Term Short Term Short Term Medium Term Short Term
5. We will promote and support well managed events and activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish clear processes for event application and management Encourage and promote events that bring communities together and promote social cohesion Ensure information about events is made available 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Short Term Short Term Short Term
6. We will promote City and Country parks as visitor attractions, attracting people to Leeds as a place to visit, live, work and do business	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Achieve and sustain Green Flag awards at the following sites: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chevin Forest Park Golden Acre Lotherton Hall Estate Temple Newsam Estate Roundhay Park Kirkstall Abbey Pudsey Park Parks that require Green Flag status to fulfil funding requirements Promote City and Country parks as an integral part of the Tourism Strategy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Short Term Short Term
7. We will guide and influence public agencies, private landowners and community groups to work within the parameters of the Parks and Green Space Strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote partnership working to complement initiatives To establish agreed protocols, including design, for any initiatives undertaken within the public green realm Providing an opportunity for private business to realise Corporate Social Responsibility and analyse outcomes Organise resources around priorities set out in the Strategy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Short Term Medium Term Medium Term

¹ Short Term – 1 to 2 years, Medium Term – 3 to 5 years, Long Term – 6 years +

Proposal	Action	Timescale ¹
8. We will engage with communities and encourage and enable people to get involved in developing our parks and green space	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a model of community involvement and engagement, to include the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ sustain community consultation via postal questionnaires and access to on-line surveys; ○ establish and maintain a volunteer database ○ encourage and support a network of sustainable ‘friends of’ and volunteer groups which are formally constituted and follow best practice guidance, including induction training and continuous development ○ develop and support the formation of ‘Young Friends’ groups. ○ source funding for a network of Recreational Rangers whose role is to work with friends, young people and volunteers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Medium Term <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Short Term ○ Short Term ○ Medium Term • Medium Term • Medium Term
2.0 Quality Places	<i>To provide good quality parks and green spaces that are well managed and provide a range of attractive facilities</i>	
9. We will develop an investment strategy through our asset management plan to maximise opportunity for sustained investment in our parks and green space	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop an investment strategy that will take account of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ utilising capital receipts ○ developing commercial opportunities ○ borrowing against projected income ○ utilising external funds where relevant ○ based on the Green Flag standard as a performance measure • Develop an investment strategy for Fixed Play • Develop an investment strategy for Playing Pitches 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Short Term • Short Term • Short Term
10. We will seek to prioritise our revenue funding to focus on management of quality places for recreation and conservation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review budget allocation and priorities for parks and green spaces 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Long Term
11. We will develop a series of strategies that fulfil the aims of the Parks and Green Space Strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop an outdoor bowls strategy that seeks to address the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Analysis of supply and demand ○ Management arrangements ○ Financially sustainable provision ○ Promoting access • Review and develop a playing pitch strategy • Review and develop a fixed play strategy • Develop an allotments strategy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Short Term • Short Term • Short Term • Short Term
12. We will facilitate a workforce equipped with the skills and knowledge to lead and manage the implementation of the Parks and Green Space Strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote parks and green space as an attractive career option • Target ‘career changers’ to consider parks and green space opportunities • Continue to ensure appropriate learning and development mechanisms are in place • Increase workforce diversity by encouraging more people from under-represented groups 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Short Term • Short Term • Short Term • Short Term
13. We will aim to improve all our parks and green spaces as measured against the Green Flag standard for field based assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitor progress against the Performance Indicator included in the Leeds Local Area Agreement, namely ‘the % of P&C sites that meet the Green Flag Standard’ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Short Term
14. We will aspire to achieve all our community parks to meet the Green Flag standard for field based assessment by 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitor and review success by incorporating a sub-indicator to measure success linked to investment strategy • Establish a continued programme of investment in community parks • Establish management plans appropriate to the site 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Short Term • Short Term • Long Term

Proposal	Action	Timescale¹
3.0 Sustaining the Green Realm	<i>To plan for the development of new, and to protect existing parks and green spaces that will offer lasting social, cultural and environmental benefits for the people of Leeds</i>	
15. We will aspire to the Council's parks and green space for recreation or conservation, to be managed as a single green estate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Undertake PPG 17 Green Space audit and needs assessment and implement findings • Ensure that externally procured services relating to the green realm reflect and encompass the objectives of the strategy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Short Term • Medium Term
16. We will conserve and improve parks, playing fields, natural green space and woodland	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop the 'Leeds Quality Parks' standard based on Green Flag site assessment • Establish and maintain a quality assessment approach to local green space in line with the Green Flag Standard • Assess the impact of applying the Accessible Natural Green Space Targets (ANGST) criteria • Promote access to parks and green space as a 'dawn to dusk' service • Agree mechanism of distribution of S106 monies within a strategic approach 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Short Term • Medium Term • Medium Term • Medium Term • Short Term
17. We will use our parks and green spaces as an important resource in adapting to climate change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commission research to measure the impact of the green infrastructure in adapting to climate change • Promote biodiversity as a systemic contribution towards dealing with Climate Change 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Short Term • Short Term
18. We will encourage conservation and biodiversity to flourish in appropriate areas within the green realm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement the Leeds Biodiversity Action Plan • Support the sustainable management of 'in bloom' initiatives 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Medium Term • Short Term
19. We will promote and develop green corridors for recreation, conservation and sustainable transport	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish links with the West Leeds Country Park and Green Gateways Initiative concept 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Long Term
20. We will seek ways to provide and manage burial space in a sustainable way	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement the policy adopted at Executive Board in December 2008 to establish a preference for smaller locally based cemetery sites combined with the extension, where possible, of existing sites. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Short Term
4.0 Creating a Healthier City	<i>To promote parks and green spaces as places to improve health and well-being and prevent disease through exercise, relaxation, and contemplation</i>	
21. We will promote and publicise the health and well-being benefits of parks and green spaces	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish links with the Physical Activity Strategy and other strategies such as the Food Strategy, Childhood Obesity Strategy and Older People's Strategy • Promote allotments for healthy eating, recreation, exercise and links with education • Promote the health benefits of trees and woodland through implementation of the Leeds Forest Strategy • Promote the value of conservation work for volunteers as a form of physical activity • Develop and implement the Allotments Strategy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Short Term • Medium Term • Medium Term • Short Term • Short Term • Short Term
22. We will contribute to the West Yorkshire Local Transport Plan by providing sustainable transport routes in parks and green spaces	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement the rights of way improvement plan to include the use of the public rights of way network to promote accessible walking, cycling and horse riding • Develop cycling routes, including safer routes to schools 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Medium Term • Long Term
23. We will promote the health messages of walking in our parks and green spaces	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a network of clearly marked routes for all abilities, promoting walking, running and cycling for health and well-being • Increase the number of people participating in walking as a form of physical activity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Short Term • Medium Term

Proposal	Action	Timescale ¹
24. We will provide opportunities for active recreation within parks and green spaces	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain links with sport development • Improve playing pitch facilities through implementing the Playing Pitch Strategy • Develop facilities within green spaces to promote active recreation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Short Term • Short Term • Short Term
5.0 An Enabler for Regeneration	<i>To promote liveability and the economic benefits of quality parks and green space provision as an integral part of major regeneration projects</i>	
25. We will aspire to developing a city centre park during the life of this strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In principle proposals to develop a City Centre park 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Medium Term
26. We will aspire to increase access to green space within the core city centre area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review planning guidance on 'open space' designation to include reference to green space • Review thresholds on developer contributions • Increase 'family friendly', development of 'non adult' space within the city centre area • Examine feasibility of innovative green space provision e.g. green walls 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Medium Term • Medium Term • Medium Term • Medium Term
27. We will consult with the community and seek ways to increase access to quality parks and green space in areas of deprivation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure Area Action Plans recognise green space deficiency and provide opportunity for suitable provision • Use major regeneration initiatives to identify opportunities to put access to quality parks and green spaces as an integral part of sustainable living 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Medium Term • Medium Term
28. We will promote access to parks and green space by seeking to expand the West Leeds Country Parks and Green Gateways initiative to other areas of the city	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review opportunities for developing the West Leeds Country Park and Green Gateways concept: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ East and South East Leeds – Wyke Beck, West/East links ○ Meanwood Valley ○ South Leeds ○ North West Leeds 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Long Term
29. We will promote the economic value of good quality parks and green space	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote parks and green spaces as a vital part of the cultural and tourism offer, an incentive for the relocation of businesses and therefore an important part of economic regeneration 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Medium Term
30. We will develop the concept of parks as community hubs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opportunity to build leisure/community facilities in parks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Long Term
6.0 Delivering the Strategy	<i>To engage partners in supporting and delivering the Parks and Green Space Strategy</i>	
31. We will establish a parks and green space forum that will meet annually to consider progress on the strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish a Parks and Green Space stakeholder forum to review progress on the Strategy annually 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Short Term