



A Quick Guide to the current proposals for Horfield Common (including the Ardagh and Wellington Hill Playing Field)

The *Area Green Space Plan (AGSP)* has been recently published by Bristol City Council. It contains proposals for green spaces across Bristol including Wellington Hill Playing Field and The Ardagh Sports Centre.

The AGSP proposals are being considered at the same time as a *Site Allocations and Development Management Options Document (SADM)* which will decide on the future- use of sites identified for disposal/sale by Bristol City Council.¹

Both documents are now open for public consultation. If you want your views to be registered by Bristol City Council in relation to these – you must respond to both of these consultation documents before 29 October 2010.

How to respond to the documents – The Quick Start Guide!

Consultation 1 - Area Green Space Plan:

1. **> Do you think that Wellington Hill Playing Field should be sold for development?**

If not, write to the Council explaining why. You might want to include some or all of the following points:

- Whether you agree with the statement included in the AGSP that Wellington Hill Playing Field 'is of low value as an open space as it is little used other than by dog walkers for most of the week.' You might include details of what you use the field for, how often you use it and if you are aware it is used by other people and groups – what they use it for (these might include walking, games, blackberry picking, kite flying, exercising dogs, reading etc)?
- Why you believe that the field is of value to the local community.

¹ You can view both of these documents in full on Bristol City Council's website at www.bristol.gov.uk/agsp, or obtain a paper copy of by calling the council's Park Strategy team on 0117 9223719.

- It is worth noting that Bristol City Council's previous '*Bristol's Parks and Green Space Strategy*'² document, published in 2008, describes parks and green spaces as '*green lungs of the city*,' and as '*having well documented health benefits both in improving physical fitness and improving mental health*.'³ Within the same document green spaces are described as being '*central to the way that cities adapt to climate change, including their role in capturing and storing water after heavy rainfall, preventing localised flooding. Green Spaces also provide an important cooling effect in cities*.'⁴ There are ongoing, unidentified problems with the drainage and subsidence of land in the Horfield Common area, and these may be significant future issues if this land is built on.
- The AGSP itself states that '*the Horfield and Lockleaze Neighbourhood Partnership area is considerably under-served for Natural Green Space with the majority of Horfield outside of the distance standard*.'⁵ Bishopston, Cotham and Redland's AGSP states that '*the area has one of the lowest amounts of publicly accessible open space in the city*.'⁶ Whilst the council may classify the field as 'a facility for active sports', it serves many purposes and is clearly a natural space. It is also well used by residents who live in Bishopston – whose boundary begins on Horfield Common (the Ardagh is officially in Bishopston). The sale of Wellington Hill Playing Field would seem to work against the stated aims of the AGSP itself.

2. **> Do you think that the sports facilities at the Ardagh should be reduced or demolished?**

> Would you support the aim of developing the centre to appeal to a broader range of users, including a cafe, better public toilets, more flexible and accessible use of the pavilion building – whilst retaining the sports facilities (including tennis courts and bowling green)?

> Would you like to see better play facilities for children on the common, including play for older children?

Write to the Council detailing your comments on these. You might like to include some or all of the following points:

² Adopted by Bristol City Council in February 2008

³ Page 40

⁴ Page 27

⁵ Page 27

⁶ *Ideas and Options Paper* Bishopston, Cotham and Redland AGSP, Page 13

- The centre is highly valued by the local community for sports and recreational activities, and the lack of maintenance and repair of the facilities in recent years is unacceptable. The centre has the potential to be an excellent facility for the local community if adequately funded.
- All of the facilities at the Ardagh, and in the children's play area are well below the standard of parks in other areas of Bristol. This should be a priority in the AGSP.
- Loss of any of the sports provision in the Ardagh Centre would be to the detriment of the local community. It is essential to retain these facilities which are locally accessible (without needing to travel by car), and which encourage inter-generational use.
- The loss of open space at Golden Hill in 1993 (which was strongly opposed by local people for environmental reasons) should not now be compounded by the loss of further sports and recreation facilities from the local community. Improvement of the Ardagh centre – retaining and improving the facilities - should be a priority for the Council in the AGSP.
- Whilst the Ardagh is being considered in the AGSP for Horfield and Lockleaze, it is actually located in the Bishopston, Cotham and Redland (BCR) Neighbourhood Partnership Area and is used extensively by residents from that area also. Investment in the facilities would encourage use of the centre by a broader range of people and in view of the significant demand for green space in the north of the BCR Neighbourhood Partnership area, this should be prioritised.
- The provision of tennis facilities at Muller Road and Orchard School (previously Monks Park School) is not an adequate proposal to mitigate for the loss of facilities at the Ardagh. The loss of the Bowling Green would be a significant loss to older members of the local and wider community, and as provision at St. Andrews Park is currently also under threat of closure – retention of the Bowling Green facility should be a priority. This will help to ensure that the facilities remain inclusive for all.

You can comment on the AGSP plans: By email: park.strategy@bristol.gov.uk

By Freepost to: **Area Green Space Plan Consultation (AG/Col33), FREEPOST BS4341, PO Box 595, BRISTOL, BS99 2BR**

Online: **by filling in a feedback form** at www.bristol.gov.uk/agsp

In person: **at a consultation event:** see www.bristol.gov.uk/agsp for details of these.

This 'quick guide' document has been prepared by Friends of Horfield Common. Friends of Horfield Common (FOHC) is a voluntary organisation with members who are local residents, neighbours and users of the common whose aim is to work together to ensure continued access to, availability of, and improvement of the state of Horfield Common, for the benefit of all.

Consultation 2 – Site Allocations and Development Management Options (SADMO) Documents:

The SADMO document states that 'The Area Green Space Planning process has suggested that this site (Wellington Hill Playing Field) is no longer required as open space, and it is considered suitable for housing due to its residential context. The site is owned by the city council. There are 2 options for the space: Option A is to sell the field for housing development; (If the whole of the site were developed for housing at 50 dwellings per hectare this would equate to 72 dwellings) or Option B which is 'DO NOT ALLOCATE FOR DEVELOPMENT.'

If you do not think that WELLINGTON HILL PLAYING SHOULD BE ALLOCATED FOR DEVELOPMENT, write to the council stating your views. You may wish to include some or all of the following points in your response:

1. Bristol City Council's Policy BCS9 states that open spaces should only be released for development where they are 'no longer important for recreation, leisure and community use and where development would result in improved urban form or an enhancement to existing open spaces'. Wellington Hill Playing Field is important for recreation, leisure and community use, and the stated low use-value of the field in the AGSP (and subsequently in the SADMO) is inaccurate and misleading.
2. Wellington Hill Playing Field should not be considered as a site for disposal. It is used by a broad-range of local groups, including a large number of groups providing activities for young people.
3. The field is the only appropriate local space which provides open access for ball games, including football.
4. As 'any development of this site will have to be preceded by archaeological investigations as remains of a medieval structure were found on the adjacent site currently being development as a nursing home' any proposed future financial benefit from the sale of this site for development would be countered by a potentially significant cost for this investigative work, which may result in the site being designated as unsuitable for development for historic or heritage purposes.

To comment on the *Site Allocations and Development Management Options* Document⁷ (which is separate from, and additional to the AGSP document) comments can be sent to the council in the following ways:

By email: bdf@bristol.gov.uk

By Freepost to: **Site Allocations (CD/BH), Freepost BS6529, BRISTOL, BS1 5BR**

For further information, and a copy of FOHCs full responses to the AGSP Proposals see www.friendsofhorfieldcommon.com

⁷ Further details of the Site Allocations and Development Management Options Document can be found on the council's website: www.bristol.gov.uk/siteallocations