

# Parks & Open Spaces Strategy 2013 – 2018 Appendices



# Appendix 1

## Legislative & Policy Context

### National Strategic Priorities

#### The Big Society

The Government wants to give citizens, communities and local government the power and information they need to come together, solve the problems they face and build the Britain they want'.

The three strands to The Big Society:

##### Fundamental Actions

A right to know – Transparency and Public accountability

A right to Challenge – so consumers never again feel powerless to challenge the way public services are deployed

Turning Government on its head – so it works for communities not just for ministers.

##### Community Empowerment

Locally led innovation, allowing and supporting local communities to be empowered to help themselves make improvements in areas important to them.

##### Philanthropic Action

Helping others to achieve their goals, by sharing information and best practice, working together to support.

Others to make the improvements and changes they want.

### Localism Bill 2010-2011

The section of the Bill relevant to the Parks and Open Spaces Strategy

#### **'New rights and powers for local communities'**

- make it easier for local people to take over the amenities they love and keep them part of local life
- ensure that local social enterprises, volunteers and community groups with a bright idea for improving local services get a chance to change how things are done
- give people a new way to voice their opinions on any local issue close to their heart
- enable local residents to call local authorities to account for the careful management of taxpayers' money

The development of partnership working with relevant charities and Friends Groups will play a significant role in the improvement of areas of parks and open spaces provision, important to the local community.

Management tools such as master planning for the development of new open space, or to refurbish existing open space will play a significant role in provision of that service.

# Planning Policy Guidance 17:

Planning for Open Space, Sport and Recreation.

Central Government provides an overall national framework to enable effective planning for future land use and development via Planning Policy Guidance Notes which set out a framework for all local types of land use. For open space, the relevant Planning Policy Guidance note is PPG17, which covers Sport, Open Space and Recreation, and recommends that local authorities undertake robust assessments of the existing and future needs of their communities for open space, sports and recreational facilities and then set locally derived standards for provision within their areas.

In accordance with Planning Policy Guidance note 17 (Planning for Open Spaces, Sport and Recreation), the Council has previously commissioned an assessment of the need for open space, sport and recreation within Amber Valley, which was undertaken, by Knight, Kavanagh and Page - May 2005.

The specific purpose of the study was to enable the Borough Council to develop up to date standards and policies for open space, sport and recreation. The specific requirements were as follows:

- Review the implications of existing strategies, policies and standards of provision.
- Consulting local communities and preparing a vision for future provision.
- Identifying existing information and planning, undertaking and analysing an audit of existing provision.

This document is now out of date in respect of public opinion and some of the demands and needs highlighted have been addressed, but the document still holds significant and usable information.

Sport England is the agency responsible for advising the Government on sports, and acts as a statutory consultee on certain developments relating to sports pitches. It has previously published a guide to assist in the production of playing pitch strategies 'Towards a Level Playing Field (2003)'. The methodology contained within this guide was used by Knight, Kavanagh and Page in their Open Space assessment for the Borough.

## Living Spaces – Cleaner, Safer Greener 2006

Public spaces are a barometer of a community. As human beings we respond positively and instinctively to places that are welcoming. We want to spend time – and money – in such a community. But all too often, we experience places that are unwelcoming, unkempt and difficult – or even dangerous – to use. The quality of public spaces affects all of us wherever we live and work. Safe, well-maintained and attractive public spaces have a critical role in creating pride in the places where we live which, in turn, is essential to building community cohesion and successful communities. That is why the Government is committed to action to make public spaces cleaner, safer, greener places that enhance the quality of life in our neighbourhoods, towns and cities. This document sets out the Government's approach to making cleaner, safer, greener public spaces

## Green Flag Award

The Green Flag Award Scheme was launched in 1996 designed to recognise and encourage good quality public parks. Eight criteria are used to evaluate whether an open space should receive an award. These are:

- That it is welcoming, accessible and has good signage.
- That it offers a healthy safe and secure environment.

- That it is clean and well maintained.
- That it is maintained using sustainable and environmentally sound methods.
- That where applicable, it promotes the value of conservation and care of historic features.
- That it promotes community involvement in the management of the site and involves the community in the provision of recreational or conservation activity.
- That the site is marketed effectively.
- That there is a coherent management plan for the site.

The Green Flag assessment is a rigorous independent process, which in the first year is undertaken by two suitably qualified and experienced judges. The assessment is broken into two parts, the first being a desk top assessment of the site management plan and policy framework. The second part is a field assessment, whereby the eight broad criteria, are divided into twenty seven separate judging elements, each of which is scored out of 10 and amalgamated to give a percentage out of 100. To be awarded a Green Flag, a site must achieve a combined desk top and field score of at least 66, with no serious concerns in any key elements, such as safe facilities. If an open space scores sufficiently highly, then in the second year, it may receive a less formal mystery shopper style assessment.

## **Education and Health**

Following publication of the Children's Bill (2004), the educational sector will play an increasingly important role in the quality of life of local communities both through an expansion of the range of services and facilities offered to school pupils and for the wider community with opportunities for the whole community. This bill envisages that, in the future, schools will be at the heart of local communities.

Government has been increasingly concerned in recent years with the effects of decreasing levels of physical activity amongst the general population, acting as a primary contributor to a range of chronic diseases such as coronary heart disease, strokes, diabetes and some cancers, as well as leading to a rise in obesity levels.

In 2004, the Department of Health issued a consultation document, 'Choosing Health', to seek stakeholders' views on what action could be taken to improve public health. This was followed soon after by a report from the Chief Medical Officer 'At least five a week' (Department of Health 2004) which set out targets for participation in physical activity for young people and adults.

Parks and Open Spaces are identified in the Choosing Health consultation document as contributing towards the achievement of the physical activity targets.

Open spaces are increasingly being recognised as providing benefits for physical and mental health. They are favourite places for walking, for taking part in informal and organised physical activity and as a preferred route for cyclists.

## **Regional Strategic Priorities**

### **The Biodiversity Strategy**

Provides a countywide framework for the conservation and future development of wildlife and natural spaces throughout Amber Valley, the partnership working between the Council, English Nature and the Wildlife Trust ensures there is a strategic approach. The service level agreement the Council has with Groundwork Derby and Derbyshire ensures delivery of priorities and community liaison at sites of importance for wildlife and attracts external funding to make vital improvements at Local Nature Reserves.

The Wildlife Trust have produced a handbook 'Habitat Creation Guide for Lowland Derbyshire' which is used in detail to inform our development of open space, this guide steers designers into ensuring habitat creation and plant selection are appropriate to the location.

## **Local Strategic Priorities**

### **Amber Valley Borough Council Strategic Objectives**

The Council has agreed a number of Strategic Objectives on which it will focus service delivery.

#### **Making a Difference Corporate Improvement Plan**

- **Vibrant and Sustainable Local Governance**
- **Sustainable Housing**
- **A Sustainably Clean, Green and Safe Borough**
- **Healthier and Equal Communities**
- **Thriving Economy and Employment**

## **Council's Five Core Values**

To deliver these objectives the council has adopted five core values, which are at the heart of everything we do to achieve the vision for the Borough:

- **Excellent People Focus**
- **Deliver value for money services through innovation**
- **Progressive partnership working**
- **Decision making of the highest standard**
- **Sustainability**

Overarching vision is:  
**'To Improve Community Well-being'**

## **Local Plan 2006 – 2011**

The Local Plan is a key corporate document of the Council, which addresses all key strategic, and corporate issues, it responds to the growing demand for infrastructure and other community benefits as a result of new development in the Borough.

The Key objectives of the Local Plan are as follows:

- **To ensure that development reflects the principles of sustainable development**
- **To increase the supply of affordable housing**
- **To reflect the principles of community safety by contributing towards reducing crime, nuisance and disorder and addressing the fear of crime**
- **To improve the health of the community by increasing the quality and range of leisure and cultural facilities**
- **To protect and enhance the environment including in relation to landscape biodiversity and built heritage**
- **To regenerate the market towns of Alfreton, Ripley, Heanor and Belper**
- **To ensure that development is accessible by all sections of the population including people with disabilities**
- **To secure the provision of financial contributions towards infrastructure and community benefits in conjunction with development**

Many of which are directly linked to the provision of Parks and Open Spaces.

## **The Core Strategy 2026**

The Core Strategy will be the key document for the Local Development Framework for Amber Valley. It will establish the vision, objectives and proposals for what sort of place we want Amber Valley to be by 2026. It will set out the main locations for new development and how this will be managed and will seek to address a range of issues facing Amber Valley.

It will also set out the spatial policies to deliver the overall objectives and priorities of the Borough Council and its partners as set out in the Sustainable Community Strategy.

## **Sustainable Community Strategy 2009 - 2014**

The Themes in the Amber Valley Sustainable Community Strategy are aligned with those in the Derbyshire Sustainable Community Strategy and the Derbyshire Local Area Agreement (LAA), in order to ensure consistency and to contribute to effective delivery of shared priorities across Derbyshire.

The key issues and priorities highlighted through consultation were:

### **Thriving Economy & Employment**

- The regeneration of market towns and local centres.
- The production and implementation of Town Centre Master Plans.
- Pedestrianisation and improving road safety.
- Improving sustainable access to employment.
- Providing sites for the needs of modern businesses.
- Managing the impact of large retail developments on town centres.
- Promoting sustainable tourism.
- Providing more training opportunities.
- Maintaining and providing employment in rural areas.

### **Safer Communities**

- Anti social behaviour and crime.
- Assault with injury.
- Domestic abuse.
- Theft crime.

### **Sustainable Housing**

- High quality affordable housing for all.
- Providing suitable homes for the elderly.
- Locating new housing in sustainable locations.
- Providing housing in rural areas for local people.
- Re-using empty properties.
- Providing a good mix of housing types.

### **Healthier Communities and Older People**

- The provision of community facilities for all age groups including leisure centres, community centres, cultural centres and libraries.

- Creating and maintaining local services including GP surgeries, hospitals, dentists and schools.
- The provision of a network of green open spaces and sports facilities.
- Maintaining services and community facilities in rural areas.

### **Children and Young People**

- Anti social behaviour and crime by young people.
- Protecting children from abuse and bullying.
- To increase the range of children's interest and perception.
- To help those who are disabled and have learning difficulties.
- To reduce obesity and excessive drinking.
- To reduce the numbers of young people not in education, employment or training (NEET).
- To reduce the number of teenage pregnancies.

### **Sustainable Environment (including Climate Change)**

- Preserving historic sites and buildings.
- Integrated and improved public transport services, footpaths and cycleways.
- Protecting greenfield and Green Belt land from development.
- Sustainable design for new buildings.
- Building in the most sustainable locations.
- Promoting renewable energy.
- Flood protection and prevention.
- Implementing environmental improvement schemes.
- Protecting and enhancing wildlife, biodiversity and habitats.

## **Regeneration Strategy 2005 - 2015**

The Amber Valley Partnership brings together public, private, voluntary and community organisations that are committed to improving the long-term fortunes of the area.

It is based on joint action to tackle the issues that will improve quality of life in Amber Valley

The Partnership recognises that its long-term vision for the area cannot be achieved by any one organisation working alone. Success will only come if many organisations work together in a real partnership taking collective responsibility for change.

The six main themes for change and improvements are as follows:

1. Safer Communities
2. Quality Housing and Environment
3. Children and Young People
4. Thriving Economy and Employment
5. Healthier Communities including Supporting Older People
6. Partnership Development

This Strategy supports the Regeneration and Community Strategy with four of their themes by providing:

1. Safer Communities - through improved open space design including town centres and CCTV, and supporting the alcohol free areas on parks and open spaces.

2. Quality Housing and Environment - through adoption of open spaces and the improvement of existing through housing development and section 106 funding
3. Children and Young People - environmental education through schools, and the provision and development of safe, inclusive, natural recreational places to play.
4. Healthier Communities – Providing recreational open space, which is free to use by all.

## **Community Safety**

The Amber Valley Community Safety Partnership was set up following the introduction of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 and amended by the Police Reform Act 2002.

The 1998 Act requires partner agencies to engage in multi agency working to tackle crime and disorder in their local area. It also requires partners to mainstream community safety within delivery of the full range of services they provide.

The key strategic priorities are:

- Anti Social Behavior
- Acquisitive Crime
- Domestic Violence
- Alcohol related Harm

Anti social behavior is one of the issues affecting Parks and Open Spaces, and only by working together can this be resolved. Graffiti, vandalism and general noise nuisance are all contributing factors to Parks and Open Space deprivation, if these issues are not tackled there is a trend for it to escalate.

## **Play Strategy 2007 – 2010 and updated in 2010 - 2015**

In 2007, Amber Valley Borough Council adopted a play strategy to steer improvements in play provision, which in turn enables the Council to apply for external funding.

This recognises that open space, both within parks and on housing estates, provides major opportunities for both fixed play and informal play provision and that visiting a playground is one of the principal reasons for visiting a park.

The Play Strategy for Amber Valley established the Amber Valley Play Partnership which ensures there is a steering group to fulfil the ambitions for children's play in the Borough from 2007 until 2015. The Play Strategy is very much a document based on consultation and partnerships. Evidence for the strategy has been drawn from national policies and initiatives, local consultation and analysis of existing play provision.

The production of the strategy has therefore been developed on a basis of shared values and the key themes and outcomes represent a consensus framework for the future of play in Amber Valley.

The strategy is targeted at young people and supported the requirements of Amber Valley Borough Council's Big Lottery/Play England Application.

The new Play Strategy 2010 – 2015 will focus on long term needs of children of all ages, and will investigate alternatives to play provision in both funding opportunities and play provision.

## **Environment Strategy 2007**

The Environmental Strategy is for the whole Borough. It will help partners and others to identify priorities for shared working and add value to organisations' individual activities. It will also help



others to understand the Community Strategy's priorities for the environment and consequently take these into account in their policies and plans. It embodies the principle of 'think global, act local', recognising that the community of Amber Valley can make a difference and must accept its responsibility to avoid or reduce its detrimental impacts on the wider world.

In this consultation document, three environmental topic areas are identified as priorities, namely:

- Energy/climate change;
- Material resources/waste; and
- Physical landscape, including street scene, public spaces.

The third priority is the most appropriate to our Open Spaces Strategy as follows:

### 3. Physical Landscape

The landscape of Amber Valley includes areas of great natural beauty, with features such as ancient woodland, wildflower meadows and river valleys rich in wildlife. Some of these areas are designated as nationally or internationally important, for example the Derwent Valley woodlands, which are a European Special Area for Conservation (SAC).

## World Heritage Status

The Derwent Valley Mills were awarded world heritage site status in 2001. They are one of only 812 sites across the world and are therefore recognised as being of international importance for the conservation of mankind's cultural and natural heritage. It is the responsibility of the Government, working with the local authorities and stakeholders, to manage the site in a sustainable way and preserve it for future generations, as part of a common universal heritage. The status brings enormous prestige to the site, attracting new visitors, but it also encourages the highest quality standards for welcoming visitors and managing the site.

## Local Strategic Landscape

The Derwent Valley is a superb and unique resource with a wide variety of natural and built environments, a long and fascinating history including major industrial developments and a wide variety of visitor attractions. The Derwent Valley Trust has developed The National Heritage Corridor as a concept to secure recognition for the valley's landscape, wildlife and heritage. In furtherance of this, it has established a corporate mark, supported by a vision to promote the development and sustainable use of the whole of the valley and its amenities for the benefit of the public, both residents and visitors.

Cromford Canal was built in the 1790's and ran over 23 km from Cromford to the Erewash Canal at Langley Mill. As its corridor traverses the Borough it has great potential to be a driver of economic and environmental improvement. The Friends of the Cromford Canal has been established to achieve the restoration of the canal to its fullest use for appropriate commercial and recreational purposes and to preserve this valuable historical heritage. It is also the subject of a biodiversity study by Derbyshire Wildlife Trust. It is hoped that during the period of this strategy the corridor will develop as a major opportunity for sustainable regeneration.

However the physical landscape is not just important in the countryside. In urban areas pleasant and safe parks, walkways and cycle routes, or safe routes to school can all encourage a more active and healthy local population.

Attractive, wildlife-rich parks and open space promote increased physical activity and well-being.

## Parks, Gardens and Open Space

Parks and gardens are a particularly important aspect of outdoor recreation in towns.

They act as informal meeting points for friends, they provide opportunities for social interaction between individuals who may not normally come into contact with each other and they can break down barriers as they are used by a wide cross section of society. The benefits of a high quality environment include a reduction in more serious anti-social behaviour and crime.

Green and clean environments promote a sense of belonging and are less likely to be vandalised than run down, dirty neighbourhoods.

The 'greenness' of a place will be a steadily growing driver of social well being, as personal locational choices are influenced by the perception of somewhere being an attractive place to live and work. Greening campaigns can be used to dispel poor images of ex-industrial or run-down areas, providing a better image so more people will want to live and work in, and visit, the area and so existing businesses will prosper and new ones will be attracted to trade in the area.

## **Local Biodiversity**

Biodiversity means 'the variety of life' - everything from bacteria to blue whales, and the habitats that support them. Amber Valley has a wide variety of natural habitats, from ancient woodlands to manmade sites, and these support species ranging from the commonplace to the globally rare. However in recent decades, in common with the rest of the UK, its biodiversity has declined, and action is needed to halt and reverse this trend.

In 1995 the UK Biodiversity Steering Group recommended that Local Biodiversity Action Plans (LBAPs) should be prepared so that the national responsibilities under the 1992 Rio Biodiversity Convention, could be applied locally. The Lowland Derbyshire Local Biodiversity Action Plan covers the Borough of Amber Valley. It seeks to conserve and enhance Lowland Derbyshire's existing wildlife and to redress past losses through habitat conservation, restoration, recreation and targeted action for priority species. In implementing the LBAP we will also be contributing to biodiversity targets in the Regional Spatial Strategy and UK Biodiversity Action Plan. Implementation of the LBAP will be coordinated through the Lowland Derbyshire Biodiversity Partnership (which includes AVBC) and was monitored and reviewed in 2010. All partners of the Amber Valley LSP will be encouraged to ensure that the protection and enhancement of biodiversity is included in their activities.



Designed & Published by Amber Valley Borough Council