



Report Title	Green Spaces Strategy 2017 - 2020
Report of	Strategic Director – People and Places
Report to	People and Places Committee
Date	2 May 2017
Item Number	8
Action	For Approval
Background Documents (For Reference)	Green Spaces Strategy Annual Report, Report to People and Places Committee 21 February 2017 Item 13. Green Spaces Strategy and Maintenance Policy, Report to Board, 20 May 2014, Item 14 Manchester Green and Blue Infrastructure Strategy

Purpose of Report

To present a new Green Spaces Strategy for the period 2017-2020, for the Committee to consider and approve.

Recommendations

It is recommended that the Committee:

- 1) Approves the draft Green Spaces Strategy at Appendix A.
- 2) Notes that the Committee will receive a report detailing progress in delivering the Strategy at its meeting in May 2018.

Impacts

Legal	None
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Financial	<p>The operating cost budget for the Environment Team and the services and projects they provide (including green spaces) is £432k in 2017/18. This is broken down as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• £144k Grounds Maintenance,• £128k staff and transport• £57k Tree work• £36k Pest control• £26k Slips and Trips and insurance• £31k community events and tipping• £10k Play Area maintenance• £10k Tipping <p>Separate to this, there is a budget for environmental improvements. This was set at £93k for 2016/17 and reduced to £44k for 2017/18, in line with the cost reduction proposals.</p>
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Human Resources	The delivery of the Green Spaces Strategy is led by the Environment Team, comprising one Manager and two Urban Rangers.
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Governance	None
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Equality and Diversity	An equality impact assessment was carried out when the Strategy was first developed, to ensure that all strands of diversity were considered within plans for increased use of green spaces. Specific measures were identified to reach out to under-represented groups, including a young people and schools events programme, fitness classes aimed at young mothers, and restoring bungalow gardens tackling Age Friendly themes.
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Risk	The key risk to delivery of the Strategy relates to resources. Whilst the Trust's managed green spaces are highly visible, and the Trust is judged on the effectiveness of its management of them, there are finite resources available to maintain and improve them. Working in partnership with others and ensuring that the community is actively involved in their green spaces will help to mitigate this.
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Consultation and Implementation	The new Strategy will be used with immediate effect, and a delivery plan will be put in place to monitor outcomes.
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1. **Introduction**

- 1.1 At its last meeting, the Committee received a report detailing the achievements made in delivering the current Green Spaces Strategy, which was adopted by the Board in May 2014.
- 1.2 This report provides a new Strategy for the period 2017-2020, for the Committee's consideration.

2. **Green Spaces Strategy 2017-2020**

- 2.1 The draft Green Spaces Strategy 2017-2020 is attached as Appendix A.
- 2.2 The Strategy has an overarching vision – *that 'our Green Oases will provide an "Urban Park" across the area, which can bring people together, build stronger communities and contribute to a healthier society' – and aim – 'to deliver well-designed and managed environmental services and create green spaces that are appealing and safe for people to access and enjoy.'*
- 2.3 The Strategy identifies five objectives that will help us to deliver this aim:
 1. Provide public realm green spaces that feel welcoming and safe
 2. Use our green spaces to engage with local residents and encourage community cohesion
 3. Ensure that our green spaces are well maintained and inappropriate behaviour is tackled
 4. Manage and maintain our green spaces in ways that are sustainable and promote conservation and biodiversity.
 5. Work with partners and stakeholders to maximise outcomes
- 2.4 Having delivered significant outcomes through the current strategy and built a strong reputation as leaders in Environment work, Southway's new strategy is rightly aspirational. It sets the following measurable targets.

By 2020:

- An additional 250 people will access our green spaces and services through events, community groups, and educational activities or by being Green Inspectors (an increase from 1,409 to 1,659).
- In the STAR Survey, at least 85.9% of our tenants will express satisfaction with the area as a place to live (a 4.7% increase on 2016 and a move from lower to middle quartile).
- At least 90% of our tenants will express satisfaction with the grounds maintenance service (maintaining the satisfaction level in 2016).

- We will have a Green Flag award for the Mottram Avenue Green Space and will be working towards the same standard across our other spaces.
- We will have reduced insurance claims relating to our green spaces.
- We will continue to work in partnership and will have drawn in additional external resources to maximise the outcomes we can achieve.

2.5 Delivery of these objectives will take significant work, in terms of staff time and other resources. However, the team is dedicated and has strong links with other organisations that will be integral to delivery, including the Royal Society for Protection of Birds (RSPB), Royal Horticultural Society (RHS), University of Manchester, City of Trees, Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue Service, Greater Manchester Police and Manchester City Council.

2.6 The team has also been successful in securing funds for projects and managing to deliver on smaller budgets by working with local schools and communities. These ways of working will continue to be a key focus during the life of the new Strategy and have an increased importance, given the challenges of balancing our investment in communities following the -1% rent reduction imposed by Government.

2.7 Officers will report on the delivery of the Strategy on an annual basis.

Appendices

Appendix A – Draft Green Spaces Strategy 2017-2020

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Draft

GREEN SPACES STRATEGY

2017 to 2020

Introduction

This Strategy sets out Southway's aims and objectives regarding the green spaces that we own and manage. It deals with our public realm green spaces as well as the private and communal gardens associated with our residential properties.

As populations continue to migrate to cities, the need to preserve and provide good quality green spaces in those cities becomes even more important.

Good quality, accessible green spaces can provide many and substantial social benefits, which contribute to a range of government and Southway priorities. The most significant of these are grouped into three broad categories:

- Improvements in levels of physical activity and health.
- Promotion of psychological health and mental well-being.
- Facilitation of social interaction, inclusion and community cohesion.

Urban green spaces can also deliver a wide range of environmental benefits, which are linked to government priorities following the Paris Agreement of 2016. These include reducing air pollution and flood risk, and regulating temperatures, as well as improving perceptions of areas as aesthetically pleasing.

Southway's strategy has strong links to the [Manchester Green and Blue Infrastructure Strategy](#) (blue spaces are waterways), with which we are heavily involved. That Strategy highlights the fact that, as well as public realm spaces, our private gardens will play a major role in our ability to adapt to climate change be resilient as a City and create healthy places where people desire to live.

Southway Context

Southway Housing Trust currently owns 157 public realm green spaces, located in the heart of our communities as well as on major transport routes into the city centre. The Trust also owns 5,793 residential properties that have some form of garden space, whether communal or private. A significant number of these have very large gardens.

We are fortunate that our neighbourhoods are located in one of the greenest areas of Manchester. As a major landowner, we are not only the custodians of this land, but contribute to the image and reputation of the areas we operate in. We create community spaces and are even able to influence the condition of private gardens.

As a community based landlord, developing and improving our green spaces is important to us. We want to ensure that people living in our neighbourhoods have access to safe and pleasant green spaces, where they can meet, relax, play and exercise. Well-managed green spaces increase the desirability of our neighbourhoods as places to live and provide us with opportunities to engage with local residents. They can provide reputational value for Southway, as well as having the potential to increase property and land value.

Some of our green spaces are located in prominent positions, offering opportunities to show case our work and promote the Southway brand whilst creating a positive image of our city. The following are our flagship sites:

- Barlow Hall Green Space
- Jubilee Woodlands, Mersey Bank
- Old Moat Lane, Old Moat
- Kingsway Crescent and Green End Road - Burnage Green Corridor
- Jubilee Gardens, adjacent to Café Nero, Didsbury Village

The Trust successfully works in partnership with organisations including the Royal Society for Protection of Birds (RSPB), Royal Horticultural Society (RHS), Lancashire Wildlife Trust, Manchester Universities, City of Trees, Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue Service, Greater Manchester Police, Manchester City Council, and other Registered Providers.

Vision

Our Green Oases will provide an “Urban Park” across the area, which can bring people together, build stronger communities and contribute to a healthier society.

Aim

The key aim of this Strategy is **to deliver well-designed and managed environmental services and create green spaces that are appealing and safe for people to access and enjoy.**

Objectives

1. Provide public realm green spaces that feel welcoming and safe

Welcoming Green Spaces

- ⊗ Create public realm green spaces that are appealing and welcoming to all local residents
- ⊗ People should enjoy using the green spaces and feel that they add to the desirability of our neighbourhoods
- ⊗ Provide facilities and activities that local people actually want
- ⊗ Consider the diverse needs, preferences and characteristics of local residents, to ensure no one feels excluded or unwelcome

Safe and Secure Green Spaces

- ⊗ Create public realm green spaces that are accessible and feel safe to all members of the community
- ⊗ Ensure that grounds, facilities and equipment are well maintained and safe to use
- ⊗ Take health and safety seriously and ensure the policy is properly implemented, so there are no avoidable accidents and injuries

2. Use our green spaces to engage with local residents and encourage community cohesion

Community Involvement and Cohesion

- 🌿 Involve residents in planning and managing the use of green spaces
- 🌿 Use our public realm green spaces as the locus for community events and activities, to bring people together and encourage them to care about the local green spaces
- 🌿 Provide opportunities for residents to report concerns and incidents regarding our green spaces and respond to these appropriately
- 🌿 Utilise our public realm green spaces to promote the health and wellbeing of our tenants

Residents' Gardens

- 🌿 Encourage local residents to see the value of their garden spaces and help equip them with the skills and confidence to maintain these spaces, enabling them to utilise their gardens to the full potential
- 🌿 Provide support to tenants who are unable to maintain their gardens
- 🌿 Return landlocked areas into gardens where possible, subject to cost-benefit and safety considerations
- 🌿 When building new homes, maximise environmental benefits whilst balancing this objective with value for money considerations, for the Trust and for tenants who will have to pay service charges

3. Ensure that our green spaces are well maintained and inappropriate behaviour is tackled

Clean and Well Maintained Green Spaces

- 🌿 Maintain grounds and other features
- 🌿 Have appropriate waste management arrangements
- 🌿 Ensure that ownership and appropriate use of public realm green spaces is clear to users, through signage and more subtle cues
- 🌿 Minimise littering, dog fouling and vandalism, and address such activities robustly where they do occur

Management and Enforcement

- 🌿 Have a clear management plan that is endorsed and championed by tenants, residents and other stakeholders
- 🌿 Have robust procedures and well trained staff for the management and maintenance of our green infrastructure
- 🌿 Engage with tenants where they fail to maintain their gardens appropriately, and if necessary take enforcement action
- 🌿 When properties become void, address any issues arising from poor maintenance of the gardens

4. Manage and maintain our green spaces in ways that are sustainable and promote conservation and biodiversity

Sustainability

- 🌱 Use environmentally sound methods in maintaining our green spaces, including having minimal and justified pesticide use, eliminating horticultural peat use and recycling waste plant material
- 🌱 Work with energy and resource conservation, pollution reduction and waste recycling at the forefront of our approach
- 🌱 Continue to work towards 'Manchester a Certain Future' and Blue and Green Infrastructure targets and objectives

Conservation and Heritage

- 🌱 The conservation of our green infrastructure will be connected to wider agendas such as 'The State of Nature Report' and local, national and international agreements
- 🌱 Effectively manage landscapes, natural features, wildlife and fauna
- 🌱 Ensure our green spaces serve their functions well without placing undue pressure on the surrounding environment

5. Work with partners and stakeholders to maximise outcomes

Work in Partnership

- 🌱 Continue to work in partnership and seek out new opportunities to do so
- 🌱 Utilise external resources, including funding and work placements, to enhance the delivery of this Strategy
- 🌱 Increase efficiency by sharing resources, expertise and good practice, and jointly procuring goods and services where appropriate
- 🌱 Align ourselves with local and national campaigns (e.g. Keep Britain Tidy), to utilise existing awareness and materials

Engage with Stakeholders

- 🌱 Work with local schools and community centres to deliver educational activities on our green spaces
- 🌱 Work with local community groups to enhance our neighbourhoods and encourage local people to see the value of our green spaces
- 🌱 Be recognised as a beacon of good practice in our sector, with regard to Green and Blue Infrastructure

Targets

By 2020:

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Our Approach

The Strategy Objectives will be embedded in, and will require the support of, all areas of the Trust. In turn, the delivery of this Strategy must take into consideration the wider objectives of the organisation and support the work of other teams where possible, to ensure we are utilising our resources and promoting the wider aims of the organisation in a proactive and positive light.

We will continue to work closely with partners and stakeholders, and Southway will be an active partner in the Green and Blue Infrastructure agenda within Manchester.

The involvement of tenants and residents and their ownership of gardens and green spaces will be essential to delivering this Strategy. Using the principles of [Our Manchester](#), we will have a strengths-based approach when working in our communities, helping people to become self-reliant and take responsibility for their gardens and green spaces.

We will engage with partners and peers to enable maximisation of resources, opportunities, innovation, learning and engagement at every opportunity. This will enable us to drive change and best practice, and maintain our levels of expertise and competency.

We will use the benchmark of The Green Flag Award to develop learning, best practice and guidance from the process. We will embed this into our day-to-day work and interaction with our green spaces, tenants, neighbourhoods, internal teams and partners.

A detailed delivery plan with target milestones will be put in place and used to monitor progress and achievements.

The delivery of the Strategy will be reported on an annual basis to Southway's People and Places Committee and to stakeholders.

Related Strategies

- Futures Strategy
- Community Investment Strategy
- Customer Involvement Strategy
- Age Friendly Strategy
- Community Investment Strategy
- Development Strategy
- Asset Management Strategy
- Blue and Green Infrastructure Strategy (Manchester City Council)
- Our Manchester, The Manchester Strategy (Manchester City Council)