

Key Issue Raised	Council Response and Action
<b>General Comments</b>	
Commend and support BCC for developing the plan which provides clear recognition of the critical role and benefits of open spaces, including for ecosystems services, health and wellbeing and biodiversity.	<p>We welcome the support given to our vision, together with the constructive comments and suggestions put forward in the responses we received.</p> <p><b>No action required.</b></p>
<p>Concern raised over the implementation and delivery of the Belfast Open Spaces Strategy and its lack of actions and targets.</p> <p>Specific comments in relation to this included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Financial resource issues should be challenged</li> <li>• Plans not ambitious enough</li> <li>• Timescale too long – not compatible with climate emergency</li> <li>• No actions included for improvements</li> </ul>	<p><b>Comments noted.</b></p> <p>The BOSS is not intended as an action plan. It is an over-arching strategy recognising the many benefits of open spaces and how these can be incorporated into projects and plans across the city. Whilst the BOSS contains headline actions these are intended to be high level and detailed action plans will be developed under these.</p> <p><b>Proposed actions:</b></p> <p>Detailed actions plans will be developed under each of the strategic principles and these will include timescales and resource allocations.</p>
Various suggestions for minor rewording to help clarify or emphasise key points throughout draft document.	<p><b>Comments noted and agreed.</b></p> <p><b>Proposed action:</b></p> <p>Minor wording amendments throughout document to aid clarity or emphasis that do not alter the overall direction or strategic principles set out in the draft document. We will also ensure alignment with the GBIP.</p>
Suggested that council should lead by example in it management of parks and open spaces.	<p><b>Comment noted.</b></p> <p>The effective delivery of the vision and principles will be implemented through its influence on other plans, strategies, programmes and projects, including through the new LDP, the GBIP, Local Biodiversity Action Plan and council investment in projects.</p> <p><b>No further action required.</b></p>

<p>Definition of Open Space is different to PPS8 and suggest single definition throughout policy documents.  Concern that typologies omit 'natural and semi-natural urban green spaces' and FiT standard for these should be included.  All of Belfast Hills not open space in terms of accessibility – suggestion that area is marked as a Significant Natural Heritage Asset with open spaces marked individually.</p>	<p><b>Comment noted.</b>  The BOSS is not a planning policy document and focuses only on land whereas PPS8 covers all open space of public value including bodies of water. It should also be noted that in the future PPS8 will be superseded by the LDP. The BOSS is one of a suite of documents within a wider policy framework and the GBIP considers a boarder suite of open space typologies.</p> <p><b>No further action required.</b></p>
<p>Greater emphasis should be given to benefits of biodiversity and the council's duties in furthering biodiversity.  Concern that priority to functionality over biodiversity – definition of Open Spaces (p8).</p>	<p><b>Comments noted.</b></p> <p><b>Proposed action:</b>  Add reference to the WANE Act 2011 and the council statutory duty to enhance biodiversity, along with minor consequential wording edits in relevant sections of document. The Council is currently developing the Local Biodiversity Action Plan (LBAP) and we will amend the policy framework on p11 to show the relationship between the BOSS and LBAP.</p>
<p>Suggestion that area working groups take the strategy forward.</p>	<p><b>Comments noted.</b>  This suggestion will be considered within the development of the actions plans for the implementation of the strategy. Where appropriate we will look to use existing or emerging structures.</p> <p><b>No further action required.</b></p>
<p>A number of respondents raised concern over the loss of green open space to development of 3G pitches - in particular Glassmullin Green.</p>	<p><b>Comments noted.</b>  This is a site specific matter that is not directly relevant to the Open Spaces Strategy, which is a strategic framework document. This specific matter of Glassmullin Green was subject to due planning process.</p> <p><b>No action required</b></p>
<p>Importance of engagement with stakeholders – offers to work together from partner organisations.</p>	<p><b>Comments noted.</b></p> <p><b>Proposed actions:</b></p>

	We will continue to work with partners in the implementation of the strategy and we will follow up with organisations who specially commented to identify any potential partnership working opportunities.
<b>Vision</b>	
<p>Several suggestions were made in relation to rewording the vision, these included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Change to 'local' network of premium open spaces</li> <li>• Suggest access for all is made more explicit</li> <li>• Omits reference to protect and enhance natural environment</li> <li>• Simplify the vision it and make it more explicit in relation to Biodiversity</li> </ul>	<p><b>Comments noted.</b></p> <p><b>Proposed action:</b> It is proposed that the vision is reworded to the following (changes in bold):</p> <p>By 2035... Belfast will have a well-connected, <b>accessible</b> network of high quality, <b>sustainable</b> open spaces recognised for the value and benefits they provide to everyone who lives, works in and visits our city.</p>
<b>Strategic Principles</b>	
<p><b>SP1 – Provide welcoming shared spaces</b></p> <p><b>Comments</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Comments stress the need to protect, enhance and preserve existing open spaces and create new open spaces, especially a city centre green space.</li> <li>• Uneven distribution of open space across the city</li> <li>• Additional reference to open space in new residential developments</li> <li>• Difficulty of creating 'new' open space – in context of growth agenda, concern that this will place considerable pressure on existing open spaces.</li> <li>• Need more emphasis on practical protection and preservation of the natural environment</li> </ul>	<p><b>Comments noted.</b></p> <p><b>Proposed action:</b> The comments/suggested actions will be considered within the development of the detailed actions plans that will be used in the implementation of the strategy. Where suggestions do not fall within the scope of the BOSS they will be directed to the appropriate service and if applicable may be supported through the implementation of existing planning policies and the new LDP. They may also be picked up under existing or emerging strategies such as the LBAP.</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Restricted access to open space eg growth in number of 3G pitches and need to measure quality of access; specific examples where provided including Glassmullan Green</li> <li>• Some underdeveloped open spaces should be considered for housing to meet acute need</li> <li>• Welcome commitment to focus development on brownfield sites</li> </ul> <p><b>Suggested Actions</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• BCC should increase ‘new’ open spaces in line with growth or new developments</li> <li>• Concerns over genuine shared spaces – neutrality</li> <li>• Address vandalism</li> </ul>	
<p><b>SP2 – Improve connectivity</b></p> <p><b>Comments</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continuous high quality cycle/pedestrians routes a priority</li> <li>• Sustainable transport policy important and should have greater emphasis and recognise the importance of connectivity and to include wildlife corridors between green spaces</li> <li>• Greenways should not only be thought of as linear - should acknowledge the benefits of inter-connectivity and linkages and beyond BCC area</li> </ul> <p><b>Suggested Actions</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure existing wildlife taken into consideration when planning greenways to comply with WANE biodiversity duties</li> <li>• Include an action to promote connectivity in relation to habitats and species</li> </ul>	<p><b>Comments noted.</b></p> <p><b>Proposed action:</b>  The comments/suggested actions will be considered within the development of the detailed actions plans that will be used in the implementation of the strategy. Where suggestions do not fall within the scope of the BOSS they will be directed to the appropriate service and if applicable may be supported through the implementation of existing planning policies and the new LDP. They may also be picked up under existing or emerging strategies such as the LBAP.</p>

<p><b>SP3 – Improve health and wellbeing</b></p> <p><b>Comments</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mixed views on the benefits of artificial pitches versus grass pitches</li> <li>• Essential to recognise the role that open space plays in wellbeing</li> <li>• Consider dog walkers as a high user group</li> <li>• Food should be more prominent – city growing/farming</li> <li>• Programming and partners key to behavioural change – consultation required to understand the needs of minority groups and help address multi- benefits of open space</li> <li>• The BOSS does not explicitly aim to promote age/child friendly environments</li> </ul> <p><b>Suggested Actions</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Partnerships need to be built up and retained</li> <li>• Providing appropriate facilities is important – toilets, shelter, seating, picnic tablets</li> <li>• Parks should remain open 24/7</li> <li>• Suggestion to add ‘and enjoyment of nature’ in action re passive recreation, high proportion of use is passive – peace and tranquillity are key attributes to well-being – need to balance this with promotion of active sport and recreation</li> </ul>	<p><b>Comments noted.</b></p> <p><b>Proposed action:</b>  The comments/suggested actions will be considered within the development of the detailed actions plans that will be used in the implementation of the strategy. Where suggestions do not fall within the scope of the BOSS they will be directed to the appropriate service and if applicable may be supported through the implementation of existing planning policies and the new LDP. They may also be picked up under existing or emerging strategies such as the LBAP.</p>
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<p><b>SP4 – Support place-making and enhance the built environment</b></p> <p><b>Comments</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Focus on parks that have been neglected</li> <li>• Need to protect built heritage and support regeneration of heritage assets - suggest change action to ‘built and natural heritage assets’</li> <li>• Suggestion regarding management principles for a healthy public realm and natural environment.</li> <li>• Have more emphasis on community involvement, including in the management of open spaces</li> <li>• Greater focus required in relation to development areas/proposals to ensure adequate open spaces and facilities</li> <li>• Should focus on longer term rather than temporary projects</li> <li>• Whilst welcome the development of activities, passive recreation should be recognised and a balance between all uses achieved</li> <li>• Addressing derelict land should aim to address housing and environmental needs</li> </ul> <p><b>Suggested Actions</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Suggest greening of vacant spaces and plazas to be more inviting for public use</li> <li>• Suggest enhancement of green spaces for multi- functionality</li> <li>• Collaborate with stakeholders/partners to animate underused spaces</li> <li>• Designation and promotion of proper working Botanic Gardens will increase the public’s understanding of its importance - should have its own classification as unique site - would welcome restoration of Palm House and Kelvin monument</li> </ul>	<p><b>Comments noted.</b></p> <p><b>Proposed action:</b>  The comments/suggested actions will be considered within the development of the detailed actions plans that will be used in the implementation of the strategy. Where suggestions do not fall within the scope of the BOSS they will be directed to the appropriate service and if applicable may be supported through the implementation of existing planning policies and the new LDP. They may also be picked up under existing or emerging strategies such as the LBAP.</p>
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Would welcome support from BCC on the heritage of Ligoniel Village</li> </ul>	
<p><b>SP5 – Increase resilience to climate change</b></p> <p><b>Comments</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Suggestions around how assets such as Divis/Black Mountain, Lagan Banks and Ballymurphy and Blackstaff Rivers could be used to tackle specific issues</li> <li>• Recommendation that native species should be used</li> <li>• Importance of partnership working</li> <li>• Suggestions around wider actions that could be taken such as renewable energy and sustainable transport</li> <li>• BOSS design strategies should be connected with the Green and Blue Infrastructure Plan</li> <li>• Consider renewable energy</li> <li>• Correct action around LwWP to reflect that this is a multi-agency programme (the final strategy document will be amended to reflect this)</li> </ul> <p><b>Suggested Actions</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Incorporate food growing spaces/reference urban agriculture</li> <li>• Should be noted that open space and de-culverting can help protect other areas from flooding through water attenuation - LWWP should be referenced under sustainable drainage (p26)</li> </ul>	<p><b>Comments noted.</b></p> <p><b>Proposed action:</b> The comments/suggested actions will be considered within the development of the detailed actions plans that will be used in the implementation of the strategy. Where suggestions do not fall within the scope of the BOSS they will be directed to the appropriate service and if applicable may be supported through the implementation of existing planning policies and the new LDP. They may also be picked up under existing or emerging strategies such as the LBAP.</p>
<p><b>SP6 – Protect and enhance the natural environment</b></p> <p><b>Comments</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Suggestion that there are many opportunities to involve citizens</li> </ul>	<p><b>Comments noted.</b></p> <p><b>Proposed action:</b> The comments/suggested actions will be considered within the development of the detailed actions plans that will be used in the implementation of the strategy. Where suggestions do not fall within</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strongly support action to enable species movements across the landscape</li> <li>• Suggestions made around actions (including on specific sites) that could be taken to support wildlife and the natural environment</li> </ul> <p><b>Suggested Actions</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A priority habitat and species audit need to be carried out to meet the aims of this strategic priority</li> <li>• Include landscape and ecosystem services within guiding principles</li> <li>• Reference BS 8545:2014 in relation to the planting of new trees</li> <li>• Under actions around invasive alien species, need to look at rhododendron and its link to phytophthora ramorum</li> </ul>	<p>the scope of the BOSS they will be directed to the appropriate service and if applicable may be supported through the implementation of existing planning policies and the new LDP. They may also be picked up under existing or emerging strategies such as the LBAP.</p>
<p><b>SP7 – Be celebrated and support learning</b></p> <p><b>Comments</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Importance of community involvement</li> <li>• Suggestion that there is link to the cultural strategy to ensure consistency</li> </ul> <p><b>Suggested Actions</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Suggestion around working with the voluntary sector and using volunteers</li> <li>• Suggestion that we make events more environmentally sustainable</li> <li>• Suggestion to work with the educational sector to engage young people</li> <li>• Have park events across the city</li> </ul>	<p><b>Comments noted.</b></p> <p><b>Proposed action:</b>  The comments/suggested actions will be considered within the development of the detailed actions plans that will be used in the implementation of the strategy. Where suggestions do not fall within the scope of the BOSS they will be directed to the appropriate service and if applicable may be supported through the implementation of existing planning policies and the new LDP. They may also be picked up under existing or emerging strategies such as the LBAP.</p>