

Local (Portsmouth) Policy Context

Portsmouth Local Plan

The Draft Portsmouth Local Plan 2038¹ is a framework to deliver the development needs of the city for the 15 year period from 2023- 2038. Progress on the Draft Local Plan can be found in the Local Development Scheme²

The plan has a direct relationship to Parks and Open Spaces because it applies to all new developments, stating what type of development can occur and where. The plan provides a framework for investment in the city and must be consistent with current planning legislation including the National Planning Policy Framework and National Planning Policy Guidance.

The Plan is an extensive document. There are three sections of particular relevance to this strategy:

- Open Space and Outdoor Recreation
- Community and Leisure Facilities
- Green infrastructure

The policy under [Open Space and Outdoor Recreation](#) provides that:

- All proposals should create, protect or enhance open space
- Enhancements should maximise quality and multi-functionality
- Any proposals which would result in net loss of open space will be refused unless:
 - The loss from development would be replaced by equivalent or improved provision in another location; or
 - Development would provide alternative sports and recreational provision

[Community and Leisure Facilities](#) policy provides that any applications for change of use or loss of premises or land in relation to a community facility, will only be granted where:

- There is no longer a need for the facility, or there is overriding demand for another community use
- Replacement facilities can be provided on-site, or within an accessible location
- The community use can be delivered from other facilities, without leading to or increasing any shortfall in provision

¹ [Portsmouth Local Plan 2038](#)

² [Local Development Scheme](#).

Appendix 2 - Local Policy

The [Green Infrastructure](#) policy provides that proposals must include green infrastructure as an integral part of design. Planning permission will only be granted where:

- Development avoids net loss in green infrastructure; unavoidable harm must be mitigated or compensated
- Development on or adjacent to green infrastructure protects or contributes to the enhancement of the infrastructure

Where areas present opportunities for additional greening, these are identified as Urban Greening Factor zones (UGF). Planning permission within these areas may be granted where the proposal demonstrates an increase in green infrastructure.

The policy also provides for the protection of trees.

The Draft Portsmouth Local Plan 2038 highlights several Strategic Development Sites including City Centre Regeneration (S1), Tipner (S2) and St James (S3). Strategic Development Sites are key locations where growth requirements can be made sustainable and therefore contribute towards an improved environment and public health outcomes. It also highlights Portsdown Hill (S9) and the Seafront (S8) as important contributors to the city's network of green and blue spaces.

City Vision 2040

The vision for the city for 2040 incorporates six over-arching objectives³. Three of these objectives are of particular relevance to this strategy:

- *A healthy and happy city - supporting each person's needs for good physical and mental health*
- *A green city - excellent green spaces to live healthy and active lives... we protect our land for the future*
- *A city with easy travel - encourage walking and cycling*

The other three objectives are also relevant indirectly:

- A city rich in culture and creativity - this can be applied to design and use of Parks space
- A city with a thriving economy - the PfSH Green Infrastructure Strategy (above) identifies that strong green infrastructure promotes investment
- A city of lifelong learning - this can be applied through Parks education opportunities

³ <https://imagineportsmouth.co.uk/>

Greening Strategy 2020

The Greening Strategy is funded by the Public Health Transformation Fund.

This strategy has four over-arching objectives:

Greening the public realm

The aim of this objective is to increase canopy coverage. Planting schemes will focus on areas of impact for air quality and spaces where further trees can be added (on streets, parks, open spaces and housing land). Hedge and shrub planting will also be increased. Capital funding has been made available to bolster existing planting and plant management budgets. Greening the public realm will also include development of wild areas across the city. Where relevant project schemes will include provision for greening.

Greening private space

The aim of this objective is for the expertise of the local authority to be leveraged to assist the greening of private space. Specialist knowledge can assist with advising on the correct planting and care, such as through the Waterfront Garden Centre.

Private space and gardens can benefit the community, by making areas more resilient to the impact of climate change together with the benefits of biodiversity. There has been a fashion for private space to be paved and artificial removing opportunity for natural development. The Council is able to work with organisations with larger private spaces, such as schools and hospitals, to impact greenery development.

Grassroots engagement

The aim of this objective is to develop communications activity to ensure that the importance of greening is understood across the city. This will enable two way communication between the residents and the Council on greening interventions.

Policy review

This aim comprises the relevant strands of the Draft Portsmouth Local Plan, considered above.

The Greening Strategy was reviewed by Cabinet in October 2021.⁴ It confirmed progress to date as follows:

Action	Location (list not exhaustive)
Rewilding undertaken	Long Curtain banks; Pembroke Gardens; Pier Road; Duisberg Way; Bransbury Park; Kingston Recreation Ground; Stamshaw Park; Alexandra Park; Langstone Gardens; Portsdown Hill
Urban Meadows sown	College Park; Milton Park; Tamworth Park; Bransbury Park; Bransbury Gardens; Clarendon Gardens; Pembroke Triangle; Southsea Rock Garden; Southsea Castle; Ladies Mile; Canoe Lake
Management of ecologically important habitats	Fort Cumberland West; Milton Common; Halsea Lines; Farlington Triangle

⁴ <https://democracy.portsmouth.gov.uk/documents/s32455/Greening%20Strategy.pdf>

The review confirmed that funding continues to be pursued. A successful bid to Forgotten Places through Trees for Cities resulted in an award of £35,950 with which to fund the 2021/2022 planting season.

The review complemented the work already undertaken via the site management plans (considered in this strategy) and noted the significant work undertaken by the Countryside Officers.

Forward planning for the Greening Strategy includes development of a greening guide for community groups and the creation of green walking trails and nature corridors.

Southsea Seafront Strategy 2010- 2026 and Seafront Masterplan Supplementary Planning Document 2021

This strategy seeks to explore how the Council can attract quality facilities to the seafront and operate commercially, whilst maintaining the *quality of the environment*.⁵ Whilst the strategy is for the most part concerned with visitor attractions and events, these will have an impact on the physical environment. The visual amenity of the seafront space is highlighted in the strategy together with the obligation to protect Southsea Common and Eastney Beach as a Site Important for Nature Conservation (SINC).

The strategy highlights the opportunity to increase awareness of environmental issues and biological diversity in the area. This includes areas such as Southsea Rose Garden, the Rock Garden and The Dell. Tree planting is also key along the seafront to provide shelter from the sea wind and protection from the sun.

The strategy also provides a focus on the importance of active travel and the opportunity presented to link Eastney Ferry to Gosport Ferry as part of the sustrans network.

The following locations are given particular attention in the strategy:

Southsea Common

Further tree planting to take place. Intensive use areas to be marked with signage.

Canoe Lake

Further signage to be undertaken, to signpost the gardens for visitors.

Eastney Beach

Creation of sustainable interpretation centre to highlight unique ecological area.

The strategy also notes the opportunity to use the area for a variety of events, provided these do not damage the environment.

The Seafront Masterplan 2021⁶ picks up many of the themes from the strategy. It also includes updated information on three areas in particular:

Sea Defences

The masterplan refers to the project by Coastal Partners to deliver replacement sea defences and how these present an opportunity to enhance the seafront.

⁵ <https://www.portsmouth.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/Seafront-Strategy.pdf>

⁶ [Seafront Masterplan Supplementary Planning Document: March 2021 \(portsmouth.gov.uk\)](#)

Health and Wellbeing

It is highlighted how the seafront open space is a significant contributor towards health and wellbeing objectives through the broad range of active leisure activities that are offered.

Climate Change

Seafront development should include the strengthening of the city's green infrastructure which contributes towards climate change mitigation.

Portsmouth Community Safety Plan 2021-2022

This plan comprises a multi-agency approach for services across the city to identify community safety priorities. These priorities should be borne in mind when planning for the city's outdoor space and they tie in with the City Vision 2040 for a happy and healthy city where residents can feel safe.

Whilst Portsmouth is a safe city, there are identified risk factors that result in crime and anti-social behaviour. Consideration by all services of community safety issues enables early intervention.

Cemeteries Strategy

This strategy considers how to manage existing cemeteries space to meet current demand and plan for future requirements. It notes that in addition to their primary function, cemeteries provide wider benefit for *physical and mental health* regarding green space, space for reflection, walking and wildlife appreciation.

The strategy considers several issues for future consideration, including:

- Increasing capacity for burial space
- Designating areas for particular communities
- Improving and enhancing cemeteries as areas of public value for green space
- Options for long term sustainability

Improvements to cemetery green space will include tree and biodiversity management. The strategy notes that there is also opportunity for community engagement, such as after dark walks and tomb trails together with the possibility of Friends groups for each or all the cemeteries.

Physical Activity Strategy

This public health strategy is provided by Energise Me⁷, a cross-authority strategy encompassing all local authorities within the Hampshire and Isle of Wight region.

The strategy has five strands which include the following:

- Positive early experiences for children and young people including opportunities for physical activity and community provision
- Opportunities that meet the needs of the community, that are accessible
- Local spaces that feel safe and attractive to the community
- Support to be active - promotion of opportunities
- Working together for improved health and wellbeing

Southsea Coastal Scheme Defences

New coastal defences are being constructed to mitigate potential flood risk for the next 100 years. Concurrently, the opportunity is being taken to consider the area more broadly. The construction period is due to run from 2020-2028. Phase 1 (Long Curtain Moat) included the creation of concrete tidal pools, which mimic natural rock pools to encourage colonisation by marine species. The pools hold water to increase the diversity of habitat whether high or low tide. This scheme is therefore considered in connection with this strategy by way of encouraging biodiversity and creating additional habitat for flora and fauna. It also forms part of the strategy for seafront development.

Economic Development and Regeneration Strategy 2019-2036

This strategy recognises that economic growth is contingent upon many factors including safeguarding the environment.⁸ It acknowledges that natural assets within an intensely urbanised space form part of the city's unique brand. As the Authority undertakes to do all it can to promote and protect healthy environments, this makes the city a good place to live and encourages investment, growth and opportunity for contributions towards improved green infrastructure.

⁷ <https://www.energiseme.org/>

⁸ <https://www.portsmouth.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/Economic-Development-Regeneration-Strategy-Accessible.pdf>

Heritage Strategy

The Heritage Strategy for Portsmouth has a key overlap with the Parks and Open Spaces Strategy.⁹ It identifies the open spaces in Portsmouth that meet historical interest criteria. It includes the following locations which are Grade II listed:

- Southsea Common
- Kingston Cemetery
- Victoria Park

These environments have a key part to play in physical and mental wellbeing. They contribute to Portsmouth's unique identity providing a contrast to the urban environment whilst at the same time providing sense of belonging, place and community through their historical relevance.

The strategy also identifies several historic fortifications which are part of the city's greenspace offer, such as:

- Hilsea Lines
- Fort Cumberland

These spaces are identified as potential heritage projects with opportunities to care for and improve the assets.

Portsmouth Transport Strategy 2021-2038

This strategy overlaps with the Parks and Open Spaces Strategy as its overarching objective is to reduce car use and increase physical activity participation in walking and cycling.¹⁰ The provision of quality infrastructure will enable short distances to be covered by sustainable travel. The strategy includes a Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) to develop a number of walking and cycling routes to connect up different parts of the city. The development of this infrastructure will be supported by reallocation of road space and provision of cycle hangars for public use.

The LCWIP is supported by Sustrans, in particular the requirement for a walking and cycling infrastructure which includes persons in wheelchairs, mobility scooters and buggy users.¹¹

Air Quality Strategy, 2017-2027

This strategy notes the importance of a clean environment to our communities and our health.¹² It aims to achieve all statutory local air quality standards across the city by 2027. It has several strategic objectives, including to 'create a focus on sustainable travel, including the promotion of a modal shift in transport from car to active travel'. The delivery of this objective is dependent upon protecting green infrastructure and incentivising sustainable and active travel options.

⁹ <https://democracy.portsmouth.gov.uk/documents/s31720/Heritage%20Strategy%20-%20Appendix%20A.pdf>

¹⁰ <https://travel.portsmouth.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/Local-Transport-Plan-2021.pdf>

¹¹ <https://www.sustrans.org.uk/our-blog/policy-consultation-submissions/2020/all/our-response-to-the-portsmouth-transport-strategy/>

¹² [env-air-quality-strategy.pdf \(portsmouth.gov.uk\)](https://www.portsmouth.gov.uk/air-quality/air-quality-strategy)

Public Health Superzone

A Superzone pilot was approved by Health and Wellbeing Board in September 2019¹³ as part of a Childhood Obesity review. This followed initiatives in London where several superzones were planned across London Boroughs. Following a delay due to Covid, a Superzone pilot in Portsmouth commenced in September 2021 at Arundel Court Primary Academy (ACPA).

The Superzone is a place-based approach working within 400 metres of a central location. The zone includes several of the city's green spaces, namely Nutfield Place, Arundel Park and Landport Park. The ACPA Superzone comprises four themes: healthy food, active places, clean air and community safety.

Active Places includes the provision of a daily mile (walk, run or jog) for all children together with active travel incentives.

Community and Safety includes improvements to the green space utilising greening funding to improve design, sightlines and provision of dog bins.

Portsmouth Playing Pitch Strategy 2018-2034

The Playing Pitch Strategy¹⁴ follows three principles:

Protect: make sure that there are sufficient facilities of quality in the correct place. The benefits of multi pitch sites are recognised and should be protected through the planning and development process.

Enhance: The strategy considers where quality affects the sustainability of playing pitch assets, where quality can be improved and where the Council can work with stakeholders in partnership together to secure funding through development.

Provide: investment to be directed at sites that provide the highest increase in participation and demonstrate long term sustainability.

¹³ [HWB 25 Sep 19 superzone.pdf \(portsmouth.gov.uk\)](#)

¹⁴ <https://democracy.portsmouth.gov.uk/documents/s18367/Final%20Draft%20Portsmouth%20City%20Council%20Stage%20D%20-PPS%20-%20V7%20-%2008.03.18.pdf>