

Nottingham Greenspace Strategy

A long term ambition for change...

**GREENER
HEALTHIER
HAPPIER
NOTTINGHAM**





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Introduction



Councillor Sam Lux
Executive Member for
Carbon Reduction,
Leisure and Culture

The significance and timing of this strategy cannot be underestimated as the importance of having a healthy urban green infrastructure is now widely acknowledged and climate change is clear and present. In response, Nottingham declared a Climate & Ecological Emergency in 2019 and published a Carbon Neutral Charter for Nottingham to become the first UK city to be carbon-neutral by 2028 (CN28). Work began on the 250-point CN28 Action Plan to deliver this in 2020.

Nottingham is well placed with its significant amount of quality greenspace to be a role model for environmental practices. These can be used to address other city priorities such as mitigating climate change, increasing biodiversity, creating nature-rich active green corridors and better supporting the health and wellbeing of our residents.

Nottingham is a dynamic, diverse, pioneering city with a high proportion of families & a large student population. The strategy seeks to recognise its

changing demographics ensuring that access to greenspace remains equitable for all. A Greener, Healthier, Happier Nottingham seeks to address inequalities within the city by giving fair access to greenspace & supporting the health and wellbeing benefits it brings.

We believe everybody should have equal opportunity to lead healthy lives through engaged, active experiences in their neighbourhoods. This strategy seeks to deliver this by bringing nature & wildlife to the places where people live by developing innovative ways of creating nature-rich corridors throughout the city.

Resident & Partner consultation in addition to a well-considered, insight-led approach towards the value of our natural capital is at the heart of this piece of work. Residents told us that their parks & greenspaces provided them with an opportunity to enjoy life through active, engaged experiences & enabled them to celebrate their heritage and communities. Walking their dogs, playing sports, meeting friends and attending local fairs

and festivals all make a difference to their lived experience, their health & wellbeing & life enjoyment.

Shared ownership is a key principle of the strategy, the Green Guardians volunteering programme is creating a citywide movement where residents & partners are joining together to enjoy looking after the cities' greenspaces as well as playing their part in environmental action.

Throughout the strategy's lifetime, much will change. This ambitious roadmap links those leading Nottingham's plans for Climate Change, Regeneration, Planning & Public Health from which collaborative action planning can flow.

This document acts as our catalyst for change.



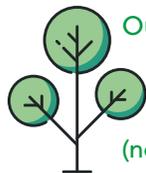
Our amazing greenspaces

Nottingham City Council has a historic network of open and greenspaces contributing to its image as a green city. We look after parks, playgrounds, nature reserves, allotments, cemeteries and community spaces for an increasing resident population of over 320,000 people.

Nottingham's parks and greenspaces cover **1,670 hectares** (the same as) **1,113 football pitches**



Our total public green/blue spaces cover **38.1%** of the city's area (not including private gardens)



Tree canopy cover **13.75%** across the city



Nottingham's trees, plants and soil store over **5,000 tonnes** of CO₂ from the atmosphere every year



Over **90%** of people feel their **park is important** to their neighbourhood

1.1 million visits per month to our parks and open spaces with **63%** of residents visiting at least **once per month**



Small green spaces contribute **£65 million** per annum in health benefits to the city and contain **77%** of the city's play areas



120 of cycle paths **Km** and **480km** of of signed Routes



Nottingham's Green Guardians volunteering programme delivered over **10,000 hours** in Years 1 and 2



Almost **24,000 trees** planted across the city in 2022 plus over **13,500 flowering bulbs.**



Engaged with over **300** registered volunteers and green groups with **600** planned activities delivered



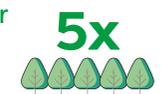
Winner of APSE Best Parks and Green Spaces Service team of the Year (21/22)



Increased annual local production nursery growing to over **900,000 plants**



5 pioneering Tiny Forests planted with **EarthWatch** delivered as well as 2 Blossom Together projects with the **National Trust**



The importance of this plan to Nottingham

Access to good quality open and greenspaces are vital for the quality of life for people living and working in our city.

Nottingham is large and culturally diverse and it's important that enough open and greenspace is provided across the city so everyone benefits equally.

Historically, we've been really successful at providing good quality open and greenspaces through the Green Flag accreditation scheme – Nottingham is committed to sustaining and growing this standard over the next 25 years.

Where new housing development is taking place, new public greenspace will be created to provide new facilities for our growing city.

Where it's not possible to create new greenspace (e.g. in small dense city centre sites), improvements will either be made to greenspace nearby or through urban greening across the city to ensure that our

overall existing greenspaces are equipped to meet increasing demand.

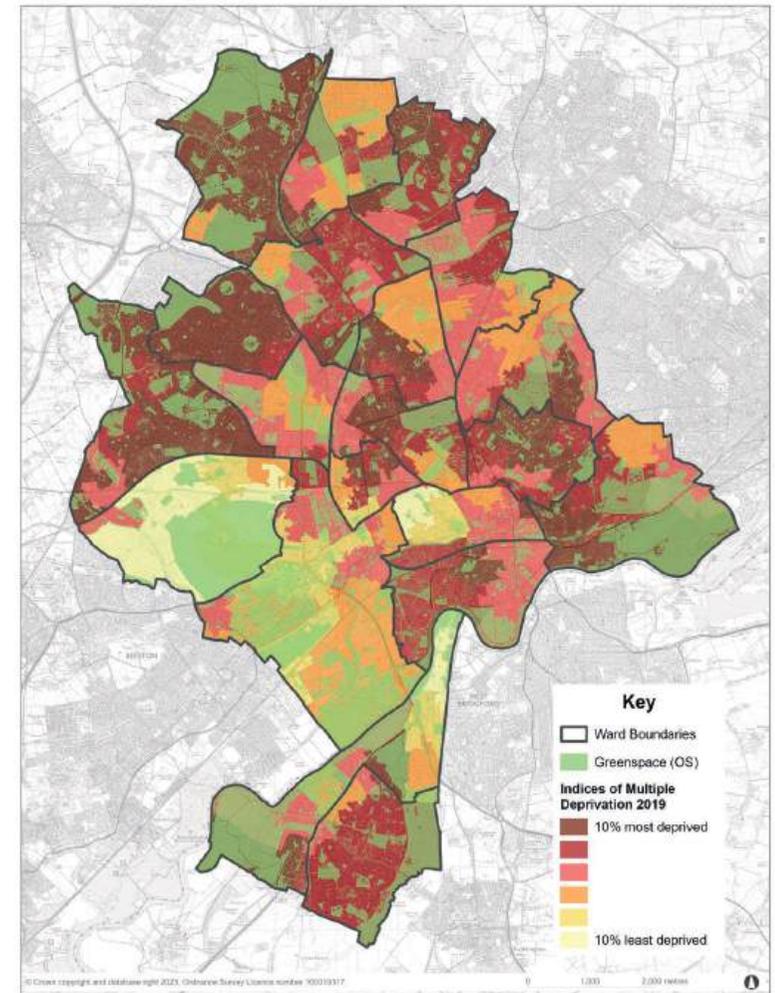
By understanding where new residents will be living, in partnership with planning and development teams, we can make provision for more, high-quality greenspace.

Our insight shows that there is a lack of quality greenspace in our most deprived communities. Tackling social injustice is a major focus for the City Council so using our greenspaces to help improve opportunities in these areas will help to address issues and form a key output of the strategy.

Nottingham is working towards the Natural England Urban Greening Factor Standard of 40% (we are currently at 38.1%).



Indices of Multiple Deprivation (2019)



Methodology

This strategy has been enabled through the Future Parks Accelerator programme (FPA) supported by the National Lottery Heritage Fund, the National Trust and DHLUC.

Nottingham was one of 8 local authorities that successfully bid to take part in a national 'sharing and learning' local authority cohort. This highly coveted place provided Nottingham City Council with the grant funding and resources to innovatively 'test and trial' strategic and operational models enabling teams to think differently about service delivery and ensure long-term sustainability.

Whilst the NLHF provided much-needed funds, the National Trust provided technical resources through skills, knowledge and expertise. Visitor Experience Design, Green Financing, Biodiversity Net Gain and Volunteering to name but a few providing technical support to help design the program's scope and outputs.

The outcomes were to; consider a step change in how people engage with and use their greenspaces; develop new cross-sector partnerships that foster collaboration and drive greater use of greenspaces; new and blended sources of funding and finance; transformation that protects and enhances all greenspace and delivers a quality free service for all.

The FPA Team embarked on building a Logic Model detailing the outcomes and impacts that the programme sought to achieve including managing fantastic Parks and Open Spaces that meet the needs of local communities and greenspaces that are protected and valued by all, increased biodiversity and thriving wildlife, happy, healthy and engaged people and a service that has a secure financial future.

Taking a research and insight-led approach, the FPA team commissioned a wide body of work to evidence the quality, quantity, and associated natural value of the council's open and greenspace assets. For information on the findings, please refer to the technical report.

Consultation and Stakeholder Engagement research was also commissioned to help better understand the value that our residents hold of their Parks and Open Spaces and how different demographics wish to engage. This evidence base gives robust data which is helping to support future activation.

As the FPA programme and its funding comes to a close, the legacy of the last 3 years of inspiring work continues to help shape transformational change not just within the service but across all stakeholders through this strategy.

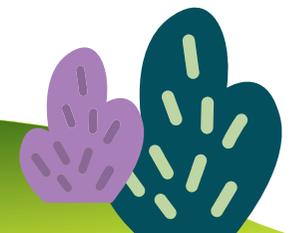
The declaration of Nottingham as a Nature City will be the ultimate manifestation of the programme's success.



National Trust



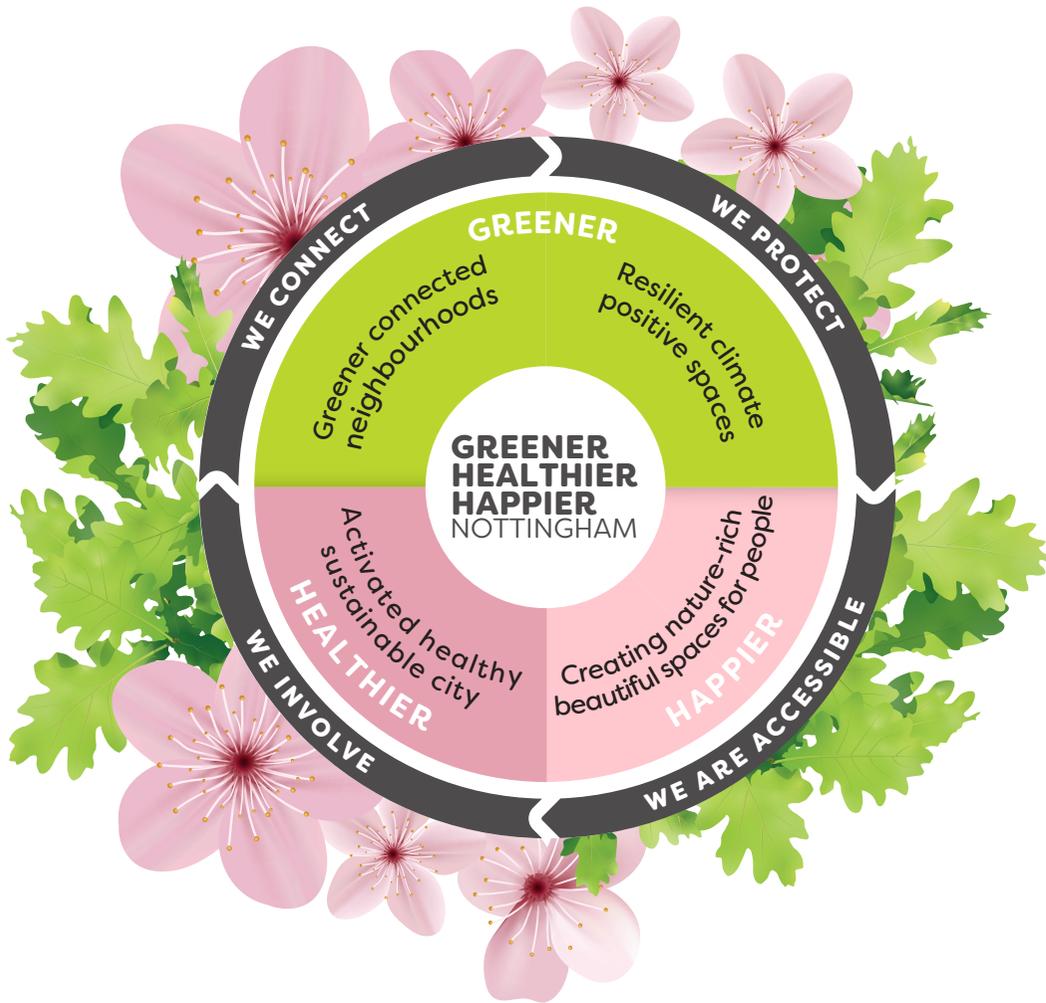
Nottingham City Council



Greener, Healthier, Happier Relationship Diagram



Our Vision, Mission and Green Values



GREENER

Over a fifth of Nottingham is dedicated greenspace and we strive for more. With nature in mind, we will support wildlife to thrive, joining spaces to benefit our people and the city ecosystem.

WE WILL be proud of a rich, resilient and connected open and greenspace network that in turn, protects the planet.

HEALTHIER

Nature-rich beautiful spaces are vital for our mental and physical well-being.

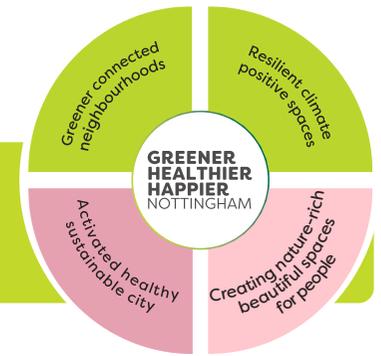
WE WILL continue to provide areas for rest & reflection immersing our citizens in diverse green and open spaces whilst enabling movement around our city through vibrant green corridors on foot or on two wheels.

HAPPIER

Our open and greenspaces bring us together and connect us.

WE WILL continue to share ownership of them to give us a common purpose. These spaces are active and well-used, welcoming people from across our communities to play, socialise, participate & partner in looking after, improving & enjoying our city.

1. Greener, connected neighbourhoods



Creating green networks across every part of Nottingham including the urban greening of streets, transport corridors and wider public realm areas, extend the benefits provided by the environment across the whole city.

Evidence shows that streets need to be cooler and the air cleaner for the better health of our citizens. Connected greenspaces provide greater access for people, nature and wildlife. Creating greener spaces in tight urban areas provide purposeful green corridors helping habitats to thrive.

Our strategy takes a whole place approach that will address the imbalances of access to quality greenspace across the city that impacts the life experiences of people living and working in Nottingham.

The insight work undertaken which underpins this summary shows where we need to focus our resources and position ourselves in order to make the most difference.

Nottingham is growing. The city's current population is over 300,000. Through the strategy's lifetime, this will have **increased by over 23% to nearer 375,000.**

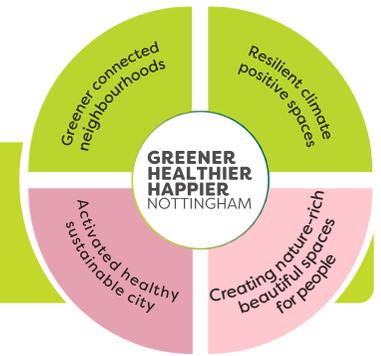
To provide for this increasing demand, it is important for us to know as much as we can about our portfolio and its quality and value for the city and its residents.

Our audits surveyed all of the city's greenspaces to establish the quality, quantity and accessibility of our current portfolio. We have used this insight to show where gaps in provision and standards can be improved to enable us to plan for future provision.

Our open and greenspaces are vital resources in supporting our residents' health and well-being in addressing climate change and in defining the character of our neighbourhoods. By advocating an increase in connected urban greening, our strategy incorporates the streets and the 'spaces in between' in our city as our findings on the quality of the environment around us begins on our doorstep.



2. Resilient and climate positive places



The UK is in the bottom 10% globally for Biodiversity. Nottingham City Council declared a climate and ecological emergency in 2019. Our greenspaces have a vital role to play in addressing some of the impacts of climate change.

As the climate changes, cities are becoming hotter. The hottest day on record for Nottingham happened in 2022 and temperatures are set to continue rising each year. Buildings and streets reflect heat whereas plants, soils and vegetation help to cool our environment. As a result, greenspaces are usually a lot cooler than surrounding streets and this cooling effect can be felt up to 100 metres from the edge of a park.

13.75% of Nottingham has tree canopy cover that provides shade and cooling during the Summer months.

Nottingham has adopted an Air Quality Strategy to reduce the number of deaths in the city resulting from pollution. Trees reduce the amount of nitrogen dioxide and sulphur dioxide in the atmosphere by 4-5%. Trees and plants also absorb particulate matter from the air.

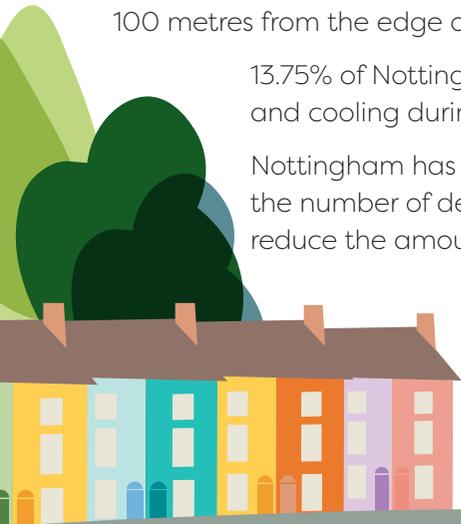
Trees also store significant amounts of carbon dioxide, reducing its volume in the atmosphere. Trees, plants and soils in Nottingham's greenspaces store over 5,000 tonnes of CO₂ every year.

Nottingham's greenspaces are an important part of the city's flood protection measures. Soils, trees and plants are really effective at improving infiltration rates of rainfall. Only 20% of rainfall falling onto a greenspace will run off into the drainage system, compared with 70% for streets. This is important because the more water that runs into our drainage system sewers, the more likely the city is to flood. The rivers and waterways running through Nottingham's greenspaces cope well with rainfall, especially when they are restored to act as natural river valleys or flood plains.

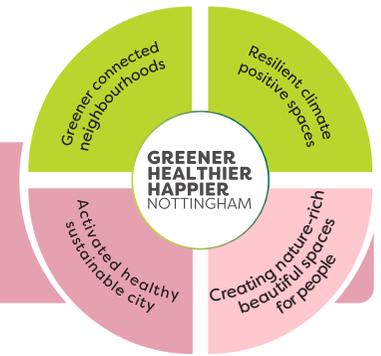
“In 2020 the Daybrook was re-naturalised to slow the flow of water, better protecting homes at risk. Re-aligning the river channel through the park also created improved habitat for wildlife and new public access”

Chloe Langley

Principal Officer -
Flood Risk Management (Strategy & Policy)



3. An activated and healthy sustainable city



Nottingham’s open and greenspaces, located where people live and work, can provide daily opportunities to experience nature connectedness whether visiting for a walk, as part of a daily commute, or to join in with community events.

There’s plenty of research to show how beneficial a visit in the park can be. A 20-minute brisk walk in the park every day can reduce the risk of having a heart attack or a stroke. Access to the natural environment is particularly beneficial to people’s mental health.

The most important way in which we can support improved health outcomes is by continuing to provide really great greenspaces. We’ve also looked at the parts of the city where levels of heart disease, obesity and diabetes are higher. By connecting great parks and natural infrastructure in these parts of the city, we can encourage people to adopt more active lifestyles, helping them to become healthier.

Access to the natural environment, exercise in the fresh air and opportunities to play have been essential considerations for children since the very first public parks were created.

Evidence suggests that access to, and engagement with, the natural environment is associated with a range of positive physical and mental health outcomes and green social prescribing can connect people at most risk of health inequality to nature.

Working with the Green Social Prescribing pilot is acknowledging the importance of people engaging in nature-based interventions and activities to improve their mental and physical well-being. Consolidating our partnerships with Public Health and Community Outreach groups and expanding social prescribing links to connect people to communities helping to support health and wellbeing. Activities range from local walking schemes, community gardening projects, green gyms, forest bathing, and arts activities and form an important partnership element of our strategy.

Growing your own food is a great way to stay healthy. St Ann’s Allotments have been used by the people of Nottingham for more than 600 years and the site is now Grade II listed, but there are a further 53 allotment sites across the city. Food growing can now be extended beyond the traditional model of the fenced allotment to include edible plantings in parks, urban orchards, open access gardens, school gardens and larger scale urban farms. Food growing is a great way to celebrate different cultural traditions and help people to acquire new skills and feel less socially isolated.

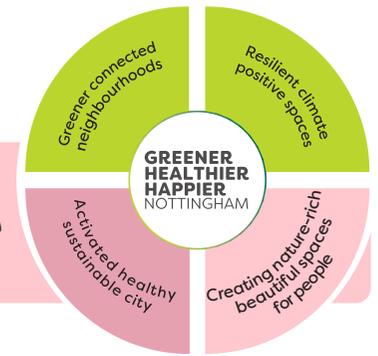
We’ll commit to sustaining our open and greenspace networks to keep people active and to develop programmes that will help people stay healthy, mentally and physically.

“Parks and greenspaces that are easy to access, safe and welcoming are key to helping people enjoy the benefits of getting outside and connecting with nature. They are vital venues for green social prescribing, providing a network of affordable, local and accessible assets that social prescribers can link their patients into, forming part of a green web that connects people, places and projects into a citywide green eco-system that supports green social prescribing.”

Amanda Chambers,
GreenSpace Programme Manager, Green Social Prescribing for Nottingham & Nottinghamshire



4. Creating nature-rich, beautiful spaces for people



To ensure our open and greenspaces are fit for the future and create better places for people to both enjoy and be involved, we need to ensure that the correct pathways for the development of our service are in place.

The Green Guardians Volunteering Programme working alongside our parks development team will play a key part in how we deliver our service now and in the future. By enabling our activated and engaged volunteering offer we will be able to increase the numbers attending our sites, gaining valuable skills and benefiting from rich, intrinsic experiences.

By generating new activities and experiences for our communities to engage with, they will continue to be relevant and responsive, helping us transform the role of our open and greenspaces from a traditional historic offer to a much more inclusive and socially progressive model.

In undertaking the research for this strategy new thinking has been explored especially around play i.e: Child Friendly Nottingham, Making Space for Girls, Green Social Prescribing. All which will help us prioritise different demographics to encourage greater usage and enjoyment moving forward.

More effective consultation and participation programme partnerships will guide how we will make all our spaces more accessible and enjoyable and fit for the future.

More information on the Greener, Healthier, Happier Volunteering Strategy can be found here.



A sustainable financial future

The State of Finance for Nature 2022 Report estimates the annual finance gap as USD 230 billion in 2025, increasing to USD 520 billion by 2050. The reinvestment of resources back into the green network is paramount for Nottingham - without it, short to long-term capital / revenue funding actions will be difficult to deliver and maintain.

Nottingham has a history of investment that started over 100 years ago with the gifting of Woodthorpe Park, the Arboretum and Victoria Embankment making a strong statement by the philanthropists of the time that valuing greenspace and trusting the City Council to look after these spaces in perpetuity for the people of Nottingham was at the forefront of their minds creating a lasting legacy.

More recently, the Parks Development team have successfully bid for significant National Lottery Heritage funding that helps with delivering citywide project-specific development and is adept at using Section 106 developer's contributions to create an efficient and effective year-round facility upgrade programme.

Woodthorpe Plant Nursery provides the council with an income from selling surplus plant stock and there are other opportunities within our ownership to diversify and expand, creating business development and social purpose opportunities through detailed visitor experience design.

As part of our focus, we will continue to explore how we can become more economically and ecologically sustainable through nature based solutions. Delivering Biodiversity Net Gain and understanding other opportunities for Green Finance investments will remain a key priority.

Our future aspirations with regard to our assets include how to bring further income into the service and develop our processes and systems to help support critical decision-making, effectiveness and economies of scale.



Key Findings

GREENER

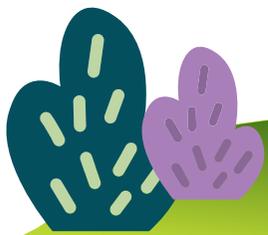
- It is imperative that the city's current supply of greenspace should be protected from the pressures of development through sufficiently robust planning designations. New greenspace should be created so that the supply keeps pace with demographic changes over the next 25 years.
- Opportunities should be taken to enhance connectivity, especially in areas of the city where a deficit in greenspace has been identified helping to create a green network. Delivering against this objective will reinforce urban greening opportunities through improved natural infrastructure.
- Areas of the city where a deficit of open space quality has been identified will be prioritised for investment. Enhanced connectivity between spaces can address quality issues presented by individual greenspaces.
- Contributing to the city's CN28 Strategy will enhance biodiversity connectivity by creating habitat corridors across the city and link to our future biodiversity net gain ambitions and tree canopy targets.
- Working with our Active Travel colleagues to understand new and innovative ways of 'greening' active travel routes, will increase the understanding of the environmental benefits that can be realised through Active Travel schemes.
- Becoming more sustainable both economically and ecologically is necessary to guide our decision-making. Strong inward investment planning will ensure our ambitions in this long-term strategy will be achievable.

HEALTHIER

- A strong focus on improving our resident's health and well-being through our open and greenspace offer will ensure social and environmental inequalities are addressed ensuring we are fit for purpose throughout the strategies lifetime.

HAPPIER

- The delivery of the Volunteering Strategy is integral to the successful activation and implementation of a Greener, Healthier, Happier Nottingham.



Strategic Objectives

GREENER

Greener Connected Neighbourhoods

Ensure that the city works to achieve our adopted targets through a consistent collaborative approach to the quantity and accessibility of our open and greenspaces.

Use our current portfolio of open and greenspaces to help support and grow our natural infrastructure by maintaining and improving the quality and safety of our greenspaces.

Further investigate and implement opportunities that work towards delivering a sustainable Best Value service in line with Council Policy, understanding potential options for future delivery, income growth, sponsorship and fundraising.

Work towards a collectively agreed stretch target (in line with Natural England's recommendations) of 40% using our agreed current baseline of 38%.

Use our greater understanding of our natural capital asset value to influence and shape future policy relating to our greenspace across the City.

Utilise audit and demographic information to highlight priority areas where bespoke work can take place to improve access, quality and accessibility in order to give better opportunities to enjoy the open and greenspaces on people's doorsteps and in communities.

Embrace opportunities for new interventions in small and 'in-between' spaces to protect existing provisions that may be impacted due to planning and demographic changes

We will ensure that Greenspaces and Natural Environment is the custodian and strategic lead in respect of the management, maintenance and strategic direction of all the city's open and greenspaces and leads on delivering the strategy's outputs.

We will ensure through our management plans, policy development, community investment plans and health and safety management that we improve our greenspace delivery measured via attainment of accreditation improvement schemes such as Green Flag and Core City benchmarking.

We will continue to innovate, maximising the use of external grant funding to improve our green infrastructure and facilities.

We will continue to use the knowledge and insight gained through delivering the FPA programme to continue to implement transformational change that will make significant improvements to the sustainability of our service and greenspaces

We will increase the opportunity for enjoying our open and greenspaces across the city but especially in areas currently lacking provision to increase connectivity using mapping and insight data to understand the change.

We will take a cross-sector campaign-led approach to involve and inspire stakeholders in the Vision, Aims and Objectives of 'Greener, Healthier and Happier'.

We will further develop blue/green corridors and urban greenspaces in both new and existing developments working directly with highways and planning.

We will work with other service areas to adopt policies that both enhance and protect our greenspaces, and benefit biodiversity.

We will work with strategic partners to maximise opportunities for creating greater access and enjoyment to all our greenspaces for our residents.

We will encourage colleagues to work with Natural England's Green Infrastructure principles when planning new and existing developments and continue the development of open space design guides working directly with planning and highways.

Strategic Objectives

Resilient climate positive spaces

Lead the Ecology and Biodiversity and Carbon Removal work streams that contributes to Carbon Neutral Nottingham (CN28) ambitions, by ensuring any infrastructure changes are offset with investment in to the City's greenspace.

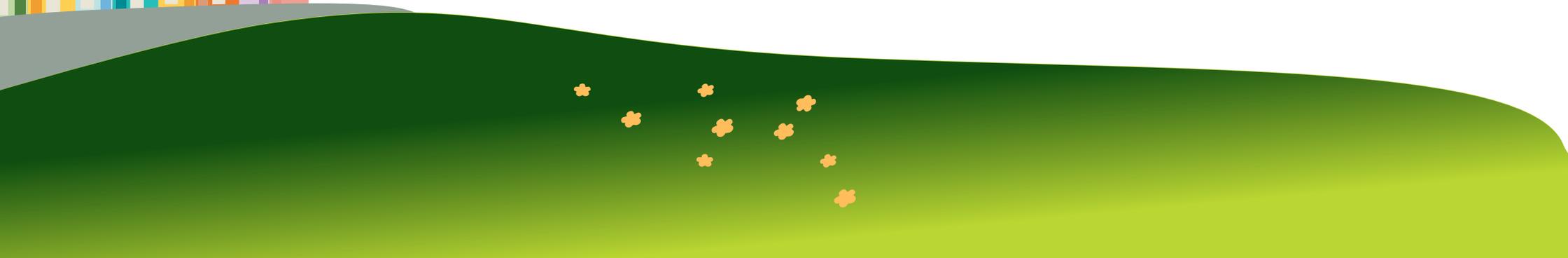
Pioneer natural infrastructure solutions through enhancing spaces for climate resilience by increasing biodiversity and tree canopy cover and the creation of new habitats to establish nature-rich corridors.

Develop a Tree and Woodland strategy including policy decisions for future management and a sustainability plan for ensuring a resilient and appropriate city tree landscape.

We will continue to be advocates for Nottingham's climate change ambitions and the Local Nature Recovery Strategy, coupled with our Air Quality Strategy leading on Greenspace delivery and Biodiversity Net Gain planning policy solutions.

We will inform and involve residents in helping us attain our CN28 and Biodiversity targets by supporting Nottingham city council's ecological crisis and designing our emerging Biodiversity plan.

We will continue to make nature-conscious changes to our open and greenspaces through improved management practices i.e. tree canopy cover, relaxed mowing and the reduction in the use of chemicals.



HEALTHIER

Active, healthy sustainable city

Advocate for the connection between access and engagement with Natural Infrastructure and city residents' lifelong health and wellbeing

Capitalise on opportunities to drive health and well-being events in our open and greenspaces with an emphasis on access for all.

Use focused national programmes to help in both the future design of greenspaces and the development of activity

We will continue working with public health and other partners to deliver joint health and well-being objectives agreeing on a cohesive long-term approach to help address the inconsistency of delivery and enable focused interventions across key areas of our city.

We will increase and drive activation programmes to make them more consistent and partner-led in order to sustain our health and well-being offer.

We will prioritise planned activities that increase residents' involvement in park activities, delivering a variety of schemes and programmes to grow our offer i.e. Green Social Prescribing, Make Space for Girls, Food Growing initiatives, PlayZones and continuous improvements to city wide accessible play schemes (linked with Child Friendly Nottingham priorities).

HAPPIER

Nature-rich beautiful spaces

Inspire others to take action together to look after our open and greenspaces

Ensure the current focus on the benefits of greenspace continues to grow using NCC volunteers and partners advocating for better-connected opportunities across the city.

Continue to create a growing active, community of diverse volunteers across the city.

We will implement the Volunteer Strategic Action Plan to increase the opportunity and demographic of the current volunteer base, promoting different ways to get involved (from community action days, to growing Friends of Groups) through working with our partners on joint campaigns.

We will recruit more volunteers/champions reflective of their communities across the city.



Our phased approach

Our People Principles

<p>People Focused</p> <p>We put people first, and take pride in what we create</p>	<p>Working Together</p> <p>We work collaboratively, building solutions with partners</p>	<p>Transparent</p> <p>We have honest and open dialogue and give constructive feedback</p>	<p>Holistic</p> <p>We consider the bigger picture and how things link together</p>	<p>Creative</p> <p>We give ourselves permission to think differently</p>	<p>Frontier</p> <p>We are pioneers. We embrace change and take a future-focused approach.</p>
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Our Approach

<p>Years 1-3</p> <p>Investing in readiness</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Get our people in place • Build our Partnership network • Set up robust effective governance • Develop our Processes & Procedures • Invest in Technology • Comms, Marketing & Fundraising Plans • Use our Insight & Data to inform future delivery • Launch our strategy 	<p>Years 1-5</p> <p>Flagship projects and building scale</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop business cases • Continue existing projects delivery • New flagship projects delivery • Build resource capacity (staff & volunteer) • Acceleration planning • Monitoring and Evaluation • Build an evidence base 	<p>Year 5 onwards</p> <p>Acceleration</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Roll out at scale • Build income generation • Monitoring and evaluation • Rolling inward investment programme
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Our Enablers

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visible Leadership • A capable team with capacity to deliver • Engaged community participation • Partnership collaboration 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good quality data • Research & Analysis • Portfolio wide plans 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Funding model and financial plan • Diversify ways of generating income • 10 year financial plan
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GREENER HEALTHIER HAPPIER NOTTINGHAM



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