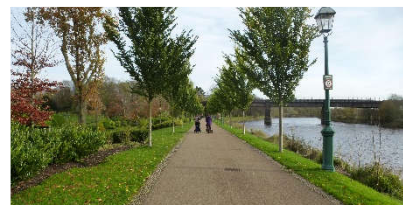


PRESTON PARKS AND GREEN SPACES STRATEGY



2021-2031



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FOREWORD

Preston's Parks have national, regional and local significance. There are over 200 parks and green spaces including 8 major sites equating to over 700 hectares.

In a publication from 1991, Hazel Conway's book 'People's Parks' she identified Moor Park as the first (municipal) park to be established in an industrial town. It is a Grade II* park listed as a 'Registered Park and Garden' by Historic England. They describe it as 'A public park laid out in 1833-5 and improved by Edward Milner in the 1860s.'

During the Cotton Famine of the early 1860s, the Town Council commissioned Edward Milner (1819-94) to prepare a report on Preston's parks. This was part of a wider scheme to assist out-of-work cotton operatives by employing them to carry out public works, financial support coming from the Public Works Loan Commissioners. Milner submitted proposals in February 1864 and was subsequently invited to design and oversee the building of two new parks, Avenham and Miller Parks, and to improve Moor Park.

Avenham Park and Miller Park are adjoining parks on the bank of the River Ribble, both are Grade II* listed parks.

Haslam Park is a Grade II listed park and is described as 'A municipal park, opened to the public in 1910, with design elements provided shortly afterwards by the landscape architect Thomas H Mawson.'

To further quote Hazel Conway 'Historic parks were designed to improve the urban environment in many ways: financially by raising the value of the property around them; practically, by cleaning the air and being the lungs for the city; physically, by providing a place for sport and exercise; and psychologically, by providing a place where people could relax and enjoy the sight of trees and grass'

We have a long and strong tradition of public parks in Preston, and this quotation remains true today in all our parks, be they nationally important parks, or small 'pocket' parks found just around the corner from where we live. We particularly recognise and value the role that they continue to play in contributing to people's physical and mental health, through sport and exercise, a chance to meet friends or simple enjoyment of the natural environment. This is especially true during the Covid Pandemic when parks and open spaces have been needed and used more than ever.

Pressure on funding and resources for parks and green spaces has been significant for some time now. But we believe that we have continued to manage and maintain parks and green spaces to a high standard with the resources available to us.



R P Boswell

Councillor Robert Boswell, Cabinet Member for the Environment

PRESTON PARKS AND GREEN SPACES STRATEGY 2021-2031

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Preston parks and open green spaces are the green lungs of the City, providing many benefits for residents and visitors. These range from providing opportunity to exercise to encouraging people to develop new skills supporting them with future career ambitions.

This Strategy lists a series of objectives designed to improve all sites, underpinned by a vision and a list of ambitions, which the City Council will aim to deliver over the next ten years.

To determine these objectives, consultation was undertaken with a variety of key stakeholders, including Council officers, park stakeholders and members of the public. Consultation findings are reflected within the report.

The objectives focus on improving and maintaining the eight key park sites in the Authority, making recommendations on how use of allotments can be maximised, considering how best to enhance tree coverage across the City and ensuring that biodiversity (confirming the Council's climate change priorities) is at the core of any future decision making.

The key recommendations emanating from the strategy are to:

- ◀ Provide an appropriate maintenance programme for all park sites and green spaces.
- ◀ Develop masterplans for the remaining six park sites, delivering the projects listed.
- ◀ Continue to seek and secure external funding to support delivery of future projects.
- ◀ Ensure that biodiversity underpins all future decision making.
- ◀ Commission a tree strategy to support a healthy tree population across the City.
- ◀ Ensure that allotments remain accessible and of the highest quality, supporting the City's communities.

PRESTON PARKS AND GREEN SPACES STRATEGY 2021-2031

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Preston's parks and green spaces provide access to a wide range of positive activities for people of all ages throughout the City. In total, there are over 200 parks and green spaces equating to over 700 hectares¹. They are the green lungs which help the city to breathe, ensuring that all residents and visitors have a safe space to enjoy, share and develop. They provide places for people to exercise, play, and relax as well as playing an important role in providing wildlife habitats, flood protection and climate change resilience.

From sharing a coffee with friends in Avenham Park to creating a new pond in Fishwick Local Nature Reserve: Preston's parks help make the City a special place, loved and appreciated by residents and visitors alike. The intention is this Strategy will ensure that these parks remain special places, for current and future generations.

To help its parks achieve their full potential, this Strategy outlines the Council's priorities for eight strategic sites over the next ten years. These are:

Ashton Park

Avenham and Miller Parks

Grange Park and Grange Valley

Haslam Park and Local Nature Reserve

London Road Recreation Ground and Fishwick Local Nature Reserve

Moor Park

Ribbleton (Waverley) Park

Winckley Square Gardens

The location and quality of all known green spaces across the City are set out as part of the Preston Open Space Study.

Structure of the Strategy

The following sections form the Parks and Green Spaces Strategy for Preston. It has been shaped via consultation with stakeholders and residents from across the City. It outlines the Council's vision and ambitions for parks and green spaces, which aligned with its corporate priorities, in order to shape a truly vibrant city. It also highlights the wider strategic links with the Council's planning, health and well-being, climate change, green infrastructure initiatives and future funding opportunities. A series of objectives are formed from the vision and ambitions designed to achieve the best parks for the people of Preston.

¹ Central Lancashire Playing Pitch & Open Spaces Strategy: Preston Open Space Study (2019)

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2.0 LOCAL CONTEXT

Before the Strategy details options for the respective sites, it is important to provide some context to help inform some of the ambitions listed later. The three largest ‘strategic parks’ are Ashton, Haslam and Moor parks. Avenham and Miller parks, which are located in the south of the Authority, runs parallel to the River Ribble, and have the Guild Wheel (an orbital cycle route around the city) running through them. Sites such as London Road Recreational Ground and Haslam Park also have designated local nature reserves adjacent or within them.

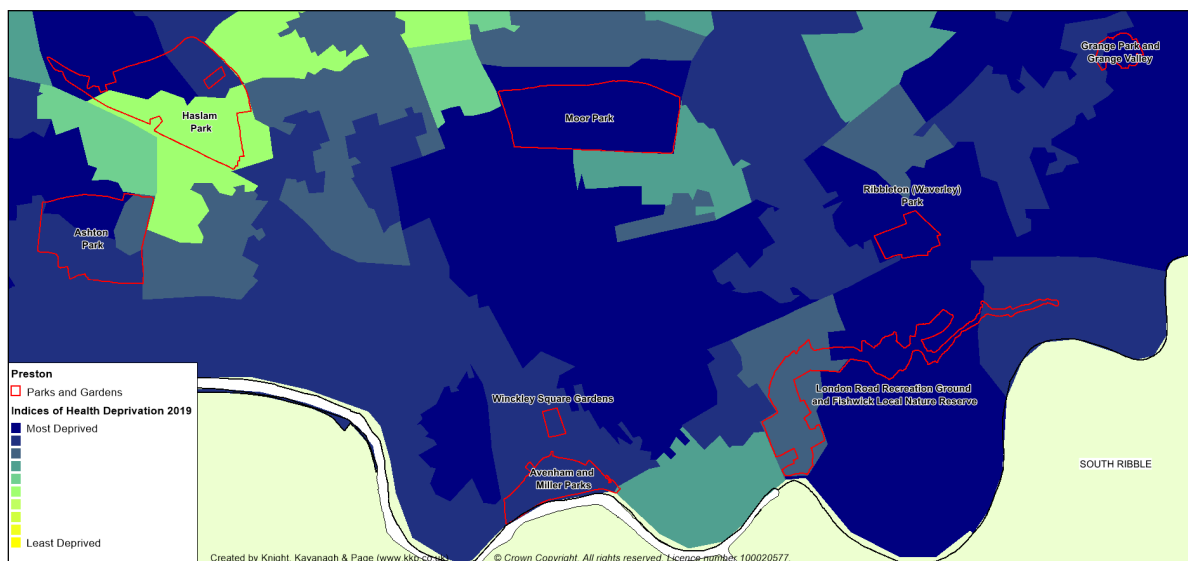
Figure 2.1: Location of all eight strategic sites in Preston



Health deprivation

Health deprivation relates to levels of potential premature death and impairment of quality of life through poor physical or mental health. Most Preston parks (in particular those at Grange and Ribblesdale (Waverley)) are located in or adjacent to areas of high health deprivation.

Figure 2.2: Areas of high health deprivation across the City



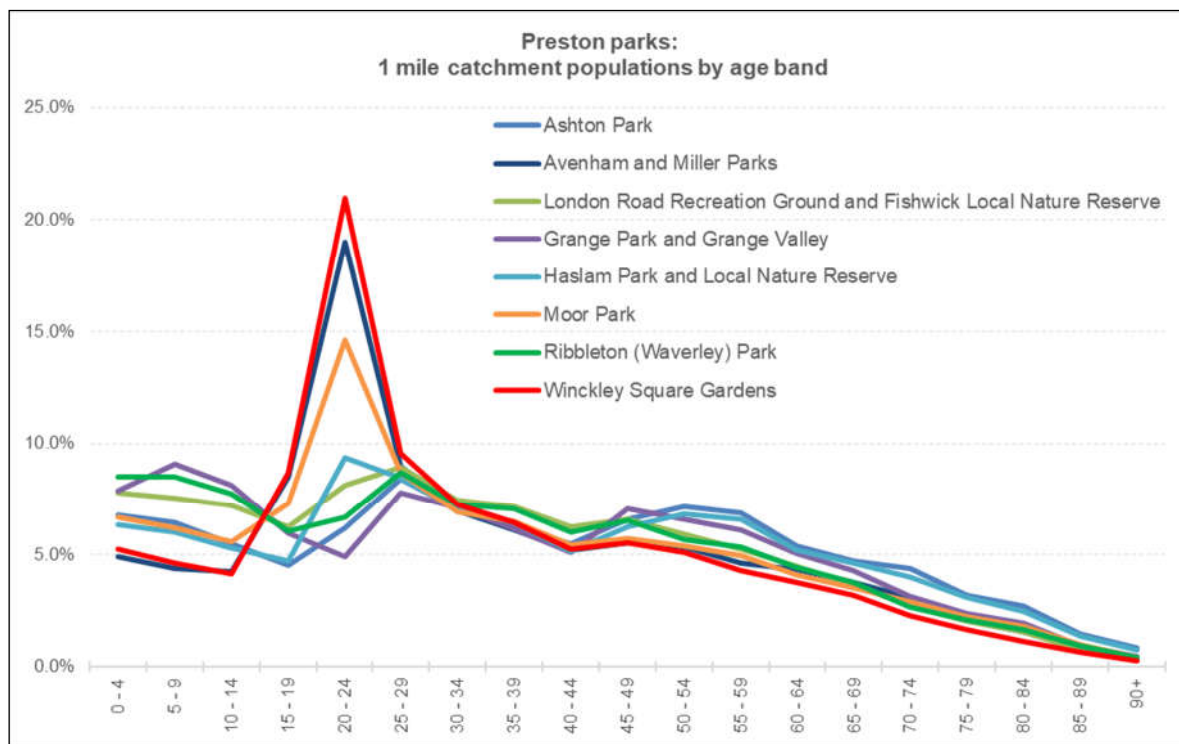
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This Strategy acknowledges and responds to this and is designed to ensure that parks, not only remain accessible to all local residents, but can also offer programmes and activities to help improve health in these local areas.

Accessibility

Figure 2.3 illustrates the percentage of residents which lives within a one-mile radial of each site, broken down by different age bands. It is important to understand the catchment demographics for each site, as this can help inform future priorities. For example, analysis related to this confirms that Winckley Square Gardens and Avenham and Miller parks have the highest percentage of residents aged between; 20-30 living close to them (this reflects the demographics of those living in the City Centre). Grange Park and Ribbleton Park have the highest proportion of residents aged between; 5-15 living nearby.

Figure 2.3: One-mile radial catchments by age band, per site



Consultation summary

To help formulate the ambitions in this Strategy, consultation applying three different approaches was undertaken in Autumn 2020. These are set out below.

Officer consultation

A series of face-to-face and/or 'Teams' meetings were undertaken with all key Council staff to gather their views and aspirations. This stressed the importance attached to the role of parks and greenspaces by the people of the City, particularly for exercise, outdoor socialising and mental health and wellbeing. Staff had observed a significant increase in footfall across all sites in summer 2020; during the covid-19 Pandemic, highlighting, more so than ever, how vital green open spaces are for the people of Preston.

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A key challenge includes continuing to offer a range of opportunities for all residents and visitors whilst ensuring that sites are financed and managed appropriately and maintained and enhanced accordingly. To support the operational and physical upkeep of sites, during an era of continuing budget reductions and competing resources, the Council will need to explore smarter ways to fund such endeavours. This includes maximising the use of available grants, capital receipts and third sector partner support. In addition, the Council is keen to make sure that sites benefit everyone. On the surface, parks provide places to exercise, socialise with the accompanying positive impact on mental wellbeing. They also provide opportunities for volunteering and education, often through Friends groups, charities or school programmes. The Council is keen that this continues.

Stakeholder consultation

A number of stakeholders, including Friends groups, local organisations and charities were consulted to discuss provision. Key themes drawn from the consultation, included their view that additional support for Friends groups across all sites was needed as part of a process of making certain that parks continue to add value in and to their respective communities.

The forms of support required include volunteer recruitment, provision of additional resources and improved relationships with park rangers and other Council staff. Local organisations and charities were also consulted including Let's Grow Preston, Wheels for All etc. These are widely recognised to be delivering highly valued programmes and initiatives at key locations, often helping to support disadvantaged groups whilst providing opportunities for personal development. It is important that parks continue to provide a role for such organisations and that sites remain accessible for all.

The importance of biodiversity and climate change were also highlighted. It is key that the management approach taken to parks and other key sites is flexible and adapts to protect and enhance biodiversity and help the City to establish and maintain a resilience to climate change.

Community consultation

An electronic consultation questionnaire was made available to the general public. This was promoted via the Council's social media platforms. The questionnaire collected information with regard to factors such as which parks residents use and how they might be improved. In total, over 200 responses were recorded.

Key in terms of visitor numbers are Moor Park, Avenham and Miller Parks and Haslam Park. This broadly reflects the larger size of these sites. Activities highlighted as being common when people were visiting include general exercising, socialising, and dog walking.

Respondent ambitions with regard to parks sites generally reflect the Council's common aspirations including better play equipment, accessible toilets (particularly at larger venues) and improved drainage. In general, the public is keen to see more inclusive activities and promotional events. For example, a pop-up bar at Avenham and Miller Parks. For others, there is a desire to see parks enhanced ecologically with more native planting, trees, and wildflowers.

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3.0 VISION

The vision for Preston's parks and green spaces is:

To provide high quality, sustainable green spaces which are safe, enjoyable, and accessible for all

Preston is proud of its accessible network of good quality parks and green spaces. With input from staff, volunteers, Friends groups and other partners, these parks and green spaces will be supported to provide a wide range of positive inclusive activities, supporting good health, improved life chances and an excellent quality of life, for everyone who lives in or visits the City.

There is compelling evidence, based on feedback from stakeholders, communities and Friends groups, of how highly local people and visitors value Preston's parks and green spaces. As a strategic North West city, well connected to the rest of the region and with integrated sustainable transport links, Preston is superbly placed to have an effective, good quality parks and open spaces network.

This Strategy and its vision align with the Council's vision as set out in its wider Corporate Plan which sees *Preston as a growing vibrant city in the North West*. It highlights that such a vision can only be achieved in partnership with all stakeholders in the City. Three priority areas are set out in order to help achieve the Council's objectives for the City and the Council as an organisation:

Your City	Securing investment to improve the assets and infrastructure and create high quality jobs*
Your Council	Delivering well run, value for money services, valued by the public; demonstrating good governance, openness and transparency and a strong democratic process
Fairness for residents	Fairness at the head of our decision making. Building an economy which supports prosperity and promotes fairness in working lives and practices. Accessibility to affordable energy and decent affordable living.

*We are in the process of developing a 15 year City Investment Plan which will set out our vision, objectives and strategy to transform Preston, targeting resources and aligning public and private sector investments to respond to needs and capitalise on opportunities for positive change. We want to maintain the momentum of change in our city to make sure the richness of life is within reach for the people of Preston.

Our long-term strategy is centred on investment priorities to support our people and is focused on sustainable and shared prosperity for our communities. At a time when the COVID-19 crisis is deeply affecting our residents and businesses, our long-term strategy will make a significant contribution to our recovery.

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Based on the Corporate Vision, Preston City Council has agreed a number of ambitions (presented below) upon which it intends to focus during the lifetime of this Strategy. From these, a series of objectives (Chapter 4) are formed. These ambitions are to:

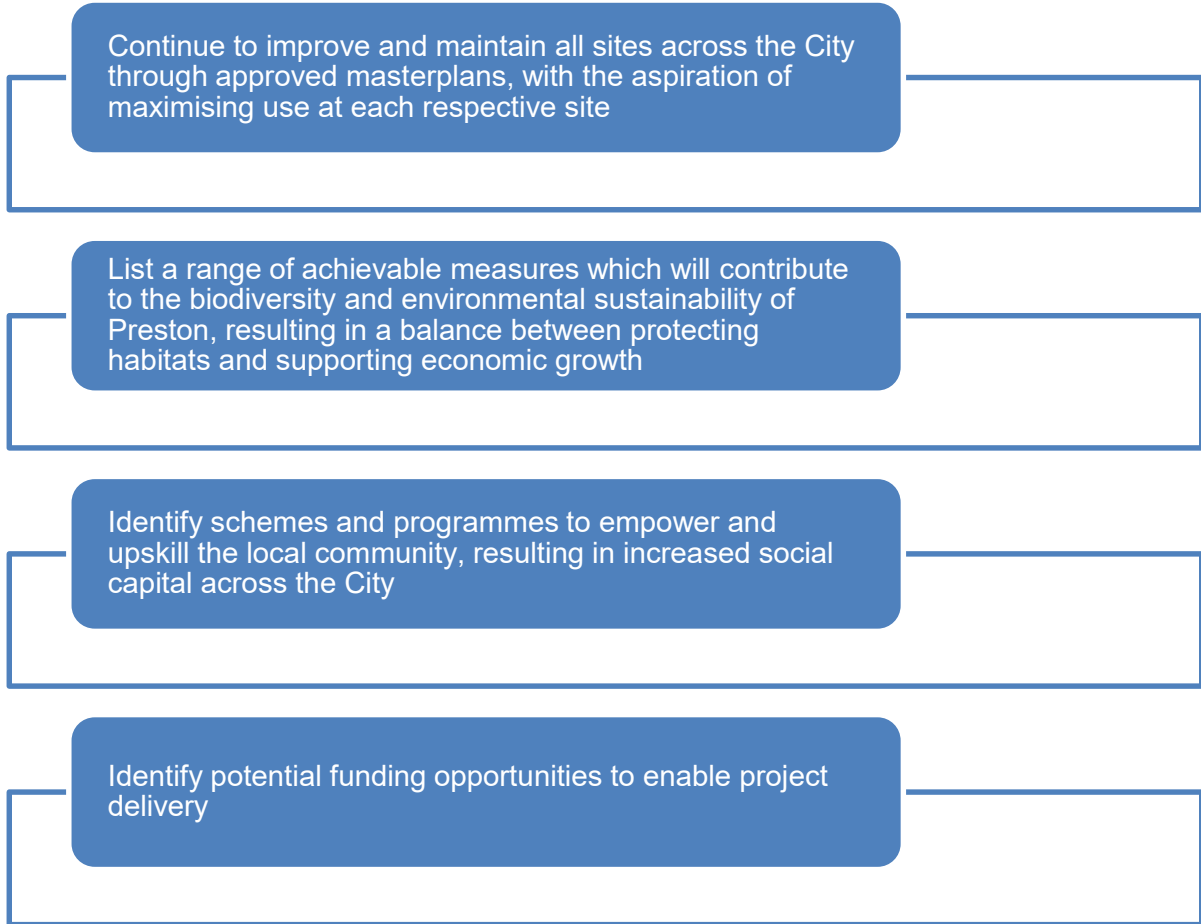
- ◀ Preserve and protect Preston's parks, local nature reserves, allotments and green spaces through a management programme which applies to all key sites. Programme elements will be specific to the respective sites, and address issues such as access, drainage, signage, grass cutting and play equipment.
- ◀ Continually look to add value to all parks and green spaces, via delivery of schemes identified in site masterplans.
- ◀ Deliver the recommendations within the Central Lancashire Playing Pitch, Open Spaces Strategy for Preston and Preston's Local Football Facilities Plan.
- ◀ Ensure that parks and green spaces are accessible to all, where practicable, and that where possible, green networks are in place to provide sustainable connectivity between sites.
- ◀ Retain and expand Green Flag Award status at all key sites across the City to maintain high standards. Green Flag awards are only awarded after an independent judges inspection of a site.
- ◀ Work with partners to provide a wide range of opportunities to continue to drive up site visitor numbers.
- ◀ Increase active participation levels across all sites by maintaining and creating opportunities to be involved in sport and physical activity.
- ◀ Develop innovative technology to increase visitor numbers across all key sites.
- ◀ Make sure that Preston's parks and green spaces, and their maintenance, make a positive contribution to the Climate Change Agenda. This includes the development and implementation of a tree strategy.
- ◀ Work with stakeholders, partners, funders and community organisations, through specially tailored programmes, to address mental health issues, upskill local communities and improve social capital.
- ◀ Engage with local communities to increase awareness of parks and green spaces and recruit more volunteers to help support the management and maintenance of key locations.
- ◀ Continue to ensure parks provide lifelong learning opportunity and the chance to develop new skills/life chances.
- ◀ Continue to identify funding sources to ensure all parks and green spaces remain attractive and accessible places to visit.
- ◀ Manage, maintain and further develop the City's play provision



PRESTON PARKS AND GREEN SPACES STRATEGY 2021-2031

4.0 STRATEGY OBJECTIVES

To achieve the vision and ambitions for Preston's parks and green spaces, this Strategy will:



A further aim of the Strategy is to review the management and maintenance of Preston's allotments, trees and Play Areas within the City.



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5.0 SITE PRIORITIES

Strategy Objective 1:

Continue to improve and maintain all sites across the City through approved masterplans, with the aspiration of maximising use at each respective site.

To help achieve the objectives of the Strategy, a series of ambitions is listed for each site. Detailed masterplans are required to deliver these. Two sites already have masterplans with planned maintenance required to ensure that they remain of the highest quality.

Ashton Park



Ashton Park is close to Preston Dock and has the Guild Wheel cycle route nearby. A suburban greenspace with a rich history, the Park is also a focus for affiliated sports. It is reported that Dick Kerr Ladies F.C, one of the earliest known women's association football teams, was originally based at this site.

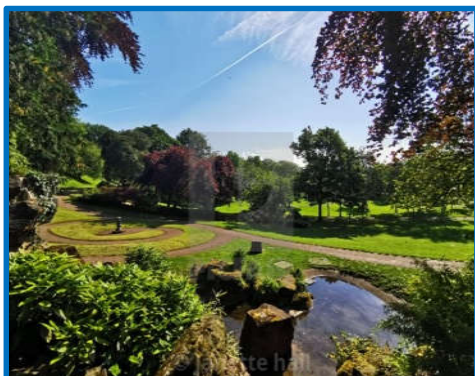
Through its Community Gardens, the Park also supports charity ventures and community events, such as Let's Grow Preston, which deliver physical and mental wellbeing programmes

There is no approved masterplan for the park, but an aspirational masterplan could include work to:

- ◀ Restore features of historic significance, including the entrance from Pedders Lane, the maze, the listed drinking fountain and the walled garden.
- ◀ Develop facilities which generate; a focus for sport, support the presence of charitable groups and increase community participation. These include;
 - Construction of a building which will accommodate; changing rooms for sports, a community café and function room plus office space to support charity groups.
 - Creation of a sports hub, with a new 3G pitch, improved grass pitches and refurbished tennis courts.
 - Improve vehicular access and car parking capacity.
- ◀ Upgrade the southern play area improving the quality of the play equipment
- ◀ Refurbish the bowls pavilion and its surroundings
- ◀ Increase tree cover and planting to improve the visual appearance of the Park and enhance biodiversity
- ◀ Improve the Park's wayfinding and signage.

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Avenham and Miller Park

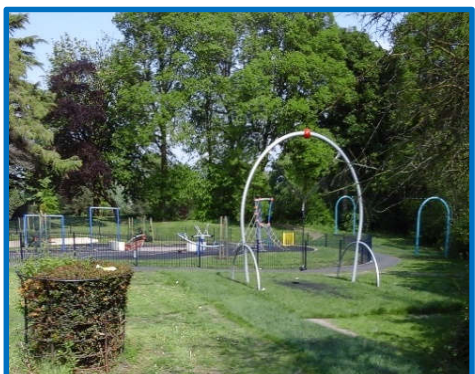


Avenham and Miller Parks are located in the heart of Preston City Centre. These adjoining Grade II* listed Victorian spaces offer a peaceful retreat next to the River Ribble.

It is the starting point for the Guild Wheel, and both accommodate traditional events such as the Annual Easter Egg rolling event. They are dedicated Centenary fields as listed by Fields in Trust - this ensures that they are in perpetuity to honour the memory of the millions who lost their lives in World War I.

The masterplans for the Parks have been implemented in full and the City intends to continue to maintain infrastructure improvements in the future.

Grange Park and Grange Valley



Grange Park is located in the east of Preston. With the site of a former Victorian Manor House to visit, it is steeped in History.

There is no current approved park masterplan but an aspirational masterplan could include work to:

- ◀ Refurbish features within the footprint of Ribbleton Hall, including the steps, main entrance, gates and furniture.
- ◀ Develop links with local community groups to secure use of the Interpretative Centre
- ◀ Create a recreational sport opportunity within the Park or in the Grange Valley which does not impact on its historic design.
- ◀ Introduce lighting to the main route to the Interpretative Centre in the formal Park.
- ◀ Increase tree cover and planting which improves its visual appearance and enhances biodiversity.
- ◀ Improve its wayfinding and signage
- ◀ Include additional community artwork elements within the Park

Haslam Park and Local Nature Reserve



Haslam Park sits alongside the Lancaster Canal. This fine Edwardian Park is attached to the Haslam Park Nature Reserve with its diverse habitats and ecological interests.

The Council has recently invested in the play area in the Park, installing new equipment, improved surfaces and drainage.

There is no approved masterplan for the park, but an aspirational masterplan could include work to:

- ◀ Restore features of historic significance which fit better with the original Thomas H Mawson design, including views over and along Savick Brook, ornamental bridge's, cascade, footpaths, drinking fountain, and planting design.
- ◀ Reinforce the physical and visual link with the Lancaster Canal
- ◀ Increase biodiversity throughout the Park including additional planting in the local nature reserve and wildflower planting.
- ◀ Improve its wayfinding and signage.
- ◀ Explore opportunities for a café and toilet.

London Road Recreation Ground and Fishwick Local Nature Reserve

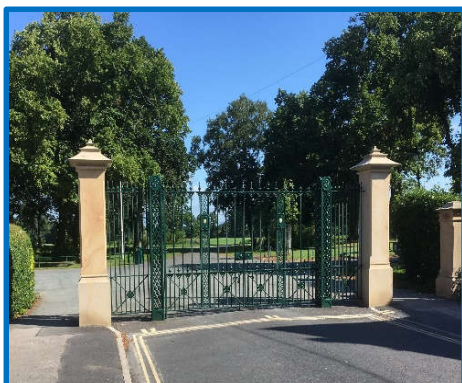


London Road Recreation Ground and Fishwick Local Nature Reserve are adjoining sites which provide a mixture of sports and natural beauty. The Recreation Ground boasts a dedicated BMX track, whilst stretching away to the east, the Nature Reserve offers a mix of diverse habitats and ecological interest.

There is no approved masterplan for the Park, but an aspirational masterplan could include work to:

- ◀ Provide a building which caters as a centre for BMX Club, footballers, park rangers and community group stakeholders associated with the nature reserve
- ◀ Refurbish the Recreation Ground entrance, local nature reserve boundary and other infrastructure.
- ◀ Increase tree cover and planting at the Recreation Ground. This will improve its visual appearance and enhance the area's biodiversity value
- ◀ Improve access and car parking provision especially serving the BMX club events and football users.

Moor Park



Moor Park is located on the outskirts of the City Centre. This Grade II* listed Victorian Park is Preston's oldest and largest at 40 hectares (100 acres). Recognised as Preston's major events park it can cater for large scale events and activities.

As well as offering a number of affiliated sports, Moor Park is also the prime focus for skateboarding in Preston due to its dedicated skate park. It was designated as a Queen Elizabeth II Playing Field site in 2012 as part of Her Majesty The Queen's Diamond Jubilee.

There is an approved masterplan for the Park consisting of a two-phase improvement programme. Phase 1 works were completed in 2019. The masterplan for the Phase 2 scheme seeks to:

- ◀ Reinststate the Serpentine Lake, making it a go-to destination feature of the Park. Investment will include:
 - De-silt and increase its size and scale to original 1867 design.
 - Reinststate the historic features surrounding it, including the bridge across, surrounding railings, architectural features, and the viewing platform.
 - Refurbish footpaths and drain networks.
 - Restore horticultural features including shrub beds and specimen trees and the other environs surrounding it.
 - Provide furniture, signage and interpretation.
 - Create fountains to improve water quality and provide exciting interactive displays for visitors.
- ◀ Upgrade the play area near the Serpentine Lake to offer natural play opportunities in keeping with the landscape setting.
- ◀ Increase the tree stock in the Park.
- ◀ Restore the Southeast historic entrance and the stone flag paving at the Southwest historic entrance
- ◀ Improve the main play area to make it an inclusive destination play area for children of all abilities.
- ◀ Upgrade the events area.
- ◀ Provide a reinforced grass parking area by North Lodge.
- ◀ Remove and grass over the informal footpaths known locally as the 'tank tracks'.
- ◀ Restore the historically significant 1867 Thomas Cooke refractor telescope within the observatory and reinststate the roof opening mechanism for its use.

Ribbleton (Waverley) Park

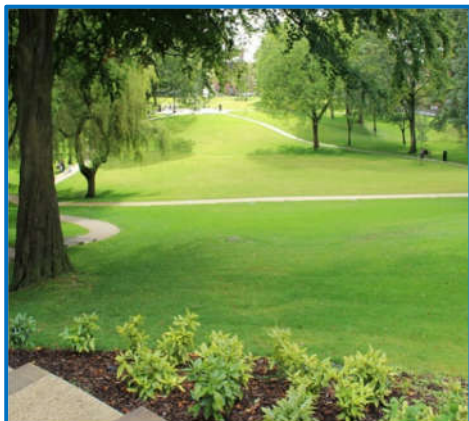


Ribbleton (Waverley) Park has a community feel and offers sport and recreation opportunities along with small community events.

There is no approved masterplan for the Park, but an aspirational masterplan could include work to:

- ◀ Enhance the Park's security by implementing boundary and entrance improvements
- ◀ Upgrade and relocate facilities which would better enhance sport, play and community participation. These include:
 - Demolish and rebuild football pavilion – probably on the current footprint
 - Upgrade and/or relocate the multi-use games area (if possible, to include floodlighting)
 - Create a community garden
- ◀ Establish an area for small community events
- ◀ Upgrade the play area
- ◀ Improve car parking provision especially where it serves football participants.
- ◀ Create a central decorative garden using the site of the redundant bowling greens
- ◀ Increase tree cover and planting to improve its visual appearance and enhance biodiversity.
- ◀ Improve its wayfinding and signage
- ◀ Include community artwork elements within it

Winckley Square Gardens



Winckley Square Gardens, located in a Georgian Square in the City Centre, offers a peaceful retreat where small community events take place.

The Park is a harmonious blend of modern and Georgian features - a beautiful green space surrounded by period architecture. The Victorian additions to the park, include the Sir Robert Peel statue which welcomes visitors at one of the Park's seven entrances.

The masterplan for this Park has been implemented in full. The Council is committed to continue to maintain infrastructure improvements in the future.

Strategy Objective 2:

List a range of achievable measures which will contribute to the biodiversity and environmental sustainability of Preston, resulting in a good balance between protecting habitats and supporting economic growth.

Ensuring the environmental sustainability of the City is vital. This needs to be managed in a way which protects habitats and contributes to biodiversity whilst also supporting economic prosperity. Any measures need to apply at strategic and local level as part of a 'whole system' approach. Below are some of the measures the Council will explore. It will:

- ◆ Make greater allowance for natural processes to occur along with creating new habitats through specific measures (e.g., increasing wildflower meadow areas and limiting removal of dead wood as a valuable habitat to support a range of invertebrates, fungi and plants).
- ◆ Remove invasive / non-native plants.
- ◆ Continue to reduce pesticide and herbicide use across all sites. This will encourage more insects and other invertebrates which will create a sustainable food chain.
- ◆ Initiate a reviewed and refreshed tree strategy to ensure effective arboriculture and woodland management.
- ◆ Work to achieve waste minimisation.
- ◆ Increase levels of engagement with park users; raising awareness of biodiversity issues among the general public (e.g., via interpretation boards and educational programmes).

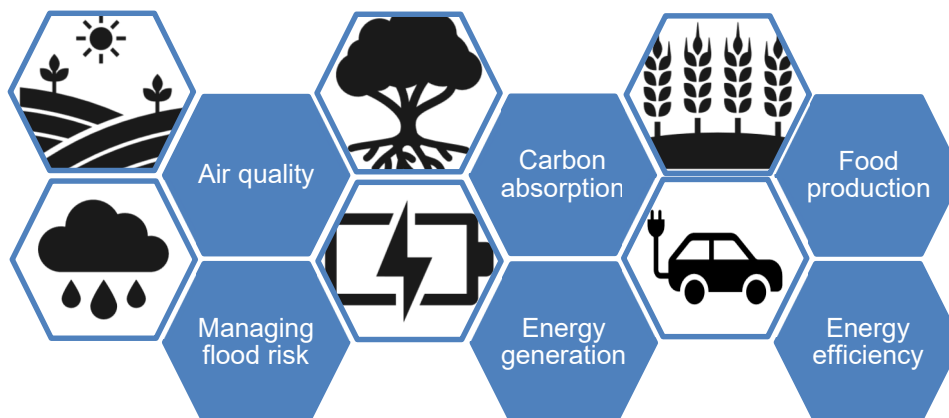


Addressing climate change is one of the key City Council aims moving forward. In 2019, the United Kingdom Parliament and many local authorities (including Preston City Council)

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declared a climate emergency. The Council recognises that ‘business as usual is not an option’ and has set out several actions to help.

Parks and open spaces have a role and ability to help tackle the climate emergency. Some of the areas in which they can help include:



Strategy Objective 3:

Identify schemes and programmes to empower and upskill the local community, resulting in increased social capital across the City.

As well as identifying physical changes to implement across sites, there is a recognised need to nurture opportunity for local people to contribute to the ongoing improvements and benefits of Preston’s parks and green spaces.

Whether this is done by helping the many Friends groups to strengthen and grow or providing opportunities for key charities to continue to deliver a range of inclusive mental and physical health programmes, the City Council will aim to ensure that parks continue to provide social capital benefits.

Parks, nature reserves and green spaces provide an opportunity to educate future generations around biodiversity, heritage and health. It is important to ensure that they are as well-resourced as possible. This will benefit individuals, local communities, social groups and educational organisations.

It is important that any project or activity is delivered in partnership with the local community. Initial conversations with park users and the surrounding local community will be required when developing and co-ordinating future events and activities.

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Strategy Objective 4:

Identify potential funding opportunities to enable project delivery

Whilst this Strategy heralds a new dawn for parks in Preston, it must be noted that there is a need for realism too. Stretched resources and continuing budget pressures make ongoing investment a significant challenge.

It is important that, over its ten year term, this Strategy recognises the approach and options to potential funding in order to ensure its successful implementation. These include:

- ◀ Continuing to investigate and pursue opportunities to secure external funding, including developer contribution receipts and grants.
- ◀ Working with external organisations to maximise investment opportunities.
- ◀ Encouraging an entrepreneurial approach that inspires new ideas and business models into parks.
- ◀ Exploring the future role of partner organisations, such as community asset transfer, the creation of community interest companies (CICs), social enterprises and trusts to help manage and/or take on the management of programmes and facilities, thus helping to reduce the Council's overall financial responsibility.

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6.0 ALLOTMENTS REVIEW

On a basic level, allotments offer the ability to grow fresh produce. However, the physical and mental wellbeing benefits of allotment provision are widely recognised. As a base for healthy activity they can provide a sense of personal achievement, increased confidence, and social interaction. All while bringing people into closer contact with nature.



Nine sites provide over 600 plots across Preston. The Council manages eight while one (Frenchwood) is self-managed. All have an association and/or site representative.

A concessionary rent rate is offered for the over 65's and those claiming unemployment/disability benefit to assist in those that are on a low income or are disabled.

Demand for allotments far exceeds supply with waiting lists at a continuous high level. The significant waiting lists are, in part, due to allotment popularity but this problem is also due to the limited turnover of members/plots and a dated process of plot allocation.

Issues common across sites include anti-social behaviour, lack of car parking, poor drainage and the condition of pathways and boundaries.

To address these challenges and ensure a sustainable future for allotments the following will occur. The Council will:

- ◀ Continue to use market leading software, Colony, to ensure that plots are allocated fairly.
- ◀ Consider the introduction of a 'trial period' system to help with plot turnover and to deal with those being left in a poor condition.
- ◀ Reclaim plots currently not fit for cultivation with the aim of bringing them back into use.
- ◀ Support development and implementation of a new tree strategy for Preston to help coordinate and address the issue of shade coverage and roots ingress into plots.
- ◀ Work with allotment site associations/representatives to develop individual site action plans to clearly set out all the improvements required and identify funds for delivery.
- ◀ Explore opportunities to work with charities, such as Let's Grow Preston, to support plot owners and encourage greater volunteering and upskilling.
- ◀ Continue to split larger plots when they become available down to regular plot to help increase the number of plots.

PRESTON PARKS AND GREEN SPACES STRATEGY 2021-2031

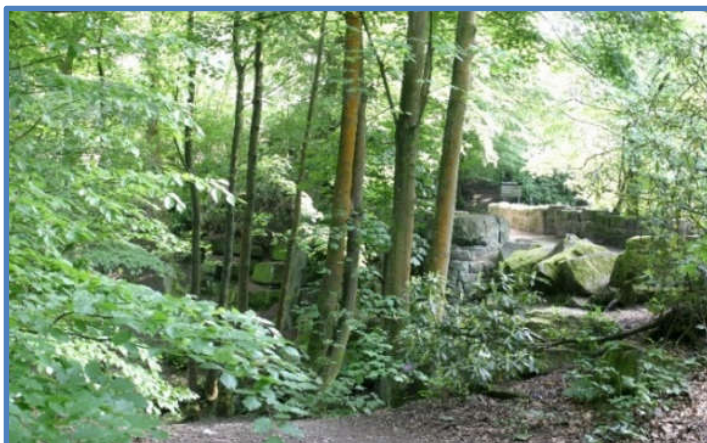
7.0 TREE MANAGEMENT

Cleaning the air that we breathe, to providing habitats, and enhancing the places we relax are just some of the benefits trees and woodlands offer. They are also critical to tackling climate change and working to achieve future zero carbon emissions.

It is vital to protect and support the variety of trees and woodlands in the City. Although not directly covered in this Strategy, tree management is associated with parks and greenspaces.

The City's last Tree & Woodlands Strategy was published in 2003. Since then, the role, significance and importance of such provision has been heightened nationally. Conversely, resources to manage provision have been adversely affected by budget reductions.

Preston seeks to implement an up-to-date Tree and Woodlands Strategy to reflect changes in national policy, work practice and future requirements.



This will set out, but not be limited to:

- ◀ Existing status and challenges:
 - Climate change
 - Biological threats
- ◀ Vision and aims, with a view to:
 - Increasing tree numbers, ensuring there is a year-on-year net gain
 - Diversifying tree stock
 - Protecting existing trees for future generations
 - Working with partners to identify where tree planting brings benefit to local communities.
- ◀ Detail management approaches and practices, including:
 - Developing an asset register
 - Monitoring stock levels
 - Good landscape design principles
 - Inspections and maintenance
 - Management plans
 - Removals
 - Emergencies
 - Planting



PRESTON PARKS AND GREEN SPACES STRATEGY 2021-2031

8.0 PLAY AREA MANAGEMENT

Outdoor children's play areas are vitally important places for children to play, exercise, developing their social, emotional and physical health as well as building their confidence, resilience and life skills. Children's play areas are free to access, open to all and provide a setting where children can explore and challenge themselves. Play is vital to healthy physical development, and has a key role in children's emotional, psychological and cognitive development. Play is how children learn. Through play children learn to take risks, compete, cooperate and manage conflict. Preston City Council manage, inspect and maintain all children play areas which are on land owned by Preston City Council. The Council manages the service to meet its responsibility in relation to Health and Safety guidelines whilst providing a fun and enjoyable play environment for children to informally play and develop their fundamental skills.

Preston's Outdoor Play facilities consist of;

- 48 Playgrounds (including 2 Adizones that have urban gym and sport facilities)
- 14 Multi Use Games Areas
- 1 Regional skatepark facility
- 1 Neighbourhood skatepark facility
- 1 National competition standard BMX Track.



Moor Park Skatepark – launch event



Grange Park refurbishment



Moor Park South Play Area

The Council will maintain them to the best standard possible within available resources. Qualified accredited play inspectors will routinely inspect equipment and repairs were required.

Whilst inspections are conducted, the sites are maintained. E.g. litter picked with any glass, litter and fouling removed and bins emptied etc. The service seeks to effect repairs to equipment for as long as practicable, however at some point equipment may become past economical repair from vandalism or age and may need to be removed. The Parks Service will follow the action plan within the service's Play Strategy to improve a key number of play areas which require investment. In our development of these play areas we will work with partners and friends groups to secure external funding to improve play value and enjoyment of these sites for children and families.

Whilst the funding picture is challenging for children's play we will seek to deliver as much value as we can through good design and procurement. Through the design of play areas we will seek to develop inclusive play areas that afford inclusive play opportunities that children with disabilities will enjoy.

Play facilities have significant influence on the design of the Councils parks and open spaces and the masterplans being considered.