

GREENSPACE NORTH WEST CONSULTATION ON THE ODPM GUIDE

[How to create quality parks and open spaces](#)

The Consultation

The initial consultation went to the GreenSpace North West Email Network that reaches 150 green space managers in the region, covering all the local authorities and numerous other organisations. The feedback from the email consultation was very disappointing, although the Policy Officer for Parks at Manchester CC provided a detailed response which has been included in full below. A more direct approach was then undertaken, consulting managers from approximately 25% of the region's local authorities at networking meetings. The Forum Steering Group discussed the outcome.

Response

GreenSpace North West welcomes the guide *How to create quality parks and open spaces*, the input from the ODPM to the sector and the targets that it sets. It has a pleasing look and feel and contains useful information although some respondents found the lay-out confusing.

The Forum does however feel that the guide has not had the intended impact within the region. The majority of managers asked were not previously aware of the publication and had to order it. Others had not found time to assimilate the contents properly. A number expressed confusion around the roles of the ODPM and CABA Space and in some cases the publication may have been overlooked as managers are now accustomed to CABA Space being the primary conduit for information.

The Forum is concerned that the positive targets set are in danger of being overlooked due to low awareness. They also need some follow up if they are to really impact standards.

Response from Manchester City Council

1. We found that we are already working towards each of the major actions suggested for establishing the recommended strategic climate and tackling specific issues. In Manchester, some of the sub-actions are yet to be implemented, or have potential to be done so more comprehensively. Some of the given recommendations are wider than just parks, i.e. council-wide or citywide.
2. We are using this document (as one of several national prescriptive documents) to assist and guide the broad developmental context for Manchester's parks. This means continuing current work already contributing towards these broad strategic actions, although not necessarily implementing every specific sub-action, particularly as some have some ambiguity.
3. We like the targets - both their simplicity and the actual targets - and plan to adopt.
4. In terms of subject matter, although broad recommendations are given, the sub-actions on occasion were not easy to extrapolate, and the examples given are case studies and thus not exhaustive. 'Following further guidance, powers and/or legislation' is often recommended, which is itself not immediate advice. The guidance also has elements of subjectivity and does not specify level of detail for actions.