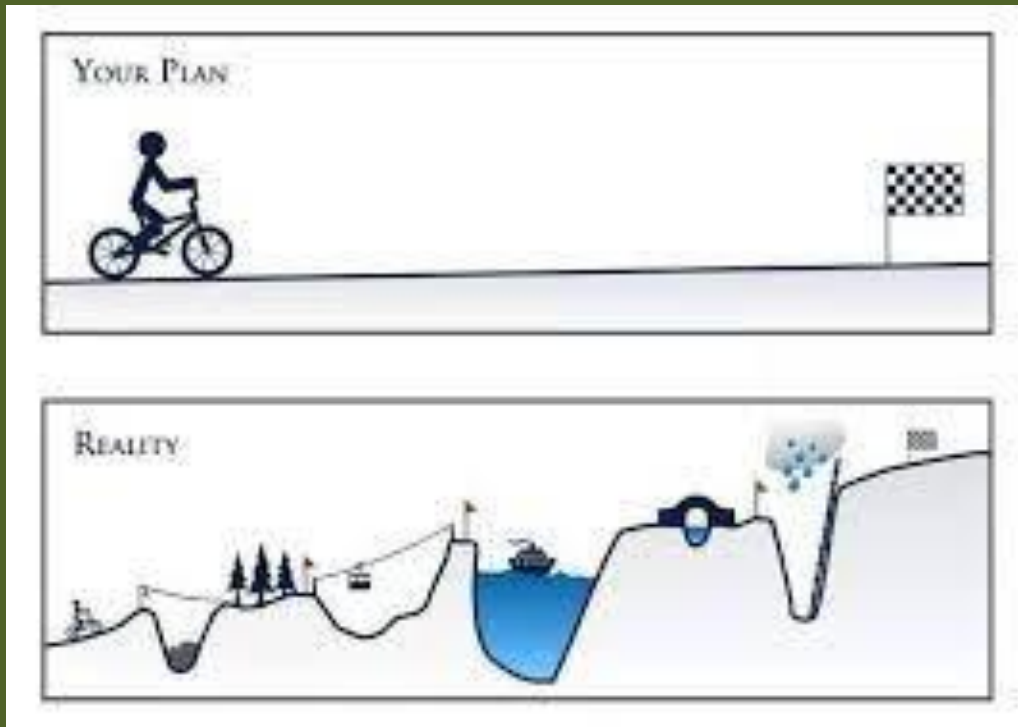




**Better
Parks**

Sheffield... Our journey so far!!!



Jo Pearce and Tony Askins
Sheffield's
Parks and Countryside
Service

Before we begin...

- We're 2 years (minus the pandemic) into this...
- Me and Tony don't profess to be experts...
- Sharing is caring...

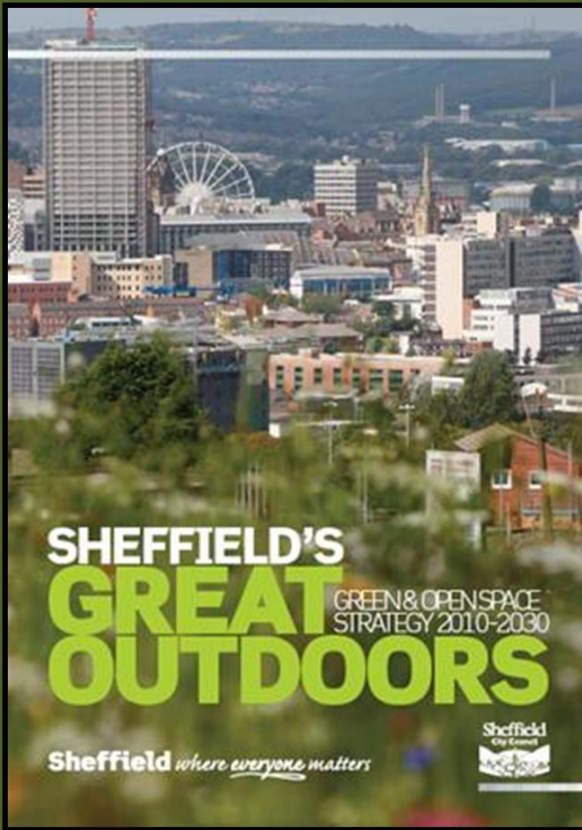


So a bit about Sheffield's Parks and Countryside

Over 800 green spaces across 4000 hectares including...

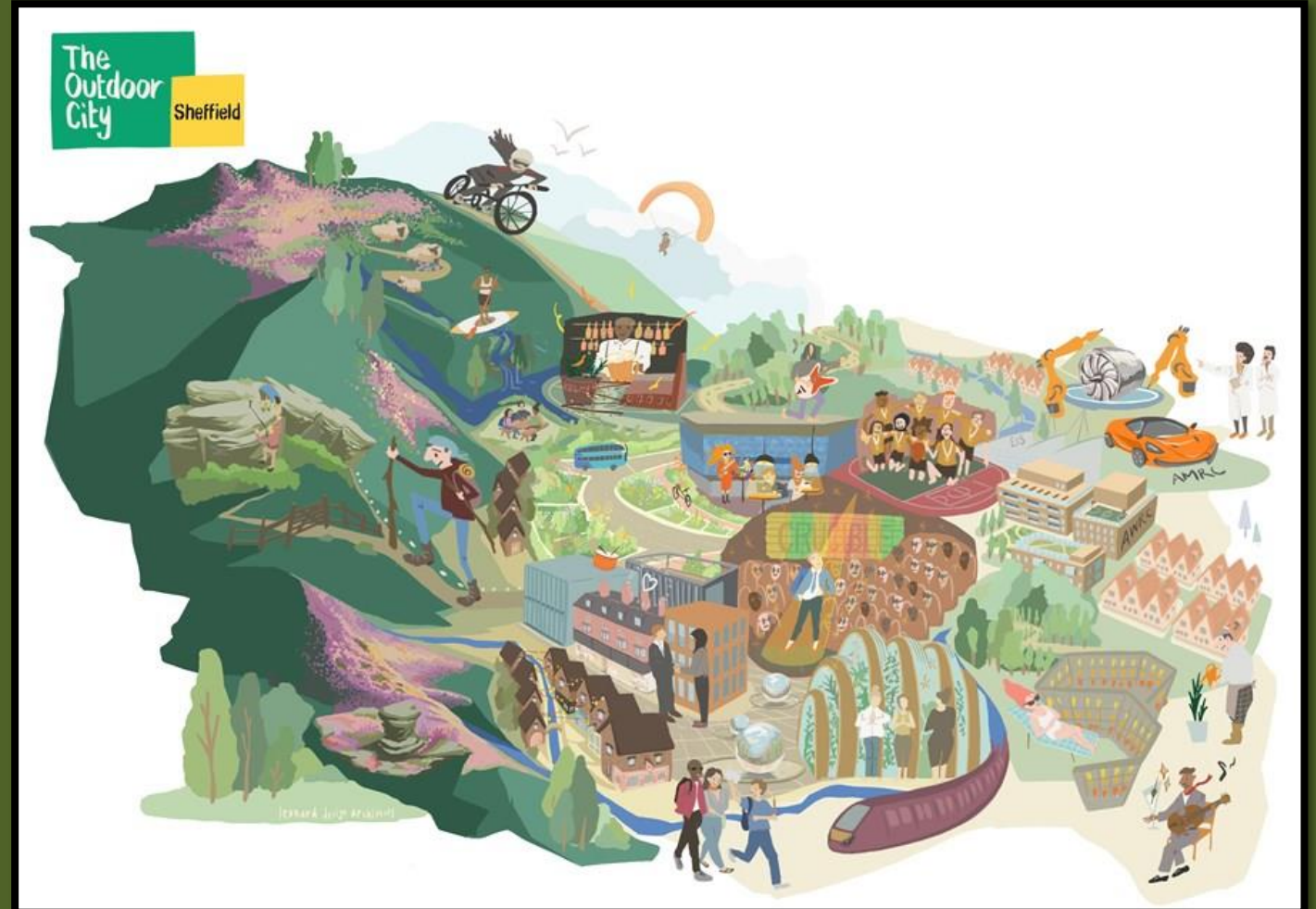
- 13 city parks
- 20 district parks
- 50 local parks
- 342 local green spaces
- 181 woodlands
- 81 allotment sites
- 262 Nature Conservation sites
- Over 100 playgrounds
- Part of Sheffield's region is within the Peak District boundary





“Our strategy will ensure that every area of the City has green and open spaces of exceptional quality for current and future generations to use and enjoy”

“Sheffield, The Outdoor City, will be internationally renowned for its outdoor offer; its quality places and outdoor people.”



2018/19 Budget = £4.9m

2022/23 Budget = £3.75m

....a (further) 23%
reduction and yet...



2023/24...a further 10%??



Better Parks is a new initiative by Sheffield City Council inviting creative, civic-minded entrepreneurs and businesses to share ideas and explore potential options that will enhance visitors' enjoyment of parks, woodlands and green spaces.

Let's start with the 'Good'...

- Business Event and promotion of vision
- Resourced team/energy – Property Services, Planning, Marketing
- Focused and strategic approach
- Political support and sign off for approach to 'do things differently' (can share cabinet report)
- Which have led to...

Awesome developments like
this...



And these...



News > Politics

New tennis courts, games area and cafe planned for Sheffield's Hillsborough Park

Tired tennis courts and a dilapidated games area in a popular Sheffield park are to be revamped with a new activity hub.

By Lucy Ashton
Wednesday, 13th April 2022, 3:44 pm
Updated: Wednesday, 13th April 2022, 3:19 pm

[Email](#) [Facebook](#) [Twitter](#) [WhatsApp](#)

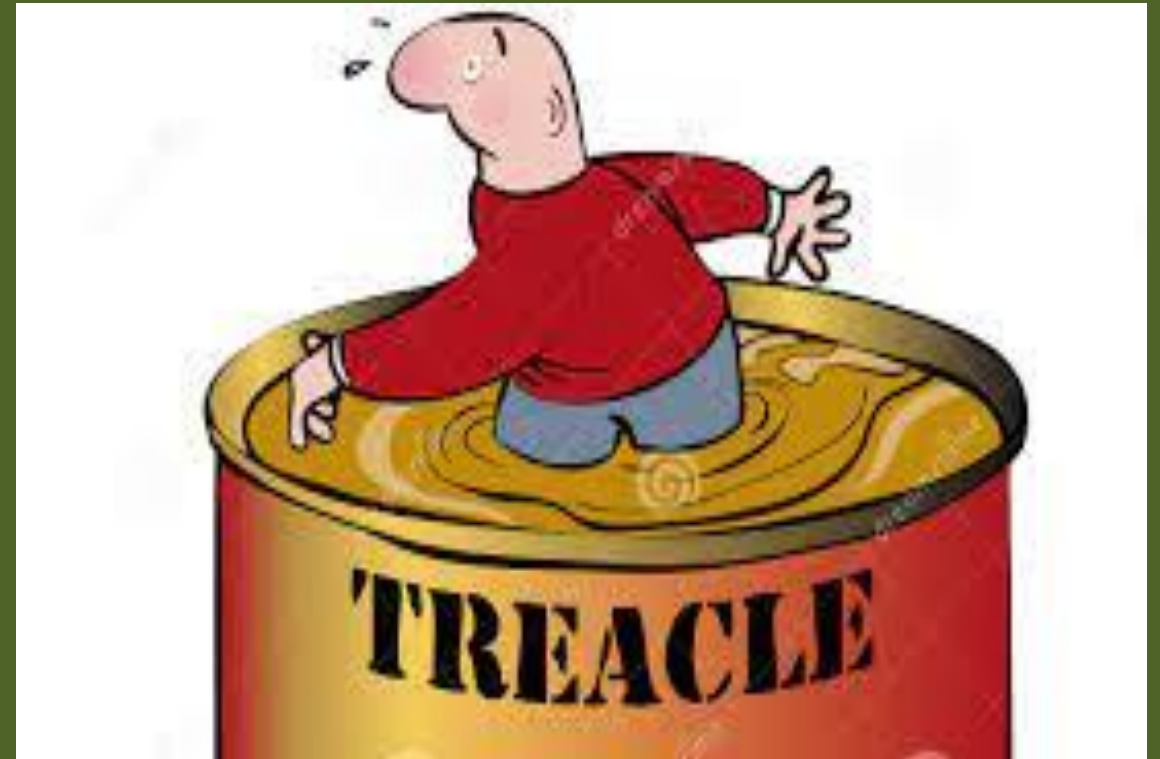


Plus culture change...an acceptance of the need to do things differently (*just couldn't find a pic for that!*)



But... (there's always a but!!)...

- **It's really not been easy... the Coach House has taken almost 5 years...**
 - working in an environment built for accountability and not entrepreneurship and profit
 - Conforming to organisational requirements and culture
 - Wading through layers of bureaucracy created over (sometimes) centuries e.g. Fields in Trust, Inaccurate/out of date ownership maps, Charitable status
 - Passion and engaged nature of groups of park users: 'Profit' a dirty word – nervousness around privatisation/investment



Sheffield park cafe proposals spark backlash as campaign launched to "save our space"

Friends of Hillsborough Park in Sheffield raise concerns about plans for new activity hub

Volunteers who look after a Sheffield park are concerned about plans to redevelop it and to charge for certain activities.

Business > Consumer

'Losing Sheffield parks sites will close me', claims ice cream van operator Andrew Cuneo

Controversial plans for Sheffield pub garden given go ahead

Councillors have voted to approve controversial plans for a pub garden in a popular Sheffield park, saying it will be a "positive contribution" the majority of visitors will enjoy.

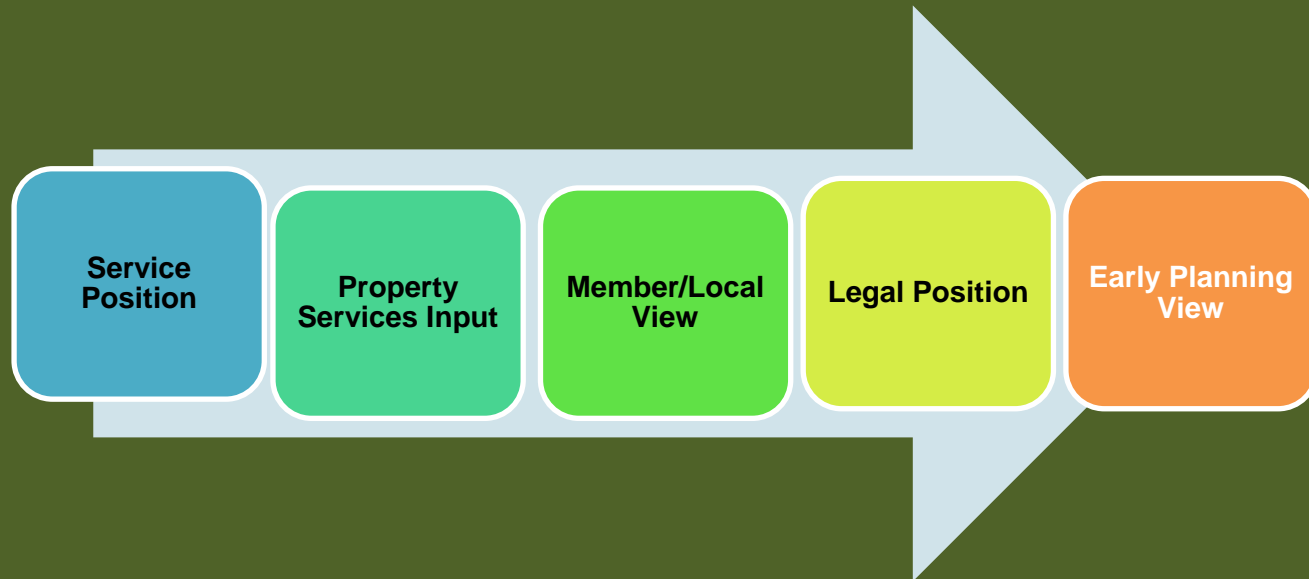
By Molly Williams, Local Democracy Reporter

Wednesday, 3rd February 2021, 7:00 am



Key reflections from our ponderings...

- Efforts have been provider/politically led – rather than service
- Policy Change – Liverpool Best Value Report (a real bump in the road)
- Better Parks vs BAU (new vs existing)
- Process of prioritisation
- Early engagement is key
- Member support (FoG) ideally
- Keep talking.....
- Genuine consultation/or inform don't ask
- Stuff takes time... manage expectations (including own)
- Senior Buy-in (Officer/Member)
- Investment Model – pros/cons
- Legal Position FIRST
- Early planning view
- Nearly always **Out to the Market**
- Go where the energy is...



Project Prioritisation...

Aligns with Strategic Priorities
Income Generation [% increase / cost saving]
Site Quality [Brew, Loo, Something to Do]
Community/Political support
Funding/Investment available
Legal/Planning/Charitable/Procurement
X Factor / Unknown Factor/ USP
Complexity of the project e.g. known info vs unknown
Timescales for completion - link in with Officer time & capacity
Strategic importance and capability to tie into wider site projects

New Stuff vs Existing...

- Temporary Concessions
- Rent reviews – benchmarked market value plus turnover share
- Utilities (sub-meters)
- Re-tendering of license agreements; Ice Cream Vans, Kids Rides, Christmas Trees
- Fitness Classes/Activity Bookings
- Online booking
- Sponsorship and Advertising (playground equipment)
- Car Parking
- Lodge tenancies/vacancies
- Fees and Charges
- *Balancing act...*



So what next for Better Parks...

Change takes time
(sorry about that)



- Focused service efforts – moving towards pooled resource
- Income target (rather than budget cut for 2022-23/24)
- Emphasis on existing commercial lettings portfolio
- Small number of key strategically/commercially important projects
- Strategy continues to evolve and become embedded as 'the way we do things' rather than as a standalone/isolated work strand
- *We continue to make Sheffield's Parks and Countrysides even BETTER (and keep the faith about that!!)*



Better
Parks

