



Ministry of Housing,
Communities &
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Dear Mr Morris,

Thank you for presenting the Charter for Parks on 21 June to Government setting out a range of proposals to support the long-term sustainability of local parks and public green spaces.

As the Minister for Parks and Green Spaces, I would like to first thank you personally for the dedication you have shown in representing the many friends groups up and down the country, and also for the huge contribution you have made towards the Parks Action Group. I know you have committed much of your own time to chairing the Empowering Communities priority working group, exploring opportunities for developing innovative programmes of work. I am sure this activity will help to increase the numbers, participation and knowledge of local friends' forums and groups and develop models for supporting community capacity building and community leaders.

Unfortunately, due to diary pressures, I was unable to meet you in person to accept the Charter for Parks. However, I would like to extend my appreciation to the pupils of the Willow School in Tottenham for formally presenting the Charter to MHCLG. I recognise the value that parks play in providing vibrant and inclusive locations for local communities to socialise, volunteer, work and exercise. It is therefore encouraging to see this level of enthusiasm from children and young people actively supporting their local parks.

I will look to address the key proposal within the Charter in relation to the introduction of a legal duty on all public green spaces. I can advise that the Government does not want to impose excessive central reporting burdens on local government and has sought to reduce the pressure on local authorities through the new burdens doctrine. This requires departments to justify why new statutory duties are being placed on local authorities and identify additional funding towards any additional costs.

Many local authorities already work very closely on wellbeing issues and are keen to develop effective approaches. I understand that best practice models are shared by the Local Government Association, which is a member of the Parks Action Group and a pivotal partner in the group's work in reviewing a range of issues relating to parks and green spaces in England.

I note the Charter's call for protections for parks from inappropriate development. I can reassure the signatories of the Charter that the national planning policy framework offers protection to all recreational facilities, including parks. The framework is clear that recreational land should not be built on unless an assessment has been carried out and has shown clearly that a park is surplus to

requirements or that the loss resulting from the proposed development would be replaced by equivalent or better provision in terms of quantity and quality in a suitable location.

I note that a number of the founding organisations endorsing the actions outlined in the Charter are members of the Parks Action Group. I am confident that the work undertaken by the group in the coming months will look to address many of the actions that have been highlighted in the report.

I look forward to meeting the membership of the Parks Action Group in the autumn to discuss how we can work together to safeguard and enhance parks and green spaces.

Thank you for writing in on this important matter.



RISHI SUNAK MP