



A GREENER AARHUS

City of Aarhus' Policy on Nature and Green Surroundings

Technical and
Environmental
Administration
City of Aarhus



CONTENTS

Preface	3
A Greener Aarhus	4
A good city for everyone.....	6
The biodiversity crisis	7
The climate challenges	8
Added value of green measures	9
Focus areas	10
Focus area 1: Nature in the open country	12
The forests	12
New forests.....	12
Natural area and the state of nature	13
Nature restoration and nature conservation	13
The ambition of nature in the open country	14
The goals of nature in the open country	15
Our priorities	15
Focus area 2: The green elements in the city	16
Parks	16
Trees	17
Green elements in planning.....	17
The ambition of a greener city	18
The goals of a greener city.....	18
Our priorities	19
Focus area 3: Experiences and stays in nature and green surroundings	20
Accessibility	21
Connections.....	21
Active in nature	22
Communication about nature	24
Proximity to nature	25
The ambition of experiences and stays in green surroundings.....	26
The goals of experiences and stays in green surroundings.....	26
Our priorities	27
Focus area 4: Co-creation on green projects	26
Putting the citizens' ideas first	28
Green projects	28
Collaboration with active associations	28
The Green Council.....	29
Dialogue on location and co-financing of trees	29
More actors regarding communication on nature	29
The ambition of co-creation on green projects	30
The goals of co-creation on green projects.....	31
Our priorities	31

PREFACE

Ball games and biodiversity. These are just a few of the interests we must take into consideration in our work to make Aarhus greener. Urban nature is a very special discipline, and I am immensely proud of how we, with small, well-thought-out approaches, have succeeded in creating attractive outdoor spaces where interests are united.

Just look at Mølleparken, which is used by many different citizens at the same time; People hang out on the grass, while others play table tennis, basketball or chess. At the same time, there are plenty of trees, shrubs and flowering herbs that support biodiversity in the city.

Urban nature is something special because it must combine our, the Aarhusians' need to use and enjoy nature with the work towards more diverse nature. Nature is under pressure, and we must play our part in turning the decline in biodiversity into progress in biological diversity. Here, all initiatives are important, from a tree in the street to large forests, connected natural areas and lakes. We want to create a good city for everyone, with room for the extreme cloudbursts of the future and in everyday life with room for living and nature.

In Aarhus, we are favored by the fact that the city is surrounded by greenery. From the city center, it is only a 15-minute bike ride to the forest and beach at Risikov and open skies over Brabrand Lake. Aarhus' forests are some of the country's most used, and out there we meet for outdoor activities, exercise and relaxation while enjoying both plant and animal life.

We can look forward to even more greenery in the Aarhus Municipality. We have a plan to plant 10,000 urban trees by 2025, to create more and better natural areas and a goal of being CO₂ neutral by 2030. This spring alone, we have planted three new forests that will help safeguard groundwater resources, bind CO₂ and contribute with more recreational nature in the local areas. During the corona period, a special need arose to meet outdoors, and the Aarhusians flocked out into the green outdoors. It is great that the citizens of Aarhus utilize the City's green potential, and I believe that the corona era has documented the need to create even more green spaces in the immediate areas and in the open country, as has been done at Geding and Kasted, with self-managing nature and water buffaloes.

"A Greener Aarhus" must be seen in the context of the major agendas. The green transition and adaptation to more rain, the development of good urban and local environments, the strengthening of citizens' physical and mental health, and the development of a city with a communal spirit and strong citizenship. With "A Greener Aarhus", we put nature and green elements on the political agenda and sharpen Aarhus City Council's ambitions and priorities in this area.

"A Greener Aarhus" is an overriding strategy where new initiatives can be added continuously. "A Greener Aarhus" provides an overview of ambitions, goals and focus areas re. green projects. The vision is an invitation to all of you who want "A Greener Aarhus". The results are stronger and more durable when we work together, and all actors involved gain influence and take ownership. We do it together. Thank you for your commitment and cooperation.

Best regards

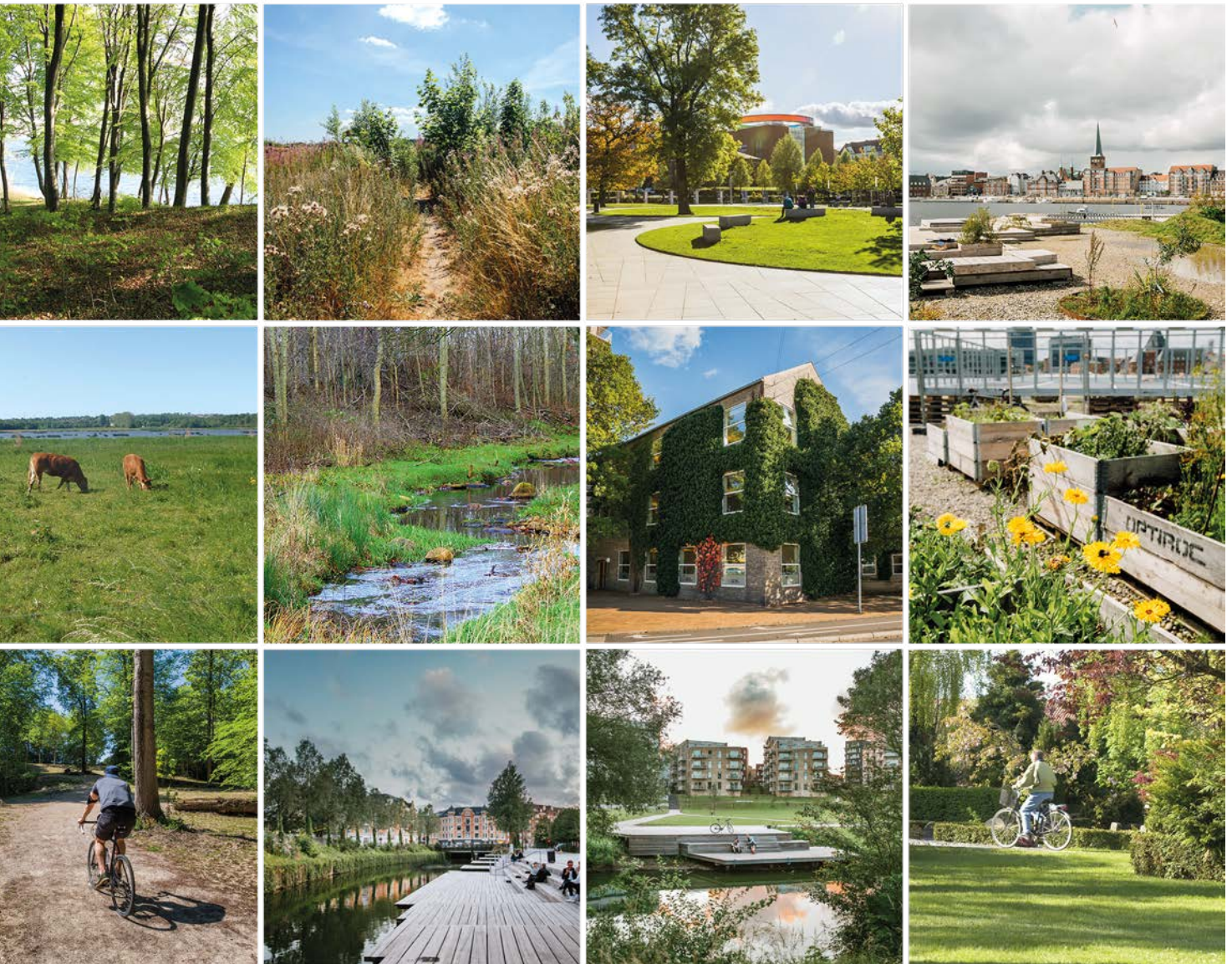
Büyamin Simsek

**Alderman, Technical Services and Environment
City of Aarhus**



A GREENER AARHUS

In Aarhus Municipality, we are very fortunate that nature experiences are close at hand. We have species-rich, ancient forests close to the city and parks and green areas inside the city. We have the coast and streams as well as the meadow lakes with their bird life and recreational trails. We have Brabrand Lake close to large residential areas and the Aarhus River runs right into the heart of Aarhus.



“Aarhus is fantastically located, by the sea and the forest. A vibrant urban environment and the most beautiful natural areas located very close to each other.”

Aarhus City Council, 12th September 2018

Nature is a central part of Aarhus’ identity and overall expression. We must protect and create more of this as the City grows and we become more Aarhusians. We want a greener Aarhus!

OUR VISION FOR 'A GREENER AARHUS'

"Aarhus Municipality wants to be a green, nature-rich municipality with high biodiversity in all types of green areas. We want to provide more and better nature in the open country, in the river valleys and in the forests. We will succeed with wise, sustainable urban development with urban nature and green spaces for recreation and outdoor activities for the benefit of all Aarhusians and visitors to the municipality."

Nature and the green elements contribute to making Aarhus a good place to live for everyone, and this contributes to achieving the Aarhus goals.

Nature and greenery are also part of the answer to the global biodiversity crisis and global climate challenges. We must utilize the opportunities offered by a more ambitious and targeted effort for a greener Aarhus and thereby contribute to achieving the UN's Sustainable Development Goals.

The Aarhus Goals: Aarhus – A good city for everyone

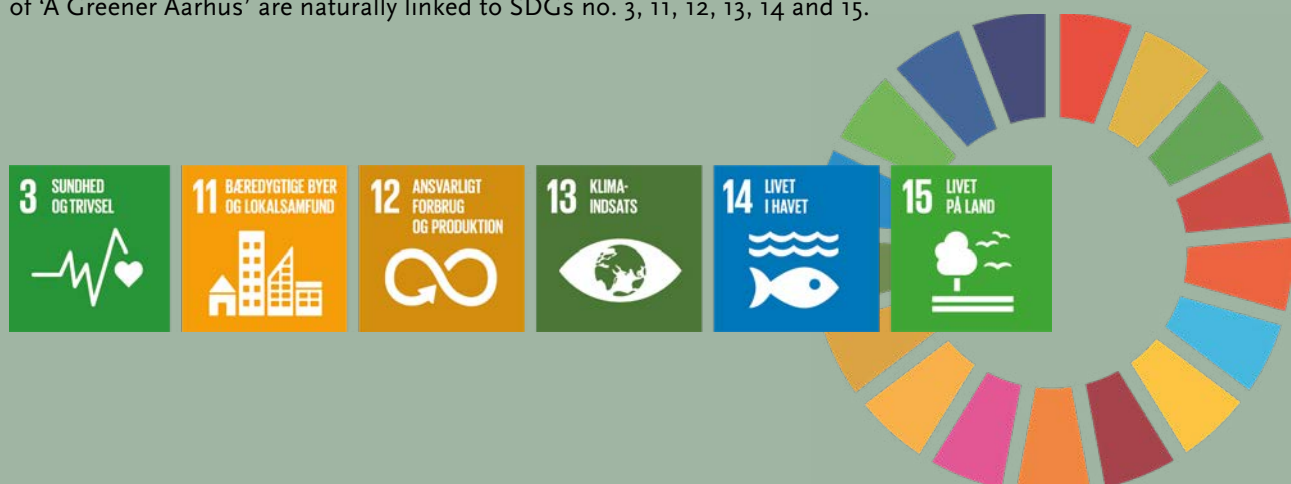


The Aarhus goals are the City Council's overall vision for what should characterize Aarhus, both now and in the future.

UN's Sustainable Development Goals

UN's 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) set the course for a more sustainable development.

"A Greener Aarhus" provides an opportunity to work closely with the citizens on the UN's 17 SDGs. We are taking a step in realizing the SDGs by adapting the goals to Aarhus. The goals of 'A Greener Aarhus' are naturally linked to SDGs no. 3, 11, 12, 13, 14 and 15.



A GOOD CITY FOR EVERYONE

Our priority is that the city is attractive and contributes to the quality of life of the Aarhusians. Nature and greenery can contribute to this, among other things, by creating experiences and opportunities for movement in a sustainable balance between use and protection. Everyone must have easy access and a short distance to different types of green experiences, and we must incorporate nature into urban development to create a better and more attractive city for everyone. That nature and greenery are important elements in the good city is confirmed in the latest public survey of the Aarhus Goals. In the public survey, Aarhusians highlight nature and cultural life as the conditions that make Aarhus a particularly good city.

Thus, "A Greener Aarhus" is an important part of the continued development of the city as the framework for the life, well-being and health of the Aarhusians.



The association 'Friends of the Botanical Garden' look after the rose garden, the theme gardens, the acid soil beds and the perennial garden in the Botanical Garden. Communal weeding days and social gatherings are key words for the association.

Public survey of the Aarhus Goals, March 2020

Top 3 categories that make Aarhus a good city

1



37 %
Cultural life

"I really like the centre of Aarhus, ARoS, the architecture, e.g. the town hall, but also the old part of the city with the latin quarter, the old churches and The Old Town."
(Female, 65 years and above)

"Enjoying Friday Concerts in Tivoli."

(Female, 50-64 years)

2



31 %
Nature

"I love that there is so much nature."

(Male, 30-49 years)

"The green areas, such as the forest around Aarhus and the Botanical Gardens, make the city cozy and create many opportunities to enjoy yourself in nature."

(Female, 18-29 years)

3



21 %
Størrelsen på byen

"Aarhus' size is manageable, but large enough to be vibrant with culture."

(Female, 50-54 years)

aarhus.dk/media/41037/aarhus-maalene-rapport-2020.pdf

THE BIODIVERSITY CRISIS

Biodiversity is declining sharply throughout the world, and in Denmark, even previously common Danish species are becoming fewer, and many species are in danger of disappearing altogether. Therefore, Aarhus Municipality has a major and important role to play, by taking care of our nature and turning the decline in biodiversity into progress by halting the loss of habitats for wild animals, plants and other organisms.



Safeguarding the biological diversity in Aarhus Municipality is done, among other things, by the care and restoration of small and large natural areas in the open country. Nature preservation keeps the grass down so that more flowering species can grow in the area and the biodiversity increases. The picture shows an area by Brabrand Lake.

Researchers around the world point out that lack of space for nature is the largest challenge. At the same time, many of the animals' habitats have been split up over time into smaller and isolated natural areas cut off by roads, cultivated fields and cities. This has made it difficult or prevented the spread of the species between natural habitats. Furthermore, Aarhus Municipality's share of areas with nature and forest is below the national average, even though it may be perceived differently at first glance, because we have both beaches, forests, streams and meadows close to the City of Aarhus. And finally, production interests and other human activity have degraded the quality of the actual habitats.



The biodiversity crisis

The biodiversity crisis is about the fact that never before in human history have we exterminated the planet's animal and plant species as quickly as we are doing now. Several sources put figures on the extent of the crisis. The UN report from IPBES (2020) on the status of biodiversity throughout the world indicates that up to one million species are threatened by extinction. Many of them risk disappearing within a few decades. Furthermore, the UN report states that:

75 % of all ecosystems on land have been strongly modified by humans.

20 % of the species on land are threatened and at risk of disappearing completely.

Source: ipbes.dk

The Danish red list (2019) states that:

The Danish species have not improved in the past 10 years.

42 % of the species on the list are in danger of disappearing from Denmark.

Source: dce.au.dk

Proposal for climate adaptation strategy (2020)

In Aarhus Municipality's strategy for climate adaptation "Aarhus with more blue", the principles for the work of creating time and space for water are laid down.

The strategy states that good climate adaptation in Aarhus Municipality is holistic and adds value in several different fields.

Furthermore, a key element of climate adaptation is that it is part of a shared societal responsibility, where different players can work together to create good solutions – utilities, citizens, business, urban development players and the municipality.



THE CLIMATE CHALLENGES

The climate is changing. The prospect of more rainfall in the future is a challenge, both for Aarhus and the rest of Denmark. In Aarhus, we want to be at the forefront of climate change.

Climate adaptation also has great potential for transforming important areas in the city and can, among other things, contribute to strengthening the city's health qualities.

Furthermore, "A Greener Aarhus" can contribute to reducing CO₂ emissions. When we take low-lying areas out of agricultural operation and instead use these areas for nature and to retain water during heavy rain and cloudbursts, the areas store CO₂ rather than release CO₂. In addition, for example, more trees in the city, afforestation and more nature will bind additional CO₂.

Dilemmas in 'A Greener Aarhus'

There are several dilemmas in the work to create "A Greener Aarhus".

Examples of these dilemmas are:

- Aarhus grows by 5,000 Aarhusians a year. In order to avoid the city spreading out into the surrounding countryside and open country, we are developing Aarhus as a denser city. At the same time, we have a goal that all Aarhusians must have a publicly accessible green area close to their home, which points more in the direction of a less dense city.
- Our ambition for experiences and stays as well as accessibility for everyone to nature and greenery must be weighed against the fact that we simultaneously want to protect and improve the habitats for animals, plants and other organisms.
- In the long run, our investments in new parks, nature and forest lead to reduced health costs, better protection of groundwater and increased property taxes. In the short time, however, the funding must be found in the inter-divisional political priorities.

ADDED VALUE OF GREEN MEASURES

"A Greener Aarhus" does not stand alone. We create holistic solutions and deliver on other goals and plans in the municipality when we create more and better nature and increase biodiversity. The added value includes:

- Groundwater protection, when we create new natural areas and forest.
- New recreational spaces, where we can meet, exercise and experience nature.
- Good surroundings and facilities, that encourage to activity and movement through active and green mobility, play and sports as well as cultural experiences.
- More plants and more trees along roads and streets can help reduce the speed of road traffic and increase the comfort for pedestrians and cyclists.

- Access to green areas with different types of experiences benefits mental and physical health.
- The easy choice becomes the healthy choice; we make it even easier for all Aarhusians to integrate physical activity into everyday life.
- Short distance to green areas makes an area more attractive and influences the choice of housing.
- Retention of water in the open country and in green areas reduces vulnerability to heavy rainfall and reduces damage costs.
- The waterways are improved when green areas contribute to natural balance in the water cycle, evaporation of water and percolation of rainwater.
- CO₂ emissions are reduced.

We are aware of the many societal benefits of acting wisely and realizing the many synergies between efforts.

Relation between "A Greener Aarhus" and other plans

"A Greener Aarhus" reflects the City Council's ambitions, goals and measures for nature and greenery in Aarhus Municipality.

"A Greener Aarhus" replaces a number of previous, more specific policies and plans for nature and greenery. The aim has been to create an overall and clear political framework and direction and thus a better basis for priorities.

The plan is that "A Greener Aarhus" shall be revised once in each city council term (4-yr. period), and once a year the city council shall receive a status on selected goals and measures in "A Greener Aarhus".

"A Greener Aarhus" must be seen in the context of the Municipal Master Plan. Ambitions and goals in "A Greener Aarhus" must be translated into concrete guidelines and framework for land use laid down in the Municipal Master Plan. This is done, among other things, via the theme plan "A Greener Aarhus with More Blue" (supplement to the municipal master plan) and the theme plan "Connected Natural Habitats".

As a supplement to "A Greener Aarhus" and the Municipal Master Plan, the Department of Technical Services and Environment will work on an administrative level, on the basis of various administrative bases, which clarify the goals and measures. These will include relevant parts of the earlier, more specific policies and plans. For example, Nature Quality Plan 2030 will live on as an administrative basis.

"A GREENER AARHUS"

- Municipal Master Plan
- A Greener Aarhus with more blue
- Connected natural habitats

- Administrative bases, etc.
- Clarification of goals and measures

Aarhus' climate strategy

Aarhus Municipality works with an overall climate strategy, which sets the framework for how Aarhus Municipality as an organization and local community will create a CO₂ neutral society by 2030. The strategy is continuously implemented in the municipality's climate action plans and activities – the next plan applies for the period from 2021-2024

Since 2008, the direct emission of CO₂ has been reduced by half for Aarhus as an urban community. 90% of the remaining emission of greenhouse gases comes from sources that are outside the direct influence of the Aarhus City Council.

FOCUS AREAS

Based on the vision of “A Greener Aarhus”, we work with nature and greenery within four focus areas:

1. Nature in the open country

2. The green elements in the city

3. Experiences and stays in nature and green surroundings

4. Co-creation on green projects



Flowering meadow with rare species near Lisbjerg Forest

Nature in the open country includes measures to preserve the quantity and quality of nature. Here, maintaining existing nature in the open country and forest with its biodiversity is of vital importance, together with the possibility of creating more space for nature. This applies both to the natural processes, including better possibilities of plant dispersal and animal crossings, and to the richness of species in general.



Greenery is important in all urban communities. Møllepark contributes to making Aarhus city centre greener.

The green elements in the city include measures for nature and the green areas in the city – that is, all local communities in Aarhus Municipality. All local communities must have more and a greater variety of greenery, because trees along roads and green areas that contribute with sensory experiences, scents and colors that change with the seasons, make the local communities more pleasant to live in.



Experiences and stays in green surroundings can take on many forms.

Experiences and stays in nature and green surroundings include measures for an active life in nature – for the benefit of both physical and mental health. The Aarhusians and visitors to the municipality must be able to enjoy both quiet stays, quiet activities, sports and play in nature and in green areas within the municipality. It is a decisive step towards a city where everyone, young and old, thrives.



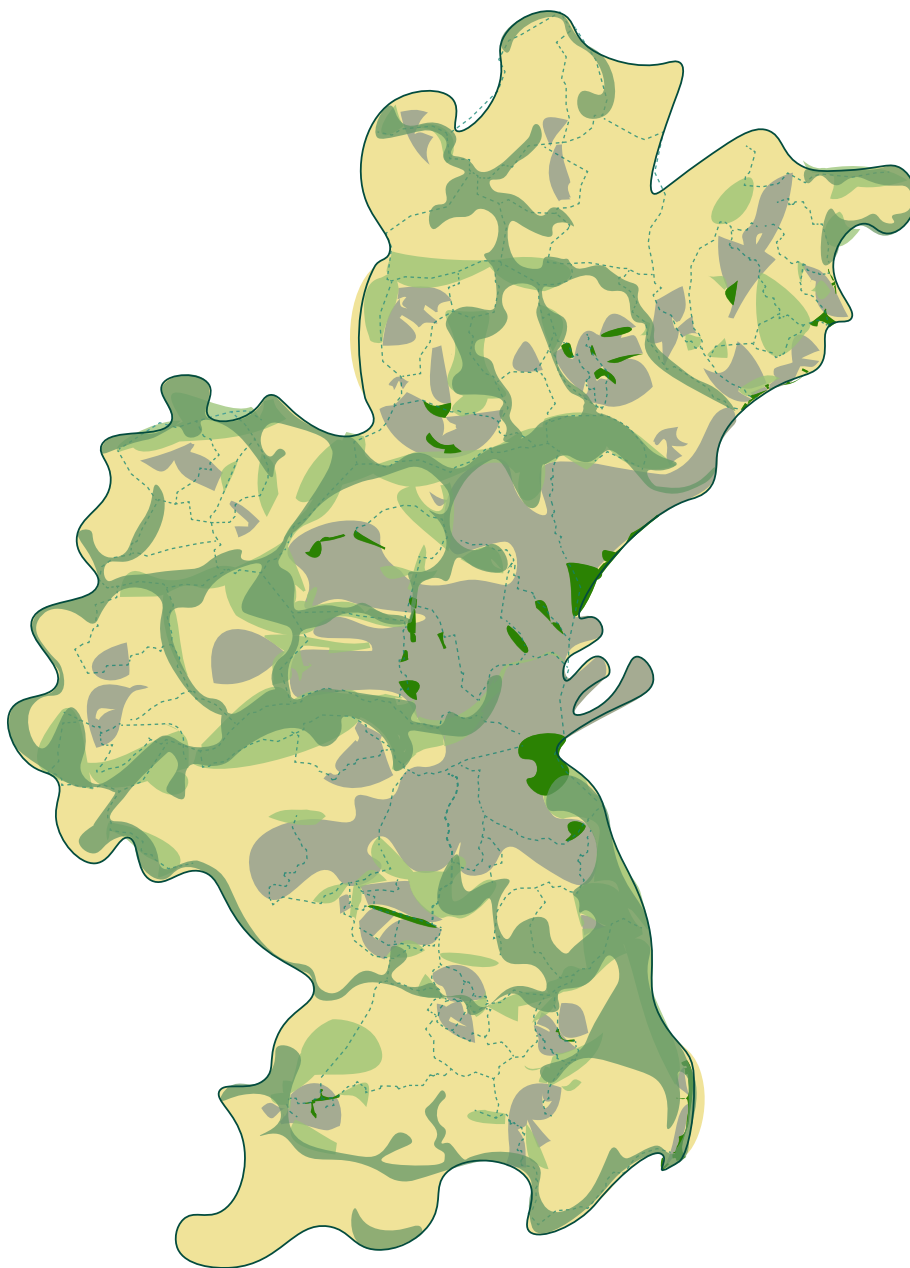
Fishing in the Aarhus River at the platform which is equipped for the disabled.

Co-creation on green projects includes initiatives where we succeed in cooperating with others. The types of collaborative relationships vary greatly, from committed private Aarhusians to companies, user groups, associations, organizations and many more.

Overall, the four focus areas make up our foundation for creation of a greener Aarhus.

Each focus area is presented on the following pages via:

- A description of the focus area in an Aarhusian context
- The ambition of the focus area
- The actual goals
- The current and impending measures



Nature in the open country



Larger forested and areas of nature outside urban areas and the connection between these larger green areas

The green elements in the city



Green areas and forested areas in urban districts

Experiences and stays in nature and green surroundings



Green excursion destinations, both in urban areas and in the open country

Co-creation on green projects



Cooperation on green projects throughout the municipality - and also across municipal boundaries

NATURE IN THE OPEN COUNTRY

We want to create an Aarhus surrounded by rich and interconnected natural areas, from the streams of the river valleys, meadows and bogs to salt meadows, grasslands and forests with good accessibility for all user groups. At the same time, we will create more connections via green paths through the city and between areas of urban nature, suburban landscapes, forests and natural areas.



The forests

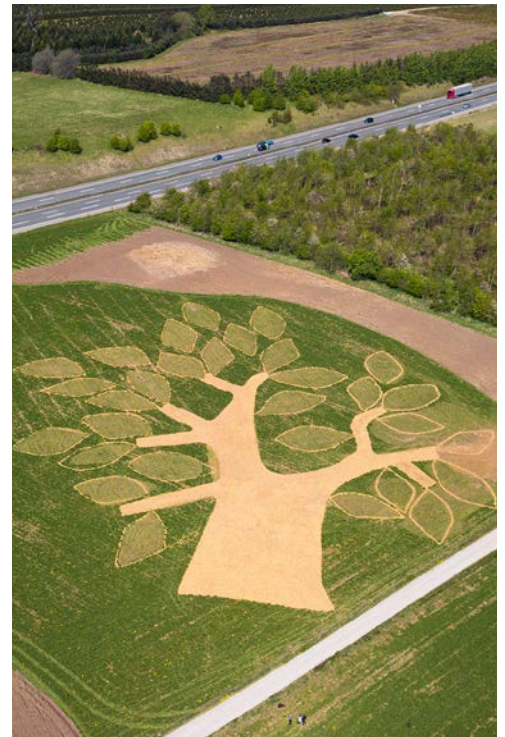
Aarhus Municipality is favored by having large areas of old forest and wild nature close to the City of Aarhus. This constitutes a completely unique attraction in a European context. At the same time, the coastline and forests are a major asset for the City in terms of settlement and recreational activities. Biodiversity is high in several of the municipal forests.

Particularly in the Marselisborg forests, there is a high species diversity and several species of special interest. Also, these forests are some of the recreational areas most extensively used in Aarhus Municipality.

There is great potential for increasing biodiversity in Aarhus Municipality's forests. Use and protection must be balanced so that citizens can continue to enjoy the forests and practice their leisure activities, while the forest and its diversity of animals, plants and other organisms can develop and good habitats can be secured.

New forests

The experience of the forests close to the City gives the impression that Aarhus Municipality has plenty of forests, but in fact we are below the national average. New forest areas protect the groundwater and at the same time provide recreational opportunities for citizens in urban development areas and in forest-deprived parts of the Municipality. Therefore, Aarhus Municipality want to plant more forest with native species and manage it more extensively. Over time, the forests will become habitat for a large number of species and thus increase biodiversity.



The new forest at Ølsted is quite a rare sight, especially seen from the air, where it becomes visible that the forest is shaped like a giant tree with a trunk, branches and 30 petals. The 3,000 trees must help to secure the groundwater resources in the area between Søften and Lisbjerg, must contribute with more recreational nature to the local area and, of course, to carbon capture and storage. The forest was planted in close collaboration between Aarhus Municipality, AutoMester E+ and the national organization 'Plant a Tree' (Plant et Træ).

Natural area and the state of nature

In the open country, Aarhus Municipality contains a varied natural environment, with river valleys, hills and a long, wild coastline influenced by waves. But nature is under pressure. To stop the decline in biological diversity and to create more and better habitats and better possibilities of plant dispersal and wildlife crossings, there is a need to preserve the existing nature.



The natural hydrology has been recreated in the river valley along Kapelbæk near Langballe and Beder. Now, the former ditched stream is once again meandering through the terrain.

At the same time, we must create more space for nature and ensure better wildlife crossings between existing natural areas. We can do this by taking the lead as a municipality on our own land, prioritizing it in our planning for private land and entering into collaborations and agreements with private landowners.



In May, you can experience this blooming carpet of the protected orchid May Cuckoo and Low Ranunculus in a meadow east of Lisbjerg Forest.

Nature restoration and nature conservation

Every year, Aarhus Municipality enters into new agreements on nature conservation of existing natural areas. We allocate areas for forest and nature via land distribution and purchase of land or operating rights. However, there is a need for even more nature restoration and nature conservation if the ambitions for species-rich nature are to be fulfilled. At Geding-Kasted Marshland, we have chosen to solve this through “Rewilding”, where water buffalo, wild horses and wild cattle ‘manage’ the natural areas all year round. It takes place in large, connected natural areas that largely manage themselves, and where e.g. winter wet areas attract migratory birds, while the nightingale sings in the willow thickets of the bog.



Rewilding in the 140-hectare area of nature, Geding-Kasted Marshland. With the help of grazing animals, we want to achieve ‘self-management’ and more dynamic and wild nature.



Common bluebird

1

Natural area and the state of nature

The term ‘natural area’ refers to nature covered by the Nature Conservation Act or areas that may develop to be covered by the conservation act.

The ‘state of nature’ is calculated, using a method developed by Aarhus University for registration of the content of nature and the physical factors on nature-protected areas and does not include water-holes and lakes. Nature registrations are carried out on all nature-protected areas over a period of five years.

The municipally-owned areas constitute approx. 25 % of the areas.



Water buffalo form part of the Rewilding project in Geding-Kasted Marshland with large, connected areas of nature.

The ambition of nature in the open country

Nature is valuable in its own right, and Aarhus Municipality has high ambitions with regard to nature. We want to increase biodiversity by giving nature’s wild plants, animals and other organisms the opportunity to develop, occupy new areas and experience the right conditions in their habitats. We want to create green, connected areas of nature around Aarhus. Species-rich nature with good living conditions for plants, animals and other organisms, which at the same time provide new nature experiences for the Aarhusians. We want more areas that are sized to support a larger population of year-round grazing animals.

Aarhus Municipality wants to be a beacon for an ambitious and multifunctional afforestation that contributes to climate adaptation and natural water levels, reduces greenhouse gases, increases biodiversity over time, provides access to new nature experiences and ensures clean drinking water for future generations.

Biodiversity is highly valued in the municipal forests, while recreational use is important for both the residents of Aarhus and the visitors to the City. This places great demands on a dynamic management that can ensure the balance between use and protection of the forests’ natural values.



Water in the forest floor between the tall trees helps to provide more varied nature. Here it is in Lisbjerg Forest, which is a mixture of old and young forest.

The goals of nature in the open country

- 4,000 hectares of nature and 8,000 hectares of forest by 2030.
- 1,000 hectares of nature by 2030 is wild and self-managing with year-round grazing animals.
- 40 % of all nature-protected areas in the municipality are of "good to high natural condition" by 2030.
- 80 % of the municipally owned areas of nature are of "good to high natural condition" by 2030.
- All afforestation projects contribute to increasing biodiversity.
- 800 hectares of forest area to be managed as wilder forests by 2030, with focus on biodiversity, more natural processes and without commercial production interests.

Our priorities:

- We take the lead, increasing the state of nature and biodiversity on municipally-owned, nature-protected areas.
- We preserve and improve existing nature and initiate measures to promote biodiversity.
- We lay out suitable, municipal agricultural land for a mosaic of more nature, forest and wet areas.
- We are involved in holistic projects on land re-parcelling in order to create more and better nature, forests and streams with free, natural river valleys.
- We collaborate with private individuals, seek fundraising and collaborate across the municipality to establish 130 hectares of new nature per year in connection with other plans and projects.
- We collaborate with, among others, the Nature Agency, Aarhus Water, crowdfunders and companies to increase the forest area by 270 hectares per year.
- We convert several forest areas into valuable and diverse forest with high biodiversity and implement five projects per year in which the natural hydrology of the forest is recreated.

Status

The area of nature has been increased to 2,690 hectares in 2019.

The forested area has been increased to 5,300 hectares in 2019.

In 2018, the state of nature in the municipally-owned, nature-protected areas was assessed as improving, while the overall state of nature in the municipality was unchanged compared to 2011.



The water course Giber Å meanders through the forests and is a breeding ground for exciting stream insects and sea trout.

2

Proposal for Pedestrian Strategy (2020)

If pedestrians are given the opportunity to experience something on their stroll, they are more likely to choose to walk. Experiences for pedestrians can be created, among other things, by adding opportunities in the form of resting places in the sun, planting, water features, table-bench sets in green surroundings and exercise facilities.

Traffic calming measures and flexible-use streets

The Mobility Plan for the City of Aarhus has introduced traffic calming measures in parts of the city centre and streets with flexible use. The traffic calming measures of the local areas in the city centre will help to create street spaces that contain functions which invite more people to stay and thus support the wish for better urban life. The flexible-use streets will provide the opportunity to increase the quality of urban spaces at times and places where there is potential for this – without making the solutions permanent.

THE GREEN ELEMENTS IN THE CITY

Nature and greenery are absolutely essential to ensure a good city for everyone. Many studies have shown that access to different kinds of green experiences is crucial for our well-being, both physical and mental health. At the same time, the variation in and proportion of greenery is of great importance for the city's micro-climate and urban nature.

**Parks**

In the city centre, the parks play a very special role and are of great importance to the life of the city. The parks can be used by everyone across generations, for recreational activities, sports and cultural events. Also, the parks and the large green areas along the coastline and the river are absolutely crucial for the presence of urban nature and biodiversity in the city.



The Memorial Park is a visible result of the Department of Technical Services and Environment's work to make the city's life function under special circumstances such as during the corona era.



There are several good examples in the city which illustrate how the city's spaces can be used in a better way. One is Mølleparken, which is used by different groups of citizens at different times of the day; people hang out on the grass while others play table tennis, basketball or chess.



There are also great qualities in the small and “quiet” urban spaces with green walls, where people can sit down, breathe and experience a quiet moment.

Trees

Trees make Aarhus Municipality an even more beautiful place to live and stay. Along streets and roads, the deliberate positioning of trees can help keep traffic speed down and improve comfort for pedestrians and cyclists. At the same time, the trees also contribute to preventing rising temperatures, handling larger amounts of rainwater and improving conditions for animals and plants.



Green elements in planning

As we become more inhabitants, the strain on the natural areas and the existing parks increases. Therefore, there is focus on ensuring that there is room for greenery as the city grows. It is all about increasing the quality and proportion of greenery in the public areas by securing space for new trees, green and inviting edge zones as well as green roofs and facades. And it is all about securing more good and well-designed green areas with more species diversity in connection with the urban development of both publicly- and privately-owned land areas.



Green elements can also be incorporated and create atmosphere in places where there was no greenery originally.

Policy for Urban Quality and Architecture (2021)

The new policy for urban quality and architecture focuses on how well-functioning urban spaces and good, sustainable architecture play together with the landscape and the local urban environments.

The proximity to nature, and the great value it has on life in Aarhus Municipality, is a key element, and this is reflected across the sections of the policy. Thus, the targeted work with nature and green areas is also highlighted as one of the bound tasks that we must succeed in when we develop Aarhus.

2

How do we determine whether the Aarhusians have a publicly accessible green area close to their home?

We calculate the proportion of Aarhusians who have a maximum of 300 metres to a publicly accessible green area of a minimum of 0.5 hectares or a maximum of 500 metres to one of a minimum of 5 hectares. It will be possible to follow whether the proportion is increasing over a number of years.

Status at the beginning of 2020

At the beginning of 2020, 77% of all Aarhusians have a maximum of 300 metres to a publicly accessible green area of a minimum of 0.5 hectares or a maximum of 500 metres to one of a minimum of 5 hectares.

At the beginning of 2020, 1,500 new trees have been planted in the city's public spaces.

The ambition of a greener city

Nature and greenery must contribute to making the city a healthy and good place to be – a good city for everyone.

The green elements in the city must contribute to a better microclimate. They must take the edge off the summer heat and the winter cold, provide better acoustics and help soften the experience of traffic noise. Green surfaces must retain rainwater so that there is less strain on the watercourses and provide moisture to the air when the air is most dry as well as reduce whirlwinds and turbulence.

Also, the green elements in the city must contribute to the overall expression of the city and help to increase sensuality, provide experiences and show the change of seasons.

Finally, the green elements in the city must add value for plants and animals in the form of food sources and habitats.

The goals of a greener city

- The Aarhusians must have a publicly accessible green area close to their home.
- 10,000 new trees will be planted in the city in the period from 2017-2025.
- Trees on publicly owned land must be preserved as far as possible.
- Public green areas must be preserved and developed with a view to greater accessibility and a great variety of experiences.
- All new urban development areas must contribute to a greener Aarhus with more quality and variety, good growing conditions for trees and space for water.



Our priorities

- We take good care of the city's existing green structure, also as the city is developed.
- We make increased quantitative and qualitative demands regarding nature and greenery when we develop the city. We set these requirements in the Municipal Master Plan, development plans, comprehensive plans and local plans.
- We work with a proximity principle, so that all Aarhusians have easy access to green areas.
- We treat green areas, health and well-being and climate adaptation, as one whole, so that climate adaptation contributes to creating more areas of nature, increasing biodiversity in streams and providing more green areas.
- We plant new trees in collaboration with the Aarhusians, among others via "Wish for a Tree", so that the municipality's citizens may influence the type and the location of the trees.
- We collaborate with non-profit organizations and the business community on external financing of new trees.
- We prepare a guide for the protection and preservation of the municipality's trees, thereby ensuring the trees' basis for existence.
- We create good living conditions for plants and animals in the city by creating space for urban nature and natural processes, also in the dense city.
- In parks and green areas, we increase the nature content by converting to more natural operation, which is balanced with regard to the recreational functions and use of the parks.



A green area in Vejlbj, where nursing home residents enjoy a get-together in the apple grove.



A rainwater reservoir in Risvangen with recreational possibilities. The water is retained when it rains heavily.

3

EXPERIENCES AND STAYS IN NATURE AND GREEN SURROUNDINGS

Nature, i.e. the green areas and the landscapes close to the cities, has great potential with regard to outdoor life, exercise, play, stress relief and nature experiences. Aarhusians' outdoor life is important. Therefore, we must ensure that we continue to have urban areas dedicated to nature and outdoor life. Nature, and the experiences which it offers us, has a very special meaning for the Aarhusians, its associational life, and for visitors to Aarhus Municipality every year.





Accessibility

Good accessibility, also for wheelchair and walker users, is crucial for people to be able to experience and use nature in the best way. Accessibility is also about feeling welcome in nature and the green areas. Both roads, paths and, not least, good information must ensure that as many people as possible can benefit from the many possibilities.

Connections

Connected natural areas, as regards recreational use, are of great importance. This is, among other things, the result of a coherent network of paths, which provides experiences of a much higher quality than if you walk/move through disconnected green areas. Therefore, an active effort must continue to be made to link together different types of footpaths - also across municipal boundaries.



An experience route at Skjodhøjkilen that offers the opportunity for a sensory experience. The route can also be used by wheelchair and walker users.

3

Active in nature

Nature is an obvious excursion destination, whether you want to spend the night outdoors, eat, walk, run, play, cycle, ride or something else entirely. Aarhus Municipality has established many public facilities in nature and in the green areas. The facilities must invite all target groups to stay, play outdoors and experience nature. These facilities include paths, roads, signs, barbecue and bonfire sites, shelters, tables, benches, stairs, and bridges across roads and paths, etc. The wide range of shelter sites and campfire sites are carefully placed in nature to support the experience when spending the night outdoors.

In addition to the normal paths used for recreational traffic, running routes, riding trails and mountain bike routes have been laid out. Finally, special areas have been set aside for dog-walking forests, which are used extensively.

There are 25 outdoor fitness sites in Aarhus Municipality. The fitness areas consist of various tools for pulse and strength training and can be used by anyone over the age of 12. Just like a large number of playgrounds, children and adults are invited to play and be active during a visit to the green areas.





Co-ordination with other policies and strategies in Aarhus Municipality

"A Greener Aarhus" sets the direction for how we can create attractive and sustainable green surroundings for life in Aarhus.

"A Greener Aarhus" is coordinated with a number of other policies and strategies in Aarhus Municipality on how the good life can unfold in attractive and sustainable green surroundings.

Aarhus Municipality's health policy 2020-2024: Aarhus Smiles

The largest health challenges are described in the health policy. One of these challenges is "Physical activity in daily life".

We will cooperate to:

- Facilitate bridge-building from municipal initiatives of movement to associational life and other offers in civil society.
- Create frameworks and facilities that invite to movement through active and green mobility, play and sports as well as cultural experiences.
- Preserve and develop green and recreational areas where we can meet and find respite and make use of nature and a clean city."

We will prioritize:

Physical activity in daily life. Ensure a good framework for movement in collaboration with educational institutions".

One of the four politically prioritized focus areas that show the direction for the work with health promotion and prevention is: "More equality in health". Under this focus area "Proximity and accessibility" is prioritized:

Proximity and accessibility

Everyone must have equal opportunities to be part of communities and activities in leisure, culture and associational life. In interaction with local actors, sustainable and local offers must be created close to the citizens' everyday lives."

aarhus.dk/media/39234/sundhedspolitik

Aarhus Municipality's Sports- and Leisure Policy 2018-2021: Healthy Communities – in motion & balance

The Sports and Leisure Policy has, among other things, the following ambition:

"The urban spaces and nature around Aarhus form a fantastic setting for leisure life. Citizens' opportunities to use the city's urban spaces, parks and sports facilities for self-organized sports- and exercise activities must be supported."

The Sports and Leisure Policy contains a number of initiatives that must fulfill this ambition in collaboration between the Sports & Leisure Department and the Technical and Environmental Department:

- "... development of opportunities for activity in urban spaces and nature. Small oases must be created in the urban realm where the City's citizens and associations can carry out their activities."
- "... work with communication about opportunities for activity in urban spaces, parks, peri-urban landscapes, green areas and coastal stretches."
- "... incorporating opportunities of leisure activities in connection with construction projects. By climate adaptation projects, added value can be created by building leisure facilities. (...) Likewise, construction projects in the sports and leisure area can take climate-related issues into account for the purpose of creating additional value."

aarhus.dk/media/15436/sports-og-fritidspolitik

3

Communication about nature

Aarhus Municipality wants to make it easy for Aarhusians of all ages to understand and to engage with the nature that surrounds us. Knowledge and familiarity are keywords in this connection, and therefore communication about nature plays a key role. Many different media and platforms are already in use, and work must continue with both physical, digital and human communication about nature. Physical signage and information boards enable the Aarhusians to understand the specific type of nature they are standing in the middle of. Map materials and other media can be used both before, during and after experiences in nature, so that not only are they inspired to new experiences, but space is also created for immersion in our nature. The “Discover Aarhus” app is one of the media that specifically provides the opportunity to plan new trips and routes and at the same time immerse yourself in information about the nature you are exploring.



App: Opdag Aarhus





Proximity to nature

The public survey of the Aarhus targets carried out in March 2020 by Epinion for Aarhus Municipality states that proximity to nature is decisive for our experience of quality of life. In particular, the closely linked combination of urban life, forest and beach is highlighted.

Source: aarhus.dk/.pdf

The public survey is described in detail on page 6.

Nature forms the framework for many of the activities we do together. Here, the associations and the communities related to associations play a major role. Experiences in nature bring people together, and therefore it is important that we, as a municipality, create good opportunities for all of us to get out and about, and not least that we have sufficient nature.

It provides quality of life and improved health, that you - as an Aarhusian - have access to nature, and that we all have access to exciting experiences in nature, both in the immediate local area and at the opposite end of the city.



Aarhus Municipality's Children and Youth Policy (2015)

In the Children and Youth Policy, "The Tale of Aarhus" is told from a child and youth perspective. Part of "The Tale of Children and Young People's Aarhus" is about the city's urban spaces, forests and parks:

"Aarhus must also be a city that families and children are naturally attracted to and settle in. This means that the perspective of the children, young people and their parents must be taken into account, not just when it comes to children's health, daycare and schools, but in everything, from the development of urban spaces to the range of leisure, associational and cultural offers and the opportunities of activities in our forests and parks."

aarhus.dk/media/4157/boerne-og-ungepolitikken

3

The ambition of experiences and stays in green surroundings

The Aarhusians must be able to enjoy an active life in green surroundings. Aarhusians must be able to stay, do activities and play. We must ensure access for all the Municipality's citizens to nature and green areas. Therefore, there must be good access to nature – and easy passage between the city and the open countryside. Larger projects and plans within the peri-urban landscapes must support an active outdoor life and greater equality in health.

The goals of experiences and stays in green surroundings

- Even more Aarhusians must have easy access to nature and the green areas and be able to enjoy an active life in green surroundings.
- Green activities and outdoor opportunities must be located across the municipality, and there must be access and offers for everyone.
- When building and developing in peri-urban landscapes, outdoor life must be incorporated from the start, with green connections, forests, water and natural areas.
- When building and developing in peri-urban landscapes, outdoor life must be incorporated from the start, with green connections, forests, water and natural areas.
- In the public survey of the Aarhusians' opinion of what makes Aarhus a good city to live in, the city's nature and green areas is assessed as one of the two most important parameters.



Our priorities

- We are developing new connected areas that are particularly suitable for outdoor life, as in the project “True Forest for Everyone”.
- More sites in the open country are included as we become more Aarhusians, and the forests and beaches close to the city can no longer meet the need.
- We promote the use of the little-known forests and natural areas through information and improved accessibility, in consideration of particularly vulnerable locations.
- We inspire to excursions and outdoor life in Aarhus, via the new Nature Canon with 10 unique natural areas.
- We promote awareness of the green excursion sites that have facilities for natural and outdoor experiences.
- We provide space for good paths, with great respect for nature.
- We secure space for nature and outdoor life, so that it is still possible to experience magnificent landscapes and natural qualities, both in the open country and in the city.
- We support outdoor life and the recreational use of nature.



True Forest for Everyone – large areas are connected

The Danish Nature Agency and Aarhus Municipality own the land in the project area and stand together in joint development for the benefit of the users. The plan for the development of the True Forest area has been drawn up through extensive citizen involvement, and therefore the forest has been named: True Forest for Everyone. True Forest is an urban forest area that is six times larger than Riis Skov. It is unknown to the vast majority of Aarhusians. The value that it has for many people to be active, we can offer more if we incorporate accessibility, facilities and scope in our new forest areas close to the city. True Skov for Everyone will accommodate quiet zones, separate paths, parking, tables and benches, places to stay (shelters), places to picnic and toilet facilities. The forest area can be used by everyone, regardless of age, physical ability and living situation. The True Forest area will be suitable for use by various citizen-oriented rehabilitation and preventative health services via an interdisciplinary effort with the participation of several of the Municipality's departments.

4

Nature conservation in collaboration with citizens

The collaboration on nature conservation is done with many different actors, and both professional farmers and city dwellers carry out nature conservation. This takes place, for example:

- along the Aarhus River, in the meadows by Brabrand Lake, with farmers with livestock
- along the brink at Åbrinken, via the grazing association started by citizens who share the purchase of cows for grazing
- haying of meadows at Brabrand Lake together with the local youth section of The Danish Society for the Conservation of Nature (DN Aarhus Ung).

All measures clearly improve the natural state of the areas.

CO-CREATION ON GREEN PROJECTS

In order to succeed with the green ambitions, we must enter into even more collaborations with landowners in the open country, companies, interest groups/professional organizations and the Aarhusians. All contributions are important, so that we achieve the goal of the common, green and species-rich Aarhus that we can pass on to the next generations. We focus on nature, rich in species with high biodiversity, space for- and access to nature - and we must work together to fulfill the wishes in order to succeed.

Putting the citizens' ideas first

Several citizens are already contributing to the green development through green communities on public land areas, through tree planting in various local communities, improving habitats in streams and by developing their local area with their neighbours. Aarhus Municipality must continue to aid and assist when Aarhusians want to take matters into their own hands. Active citizenship is central, and there is a lot of experience to build on, so that citizens can help shape and take responsibility in their local area.

**Green projects**

Cooperation on green projects takes place, for example, with a landowner or a local community council. Green projects support our goal of more and better nature as well as community and social relations in relation to strengthening of mental health. The projects can be about nature maintenance and new natural areas as well as better access to nature. Among other things, the projects provide knowledge about how we improve biodiversity in forests and meadows and provide better access to nature experiences and outdoor activities.

Collaboration with active associations

There is an extensive collaboration with many active associations regarding the use of and access to nature. Mountain bikers, orienteering runners and horse riders, for example, contribute very concretely and directly. There is also cooperation on nature conservation with, for example, grazing associations and farmers, so that biodiversity is increased.

Pocket parks

The Aarhusians are good at spotting the small spaces in their local neighbourhoods which can relatively easily be transformed into small pocket parks that create great value locally. This does not solely apply to the publicly owned areas. Several homeowners' associations and housing associations also make common areas available to the public, and the residents put time and energy into transforming small grassless deserts into living areas, often with edible plants for the enjoyment of both people and animals.



The Green Council

Aarhus Municipality collaborate with The Green Council. The Council is an advisory board within nature protection and nature management. The Council's commitment ensures a broad and qualified dialogue and debate about the protection, use and development of nature in Aarhus Municipality and contributes to green planning and projects that promote nature and outdoor life.

Dialogue on location and co-financing of trees

Towards 2025, the Aarhusians, the business community and other partners will be involved in both the location and co-financing of even more trees.

More actors regarding communication on nature

We collaborate with established organisations, institutions and networks to convey the nature of Aarhus and at the same time support 'everyday communication'. A movement where citizens share nature experiences with each other. Many Aarhusians are preoccupied with this agenda.

It provides a different kind of nature experience than the more classic nature guide, and therefore we find that many new target groups are reached in this way. This applies, for example, to families with children and young people, where the joy of nature spreads among young people.

The new movement activates the Aarhusians and supports the citizens passionate about nature who wish to share their knowledge with others, including knowledge of more hidden places and nature experiences. This adds new, exciting aspects to what you can experience in Aarhus Municipality's green areas, and the Aarhusians are inspired to get out more and spend time in nature and discover new places in Aarhus.

Together for more forest

The City Council has entered into a cooperation with the Danish Nature Agency and Aarhus Water to plant forest. In order to reach the goal, even more actors are needed in this field. Therefore, the Municipality will work to ensure that citizens and businesses can contribute to an even greater extent to establish more forest. There are already collaborations with private companies and citizens who collect funds to plant new forest. Furthermore, we work to engage the citizens when the trees are to be planted in the ground, so that the local communities gain ownership, and in this way both use and care for the new forest areas.



4

The ambition of co-creation on green projects

We want to strengthen and expand the cooperation on green projects with citizens, landowners, green associations and organisations. We want to create a greener Aarhus together. Everyone must feel that they can and must take part in creating a greener Aarhus, and that we all have a shared responsibility to ensure that we succeed in creating a greener Aarhus.



The goals of co-creation on green projects

- Citizens, landowners, associations, organizations and companies must be engaged to an even greater extent in creating green, biodiverse and recreational areas in the city and in the open country.
- Many different citizen groups and viewpoints must be engaged in collaborations on green projects. This applies to both children, young people, the elderly and citizens with special needs, just as it applies to associations and organizations with various kinds of interests.
- Aarhusians must be able to easily share their enjoyment of nature and experiences with each other.

Our priorities

- We are open to all types of collaborations and we involve citizens, associations and organizations in nature and outdoor projects in order to increase the collective power around nature and greenery.
- We collaborate with research institutions such as the Aarhus School of Architecture, Aarhus University, Natural History Museum Aarhus and we participate in innovative development projects in the EU and nationally on nature-based solutions that promote 'a green municipality with more blue'.
- We collaborate with The Green Council and other outdoor and green organizations for more and better natural areas, more outdoor facilities and better accessibility to nature for everyone.
- We invite the Aarhusians to share their enjoyment of nature by holding various types of guided tours and events in nature.
- We use the interest in edible plants and creatures to focus on, among other things, biodiversity and the protection of nature.





**Technical and
Environmental
Administration**

City of Aarhus

Karen Blixens Boulevard 7

8220 Brabrand

