

## **Open Space Supplementary Planning Guidance update**

### **Summary**

1. The purpose of this report is to update members on the issues raised by members on the Draft Open Space SPG, which was discussed at Planning Committee on 24<sup>th</sup> May. It highlights the fact that the Council will shortly be undertaking a PPG17 Assessment of open space needs for the City of York (as required by paragraph 1 of PPG17), and outlines the relationship between the draft SPG and the PPG17 assessment.

### **Background**

2. At Full Council on 12<sup>th</sup> April 2005, members approved the 4<sup>th</sup> Set of Changes to the City of York Local Plan for development control purposes. This included policy L1c (Provision of New Open Space in Development), which required open space (either on-site provision or commuted sum payments) to be provided on residential developments of single dwellings upwards, and required open space to be provided in employment, retail and leisure developments of 2,500m<sup>2</sup> and above. The policy also placed greater emphasis on promoting accessibility of open space.
3. The Council has produced a draft SPG 'Open Space in New Developments – A Guide for Developers', to support policy L1c. Consultation on the SPG took place between 21<sup>st</sup> November 2005 and 13<sup>th</sup> January 2006. In total, 120 individual representations were received, from 27 people or organisations. A number of representations claimed that the Council should undertake a PPG17 type audit of open space within the City.
4. The results of the consultation, and subsequent proposed changes were reported to Planning Committee on 24<sup>th</sup> May 2006. At the meeting, members expressed concern regarding the proposed increase in maximum walking distance for outdoor sports facilities from 1,600m to 3,500m. They noted that whilst this approach was consistent with the Sport and Active Leisure Strategy, it was inconsistent with the approach taken in the draft Local Plan. It was argued that this change would result in a lack of provision in the central urban areas of the city, including for city centre schools, and an increase in car use, which would also impact on the city centre residents where car ownership was

lower. It was suggested that further information needed to be provided about the type of facility that may be available at 3,500m and that a further category of smaller, formal facilities may be required at 1,600m. It was agreed to refer these issues relating to accessibility to a meeting of the Local Development Framework Working Group, to which the Executive Member for Leisure and Culture Advisory Panel would also be invited.

## **Consultation**

5. Since the meeting took place on 24<sup>th</sup> May, officers have been in discussion with officers in the Lifelong Learning and Leisure sections of the Council with regard to the issues about the proposed walking distances to outdoor sports facilities, raised at the Planning Committee meeting of 24<sup>th</sup> May.

## **Options**

6. In parallel to the open space SPG, the Council is in the process of forming an evidence base, which will inform the production of the Local Development Framework (LDF). A PPG17 Assessment of local needs is a requirement, as stated in PPG17, and it was decided that in order to progress the LDF, the Council should commission consultants to undertake a PPG17 Assessment of open space needs. This assessment will include a strategy which will set robust standards based on assessments of need of existing facilities and form the basis for redressing quantitative and qualitative deficiencies in the area, through the planning process.
7. The local assessment will be used to inform the LDF Core Strategy, to facilitate better decision making as part of the development control process, to make it easier to negotiate Section 106 contributions, to provide essential evidence for use at appeals, and to influence the allocation of new residential and employment uses. However, the results of the Assessment could also be used to help inform the basis for the open space SPG, by providing an up to date and robust evidence base of current facilities and needs.
8. The scope of the PPG17 Assessment should include open space and outdoor sports and recreational facilities. These assessments must consider both urban and rural areas. The study is not to include any detailed assessment of indoor recreation facilities such as swimming pools or leisure / sports centres.
9. The methodology employed will closely follow advice contained in the good practice guide 'Assessing Needs and Opportunities: A Companion Guide to PPG17', and will include the following key elements:
  - Stage 1 – Assessment of Local Need;
  - Stage 2 – Identification of Existing Information;
  - Stage 3 – Identification of Local Standards;
  - Stage 4 – Assessment of Existing Open Space;
  - Stage 5 – Identify Options;
  - Stage 6 – Develop an Open Space Strategy

10. The Council is currently in the process of appointing consultants to undertake the study, following invitations to submit a tender by 25<sup>th</sup> July. It is envisaged that a consultant will be commissioned to begin the Study in August and a completed Final Strategy will be submitted to the Council in Autumn. However, the timescale will depend on the work programme and existing commitments of the chosen consultants appointed, and the timescale will be one of a number of determining factors regarding who will be appointed to undertake the Assessment.
11. Whilst such a study will provide invaluable background evidence to the Local Development Framework, it will also provide important information to support the work currently in progress to produce the Open Space SPG.
12. Given the current position on the existing draft Open Space SPG, the Council is therefore faced with 2 options:
  - Option 1: To reconsider the issues raised by Members at Planning Committee of 24<sup>th</sup> May 2006 following completion of the PPG17 Assessment of Open Space Needs and amend the SPG accordingly; or
  - Option 2: To address the issues raised by Members at the Planning Committee of 24<sup>th</sup> May 2006 before the completion of the PPG17 Assessment of Open Space Needs, and approve the draft SPG for development control purposes.

## **Analysis**

13. The following is a comparison of the options raised in paragraph 12, above.

Option 1: To reconsider the issues raised by Members at Planning Committee of 24<sup>th</sup> May 2006 following completion of the PPG17 Assessment of Open Space Needs and amend the SPG accordingly.

14. This option would involve the reconsideration of the issues raised by members at the 24<sup>th</sup> May Planning Committee in the light of the completion of the PPG17 Assessment, allowing the outcomes of the PPG17 Assessment to be incorporated in the SPG.

The advantages and disadvantages of this option are:

<b>Advantages</b>	<b>Disadvantages</b>
SPG would incorporate more up to date information and would reflect the open space requirement of the City more accurately	May require partial re-draft of elements of the SPG.
Would be more accountable	Would extend timescales relating to approval of SPG
Would be better integrated with the LDF process	

Option 2: To address the issues raised by Members at the Planning Committee of 24<sup>th</sup> May 2006 before the completion of the PPG17 Assessment of Open Space Needs, and approve the draft SPG for development control purposes.

15. This option would involve addressing the issues raised by Members at Planning Committee on 24<sup>th</sup> May 2006 and progressing the SPG independently of the PPG17 Assessment.

The advantages and disadvantages of this option are:

<b>Advantages</b>	<b>Disadvantages</b>
The SPG would be finally approved earlier.	The SPG would not incorporate any updated information regarding open space needs and standards
	It may soon be outdated, following the outcomes of the PPG17 Assessment of Needs.
	The SPG may not be integrated in to the LDF process.

16. Officers consider that due to the importance the PPG17 Study will have on the evidence base for the LDF, and that this information will also prove useful for informing the Open Space SPG, Option 1 would be the most appropriate one to undertake at this stage. It is therefore proposed that officers report back to members on the issues raised in the Planning Committee meeting of 24<sup>th</sup> May 2006, once the PPG17 Assessment has been undertaken.
17. In addition, the consultants undertaking the PPG17 Assessment may also be able to consider some of the issues raised by Members at Planning Committee on 24<sup>th</sup> May (as outlined in paragraph 4 of this report), as part of the PPG17 Assessment. If members wish, officers can ask the consultants whether this is feasible.

### **Corporate Priorities**

18. The option outlined above accords with the following Corporate Strategy Priorities:
- Improve the actual and perceived condition and appearance of the city's streets, housing estates and publicly accessible spaces;
  - Improve the health and lifestyles of people who live in York, in particular among groups whose levels of health are the poorest.

## Implications

19. The following implications have been assessed:
- **Financial** - *Cost of the PPG17 Assessment is likely to be circa £45 - £50k*
  - **Human Resources (HR)** - *None*
  - **Equalities** - *None*
  - **Legal** - *None*
  - **Crime and Disorder** - *None*
  - **Information Technology (IT)** - *None*
  - **Property** - *None*
  - **Other** - *None*

## Risk Management

20. In compliance with the Councils risk management strategy. There are no risks associated with the recommendations of this report.

## Recommendations

21. Members are asked:
- 1) To note the issues considered in this report; and
  - 2) To defer taking a report back to Planning Committee on the Open Space SPG until the outcomes of the PPG17 Assessment has been received; and  

Reason: To allow the results of the PPG17 Assessment to be incorporated into the Open Space SPG.
  - 3) To consider asking the consultants appointed to undertake the PPG17 Assessment whether they think any of the issues raised by Members at Planning Committee could be addressed as part the PPG17 Assessment.  

Reason: To allow the consultants undertaking the PPG17 Assessment to consider the relevant issues to make the PPG17 Assessment more comprehensive.

## Contact Details

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**Report Approved**

**Date** 15/8/06

**Specialist Implications Officers** - None

**Wards Affected:** *List wards or tick box to indicate all*

**All**

**For further information please contact the author of the report**

**Background Papers:**

*None*

**Annexes**

*None*