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## **Local Development Framework Working Group**

27<sup>th</sup> June 2007

Report of the Director of City Strategy

### **Open Space, Sport and Recreation Study – Evidence Base**

#### **Summary**

1. The purpose of this report is to seek Member's approval of the City of York Council - Draft Open Space, Sport and Recreation Study (attached as Annex A to this LDF Working Group Report – Appendices to the City of York Council - Draft Open Space, Sport and Recreation Study are located in the Members Library), which has been prepared for the Council by open space consultants, PMP. The study will form the open space, sport and recreation part of the Evidence Base for the Local Development Framework.

#### **Background**

2. PPG17 (Planning For Open Space, Sport and Recreation) requires local authorities to undertake a robust assessment of the existing and future needs of their communities for open space, sports and recreational facilities. The Guidance requires local authorities to undertake audits of existing open space, sports and recreational facilities and states that audits should consider both the quantitative and qualitative elements of such facilities.
3. The intention of carrying out the assessments is to allow local authorities to identify specific needs and quantitative or qualitative deficits or surpluses of open space, sports and recreational facilities in their area. The assessments should form a starting point for establishing an effective strategy for open space, sport and recreation at a local level. The report only covers outdoor recreation facilities, not indoor built facilities. A typology of the open spaces is included in Annex B to this Report.
4. In view of the importance of carrying out an assessment of open space, consultants PMP were commissioned to carry out an Open Space, Sport and Recreation Study for York, in line with the requirements of PPG17. The Study as a whole will form an important part of the evidence base for the LDF, feeding into the Core Strategy and Allocations DPDs and the Area Action Plans for York North West and the City Centre.
5. The Study is to be prepared in two phases:

- phase one (which is the subject of this report) provides an analysis of existing provision, derives local standards based on consultation and best practice and makes strategic recommendations; and
  - phase two will apply the provision standards which have been recommended in the first phase and identify areas deficient in accessibility, areas of quantitative deficiency or surplus and quality deficiencies on specific sites. The second phase will also draft policies and make recommendations for strategic priorities.
6. Phase one of the study has been completed in line with national policies, as required by PPG17, and is put forward for Member's approval in this report. Phase 2, which will follow after Members have approved the outcomes of Phase 1, will form further work, which will feed into the Core Strategy at the Preferred Options stage, but will also be of key importance to the Key Allocations and Proposals Map DPD and other DPD's to be produced in the future. It is intended that Phase 2 will commence almost immediately.

*Headline Results from the Study*

7. This first phase of the Study has identified the local need, audited local provision and suggested local provision standards for York. These local provision standards identify the quantity, quality and accessibility of each type of open space.

Quantity issues – key findings:

8. Quantity standards are set out in the report, which give recommendations for each typology, based on the quantity of open space per 1,000 population. These are derived from the assessment of the local community's perceptions of the adequacy of existing levels of provision.
9. The following table outlines the current provision, recommended provision and the proposed change in provision, based on ha per 1,000 population. These are shown for each typology. They are based on the outcomes of consultation and audit work undertaken by the consultants

Typology	Current provision (ha per 1,000 population)	Recommended provision (ha per 1,000 population)	Change in provision (per 1,000 population)
Parks and Gardens	0.16	0.16	No change
Natural and Semi Natural Provision	1.58	1.59	Increase 0.01
Amenity Green Space	1.27	1.29	Increase 0.02
Provision for Children	0.05	0.07	Increase 0.02
Provision for Teenagers	0.0043	0.04	Increase 0.035
Outdoor sports Facilities	1.94	1.95	Increase 0.01

Allotments	0.29	0.31	Increase 0.02
Cemeteries, Churchyards and Green Corridors	N/A	N/A	N/A

Quality issues – key findings:

10. The consultants have made the following recommendations for each typology, based on visions that are reflective of the aspirations and expectations of the community, derived from local consultations. The quality of current provision is outlined within the Consultants report for each typology.
- **City Parks** (eg. Rowntree Park): *“A welcoming, clean and litter free site providing a one-stop community facility which is safe and accessible to all and has a range of facilities and other types of open space within it. City Parks should be attractive, well designed and maintained, providing well-kept grass, flowers and trees, adequate lighting and other appropriate safety features, as well as suitable ancillary accommodation (including seating, toilets, litter bins and play facilities). Sites should promote the conservation of wildlife and the built heritage and provide links to the surrounding green infrastructure”*
  - **Local Parks** (eg. Hull Road Park): *“All Local Parks should be a facility serving the immediate needs of local people for active recreation. They should provide a welcoming, clean and litter free environment. Maintenance should focus on providing well-kept grass, flowers and trees and encourage wildlife to flourish with the use of varied vegetation through appropriate management. Community Leisure Officers should work with other organisations and the community to provide a hub of interest, activities and local events. Good quality and appropriate ancillary facilities (play areas, litter-bins, dog-bins and benches) should be provided to encourage greater use. ”*
  - **Natural & Semi Natural provision:** *“A clean and litter free site with clear and obvious pathways that provide opportunities to link other open spaces together and where appropriate link to the outlying countryside. Sites should encourage wildlife conservation, biodiversity and environmental awareness and contain appropriate natural features. Litterbins, dog bins, benches and picnic areas should be provided where possible and there should be a clear focus on balancing recreational and wildlife needs, whilst ensuring public access. Community involvement through management, maintenance and promotion of these sites should be maximised. ”*
  - **Amenity Green Space:** *“A clean and well-maintained green space site that is accessible to all. Sites should have appropriate ancillary facilities (dog and litter bins etc), pathways and landscaping in the right places providing a safe secure site with a spacious outlook that enhances the appearance of the local environment and provides a safe area for young people to meet. Larger sites should be suitable for informal play opportunities and should be enhanced to*

*encourage the site to become a community focus, while smaller sites should at the least provide an important visual amenity function.”*

- **Provision for Children:** *“A well designed clean site of sufficient size to provide a mix of well-maintained and imaginative formal equipment and an enriched play environment in a safe and convenient location. Equipped play spaces should be fun and exciting and should have clear boundaries with dog free areas and include appropriate ancillary accommodation such as seating, litter bins and toilets in the locality of larger sites. Sites should also comply with appropriate national guidelines for design and safety and safeguard residential amenity of neighbouring land users. The site should also be accessible to all”.*
- **Provision for Teenagers:** *“A well designed high quality site that provides a meeting place for young people, encompassing the needs of all users with varied formal and informal equipment/space. The site should be located in a safe environment that is accessible to all, without compromising neighbouring land users. The focus should be on providing a well-maintained, clean and litter free area with appropriate lighting and shelter, promoting a sense of community ownership. Facilities should be developed through extensive consultation with the local community at all stages of the process”*
- **Outdoor Sports Facilities:** *“A well-planned, clean and litter free sports facility that sits in harmony with its surroundings. The site should be well maintained to an appropriate match play standard, with good grass coverage and well-drained quality surfaces. Appropriate ancillary facilities should be provided at sites with consideration given to providing toilets, changing rooms, car parking, and meeting places. The site should be managed appropriately ensuring community safety and provide a local amenity that is close to people’s homes, encouraging residents to participate in physical activity”*
- **Allotments:** *“A well-kept, well managed and secure site that encourages sustainable development, bio-diversity, healthy living and education with appropriate ancillary facilities (eg provision of water and toilets) to meet local needs, clearly marked pathways and good quality soils. The site should be spacious providing appropriate access for all and should be promoted to ensure local community awareness”.*
- **Cemeteries and churchyards:** *“A clean and well-maintained site providing long-term burial capacity, an area of quiet contemplation and a sanctuary for wildlife. Sites should have clear pathways, varied vegetation and landscaping and provide appropriate ancillary accommodation (e.g. facilities for flowers litter bins and seating.) Access to sites should be enhanced by parking facilities and by public transport routes where possible, particularly in urban areas”*
- **Green Corridors:** *“Linear open spaces should be clean and litter-free, safe and convenient corridors with clear pathways, linking major residential areas, open spaces, urban centres, leisure facilities and employment areas, that*

*promote sustainable methods of transport. Appropriate ancillary facilities such as litter, dog bins and seating in appropriate places with signage to and within the sites should be featured to encourage access for all. The corridor should also seek to encourage biodiversity and wildlife habitats, enabling the movement of both wildlife and people between open spaces, linking in specifically with natural areas of open space.”*

Accessibility issues – key findings:

11. Accessibility standards are set out in the form of a maximum walking time, where walking is considered to be the most appropriate mode of transport, and a drive time where driving would be appropriate. The standards reflect the Council’s strategic vision of promoting travel by mean other than by car.

The following table gives a maximum walking time to travel to the type of open space.

Typology	Maximum walking time to travel to facility
Parks and Gardens	City Parks: 20 minute walk time Local Parks: 15 minute walk time
Natural and Semi Natural Provision	15 minute walk time
Amenity Green Space	5 minute walk time
Provision for Children	10 minute walk time
Provision for Teenagers	15 minutes walk time
Outdoor Sports Facilities	15 minute walk time to local outdoor sports (grass pitches, tennis and bowling greens):  20 minute drive (8km) to synthetic turf Pitches and golf courses.
Allotments	15 minute walk time
Cemeteries, Churchyards and Green Corridors	N/A

*Implications for the Local Development Framework*

12. The Open Space, Sport and Recreation Study as a whole will form a vital part of the evidence base for the emerging Local Development Framework. It will form the starting point for establishing an effective planning approach to open space, sport and outdoor recreation. Setting robust local standards based on assessments of need of existing facilities and will enable the Local Authority to redress quantitative and qualitative deficiencies in the Local Authority area through the planning process.
13. The LDF Core Strategy will set the overall strategic approach to addressing any deficiencies in open space provision. To do this the consultation at the Issues and Option stage will explore the importance attached to quantity, quality and accessibility within the context of the different types of open space

identified. Within this broader policy the LDF Allocations DPD may seek to address specific deficiencies through the allocation of sites.

14. Phase one of the Study will directly inform the Core Strategy 'Second Issues and Options Report', and will be critical in terms of considering what criteria should be taken into account when determining the overall principles for addressing deficiencies in open space. It will inform the discussion of key issues relating to open space by providing information on needs and providing an assessment of the quantity, quality and accessibility of open space, as well as recommending local standards.
15. Phase two of the Study will provide the detailed information required to inform the Preferred Options of the Core Strategy and the Issues and Options Allocations DPD and the Area Action Plans for York North West and the City Centre.

## **Consultation**

16. Public consultation has formed a key aspect of the Open Space, Sport and Recreation Study, with a number of public consultation exercises, focussing on a number of target audiences, at various stages in the Assessment. These are summarised below:
  - questionnaires sent to a sample of 5,000 residents across the City;
  - questionnaires to Parish Councils;
  - school pupil IT based questionnaire survey;
  - consultation with Council officers;
  - consultation with interest groups / external agencies, sports clubs / outdoor leisure providers, adjacent local authorities;
  - workshops with local interest groups;
  - advertising via local media;
  - drop in sessions / exhibitions at Parliament Street, and Tesco Askham Bar & Clifton Moor;
  - officer attendance and / or displays at Ward Committee meetings;
  - response text messaging service;
  - e-mail response service.
17. The above consultation methods have helped ensure that a significant proportion of residents and interest groups / organisations across the City have been involved in the consultation process. This has enabled PMP to clearly identify the local need for open space.

## **Options**

18. Members have two options relating to the Open Space, Sport and Recreation Study:

**Option 1:** To approve the Open Space, Sport and Recreation Study, attached as Annex A, for publication as part of the Local Development Framework evidence base;

**Option 2:** To seek amendments to the Open Space, Sport and Recreation Study through recommendations of the LDF Working Group, or request further work from PMP.

## **Analysis**

19. The Open Space, Sport and Recreation Study forms an important part of the evidence base for the LDF. It will be the primary evidence used to guide the policy issues regarding open space provision in the City. Given the significance of this Study it is important that it is approved as part of the evidence base to support the progress of the Local Development Framework, both at the Core Strategy Issues and Options 2 stage and also within subsequent detailed policy documents.
20. Delaying the approval of the Open Space, Sport and Recreation Study could delay the Core Strategy Issues and Options 2 consultation, which is due to take place during July and August. Consequently, there would be a significant risk that this would delay further stages of the LDF, since the Core Strategy will provide the overall planning policy framework to inform the other Development Plan Documents.
21. Members are therefore asked to approve Phase one of the Open Space, Sport and Recreation Study, as part of the evidence base for the Local Development Framework.

## **Corporate Priorities**

22. 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**

23. The following implications have been assessed.
  - **Financial** – *None*.
  - **Human Resources (HR)** – *None*.
  - **Equalities** - *None*

- **Legal** - *None*
- **Crime and Disorder** - *None*
- **Information Technology (IT)** - *None*
- **Property** - *None*
- **Other**

## **Risk Management**

24. There are no identified risks in this proposal

## **Recommendations**

25. That Members:

- (i) approve, subject to the recommendations of this Working Group, the proposed Open Space, Sport and Recreation Study, included as Annex A to this report, for publication as part of the Local Development Framework evidence base.

Reason: So that the Open Space, Sport and Recreation Study can be used as part of the Local Development Framework evidence base.

- (ii) delegate to the Director of City Strategy, in consultation with the Executive Member for City Strategy, the making of any other necessary changes arising from the recommendation of the LDF Working Group, prior to its publication as part of the Local Development Framework evidence base.

Reason: So that any recommended changes can be incorporated into the Open Space, Sport and Recreation Study.



## Contact Details

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**Report Approved**

**Date** 18/6/07

**Specialist Implications Officer(s)** *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**

Annex A): City of York Council – Draft Open Space, Sport and Recreation Study (Main Report)

Annex B): Typology of open space: