

## **2. Undertaking the study**

### **Introduction**

- 2.1 This study has been undertaken in accordance with PPG17 and its Companion Guide. PPG17 emphasises the importance of making decisions based on local needs and aspirations as opposed to following national trends and guidelines.
- 2.2 PPG17 encourages local authorities to plan for the future and states that robust assessments of the existing and future needs of their communities with regards open space, sports and recreational facilities should be undertaken.
- 2.3 The Companion Guide indicates that the four guiding principles in undertaking a local assessment are:
- (i) understanding that local needs will vary according to socio-demographic and cultural characteristics
  - (ii) recognising that the provision of good quality and effective open space relies on effective planning but also on creative design, landscape management and maintenance
  - (iii) considering that delivering high quality and sustainable open spaces may depend much more on improving and enhancing existing open space rather than new provision
  - (iv) taking into account that the value of open space will be greater when local needs are met. It is essential to consider the wider benefits that sites generate for people, wildlife and the environment.
- 2.4 Paragraph 7 states that “local authorities should use the information gained from their assessments of needs and opportunities to set locally derived standards for the provision of open space, sports and recreational facilities in their areas”. PPG17 sets out the Government’s belief that national standards are inappropriate as they do not take into account the demographics of an area, the specific needs of residents and the extent of built development. Achievement of national standards in a dense urban area such as Manchester City is particularly challenging. Setting local standards through the PPG17 process therefore ensures that the provision of open space, sport and recreation facilities is tailored to the needs and aspirations of local residents as well as the characteristics and environment of Manchester.
- 2.5 The policy guidance sets out priorities for local authorities in terms of:
- assessing needs and opportunities
  - undertaking audits of open space, sport and recreational facilities
  - setting local standards
  - maintaining an adequate supply of open space
  - planning for new open space.



**Types of open space**

- 2.6 The overall definition of open space within the government planning guidance is:  
*“all open space of public value, including not just land, but also areas of water such as rivers, canals, lakes and reservoirs which offer important opportunities for sport and recreation and can also act as a visual amenity”.*
- 2.7 PPG17 identifies ten typologies including nine types of green space and one category of urban open space. It states that local authorities when preparing assessments of needs and audits of existing open space and recreation facilities should use these typologies, or variations of it.
- 2.8 In order to best reflect the types of provision in Manchester, changes were made to the typologies detailed in PPG17, specifically:
- Parks and Gardens was subdivided into two typologies (city parks and local parks) to reflect the different sizes of facility
  - Provision for children and young people was subdivided into provision for children (up to 12) and provision for young people (over 12) in order to reflect that the presence of a facility for children does not necessarily negate the need for a facility for teenagers
  - Open space in the City centre has been considered separately in some typologies in order to take into account the different characteristics of this area in comparison to the remainder of the City.
- 2.9 Table 2.1 sets out the types of open space included within this study:

**Table 2.1 Typologies of open space, sport and recreation facilities**

Type	Definition	Primary purpose
<b>City parks</b>	City parks are large, regionally significant facilities that contain a variety of facilities and may have one or more of the other types of open space within them. For example, Heaton Park, Wythenshawe Park.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• informal recreation</li> <li>• community events.</li> </ul>
<b>Neighbourhood / local parks</b>	Includes urban parks and formal gardens. Neighbourhood parks serve the local community and are smaller in size than City parks. Parks usually contain a variety of facilities, and may have one of more of the other types of open space within them. Eg Didsbury Park.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• informal recreation</li> <li>• community events.</li> </ul>
<b>Natural and semi-natural green spaces</b>	Includes publicly accessible woodlands, urban forestry, scrub, grasslands (eg downlands, commons, meadows), wetlands and wastelands eg Medlock Valley.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• wildlife conservation</li> <li>• biodiversity</li> <li>• environmental education &amp; awareness.</li> </ul>

## SECTION 2 – UNDERTAKING THE STUDY

Type	Definition	Primary purpose
<b>Amenity green space</b>	Most commonly but not exclusively found in housing areas. Includes informal recreation green spaces and village greens.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>informal activities close to home or work</li> <li>children's play</li> <li>enhancement of the appearance of residential or other areas.</li> </ul>
<b>Provision for children</b>	Areas designed primarily for play and social interaction involving children below aged 12. While it is recognised that a wide variety of opportunities for children exist (including play schemes and open spaces not specifically designed for this purpose), as per PPG17, this typology considers only those spaces specifically designed as equipped play facilities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>children's play.</li> </ul>
<b>Provision for young people</b>	Areas designed primarily for play and social interaction involving young people aged 12 and above. While it is recognised that a wide variety of opportunities for young people exist (including youth clubs and open spaces not specifically designed for this purpose, as per PPG17, this typology considers only those spaces specifically designed for use by young people eg: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>teenage shelters</li> <li>skateboard parks</li> <li>BMX tracks</li> <li>Multi Use Games Areas.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>activities or meeting places for young people.</li> </ul>
<b>Outdoor sports facilities</b>	Natural or artificial surfaces either publicly or privately owned used for sport and recreation. Includes school playing fields. These include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>outdoor sports pitches</li> <li>tennis courts and bowls greens</li> <li>golf courses</li> <li>athletics tracks</li> <li>playing fields (including school playing fields)</li> <li>water sports.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>facilities for formal sports participation.</li> </ul>

Type	Definition	Primary purpose
<b>Allotments</b>	Opportunities for those people who wish to do so to grow their own produce as part of the long-term promotion of sustainability, health and social inclusion. May also include urban farms. This typology does not include private gardens.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>growing vegetable, fruit and flowers (drop root crops).</li> </ul>
<b>Cemeteries &amp; churchyards</b>	Cemeteries and churchyards including disused churchyards and other burial grounds.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>burial of the dead</li> <li>quiet contemplation.</li> </ul>
<b>Green corridors</b>	Includes towpaths along canals and riverbanks, cycleways, rights of way and disused railway lines.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>walking, cycling or horse riding</li> <li>leisure purposes or travel</li> <li>opportunities for wildlife migration.</li> </ul>
<b>Civic spaces</b>	Hard surfaced areas located within town or city centres for example Albert Square.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>community events</li> <li>setting for civic buildings</li> </ul>

2.10 Although not a type of open space, PPG17 also highlights the importance of considering the provision of indoor sports facilities. The provision of sports halls, swimming pools, indoor tennis, indoor bowls, squash and cycling is discussed within Section 9 of this report.

**PPPG 17 – five step process**

2.11 The PPG17 Companion Guide sets out a five-step logical process for undertaking a local assessment of open space, specifically;

- Step 1 – identifying local needs
- Step 2 – auditing local provision
- Step 3 – setting provision standards
- Step 4 – applying provision standards
- Step 5 – drafting policies – recommendations and strategic priorities.

2.12 Although presented as a linear process above, in reality, steps 1 and 2 were undertaken in simultaneously. The tasks included within each step are detailed below.

**Step 1 - identifying local needs**

2.13 PPG17 states that community consultations are essential to identify local attitudes to existing provision and local expectations for additional or improved provision. The guidance relies less on the implementation of national standards and places increased emphasis on local needs.

## **SECTION 2 – UNDERTAKING THE STUDY**

---

2.14 A balance of statistical and subjective consultations was carried out in order to ensure that a wide variety of opinions were heard. Subjective consultation provides an opportunity to test the key themes arising from the statistical evidence.

2.15 Consultations carried out across Manchester included:

- household questionnaires
- neighbourhood ‘drop in’ sessions
- internet survey for children and young people
- consultation with external agencies
- workshop sessions
- one-to-one consultations with Council officers.

2.16 Background is provided on each of the key elements of the consultation in the paragraphs that follow.

### **Household survey**

2.17 The household survey provides an opportunity for randomly selected households to comment on the quality, quantity and accessibility of existing open spaces as well as to identify their aspirations for future provision.

2.18 6000 questionnaires were distributed to households to capture the views of both users and non-users of open spaces. Residents were randomly selected from the electoral register.

2.19 Random distribution of questionnaires to a geographically representative sample (based on the populations living each of the identified analysis areas) of households ensures that representatives from all age groups, ethnic groups and gender were given the opportunity to participate. In order to promote an even response rate across ages and gender, residents with the next birthday in each household were asked to complete the questionnaire. A copy of the household survey and accompanying covering letter can be found in Appendix B.

2.20 519 postal surveys were returned completed to a satisfactory standard. Obtaining more than 400 responses means that the results are accurate to +/- 5% at the 95% confidence interval. This data source therefore provides a reliable evidence base that can be used as the basis for setting standards.

### **Neighbourhood ‘drop in’ sessions**

2.21 Neighbourhood ‘drop in’ sessions were held in

- Asda, Sport City
- Asda, Harpurhey
- Asda, Hulme
- Sainsburys, Fallowfield
- Wythenshawe Forum
- Piccadilly Gardens
- Albert Square

## **SECTION 2 – UNDERTAKING THE STUDY**

---

2.22 These sessions were advertised to the public via the local press and intended to provide an informal opportunity for residents to give their views on open space, sport and recreation issues.

2.23 Local interest groups were also formally invited to the sessions.

### **Internet survey for children and young people**

2.24 Although consultation with young people and children is traditionally difficult, it is important to understand the views of this large sector of the community. Children are important users of open space, sport and recreation facilities.

2.25 Two questionnaires were therefore posted on the internet: one targeting pupils of a primary school age and one aimed at young people. All schools within the Manchester City Council boundaries were notified of the website address and asked to encourage their pupils to complete the questionnaires.

2.26 327 responses were received in total.

### **Workshops**

2.27 Workshops were carried out in six locations across the City. These sessions were designed to provide community and user groups with an opportunity to input into the study and provide detailed opinions on the current and future provision of open space, sport and recreation facilities in Manchester.

2.28 Sessions were held at:

- Union Chapel, Fallowfield
- Abraham Moss Leisure Centre, Crumpsall
- Wythenshawe Forum
- Sporting Edge – East Manchester
- Town Hall (two sessions).

2.29 Invitees to these sessions included:

- |  |                          |
|--|--------------------------|
| • Bowling groups                             | • Friends of park groups |
| • Allotment societies                        | • Youth clubs            |
| • Residents and tenants associations         | • Sport clubs            |
| • Football leagues using park playing fields | • Play scheme providers  |
| • Green space user groups                    | • Ward coordinators      |
|  | • CN4M Network.          |

### **External agencies questionnaire**

- 2.30 Questionnaires were distributed to key regional and local agencies with the aim of obtaining their views and ensuring that local standards dovetail with local and regional priorities.

### **Internal officers**

- 2.31 Consultations with Council officers were held in order to understand the work, focus and key priorities of the Council and to provide a detailed strategic and practical overview. An online survey was also distributed to all Council employees with computer access.

### **Step 2 - auditing local provision**

- 2.32 PPG17 states that audits of provision should encompass all existing open space and sport and recreation facilities irrespective of ownership. The logic for this is that all forms of provision can contribute to meeting local needs.
- 2.33 A detailed audit of provision of open space was carried out across Manchester City Council boundaries. The foundations of the audit were information held by the City Council. This information was refined through a desk based exercise using detailed aerial photography as well as street based mapping.
- 2.34 The multi functionality of open space presents a challenge. In order to address this issue, all spaces have been classified by their primary purpose. This ensures that all spaces are counted only once, but does not negate the need to consider the relationships between different types of open space as part of the study.
- 2.35 Additionally, some types of open space are located within a larger space. Where this occurs and the primary purpose is clearly defined, these sites are considered to be two separate sites and have been subdivided. A good example is the location of a children's play area within a park. It is important that these sites are considered separately as they have different roles and fall into different typologies.
- 2.36 In line with PPG17, grass verges and farmland are excluded from consideration. In agreement with the City Council, sites where planning permission has already been granted or development briefs have already been released are excluded.
- 2.37 Over 1,300 sites were identified during the audit. Each site was classified into the relevant typology and site assessments were then carried out at each site.
- 2.38 The audit was checked thoroughly by Council officers from a variety of departments in order to ensure accuracy. While every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of the audit, it must be noted that the omission of a site does not necessarily mean that it is not considered to be green space and that policies relating to green space are not applicable. Updating the audit will be an ongoing process and the audit will be constantly refined in response to changes in the character of the City.
- 2.39 As well as considering the quantity of open space, sport and recreation provision, it is also important to evaluate the quality of existing sites. Audits of quality are particularly important as they allow local authorities to identify potential for increased use through better design, management and maintenance.

2.40 Sites were evaluated against a matrix enabling comparisons between sites in the same typology and across typologies. For consistency purposes, all sites were assessed by the same person. Sites were rated against the following categories:

- accessibility
- quality
- wider benefits.

2.41 The site assessment process resulted in an overall quality and accessibility score for each site in addition to ratings for each individual factor. The site assessment sheets used are contained within Appendix C.

### **Steps 3 and 4 - setting and applying provision standards**

2.42 PPG17 states that open space standards should be set locally and recommends that national standards should not be used to assess local circumstances.

2.43 Local authorities use information gained from the assessment of needs and opportunities (stage 1) to set local standards for the provision of open space, sport and recreational facilities. In order to ensure that the recommended local standards are directly representative of local needs in Manchester, the standards have been derived directly from the findings of the consultations as well as the analysis of existing provision.

2.44 PPG17 recommends that local standards should include:

- quantitative elements (how much new provision may be needed)
- a qualitative component (against which to measure the need for enhancement of existing facilities)
- accessibility (including distance thresholds and consideration of the cost of using a facility).

2.45 Table 2.2 below briefly summarises the process that has been adopted for setting local standards. Standards were set during a workshop that was attended by representatives from a range of Council departments and the local community.



**Table 2.2 – The setting standards process**

<b>Process Stage</b>	<b>Methodology</b>
<b>National standards</b>	Analysis of any existing national standards for each typology. These are usually provided by national organisations eg Fields in Trust for playing pitches. It is important to ensure that national standards are taken into account as part of determination of local standards.
<b>Existing local standards</b>	Consideration of existing local standards for each typology that are currently applied by the Council. These include standards set out in the UDP and in other adopted strategies.
<b>Current provision (quantity standards only)</b>	Assessment of the current quantity of provision within the local authority area as a whole and within each of the analysis areas.
<b>Benchmarking</b>	Figures detailing local standards set by PMP for other open space projects to provide a benchmark.
<b>Consultation (household survey)</b>	Consideration of the findings of the household survey with regards the provision of each type of open space. This analysis provides a robust indication (at the City wide 95% confidence level) of public perception of the existing provision and aspirations for future provision of all different types of open spaces.
<b>Consultation comments</b>	Results from qualitative consultations are used to test the key themes emerging from the statistical evidence base and to determine issues of priority importance to residents. These feed in to the standards set.
<b>PMP recommendation</b>	PMP recommendation of a local standard. The standard is based on an assessment of the local community need and will be in the form of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• quantity – x hectares per 1000 population</li> <li>• accessibility – a distance threshold in metres</li> <li>• quality – a list of essential and desirable features.</li> </ul>
<b>PMP justification</b>	Full justifications for the recommended local standard based on qualitative and quantitative consultations are provided for each typology.

2.46 A brief explanation of the purpose of setting each type of standard is set out below.

**Quantity**

2.47 The open space audit gives an understanding of the quantity of provision for each type of open space in each area of the City. This level of detail enables the calculation of the amount (hectares) of each type of open space per 1,000 population.

2.48 The overall aim of the quantity assessment is to:

- provide an understanding of the adequacy of existing provision for each type of open space in the City
- establish areas of the City suffering from deficiency of provision of each type of open space.

- provide a guide to developers as to the amount of open space expected in conjunction with new development.

2.49 This assessment measures the quantity of provision against the current population (451,900). Consideration is also given to the amount of growth that can take place in each area without provision falling below the minimum recommended standard.

### **Accessibility**

2.50 Accessibility is a key criterion for open space sites. Without good access, the provision of high quality open space would be of limited value. The overall aim of accessibility standards is to identify:

- how accessible sites are
- how far people are willing to travel to reach open space
- areas of the City that are deficient in provision (identified through the application of local standards).

2.51 Similar to quantity standards, accessibility standards should be derived from an understanding of community views, particularly with regards to the maximum distance that members of the public are willing to travel.

2.52 Accessibility standards are set in the form of distance thresholds (ie the maximum distance that typical users can reasonably be expected to travel to each type of provision using different modes of transport). Application of these standards will then facilitate the identification of areas where residents do not have appropriate access to facilities. PPG17 suggests that open spaces should be accessible by environmentally friendly forms of transport such as walking, cycling and public transport. Access by the public transport system is of particular importance in Manchester in light of low levels of car ownership coupled with high instances of deprivation. Other issues relating to access (such as cost) are also considered where appropriate.

### **Quality**

2.53 The quality and value of open space are fundamentally different and can sometimes be completely unrelated. Two examples of this are:

- a high quality open space is provided but is completely inaccessible. Usage is therefore restricted and as a result the value of the site to the public is limited
- a low quality open space may be used every day by the public or have significant wider benefits such as biodiversity or educational use and therefore has a high value despite qualitative issues.

2.54 The overall aim of a quality assessment should be to identify deficiencies in quality and key quality factors that need to be improved within:

- the geographical areas of the City
- specific types of open space.

2.55 The quality standards set as part of the study are intended to provide information on the key features of open space that are important to local residents. Sites are then assessed and given a score for a range of factors including:

## **SECTION 2 – UNDERTAKING THE STUDY**

---

- cleanliness and maintenance
  - security and safety
  - vegetation
  - ancillary accommodation.
- 2.56 Each element of quality is rated on a scale of very good (5 points) to poor (1 point) and a total percentage score is then calculated. Where an element of provision (such as toilets) is considered to be not applicable, this will not be taken into account in the calculation of the percentage score.
- 2.57 These scores are then weighted (multiplied either by 4, 3, 2 or 1) to reflect the importance of each factor for each type of open space. These weightings are derived from the findings of the consultation. Factors that are given higher weightings are perceived to be the most important and to have the largest impact on the quality of the site according to local residents. Factors with a higher weighting will therefore influence the total score more than those with lower weightings.
- 2.58 Full details of the linkages between the quality assessments and the site visits undertaken can be found in Appendix G.
- 2.59 Following the calculation of the total scores achieved during site visits, sites can then be benchmarked against each other. The quality of existing open space, sport and recreation facilities will be evaluated in the later sections of this report.

### **Step 5 – drafting policies - recommendations and strategic priorities**

- 2.60 The application of the local standards enables the identification of deficiencies in terms of accessibility, quality and quantity and also enables analysis of the spatial distribution of unmet need.
- 2.61 In accordance with the PPG17 Companion Guide, a strategic framework or Open Space, Sport and Recreation Strategy for the planning, delivery, management and monitoring of open space, sport and recreation facilities should have four basic components, specifically:
- geographical areas where existing provision is protected
    - where the existing level of provision is below or the same as the recommended quantity standard, sites should be protected. Sites of high value to the community should also be protected
  - areas where existing provision should be enhanced
    - there are two discrete instances where existing provision may be in need of enhancement. In areas where there is a quantitative deficiency of provision but no accessibility issues the Council may wish to increase the capacity of existing provision. Alternatively, in areas where facilities or spaces do not meet the relevant quality standards, enhancements will be required. Site assessments will inform qualitative improvements

- areas where existing provision should be relocated or redesignated
  - in order to meet local needs more effectively or make better overall use of land it may be necessary to relocate or re-designate some existing sites
- areas where new provision should be considered
  - new sites should be located either in areas within the accessibility catchments of existing provision but where there is a quantitative deficiency or in areas outside of catchments. More generally, the Council should deliver a plan led approach to significant housing growth and open space and should test potential housing locations against the findings of the open space, sport and recreation study. The findings of this study should also be used to guide the levels of contribution required for each type of open space.

2.62 The recommendations contained within the report are based on the findings of the application of the local standards for each typology and in the specific geographic areas. An example of a general recommendation is provided below:

**PG1**

Given the low number of sites within the City, all park and garden sites should be afforded protection from development.

2.63 In each of the City's regeneration areas, short, medium and long term priorities are also recommended.

**Cross Border Movement**

- 2.64 While the assessment evaluates only those sites falling within Manchester City Council boundaries, sites in neighbouring authorities also play a role in meeting the needs of residents where these sites fall within the identified catchment area for each type of open space. For example, residents living in the western edge of Wythenshawe may travel into Trafford to use some open space, sport and recreation facilities.
- 2.65 A degree of cross border travel in both directions (in and out of Manchester) is assumed within this study as residents do not stop at local authority boundaries.
- 2.66 Where deficiencies in open space have been identified, where this is (or may be) met by a space located in a neighbouring authority this should be taken into account in prioritising the creation of new open spaces.
- 2.67 Relating to this, while detailed analysis has not been undertaken on cross boundary movement as part of this study, any planning applications which are located close to a boundary should take into account the impact of spaces located over the boundary in the neighbouring authority.
- 2.68 The recommendations and key issues raised will inform the direction of the local development framework as well as other strategy documents across the City.