

3. Strategic context

- 3.1 This strategic review provides background on the national, regional and local picture relevant to open space, sport and recreation facilities. The Council has provided all documents reviewed within this Section of the report. Whilst this review is not exhaustive it provides details on the context considered important within this study.
- 3.2 For the purposes of this study, Planning Policy Guidance Note 17 and the Companion Guide, Assessing Needs and Opportunities are the key overarching documents. All documents reviewed within this report influence the provision of facilities in Manchester and the strategic priorities of the Council.
- 3.3 In addition to PPG17, there are numerous other national documents and agencies that shape the strategic context to open spaces, sport and recreation facilities across the country and as such influence the provision of facilities and the findings of this report.
- 3.4 Appendix D sets out the national strategic context, including Living Spaces: Cleaner, Safer Greener which was produced by the ODPM in 2002 and led to the creation of CABI Space, a national government agency which has the overall aim “*to bring excellence to the design, management and maintenance of parks and public space in towns and cities*”.
- 3.5 The following sets out the regional and local strategic context for Manchester considering overarching documents and their relationship to this study. Documents specific to one type of open space will be reviewed within typology specific Sections 4 – 13.

Regional policy documents

The Regional Spatial Strategy for the North West of England (formerly Regional Planning Guidance (RPG 11) September 2008

- 3.6 The Plan sets out the scale, priorities and broad locations for future development across the region – providing a framework for where and how much development should take place. It covers a broad range of issues including housing, retail and the environment, and includes the Regional Transport Strategy. Ultimately the document seeks to ensure the sustainable growth and development of the North West. Manchester is identified as one of the two key regional centres in the North West and is home to the North West’s largest sub regional economy.
- 3.7 The objectives of specific relevance to this open space study are:
- to develop urban, rural and coastal communities as safe, sustainable, attractive and distinctive places to live, work and visit
 - to reduce economic, environmental, educational, health and other social inequalities between North West communities
 - to protect and enhance the region’s built and natural environmental assets, its coastal areas and unique culture and heritage
 - providing the Council with evidence to make informed decision on sustained open space.

- 3.8 This PPG17 study for Manchester will aid in the development of communities by providing sustainable open space. The enhanced quality of open spaces will also create attractive and distinctive areas across the City that meet local needs and are equitably distributed.
- 3.9 The Draft Regional Spatial Strategy sets out the anticipated scale of housing development across the North West, stating specifically that:
- the target annual completion rate for Manchester would be 3500 (2003-2021)
 - this would result in an overall increase in the number of dwellings by 63000 over the RSS period. It is important to ensure that any growth in population is supported by appropriate open space provision.
- 3.10 The study will inform the enhancement of Manchester's open spaces and protect natural environment assets.

The North West Regional Economic Strategy 2006 (Draft)

- 3.11 In this strategy, Manchester is identified as a key driver in City-regional growth. Improving the environment is one of three key factors in achieving the quality of life vision.

'North West On The Move': The North West Plan for Sport and Physical Activity 2004 – 2008

- 3.12 North West On The Move is the Regional Sport & Physical Activity Plan. Its formulation has involved national, regional and local consultations with key stakeholders, agencies and organisations across the private, public and voluntary sectors that fully understand the strategic issues and local needs of the region. It has two main aims:
- to significantly increase participation in sport & physical activity
 - to widen access and reduce inequality in participation amongst priority groups.
- 3.13 The plan recognizes that the target to increase participation by one per cent year on year, leading to 50% participation across the north west by 2020, can only be achieved with shared commitment from all partners to deliver the plan across the region.
- 3.14 These partners include sporting and non-sporting organisations that have a role to play in sport from a participation perspective and other socio-economic perspectives.

- 3.15 The plan aims to achieve the seven key outcomes set out within the national Sport England Framework for delivery.
- increase participation in club and community sport
 - improve levels of sport performance
 - widen access to sport
 - improve the health and well being of people through sport
 - create safer and stronger communities through sport
 - improve education through PE and sport
 - benefit the economy through sport.
- 3.16 It identifies six key interventions including:
- building the Delivery System
 - building capaCity
 - marketing sport
 - building infrastructure
 - improving performance
 - strategic planning.
- 3.17 Investment in sport in the North West will be profiled through these key interventions to achieve the required outcomes. The priority groups identified within the target for the North West are:
- women and girls – with participation rates 14% less than those for men
 - black and ethnic minorities – who participate 6% less than the average
 - people with disabilities – with participation rates almost half the average
 - people on low incomes – likely to participate one third of the average.
- 3.18 This open space, sport and recreation study will help the Council to identify priorities for improved sport and recreation provision across the City.

Local strategic documents

- 3.19 Local strategic documents have been reviewed within the individual typology Sections, highlighting specific strategic objectives that link into this study. Table 3.1 outlines the key local overarching local strategic documents.

Table 3.1 – Strategic context – Implications for this assessment of open space, sport and recreation facilities

Document name	Outline	Application to open space
<p>Manchester Unitary Development Plan (1995)</p>	<p>Specific policies included within this document relating to this Open Space and Recreational Needs Assessment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy L1 seeks to increase the provision of leisure, recreation and cultural facilities in the City • Policy R1 focuses on regeneration within the City, aiming to substantially improve the environment. <p>The UDP outlines Manchester City Councils commitment to protect and improve the environment and includes three policies for Environmental Improvement and Protection:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy E1.1 outlines measures to reduce and prevent pollution • Policy E1.2 highlights the need to protect the environment over and above pollution considerations • Policy E1.3 seeks to develop measures to improve the environment <p>All three policies can affect Manchester’s biodiversity, both directly and indirectly and are summarised below.</p> <p>The Council gives environmental protection a high priority. The Council’s objectives are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • safeguarding the Green Belt • protecting important wildlife habitats • providing good quality agricultural land • preventing, wherever possible, the loss of trees • seeking to retain buildings and areas of architectural and/or historic interest • protecting ancient monuments and sites of architectural interest • maintaining environmental quality in residential areas by carefully controlling development 	<p>The study will focus upon the protection of open space.</p> <p>The study will protect and enhance the natural landscape.</p> <p>The assessment of all open space in the City will identify areas that are deficient in open space and evaluate the value of open space through the site assessments and local consultation.</p> <p>The study will consider the provision of all grass pitches regardless of ownership and make recommendations for future provision.</p> <p>The study will inform the future development of policies for open space, sport and recreation.</p> <p>The study recognises the importance of nature conservation and will seek to protect sites of nature conservation from development.</p> <p>The importance of green corridors in linking open spaces is recognised in the study. The enhancement of linear routes will be considered in improving access to open space.</p> <p>The study will provide the Council with information on all open spaces in the City. This will allow the Council to make informed decisions when seeking developer contributions.</p>

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Document name	Outline	Application to open space
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • carefully controlling development involving hazardous installations or “bad neighbour” industrial uses. <p>The Council’s priorities for environmental improvement in the UDP are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creating a network of safe and attractive major linear recreational open spaces by linking and making better use of river valleys, canals, disused railways, and other areas of open space • Promoting measures which will lead to a safer environment for all people who live in and use the City • Promoting improvements aimed at providing better conditions for disabled people • Improving housing areas especially reducing the impact of traffic and dealing with poor quality open space • Reclaiming derelict land • Upgrading the appearance of major road and rail routes • Further enhancing the environment of the City Centre with particular emphasis on improving conditions for pedestrians • Enhancing conservation areas and designating further conservation areas • Make shopping centres safer and more attractive • Upgrading the City’s parks and other recreational areas. 	
<p>City Centre Strategic Plan (2004-2007)</p>	<p>Manchester’s vision is for the City Centre to be <i>defined by excellence in design, in quality, in diversity of offer.</i></p> <p>This strategy focuses on delivering this vision up to and including 2012.</p> <p>The importance of amenity spaces and public open space for City Centre residents is highlighted in this strategy. Attractive green spaces such as Sackville Park and Parsonage Gardens are identified as key sites within a growing urban environment.</p> <p>Key outcomes for the City Centre in achieving Manchester’s vision include:</p>	<p>The provision of high quality open space can contribute to achieving the vision for Manchester’s City Centre.</p> <p>Sustainable transport links, such as cycle routes, will be promoted in the study.</p> <p>The study will provide a tool for calculating developer contributions</p>

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • competitiveness • clean and well maintained – including the City’s public realm • a safe City • green and sustainable • a City Centre for everyone • employment and inclusiveness • transport and travel • marketing and promotion • place making. <p>Within this strategy, reference is made to the planned Irwell City Park, an area of world-class public realm that will incorporate high quality public open spaces, green spaces and river walkway. This development will add value in the form of formal and informal recreation opportunities for the ever growing residential offering in the City.</p>	
Manchester Strategic Regeneration Frameworks	<p>The Strategic Regeneration Frameworks (SRFs) have been produced for the sub-City areas. The SRFs outline the key objectives for regeneration with the sub-City areas and provide a long term regeneration framework.</p> <p>The SRF for each area is reviewed in detail in each sub –City area section of the report.</p>	
The Manchester Way – Manchester’s Sustainable Community Strategy (2006-2015)	<p>The strategy provides a framework for the regeneration of the entire City and specifically sets out a number of objectives for achieving a more sustainable environment.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Investing in children, families and young people: In many cases high density housing means that managed green space is the first point of contact with nature that people have. This green space is an opportunity for residents and families to benefit socially and educationally. • Housing and Sustainable Communities: Managing the biodiversity of green spaces will raise the quality of the local environment and help to support the economic value of the area. 	

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Document name	Outline	Application to open space
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Making Manchester Safe: Nature conservation should not just seek to focus on the biodiversity of Manchester but should also seek to increase the use of the natural environment by local people thereby increasing site surveillance and enhancing community safety; a practice used in the Green Flag management process. • Health Inequalities: Manchester has some of the most challenging health problems in the UK; biodiversity can encourage the development of healthier outdoor activities and reduce pollution • Enhancing the cultural base of Manchester: Well managed and attractive open space can provide the local residents with a communal meeting point and encourage community interaction. Furthermore, there is exciting potential for the linkage, exploration and promotion of the interaction between biodiversity and heritage in Manchester, for example through ancient woodlands and hedgerows, or lodges created during Manchester's textile era. Protection and enhancement of such features to achieve improved biodiversity will contribute to the preservation of heritage sites and the City's historical identity, further linking people with places and forging strong cultural connections. 	
Manchester Cultural Strategy	<p>This strategy takes forward the cultural theme of Manchester's Community Strategy. The strategy focuses on two main aims:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • to secure recognition and support for the City's regeneration as a vibrant cultural capital • to encourage greater participation of local residents in cultural activities 	<p>This study can contribute to the achievement of the targets set out in the Cultural Strategy.</p> <p>A range of skills and attributes can be developed through sport and therefore by providing sufficient open space and sports facilities, lifelong learning can be promoted.</p> <p>Providing locally accessible open space can increase opportunities for physical activity, thus contributing to the improvement of the health and wellbeing of residents.</p> <p>The provision of sport and young people's facilities can keep young people engaged and provide a challenge and sense of purpose. This can keep young people away from crime and make the community</p>

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		<p>safer.</p> <p>The study will facilitate the enhancement of the quality of open space in the City through the application of the quality standard, increase awareness and opportunities through local consultation and promote improvements to the accessibility of open space.</p>
<p>Manchester Play Strategy (2006 – 2010)</p>	<p>Manchester’s vision is to enable the City’s children and young people to have access to local, safe, exciting and challenging places to play.</p> <p>The strategy is structured around three key priorities. These are to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • develop Provision • reduce barriers to play • build district capaCity <p>The key priorities for the City are regeneration, the need to reduce crime and disorder and the achievement of the five outcomes of the Government programme <i>Every Child Matters: Change for Children</i>. These are Be Healthy, Stay Safe, Enjoy and Achieve, Make a Positive Contribution, Achieve Economic Wellbeing.</p> <p>With reference to this open space study, this includes the following key objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • increase the opportunities for risk and challenge in play • increase the number of quality play spaces • increase the number of supervised play opportunities • increase free play opportunities in parks and open spaces • consistent approach to consulting with children and young people. 	<p>The study will support the development of children and young people by targeting the correct provision of high quality, accessible facilities.</p> <p>The findings of the study are based on an assessment of local need which included specific consultation with young people and children. The study will therefore ensure that a service is provided that is inclusive and responsive to local need.</p> <p>The local quantity standard will challenge current play provision and the audit will provide an overview to promote a more strategic and co-ordinated approach to provision for young people. Good quality play facilities will be promoted through the local quality standard.</p> <p>The provision of open space provides opportunities for social interaction, therefore reducing social exclusion.</p>

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	<p>Specific aims of the strategy are to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • improve the value and raise the profile of play across the City • increase the number of children and young people who play • raise awareness of the benefits and long-term legacy of play • work in partnership with key stakeholders to promote and provide play services • promote the long-term sustainability of play in Manchester • maximise the use of new and existing play resources in the City. <p>With reference to this study, the strategy stresses the importance of ensuring parks and open spaces offer high quality play facilities that offer challenge and a combination of natural and formal play provision.</p>	
<p>Manchester Children and Young People Plan (2006-2009)</p>	<p>This plan sets out key actions to improve outcomes for children and young people over the three year period 2006-2009. This plan underpins Manchester's Community Strategy, linking in to three core areas of activity:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • achieving potential through education and employment • creating neighbourhoods of choice • mutual respect, individual and collective self-esteem. <p>The plan divides children and young people's life-chances into five outcomes areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • be healthy • staying safe • enjoying and achieving • making a positive contribution • achieving economic well-being. 	<p>The application of the quantity, quality and accessibility standards will guide the provision of and access to safe, high quality and stimulating play and informal recreation provision.</p>
<p>Manchester</p>	<p>This strategy stems from the National Biodiversity Action Plan (1994) and the</p>	<p>Biodiversity is promoted in PPG17 and the study will</p>

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Biodiversity Strategy (2005)	<p>Greater Manchester Biodiversity Action Plan (2002). It aims to inspire the people of Manchester to become more responsible about their local environment.</p> <p>Manchester’s Biodiversity Strategy aims to reach beyond Sites of Specific Interest (SSSI), Site of Biological Importance, and Local Nature Reserves and include natural woodland, common habitats and species.</p> <p>The aim of the Manchester Biodiversity Strategy is to:</p> <p><i>‘Conserve, protect and enhance biodiversity in the City for current and future generations’.</i></p> <p>The strategy outlines the following key objectives:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. to create a full species and habitat audit to establish a baseline of biodiversity in the City: 2. to use a best practice approach when managing for biodiversity 3. promote biodiversity in Manchester 4. promote biodiversity through environmental education 5. integrate biodiversity into the wider sustainable development agenda. 	<p>provide evidence for the conservation, enhancement and protection of biodiversity.</p>
Manchester Leisure Greenspace Management Strategy 2003	<p>This strategic framework provides site-by-site baseline information on landscape and habitat types for all recreational sites, and prescriptive guidance to the development of site-specific management strategies and action plans for these landscape and habitat types. The framework therefore includes a summary audit of existing habitat and landscape elements throughout the whole of the Manchester Leisure resource including woodland, summary options for change, and an initial Woodland Strategy with broad guidance for the production of woodland management plans.</p> <p>A programme of production of site-specific management plans is underway which incorporates these landscape and habitat management objectives and prescriptions, including site specific and generic woodland management planning.</p>	
A Sport, Recreation and Open Space Facility Strategy for New East	<p>The aim of this study was to provide clear direction in order to protect and enhance open space provision on New East Manchester.</p> <p>The strategy sets out to:</p>	

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Manchester (2003)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • identify priorities for future developments • encourage partnerships to be developed to meet the needs of the local communities • respond to the needs of the local communities and provide a wide range of sporting and recreational opportunity • improve co-ordination of resources to maximise local benefit and avoid duplication • strengthen and support funding applications for capital investment in sport and recreation. <p>The two core objectives for the regeneration of East Manchester are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • creating sustainable communities through making East Manchester an attractive place to live and work with a range and quality of facilities and services that meets the needs of the local community • ensuring that East Manchester maximises the contribution it can make to the sub regional, regional and national economy. 	
Irk Valley Local Plan (2007)	<p>The plan outlines how to make best use of the Irk River Valley and its open spaces and promotes the area as an important natural landscape in North Manchester.</p> <p>The vision of the plan is to develop the Irk Valley into an integrated regional park system with a network of accessible, high quality open spaces. The provision of a network of open spaces will enhance the quality of life for residents and enhance regeneration in the area.</p> <p>The eight key objectives of the plan are to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • use the Irk Valley as a catalyst for regeneration • provide high quality, safe and accessible open spaces • improve connectivity and linkages • improve image and identity 	The study can contribute to the achievement of the key objectives of the plan.

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• protect and enhance ecological assets• resolve management and ownership issues• increase community involvement• integrate open space with existing and proposed built development areas.	

Summary and conclusions

- 3.20 The provision of open spaces, sport and recreation facilities contributes to the achievement of wider governmental objectives such as social and community cohesion, urban renaissance and promoting a healthy and enjoyable life.
- 3.21 The recent planning white paper highlights a number of key challenges, many of which the effective provision of green space can play a key role in successfully meeting these challenges.
- 3.22 Any development of open spaces (ie provision of either new or enhancement of existing spaces) should take into account biodiversity and nature conservation opportunities and develop an increasing environmental awareness, as well as facilitating the increase needed in participation in sport and active recreation.
- 3.23 Many organisations are willing to work in partnership together to manage and develop existing open spaces and share similar aims and objectives eg protecting, enhancing and maximising usage and nature conservation value of open spaces. The importance of enhancing biodiversity across the region as well as maintaining and improving the green network is a key feature of many regional strategies.
- 3.24 Points emerging from the strategic review that are integral to the development of this open space, sport and recreation assessment in Manchester include:
- improvements and continuing enhancement of the local environment are an important feature of the region, providing a tool to achieve many wide-ranging issues impacting on health levels as well as increasing the well-being of residents, workers and visitors
 - housing developments and geographical allocations driven by national and regional planning policies, and employment land allocations will have a direct impact on open space, sport and recreation provision and sustainability. High population growth will place increasing demands on existing open spaces as well as generating higher needs for recreational open space provision
 - the provision of green space can play a key role in the achievement of local targets including the enhancement of local quality of life and reducing health inequalities
 - green space sites are also instrumental in ensuring that settlements are safe and attractive to live in. This study will ensure that sites can be effectively prioritised for improvement
 - the quality of open space provided is as important as the quantity. It is essential that the value of sites to both local residents and wildlife is maximised.
- 3.25 In summary, this review of strategic documents highlights the local importance of maintaining and improving open space sites within Manchester City Council. This local needs study and resulting strategy will contribute to achieving the wider aims of a number of local and national agencies.