

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

### **Quantity**

- 1.1 PPG17 advocates that planning policies for open space, including playing fields, should be based upon local standards derived from a robust assessment of local need.
- 1.2 The quantity of provision provided by the audit of open space has assisted in the setting of such local provision standards for the Borough. These are included for each type of open space in the separate sections and, as recommended by PPG17, is undertaken by population to calculate the quantity of provision per person.
- 1.3 The quantitative analysis has also taken into account key issues raised from previous consultations with the public. This provides a more objective view rather than relying solely on statistical calculations. A comparison with the community's view on the existing level of facilities required and the current level of provision needs to be undertaken to help establish a reasonable level of provision.
- 1.4 Provision standards are then applied to determine whether there is a surplus of provision, the provision was about right or there is a deficiency.
- 1.5 The standards are based on population data provided by Kettering Borough Council.

#### **Basic methodology: Setting the quantity standard**

- existing national and local standards are identified
- the existing level of provision is calculated from the open space audit and provided against the population by analysis area, by rural/urban areas and at the borough level
- benchmarking is provided from other studies carried out by PMP giving an indication of whether the existing level of provision in Kettering is above or below other authorities
- consultations undertaken as part of the study form the local needs assessment to determine whether standards should be set above or below existing levels of provision. In particular question 2 of the survey – whether respondents feel there is enough/not enough etc. and WHY
- this information is brought together to determine whether the standard should be increased or decreased or set at the existing level. The use of the quantity standards calculator and worksheet help to determine the exact standard

- 1.6 The overall aim of the quantity assessment is to:
  - establish areas of the Borough suffering from deficiency of provision within each type of open space
  - areas of significant surplus where it may be possible to investigate changing the type of open space to types that are deficient in that area.

## **Quality**

- 1.7 Quality and value of open space are fundamentally different and can sometimes be completely unrelated. An example of this could be:
- a high quality open space is provided but is completely inaccessible. Its usage is therefore restricted and its value to the public limited; or
  - a low quality open space may be used every day by the public or have some significant wider benefit such as biodiversity or educational use and therefore has a relatively high value to the public.
- 1.8 The needs assessment therefore analyses quality and value separately within each type of open space.

### **Basic methodology: setting a quality vision**

A quality vision is devised based on the consultations with the community, other national and local design guidelines and standards set for other authorities. This provides a benchmark for the existing provision and the basis in which new provision should aspire.

The quality vision is linked to the site assessments of quality by setting a percentage score for each typology. This score reflects the key points from the local quality vision. This score can then be applied to the existing level of provision to identify any key areas for improvements and to identify those sites that currently meet this standard.

- 1.9 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 Borough
  - specific types of open space
  - specific quality factors that ensure a high quality open space
- 1.10 This enables resources to be concentrated on areas that need to be improved.

## **Accessibility**

- 1.11 Accessibility is a key assessment of open space sites. Without accessibility for the public the provision of good quality or good quantity of open space sites would be of very limited value. The overall aim of an accessibility assessment should be to identify:
- how accessible sites are
  - how far are people are willing to travel to reach open space
  - areas of the Borough deficient in provision
  - areas of the Borough suffering in accessibility and therefore of priority importance

- key accessibility factors that need to be improved
- 1.12 Setting accessibility standards for open space should be derived from an analysis of the accessibility issues within the audit and in light of community views.

**Basic methodology: setting the accessibility standard**

Distance thresholds (i.e. the maximum distance that typical users can reasonably be expected to travel to each type of provision using different modes of transport) are a very useful planning tool especially when used in association with a Geographical Information System (GIS). This is assessed through the household survey asking how far people would expect to travel to each type of open space (question 3) and the 75% quartile is derived from this.

This is supplemented by other consultations and the distances people currently travel

- 1.13 PPG17 encourages any new open space sites or enhancement of existing sites to be accessible by environmentally friendly forms of transport such as walking, cycling and public transport. There is a real desire to move away from reliability on the car.

**Level of usage and value**

- 1.14 The value of an open space site is entirely different to quality and relates mainly to three key factors as described in PPG17 companion guide:
- **Context** – a site that is inaccessible is irrelevant to potential users and therefore is of little value irrespective of its quality. Also, in areas where there is a large amount of high quality open space or more than is actually required, some of it may be of little value. In contrast to this, a site of low quality but in an area of low provision maybe of extremely high value to the public.
  - **Level and type of use** – poorly used open space sites may be of little value while highly used sites may be of high value
  - **Wider benefits** – there are many wider benefits of open space sites that should be taken into account when analysing the results of particular sites e.g. visual impact, benefits for biodiversity, education, cultural, economy etc. These benefits are difficult to assess in a systematic way and would require detailed site visits.
- 1.15 Evaluating value therefore involves attempting to assess these factors, in particular relating the context of the open space site (quality and accessibility) against the level of use of each site.
- 1.16 From the assessment of the value of sites, we are able to start to determine policy options in terms of feeding into a specific action plan. This is fundamental to effective planning:

**APPENDIX F – STEPS 3 AND 4 : SETTING AND APPLYING PROVISION STANDARDS**

1.17 The figure below provides a simple means of determining the most appropriate policy approach to each existing open space site.

