

Rother District Council - Setting Quality Standards

Field	Comment
National Standards and/or Benchmarks	Details of any existing national standards for each typology usually provided by national organisations e.g. Green Flag criteria for parks produced by Civic Trust.
Existing Local Quality Standards	There maybe some existing local standards that will need to be taken into account and used as a guidance benchmark when setting new local standards.
Consultation (Household Survey - aspirations)	Results from the household survey with regards to users of each typology in relation to their aspirations and needs and existing quality experiences.
Consultation (other)	Results from all the consultations undertaken with regards the quality issues for each typology.

Field	Comment
PMP Recommendation	PMP recommendation of a local quality standard for discussion and approval by the client.
PMP Justification	PMP reasoning and justification for the locals standard that has been recommended.
CLIENT APPROVAL	Client to approve local standard before analysis undertaken.

APPENDIX I – QUALITY STANDARDS

PARKS AND GARDENS	
National Standards and/or Benchmarks	GREEN FLAG CRITERIA - Welcoming Place / Healthy, Safe and Secure / Clean and Well-maintained / Sustainable / Conservation and Heritage / Community Involvement / Marketing / Management.
Existing Local Quality Standards	No existing quality standards.
Consultation (Household Survey - aspirations)	Highest rated aspirations: clean and litter free, well kept grass, flowers, trees and shrubs, toilets and seating. Respondents to the survey highlighted specifically, adequate staff on site, adequate lighting and CCTV as being key to providing safe open spaces. Vandalism and graffiti, dog fouling, and litter are considered to be the worst current quality issues in parks in Kettering.
Consultation (Other)	<p>Residents at the drop-in sessions across the District considered the quality of parks and gardens to be good. Residents indicated that the facilities at Egerton Park should be updated, especially the play items. Bexhill residents were concerned at the loss of open space around Galley Hill and the need to have parks in this area that provided parking and proper pathways.</p> <p>The Young People’s Internet Survey revealed that Egerton Park and Battle Recreation Ground were the most frequented sites by children. The most common reason for site use was to meet friends and to play on sports pitches/courts with friends. This was reiterated by the most popular reason for using open space was its proximity to the child’s home. Safety was a major concern, especially at the larger parks. Improved lighting, cameras and staff on site were deemed at factors that would improve safety. There was an issue with antisocial behaviour of older children, discourage younger participants using parks. The idea of organised activities at parks was not popular amongst respondents.</p>

PARKS AND GARDENS	
	<p>Consultation with key external agencies also suggested that in general the district was well served in terms of the quality of parks and gardens when considered in comparison to other local authorities. The Hasting and Rother Disability Forum have a valuable influence on Egerton Park developments. The Sussex Police realise the issues caused by antisocial behaviour of youths meeting in parks, especially in Egerton Park during summer months. New plans should include enforced closing at dusk and use of CCTV in order to prevent the deterioration of the park's quality. There are also plans to open up the southern part of Pebsham Countryside Park for recreation activities but it is important that nature reserve areas are not negatively impacted.</p> <p>Consultation with internal council officers indicated that parks and gardens in the district were generally of a high standard, supported by the 2003 Triennial Survey sighting 75% of residents to be satisfied with parks and gardens. Despite this it was felt by several council members that the flagship park in Bexhill, Egerton Park was below standard, something that is currently being addressed. A benefit of many of the parks was their ability to offer a range of activities and this is further encouraged by the development of Pebsham Countryside Park, a site that is well maintained and managed.</p>

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PARKS AND GARDENS	
PMP Recommendation	<i>"Parks and gardens should be well kept with a variety of vegetation, flowers, trees and shrubs. Appropriate ancillary accommodation should be provided where appropriate (including seating, toilets and litter/dog bins) with clear signage to and within the site. Sites should be safe and secure with suitable lighting and where appropriate have a ranger / warden presence to further improve the security of the facilities. The Green Flag award is an aspiration for strategic sites throughout the District."</i>
PMP Justification	With an existing aim of improving the quality of Parks and Gardens in Rother and emphasis placed on gaining Green Flag status it is essential that the Council implement a quality standard so as to improve provision across the whole district. The recommended standard incorporates the National Green Flag Award criteria for quality, safety, recreation benefit and facility mix. However, owing to the nature of our methodology in line with PPG17 it is important that local community aspirations form the basis of the local standards. Therefore, it is suggested that parks should be clean and litter free and provide a mix of appropriate recreational and ancillary facilities. The standard has been formulated to ensure that park provision is sustainable, balanced and ultimately achievable. The improvement of quality and accessibility to parks, the addressing of key issues restricting usage and the promotion of best practice sites such as Gun Gardens at Rye should increase local aspirations and encourage usage of parks and gardens.
Client Approval	Local Quality Standard.

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NATURAL AND SEMI-NATURAL	
National Standards and/or Benchmarks	Countryside Agency - land should be managed to conserve or enhance its rich landscape, biodiversity, heritage and local customs.
Existing Local Quality Standards	No existing quality standards.
Consultation (Household Survey - aspirations)	Highest rated aspirations from the household survey include unspoilt natural features, clean and litter free, and suitable footpaths. Other sited benefits included dog walking areas, water features and flowers and trees. Respondents to the household survey indicated that a reputation of the open space, presence of other users, staff-on-site and clear routes to the open space are important to help people feel safe in open space. Dog fouling and litter problems are currently considered to be the worst quality issues in natural open space sites.
Consultation (Other)	<p>Consultation with key external agencies, particularly the Sussex Wildlife Trust indicated the value of biodiversity across the District. The organisation is proactively promoting the link between conservation and education. It was felt that any plans for natural and semi-natural sites should show an appreciation of the multi-functional nature of such sites, whilst paying particular mind to their biodiversity and nature conservation role. The importance of free site access and good public transport is highlighted with the scope for new users, especially as the SWT are looking to expand existing sites. Good benchmark sites are sighted as Castle Water and Flatropers Wood in Rye.</p> <p>There are ten conservation sites identified in the Local Plan with potential for a further six. In general the quality of natural and semi-natural areas is believed to be reasonable due to good maintenance practises although there is concern that these may be affected by a reduced budget. The housing development in north Bexhill could be a good opportunity to establish new natural areas.</p>

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NATURAL AND SEMI-NATURAL	
PMP Recommendation	<i>“A site that encourages wildlife conservation and biodiversity. Opportunities to link natural sites together with green corridors should be maximised and clear pathways and dog-walking facilities should be provided. Litter bins should be provided and management of local sites should involve the community. There should be a clear focus on balancing wildlife needs with the access and recreational needs of the public where appropriate.”</i>
PMP Justification	It is clear that natural and semi-natural open space provides an important community function. The standard suggests that by increasing functionality and overall quality of such open spaces where appropriate then the community will benefit. By introducing this quality standard and quality benchmarking the Council will be able to assess the value of sites and identify those sites which need improvements.
Client Approval	Local Quality Standard.

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AMENITY GREEN SPACE	
National Standards and/or Benchmarks	No national quality standards.
Existing Local Quality Standards	No existing quality standards.
Consultation (Household Survey - aspirations)	Highest rated aspirations: toilets, parking facilities, litter bins and good access to sites. Adequate lighting, CCTV and staff-on-site were key safety concerns at amenity green space sites. Similar to other open space types, vandalism/graffiti, dog fouling and litter problems were considered to be the worst quality issues at the current time.
Consultation (Other)	<p>Drop in sessions indicated that there needs to be more properly maintained paths across amenity green space, especially when they are used to provide access to further natural and semi-natural sites. There was also the demand for providing fenced off amenity green spaces and natural areas whereby dogs can be allowed to run free whilst being supervised by their owners.</p> <p>Consultation with external agencies revealed that the quality of general amenity areas was considered to be generally quite good. However, it was felt that signage and basic amenity green spaces could be improved by making them more inspiring and also by standardising signage so members of the public were more aware that they were entering a Rother Council maintained space.</p>

AMENITY GREENSPACE	
PMP Recommendation	<p><i>“Amenity green spaces should have varied equipment and ancillary facilities suitable for the size of the site. A variety of vegetation should be provided to enhance the overall appearance of the local environment. Larger sites should be suitable for informal play opportunities and should be encouraged to become a community focus. Smaller sites should, as a minimum, provide an important visual amenity function. Safety and security should be considered wherever possible, including the provision of appropriate lighting.”</i></p>
PMP Justification	<p>It is recommended that amenity green space provides an important community function. The standard suggests that by increasing functionality of such open space then the community will benefit. The standard incorporates both public and council aspirations and has been designed to promote best practice encouraging informal play where sites are large enough.</p> <p>By introducing this quality standard and quality scoring matrix the Council will be able to assess the value of sites and identify the poorest quality sites which could potentially be disposed of in areas with provision above the minimum standard and in turn help improve the overall quality of open space.</p> <p>In conjunction with this standard it may be appropriate to set a minimum size standard to avoid smaller sites that create maintenance issues and ensure informal play is possible.</p>
Client Approval	Local Quantity Standard.

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PROVISION FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE	
National Standards and/or Benchmarks	LAPs, LEAPs and NEAPs indicate some quality aspirations in terms of needing seating for adults, varied range of equipment and teenager meeting place.
Existing Local Quality Standards	No existing quality standards.
Consultation (Household Survey - aspirations)	Highest rated aspirations: clean and litter free, have well kept grass, seating, toilets and a dog free area. The reputation of the play area, improved lighting and staff-on-site were suggested as ways of improving the safety of such sites. Vandalism and graffiti, miss-use of sites and safety and age of equipment were considered to be the most concerning quality issues at present.
Consultation (Other)	<p>The young peoples survey indicated that play areas were the second most visited site by children behind amenity green space sites. 61% of children sighted the quality of play areas as fair or good although 39% deemed the facilities as poor or very poor. The main suggestion for improving sites was the provision of more interesting equipment. There was a general concern over the quality of sites.</p> <p>At drop in sessions, sites tended to need better maintenance and more varied items. Residents encouraged greater enforcement of rules preventing mopeds and bikes being brought onto areas. Proper boundaries should be used to secure sites.</p> <p>Consultation with external agencies including the Rother Youth Forum, indicating that youth shelters may be implemented as a way of encouraging girls, who are normally difficult to target, to use open space. The Disability Forum also felt that there was a difficulty in ensuring integration of young people with a disability in open space activities. Internal consultations highlighted an awareness to engage in the promotion of child facilities, despite an ageing Bexhill population. Proposals should specifically target peripheral locations. There is currently a Play Strategy that is targeting underserved areas. It was felt that locating sites in safe environments was imperative for their promotion and avoiding a negative affect on local residents and businesses. Teenage provision was highlighted as a main weakness that is currently being addressed and the need for provision of suitable activities. The council</p>

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	needs an awareness regarding the variety of specific equipment types.
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PROVISION FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE	
PMP Recommendation	<i>“A site providing a range of well-maintained equipment in a safe and secure location. It should be easily accessible whilst safeguarding the residential amenity of neighbouring land users. The site should have clear boundaries, be within a reasonable distance of residences, be clean, litter and dog free/controlled, and provide ancillary facilities where appropriate (eg benches, litter-bins and toilets). The planning, design and maintenance of the site should take into account the ‘Best Play’ enriched play environment criteria and complement and utilise the natural environment and landscape within which it is set.”</i>
PMP Justification	In order to address security issues at play areas, the standard states that play areas should be located close to housing or footpaths or within larger park sites as an additional level of security to be provided through natural policing e.g. overlooking houses. Lighting should be provided where appropriate. The standard encompasses the need for play areas to be both sustainable in management terms but also to provide a mix of facilities and an enriched play environment and also for the site to be clean and safe to use. This is reflected in the aspirations for play areas and within this standard. In addition sites should include NPFA design guidelines where appropriate.
Client Approval	Local Quality Standard.

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OUTDOOR SPORTS FACILITIES	
National Standards and/or Benchmarks	NPFA - quality of provision could include gradients, orientation, ancillary accommodation, planting and community safety.
Existing Local Quality Standards	No existing quality standards.
Consultation (Household Survey - aspirations)	Highest rated aspirations: well kept grass, litter free, parking facilities, level surface and toilets. Highest rated safety factors included adequate lighting, CCTV and staff-on-site. Vandalism and graffiti, poor maintenance and dog fouling, were considered to be the worst quality issues at the present time.
Consultation (Other)	<p>Consultation with local sports clubs revealed an even split between those believing that facilities were adequate for their needs and those requiring improvements. A major concern was the standard of changing facilities and poor parking provision that would benefit significantly from proper lighting on more sites. Poor drainage and flooding of sites was a common issue, especially un Pett and Little Common.</p> <p>Residents attending drop in sessions indicated that there should be greater public access to outdoor sports facilities, especially in Bexhill. Drainage issues and overuse of recreation grounds as sports pitches causes a severe deterioration in quality.</p> <p>Internal consultations indicated that some pavilions and pitches in smaller settlements are not of an acceptable standard and raising adequate funds is difficult. The quality of pitches for all sports is deemed as being good although drainage issues were primarily sighted at Little Common and Rye Salts. The council need to take a more proactive role in maintaining rural sites.</p>

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OUTDOOR SPORTS FACILITIES	
PMP Recommendation	<i>'A clean and litter free sports facility with appropriate and well-drained good quality surfaces, and appropriate ancillary accommodation including toilets, car parking, litter and dog-fouling bins. All new sites should meet national governing body guidelines, with all existing sites aspiring to this.'</i>
PMP Justification	The public consultation responses to the quality of outdoor sports facilities tend to centre around poor changing facilities, and drainage issues that cause a deterioration in pitches, especially with overuse. These are therefore reflected in the quality standards. Importantly, ancillary facilities such as changing facilities, car parking and toilets were also highly rated aspirations. The consultations also indicated that sports clubs and their members had issues with poor ancillary accommodation.
Client Approval	Local Quality Standard.

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ALLOTMENTS	
National Standards and/or Benchmarks	NONE.
Existing Local Quality Standards	No existing quality standards.
Consultation (Household Survey - aspirations)	Only a limited number of respondents to the household survey stated that allotments were their most frequently used type of open space. For these users, the highest rated aspirations were: well-kept grass, parking facilities, dog free areas and toilets. The major problem reported at allotment sites was vandalism and graffiti.
Consultation (Other)	Internal consultations indicated that there was a varying level of use across the District. Sites with waiting lists included Broad Oak, Collington Hall and Barrack Hall. It was felt that the quality of plots was generally reasonable.

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ALLOTMENTS	
PMP Recommendation	<i>'A well-maintained site with appropriate ancillary facilities (eg water supplies, litter bins, toilets, parking facilities), that is easy to get to and easy to get around. Sites should have appropriate boundaries, encourage sustainability and ideally be situated in areas of good soil quality.'</i>
PMP Justification	Provision of allotments is demand driven. However, in times when the wider health agenda is important such sites need to be promoted. Good quality allotments with appropriate ancillary facilities which promote sustainable development will help attract more people to allotment sites in Kettering.
Client Approval	Local Quality Standard.

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CEMETERIES AND CHURCHYARDS	
National Standards and/or Benchmarks	NONE.
Existing Local Quality Standards	No existing quality standards.
Consultation (Household Survey - aspirations)	Nearly all of these respondents stated the same highest rated aspirations: well kept grass with seating, flowers/trees, parking facilities, to be dog free areas, have toilets and to be litter free. These respondents indicated that the highest rated safety measure was staff on site. The users indicated the only notable issue was vandalism and graffiti on certain sites.
Consultation (Other)	The Sussex Police were actively discouraging anti-social behaviour at churches and cemeteries that had become an issue with youths hanging around.

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CEMETERIES AND CHURCHYARDS	
PMP Recommendation	<i>“Sites should provide an area of quiet contemplation and an opportunity to enhance biodiversity. Sites should be well kept, with a variety of flowers, trees and shrubs. Seating and litter bins should be provided where appropriate. Sites should have well defined boundaries and appropriate lighting to discourage misuse. ”</i>
PMP Justification	It is important for the Council and the public to acknowledge the important open space function that churchyards and cemeteries provide. This can be particularly the case in rural areas where cemeteries and churchyards may be the only open space in the village. However, it is essential that sites are regularly maintained with clear footpaths so as to increase the ease of access and safety for those who visit the sites. It is important that good practice is promoted throughout the district.
Client Approval	Local Quantity Standard.

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GREEN CORRIDORS	
National Standards and/or Benchmarks	Countryside Agency - what the user should expect to find is i) a path provided by the protection and reinforcement of existing vegetation; ii) ground not soft enough to allow a horse or cycle to sink into it; iii) a path on unvegetated natural surfaces.
Existing Local Quality Standards	No existing quality standards.
Consultation (Household Survey - aspirations)	The household survey indicated green corridors to be a frequently used open space typology in the district. Highest rated aspirations: be clean and litter free with clear footpaths, well-kept grass and nature features. Highest rated safety factors included other users on site and a clear route to the open space. Dog fouling and litter problems were considered to be the worst quality issues at the current time.
Consultation (Other)	Consultation with external organisation closely involved in using the green corridors indicated that the existing green corridors were of a good standard and the footpath network was popular in the rural parishes. Usage could be increased if marketing and promotion of these green corridors was made a priority.

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GREEN CORRIDORS	
PMP Recommendation	<i>“Corridors should have clear pathways, linking major open spaces together and providing ancillary facilities such as bins and seating in appropriate places with appropriate signage to aid usage. The corridor should also encourage biodiversity and wildlife habitats, enabling the movement of both wildlife and people between open spaces.”</i>
PMP Justification	Green corridors play an important role in linking communities and provide an opportunity for exercise for local residents. It is therefore important that any new provision meets this local quality standard, which incorporates the Council's visions and public aspirations. Ultimately sites need to be safe with clear pathways and well maintained to encourage usage. These major routes also need to be well lit and secure.
Client Approval	Local Quantity Standard.