

Undertaking the study

Introduction

- 2.1 The PPG17 companion guide is a guidance process suggesting ways and means of undertaking a local needs assessment. It emphasises the importance of considering local demand and need, as opposed to following national trends and guidelines. The four guiding principles in undertaking a local assessment are:
- local needs will vary even within local authority areas according to socio-demographic and cultural characteristics
 - the provision of good quality and effective open space relies on effective planning but also on creative design, landscape management and maintenance
 - delivering high quality and sustainable open spaces may depend much more on improving and enhancing existing open space rather than new provision
 - the value of open space depends primarily on meeting identified local needs and the wider benefits they generate for people, wildlife and the environment.
- 2.2 PPG17 recognises that the approach needs to be adopted to meet the needs of each authority to accurately reflect the different structures and characteristics. The resulting conclusions and recommendations of this study therefore represent local needs specific to Ryedale. All local standards are also specific to Ryedale.

Types of open space

- 2.3 PPG17 identifies ten typologies of open space. These categories include nine types of green space and one category of urban open space specifically:
- parks and gardens
 - natural and semi natural open space
 - amenity greenspace
 - provision for children and young people
 - outdoor sports facilities (including pitches, tennis and bowls)
 - allotments and community gardens
 - green corridors
 - cemeteries and churchyards
 - civic spaces
 - accessible countryside.

- 2.4 Although the above typologies are defined in PPG17, the importance of adapting the typologies to fit into the local context is recognised and it is stated that variations of the different types of open space can be used.
- 2.5 While the typologies used are based on those set out in the PPG17 Companion Guide, consultation highlighted that not only did these typologies not correspond with current provision in the district, but they also deviated from the needs and aspirations of the community. In light of the rural nature of the district, amenity green space sites have been sub divided into market town spaces and village open spaces, reflecting the different types of space provided across the settlement hierarchy.

PPG17 – 5 step process

- 2.6 The PPG17 Companion Guide sets out a logical five-step process for undertaking a local assessment of open space. The 5 step process is as follows:
- 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.
- 2.7 Gillespies Consultancy undertook steps 1 and 2. Further consultation on the identification of local needs was completed by PMP. Full details of the process followed for each section is set out below:
- 2.8 Full details of the typologies included, their definitions and their primary purpose are outlined in Appendix B.

Step 1 - Identifying local needs

- 2.9 In order to identify local community need a series of consultations have been undertaken. The information gained from this process has been used to inform the study and to help understand:
- the key issues/problems facing different Council departments and agencies
 - the needs and requirements of local residents
 - the attitudes and expectations regarding open space
 - good and bad points about the existing provision
 - existing open space, sport and recreation provision at a strategic level.
- 2.10 The resulting picture of local needs forms the basis of the recommended local standards. The findings emerging from the application of these local standards therefore reflect local community need, ensuring that future provision of open spaces will meet the needs of residents of Ryedale.

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- 2.11 Results of consultations are detailed within the typology specific sections 3 – 10. A strategic review was also undertaken and this is provided in Appendix A of the Gillespies Report. A strategic overview to the study, including the National and Local Context is set out in this report within the typology specific sections.
- 2.12 Key consultations undertaken as part of this process include:
- Steering Group Meeting (undertaken by Gillespies)
 - **workshops** – three workshops involving Parish and Town Councils and key user groups were held during July and August 2004 (undertaken by Gillespies). Discussions at these workshops centred around key issues and vision statements.
 - **household survey** – surveys were distributed to 5000 randomly selected residents (Appendix C) across the district. These residents were geographically representative of residents of Ryedale. All responses were inputted into an Access 2000 database.
 - **drop in sessions** held at four locations across the district, specifically Malton, Pickering, Helmsley and Sinnington. These consultations provided local residents with the opportunity to informally give their views on open spaces, sport and recreation facilities in the area.
 - **internal consultations** with Council officers.

Step 2 - Auditing local provision

- 2.13 Gillespies compiled a detailed audit of open space provision within Ryedale during 2005. This audit forms the basis for the development of the local standards and provides an understanding of the current level of provision across the district. For the purposes of this study, it was assumed that the audit compiled is complete and accurate.
- 2.14 The audit process included:
- desk top audit
 - internet research
 - postal survey to owners of Village Halls and indoor and outdoor sports facilities.
- 2.15 It also included bus route mapping and heritage and ecological input. The key assumptions on which the audit is based are set out in detail within the report accompanying the audit produced by Gillespies and are summarised in brief in the table and text that follows.
- 2.16 The audit undertaken excludes sites located in villages with less than 20 dwellings. It also excludes any villages that are not considered within the local plan area. In total 85 villages were visited. A full list of exclusions is provided within Appendix B of the Gillespies report.
- 2.17 The audit categorises open spaces as:

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Typology	Definition
Allotments and Community Gardens	Open green spaces divided into plots of land and are dedicated to growing of non commercial produce
Cemeteries, Disused churchyards and burial grounds	Cemeteries, disused churchyards and burial grounds – may have landscape and other benefits. Linked to promotion of wildlife and biodiversity.
Community / Village Halls	Community halls are located in market towns. Village halls are found in villages. Both provide a variety of facilities for use by the community.
Formal Parks and Gardens	Includes urban parks, country parks and formal gardens. Provide for formal / informal recreation.
Civic and Market Squares	Centrally located hard surfaced areas where markets, community events or public gatherings take place.
Market Town Amenity Space	Open green space including informal recreational spaces and spaces within housing areas that provide opportunities for informal recreation or enhancement of the appearance of residential or other areas. A minimum size of 100m ² has been applied. Highway verges have been included if deemed sufficiently large enough to offer landscape improvements.
Natural and Semi Natural Greenspaces	Publicly accessible informal greenspaces including woodlands, urban forestry, scrub, grasslands, wetlands, wastelands, water and derelict open land and rock areas such as quarries. A minimum size of 5ha has been applied.
Provision for Children and Young People	Play spaces designed for play and social interaction involving children and young people. Includes play areas, skateboard parks, outdoor basketball hoops and more informal areas such as teenage shelters.
Indoor and Outdoor Sports Facilities	Areas providing opportunities for formalised sport. Includes tennis courts, bowling greens, pitches, golf courses, athletics tracks, health and fitness centres, school playing fields and other outdoor sports areas.

Typology	Definition
Village Greens	Local green spaces with or without basic facilities. May be used for community events.
Village Public Rights of Way	Located within the settlement boundary of the village and lead away from the village. Include river and canal banks, public rights of way and accessible disused railways.

- 2.18 Site assessments were undertaken at all sites to provide an indication of the current quality of sites and those requiring improvement. Quality was measured against a predefined set of criteria for each typology, enabling a consistent objective approach and comparisons between different sites. Full details of the criteria for evaluation is provided within part two of the appendix of the Gillespies Report in Appendices D to P.
- 2.19 Sites were rated individually against the above categories and an overall site categorisation was also provided, classifying sites as good, moderate or poor.
- 2.20 All sites are stored on a GIS layer that was provided to the Council in a series of shape files. This GIS layer provides the basis for the application of the local standards and should be regularly updated to ensure an accurate record of open spaces is maintained.

Steps 3 Setting provision standards

- 2.21 PPG17 advocates that planning policies for open space should be based upon local standards derived from a robust assessment of local need.
- 2.22 Key themes emerging from consultations in addition to the findings of the open space audit and site assessments were therefore used as a basis to determine provision standards for each type of open space in terms of quality, quantity and accessibility. The visions and aims suggested by Gillespies also feed into the development of these local standards.
- 2.23 The full justification for each of the recommended standards for Ryedale is set out in appendices E, F and G.
- 2.24 The application of these robust local standards based on assessments of need and existing provision will form the basis for addressing quantitative and qualitative needs through the planning process.

Table 2.1: The key stages of the setting local quantity standards

Process Stage	Methodology
National Standards	Analysis of any existing national standards for each typology. These are usually provided by national organisations e.g. National Playing Fields Association for playing pitches. It is important to ensure that national standards are taken into account as part of determination of local standards.

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Process Stage	Methodology
Existing Local Standards	Consideration of existing local standards for each typology that are currently applied by the Council. These include standards set out in the local plan and in other strategies and documents.
Current Provision (per 1,000 population)	Assessment of the current quantity of provision within the local authority area as a whole and within each of the 5 analysis areas.
Benchmarking	Figures detailing actual provision and subsequent local standards set by PMP within other green space and open space projects to provide a comparison benchmark when setting local standards.
Consultation (household survey)	Consideration of the findings of the household survey with regards the quantity of provision for each type of open space. This analysis provides a robust indication (at the district wide 95% confidence level) of public perception of the existing level of provision of all different types of open spaces.
Consultation Comments (Quantity)	PPG 17 indicates that where local provision is regarded as inadequate it is important to establish why this is the case. A feeling of deficiency can sometimes be due to qualitative issues of existing open space sites rather than actual quantity issues. It is therefore important to assess findings of both the household survey in addition to the emerging issues from the more qualitative consultations such as workshops and drop in sessions in order to gain a thorough understanding of local community need and perception.
PMP Recommendation	PMP recommendation of a local standard. The standard is based on an assessment of the local community need and perceptions of the adequacy of existing levels of provision across the district.
PMP Justification	Full justification for the recommended local standard based on qualitative and quantitative consultations are provided for each typology.

Accessibility

2.25 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 accessibility standards should be to identify:

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

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- 2.26 Similar to quantity standards, accessibility standards should be derived from an understanding of the community views, particularly with regards to the maximum distance that members of the public are willing to travel.
- 2.27 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). 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.
- 2.28 Accessibility standards are set in the form of a distance in metres where walk is considered to be the most appropriate mode of travel, and a drive time where driving to the open space site would be more appropriate.
- 2.29 The table 2.2 below outlines the key stages in setting local accessibility standards.

Table 2.2: Key stages in setting accessibility standards

Process Stage	Methodology
National Standards	Analysis of any existing accessibility standards for each typology.
Existing Local Standards	Consideration of existing local standards for each typology that are currently applied by the Council. These include standards set out in the local plan and in other strategies and documents.
Benchmarking	Figures detailing local standards set by PMP within other green space and open space projects to provide a comparison benchmark when setting local standards.
Consultation (household survey)	Consideration of the findings of the household survey with regards the distance expected to travel to each type of open space and the 75% threshold. The use of the 75% threshold is consistent with recommendations in PPG17 and is used to ensure that extreme responses are discounted.
Consultation Comments (Quantity)	Findings of qualitative consultations regarding access to open space sites and the distances people expect to travel to reach open space sites.
PMP Recommendation	PMP recommendation for a local accessibility standard. The standard is based on an assessment of the local community need and perceptions of the adequacy of existing levels of provision across the district.
PMP Justification	Full justification for the recommended local standard based on consultations and local expectations are provided for each typology.

Quality

- 2.30 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.
- 2.31 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 district
 - specific types of open space
 - specific quality factors that ensure a high quality open space.
- 2.32 This enables resources to be concentrated on areas that need to be improved.
- 2.33 In line with PPG17, quality visions for each type of open space have been set. These visions should represent an ideal quality of provision for each space within that category and should be the target for future improvement.
- 2.34 The quality visions set are intended as an aspirational target, reflecting the key quality features that the community wants. The vision should be applied both to existing open spaces and also as a benchmark when designing and creating new areas of open space.
- 2.35 It is reflective of both local community needs and desires. The key steps to setting a quality vision are set out in table 2.3 below:

Table 2.3: Setting a quality vision

Process Stage	Methodology
National Standards	Analysis of any existing qualitative standards for each typology.
Existing Local Standards	Consideration of existing local standards for each typology that are currently applied by the Council. These include standards are set out in the local plan and in other strategies and documents.
Consultation (household survey)	Consideration of the findings of the household survey with regards to the key quality features expected in each type of open space and consideration of the key issues experienced at existing open space sites
Consultation Comments (Quantity)	Findings of qualitative consultations regarding the importance of different quality features at each site, in addition to problems experienced at current sites used

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Process Stage	Methodology
PMP Recommendation	PMP recommendation for a local quality vision. The standard is based on an assessment of the local community need and the key features that people like to see for each different type of open space.
PMP Justification	Full justification for the recommended local standard based on consultations and local expectations are provided for each typology.

Steps 4 - Applying provision standards

- 2.36 The application of the recommended local standards enables the identification of areas of deficiency and priorities for action in terms of improving the quantity, quality and accessibility of open space.
- 2.37 In order to fully understand open space provision within Ryedale, quantity, quality and accessibility standards should be considered in conjunction with each other. Application of the local standards enables the assessment of site-specific issues and value in addition to the overall prioritisation of areas. The application of these standards has been considered for each type of open space in the typology specific sections.
- 2.38 Further detail on the methodology for the application of local standards and understanding the value of different open space types can be found in appendix D. The application of local standards will form the evidence base for addressing qualitative, quantitative and accessibility needs through the planning process.

Step 5 – Drafting policies - recommendations and strategic priorities

- 2.39 The application of the standards provides strategic priorities and recommendations, which are set out for each typology within the report.
- 2.40 The report also provides guidance for the application of Section 106 agreements based on the approach taken by other authorities and national best practice.