

1 October 2013

Dear Councillor

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY TASK GROUP - PLAY AND OPEN SPACES STRATEGY - THURSDAY, 3RD OCTOBER 2013

I am now able to enclose, for consideration at the above meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Task Group - Play and Open Spaces Strategy, the following documents that were unavailable when the agenda was printed.

Agenda No Item

4. **Case studies (Pages 7 - 14)**

Plans are enclosed for each of the four locations listed below:

- Southlands High School: Playing Pitches – Chorley Town West
- Canal Walk: Play Area – Chorley Town East
- Greenside: Playing Pitches – Euxton, Astley and Buckshaw
- Coronation Recreation Ground: Multi-use facility – Chorley Town West

6. **Play, Open Spaces and Playing Pitches Strategy 2013 - 18: Consultation Draft (Pages 15 - 34)**

The Consultation draft is enclosed for Members consideration.

Yours sincerely



Gary Hall
Chief Executive

Dianne Scambler
Democratic and Member Services Officer
E-mail: dianneb.scambler@chorley.gov.uk
Tel: (01257) 515034
Fax: (01257) 515150

Distribution

1. Agenda and reports to all Members of the Overview and Scrutiny Task Group - Play and Open Spaces Strategy for attendance.

This page is intentionally left blank



This page is intentionally left blank



This page is intentionally left blank



This page is intentionally left blank



This page is intentionally left blank

Play, Open Space & Playing Pitch Strategy 2013-18

Executive Summary

Consultation draft



CONTENTS

		Page
1.0	WHERE ARE WE NOW?	2
	1.1 Forward	2
	1.2 Introduction	3
	1.3 Background	3
2.0	WHERE DO WE WANT TO GET TO?	6
	2.1 Vision	6
	2.2 Objectives	6
3.0	APPROACH AND METHODOLOGY	7
	3.1 Policy context	7
	3.2 Neighbourhood areas	8
	3.3 Open space typology and assessment	8
	3.4 Playing field assessment	11
	3.5 Link to open space and playing pitch supplementary planning documents	11
4.0	HOW WILL WE GET THERE?	12
	4.1 Working together with partners and the community	12
	4.2 Combined five year action plan	12
5.0	HOW WILL WE KNOW WHEN WE HAVE GOT THERE?	13
	5.1 Monitoring	14
	5.2 Review	14
6.0	NEXT STEPS	14
	6.1 Consultation	14

APPENDICES		
	1- Five year action plan	15
	2 - Open Space - Background Information	Separate documents
	3 - Play Area- Background Information	
	4 - Playing Pitch - Background Information	

1.0 WHERE ARE WE NOW?

1.1 Forward

Chorley is a district in central Lancashire that occupies a prime strategic location. It is a predominantly rural area, with approximately three quarters of the Borough being open space and countryside. This defines the Borough's character and the protection of open space from future encroachment is important for all residents of Chorley.

Chorley was granted membership of the UK Healthy Cities Network in 2013 and has a wide range of opportunities for people to get active and stay active. Our wealth of open spaces are popular and well used and vary from a doorstep green, to a town park, allotments, nature reserve or large playing field. They play an important role in community life. Much of the open space is owned and maintained by Chorley Council but residents also have permitted use of a range of privately owned spaces, such as school playing fields and private sports grounds.

Residents of Chorley have access to 297 sites classed as open space, covering 852 hectares and circa 100 playing pitch sites covering approximately 98 hectares. Chorley is identified as a growth area in Lancashire with an estimated 6,000 dwellings to be built by 2026 with a population expected to rise to up to 118,000. New open spaces will be created as part of this development to serve the growing community.

Chorley Council is committed to a programme of investment in our parks, playing pitches and open spaces to sustain quality spaces and outdoor facilities for everyone to enjoy. We also face significant with ever more pressure to reduce council spending, we need to ensure that the management and maintenance of our parks is efficient and providing value for money. However, we don't do this alone. We welcome input and assistance from many partners, groups and volunteers who, like us, are committed to enhancing and protecting our green spaces.

We are consulting on this draft strategy to share the priorities and improvements that we've identified and we welcome your views and ideas.



Councillor Beverley Murray
Executive Member (People)

1.2 Introduction

The draft Play, Open Space and Playing Pitch Strategy sets out how Chorley Council plans to protect, manage, enhance and secure its open spaces over the next five years and beyond. It focuses on sites that need to be improved or sustained to mitigate against negative trends and recommends how any identified deficiencies in provision of open space should be addressed through a five year action plan (Appendix 1).

To support the Executive Summary and the associated action plan, three supplementary documents (Appendices 2-4) have been produced covering open space, play areas and playing pitches respectively. These documents provide the full details and analysis that has been undertaken to identify the key priorities and associated actions.

The executive summary will:

- Provide an overview of the Play, Open Space and Playing Pitch Strategy focusing on the key priorities from each background document together with a combined draft action plan which prioritises both strategic and site based projects over the next five years.
- Using Health Impact Assessment (HIA) methodologies, new projects will be scoped to assess whether the health and wellbeing opportunities available to the Borough are being maximised.
- Outline how the Council, in partnership with the local community and partner agencies, can ensure total inclusion and improve existing provision for health and wellbeing.
- Prioritise future spending on play areas, playing pitches and open spaces through the combined action plan.
- Provide information to inform the Council to make decisions on the distribution of developer contributions, prioritising projects and sites according to a range of core criteria.
- Ensure that any targets identified through the strategy are delivered in a clear, collaborative and inclusive manner.
- Ensure the Borough of Chorley demonstrates equality of accessibility across both the rural and urban areas.

1.2 Background

Playing pitches, play areas and open spaces are increasingly recognised as a vital component of successful, healthy and thriving towns, cities and villages. Research shows that parks and open spaces are some of the most widely used facilities provided by local authorities and it is well documented that there are strong links between health, well-being and open space. Natural open space and green space also demonstrate economic, social, environmental benefits within society.

Urban and semi-rural environments in Chorley offer a diverse range of open space opportunities, along with the close proximity to beautiful countryside, the Leeds Liverpool Canal and 317 miles of

public rights of way. Popular open space visitor attractions include Astley Park, Go Ape treetop adventure at Rivington and Hoghton Tower. The area is also blessed with large swathes of open space including Yarrow Valley Country Park, Cuerden Valley Country Park, and the countryside to the east which forms the West Pennine Moors. These sites along with recreation grounds, sports pitches, play areas and amenity open space provide opportunities to get outside and exercise.

These open spaces also provide visual and aesthetic quality, contact with wild-space and a safe refuge for wildlife and natural habitats. The need to protect and increase the amount of open space globally has been heightened through climate change as we increasingly have to deal with hotter summers and wetter winters.

The health profile of Chorley is mixed compared with the England average. Priorities in Chorley include improving access to and the quality of local health services in emerging new health and wellbeing structures, reducing health inequalities across settings and enabling families to make healthy lifestyle choices (The Chorley Health Profile, 2012)

The following key points summarise the benefits of open space:

- Strategic functions: defining and separating urban areas, better linking town and country and providing for recreational need over a wide area
- Promoting health and well-being – providing opportunities for people of all ages for informal recreation, or to walk, cycle or ride within parks and open spaces or along paths, bridleways and canal banks. Allotments may provide physical exercise or other health benefits
- Urban quality – helping to support regeneration and improving quality of life for communities by providing visually attractive green spaces close to where people live, making areas more attractive to new employers who in turn create new employment opportunities.
- Trees and greenspaces filter air pollution, stabilise ground surfaces, intercept rainfall, flood mitigation, create visual and sound barriers, provide temporary cover for derelict sites, contribute to sheltering, shading and water protection, and decreased local air temperatures, lowering the impact of climate change.
- Havens and habitats for flora and fauna – sites may have potential to be corridors or stepping stones from one habitat to another and may contribute towards achieving objectives set out in local biodiversity action plans
- As a visual amenity, even without public access, people can enjoy having space near to them to provide an outlook, variety in the urban scene or as a positive element in the landscape. Urban greenspaces are major contributors to the quality of the environment and human health and well-being in towns and suburban areas.
- As a community resource – as a place for congregating and for holding community events, religious festivals, fetes and fairs, increases quality of life and heightens social interaction.
- Physical activity in the natural environment not only aids an increased life-span, greater well-being, fewer symptoms of depression, lower rates of smoking and substance misuse but also an increased ability to function better at work and home.
- Health Walk and Green Gym participants cited they stated being 'in the countryside' and 'contact with nature' as key motivating factors to be active.

What is Chorley Council doing to promote open space and healthy lifestyles?

Our pro-active teams are out and about in the community across the Borough helping to deliver, develop and sustain sporting and play activity along with encouraging and supporting residents to adopt a healthy and positive lifestyle.

The Council develop and work with all levels of ability and all ages by using a diverse range of sport and play methods to engage the community as a whole.

The teams work on specific projects and events, working alongside many partners both locally and nationally, to support clubs, groups and organisations to enhance what they offer in the community. Three of our projects Get up and Go, Raising the Bar and Active Generation were recognised by the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games as outstanding and innovative projects and have been awarded the Inspire Mark. Other projects include Active Nation, Streetgames, Sportivate, Us Girls, Reach up and Go.

Our ranger team lead volunteer groups carry out practical maintenance activities and provide support to health walk leaders to run Find Your Feet and Tiny Treckers, they also organize regular guided walks through Yarrow Valley Country Park and surrounding countryside.

Our leisure centers throughout the Borough are promoted to residents and offer value to our customers, free swimming is available for children in the school holidays to encourage families to keep fit and active.

To find out more please visit Chorley Council website and also look at the What's Happening magazine which advertises the latest activities.

Open space challenges

Improving the quality of parks and open spaces in Chorley has been, and remains, one of the council's top priorities. However, reduced financial resources have led to increasing pressure to reduce council spending generally and this has brought about a need to reassess the costs of maintaining these spaces and the way they are managed.

Community consultations have highlighted local resident's interest and desire for better quality open spaces with a good range of facilities. In order to provide improvements, funding needs to be found and the cost of future maintenance taken into account.

Also, demands on urban land and an on-going need to provide new homes to accommodate an increasing population in Chorley can mean that there is added pressure on open space, both public and privately owned. The council will ensure that it continues to have robust policies in place to protect the majority of public and private open spaces, such as playing fields and development is targeted on brown field land where possible. However, it also recognises that in some cases allowing the development of poor quality, inaccessible or marginal open space in return for funds to improve quality and facilities on others may be appropriate. Balanced against this is the need to ensure that future population growth is reflected in the level of open space provision.

There are no easy solutions to these challenges, but this strategy will set down solid principles to ensure that the right decisions are made to create, manage and protect quality open space for the future.

Current and future needs

Chorley has a population of 109,100 (2012 estimate) who have access to 297 sites classed as open space, covering 852 hectares and circa 100 playing pitch sites covering approximately 98 hectares. Chorley is identified as a growth area in Lancashire with an estimated 6000 dwellings to be built by 2026 with a population expected to rise to between 114,200-118,000. The council needs to ensure that there is sufficient provision of open space and sports facilities to cater for this increase. New open spaces will be created as part of this development to serve the growing community.

2.0 WHERE DO WE WANT TO GET TO?

2.1 Vision

To secure the future provision, improvement and maintenance of play areas, open space and playing pitches in Chorley, supporting safe, healthy and sustainable communities and serving the needs and aspirations of the residents of Chorley.

Ensure that everyone has the opportunity to access good sport, physical activity and recreation facilities promoting their usage and improving the health and wellbeing of all.

2.2 Objectives

- To protect and allocate open spaces where possible in the site allocations SPD.
- To guide neighbourhood working and action plans for the next five years.
- To publish a combined action plan identifying a programme of works and priority sites for investment up to 2018.
- To create 6 new junior football pitches by 2018 and deliver improvements to pitch sites that are rated as poor or average.
- By 2018 no play areas will have a low play quality.
- To increase user satisfaction in our parks and open spaces over the next 5 years, as measured by the open space survey.
- To invest at least £200k of additional capital spending per year for 5 years on open spaces, through developer contributions, grants, capital works and disposals.
- To retain 4 Green Flag sites within our parks and open spaces over the next 5 years.
- To create or refurbish at least 2 children's play areas per year for the next 5 years

- To increase the amount of allotment sites across the Borough focusing on the areas with identified deficiencies by 1.6 hectares before the end of 2017.
- Focus on identified deficiencies - particularly around quality, quantity and accessibility – and improve identified open spaces as per action plans, providing better linkages, improved community safety and standards of provision. .
- To increase community involvement in open space management by supporting at least one new group or individual per year over the next 5 years
- To provide annual reports to highlight achievements and setbacks and where necessary realign targets within action plans.
- To review the playing pitch, play area and open space strategy in year 5 in order to refresh the documents to continue 2019 – 2024.

3.0 APPROACH AND METHODOLOGY

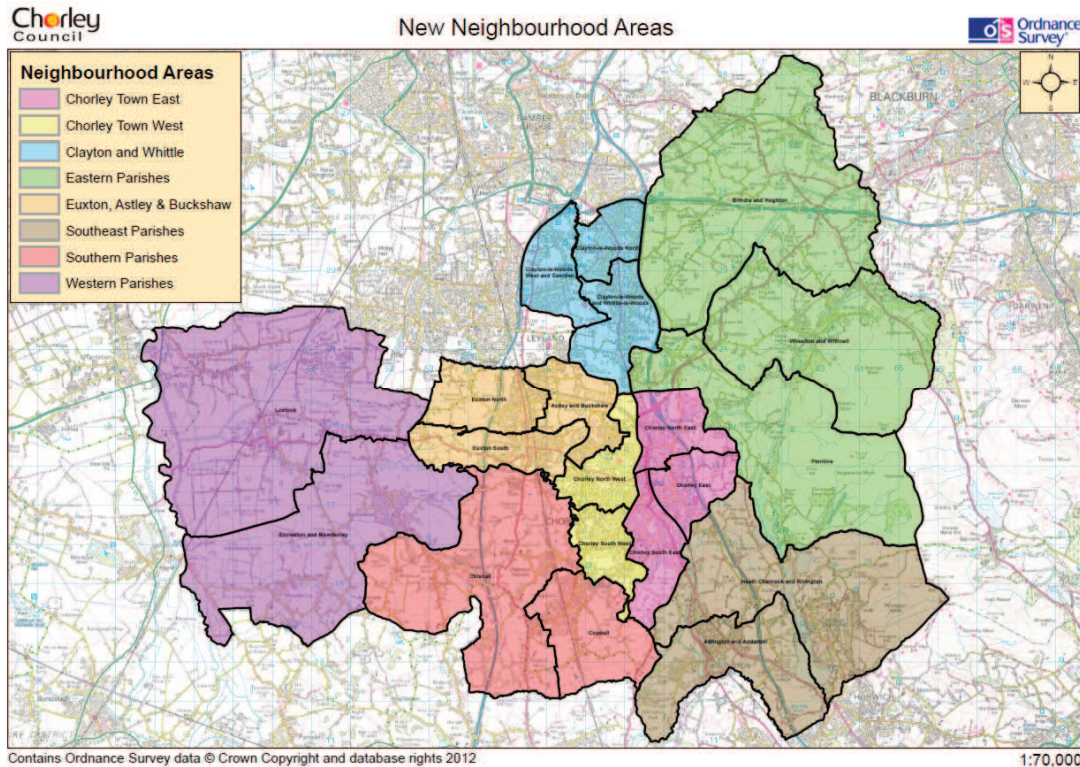
3.1 Policy context

The strategy sets out a vision and framework for the future Chorley’s play areas, playing pitches and open spaces. The strategy is also aligned and linked to policies, aims and aspirations contained in national, regional and local documents and plans including:-

National	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF 2012) • Planning Policy Guidance Note 17 (PPG17) • NI199 – national indicator for play • Planning & Design for Outdoor Sport & Play (Fields in Trust) • Rugby Football Union National Facilities Strategy • Community Rugby League Facilities Strategy • Play Strategy for England • National Community Safety Plan • Sport England towards a level playing field 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sport England Strategy (2011/12 – 21014/15) • Sport England Youth and Community Strategy (2012-17) a sporting habit for life. • The Football Association - National Game Strategy • Grounds to Play – England and Wales Cricket Board Strategic Plan (2010 – 2013) • England Hockey (2012) • Conformity to Disability Discrimination Act
Regional	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Central Lancashire Core Strategy • Central Lancashire PPG17 Open Space Study (2012) • Strategic Framework for Play in Lancashire – LCC (2010) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lancashire County Football Association (LCFA) • Lancashire Cricket Board (LCB)
Local	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chorley Council Corporate and Strategic Priorities • Chorley Play Partnership • Sustainable Community Strategy for Chorley (2007-15) • Chorley & South Ribble Clinical Commissioning Group 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chorley Health Profile 2012 • Chorley Community Safety Partnership • Neighbourhood Plans • Asset Management Strategy

3.2 Neighbourhood Areas

The Chorley borough area is split into eight neighbourhood areas for management and development purposes. The strategy makes reference the neighborhood areas that consists of a number of wards and they are a mix of urban, semi-rural and rural settlements as illustrated below.



3.3 Open space typology and assessment

The open space in Chorley, including play areas, has been assessed under the following open space typologies as detailed in the table below. Sometimes the ‘purpose’ of a space can be hard to define, as many sites are multi-functional. Therefore a ‘primary purpose’ is identified in order to help clarify the main functions of the space. Each area of open space is only measured once.

PPG17 Typology	Primary Purpose
Amenity greenspace	Opportunities for informal activities close to home or work or enhancement of the appearance of residential or other areas.
Provision for children and young people	Areas designed primarily for play and social interaction involving children and young people such as equipped play areas, ball courts, skateboard areas and teenage shelters.
Parks and gardens	Accessible, high quality opportunities for informal recreation and community events. Does not include Country Parks due to their more natural characteristics. They are included in natural and semi-natural greenspaces.
Natural and semi-natural greenspaces	Wildlife conservation, biodiversity and environmental education and awareness. Includes urban woodland and Country Parks.
Allotments	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.
Green corridors	Walking, cycling or horse riding, whether for leisure purposes or travel and opportunities for wildlife migration.
Cemeteries / churchyards	Quiet contemplation and burial of the dead, often linked to the promotion of wildlife conservation and biodiversity
Civic spaces	Providing a setting for civic buildings, public demonstrations and community events.

Site analysis measures

Each open space has been assessed, scored and mapped on a geographical information system (refer to the appendices 2-4 for more detail). The following criteria have been used:-

Quality – this depends on two things: the needs and expectations of users (people and wildlife) and good design, management, security and maintenance – i.e. ‘fit for purpose’. Green Flag Award criteria were used to calculate the quality of each site and assign a score.

Value - using data calculated from the site visits and desk based research a value score for each site is established. Value is defined in PPG17 in relation to the following three issues:

- Context of the site i.e. its accessibility, scarcity value and historic value.
- Level and type of use.
- The wider benefits it generates for people, biodiversity and the wider environment.

Quantity – this is measured in terms of the amount of provision by hectare per 1,000 population. There are quantity standards set for different types of open space for each local authority area. These are a guideline as to how much open space, sport and play/recreation provision is needed to strategically serve the area. These standards have been calculated taking into account the current provision, current population, any identified deficiencies and the estimated population in 2026 (the end date of the Core Strategy and Site Allocations DPD). This therefore identifies surplus or deficit of provision by typology by neighbourhood area.

The standards are as follows:

Typology	Recommended Standard (ha/1000 population)		
	Preston	South Ribble	Chorley
Amenity greenspace	0.54	1.33	0.73
Provision for children/young people	0.02	0.06	0.08
Parks and gardens	1.81	0.66	1.91
Natural and semi-natural	1.78	1.98	4.64
Allotments	0.17	0.08	0.07
Green corridors	-	-	-
Cemeteries/churchyards	-	-	-
Civic spaces	-	-	-
Playing Pitches	1.01	1.14	1.21

No quantity standards are set for green corridors, churchyards/cemeteries or civic spaces. The open space study states that it is not appropriate to set provision standards for green corridors in terms of quantity because of their linear nature and the demand for cemeteries/churchyards is determined by demand for burial space. Civic spaces are normally provided on an opportunistic and urban design led basis therefore no quantity standard is set.

Accessibility – if a space is not accessible, it will not be well used. It is important to make sure spaces are welcoming and accessible to residents. However, quieter spaces can contribute to the visual amenity and biodiversity value of an area.

The open space study sets accessibility standards for the different typologies of open space in order to identify areas that are not currently served by existing facilities. They are based on distances residents would be willing to travel to access different types of open spaces. The table below identifies the accessibility standards for each typology. It must be noted that accessibility must be looked at on a site by site basis, for example if access to a site means crossing busy roads, railways or water bodies it may be more appropriate to increase the quantity of open space in this locality to avoid unnecessary threats to site users.

Typology	Accessibility Standard
Amenity greenspace	10 minute walk time (800m)
Provision for children/young people	10 minute walk time (800m)
Parks and gardens	12 minute walk time (1000m)
Natural and semi-natural	10 minute walk time (800m)
Allotments	10 minute walk time (800m) / 10 minute drive time
Green corridors	No standard set.
Cemeteries/churchyards	No standard set.
Civic spaces	No standard set.

No accessibility standards are set for green corridors, churchyards / cemeteries or civic spaces. This is because it is difficult to assess green corridors against catchment areas due to their linear nature and usage. Provision of cemeteries / churchyards should be determined by demand for burial space therefore it is not appropriate to set an accessibility standard. The companion guide to PPG17 states that there is no realistic requirement to set catchments for civic spaces as the provision will not be appropriate in every environment and cannot be easily influenced through planning policy.

For play areas the following extra measures have been considered – equipment condition and life expectancy; repair and maintenance costs and inclusive play i.e. does the site have equipment for use by children regardless of their physical or learning abilities?

Quality and Value Assessment

A threshold was applied to the results to identify whether the site is of high or low quality/value (green indicates high quality / value (above 40% and 20% respectively), red indicates low quality /value (below 40% and 20% respectively). The open space study recommends what action to take based on the quality and value ratings of a site as follows:

High quality / High value	Site should be protected.
High quality / Low value	Preferred policy approach should be to enhance its value. If this is not possible the next best policy approach is to consider whether it might be of high value if converted to a different type of open space. If this is also impossible, only then is it acceptable to consider a change of use.
Low quality / High value	Preferred policy approach should be to protect site and enhance its quality. If there is a surplus of sites within that typology, and the site is not needed to remedy a deficiency in another typology, disposal of the site with the lowest value should be considered.
Low quality / Low value	If there is an identified shortfall, the policy approach should be to enhance its quality, provided it is also possible to enhance its value. If there is a surplus of sites within that typology, changing the site to another typology should be considered. If there is no shortfall in other typologies, the open space may be surplus to requirements and a change of use should be considered.

3.4 Playing Field assessment

Quality

Playing pitches were assessed on the length of grass, size of pitch, adequate safety margins, slope of the pitch, evenness of the pitch, evidence of dog fouling, evidence of litter, evidence of unofficial use, evidence of damage to the surface, changing accommodation, goal posts, car parking, line marking and training area. Pitches have been scored as:

- An excellent or good pitch = Good quality
- An average pitch = Adequate quality
- A below average pitch or poor pitch = Poor quality

Capacity

This is based on the quality rating for football and rugby pitches and the number of teams currently playing at the sites. These ratings assist in the identification of sites for improvement/development or rationalisation.

Cricket capacity is measured on a season rather than a weekly basis. A good quality wicket should be able to take 5 matches per season per grass wicket and 60 matches per synthetic wicket. Pitches have been rated as:-

- Red – the pitch is being used over capacity
- Amber – the pitch is played to capacity
- Green – the pitch is being used under capacity

3.5 Link to Open Space & Playing Pitch Supplementary Planning Document

Chorley Council's Planning Policy Team have been working in partnership with Preston Council and South Ribble Council on a Joint Core Strategy to help identify potential sites where new house allocation and development can be accommodated. This will inevitably have an impact on the demand for and distribution of open spaces across the borough. To this end a Central Lancashire Open Space Study and Playing Pitch Strategy was prepared by consultants Knight, Kavanagh and Page (KKP) in 2011. An assessment of the quantity, quality and accessibility of open space provision was carried out in accordance with the companion guide to Planning Policy Guidance Note 17 (PPG17) 'Assessing Needs and Opportunities.'

The Play, Open Space and Playing Pitch Strategy has used the data from the KKP study to form the basis of the document with updates and changes made where necessary. The strategy sets out a rationale for ensuring that the correct quantity of open space is created and secured through the planning process and that existing public and private open spaces are protected from inappropriate development. The strategy will ensure that the needs of current and future residents are taken into account, that the quality of the spaces is regularly assessed and improved and that the open spaces are well distributed and accessible to as many people as possible.

The strategy document provides an evidence base and rationale to help secure external funding for the improvement and additional provision of open space and facilities within the borough. Every new residential development in the borough contributes towards open space via developer contributions secured through S106 agreements linked to the planning process.

The full strategy is very detailed, providing an assessment of every site in the borough and can be found in appendices 2, 3 and 4. These documents form part of the evidence base for the Site

Allocations and Development Management Policies Development Plan Document (DPD) and have informed the following policies:

- HS4A: Open Space Requirements in New Housing Developments
- HS4B: Playing Pitch Requirements in New Housing Developments
- HW1: New Open Space, Sport and Recreational Facilities
- HW2: Protection of Existing Open Space, Sport and Recreational Facilities
- HW5: Allotments

They will be used to inform final decisions on sites to be protected as open spaces and playing pitches and new sites to be allocated. They will aid and confirm the process for determining provision in relation to new development within the borough. They will also determine whether the development should contribute an on-site or off site sum, determine the location for this and set the level of contribution as per the cost in the table below:

Typology	Cost per m2	Cost per dwelling		
		Preston	South Ribble	Chorley
Amenity greenspace	£8	£104	£255	£140
Provision for children/young people	£70	£34	£101	£134
Parks and Gardens	£32	£1,390	£507	£1,467
Natural/semi-natural greenspace	£5	£214	£238	£557
Allotments	£9	£37	£17	£15
Playing Pitch	£55	£1,335	£1,507	£1,599

Please refer to Central Lancashire Supplementary Planning Document Open Space and Playing Pitch, Final Version: July 2013 for more detail.

4.0 HOW WE GET THERE?

4.1 Working with partners and the community

There are many voluntary, public and private sector partners already involved in looking after the open spaces across the borough. Some act in an advisory role, others actively manage our spaces, provide key services, perform community liaison or help with funding for specific projects. These partnerships can and do bring significant benefits. Similarly, integrating open space improvements with wider programmes of neighbourhood working often gives better outcomes. We are committed to further developing a partnership, multi-agency approach to the improvement of our open spaces. Open space partners include:

- Parish Councils
- Chorley Community Housing
- Places for People
- Community Payback (Probation Service)
- Trust for Conservation Volunteers
- Private landowners / schools
- Various sports groups / clubs
- Chorley Allotment Society
- Cuerden Valley Trust
- Chorley Football Development Group
- Chorley Cricket Development Group
- Bowls forum
- Neighbourhood partnerships
- Local community and friends groups

Across the borough there are numerous community groups who look after the interests of their local green spaces. The council acknowledges the importance of their input, dedication and local involvement, which helps to improve, enliven and enhance our open spaces.

Chorley is very fortunate in having dedicated and committed volunteers and Friends Groups, who hold regular volunteer work days, where they carry out tasks such as weeding, scrub clearance, litter picking and planting, to supplement the council's maintenance regime. They also act as our eyes and ears on the ground and report larger maintenance issues to the council. The council will continue to support and encourage the formation of local Friends Groups and welcomes the input of local community and interest groups.

4.2 Combined five year action plan

The strategy essentially analyses and summarises the findings of the open space study. It identifies where there are deficiencies and where further provision is required. It also identifies where improvements are needed to be made to existing sites.

It is recommended that the majority of sites continue to be protected.

The action plan prioritises the sites which require improvement over a five year period and identifies where the funding will come from and who is leading the project. The majority of deficiencies in open space can be addressed by securing new provision from housing developments either on-site or by way of a financial contribution towards off-site provision.

The action plan also details when broad objectives will be implemented and who will lead on delivery of projects, for example, identifying potential sites by settlement to meet the deficit of allotments in Chorley.

A five year action plan has been produced that reflects site based and also broader objectives that will be delivered as part of the strategy. The allocation of actions is based upon the priorities identified with high priority actions starting in 2013-14 (year one) and other actions being phased across the five year period up to 2018.

The strategy and action plan is a 'living' document. As sites and circumstances change over time the document will be updated accordingly. It is also important note, that actions are not 'fixed in stone' and may be brought forward or rescheduled based upon changes in circumstances such as external funding and development opportunities.

5.0 HOW WILL WE KNOW WHEN WE'VE GOT THERE?

5.1 Monitoring

It is essential that the site assessment data is reviewed and refreshed area by area taking into account of any improvements in pitch and open space quality and increases in capacity. This will keep a tally of the surpluses / deficiencies in the borough. This will ensure that the audit and assessment data will be accurate in order to respond appropriately to the needs of the local community. This will also avoid the need for a complete review of the Strategy in the short term.

As recommendations and deficiencies are addressed it is important to continually update the base line data. The action plans will be implemented on a year by year basis. Progress will be monitored and logged and feedback sought from site users. An annual update report will be produced to highlight the achievements and setbacks encountered. New action points will be set and targets adapted as necessary dependant on what has been achieved

5.2 Review

A review of the overall strategy will take place in year five and this will form the basis of future strategy development.

6.0 NEXT STEPS...

6.1 Consultation

It is essential to involve residents, local groups and organisations in making choices and decisions about the future development and priorities for our open spaces. The draft strategy now informs a consultation and collaboration process to help create an accurate, detailed open space action plan for each neighbourhood / settlement in the borough and to ensure that the vision and objectives of Chorley Council are supported.

There may well be some tough decisions and compromises to be made in order to achieve the high quality, safe, clean and sustainable open spaces that we aspire to. However, we will ensure that we keep residents fully informed and involved in the process so that everyone understands the Council's intentions.

Consultation will be carried out with statutory and non-statutory partners, local residents, community groups and neighbourhood partnerships during November – December 2013.

Following collation and consideration of consultation feedback, a final strategy will be drafted and then be taken to the Council's Executive Cabinet approval in February / March 2014.