



Report of	Meeting	Date
Joint LDF Officer Team	Central Lancashire LDF Joint Advisory Committee	31 May 2012

CENTRAL LANCASHIRE OPEN SPACE STUDY

PURPOSE OF REPORT

1. To summarise the key findings of the Open Space Study.

RECOMMENDATION(S)

2. That members note the contents of this report

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF REPORT

3. The report was prepared by consultants Knight, Kavanagh & Page for Central Lancashire. It supplements a previous report, produced in 2010 which was not completed as PMP Genesis (the appointed consultants) went into administration. The assessment covers the quantity, quality and accessibility of a wide range of different types of open space. This is particularly important for deciding on the future provision of open space in Site Allocations Development Plan Documents and for on grounds management. The study also considers the application of open space standards across Central Lancashire. It explores how aspects such as quality and value of sites could be strategically improved.

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION(S)

(If the recommendations are accepted)

4. To help ensure Members are aware of the key findings of the Study.

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

5. None.

BACKGROUND

6. Members will be aware that consultants Knight Kavanagh & Page (KKP) were engaged to complete the Central Lancashire Open Space Study following the previous consultants entering into administration. KKP have completed their report and this is being considered by Officers before publication. It will include the findings of the research, consultation, site assessments, data analysis and GIS mapping that underpins the study. It also supplements a previous draft report, delivered in 2010 referred to as the Central Lancashire Open Space, Sport & Recreation Study, which predominately focused on identifying local needs in relation to quantity and accessibility.
7. The work centres on an assessment of the **quantity, quality and accessibility** of open space facilities/provision and was carried out in accordance with Planning Policy Guidance Note 17 and the Companion Guide entitled 'Assessing Needs and Opportunities' published in September 2002. The specific objectives of this audit and assessment were to:
 - Review and utilise (as appropriate) work and studies completed to date (including the 2010 local needs assessment/consultation).
 - Verify the audit and carry out site assessments to assess the quality and value of provision.
 - Set and apply locally derived provision standards including quality, quantity and accessibility.
 - Identify open space surpluses and deficiencies and provide evidence to support development of planning policies.
8. This study is an important contribution to the production of Central Lancashire's Core Strategy and Site Allocations Development Plan Documents. Through recognising the provision of open spaces in plan form, provision can be assessed in terms of quantity, quality and accessibility, strengthening protection and supplementing provision where appropriate.
9. This does not mean that open space outside of the 'recognised provision' can be seen as secondary or surplus. Sites can be significant for the neighbourhoods they service and/or be of wider strategic importance to an area. This will be reflected in open space policies proposed in the emerging Site Allocations Development Plan Documents.
10. This study covers the following open space typologies as set out in 'Assessing Needs and Opportunities: A Companion Guide to Planning Policy Guidance Note 17'.

	PPG17 typology	Primary purpose
Greenspaces	Parks and gardens	Accessible, high quality opportunities for informal recreation and community events.
	Natural and semi-natural greenspaces	Wildlife conservation, biodiversity and environmental education and awareness. Includes urban woodland and beaches, where appropriate.
	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.
	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.

	PPG17 typology	Primary purpose
	Green corridors	Walking, cycling or horse riding, whether for leisure purposes or travel, and opportunities for wildlife migration.
	Cemeteries, disused churchyards and other burial grounds	Quiet contemplation and burial of the dead, often linked to the promotion of wildlife conservation and biodiversity.
Civic spaces	Civic and market squares and other hard surfaced areas designed for pedestrians including the promenade	Providing a setting for civic buildings, public demonstrations and community events.

11. The report considers the supply and demand issues for open space facilities in Central Lancashire. Each part contains relevant typology specific data.
12. The study also uses household survey information previously gathered by PMP Genesis in Spring of 2010. It also includes those views collected from an internet survey for children and young people which targeted primary and secondary school children.
13. The study sits alongside the Central Lancashire Playing Pitch Strategy which has also been undertaken by KKP in accordance with the methodology provided in the Sport England's 'Towards a Level Playing Field – A guide to the production of playing pitch strategies' for assessing demand and supply for outdoor sports facilities. This has been covered in separate committee report before Members.

STUDY METHODOLOGY

14. In total, 707 open spaces (including provision for children and young people) were identified over Central Lancashire (some 300 in Chorley), plotted on GIS, and assessed to evaluate site value and quality.
15. In accordance with PPG17 recommendations a minimum size threshold of 0.2 hectares was applied to the inclusion of some typologies within the study. This means that, in general, sites that fall below this threshold were not audited. However, some smaller sites (i.e. those that are identified through consultation as being of significance) were included.
16. Data collated from site visits was based upon those derived from the Green Flag Award scheme (a national standard for parks and green spaces in England and Wales, operated by the Green Flag Plus Partnership). This was utilised to calculate a **quality** score for each site visited.
17. Using data collected from the site visits and desk based research a **value** score for each site is identified. 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.
18. Quality and value were treated separately in terms of scoring as they are considered to be fundamentally different and can be unrelated. For example, a high quality space may be in an inaccessible location and, thus, be of little value; while, a rundown (poor quality) space

may be the only one in an area and thus be immensely valuable. Accordingly, each type of open space received separate quality and value scores.

KEY FINDINGS OF STUDY FOR CENTRAL LANCASHIRE

Quality

19. Nearly two thirds of assessed open spaces in Central Lancashire score high for quality. More natural and semi-natural sites score low for quality compared to any other typology. This is due to the criteria for assessing these sites which looked at the presence of specific features or facilities such as woodland and open grassland. Such sites also tended to score low for personal security given they are often in isolated locations and not overlooked by other land uses. In addition, they score less for ongoing management or maintenance which was in many cases deliberate in order to provide, for example, unmanaged habitats. Accordingly, their assessment results need to be treated with caution.
20. Amenity greenspaces, provision for children and young people, and parks are generally of a good quality. In particular a significant proportion of allotments and cemeteries are rated as being of a high quality.
21. In general, maintenance of open spaces is regarded as being of a good standard and is seen as a significant contributor to a site's overall quality. This is further reflected in the results from the 2010 household survey; which found nearly all typologies are viewed as being of either good or excellent quality. However, more respondents consider the typologies of amenity greenspace and provision for children and young people to be of a poor quality.

Value

22. The majority of sites were assessed as being of high value. Similar to the quality scores; natural and amenity greenspaces have a higher proportion of low value sites. This reflects the number of sites that lack any particular features, especially for natural and semi-natural greenspaces. However, the value these sites play in providing a visual amenity and a break from the built form remains important in a wider context.
23. To score a high value a site needs to be well used by the local community, well maintained (with a balance for conservation), provide a safe environment and have features of interest; for example play equipment and landscaping. Sites that provide for a cross section of users and have a multi-functional scored better than those that offer limited functions and that are thought of as bland and unattractive.
24. The majority of feedback from the household survey in 2010 views open spaces as being important to people's lives. This reflects the high value placed on open space provision by respondents and supports the findings of the site visit data.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

25. Another element of this study considered the planning policy implications and the application of open space standards across Central Lancashire. It explored how things such as quality and value of sites could be strategically improved.
26. The recommended standards have been applied to each typology for all three central Lancashire authorities in order to assess current need. This has projected to 2026 to assess future need, based on anticipated population growth. (See Appendix 1).

27. The standards, suggested policy approach and associated allocations/de-allocations will be included in the next iteration of the each authority's Site Allocations Development Plan Document. The study will also inform the proposed Open Space Supplementary Planning Document as well as any necessary strategy and efficiency approaches to tackling issues highlighted.

Background Papers			
Document	Date	File	Place of Inspection
Central Lancashire Open Space Study	May 2012		District Council Offices

Report Author	Ext	Email address	Doc ID
Peter McAnespie	5286	peter.mcanespie@chorley.gov.uk	JAC Report – May 12 – Open Space

Appendix 1

Parks and gardens

Analysis area	Current provision (ha)	Current population	Current standard	Identified deficiencies	Total future provision (ha)	Standard based on current demand	Future population	Total new provision 2026 (ha)
	(A)	(B)	(C)	(D)	(E)	(F)	(G)	(H)
Chorley	199.96	104,700	1.91	-	199.96	1.91	114,200	18.14
Preston	245.29	135,300	1.81	-	245.29	1.81	144,500	16.68
South Ribble	71.19	107,500	0.66	-	71.19	0.66	117,600	6.69
CENTRAL LANCASHIRE	516.44	347,500	1.49	-	516.44	1.49	376,300	42.80

Natural and semi-natural

Analysis area	Current provision (ha)	Current population	Current standard	Identified deficiencies	Total future provision (ha)	Standard based on current demand	Future population	Total new provision 2026 (ha)
	(A)	(B)	(C)	(D)	(E)	(F)	(G)	(H)
Chorley	485.92	104,700	4.64	-	485.92	4.64	114,200	44.09
Preston	240.21	135,300	1.78	-	240.21	1.78	144,500	16.33
South Ribble	212.69	107,500	1.98	-	212.69	1.98	117,600	19.98
CENTRAL LANCASHIRE	938.82	347,500	2.70	-	938.82	2.70	376,300	77.81

Amenity greenspace

Analysis area	Current provision (ha)	Current population	Current standard	Identified deficiencies	Total future provision (ha)	Standard based on current demand	Future population	Total new provision 2026 (ha)
	(A)	(B)	(C)	(D)	(E)	(F)	(G)	(H)
Chorley	76.36	104,700	0.73	-	76.36	0.73	114,200	6.93
Preston	72.81	135,300	0.54	-	72.81	0.54	144,500	4.95
South Ribble	143.20	107,500	1.33	-	143.20	1.34	117,600	13.45
CENTRAL LANCASHIRE	292.36	347,500	0.84	-	292.36	0.84	376,300	24.23

Provision for children and young people

Analysis area	Current provision (ha)	Current population	Current standard	Identified deficiencies	Total future provision (ha)	Standard based on current demand	Future population	Total new provision 2026 (ha)
	(A)	(B)	(C)	(D)	(E)	(F)	(G)	(H)
Chorley	8.60	104,700	0.08	-	8.60	0.08	114,200	0.78
Preston	3.21	135,300	0.02	0.08	3.29	0.02	144,500	0.30
South Ribble	6.59	107,500	0.06	0.04	6.63	0.06	117,600	0.66
CENTRAL LANCASHIRE	18.40	347,500	0.05	0.12	18.52	0.05	376,300	1.66

Allotments

Analysis area	Current provision (ha)	Current population	Current standard	Identified deficiencies	Total future provision (ha)	Standard based on current demand	Future population	Total new provision 2026 (ha)
	(A)	(B)	(C)	(D)	(E)	(F)	(G)	(H)
Chorley	6.84	104,700	0.07	1.60	8.44	0.08	114,200	2.37
Preston	23.34	135,300	0.17	1.60	24.94	0.18	144,500	3.30
South Ribble	8.67	107,500	0.08	1.20	9.87	0.09	117,600	2.13
CENTRAL LANCASHIRE	38.85	347,500	0.11	4.40	43.25	0.12	376,300	7.98

This page is intentionally left blank