CENTRAL LANCASHIRE PPG17 OPEN SPACE STUDY MAY 2012

Auditing local provision (supply)

The site audit for this study was undertaken by the KKP Field Research Team. In total, 711 open spaces[1] (including provision for children and young people) are identified, plotted on GIS and assessed to evaluate site value and quality. Each site is classified based on its primary open space purpose, so that each type of space is counted only once. The audit, and therefore the report, utilise the following typologies in accordance with PPG17:

1. Parks and gardens
2. Natural and semi-natural greenspace (including country parks)
3. Amenity greenspace
4. Provision for children and young people
5. Allotments
6. Cemeteries/churchyards
7. Civic space
8. Green corridors

In accordance with PPG17 recommendations a size threshold of 0.2 hectares has been applied to the inclusion of some typologies within the study. This means that, in general, sites that fall below this threshold are not audited. However, some sites below the threshold (i.e. those that are identified through consultation as being of significance) are included. The list below details the threshold for each typology:

‹ Parks and gardens – no threshold
‹ Natural and semi-natural greenspace – 0.2 ha
‹ Amenity greenspace – 0.2 ha
‹ Provision for children and young people – no threshold
‹ Allotments – no threshold
‹ Cemeteries/churchyards – no threshold
‹ Civic space – no threshold

Database development

All information relating to open spaces across Central Lancashire is collated in the project open space database (supplied as an Excel electronic file). All sites included within the audit, as identified and assessed, are included within it. The database details for each site are as follows:

> **Data held on open spaces database (summary)**
> KKP reference number (used for mapping)
> Site name
> Ownership
> Management
> Typology
> Size (hectares)
> Site visit data

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[1] *A further 74 sites were also site visited but excluded from the audit as they were not physically accessible to site researchers (i.e. no obvious entry point, secured fence site)*

Sites are primarily identified by KKP in the audit using official site names, where possible, and/or secondly using road names and locations.

Quality and value

Quality and value are 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, if a rundown (poor quality) space may be the only one in an area and thus be immensely valuable. As a result, quality and value are also treated separately in terms of scoring. Each type of open space receives separate quality and value scores as follows. This will also allow application of a high and low quality/value matrix to further help determine prioritisation of investment and to identify sites that may be surplus to a particular open space typology.

Analysis of quality

Data collated from site visits is based upon those derived from the Green Flag Award scheme (a national standard for parks and green spaces in England and Wales). This is utilised to calculate a quality score for each site visited. Scores in the database are presented as percentage figures. The quality criteria used for the open space assessments carried out are summarised in the following table.

Quality criteria for open space site visit (score)
Physical access, e.g., public transport links, directional signposts,
Personal security, e.g. , site is overlooked, natural surveillance
Access-social, e.g., appropriate minimum entrance widths
Parking, e.g., availability, specific, disabled parking
Information signage, e.g., presence of up to date site information, notice boards
Equipment and facilities, e.g., assessment of both adequacy and maintenance of provision such as seats, benches, bins, toilets
Location value, e.g., proximity of housing, other greenspace
Site problems, e.g., presence of vandalism, graffiti
Healthy, safe and secure, e.g., fencing, gates, staff on site
Maintenance and cleanliness, e.g., condition of general landscape & features
Groups that the site meets the needs of, e.g., elderly, young people
Site potential

For provision for children and young people, the criteria is also built around Green Flag and is a non technical visual assessment of the whole site, including general equipment and surface quality/appearance but also includes an assessment of, for example, bench and bin provision. This differs from an independent RosPA review, which is a more technical assessment of equipment in terms of play value and risk assessment grade. Subsequently, for the purpose of any future equipment requirements, the findings of the RosPA reviews should also be used.

Analysis of value

Using data calculated 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.

The value criteria set is derived from PPG17. It is summarised below:

Value criteria for open space site visits (score)
Level of use (observations only), e.g., evidence of different user types (e.g. dog walkers, joggers, children) throughout day, located near school and/or community facility
Context of site in relation to other open spaces
Structural and landscape benefits, e.g., well located, high quality defining the identity and character of the area
Ecological benefits, e.g., supports/promotes biodiversity & wildlife habitats
Educational benefits, e.g., provides learning opportunities on nature/historic landscapes, people & features
Social inclusion and health benefits, e.g., promotes civic pride, community ownership and a sense of belonging; helping to promote well-being
Cultural and heritage benefits, e.g., historic elements/links (e.g. listed building, statues) and high profile symbols of local area
Amenity benefits and a sense of place, e.g., attractive places that are safe and well maintained; helping to create specific neighbourhoods and landmarks
Economic benefits, e.g., enhances property values, promotes economic activity and attracts people from near and far
Value - non site visit criteria (score)
Designated site such as LNR or SSSI
Educational programme in place
Historic site
Listed building or historical monument on site
Registered 'friends of group' to the site

Quality and value thresholds

In order to determine whether sites are high or low quality (as recommended by PPG17); the results of the site assessments have been colour-coded against a baseline threshold (high being green and low being red).

The primary aim of applying a threshold is to identify sites where investment and/or improvements are required. It can also be used to set an aspirational quality standard to be achieved at some point in the future and to inform decisions around the need to further protect sites from future development (particularly when applied with its respective value score in a matrix format).

The base line threshold for assessing quality is, for most typologies, often set around 60%; based on the pass rate for Green Flag criteria (site visit criteria also being based on Green Flag). This is the only national benchmark available for parks and open spaces. However, the site visit criteria used for Green Flag is not always appropriate for every open space typology and is set to represent a sufficiently high standard site.

Therefore the baseline threshold for certain typologies is amended to better reflect this.

Table 2.2: Quality and value thresholds by typology

Typology	Quality threshold	Value threshold
Parks and gardens	40%	20%
Natural and semi-natural greenspace	25%	20%
Amenity greenspace	30%	20%
Provision for children and young people	40%	20%
Allotments	40%	20%
Cemeteries/churchyards	40%	20%
Civic space	40%	20%
Green corridors	40%	20%

Identifying local need (demand)

Consultation to identify local need for new and improved facilities was the predominant focus of the Central Lancashire Open Space, Sport & Recreation Study 2010. We have therefore utilised the findings of the household survey carried out as part of this to further support the results of the quality and value assessment. This has also been supplemented by face-to-face and/or telephone interviews with key local authority officers responsible for the management and development of sites relating to each typology. A new survey has also been sent to parish councils

In addition, a survey to all parish and town councils was also distributed, generating 38 responses (100% response rate). This helped to pick up on issues, problems and concerns relating to open space provision at a more local level, as well as identifying the attitudes and needs of the broader local community. It also allowed any local issues and aspirations to be identified.

Surveys

As part of the Open Space, Sport and Recreation Study 2010, research was undertaken to gain an understanding of the views and opinions regarding open spaces in Central Lancashire. KKP has used this information to support the findings of the audit, where possible.

In total 10,000 postal surveys were distributed to households across Central Lancashire; with 711 being returned as follows:

Table 2.3: Survey responses and return rate

Authority area	Responses received	Return rate
Chorley	229	7.6%
Preston	229	5.9%
South Ribble	253	8.2%
CENTRAL LANCASHIRE	**711**	**7.1%**

In addition to this, an online survey for children and young people was also carried out between February and April 2010. The two surveys (one primary and one secondary) were hosted on a website with guidance notes being sent to schools via Lancashire County Council's communication portal. A total of 358 responses were received.

Accessibility standards

Accessibility standards for different types of provision are a tool to identify communities currently not served by existing facilities. It is recognised that factors that underpin catchment areas vary from person to person, day to day and hour to hour. This problem is overcome by accepting the concept of 'effective catchments', defined as the distance that would be travelled by the majority of users.

Guidance is offered by the Greater London Authority (GLA) (2002): 'Guide to preparing open space strategies' with regard to appropriate catchment areas for authorities to adopt. However, in order to make accessibility standards more locally specific to Central Lancashire, we propose to use data from the 2010 consultation to set appropriate catchments. The following standards were recorded in the 2010 household survey in relation to how far residents would be willing to travel to access different types of open space provision.

Table 2.4: Accessibility standards to travel to open space provision

Typology	Accessibility standard	KKP applied standard
Formal parks	12 minute walk time (1000m)	12 minute walk time (1000m)
	15 minute drive time	15 minute drive time
Country Parks	20 minute drive time	10 minute walk time (800m)
Natural and Semi-natural	10 minute walk time (800m)	
	10 minute drive time	10 minute drive time
Amenity greenspace	10 minute walk time (800m)	10 minute walk time (800m)
Provision for children	400m	10 minute walk time (800m)
Provision for young people	11 minute walk time (900m)	
Outdoor Sports Facilities	10 minute drive	See separate Playing Pitch Strategy
	10 minute walk	
Allotments	10 minute walk time (800m)	10 minute walk time (800m)
	10 minute drive time	10 minute drive time
Green corridors	No standard set	No standard set
Cemeteries	No standard set	No standard set

Most typologies are set as having an accessibility standard of 10 minute walk time. A combined accessibility standard of 10 minute walk time is also applied to the provision for children and young people. This is in order to provide a single complete catchment for such typologies, as both forms have been identified under one open space type. This is in keeping with the mapping presented in the previous study.

No standard is set for the typologies of green corridors or cemeteries. It is difficult to assess green corridors against catchment areas due to their linear nature and usage. For cemeteries, provision should be determined by demand for burial space.