

Introduction and background

The study

- 1.1 In July 2006 Salisbury District Council ('the Council') appointed PMP to undertake an Open Space Study.
- 1.2 The main focus of the study was to:
 - identify local needs through assessment
 - audit all public and private existing open space, sport and recreational facilities within the District, including school sites and allotments
 - set local provision standards
 - apply local provisions standards
 - produce options for future strategy and policies.
- 1.3 The study has been undertaken in accordance with the requirements of the latest Planning Policy Guidance Note 17 (PPG17, Planning for Open Space Sport and Recreation, July 2002) and its Companion Guide (September 2002).
- 1.4 The study encompasses the majority of typologies set out in PPG17 with quantity standards set for the following typologies:
 - provision for children and young people
 - allotments and community gardens
 - parks and gardens
 - formal sports provision
 - amenity greenspace.
- 1.5 PMP and the Council have followed the recommendations of PPG17 throughout the study. By following these recommendations, this study has the potential to make a real difference to the quantity, quality and accessibility of open spaces in the District of Salisbury.

Need for local assessments

- 1.6 This assessment of open space and local needs will enable the Council to:
 - plan positively, creatively and effectively in identifying priority areas for improvement and to identify the types of open space required
 - ensure an adequate provision of high quality, accessible open space to meet the needs of the local community
 - ensure any funding is invested where there is the greatest need
 - lead Section 106 (S106) negotiations with developers from a position of knowledge with supporting evidence.

SECTION 1 - INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

- 1.7 Where no assessment exists, developers can undertake their own independent assessment to demonstrate that open space is surplus to requirements. It is therefore desirable for the Council to have robust data to protect open space within the District.

Why public open space?

- 1.8 PPG17 states that well designed and implemented planning policies for open space, sport and recreation are fundamental to delivering broader Government objectives, which include:
- supporting an urban renaissance
 - supporting a rural renewal
 - promotion of social inclusion and community cohesion
 - health and well being
 - promoting more sustainable development.
- 1.9 Open space and recreation provision in the District, therefore, has an important role to play in supporting the realisation of these objectives.

Function of open space

- 1.10 Open spaces can provide a number of functions within the urban fabric of cities, towns and villages. These include, for example, provision for play and informal recreation, a landscaping buffer within and between the built environment, a habitat for the promotion of biodiversity and the greening of the residential environment. Each type of open space has various benefits. For example, allotments for the growing of one's own produce, play areas for children's play and playing pitches for formal sports events. Open space can additionally perform a secondary function. For example, outdoor sports facilities have an amenity value in addition to providing for sport and recreation.
- 1.11 There is a need to provide a balance between different types of open space in order to meet local needs. For example, not all areas will show a demand for open space in the form of playing pitches or allotments. Some areas will have specific local demand for green corridors such as nature walks or bridleways.
- 1.12 Changing social and economic circumstances, changed work and leisure practices, more sophisticated consumer tastes and higher public expectations have placed new demands on open spaces. They have to serve more diverse communities and face competition from various developers including sport and leisure. Open spaces can promote community cohesion, encourage community development, and stimulate partnerships between the public and private sector.
- 1.13 Parks and open spaces are more accessible to a wider range of people than some sport and leisure facilities. They are also better able to realise the aims of social inclusion and equality of opportunity. The provision of open spaces and recreation is central to a sustainable and thriving community.
- 1.14 It is widely recognised that the provision of high quality public space can help promote an area as an attractive place to live, and can result in a number of wider benefits. These are set out in Appendix A.

Local features and demographics

- 1.15 The District of Salisbury is located in South Wiltshire and comprises of the main urban area of Salisbury city and a large number of rural villages that differ greatly in size. Map 1.1 shows the location of the main urban areas of the Salisbury District.

Map 1.1 The District of Salisbury



- 1.16 The 2001 census indicates a population of 114,613 residing in the District with a 49%/51% split between males and females.
- 1.17 Population density for the District is approximately 1.14 people per hectare. This compares to an average of 2.07 for the region and 3.77 for England. This highlights the rural nature of the majority of the District.
- 1.18 Examination of the age structure of the region shows that the average age for residents is above the England average but slightly below the average for the region. Of particular note are the number of residents over 45 years in age (42.8% of the total Salisbury population but 39.6% of the total population in England).
- 1.19 There are a large number of Town and Parish Councils in the District. This means that a large amount of the open space in the District, outside of the city area, is outside of the direct control of the Council. Where recommendations are made for improvements to open spaces in Parished areas, it should be noted that partnership working between the District and Parish Council will be necessary.

Summary

1.20 This study:

- provides an evaluation and summary of the local needs assessment, which has assisted in identifying areas of high and low priority for open space needs throughout the District
- provides an analysis of existing provision for each type of open space
- presents quantity, quality and accessibility standards for appropriate typologies
- enables the Council to ensure the most effective and efficient use of open spaces within the District. It also enables the Council to plan and respond appropriately to development pressures
- provides the necessary information to be used in developing a strategy for the future management and development of open space.