

Introduction and background

The study

- 1.1 In February 2006, Ryedale District Council (the Council) appointed PMP to undertake an Open Space, Sport and Recreational Standards study across the district. The study provides the Council with clear provision standards that can be applied to determine clear priorities and policies for the future (based on local need) and a direction for the allocation of resources.
- 1.2 The study builds on the audit work completed in August 2005 that assessed the quantity and quality of open spaces across the district and the audit is the base for this study. The key objectives of the work were to:
 - set provision standards to include:
 - a quantitative component
 - a qualitative element
 - an accessibility element
 - apply the recommended provision standards to:
 - identify quantitative deficiencies or surpluses
 - accessibility constraints
 - identify situations in which planning standards may be waived or amended
 - outline the likely future needs of the district
- 1.3 The study is 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 published in September 2002. Further details of these documents are set out later in this section.

Why open space, sport and recreation?

- 1.4 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.
- 1.5 Open space and recreation provision in Ryedale therefore has an important role to play in supporting the implementation of these objectives. Key benefits resulting from an understanding of the open spaces across the district include:

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- contributing to key corporate priorities including safe and active communities, healthy population, clean, green attractive environment and accessible services and transport choices
- the identification of the opportunities to further improve the provision of open spaces
- improved knowledge of user requirements to assist in the planning and management of facilities
- provision of a robust basis for resisting the loss of open space where appropriate and securing resources to enhance the availability and quality of open space.

Functions of open space

- 1.6 Open spaces can provide a number of functions within the urban fabric of towns and villages. For example, the provision for play and informal recreation, a landscaping buffer within and between the built environment and a habitat for the promotion of biodiversity.
- 1.7 Each type of open space has various benefits, which depend on the type of open space. For example, allotments for the growing of one's own produce, play areas for children's play and 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.
- 1.8 There is a need to provide a balance between different types of open space to meet local needs. For example, not all areas' needs will show a demand for playing pitches or allotments. Some areas will have specific local demand for green corridors such as nature walks or bridleways.
- 1.9 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 also promote community cohesion, encourage community development and stimulate partnerships between the public and private sector.
- 1.10 As a rural area surrounded by nearby countryside and with a dispersed population, provision of formal open spaces to sufficiently meet local and recreational needs within Ryedale is a challenge. Although formal open space has a key role to play, residents recognise and value the benefits that the nearby countryside brings.

Benefits of open space

- 1.11 Open spaces, including parks, playgrounds, amenity green space, nature reserves and the countryside, are diverse locations that provide opportunities for a range of formal and informal leisure, passive and active sport, recreation and play.
- 1.12 Parks and open spaces are more accessible to a wider range of people than some sport and leisure facilities and are better able to realise the aims of social inclusion and equality of opportunity. The provision of open spaces and recreation provision is also key to an ideal, sustainable and thriving community.

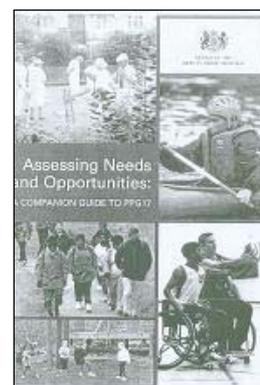
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- 1.13 It is widely recognised that the provision of high quality ‘public realm’ facilities such as parks and open spaces can assist in the promotion of an area as an attractive place to live, and can result in a number of wider benefits. These are highlighted in Appendix A.
- 1.14 Although it is important to recognise the benefits of formal open space provision it is important that this formal open space is considered within the wider context in Ryedale.

National context – Open Space

“Assessing Needs & Opportunities”- National Planning Policy Background

- 1.15 PPG17 states “the government expects all local authorities to carry out assessments of needs and audits of open space and sports and recreational facilities.”
- 1.16 The major change in the policy guidance from the previous version is the requirement for local authority decisions regarding open space, to be **informed by local needs assessments and an audit of existing provision**. Such audits should incorporate qualitative, quantitative and accessibility considerations as well as the overall non-monetary value of the land including the level of use. National standards are no longer considered to meet local needs, although they may be used as benchmarks.
- 1.17 Other changes in this planning policy document are:
- a greater emphasis is placed on qualitative considerations – this is particularly important as it will allow local authorities to identify potential for increased use through better design, management and/or maintenance of open space
 - it advocates the setting of local standards appropriate to the local area rather than assessment by national standards although these can be used as benchmarks. The Government believes that national standards are inappropriate, as they do not take into account the demographics of an area, the specific needs of residents and the extent of built development.
 - it provides further guidance on the constituent elements of open space typologies
 - it clearly acknowledges the multiple functions that open spaces can perform.
- 1.18 The policy guidance sets out priorities for local authorities in terms of:
- assessing needs and opportunities – undertaking audits of open space, sport and recreational facilities
 - setting local standards
 - maintaining an adequate supply of open space
 - planning for new open space.
- 1.19 The companion guide sets out the process for undertaking local assessments of needs and audits of provision. It also:
- indicates how Councils can establish the needs of local communities and apply provision standards
 - promotes a consistent approach across varying types of open space.



- 1.20 Both the audit and this subsequent report which focuses on the development and application of local standards follow the methodology set out in PPG17.

Demographics and local features

- 1.21 Ryedale District Council is located in North Yorkshire and is a predominantly rural area which includes part of the North York Moors National Park. The National Park area is not covered by the land use planning control of the Council. The geographical location of Ryedale, situated in close proximity to the North Yorkshire Moors is particularly influential with regards the type of open space aspired to in the area.
- 1.22 Almost half of the 50,782 people living in Ryedale at the time of the 2001 census reside within the main market towns of Malton, Norton, Helmsley, Kirkbymoorside and Pickering. The remainder reside in a range of rural settlements dispersed across the district which covers 582 square miles and is divided into 20 wards and 115 parishes. Parish and Town Councils are key providers of open spaces across the district and have an important role to play in ensuring that there is local provision of open spaces, sport and recreation facilities.
- 1.23 Analysis of the Indices of Deprivation 2004 highlights that Ryedale District Council is ranked 242 out of the 354 local authorities. Further analysis of the breakdown of deprivation on a super output area level reinforces this, with no areas in Ryedale featuring in the bottom 10% of the country and Malton rated within the top 10%. Despite this, there are 9 output areas within Ryedale where the employment rating is within the bottom 10% in the country.
- 1.24 Tourism is a key industry within Ryedale and visitor spend makes a significant contribution to the economy. Tourists travel to Ryedale to visit the picturesque market towns, and village, the nearby countryside and associated attractions and the historic heritage. The Council has a tourism strategy, which focuses on delivering a sustainable form of tourism that has high regard for the natural environment and takes advantage of the natural beauty of the area.
- 1.25 The Yorkshire and Humber Regional Spatial Strategy sets a target of 3460 additional houses in the district by 2021 which will generate an approximate increase in population of 8650 people. The district is characterised by an ageing population with an average age of 42.5 years. 26.7% of the population were 60 or above at the time of the 2001 census compared to just 23.8% nationally. This may impact on the type and balance of open spaces aspired to by local residents.
- 1.26 Analysis of the open space across the district has been undertaken by type of open space looking at different areas across the local authority boundary (referred to as analysis areas in this report). These areas were discussed and agreed with the Council.
- 1.27 The use of analysis areas allows examination of data at a more detailed local level, enabling an understanding of the geographical distribution of open spaces and ensuring that differences in perception and opinion of open spaces across the district are understood.
- 1.28 The district has been split into five areas using administrative ward boundaries. These boundaries can be seen in map 1.1 overleaf and are referred to throughout the report as analysis areas. Analysis of specific areas can be undertaken using the GIS system and applying the local standards.

Map 1.1: Analysis areas within Ryedale District



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- 1.29 The five defined analysis areas for Ryedale are:
- Helmsley and Kirkbymoorside
 - Rural North
 - Pickering
 - Malton
 - Rural South
- 1.30 Each analysis area includes a variety of settlements including market towns, key centres and smaller settlements. The analysis areas are based around the larger towns and it is assumed that people in the smaller villages use the amenities in the larger towns that are in their analysis area.
- 1.31 The analysis areas incorporate all land within Ryedale District Council Boundary, to ensure that all residents have an opportunity to contribute to the study. However, the audit of provision has been focused on land inside of the Plan area, rather than the wider Council Boundary, to ensure that the local quantity standards are relevant for emerging planning policy work.
- 1.32 The Core Strategy has now been submitted to the Secretary of State following extensive consultation phases, which have fed into the production of the submission document. The Strategy has now been submitted to the Secretary of State and was the subject of a public inquiry during July 2006. The strategy sets out the long-term vision, aims and strategy for the next 15 years to guide public and private sector investment. In particular, it specifies:
- specific types of new development required to meet Ryedale's needs;
 - sorts of changes that will happen in different locations;
 - types of projects and investment needed to successfully deliver the strategy.
- 1.33 It also includes a 'spatial strategy' that outlines how new development will be distributed amongst the District's towns and villages. This spatial strategy has been considered in the context of open space, sport and recreation in the district in this report.
- 1.34 The spatial strategy sets out a five tier settlement hierarchy:
- **Principle service centre** - Malton/Norton will be the main focus for new development
 - **Local Service Centre** - new development will be directed to Pickering after Malton and Norton
 - **Other local service centres** - Kirkbymoorside and Helmsley
 - **Service Villages** - within the more rural parts of the District, ten service Villages have been identified as places where some new development may be appropriate. The selection of these villages has been based on the availability of three essential services – a good bus service, a local food shop and a primary school.

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- **Areas of restricted development** - in all other villages new development will be controlled so that it meets the needs of the local community.
- 1.35 Although the strategy sets out a hierarchy for development as outlined above, the level of development and associated projected population change in each area is not yet known. For this reason, this study considers both the current year (using mid year estimates) and three scenarios for 2021 projecting different levels of growth in the analysis areas.
- 1.36 Current and future population projections for each of the three scenarios are set out for information purposes in table 1.1 below. The assumed level of growth in each scenario for each of the analysis areas is also provided.

Table 1.1: Current and future population projections

Analysis Area	Current Year	2021 Scenario 1	Assumed Level of growth %	2021 Scenario 2	Assumed Level of growth %	2021 Scenario 3	Assumed Level of growth %
Area 1: Rural North	10660	11090	5	11090	5	11090	5
Area 2: Malton	11840	15300	40	16165	50	17030	60
Area 3: Rural South	12320	12755	5	12755	5	12755	5
Area 4: Pickering	10370	12965	30	12535	25	12100	20
Area 5: Helmsley and Kirkbymoorside	6510	8240	20	7805	15	7375	10
Overall	51700	60350		60350		60350	

- 1.37 The above calculations for future population projections assume that allocations stated in the Regional Spatial Strategy are fulfilled and that occupancy is an average of 2.5 people per dwelling.
- 1.38 The Local Development Framework highlights a number of key challenges for the future of Ryedale and outlines a number of underlying issues in the district that need to be addressed through the implementation of the Local Development Framework. Provision of open space, sport and recreation should be considered in the context of these key challenges which include:
- shortfalls of affordable housing
 - changing economies and a need to diversify the economic base of the district
 - a very high quality built and natural environment which is susceptible to flooding
 - a geographically large rural area with a low population density characterised by poor public transport provision. This increases the reliance on the car and isolates and disadvantages those that do not have private transport.
 - there is an ageing population and the number of people in their 20s is falling – this places different demands on the types of housing and infrastructure that may be required in addition to the level and type of open space provision aspired to.

Structure of the report

1.39 The methodology and process undertaken is set out in section two of this report. Sections 3 – 10 relate to the following typologies identified within the scope of the report:

- informal market town open space (section 3)
- children and young people (section 4)
- outdoor sports facilities (section 5)
- village open space (section 6)
- indoor sports facilities (section 7)
- allotments (section 8)
- green corridors (section 9)
- cemeteries and churchyards (section 10)

1.40 Each typology chapter sets out the strategic context to that particular typology, the recommended quantity, quality and accessibility standards and the application of these standards through the geographical analysis. Section 11 provides advice on the implementation of the study on a case-by-case basis in terms of developer contributions.