

**BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL**

**CABINET**

**3<sup>rd</sup> June 2009**

**Preferred Planning Guidance (PPG)17 – Outturn Report**

Responsible Portfolio Holder	Cllr Roger Smith
Responsible Head of Service (deputy)	John Godwin
Key Decision	

**1. SUMMARY**

- 1.1 The following report sets out the operational implications of the PPG17 assessment of Bromsgrove in relation to the delivery of services within the Parks and Open Spaces section. Further more the report seeks members agreement to establish a set of key principles for the planning, implementation, funding and delivery of the services reviewed (current & future) under PPG17.

**2. RECOMMENDATION**

- 2.1 The Cabinet is recommended to:

- 2.1.1 Approve the recommended action relating to section 3.6 Parks and Gardens.
- 2.1.2 Approve the recommended action relating to section 3.7 Amenity Green Spaces.
- 2.1.3 Approve the recommended action relating to section 3.8 Provision for children and young people.
- 2.1.4 Note the comments under the recommended action relating to section 3.9 Outdoor sports facilities.
- 2.1.5 Approve the recommended action relating to section 3.10 Allotments.
- 2.1.6 Approve the recommended action relating to section 3.11 Cemeteries and Churchyards.
- 2.1.7 Approve the recommended action relating to section 3.12 Civic Space.

**3. BACKGROUND**

- 3.1 As Members will be aware following the PPG17 report to the Local Development Frame (LDF) Working Party on the 16<sup>th</sup> March 2009, the planning system stresses that a strong evidence base is needed to support the production of development plan documents, such as the Core Strategy. The Council has therefore commissioned a study on open space sport and

recreation which has informed the draft core strategy specifically Core Policy 11: Open Space and Recreation. The study has been carried out by PMP Consultants on behalf of both the Planning and Environment Services and the Street Scene and Community Services.

3.2 The Planning Policy Guidance 17: Planning for open space, sport and recreation (PPG17) states that well designed and implemented planning policies for open space, sport and recreation are fundamental to delivering broader Government objectives, like supporting an urban renaissance, rural renewal, promotion of social inclusion and community cohesion, health and well being and promoting more sustainable development. To achieve this, local authorities should undertake robust assessments of the existing and future needs of their communities for open space, sport and recreation facilities and by referring to this information, to set locally derived standards for the area. This study is therefore undertaken in accordance with PPG17 and the guiding principles in its companion guide: Assessing needs and opportunities. The assessment is an essential part of the evidence base which underpins the core strategy, however the document does not only relate to the Council's planning functions it also impacts on the current operation of services with in the Parks and Open Spaces and any future service enhancements/expansions plans. Some of the first core strategies to be developed were found to be unsound as they didn't have a fully compliant PPG17 assessment to justify policies on open space.

3.3 The study covers 10 types of open space, sport and recreation facilities within Bromsgrove. They are:

- 1) *Parks and gardens* – areas that provide informal recreation and community events such as Sander's Park
- 2) *Natural and semi-natural green spaces* – areas for wildlife conservation, biodiversity environmental education and awareness, such as Sycamore Drive Local Nature Area
- 3) *Amenity green space* - green spaces providing informal activities close to home or work, children's play and enhancement of the appearance of residential or other areas. Example includes the amenity green space on Barnsley Hall Road.
- 4) *Provision for children* - areas for play and social interaction involving children under 12, such as Barnt Green Parish Council Park play area.
- 5) *Provision for young people* – areas for play and social interaction involving young people aged 12 or above, such as Stoke Prior Parish Playing Field Basketball Court
- 6) *Outdoor sports facilities* – formal sports facilities like tennis courts and playing fields (including school playing fields). Example includes Wythall Park Bowling Green.
- 7) *Allotments* – such as Hewell Road allotments
- 8) *Cemeteries & churchyards* - place for burial and quiet contemplation, such as St. Laurence Parish Church

- 9) *Green corridors* – areas for walking, cycling, horse-riding, leisure, travel or wildlife migration such as towpaths along canals, rights of way
- 10) *Civic spaces* – places for community events and setting for civic buildings, these are hard surfaced areas usually located within town centre. Example includes Wythall War Memorial.

3.4 A full explanation of the methodology of the study and the steps it followed can be found with in Appendix 1 – The LDF Working Party Report of the 16<sup>th</sup> March 09 in sections 3.6 to 3.13. Within the same report the author then went on to highlight the following key areas/priorities for consideration:

- 1) Parks & Gardens – section 3.14 to 3.15
- 2) Natural and semi-natural green spaces – section 3.16 to 3.17
- 3) Amenity green space – section 3.18 to 3.19
- 4) Provision for children & young people – section 3.20 to 3.22
- 5) Outdoor sports facilities – *section 3.23 to 3.24*
- 6) Allotments – section 3.24 to 3.26
- 7) Cemeteries & churchyards – section 3.27 to 3.28
- 8) Civic Spaces – section 3.29 to 3.30
- 9) Green Corridors – section 3.31 to 3.32

Members should also be aware that the consultation process used was reviewed by the Council's Corporate Communication and Policy team to ensure it complied with BDC requirements and was statistically robust.

3.5 For the purpose of this report the Council's Street Scene & Community department who are responsible for the current operation of the services will focus on the following areas. Any area not covered in the following sections are considered to be strategic planning issues and will be addressed through the relevant strategies for the department:

The initial comments are taken for the LDF report dated 18<sup>th</sup> March 09 and the recommended actions are to be agreed with Members and actioned by the Street Scene & Community department. They out line the key principles for the planning, implementation, future funding bids and delivery of the services reviewed (current & future) under PPG17.

In cases where the recommended action states that a review is undertaken to establish future service changes over normal management practices officers will produce subsequent issue specific reports for Member approval.

### 3.6 ***Parks and Gardens***

Applying the quantity standard shows that there is a current shortfall of 0.21 hectares which will increase to 2.86 hectares in 2026. As, the overall shortfall is relatively small combined with the difficulties of providing formal parks and gardens it is suggested that new provision is unlikely to be

required. Applying the walk time standard shows that the majority of residents in Bromsgrove East, North East, North and West are outside the catchment area, whereas the application of drive time standard shows that all residents can reach a park. The quality standard shows that cleanliness and maintenance are most important.

To meet the future shortfall, it is important to protect parks from development and consider the designation of pocket parks within settlements outside the catchment of a park such as Hagley. To improve the accessibility, a network of 'green linkages' as sustainable transport links is recommended.

***Recommended Actions:***

- Review the street cleansing, ground maintenance and repairs & renewal arrangements at Sanders Park & St Chad's Park and develop improvement/management plans at each site to ensure that they meet resident expectations.
- Work in partnership with other organisations who manage/operate parks and/or recreational open spaces to assist in the enhancement of "pocket parks" in areas outside the catchment areas of BDC parks for example Bromsgrove West (Hagley).
- Continue to increase the role the Council's Arts & Events, Sports Development and Community Safety Teams play in the delivery of activities with in Parks and Open Spaces. Exploit external funding opportunities in these areas to maximise the usage and the benefit to the community for example informal exercise opportunities such as trim trails/outdoor circuit training.

**3.7 Amenity green space (AGS)**

Apart from Bromsgrove East and North East, the provision of other areas is insufficient to meet current and future demand. For example, settlements like Hagley which fall outside the catchments of a park and amenity space will need increased provision if possible. Accessibility is important in maximising usage. 61% of residents would expect to walk to amenity green spaces. This reflects that people considered amenity green space as local resources. The quality of sites is average and assessments reveal that a number of sites are in need of significant improvement such as Long Meadows Road AGS and Sharps Close AGS. Local consultation shows that only high quality and functional sites are valued.

To address quantity deficiencies, development of the amenity spaces into a network of green corridors and increased provision in smaller villages are recommended. It is also reminded that settlements with over 500 residents would require local access to amenity green space.

***Recommended Actions:***

- Produce an adoption procedure of areas of AGS that sets minimum standards of provision that area acceptable to BDC and ensure that all areas that are due to be adopted or proposed for adoption by developers are vetted against the criteria.
- Review the ongoing street cleansing, ground maintenance and repairs & renewal arrangements for AGS's to ensure that they are perceived as being high quality by residents.
- Review the current issues around insufficient provision and investigate the potential to increase provision where appropriate by potential change of use/increased access opportunities. Provision in the Hagley area is highlighted as a specific requirement in the report, however this situation will be eased when the adoption of 2 areas of AGS are completed in due course.

### **3.8 Provision for children and young people**

Although current provision for children is sufficient and overlapping catchments can be found, application of the quantity standard indicates that there will be a shortfall of 0.26 hectares by 2026. In terms of quality, cleanliness and maintenance is considered as the most important factor. Almost half of the respondents of the household survey considered the quality of facilities to be good.

Apart from Bromsgrove Central, provision for young people is insufficient to meet current and future needs. Similar to provision for children, priority of provision should be given to areas without open space that can play the offsetting role, such as Hagley and Clent parishes. For quality, safety and security is considered very important. Many existing sites were criticised for their range of facilities and lack of innovative and exciting play equipment.

To help reduce deficiencies, re-structuring sites serving overlapping catchments and re-profiling sites serving indistinct catchments are recommended. For areas identified as devoid in provision, provision for new facilities should be sought.

#### ***Recommended Actions:***

- Undertake a review of the play provision for children & young people and adopt a methodology where investment is made into larger AGS's/recreation ground to create multi age provision in one location, with a targeted objective of increasing young peoples and/or risk play provision as a priority.
- In areas where there are small poor quality play facilities or indistinct catchments adopt a methodology of removal of the equipment and returning the area to AGS. To support this work the Council's strategic planning team will review the planning application process to ensure that any proposed removals do not contradict any planning approval that have been granted. This process will though need to be supported by a local area consultation process were required and investment in higher

quality facilities within the catchment area and be subject to the Council's annual budget cycle or the attraction of external funding sources.

- In areas where AGS;s have been inappropriately located as aprt of existing developments consider the sale of the land to generate capital receipts to reinvest in poor quality play facilities and/or expand existing provision with in the catchment area. This recommendation will be subject to the catchment area meeting the applicable local standard.
- Review over lapping sites and ensure that any potential changes to provision consider this factor including producing a removal, enhancement or re profiling list of current play provision.
- Investigate working in partnership with other organisations who manage/operate parks and/or recreational open spaces to increase the quality and accessibility of provision in areas that currently have insufficient provision when measured against the agreed standards.
- Review the street cleansing, ground maintenance and repairs & renewal arrangements for play provision with in areas where there are perceived quality issues and develop improvement plans to address these issues.
- Work with other organisations and children & young people to ensure that they feel safe when accessing these services and where required provide additional support in such areas to off set access, innovation & risk implications.
- Review & Update the Bromsgrove Play Action Plan to reflect the above reviews.

With in the report specific areas were identified as requiring new or reprofiled provision. Please see officers initial comments in relation to the matter based on recent investment that has been provided via BDC, BIG Lottery and DCSF:

- Bromsgrove West, (Hagley & Clent) – These areas will be reviewed with in the district wide review and built into future planning considerations.
- Bromsgrove North, (Beacon & Hillside) - These areas will be reviewed with in the district wide review and built into future planning considerations. Officers are however concerned that comments relating to the Beacon ward may be misleading due to its close proximity to St Chad's Park (Waseley) and would consider any future development (in this area) is best made with in existing local provision.
- Bromsgrove North East, (Wythall South & Hollywood & Majors Green) – Due to the recent investment & improvements that has been undertaken in the Drakes Cross and Walkers Heath ward and Hollywood & Majors Green ward (Bromsgrove North East), this area will require closer scrutiny when reviewed to ensure the effective use of resources. However officer do accept that there is a lack of teenage provision in these areas.
- Bromsgrove Central, (Marlbrook & St Johns) – These areas will be reviewed with in the district wide review and built into future planning

considerations. The St Johns requirements will also need to be considered by the Town Centre redevelopment group with a specific focus given to the proposed enhancement to the recreation ground.

- Bromsgrove East, (Tardebigge & Alvechurch) - These areas will be reviewed with in the district wide review and built into future planning considerations. However since the report was commissioned the Council has attracted external funding for a redeveloped junior play area in Alvechurch. This will need to be factored into the review, as will the recent purchase of the former MHP land by developers within Tardebigge.

### 3.9 *Outdoor sports facilities*

Apart from Bromsgrove East, existing provision is insufficient to meet future needs which will result in 19.59 hectares of shortfall by 2026. Applying the accessibility standard, all residents are found to have access to at least one outdoor sports facilities. Cleanliness and maintenance are considered the most important determinant of quality. The householder survey shows that 40% of respondents considered the quality of sports facilities as average and 30% considered that as poor.

Due to the quantitative and qualitative deficiencies, the protection and quality improvement of all outdoor sports facilities are recommended. Improving the accessibility to school-based STP facilities is also considered necessary to help meeting the local needs. It is also recommended that all sites should meet the National Governing Body criteria.

#### ***Recommended Actions:***

- This area of work is considered within a future report relating Sport Hub provision. However the key message of the assessment were:
  - consideration needs to be given to protecting existing provision either with in BDC's control or that of other providers,
  - enhancing our own provision to address qualitative implications of current provision & facilities, with a specific reference to pitch drainage.
  - A lack of changing provision on some sites.
  - Increasing/decreasing provision (pitch layouts) to meet the local needs identified such as more junior pitches.
  - Increased access to school based provision/pitches.
- Specific areas that were identified as having an under provision were Bromsgrove North East and Bromsgrove West. Although Bromsgrove West should benefit from the playing pitch works that are currently being undertaken close to the Hagley area with in Dudley MBC.

### 3.10 *Allotments*

There is currently a shortfall of 1.41 hectares and the deficiencies will increase to 3.35 hectares by 2026. Only Bromsgrove Central and West have sufficient provision to meet the current and future needs. Walking to allotments is preferred and applying the standard shows that no residents in Bromsgrove North East have access to an allotment. For Bromsgrove East, North and West, the majority of residents are outside the recommended accessibility catchment. Site visits suggest the quality of allotment is good overall. Security and safety is considered as the most important quality determinant.

Whilst protection of allotments is recommended, provision in areas of deficiencies is recommended. For areas currently without allotments, provision is recommended if evaluation of demand shows such needs.

### ***Recommended Actions:***

- Implement an expansion plan for existing allotment sites to reinstate all available plots, for example expansion to Watt Close and Round Hill allotments sites.
- Where applicable utilise existing BDC land and work in partnership with other organisations to develop provision in areas where access is limited or not available. Specific areas mentioned in the report were Hagley, Rubery, Wythall & East Bromsgrove.
- Review the current booking arrangements and restrict residents to a maximum of 1 sixteenth of an acre plots per household for new tenants. For existing tenants give notice that after Oct 2010 the Council will no longer continue with multiple plot allocations over one eighth of an acre.
- Members to agree a policy that Bromsgrove allotment plots are to be leased to Bromsgrove residents only as from Oct 2010.
- Develop a process for the creation of allotment societies to over see the quality of on site provision and agree a model for future service delivery in such circumstances.
- Create a set of guidance notes with CDRP partners for allotment holders to identify best practice with regard to managing on site security and safety concerns. As part of this process undertake a review of all sites with the Police Crime Risk Manager to identify any issues for consideration by the Council or tenants.
- Create an inspection & planned preventive maintenance programme to address quality issues identified and ensure a suitable budget is available through the re profiling of existing budgets or the business planning cycle.

### ***3.11 Cemeteries and Churchyard***

PPG17 Annex states “As churchyards can only exist where there is a church, the only form of provision standard which will be required is a qualitative one”, whereas for cemeteries “every individual cemetery has a finite capacity and therefore there is a steady need for more of them”. The council’s cemeteries and churchyards officer indicates that there is sufficient



burial capacity for the foreseeable future#. There is no definitive national or local accessibility standards available and hence no realistic requirement to set catchments. Because very few people identified cemeteries and churchyards as their favourite open space, there was too few response to set a sound quality standard. But among the responses received, cleanliness, maintenance and perceived safety were considered most important.

The lack of standards means it is inappropriate to state areas of deficiency. Apart from protecting the current cemeteries and churchyard, the Council should ensure there is continued and sustainable land provision for cemeteries. In areas of limited open space provision, enhancement to accessibility and quality of cemeteries and churchyards should be prioritised.

# - Please note that this comment relates to the space available at the North Bromsgrove Cemetery, however this space is current unusable and no development plan is in place to over see the creation of additional capacity.

***Recommended Actions:***

- Produce a design specification for the for the expansion of the North Bromsgrove Cemetery, secure a budget bids for the works required and undertake a procurement exercise in order to ensure that the above mentioned capacity is available by April 2011.
- Review the ongoing grounds maintenance and repairs & renewal arrangements for cemeteries to ensure that they are perceived as being high quality by residents.
- Under take a plotting exercise to establish current capacity with in church yards and to identify the future requirements that will be placed upon the Council with regard to adoption of closed church yards.

*3.12 Civic space*

PPG17 suggests that it is not realistic to set a quantity and accessibility standards for civic spaces due to their specialist nature. Residents highlighted that cleanliness, maintenance and perceived safety are the most important quality determinants. Infrastructure (such as bins and seats) should also be provided.

It is recommended that new development should take into account the demand for new civic spaces from local residents. Creating green linkages to neighbourhoods will improve accessibility.

Recommended Action:

- Review the ongoing, street cleansing, grounds maintenance and repairs & renewal arrangements for Civic Spaces to ensure that they are perceived as being high quality by residents.

#### **4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1 There are no specific financial implications contained within this report as the resource implications required relate to officer time and/or the reallocation/re profiling of existing budgets.
- 4.2 In cases where service specific reports require additional financial support, subsequent reports will be provided to members (as highlighted in section 3.5) or budget bids will be produced in line with the business planning process/MTFP requirements.

#### **5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 There are no specific legal implications contained within this report, any future legal implications arising within the reviews recommended will be addressed on a case by case basis.

#### **6. COUNCIL OBJECTIVES**

- 6.1 The purpose of this report is to identify the steps required to address issues raised by the PPG17 assessment. Although in principle a planning requirement, due to the nature of the assessment and the high levels of consultation & inspection that are used to produce the final document, the report does allow front line services to review the qualitative & accessibility standards of current service delivery against a robust framework.
- 6.2 As such the recommendations are designed to enhance the level of service provision and make services increasingly more accessible to local residents.
- 6.3 The actions and reviews that have been identified will contribute to:
  - The Council's vision by increasing residents satisfaction (become proud) with where they live and by providing service that are on the road to excellence.
  - The values of the Council by increasing partnership working where required to improve residents quality of life, allow greater equality of access to services and respond to the Customer first agenda by using resident feedback to shape service improvements.
  - The improvements made will also directly contribute to C03 and the specific priority of sense of community as shown in section 15.3 to 15.8 (p293) of the PPG17 assessment.
- 6.4 The PPG17 Assessment report in section 15.12 to 15.15 also highlights the contributions Green Spaces, Sport & Recreational facilities make to the

regional & local documents and the Worcestershire LAA & its specific objectives.

## 7. **RISK MANAGEMENT**

7.1 The main risks associated with the details included in this report are:

- Inability to influence the identified requirements due to unavailable spaces, budget constraints, capacity implications and ineffective partnerships in areas where BDC does not have sufficient land available.
- Poor publicity or reputational damage with in areas where in sufficient supply is identified.
- Reputation impact in cases where land is reallocated for different use or operational policies are revised and impact on current users.

7.2 These risks are being managed as follows:

- Inability to influence the identified requirements:
  - *Additional requirements for open space built into future development planning documents*
  - *Maximisation of section 106 agreements and a prioritised approach to future budget submissions based on local need.*
  - *Medium term response plans produced to balance the delivery of existing services with the need to enhance service on a prioritisation basis.*
- Poor Publicity or reputational damage (location based):
  - *Communications plan developed to respond to local concerns and agreed responses based on reviews undertaken prepared.*
  - *Staff briefings to be held where required to ensure effective communications with residents.*
- Reputational impact on residents/users.
  - *All decisions to be publicised in advance and consultation undertaken where required. Where required alternative provision provider or alternative services recommended.*
  - *Ward Members and staff briefed in situations where local provision or the delivery of services will impact on specific groups or individuals and agreed response prepared.*
  - *Communications plan prepared on specific issues as and when required to control the flow of information and ensure suitable notification is given.*

7.3 Currently the risk identified in the bullet point in 7.1 are not addressed by any risk register and will be added to the SS&C risk register for 2009.

## 8. CUSTOMER IMPLICATIONS

8.1 Please see section 6 & 7 of this report as they identify all issues and actions required relating to customers.

## 9. EQUALITIES AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

9.1 There are no specific Equality & Diversity implications contained with in this report, any future implications with in the reviews recommend will be considered, impact assessed & addressed on a case by case basis.

## 10. VALUE FOR MONEY IMPLICATIONS

10.1 There are no specific VFM implications contained with in this report, however the recommended action will lead to a more coordinated approach to services delivery/provision, a rationalisation a the built play environment, enhanced partnership working, higher customer satisfaction with the services provided (quality of life) and a more effective use of resources in future years.

## 11. OTHER IMPLICATIONS

Procurement Issues - None
Personnel Implications - None
Governance/Performance Management - None
Community Safety including Section 17 of Crime and Disorder Act 1998 – None
Policy – Yes, this relates to the suggest operational policy change highlighted around fixed play, allotments, partnership working & AMG's.
Environmental – None but bio diversity implications will be considered in relation to future changes of use and open space enhancement.

## 12. OTHERS CONSULTED ON THE REPORT

Portfolio Holder	YES
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Chief Executive	YES
Executive Director - Partnerships and Projects	NO
Executive Director - Services	YES
Assistant Chief Executive	NO
Head of Service	YES
Head of Financial Services	YES
Head of Legal, Equalities & Democratic Services	NO
Head of Organisational Development & HR	NO
Corporate Procurement Team	NO

**13. WARDS AFFECTED**

'All Wards

**14. APPENDICES**

Appendix 1: PPG17 Assessment of Bromsgrove District Council

Appendix 2: Bromsgrove Ward Map and Area guide.

**15. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

Open Space, Sport and Recreation Local Needs Survey (A copy has been placed in members room or available electronically from the strategic planning team).

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