



**REPORT FROM: PLANNING, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND REGULATORY SERVICES MANAGER**

**TO: POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE**

**DATE: 28<sup>th</sup> MAY, 2019**

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## **OPEN SPACE AUDIT 2019**

### **PURPOSE OF REPORT**

To present the update of the Open Space Audit to Members and recommend it for adoption.

### **RECOMMENDATION**

To adopt the Open Space Audit 2019 as part of the evidence base for the Pendle Local Plan Part 2: Site Allocations and Development Policies

### **REASON FOR RECOMMENDATION**

The National Planning Policy Framework 2018 (NPPF) makes it clear that to be found sound at examination Local Plans should be underpinned by relevant and up-to-date evidence that is adequate and proportionate, focused tightly on supporting and justifying the policies concerned (paragraph 31)..

### **ISSUE**

#### Introduction

Open space is a valuable asset that has multiple benefits for our communities and the planet. It provides areas where communities can interact with each other, nature and the built environment.

Access to a network of high quality open spaces provides opportunities for sport and physical activity, which are important for the health, social and cultural well-being of communities.

Open space also helps to meet the significant challenges presented by climate change and flooding. Street trees and woodland provide urban cooling, whilst Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) help to reduce the overland flow of rainwater following a rainstorm. Many open space sites also provide valuable habitats for wildlife.

## National Policy Requirements

The National Planning Policy Framework 2018 ["NPPF"] recognizes that the planning system has an important role to play in ensuring that the provision of open space is sufficient to meet the needs of the population. It states that Local Plans to plan positively for the provision of accessible open spaces that reflect the current and future needs of their communities.

The NPPF requires planning policies and site allocations in the Local Plan to be based on robust and up-to-date assessment of the need for open space, sport and recreation facilities. This assessment should address any quantitative and/or qualitative deficits or surpluses to help inform the need for new provision.

## Local Plan Policies

Pendle Local Plan Part 1: Core Strategy ["LP1"] sets out the strategic planning policies for the borough. Policy ENV1: Protecting and Enhancing Our Natural and Historic Environments sets out the strategic approach to planning for open space, whilst Policy SUP2 supports the provision of open space to improve the long-term health prospects and future well-being of local residents.

Local standards for the amount, quality and accessibility of open space, established in the new Pendle Open Space Audit, will be incorporated into the emerging Pendle Local Plan Part 2: Site Allocations and Development Policies ["LP2"].

## Pendle Open Space Audit

The borough's first Open Space Audit was adopted by Pendle Council in 2004. This document was updated and expanded in 2008, but is now out-of-date and no longer fully compliant with national planning policy.

The 2019 audit is fully compliant with the requirements set out in the NPPF. It provides an up-to-date assessment of the quantity and quality of open space provision in the borough. It also considers the distribution and accessibility of open space sites, to help identify those areas with either a surplus or deficit of open space provision.

In the 2019 audit existing provision within the following open space typologies, is considered by ward, area committee area and borough:

- Allotments
- Amenity Greenspace – *informal greenspaces close to home or work, that provide an opportunity for informal activity or enhance the appearance of an area.*
- Cemeteries
- Civic Space
- Green and Blue Corridors – *linear features that are used for walking, cycling or horse riding and provide opportunities for wildlife migration (e.g. canals, rivers, former railway lines etc.).*
- *Natural Greenspace (including woodland)*
- Outdoor Sports
- Parks
- Play Areas

## Key Changes

1. For the first time in Pendle, the 2019 audit establishes a set of local standards for the amount, quality and accessibility of open space that it expects to be provided, both within local neighbourhoods and at a borough-wide level (Chapter 4).

These standards will be incorporated into the emerging Pendle Local Plan Part 2: Site Allocations and Development Policies ["LP2"] to help ensure that, where necessary, developers are required to provide sufficient open space in new developments to meet the needs of local residents.

2. With improved GIS mapping available, the opportunity has been taken to re-map each site to ensure that the site area recorded is as accurate as possible. This has resulted in a decrease in the site area reported for some sites.
3. In earlier audits some sites were classified under more than one typology, particularly within the natural greenspace and woodland typologies. This caused issues with double counting, so the 2019 audit only classifies sites under their primary typology thereby eliminating the potential for double counting. This approach is not without its own drawbacks, as it can result in the apparent under-recording of a particular typology. This is most evident in the case of Victory Park in Barnoldswick, which is effectively a series of playing pitches and formal play areas. These are recorded under the outdoor sports and play area typologies rather than the Parks typology.

### Summary

Whilst the total amount of open space recorded has decreased since the previous audit, this is primarily a result of more accurate digitized mapping and the elimination of double counting, rather than a significant loss of sites.

Despite a significant reduction in resources, there has been a general improvement in the quality of open space provision, particularly within the Parks and Play Area typologies.

The majority of the borough's residents have good access to all typologies of open space, when assessed against the relevant local standards. However, there are parts of the borough with relatively poor access to Parks and Play Areas and the wards of Blacko & Higherford, Clover Hill, Horsfield, Old Laund Booth and Walverden have deficiencies in all but one of the nine typologies assessed.

Emerging planning policy will need to provide continued protection for open space sites and employ appropriate mechanisms to secure improvements to those sites, or areas of the borough, with the lowest quality scores. In areas where a deficit in provision has been recorded new development maybe required to contribute towards additional provision.

### **IMPLICATIONS**

<b>Policy:</b>	The findings from the Open Space Audit 2019 will be used to support the development of planning policies in the emerging Local Plan.
<b>Financial:</b>	There are no financial implications arising directly from the contents of this report.
<b>Legal:</b>	None identified.
<b>Risk Management:</b>	None identified.
<b>Health and Safety:</b>	None identified.
<b>Sustainability:</b>	The principle of promoting sustainable growth and development is a key objective of the NPPF. The Open Space Audit provides the evidence required to ensure that emerging planning policy will continue to provide

for an adequate supply of quality open spaces that are accessible and relevant to the public.

**Community Safety:** None identified.

**Equality and Diversity:** None identified.

## **APPENDICES**

Appendix 1: Pendle Open Space Audit 2019

## **LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS**

Pendle Local Plan Part 1: Core Strategy (2015)

Rosendale, Burnley and Pendle Playing Pitch Strategy (2016)