

## **Undertaking the study**

### **Introduction**

- 2.1 As previously mentioned, this study was undertaken in accordance with PPG17 and its companion guide. This companion guide is a guidance process suggesting ways and means of undertaking such a study. It emphasises the importance of undertaking a local needs assessment, as opposed to following national trends and guidelines. The four guiding principles in undertaking a local assessment are:
- (i) local needs will vary even within local authority areas according to socio-demographic and cultural characteristics
  - (ii) the provision of good quality and effective open space relies on effective planning but also on creative design, landscape management and maintenance
  - (iii) delivering high quality and sustainable open spaces may depend much more on improving and enhancing existing open space rather than new provision
  - (iv) the value of open space depends primarily on meeting identified local needs and the wider benefits they generate for people, wildlife and the environment.
- 2.2 PPG17 recognises that individual approaches appropriate to each local authority will need to be adopted as each area has different structures and characteristics. The resulting conclusions and recommendations of this study are therefore representative of the local needs of the District of Rother.

### **Types of open space**

- 2.3 The overall definition of open space within the government planning guidance is:
- “all open space of public value, including not just land, but also areas of water such as rivers, canals, lakes and reservoirs which offer important opportunities for sport and recreation and can also act as a visual amenity.”*
- 2.4 PPG17 identifies 10 open space typologies. These categories include nine types of open space and one category of urban open space. This study includes the assessment of the following typologies:
- amenity greenspace
  - parks and gardens
  - natural and semi natural open space
  - provision for children and young people
  - outdoor sports facilities
  - allotments and community gardens
  - green corridors
  - churchyards and cemeteries
  - civic spaces.
- 2.5 In addition, a supply and demand assessment for indoor sports facilities was undertaken and an additional typology of beaches/coastal areas was introduced to recognise this is an important open space resource for many residents.

- 2.6 The study takes into account open spaces provided, owned and managed by other organisations illustrating a more accurate picture of current provision within the two areas. Full details of these typologies, their definitions and primary purpose are outlined in Appendix C.

**PPG17 – Five step process**

- 2.7 The PPG17 companion guide sets out a five step logical process for undertaking a local assessment of open space. This process was used in undertaking this study to meet the requirements of the Council to plan, monitor and set targets for their existing and future provision of open space within the District. Although presented as a linear process below, in reality, many stages were undertaken in parallel.

- 2.8 The five step process is as follows:

- step one – Identifying local needs
- step two – Auditing local provision
- step three – Setting provision standards
- step four – Applying provision standards
- step five – Drafting policies – recommendations and strategic priorities.

**Our process**

- 2.9 The following steps indicate how the study has been undertaken in accordance with PPG17.

***Step one - Identifying local needs***

- 2.10 In order to identify local needs, a series of consultations were carried out, these included:
- 5,400 household questionnaires disseminated across Rother (users and non users of open space) using analysis areas split according to geographical and demographic boundaries (a copy of the analysis areas can be found in Appendix D)
  - sports club surveys to all identified clubs
  - young people’s internet survey – sent out to all the schools in the District
  - ‘drop in’ neighbourhood sessions at three towns and one village in the District
  - press releases, a specific email address and text messaging service were set up to allow the general public to provide comments on open space
  - internal one-to-one consultations with Council officers
  - consultation with parish and town councils and external agencies.
- 2.11 Specific details on the process adopted for Step 1, along with relevant questionnaires, can be found in Appendix D.

***Step two - Auditing local provision***

- 2.12 The Council had already compiled some data in GIS form on the open spaces in the District.
- 2.13 PMP conducted a thorough audit through desk research and site assessments. This included ensuring consistency of categorisation of open space sites into the PPG17 typologies used for this study.
- 2.14 A total of 550 sites were identified through the audit within settlement boundaries. Where accessible, these sites were assessed on quantity, quality, accessibility and value using a standard matrix and definitions, which can be found in Appendix E.
- 2.15 Each open space site was then digitised using GIS software and its associated ratings and characteristics were recorded on a linked Access database.
- 2.16 This report is supplemented by an Access database, which will enable further updates of open spaces and varying forms of analysis to be undertaken. This allows a dynamic reporting and assessment mechanism and enables individual sites or specific geographical locations to be examined in detail where necessary.

***Steps three and four - Setting and applying provision standards***

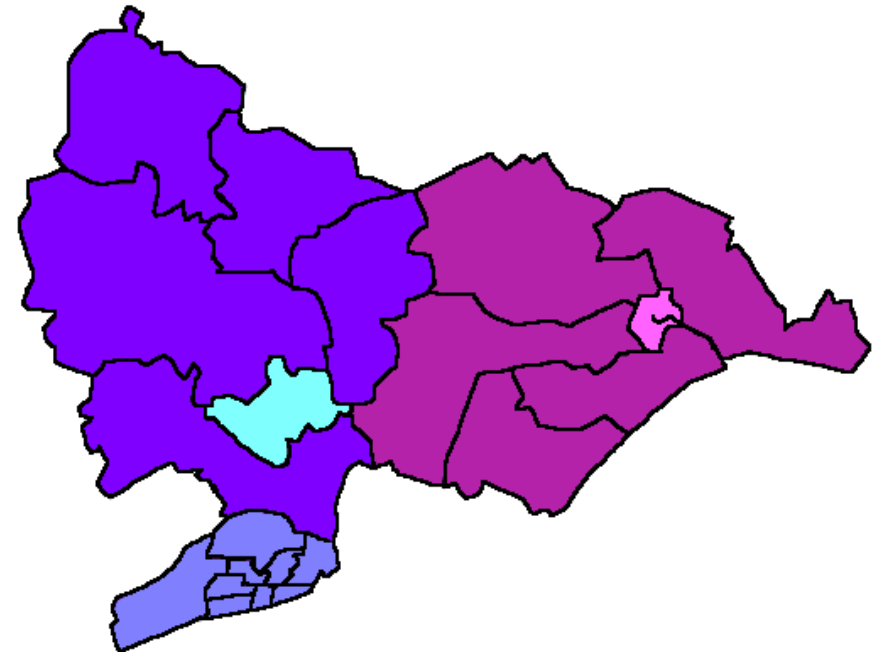
- 2.17 From the analysis of the significant amount of data collected and site ratings in terms of quality, quantity, accessibility and value of the sites we are able to:
- determine a set of provision standards for each type of open space
  - apply such standards for each type of open space
  - identify gaps in provision across the different types of open space and therefore the areas of priority.
- 2.18 The analysis has therefore been undertaken by type of open space, looking at different areas across the local authority boundary (referred to as analysis areas in this report), which were discussed and agreed by the Council.
- 2.19 The use of analysis areas allows examination of data at a more detailed local level, and provides a geographical background to the analysis, especially where some areas are sparsely populated and very rural in nature. Table and Figure 2.1 overleaf, provide details on the analysis areas used in this study and the wards within each analysis area.

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**Table 2.1 Analysis area breakdown**

Area 1 Bexhill	Area 2 Battle	Area 3 Rye	Area 4 West Rother	Area 5 East Rother
Central	Battle Town	Rye	Crowhurst	Brede Valley
Collington			Darwell	Marsham
Kewhurst			Ewhurst and Sedlescombe	Rother Levels
Old Town			Salehurst	Eastern Rother
Sackville			Ticehurst and Etchingham	
St Marks				
St Michael's				
St Stephen's				
Sidley				

**Figure 2.1 Analysis area breakdown**



Key:  West Rother     Battle     Bexhill     Rye     East Rother

## ***SECTION 2 – UNDERTAKING THE STUDY***

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- 2.20 Setting robust local standards based on assessments of need and audits of existing facilities will form the basis for addressing quantitative and qualitative needs through the planning process.
- 2.21 Further detail regarding the process for the setting and application of each type of provision standard is outlined in Appendix F.

### ***Step 5 – Drafting policies - recommendations and strategic priorities***

- 2.22 Application of the standards provide strategic priorities and recommendations which are set out for each typology within the report.
- 2.23 The report also provides guidance for the application of Section 106 agreements and using best practice formula and costings based on the approach taken by other authorities and best practice.