Appendix 3

Site Assessment Methodology

Reigate & Banstead
BOROUGH COUNCIL
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APPENDIX 3:   ASSESSMENT METHODOLOGY

Introduction

There were three components to assessing provision across the Borough:

- A quantitative component. This was determined in order to determine how much new provision may be needed. Such a standard identifies where provision appears deficient, and where fuller investigation is needed to more fully determine future needs.
- A qualitative component. This takes the form of a local quality standard or vision, established through consultation and site assessment, as a description of the quality aspired to for the various open spaces. In conjunction with assessing site quality, the value of each site was also evaluated. This is used in conjunction with the quality of individual sites, to help determine the appropriate strategy for managing sites, the aim being to gradually improve the sites so that they become high in terms of both quality and value scores.
- An accessibility component. The local accessibility standard was established aimed at improving peoples' access to site. A distance threshold was established for each typology through consultation based on the preferred means of travel associated with that typology, and the distance people expected to travel. The resulting catchment represents the area within which residents are considered to have access to the open space.

Assessment of Quantity of Provision

The quantity of provision is expressed in terms of hectares of each typology per 1,000 people, or number of pitches per 1,000 people. The boundaries of each of the sites were identified and then included on the GIS. The ward within which the site lies was identified and included in the Sites Database. Where a site crossed into two or more wards, the area was apportioned appropriately.

The total area (hectares) of each typology was calculated per ward. When divided by the population in that ward, this determined the current quantity per 1,000 population, for the current (2010) and projected 2026 populations. The quantity of each typology, and the quantity per ward is presented in each of the relevant sections of the report.

Sites and facilities were included within the assessment irrespective of the level of permitted access, and classified as accessible, restricted access or no public access. Where appropriate, sites are classified as accessible or inaccessible within the data tables and maps, so as to enable a picture to be drawn of the total extent of open space and facilities together with the accessibility, or potential accessibility to those spaces and facilities.

The current and projected future quantity provision was then assessed against the local quantity standard (see relevant sections of the report). All sites in each typology are listed in the Sites Database in Appendix 5.

Assessment of Accessibility

The second factor in the assessment focuses on accessibility of sites across the Borough to local residents. The principle of the 'catchment area' is used as a mechanism for identifying areas of the

Borough which are well served by existing open space, and areas in which there is a deficiency of accessible provision.

The catchment is defined in PPG17 as the distance travelled by the 75th centile of users by the means of transport cited as the most popular. These 'as the crow flies' distances are determined from the residents survey, in which residents are asked how long they consider they would expect to travel to sites (of different typology) and by what means. (See Appendix 4b).

All sites were plotted on GIS and the agreed distance threshold was measured from the edge of the site, creating a 'catchment' around the site within which it is considered that people could reasonably be expected to travel. When repeated for each site of a particular typology across the Borough, it was possible to form a picture of those areas of the Borough which are well served by sites and those where deficiencies were present. These maps of accessibility are shown for each typology in the relevant sections 4 to 13.

In accordance with PPG17, sites are identified as being of County/Borough level, local, or neighbourhood significance, depending on the expected 'draw' of the sites. Sites of different levels of significance then are expected to have differing accessibility thresholds. The identification of the hierarchy for each site then enabled different accessibility thresholds to be assigned to each of the groups of sites if appropriate. These are as follows:

- Level 1: County or Borough significance - a site with strategic importance or with such facilities attracting visitors from outside the Borough.
- Level 2: Local significance – drawing visitors from two or more wards
- Level 3: Neighbourhood significance - attracting almost all users from a single neighbourhood

The accessibility assessments determined that people expected provision of some typologies to be local. For example, people expect to be able to walk a short distance to play areas, to access a recreation ground, most outdoors sports and natural/semi-natural space. For other typologies, such as parks and gardens, allotments, cemeteries and specialist sports facilities, people expected to travel a distance. This information helped to generate the local standards for quantity. For the first group, the local quantity standard was best considered at a local level, whereas for the second group, a wider application area, at an area or borough level was more appropriate.

Assessment of Quality and Value

The third component of the provision analysis was to determine quality and value of each site in order to be able to determine where improvements could or should be focused. The assessment of quality and value are determined from the analysis of quality in the site audits, together with community views and compared against the locally derived quality standards.

The PPG17 guidance provides criteria for use in quality and value site audits. This method has been used as a basis for the Reigate & Banstead audits. For determining quality, each site was assessed in terms of 4 key features - site security and safety; vegetation; site facilities; and cleanliness and maintenance. Within these four features are a number of criteria, potentially 17 in total. Prior to the audits, the team identified the criteria which were applicable to the typology concerned. For example in evaluating natural and semi natural space, the criteria on 'level of site' was not applicable. For value, each site was evaluated against 8 pre-determined value criteria.

During the audits, each site was evaluated against each of the applicable criteria. A 1(low) -5 (high) point score system was used.

Weightings were assigned to ensure the appropriate balance within the overall score for each of the key features, determined by officers referring to 'reference sites', sites considered by the team to represent good, reasonable or poor quality respectively. Raw and weighted data were then entered into the Site quality and Audit database. The scores were presented as percentage scores. Using key 'reference sites', the team was then able to identify good/reasonable/poor score thresholds. All site scores were then transformed into one of these ratings for inclusion in the Site Database (Appendix 5).

A key element of the site assessment was the determination of a quality standard. This is a 'quality vision' for the sites, reflecting the current quality of the sites and aspirations of the residents. The score represented by this vision is then used as a benchmark against which to evaluate the quality of the sites. No value standard is required by PPG17.

The process then considered the balance between quality and value. A well maintained, clean open space (high or good quality) may be located in an inaccessible location (low or poor value) or no opportunity to link with the residential area and elements of the green infrastructure network. Similarly a site which is unique for its educational value (high value) may be run-down (poor quality). The balance of quality and value for sites will be major determinants in determining the best approach to improving the network of sites across the Borough.

Each site was considered in terms of the balance between quality and value. The aim is to manage the network of sites, so as to gradually increase the proportion of sites which are of high quality and high value. The findings of the study can then be input into the development of a strategy for improving sites across the Borough..

The Audit Checklist, below, indicates the criteria against which the sites were evaluated, and also identifies for each typology, the criteria applicable for each typology. It also shows the site assessment sheet used in the audits.

PPG17 OPEN SPACE AUDIT – QUALITY SCORING ASSESSMENT

Quality Attribute	Very Good (5)	Good (4)	Average (3)	Poor (2)	Very Poor (1)	Applicability of each attribute to each typology								
						1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Site Security and Safety														
1 Main Entrance	Easy to find, welcome/advisory sign, appropriate size, clear, clean, tidy, well maintained and inviting *Informal sites; focus on key access points*	Appropriate size, clear, clean, tidy, well maintained and inviting	Obvious, open, inviting, clean	Apparent as an entrance, clean	Inappropriate location and poorly maintained	y	y		y		y	y	y	
2 Lighting	Appropriate lighting that promotes the safety of the open space; well-maintained	Appropriate lighting; well-maintained	Some lighting; some general improvements could be made	Limited lighting; or appropriate lighting in poor condition	Limited lighting in poor condition; or no lighting in places required	y	y	y	y		y		y	y
3 Equipment (e.g. protection of equipment and appropriate flooring and surfaces)	Equipment in excellent condition; excellent surfaces throughout the site; appropriate fencing of site to protect equipment and/or ensure safety of users	Equipment in good condition; appropriate and suitable surfaces provided throughout the majority of the site; sufficient measures provided to protect equipment and/or ensure safety of users	Equipment in reasonable condition; appropriate surfaces provided but some potential improvements; some measures provided to protect equipment and/or ensure safety of users	Equipment in poor condition; some questions regarding safety of use; appropriate surfaces provided but in poor condition or some clear concerns regarding surfaces; limited measures to protect equipment of users	Equipment in very poor condition; clear questions regarding safety of use; inappropriate surfaces; no measures to protect equipment of users				y		y			
4 Boundaries (site edges incl. hedges fencing, gates	Clearly defined and well-maintained to a high standard	Clearly defined and maintained to a reasonable standard	Mostly clearly defined but possibly improvements to be made to the standard and condition	Poorly defined and some questions regarding the standard and condition	Poorly defined and in a state of disrepair	y	y		y		y	y		
Vegetation														
5 Planted areas (trees, shrubs, floral areas etc) *Vegetation (trees, shrubs, grass, etc)*	Numerous planting, appropriate mix of plants, installed and maintained to a high standard no weeds *Vegetation actively managed for formal /informal amenity and biodiversity. Extensive areas of wildlife habitat managed in partnership with community.*	Numerous planting, appropriate mix of plants, Installed/maintained to reasonable standard; few weeds *Vegetation managed for informal amenity, some wildlife habitat management*	Appropriate range of vegetation and plants but with some patchy maintenance *Vegetation managed mainly for informal amenity, with some wildlife habitat management*	Limited range of vegetation and plants but reasonable maintenance *Vegetation managed mainly for informal amenity,, no wildlife habitat management*	Limited range of vegetation and plants; poor maintenance with some areas clearly suffering *Limited vegetation maintenance*	y	y	y		y	y		y	y

6 Grassed areas or grassed pitches	Full grass cover throughout; dense sward, good colour, cleanly cut and in excellent colour and condition *Grassed/open areas* *Variety of grassland habitats and sward lengths, well maintained under contract, few monitoring problems.*	Full grass cover throughout and cleanly cut; dense sward, good colour, few weeds but generally in good condition *Variety of grassland habitats and sward lengths, managed under contract, some problems maintaining required mix of grassland habitats.*	Grass cover throughout but with some thin patches /excessive growth in some areas; some bald areas and a few weeds; but generally in good condition *Limited range of grassland habitats/cut lengths. Grass in popular 'honey-pot' locations subject to wear and tear (thin and bald patches)*	General grass cover, some significant areas thin, saturated and/or poorly maintained; cut infrequently with obvious clippings still in existence *General grass condition in open areas is average with bald patches. Cutting could be changed, clippings obvious or cut quality poor.*	General grass cover with some serious wear and tear and/or limited grass cover in many areas; little/no serious attempt to correct *Serious problems evident incl. ragwort and unmanaged invasive non-natives e.g. Jap. knotweek. Clippings dumped on site.*	y	y		y	y	y		y
Site Facilities													
7 Toilets	Provided. easy to access; signed and well-maintained	Provided within or adjacent to site; not easy to find or to access; some minor improvements could be made (e.g. cleanliness)	Provided within or adjacent to site; difficult to find or access; generally not very well maintained or inviting	Insufficient toilets provided, or those provided are in poor condition, likely to be generally avoided by users; uninviting	None, or a temporary toilet, for events only.	y		y		y			y
8 Parking (related to open spaces)	On-site parking provided or adjacent to site; adequate number; clean and in good condition; well signposted *Informal sites: Also Good access via sustainable transport, cycle tracks to and within the site.*	On-site/appropriate off-site parking provided; adequate number; generally clean but improvements could be made *Informal sites: good access via sustainable transport/cycle tracks to/within site, maintenance could be better*	Appropriate off-site parking provided; some limit in terms of spaces; generally clean *Informal sites: access via sustainable transport / cycling is possible.*	No on-site and limited off-site parking provided; or adequate number of spaces but in poor condition *Informal sites: limited access to sustainable transport.*	Parking provision limited and in poor condition *No or very limited access to sustainable transport.*	y	y		y		y	y	y	y
9 Provision of bins for rubbish/litter and dog mess	Numerous bins provided and in good condition; in right locations and clearly labelled for appropriate purpose *Or if not provided, litter is cleared regularly and site is almost litter-free, with on-site information provided about taking litter home.*	Numerous bins provided and in average condition; clearly visible and in appropriate locations *Or litter cleared regularly, the site is relatively litter–free.*	Adequate number provided and in average condition; locations need review, some signs of overuse/ damage etc *Or litter cleared regularly, but the site is littered in honey pot locations.*	Insufficient number provided but in average/ good condition; OR appropriate number but significant signs of damage, limited maintenance or inappropriate location. *Or litter is cleared on an 'as and when basis', with litter regularly apparent.*	None or Insufficient number provided and in poor condition *Or litter on site is a significant problem*	y	y	y	y	y	y			y
10 Seats / Benches	Numerous (or appropriate) for the size of site and in good condition	Numerous (or appropriate) or the size of site and in average condition	Adequate number for the size of site and in good condition *More seats or better conditions*	Insufficient number but in good condition; or adequate number but in poor condition	Insufficient number and in poor condition	y	y	y	y	y	y		y	y

would be beneficial.

11 Pathways/cycleways/bridleways (within the open space sites)	Suitable materials, level for safe use, edges well defined; surfaces clean, debris and weed free and in excellent condition; good disabled access. *For informal sites: focus on suitable materials, level for safe use, disabled access. Pathways appropriate to typology*	Suitable materials, level for safe use, edges well defined; little debris and/or weeds but overall in good condition; good disabled access in most areas	Suitable materials, level for safe use, edges reasonably well defined; some debris and/or weeds but doesn't detract too much from overall appearance; disabled access in some areas	Suitable materials but some faults; some difficulty with defined edges; debris and/or weeds detract slightly from appearance; some difficulties with disabled access	Inappropriate materials and/or significant faults; edges not clearly defined; significant debris and/or weeds; limited disabled access or very restricted	y	y	y			y	y	
12 Information & Signage	Information clearly displayed in various formats (e.g. noticeboards, leaflets etc); signage in good condition	Information clearly displayed in appropriate format; signage in good condition	Appropriate information displayed in some format; condition of signage reasonable	Limited information displayed; signage that is provided in poor condition and uninviting	No information displayed in appropriate areas; no signage	y	y	y		y	y	y	y
13 Topography of grass pitch	Good level pitch		Slight slope		Dips and ruts	y	y		y				
14 Hard court and artificial pitches/areas	Good even surface, clearly marked, good condition, adequate fencing	Good even surface, markings fading, average condition, adequate fencing	Reasonable surface, markings fading and fencing needing repair	Inadequate surface, markings fading and fencing in need of repair	Poor surface, markings poor and fencing poor	y	y		y				
15 Drainage	Good		Fair		poor	y	y		y				
Cleanliness and maintenance													
16 Vandalism, Graffiti, Noise, Smells (unattractive)	No evidence of vandalism, graffiti. Very quiet and peaceful site; no intrusion by any noise; no unattractive smells	Limited evidence of vandalism, graffiti. Limited intrusion by noise; i.e. site located away from roads, railways, works sites etc; Limited unattractive smells	Some evidence but doesn't really detract from attraction or cleanliness of the area. Little intrusion by noise (e.g. busy road, railway nearby) but wouldn't really deter usage of the site. Little unattractive smells or some smells that would be a one-off.	Evidence which would probably deter some users. Noise intrusion apparent; may have some affect on potential usage. Some unattractive more permanent smells; may deter some users	Clear evidence which would probably deter any usage of the open space site. Noise intrusion clearly apparent by a number of sources and would probably deter some usage. Clearly apparent unattractive permanent smells; would deter some users	y	y	y		y	y		y	y
17 Litter problems and dog fouling. And general cleanliness/maintenance	No evidence of dog fouling or litter; Bins provided where appropriate. Clean and tidy. Well-maintained site that is inviting to users; possibly an example of good practice	Limited evidence of dog fouling or litter. Clean and tidy site; good maintenance	Some evidence of dog fouling or litter but doesn't really detract from cleanliness or attraction of the area. Mainly concentrated near car parks and key access points. Reasonably clean and tidy site; some potential improvements	Evidence of dog fouling and litter which would probably deter some users, including away from main car parks and access points. Some questions regarding the cleanliness of the site; obvious improvements could be made.	Clear evidence of dog fouling and litter around the site, which would probably deter any usage of the open space site. Poor cleanliness; clear evidence of a lack of maintenance	y	y	y	y	y	y	y	y	y

ASSESSING VALUE.

KEY VALUE ATTRIBUTES	HIGH VALUE 3	MEDIUM VALUE 2	LOW VALUE 1
Accessibility			
Competition with similar quality provision in area			
Level of use			
Visual appearance or help in defining identity and character of area			
Importance for bio-diversity			
Education benefits			
Cultural / historical benefits			
Social/health /community benefits eg events			
Amenity benefits and a sense of place			
Economic benefits			
Other information on the site gained from the surveys			

QUALITY ASSESSMENT SITE RECORD SHEET:

Site no:	
Site Name	
Site Address	
UPRN ref	
Grid ref	
Reference to other 'sites' on the same site.	
Date of visit:	

Specific features of site:

Annotated site plan attached?

Typology of open space	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9

Secondary typology:

QUALITY ATTRIBUTE	Score 5-1		Score 5-1
QUALITY ATTRIBUTE: SITE SECURITY AND SAFETY		**QUALITY ATTRIBUTE: SITE FACILITIES**	
1 Main Entrance		7 Toilets	
2 Lighting		8 Parking (related to open spaces)	
3 Equipment (e.g. protection of equipment and appropriate flooring and surfaces)		9 Provision of bins for rubbish/litter and dog mess	
4 Boundaries (site edges) (including hedges, fencing, gates)		10 Seats / Benches	
SUBTOTAL		11 Pathways/cycle/bridleways (within open space sites)	
QUALITY ATTRIBUTE: VEGETATION		12 Information & Signage	
5 Planted areas (trees, shrubs, floral areas etc) *Vegetation (trees, shrubs, grass, etc)*		13 Topography of grass pitch	
6 Grassed areas or grassed pitches		14 Hard court and artificial pitches/areas	
SUBTOTAL		15 Drainage	
		SUBTOTAL	
		QUALITY ATTRIBUTE: CLEANLINESS AND MAINTENANCE	
		16 Vandalism, Graffiti Noise Smells (unattractive)	
		17 Litter problems and dog fouling And general cleanliness/ maintenance	
		SUBTOTAL	
		TOTAL SCORE UNWEIGHTED	

ABOUT THE SITE	
Current land use	Is site on or near a Green Corridor; links to other open spaces
History of land use	Potential Green corridor opportunities. Opportunity of other links/access as a result of a development here
Surrounding land use	Does site add to landscape quality – near/middle distance/long distance
Disabled access	Recommendations for improvement
CONSTRAINTS TO DEVELOPMENT	
Rail lines? Major roads?	Air quality management zone?
Flooding?	Contamination (desk top)
Environmental constraint s to development	Area where there is a noise sensitivity?
Temporary construction issues/constraints	OPTIONS UNDER CONSIDERATION: Remain as is/ other options considered
Accessibility? Bus routes etc	