Introduction and background

The study

1.1 During December 2007, Kingston-upon-Hull City Council (the Council) appointed PMP to undertake an assessment of the city’s open space, sport and recreation facilities. This report sets out the findings of the assessment and highlights priorities for the future delivery of open space, sport and recreation facilities.

1.2 The study will be used to update the standards currently used in the Local Plan and will form part of the evidence base for the Hull Development Framework (HDF). The report will also inform the preparation of a Green Space Strategy outlining priorities for the management and maintenance of open spaces across the city.

1.3 This assessment will ensure that priorities for the future and resource allocation are based on local need and aspirations and that a strategic approach to the provision of open space, sport and recreation facilities is adopted.

1.4 The study is underpinned by several key objectives, specifically:

- to enable the establishment of an effective approach to planning open space, sport and recreation facilities
- to set robust local standards based on assessments of local needs
- to facilitate improved decision making as part of the Development Control process
- to guide/steer/influence Section 106 negotiations
- to maximise the benefits arising from the Building Schools for the Future (BSF) and Gateway Pathfinder programmes and to link with other strategic opportunities and policies.

1.5 The study has been undertaken in accordance with the requirements of the updated PPG 17 and its Companion Guide published in September 2002.


1.6 PPG17 states that local authorities should undertake robust assessments of the existing and future needs of their communities for open space, sport and recreational facilities (paragraph 1).

1.7 The document also states that local authorities should undertake audits of existing open space, sports and recreational facilities. The information gained from the assessment of needs and opportunities should be used to set locally derived standards for the provision of open space, sport and recreational facilities in their areas (paragraph 7). 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.
1.8 The guidance sets 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.

1.9 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.

1.10 PMP and the Council have followed the recommendations of PPG17 throughout the study and the full methodology used is set out in Section 2.

The strategic hierarchy

1.11 Figure 1.1 overleaf illustrates how the findings of this report fit into the wider strategic hierarchy and contribute to the achievement of corporate priorities.

1.12 It can be seen that this assessment will act as an evidence base for the planning system, one of the key facilitators of open space and sports facility development.

1.13 Further detailed assessments (for example a play strategy, indoor facilities strategy and playing pitch strategy) will examine some of the key issues raised in this document in more detail.
Why public open space?

1.14 PPG 17 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 wellbeing
- promoting more sustainable development.

1.15 Open space, sport and recreation provision in Hull has an important role to play in supporting the implementation of these objectives. On a local level, the sport and physical activity strategy highlighted the role of parks and open spaces in improving...
the health and well being of residents, further reinforcing the importance of effective provision.

**Function and benefits of open space**

1.16 Open spaces provide a number of functions within the urban fabric of cities, for example, the provision for play and informal recreation, a landscaping buffer within and between the built environment and/or a habitat for the promotion of biodiversity.

1.17 Each type of open space has different benefits, which depend on the type of open space, for example allotments for the growing of own produce, play areas for children's play and playing pitches for formal sports events. Open space can also perform a secondary function, for example outdoor sports facilities have an amenity value in addition to facilitating sport and recreation.

1.18 There is a need to provide a balance between different types of open space in order to meet local aspirations. An understanding of local expectations and aspirations is therefore central to the effective provision of open space.

1.19 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. Open spaces can also promote community cohesion, encourage community development and stimulate partnerships between the public and private sector. The provision of open spaces and recreation provision is key to an ideal, sustainable and thriving community.

1.20 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 wider benefits are highlighted in Appendix A.

1.21 The role of green spaces in flood management and mitigation of climate change is also recognised. Open space allows for the storage and free flow of flood waters, reducing the risk to nearby houses. This is particularly important in an urban context, as highlighted by the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment recently carried out across Hull. Furthermore, Planning Policy Statement 1 (PPS 1) specifically refers to opportunities for open space and green infrastructure to contribute to urban cooling, sustainable drainage systems and conserving and enhancing biodiversity. It suggests that development should be seen as a tool of environmental enhancement as opposed to environmental degradation.

1.22 This links with the opportunities that the effective provision of green space brings in terms of the creation of habitats and the promotion of biodiversity. PPG17 highlights the role that open space plays in the creation of flora and fauna. The Local Biodiversity Action Plan, produced by the Hull Biodiversity Partnership, identifies a myriad of green spaces and important habitats throughout the city. According to the Hull Local Plan (May 2000), there are 119 Sites of Nature Conservation Interest (SNCI) in the city totalling an estimated 600 hectares. This includes some of Hull’s public parks (eg Pearson Park, West Park, East Park and Pickering Park) and twelve cemeteries across the city covering 70 hectares. There are also currently 65 hectares of allotments and a vibrant network of private gardens. This highlights the significant levels of opportunity to further increase the levels of biodiversity in the city. An updated assessment of biodiversity has been undertaken as part of this assessment. The key findings are integrated with this document.
SECTION 1 – INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

Local features and demographics

1.23 Kingston Upon Hull is situated on the northern bank of the Humber estuary and has one of the biggest and fastest growing ports in the UK. The city covers an area of 7,145 hectares. It is bordered by the local authorities of East Riding of Yorkshire, North East Lincolnshire and North Lincolnshire. There is significant cross boundary travel and many residents of nearby areas commute into Hull, particularly from East Riding.

1.24 The population of Hull is just over 250,000. Projections for the future of the city indicate that the population profile is likely to age. The total number of residents who will be living in the city is uncertain, however projections over the core strategy period indicate that population change is likely to range from a decline of 3,000 residents to an increase of 11,500 residents. This will impact on the demand for open space in the future.

1.25 21% of residents in the city are currently under the age of 16 and 15% are of pension age. It is estimated that black and minority ethnic (BME) groups within the City make up 3.6% of the population, which is significantly below the regional and national average. It is therefore vital to make sure the varying needs of these sectors of the community are met.

1.26 Hull is a university city and therefore has a large student population. This influences the demand for open space, sport and recreation facilities.

1.27 Overall, deprivation levels are high and Hull is ranked the 11th most deprived of England’s 354 council areas. Over half the population lives in neighbourhoods among the 20% most deprived in England. All of the city’s wards fall into the most deprived or second most deprived quartile. Hull’s economy is dominated by low wages, high unemployment and inactivity rates and, for those in employment, low value/low paid professions. Levels of car ownership in Hull are also low (56%) compared to regional (70%) and national levels (73%). It is therefore particularly important to ensure that there is local access to high quality open spaces.

1.28 Alongside the high levels of deprivation there are many opportunities. Gateway, the city’s Housing Market Renewal (HMR) Pathfinder, has identified two areas for regeneration across the city, Newington and St Andrews and the Holderness Road Corridor. The regeneration of these areas provides a significant opportunity to enhance the quality and functionality of open spaces.

1.29 Map 1.1 overleaf illustrates the City Council area of Hull and highlights the areas where deprivation is highest.
Map 1.1 – Areas of Deprivation (according to IMD 2004) in Hull

Areas of Deprivation

Based on Mapinfo Streetpro data. Crown Copyright PMP Ltd.
1.30 Hull residents are more likely to describe their health as 'poor' than the national average and the proportion of residents with a limiting long-term illness is significantly higher than average.

1.31 Participation in sport and physical activity is below the national average in Hull (at least 3 days a week x 30 minutes moderate participation), for both men (21.4% compared with 23.7% nationally) and women (14.8% compared with 18.5% nationally). 57% of residents did not accumulate 30 minutes of moderate physical activity in the four weeks before the Active People (Sport England 2007) survey took place. Despite this, when taking into account the levels of deprivation in the city, residents of Hull participate slightly more than may have been expected. This reinforces the opportunities that the development of appropriate sport and recreation facilities and alternative sources of physical activity (such as parks) can bring. 57.5% of the adult population in Hull belong to segments which are less likely than average to participate in sport and active recreation.

**Structure of the report**

1.32 This report is split into 14 sections. Section 2 sets out the methodology for undertaking the study and Section 3 sets out the strategic context, highlighting national, regional and local influences on the provision of open space in the city.

1.33 Sections 4–13 relate to each of the typologies identified within the scope of the report. Each typology chapter sets out the strategic context to that particular typology, key issues emerging from consultations relating to that particular typology and the recommended quantity, quality and accessibility standards. These standards are then applied to determine the priorities for that type of open space across the different geographical areas of the city.

1.34 Section 14 summarises the key issues for each type of open space and identifies the strategic priorities for each area of the city. An overview outlining the planning policy context and the future application of the study is also provided.

1.35 A number of appendices are referenced throughout the report. These appendices supplement the information provided within the main body of the text and provide further detail of work undertaken.