

Gosport Borough Local Plan 2011-2029

Statement on Issues and Questions

Issue 1.7

Is the Open Space Monitoring Report based on sound evidence?

Date: 6th February 2015



GOSPORT
Borough Council

Introduction

- 1.1 The Council has produced several versions of the Open Space Monitoring Report, with the latest produced in 2014 (Submission Library LP/E9/1). Previous versions were produced in 1996, 2002, 2004, 2010, and 2012.

Soundness of Open Space Monitoring Report

- 2.1 The principles of the OSMR have remained the same in that they bring together all the latest information relating to open spaces. This includes:
- An audit of all open space in the Borough so that each one can be compared relative to each other including the type and size of open space, and their recreational quality and value;
 - Assessments of accessibility of open spaces have been included in later versions;
 - A consideration of Government guidance and best practice where appropriate;
 - A summary of the most recent public consultation involving open space issues;
 - A summary of results of the latest specific open space evidence studies such as the Playing Pitch and Sports Facility Assessment 2014 (PPSFA)(LP/E9/3);
 - A summary of identified open space needs and priorities (based on the above) including on a ward by ward assessment.
- 2.2 The OSMR's have proved very useful over the years for a number of purposes including: assisting with the identification of priorities for the use of developer contributions; identifying opportunities to improve the quality, value and accessibility of open spaces; and the monitoring of planning policies.
- 2.3 The evidence studies that inform the Open Space Monitoring Report have been based on the latest available methodologies at the time of being undertaken. In particular in relation to the PPSFA the consultants, Strategic Leisure, were aware that the methodology for conducting a sports assessment was in the process of being amended. Due to the timing of the study Strategic Leisure were in regular contact with Sport England during their research and that Sport England agreed to a hybrid approach. Representatives from the Rugby Football Union (RFU) and the Football Association (FA) also accepted the methodology.
- 2.4 The methodology of the Open Space Audit element of the OSMR, which is the main element of primary work in the document, is set out in Appendix 2 of the 2014 OSMR (p130-157) with specific reference made to the quality/value matrix on pages 15-16). The work including the following elements is based largely on the Government's *Assessing Needs and Opportunities*¹ (which was a companion guide to the former PPG17 Open Space): Such elements include
- the typology of open space;
 - the assessment of quality;
 - the assessment of value;
 - the combined quality/value matrix.

¹ https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/7660/156780.pdf

- 2.5 In terms of assessing quality the methodology uses criteria from a variety of best practice documents including research undertaken by the Urban Green Space Taskforce, the Green Flag awards and the Urban Park Forum (see pages 130-131 of the OSMR). It is acknowledged that PPG17 and the Companion Guide have now been superseded by the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and national Planning Practice Guidance (nPPG) respectively. However it is considered that in the absence of any detailed nationally prescribed methodology of undertaking open space research as required by NPPF (Paragraph 73), the former guidance *Assessing Needs and Opportunities* provides very helpful and robust advice on conducting an open space audit without contradicting later Government guidance in the NPPF and nPPG. The continued use of this methodology also enables the latest results to be compared.

Conclusion

- 3.1 The Council considers that the Open Space Monitoring Report is based on sound evidence in that:
- The audit element follows an established and robust national methodology; and
 - Other studies used to support the OSMR incorporate robust methodologies including the Playing Pitch and Sports Facility Assessment.
- 3.2 The OSMR provides a clear, proportionate and comprehensive assessment of the variety of open space in the Borough which provides detailed information regarding open space provision in the Borough including priorities for improvements.