3.1 This section identifies the policy context on a national, regional and local basis within which the study has been conducted. The subsequent strategy and action plan will identify ways in which the provision of open space, sport and recreational facilities in Kirklees supports and reflects these policies.

National context

Planning policy


3.2 The revised Planning Policy Guidance 17: Planning for Open Space, Sport and Recreation (PPG17), published in 2002, advises local planning authorities to provide the strongest protection for open space, to resist development pressures that could diminish recreational provision and to adopt a strategic approach to the provision and protection of sports facilities. PPG17 identifies the requirement for all local authorities to assess the existing and future needs of their communities for open space, sport and recreational facilities. This includes undertaking an audit to consider the quantitative & qualitative elements of open space and allow identification of specific needs and quantitative &/or qualitative deficits or surpluses of open space. This report will address these issues in Kirklees.


3.3 PPG 13 sets out the Government’s objectives for the development of Britain’s transport system. Local authorities are encouraged to produce planning policies, which will stimulate and assist people in using bicycles. Routes should be proposed in local plans where cycling can be made safer and more attractive. These routes may be combined with horse riders and pedestrians to create multi user routes, away from traffic.

3.4 PPS3 details the Government’s objectives for housing policy. It focuses on ensuring that the housing needs of all in the community are recognised and promoting more sustainable patterns of development. In particular, it seeks to achieve a wide choice of high quality homes, widen opportunities for home ownership, improve affordability and create sustainable, mixed inclusive communities. A key objective of PPS3 is that local planning authorities should continue to make effective use of land by re-using land within urban areas that has been previously developed. They are also required to seek to reduce car dependence by facilitating more walking and cycling. Promoting good design is fundamental to the development of high quality new housing developments, including providing or enabling good access to community, amenity and recreation space (including play space), in order to create attractive, high-quality living environments in which people will choose to live.


3.5 PPS1 outlines the Government’s view that sustainable development is the core principle underpinning planning. It is defined as ‘development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.’ Planning should facilitate and promote sustainable and inclusive patterns of urban and rural development by making suitable land available for development in line with economic, social and environmental objectives to improve people’s quality of life, contributing to sustainable economic development; protecting and enhancing the natural and historic environment, the quality and character of the countryside, and existing communities; ensuring high quality development through good and inclusive design, and the efficient use of resources; and ensuring that development supports existing communities and contributes to the creation of safe, sustainable, liveable and mixed communities with good access to jobs and key services for all members of the community.


3.6 Planning Policy Statement 9 (PPS9) sets out the Government’s vision for conserving and enhancing biological diversity in England, together with a programme of work to achieve it. It includes the broad aim that planning, development and regeneration should have minimal impacts on biodiversity and enhance it wherever possible. In moving towards this vision, the Government’s objectives for planning are to promote sustainable development; to conserve, enhance and restore the diversity of England’s wildlife and geology; and to contribute to rural renewal and urban renaissance.
Other National Context

3.7 Over the past decade, a significant number of reports has been published in relation to open and green spaces.


3.8 The Rural White Paper sets out the Government’s vision of a living, working, protected and vibrant countryside. Key issues in respect of open spaces include proposals to improve rural transport, policies to conserve and enhance the countryside, restoring and maintaining wildlife diversity and the natural environment. Key success identified in the review undertaken in 2004 include added emphasis on sites of special scientific interest and the England Biodiversity Strategy, which integrates biodiversity conservation into key policies and programmes.

DTLR: The Urban Green Spaces Taskforce: Green Spaces, Better Places (2002)

3.9 The final report of the Urban Green Spaces Taskforce identifies the need for an urban renaissance of parks and green spaces. It details:

- The benefits of parks and green spaces for urban life and their contribution to long-term social, economic and environmental progress (e.g., urban regeneration and renewal; health; social cohesion, community development and citizenship; education and lifelong learning; environmental sustainability; heritage and culture).
- The problems affecting urban parks and green spaces and ways in which they might be overcome (e.g., serving marginalised groups, investment, partnership and information systems).
- The need for a strategic policy framework within which all decision makers can operate and contribute to deliver networks of urban green spaces.
- Identification of ways to deliver the report’s vision of ‘liveable’, sustainable modern towns and cities – strong civic and local pride, reinforced by a green spaces strategy; common criteria to measure quality and care; strong local leadership and greater national support; a scheme to fund enablers to work with local groups and create partnerships; the creation of a new national agency for urban parks and green spaces.


3.10 This report highlights the decline of urban parks in the United Kingdom. Despite receiving over 1.5 billion visits per year, cuts in revenue expenditure over the previous 20 years were estimated at £1.3 billion. The report identifies the key challenge of arresting the decline in parks and starting a renaissance in open spaces.

3.11 This strategy sets out a vision for the Country of landscapes ‘where wild species and habitats are part of healthy functioning ecosystems; where we nurture, treasure and enhance our biodiversity, and where biodiversity is a natural consideration of policies and decisions, and in society as a whole.’

3.12 The Biodiversity Strategy for England seeks to ensure that biodiversity considerations become embedded in all the main sectors of economic activity, public and private. It sets out a programme to make the changes necessary to conserve, enhance and work with the grain of nature and ecosystems rather than against them. It takes account of climate change as one of the most important factors affecting biodiversity and influencing policies.


3.13 The Sustainable Communities Plan (Sustainable Communities: Building for the future) sets out a long-term programme of action for delivering sustainable communities in both urban and rural areas. It aims to tackle housing supply issues in the South East, low demand in other parts of the country, and the quality of our public spaces.

3.14 The Plan includes not just a significant increase in resources and major reforms of housing and planning, but a new approach to how we build and what we build.

3.15 The programme of action aims to focus the attention and co-ordinate the efforts of all levels of Government and stakeholders in bringing about development that meets the economic, social and environmental needs of future generations as well as succeeding now.

3.16 Key policy areas include the introduction of the ‘Cleaner, Safer, Greener’ programme (309 Green Flag awards, 71% satisfaction with the quality of green space and £24.7 million awarded to 1,100 Living Space community projects).

CABE Space: Manifesto for better public spaces (2004)

3.17 This documents seeks to help create a national consensus that parks and public spaces are a genuine political and financial priority by encouraging national and local agencies to sign up to the ‘manifesto.’
3.18 The value of public space shows how cities in the UK and around the world have received far-reaching economic, health and social benefits from making the best of their public spaces.

CABE Space: Parks need parkforce (2005)

3.19 Parks need parkforce sets out the case for increasing the number of on-site staff to create safe, popular and beautiful parks.

CABE Space: Start with the park: creating sustainable urban green spaces in areas of housing growth and renewal (2005)

3.20 Start with the park is a good practice guide for everyone involved in the processes of sustainable growth and renewal in England. It is particularly relevant to the creation and care of green spaces in housing growth areas and housing market renewal areas. It will inform and inspire strategic decision-makers working in local delivery and partnership bodies, local and regional authorities, government departments and other national agencies, private developers, house builders and registered social landlords and community and voluntary sector groups.

CABE Space: Urban parks: Do you know what you're getting for your money? (2006)

3.21 This report seeks to establish the extent to which simply providing more resources would automatically improve green space quality. It highlights a number of key issues:

- The importance of assessing the existing quality of parks and green spaces and to set clear and measurable aspirations for the future.
- The difference between cutting budgets and making efficiency gains is not always appreciated.
- Increases in national funding do not necessarily lead to more resources at a local level.
- The level of local importance does not always carry through the decision-making hierarchy, with parks and green spaces slipping down the agenda as financial decision-making moves onto a higher and more strategic level.
- The importance of a corporate strategy and a strategic approach.
National agencies

3.22 This section briefly summarises the policy aims of the key organisations working in the field of open space, sport and recreation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Agency</th>
<th>Comment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>National agencies</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CABE Space</td>
<td>CABE Space, established in 2003, is part of CABE, the Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment, which champions the quality of our buildings and spaces. CABE Space is publicly funded by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM). It aims to bring excellence to the design, management and maintenance of parks and public space in our towns and cities. CABE Space works with local authorities and other bodies responsible for public space to help them provide a better service. Its work encourages local councils to think holistically about their green space, and what it means for residents’ health and well being, routes to school and work, and recreation through play and sport. CABE Space’s goal is to ensure that every person in England has easy access to well designed and well looked after public space.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Civic Trust</td>
<td>The Civic Trust was founded in 1957 to encourage high standards of planning and architecture. It is concerned with the quality of the built environment and its impact on people. It raises awareness of the need to create environments, which bring out the best in people, celebrate the best places, and expect the highest quality for all communities. The Civic Trust manages the Green Flag Award, which is the national standard for parks and green spaces in England and Wales. The award scheme began in 1996 as a means of recognising and rewarding the best green spaces in the country. It was also seen as a way of encouraging others to achieve the same high environmental standards, creating a benchmark of excellence in recreational green areas.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English Heritage</td>
<td>English Heritage’s role is to make sure that the historic environment of England is properly maintained and cared for. It also helps people understand and appreciate why the historic buildings and landscapes around them matter. It provides a range of grants and advice and helps designate special places.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Entrust</td>
<td>ENTRUST regulates the Landfill Tax Credit Scheme, which encourages and enables landfill operators to support a wide range of environmental projects by giving them a tax credit against their donations to environmental bodies. Around half of this is spent on parks, green spaces and the restoration of buildings.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Environment Agency</td>
<td>The Environment Agency is the leading public body for protecting and improving the environment in England and Wales and ensuring that air, land and water are managed sustainably. Its work encompasses town planning and the funding of improvements to green spaces.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Groundwork UK</td>
<td>Groundwork UK is a leading environmental regeneration charity, aiming to make sustainable development a reality in the UK’s poorest neighbourhoods. Sub-regional trusts deliver projects.</td>
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<td>Agency</td>
<td>Comment</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Agency</strong></td>
<td><strong>Comment</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Land Restoration Trust</td>
<td>A partnership between English Partnerships, Groundwork UK, the Forestry Commission and the Environment Agency, this venture aims to tackle enduring dereliction across England. It will provide environmentally informed, community-led, long-term regeneration solutions through local partnerships.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Trust</td>
<td>The National Trust holds many areas of natural beauty and special buildings in perpetuity for the nation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Natural England</td>
<td>Following publication of the draft Natural Environment and Rural Communities Bill in February 2005, Natural England, the environment activities of the Rural Development Service and the Countryside Agency’s Landscape, Access and Recreation division are working together to enhance landscapes and wildlife, promote countryside access and recreation. In 2007, the three organisations will be united in a single body with responsibility for enhancing biodiversity and landscapes and wildlife in rural, urban, coastal and marine areas; promoting access, recreation and public well-being, and contributing to the way natural resources are managed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban parks</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GreenSpace</td>
<td>GreenSpace is a charitable organisation set up to help those committed to the planning, design, management and use of public parks and open spaces. It is dedicated to promoting the importance of public spaces and increasing awareness of related issues.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heritage Lottery Fund</td>
<td>The HLF enables communities to look after, learn about and celebrate the UK’s diverse heritage. Since establishing its Urban Parks Programme in 1995, it has committed £320 million to regenerating over 200 parks.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provision for children and young people</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children’s Play Council</td>
<td>The CPC is a campaigning and research organisation promoting children’s policy development in England. It is an alliance of national and regional voluntary organisations, local authorities and partnerships. It aims to raise awareness of the importance of play, promotes consultation with children and young people of all abilities and facilitates networks between children’s services.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning Through Landscapes</td>
<td>Learning Through Landscapes is the national school grounds charity. It works with schools, early-years settings, organisations and individuals across the Country to help them improve and develop their grounds.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Playing Fields Association</td>
<td>The NPFA is the only organisation with specific responsibility for acquiring, protecting and improving playing fields, playgrounds and play space.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Sensory Trust</td>
<td>The Sensory Trust raises awareness of good practice in green space design and management; makes green space more accessible and offers consultancy and advice on inclusive design.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Natural/semi-natural provision</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forestry Commission</td>
<td>The Forestry Commission is the government department responsible for forestry throughout Great Britain. It aims to protect and expand Britain’s forests and woodlands and increase their value to society and the environment.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Agency</td>
<td>Comment</td>
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<td>--------------------------------------------</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tree Council</td>
<td>The Tree Council’s aim is to improve the environment in town and country by promoting the planting and conservation of trees and woods throughout the UK.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wildlife trusts</td>
<td>The Wildlife Trusts partnership is the UK’s leading conservation charity exclusively dedicated to wildlife. Its network of 47 local wildlife trusts work together to protect wildlife in towns and the countryside. The trusts cater for over 2,560 nature reserves.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Green corridors</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>British Waterways</td>
<td>British Waterways is responsible for maintaining 2,000 miles of the UK’s inland waterway network so that people can use it for a wide range of leisure activities. It is also seeking to extend the network as part of the UK’s tourism industry.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sustrans</td>
<td>Sustrans works on practical projects to encourage people to walk, cycle and use public transport in order to reduce motor traffic. It is responsible for the National Cycle Network, a project that has delivered nearly 10,000 miles of routes in the UK.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ENCAMs</td>
<td>ENCAMs is the charity that runs the Keep Britain Tidy campaign. Its aims are to convince its targeted groups to take effective action to enable others to improve, maintain and own their local environments; correctly dispose of material that could become litter; deter gum deposition; deter graffiti; reduce nuisance and abandoned vehicles and reduce the nuisance of neighbourhood nose.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Federation of City Farms and Community Gardens</td>
<td>The Federation of City Farms and Community Gardens is a charity that supports, promotes and represents city farms and community gardens throughout the UK.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Society of Allotment and Leisure Gardeners Ltd (NSALG)</td>
<td>The National Society of Allotment and Leisure Gardeners Ltd represents allotment gardens nationwide. It aims to protect, promote and preserve allotments for future generations by monitoring allotment law and other relevant legislation. It provides advice and information in respect of sites under threat.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Sports policy

Game Plan

3.23 Game Plan is the Government’s strategy for sport and physical activity through to 2020. It was published in December 2002 and presents a new vision for England to become the most active and successful sporting nation in the world. It now provides the lead for all sports plans in England. It identifies the two overarching objectives for government as:

- A major increase in participation in sport and physical activity, primarily because of the significant health benefits and to reduce the growing costs of inactivity.
- A sustainable improvement in success in international competition, particularly in the sports which matter most to the public, primarily because of the ‘feelgood factor’ associated with winning.

3.24 Three distinct aims arise from these objectives:

- To encourage a mass participation culture, with a target for 70% of the population to be reasonably active (for example 30 minutes of moderate exercise five times a week) by 2020.
- To enhance international success, with a target for British and English teams and individuals to sustain rankings within the top five, particularly in more popular sports.
- To adopt a different approach to hosting mega sporting events. They should be seen as an occasional celebration of success rather than as a means to achieving other government objectives.

Sport England

3.25 Sport England is the strategic lead for delivering the Government’s sporting objectives in England. It distributes both Lottery and Exchequer funds to sport.

3.26 Its vision is to make England an active and successful sporting nation. Its mission is ‘working with others to create opportunities to get involved in sport, to stay in sport and to excel and succeed in sport at every level’.

3.27 Its business objectives are:

- Start – increase participation in sport in order to improve the health of the nation, with a focus on priority groups.
- Stay – retain people in sport and active recreation through an effective network of clubs, sports facilities, coaches, volunteers and competitive opportunities.
- Succeed – achieve sporting success at every level.
3.28 Sport England has developed the framework for sport. It identifies the seven main drivers for change and the five major settings where sport can take place. The six policy areas identify where actions need to be focused. The identified outcomes provide the structure for this strategy.

**Figure 3.1: National framework for sport**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>INTENTION</th>
<th>ANALYSIS</th>
<th>ACTION</th>
<th>IMPACT</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AIM</td>
<td>THE SEVEN KEY DRIVERS OF CHANGE</td>
<td>THE FIVE SETTINGS FOR CHANGE</td>
<td>THE SIX POLICY AREAS FOR CHANGE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To change the culture of sport and physical activity in England in order to increase participation across all social groups leading to improvements in health and other social and economic benefits and providing the basis for progression into higher levels of performance</td>
<td>AGING POPULATION (Key agents of change)</td>
<td>HOME (Key agents of change)</td>
<td>PROMOTION AND MARKETING</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>TIME PRESSURES</td>
<td>COMMUNITY (Key agents of change)</td>
<td>LEGISLATION AND REGULATORY CHANGE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>WELL BEING AND OBESITY</td>
<td>WORKPLACE (Key agents of change)</td>
<td>QUALITY ACCREDITATION AND IMPROVEMENT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>LEVELS OF INVESTMENT</td>
<td>HIGHER AND FURTHER EDUCATION (Key agents of change)</td>
<td>STRUCTURES AND PARTNERSHIPS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>UTILISING EDUCATION</td>
<td>PRIMARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOLS (Key agents of change)</td>
<td>INNOVATION AND DELIVERY</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>VARIATIONS IN ACCESS</td>
<td>VOLUNTEERS AND PROFESSIONALS</td>
<td>STRATEGIC PLANNING AND EVIDENCE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GAME PLAN</td>
<td>Henley Analysis and Stakeholder Consultation</td>
<td>Emerging Issues and Policy Priorities</td>
<td>MEASUREMENT</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Regional context**

3.29 This section identifies the regional policy context within which the study has been conducted. The subsequent strategy and action plan will identify ways in which the provision of open space, sport and recreational facilities in Kirklees supports and reflects regional policy.

**Yorkshire Forward**

3.30 Yorkshire Forward is the regional development agency for the region. It operates the ‘Renaissance Towns Project’ with the aim of reinforcing the Yorkshire and Humberside region as an area of world-class urban centres. Its embodiment in Kirklees is the Renaissance Town Initiative in Huddersfield.
3.31 A Renaissance Town Team, led by the Council with representatives of Huddersfield Pride, University of Huddersfield, local residents and businesses, is working to regenerate Huddersfield Town Centre and to develop a vision for how the town centre might look in 20 years' time. The Initiative is part of a programme for selected towns. Consultation in 2002 gained widespread support for a strategy of environmental improvements for the town centre over the next ten years. The objectives are to:

“provide a more attractive environment, safer streets, improved access to facilities, and more effective use of parking - helping to create a town centre that looks and works better”.

Yorkshire and Humber Assembly: Regional spatial strategy (2005)

3.32 The regional spatial strategy’s vision for Yorkshire and Humber is ‘of a recognisably world class and international region where the economic, environmental, and social well being of all our region and its people advances rapidly and sustainably.’

3.33 Delivering high quality environments in Yorkshire and Humber entails protecting and enhancing its rich and varied environmental assets. The strategy identifies the need to use resources wisely and efficiently, minimise pollution, and protect and enhance biodiversity. It advocates good quality development, enhancing poor quality environments in town and country, urgent attention to tackle the causes and impacts of climate change, reduce waste and manage it sustainably, and safeguard threatened wildlife and landscape heritage.

Yorkshire Culture: Regional cultural strategy (2001)

3.34 Yorkshire Culture's aspiration is that by 2010:

- Everyone in the region leads a rich, diverse and fulfilling cultural life, with a strong sense of community and a healthy lifestyle.
- That culture and the creative industries make a substantial contribution to a thriving regional economy.
- That all barriers to participation in the region’s culture are removed – whether due to geography, education, background, ability or income.
- That the distinctive, diverse, world class culture of Yorkshire and the Humber holds its rightful place in Britain, Europe and the World.
- That local, regional, national and European resources are maximised to provide excellent, accessible, well-used cultural services and facilities.

3.35 The Yorkshire Plan for Sport has been developed with key stakeholders to state how the region will achieve the national objectives set out in Game Plan. It focuses the work of the regional agencies and organisation involved in sport at the local level and provides a shared agenda that promotes partnership working in order that changes are made to get the region active. The overall target is to get 160,000 more people active through sport by 2008. The Plan also lists other outcomes, to:

- Improve levels of performance by aiming to have 10% of Yorkshire athletes in the English and British teams.
- Widen access to sport and reduce the participation gap between population groups by 25%.
- Improve health and well being with 32% of adults achieving the Department of Health physical activity guidelines.
- Improve community safety by a 5% increase in voluntary and community sector sport activity.
- Raise standards in education by achieving the PESCCL objective of 75% of school children receiving two hours of high quality physical education and extracurricular sport per week.
- Benefit the economy by maintaining sport’s contribution at 1.6%.

3.36 The strategy clearly identifies that sport needs clear, defined and consistent performance indicators with agreed targets and standards, and reliable baseline information on the number of people taking part. A key policy aim is that the Regional Spatial Strategy and all local development frameworks support the development of new or improved facilities and green spaces to secure opportunities to take part in sport and active recreation.
Local context

3.37 This section identifies the local policy context within which the study has been conducted. The subsequent strategy recommendations will identify ways in which the provision of open space, sport and recreational facilities in Kirklees supports and reflects regional policy.

Profile

3.38 Kirklees covers an area of 40,910 hectares with a population of 388,571 (Census 2001).

Figure 3.2- Map showing location of Kirklees

3.39 Kirklees is located in the heart of northern England, stretching from the slopes of the Pennines in the west to the former coalfields of Barnsley and Wakefield in the east; it also encompasses the Peak District National Park in the south and borders Leeds and Bradford in the north.

3.40 The main towns of the district are Huddersfield, Dewsbury and Batley and yet, despite its metropolitan status and industrial past, over two thirds of the area is protected rural landscape.
3.41 The area’s history and development is based in the textile industry. Huddersfield and Dewsbury are busy market towns with distinctive characteristics. The legacy of industry has left a landscape marked by stone mills, many of which are now being repurposed for the many commuters who live on the trans-Pennine corridor. The population is diverse and multicultural.

3.42 The main administrative centre of the Borough is Huddersfield, which boasts a variety of attractions. For example the Lawrence Batley Theatre, Huddersfield Art Gallery and the pioneering Galpharm Stadium, RIBA Building of the Year award winner.

Local demographics

3.43 These statistics are produced by the index team at Oxford University for the Department of Transport, Local Government and the Regions (formerly DETR). The latest set of statistics available was published in 2004.

3.44 The indices of multiple deprivation analyses deprivation according to key indicators:

- Income.
- Employment.
- Health deprivation and disability.
- Education, skills and training.
- Housing.
- Geographical access to services.

Figure 3.3: IMD map of Kirklees
Community Strategy for Kirklees - Vision 2012

3.45 The Community Strategy, produced by the Kirklees Partnership and drawn up on the basis of wide discussion in 1999, sets out how Kirklees should change over the next ten years. It commits the main agencies to work together on a blueprint to make the vision reality. Its vision is:

‘By 2020 Kirklees is recognised in West Yorkshire and beyond as a major area of success. Its strong economy is supported by an attractive, high quality environment, offering the best of urban and rural living. Creativity and learning are highly valued. Communities are proud of their past, but enjoy diversity, are outward looking and face the future with optimism. Both young and old find it a safe, healthy and supportive place, where there is a clear commitment that all should share in its success.’

3.46 The Community Strategy identifies a number of key commitments. It is essential that the provision of open spaces, sport and recreational facilities contributes to the vision for Kirklees and delivery of these key commitments:

- Create a stronger economy that is better able to meet the needs of the local community.
- Reduce all forms of discrimination and prejudice.
- Make Kirklees better connected.
- Increase children’s and young people’s attainment and opportunities.
- Make Kirklees safer.
- Make Kirklees cleaner and more attractive.
- Improve, health, well-being and independence.
- Increase the number of safe warm and affordable homes.
- Develop living, vibrant town centres.
- Support the development of individuals and communities.

The priorities for 2006-2009 are split into four themes: Regeneration and Sustainable Development; Safer and Stronger Communities; Children and Young People and Healthier Communities. There are a number of ambitions within these themes that are relevant to this study, which are outlined below:

- To connect people and places better and reduce the need to travel.
- Improve cultural, sport and entertainment facilities to increase opportunities and the appeal of the District.
- Implement an LDF that makes effective use of land.
- Create a “green framework” to link wildlife sites, river corridors and other cultural facilities to maximise their potential for bio-diversity and community use.
- Lower fear of crime.
- An improved physical environment.
- Create cleaner, greener and safer public spaces.
Provide high quality, enjoyable out of school learning and enrichment experiences for all, including sporting, cultural and rural/environmental activities.

Local area agreement (LAA)

3.47 Kirklees' local area agreement is the single most important statement of the collective expectations of stakeholders and is used to drive and align general planning processes in Kirklees. Again, it is important that the provision of open space, sport and recreational facilities is geared to supporting delivering of LAA targets.

Council priorities, Kirklees Council Vision 2006

3.48 Kirklees Council aims to support a diverse and confident community, with access for all to:

High quality services
Kirklees Council seeks to excel, especially in the areas such as local public service agreements (LPSAs), improving council tax and housing benefits processing, improving process of planning applications, improve the overall coordination of services for children and young people and deliver a strategy for improved culture and leisure activities.

Good customer care
It also aims to provide exemplary service of the highest quality and to be easily accessible and responsive to customer needs. The priority continues to be to “deliver the customer service/e-government strategies”.

A thriving economy
By strengthening and broadening the economic base, providing an infrastructure and secure generation of buildings, improve the quality of life in the area and initiate action for employment.

A healthy, safe and sustainable environment
The Council aims to achieve sustainable development by helping to reduce pollution and the consumption of raw materials and energy levels to minimise the impact on the local environment.
The Development Plan

3.49 The current development plan for Kirklees is the Unitary Development Plan (UDP), which was adopted in March 1999. Recognising the importance of caring for the environment and contributing to the quality of life, the UDP sets out a number of strategic policies relevant to the study. These include:

- **Policy R6** – Development giving rise to a need for public open space should include measures to ensure that this need can be satisfied.
- **Policy R7A** – Development of public open space will not be permitted unless adequate replacement provision is provided or it is demonstrated that the site will not be required in the longer term.
- **Policy R9** – Development on allotments will not be permitted unless equivalent replacement provision is provided or it can be demonstrated that there is no unsatisfied demand.
- **Policy R13** – Consideration of development proposals will take account of the potential for new links in the public rights of way network.

3.50 Under the terms of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 each council is to prepare a Local Development Framework (LDF) to replace its existing statutory development plan. This Open Space Study is being provided in preparation for the forthcoming Local Development Framework (LDF).

3.51 The LDF will have the same function as the UDP: to provide a policy framework for decisions about the use and development of land. However, in doing this it must also seek to deliver the spatial aspects of the Community Strategy.

3.52 The government has set a target for LDFs to replace existing plans by September 2007. As it is unlikely to be possible within this timescale to replace current plans in their entirety, the legislation allows for existing plans to be ‘saved’ in whole or part and incorporated into the LDF. The saved plans will be replaced later by additions to the LDF, which will bring it up to date.
Kirklees Strategy for Culture 2003-2006 - Past, Present and Future

3.53 Past, present and future aims to promote, develop and improve leisure, recreation and cultural opportunities for people who live in, work in or visit Kirklees. There are ten key objectives:

- Create a stronger economy that is better able to meet the needs of the local community by developing the creative and cultural economy and sustainable employment.
- Promote cultural diversity and mutual understanding through – and within – cultural activity, in order to reduce all forms of prejudice and discrimination and to generate pride in a positive image of Kirklees.
- Make Kirklees better connected and promote opportunities for a wide and diverse range of cultural experiences.
- Increase children’s and young people’s attainment and opportunities through crime and sport.
- Make Kirklees safer.
- Make Kirklees cleaner and more attractive by promoting, protecting and enhancing the built and natural environment.
- Improve health, well-being and independence by addressing issues of social inclusion in cultural planning and activities.
- Help to increase the provision of safe, warm and comfortable homes.
- Develop living, vibrant town centres.
- Support the development of individuals and communities through Lifelong Learning and Cultural identity.

A Strategy for Sport and Recreation in Kirklees (2003-2008)

3.54 The aim of the Strategy is to give vision and direction for sport within Kirklees and provide a framework for organisations to establish partnership working throughout the Borough. The key aims of the Sport and Recreation Strategy are:

- To encourage healthy lifestyles.
- To deliver sports equity.
- To promote and deliver a co-ordinated sports development programme, in-order to increase participation and raise standards.
- To promote a sustainable pattern of sport and recreation provision.
- To seek quality service and improved facility provision.
- To maximise the use of resources through partnership.
3.55 The Kirklees Sport and Recreation Strategy aims to make a significant contribution to the strategic vision of the Kirklees Partnership by:

- Making full use of the diversity of our communities.
- Harnessing a collaborative response to the challenges presented over the next ten years.
- Minimising the impact of disadvantage caused by poverty.
- Increasing community cohesion.
- Creating sustainable solutions.

3.56 The Sport and Recreation Strategy will contribute to the challenges identified by the Kirklees Partnership by:

- Ensuring sport and recreation play a part in the economic success of the district.
- By reducing all forms of discrimination and prejudice which provide barriers to participation, as well as using sport and recreation as a medium to promote cohesion.
- Providing a wide range of opportunities for young people to participate and reach their full potential.
- Using sport and recreation in order to provide diversionary activities, therefore making a contribution to community safety.
- Ensuring parks and open spaces are managed in a way that meets the communities’ aspirations.
PART 4: AUDITING LOCAL PROVISION

General open space issues

3.57 During consultation with users and non-users of open spaces throughout Kirklees, many issues concerning open spaces in the District have been raised and discussed with KKP. Typology and site specific issues are covered in the relevant sections of this report. This section sets out those generic issues, which cut across more than one typology.

Usage of open spaces

3.58 The results of the street survey show that the most commonly visited open space is a park (51% of respondents having visited in the last 12 months). Large proportions of residents have also visited a footpath/cyclepath and a civic space/non-green space (39% and 35%) in the previous 12 months. Visits to footpaths/cyclepaths or nature areas are made by very few Asian respondents. Those respondents surveyed in Dewsbury Town Centre are most likely to visit civic spaces. However, respondents in Slaithwaite and Holmfirth are most likely to visit a footpath/cyclepath.

3.59 The level of visits to play areas for teenagers (5% of respondents) and allotments (3% of respondents) is particularly low relative to other forms of provision. However, respondents aged 16-24 visited allotments and also play areas for teenagers slightly more than any other age group. This may relate to the fact that such areas are generally not visited in the same way as other provision (i.e. visits to allotments are usually undertaken for the specific purpose of working on an allotment plot rather than for the generic recreational purposes for which a park is usually visited. Similarly play areas for teenagers are targeted at specific types of users.)
Figure 3.4: Open spaces visited in the previous 12 months (Proportion of all respondents)

Reason for usage

3.60 The main reasons for usage of open space facilities are to take fresh air (38%) and to exercise (34%). Relatively few respondents visit open spaces to play sports/games informally (13%), although this is particularly cited as a reason for visiting open spaces amongst those aged 16-24. To take children to play/use the play area (26%) is identified as a main reason for usage of open spaces by a number of respondents, particularly for those surveyed in Denby Dale. To meet with friends (24%) is also identified as a significant reason for the usage of open space and particularly amongst those respondents aged 25-44. A further important reason for usage of open spaces is to relax/contemplate.
Figure 3.5: Reasons for usage of open space in the previous 12 months

Reasons for non-usage

3.61 The main reasons for non-usage of open space facilities are lack of interest (35% of all respondents), fears over personal safety (17%) and mobility and access problems (12%), which are cited equally across all age ranges, ethnic origins and area locations. There is a range of other reasons cited as causing non-use of open space including dog fouling, lack of transport, no facilities for young people, no quality refreshment facilities, poor standard of maintenance and poor toilets. Key areas to consider in the future management of open spaces are, therefore, stimulating an interest in open spaces and encouraging people to make greater use of sites whilst addressing issues with personal safety. Dog fouling is identified as an issue mainly amongst those surveyed in Dewsbury Town Centre.
Figure 3.6: Reasons for non-usage of open spaces (proportion of all respondents)

Travel time

3.62 Survey responses show that for most typologies people are most willing to walk up to 15 minutes to reach open spaces. For the typology of grassed areas on housing estates people are generally willing to travel less than 5 minutes. There is an expectation from respondents that grassed areas on housing estates should be one of the most accessible forms of open space provision.

3.63 The distance that respondents are prepared to travel to reach a particular open space typology is examined in greater detail in each typology section. However, the majority are not prepared to travel further than a 15 minutes walk to reach an allotment, churchyard/cemetery, play area (whether for children or teenagers), footpaths/cyclepaths, park and grassed area on housing estate.
3.64 Data from the street survey identifies the main means of travel used to reach open spaces as walking (47%) followed by car (26%) and by bus (24%). Respondents surveyed in Dewsbury Town Centre and Huddersfield Town Centre are more likely to travel by bus from each of the locations surveyed. This may be due to the good transport links at these centres or it may be that transport is required to access open spaces. However, respondents in Denby Dale are most likely to access open spaces by walking (70%).
3.65 The majority of respondents identified the ease of travelling to open spaces as good or very good (72%). Few respondents identified it to be poor (3%) or very poor (1%). However, those surveyed also identified that the ease of travelling could be improved through an increased provision of public transport to open spaces and a better network of roads and paths.
Availability of provision

3.66 The pattern in terms of rating the availability of open spaces provision in Kirklees shows that typologies visited by a large proportion of respondents are rated highly; those that are visited less suffer from respondents being unable to rate the availability of provision.

3.67 Respondents generally differ very little in their opinion in the availability of provision of open spaces across age, ethnicity and area location.

Figure 3.10: Rating of availability of provision

Accessibility

3.68 A key finding in geographic analysis of accessibility, constantly features the area of Kirkburton. Catchment mapping shows that, in comparison to any other area, the settlement area of Kirkburton is poorly provided for in terms of four open space typologies, namely: -

- Parks and gardens.
- Allotments.
- Civic spaces.
- Play areas.

3.69 Consultation also highlights a perceived lack of formal open space provision, such as parks, in the Kirkburton area.
3.70 There are two play areas serving the Kirkburton settlement area. However, both sites are classified as local areas for plays (LAPs) and therefore only have small catchment areas, leaving large catchment gaps in terms of provision for children and young people.

3.71 Consultation findings suggest that physical access to sites is a major concern across Kirklees. User groups believe that there is a lack of use of open spaces by disabled and elderly users due to accessibility issues. A number of disability interest groups feel that provision of a scooter available for visits to open spaces, particularly parks and semi-natural sites, would be well used and encourage greater use by minority groups. A similar scheme is operated by Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council within Witton Country Park and neighbouring WMDC in Pugneys Country Park. It would be feasible (at cost) to hire scooters out on routes such as the Spen Valley Greenway (perhaps from Spen Valley Leisure Centre).

3.72 One of the greatest barriers for potential users of open space is the lack of information available. The Kirklees website has a role to play in overcoming this barrier through improvement of information provided. This is currently lacking, in particular, information available on parks and gardens and semi-natural sites. Information packs on ‘access for all’ routes and sites would be valuable to a greater diversity of people, similar to the excellent material produced by Leeds City Council Parks and Countryside Service. Kirklees Countryside Unit is a partner in the Break Free initiative, which is producing a national network of ‘access for all’ routes. Oakwell Hall Country Park produces good information and the ‘Wild About Countryside – in Kirklees’ events and walks programme.

3.73 The lack of information available is particularly limiting to residents with disabilities e.g. wheelchair users. Residents with disabilities accept that not all open spaces can be fully accessible but would like to see more information provided about the sites that are suitable, for example sites with disabled toilets or paths suitable for wheelchairs. Wakefield Metropolitan District Council offers a good example of a website set up which provides information about location of open spaces, facilities provided within open spaces, accessibility of the sites for visitors with disabilities and contact information.

3.74 The council has a lack of access audit information identifying how accessible open spaces are in Kirklees for users with disabilities, the elderly and for families with buggies. KKP site assessments give a starting point to indicate the general accessibility of sites. A small number of access audits have been carried by the council for woodland sites and the council has also undertaken Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) assessments for its play areas. The council has also carried out inspections of the access points on green corridors to ensure that the A-frames being installed to prevent illegal quad bike use are compliant with the DDA.
3.75 It has proved difficult in the past for the council to get corporate funding towards initiatives encouraging ‘access for all’ and to maintain initiatives aimed at encouraging members of ethnic minority communities to make greater use of green spaces. The Muslim community (from India, Pakistan and Bangladesh) in particular is very under represented among visitors to greenways and natural and semi natural sites.

Quality

3.76 The methodology for assessing quality is set out in Part 2 (Methodology). The table below summarises the results of all the quality assessment for open spaces in Kirklees. The threshold for assessing low quality is set at 40% and high quality set at 60%; this is based on Green Flag criteria. A summary of data by analysis areas is provided an each typology section.

Table 3.1: Quality scores for all open space typologies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Typology</th>
<th>QUALITY Scores</th>
<th>Threshold</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>maximum score</td>
<td>lowest score</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parks and Gardens</td>
<td>164</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Natural and semi natural greenspaces</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Green corridors</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amenity greenspace</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public playing fields</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Playing Fields</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provision for children and young people</td>
<td>105</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Allotments</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cemeteries</td>
<td>184</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Civic spaces</td>
<td>134</td>
<td>39%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3.77 The average quality scores for the different typologies of open space vary across Kirklees, from 59% for play areas to only 35% for green corridors. However, in the main, open spaces are assessed as medium quality. There is a high proportion of green corridors assessed as low quality.
3.78 For children’s play areas, over a half of sites fall below the 60% threshold (208). This is, in part, due to 131 sites that are not fenced, 78 sites with a low score for equipment quality and 77 sites with no controls or inadequate controls to prevent illegal use.

3.79 There is a wide range of issues related to the quality of open space sites in Kirklees. Dog fouling is a problem across many sites, including semi-natural green spaces, parks and amenity greenspaces. Users expressed the need for an increased number of dog foul bins. Site visits identified that 16% of sites that do not already have dog foul bins provided would benefit from having dog bins on site. These are mainly semi natural sites, parks and amenity greenspaces. However, the resource implications are significant, as they require regular emptying, particularly in summer. It is currently not council policy to install dog foul bins for these reasons.

3.80 Fly tipping is an issue across the District. The problem is experienced most severely on amenity greenspaces. The site assessments identified at least 28 sites that were fly tipped at the time of visit.

3.81 Not uncommon throughout the Country, the use of quad bikes is an issue in several of Kirklees open spaces. Residents feel that there is need for greater enforcement of illegal use of open spaces by quad bikes and motorbikes. In total, 23 sites were identified as having signs of use by quad bikes/motorbikes. Sites include semi natural greenspaces and amenity greenspaces. In restricting motorbike access to open space, care must be taken not to compromise access issues, particularly for wheelchairs.

3.82 There is a need to enforce controls over dog fouling, fly tipping and motorbike use. Surveillance and well publicised prosecutions of offenders could be a useful deterrent.
There is significant variation in the rating of the quality of open space provision in Kirklees. It is very strongly correlated to usage, in that where there are low levels of visit to an open space typology, large proportions of residents are unable to rate the quality. For example, allotments and play areas for teenagers, which have the two lowest levels of visit, have the highest proportion of respondents not able to rate the quality. However, where respondents are able to rate quality, it is generally rated as good or very good, e.g., 45% rate the quality of parks in Kirklees as good or very good.

For nearly all typologies, users are more likely to rate the quality of provision as good or very good than non-users. This reinforces the importance of encouraging residents to utilise open spaces – the findings suggest that those visiting open spaces will rate it more positively than those that do not utilise such provision. They only exception is play provision for teenagers, where there is no significant difference in the perception of users and non-users. Respondents highlighted that the two main ways in which open spaces can be improved is through a general clean up of the area and for more provision to be made for teenagers and children.
Value

3.85 The methodology for assessing value is set out in Part 2 (Methodology). The table below summarises the results of all the value assessments for open spaces in Kirklees. The threshold for assessing value differs depending on the typology. A summary of data by analysis areas is provided an each typology section.

Table 3.2: Value scores for all open space typologies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Analysis area</th>
<th>VALUE Scores</th>
<th>Threshold</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>maximum score</td>
<td>lowest score</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parks and Gardens</td>
<td>125</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Natural and semi natural greenspaces</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Green corridors</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amenity greenspace</td>
<td>105</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public playing fields</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provision for children and young people</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Allotments</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cemeteries</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Civic spaces</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3.86 In terms of value, there is a significant variation in the mean scores across the different typologies, ranging from just 11% for natural and semi natural greenspace to 50% for civic space. A large proportion of green corridors, cemeteries and public playing fields were assessed as low value.
Importance of open spaces

3.87 The provision of open spaces is rated as very or quite important by the majority of respondents to the street survey (89%). This reinforces the value that is placed on open and green spaces by the residents of, and visitors to, Kirklees. There is no variation in opinion on the importance of open spaces amongst a particular age group, ethnicity or area location.

Figure 3.12: Importance of open spaces

Community safety

3.88 Consultation suggests that many people are apprehensive about using open spaces due to vandalism evident at some sites and intimidation by youth congregation. For example, West End Park, Cleckheaton which is noted as being in a good location, but requiring better surveillance methods due to youth congregation. Norman Park, Birkby also suffers from youth congregation, which significantly reduces use of the play area. The public’s perception of crime within open spaces appears to be much higher than its actual occurrence. Improving safety perceptions in parks and open spaces could include improved lighting and CCTV installation.

3.89 Open space design is an issue and is not always a primary consideration in site development. However, the design of open space has an impact on its use. Council officers and open space users believe that the ‘secure by design’ principle should be used for open spaces such as parks and play areas to provide better natural surveillance. National evidence shows that, if housing overlooks a site, antisocial behaviour is usually reduced.
3.90 The recent introduction of a park warden service has had a positive impact on the quality of sites. Community engagement has been greatly increased resulting in a reduction in the occurrence of anti-social behaviour within parks and open spaces. However, there is still a perceived lack of staff presence within parks and open spaces.

Frequency of visits

3.91 There is significant variation in the frequency of visits to each typology. Footpaths/cyclepaths and grassed areas on housing estates tend to be visited more than once a week particularly due to their accessibility. Nature areas tend to be visited once a month as they tend to be visited for a specific purpose rather than for recreational purposes.

Figure 3.13: Frequency of visits to open spaces