

Portsmouth Open Spaces Assessment

2020 Addendum

Contents

1. Introduction.....	2
2. Quantitative analysis.....	2
Amenity greenspace	3
Provision for children and young people	3
Allotments.....	5
Natural and semi-natural greenspace.....	6
Public parks and gardens	7
3. Conclusions of this update.....	8
4. New Development and Open Space Provision	11

1. Introduction

- 1.1. As part of its evidence base for the Local Plan review the Council commissioned an assessment of its publically accessible open spaces in the city, this Open Spaces Assessment (OSA) was completed in 2018. This assessment reviewed the quantity, quality and accessibility of various typologies of open space and provided an overview of needs now and into the future. The assessment was published as part of the February 2019 Local Plan evidence consultation and can be found on the website alongside the rest of the evidence base¹.
- 1.2. Since completion of the open spaces assessment the timeframe of the new Local Plan, which originally ran from 2011 to 2034, has been updated to cover the period of 2038. Furthermore, the population estimates for England and Wales, upon which the analysis of the open spaces assessment relied, were revised by the Office for National Statistics (ONS) in late 2018. The update resulted in a revision downwards in the population estimate figure for Portsmouth of 0.7%². This revision has subsequently led to the production of amended population projections into the future for the UK, including Portsmouth, though it should be noted that this has not resulted in a radical change for the city. The most recent population projections for local authorities by ONS are now the 2018-based subnational principal population projections for local authorities and higher administrative areas in England³.
- 1.3. As such, this addendum note is intended to provide an update to the 2018 OSA taking the above developments into account. Whilst much of the findings of the assessment are still considered to be valid and up-to-date, the following sections should be taken as superseding the relevant parts of the report wherever highlighted - principally they focus on the quantitative space standard assessments covered in pages 42 to 50 of the document. The second part of the note then goes on to consider the standard of provision to be required of new development in the emerging Local Plan and details how a suggested figure has been calculated.

2. Quantitative analysis

- 2.1. Pages 42 to 50 of the 2018 OSA set out the results of an assessment of the quantities of various typologies of open spaces and calculated a standard of provision per 1,000 people. Due to the changes set out in para 1.2, these standards are now out of date. An updated quantitative analysis of open space standards in the city for current and future population levels has therefore been calculated and is shown in the tables on the following pages.

¹ <https://www.portsmouth.gov.uk/ext/development-and-planning/planning-policy/the-local-plan>

² <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/populationandmigration/populationestimates/bulletins/annualmidyearpopulationestimates/mid2012tomid2016>

³ <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/populationandmigration/populationprojections>

2.2. Once more, the tables highlight the existing levels of open space, and the level of provision per 1,000 people as of the beginning of the plan period and in the future (projected to the year 2038 instead of 2034). The assessment of standard of provision is set out based upon the nationally recommended levels (taken from Fields in Trust⁴) which the report recommended be utilised going forward (highlighted bold). It also includes a comparison using the standard of provision previously used in the city based upon the previous Portsmouth Parks and Open Spaces Strategy, as the OSA did.

Amenity greenspace

2.3. For amenity greenspace in the city, as per Table 1, Portsmouth is in deficit for the size of its population at the beginning of the plan period according to the recommended standard from the Fields in Trust and the undersupply is of 78.86ha. By the end of the Local Plan period, this deficit will have increased to 86.19ha.

Table 1 - Standard of amenity greenspace provision in Portsmouth between 2016 and 2038

Option	Standard	HA	Population 2016	Current provision HA/1000	Requirement current	Current deficit/oversupply	Population 2038	Requirement by 2038	Deficit/oversupply 2038
Option 1 - Projection using recommended open standard applied against ONS pop estimates.	Fields in Trust 0.6 ha/1,000 population	49.12	213,300	0.23	127.98	78.86	225,524	135.31	86.19
Option 2 - Projection utilising former open space standard applied against ONS estimates.	Open Spaces Strategy 1.05 ha/1,000 population	49.12	213,300	0.23	223.97	174.85	225,524	236.80	187.68

Provision for children and young people

⁴ A national charity who work to protect parks and green spaces. Their guidance on open space benchmarking builds on that of the National Playing Field Association whose open space recommendations were traditionally used by many Local Authorities previously. More info: <http://www.fieldsintrust.org/>

2.4. For spaces for children and young people in the city, as per Table 2, Portsmouth is in deficit for the size of population at the beginning of the plan period according to the recommended standard from the Fields in Trust, this is at an undersupply of 39.32ha. By the end of the Local Plan period, this deficit will have increased to 42.37ha.

Table 2 - Standard of provision for children and young people in Portsmouth between 2016 and 2038

Option	Standard	HA	Population 2016	Current provision HA/1000	Requirement current	Current deficit/oversupply	Population 2038	Requirement by 2038	Deficit/oversupply 2038
Option 1 - Projection using recommended open standard applied against ONS pop estimates.	Fields in Trust 0.25 ha/1,000 population	14.01	213,300	0.07	53.33	39.32	225,524	56.38	42.37
Option 2 - Projection utilising former open space standard applied against ONS estimates.	Open Spaces Strategy 0.88 ha/1,000 population	14.01	213,300	0.07	187.70	173.69	225,524	198.46	184.45

Allotments

2.5. For allotments in the city, as per Table 3, Portsmouth is in deficit for the size of population at the beginning of the plan period according to the recommended standard from the Fields in Trust, this is at an undersupply of 18.88ha. By the end of the Local Plan period, this deficit will have increased to 21.32ha.

Table 3 - Standard of allotments provision in Portsmouth between 2016 and 2038

Option	Standard	HA	Population 2016	Current provision HA/1000	Requirement current	Current deficit/oversupply	Population 2038	Requirement by 2038	Deficit/oversupply 2038
Option 1 - Projection using recommended open standard applied against ONS pop estimates.	Fields in Trust 0.2 ha/1,000 population	23.78	213,300	0.11	42.66	18.88	225,524	45.10	21.32
Option 2 - Projection utilising former open space standard applied against ONS estimates.	Open Spaces Strategy 0.14 ha/1,000 population	23.78	213,300	0.11	29.86	6.08	225,524	31.57	7.79

Natural and semi-natural greenspace

2.6. For natural and semi-natural greenspaces in the city, as per Table 4, Portsmouth is in deficit for the size of population at the beginning of the plan period according to the recommended standard from the Fields in Trust, at an undersupply of 49.37ha. By the end of the Local Plan period, this deficit will have increased to 71.37ha.

Table 4 - Standard of provision of natural and semi-natural greenspace in Portsmouth between 2016 and 2038

Option	Standard	HA	Population 2016	Current provision HA/1000	Requirement current	Current deficit/oversupply	Population 2038	Requirement by 2038	Deficit/oversupply 2038
Option 1 - Projection using recommended open standard applied against ONS pop estimates.	Fields in Trust 1.8 ha/1,000 population	334.57	213,300	1.57	383.94	49.37	225,524	405.94	71.37
Option 2 - Projection utilising former open space standard applied against ONS estimates.	Open Spaces Strategy 2.1 ha/1,000 population	334.57	213,300	1.57	447.93	113.36	225,524	473.60	139.03

Public parks and gardens

2.7. For provision of public parks and gardens in the city, as per Table 5, Portsmouth is in deficit at the beginning of the plan period for the size of population according to the recommended standard from the Fields in Trust, this is at an undersupply of 37.20ha. By the end of the Local Plan period, this deficit will have increased to 46.98ha. Whilst the previous standard used by the Portsmouth Parks and Open spaces strategy would suggest that parks provision is currently at an oversupply by 9.73ha, the full OSA recommends this standard is not used, and the national Fields in Trust standard used instead because it is considered a very important form of open space provision for the growing population of Portsmouth because of the multi-functional nature of these areas.

Table 5 - Standard of public parks and gardens provision in Portsmouth between 2016 and 2038

Option	Standard	HA	Population 2016	Current provision HA/1000	Requirement current	Current deficit/oversupply	Population 2038	Requirement by 2038	Deficit/oversupply 2038
Option 1 - Projection using recommended open standard applied against ONS pop estimates.	Fields in Trust 0.8 ha/1,000 population	133.44	213,300	0.63	170.64	37.20	225,524	180.42	46.98
Option 2 - Projection utilising former open space standard applied against ONS estimates.	Open Spaces Strategy 0.58 ha/1,000 population	133.44	213,300	0.63	123.71	-9.73	225,524	130.80	-2.64

3. Conclusions of this update

3.1. This update to the 2018 Open Spaces Assessment (OSA) considers the need for open space provision over an amended Local Plan period (a change from 2011-2034 to 2016-2038) and has found that the revised population growth does not result in a significant uplift in the open space requirements. The updated population projections for Portsmouth at the end of the Local Plan period, lower by 4.3% from 235,700 (in 2034 based on the original projections used in the 2018 OSA methodology as previously published) to 225,524 (based upon the most recent 2018 based ONS subnational principal population projections for England). This reduced population estimate for the end of the Local Plan period results in a reduced need for each typology of open space as is evidenced in table 6, the change ranges from 20.4% reduction (for natural and semi-natural type), to a 5.7% reduction (for provision for children and young people). This update ensures that the Council is working from the most up-to-date calculations it can as it prepares the Local Plan.

Table 6 - Summary of open space provision for each typology at beginning of Plan period (2016) versus at the end (2038)

Category of open space	Deficit/oversupply as of 2016	Deficit/Oversupply by 2034 (Initial 2018 Open Space Assessment findings)	Updated deficit/oversupply by 2038 (ONS population projections)
Amenity greenspace	78.86 ha deficit	92.30 ha deficit	86.19 ha deficit
Provision for children and young people	39.32 ha deficit	44.92 ha deficit	42.37 ha deficit
Allotments	18.88 ha deficit	23.36 ha deficit	21.32 ha deficit
Natural and semi-natural greenspace	49.37 ha deficit	89.69 ha deficit	71.37 ha deficit
Public parks and gardens	37.2 ha deficit	55.12 ha deficit	46.98 ha deficit

3.2. By the end of the Local Plan period, using nationally recommended open space guidelines for provision per 1,000 people, provision of every type of public open space in the city will be in deficit for the city's projected population, as was the findings of the original 2018 assessment.

3.3. When considering the implications of the above for the new Local Plan, it is still considered that the conclusions of the original OSA are still relevant. Whilst these conclusions were wide ranging and the original report should be referred to for the full detail, the key conclusions for each open space were as follows:

Facilities for Children and Young People. Imaginative use of more adventurous equipment for older children and young people should be made, including the use of software applications which encourage "play by stealth." Better landscaping is required to

increase attractiveness, biodiversity, and provide shade. More welcoming and informative signage at entrances should be fitted. All-weather footpaths should be provided from open space entrances to play areas. The provision of more seating and litter bins is required. Finally, equipment providing better access for disabled or less able-bodied children should be introduced at larger play sites. Provision in terms of quantity is well below levels advocated for equipped areas by Fields in Trust.

Amenity Greenspace. Most sites lack welcoming and informative interpretation, which would increase “sense of place” and increase usage. Few have areas of informal landscape to enhance biodiversity. Whilst quantity standards are below desirable levels, qualitative improvements in these areas will have an impact on usage. In terms of accessibility, there are shortages in the north around Cosham, and in the central and central south of the City, including Fratton. Special consideration should be given to meeting demand if and when land becomes available in these locations. In addition, it will be important to ensure that sufficient Amenity Greenspace is included in new development in accordance with FIT guidelines. It is suggested that they be linked wherever possible to other open space in the City and with local communities by a series of interconnected Greenways which could follow open spaces such as linear verges and areas adjacent to strategic routes. New open space in growth areas should be designed in such a way as to improve access around and through the site.

Public Parks and Gardens. The use of more informal planting, including tree planting, would be an improvement which would make Public Parks more attractive and would enhance biodiversity. Better footpath connections are required at some sites to provide all-weather access for pedestrians and cyclists. Better signage is needed to provide a 'welcome' and encourage greater usage. It is suggested that further efforts are made to achieve the Green Flag standard at Hilsea Lines, Canoe Lake, Victoria Park, Southsea Rose Gardens and Bransbury Park. New provision should be made where areas of new growth are sufficiently large that provision is justified for increasing populations. Public Parks and Gardens are also a useful potential element in the creation of a Greenway network. There is a shortfall to the east of the City, and no suitable facilities of this type in Anchorage Park.

Natural and Semi-Natural Greenspace. A number lack signage. A better footpath network is also required at a number of sites to improve all weather access for pedestrians and cyclists. More seating is necessary. In terms of distribution, there is a shortfall in the south, compared to the north, of the City. It is important that informal planting is increased in the form of trees and meadow in other open space types. In addition, Semi-Natural Greenspace has the potential to be an essential component of a Greenway network in the City. There are also opportunities to connect to Natural and Semi-Natural Greenspace at Portsdown in order to open route ways up to the wider countryside.

Allotments. Some sites need to be more welcoming, with attractive entrances and informative signage. Some perimeter fences are in relatively poor condition. Local growing initiatives would engage communities and local schools. There is a shortage of provision in particular south of Portsea Island, and in North End.

Cemeteries and Churchyards. Including Highland, Kingston and Milton cemeteries and a number of large churchyards (including St Thomas' Cathedral). Improved use could be made of interpretative signage. As with other types of open space, greater use could be made of environmental areas to enhance biodiversity.

Outdoor Sports Facilities. These are generally outside the scope of an open space assessment, but are included purely for use for informal outdoor recreation. More seating is necessary at these sites. Signage was generally poor. There are opportunities to plant trees and areas for wildlife, particularly around perimeters.

3.4. Principally the new Local Plan will need to ensure that wherever possible new open space should be sought in new development to help to address undersupply of open space. Equally, as this will be difficult to achieve in many areas due to the density of development already present, enhancements to existing spaces should also be sought so that they are able to accommodate increased pressure from additional users. Improvements should target quality of signage and facilities, biodiversity improvements like tree and meadow planting, as well as new play equipment that meets the needs of younger and older age ranges including the disabled. It will also be important to look for opportunities to improve connections between open spaces in the city.

3.5. The new Local Plan will seek to address the Open Space requirements for the plan period, based on available data relating to estimated population growth through the following:

1. *Continued protection of a network of public and private open space throughout the city including expanding this protection to several other areas that previously did not benefit from protection through the existing PCS13, including several school pitches as well as areas of land along Portsdown Hill.*
2. *Requirements on residential development of over 50 dwellings to provide public open space as part of the site or otherwise to provide a financial contribution towards the improvement of an appropriate local open space.*
3. *An improved network of connections between open spaces through a newly identified green grid⁵, made up of a range of green corridors that will have a role in encouraging active and sustainable transport of residents as well as boosting mobility of flora and fauna across urban areas.*

⁵ See the Council's Green Infrastructure background paper (2019) on the website for more details: <https://www.portsmouth.gov.uk/ext/development-and-planning/planning-policy/new-local-plan-evidence>

4. New Development and Open Space Provision

Background to the PCS13 pocket parks requirement

- 4.1. The adopted Portsmouth Local Plan (2012) includes a requirement for pocket park provision on developments of more than 50 dwellings. The policy's effectiveness has been mixed with analysis set out in the green infrastructure background paper⁶ highlighting that many larger developments in the city were not delivering pocket parks due to being either general permitted development, or student/sheltered accommodation which the policy could not be applied to. Of those proposals that did activate the policy (ten out of twenty four since 2012), physical pocket parks have been delivered on just over half of occasions (six proposals), in the majority of other cases (three out of four) a commuted sum was paid for offsite enhancements instead which can still be seen as a positive result for the policy.
- 4.2. The draft open spaces policy for the new Local Plan proposes to retain the requirement for provision of open space (which is generally expected to be in the form of a pocket park) on larger developments with a proposed threshold set at proposals involving 100 dwellings or more. Furthermore, the scope of the policy has been expanded, to apply to other equivalent residential uses, including proposals for students and older people (over 100 bedrooms), where previously these types of accommodation did not activate the requirement.

Approach to setting a standard of provision of open space on new developments

- 4.3. The 1.5ha per 1,000 people pocket parks standard has been reviewed as part of the process of drafting the new open space policy for the Local Plan and in light of the recommendations of the 2018 Open Spaces Assessment. The previous policy set out in the 2012 adopted Core strategy had a requirement of a standard of provision equating to 1.5 ha of open space for every 1,000 people accommodated by the new development. The methodology which led to setting the 1.5 ha standard is set out in full in the *Parks and Open Spaces Strategy (2012)*⁷, but to summarise was calculated by combining the standards of provision for the various types of open space that a developer in the city might reasonably be expected to provide as part of any new development.
- 4.4. It is considered that the 2012 methodology is still a sound starting point for considering the standard of open space provision for new development in the city, and type of open space provided should consider the needs of occupants and local deficits. Open space provision, including outdoor sports pitches may also been delivered by other means such as through CIL and a review of the Council's facilities. Applying

⁶ Portsmouth Local Plan evidence paper - Green Infrastructure background paper (2021)

⁷ <https://www.portsmouth.gov.uk/ext/leisure/parks/parks-and-open-spaces-strategy>

the Fields in Trust recommended quantity standards⁸ to the typologies on this basis would however still result in a higher overall standard of provision of open space at a level of 1.65ha per 1,000 people as demonstrated in table 7.

- 4.5. The draft policy approach to open space and recreation in the new local plan will continue to require larger residential schemes to deliver new open space; an appropriate threshold for this requirement will be tested through the 'Regulation 18' consultation in summer 2021.
- 4.6. It should also be recognised that provision from new development is only one of addressing open space provision through the Local Plan. The Council has identified a strategic green grid as part of its draft Green Infrastructure policy which comprises of a network of strategic green corridors - one objective of this approach is that it should over time help to better link up existing open spaces to encourage people to access these spaces as well as encourage species to move between these spaces. Furthermore, where appropriate, the Council is seeking to deliver new and improved open space provision through the proposed strategic site allocations for the new Local Plan.

Table 7: Breakdown of recommended quantity standards comprising overall proposed standard of provision

Green space type	Standard (ha per 1,000 population)
Parks and gardens	0.8
Amenity (informal) green space	0.6
Equipped play space	0.25
Total	1.65

- 4.7. The need for more informal biodiversity improvement across the city which was highlighted by the open spaces assessment and the draft Open Space and Recreational Policy stresses the need for multi-functional open space that can serve multiple roles including contributing to biodiversity. This issue is addressed separately through other draft policies of the draft Local Plan also which as a whole include a range of requirements which will work in tandem with this pocket park provision to deliver improvements in the city including:
 - Additional greening through an 'Urban Greening factor tool' - requiring use of the Council's UGF tool to demonstrate quantitative gains in green infrastructure on sites within key locations.
 - Green corridors - requiring development to contribute to the strengthening of green corridors linking up green spaces across the city.

⁸ <http://www.fieldsintrust.org/guidance>

- Biodiversity net gain - reflecting national policy requirements (and expected legislation) for delivering biodiversity net gain in all new development in the city.
- Protection of open space - ensuring an increased network of protected green spaces in the city from loss to new development.

New national guidance on open space standards

4.8. A final issue that should be acknowledged for the on-going development of this policy approach is the potential for new national guidance on open space standards. The Government's guidance notes on the National Model Design Code (2021) indicate that open space and recreation guidance on Accessibility to Natural Greenspace (ANGSt) will shortly be updated. This will include the revision of standards used to set local space requirements, which tend to be either population based (as used in previous assessments of Portsmouth's need) or based on distance to open space. There is an acknowledgement that the populations based standards may be difficult to achieve in areas of high density and that contributions may need to be made towards any shortfall. **It is indicated that the new standards may focus more on accessibility to open space. The Local Plan approach to open space and recreation may therefore require revision in-line with this new guidance in due course.**