

GREENSPACE - QUALITY MONITORING

1 Purpose

- 1.1 Further to the two previous meetings of the Scrutiny Review Panel (8th December and 3rd February), this report provides an overview of work undertaken.
- 1.2 This paper has been formatted to match the published agenda for the Panel's next meeting on the 13th April.

2 Overview

- 2.1 Stockport Council's green estate is vast and encompasses a wide range of typologies including verges, scrubland, recreation field, formal park, woodland, allotment, country park and others.
- 2.2 These sites provide a wide range of benefits including ensuring biological diversity across the borough, providing opportunities for sustainable urban drainage, clean air, carbon sequestration, economic benefits as well as both mental and physical wellbeing.
- 2.3 This current project is focussed on one aspect of greenspace provision. That is ensuring that all residents of Stockport have access to good quality amenity greenspace. This paper outlines work undertaken to date to define, identify, map and quality assess the minimum number of sites that, if brought to a defined quality standard, would maximise the number of Stockport residents who have access to good quality amenity greenspace.

3 Definitions of sites for inclusion

- 3.1 Factors that have influenced the definitions include site typology, size, range, number and type of assets and contained within the site.
- 3.2 Further to comments received from Panel members the definitions have been refined and had a small number of example sites include. The definitions are at appendix one.

4 Developing a priority list of sites

- 4.1 The number of greenspace sites maintained by the Council numbers several hundred.
- 4.2 It is proposed that within the introductory phase of this project resources are targeted at the minimum number of sites that meet the criteria for Major and Local; and that will realise the maximum benefit to the greatest number of residents. In short, take the easy and most profitable wins first.
- 4.3 Work to date suggests that in applying a 10min walk / approx. 1.2km accessible boundary to sites 71% of the population fall into the catchment area of the 28 applicable greenspaces. A relatively small percentage increase of the population, to 80%, is achieved when the number of sites is extended to 43.
- 4.4 The list of sites currently included is at appendix two

5 Mapping of sites

- 5.1 Mapping of sites and the extent of each sites accessibility is ongoing. Currently a distance of 1.2km has been applied. Major obstructions, such as motorways, have been factored in when considering accessibility. These obstructions are included manually, which is time consuming, and as such there is some further work required.
- 5.2 In the example map at appendix three the yellow shading is the area covered by the proposed initial 28 sites. Blue shading is where an additional 15 potentially viable sites could be added. Green shading is where residents have access to choice of more than one of the combined 43 sites.
- 5.3 Next steps in mapping and site selection will be to determine a plan to provide access to a good quality greenspace for all of the borough's residents.

6 Timeline for baseline quality assessments

- 6.1 The initial tranche of quality inspections will take place between 16th – 19th May. These first inspections will be undertaken by staff with extensive experience of working in greenspace and who are former judges for the National Green Flag Award.
- 6.2 It is anticipated that the 28 sites providing up to 71% coverage of residents will be inspected in this first phase.
- 6.3 Following the assessments there will be a need to produce site based action plans and an overall priority action plan.
- 6.4 Yet to be determined is the phasing of both additional and ongoing site assessments.
- 6.5 Inspection criteria will be as previously shared (Appendix four). Inspections are site based at present and will take a balanced view of the entire site with particular reference to the visitor experience.

7 Access standards to key assets / future provision

- 7.1 The Panel asked that officers investigate the value of creating access standards to key assets, separate from the assessment of quality greenspaces.
- 7.2 These assets were to include assets, such as wheel sports facilities, and consideration was to be given to developing access standards. This was thought to be a useful data set in determining future provision of key asset types.
- 7.3 There are a number of key assets, including play areas and football pitches, that already have access standards associated with them. In the case of pitches these access standards are provided by Fields in Trust and for Play access distances are set within planning guidance.
- 7.4 In practice such data has not been used to determine future provision. There is little if any opportunity to create new pitches. Play area provision is dependent on development which provides money for play that is geographically linked to the development rather than on a borough wide needs basis.
- 7.5 Work undertaken to date on determining the value of accessibility standards for key assets suggests that useful data would be difficult to ascertain and that the information itself would not be entirely helpful in determining future provision.

- 7.6 Officers will continue to review but regrettably there is no progress of note to share with the panel at this time.

8 Recommendation

- 8.1 That the panel comments on the work undertaken to date, with particular reference to the proposed methodology and phasing of the initial tranche of sites.
- 8.2 That the panel approves officers opening a dialogue with the Stockport Greenspace Forum as the initial step in seeking wider stakeholder engagement in the project.

APPENDIX ONE – SITE DEFINITIONS

Each named site will be categorised as either a *Major*, *Neighbourhood* or *Local* site. A site's *Category* will be determined by the following criteria.

Category - "Major" Sites

"Major" sites will, as appropriate to the site:

- attract visitors from outside of the borough and serve as a neighbourhood site to those people who live within 1.2km
- be an established visitor destination in its own right
- have the capacity to attract large numbers and range of visits for both resident and visitors to the Borough
- generally be of a substantial size
- have its own individual characteristics which give the site its special importance
- offer a range of quality facilities
- have good accessibility for pedestrians (including persons with disabilities), cyclists, public & private transport
- have visitor facilities including quality supervised toilet provision
- also act as a district site and as a local site to their immediate communities
- aspire towards "dedicated" site maintenance teams
- be maintained to appropriate quality standards

Example sites would include: Bramhall Park and Bruntwood Park

ii) Category - "Neighbourhood" Sites will, as appropriate to the site:

- serve a sector that is approximately 1.2km from boundary of the park
- provide quality green spaces
- have specific features/attraction(s)
- have good accessibility for pedestrians (including persons with disabilities), cyclists, public & private transport
- act as a local site for their local communities
- collectively provide a diverse range of experiences throughout the Borough, each developing their own individual character
- be maintained to appropriate quality standards
- when added to the Major sites, cover the whole Borough

Example sites would include: Bredbury Recreation Ground, Thornfield Park

iii) Category - "Local" Sites

These will be sites that may need to be brought to a quality standard if there are pockets of communities who do not have access to a good quality neighbourhood park within 1.2 km.

"Local" sites will, as appropriate to the site:

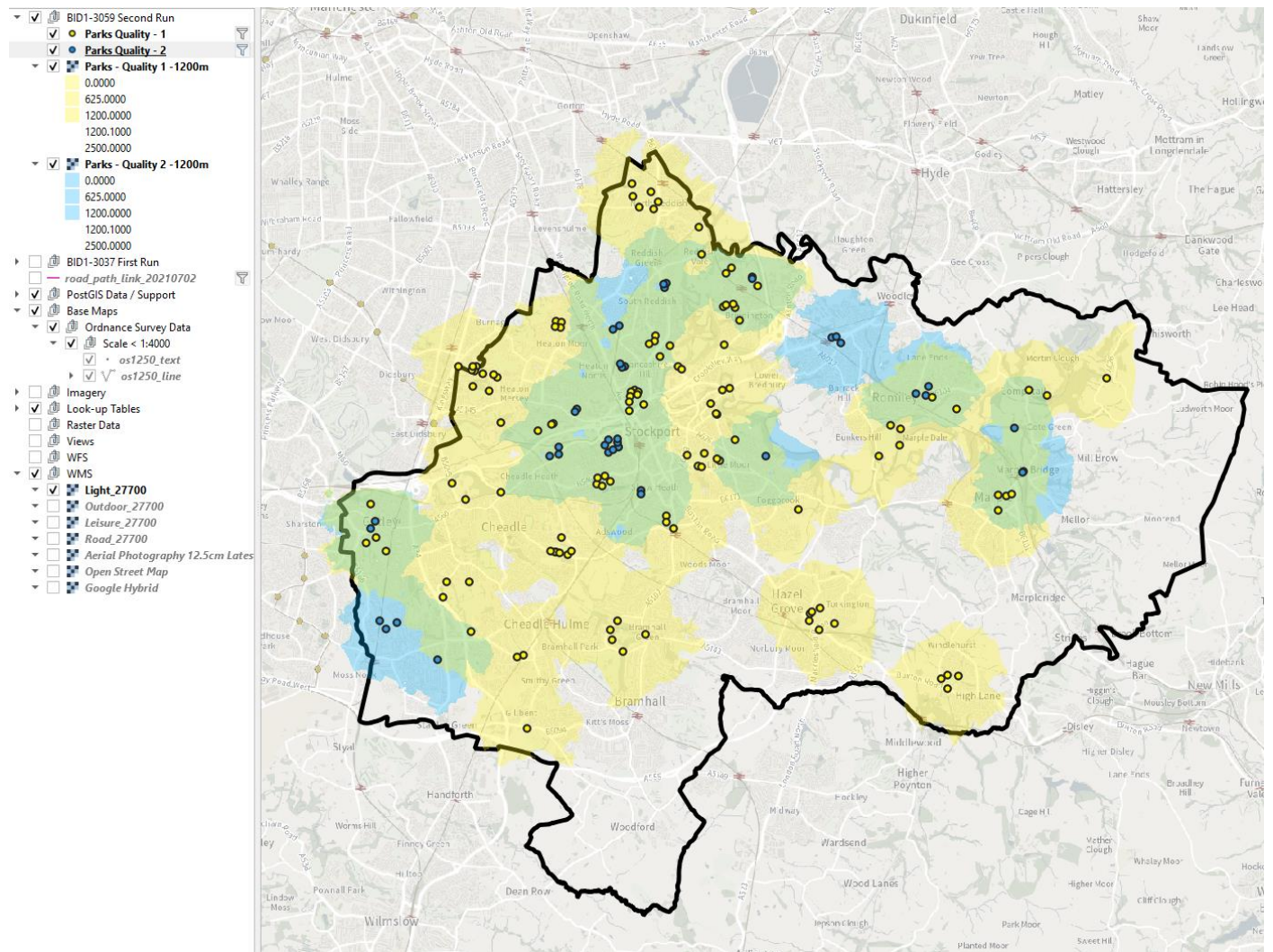
- serve a sector of approximately 0.4 km
- be generally accessible on foot
- principally cater for local community and cultural needs
- be particularly important in accommodating informal leisure use
- form part of the local landscape, and possibly heritage
- be maintained to appropriate standards
- provide a safe and pleasant environment for all members of the community

APPENDIX TWO – PROPOSED SITES

INITIAL 28 SITES

Abney Hall
Adswood Park
Alexandra Park (inc Sykes Reservoir)
Bramhall Park
Brinnington Park
Bruntwood Park
Cale Green Park
Chadkirk Country Estate
Etherow Country Park
Gatley Carrs
Gotherage Lane (Tangshutt LNR)
Half Moon Lane
Heathbank Road
Heaton Mersey Common
Heaton Moor Park
Heaton Norris Park
High Lane
Marple Memorial Park
Mersey Vale Country Park (inc Craig Road)
North Reddish Park
Reddish Vale Country Park
South Park
South Reddish Park
St Thomas' Park
Torkington Park
Vernon Park
William Scholes Playing Fields
Woodbank Park
ADDITIONAL 15 SITES
Brabyns Park
Bredbury Recreation Ground
Cheadle Heath Park (Gorse Bank)
Crescent Park
East Avenue
Gatley Rec.
Grafton Street
Hollywood
Manchester Road
Moat Walk (link to R Vale)
Romiley Rec.
Rose Vale Park
Shaw Heath Park
Unity Park - linked to RV
Woodlands Park

APPENDIX THREE – EXAMPLE OF AVAILABLE MAPPING DATA



APPENDIX FOUR - Acquired 24th January 2022 from:

<https://www.greenflagaward.org/how-it-works/judging-criteria/green-flag-award/>

1: A WELCOMING PLACE

1. Welcome
2. Good and Safe Access
3. Signage
4. Equal Access for All

2: HEALTHY, SAFE AND SECURE

5. Appropriate Provision of Quality Facilities and Activities
6. Safe Equipment and Facilities
7. Personal Security
8. Control of Dogs/Dog Fouling

3: WELL MAINTAINED AND CLEAN

9. Litter and Waste Management
10. Horticultural Maintenance
11. Arboricultural Maintenance
12. Building and Infrastructure Maintenance
13. Equipment Maintenance

4: ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT

14. Managing Environmental Impact
15. Waste Minimisation
16. Chemical Use
17. Peat Use
18. Climate Change Adaption Strategies

5: BIODIVERSITY, LANDSCAPE AND HERITAGE

19. Management of Natural Features, Wild Fauna and Flora
20. Conservation of Landscape Features
21. Conservation of Buildings and Structures

6: COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

22. Community Involvement in Management and Development
23. Appropriate Provision for Community

7: MARKETING AND COMMUNICATION

24. Marketing and Promotion
25. Appropriate Information Channels
26. Appropriate Educational and Interpretational Information

8: MANAGEMENT

27. Implementation of Action Plan