

Viability of open space standards in light of the Open Space Strategy and miscellaneous key issues, 26 September 2011

The workshop discussion paper of 4 May 2011 proposed the removal of the open space standards from the policies HW1 and HW2; this was agreed at the PMB meeting of 7 June 2011 with a final view on the outcome of the IDP. This issue was raised again at the PMB meeting 14 September 2011 with the same agreement.

The issue discussed was whether to include the Open Space Standards within the policy. Whilst including the Standards allows easier reference without having to look at supporting evidence, excluding them allows a more flexible and adaptable approach. The Standards have been arrived at through application of Government Policy through the PPG17 Assessment. The Government have announced their intention to replace these policies with the National Planning Policy Framework, which may have implications for future updating of the Standards. Also existing Strategies that currently inform the Core Strategy are written to cover the next few years (ie Open Space Strategy is adopted up to 2015) after which they will be reviewed. The plan period covers the next 15 years. Including the standards in the policy binds those standards over the length of the plan period. Having the standards informed by separate documents allows for the opportunity to review individual aspects of those standards without the need to review the Core Strategy Policy, which will need to go through the full consultation process before it can be changed.

It was also suggested that not including the Standards within the Policy was contrary to PPG17, which states "Planning policies should identify specific needs and quantitative or qualitative deficits or surpluses of open space, sports and recreational facilities in the local area. The information gained from this assessment of needs and opportunities should be used to set locally derived standards for the provision of open space, sport and recreational facilities." I consider that this is in line with our proposed approach. You have an assessment of needs within your PPG17 Assessment and the policy will support the provision of facilities in line with those needs.

With reference to the IDP, South Somerset's Community Health and Leisure Service have been consulted and the facilities and requirements they require will have informed the IDP, details of which will be included in that report.