SUMMARY

- The amount of Outdoor Recreation, Equipped Play Areas and Allotments in Wakefield Central Neighbourhood Management Area is just below standard but the distribution is poor.
- The ward of Wakefield North which includes the city centre is significantly deprived of Accessible Greenspace particularly Equipped Play Areas.
- A lack of good quality green linkages effectively reduces access to greenspace.
- A Parks for People funding bid for Thornes Park would concentrate resources at a cost to all other sites in the Wakefield District.

INTRODUCTION

This Blueprint proposes changes to make the greenspace network fairer and more sustainable. The aim will be to provide something for everyone rather than everything for everyone.

To ensure a consistent approach across the whole district a two stage assessment will be made of greenspace provision alongside local knowledge of the area:

- Access to greenspace and facilities will be assessed using the catchment distances in Table 1.
- The amount of Accessible Greenspace and facilities will be assessed using quantity standards.

It is recommended that the Blueprint is reviewed at least annually.

PART ONE - EVIDENCE

1. MAIN SITES

The Neighbourhood Management Area of Wakefield Central is made up of the wards of Stanley & Outwood East, Wrenthorpe & Outwood West, Ossett and Horbury & South Ossett as shown in Appendix I.

Thornes Park is the main park in Wakefield City centre. There is the potential to develop the central mound in the park known as Lowe Hill with its spectacular views into the main attraction for the park. There is a conflict of identity between Heritage and Sport throughout the park and the compromise has been to separate the two areas. The future of the Wakefield College campus within the park is unresolved and there are issues with a lack of pedestrian and cycle links from city centre amenities.
Balne Lane Fields is a large natural grassland area in a valuable location close to the city centre but its potential for recreation has not been realised and linkages into the city centre are poor.

Wakefield (Lupset) Municipal Golf Course is the largest greenspace in Wakefield Central but is not accessible to the public. The site is managed by Wakefield Council’s Sport & Active Lifestyles.

The City Fields development of 2,500 properties in the east of the management area should provide a significant amount of new recreational greenspace – but also creates a large population to serve. There are concerns that pedestrian and cycle linkages from the development to city centre amenities will be inadequate or unappealing. These same linkages would conversely serve residents in the city centre wishing to visit a potential future attraction at Welbeck Landfill Site.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Greenspace Category</th>
<th>Catchment Distance(s)</th>
<th>Minimum Area(s)</th>
<th>Description of Greenspace Category</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Accessible Greenspace</td>
<td>120m</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Churchgrounds, Natural Areas, Sportsfields and Amenity Areas which are publicly accessible</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Sites must provide for recreation – does not include sites offering only visual benefits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outdoor Recreation</td>
<td>250m 500m</td>
<td>0.2ha 2ha</td>
<td>Sportsfields and Amenity Areas suitable for ball games such as kickabout</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Multi Use Games Areas (MUGAs) should be prioritised for areas where there is little Outdoor Recreation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equipped Play Area</td>
<td>500m</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Equipped Play Areas for children containing manufactured play equipment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Equipped Play Areas should be prioritised in areas where there is little Accessible Greenspace</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skateboard Park</td>
<td>2km</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Skateboard Parks: basins and ramps for skateboarding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Formal BMX tracks are also included in this category</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Natural Areas</td>
<td>500m 2km 2km 5km</td>
<td>2ha 20ha 100ha</td>
<td>Areas of natural greenspace such as grasslands and woodlands which are publicly accessible</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Management of Natural Areas for the benefit of biodiversity is covered in the Local Biodiversity Action Plan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Allotments</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Plots of land rented to individuals for the purpose of growing produce</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Allotment sites are not accessible to the general public</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Green Linkages</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Walking and cycling linkages for recreation and commuting that do not use public carriageways</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Green Linkages that are appealing to use can greatly increase access to recreational greenspaces</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Table 1: Greenspace Catchment Distances*
2. THE LOCAL PLAN

The Local Plan can be viewed as an interactive map on the LDF Portal which is found in the Planning Policy section of the Wakefield Council website. Appendix II shows:

- **Adopted** policies from the Local Plan (Special Policy Areas, Housing Sites and Protected Areas of Search)
- Policies in **consultation** from the Leisure, Recreation and Open Space Local Plan (Strategic Leisure Corridors, Leisure Opportunities Areas and Sports Facilities)

2.1 Adopted Policies

There are no developments that would significantly impact upon greenspace apart from SPA2, the City Fields Development, which will result in a significant loss of accessible open greenspace - but will create a significant amount of recreational greenspace and green infrastructure improvements to serve the new population.

Of the housing site allocations in the Neighbourhood Management Area, only Land at Dewsbury Road HS12 (Silkwood Development) requires public open space, stated as a 2ha accessible natural area and a play area.

Large derelict open spaces near to Wakefield One Offices and Westgate Train Station are designated within the Merchantgate special policy area, which will contain “high quality public spaces and squares”.

The regeneration of the Kirkgate area will create new provision for leisure and recreation.

The Emerald Ring and Waterfront regeneration cover significant areas and even if no new greenspace is provided the landscaping should provide significant environmental improvements to encourage more walking and cycling.

Wakefield (Lupset) Golf Course and Roundwood are designated Local Wildlife Sites.

2.2 Leisure, Recreation and Open Space Local Plan

Balne Lane Playing Fields (SF15): The site is allocated for Sports Facilities in the emerging Leisure, Recreation and Open Space Local Plan. Proposals include creating new rugby and football pitches and ancillary facilities for Wakefield College and wider community use. A Strategic Leisure Corridor through the site linking Thornes Park, Wrenthorpe Park and Alverthorpe Meadows will also be created. There is potential to develop other community sports facilities within the site and provide some ecological enhancements along Balne Beck. The Playing Pitch Strategy will include an assessment of sports pitch requirements.

Kirkgate Leisure Opportunity Area (LA08) is a key regeneration area including potential sports facilities linked to Sun Lane Leisure Centre and creation of a small urban park.
Strategic Leisure Corridors LC3 Calder Valley and LC32 (Wrenthorpe Park – Thornes Park – Lupset Golf Course) virtually follow the boundary of the Neighbourhood Management Area. Wakefield (Lupset) Golf Course and adjacent housing adjoining the motorway create a barrier to prevent it being a complete loop. The designation of Strategic Leisure Corridors should protect these routes and help attract investment to increase their appeal.

3. ANALYSIS

A map of Accessible Greenspace and Allotments is shown in Appendix III and areas of Greenspace Deprivation are shown in Appendix IV.

3.1 Accessible Greenspace

A catchment distance of 120m is applied to Accessible Greenspace which comprises Churchgrounds, Sportsfields, Natural Areas and Amenity Areas that are accessible to the public and provide for recreation. There is no minimum site size.

Applying the catchment distance of 120m indicates that there are several areas of Accessible Greenspace Deprivation in Wakefield North, primarily the areas around Oakwood Avenue AGD101, Lincoln Street AGD102, the city centre AGD103 and sparse provision north of the city centre. In this highly developed ward there are few opportunities for new areas of greenspace. Equipped Play Areas, high quality Green linkages and landscaping can be effective in mitigating for greenspace deprivation in such areas.

There are no Green Linkages or any appealing walking or cycling routes from the city centre to Thornes Park and access is further reduced by busy roads with poor pedestrian crossings.

The greening of the city centre through the Emerald Ring and the Waterfront projects should improve the appeal of the local environment and mitigate for the low amount of greenspace in the area.

Distribution of accessible greenspace is acceptable in the ward of Wakefield East, with slight under provision in the northwest Pinderfields area and overprovision in south Eastmoor.

There is a small area of accessible greenspace deprivation AGD104 south of Thornes Park, but generally greenspace in the ward of Wakefield West is highly accessible, indeed there is an apparent surplus - but opportunities for alternative uses or sale may be limited, particularly sites in Lupset which appear to be land locked.

Areas of potential surplus Accessible Greenspace SGS101 – SGS107 are shown for the Neighbourhood Management Area of Wakefield Central in Appendix V. One or more of the Accessible Greenspace sites within these boundaries - not all of them - could be strategically selected for decommissioning with minimal impact on coverage.
3.2 Equipped Play Areas

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Equipped Play Areas</th>
<th>Ward of Wakefield North</th>
<th>Ward of Wakefield East</th>
<th>Ward of Wakefield West</th>
<th>WAKEFIELD CENTRAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Population</td>
<td>15,893</td>
<td>16,182</td>
<td>15,522</td>
<td>47,597</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sites/1000 residents</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.433</td>
<td>0.258</td>
<td>0.231</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Table 2: Equipped Play Areas (Standard is 0.3 sites/1000 residents)*

The ward of Wakefield North requires more Equipped Play Areas particularly where there is little Accessible Greenspace. Three areas of Equipped Play Deprivation have been identified EPD101 – EPD103. The city centre has not been identified as an area of shortfall since the resident population is low, but a suitable proposal would be considered using existing procedures.

Area of Equipped Play Deprivation EPD101 would be reduced by new provision planned for the Silkwood Development HS12. EPD102 would be reduced by a new Equipped Play Area at Balne Lane Fields (preferably the southwest corner). EPD103 would be reduced by new provision at the police training school in the adjacent ward of Wakefield East.

The ward of Wakefield East has an overprovision of Equipped Play. New ones are also expected as part of City Fields Development SPA2 and the redevelopment of the police training school where there is currently little Accessible Greenspace.

The ward of Wakefield West has about the standard amount of Equipped Play and access to other greenspace is good. There is an option for a new Equipped Play Area in the southeast corner of Thornes Park to replace nearby old ones and provide for a larger number of residents.

Areas of potential surplus Equipped Play Areas SEP101 – SEP102 are shown for the Neighbourhood Management Area of Wakefield Central in Appendix V. One or more of the Equipped Play Areas within these boundaries - not all of them - could be strategically selected for decommissioning with minimal impact on coverage.

3.3 Outdoor Recreation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Outdoor Recreation</th>
<th>Ward of Wakefield North</th>
<th>Ward of Wakefield East</th>
<th>Ward of Wakefield West</th>
<th>WAKEFIELD CENTRAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MUGAs</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outdoor Recreation</td>
<td>14.1ha</td>
<td>29.6ha</td>
<td>69.6ha</td>
<td>113.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Population</td>
<td>15,893</td>
<td>16,182</td>
<td>15,522</td>
<td>47,597</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ha/1000</td>
<td>0.89</td>
<td>1.83</td>
<td>4.48</td>
<td>2.38</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Table 3: Outdoor Recreation (Standard is 2.4ha/1000 residents)*

Outdoor Recreation comprises sports fields and areas suitable for informal games. Sites over 0.2ha are allocated a 250m catchment distance and sites over 2ha are allocated a 500m catchment distance.
The ward of **Wakefield North** which contains the city centre has a substantial shortfall of Outdoor Recreation. New residential developments should where possible provide onsite Outdoor Recreation greater than 0.2ha in size.

The large area of Outdoor Recreation Deprivation over 0.2ha ORDA101 could be reduced by developments at Merchantgate, the police training school and Kirkgate.

Outdoor Recreation Deprivation ORDA102 would be reduced if sports pitches were created at Balne Lane Fields SF15.

The large area of Outdoor Recreation Deprivation over 2ha ORDB101 could be addressed by new provision at Merchantgate, but it may be unlikely that a new greenspace of this size would be created. Consideration could be given to installing a MUGA as part of the Sun Lane Leisure complex CW22 to compensate for the shortfall of Outdoor Recreation.

Applying catchment distances to Outdoor Recreation in the ward of **Wakefield East** indicates that access is good for both categories. Table 3 however indicates that the ward is short on amount, so it is therefore important to protect sites to prevent further loss to development – particularly sites at risk in the vicinity of Pinderfields. New Outdoor Recreation as part of the City Fields Development will increase the amount but population will also increase.

The ward of **Wakefield West** has a large amount of Outdoor Recreation. Surplus greenspace in the Lupset area appears to be landlocked providing few opportunities to develop for other uses or sell. There also appears to be a MUGA at Jubilee Hall, Lupset.

The Outdoor Recreation provision for the Neighbourhood Management Area is 2.38ha per 1000 residents which is very close to the 6 acre standard of 2.4ha per 1000.

In areas of shortfall of Outdoor Recreation, public use of school grounds or other private playing fields could be negotiated. MUGAs can also be installed in areas of shortfall - or even parts of supermarket car parks which are little used in evenings could be used.

**3.4 Skateboard Park & BMX**

Thornes Park Skateboard Park provides adequately for the whole Wakefield Central Neighbourhood Management Area.

**3.5 Natural Areas**

Natural Areas comprise publicly accessible woodlands and natural heath and grasslands. Sites over 2ha are allocated a 500m catchment distance and sites over 20ha are allocated a 2km catchment distance.
There is a substantial area of Natural Greenspace Deprivation over 2ha NGD101 in the west of the Neighbourhood Management Area and NGD102 in the centre but there is little chance of a large Natural Area being created in the city centre.

There are potential losses of Natural Areas as a consequence of the City Fields Development and at Balne Lane Fields to make space for sports pitches.

Although about 6ha of Natural Areas have been created from the naturalisation programme the impact on the distribution of Natural Areas is small due to the size and location of these sites. The naturalisation programme has not been accounted for in the analysis of greenspace in this plan.

The Local Biodiversity Action Plan specifies priority habitats to be created and enhanced across the Wakefield District but no projects have been identified for the Wakefield Central Neighbourhood Management Area.

### 3.6 Allotments

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Ward of Wakefield North</th>
<th>Ward of Wakefield East</th>
<th>Ward of Wakefield West</th>
<th>WAKEFIELD CENTRAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Allotments</td>
<td>0.76ha</td>
<td>5.74ha</td>
<td>1.76ha</td>
<td>8.26ha</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Population</td>
<td>15,893</td>
<td>16,182</td>
<td>15,522</td>
<td>47,597</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ha/1000</td>
<td>0.05</td>
<td>0.36</td>
<td>0.11</td>
<td>0.17</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 4: Allotments (Standard is 0.2ha/1000 residents)**

There are notable shortages in the ward of Wakefield North and to a lesser extent in Wakefield West, and the overall provision for the Neighbourhood Management Area is slightly below the standard of 0.2ha/1000. Opportunities for new allotments sites are few in such urbanised areas and where demand for residential development and other uses are high.

There is the potential to convert some of the landlocked POS in Lupset into allotments but this may meet opposition from residents of properties backing onto the sites.

All seven allotments sites in the Neighbourhood Management Area are managed by Wakefield Council. The mean number of applicants on a waiting list was 13 at October 2015. The longest waiting list was for St John’s (29) in Wakefield North and the shortest were for the adjacent sites of North Avenue (4) and Barratts Road (5) in Wakefield East. The policy to sub divide plots should further reduce waiting lists over time.

Area of potential surplus Allotments SAS101 is shown for the Neighbourhood Management Area of Wakefield Central in Appendix V. One or more of the Allotments sites within these boundaries - not all of them - could be strategically selected for decommissioning with minimal impact on coverage.
PART TWO – DELIVERY

4. STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT OF THE NETWORK

4.1 Key Greenspaces

A comprehensive management plan for Thornes Park has just been completed and an application for Parks for People funding is being considered which would develop and enhance heritage features within the park. There are options for a new café and play area in the southeast corner of the park.

Balne Lane Fields will be enhanced for recreation, play and sport. A master plan should first be developed and agreed.

Wakefield (Lupset) Municipal Golf Course is the largest greenspace in Wakefield Central but is not accessible to the public. There is the potential for it to be developed into a sports hub to serve the west of the district.

The City Fields development in the east of the management area should provide a significant amount of new recreational greenspace – but also provides a large population to serve. A master plan for the development is currently being developed.

The following Equipped Play Areas are in highly sustainable and valuable locations and would be potentially and provisionally refurbished as a priority:

- Lower York Street, College Grove
- Berner’s Street, Primrose Hill
- Thornes Park
- Jubilee Hall, Lupset

4.2 Sites Recommended for Protection

Most greenspace sites are at no threat of disposal and are protected adequately by existing policies within the adopted Local Plan. The sites identified here for protection are strategically important and are deemed to be potentially desirable as residential development sites.

It is recommended that no loss even incremental should be accepted for any of the sites P101 – P105 which are mapped in Appendix IV. Proposals to dispose of other sites will be assessed on a site by site basis.

4.3 New Recreational Provision

Most new recreational assets will be installed as part of new residential developments as guided by this plan. It is likely that new features will be installed in Thornes Park and Balne Lane Fields as guided by more detail plans, and by urban regeneration schemes in the city centre.
There are no assets that Wakefield Council is known to be intending to purchase or adopt for the purpose of recreation in this Neighbourhood Management Area.

4.4 Sites Recommended for Decommissioning

Any proposals to decommission greenspaces will be assessed using established procedures and guided by this plan. Wakefield Council will proactively look to strategically decommission greenspaces based on areas of surpluses identified in Appendix V.

5. ACTION PLAN 2016/17

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Project</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Thornes Park</td>
<td>Implement Thornes Park Management Plan. Prepare and submit HLF bid should Cabinet decide to apply</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Balne Lane Fields</td>
<td>Develop and agree master plan for Balne Lane Fields</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>City Fields Master Plan</td>
<td>Ensure adequate and appropriate recreational provision is planned for the City Fields Development. Secure and allocate s106 investment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Rationalisation of Equipped Play Areas</td>
<td>Decommission one Equipped Play Area in the ward of Wakefield East to reduce surplus provision</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Rationalisation of Greenspace</td>
<td>Investigate options for rationalisation of greenspace in areas of surplus as identified in Appendix V</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Green Linkages</td>
<td>Plot and assess quality and appeal of Green Linkages, particularly for the triangle consisting of: Thornes Park - Balne Lane Fields - City Centre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Delivery of Strategies and Plans</td>
<td>Incorporate other plans into the Blueprint: Local Plan for Leisure, Recreation and Open Space, Local Biodiversity Action Plan, Infrastructure Plan, Drainage Plan, Playing Pitch Plan, Asset Plan</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
6. RELATED PLANS

The following plans are continually updated. The first three plans in the table are used to track the delivery of projects:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Plan Name</th>
<th>SharePoint Location</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Parks and Open Space Capital Plan</td>
<td>Greenspace/ Finances/..</td>
<td>Approved improvements to parks infrastructure and facilities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Section 106 Funding Tracker</td>
<td>Greenspace/ Finances/..</td>
<td>Allocations for commuted sums for offsite improvements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greenspace Delivery Plan</td>
<td>Greenspace/ GS2 Delivery Plan/..</td>
<td>List of projects identified from the draft Greenspace Plan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asset Management Plan</td>
<td>Greenspace/ Property &amp; Assets/..</td>
<td>Lists of buildings, facilities, allotments, leases and licences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Greenspace Policy</td>
<td>Greenspace/Policy &amp; Procedures/..</td>
<td>Policy guiding the planning, management and financing of greenspace</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greenspace Blueprints</td>
<td>Greenspace/ Greenspace Planning/..</td>
<td>This report - plus ones for the six other Neighbourhood Management Areas</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

6.1 Disclaimer

Wakefield Council takes no responsibility for the accuracy of information contained within this report which should be considered as advisory. Any recommendations or proposals may be withdrawn or altered at any time. Identified areas of greenspace shortfall do not imply that Wakefield Council is under any obligation to fulfil this need.

There is a significant delay between new greenspace being created on new developments and the greenspace being mapped. Caution should therefore be exercised in identifying areas of greenspace shortfall near recent developments. Site specific requirements for greenspace are negotiated with developers and may not always be provided as required in the Local Plan.
Appendix I

Ward Boundaries in Wakefield Central

WAKEFIELD NORTH

WAKEFIELD EAST

WAKEFIELD WEST

WAKEFIELD SOUTH

AND SOUTH OSSETT

HORSEHURST
Appendix II

Adopted and Proposed Policies from the Local Plan

Leisure, Recreation and Open Space Local Plan (Submitted)
- Strategic Leisure Corridor
- Leisure Opportunity Area
- Sports Facility

Local Plan (Adopted)
- Housing Site
- Special Policy Area
- Protected Area of Search