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Ares Landscape Architects were commissioned by Michael Dyson Associates Limited in June to prepare an Outline Greenspace Appraisal for areas surrounding The Crescent, Thurcroft.

The purpose of this report is to set out the findings of the objective assessment of the current quality and provision of Public Open Greenspace around the The Crescent in Thurcroft near Rotherham.

Context

Michael Dyson Associates Limited had submitted an application for the development of land at The Crescent for 21 dwellings on land enclosed by The Crescent, application No 082014/1.511. The proposed development takes up approximately 65% of the existing greenspace for new housing and retains 35% of the site area (or 0.3ha) as a new and enhanced amenity greenspace.

The application had been refused by Committee on the 23rd February on the basis it would have an unacceptable impact on Public Open Greenspace.

More Specifically:

“The site is allocated as Urban Greenspace on the adopted UDP and the loss of the Urban Greenspace, which is not clearly surplus to requirements, would be detrimental to the local community and the applicant has failed to demonstrate a scheme whereby equivalent or improved provision of Urban Greenspace would be provided within the locality. As such, the proposals are contrary to Core Strategy Policy CS22 “Green Spaces” and to ‘saved’ UDP Policy PHY5.1 “Allocated Urban Greenspace”, as well as the guidance contained within the NPPF.”

This report therefore aims also to demonstrate not just the objective quality of existing greenspace but the likely impact on it arising from the proposals.
**METHODOLOGY**

**Definition**
Greenspace refers to open spaces comprising green or vegetated spaces, including water and beaches but excluding streetspaces and urban civic spaces.

**Study Area**
The National Playing Field Association (NPFA) recommends a minimum standard for outdoor play space of 2.4 hectares (6 acres) for 1,000 people.

Accessible Natural Green Space Standards in Towns and Cities, published by English Nature, recommends that no person should live more than 300m from their nearest area of natural green space of at least 2ha in size.

The Woodland Trust recommends that no person should live more than 200m from at least one area of accessible woodland of no less than 2ha in size.

According to Rotherham Green Space Strategy, published in 2010 any new greenspaces with Urban areas should be minimum 0.2ha.

For the purpose of this report, therefore, the study area has been set to a 1km radius from the centre of the site (illustrated on this page). This is more onerous than any of the above guidance and represents a walking distance of 15 minutes.

**Methodology**
This appraisal initially identified all greenspace provision within the study area through desktop study, which included the examination of OS maps as well as aerial photographs and published RMBC documents: ‘Rotherham Greenspace Audit’ and ‘Rotherham Green Spaces Strategy’.

Once the distribution of green space was determined, the survey work was carried out to record physical features and site facilities within the individual sites. Their amenity value to the community was established, as well as ease of access.

Quality is a key issue for greenspace. The value and benefits of greenspace are only realisable if greenspace is fit for purpose, and is in a condition that can support its purpose and function.

The key measures of greenspace value are:

1. **quality** in terms of how well a greenspace or wider network of greenspace assets addresses the varied function, needs and aspirations of its users and other stakeholders.
2. **quantity** in terms of the overall quantity of greenspace, its distribution spatially and in terms of differing types of greenspace (e.g. parks, green corridors, etc).
3. **accessibility** in terms of how well connected, accessible and inclusive greenspace is to communities.
METHODOLOGY

Greenspace quality criteria or indicators

These criteria represent an understanding of what people expect to find in a quality greenspace, whilst recognising the diversity and distinctive character of individual places.

1. Accessible, and connected greenspaces should:
   - be well located close to a community
   - meet Disability Discrimination Act requirements and disabled user needs
   - provide quality paths that are fit for purpose
   - connect with other transport modes
   - allow movement in and between places
   - have accessible entrances in the right places
   - offer connecting path network and signage

2. Attractive and appealing places should:
   - be attractive, with a positive image
   - provide an attractive setting for urban areas
   - contain quality materials, equipment and furniture
   - contain attractive plants and landscape elements
   - have welcoming boundaries and entrance areas
   - provide facilities in clean, safe and usable condition
   - have low levels of litter and adequate bins
   - be well maintained

3. Biodiverse supporting ecological networks should:
   - contribute positively to biodiversity, water and air quality
   - have areas large enough to sustain wildlife populations
   - offer a diversity of habitats
   - be part of the wider landscape structure and setting
   - connect with wider green networks
   - provide a balance between habitat protection and public access

4. Greenspace should promote activity, health and well being and therefore should:
   - provide places for a range of outdoor activities
   - provide diverse play, sport and recreational opportunities
   - provide places for social interaction
   - contain appropriate, high quality facilities to meet user needs

   (e.g. picnic areas, toilets, parking)
   - contain appropriate facilities for location and size
   - be carefully sited facilities for a range of ages
   - be adaptable to changing needs and uses

5. Greenspace should have community benefits and therefore should:
   - be safe and welcoming
   - have good levels of natural surveillance
   - show no evidence of anti-social behaviour
   - have appropriate lighting levels
   - have a sense of local identity and place (e.g. public art, natural and heritage features)
   - provide good routes to wider community facilities
   - contain distinctive and memorable places
   - cater for a range of functions and activities
   - provide opportunities for involvement in management and decision making

These indicators will be used to measure the value of Greenspace around The Crescent.
This section deals with the policies and designations relevant to this Greenspace Appraisal.

At National level, Planning Policy Guidance 17: Sport and Recreation applies.

This PPG describes the role of the planning system in assessing opportunities and needs for sport and recreation provision and safeguarding open space which has recreational value.

The guidance observes that it is part of the function of the planning system to ensure that through the preparation of development plans adequate land and water resources are allocated for organised sport and informal recreation.
POLICY CONTEXT

It says that local planning authorities should take account of the community’s need for recreational space, having regard to current levels of provision and deficiencies and relating pressures for development of open space which conflict with the wider public interest.

It discusses the role of all levels of plan: planning agreements, and the use of local authority land and compulsory purchase powers. It discusses provision in urban areas, the urban fringe, the Green Belts, and the countryside and particular sports including football stadia, water sports and golf.

The site lies within the jurisdiction of Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council and the Council’s planning policies that are used to guide development, conservation, regeneration and environmental improvement activity in Rotherham are set out within its Unitary Development Plan (UDP) adopted in June 1999.

Policies for the Borough

Policy CR2 Recreation Provision
“The Council will seek to enable a range of recreation and leisure opportunities to be realised, through the local authority, private sector and local community partnerships, wherever appropriate, to meet the aspirations of the resident population and in particular to provide for the needs of identified target groups including people with disabilities.”

Policy ENV5 Urban Greenspace
“The Council will seek to retain and enhance open space which is of importance from a recreation, conservation and amenity point of view, but which is not afforded Green Belt protection. Its development will only be allowed in exceptional circumstances.”

The site is designated as Urban Greenspace. Within close proximity of the site there are a number of other designated Urban Greenspaces as well as green belt to the south and east. The Thurncroft open coal mining site to the north is designated as a major potential recreation area.

In 2005 Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council (RMBC) published a report prepared by Scott Wilson called ‘Rotherham Greenspaces Audit’. The purpose of this report was to establish a framework for planning and delivering greenspaces to predetermined standards, and for making decisions about future changes in their ownership.

According to the ‘Rotherham Greenspaces Audit’ there are no ‘Borough’ level greenspaces within the study area. There are however a number of local level greenspaces and one Neighbourhood level greenspace within 1km radius of the site.

Within the study area the audit identifies a multitude of greenspace typologies; amenity greenspace, cemeteries, natural greenspace, parks and outdoor sports areas.

Greenspace within immediate proximity to the site and further to the north has been assessed as of high quality with areas further to the east as on the lower quality spectrum.

In 2010 Rotherham Council published ‘Rotherham Green Spaces Strategy’. This Strategy document included land at The Crescent.
The diagram to the left shows the distribution of greenspace within the study area.

Within the established study area 11 greenspaces have been identified. These are distributed primarily to the north and west of the site, with a green corridor to the east.

The diagram to the left shows a very good greenspace distribution within the study area and around the site with the wider countryside within 300m of the site.

The greenspace within the study area varies in size from small to large. What is not shown on this plan is the area within the northern part of the study area which is currently an open mining facility but which has been designated as a major potential recreation area.

The residential properties enclosing The Crescent greenspace have access to other greenspaces within 300m, or 5mins walking distance including smaller green areas to the west and north, as well as a very large greenspace to the south. Additionally, there is access to a cycle path to the east which links with large greenspaces to the north.
The diagram on this page illustrates the existing network of footpaths and other Public Rights Of Way within the study area.

These ensure the greenspaces already identified are well connected through existing road and pedestrian networks.

There are direct pedestrian and road links to the many other greenspaces within immediate proximity of the site and the housing within The Crescent.

It is worth noting that the area of open countryside to the south and the west is also well linked, meaning any residents within the study area have very good access to the countryside.

The cycle path to the east of the site links with countryside to the south and further greenspace to the north.

**KEY**

- Public Rights of Way
- Roads
- Bus Routes
CONNECTIONS

EXISTING

The diagram to the left defines areas in purple as being within 300m of green space. This includes the proposed development site as green space.

As the diagram shows currently all residential areas within the study area have access to green space within 300m. This would equate to under 3 minutes of walking distance.
CONNECTIONS

PROPOSED

The diagram to the left defines areas in purple as being within 300m catchment to greenspace once the development has occurred.

As the diagram shows following the development of The Crescent all residential areas within the study area will retain access to greenspace within 300m which equates to under 3 minutes of walking distance.

- Residential areas within the study area will retain access to greenspace within 300m which equates to under 3 minutes of walking distance.
A greenspace Hierarchy is a way of identifying the different roles that greenspaces perform in terms of the populations that they serve. The hierarchy is different to function, although some primary functions will tend to fill a higher level of the hierarchy than others.

Definitions

Borough - Weekend and occasional visits by car or public transport

Neighbourhood - Weekend, early morning, after school and evening visits by foot, cycle, car and short bus trips

Local - Regular use mainly by pedestrian visitors, including preferred routes to school, shops, work etc.

Greenspace within the study area is predominantly of local significance, including the area of proposed development.

There is one greenspace of neighbourhood significance which is within 600m of the site or equivalent of 10min walk.

There is no greenspace of Borough significance within the study area.
There are many different types of greenspace. When considered collectively as a wider green infrastructure, they can create an extensive and powerful recreational, cultural and community facility, improving environmental quality and health, as well as providing diverse and species-rich habitats.

Every green space is different. In accordance with planning policy guidance PPG17 all greenspaces can be grouped into typologies, which reflect their primary use, status or visual importance. However, a typology often does not fully delineate the role of a green space and many spaces have more than one function. Greenspaces can therefore also be assigned a primary and secondary function. For example a park might be primarily used for informal recreation such as walking or sitting but might also be used for formal sports such as rugby or football.

The table below lists the greenspace typologies and offers a brief description of these.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Public parks and gardens</td>
<td>Areas of land normally enclosed, designed, constructed, managed and maintained as a public park or garden. These may be owned or managed by community groups.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amenity greenspace</td>
<td>Landscaped areas providing visual amenity or separating different buildings or land uses for environmental, visual or safety reasons and used for a variety of informal or social activities such as sunbathing, picnics or kickabouts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sports areas</td>
<td>Large and generally flat areas of grassland or specially designed surfaces, used primarily for designated sports (including playing fields, golf courses, tennis courts and bowling greens) and which are generally bookable.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Green corridors</td>
<td>Routes including canals, river corridors and old railway lines, linking different areas within a town or city as part of a designated and managed network and used for walking, cycling or horse riding, or linking towns and cities to their surrounding countryside or country parks. These may link green spaces together.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Natural/semi-natural greenspaces</td>
<td>Areas of underdeveloped or previously developed land with residual natural habitats or which have been planted or colonised by vegetation and wildlife, including woodland and wetland areas.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Allotments and community growing spaces</td>
<td>Areas of land for growing fruit, vegetables and other plants, either in individual allotments or as a community activity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other functional greenspace</td>
<td>May be one or more types as required by local circumstances or priorities.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
As the diagram to the left shows, there are numerous greenspace typologies within the study area and within close proximity to the site. The site itself has been classified as amenity greenspace. It is in very close proximity to other amenity greenspaces to the north, east, south, and west. There is also a large natural greenspace to the east and north of the site which is also a green corridor and connects to the wider countryside. To the north and west there is a park, sports ground, and a number of local allotments.

KEY

- Amenity Greenspace
- Natural
- Outdoor Sports
- Parks
- Allotments and Community Growing space
- Green Corridors
The baseline assessment of greenspace quality around The Crescent, using the criteria established in the Methodology section, is presented on this page.

Much of the greenspace provision within the study area is of good quality.

There are facilities provided to the sports grounds and parks that include changing rooms, MUGA’s and children’s play areas. There is also a large proportion of natural greenspaces that can support local biodiversity, and a large number of allotment spaces that benefit the community. These are in close proximity (within 600m) of the proposed development site.

The Crescent itself is assessed to be of poor quality due to its lack of facilities, ecological or recreational value.

None of the greenspace has been assessed as of excellent quality.

KEY

- Very Poor Quality
- Poor Quality
- Average Quality
- Good Quality
- Excellent Quality
In summary the 1 km study area has a good provision of greenspace which is evenly distributed throughout with access to the wider countryside and associated PB&V network.

All housing within the study area has currently access to greenspace within 300m and will retain to have access to greenspace within 300m if The Crescent is developed for housing. Furthermore an area of approximately 0.3ha of The Crescent will be retained as greenspace and designed to include improved access and facilities.

The types of greenspaces within the study area are varied and include a good proportion of amenity greenspace, parks, sports areas, allotments as well as natural greenspaces and green corridor.

Most of the greenspace within the study area is of local significance and of ranging quality.

The greenspace which is proposed for the new housing development lacks facilities and is of low ecological or recreational value and as such has been assessed as being of POOR QUALITY.

The exiting greenspace is a medium sized expanse of close mown grass. It is a greenspace of low quality with limited use.

There are a number of greenspaces within the study area with better provision and of higher quality, larger spaces such as Gordon Bennet Park, a local level greenspace which offers a number of recreational facilities such as games courts and play areas and is 600m away from the site or the equivalent of 10 minutes walking distance.

Furthermore not all of The Crescent will be taken up by the housing development. 35% of The Crescent will be retained as an enhanced greenspace.

The impact of the proposed development on loss of greenspace would be limited only to the properties encasing the Crescent. However these properties will retain access to the new greenspace with its new provision.

It is therefore predicted that the loss of greenspace resulting from the proposed development would be slight adverse. However the proposed development would result in creating a new smaller yet more valuable greenspace. The new greenspace would contain improved provision resulting in enhanced biodiversity and increased recreational value. Therefore reducing the size of the existing greenspace would balance out by enhancing the 35% of the site area to result in a NEGLIGIBLE impact on the greenspace within the study area.

The study area has good provision of greenspace of varying typologies and sizes.

The exiting Crescent greenspace is a medium sized expanse of close mown grass. It is a greenspace of low quality with limited use and lacking facilities. There are a number of more significant and more valuable greenspaces within relatively close proximity of the site such as the neighbourhood level Gordon Bennet Park.

The impact of the proposed development on greenspace provision within the study area has been assessed as negligible based on retention of 35% of the site area to create an enhanced greenspace to benefit the residents of The Crescent and the wider community.
APPENDIX
Photographic Study
INDIVIDUAL SITES - ASSESSMENT
Survey information

Greenspace reference: Steadfolds Lane natural space - C1

Greenspace classification: Primary: Natural Greenspace

Location: Steadfolds Lane

Size: 30,375m²

Description:
A large expanse of open grassland and scrub land which is accessible to the public however has limited inclusive access - An large circular meadow grass area is centrally located with access from all sides. It is bounded by informal tracks to the east residential properties to the west

Record of physical features and site facilities:
No site facilities.

Value to the community:
High

Connectivity:
Well connected externally, Limited internal connections

Quality according to ‘Greenspace Audit for Rotherham’:
288

Assessment of quality:
Average

Photographic record:
INDIVIDUAL SITES - ASSESSMENT
Survey information

Greenspace reference: Thurcroft Miners Welfare - C02

Greenspace classification: Primary: Sports Ground

Location: Intersection of Sandy Lane and New Orchard Lane

Size: 31,112 m²

Description: Large open playing fields with both cricket and football pitches. Board by Wildflower meadows to the site edges, board by residential properties to the NE and New Orchard Lane to the West.

Record of physical features and site facilities:
Cricket Pitch and two Football Pitches. Single Storey Pavilion located to the west for sports pitch users

Value to the community:
High

Connectivity:
Well connected externally.

Quality according to ‘Greenspace Audit for Rotherham’:
9/12

Assessment of quality:
Good

Photographic record:
INDIVIDUAL SITES - ASSESSMENT
Survey information

Greenspace reference: Sandy Lane Allotments - C03
Greenspace classification:
Primary: Allotments and community growing space

Location: Sandy Lane
Size: 3,767m²

Description:
Medium sized allotment area. Located SE of C02 and south of C01. Bounded by mature hedgerows and trees to the north and north-east. Access from Sandy Lane. Limited inclusive access.

Record of physical features and site facilities:
Variety of sheds and structures implemented by allotment users. No formal facilities.

Value to the community:
High

Connectivity:
Well connected externally

Quality according to ‘Greenspace Audit for Rotherham’:
N/A

Assessment of quality:
Average
INDIVIDUAL SITES - ASSESSMENT
Survey information

Green space reference: Woodhouse Green - CD4

Green space classification:
Primary: Amenity Green space

Location: Cobett Drive

Size: 1,456m²

Description:
Small sized area of amenity grassland located adjacent to the Woodhouse Green road [B6060]. Boxed by hedgerow next to the road for protection and screening.

Record of physical features and site facilities:
No site facilities. Small number of mature trees to the edges.

Value to the community:
Low

Connectivity:
Well connected. Limited internal connections

Quality according to ‘Green space Audit for Rotherham’ 11/02:
n/a

Assessment of quality:
Poor

Photographic record:
INDIVIDUAL SITES - ASSESSMENT
Survey information

Green space reference: Gordon Bennett Park - CG5

Green space classification: Primary Parks - Neighbourhood level

Location: Green Arbour Road

Size: 29,659m²

Description:
Large park containing a variety of spaces. Open amenity grassland bound by rough grass and habitat areas. One natural turf football pitch is provided as well as a single Multi-Use-Games-Court which houses basketball, football and netball. There are also skating facilities and a children’s play area with a variety of play equipment.

Record of physical features and site facilities:
Play equipment, fences, goalposts, trees, paths, skate park, MUGA, lighting, seating.

Value to the community:
High

Connectivity:
Well connected externally and internally

Quality according to ‘Green space Audit for Rotherham’:
9/10

Assessment of quality:
Good
INDIVIDUAL SITES - ASSESSMENT
Survey information

Greenpeace reference: Zamor Crescent - C06

Greenpeace classification:
Primary: Natural Greenpace

Location: Zamor Crescent

Size: 12,226m²

Description:
Unmaintained grassland with a centrally located informal car park.

Record of physical features and site facilities:
Fencing, Storage containers. No Formal facilities.

Value to the community:
Low

Connectivity:
Limited connectivity externally and internally

Quality according to 'Greenpeace Audit for Rotherham':
215

Assessment of quality:
Poor
INDIVIDUAL SITES - ASSESSMENT

Survey information

**Green space reference:** Steadfolds Lane Allotments - C07

**Green space classification:**
Primary: Allotments and community growing space

**Location:** Steadfolds Lane

**Size:** 16,621 m²

**Description:**
Allotments bound by unused scrub land to the south and existing woodland to the north. Set back from the road with a single track for access.

**Record of physical features and site facilities:**
Variety of sheds and structures implemented by allotment users. No formal facilities.

**Value to the community:**
High

**Connectivity:**
Limited connectivity externally and internally

**Quality according to ‘Green space Audit for Rotherham’:**
n/a

**Assessment of quality:**
Good
INDIVIDUAL SITES - ASSESSMENT
Survey information

Green space reference: Steadfields Lane Unnamed Green Space - CO8

Green space classification:
Primary: Natural green space - Local level

Location: Blyth Road

Size: 75.787m²

Description:
Large area of varied vegetation typologies from open scrub land to meadows and denser woodland and hedgerows.

Record of physical features and site facilities:
No formal facilities. National Cycle path route through

Value to the community:
Good

Connectivity:
Limited external and internal connectivity

Quality according to "Green space Audit for Rotherham": n/a

Assessment of quality:
Good

Photographic record:
INDIVIDUAL SITES - ASSESSMENT
Survey information

Greenpace reference: Cycle Path from Laughton road - C09

Photographic record:

Greenpace classification: Primary Park - Local level

Location: Running N-S from between Steadfolds land and Laughton Road and extending further south

Size: 55,700m²

Description: Single track National Cycle route bound by mature vegetation either side and linking with greenspace C08

Record of physical features and site facilities:
- Pedestrian guardrails, accessible footpaths, signage
- Value to the community: Good
- Connectivity:
  - Well connected internally and externally. Two access points - one at Steadfolds Lane and one at Laughton Road.

Quality according to ‘Greenpace Audit for Rotherham’ n/a

Assessment of quality:
- Good
INDIVIDUAL SITES - ASSESSMENT
Survey information

Greenspace reference: The Crescent Green - C10

Greenspace classification:
Primary: Amenity green space - Local level

Location: The Crescent

Size: 8,397m²

Description:
Medium sized amenity close mown grassland board on all sides by residential properties. Small number of mature trees. Two squares of concrete located centrally on the site.

Record of physical features and site facilities:
Telegraph poles, benches

Value to the community:
Limited

Connectivity:
Well connected externally, Limited internal connections

Quality according to ‘Greenspace Audit for Rotherham’: 131

Assessment of quality:
Poor
INDIVIDUAL SITES - ASSESSMENT
Survey information

Green space reference: Green Arbour School - C12

Green space classification: Primary: Amenity Green space - Local level

Location: Green Arbour Road

Size: 22,101m²

Description:
Large open grassland that has had little recent realignment. Relatively flat topography. Board by school to the north and residential properties to the east and west. Ivorhoe Road bounds the southern boundary.

Record of physical features and site facilities:
No site facilities

Value to the community:
Limited

Connectivity:
Well connected externally, no internal connections

Quality according to 'Green space Audit for Rotherham': 3/2

Assessment of quality:
Poor