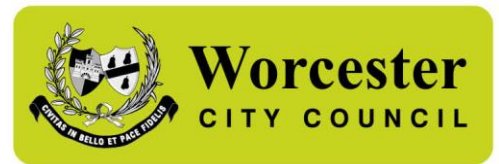


# Community and Stakeholder Consultation (2018)

Forming part of the South Worcestershire  
Open Space Assessment and Community Buildings and Halls  
Report



(FINAL MAY 2019)

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# South Worcestershire Open Space Assessment - Consultation Report

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## Glossary of Terms

| Term  | Meaning                                           |
|-------|---------------------------------------------------|
| ACRE  | Action with Communities in Rural England          |
| ANGSt | Accessible Natural Green Space Standard           |
| AONB  | Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty                |
| CCG   | Clinical Commissioning Group                      |
| EA    | Environment Agency                                |
| FiT   | Fields in Trust                                   |
| GI    | Green Infrastructure                              |
| HAP   | Habitat Action Plan                               |
| HIA   | Health Impact Assessment                          |
| IDP   | Infrastructure Delivery Plan                      |
| LAP   | Local Area for Play                               |
| LEAP  | Local Equipped Area for Play                      |
| LNR   | Local Nature Reserve                              |
| LWS   | Local Wildlife Site                               |
| MHDC  | Malvern Hills District Council                    |
| MRC   | Main Rural Centre                                 |
| MUGA  | Multi Use Games Area                              |
| NDP   | Neighbourhood Development Plan                    |
| NEAP  | Neighbourhood Equipped Area for Play              |
| NICE  | National Institute for Health and Care Excellence |
| NPPF  | National Planning Policy Framework                |
| PC/TC | Parish Council/Town Council                       |
| PPG17 | Planning Policy Guidance Note 17                  |
| RA    | Ramblers Association                              |
| ROWIP | Rights of Way Improvement Plan                    |
| SAP   | Species Action Plan                               |
| SSSI  | Sites of Special Scientific Interest              |
| SPD   | Supplementary Planning Document                   |
| SWC   | South Worcestershire Councils                     |
| SWDP  | South Worcestershire Development Plan             |
| WASSt | Woodland Access Standard                          |
| WCC   | Worcestershire City Council                       |
| WDC   | Wychavon District Council                         |
| WWT   | Worcestershire Wildlife Trust                     |

## Acknowledgments

Many individuals, groups and organisations have provided information, views and support in preparing this study. Input from these stakeholders is fundamental to the report, and provides the basis for the evidence in supporting the standards, options and recommendations in relation to open space and outdoor recreation facilities. The study has been carried out by Ethos Environmental Planning in conjunction with associates Leisure and the Environment.

## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

This is one of three reports provided within the overall *Open Space Assessment for South Worcestershire 2019*. It is a supporting document to the two main reports: The Open Space Study and the Community Buildings Study. It provides consultation findings from various stakeholders and feeds into other aspects of the study as explained below.

### 1.1 Study Overview

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2018 requires local planning authorities to set out policies to help enable communities to access high quality open spaces and opportunities for recreation (*Section 8 – Promoting healthy and safe communities*). These policies need to be based on a thorough understanding of local needs for such facilities and opportunities available for new provision.

In view of the above, in 2018 the South Worcestershire Councils (Malvern Hills District Council, Worcester City Council and Wychavon District Council, (collectively abbreviated as the SWCs) appointed Ethos Environmental Planning to provide an up-to-date and robust assessment identifying needs, surpluses and deficits in open space and recreation facilities<sup>1</sup> to support the production of the review of the Local Plan.

In summary, the main requirement of the brief is to provide an open space assessment (including community buildings) to assist the South Worcestershire Councils in identifying local needs for different types of open space and recreational facilities and to derive open space standards and the levels of provision required in new development. These standards then need to be applied to the study area to:

- Identify areas that may be lacking particular types of facilities and illustrate where attention should be focused with regard to providing new or improved facilities, and where Developer Contributions should be sought/spent;
- Provide robust evidence to resist inappropriate development on open spaces;
- Identify any open spaces that are surplus to requirements;
- Establish an up-to-date evidence base to help to inform the SWDP policy review of open space provision during the Local Plan review period, and assist in future monitoring of open space and recreational facilities, including any allocated through Neighbourhood Plans; and
- Enable the SWCs to establish strategic requirements for existing urban areas and potential new allocations, including the possibility of a new settlement.

The assessment will also provide evidence to enable the SWCs to develop stronger funding bids when looking to improve provision in deprived areas or provide specific facilities that the study indicated are needed in particular areas.

In order to meet this brief Ethos are providing:

- An Open Spaces audit and assessment<sup>2</sup>
- A Community Buildings audit and assessment<sup>3</sup>

As such the overall outcome of the study will feature two main reports as noted above drawing upon an evidence base appropriate to each study comprised of:

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<sup>1</sup> Excluding pitch sports which have been covered by a separate Playing Pitch Study (PPS).

<sup>2</sup> Including play space and natural green space/recreation

<sup>3</sup> Excluding swimming pools, leisure centres and dedicated sports halls. Community Buildings refers to local village halls and community centres.

- Consultation and engagement with all relevant key stakeholders, agencies and organisations as well as the wider community and general public;
- A detailed audit of all open spaces, outdoor recreation facilities and community buildings (as defined within the scope of each assessment report); and
- Analysis and assessment of the adequacy of current and future facility provision based on recommended national guidance such as that provided by national government, Fields in Trust, Play England and ACRE (Action with Communities in Rural England).

## 1.2 The Community and Stakeholder Needs Assessment

This report makes a cross-cutting contribution to the overall study in providing evidence that will be used in both of the main study reports<sup>4</sup>. It primarily relates to the Open Spaces Assessment but relevant findings and information will also be carried forward in the Community Buildings Study.

In the two main reports (Open Space Assessment and Community Buildings Assessment) the consultation findings will be combined with other evidence, findings and assessments such as that completed in the audit, mapping and analysis process.

Undertaking comprehensive consultation and engagement with all relevant stakeholders and the wider community is an essential part of the overall process. It is an expectation of the NPPF and is needed to ensure that the study is robust in relation to recommended national guidance.

The report examines local need for a wide range of different kinds of open space and recreation facilities. It has drawn upon a range of survey and analytical techniques including a review of consultation findings from relevant play, leisure and open space studies. It outlines the community consultation and research process that has been undertaken as part of the study as well as the main findings.

The consultation report is made up of four main sections:

- General community consultation
- Neighbouring local authorities; and town and parish councils
- Parks, green spaces, countryside, and rights of way
- Play and youth facilities

Each section provides additional detail on the consultation process relevant to that section and at the end of each section there is a short summary of the key findings.

The consultation and research programme was undertaken from August to October 2018. The extent of the research reflects the breadth and diversity of the study and a consequent need to engage with as wide a cross section of the community and stakeholders as possible<sup>5</sup>.

In summary, questionnaire surveys were undertaken as below:

- A general household survey (postal and online)
- A survey of town and parish councils

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<sup>4</sup> Additional consultation has also been undertaken in relation to Community Buildings. These additional findings will be included in the Community Buildings Study.

<sup>5</sup> It should be noted that this report provides consultation evidence in the form of the observations and views/opinions sourced from many different organisations, individuals and studies. On occasion the views and observations expressed by individuals and groups may not be consistent with each other, nor are such individual contributions necessarily accurate or up to date.

- Local groups and organisations' surveys

In addition to the above a number of one to one stakeholder interviews/surveys were undertaken.

The result of this consultation and other analyses will help (amongst other things) to inform the content of the recommended local standards as appropriate. This will be explained further in the two main reports.

The consultation report also helps the study to understand stakeholder and local people's appreciation of open space, outdoor recreation facilities, and the wider green infrastructure and the values attached by the community to the various forms of open spaces and community facilities. This appreciation will have clear implications for the way in which open space and recreation facilities are considered as part of plan making as well as in dealing with planning applications.

## 2.0 GENERAL COMMUNITY CONSULTATION

This section provides consultation findings that covered all aspects of open space, outdoor recreation and community buildings provision (excluding indoor sports and playing pitch provision). In this sense it provides a useful overview across all these aspects rather than simply from groups and organisations with specific interests in just one aspect of open space, sport and outdoor recreation. This contrasts, for example, with the other sections of the report which supply findings from individuals, groups and organisations with specific interests in individual elements of open space and recreation facilities.

The section also includes engagement with public health stakeholders who have an interest running across all aspects of recreation facility provision, whatever activity that may be (in relation to encouraging an increase in physical activity - with associated health benefits).

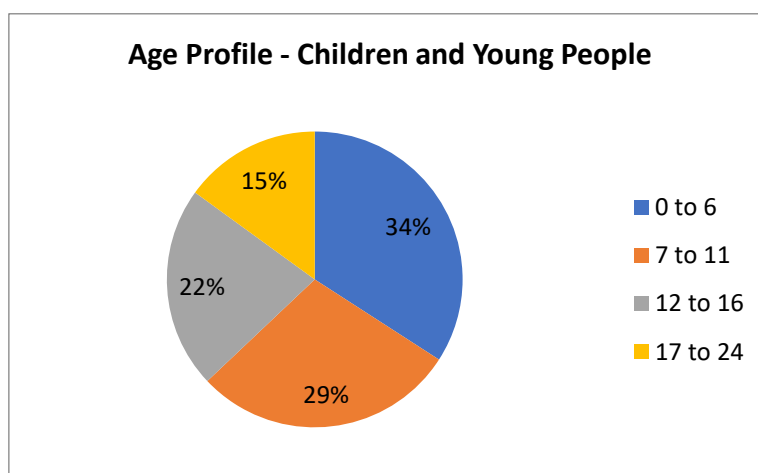
### 2.1 Residents' Household Survey

#### 2.1.1 Introduction

The open space and community recreation facilities study needs to secure a general understanding of how residents of South Worcestershire currently make use of the various kinds of open space and recreation facilities; in particular whether they think there are enough of such facilities; what they think of the quality of those facilities; how accessible they are; and what kind of facilities they think are priorities for future development and improvement. A good way of securing this general overview is to secure responses from a broad cross section of South Worcestershire households.

A questionnaire survey was therefore designed by Ethos and agreed by the steering group. It was distributed to a random sample of 4,500 households (1,500 from each district). In addition, an online version was promoted by the three Councils. Respondents were asked to respond to provide a view on behalf of their household, rather than simply as individuals. 1,041 surveys were completed. The total number of people represented through the household survey was 2,290 and the average household size of the households was 2.2 – slightly lower than the UK average and the study area as a whole (2.3)<sup>6</sup>.

28% of households who responded had children (representing household views on behalf of 443 children and young people) with ages spread across the age range:



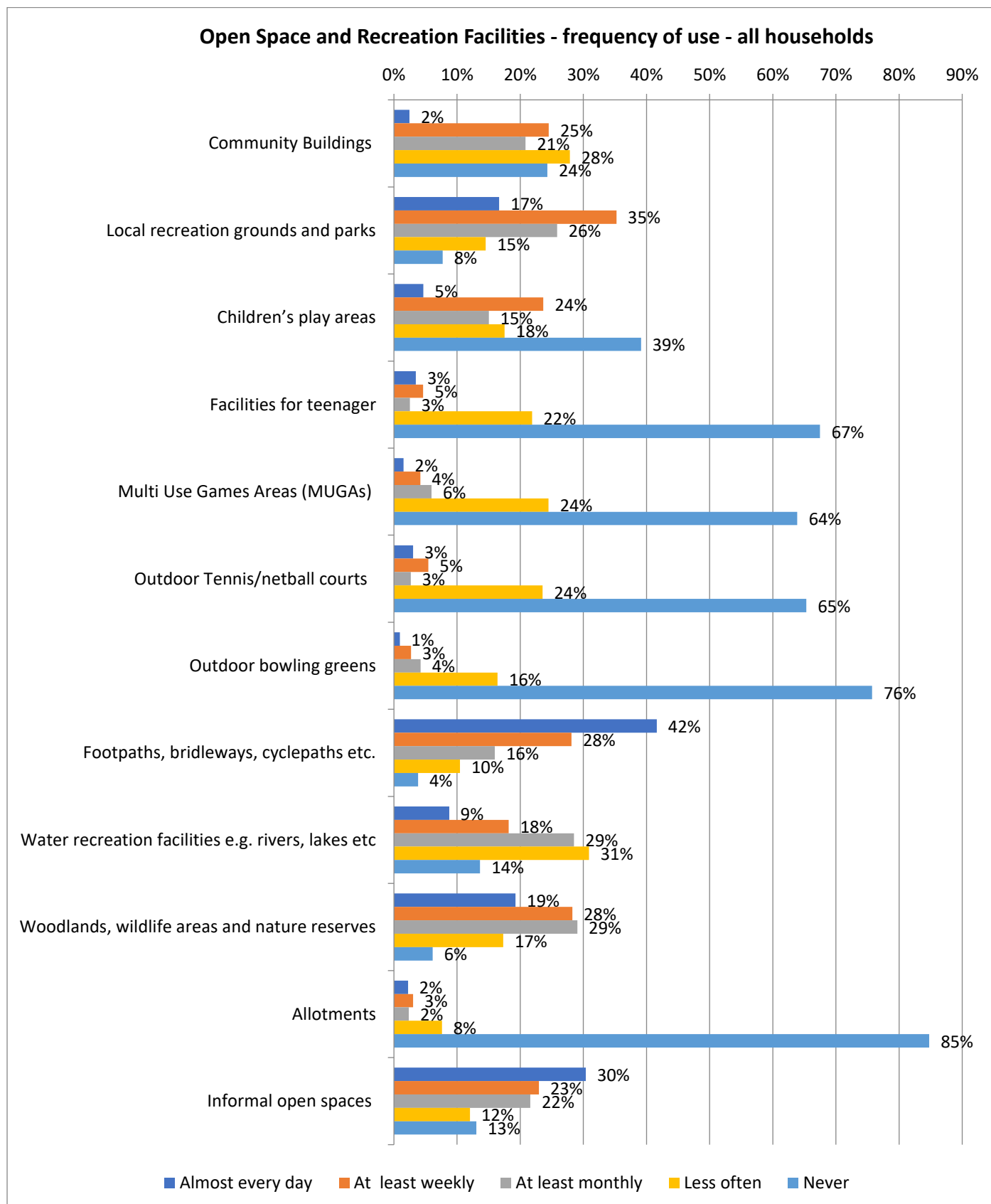
The following sections provide some of the key findings<sup>7</sup>.

<sup>6</sup> 2011 census figures

<sup>7</sup> The findings are further considered - in detail - in the main reports.

## 2.1.2 Frequency of use – All households

Respondents were asked to state how often they visited or used each of the following types of open space, and community recreation facilities within the study area and the results are shown on the charts below<sup>8</sup>:



<sup>8</sup> Please note that percentages have been rounded up or down to the nearest full percentage. This means that on some occasions the total percentages may vary slightly from 100%.

### *Open Spaces and Outdoor facilities*

- It is the SWCs footpaths, bridleways and cycle paths that are most commonly used by most households at least monthly (86%); followed by parks and recreation grounds (78%); and woodlands, wildlife areas and nature reserves (76%).
- Footpaths, bridleways and cycle paths are also by far the most frequently used facility on both a weekly and daily basis (70% - of which 42% use them almost every day); followed by informal open spaces e.g. for ball games, picnics, hobbies, dog walking etc (53% - of which 30% visit almost every day); and Parks and recreation grounds (53% - of which 17% visit almost every day).
- Areas for water recreation and play spaces are also fairly frequently used but by fewer households. At least 44% use them on a regular basis - at least monthly (including those who are more regular users).

### *Community Buildings*

- 48% visit their local village hall/community centre at least monthly (27% of those at least weekly). An additional 28% make use of such facilities but less often.

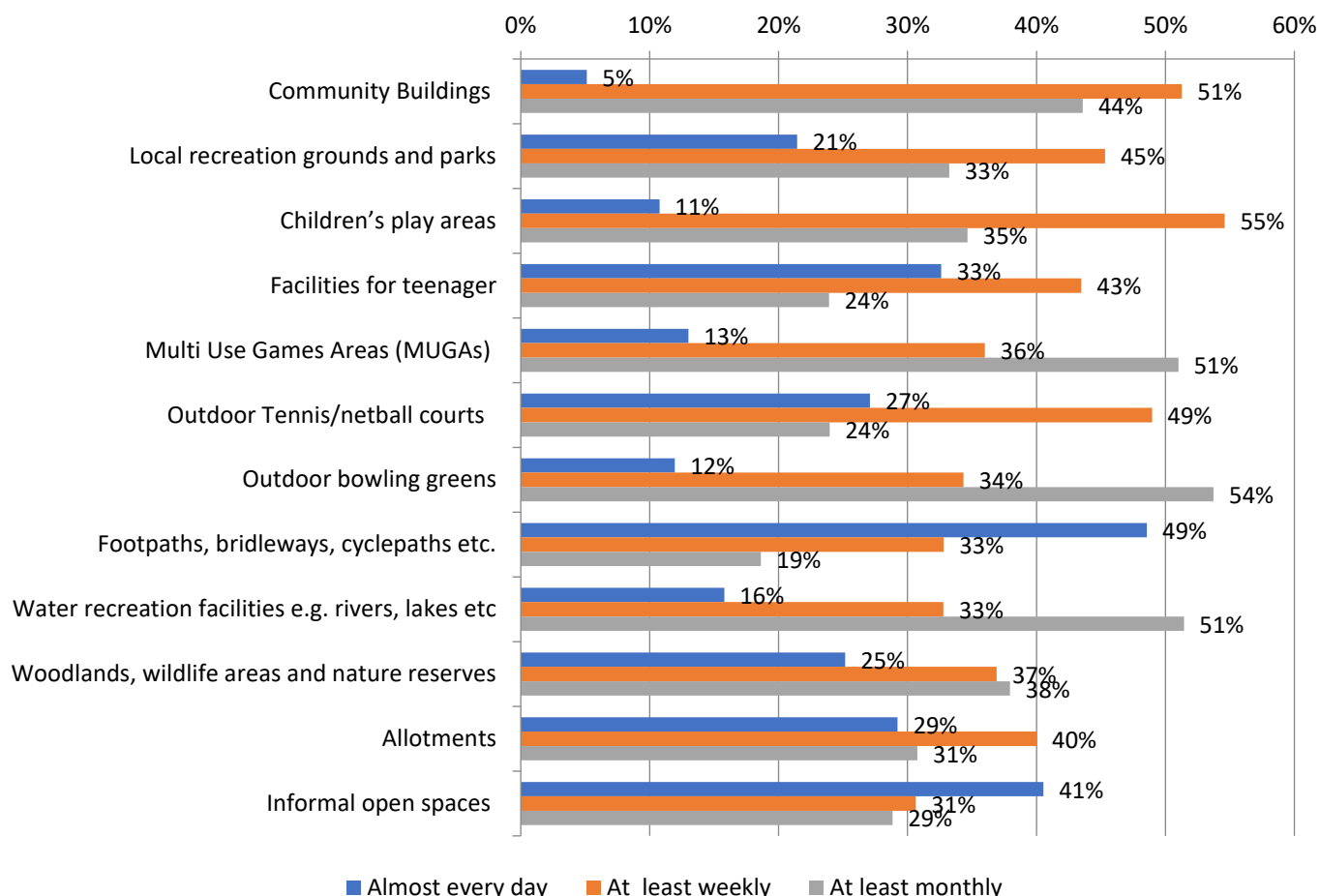
#### **2.1.3 Frequency, regularity and times of use – Regular Users<sup>9</sup>**

It is interesting to look at the frequency with which regular users of facilities visit them as for some facilities this is not immediately obvious from looking at the overall figures.

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<sup>9</sup> By regular users we mean those households where open spaces/facilities are used/visited at least monthly.

### Open Space and Recreation Facilities - frequency of use - regular users



#### Open Space and Outdoor facilities

- 76% of users visit teen facilities e.g. skateparks at least weekly (33% nearly every day); and 66% visit play spaces at least weekly (11% nearly every day).
- 76% of users of outdoor tennis/netball courts use them at least weekly (of which 27% nearly every day).
- 69% of allotment holders visit their allotment at least weekly (of which 29% visit almost every day).

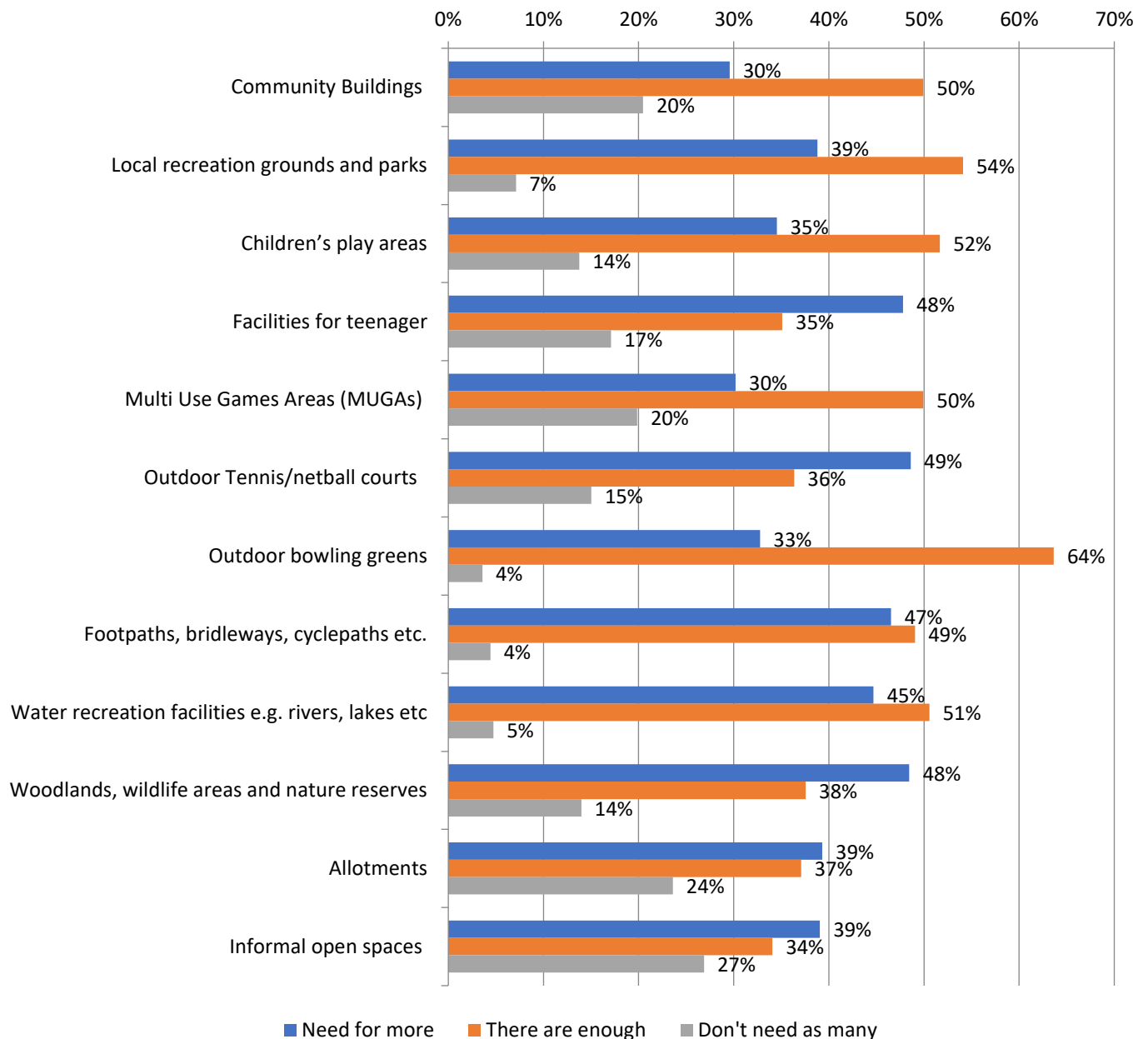
#### Community Buildings

- 56% of users make use their local village hall/community centre at least weekly (5% almost every day).

### 2.1.4 Quantity of open space and recreation facilities

Residents were asked if they needed more, the same or fewer of different types of open space and recreational facilities. Findings are illustrated in the chart below and will influence the “quantity” component of local standards as appropriate (this will be explained further in the main reports).

### Quantity - are there enough open spaces/recreation facilities?



#### Open Space and Outdoor Facilities

- In the main respondents indicated that for most kinds of open space and recreational facilities across the district there is sufficient provision.
- A significant number of households (49%) reported a general need for more outdoor tennis/netball courts across the study area. Similar numbers highlighted a need for more facilities for teenagers (48%) and woodlands, wildlife areas and nature reserves.
- A large majority (at least 65%) thought that overall there are enough outdoor bowling greens, play areas and MUGAs.

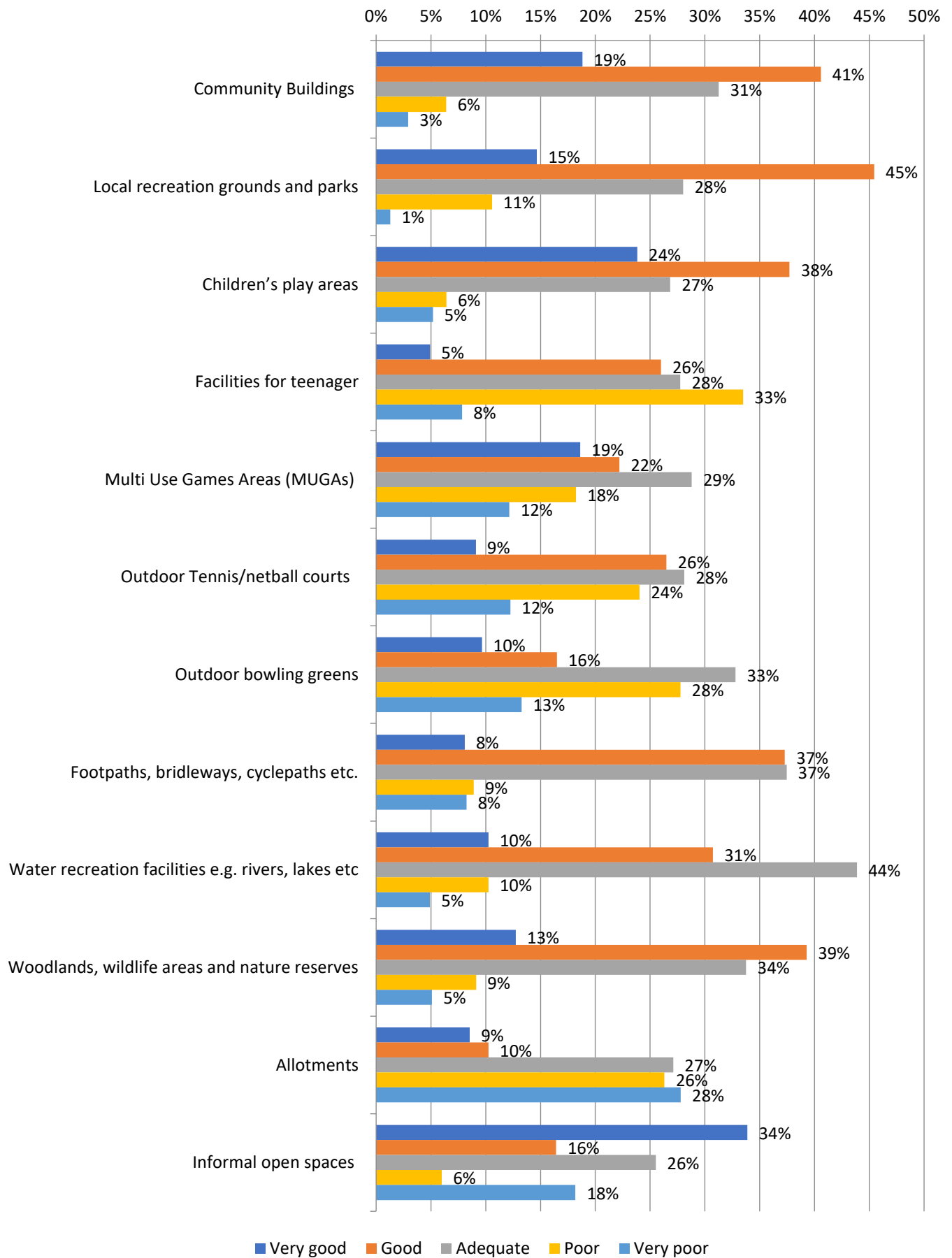
#### Community Buildings

- A clear majority of households reported that overall there are enough village halls/community centres (70%).

### 2.1.5 Quality of open space, sport and recreation facilities

Respondents were asked how they rated various types of facilities in the study area in terms of quality. The responses of those expressing an opinion on specific categories of facility are illustrated below:

### Quality of open spaces/recreation facilities



## *Open Space and Outdoor Facilities*

For most kinds of outdoor facilities/open spaces a majority of households who expressed a view suggested that in general they were of adequate or better quality. However, for some typologies there were notable levels of dissatisfaction with general levels of quality as noted below.

- 54% of households noted the overall quality of allotments as being poor or very poor.
- 41% highlighted the overall quality of outdoor facilities for teenagers as being either poor or very poor; similarly, for outdoor bowling greens.
- The quality of tennis/netball courts was rated as poor or worse by 36% of respondents.

In contrast some kinds of facilities/open spaces were rated highly in terms of quality.

- The quality of children's play areas was rated as good or very good by 62% of households; similarly, for parks and recreation grounds (60% rate quality in general as being good or very good).
- Other kinds of open spaces with notable levels of satisfaction were woodlands, wildlife areas and nature reserves (52%); and informal open spaces for dog walking, picnics, ball games etc (50%).

## *Community Buildings*

- 60% of households rated the quality of village halls and community centres as good or very good.

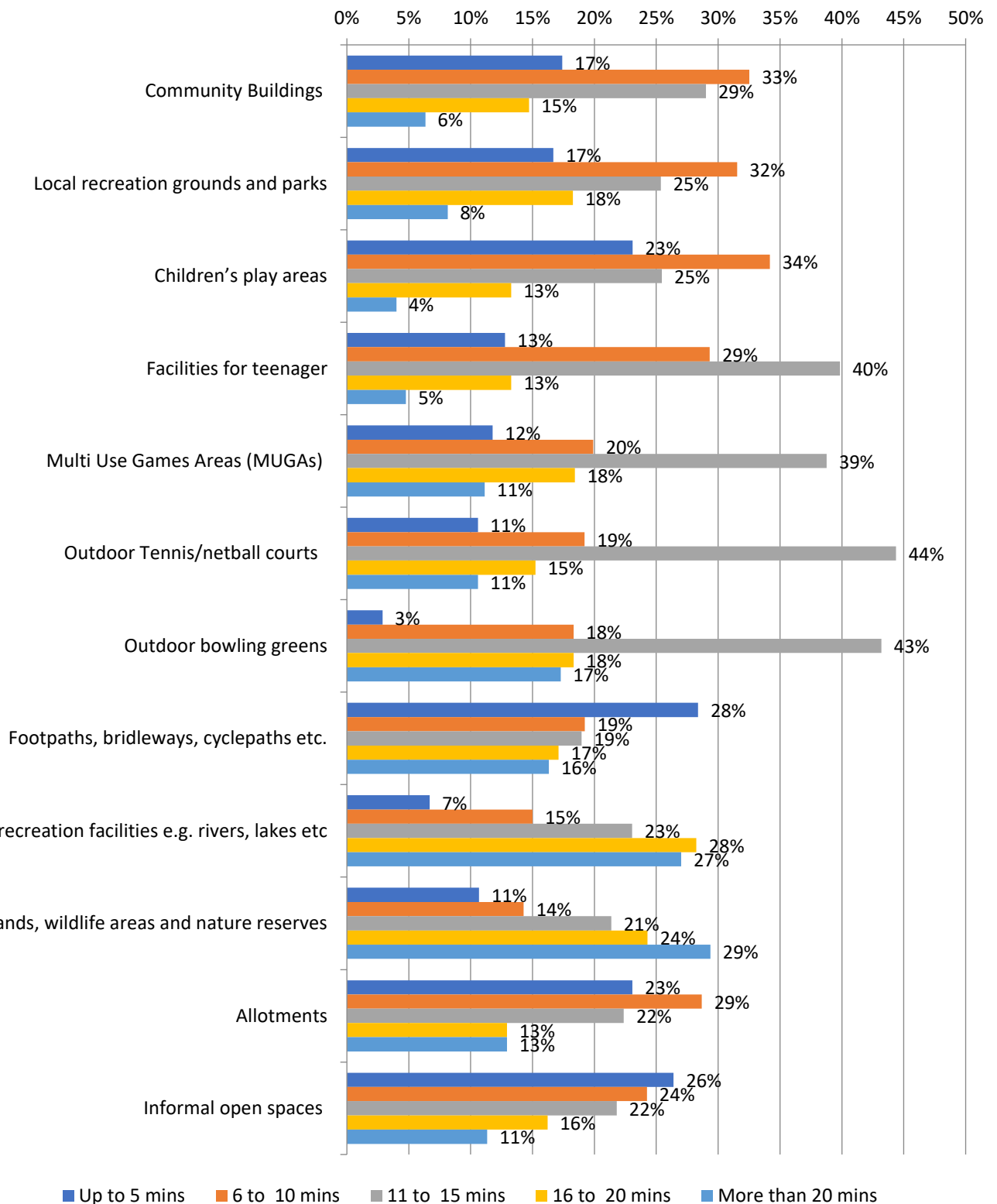
The detailed findings regarding quality will be useful in relation to reviewing the "quality" aspect of local standards.

### **2.1.6 Access Issues (Geographical)**

An important component of this study is to develop and recommend a series of local standards of provision for different types of open space, sport and recreation opportunity. The following provides a means to gauge people's willingness to travel to use different types of facility/open space (which might be by car, foot, bike, public transport etc). Where appropriate, these results will feed into the determination of the "access" element of local standards.

In looking at the travel times in the first set of charts below it should be noted that these do not specify the mode of preferred travel (this is covered by the next set of charts).

### Acceptable travel times to open spaces/recreation facilities



### Open Space and Outdoor Facilities

In general, a majority of household respondents report that they would not normally travel more than 15 minutes to visit most kinds of open spaces and recreational facilities. There is considerable variation however between the typologies. For example, 55% of households are prepared to travel 16 minutes or more to visit water recreation facilities (27% of those would travel more than 20 minutes); and 53% of households are prepared to travel that long to visit woodlands, wildlife areas and nature reserves (of which 29% would travel more than 20 minutes).

In contrast, for significant numbers of residents, facilities need to be much more locally accessible before they will be used (for example, play areas, youth facilities, informal open space and allotments).

- 57% of users would expect play areas to be within a 10 minute travel time, of which 23% would not wish to travel more than 5 minutes; and 52% of users would expect youth facilities to be within a 10 minute travel time, of which 13% would not wish to travel more than 5 minutes.
- 52% of users would expect allotments to be within a 10 minute travel time, of which 23% would not wish to travel more than 5 minutes.
- 50% of users would expect access to informal open spaces to be within a 10 minute travel time, of which 26% would not wish to travel more than 5 minutes.

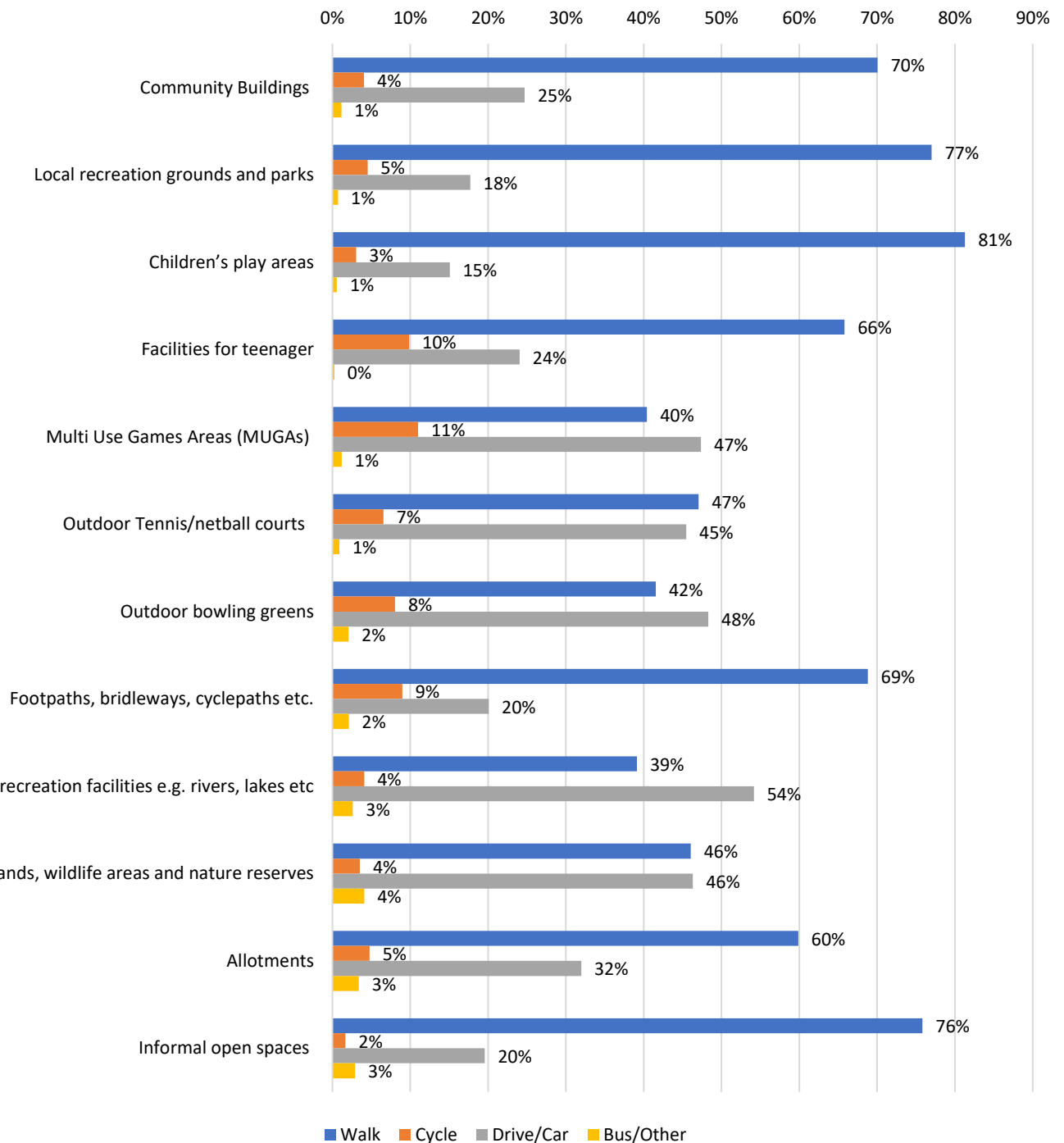
### *Community Buildings*

- 50% of users would expect community buildings to be within a 10 minute travel time, of which 17% would not wish to travel more than 5 minutes.

It is clear from the above that there is great variance in respondents' apparent willingness to spend time travelling to different types of facility. In drawing up the "access" element of specific local standards for different kinds of open space/facility it is clearly very important to take careful note of all of these findings (combined with the preferred mode of travel options discussed below).

An accompanying question asked what mode of transport respondents were likely to use to get to such opportunities (where they would use them).

## Preferred Mode of Travel - Open Space and Recreation facilities



### Open Space and Outdoor recreation

For most typologies walking is the norm, most notably for facilities such as play areas (81%); recreation grounds and parks (77%); and informal open spaces and teen facilities (76%). However, a small majority of respondent households would normally drive rather than walk to water recreation facilities (54%). Significant numbers would also drive to outdoor bowling greens (48%); woodlands, wildlife areas and nature reserves (46%); and outdoor tennis courts, indicating a particular need for adequate parking spaces.

It is notable that for travel to make use of MUGAs and youth facilities cycling is a significant mode of travel for some users (at least 10%); and to a slightly lesser extent for users of foot/cycle paths and outdoor bowling greens.

70% of users would normally walk to their village hall/community centre.

The two main reports will also discuss in detail the way different typologies should be treated in relation to spatial planning standards. For example, while the main open space report will recommend general standards for facilities such as play areas (in terms of specific quantity, quality and access requirements) general standards will not be appropriate for typologies such as footpaths, cycle paths and bridleways.

### ***Importance of Footpath/cycle access***

Residents were asked if they would cycle or walk further or more often if the quality of their journey by foot or bike to a nearby open space or facility was improved.

- 82% of households confirmed that they would be prepared to walk/cycle further if the quality of the route was improved
- 85% also said that if the quality of the route was improved they would make the journey more often.

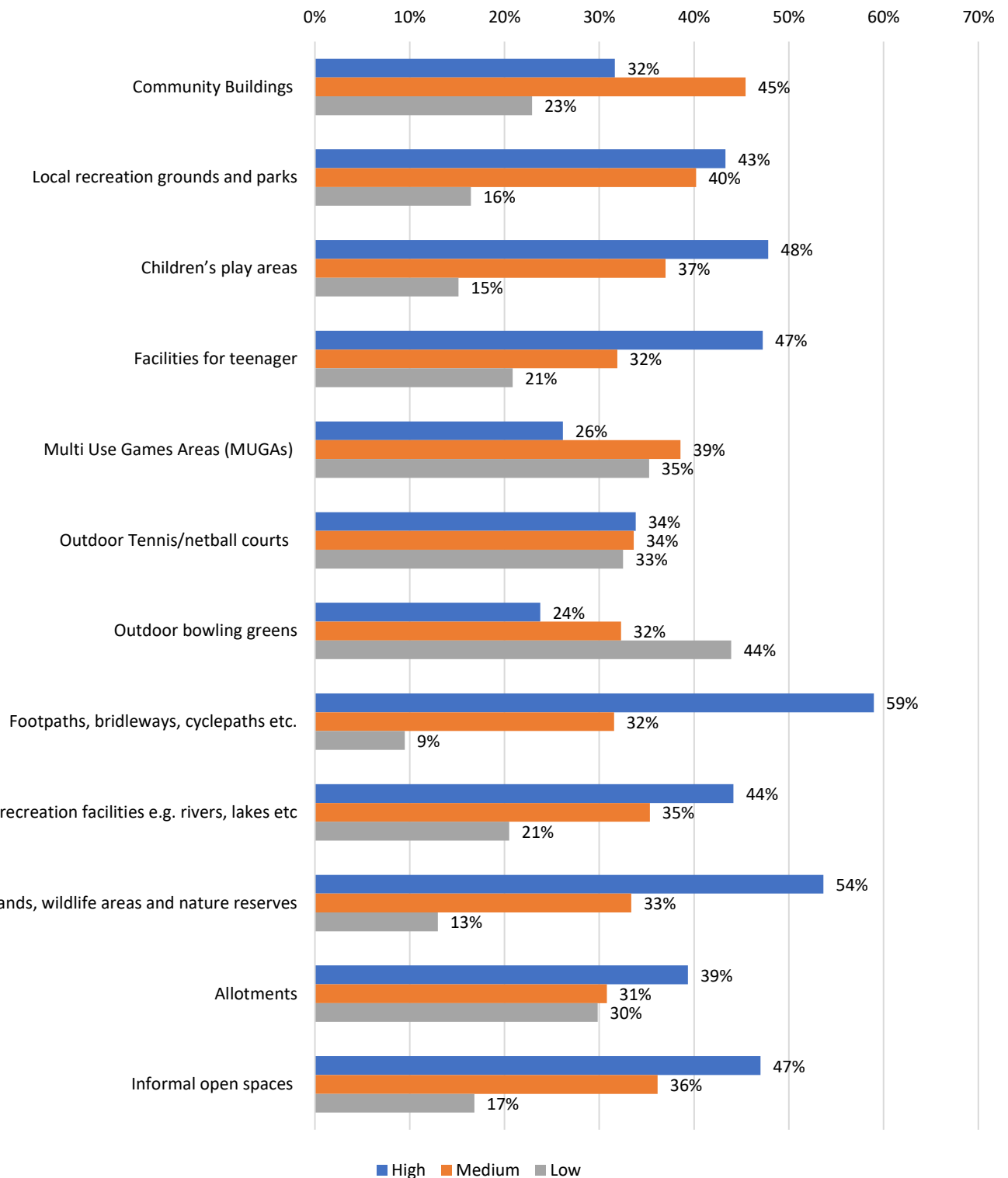
This is a significant finding in terms of illustrating the potential benefit of ensuring good foot and cycle path access to facilities; and providing cycle parking facilities.

The detailed findings from this section will be used when drawing up the access elements of relevant standards for different kinds of open space elsewhere in the study.

### **2.1.7 Key Issues and priorities for improvement**

Households were also asked what their priorities for improvement in provision were. Findings are illustrated on the table below. Respondents were asked to rate the need for new or improved facilities by indicating priorities at three levels – high, medium or low.

## Priorities for Improvement



### *Open Space and Outdoor Facilities*

The category highlighted by the largest number of households as a high priority for potential improvement/new provision was better footpaths, bridleway and cyclepath provision (59%); followed by woodlands, wildlife areas and nature reserves (54%).

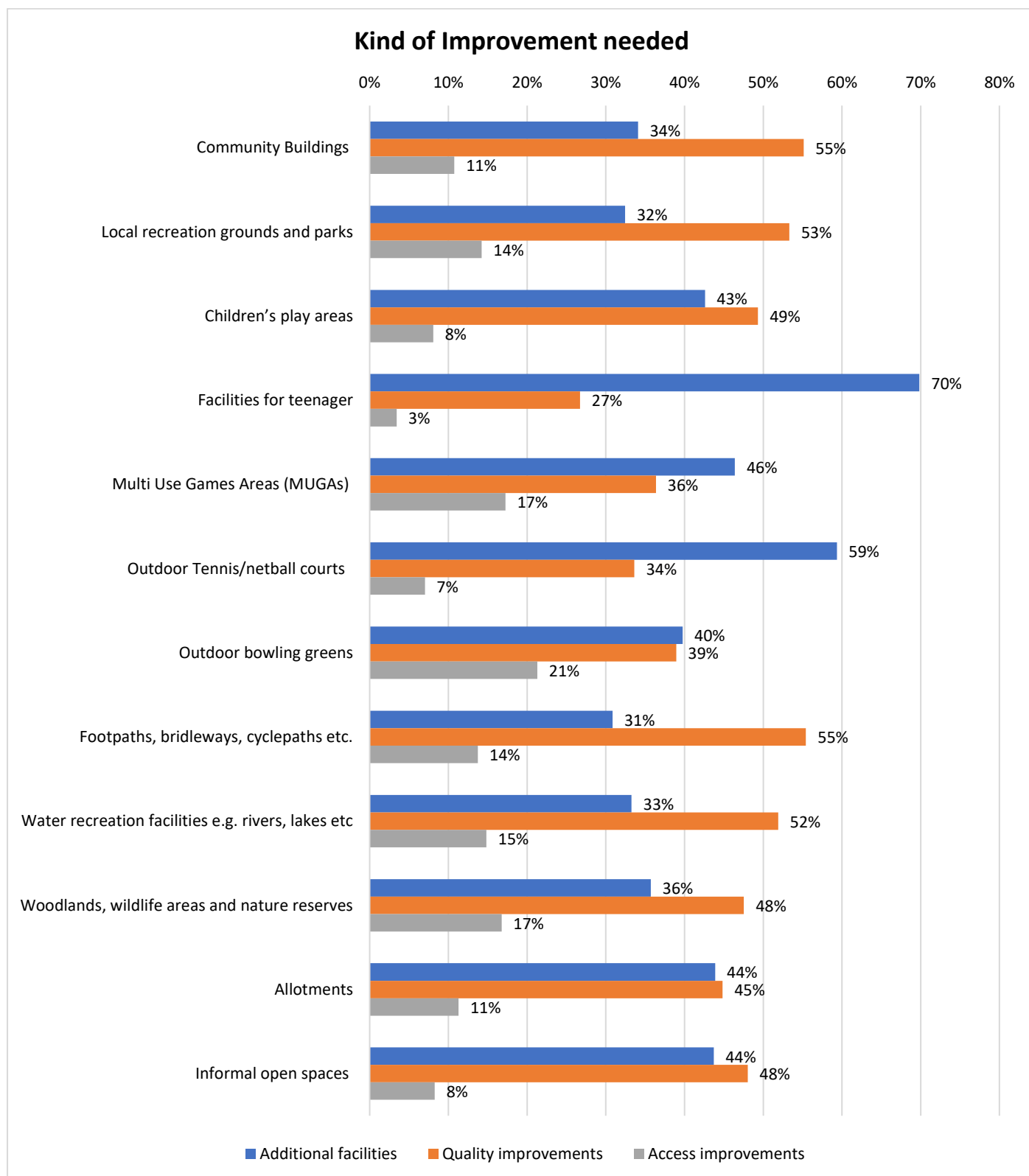
Other notable high priorities for improvement noted by significant numbers were children's play areas (48%); facilities for teenagers (47%); and informal open space for dog walking, ball games, picnic etc.

## Community Buildings

Improvements to community buildings scored quite highly as a priority with a combined high/medium priority rating of 77% of which 32% indicated a high priority.

## Kind of Improvement Needed

Associated questions asked households to indicate whether the kind of priority need was primarily for more facilities, improved quality of existing, or improved access. In relation to the priorities noted above these findings are shown in the charts below:



### *Open Space and Outdoor Facilities*

- In general, for most kinds of open space and outdoor facilities improvements to quality is the most commonly identified as the priority need (rather than additional facilities).
- Typologies where quality improvements to existing provision is clearly the more common kind of improvement need identified (rather than new provision) are local recreation grounds/parks and children's play areas.
- The category where it is particularly clear cut that the primary need identified is for more facilities is provision for teenagers (70%). The other typology with a majority indicating a need for more rather than improvements in quality is tennis/netball courts (59%).
- Improved access was deemed important by significant numbers for bowling greens (21%).

### *Community Buildings*

- The primary need identified for improved provision of community buildings by the majority of respondents related to quality (55%) rather than additional facilities. 11% also indicated the need for improved access.

## 2.2 Stakeholder Views - Public Health

### 2.2.1 Introduction

This section highlights stakeholder views on the value of open space to the wider public health agenda. This includes national perspectives from organisations such as the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) and Public Health England. It also provides feedback from the District Councils Public Health leads as well as the Worcestershire County Council Consultant in Public Health.

The South Worcestershire City/District Councils are represented on the Worcestershire Health and Wellbeing Board. The board leads and advises on the development of the local Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) Integrated Commissioning Strategy and Plan. It ensures effective local engagement and monitors local outcomes. It focuses on improving the health and wellbeing of the people living in their CCG area through joined up commissioning across the NHS, social care, district councils, public health and other relevant services.

### 2.2.2 National perspectives on the value of open spaces and physical activity to health and wellbeing.

The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) have pointed out that "physical activity is not only fun and enjoyable, it is essential for good health, helping to prevent or manage over 20 conditions and diseases. This includes heart disease, diabetes, some cancers and obesity. It can also help improve people's mental health and wellbeing<sup>10</sup>."

#### **NICE Local Authority Briefing - Public health**

Supporting people of all ages to be more physically active can help local authorities meet their new public health responsibilities. Specifically, it will impact on a range of indicators identified in the public health and the adult social care outcomes frameworks including:

- use of green space for exercise/health reasons
- child development
- excess weight in children and adults
- proportion of physically active and inactive adults
- self-reported wellbeing and health-related quality of life
- falls and injuries in the over-65s
- mortality from cardiovascular diseases (including heart disease and stroke), cancer and respiratory diseases.

More specifically in relation to the Open Spaces Study, Public Health England has provided a health equity briefing: *Local action on health inequalities: Improving access to green spaces*.

#### **Public Health England - health equity briefing: Local action on health inequalities: Improving access to green spaces. Summary of key points**

- There is significant and growing evidence on the health benefits of access to good quality green spaces. The benefits include better self-rated health; lower body mass index, overweight and obesity levels; improved mental health and wellbeing; increased longevity.
- There is unequal access to green space across England. People living in the most deprived areas are less likely to live near green spaces and will therefore have fewer opportunities to experience the health benefits of green space compared with people living in less deprived areas.

<sup>10</sup> NICE Local government briefing [LGB3] - April 2013

- Increasing the use of good quality green space for all social groups is likely to improve health outcomes and reduce health inequalities. It can also bring other benefits such as greater community cohesion and reduced social isolation.
- Local authorities play a vital role in protecting, maintaining and improving local green spaces and can create new areas of green space to improve access for all communities. Such efforts require joint work across different parts of the local authority and beyond, particularly public health, planning, transport, and parks and leisure.

Providing opportunities for physical activity by developing and maintaining appropriate facilities such as parks and open spaces is therefore very important in relation to promoting better public health. Public Health services nationally therefore tend to have an interest in all aspects of active recreation facility provision; and this is reflected in the views of the team in South Worcestershire.

### **2.2.3 Worcestershire County Council – Public Health**

The County Health and Wellbeing Board leads and advises on work to improve the health and wellbeing of the people of Worcestershire through joined up commissioning across the NHS, social care, public health and other services. The Board's statutory functions are to:

- Prepare a Joint Strategic Needs Assessment and a Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy.
- Encourage integrated working between health and social care commissioners including making arrangements under Section 75 of the National Health Service Act 2006

The County Council supports the Board and their Public Health team produce the Worcestershire Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy which the South Worcestershire Council's own plans support (see below). The Strategy has 3 themes; mental and emotional health, physical activity and alcohol reduction.

The Physical Activity strand refers to promoting everyday physical activity such as walking and cycling, these being supported by access to green spaces and a comprehensive, continuous walking and cycling network. It is well evidenced that access to green space can improve mental wellbeing.

The Public Health Directorate comments on Health Impact Assessments (HIAs) completed by developers when making specified planning applications. Within this assessment is a requirement to assess quantity and quality of green space, play areas, walking and cycling routes and encouraging healthier food choices which may include reference to allotments, community growing in smaller spaces and edible planting. The aim of the HIAs is to influence and inform future developments in order to ensure that newly built environments are designed to allow healthier behaviours, such as physical activity, the behaviours of choice through making options to be physically active easier, more accessible, more sociable and timely compared with inactive travel means (car etc).

The County Council public health team also promotes a number of initiatives under a number of themes relevant to this study including Health Walks and the promotion of self-led walking and cycling routes. They also signpost local people to national initiatives such as *change4life* including programmes for children, for example "Train Like a Jedi".

### **2.2.4 South Worcestershire Health & Wellbeing**

Each of the three South Worcestershire City/District Councils (SWCs) have local public health leads who work together alongside the County Council Public Health Consultant. Worcestershire County Council and the three South Worcestershire Councils fully recognise the value of open space, recreation and physical activity in relation to promoting health and wellbeing and public health objectives.

The SWCs have their own local Health and Wellbeing Plan that supports the County Council's Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy. The individual Councils also promote their own activity and education programmes based on their local Health and Wellbeing Plan priorities.

The local public health leads noted a number of initiatives as examples of local initiatives using local open and green spaces.

**Route to the Hills Plan** - provides a strategy to improve and enhance the two key areas of public open space in the centre of Great Malvern; Priory Park and Rose Bank Gardens. In addition, the concept of a "Route to the Hills" linking the town of Great Malvern to the Malvern Hills, has been developed to strengthen the link between the town and the hills and maximising the economic and social benefits of the project.

**Wychavon District Council** includes in its current strategy the following promises to:

- Investigate options for installing new green and active travel options such as electric car charging points and cycle routes by March 2021.
- Improve management of and public access to four Wychavon owned Wildlife sites at Droitwich Woods, Stoulton Woods, Avon Meadows and Broadway Gravel Pit through increased community involvement and volunteer action by 31 March 2019.

**Health Walks:** The Public Health Directorate commissions Health Walks and the Living Well Service. The Health Walks programme often makes use of parks, country parks and other open space such as playing fields. In Wychavon, for example, there are Health Walks starting in: Evesham, Pershore, Broadway and Droitwich

**Park Run:** There are Park Runs at various locations including Worcester Woods Country Park and Worcester Pitchcroft (Worcester City); and Hampton Ferry to Crown Meadow Park (Evesham).

**Couch to 50k Cycling** – There is a Couch to 50k cycling course (women only) utilizing green opens space and the road network.

**Couch to 5k Runs-** There are two Couch to 5K runs being delivered locally, one in Malvern at the Malvern Town Football Club and the second at Upton Riverboats Children's Centre.

**Letterboxing** - Malvern Hills Letterboxing is a family fun form of orienteering designed to encourage children and families to enjoy being outdoors together. The letterboxes are simply boxes with a rubber stamp, Inkpapad and guest book to sign. There are 25 letterboxes hidden all over the Malvern Hills.

**Balanceability** - a nationally accredited learn to ride programme. Malvern Hills District Council are currently offering Level 2 Balanceability courses, which are aimed at 4+ year olds who cannot ride a bike. The courses are being delivered at Dyson Perrins High School and at Riverboats Children's Centre in Malvern.

### **Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) - Planning for Health in South Worcestershire (2017)**

In relation to spatial planning the three Councils have adopted an SPD specifically highlighting the importance of public health. The SPD was prepared in partnership with the Strategic Planning team and the Directorate of Public Health at Worcestershire County Council and representatives from Planning Policy and Development Management teams within the three councils. It provides guidance to local authority planning officers, applicants, relevant organisations and the wider community on delivering healthier developments.

## ***Community Facilities***

The SPD notes that:

- Community facilities play an increasingly important role in providing for the wellbeing of the community and the facilitation of social contact. Ensuring that people do not feel the negative impacts of social exclusion is an important consideration in terms of both their physical and mental health and general well-being and that such facilities can encourage companionship, a sense of identity and belonging.
- Well-integrated and maintained public spaces, community facilities, and parks are known to increase levels of 'incidental activity' and social interaction by making it easier for residents to access facilities nearer to their homes".

## ***Green Infrastructure and Open Space***

The SPD notes that:

- The proximity and accessibility of green spaces to residential areas is positively associated with increased overall levels of physical activity. Access and quality are key issues in the provision of green space. Greater proportions of green space in a district are associated with better levels of self-reported health.
- Green and open spaces can improve public health and community wellbeing and help people of all ages to remain active by improving environmental quality, providing opportunities for recreation and exercise and delivering mental and physical health benefits. This is particularly important for older population groups.
- Having access to age-friendly local green and open spaces can help the elderly to remain active for longer and can reduce the potential for isolation through encouraging social interaction. A recent review of physical activity interventions and their effects on the brain also found that older people who engaged in walking as a physical activity were less likely to develop dementia.

## ***Play Spaces/recreation***

The SPD notes that:

- As well as encouraging physical activity and thereby reducing obesity, access to green space, sports and other recreational facilities promotes relaxation and reduction in stress, and can also bring about social interaction within communities.
- Obesity and being overweight increases the risk of developing a range of serious diseases including heart disease, diabetes and cancers, which lead to an increased demand on social care services.
- Obesity and diabetes, are continuing to increase in Worcestershire with little sign of slowing down. Around 25.6% of the adult population are obese, which is higher than the national average (24.2%).
- About a quarter of children starting school in Worcestershire are either overweight or obese, and about a third are overweight or obese by the time they leave primary school at the end of year six (40). More specifically, in Malvern Hills 29.9% of children are overweight or obese by the age of 10 or 11; in Worcester City this percentage is higher at 31.6%, and in Wychavon the proportion is 29.1%.
- Access to high-quality and well-maintained green space promotes physical activity, positive mental wellbeing and healthy childhood development. Children with access to safe green spaces are more likely to be physically active and less likely to be overweight. Outdoor play encourages healthy brain development and promotion of wellbeing through adulthood.
- Natural play areas can allow for adventurous play helping them to develop useful skills through play. Children who play in green spaces also develop better motor skills than those who do not.

- When considering mental health, MIND's Ecotherapy Report found that a greener, more active lifestyle aids positive changes. It concluded that people experiencing mental distress frequently use physical activities such as walking, gardening and exercise to help lift their mood, reduce stress, provide purpose and meaning, and reduce their vulnerability to depression.
- There is firm evidence that links health and wellbeing benefits to increased physical activity, whether it is everyday activities such as walking or cycling to work, or increased active recreation. The benefits are preventative as well as therapeutic for people with existing conditions, with the use of green spaces for exercise being particularly effective in reducing morbidity. Because the effects are felt particularly strongly among children and lower socioeconomic groups, these benefits can help to reduce health inequalities.

### ***Active Travel***

- Car travel has replaced many journeys once made by walking or cycling. Additionally, the car is used instead of active travel modes for many shorter journeys. This has been a key factor in the decline of physical activity levels over the past 40 years.
- New developments should be designed to encourage alternative transport modes, for example by providing bicycle storage points and/or changing facilities in work places. Similarly, travel routes should be designed so that genuine priority is given to pedestrians and cyclists.

## 2.3 General Community and Public Health – Key Findings

This section provides some key consultation findings from the South Worcestershire household survey and public health stakeholders.

### 2.3.1 Quantity

#### *Open Space and Outdoor Facilities*

- In the main respondents indicated that for most kinds of open space and recreational facilities across the three districts there is sufficient provision.
- A significant number of households (49%) reported a general need for more outdoor tennis/netball courts across the district. Similar numbers highlighted a need for more facilities for teenagers (48%) and woodlands, wildlife areas and nature reserves.
- A large majority (at least 65%) thought that overall there were enough outdoor bowling greens, play areas and Multi-Use Games Areas (MUGAs).

#### *Community Buildings*

- A clear majority of households reported that overall there are enough village halls/community centres (70%).

### 2.3.2 Quality

For most kinds of outdoor facilities/open spaces a majority of households suggested that in general they were of adequate or better quality. However, for some typologies there were notable levels of dissatisfaction with general levels of quality as noted below.

- 54% of households noted the overall quality of allotments as being poor or very poor.
- 41% highlighted the overall quality of outdoor facilities for teenagers as being either poor or very poor; similarly, for outdoor bowling greens.
- The quality of tennis/netball courts was rated as poor or worse by 36% of respondents.

In contrast some facilities/open spaces were rated highly in terms of quality.

- The quality of children's play areas was rated as good or very good by 62% of households; similarly, for parks and recreation grounds (60% rate quality in general as being good or very good).
- Other kinds of open spaces with notable levels of satisfaction were woodlands, wildlife areas and nature reserves (52%); and informal open spaces for dog walking, picnics, ball games etc (50%).

#### *Community Buildings*

- 60% of households rated the quality of village halls and community centres as good or very good.

### 2.3.3 Access (Geographical)

#### *Open Space*

In general, a majority of household respondents reported that they would not normally travel more than 15 minutes to visit most kinds of open spaces and recreational facilities. There is considerable variation however between the typologies. For example, 55% of households are prepared to travel 16 minutes or more to visit water recreation facilities (27% of those would travel more than 20 minutes); and 53% of

households are prepared to travel that long to visit woodlands, wildlife areas and nature reserves (of which 29% would travel more than 20 minutes).

In contrast, for significant numbers of residents, facilities need to be much more locally accessible before they will be used (for example, play areas, youth facilities, informal open space and allotments).

- 57% of users would expect play areas to be within a 10 minute travel time, of which 23% would not wish to travel more than 5 minutes; and 52% of users would expect youth facilities to be within a 10 minute travel time, of which 13% would not wish to travel more than 5 minutes.
- 52% of users would expect allotments to be within a 10 minute travel time, of which 23% would not wish to travel more than 5 minutes.
- 50% of users would expect access to informal open spaces to be within a 10 minute travel time, of which 26% would not wish to travel more than 5 minutes.

For most typologies walking is the preferred choice, most notably for facilities such as play areas (81%); recreation grounds and parks (77%); and informal open spaces and teen facilities (76%). However, a small majority of respondent households would normally drive rather than walk to water recreation facilities (54%). Significant numbers would also drive to outdoor bowling greens (48%); woodlands, wildlife areas and nature reserves (46%); and outdoor tennis courts, indicating a particular need for adequate parking spaces.

It is notable that for some MUGAs and youth facilities cycling is a significant mode of travel (at least 10%) and to a slightly lesser extent foot/cycle paths and outdoor bowling greens.

### ***Community Buildings***

- 50% of users would expect community buildings to be within a 10 minute travel time, of which 17% would not wish to travel more than 5 minutes.
- 70% of users would normally walk to their village hall/community centre.

### ***Importance of footpath/cycle access***

- 82% of households confirmed that they would be prepared to walk/cycle further if the quality of the route was improved. 85% also said that if the quality of the route was improved they would make the journey more often.

## **2.3.3 Priorities**

### ***Open Space and Outdoor Facilities***

- The category highlighted by the largest number of households as a high priority for potential improvement/new provision was better footpaths, bridleway and cyclepath provision (59%); followed by woodlands, wildlife areas and nature reserves (54%).
- Other notable high priorities for improvement noted by significant numbers of respondents were children's play areas (48%); facilities for teenagers (47%); and informal open space for dog walking, ball games, picnic etc.

### ***Community Buildings***

- Improvements to community buildings scored quite highly as a priority with a combined high/medium priority rating of 77% of which 32% indicated a high priority.

### 2.3.5 Public Health and other issues

- Each of the three WCSs has local public health leads who work together alongside Worcestershire County Council's Public Health Consultant.
- Worcestershire County Council and the three SWCs specifically recognise the value of open space, recreation and physical activity in relation to promoting health and wellbeing and public health objectives.
- The SWCs each have their own local Health and Wellbeing Plan that supports the County Council's Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy. The individual Councils also promote their own activity and education programmes based on their local Health and Wellbeing Plan priorities.
- The SWCs have adopted 'Planning for Health in South Worcestershire' SPD specifically highlighting the importance of health and wellbeing in planning. The SPD was prepared in partnership with the Strategic Planning team and the Directorate of Public Health at Worcestershire County Council and representatives from Planning Policy and Development Management teams across the three councils. The SPD highlights that:
  - Green and open spaces can improve public health and community wellbeing and help people of all ages to remain active by improving environmental quality, providing opportunities for recreation and exercise and delivering mental and physical health benefits.
  - Access to high-quality and well-maintained green space promotes physical activity, positive mental wellbeing and healthy childhood development. Children with access to safe green spaces are more likely to be physically active and less likely to be overweight. Outdoor play encourages healthy brain development and promotion of wellbeing through adulthood.
  - To encourage physical activity, new developments should be designed to encourage alternative transport modes, for example by providing bicycle storage points and/or changing facilities in work places. Similarly, travel routes should be designed so that genuine priority is given to pedestrians and cyclists.
- Some sectors of the community face particular barriers to access such as disabled people; children and young people; households in the more isolated rural areas and those in the more deprived wards of the study area

### 3. NEIGHBOURING AUTHORITIES, TOWN/PARISH COUNCILS and WCC WARD MEMBERS

#### 3.1 Introduction

This section provides information and feedback from neighbouring local authorities and local town and parish councils. It is important to consult with neighbouring local authorities under the "duty to co-operate" requirement. This places a legal duty on local planning authorities, county councils in England and public bodies to "engage constructively, actively and on an ongoing basis to maximise the effectiveness of Local Plan preparation in the context of strategic cross boundary matters"<sup>11</sup>.

The need to consult and engage with local parish councils arises from the fact that many parish councils are responsible for the management of open spaces, play areas and recreation grounds; and the local councils also tend to have a good understanding of local needs and priorities in relation to local sport, play and recreation facilities. They are also statutory consultees on planning matters, and some are involved in neighbourhood planning.

Section three is comprised of three main sub-sections:

- Neighbouring Authorities - Cross-boundary and strategic issues
- Parish and Town Councils
- Worcester City Council Ward Members

There is a summary of key issues at the end of the section. The information and findings of this section will be taken forward in the main reports.

#### 3.2 Neighbouring authorities - Cross boundary and strategic issues

##### 3.2.1 Overview – South Worcestershire Councils

The South Worcestershire Study Area shares borders with the Local Authorities of Cotswold; Bromsgrove and Redditch; Wyre Forest; Tewkesbury; Herefordshire County; Stratford on Avon; and the Forest of Dean. Officers from the SWC highlighted a number of cross-border/strategic considerations related to open spaces as noted below:

|                         |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
|-------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Bromsgrove and Redditch | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Green Belt</li><li>• GI Environmental Character Areas – Protect and Enhance (Worcestershire Area Coverage only).</li></ul>                                                                                                            |
| Cotswold                | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Cotswolds AONB - which extends into Wychavon, so shared management plan.</li></ul>                                                                                                                                                    |
| Forest of Dean          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• No specific cross boundary issues have arisen up to date. The boundary with Forest of Dean is very small. A small part of the Malvern Hills AONB is in the Forest of Dean District and FOD DC are on the partnership board.</li></ul> |
| Herefordshire           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Malvern Hills AONB- which extends in to Herefordshire, so shared management plan.</li></ul>                                                                                                                                           |
| Stratford               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Green Belt</li><li>• Other – Long Marston area / brownfield allocation/ new settlement- Stratford/ Wychavon border.</li></ul>                                                                                                         |

<sup>11</sup> See <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/duty-to-cooperate>

|             |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
|-------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|             | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="https://www.stratford.gov.uk/templates/server/document-relay.cfm?doc=173518&amp;name=SDC%20CORE%20STRATEGY%202011%202031%20July%202016.pdf">https://www.stratford.gov.uk/templates/server/document-relay.cfm?doc=173518&amp;name=SDC%20CORE%20STRATEGY%202011%202031%20July%202016.pdf</a></li> </ul> |
| Tewkesbury  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bredon Hill AONB</li> <li>• Other - Land at Mitton (cross boundary housing)</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| Wyre Forest | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Green Belt</li> <li>• GI Environmental Character Areas – Protect and Enhance (Worcestershire Area Coverage only)</li> <li>• Dumbleton Dingle Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)</li> <li>• Other – Duty to co-operate history (Astley Cross Area).</li> </ul>                                          |

### 3.2.2 Neighbouring Local Authorities

Planning policy officers were also contacted from the seven authorities noted above to check if they had identified any cross-border issues that they thought should be taken into account. Comments and observations from officers of these authorities are provided below<sup>12</sup>.

#### Bromsgrove and Redditch

| Type of study                | Notes/updates on relevant studies                                                                                                                                   | Comments and observations – cross border issues <sup>13</sup>                                                                                             |
|------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Green Infrastructure         | Worcestershire County wide Green Infrastructure Strategy – more detailed work required on Landscape Character Assessment to inform Bromsgrove District Plan Review. | Possible implications arising from cross boundary landscape types to the south of Bromsgrove and Redditch.                                                |
| Open Space/PPG17 study       | Completed 2007 - will require updating in light of District Plan Review. Likely to commence work in 2019.                                                           | Unclear at such an early stage in plan review/ until up to date evidence base in place and it is clearer where future development/growth will be located. |
| Play/Youth facility strategy | Some standards incorporated as part of 2007 audit.                                                                                                                  | As noted above                                                                                                                                            |
| Community Buildings          | We have completed some in-house work /audit.                                                                                                                        | As noted above.                                                                                                                                           |

#### Cotswold

| Type of study                | Notes/updates on relevant studies                                                                                               | Comments and observations – cross border issues |
|------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|
| Green Infrastructure         | Completed Sept 2017: Green Infrastructure, Open Space and Play Space Strategy. Review of GI element of the document is in place | No issues specifically identified.              |
| Open Space/PPG17 study       | Green Infrastructure, Open Space and Play Space Strategy.                                                                       | No issues specifically identified.              |
| Play/Youth facility strategy | Green Infrastructure, Open Space and Play Space Strategy.                                                                       | No issues specifically identified.              |
| Community Buildings          | Strategic Assessment of Need for Halls Provision in CDC - April 2016                                                            | No issues specifically identified.              |

<sup>12</sup> The officer responses were collected via an emailed pro-forma.

<sup>13</sup> These comments will be taken forward and considered in the main report.

|       |                        |                                                                                                                                                                   |
|-------|------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Other | Local Plan 2011 – 2031 | Please see Policy SP6 (Cheltenham to Stratford upon Avon Railway Line) and Policy & Policy INF6 (Heavy vehicles control zone) of the adopted Local Plan 2011-2031 |
|-------|------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

## Herefordshire

| Type of study             | Notes/updates on relevant studies                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | Comments and observations – cross border issues |
|---------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|
| Green Infrastructure      | GI Strategy 2010 and GI Study 2008. Can be viewed on the Herefordshire Council's Local Plan Evidence Base website.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | No issues specifically highlighted.             |
| Open Space/PPG17          | Completed 2006. Still relevant in part: Amenity Green Space; Parks and Gardens; and Semi Natural public open space. No significant changes in provision.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                | No issues specifically highlighted.             |
| Playing Pitch Study       | Playing Pitch Assessment 2012: can be viewed on the Council's Local Plan Evidence Base. An Outdoor Sports Investment Plan has been produced in accordance with Sport England's requirement to keep the data up to date and refreshed. This has been prepared in partnership with Sport England, County Sports Partnership and the relevant NGBs for football, cricket, rugby and hockey | No issues specifically highlighted.             |
| Play and Youth facilities | Play Facilities Study 2012: This can be viewed on the Council's Local Plan Evidence Base. An investment plan for play areas has also been produced in consultation with all providers and local communities.                                                                                                                                                                            | No issues specifically highlighted.             |

## Stratford on Avon

| Type of study        | Notes/updates on relevant studies                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | Comments and observations – cross border issues |
|----------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|
| Green Infrastructure | <p>Title: Warwickshire, Coventry and Solihull Sub-Regional Green Infrastructure Strategy.</p> <p>Comments: The purpose of the strategy was to provide evidence for the preparation of plans, policies and strategies relating to Green Infrastructure at a sub-regional level.</p> <p>Title: Green Infrastructure Study for the Stratford-on-Avon District.</p> <p>Comments: Produced to form an evidence base for the District's Core</p> | No issues specifically highlighted.             |

|                     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |                                     |
|---------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
|                     | Strategy and the purpose of the study was to identify the existing green infrastructure networks. The study focused on the main town of Stratford-upon-Avon and the eight Main Rural Centres (MRCs) as set out in the Core Strategy.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |                                     |
| Open Space/PPG17    | Under review. The review will include an audit of existing facilities, an assessment of the quality of those facilities and a review of existing and anticipated demand. The study will contribute to an update of the PPG17 study and partial update undertaken in 2014 which was produced to inform the Submission Core Strategy and Infrastructure Delivery Plan. The new study is to take account of the revised (higher) housing figures set out in the adopted Core Strategy. | No issues specifically highlighted. |
| Community Buildings | Not yet complete: Indoor Facility Strategy – to cover the whole District.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | No issues specifically highlighted. |

### Tewkesbury

| Type of study                  | Notes/updates on relevant studies                                                                                                                                                  | Comments and observations – cross border issues                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
|--------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Green Infrastructure           | JCS Green Infrastructure Strategy (2014)<br><a href="https://drive.google.com/open?id=0BwVPoSbUuXamdadDRHMIF0Z0k">https://drive.google.com/open?id=0BwVPoSbUuXamdadDRHMIF0Z0k</a>  | <p>No specific issues – however, there is a cross-boundary live planning application for 500 dwellings at Bredon on the edge of Tewkesbury town but within Wychavon District. We are obviously keen to ensure that adequate infrastructure is provided for this development as well as the impacts from the development on existing facilities within Tewkesbury.</p> <p>Tewkesbury Borough Council is soon to be consulting (November 2018) on a concept masterplan for the Ashchurch area. This is exploring the potential to large strategy scale development to meet future housing and employment needs. This area lies close to the boundary with Wychavon district. While there are no specific issues yet raised with this, there could be things we need to take into account, primarily impacts on the green infrastructure network in the area. You can find a copy of the masterplan here: <a href="http://minutes.tewkesbury.gov.uk/documents/s34006/APPENDIX%20%20Ashch">http://minutes.tewkesbury.gov.uk/documents/s34006/APPENDIX%20%20Ashch</a></p> |
| Open Space/PPG17 study         | Social, sport and open space study (2017)<br><a href="https://www.tewkesbury.gov.uk/planning-policy-evidence-base">https://www.tewkesbury.gov.uk/planning-policy-evidence-base</a> |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| Parks/Greenspace/ Countryside  | Social, sport and open space study (2017)<br><a href="https://www.tewkesbury.gov.uk/planning-policy-evidence-base">https://www.tewkesbury.gov.uk/planning-policy-evidence-base</a> |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| Play /Youth Facility Strategy  | Social, sport and open space study (2017)<br><a href="https://www.tewkesbury.gov.uk/planning-policy-evidence-base">https://www.tewkesbury.gov.uk/planning-policy-evidence-base</a> |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| Community Buildings Assessment | Social, sport and open space study (2017)<br><a href="https://www.tewkesbury.gov.uk/planning-policy-evidence-base">https://www.tewkesbury.gov.uk/planning-policy-evidence-base</a> |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |

|  |  |                                                          |
|--|--|----------------------------------------------------------|
|  |  | <a href="#">urch%20Masterplan%20-%20JCS%20Report.pdf</a> |
|--|--|----------------------------------------------------------|

## Wyre Forest

| Type of study                 | Notes/updates on relevant studies                          | Comments and observations – cross border issues                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
|-------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Green Infrastructure          | GI Study completed October 2012.                           | Please go to our evidence base page on the Wyre Forest Website to access the relevant documents:<br><a href="http://www.wyreforestdc.gov.uk/planning-and-buildings/planning-policy/local-plan-evidence-base.aspx">http://www.wyreforestdc.gov.uk/planning-and-buildings/planning-policy/local-plan-evidence-base.aspx</a><br>Our reports do not identify any open space with cross border significance. Hartlebury Common though does border Wychavon district, and it is one of the top four highest scoring rating in terms of quality in the district in terms of natural and semi natural greenspace. It is also identified as a SSSI and Local Nature Reserve. |
| Open Space/PPG17 study        | Open Space Assessment and Study Standards paper – May 2017 |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| Parks/Greenspace/Countryside  | Open Space Assessment and Study Standards paper – May 2017 |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| Play /Youth Facility Strategy | Open Space Assessment and Study Standards paper – May 2017 |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| Community Buildings           | Completed in 2009                                          |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |

There was no response from Forest of Dean District Council.

### 3.3 Town/Parish Councils

Within the South Worcestershire Study Area there are 127 town/parish councils (some of these are parishes that hold an annual parish meeting rather than an ongoing parish council). Surveys were sent to the local councils followed up by reminders and phone calls as needed. 72 town and parish councils responded as noted below:

- Abberley (Village and Common)
- Alfrick and Lulsley
- Ashton Under Hill
- Astley and Dunley
- Aston Somerville
- Badsey & Aldington
- Bayton
- Berrow
- Birtsmorton
- Bishampton & Throckmorton
- Broadwas & Cotheridge
- Broadway
- Bushley
- Castlemorton
- Charlton
- Cleeve Prior
- Cookhill
- Crowle
- Droitwich Spa Town Council
- Earls Croome
- Eastham
- Eckington
- Elbridge
- Evesham
- Flyford Flavell, Grafton  
Flyford and North Piddle
- Great Witley and Hillhampton
- Hallow
- Hanley Castle
- Hartlebury
- Harvington
- Hindlip, Martin  
Hussingtee & Salwarpe
- Hinton on the Green
- Holt
- Honeybourne
- Kenswick & Wichenford
- Knighton on Teme
- Knightwick and Doddenham
- Lindridge parish council
- Little Malvern & Welland
- Little Witley
- Longdon, Queenhill and Holdfast
- Lower Sapey
- Malvern Wells
- Martley
- Norton & Lenchwick
- Norton-juxta-Kempsey
- Offenham
- Ombersley and Doverdale
- Norton & Lenchwick
- Overbury and Conderton
- Pebworth
- Pendock
- Pensax
- Peopleton
- Pershore Town Council
- Rous Lench
- Sedgeberrow
- Severn Stoke & Croome  
d'Abitot
- South Lenches
- South Littleton
- Stock & Bradley
- St Peter the Great County
- Strensham
- Suckley
- Tenbury Town Council
- The Shelsleys
- Tibberton
- Upton upon Severn Town Council
- West Malvern
- Whittington
- Wickhamford
- Wyre Piddle

#### 3.3.1 Responses overview

Some broad findings from the survey were that:

- 52 of the 72 town/parish councils who responded were directly responsible for the management of various local spaces and outdoor recreational facilities. 20 local councils managed community buildings directly and many noted that they were managed by a local trust.
- 44 of the local councils who responded noted that there was a need for additional or improved open space, play and recreation facilities within their town or parish.

- The sectors of the community most commonly identified as being poorly served in relation to their needs were children, young people/teenagers, and older people.
- Poor transport for all sectors but particularly for children and young people was highlighted.

### ***Quality factors - open space provision***

We asked the local councils to highlight what they thought, in general, were high priorities as regards qualitative factors of recreational open spaces. The quality factors most commonly deemed to be of a high priority as regards recreational public open spaces are that:

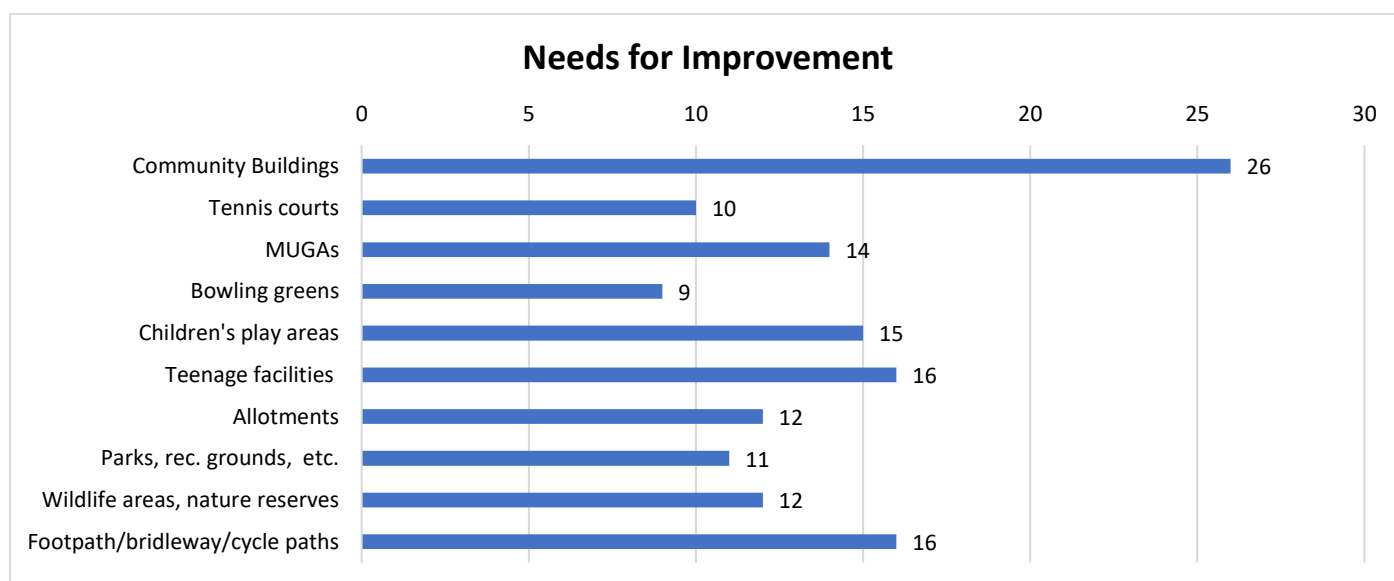
- They should be safe and secure for those using them
- They should be easy to get to and to get around within for all members of the community
- Equipment and grounds should be of high quality and well maintained
- They should be multi-functional providing for all sectors of the community.
- There should be adequate opportunities for dog walking and freedom from dog fouling
- There should be control of noise and unsocial behaviour

Other factors specifically highlighted included:

- There should be provision of outdoor seated areas.
- They should be durable and aesthetically pleasing to a majority of villagers.
- Need for an Inspection and Maintenance strategy - any equipment on site should be regular (weekly) inspections for damage and/or deterioration requiring repair and have routine checks for health and safety standard compliance
- Should be well and appropriately lit when necessary.
- Provision of shelter/performance areas, like the old-fashioned band stands. That way we could encourage local groups to put on concerts and mini-performances, we could get a fitness / walking group going etc.

### ***Summary of Identified needs for improvement***

The survey provided opportunities for the town and parish councils to indicate specific needs for improvement across the different typologies. These can be found in the full survey findings provided as Appendix 1. The chart below illustrates the broad extent of needs identified across the parishes/towns for the various kinds of open space and recreational facilities:



The needs of individual parishes/towns are quite varied. The more frequently highlighted typologies are:

- Community Buildings – Village halls and Community Centres. Need for quality and access improvements to existing facilities in the main rather than additional halls.
- Footpaths, bridleways and cyclepaths (provision of new cyclepaths being most commonly identified along with improved maintenance of rights of way).
- Play areas and youth facilities – mainly improvements in quality for play areas but need for additional youth facilities.

### 3.3.2 Parish/Town specific issues

#### *Unmet needs and aspirations for improvement*

As part of the survey we also asked the open questions "are you aware of any particular groups within your community whose needs are not currently met" and "if you have, or are aware of, any specific projects, plans and aspirations for improving open space and outdoor recreation facilities in the Parish please tell us". Individual town/parish responses are shown in the table below.

| Local Council                 | Groups whose needs not being met                                                                                                                                                                                              | Current plans and known aspirations                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
|-------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Abberley (Village and Common) | Over the last few years groups have had to disband because of the absence of facilities. One of the last remaining groups is the Young Farmers Club.                                                                          | Without S106 guarantees we are stuck. MHDC need to confirm that S106 is coming to Abberley in order for us to put together the much needed land extension plans for the Village Hall to include play area and community outdoor meeting. The local village school is trying to raise monies for a community use play project. <a href="https://www.abberley.worcs.sch.uk/">https://www.abberley.worcs.sch.uk/</a> |
| Badsey & Aldington            |                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | Community garden and allotments                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| Bayton Parish Council         | Children of all ages have little equipment, they have lots of open space. Adult exercise equipment. The hall is not used much for clubs                                                                                       | We are holding funds to tidy up villages but being a small community it is difficult. It has been suggested Trustees put equipment on recreation ground but nothing has been done so far.                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| Berrow                        | None are being met. The lack of public transport to other locations is an issue                                                                                                                                               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| Bishampton & Throckmorton     | A recent survey elicited an interest in an improvement in the current facilities for outdoor table tennis.<br><br>The other outcomes and a full report of the survey has not yet been circulated or considered within the PC. | TBC                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| Broadwas & Cotheridge         | Young people                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | Parish Council is in the process of pursuing an extension to the village hall, and also waiting for S106 funds to come through for improvements to the recreation ground. The                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |

|                            |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
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|                            |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | Parish Council is in the process of completing a Neighbourhood Development Plan                                                                                                                                                                                |
| Broadway                   | Allotment space within the parish<br>Tennis Facilities within the village                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | Being included within the Neighbourhood Plan currently being produced - draft due in early 2019.<br>Redevelopment of Youth Club<br>Possible relocation of Football Club<br>Community Land Trust – in connection with Neighbourhood Plan                        |
| Bushley                    | Bushley is a very small category 4a village, without a school (apart from the Private Bredon School).<br>3 or 4 children attend primary schools privately or at Eldersfield Lawn.<br>Approx. 5 or 6 young people attend secondary schools in Hanley Castle or Gloucester<br>A bowls club meets in the Village Hall on Monday evenings. Average age 75 -no aspiration to develop younger members. |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| Charlton                   | Facilities are shared with Cropthorne village                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| Cleeve Prior               | Young people and teenagers. Multi Use Games Area and a place for teenagers to congregate.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | The Council hopes to facilitate the purchase of new play equipment for the School Playing Fields.                                                                                                                                                              |
| Cookhill                   | N/A                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | The Parish Council would like to continue to provide facilities for all age groups in the playing fields and recreational ground and to support Cookhill Cricket Club in its bid to encourage new players of all ages.                                         |
| Crowle                     | No                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | Planning to continue with maintenance and updates of existing facilities as budget/fundraising allows.                                                                                                                                                         |
| Droitwich Spa Town Council | None                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             | Early stages of Neighbourhood Plan in progress supported by contracted Planning Consultant. One provisional theme heading for the draft plan is "Open Spaces".<br>Neighbourhood Plan in progress.                                                              |
| Eastham                    | It is hoped if/when a new Hall is built the community will organise events for all ages                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | We aim to support Hall Trustees in their efforts to obtain BLF funds for a new hall, legal issues have held the project up but PC are hopeful of a good outcome                                                                                                |
| Eckington                  | No                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | Eckington PC is currently preparing a Neighbourhood Plan. If adopted the plan will contain allocations for increased open space/play areas. The two sites are situated to the east of Pershore Road (Eckington Bank) and at the southern end of Jarvis Street. |

|                                                   |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
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| Evesham Town Council                              | Bowls Club are seeking funding to upgrade their pavilion. Sports Club are also working on upgrading their facilities.                                                                                                                                                                                           | New Cemetery. New allotment sites<br>Bowls Club as already stated and Evesham Sports Club have plans for improvements.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| Flyford Flavell, Grafton Flyford and North Piddle | The PC is currently thinking about providing play equipment on the green. The village hall committee is currently looking at improving facilities so that provision could be made for young people.                                                                                                             | Provision of play equipment if required by the community. Support of Village Hall plans for improvement.<br>Continual development at Grafton Wood now impeded by lack of funds.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| Great Witley and Hillhampton                      | The village could not sustain a swimming pool. A bowling green would be welcome.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                | We would like to link up the park (Bowen's field) with the school, multi-use court and children's play area. At present there is a footpath linking them but there is a field adjacent to the footpath which could readily be added to the present facilities.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| Hallow                                            | The Hallow community is currently seeking to draft a Neighbourhood Development Plan and also anticipates a need to consult all residents in relation to anticipated S106 funds.<br>The Parish Council would hope to have a clear understanding of community aspirations within the next 12 to 18 months.        | Parish Council is aware of the imminent availability of S106 funds, made available as a result of local developments. A public information event has already been held. Over the next 12 to 18 months consultation with local residents and community groups will seek to determine requirements for the use of these funds.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| Hanley                                            | No                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | A cycle path and improved footpaths linking Hanley Swan & Hanley Castle is their priority.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| Hartlebury                                        | No                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | Project already underway to improve the Parish Hall and recreational facilities within the village                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| Harvington                                        | Apart from the Baptist Chapel Youth initiative, there is nothing specifically for older teenagers in the village. The interests of the older generation appear to be fairly well catered for. Adult training equipment has been requested, and is under consideration (see above reference re: Jubilee Orchard) | One aspiration supported by the village, is to provide access across the River Avon, at the bottom of Anchor Lane, to Offenham. This would either be by undertaking work to re-open the ford - [rendered inaccessible in the '70s following construction of a lock to allow boats to navigate the Avon from Stratford to beyond Evesham, which 'flooded' the ford] - or constructing a footbridge to allow walkers and cyclists access across adjacent to the Fish & Anchor pub, which opens the potential to connect to the Fosse Way and beyond.<br>The cricket club are currently involved in improving the facilities available in their pavilion, with help from a grant from the Parish Council, following the major water leak damage. Once renovated the pavilion will again be available to hire for parties, etc. |
| Hindlip,                                          | All current needs of Young and Older People are limited to and met                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | There is always scope and need for new, improving or expanding existing facilities to                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |

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| Martin Hussingtree & Salwarpe. | by varied groups utilizing Salwarpe Village Hall i.e. Pre-school group. Health/Heart activity groups. Judo and All ages Dance clubs. Women's Institute. Foreign language course. Dog training course. Young children under school age are poorly served and those of school age have limited first school facilities. The communities of this PC are likely to use facilities in Droitwich, Fernhill Heath and Worcester.                                          | serve this diverse rural area. However, the rural parishes of Hindlip, Martin Hussingtree and Salwarpe are limited by agricultural and equine activities, conservation areas and protected settings of historic Listed Buildings. Located in Salwarpe parish to the boundary of Droitwich Town. William Davis Ltd Housing development is currently under construction at Copcut Rise, where future outdoor LEAPs and NEAP's play areas within the site are intended. At Court Farm Enterprise Centre, Hindlip Lane, Hindlip there is proposed an Indoor Conference/meeting Centre. |
| Honeybourne                    | Interest in a Boules tank on the Recreation Field – being investigated by Parish Council                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | As noted.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| Kenswick & Wichenford          | There has been a suggestion of a bowling green.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | We have just refurbished the 1000 Green: repaired existing equipment; installed new equipment                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| Knighton on Teme               | No                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | None at present, facilities close by in Tenbury Wells                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| Lindridge                      | Children and young people generally. Estimate to be at least 100 plus children in the Parish.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | Aspirations to support indoor/outdoor provisions in Eardiston under S106 if development was to take place in Eardiston. The Social Club have aspirations to develop a small play area but funding and lack of ground will inhibit this. The Church is seeking to carry out a feasibility study to convert to a multi-use facility.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| Little Malvern & Welland       | No                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | Current plans to provide adult outdoor gym equipment                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| Little Witley                  | Exercise Groups (we have a yoga group who try to organise an outdoor event once a month if not more), young people (primary and middle school years, senior school and college years) and older people, special interests groups ie walking for fitness groups, we also have many family units, but there is nowhere for them to go to as a family unit to play rounders, kick a football about etc. (and yes, we do have families that actually want to do that). | The Parish Council would very much like to explore the option of open space provision, but it is a small parish and financing such an initiative may prove challenging, but with project help and grants, not impossible.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| Lower Sapey                    | No                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | The Church is putting in water and hopefully a loo and kitchen so that as well as the big breakfast and wedding tea party which happened in the church car park further local                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |

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|                                     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | events can take place there. This is in response to an audit undertaken by the church from the residents of the community as to what they wanted the church for. It is the only community space in the parish                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| Malvern Wells                       | None specifically identified.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | If land was available we would like to extend the availability of play provision for local children and young adults.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| Martley                             | We lack a meeting place in the village since the pub has closed. There is an identified need for a pub and a café, which could also meet the social needs of the isolated and the elderly.                                                                          | Improve the Millennium Green, continue upgrading the Memorial Hall. Local residents' groups wish to improve the management of green spaces in housing estates.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| Norton & Lenchwick                  | An outdoor summer and term holidays youth group would be beneficial to our 8 to 13 sectors of youth                                                                                                                                                                 | We are in the process of completing our 10-year plan of improving and developing our outdoor space<br>Aspiration: We would love to get back a small tract of land next to the parish hall and adjacent to our playing field from a private developer. It was in public use and is still publicly used (without permission). It would enhance space for walkers, perhaps a small orchard, and provide the parish with space to hold outdoor events. Access to the land by vehicle is poor and it is not included in the SWDP but the developer thinks he has potential to develop. |
| Norton-juxta-Kempsey Parish Council | No                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | Within the proposed Welbeck Development there is provision for sport facilities and open space for walking.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| Offenham                            | Allotments                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | PC currently looking at making the recreation ground a place of fitness for all ages. Ongoing plans - already updated play area, proposed fitness track and possible MUGA, also adult fitness equipment                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| Ombersley and Doverdale             | The Parish of Ombersley and Doverdale are an aging population. There is a need for more community open space with benches and outdoor exercise equipment for older people. Ideally residents would like to see a village green in the Northern Part of the village. | We would like to move the football pitch and turn that area into a village green. A play ground committee has been set up to improve equipment in the children's play area.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| Pendock                             | None are met. The lack of public transport is an issue                                                                                                                                                                                                              |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| Pensax                              | Do not think there are any, we do have a pub which seems to be well used by local community, including groups, but that has now changed                                                                                                                             | Re the Hall, Trustees were going to apply for grants to improve kitchen at least but due to lack of use they have not taken the matter any further.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |

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|                            | hands so the future use may well change                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| Pershore Town Council      | Larger groups who wish to meet along with various larger social events and weddings have nowhere to go.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | The Town Council has spent two years researching the possibility of providing a new hall as well as undertaking public consultation. As a result a new hall is to be built in Defford Road.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| Rous Lench                 | There is little social provision for younger residents                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | Some street lighting could be helpful as mentioned in the village design statement in October 2008.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| Sedgeberrow Parish Council | There is a desperate need for daytime indoor community space to allow residents of all ages to congregate and progress community driven opportunities.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | Sedgeberrow Communities Group led by the Parish Council are seeking to re-establish an interim Community Hub whilst seeking to develop a scheme for the re-introduction of a Community Hall to include a volunteer run shop, education facilities, stage area for amateur dramatic, dance area and public meeting hall.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| South Littleton            | No                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | For many years the Parish has been endeavouring to acquire land near to South Meadow (Long Lartin) in order to provide more facilities for children and older children. Ministry of Justice own the land and we were offered the land at one point at a peppercorn rent. Offer subsequently withdrawn. Parish have been considering providing some outdoors gym equipment                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| St Peter the Great County  | Worcester City Council provides no community recreational facilities in St. Peter's. In particular there is no provision for young people and this has been a source of continued concern for many years leading to antisocial behaviour amongst bored youth. The development of St. Peters in the 1980s and 1990s was carried out with no provision for community facilities beyond a supermarket and some shops and a few small play areas. There is no school, no community centre, no sports pavilion, no youth club. Everything that does exist in St. Peters has largely been provided by the community themselves and that is one reason they petitioned for a parish council to be set up - so they could do some small things for themselves (NB - parish precept is less than £40,000 per annum). | The priority for the parish council is to ensure that the current small village hall is replaced at the end of its lease by a facility capable of hosting current clubs and societies whilst also being large enough to extend this to recreational activities for our youth. At the same time, the Parish Council is keen to provide some sort of sports pavilion in one of larger parks - perhaps along the lines of the new "Sons of Rest" building in Gheluvelt Park. The Parish Council and the Village Hall Association cannot afford the capital costs of these buildings but would be prepared to take on the management of them. |

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| Strensham            | None aware of                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | The Parish Council is currently applying for NHB funding to install benches to allow members of the community to enjoy outside spaces and views in the village.<br>The Parish Council has secured New Homes Bonus funding for improvement of Village Hall facilities, with work due to start soon.                                                                                                                                        |
| Suckley              | Inadequate facilities for smaller children within easy access of housing                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | We would love to have children's' facilities closer to existing housing and within sight of that housing for peace of mind. There is green space available in the ideal location, but the current social housing provider bans all games on the site and will not permit play equipment.                                                                                                                                                  |
| Tenbury Town Council | Currently undertaking a 'Let's Get Tenbury Active' survey to identify needs with the community.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            | Renovate Pavilion. Provide allotments. Work with the football club to provide new changing rooms. Work with Tenbury Community Pool Ltd to improve facilities.<br>Tenbury Primary Academy are fundraising to provide a running track at the school. Tenbury Community Pool Ltd are fundraising to improve the changing facilities and disability facilities at the centre. Football clubs are seeking funding to build new changing rooms. |
| Tibberton            |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            | The Parish Council in the process of building a new village hall to suitable for the future needs of the village and providing allotments.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| Upton Upon Severn TC | Safe cycle routes for recreational cyclists or for commuters are non-existent locally and their creation would benefit the community greatly. Improved moorings. There is a dire shortage of moorings for boaters which the council would be keen to improve.                                                                                                                                              | To provide additional moorings – we have a working group but funding is a problem. A long-term aim to perhaps provide outdoor gym equipment but we are waiting for the sector to prove itself. Other organisations are also investigating additional moorings. Not aware of other projects but that doesn't mean there aren't any.                                                                                                        |
| Whittington          | The current village hall is inadequate (old, too small, expensive to maintain, several health and safety concerns). There is currently a community project to provide a much better (in all respects) village hall facility which will inevitably improve significantly our ability to provide a greater variety of community events, facilities and opportunities to ALL age groups within the community. | Rebuild of existing village hall and development of grounds on existing site.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| Wickhamford          | No                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         | Allotment-no land available                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| Wyre Piddle          | Young people and older people need access to an outdoor and/or                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             | Development of Nature Reserve along Piddle Brooke – Area between Rail way viaduct and                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |

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|  | <p>indoor facility to play games, more social seating throughout the village, an allotment, improved pathways and cycleways, improved access and flexibility for the village hall, and a local nature/wildlife area for exercise and relaxation. The inter parish games take place each year including rounders, skittles, darts, football, bell boating, table tennis, petanque, cross-country, but the village has no facilities for practice or hosting any of the events.</p> | <p>Piddle Brooke Bridge.<br/>Footpath link through George Lane to a nature reserve/recreational facility to be developed on filled land-fill site<br/>Development of facilities for all surrounding villages at Throckmorton airfield<br/>Reinstatement of the chain link ferry to connect Wyre Piddle with the opposite bank of the Avon to provide a circular walk through Pershore for Wick, Wyre Piddle and surrounding villages.<br/>Footpath link through George Lane to a nature reserve/recreational facility to be developed on land-fill site – this has been discussed with the management of the site<br/>Development of facilities for all surrounding villages at Throckmorton airfield – this has been discussed with the management of this site</p> |
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### Parish/Town Councils – other comments

Finally, the survey also provided the opportunity to raise any other issues or to make other points. The table below provides individual town/parish responses made:

| Parish                                   | Comments                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
|------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Abberley (Village and Common)            | Abberley is a community becoming more and more isolated as facilities around the parish are closed and transport services reduced. We need less housing being shoe horned in on the outskirts of the settlement and more thought about servicing the quality of life needs of our population. We have one open space, being kept going by a group of volunteers - we need a safe child play area ideally close to the village hall/primary school (they are opposite one another) and we need far better maintenance of the footways in the Common and Village - that way people can get around to the new facilities that we have. We need to stop mucking about and MHDC need to give us a guarantee of the S106 money so that the Parish Council can actually get active on the projects we'd like to launch to benefit the community. |
| Berrow                                   | Lack of public transport                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| Broadway Parish Council                  | The Neighbourhood Plan takes a holistic view and these open spaces, community facilities contribute to the vitality and well-being of the Parish.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| Bushley Parish Council                   | Bushley has few families who express an interest in village life. Most people have large gardens. When my children (now 33 and 38) were growing up here the roads could be used as cycleways, most went to the same school in Tewkesbury, so saw much of each other at weekends and holidays- camping, playing in the fields, cricket, football, tennis, fishing ... I could go on. Life has changed for the children and families of today and they have different aspirations/expectations.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| Hindlip, Martin Hussingtee & Salwarpe PC | It is not important that everything suits everybody, but that there should be some facilities available to and accessible by all members of the community. Both parking and disabled facilities should likewise be a consideration. In answering, consideration has been given to the rural nature of the combined three parishes.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| Martley                                  | More care is needed with the contracts for the maintenance of green space in new housing estates. There have been problems in our parish with developers not passing                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |

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|                                          | control over to residents and contracts being placed by developers with unsuitable contractors.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| Pendock                                  | Lack of public transport                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| Sedgeberrow Parish Council               | Sedgeberrow has limited facilities. Developments within the village have had their Section 106 monies spent on facilities in Evesham that due to public transport inadequacies aren't available to rural residents during the evenings.                                                                                               |
| St Peter the Great County Parish Council | Parks and open spaces are fine but if there are no associated facilities - toilets, sports pavilion, shelter, or youth club, then their full potential is not being utilised. Provide those facilities and physical and mental health improves, social and community cohesion expands and society as a whole garners a positive gain. |

### 3.4 Worcester City Council – Ward Members

Worcester City Council's administrative area is not parished with the exception of two areas: Warndon Parish (containing Warndon Parish North and Warndon Parish South) and St. Peter the Great Parish. To secure a local perspective Worcester City Council Ward Members were surveyed and returns were received from the following wards: Arboretum, Battenhall, Cathedral, Claines, Gorse Hill, St. Peter's Parish; Warndon Parish North and Warndon Parish South.

#### 3.4.1 Ward specific issues

##### Unmet needs and aspirations for improvement

| Ward                   | Groups whose needs not being met                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | Current plans and known aspirations                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
|------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Arboretum              | Children and young people living in the Arboretum area need better recreational facilities.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | Worcester Play Area Strategy.<br>The Arboretum Residents' Association manage the Westbury Street Pocket Park (community garden). They also have a project to clear the alleyways in the area and (where residents are in agreement) create garden spaces in the alleys.<br>Worcester Canal Group hold monthly litterpicks along the canal towpath and in Lansdowne Park. |
| Battenhall             | Dog walkers would like a 'dog park' where they can let their dogs off leads securely.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         | None specifically identified.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| Cathedral              | There has been extensive development and large increase in population in new Diglis and the Porcelain works. A community centre was planned here but this has not materialised. These residents have unmet community needs. The new swimming pool and leisure centre at Perdiswell is not accessible to Cathedral residents who cannot drive. | Plan for Riverside improvements, also City Centre Master Plan.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| Claines Ward           | There is a demand for additional Children's Play Areas, we have two very good facilities, but they are at the extreme south, and at the extreme east of the ward. There is virtually nothing in terms of Children's Play Areas within walking distance of the vast majority of residents with small children.                                 | None specifically identified.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| Gorse Hill Ward        | Toddlers in Avon Teme Road.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | None specifically identified.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| St Peter's Parish Ward | Several unmet needs in terms of sporting/recreational activity facilities.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | Some play area refurbishment although it is overdue.<br>Area 51, a Playbuilder Scheme, needs urgent replacement.<br>Restoration of "wet lands", beside Duck Brook, a project the Environment Agency                                                                                                                                                                      |

|                      |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
|----------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                      |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         | were keen on, but this scheme has gone cold.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| Warndon Parish North | Nothing obvious                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         | Warndon Parish Plan is being developed by Warndon Parish Council likely to include suggestions including city council owned land off Parsonage Way.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| Warndon Parish South | The community Hub already runs a local walking and keep fit groups as well as a local gardening group and there is a local friends group that helps manage local open spaces, there are also a number of individual community litter pickers would look after their local areas. There are also a number of juice pressing groups involved with the community orchards. | At present there are no plans to develop new community facilities in the area. There are continuing plans to maintain and repair and replace play equipment in the local play areas. There have been feasibility studies carried out for the possibility for a site on Parsonage Way for a home for Worcester City Football club, the land is just outside the ward and was found to be unsuitable for development due to a rare breed of Bats and Great Crested Newts who use the land for feeding. |

The survey also provided the opportunity to raise any other issues or to make other general points. The table below provides individual ward responses made:

| Ward                 | Other Comments                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
|----------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Arboretum            | Too many of our open spaces are dominated by dog walkers. Some open spaces are sterile - we should encourage wildlife, tree planting, guerrilla gardening etc.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| Cathedral            | Cathedral ward suffers from poor air quality and traffic congestion - not conducive to good health for residents. The new developments, with multiple apartment blocks, have poor public space, unsoftened by landscaping or greenery and lacking any sense of community. The University of Worcester has some facilities within Cathedral Ward. Some of the indoor spaces are open to the public but the outdoor space on the Castle Street site is under-utilised. |
| Claines Ward         | Gheluvelt Park splash pad attracts huge numbers of visitors, mostly at the same time (outside school hours when its warm and sunny) leading to major parking disruption for local residents, parking is already difficult. Gheluvet Park disparately needs more parking provision, only option is to expand car park on Waterworks Road opposite Pump House. Or build another splash pad elsewhere in the city to reduce demand.                                     |
| Gorse Hill Ward      | Guided/supported play important; need to have attendant on site.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| Warndon Parish South | Warndon Villages is an excellent example of how an estate of 4000 houses can be built incorporating plenty of open spaces with a good number of play areas, footpaths, cycle routes and bridleways and plenty of landscape planting. The only downside is that some of the areas have been overplanted and do cost more to maintain. The maintenance of this shows a good relationship with the local parish council and the City Council.                           |

The detailed Town/Parish Council and Worcester City Council ward member responses relating to aspects of quantity and quality of the various elements are provided in Appendix 1.

## 3.5 Neighbouring Local Authorities and Parish Councils - Observations and key issues

### Neighbouring Local Authorities – Cross Boundary Issues

Section 3.1 above briefly reviewed feedback from neighbouring Local Authorities in relation to the status of their open space strategies/associated studies and any cross-border issues of significance. The variety of documents and strategies in place (and their relevance to current planning policy) is considerable, embracing green infrastructure studies, open space strategies, and sport, recreation and play strategies. The approach adopted by each authority is very much locally derived.

A number of neighbouring authorities have highlighted issues relating to green infrastructure but in general few cross border and wider strategic issues have been specifically identified. There may be scope for neighbouring local authorities to work more closely across boundary lines to make the most of accessible natural green space resources and to develop additional common themes and agendas.

Examples of specific issues of cross/border and wider strategic observations included:

- Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) sites crossing boundaries in some areas e.g. Cotswolds, Malvern Hills and Bredon Hill.
- Possible implications arising from cross boundary landscape types to the south of Bromsgrove and Redditch.
- Cotswolds District - Policy SP6 (Cheltenham to Stratford upon Avon Railway Line) and Policy & Policy INF6 (Heavy vehicles control zone) of the adopted Local Plan 2011-2031.
- Tewkesbury - dwellings near Bredon on the edge of Tewkesbury town but within Wychavon District; and a concept masterplan for the Ashchurch area which lies close to the boundary with Wychavon District.

It is notable that many authorities are currently involved with the commissioning of new open space related studies or the updating of previous strategies that are now considered to be out of date.

### Parish/Town Councils and Worcester City Council Ward members

Section 3.2 above provided findings from the parish councils' survey undertaken for the study. 72 of the 127 local town and parish councils responded. Section 3.3 detailed responses from Worcester City ward members in relation to 8 wards in the City.

#### **General Overview**

- 52 of the 72 town/parish councils who responded were directly responsible for the management of various local spaces and outdoor recreational facilities. 20 local councils managed community buildings directly and many noted that they were managed by a local trust.
- 44 of the local councils who responded noted that there was a need for additional or improved open space, play and recreation facilities within their town or parish.
- The sectors of the community most commonly identified as being poorly served in relation to their needs were children, young people/teenagers, and older people.
- Poor transport for all sectors but particularly for children and young people was highlighted.

#### **Common areas of concern**

The needs and aspirations that individual parishes and Worcester City ward members identified were very varied. The more frequently highlighted typologies were:

- Community Buildings – village halls and community centres. Need for quality and access improvements to existing facilities in the main rather than additional halls;
- Footpaths, bridleways and cyclepaths (provision of new cyclepaths being most commonly identified along with improved maintenance of rights of way); and
- Play areas and youth facilities – mainly improvements in quality for play areas but need for additional youth facilities.

### ***Quality factors - open space provision***

The quality factors most commonly deemed to be of a high priority as regards recreational public open spaces are that:

- They should be safe and secure for those using them;
- They should be easy to get to and to get around within for all members of the community;
- Equipment and grounds should be of high quality and well maintained;
- They should be multi-functional providing for all sectors of the community;
- There should be adequate opportunities for dog walking and freedom from dog fouling; and
- There should be control of noise and unsocial behaviour

Other factors specifically highlighted included:

- There should be provision of outdoor seated areas;
- They should be durable and aesthetically pleasing to a majority of villagers;
- Need for an Inspection and Maintenance strategy - any equipment on site should be regular (weekly) inspections for damage and/or deterioration requiring repair and have routine checks for health and safety standard compliance;
- Should be well and appropriately lit when necessary; and
- Provision of shelter/performance areas, like the old-fashioned band stands. This could encourage local groups to put on concerts and mini-performances, and also could get a fitness / walking group going etc.

### ***Detailed responses on open space typologies***

The parish/town councils and Worcester City ward members also provided detailed responses relating to aspects of quantity and quality of the various elements of open spaces surveyed which can be found in Appendix 1.

## 4.0 PARKS, GREEN SPACES, COUNTRYSIDE AND RIGHTS OF WAY

### 4.1 Introduction

This section covers consultation responses and findings in relation to non-sporting recreational open spaces, including parks and gardens, natural green spaces, countryside and water recreation, allotments, recreations grounds and rights of way.

Consultation undertaken for this section included key stakeholder surveys, and a survey of relevant community organisations. In addition to community groups, local (town and parish) councils were consulted as part of the core consultation: many of these local councils made comments relevant to the types of open space considered here. Therefore, where such councils have made relevant responses in their returns they are also noted along with those from the local community groups.

The information and findings from this section will be taken forward in the Open Space Study main report.

This section is comprised of nine main sub headings:

- Review of key local authority strategy
- Key stakeholders - strategic context and overview
- Community organisations – overview
- Parks and recreation grounds
- Allotments
- Natural green space/outdoor recreation – e.g. wildlife areas, nature reserves and woodlands
- Footpaths, bridleways and cyclepaths
- Water recreation
- Other open space

There is a summary of key points and issues at the end of the section, which also reference relevant findings from a sample household survey conducted as part of the overall core consultation.

### 4.2 Review of relevant local authority policy and strategy

#### **Corporate Plans of the South Worcestershire local authorities.**

Each of the three south Worcestershire councils (SWC) produce their own 'council plans' or strategies. These tend to be short documents that are periodically updated, and they set the tone for council decisions and actions over a set time horizon. The following summarises each of the three plans.

**Malvern Hills District Council Five Year Plan 2016-2021:** A vision is to make life better for everyone who lives, works in and experiences the Malvern Hills District. To achieve this there are three priorities with objectives and actions for each, making the most of resources:

- Building stronger and healthier communities
- Driving economic prosperity and growth
- Making the most of our superb environment

A five-year plan sets out specific ambitions and direction to help prioritise resources and deliver actions.

**Wychavon District Council Our strategy 2016 – 2020:** A four-year strategy sets out the direction for the council from April 2016 up until March 2020.

The stated purpose/aim is to be an outstanding, innovative council delivering great services and making life better for everyone in Wychavon.

The strategy contains the three priorities shown below. For each priority there are several goals:

- People: healthy, happy, active and supported
- Place: green, clean and safe with quality, affordable homes
- Prosperity: vibrant communities with quality jobs and skills.

#### **Worcester City Plan 2016-2021 "Building a successful future on 2000 years of history"**

- **Stronger and Connected Communities:** A stated desire for people in Worcester to feel they are part of a city where they have positive relationships with each other, where they feel safe and where they are able to succeed to the best of their abilities.
- **A Prosperous City:** A goal of sustainable growth from which many people and communities can benefit.
- **A Healthy and Active City:** A desire for residents to have a good start in life, enjoying healthy and fulfilling lives, through to a dignified end.
- **A Heritage City for the 21st Century:** Seek to retain the 'essence of Worcester', whilst accommodating the needs of sustainable growth and development in a way that is sympathetic with a range of views, needs and potential.
- **Sustaining and Improving our Assets:** A goal that people recognise the beauty of the city help to protect, sustain and improve its environment for the benefit of current and future generations.

#### **The South Worcestershire Development Plan (SWDP)**

The SWDP was adopted and published on 25 February 2016. Planning decisions by these Local Planning Authorities and the Government's Planning Inspectorate must be taken in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

The SWCs started a review of the SWDP in late 2017. This is in line with new Government requirements that local plans should be updated every five years, and therefore a revised SWDP is required by 2021. The review will provide an updated plan period to the year 2041. The plan will update the existing SWDP and where necessary its Vision, Objectives, Spatial Strategy and policies for the future development of the South Worcestershire area. The plan will also include site allocations, policies and policy designations that will provide for the development needs of the area up to 2041.

#### **Key objectives of the adopted SWDP**

The key objectives of the adopted SWDP relevant to this study are contained under the following themes, which also tend to reflect the stated aims and ambitions of the (above) council plans:

##### *'Stronger Communities'*

- To deliver sufficient new homes needed by local communities and which will help support economic growth<sup>14</sup>.

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<sup>14</sup> Quantifiable housing needs change and the figures provided in the adopted local plan can only represent a snapshot in time, as housing sites are committed and built, and other circumstances change. Therefore, the quantum of housing allocations and needs (including those in the local plan) are not mentioned in this consultation report, but are instead considered in other accompanying assessment reports where they have particular relevance.

- To allocate most development in locations where there is good access to local services and where transport choice is maximised.

#### *‘A Better Environment for Today and Tomorrow’*

- To protect the Green Infrastructure Network and take every opportunity to increase its coverage and quality.
- To enhance biodiversity, geodiversity, landscape quality, water quality and protect the highest quality agricultural land.

#### *‘Improving Health and Well-being’*

- To ensure that new development sets out high quality formal / informal recreational opportunities and contributes to enhanced sporting facilities in order to encourage healthy lifestyles.

Local Plan policies support the above objectives. In some cases, policies have supporting footnotes and references included in the Local Plan, and as such have been excluded for brevity. The key local plan policies considered relevant to this study are therefore as follows:

### **SWDP 5: Green Infrastructure**

- A. Housing development proposals (including mixed-use schemes) are required to contribute towards the provision, maintenance, improvement and connectivity of Green Infrastructure (GI) as follows (subject to financial viability):
  - i. For greenfield sites exceeding 1ha (gross) - 40% Green Infrastructure (GI).
  - ii. For greenfield sites of less than 1ha but more than 0.2ha (gross) – 20% Green Infrastructure (GI).
  - iii. For brownfield sites – no specific Green Infrastructure (GI).
- B. The precise form and function(s) of GI will depend on local circumstances and the Worcestershire Green Infrastructure Strategy’s priorities. Developers should seek to agree these matters with the local planning authority in advance of a planning application. Effective management arrangements should also be clearly set out and secured. Once a planning permission has been implemented, the associated GI will be protected as Green Space (SWDP 38 refers).
- C. Other than specific site allocations in the development plan, development proposals that would have a detrimental impact on important GI attributes within the areas identified as “protect and enhance” or “protect and restore”, as identified on the Environmental Character Areas Map, will not be permitted unless:
  - i. A robust, independent assessment of community and technical need shows the specific GI typology to be surplus to requirements in that location; and
  - ii. Replacement of, or investment in, GI of at least equal community and technical benefit is secured.

### **SWDP 37: Built Community Facilities<sup>15</sup>**

- A. The provision of new community facilities or the enhancement of existing facilities will be permitted, particularly where the proposals have resulted from neighbourhood planning, subject to satisfying the sequential test in the Framework where applicable. Applicants will be required to consider whether the combining or rationalisation of existing facilities would be more appropriate than the provision of a new facility.

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<sup>15</sup> An explanatory note to the policy makes clear that ‘community facilities’ comprise specific buildings (and associated land) for a range of uses, including: Health facilities. Emergency services i.e. ambulance, police, fire. Educational establishments such as schools and colleges. Community centres, village halls. Leisure and cultural facilities. Public houses. Places of worship. Libraries. Built sports facilities Cinemas / theatres. Formal sports pitches / courts.

- B. Any proposal that would result in the loss of a site or building currently or last used as a community facility will only be permitted if the following criteria are met:
  - i. An alternative community facility which meets local needs to at least the same extent is, or will be, provided in an equally or more accessible location; or
  - ii. It has been demonstrated that there is an excess of similar provision in the appropriate catchment area for that particular facility and the site or building is not needed for any other community facility; or
  - iii. In the case of commercial community facilities, it has been demonstrated that it would not be economically or operationally viable to retain the facility for community use; or
  - iv. In the case of non-commercial community facilities, the use is no longer operationally viable; or
  - v. The community facility could not be provided or operated by either the current occupier or by an alternative occupier (e.g. by a local community body, public-private partnership, etc.) and it has been marketed in accordance with Annex F (Marketing Requirements).
  - vi. Applicants are required to scope existing facilities in the area and consider whether it would be more appropriate to combine or rationalise existing facilities in the first instance.
  - vii. Applicants proposing to re-develop or convert a community facility should consult the appropriate community prior to the submission of a planning application.

### **SWDP 38: Green Space**

- A. Green Space, as identified on the Policies Map, includes a range of private and public open spaces and associated community facilities.
- B. Development of Green Space will not be permitted unless the following exceptional circumstances are demonstrated:
  - i. The proposal is for a community / recreational use that does not compromise the essential quality and character of the Green Space; or
  - ii. An assessment of community and technical need (using recognised national methodology where appropriate) clearly demonstrates that the Green Space is surplus to requirements; or
  - iii. Alternative / replacement Green Space of at least equivalent value to the community has been secured in a suitable location.
- C. This policy should be read in conjunction with policies SWDP 5, 22, 29 & 39<sup>16</sup> as any new Green Infrastructure secured under these policies will be designated and protected as Green Space.

### **SWDP 39: Provision for Green Space and Outdoor Community Uses in New Development**

- A. Development proposals exceeding 5 dwellings<sup>17</sup> should make provision for Green Space and outdoor community uses as set out in Table 10, together with secure arrangements for its long-term management and on-going maintenance. Enhancing accessibility to these open spaces, e.g. through improvements to the Rights of Way Network, is strongly encouraged. The total amount of Green Space will be within the overall quantum of Green Infrastructure required by SWDP 5. In addition to Table 10, the precise amount, form and type of outdoor community use will be informed by local evidence, e.g. Parish and Town Plans, Neighbourhood Plans, Village Design Statements.

<sup>16</sup> SWDP 22 and 29 deal with Biological and Geological Diversity; and, Sustainable Drainage, respectively.

<sup>17</sup> Following the Court of Appeal decision regarding West Berkshire and Reading Councils' challenge to the Government's policy on developer contributions thresholds, the 28 November 2014 Ministerial Statement is a material consideration for the decision maker. For tariff-based developer contributions the south Worcestershire Councils will not seek them for development of 10 or less (net) dwellings unless the site lies within a Designated Rural Area where only on developments of 5 dwellings or less will developer contributions not be sought.

## Standards of Provision<sup>18</sup>

|                                                                         | Malvern Hills                 | Worcester (within its administrative boundary) | Wychavon                      |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------|------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------|
|                                                                         | ha / 1,000 population         |                                                |                               |
| <b>Amenity (including informal pitches) and semi-natural greenspace</b> | 2                             | 1.11                                           | 1.03                          |
| <b>Cemeteries, churchyards</b>                                          | 0.41                          | No set standard                                | No set standard               |
| <b>Civic space</b>                                                      | 0.03                          | 0.03                                           | 0.03                          |
| <b>Allotments</b>                                                       | 0.14                          | 0.4                                            | 0.39                          |
| <b>Formal pitches etc.</b>                                              | No set standard (see C below) |                                                | No set standard (see C below) |
| <b>Total</b>                                                            | <b>2.62</b>                   | <b>2.15</b>                                    | <b>1.54</b>                   |

- B. In cases where it will be impractical and inappropriate to deliver all the open space typologies on site, developer contributions towards off-site provision will be sought and secured through a legal agreement. For large scale proposals, in particular the urban extensions, most of the typologies must be delivered on site. In all cases the developer will be required to secure the long-term maintenance / management arrangements for all Green Space / outdoor community uses both on and off-site.
- C. Requirements for new and improved formal sports pitches will be assessed on a case by case basis using the most up-to-date available evidence.
- D. On-site provision of Green Space will have regard to the following accessibility standards:  
Playing Pitches - within 1.2km of all dwellings or within 20-minutes' drive-time in rural areas.

There are other area and site specification policies, allocations and designations elsewhere in the Local Plan that may have relevance to aspects of this study.

The current standards will be reviewed and new standards proposed as part of this study.

### Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) - Developer Contributions (Adopted July 2018)

This SPD sets out the approach that the three SWCs will take when considering and determining the amount a developer should pay towards infrastructure necessary to make a development proposal acceptable in planning terms.

The SPD offers guidance on the application of developer contributions towards the implementation of Policy SWDP 39, where developments exceed 10 dwellings (as per footnote 17 of this report). Unit costs are offered for different types of open space, as are average household sizes to enable 'per capita' estimates to be made as required in the policy (see below).

| District      | Average Household Size |
|---------------|------------------------|
| Malvern Hills | 2.32                   |
| Worcester     | 2.35                   |
| Wychavon      | 2.36                   |

<sup>18</sup> Excludes the policy standards for Equipped Play Space which are covered in section 5

| District      | Dwellings per 1,000 residents |
|---------------|-------------------------------|
| Malvern Hills | 431                           |
| Worcester     | 425                           |
| Wychavon      | 423                           |

As the above average household sizes and per capita populations vary between the three South Worcestershire Councils, so too will the unit costs of providing open space vary between each authority, and the SPD offers guidance in this regard through bespoke tables.

The SPD also offers guidance on means to secure the long-term maintenance of open space provided either within a development or elsewhere. This includes future maintenance scenarios of new open space may be secured by a variety of means, including by a management company and estate management charges or by adoption of the land by a local authority. It is to be noted that potential variables such as unit costs and average household sizes are embedded in the SPD, which presumably makes for difficulty in updating.

**Other Planning Obligations:** The general need for development to mitigate against any adverse impacts is supported by policy SWDP 7 infrastructure which states that ‘Development will be required to provide or contribute towards the provision of infrastructure needed to support it. Developers will also need to contribute towards community benefits related to the development.’

Any developer contribution for bespoke infrastructure provision can only be required if it is in accordance with the CIL Regulations and the NPPF tests for planning obligations (Necessary to make the development acceptable in planning terms; Directly related to the development; and Fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind to the development).

In the SPD, relevant infrastructure for planning obligations is defined as: Biodiversity/natural habitats; Historic environment; Burial land; Community Development; Indoor Sport & Recreation Facilities; Renewable and Low Carbon Energy; Waste Management; Emergency Services infrastructure; Public Art and Public Realm enhancements beyond the boundary of a development site; Employment and Skills initiatives and training.

### Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) Publications

The IDP will be updated through the local plan review and give details of the infrastructure that is required to support the growth set out in the SWDP. The information set out in the IDP will be used to develop the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL), and to inform and support negotiations with developers about site specific developer contributions (s106) and other relevant agreements (such as s278 public highways) to contribute towards the impact on the local and strategic transport network.

The original structure of the South Worcestershire Infrastructure Delivery Plan, based on national best practice and the particular situation in South Worcestershire, was endorsed by the South Worcestershire Joint Advisory Panel. The following is the structure of the IDP for the latest update (Oct 2016): 1) Introduction. 2) South Worcestershire Context 3) SWDP Approach 4) Physical Infrastructure 5) Social Infrastructure 6) Green Infrastructure 7) Delivery of Infrastructure: Funding Mechanisms 8) Conclusions. Open space (including green infrastructure), and community buildings are covered to varying degrees in Sections 6 and 7.

## 4.3 Key Stakeholders - strategic context and overview

This sub-section summarises the role and function of key stakeholders that have responded to the consultation. Responses specific to certain types of open space are highlighted under each of the focused typology headings later in this section.

The following Council officers provided comments through written response and/or phone interview. The roles of these officers are summarised below, and their comments on themes covered by the study are addressed later in this section.

### 4.3.1 South Worcestershire and Worcestershire County Councils

#### **Malvern Hills District Council**

**Contracts and Performance Manager**

#### **Worcester City Council**

**Supervisor Environmental Operations**

*Role:* Amongst other functions is responsible for overseeing the maintenance of greenspaces within the City.

#### **Wychavon District Council**

**Wildlife Sites and Projects Officer**

*Role:* Responsible for overseeing the promotion and development of various wildlife and wetland projects within the District.

**Senior Parks and Greenspace Officer**

*Role:* Amongst other functions is responsible for overseeing the maintenance of greenspaces within the District.

#### **Worcestershire County Council**

**Countryside and Greenspace Manager**

*Role:* Within the overall 'Countryside and Leisure' service of the County Council, which has responsibilities covering: Country Parks, Picnic Places & Nature Reserves; Public Rights of Way; Walks & Rides; Volunteering with the Countryside Service; Health Walks; Gypsies & Travellers; Advice & Support for Your Local Project; Access Land

**Transport Strategy Officer**

*Role:* Responsible for the development of strategic transport policy and strategy across the County, especially with regard to cycling and walking.

### 4.3.2 Strategic Organisations

A semi-structured questionnaire was circulated to all relevant strategic organisations considered to have a bearing on the study (with the exception of neighbouring local authorities, which were considered through a separate part of the consultation). Strategic organisations were generally defined as those that covered geographical areas larger than the South Worcestershire area, although exceptions had to be made in the case of those with specific responsibilities for the Malvern Hills and the Cotswolds (where the latter converges on the South Worcestershire area).

The organisations consulted were:

- Canal and River Trust
- Cotswolds AONB ✓
- Environment Agency ✓
- Forestry Commission
- Malvern Hills Trust ✓
- Malvern Hills AONB ✓
- Natural England ✓
- Rural Community Council (Village Halls)
- Woodland Trust
- Worcestershire Wildlife Trust ✓

Those organisations that have responded directly to the survey are 'ticked'. Where responses have not been received additional desk-based investigations have been conducted to gain insight into policies of organisations as they relate to the South Worcestershire area. In discussion with the AONBs it was agreed that the issues raised in their management plan should, where relevant, be used as a contribution to this consultation.

#### **Worcestershire Wildlife Trust (WWT)** Senior Conservation Officer - Planning

**Role:** WWT manages various nature reserves within Worcestershire. It has over 30 nature reserves in the SWDP area. These vary greatly from small grasslands with very limited public access to larger woodlands and meadow complexes where we encourage quiet enjoyment of wildlife.

Examples of some of its larger reserves in the SWDP area include The Knapp and Papermill (near Alfrick), Upton Warren (near Bromsgrove but in Wychavon district), Tiddesley Wood (close to Pershore), Monkwood (near Worcester) and Grafton Wood (near Flyford Flavell).

#### **Natural England** (Lead Advisor- Planning for a better environment)

**Role:** The government's adviser for the natural environment in England, helping to protect England's nature and landscapes for people to enjoy and for the services they provide. Its responsibilities are for:

- promoting nature conservation and protecting biodiversity
- conserving and enhancing the landscape
- securing the provision and improvement of facilities for the study, understanding and enjoyment of the natural environment
- promoting access to the countryside and open spaces and encouraging open-air recreation
- contributing in other ways to social and economic well-being through management of the natural environment

Within the South Worcestershire area, Natural England oversees three National Nature Reserves:

- Bredon Hill (managed by Natural England)
- Chaddesley Woods (not managed by Natural England)
- Foster's Green Meadows (not managed by Natural England)

**Spatial planning standards:** Natural England has proposed standards for provision of natural green space, the Accessible Natural Green Space (ANGSt) standard. These standards recommend that everyone, wherever they live, should have accessible natural green space:

- Of at least 2 hectares in size, no more than 300 metres (5 minute's walk) from home
- At least one accessible 20 hectare site within two kilometres of home
- One accessible 100 hectare site within five kilometres of home; and
- One accessible 500 hectare site within ten kilometres of home; plus
- Statutory local Nature Reserves at a minimum level of one hectare per thousand population

Natural England suggest that these standards should be a target to achieve; and particularly that everyone, wherever they live, should have an accessible natural green spaces of at least two hectares in size, no more than 300 metres (5 minutes from home).

## The Woodland Trust

*Role:* The Woodland Trust is the country's largest woodland conservation charity with over 500,000 members and supporters and more than 1,000 sites, covering over 26,000 hectares, all over the UK.

The Trust protect and campaign, plant trees, and restore ancient woodland for the benefit of wildlife and people. It states that "Trees and woods filter our air, cool our cities, purify our water and enrich our soil. Yet the damage done to them has now reached catastrophic levels, and our plant and animal species are declining at an alarming rate."

**Spatial Planning Standards:** The Woodland Trust has researched and developed the Woodland Access Standard (WASSt) for local authorities to aim for, encapsulated in their Space for People publication. They believe that the WASSt can be an important policy tool complimenting other access standards used in delivering green infrastructure for health benefits.

The WASSt is complimentary to Natural England's ANGSt+ and is endorsed by Natural England. The Woodland Trust Woodland Access Standard recommends:

- that no person should live more than 500m from at least one area of accessible woodland of no less than 2ha in size
- that there should also be at least one area of accessible woodland of no less than 20ha within 4km (8km round-trip) of people's homes.

## Environment Agency (EA)

*Role:* The Environment Agency (EA) protects and improves the environment and promotes sustainable development. It plays a central role in implementing the government's environmental strategy in England. The Environment Agency plays a lead role in managing flood risk and works to minimise the impact of flooding.

EA is an executive non-departmental public body of the Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs

**EA's views on the importance of biodiversity and multi-functional open space:** Green Infrastructure (GI) is a term that describes a network of interconnected green and blue spaces such as: parks and gardens; playing fields and allotments; towpaths and wildlife corridors; beaches; watercourses, wetlands and flood storage areas; woodlands; trees; grasslands; green roofs and swales. GI lies within and between cities, towns and villages and can include both private and public spaces. The EA note that:

- A well planned and managed GI network can and should perform multiple functions and provide multiple benefits and services for communities such as:
  - managing surface water and flood risk
  - improving water quality
  - helping communities to address and adapt to climate change
  - providing opportunities for recreation and improved wellbeing
  - enhancing biodiversity
  - promoting community interaction

Guidance is available <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/natural-environment>

## The Forestry Commission

**Role:** The Forestry Commission is the government department responsible for protecting, expanding and promoting the sustainable management of woodlands and increasing their value to society and the environment.

The Forestry Commission and Natural England share Standing Advice in relation to Ancient Woodlands. The Local Partnership Advisor notes that:

- The NPPF amended in May contains stronger protections for ancient trees and ancient woodlands
- The Forestry Act regulates felling of woodland. UK Forest Standard provides guidance on acceptable management of woodland and on best practice.
- The government's 25 Year Environment Plan reiterates a commitment to planting 11 million trees.
- the government's Clean Growth Strategy includes a commitment to increasing woodland cover in England to 12% by 2060, which means 130,000ha of new woodland. It also sets out a target of a 26% drop in emissions from land use, which may require an even larger shift to woodland.

The Forestry Commission also provided specific national guidance “Local Plans and ancient woodland – Forestry Commission approach” which they note may assist in assessing the appropriateness of sites for future development, and to highlight opportunities for achieving meeting renewable energy obligations (see Appendix 2).

## The Malvern Hills Trust

*Role:* Protects and manages the Malvern Hills and Commons on behalf of the nation. Its work keeps this diverse landscape open to all and maintains its rich cultural and natural heritage. The Malvern Hills Trust looks after over 1,200 hectares of land including open hilltops, urban commons, wooded slopes and haymeadows. All of the work is determined and guided by the Malvern Hills Acts.

The Trust's Business Plan is the principal strategic document in the ongoing development and good management of our organisation.

It sets out the key aims and objectives of the Malvern Hills Trust, both in the short and long-term view, and identifies those challenges and issues which are anticipated in the coming years.

## Malvern Hills AONB and Cotswolds AONB (Partnerships)

*Role:* The primary purpose of AONB designation is to conserve and enhance natural beauty. “In pursuing the primary purpose of designation, account should be taken of the needs of agriculture, forestry and other rural industries and of the economic and social needs of local communities. Particular regard should be paid to promoting sustainable forms of economic and social development that in themselves conserve and enhance the environment. Recreation is not an objective of designation, but the demand for recreation should be met so far as this is consistent with the conservation of natural beauty and the needs of agriculture, forestry and other uses”.

The two AONB designations in south Worcestershire signify that the natural beauty of an area is of national importance. As such, Partnerships of local and national interests work together to conserve and enhance the area through the implementation of five-year AONB Management Plans.

‘AONB Partnership’ is an umbrella term comprising all of those bodies and individuals that work together to conserve and enhance the special qualities of a designated area. A formal governance structure exists to facilitate this joint working and, in particular, to ensure that the AONB Management Plan is produced, implemented and reviewed. However, it should be noted that much is also achieved through informal opportunities for joint working, for example, with individuals, businesses and communities.

Both AONB partnerships have management plans. The intention is that the AONB management plan is informed by other land use policies, plans and strategies (such as statutory development plans) and is implemented alongside and in conjunction with them. However, in focussing on the AONB designation and the statutory purpose to conserve and enhance natural beauty it is also expected that management plans will influence the preparation and delivery of key policies, plans, processes and decisions affecting the area. This would cover, for example, Local Plans, Neighbourhood Development Plans, Local Transport Plans and Green Infrastructure Strategies.

## 4.4 Community Organisations Survey (non-sports): overview

### 4.4.1 Introduction

A semi-structured questionnaire was circulated to relevant community organisations considered to have an interest in open space covered by this study. Community organisations were defined as those that cover a geography spanning only part of the overall study area (usually just one of the three constituent local authorities).

The questionnaire asked about each organisation's key interests and activities. It also asked for comments on aspects of local green Infrastructure, open space, recreation in relation to considerations of 'Quantity', 'Quality', and 'Accessibility'.

12 organisations responded, although two of these might ultimately be considered better covered under Key Stakeholders (notable the Ramblers Association and the Council for the Preservation of Rural England (CPRE)). However, local representatives for organisations such as these, often offer 'local/personal' as opposed to strategic views.

The following summarises the roles of each of these organisations. Their detailed comments received are covered later in this section.

|                      |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
|----------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Name of Group</b> | <b>Pensham Community Trust</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| Representative       | Chairman                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| Area covered         | Wychavon District                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| Summary of activity  | We have established and maintain a community field in our village because there are no recreational or wildlife facilities provided for us.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| <b>Name of Group</b> | <b>Droitwich Community Sports Club</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| Representative       | Development Officer                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| Area covered         | Wychavon District                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| Summary of activity  | We are predominantly a rugby club catering for ages 3-senior level. We have circa 450 mini & junior members and circa 100 senior players. The club has also played host to other users including football and archery and our long term objectives are to become a fully integrated multi-sport club. We also host community interest groups such as Age UK & forest school uses as well as regular blood donation days. |
| <b>Name of Group</b> | <b>Malvern Hills District Footpath Society</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| Representative       | Secretary                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| Area covered         | Malvern District                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| Summary of activity  | Walking group whose aim is to keep the footpaths within the Malvern District open by walking them. 171 members mainly 60+ age group. 2 5-6 miles walks per week and 1 10-12 mile walk per week.                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| <b>Name of Group</b> | <b>Malvern Community Forest</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| Representative       | Chair                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| Area covered         | Malvern District                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| Summary of activity  | Our aims are as follows<br>1. To establish, maintain and use woodland and other environmental assets for the educational, health and environmental benefit of the local and wider community.<br>2. To work in partnership with communities, charities and other agencies to increase the awareness, knowledge, appreciation and involvement of the general public with                                                   |

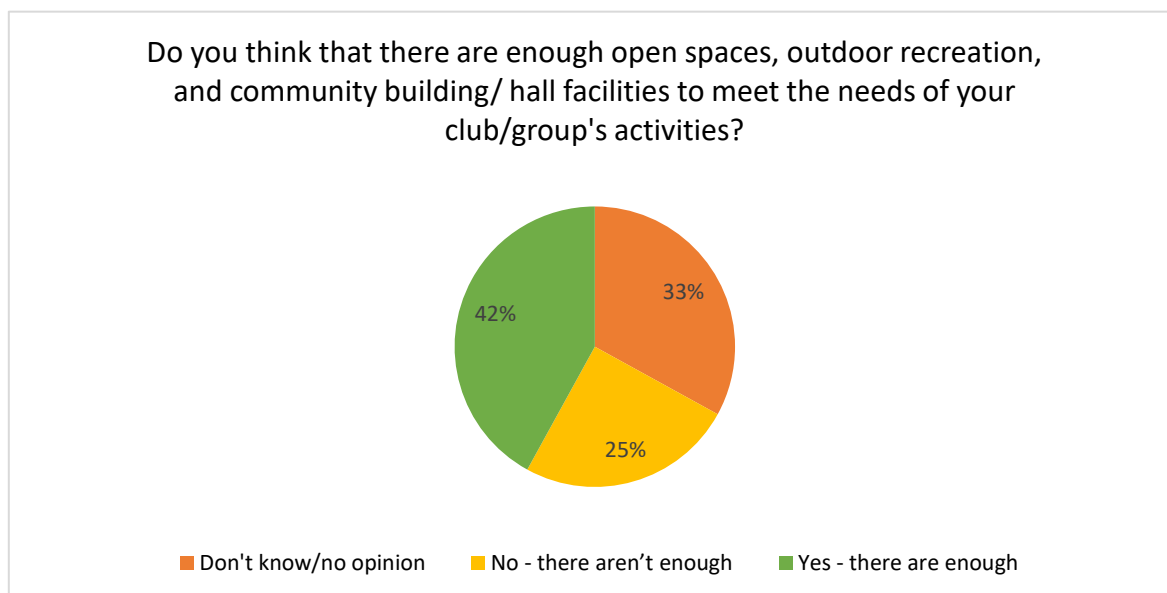
|                      |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
|----------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                      | trees, woodland, other environmental assets and associated crafts and skills<br>We involve people of all ages, from 7 months to 70+ years                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| <b>Name of Group</b> | <b>Evesham &amp; District Pensioners Association</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| Representative       | Vice Chair                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| Area covered         | Wychavon District                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| Summary of activity  | 50 plus Older Peoples Forum - arrange for speakers at meetings - social events etc.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| <b>Name of Group</b> | <b>Cycling UK &amp; Push Bike!</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| Representative       | Local Campaign Representative for the National Cycling Charity. Chair of local Cycle Campaign Group, Push Bike!                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| Area covered         | Worcester City                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| Summary of activity  | Cycling UK is the National Cycling Charity. It has over 400 members locally and in excess of 800 in the County. Push Bike! is a local cycle campaign group that has been jointly established by local Cycling UK and Sustrans volunteers. We comment on Planning and Highway Matters and undertake various promotional and advocacy activities to encourage more people to cycle locally. This includes a regular Push Bike! column in the Worcester News, Publication of an annual What's On Cycling Events listing for the County, Distribution of cycle maps and promotional items to Bike Shops, TICs, Leisure Centres etc, provision of an information stand at various events and attendance on various groups including the statutory Local Access Forum and the Green Infrastructure Partnership. |
| <b>Name of Group</b> | <b>Worcestershire Wildlife Trust Malvern Group</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| Representative       | Chairman                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| Area covered         | Malvern District                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| Summary of activity  | A general interest group for wildlife and conservation. We aim to educate, inform and entertain, as well as fund-raising, and active conservation work in nature reserves. Most of our members are age 50+.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| <b>Name of Group</b> | <b>Malvern Hills gardening club</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| Representative       | Secretary                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| Area covered         | Malvern District                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| Summary of activity  | We meet once a month and have gardening related talks. Garden visits in the summer                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| <b>Name of Group</b> | <b>Malvern Joggers</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| Representative       | Chairman                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| Area covered         | Malvern District                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| Summary of activity  | We have a junior section 8-15 which meets on a Sunday circa 30 members. The main club night is a Wednesday for adults. Membership is 230 with about 60-80 turning up each week. Our main activity is jogging.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| <b>Name of Group</b> | <b>Malvern Hills Riding for the Disabled</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| Representative       | Secretary and Trustee                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| Area covered         | Malvern District                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| Summary of activity  | We provide Riding opportunities for children from Regency High School Worcester at Guinness Park Farm Leigh Sinton. The sessions are run by volunteers to help the children aged between 11 and 18 physically and mentally.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |

In addition to community groups, local (town and parish) councils were consulted as part of the core consultation: many of these local councils made comments relevant to the types of open space considered here. Therefore, where such councils have made relevant responses in their returns they are also noted along with those from the local community groups.

## 4.4.2 Community Organisations Survey (non-sports): overview – quantity, quality, and accessibility

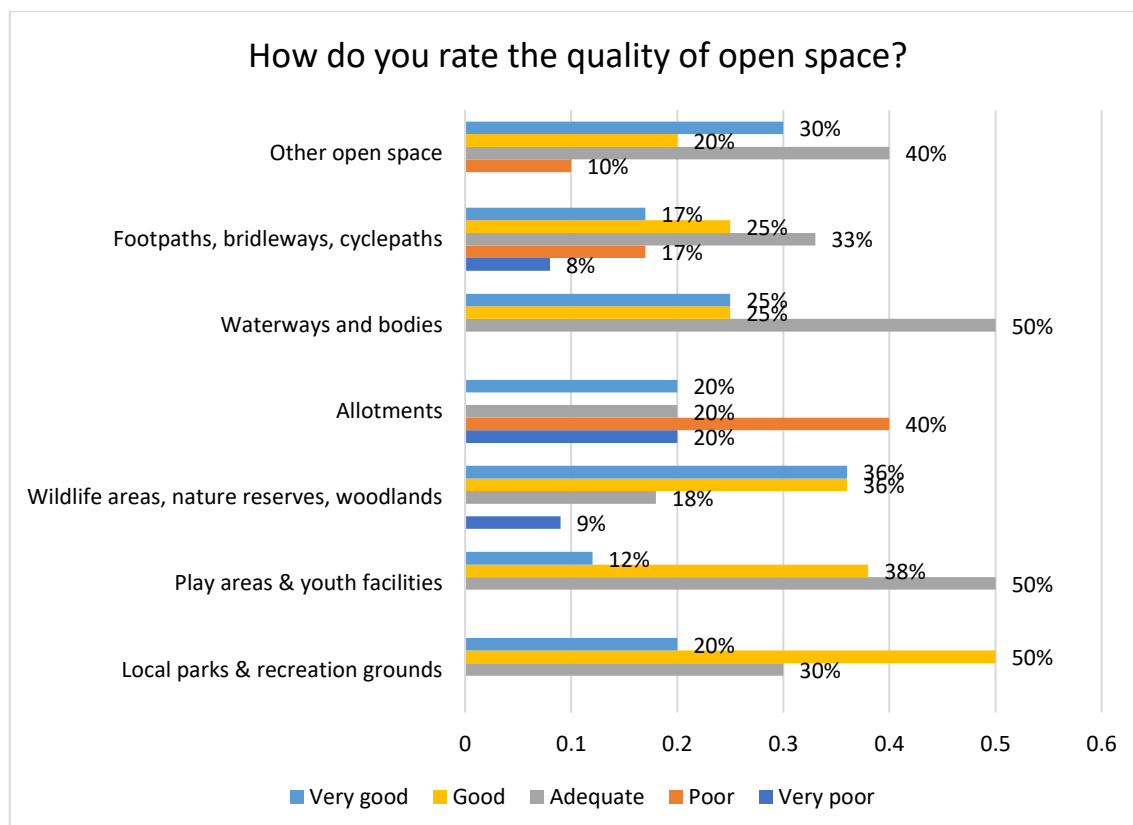
The organisations were asked about whether they used open space to meet the specific needs in respect of the quantity, quality and accessibility of open space. These themes are considered in more detail later in this section. However, as a general overview, the following were highlighted by the questionnaire survey.

### Quantity



Of those responding to the question most (43%) thought there were enough open spaces to meet their needs; 25% felt there were not enough; with the rest unsure, or with no opinion.

### Quality



From those expressing a view on quality it can be seen that:

- Wildlife areas and local parks and recreation grounds are rated highest in terms of quality (at least 70%).
- The quality of allotments is the least well rated by users with 60% rating them as poor or very poor compared to 20% rating them as good.
- Other typologies tend to be rated as adequate or better by the majority of local organisations.

## Access

Of those responding to a question about the *accessibility* of different types of open space, the following comments were made:

| Organisation                                | Comments                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
|---------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Worcestershire Area of Ramblers Association | <p>Allotments: There are long waiting lists to get an allotment in Malvern.</p> <p>Footpaths, Bridleways, Cyclepaths and Rights of Way: There are areas in the area of the South Worcestershire Development Plan Area where provision is sparse. There are other areas such as the Malvern Hills where scope for walking is great. In the latter the problem is over use. This could be overcome to some extent if it was easier to walk in other areas.</p> <p>The real major problem is the lack of resources allocated by the County Council to fund maintenance of the network. Foot paths are overgrown, stiles, gates, bridges and steps are dilapidated, way marking and signing is inadequate. Planning authorities do not pay sufficient regard to the potential of footpaths as a recreational, economic and health asset when preparing their plans and granting planning permission for development.</p>                                                                                                            |
| Pensham Community Trust                     | <p>Local Parks and Recreation Grounds: We think that the basic provision across the area in towns and the city are quite good and that they are kept tidy and clean.</p> <p>We would like to see more disparate special interest groups formed to encourage nature study such as moths and butterfly groups, bird groups and bats and mammals.</p> <p>Wildlife Areas, Nature Reserves and Woodlands: We think that these should be provided with basic facilities such as rubbish bins and CCTV to make visitors comfortable about leaving their cars where they are not going to be broken into and vandalised.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| Droitwich Community Sports Club             | <p>Local Parks and Recreation Grounds: We would like to develop / use our boundary tree planted areas around the grounds for a Droitwich Sunday fun run and a mud run / obstacle course for school age children and adults alike with supervised access and training in conjunction with a fitness operator. Without funding we do not have the resources to deliver these improvements.</p> <p>We have addressed the recommendations of the SWPPS in order to maximise the use and durability of the facilities that we do have but, without more pitches we will not be able to accommodate either organic growth for rugby or any of the other user groups that we would like to attract to the site. Additional pitches on joining land and the enlargement and reconfiguration of the existing club-house facilities could facilitate the delivery of a regional multi-sport hub with excellent access links across the region.</p> <p>Water Recreation: Excellent provision on adjoining land - Droitwich Spa Marina.</p> |

| Organisation                                | Comments                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
|---------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                                             | Footpaths, Bridleways, Cyclepaths and Rights of Way: Well managed in Bowbrook by the local warden.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| Malvern Hills District Footpath Society     | Wildlife Areas, Nature Reserves and Woodlands: We walk through these and are happy with them.<br>Footpaths, Bridleways, Cyclepaths and Rights of Way: We are happy with these although we do have a Rights of Way Section in the Club. We have 4 members who spend a huge amount of time fighting rights of way closures and also fighting for rights of way that have been closed for building etc. and then whoever is in charge of them has forgotten to open them again.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| Malvern Community Forest                    | Wildlife Areas, Nature Reserves and Woodlands: Malvern is relatively well provided with these sorts of areas with a low-involvement, recreational point of view. Only one reserve receives local authority support (St. Wulstans), but being a reserve, it is not appropriate for our sort of woodland creation/management/production activities.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| Evesham & District Pensioners Association   | Wildlife Areas, Nature Reserves and Woodlands: Inadequate number.<br><br>Allotments: Inadequate number.<br><br>Footpaths, Bridleways, Cyclepaths and Rights of Way: Lack of access in particular disabled.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| Cycling UK & Push Bike!                     | Footpaths, Bridleways, Cyclepaths and Rights of Way: The existing Cycle network needs to be audited with a view to identify low cost ways in which improvements can be made, but also to identify gaps that need to be filled as a priority and when set against a robust analysis of the routes along which there is the greatest potential to encourage more utility cycle use for commuting to work, school or visiting the shops, etc                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| Worcestershire Wildlife Trust Malvern Group | Wildlife Areas, Nature Reserves and Woodlands: In Malvern we are particularly fortunate to have the Malvern Hills, ably managed by the Malvern Hills Trust for wildlife as well as many recreational purposes.<br>There is always a need for more nature reserves however, and for better connectivity between the nature reserves which already exist.<br>Hedges are often cut too much, or at the wrong time of year, and roadside verges are "tidied" more than they need to be for safety purposes. Hedges and verges can be affected by indiscriminate use of pesticides from nearby farmland.<br>There is constant pressure to build on land which developers see as available e.g. Langland Wood near the Three Counties Showground. |
| CPRE                                        | Allotments: Loss of space for the allotment near Gt Malvern cemetery is regrettable.<br><br>There doesn't seem to be any consideration for the years of work it takes to improve the quality of the soil to make it productive.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| Malvern Joggers                             | Local Parks and Recreation Grounds: It is a shame that there is not one park large enough to support the parkrun activity.<br><br>Footpaths, Bridleways, Cyclepaths and Rights of Way: There are far too few cycle paths. Ideally a cycle path between Worcester and Malvern would support those who currently cycle and would encourage more to cycle<br><br>I would like to see a mountain bike area/park designated in a quieter section of the hills such as down-hill from the West of England car park                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |

## 4.5 Parks and Recreation Grounds (including Country Parks)

### 4.5.1 South Worcestershire and Worcestershire County Councils)

#### **Malvern Hills District Council (*Contracts and Performance Manager*)**

The majority of the districts parks and open spaces are owned and maintained by the town and parish councils for the area they are located. The Council does however maintain an important role in the protection of existing and development of new park and open space provision, as a result of new developments. The council itself owns, manages and maintains Priory Park, Great Malvern; Belle Vue Island, Great Malvern; Hanley Road Car Park, Upton; and the Old Churchyard and Tower, Upton

#### **Worcester City Council**

##### ***Supervisor Environmental Operations***

*Quantity:* We have enough parks and open spaces in our city area and they are all well used by the public. We have 3 green flag premier parks.

#### **Wychavon District Council**

##### ***Senior Parks and Greenspace Officer***

*Quantity:* We manage the parks and open spaces in the 3 market towns of Evesham, Pershore and Droitwich.

*Quality:* Quality is high as we have 5 Green Flags and strive to keep all our sites in good order.

We do not look after Parish recreation or play grounds.

*Accessibility:* All our parks are accessible and we feel that we do have enough areas - would not want to lose any though.

##### ***Wildlife Sites and Projects Officer***

*Quantity:* Wychavon seems to be well served in terms of the number of parks and recreation grounds for the larger urban centres of Droitwich, Evesham and Pershore, but perhaps some of the more rural communities a bit less so. This may be down to Parish Council provision and this may be more of my perception than actual reality.

*Quality:* The quality of parks and recreation grounds provided by Wychavon, is excellent, as evidenced by the number of Green Flag Awards that are held by our public parks and the level of attention afforded to them by our Parks and Greenspace team is a reflection of how valuable and valued our public open spaces are.

Throughout the summer, our major parks are full of residents and visitors enjoying the open spaces and the activities that are provided within them, water parks proving particularly popular (personal observation!). It would suggest to me that some of the parks are destinations in themselves, something that someone would make the effort to travel to, rather than necessarily using them just because they're on the doorstep.

*Accessibility:* The urban centres are all easily accessible - but I do have my doubts as to whether some of the rural communities feel quite as well served.

## Worcestershire County Council (Countryside and Greenspace Manager)

*Quantity:* We manage Worcester Woods Country Park, which is a Green Flag Award winning park and has been since 2004. It is the only country park in south Worcestershire and has reached its capacity in terms of visitor numbers. Another country park is needed within the South Worcestershire area to keep up with demand for natural greenspaces.

### 4.5.2 Strategic Organisations

#### The Malvern Hills Trust

*Quality:* We care for recreation areas as part of our remit however these are very informal e.g. football pitch on Hollybed Common and Malvern Common. Providing space for recreation and parks is not our main function and these spaces are used occasionally by local schools for sports days and one off events but no more.

### 4.5.3 Community Organisations Survey

#### *Quantity and Quality*

| Group                           | Area                   | Comment                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
|---------------------------------|------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Pensham Community Trust         | Wychavon District      | The mere fact that we exist in fact our whole raison d'etre is because nothing has been provided and so we do not believe that enough is provided outside the main towns.<br>We think that the basic provision across the area in towns and the city are quite good and that they are kept tidy and clean.<br>We would like to see more disparate special interest groups formed to encourage nature study such as moths and butterfly groups, bird groups and bats and mammals.                                                            |
| Droitwich Community Sports Club | Wychavon District      | In order to meet the needs of our existing users and our proposed development as a key hub for sport in the region we will need more pitches to meet the needs of new user groups.<br><br>We would like to develop / use our boundary tree planted areas around the grounds for a Droitwich Sunday fun run and a mud run / obstacle course for school age children and adults alike with supervised access and training in conjunction with a fitness operator. Without funding we do not have the resources to deliver these improvements. |
| Malvern Joggers                 | Malvern Hills District | It is a shame that there is not one park large enough to support the parkrun activity                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |

The following local councils also made observations about local parks and recreation grounds (where specific comments were made they are reported).

#### *Quantity/Quality*

| Local Council                | Shortfall? (and/or) Specific Comment                                                                             |
|------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Bishampton & Throckmorton PC | Neither village has a central village green and each could benefit from the creation of an area of green beauty. |

|                                          |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
|------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Broadwas & Cotheridge                    | New running track                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| Droitwich Spa Town Council               | Adequate                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| Eckington                                | A park or recreation ground towards the centre of the village to complement existing                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| Great Witley and Hillhampton             | We have half a football pitch and a park with outdoor exercise machines in place. A full-size pitch and a larger park would be welcome                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| Hallow Parish Council                    | The village green, playing field and Holly Bank would all benefit from additional facilities                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| Harvington Parish Council (Near Evesham) | There is the main (small) triangular village green, near to the school and the village hall, in the centre of the old village, at the junction of Village Street and Station Road, with other similar grassed areas and wide verges around the village, giving an open country feel to the village, which the Neighbourhood Plan aims to protect. |
| Hindlip. Martin Hussingtee & Salwarpe PC | Martin Green – no use made of due to location.<br><br>Brown Heath Brown Heath Lane – an area allowed to overgrow naturally.                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| Little Witley Parish Council             | Would be very welcome, especially as there are no footways in the parish so walking is dangerous                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| Martley                                  | Recreation area and Millennium Green. The new burial ground will include a large green space.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| Ombersley and Doverdale                  | We need a village green in the northern part of the Parish.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| Rous Lench Parish council                | Potential improvement to green                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| Sedgeberrow Parish Council               | With a population circa 850 Sedgeberrow has an immediate need for better equipped recreational areas accommodating football, cricket pitches, tennis courts and bowling greens with changing facilities. These areas could also facilitate better play areas for children of all ages.                                                            |
| Wyre Piddle Parish Council               | Continued development and improvement of existing areas plus new areas see above                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |

## 4.6 Allotment Provision

### 4.6.1 South Worcestershire Councils

Statutory allotment provision is normally dealt with at the town and parish council level. However, the following comments have also been made.

#### Supervisor Environmental Operations (Worcester City Council)

*Quantity:* our allotments are well used and supported by us.

### 4.6.2 Community Organisations Survey (including local councils)

#### *Quantity*

| Group                                       | Area              | Comment                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
|---------------------------------------------|-------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Worcestershire Area of Ramblers Association | Malvern District  | There are long waiting lists to get an allotment in Malvern                                                                                                                                                         |
| Evesham & District Pensioners Association   | Wychavon District | Inadequate number                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| CPRE                                        | Malvern District  | Loss of space for the allotment near Gt Malvern cemetery is regrettable.<br><br>There doesn't seem to be any consideration for the years of work it takes to improve the quality of the soil to make it productive. |

The following local councils also made observations about local allotment provision (where specific comments were made they are reported).

#### *Quantity/Quality*

| Local Council                            | Shortfall? (and/or) Specific Comment                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
|------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Abberley (Village and Common)            | New Provision - everyone is begging for allotments because houses are being built with next to no gardens.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| Badsey & Aldington Parish Council        | Yes                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| Bishampton & Throckmorton Parish Council | This could be another potential use of the land to be reclaimed at the rear of the Dolphin. The major cost with any allotment scheme is the fencing required to provide security and the provision of water. With the aging population and construction of houses with very small gardens which seems to be the increasing norm, allotment space could become an important secular social meeting place for many in the villages. There is already an active Gardening Club. |
| Broadway Parish Council                  | No current space allocated or available                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| Droitwich Spa Town Council               | Adequate provision already – 4 sites and 106 plots. Minimal waiting list of approximately 12 persons. Generally fully let to capacity of plots available                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| Evesham                                  | We need more allotments, we are oversubscribed,                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| Hallow Parish Council                    | Hallow currently rents via a temporary annual lease land for allotments.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |

|                              |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
|------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Hanley Castle Parish         | More to be made available                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| Harvington Parish Council    | The allotments, to the rear of the school, are well used.                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| Little Witley Parish Council | Yes                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| Martley                      | Private allotments are for rent near the village.                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| Offenham                     | No land currently available for sale or rent, PC have made enquiries                                                                                                                                                                         |
| Tenbury Town Council         | Tenbury Town Council has a waiting list for allotments. Unfortunately, land has not been identified has yet.                                                                                                                                 |
| Tibberton Parish Council     | Area identified                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| Whittington                  | Allotments - no access difficulties and potentially additional allotments with proposed new/further development.                                                                                                                             |
| Wyre Piddle Parish Council   | There is no provision for Allotments despite there being several suitable open spaces available. Wyre Hill former ancient Orchard land, the other being an unused football pitch that was given over to the land army. East Side of Village. |

## 4.7 Wildlife areas, nature reserves and woodland

### 4.7.1 South Worcestershire and Worcestershire County Councils

#### **Worcester City Council (*Supervisor Environmental Operations*)**

*Quantity:* We have an officer who travels around our area and works in conjunction with WWT and DWT to maintain our conservation sites.

#### **Wychavon District Council**

##### ***Senior Parks and Greenspace Officer***

Wychavon have nature reserves in Broadway (small gravel pit), Evesham (small old clay pit) and Droitwich Community Woods, along with the wetland area at Pershore.

##### ***Wildlife Sites and Projects Officer***

*Quality:* Wychavon appears to be a district with lots of high-quality wildlife areas, which is true - for some parts!

Bredon Hill and around Broadway have the Cotswold AONB protection, Bredon Hill itself has National Nature Reserve status as well as being a SSSI, but many of the other SSSIs and designated sites are small and scattered, with limited connectivity between them.

Those sites that are designated are often in good hands, being looked after by Worcestershire Wildlife Trust, Butterfly Conservation, Worcestershire County Council, or in private ownership.

The special character of these nature reserves usually means they are more removed from the urban centres of population, however where they are close enough, for example Tiddesley Wood near Pershore, managed by Worcestershire Wildlife Trust, they do get a very high footfall.

*Quality/Accessibility:* Sites like Avon Meadows in Pershore, Stoulton and Jubilee Woodlands and Droitwich Community Woods aim to balance the needs of wildlife conservation against public access, understanding that the benefits of high quality, accessible green space can provide many health and wellbeing benefits for people.

My perception is that rural communities don't have better access to wildlife rich nature reserves, farmland yes, but high quality wildlife sites and nature reserves, maybe not. The Vale of Evesham, for example, has very few SSSIs, and those that exist are small pockets and not necessarily accessible, Local Nature Reserves or other sites that are designated for their wildlife value.

Vale Landscape Heritage Trust are another landowner of significant wildlife habitats within Wychavon, focusing on conserving and protecting orchards and floodplain meadows which typify the landscape character of the Vale of Evesham, however many of their sites have limited public access due to the sensitive nature of the sites.

#### **Worcestershire County Council (Countryside & Greenspace Manager)**

*Quantity/Quality:* We manage a number of picnic places in south Worcestershire and also St Wulstan's Nature Reserve (Malvern Hills District) which is another Green Flag Award winning site. Again, this site has reached its carrying capacity.

## 4.7.2 Strategic Organisations

### Environment Agency

*Quality:* We welcome improvement to wildlife areas, particularly in relation to enhancement and maintenance of habitats for protected species, we protect the following species:

- Fish including salmon, all lamprey, twaite and Allis shad, bullhead and spined loach
- Water voles; Otters; White clawed crayfish; freshwater pearl mussels;

Natural England are responsible for other protected species.

### Malvern Hills Trust

The Malvern Hills and Commons and all land under the Malvern Hills Trust jurisdiction are managed for their wildlife as well as for local people and visitors.

Our work is a balance of providing outdoor space for recreation and wildlife.

We are primarily a protected landscape with public access. Much of the Malvern Hills and Commons are designated as a Site of Special Scientific Interest in recognition of the habitats and species found here.

More information on how we balance that can be found in our Land Management Plan: <http://www.malvern hills.org.uk/looking-after/land-management-plan>

### Malvern Hills AONB

Responses are under paragraph 4.11.

### Natural England

See general statements made under section 4.3.

### Worcestershire Wildlife Trust

*Quantity/Quality:* We are pleased to note and support the designation of LNRs across the SWDP area. Together with many other undesignated public green spaces these provide valuable access to wildlife areas for the general public. However, sites of this type are rather scarce and we consider that access to wildlife-rich recreation space is currently too limited. In particular, the opportunity to access wildlife areas close to residential development is often poor and so where sites do exist they often suffer from very heavy use, which acts to limit the wildlife value they can maintain.

This is a particular concern for our own urban-fringe sites where the level of use may significantly compromise our nature conservation objectives. Provision of additional sites close to major development (and indeed within those strategic applications yet to be decided) would therefore have important benefits in providing contact with nature (with the associated health and well-being benefits that brings) whilst helping to reduce pressure on existing sites of high ecological value.

In this regard work by the Worcestershire Green Infrastructure Partnership is worthy of note. The so-called Concept Plans drawn up by the partners are helping to incorporate sufficient wildlife-rich POS in strategic developments to encourage enjoyment of the natural world whilst also attempting to limit the adverse impacts of increased population on nearby sites of high ecological value. You can find out more at

**Accessibility:** It is important to note that whilst we are keen to encourage enjoyment of the natural world, and whilst our reserves play an important role in this, we do not see them as good places to increase recreation more generally. Our reserves are usually rather small and therefore not able to accommodate large footfall, moreover they have usually been purchased because of an existing feature or species of particular value and our management objectives will be directed toward maintaining and enhancing that value. Where unrestricted access would compromise those objectives we actively seek to limit visits through a permit system. In rare cases sites are opened only for guided tours and are not suitable for any other access. As noted earlier, we do not wish to increase visits to our reserves. We do not consider them to be suitable or appropriate places for general countryside recreation (for example they do not usually provide appropriate places for daily dog walking, more sporting recreation such as mountain biking or group running or a replacement for a high quality network of public footpaths) because they are specifically managed to benefit wildlife and to allow for quite enjoyment of that wildlife. Access that is incompatible with those objectives is not encouraged.

### 4.7.3 Community Organisations Survey

#### Quantity/Quality

| Group                                       | Area              | Comment                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
|---------------------------------------------|-------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Worcestershire Area of Ramblers Association | Malvern District  | I have already referred to the over use of the Malvern Hills by walkers. I would add that cyclists are also an erosive force that needs to be addressed. It seems to me that we should be planning for less activity on those hills. The Teme Valley is less well known but in my view is so sensitive that only quiet passive activity could be accommodated. The same applies in the Lenches and the Cotswolds.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| Pensham Community Trust                     | Wychavon District | We think that these should be provided with basic facilities such as rubbish bins and CCTV to make visitors comfortable about leaving their cars where they are not going to be broken into and vandalised.<br>The government should resist the temptation to build houses everywhere as natural areas must be left for the peace of mind of rural inhabitants and the wildlife                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| Malvern Hills District Footpath Society     | Malvern District  | We walk through these and are happy with them.<br>No, we should all fit in with each other when it comes to our activities. You cannot take away from one group to give to another otherwise you would have walking areas, horse riding areas etc.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| Malvern Community Forest                    | Malvern District  | We are not aware of any woodlands, wood pastures, hedgerows, or orchard held by the local authority in the Malvern Chase area.<br><br>Members, volunteers and the wider public have great difficulty accessing Townsend Way Community Woodland as it entails crossing the very busy Townsend Way, which serves residential and industrial/commercial areas. There is a pedestrian-controlled crossing at the north end of Townsend Way, which is not linked to any footpath access to the Woodland. The Woodland stretches for a mile from this crossing without any other.<br><br>Malvern is relatively well provided with these sorts of areas with a low-involvement, recreational point of view. Only one reserve receives local authority support (St Wulstans), but being a reserve, it is not appropriate for our sort of woodland creation/management/production activities. |

| Group                                          | Area             | Comment                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
|------------------------------------------------|------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                                                |                  | Wildlife is definitely 'damaged' by outdoor recreational activity, with dog-walking being of most concern for both flora and fauna. Having a high level of predators (dogs) regularly passing through wildlife areas chases fauna from the area; the associated high level of excrement significantly damages existing soils and the flora they support. This goes widely unrecognised and unacknowledged. Heavy pedestrian footfall compacts soil and deprives larger plants roots - trees especially - of air, water and nutrients.                                                                                                                                                                           |
| Worcestershire Wildlife Trust<br>Malvern Group | Malvern District | <p>In Malvern we are particularly fortunate to have the Malvern Hills, ably managed by the Malvern Hills Trust for wildlife as well as many recreational purposes.</p> <p>There is always a need for more nature reserves however, and for better connectivity between the nature reserves which already exist.</p> <p>Hedges are often cut too much, or at the wrong time of year, and roadside verges are "tidied" more than they need to be for safety purposes. Hedges and verges can be affected by indiscriminate use of pesticides from nearby farmland.</p> <p>There is constant pressure to build on land which developers see as available e.g. Langland Wood near the Three Counties Showground.</p> |

The following local councils also made observations about wildlife areas, nature reserves and woodland provision (where specific comments were made they are reported).

#### **Quantity/Quality**

| Local Council                                     | Shortfall? (and/or) Specific Comment                                                                                                                                                                               |
|---------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Abberley (Village and Common)                     | Improved - Worcestershire County Council Countryside Unit need to signpost better (project underway apparently) and we could really do with places for the elderly and less able bodied to be able to move around. |
| Bishampton & Throckmorton PC                      | These are probably well served with the recent acquisition of Shorthorn wood.                                                                                                                                      |
| Bushley PC                                        | Used by locals and others                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| Droitwich Spa Town Council                        | Copcut Park in place                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| Evesham Town Council                              | We have Battleton Brook which I would like to investigate whether it would be possible to develop into a formal nature area                                                                                        |
| Flyford Flavell, Grafton Flyford and North Piddle | Further support for Grafton Wood desirable                                                                                                                                                                         |
| Great Witley and Hillhampton                      | None but we do live in a place with extensive areas of woodland providing a good habitat for wildlife                                                                                                              |
| Hallow Parish Council                             | The Parish Council's has in the past aspired to create a community orchard with dedicated paths suitable for all members of the community on 50% of the HollyBank site                                             |
| Harvington Parish Council (Near Evesham)          | There are no designated wildlife areas around the village, but the open farmland and nearby woods and coppices protect wildlife.                                                                                   |
| Hindlip. Martin Hussingtee & Salwarpe PC          | Worcestershire Wild Life Trust – a good central facility could be developed/utilized further by the community.                                                                                                     |

| Local Council                | Shortfall? (and/or) Specific Comment                                                                                                                                    |
|------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Hinton on the Green          | None required                                                                                                                                                           |
| Honeybourne                  | None available at this time                                                                                                                                             |
| Little Malvern & Welland PC  | Current plans in place to purchase a community orchard within the village                                                                                               |
| Little Witley PC             | Would be very welcome, especially as there are no footways in the parish so walking is dangerous                                                                        |
| Martley PC                   | The trust managing the Millennium Green seeks to develop it as a wildlife area.                                                                                         |
| South Littleton PC           | Yes                                                                                                                                                                     |
| St Peter the Great County PC | Land around Middle Battenhall Farm is last rural enclave in the parish and is a much cherished haven for local wildlife which could benefit from additional protection. |
| Wyre Piddle Parish Council   | Development of Nature Reserve along Piddle Brooke – Area between Rail way viaduct and Piddle Brooke Bridge                                                              |

## 4.8 Rights of Way, Permissive Routes, Cycle Paths

### 4.8.1 South Worcestershire and Worcestershire County Councils

#### **Worcester City Council (*Supervisor Environmental Operations*)**

*Quality:* We work with Sustrans and the county to maintain all our rights of way and cycle paths etc

#### **Worcestershire County Council (*County Transport Strategy Officer*)**

*General:* Rights of way, permissive routes and cycle paths are essential for the provision/ enjoyment of 'recreation', and they are equally essential for the provision of 'access for all' and for giving people the option to travel actively, with all of the benefits that this brings (both to the individual and to society).

The overlap between these three considerations (recreation, access for all and active travel) is considerable and the following comments assume no distinction:

*Quantity/Quality:* There is the potential for increased provision and improved quality of the provision of 'traffic free' access across the SWDP area as a whole.

Guidance and agreed best practice evolve over time and some of the traffic free access that exists today could be improved in order to bring it up to current standards and thereby for it to function as intended. Guidance and best practice can not only refer to design standards, but also to materials and construction standards.

A good example of provision that has been delivered in recent years is the riverside loop in Worcester, which has seen a huge increase in traffic-free access to the River Severn. The paths on both sides of the river were improved (on one side it was simply a muddy track before the intervention) from Worcester Bridge to just downstream of Diglis Island, where a new bridge for walking and cycling was built. User-intercept surveys showed that annually there were approximately 31,000 trips past a point just north-west of where the bridge was proposed. The same surveys repeated after the bridge had been built showed this had risen to 465,000.

### 4.8.2 Strategic Organisations

#### **Malvern Hills Trust**

Public rights of way cross land under our care.

Our Acts of Parliament also provide walkers with the right of access across land under our jurisdiction (visitors can be excluded from areas for safety). This is similar but not the same as Open Access which can be found elsewhere in the county. This provides really high quantity and high quality access for walkers when visiting land under our care.

There are over 56km of bridleway on the Malvern Hills and some sections are very well serviced. This is primarily on land within Worcestershire County Council as there are no bridleways on land within Herefordshire County. The bridleway network is not well linked due to this difference between the two counties. We have permitted cycling access on some section of the Malvern Hills (within Worcestershire) to improve the situation for cyclists.

More information on permissive cycle routes can be found here:

<http://www.malvern hills.org.uk/visiting/cycling/>

Access to site however can be difficult and bus networks around the Malvern Hills landscape are infrequent or non-existent. Access to many sites is restricted to those who are extremely fit (can walk or cycle long distances) or those who have access to a car.

## **Malvern Hills AONB**

*Quality:* In some parts of the AONB, a footpath or track may be one of the most obvious signs of human activity in an otherwise 'natural' setting. Overly formalised and heavily engineered paths can jar in such locations. By contrast, paths that have been sympathetically designed and managed can be a positive feature of the landscape. They are a pleasure to use. The Highway Authorities are obliged to keep rights of way in a condition suitable for their intended use and may be under pressure to complete a repair quickly. However, the AONB will benefit if works on paths and tracks is sensitive to the 'natural' setting.

*Accessibility:* 'Miles Without Stiles' are promoted footpaths and tracks which are suitable for use by those who do not want to clamber over barriers when out enjoying the countryside. Leaflets are available for routes in the parishes of Colwall, Cradley and Mathon. These routes were created by Herefordshire Council, in conjunction with Natural England and the Malvern Hills AONB Partnership.

There is a very good rights of way network in the AONB that includes both public footpaths and bridleways. On the Malvern Hills, this network is underpinned by a system of open access for walkers and horse riders on land controlled by the Malvern Hills Trust. These arrangements can lead to confusion over access rights in the transition zone between statutory rights of way and open access land. A map and guide recently produced by the Malvern Hills Trust helps to reduce this confusion by showing the position of bridleways and pedestrian routes. It is important that people understand access rights.

Mountain biking is popular on the Malvern Hills but there are no dedicated routes for use only by mountain bikes. Open access rights on Malvern Hills Trust land do not extend to cyclists but cyclists do have rights to use designated bridleways on the

Some riders use paths and tracks that they have no legal right to use. The 'Malverns by Mountain Bike' Campaign aims to encourage responsible mountain biking on the Hills and Commons. Recent initiatives include the publication of a map and guide, the creation of some permissive routes and some waymarked trails for mountain bikers.

For some people, particularly the less mobile, it is difficult to explore parts of the AONB. Standard practices sometimes create obstacles, like steps and stiles. There is a need to promote routes that are suitable for people with limited mobility. Wheelchair users, families with pushchairs and the visually impaired can then visit and enjoy the AONB. In some parts of the AONB, gates have replaced stiles and some easy access trails are in place to allow greater access for people with a wide range of physical abilities. In addition, visitors to the Malvern Hills Geocentre can now hire all terrain mobility scooters to enable them to access the northern hills. However, there is more to be done to make access easier and to promote this access.

### 4.8.3 Community Organisations Survey

| Group                                       | Area              | Comments                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
|---------------------------------------------|-------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Worcestershire Area of Ramblers Association | Malvern District  | <p>Provision is considered to be Good overall.</p> <p>There are areas in the area of the South Worcestershire Development Plan Area where provision is sparse. There are other areas such as the Malvern Hills where scope for walking is great. In the latter the problem is over use. This could be overcome to some extent if it was easier to walk in other areas.</p> <p>The real major problem is the lack of resources allocated by the County Council to fund maintenance of the network. Footpaths are overgrown, stiles, gates, bridges and steps are dilapidated, way marking and signing is inadequate. Planning authorities do not pay sufficient regard to the potential of footpaths as a recreational, economic and health asset when preparing their plans and granting planning permission for development.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| Pensham Community Trust                     | Wychavon District | <p>Views provision as Adequate.</p> <p>The government should resist the temptation to build houses everywhere as natural areas must be left for the peace of mind of rural inhabitants and the wildlife.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| Malvern Hills District Footpath Society     | Malvern District  | <p>Views provision as very good.</p> <p>We are happy with these although we do have a Rights of Way Section in the Club. We have 4 members who spend a huge amount of time fighting rights of way closures and also fighting for rights of way that have been closed for building etc. and then whoever is in charge of them has forgotten to open them again.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| Evesham & District Pensioners Association   | Wychavon District | Lack of access in particular disabled                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| Cycling UK & Push Bike!                     | Worcester City    | <p>Cycleways in the local area have been developed in an un-coordinated and opportunistic way and mostly when funding has been obtained from developers or through grant funding. As a result, it fails to provide an integrated network and the into town and cross town links that are needed if more are to be encouraged to cycle instead of using their cars. Much of the cycleways that are provided are also poorly designed and badly maintained. A specific issue is the ban on cycle use in the pedestrianised City Centre between 10.30am &amp; 4.30pm. This discourages into and cross City use and results in sub-optimal use of the cycleway investment that has been made. For those that aren't discouraged it either means they are tempted to ignore the ban resulting in antagonism with pedestrians or forces them to use the dangerous inner ring road. It is therefore important for suitable and unrestricted N-S and W-E routes through the City Centre to be provided.</p> <p>The existing Cycle network needs to be audited with a view to identify low cost ways in which improvements can be made, but also to identify gaps</p> |

| Group           | Area             | Comments                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
|-----------------|------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                 |                  | <p>that need to be filled as a priority and when set against a robust analysis of the routes along which there is the greatest potential to encourage more utility cycle use for commuting to work, school or visiting the shops, etc</p> <p>Improving the cycle network and encouraging more cycle use needs to be built into a clear and integrated strategy that also supports a range of other priorities such as the reduction of congestion and air pollution and improving health outcomes. The County Council has been promising to develop an integrated cycle strategy since 2014. Since April 2017 there is also a national expectation that local highway authorities develop their own Cycling &amp; Walking Investment Strategies. There is still no sign that a strategy will ever be developed.</p> |
| Malvern Joggers | Malvern District | <p>There are far too few cycle paths. Ideally a cycle path between Worcester and Malvern would support those who currently cycle and would encourage more to cycle.</p> <p>I would like to see a mountain bike area/park designated in a quieter section of the hills such as down hill from the west of England car park.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |

The following local councils also made observations about wildlife areas, nature reserves and woodland provision (where specific comments were made they are reported).

### Quantity/Quality

| Local Council                | Shortfall? (and/or) Specific Comment                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
|------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Bishampton & Throckmorton PC | A local resident takes the lead for the upkeep of local footpaths and styles etc. There are no cycleways other than the roads. It wouldn't make sense to create separate cycleways and there would be little or no demand.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| Broadwas & Cotheridge        | Need constant clearing, poor access to the river                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| Broadway PC                  | No current allocated routes for cyclists                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| Bushley PC                   | Well used by locals and others. Road cycling, no cycleways                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| Droitwich Spa Town Council   | Some further cycle way provision would be beneficial                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| Great Witley and Hillhampton | Many public footpaths which are well-used by residents and visitors.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| Hanley Castle PC             | Cycle path linking Hanley Swan through to Upton needs to be improved                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| Harvington Parish Council    | <p>The Neighbourhood Plan questionnaire highlighted how important villagers viewed the existing footpaths network, and wished them protected, and extended where possible. One of the most important aspirations identified was to create cycleways from adjacent villages through the area to Evesham and adjacent villages etc. A group already exists, who meet regularly with the aim to liaise with councils and other organisations to create such a network of safe cycle routes.</p> <p>Dog walkers used to use a field, to the rear of the playing field, and created quite a community spirit of like-minded individuals who met together as a social group. The land, however, apart from a public footpath, is privately owned, and the owner has recently installed signs reminding it is private property with no access. It would be nice to find an area, within the similar vicinity, where dog walkers would be safe and could enjoy allowing their dogs to roam free within the area.</p> |

|                                                      |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
|------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Hindlip, Martin Hussingtee & Salwarpe Parish Council | Bridle paths and public rights of way span the rural environment of the Parish and are patrolled by Path Wardens.<br>Canal tow paths easily accessible running through the Parish.<br>Roads are becoming unsuited for walking due to no pavements and ever increasing traffic from “rat runs” and developments within the Parish.<br>Cycle routes from Worcester to Droitwich run through the Parish.                                                                                                            |
| Kenswick & Wichenford PC                             | For the last few years we have been unable to recruit any Footpath Officer to maintain our network which is the 5th largest in the county.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| Lindridge Parish Council                             | Existing footpaths/bridleways poorly maintained. We have no cycleways despite having two major roads – A443/A456. Too dangerous for cyclists.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| Little Witley PC                                     | Footways would be very welcome.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| Lower Sapey                                          | Excellent support from Jon White. But no one walks over the new bridge he put up                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| Martley                                              | Excellent network of local rights of way, kept clear by a voluntary group (the Path-or-nones). Parish is on the Worcestershire Way and the Geopark Way.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| Offenham                                             | Yes                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| South Littleton PC                                   | Cycleway                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| St Peter the Great County PC                         | Yes - there is an opportunity to develop a "Duck Brook Valley Walk from Red Hill, through the parish and down to the Severn at Diglis which would link a number of open spaces and historical sites together                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| Strensham                                            | Parish footpaths could be improved                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| Tenbury Town Council                                 | Tenbury Town Council is responsible for the Riverwalk - railings will need to be painted and possible replaced.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| Whittington                                          | Some existing footpaths/bridle ways being closed and / or being redirected due to new / proposed development.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| Wyre Piddle PC                                       | The existing footpaths/cycleways linking Lower Moor, Fladbury and Pershore need to be improved and made accessible to all. There is no disabled access to footpaths<br>Clear signage is required. There is no safe footpath out of the village to the west for pedestrians. There needs to be a safe footpath over the railway on Wyre Hill.<br>The verges on Wyre Road are too narrow and part of this road is designated as national speed limit making it unsafe for pedestrians to walk to local facilities. |

## 4.9 Water (canals, rivers, and lakes)

### 4.9.1 South Worcestershire and Worcestershire County Councils

#### South Worcestershire Councils

##### **Worcester City Council (*Supervisor Environmental Operations*)**

*Quantity/Quality:* We have a river team who maintain our riverside park we are currently in the process of improving things and attaining green flag status.

##### **Wychavon District Council**

##### ***Senior Parks and Greenspace Officer***

*Quantity:* We have a canal running through Vines Park in Droitwich and river Avon in Evesham parks. Lakes in Lido Park Droitwich.

##### ***Wildlife Sites and Projects Officer***

*Quantity:* With the River Avon as a major influence, the Droitwich Canal network and numerous tributaries, watercourses play a significant role in the character of Wychavon.

*Quality:* The quality of the water environment is frequently not good, either through diffuse pollution from both urban and rural sources, or through the pervasive presence of non-native invasive species.

1 large lake in Wychavon, which is a SSSI is in poor condition and not getting any better. Water Framework Directive condition assessments show some of our water bodies in the South of the district, coming off the Cotswold escarpment, to be particularly bad in terms of water quality, largely due to either water treatment plants or farm-related run-off.

*Accessibility:* Footpath access is patchy, better for canals perhaps than rivers, however Avon Navigation Trust are the navigation authority for the River Avon and are undertaking works to improve access for people arriving via the waterway.

Pershore in particular has turned its back on the river, with no promoted riverside walks and sections of the river bank in private ownership, however the county council owned picnic site at the historic Pershore Bridge site, at some distance from the town centre, is always incredibly popular.

##### **Worcestershire County Council (*County Transport Strategy Officer*)**

See comments under 4.8, which are relevant here. Over and above that, development that is proposed in the vicinity of such water bodies should be orientated such that the development 'faces' the water body and consideration should be given to the provision of traffic-free access alongside/ parallel to the water body.

### 4.9.2 Strategic Organisations

#### **Environment Agency**

*Quality:* The Environment Agency is the lead authority in England for:

- improvements on inland and coastal waters through better land management
- protecting inland and coastal waters from diffuse pollution in urban and rural areas

- driving wiser, sustainable use of water as a natural resource
- creating better habitat for wildlife that lives in and around water
- creating a better quality of life for everyone

The Environment Agency will work towards these goals by:

- making sure the regulations and policies from the WFD get the best results for the environment
- carrying them out based on data, evidence and local knowledge
- working with others

Our current objectives are to 'achieve good status' or to 'maintain high status' of WFD waterbodies by 2027.

WFD is implemented through River Basin Management Planning, these are produced every 6 years for each River Basin District.

River Basin Management Plans can be found below and will provide in depth detail about watercourses in the South Worcester Councils.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/river-basin-management-plans-2015#severn-river-basin-district-rbmp:-2015>

Further data, to assist WFD assessment, can be obtained from our Catchment Data Explorer Tool: <https://environment.data.gov.uk/catchment-planning/RiverBasinDistrict/9>

Water enhancements to reduce flood risk are also welcomed providing they do not compromise other functions such as ecology, for example landscaping of land next to banks, hard wall defences, de-culverting, channel improvements /realigning/ impounding structure.

## **Natural England**

See answers under section 4.11, which also have relevance here.

### **4.9.2 Community Organisations**

[No substantive comments received on this particular topic]

## 4.10 Other informal amenity open space

### 4.10.1 South Worcestershire and Worcestershire County Councils

#### Worcestershire County Council (*County Transport Strategy Officer*)

*Quality/Accessibility:* Informal and amenity spaces delivered by developments often miss the opportunity to also provide for active travel/ access for all. Developments designed so as to simply comply with the need to provide the mandated green spaces, play areas and sustainable drainage schemes too often deliver 'sterile' spaces that are little used.

Instead of considering these provisions separately, combining them in a linear route that runs through any given development could provide a quality, usable 'active travel corridor' that not only delivered the mandated spaces but also ensured that they were used and formed an eminently marketable feature.

#### ***Rights of Way Improvement Plan***

The ROWIP is a strategic assessment of the adequacy of the rights of way network to meet current and future demand (for walking, cycling and riding for recreational or utilitarian purposes) and will provide strategic aims and objectives for the development and management of the network in the future.

Although the ROWIP is focused on public rights of way, it is also concerned with the adequacy of other tracts of land that the public might use to complete their walk, cycle or ride (e.g. canal towpath or public open space) insofar as those tracts of land contribute to a wider network of routes available for walking, cycling or riding.

Worcestershire County Council published their first Rights of Way Improvement Plan in 2007, which will influence the improvements on footpaths, bridleways and byways for people to walk, ride, or cycle in the County over a 10 years period to 2017 at a strategic level (it will not address individual issues on individual rights of way). The plan is currently under review and the revised document will be available to be downloaded later on in 2018.

There are strong links between the ROWIP and the Local Transport Plan, as the rights of way network can play an important role in providing more sustainable modes of transport for both leisure and utility journeys.

Worcestershire's Rights of Way Improvement Plan now forms one of the sub strategies of Worcestershire's third Local Transport Plan (2011 – 2026).

### 4.10.2 Strategic Organisations

#### **Malvern Hills Trust**

We care for a number of verges and remnants of Common Land throughout Malvern which includes land along Guarlford Road and Sherrards Green.

This provides open green space in relatively urban areas which is frequently used by local people for walking, informal recreation.

### 4.10.3 Community Organisations Survey

[No substantive comments received on this topic]

## 4.11 Outdoor recreation in areas of sensitivity, biodiversity and multi-functional open space

### A) Outdoor recreation in areas of sensitivity

#### 4.11.1 South Worcestershire Councils

##### Wychavon District Council

##### *Senior Parks and Greenspace Officer*

*Quality:* All of our Green Flag parks are of historical importance. Some are covered with Scheduled Ancient Monument (SAM) designation.

##### *Wildlife Sites and Projects Officer*

*Quality/Accessibility:* Dog mess is the perpetual problem and can really ruin a sensitive area, not only in terms of visual and perception, but also in terms of site soil fertility, something not often thought about. Dogs also allowed to chase wildlife and livestock have become a growing problem, particularly in more built up areas - lack of education/sense about the impact of dogs on nesting birds or pregnant livestock.

Perception that the countryside should be tidy - one of the worst. No mud, no brambles, no nettles paths mown all the time, never an overhanging branch - no understanding of the wild in wildlife! Use paths to steer people where you want them to go and use nettles and brambles to keep them out of places you don't want them.

#### 4.11.2 Strategic Organisations

##### Malvern Hills Trust

Many of our sites are protected and designated by SSSI's or Scheduled Monuments. How we balance these sensitive sites with outdoor recreation can be found in more detail in our Land Management Plan: <http://www.malvern hills.org.uk/looking-after/land-management-plan/>

The main issues we have are:

Mountain biking - The use of footpaths on cycles and the creation of new 'off-piste' trails on the Hills and Commons which causes damage to protected habitats, archaeology and existing Public Rights of Way. We have been working on a "Malverns by Mountain Bike" project for the last 2 years. More information can be found here: <http://www.malvern hills.org.uk/visiting/cycling/>

Dog related issues - Dog fouling is a constant problem on the Hills and Commons. We also have grazing livestock on the Hills and Commons as part of our land management programme. A number of sheep are killed each year by dogs on the Hills and Commons and we work closely with the livestock owners to raise awareness of this.

Above all of these issues however, it is incredibly important that outdoor recreation is available in sites such as the Malvern Hills where there are rare species, ancient archaeology and a tradition of grazing common land. This links people to their heritage and their past. Being awed by a hillfort is part of the joy that people get when visiting and inspires learning and caring for heritage and landscape. The wide range of features that this landscape has to offer is to be celebrated.

## Malvern Hills AONB

*Quality:* The impact of visitor pressure can be acute in some parts of the AONB, and has led to the damage of some sensitive habitats. For example, walking, cycling and horse riding on the hills has eroded lowland acid grassland. Other potentially damaging activities include dog-roaming (which can disturb wildlife), unrestricted parking, litter and fly tipping.

As the local population rises, there may be more people and dogs on the hills and commons. This can lead to a range of impacts on the land and the wildlife it supports, for example, erosion of paths and disturbance to ground-nesting birds. Better data on levels of use and impacts is essential to help manage this change and to maintain the special qualities of the area.

Many of the AONB's small rural roads are used for walking, cycling and horse riding. These are some of the most tranquil parts of the AONB. New development, or changes to the highway network, could result in increasing volumes of traffic on these rural roads, which could compromise the tranquillity of the network and discourage their use for quiet recreational enjoyment. At the same time, many rural businesses and farms rely on road transport.

*Quality and Accessibility:* Car parking around the northern and central Malvern Hills provides easy access to the ridge and other walks. There are only limited parking spaces elsewhere in the AONB. This is especially true in the villages where visitors could help to support the local economy. There is scope to manage visitors to reduce their impact on the ridge and 'spread the load' to other paths and areas within the AONB. This needs to be balanced with the wish to maintain areas of tranquillity.

*Accessibility:* There may be a need to create and promote new opportunities for countryside access. This is more sustainable if accessible green space and access is close to where people live and work. This may help to alleviate local pressures. Private landowners have a valuable role to play in reducing pressure on 'honey pot' sites. They can provide a welcoming experience to visitors on the many rights of way and permissive paths in the area. For example, planning permission for a new visitor centre and café at Eastnor has recently been granted.

For some people it may be that a lack of confidence/experience, a lack of information and/or the costs of car parking are factors that prevent people from exploring the countryside. It is likely that such factors affect certain groups more than others. For example, a recent visitor survey on the Malvern Hills and Commons found that 85% of visitors had been to the area before. In the same survey, 58% of visitors described themselves as full-time employed, 21% as retired with a company/private pension and 10% as self-employed. Just 1% were retired on a state pension only, 2% had been unemployed for less than six months and no respondents had been unemployed for more than six months. Efforts need to be made to address issues of under representation and to ensure that the health and well-being benefits that come from being close to nature are available to all.

## Natural England

*Quality/Accessibility:* Caution should be applied to promoting recreation on wildlife sites. Some sites are sensitive to recreational impacts and promotion of recreation in the wrong places could lead to damage or deterioration of a site.

The Malvern Hills SSSI for example suffers from recreational impacts from high footfall, cyclists, horse riders and dogs disturbing breeding birds.

## Worcestershire Wildlife Trust

*Quality/Accessibility:* This is an area of significant concern for us in relation to our reserves. See also answers to sub-sections 4.3 and 4.8.

Similar concerns pertain to a wide range of accessible sites, many of which can be of high value for wildlife. A number of council and privately-owned sites may be of sufficient ecological quality as to merit Local Wildlife Site status and yet some of these sites are subject to significant and increasing recreational pressure. Seeking an appropriate balance between delivering the obvious benefits of open-air recreation and maintaining ecological quality can be difficult and there is significant risk of high levels of recreational pressure causing a degradation of the sites being visited. This problem may be especially stark where recreational trends alter (either through intentional promotion, unnoticed or in small increments) over time. Examples can include an increase in off-road mountain biking and the commensurate impact on woodland ground flora or straightforward pedestrian trampling and path widening as a result of increasing numbers of walkers. Side effects of inappropriate levels of use can include eutrophication as result of dog mess and disturbance to sensitive species including birds as well as direct habitat loss.

As we suggested in section 8 we consider that in view of these sensitivities additional wildlife rich spaces should be created so as to reduce the pressure on the extant resource. These need to be close to large areas of population and should have 'soft' management features built in so as to channel users in a manner that allows for access to nature but also retains quiet spaces in which wildlife can thrive.

### 4.11.3 Community Organisations Survey

| Group                                       | Comment                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
|---------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Worcestershire Area of Ramblers Association | I have already referred to the over use of the Malvern Hills by walkers. I would add that cyclists are also an erosive force that needs to be addressed. It seems to me that we should be planning for less activity on those hills. The Teme Valley is less well known but in my view is so sensitive that only quiet passive activity could be accommodated. The same applies in the Lenches and the Cotswolds.                                                                                                                     |
| Droitwich Community Sports Club             | Encouraging outdoor activities at all ages is essential and should be prioritised if we are to limit the impact of the more sedentary lifestyles that we lead. The implications of not delivering these facilities is inevitably going to be increased healthcare expenditure.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| Malvern Hills District Footpath Society     | We should all fit in with each other when it comes to our activities. You cannot take away from one group to give to another otherwise you would have walking areas, horse riding areas etc.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| Malvern Community Forest                    | Wildlife is definitely 'damaged' by outdoor recreational activity, with dog-walking being of most concern for both flora and fauna. Having a high level of predators (dogs) regularly passing through wildlife areas chases fauna from the area; the associated high level of excrement significantly damages existing soils and the flora they support. This goes widely unrecognised and unacknowledged. Heavy pedestrian footfall compacts soil and deprives larger plants roots - trees especially - of air, water and nutrients. |

|      |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
|------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| CPRE | <p>Young people seem obsessed with being outside playing games, especially football (which is very easy to play), rather than trying to learn something of educational value or doing some work.</p> <p>A lot of games (e.g. football, basketball) are accompanied by a lot of enthusiastic shouting, which can be heard by many people living quite a long way from the sports ground. However, I don't think this causes much annoyance.</p> <p>It is therefore better to locate such sites near the estates where people live rather than put them in open countryside. Yes, countryside is damaged by the more physical recreation activities and should be left for agriculture, wildlife and quieter activities such as walking.</p> |
|------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

## B) The importance of biodiversity and multi-functional open space

### 4.11.4 South Worcestershire Councils

#### South Worcestershire Councils

##### Wychavon District Council

##### *Senior Parks and Greenspace Officer*

*Quality:* We feel Biodiversity is important and have introduced flower meadows and mass spring bulbs into parks for insect pollinators.

##### *Wildlife Sites and Projects Officer*

*Quality/Accessibility:* Avon Meadows in Pershore is a perfect example of a multi-functional space. Created wetlands, now 10 years old, host reed warblers, reed buntings, breeding cuckoo, visiting bittern, lapwing and snipe over the winter.

Recreation of species rich grassland in a floodplain underway, restoring 10+ Ha of species-rich floodplain meadow.

A network of footpaths across the site allow people to continue to use it, unless it becomes fully flooded.

Active local community volunteers manage the reserve, monitor and survey wildlife, lead guided walks, cut the reeds, lay the hedges, monitor subsurface water levels and identify the plants.

A well-used place for school visits and educational sessions for local interest groups, colleges and universities.

What Avon Meadows allows us to do is get people up close to nature, it's not a designated site, so its fairly robust, it means that we can train people in wildlife survey techniques and enthuse people about wildlife on their doorstep.

When it was constructed in 2008/09, surface water drainage that had previously been piped directly to the River Avon was diverted into the created wetlands. This water is loaded with phosphates and nitrates when it comes into the wetland system, and most of it has gone by the time it leaves.

In terms of ecosystem services and natural capital... we provide food in the form of a hay crop every year; our permanent grassland stores and captures carbon every year; we enhance water quality through our wetlands; we provide flood storage and alleviation; we provide high quality recreation and learning space for the residents of Pershore and incredible biodiversity gains through a mosaic of high quality habitats along a river corridor.

## 4.11.5 Strategic Organisations

### Environment Agency

*Quality:* This is important, multi-functional space can incorporate waterbodies, enhance the environment and improve networks for protected species.

In many towns, rivers are hidden, have been culverted. Opening up watercourses, landscaping and creating viable habitat for species is highly beneficial to open space. It adds value to the space and creates a focal point (watercourse) and connection to the natural environment to users/protected species.

### Malvern Hills Trust

It is incredibly important that outdoor recreation is available in sites such as the Malvern Hills where there are rare species, ancient archaeology and a tradition of grazing common land. This links people to their heritage and their past. Being awed by a hillfort is part of the joy that people get when visiting and inspires learning and caring for heritage and landscape. The wide range of features that this landscape has to offer is to be celebrated.

The Malvern Hills and Commons offer a diverse landscape and a multifunctional open space for hang gliders, walkers, cyclists and more.

### Natural England

*Quality/Accessibility:* The National Planning Policy Framework states that local planning authorities should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, sites of biodiversity or geological value and soils and minimising impacts on and providing net gains for biodiversity, including by establishing coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures (170a &d). The Planning Practice Guidance on Green Infrastructure provides more detail on this.

Ecological networks are coherent systems of natural habitats organised across whole landscapes so as to maintain ecological functions. A key principle is to maintain connectivity - to enable free movement and dispersal of wildlife e.g. badger routes, river corridors for the migration of fish and staging posts for migratory birds.

Urban green space provides multi-functional benefits. It contributes to coherent and resilient ecological networks, allowing species to move around within, and between, towns and the countryside with even small patches of habitat benefitting movement. Urban GI is also recognised as one of the most effective tools available to us in managing environmental risks such as flooding and heat waves. Greener neighbourhoods and improved access to nature can also improve public health and quality of life and reduce environmental inequalities.

There may be significant opportunities to retrofit green infrastructure in urban environments. These can be realised through:

- green roof systems and roof gardens;
- green walls to provide insulation or shading and cooling;
- new tree planting or altering the management of land (e.g. management of verges to enhance biodiversity).

Green infrastructure is also relevant in a rural context, where it might additionally refer to the use of farmland, woodland, wetlands or other natural features to provide services such as flood protection, carbon storage or water purification.

A strategic approach for green infrastructure networks should support a similar approach for ecological networks, as outlined above. Evidence of a strategic approach can be underpinned by a Green Infrastructure Strategy. We encourage the provision of green infrastructure to be integrated into relevant other policies, for example biodiversity, green space, flood risk, climate change, reflecting the multifunctional benefits of green infrastructure.

You could also consider issues relating to the protection of natural resources, including air quality, ground and surface water and soils within urban design plans.

Further information on GI is included within The Town and Country Planning Association's "Design Guide for Sustainable Communities" and their more recent "Good Practice Guidance for Green Infrastructure and Biodiversity".

## **Worcestershire Wildlife Trust**

*Quality/Accessibility:* We are firmly of the opinion that biodiverse multi-functional open space is vital for the health and wellbeing of communities in Worcestershire. The county GI strategy [http://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/info/20015/planning\\_policy\\_and\\_strategy/1002/planning\\_for\\_green\\_infrastructure](http://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/info/20015/planning_policy_and_strategy/1002/planning_for_green_infrastructure) is supported by an evidence base which sets this out in some detail and so we do not wish to repeat the basic information here. However it is worth noting that all the GI Concept Statements make a clear link between POS and biodiversity enhancement opportunities.

Linked to this agenda, but perhaps harder to quantify, is the need for a coherent and well managed PROW network. This has synergies with emerging work on resilient ecological networks and there may be merit in considering links between the two agendas as part of this study. Issues of disturbance and any need for lighting of routeways will need careful consideration but developing robust public access networks that not only permeate urban and rural areas but that also seek to improve the resilience of the ecological network would be worthwhile. In addition, any improvements to the wider countryside PROW network could also help to alleviate recreational pressure on nature reserves and other less robust ecologically important sites.

### **4.11.6 Community Organisations Survey**

[No substantive comments made on this topic]

## 4.12 Other comments and observations

Beyond comments made under the above specific headings, several organisations and groups made comments that could not really be classified neatly under the above headings but are nonetheless considered to have relevance.

### 4.12.1 Strategic organisations

| Organisation                  | Comment                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
|-------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Environment Agency            | The above is given as free preliminary advice. Any further work outside our normal statutory remit will be chargeable under our Cost Recovery service.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| Malvern Hills Trust           | We take the experience of those using the Hills for Outdoor Recreation seriously and every 6 months meet with a Recreation Advisory Panel made up of representatives from various recreation groups. Their feedback on projects and management proposals are incredibly valuable and important. We use this information to better plan works and guide our visitors recreation management. Providing a method by which people can feedback into providers of local space is important and should be in place wherever possible.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| Worcestershire Wildlife Trust | <p>We are firmly of the opinion that biodiverse multi-functional open space is vital for the health and wellbeing of communities in Worcestershire. The county GI strategy is supported by an evidence base which sets this out in some detail and so we do not wish to repeat the basic information here. However, it is worth noting that all the GI Concept Statements make a clear link between POS and biodiversity enhancement opportunities.</p> <p>Linked to this agenda, but perhaps harder to quantify, is the need for a coherent and well managed PROW network. This has synergies with emerging work on resilient ecological networks and there may be merit in considering links between the two agendas as part of this study. Issues of disturbance and any need for lighting of routeways will need careful consideration but developing robust public access networks that not only permeate urban and rural areas but that also seek to improve the resilience of the ecological network would be worthwhile. In addition, any improvements to the wider countryside PROW network could also help to alleviate recreational pressure on nature reserves and other less robust ecologically important sites.</p> |

### 4.12.2 Community Organisations

| Group                           | Comment                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
|---------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Pensham Community Trust         | The government should resist the temptation to build houses everywhere as natural areas must be left for the peace of mind of rural inhabitants and the wildlife                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| Droitwich Community Sports Club | We would like to work with the Local Authority to deliver a legacy hub for ball sports at Droitwich Community Sport Club.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| Cycling UK & Push Bike!         | Improving the cycle network and encouraging more cycle use needs to be built into a clear and integrated strategy that also supports a range of other priorities such as the reduction of congestion and air pollution and improving health outcomes. The County Council has been promising to develop an integrated cycle strategy since 2014. Since April 2017 there is also a national expectation that local highway authorities develop their own Cycling & Walking Investment Strategies. There is still no sign that a strategy will ever be developed. |

## 4.13 Park, Green Space, Countryside and Rights of Way: Key Findings

### Overview

- The most important policy document relating to this study in the current adopted SWDP for South Worcestershire, which is in the early stages of review.
- The SWDP contains standards of provision for Open Space and Green Infrastructure.
- The SWDP also contains standards relating to the conservation of the stock of open space.
- There are other recommended standards in relation to the provision of types of open space- notably the Accessible Natural Green Space Standard (ANGSt) advocated by Natural England.
- Other important documents relevant to this study include the Developer Contributions SPD covering planning obligations and developer contributions; and the Infrastructure Delivery Plan.
- It is noted that the current local plan does not contain standards for outdoor sports pitches (however the July 2018 Developer Contributions SPD does feature a standard).
- It is also noted that the SPD covering planning obligations and developer contributions embeds figures relating to unit costs and household sizes that are susceptible to change.

### Quantity

**Strategic organisations** (including local authority officers, and policy documents).

- Generally, the view of strategic organisations (including local authority officers) is that quantitative provision across the area is quite good, although adopted policy requires additional provision in association with planned new development.
- Specific concern was highlighted in respect of a lack of allotment provision in some areas.
- Concern was also expressed about the shortage of country parks in the south part of the study area.

### Community groups survey

- Of those responding to the question most (43%) thought there were enough open spaces to meet their needs; 25% felt there were not enough; with the rest unsure, or with no opinion.
- Specific instances of quantity issues are reported in the relevant part of this section.

### Household Survey

- Of the householders responding to the household survey, a majority indicated a belief that for most kinds of open space and recreational facilities, across the study area there is sufficient provision.
- However, a large minority of households (48%) reported a general need for more woodlands, wildlife areas and nature reserves.
- The survey highlighted that It is the area's footpaths, bridleways and cycle paths that are most commonly used by most households at least monthly (86%); followed by parks and recreation grounds (78%); and woodlands, wildlife areas and nature reserves (76%).
- Footpaths, bridleways and cycle paths are also by far the most frequently used facility on both a weekly and daily basis (70% - of which 42% use them almost every day); followed by informal open spaces e.g. for ball games, picnics, hobbies, dog walking etc (53% - of which 30% visit almost every day); and Parks and recreation grounds (53% - of which 17% visit almost every day);

## **Parish Councils**

- Many individual local councils made observations regarding the quantitative adequacy or otherwise of various types of open space provision, as summarised at the relevant points in this section.

## **Quality**

Strategic organisations (including local authority officers, and policy documents).

- Generally, local authority officers observed that the quality of existing open spaces is relatively good, and there are certainly parks and landscapes of high quality.
- However, issues can arise from the potential damage caused to habitats by recreational use; and hence a need to establish an appropriate balance on some sites between recreational uses and wildlife protection/enhancement.
- There is the potential for increased provision and improved quality of the provision of 'traffic free' access across the South Worcestershire area as a whole

## **Community group survey**

- There was strong concern expressed regarding provision of dedicated cycle paths, with the view being that this was often piecemeal.
- There was also concern about declining resources for the maintenance and improvement of the Rights of Way network.
- Many individual local councils made observations regarding the qualitative adequacy or otherwise of various types of open space provision, as summarised at the relevant points in this section.
- Certain groups expressed concern regarding the lack of facilities within certain types of open space (such as 'park run' routes and sports pitches).

## **Household Survey**

- For most kinds of outdoor facilities/open spaces the majority of households who expressed a view suggested that in general they were of adequate or better quality.
- However, for some typologies there were notable levels of dissatisfaction with general levels of quality as noted below. 54% of households noted the overall quality of allotments as being poor or very poor.
- In contrast some kinds of facilities/open spaces were rated highly in terms of quality. The quality of parks and recreation grounds was rated as good or very good by 60% of respondents.
- Other kinds of open spaces with notable levels of satisfaction were woodlands, wildlife areas and nature reserves (52%); and informal open spaces for dog walking, picnics, ball games etc (50%).

## **Access**

**Strategic organisations** (including local authority officers, and policy documents).

- Generally good access to green space in overall, but with some provision-specific exceptions.
- Consultees expressed caution about access by people to areas valuable to flora and fauna.

## **Household Survey**

- In general, the majority of household respondents reported that they would not normally travel more than 15 minutes to visit most kinds of open spaces and recreational facilities.
- There is considerable variation however between the typologies. For example, 55% of households are prepared to travel 16 minutes or more to visit water recreation facilities (27% of those would travel more than 20 minutes); and 53% of households are prepared to travel that

long to visit woodlands, wildlife areas and nature reserves (of which 29% would travel more than 20 minutes).

- In contrast, for significant numbers of residents, facilities need to be much more locally accessible before they will be used (for example, play areas, youth facilities, informal open space and allotments).
- 52% of users would expect allotments to be within a 10 minute travel time, of which 23% would not wish to travel more than 5 minutes.
- 50% of users would expect access to informal open spaces to be within a 10 minute travel time, of which 26% would not wish to travel more than 5 minutes.

Residents were asked if they would cycle or walk further or more often if the quality of their journey by foot or bicycle to a nearby open space or facility was improved. 82% of households confirmed that they would be prepared to walk/cycle further if the quality of the route was improved; 85% also said that if the quality of the route was improved they would make the journey more often. This is a significant finding in terms of illustrating the potential benefit of ensuring good foot and cycle path access to facilities; and providing cycle parking facilities.

***Community groups survey:***

- Strong views were expressed by some groups in respect of access to the Rights of Way network for those with physical limitations.
- Similar sentiment was expressed in respect to off road routes for cycling.

## 5.0 OUTDOOR PLAY AND YOUTH FACILITIES

This section provides feedback and information relating to outdoor play and youth facilities. It considers information and views provided by various stakeholders, strategic organisations and local groups.

The section is structured into two main parts:

- Review of Policy and Strategy
- Youth and Play – stakeholder feedback

There is a summary of key points and issues at the end of the section.

### 5.1 Review of Policy and Strategy

#### 5.1.1 The South Worcestershire Development Plan (SWDP) 2016

The SWDP (policy 39) sets quantitative standards (in hectares per 1000 population) for the provision of equipped play space in new development as below:

| Typology            | Malvern Hills | Worcester - within its administrative boundary. | Wychavon |
|---------------------|---------------|-------------------------------------------------|----------|
| Equipped play space | 0.04ha        | 0.61ha                                          | 0.09ha   |

It adds that on-site provision will have regard to the following accessibility standards for Children's Play Space (safe walking distances to dwellings):

- Local Area for Play (LAP) – within 100m.
- Local Equipped Area for Play (LEAP) – within 400m.
- Neighbourhood Equipped Area for Play (NEAP) – within 1km.

There does not appear to be a specific local quality element of the required standard other than by reference to the FiT classification of LAP, LEAP and NEAP (see further information below).

The adopted Play Space standards will be reviewed and new standards recommended as part of the study process.

#### 5.1.2 Worcestershire Play Strategy (2007-10)

##### Introduction

The most recent Play Strategy was produced in 2007 and was supported by all three of the South Worcestershire Councils. Though out of date many of its broad principles and priorities remain relevant to the current Open Space Assessment.

In its Primary Statement it notes that “for many the primary outside play spaces are the street and other open spaces near their homes”. In the statement it also highlights that where they play depends upon a number of factors including “The accessibility of the open spaces they might want to use; and the variety and attractiveness of potential play spaces”.

The scope of the strategy included:

- Outdoor play equipment in public parks.
- Outdoor play equipment on housing developments.
- Outdoor play equipment in parishes
- Open Spaces for recreational use.
- Youth provision such as seating, shelters, MUGAs and skate parks.

## Underpinning principles and values

Of relevance to the Open Space Assessment this section included the following broad aims:

- To ensure that children and young people have safe and easy access to a range of play opportunities within a reasonable distance of their homes.
- To provide facilities and services that meet all children's needs, encouraging social inclusion and embracing people with disabilities.
- To be prepared to offer challenge, whilst managing risk.

## Priorities

As regards Open Spaces the main aspiration of the strategy was "children and young people have increased opportunity to access and enjoy a variety of play".

It was noted that "research shows that children's favourite place to play is outdoors. They like playing on the streets, in parks and recreation places". The strategy noted the importance of providing good quality play spaces providing challenge and risk within a managed environment: "since risk-taking is an intrinsic part of children's development, studies show that children will seek risk anyway. It is therefore better to provide "safe risks" for children through the design of imaginative, challenging outdoor playgrounds".

Specific priorities were to ensure:

- More children and young people have access to a range of quality play opportunities.
- More children and young people have the opportunity to access parks and open spaces.
- More children and young people have the opportunity to take 'safe risks'.
- More children and young people have the opportunity to lead healthy lifestyles.

### 5.1.3 Fields in Trust (FiT)

In 2015 Fields in Trust produced the report: "Guidance for Outdoor Sport and Play - Beyond the Six Acre Standard". In relation to standards for children's play space the following summary was produced as a guide for local authorities considering local standards:

| Typology                                             | Quantity guideline (hectares per 1,000 population)    | Walking guideline (walking distance: metres from dwellings) |
|------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------|
| Equipped/designated play areas                       | 0.25<br>See table below for recommended minimum sizes | LAPs – 100m<br>LEAPs – 400m<br>NEAPs – 1,000m               |
| Other outdoor provision (MUGAs and skateboard parks) | 0.3                                                   | 700m                                                        |

FiT add that “quantity guidelines should not be interpreted as either a maximum or minimum level of provision; rather they are benchmark standards that can be adjusted to take account of local circumstances”.

The minimum sizes FiT recommend for play/youth spaces is noted below:

| Play space typology    | Minimum size | Minimum dimensions                                                                                                                                                                                       | Buffer zones                                                                            |
|------------------------|--------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| LAP                    | 0.01ha       | 10x10 metres<br>(minimum activity zone of 100sqm)                                                                                                                                                        | 5m minimum separation between activity zone and the boundary of dwellings               |
| LEAP                   | 0.04ha       | 20x20 metres<br>(minimum activity zone of 400sqm)                                                                                                                                                        | 20m minimum separation between activity zone and the habitable room façade of dwellings |
| NEAP                   | 0.1ha        | 31.6x31.6 metres<br>(minimum activity zone of 1,000sqm comprising an area for play equipment and structures & a hard surfaced area of at least 465sqm (the minimum needed to play five-a-side football). | 30m minimum separation between activity zone and the boundary of dwellings              |
| MUGA & Skateboard Park | 0.1ha        | 40x20 metres                                                                                                                                                                                             | 30m minimum separation between activity zone and the boundary of dwellings              |

## Quality Guidance

FiT also provide general quality guidance for public open spaces.

- Quality appropriate to the intended level of performance, designed to appropriate technical standards.
- Located where they are of most value to the community to be served.
- Sufficiently diverse recreational use for the whole community.
- Appropriately landscaped.
- Maintained safely and to the highest possible condition with available finance.
- Positively managed taking account of the need for repair and replacement over time as necessary.
- Provision of appropriate ancillary facilities and equipment.
- Provision of footpaths.
- Designed so as to be free of the fear of harm or crime.
- Local authorities can set their own quality benchmark standards for play areas using Play England’s Quality Assessment Tool.

### 5.1.4 Play England

Play England also have some broad observations about overall policy direction and advice on local standards as summarised below.

#### Quantity

Play England recommend provision of a range of play spaces in all urban environments:

- A Doorstep spaces close to home
- B Local play spaces – larger areas within easy walking distance
- C Neighbourhood spaces for play – larger spaces within walking distance
- D Destination/family sites; accessible by bicycle, public transport and with car parking

They emphasise that play spaces do not just mean formal play areas. While these are included play spaces cover all areas of public open spaces that are "playable" e.g. spaces that are accessible, safe, appropriate for play and where play use is welcomed and encouraged.

They also point out the need for standards for smaller settlements and rural areas where the doorstep, local, neighbourhood, and destination hierarchy is unlikely to be appropriate.

### **Quality**

Play England would like the Play England Design Guide *Design for Play* to be referenced and added as a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD). Play England have developed a *Quality Assessment Tool* that can be used to judge the quality of individual play spaces. They recommend that local authorities consider adopting this as a means of assessing the quality of play spaces in the local area.

### **Access**

Access is the key element for Play England as referred to in the Quantity section – a range of doorstep, local, neighbourhood, and destination play spaces with appropriate catchments. Disability access is also an important issue for Play England and they would like local authorities to adopt the KIDS publication *Inclusion by Design* as a Supplementary Planning Document.

### **Priorities**

Play England have a guidance document: *Better Places to Play through Planning*. The publication gives detailed guidance on setting local standards for access, quantity and quality of playable space. It also shows how provision for better play opportunities can be promoted in planning policies and processes; giving detail of how local development frameworks and planning control can be utilised in favour of child-friendly communities. They recommended that local authorities adopt this guidance generally in terms of play and spatial planning.

## 5.2 Youth and Play facilities – Stakeholders

### 5.2.1 South Worcestershire Councils

#### **Worcester City Council** (Supervisor - Environmental Operations)

The City Council manage 45 play areas which are well used. The Council has a rolling policy on updating equipment. Each year we pick 3 or 4 sites to improve. The Council aims to spread the improvement projects around the city so that every area has up to date equipment.

The Council has its own play inspectors who travel around the city inspecting and logging faults and then fixing any problems. This is done on a fortnight rotation and quarterly for a full operational inspection.

#### **Wychavon District Council** (Senior Parks and Greenspace Officers)

The Council recognises that play is an important part of a child's development, and this can provide a mechanism to explore and develop their skills. Children learn through play by experimenting with their mental and physical capabilities.

Wychavon Council manages 27 play areas which includes 3 skate parks and 3 water play facilities. The play areas have varied types of equipment that meets high quality and safety standards. Some equipment is more challenging than others to provide a different and stimulating play experience.

Any other play areas in the villages are usually managed by the Parish Councils or sometimes a charitable organisation.

#### **Malvern Hills District Council** (Contracts and Development Manager)

The majority of the District's play areas and youth facilities are owned and maintained by the town and parish councils for the area they are located.

The District Council manages Priory Park in Malvern which includes a children's play area. It also manages another six local play areas at Dean Close and Montgomery Close, Powick; Milestone Road in Upton; and Gainsborough Close, Gifford Drive and Blandford Close in Welland.

All District Council owned play parks are voluntary smoke free zones as a result of the Council signing the Local Government Declaration on Tobacco Control. The declaration supports the Council's commitment to address the harm caused by tobacco as part of their priorities; to build stronger and healthier communities and make the most of the local environment<sup>19</sup>.

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<sup>19</sup> The MHDC Senior Planning Officer also made a specific observation that the skateboard park in Victoria Park, Malvern Link has recently been extended (managed by Malvern Town Council).

## 5.2.2 Town and Parish Councils

Town and Parish Councils are key owners and managers of local play areas and youth facilities in South Worcestershire, particularly in Malvern Hills District. Many of them highlight needs for improvements. Specific comments on play and youth facilities from individual parishes are provided in the table below:

| Local Council                                     | Comments – Play and Youth Facilities                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
|---------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Abberley (Village and Common)                     | New Provision needed – play and youth.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| Bayton                                            | Would be good to have some play equipment for children and adults                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| Bishampton & Throckmorton                         | There is no current need for an expansion of the current children’s play facilities. Skateparks provide a valuable resource for teenagers who are more individualistic than those who are attracted to the more popular sports. Their needs should also be catered for; - they could be our entrepreneurs of tomorrow. Skateboards can create noise and disturbance for local residents and so need to be sited at some distance from local housing.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| Broadwas & Cotheridge                             | New equipment needed for play areas. Outdoor shelter needed for youth.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| Crowle                                            | Play areas will require updates soon.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| Droitwich Spa Town Council                        | Play areas already available at Lido Park, Vines Park and Westlands. Some shortfall for youth facilities.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| Eastham                                           | Would be good to have some play equipment but the area would need to be fenced off, residents may not like that                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| Flyford Flavell, Grafton Flyford and North Piddle | Under consultation re play areas. No demand identified for youth facilities.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| Great Witley and Hillhampton                      | Adequate for play areas.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| Hallow                                            | The current play areas would benefit from additional facilities and in places a total re-design. Teenage facilities re limited – to a zip wire, basket swing and open access area – additional facilities would we believe be welcomed by the wider parish.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| Harvington                                        | The play areas that exist are well used, and the Parish Council are currently investigating improvements. The Neighbourhood Plan designates an area of land opposite the Golden Cross public house for community use, which could include such an area in future.<br>The scope for older teenage activities in the village is very limited. The cricket club does operate to encourage young people to become involved. The idea of a skateboard park has been muted. The only problem is to find a location, to alleviate the risk of nuisance to nearby properties from the potential for considerable levels of noise from such an installation. Most teenagers go outside the village for activities in neighbouring towns. |
| Hindlip, Martin Hussingtee & Salwarpe             | Play areas: Churchfields Farm – other facilities currently outside the Parish. Youth Facilities only available in either Droitwich or Worcester                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| Hinton on the Green                               | Nothing further required                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| Lindridge                                         | There is a need for play areas. No facilities at the moment - specifically in Eardiston where the majority of young people live. No youth facilities.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| Little Witley                                     | New play area - this would be so useful. New youth area - might be linked into a MUGAs with a small ramp for practice. We have a lot of teenagers who have nothing to do.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |

|                            |                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
|----------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Malvern Wells              | Recently refurbished our Play Areas.                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| Martley                    | Good local play facility. Skate park is an excellent local facility                                                                                                                                                    |
| Offenham                   | Currently being improved                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| South Littleton            | Need for youth facilities.                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| St Peter the Great County  | Need indoor facilities for a youth club.                                                                                                                                                                               |
| Suckley                    | Badly situated down single-track unlit road well away from housing - new facilities required adjacent to social housing (e.g. Damson Way)                                                                              |
| Tenbury Town Council       | Some play equipment may need replacing in the near future. Second hand youth equipment, which may need replacing in the near future.                                                                                   |
| Tibberton                  | No space or area for youth facilities owned by Parish Council                                                                                                                                                          |
| West Malvern               | New play area required                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| Whittington                | Children's play area. There is a children's play area on the new development - Uffnalls - it is understood that once 'handed over' by the Developers this facility will be the responsibility of the District Council? |
| Wyre Piddle Parish Council | There is one small play area for younger children but further areas are needed for younger and older children. There are no facilities for teenagers available.                                                        |

### 5.2.3 Woodland Trust

The Woodland Trust highlight that woods are important spaces for informal play "as highlighted in the **Public Health White Paper** (Healthy Lives, Healthy People; Nov 2010) there are tremendous opportunities for native woodland to contribute positively towards delivering improved mental and physical health for children and young people. Research shows that woodland can provide benefits for air quality, urban heat island cooling, physical exercise provision and relief from mental illness".

### 5.2.4 Worcester Play Council

Worcester Play Council was established in 1987 to "champion and influence the role of play within Worcester City". Their vision is to "ensure the availability of high quality play provision and opportunities open to all children under 16 years of age across the city".

The Play Council's aims are to:

- Be the champion for play across the city.
- Develop a high quality workforce to deliver play based on current best practice and guidelines to maximise the potential of every child.
- Seek and raise funds for the development and delivery of play across the city.
- Offer up to date guidance and support to our members, partner organisations and stakeholders.
- Facilitate partnerships to maximise the development and delivery of play across the city.

The Play Council development manager commented on various aspects of outdoor play provision as noted below:

- Overall across Worcester City there seem to be enough equipped play spaces for under 13s and open space areas for informal and natural play.
- Similarly, in terms of quantity there are enough teen/play facilities such as skate/wheels areas, BMX etc. and areas of open space where teenagers can "hang out"; youth shelters etc.

- As regards quality, in general local equipped play areas are good as are wheeled sports facilities, youth shelters/outdoor meeting areas. Similarly, for wild natural areas for play e.g. grassed spaces, ponds, trees for climbing, sand/mud etc).
- However, play areas with more challenging equipment for teenagers and MUGAs are less good in terms of quality.
- Priorities for improvement – the kinds of play spaces that are most needed in the City area are wild natural areas (grass, ponds, trees for climbing, sand/mud etc); play areas with more challenging equipment for teenagers and MUGAs.
- One specific need identified was for the provision of outdoor basketball pitches.

### **5.2.5 Wychavon Youth Bus (Wychavon District Council)**

The Wychavon Youth Bus provides a mobile facility for young people aged between 8-17. It is booked to go out to villages across the district to provide a range of activities, information and support for young people.

The aims of the youth bus are to:

- Provide a multi-use space for children and young people.
- Offer a variety of activities, information and support services.
- Provide a safe place for young people predominantly in rural areas and get young people off the streets.
- Reduce anti-social behaviour and respond to reports of anti-social behaviour.
- Provide a rolling program of support to villages and target areas with the most need.

The Youth Bus Manager made the following general points about outdoor play/youth provision across Wychavon District:

- Quantity – overall for under 13s there don't seem to be enough equipped play areas and accessible open space areas for informal and natural play. In particular there is a need for more provision for the 10+ age range.
- Similarly, provision for teenagers is limited and there aren't enough skate parks, MUGAs and youth shelters/meeting areas. In particular there is a need for more youth shelters and safe areas of open space where teenagers can "hang out".
- Quality - in general the quality of local equipped playgrounds, grass kickabout areas and natural areas for informal play are good. By contrast, youth shelters and play areas with more challenging equipment for teenagers tend to be poor. MUGAs and skate parks/wheeled sports provision are no better than adequate.
- Priorities – in general across the District the kinds of provision that are most needed are youth shelters and outdoor gyms. Other aspects in need of improvement are equipped play areas and spaces providing opportunities for informal natural play.
- It is also important to improve recreational areas by village halls and make them more usable e.g. supply better lighting and provide outdoor toilets. Also it would be useful to provide parking spaces for larger attractions such as mobile cinemas - they are currently too narrow to get larger vehicle in so limit their use.

The Youth Bus Manager also noted that the District Council had recently undertaken a residents survey at the Westlands estate in Droitwich. One question asked was "what most needs improving about the estate". The two most frequently chosen suggestions by both adults and young people were park improvements and young people's activities.

## 5.2.6 Play and Youth Organisations Survey

Local community and youth organisations were also surveyed and comments relating to play and youth facilities are noted in the table below:

| Group                          | Comments on Play and Youth Facilities                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
|--------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| ARCOS                          | ARCOS is a disability charity that supports communication skills. We make use of local parks within Malvern. Overall, we don't think that are enough play and youth facilities in the local area. In general, we also think quality is fairly poor. Equipment within equipped play spaces is not inclusive. Many parks have the same equipment within them from years ago. We would like to see more and better areas that are inclusive for families with additional needs. Priorities for improvement are play areas for both younger children and areas with more challenge for teenagers and MUGAs. We would also like to see more accessible natural areas for informal play.                                                                                                                                     |
| Outside Youth Association      | We run a Youth Centre in Evesham offering targeted and open access sessions, working with young people aged 11-19. We think that while overall there are enough equipped play areas and outdoor sports facilities, there are not enough accessible open space areas for informal and natural play. Also there aren't enough youth facilities and youth shelters. In general, we think quality is poor. The main priorities for improved provision are youth shelters, play areas with more challenging equipment for teenagers, and accessible natural areas for informal play.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| Wallace House Community Centre | We are based in Evesham and provide facilities and activities for young people, families and community groups. We have a small area of outdoor space that our groups have converted into a community garden which is used 2 or 3 days each week for community groups to socialise, do gardening. Youth clubs use it for an extra outdoor area for BBQs, socialising, and enjoying the outdoors. We think that while there are generally enough play spaces for younger children there is not enough for teenagers – we need more provision for young people across the board. The same applies to quality – tends to be good for play areas, poor for youth. Top priority needs for improved provision are youth shelters, challenging play spaces for teenagers, outdoor gyms and parkour.                            |
| Witton Middle School           | We are a junior school in Droitwich. In general there seem to be enough play areas for under 13s but not enough MUGAs etc. The quality of play areas is good, similar for grass kickabout areas. The quality of youth shelters, areas with challenging equipment for teenagers and outdoor gyms tends to be poor. Main needs for improvement are youth shelters.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| Perdiswell Skate Park Group    | Our skate park based in Worcester at Perdiswell Young People's Leisure Club. It is a 24 hr open access area available to anyone. The purpose of our park is to promote the skate scene locally. The organisation is run with skaters needs in mind, so ideally we are trying to create a forum. The snow last winter and then the heat waves over the summer has affected the skate park hugely. User numbers have dramatically decreased and the damage the weather has caused is now a problem. The skate park is a great local open space for all ages but is currently not being used to its full potential. Some of the skaters and are creating a forum to tackle the issues we are experiencing. We are looking at fundraising options for fixing the park and hopefully give it the refurbishment it deserves. |

### 5.3 Play Areas and Youth Facilities - Key Findings

The South Worcestershire Councils vary considerably in relation to their respective degrees of management responsibility for play areas and youth facilities. Worcester City is the primary provider in Worcester, Wychavon District manage a significant number and Malvern Hills District only a small number. The Town and Parish Councils are important providers in Malvern Hills and Wychavon Districts.

#### **Quantity**

- The Worcester Play Council suggested that overall there seem to be enough play areas and youth facilities in Worcester City.
- The Wychavon Youth Bus Manager thought that overall across the district there were not enough play areas or youth facilities.
- A number of parish councils suggested that there is not enough play provision in their parish but a higher proportion highlighted a lack of youth facilities. The local play and youth organisations also highlighted a greater need for more youth facilities in comparison to play areas.

#### *Residents survey*

- A majority of households (52%) stated that overall there are enough play areas compared to 35% suggesting a need for more provision.
- A significant number of households (49%) reported a general need for more facilities for teenagers.

#### **Quality**

- The Worcester Play Council noted that in general the quality of local equipped play areas is good, as are wheeled sports facilities and youth shelters/outdoor meeting areas. Similarly, quality was considered to be good for wild natural areas for play e.g. grassed spaces, ponds, trees for climbing, sand/mud etc).
- The Wychavon Youth Bus Manager suggested that in general the quality of local equipped playgrounds, grass kickabout areas and natural areas for informal play is good. By contrast, youth shelters and play areas with more challenging equipment for teenagers tended to be poor. MUGAs and skate parks/wheeled sports provision were no better than adequate.
- A significant number of parish councils highlighted a need for improvements to local play areas and youth facilities. Many of the Play and Youth Organisations report similar concerns. In the main play areas tended to be judged as being of better quality than youth facilities.

#### *Residents survey*

- The quality of youth facilities was not rated highly - 69% of respondent households stated that they were at best adequate with 41% of those rating them as poor or very poor.
- In general resident have fewer concerns with the quality of equipped play areas across South Worcestershire (62% rated them as being good or very good in contrast to 11% rating them as poor or very poor).

#### **Access**

- ARCOS a local disability organisation would like to see more and better areas that are inclusive for families with additional needs; and they would also like to see more accessible natural areas for informal play.

### *Residents survey*

- 57% of users would expect play areas to be within a 10 minute travel time, of which 23% would not wish to travel more than 5 minutes. 52% of users would expect youth facilities to be within a 10 minute travel time, of which 13% would not wish to travel more than 5 minutes.
- A majority of respondents (68%) would be prepared to travel 15 minutes to make use of Multi-use Games Areas (of which 29% would travel longer).

### *Priorities for improvement*

- In the Residents Survey children's play areas and facilities for teenagers scored highly as priorities for improvement in comparison to many other typologies.
- Stakeholders indicated that the kinds of facilities that were most frequently rated as being a high priority for improvement were play areas with more challenging equipment for teenagers; skateboard, BMX or other wheeled sports facilities; and youth shelters/outdoor meeting areas with seats.

### *Other Issues / General Observations*

- The value of play in relation to improvements to children and young people's health and wellbeing was highlighted by a number of stakeholders.
- In support of public health objectives, Malvern Hills District Council have adopted a smoke free policy for all 7 of the play areas that they manage.
- A number of town and parish councils referred to a lack of funding to develop and maintain play and youth facilities to a satisfactory level.
- The Perdiswell Skate Park Group (Worcester City) noted a specific need for improvements to their skate park which attracts skaters from a very wide catchment across South Worcestershire.
- Stakeholders noted the need for well-designed play and youth facilities, the value of consultation with young people and the wider community in that process, and the potential for natural landscaped play areas in which play equipment may not be necessary or simply be a small element of the overall design.
- Play England and FiT provided useful guidance on play and spatial planning; play space design; and managing risk in play. Some of these could be adopted as guidance in Supplementary Planning Documents.

## 6.0 CONCLUDING REMARKS

The survey work, stakeholder consultation, and desk-based research have highlighted a wide range of issues of value to the Open Space and Community Buildings Assessments.

Response levels to the residents' survey, town/parish councils survey, and community organisation survey have been high. This has ensured that a wide and diverse range of views from local residents and groups with an interest in open space, outdoor recreation facilities and community buildings have influenced the findings of the study. Most of the main strategic stakeholders have responded and key issues have been identified to be further considered in the two main reports.

There is a strong degree of consistency across the various sources on key areas of local and strategic need/aspirations, from which we can be confident that the findings are robust and reliable. This provides a strong evidence base to be combined with the detailed typologies audit and analysis.

The information and findings from the consultation report are further considered and analysed in the Open Space Assessment report in relation to the various typologies of open space and outdoor recreation being analysed. Similarly, relevant findings will feed into the main Community Buildings assessment report. In particular the findings provide evidence to support the spatial planning standards recommended for the different categories of open space and community recreation facilities.