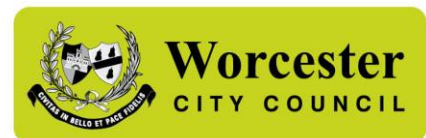


South Worcestershire Open Space Assessment (2019)

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



(FINAL MAY 2019, AMENDED MARCH 2021)

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South Worcestershire Open Space Assessment

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Amendments

March 2021: Amendments have been made to Tables 16 to 19 to rectify calculation errors relating to Play (Youth) for Required Provision (ha).

Glossary of Terms

Term	Meaning
ANGSt	Accessible Natural Green Space Standard
CIL	Community Infrastructure Levy
FIT	Fields In Trust (originally known as the 'National Playing Fields Association')
GI	Green Infrastructure
GIS	Geographic Information System
IMD	Index of Multiple Deprivation
LAP	Local Area for Play
LEAP	Local Equipped Area for Play
LSOA	Lower-layer Super Output Areas
MUGA	Multi Use Games Area
NEAP	Neighbourhood Equipped Play Area
NEWP	Natural Environment White Paper
NGB	National Governing Body
NPPF	National Planning Policy Framework
NPPG	National Planning Practice Guidance
ONS	Office for National Statistics
PPG17	Planning Policy Guidance Note 17
SPD	Supplementary Planning Document
SWC	South Worcestershire Councils
SWDP	South Worcestershire Development Plan
SWDPR	South Worcestershire Development Plan Review
PPS	Playing Pitch Strategy

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Overview

This Open Space Assessment has been undertaken by Ethos Environmental Planning to inform the South Worcestershire Councils (SWC) of Malvern Hills District Council, Wychavon District Council and Worcester City Council Development Plan Review (DPR). It will inform the SWC's plan-making and decision-making processes in relation to open space provision up to 2041.

The Study has been carried out in line with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), in particular paragraph 96, which states: *'Access to a network of high quality open spaces and opportunities for sport and physical activity is important for the health and well-being of communities. Planning policies should be based on robust and up-to-date assessments of the need for open space, sport and recreation facilities (including quantitative or qualitative deficits or surpluses) and opportunities for new provision. Information gained from the assessments should be used to determine what open space, sport and recreational provision is needed, which plans should then seek to accommodate'*.

This report (The Open Space Assessment) is one of three reports provided as part of the overall Study. The other two reports are the Community and Stakeholder Consultation Report and the Village Halls and Community Centres Assessment.

The Open Space Assessment includes six key stages:

- Strategic context/overview;
- Identifying local needs (based on the Community and Stakeholder Consultation Report);
- Audit of open space provision;
- Setting provision standards;
- Applying provision standards; and
- Draft policies and recommendations.

Consultation and Audit of Provision

The Study examined local need for a wide range of different types of open space, via questionnaire surveys which included a general household survey, a survey of Town and Parish councils and a local groups and organisations survey.

The audit of open space provision included a comprehensive mapping and audit process to collate data on the current provision and quality of open space across the Study area. Open spaces were mapped onto a Geographic Information System (GIS) (ArcView) and categorised into individual typologies. Quality audits (based on the Green Flag assessment criteria) were undertaken at key open spaces and all play spaces across the Study area.

Development of Standards

The information from the consultation (local needs assessment), along with the audit of provision and review of existing local and national standards were analysed in order to produce new recommended open space standards for access and quantity. Quality standards have also been recommended, based on Green Flag criteria. The quantity and access standards recommended are summarised in the table below:

Typology	Quantity standards for assessing existing provision and requirements for new provision (ha/1000 population)	Access standard
Allotments	0.30	720 metres or 15 minutes' walk time
Amenity Green Space (sites >0.15 ha)	0.70	600 metres or 12-13 minutes' walk time
Park and Recreation Grounds (public and private combined)	1.70	600 metres or 12-13 minutes' walk time
Play Space (Children)	0.05	600 metres or 12-13 minutes' walk time
Play Space (Youth)	0.05	720 metres or 15 minutes' walk time
Natural Green Space	1.0	920 metres or 20 minutes' walk time ANGst Standards
Total for new provision	3.80 ha/1000	

Application of Standards

The standards above (and quality standards) have been used to identify existing deficiencies or surpluses in the quantity, access and quality of open space across the Study Area by district and ward.

The use of the quantity statistics should not be in isolation – they should be considered alongside the access and quality standards.

The standards that have been proposed are for minimum guidance levels of provision. Certain geographical areas may enjoy levels of provision exceeding minimum standards but this does not mean there is a surplus, as all such provision may be well used.

The application of standards is covered in section 7. The quantity analysis, summarised in table 20 (section 7.2) shows that in every ward, there is a deficiency in at least one typology of open space.

Policy Recommendations

The strategic options and policy recommendations in section 8 of this report address the processes for understanding the options around the following five key areas:

- Existing provision to be protected;
- Existing provision to be enhanced;
- Opportunities for re-location/re-designation of open space;
- Identification of areas for new provision; and
- Facilities that may be surplus to requirement.

Section 8 also considers developer contributions, including costs of providing open space and thresholds for on-site or/and off-site provision.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Overview

This Open Space Assessment has been undertaken by Ethos Environmental Planning to inform the South Worcestershire Councils (SWC) of Malvern Hills District Council, Wychavon District Council and Worcester City Council Development Plan Review (DPR). It will inform the SWC's plan-making and decision-making processes in relation to open space provision up to 2041¹.

The Open Space Assessment is one of three reports provided as part of the overall Study. The three reports are the:

- South Worcestershire Community and Stakeholder Consultation Report;
- South Worcestershire Open Space Assessment (this report); and
- South Worcestershire Community Buildings and Halls Report.

The NPPF (paragraph 96) recognises that access to high quality open spaces and opportunities for sport and recreation can make an important contribution to the health and well-being of communities. It requires local planning authorities to set out policies to help enable communities to access high quality open spaces and opportunities for sport and recreation. These policies must be based on a thorough understanding of the local needs for such facilities and opportunities available for new provision.

The study has been carried out in-line with the NPPF, which was principally updated in July 2018, with further updates following in February 2019. The methodology of the Open Space Assessment has primarily been affected by the absence of updated information relating to (the now superseded) Planning Policy Guidance Note 17 (PPG 17) in the NPPF and National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG). Whilst the government has not published anything specifically to replace this document (it does signpost the Sport England guidance for sports facilities assessments²), there is however, still clear references made in the new NPPF and NPPG to the principles and ideology established within PPG17. As such the underlying principles of this study have been informed by the former guidance provided in '*Planning Policy Guidance Note 17: Planning for Open Space, Sport and Recreation*', and its Companion Guide '*Assessing Needs and Opportunities*', which is a tried and tested methodology and provides a consistent approach with many other local authorities.

It should be noted that this study provides an evidence base for planning policy, and is not a strategy document. The recommendations (Section 8) of this assessment include the basis for the formulation of policies related to open space that will be considered for inclusion within the reviewed Local Plan, and the assessment can be used to inform more detailed strategy work.

¹ The plan period is 2021 to 2041

² <http://planningguidance.planningportal.gov.uk/blog/guidance/open-space-sports-and-recreation-facilities-public-rights-of-way-and-local-green-space/open-space-sports-and-recreation-facilities>

1.2 The South Worcestershire Development Plan Review (SWDPR)

The South Worcestershire Development Plan (SWDP) was adopted in February 2016, and covers the period 2006 to 2030.

The South Worcestershire Councils 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 years³, 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 review will include site allocations, policies and policy designations that will provide for the development needs of the area up to 2041.

The Issues and Options Consultation (November 2018) set out the anticipated requirement for new housing. The Government has introduced a standard methodology for calculating housing need. The methodology is set out within the NPPG and it is based on household projections for the area, plus an uplift to take account of affordability. It should be noted that the housing figure derived from the standard methodology will change at least annually as new affordability data is published each year and new household projections are published approximately every two years. The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) consulted on revisions of the standard methodology in late 2018. This consultation resulted in updated versions of the NPPF and NPPG in February 2019, with the NPPG stating that in setting the baseline figure for household growth projections, the 2014 National Statistics figures should be used as opposed to the more recent (but lower) 2016 figures.

The SWDP is currently at the 'Issues and Options' stage of plan production. Therefore, as of 31st March 2018, it is anticipated that the SWDPR currently needs to make provision for approximately 14,000 dwellings for the period up to 2041 in addition to those which have already been delivered or are likely to be delivered based on current commitments and completions.

1.3 Purpose of this Report

1.3.1 Overall Aim of the Open Space Assessment

The aims of the study are to provide a robust assessment of needs and deficiencies in open spaces in order to establish local provision standards and create an up to date evidence base which can be used to inform the SWDPR. The standards will be used to assess proposals for open spaces during the Plan period, recognising the need for improving the quality of existing open spaces in addition to requirements for new provision.

Village halls and community centres are considered under a separate report as identified in section 1.1.

³ <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/plan-making>

1.3.2 Scope of Assessment

The overall aim of the assessment is to audit the quality, quantity and accessibility of existing open space within the Study Area; identify any surpluses, shortfalls or deficiencies; assess future needs as a result of proposed growth; and to develop local standards for planning policy.

It will provide a comprehensive assessment of the current level of provision, accessibility and quality of the different types of open space. The assessment will also recommend policies for resisting inappropriate development on open spaces and will provide the SWC with a robust evidence base to help justify contributions towards provision of and improvements to open space quality/provision.

The assessment excludes an audit of playing pitches as these have been covered under a separate South Worcestershire Playing Pitch Strategy (July 2015), but are considered within the overall standards recommendations⁴.

1.4 Structure of the report

The open space assessment follows five key stages as summarised below:

- Step 1 – Identifying Local Needs
- Step 2 – Audit of Existing Open Space Assets
- Step 3 – Setting Local Standards
- Step 4 – Applying Local Standards
- Step 5 – Policy Recommendations

1.5 The Study Area

1.5.1 Overview

South Worcestershire covers approximately 1,300km² and forms the southern limit of the West Midlands region. It also borders the south-west and south-east regions. It comprises the largely rural districts of Malvern Hills and Wychavon along with Worcester City, the largest urban area. Beyond the city are the three main towns of Droitwich Spa, Evesham and Malvern as well as the smaller towns of Pershore, Tenbury Wells and Upton-upon-Severn. In addition, there are over 200 villages of varying size, character and level of service provision. The total population of south Worcestershire is approximately 304,857 (2017 Mid-Year Population Estimates).

The landscape is generally of a very high quality and is a defining feature of south Worcestershire. The countryside is distinguished by the upland areas of part of the Cotswolds

⁴<https://www.wychavon.gov.uk/documents/10586/8183916/South+Worcestershire+Playing+Pitch+Strategy+Strategy+Final+Sept+2015.pdf/e4706541-6ba0-4a9a-8b94-318ad3d34e45>

(including Bredon Hill) and the Malvern Hills Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty as well as the river valleys of the Avon, Severn and the Teme. Parts of the Worcester City and Wychavon District's are covered by the West Midlands Green Belt.

1.5.2 Administrative Boundaries

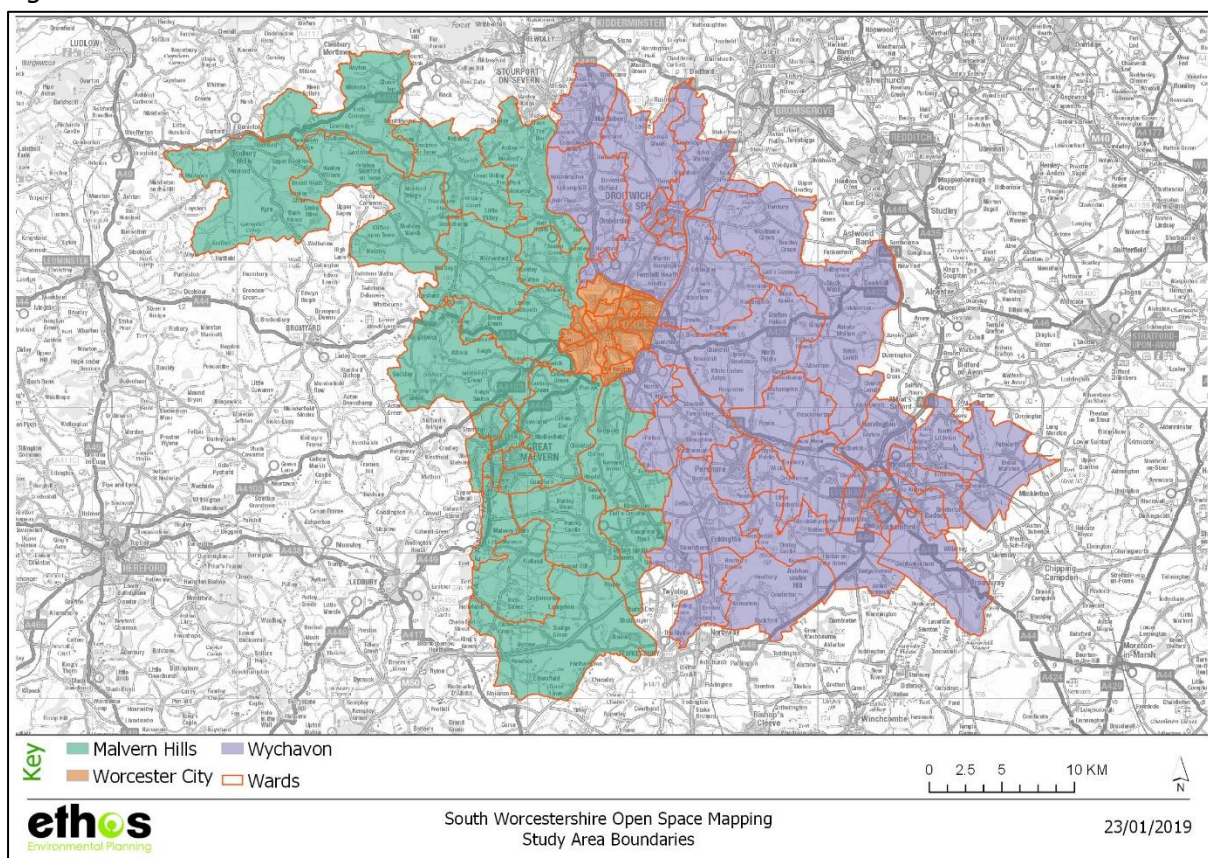
In order to analyse the current provision and future requirements for open space across the Study Area, the following geographical areas have been used:

- Whole Study Area boundary (South Worcestershire, an amalgamation of the three districts);
- Each district boundary; and
- Ward boundaries.

These boundaries are shown in figure 1 below and were agreed by the project steering group as the most effective way to analyse provision.

Of particular relevance to this study are the ONS mid-year (2017) population statistics by ward, which provide much more up-to-date figures compared to the 2011 Census data and have been used as the basis for much of the current and future assessment of need for open space.

Figure 1 SWC Boundaries



1.5.3 Population Statistics (ONS mid-year (2017) population estimates)

The population of the Study Area is 304,857.

This is broken down by district as follows:

- Malvern Hills: 77,165
- Worcester City: 102,314
- Wychavon: 125,378

The further breakdown by ward is shown in table 1 below.

Table 1 Ward population statistics (ONS mid-year 2017 population estimates)

Ward (Grouped by District)	Population
Malvern Hills	
Alfrick and Leigh	3493
Baldwin	2182
Broadheath	3593
Chase	6113
Dyson Perrins	4666
Hallow	1848
Kempsey	4096
Lindridge	2248
Link	6368
Longdon	2092
Martley	1917
Morton	2251
Pickersleigh	6446
Powick	3922
Priory	4463
Ripple	1766
Teme Valley	1879
Tenbury	4025
Upton and Hanley	4153
Wells	3242
West	4112
Woodbury	2290
Worcester	
Arboretum	6301
Battenhall	5295
Bedwardine	8399
Cathedral	11488
Claines	8211
Gorse Hill	5749
Nunnery	8028

Ward (Grouped by District)	Population
Rainbow Hill	5525
St Clement	6037
St John	9074
St Peter's Parish	5536
St Stephen	5430
Warndon	5754
Warndon Parish North	5376
Warndon Parish South	6111
Wychavon	
Badsey	3096
Bengeworth	7661
Bowbrook	2870
Bredon	2666
Bretforton and Offenham	2966
Broadway and Wickhamford	4662
Dodderhill	2835
Drakes Broughton	2519
Droitwich Central	2570
Droitwich East	5561
Droitwich South East	5400
Droitwich South West	4985
Droitwich West	5364
Eckington	2673
Elmley Castle and Somerville	2457
Evesham North	5293
Evesham South	5417
Fladbury	2783
Great Hampton	3168
Hartlebury	2936
Harvington and Norton	2704
Honeybourne and Pebworth	2758
Inkberrow	5685
Little Hampton	5665
Lovett and North Claines	5641
Norton and Whittington	3647
Ombersley	2451
Pershore	7716
Pinvin	3001
South Bredon Hill	2419
The Littletons	3111
Upton Snodsbury	2698

2.0 METHODOLOGY

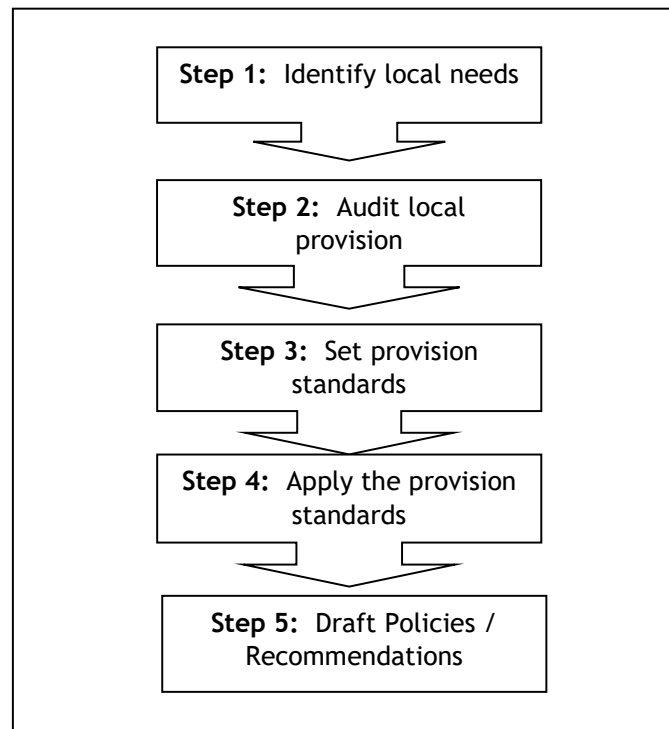
2.1 General

The starting point for this study has been the guidance in Section 8 of the NPPF, which adheres to but has superseded PPG17. The policy gives clear recommendations for the protection of and appropriate provision for open space, however it does not provide any detailed guidance on how to conduct an open space assessment. It is therefore both logical and acceptable to reference the guidance for assessment provided in the former PPG17 and its companion guide. PPG17 placed a requirement on local authorities to undertake assessments and audits of open space, sports and recreational facilities in order to:

- identify the needs of the population;
- identify the potential for increased use; and
- establish an effective strategy for open space/sports/recreational facilities at the local level.

The Companion Guide to PPG17 recommended an overall approach to this kind of study as summarised in figure 2 below:

Figure 2 Summary of methodology



Within this overall approach the companion guide suggests a range of methods and techniques that might be adopted in helping the assessment process. Where appropriate, these methods and techniques have been employed within this study and are explained at the relevant point in the report. In addition, they are summarised in the paragraphs below.

2.2 Identify Local Need (Step 1)

The Community and Stakeholder Consultation Report (2018) examines identified local need for various types of open space, sports and recreational opportunities. It has drawn upon a range of survey and analytical techniques as well as a detailed review of existing consultation data and other relevant documentation. The report details the community consultation and research process that has been undertaken as part of the study as well as the main findings. For further details of the findings, please refer to the Community and Stakeholder Consultation Report.

2.3 Audit of Existing Open Space Typologies (Step 2)

2.3.1 Defining the scope of the audit

In order to build up an accurate picture of the current open space provision in South Worcestershire, an initial desktop audit of each open space typology was carried out. This included:

- analysis of existing GIS data held by SWC;
- desktop mapping of open space from aerial photography;
- questionnaires to town and parish councils; and
- liaison with council officers.

Following this, site visits were undertaken by Ethos during the summer of 2018 at a total of 559 sites, with quality audits undertaken at 549 sites (228 of these were children's and youth play spaces, and 78 were desktop quality audits of natural green spaces) to assess the quality of sites. The quality audit drew on criteria set out in the 'Green Flag Award'⁵. The audits were undertaken using a standardised methodology and consistent approach (explained in more detail in section 7.4). However, audits of this nature can only ever be a snap-shot in time and their main purpose is to provide a consistent and objective assessment of a site's existing quality rather than a full audit. Clearly, local communities may have aspirations which are not identified in the quality audit, but it is hoped that these can be explored further outside of this study through site management plans and neighbourhood/parish plans as appropriate.

2.3.2 Approach to mapping

As part of the audit process, sites were mapped into their different typologies using a multi-functional approach to mapping, as demonstrated in figure 3 below.

Where open spaces cross ward boundaries, in order to calculate the quantity of open space by ward, these have been split using the ward boundary.

Only open spaces within the Study Area have been mapped i.e. although cross-border use of open space has been noted and considered (including within the Community and Stakeholder

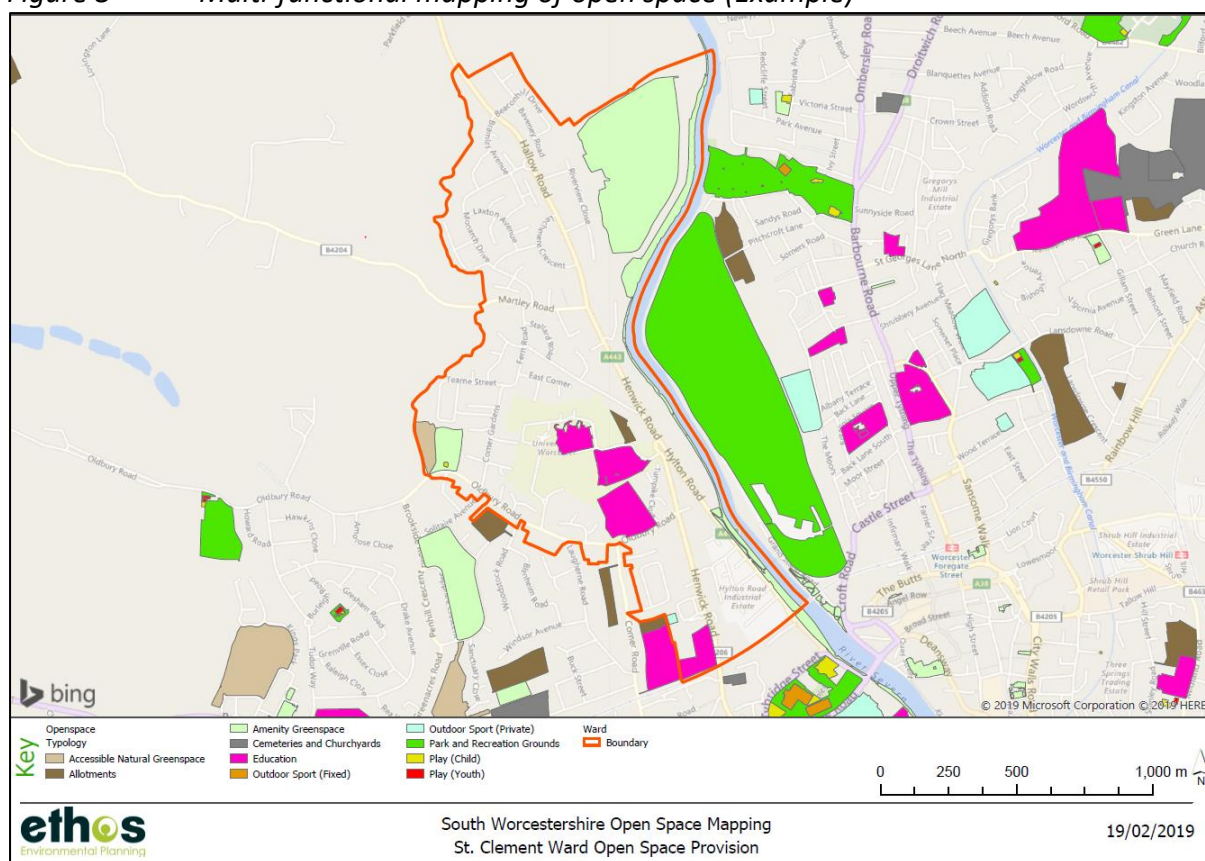
⁵ <http://www.greenflagaward.org.uk/judges/judging-criteria>

Consultation Report 2018), open spaces falling outside of the Study Area boundary have not been mapped.

The study maps open space typologies in the context of the wider Green Space (policy SWDP 38 layer) network. Although this study deals with certain typologies of open space, with a focus on accessible open space, the importance of the wider green space network e.g. in terms of green infrastructure, biodiversity, visual amenity and health and wellbeing is recognised, and is afforded protection through current policy SWDP 38⁶.

It should be noted that the typologies mapping is as accurate as possible (as of February 2019) following cross checking with the SWC's GIS layers, desktop mapping, consultation with town/parish councils and site visits. However, there may be anomaly sites which are picked up at a later date. The mapping will also be kept up to date by the SWC's, as new open space is provided through future development.

Figure 3 Multi-functional mapping of open space (Example)



⁶ Policy SWDP 38 will be updated as part of the SWDPR and will provide further policy requirements/criteria in relation to open spaces not covered by a particular typology

2.4 Set and Apply Provision Standards (Steps 3 and 4)

Local provision standards have been set for the Study Area (in agreement with the project team and the SWC's Officer Steering Group), with three components, embracing:

- quantity;
- accessibility;
- quality.

Quantity

The GIS database and mapping has been used to assess the existing provision of open space across the Study Area. The existing levels of provision are considered alongside the findings of previous studies, the local needs assessment and consideration of existing and national standards or benchmarks. The key to developing robust local quantity standards is that they are locally derived, evidence based and most importantly, achievable. Typically, standards are expressed as hectares per 1,000 population. The recommended standards are then used to assess the supply of each type of open space typology across the Study Area.

Access

Evidence from previous studies, the local needs assessment and consideration of national benchmarks are used to develop access standards for open space. Typically, standards are expressed as straight line walk distances. Drive time standards have not been proposed as these are normally only appropriate for strategic sites such as sports hub sites. Drive time standards generally do not work well for analysing access to local facilities/open space, as they do not generally show where the gaps in access are, and in addition, the community and stakeholder consultation has shown that the majority of households access open spaces on foot.

A series of maps assessing access for different typologies are presented in this report. The maps are intended to be indicative, and more detailed maps by district and ward are provided at appendix 2. They show the straight line buffers along with population density (2011 census output areas) so that the key gaps in access can be identified.

The straight line walking distances do not take into account roads or barriers to access, and so the actual route walked (the pedestrian route) is generally further i.e. straight line distances are around 60% of actual distances. The standard walk time and straight line/pedestrian route distances are shown in table 2 below:

Table 2 Standard walk times and distances

walk time (minutes)	Pedestrian Route (metres)	Straight line (metres)
1	100	60
2	160	96
3	240	144
4	320	192
5	400	240

walk time (minutes)	Pedestrian Route (metres)	Straight line (metres)
6	480	288
7	560	336
8	640	384
9	720	432
10	800	480
11	880	528
12	960	576
13	1040	624
14	1120	672
15	1200	720
16	1280	768
17	1360	816
18	1440	864
19	1520	912
20	1600	960

Quality

Quality standards have been developed drawing on previous studies, national benchmarks and good practice, evidence from the local needs assessment and the findings of the quality audits. The quality standards also include recommended policies to guide the provision of new open space through future development.

2.5 Draft Policy Recommendations (Step 5)

This section outlines higher level strategic options which may be applicable at town, ward, and study area wide level. The strategic options address five key areas:

1. Existing provision to be protected;
2. Existing provision to be enhanced;
3. Opportunities for re-location/re-designation of open space;
4. Identification of areas for new provision; and
5. Facilities that may be surplus to requirement.

3.0 CONTEXT

3.1 Introduction

This section sets out a brief review of the most relevant national and local policies related to the study, which have been considered in developing the methodology and findings of the study. Policies and strategies are subject to regular change, therefore the summary provided in this section was correct at the time of writing.

It also provides important contextual information regarding health and deprivation for the Study Area.

The policy overview includes analysis of the SWC's existing strategies and policies. It also includes a review of other strategies of relevance at national and local levels and assesses their implications for the provision of open space, sport and recreation opportunities.

The PPG17 companion guide identified the importance of understanding the implications of existing strategies on the study. Specifically, before initiating local consultation, there should be a review of existing national and local plans and strategies, and an assessment of the implementation and effectiveness of existing planning policies and provision standards.

3.2 Strategic Context

3.2.1 National Strategic Context

3.2.1.1 National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (February 2019)

The NPPF sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how they should be applied. The NPPF must be adhered to in the preparation of local and neighbourhood plans, and is a material consideration in planning decisions.

Within the NPPF, open space is defined as 'All open space of public value, including not just land, but also areas of water (such as rivers, canals, lakes and reservoirs) which offer important opportunities for sport and recreation and can act as a visual amenity'.

The NPPF contains the following references that relate to green infrastructure and open spaces:

- **Para 7** - The purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. At a very high level, the objective of sustainable development can be summarised as meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.
 - **Para 96** - Access to a network of high quality open spaces and opportunities for sport and physical activity is important for the health and well-being of communities. Planning policies should be based on robust and up-to-date assessments of the need
-

for open space, sport and recreation facilities (including quantitative or qualitative deficits or surpluses) and opportunities for new provision. Information gained from the assessments should be used to determine what open space, sport and recreational provision is needed, which plans should then seek to accommodate.

- **Para 97** - Existing open space, sports and recreational buildings and land, including playing fields, should not be built on unless:
 - a) an assessment has been undertaken which has clearly shown the open space, buildings or land to be surplus to requirements; or
 - b) the loss resulting from the proposed development would be replaced by equivalent or better provision in terms of quantity and quality in a suitable location; or
 - c) the development is for alternative sports and recreational provision, the benefits of which clearly outweigh the loss of the current or former use.
- **Para 98** - Planning policies and decisions should protect and enhance public rights of way and access, including taking opportunities to provide better facilities for users, for example by adding links to existing rights of way networks including National Trails
- **Para 149** - Plans should take a proactive approach to mitigating and adapting to climate change, taking into account the long-term implications for flood risk, coastal change, water supply, biodiversity and landscapes, and the risk of overheating from rising temperatures. Policies should support appropriate measures to ensure the future resilience of communities and infrastructure to climate change impacts, such as providing space for physical protection measures, or making provision for the possible future relocation of vulnerable development and infrastructure
- **Para 170** - Planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment.

3.2.1.2 Green Infrastructure

The concept of green infrastructure (GI) is now firmly embedded in national policy with the NPPF requiring local planning authorities to set out a strategic approach in their Local Plans, planning positively for the creation, protection, enhancement and management of networks of biodiversity and green infrastructure. It defines green infrastructure as *'a network of multi-functional green space, urban and rural, which is capable of delivering a wide range of environmental and quality of life benefits for local communities'*.

The Study Area has a wide range of existing green infrastructure assets such as open spaces, parks and gardens, allotments, woodlands, street trees, fields, hedgerows, treelines, lakes, ponds, rivers, meadows and grassland playing fields, as well as footpaths, cycleways and waterways. However, the concept of GI looks beyond existing designations, seeking opportunities to increase function and connectivity of assets to maximise the benefits for the community and wildlife.

3.2.1.3 The Natural Environment White Paper (NEWP) The Natural Choice: securing the value of nature (2011)

The white paper⁷ recognises that a healthy natural environment is the foundation of sustained economic growth, prospering communities and personal wellbeing. It sets out how the value of nature can be mainstreamed across our society by facilitating local action; strengthening the connections between people and nature; creating a green economy and showing leadership in the European Union (EU) and internationally.

It responds to the 2010 independent review of England's wildlife sites and ecological network, chaired by Professor Sir John Lawton, which identifies the need for more, better and bigger joined spaces for nature.

3.2.1.4 Biodiversity 2020: A strategy for England's wildlife and ecosystem services (August 2011)

This biodiversity strategy for England builds on the Natural Environment White Paper and sets out the strategic direction for national biodiversity policy to implement international and EU commitments.

The vision for England is: 'By 2050 our land and seas will be rich in wildlife, our biodiversity will be valued, conserved, restored, managed sustainably and be more resilient and able to adapt to climate change, providing essential services and delivering benefits for everyone'.

The mission of this strategy is to 'halt overall biodiversity loss, support healthy well-functioning ecosystems and establish coherent ecological networks, with more and better places for nature for the benefit of wildlife and people'. The strategy contains four outcomes to be achieved by the end of 2020. These are:

Habitats and ecosystems on land (including freshwater environments)

By 2020 we will have put in place measures so that biodiversity is maintained and enhanced, further degradation has been halted and where possible, restoration is underway helping to deliver more resilient and coherent ecological networks as well as healthy and well-functioning ecosystems which can deliver multiple benefits for wildlife and people too.

Marine habitats, ecosystems and fisheries

By 2020 we will have put in place measures so that biodiversity is maintained, further degradation has been halted and where possible, restoration is underway, helping deliver good environmental status and our vision of clean, healthy, safe productive and biologically diverse oceans and seas.

Species

By 2020, we will see an overall improvement in the status of our wildlife and will have prevented further human-induced extinctions of known threatened species.

⁷ <http://www.official-documents.gov.uk/document/cm80/8082/8082.pdf>

People

By 2020, significantly more people will be engaged in biodiversity issues, aware of its value and taking positive action.

3.2.1.5 A Green Future: Our 25 Year Plan to Improve the Environment (2018)

This 25 Year Environment Plan sets out government action to help the natural world regain and retain good health. It aims to deliver cleaner air and water in our cities and rural landscapes, protect threatened species and provide richer wildlife habitats. It calls for an approach to agriculture, forestry, land use and fishing that puts the environment first.

The 25-year goals are:

- Clean air;
- Clean and plentiful water;
- Thriving plants and wildlife;
- A reduced risk of harm from environmental hazards such as flooding and drought;
- Using resources from nature more sustainably and efficiently; and
- Enhanced beauty, heritage and engagement with the natural environment.

In addition, pressures on the environment will be managed by:

- Mitigating and adapting to climate change;
- Minimising waste;
- Managing exposure to chemicals; and
- Enhancing biosecurity.

Actions/policies are identified around six key areas: 1) Using and managing land sustainably; 2) Recovering nature and enhancing the beauty of landscapes; 3) Connecting people with the environment to improve health and wellbeing; 4) Increasing resource efficiency, and reducing pollution and waste; 5) Securing clean, productive and biologically diverse seas and oceans; and 6) Protecting and improving the global environment.

The Plan sits alongside two other important government strategies. The Industrial Strategy sets out how productivity will be boosted across the UK through five foundations – ideas, people, infrastructure, business, environment and places. Clean Growth is one of the four Grand Challenges laid out in the strategy that will put the UK at the forefront of industries of the future, ensuring that it takes advantage of transformational global trends. The Clean Growth Strategy sets out the UK's reaffirmed ambition to promote the ambitious economic and environmental policies to mitigate climate change and deliver clean, green growth.

3.2.1.6 Sporting Future - A New Strategy for an Active Nation (December 2015)

This cross-government strategy seeks to address flat-lining levels of sport participation and high levels of inactivity in this country. Through this strategy, government is redefining what success in sport means, with a new focus on five key outcomes: physical wellbeing, mental wellbeing, individual development, social and community development and economic

development. In future, funding decisions will be made on the basis of the outcomes that sport and physical activity can deliver.

It is the government's ambition that all relevant departments work closer together to create a more physically active nation, where children and young people enjoy the best sporting opportunities available and people of all ages and backgrounds can enjoy the many benefits that sport and physical activity bring, at every stage in their lives.

The government is reaffirming its commitment to Olympic and Paralympic success but also extending that ambition to non-Olympic sports where it will support success through grassroots investment in those sports, and by sharing UK Sport's knowledge and expertise. The strategy outlines what is expected of the sector to deliver this vision, and how the government will support it in getting there.

Public investment into community sport is to reach children as young as five as part of a ground-breaking new strategy. The move will see Sport England's remit changed from investing in sport for those aged 14 and over to supporting people from five years old right through to pensioners, in a bid to create a more active nation.

Investment will be targeted at sport projects that have a meaningful, measurable impact on how they are improving people's lives – from helping young people gain skills to get into work, to tackling social inclusion and improving physical and mental health.

Funding will also be targeted at groups who have low participation rates to encourage those who do not take part in sport and physical activity to get involved. This includes supporting women, disabled people, those in lower socio-economic groups and older people.

3.2.1.7 Sport England Strategy – 'Towards an Active Nation' (2016-2021)

In response to the Government's strategy, Sport England's new strategy vision is that that everyone in England, regardless of age, background or ability, feels able to take part in sport or activity. Sport England's new vision and its supporting aims will therefore contribute to achieving the government's strategy. Key features of the new Strategy are:

- Dedicated funding to get children and young people active from the age of five, including a new fund for family based activities and offering training to at least two teachers in every secondary school in England to help them better meet the needs of all children, irrespective of their level of sporting ability;
 - Working with the sport sector to put customers at the heart of everything they do and using the principles of behavioral change to inform their work;
 - Piloting new ways of working locally by investing in up to 10 places in England – a mix of urban and rural areas;
 - Investing up to £30m in a new volunteering strategy, enabling more people to get the benefits of volunteering and attracting a new, more diverse range of volunteers;
 - Helping sport keep pace with the digital expectations of customers – making it as easy to book a badminton court as a hotel room; and
-

- Working closely with governing bodies of sport and others who support people who already play regularly, to help them become more efficient, sustainable and diversify their sources of funding.

3.2.2 Local Context

3.2.2.1 Corporate Plans of the South Worcestershire local authorities

Each of the three SWC's 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: The 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, with several goals under each priority:

- 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 2,000 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.

3.2.2.2 The South Worcestershire Development Plan (SWDP)

The SWDP was adopted and published on 25 February 2016. The SWDP is an integral part of the Development Plan. 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 SWC's started a review of the SWDP in late 2017. This is in line with new government requirements that local plans should be reviewed 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 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 growth⁸.
- 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'

⁸ 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 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 Facilities⁹

- 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.

⁹ 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 & 39¹⁰ as any new Green Infrastructure secured under these policies will be designated and protected as Green Space.

¹⁰ SWDP 22 and 29 deal with Biological and Geological Diversity; and, Sustainable Drainage, respectively.

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

- A. Development proposals exceeding 5 dwellings 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.

Standards of Provision

	Malvern Hills	Worcester (within its administrative boundary)	Wychavon
	ha / 1,000 population		
Amenity (including informal pitches) and semi-natural greenspace	2.00	1.11	1.03
Equipped Play Space	0.04	0.61	0.09
Cemeteries, churchyards	0.41	No set standard	No set standard
Civic space	0.03	0.03	0.03
Allotments	0.14	0.4	0.39
Formal pitches etc.	No set standard (see C below)	No set standard (see C below)	No set standard (see C below)
Total	2.62	2.15	1.54

- 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.

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

This SPD sets out the approach that the three SWC's 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, including towards the implementation of policy SWDP 39, where developments exceed 5 dwellings. 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.

The SPD adopts the approach that, as the average household sizes and per capita populations vary between the three South Worcestershire Councils, so too will the unit costs of providing open space between each authority, and the SPD offers guidance in this regard through bespoke tables¹¹.

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 how 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, including parish and town councils.

3.2.2.4 Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) – Planning for Health in South Worcestershire (Adopted September 2017)

This SPD provides guidance to local authority planning officers, applicants, relevant organisations and the wider community on delivering healthier developments. The main process of achieving this through the SPD is by Health Impact Assessments (HIA). HIA is a tool that helps to predict the health implications on a population of planning proposals and can help inform stakeholders when developing schemes or making decisions on planning applications.

The SPD recognises the need to plan for healthier developments and better living environments, and that the places and spaces where we live and work can have a real impact on health and wellbeing. It recognises 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.

¹¹ The new typologies (developed in this study) will need to be adapted into a new costings matrix in a revised SPD. Recommendations for a cost methodology which may be adopted by the SWC has been provided in Section 8.7 of this report.

The SPD primarily focuses on the principal links between planning and health. The SPD addresses the following nine health and wellbeing principles:

- Sustainable development
- Urban form – design and the public realm
- Housing and employment
- Age-friendly environments for the elderly and those living with dementia
- Community facilities
- Green infrastructure and play spaces/recreation
- Air quality, noise, light and water management
- Active travel
- Encouraging healthier food choices

The SPD also aims to contribute to the priorities within Worcestershire's second Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy (2016-2021), which are:

- Mental health and wellbeing throughout life
- Being active at every age
- Reducing harm from alcohol at all ages

3.2.2.5 Worcester City Council PPG17 Open Spaces, Indoor Sports and Community Recreation Assessment (2006), Malvern Hill District Council Open Space, Sport and Recreation Study (2007) and Wychavon District Council Open Space, Sport & Recreation Study (2006)

These previous open space assessments for each of the districts have been considered in the Development of Standards (Section 6 of this report).

3.3 Health and Deprivation Context

3.3.1 Introduction

Public Health England has published the 2018 Health Profiles for Malvern Hills, Worcester City and Wychavon¹².

Malvern Hills Summary:

The health of people in Malvern Hills is varied compared with the England average. About 13% (1,400) of children live in low income families. Life expectancy for men is higher than the England average.

¹² <https://fingertips.phe.org.uk/profile/health-profiles/data#page/9/gid/1938132696/pat/6/par/E12000005/ati/101/are/E07000238>

Worcester City Summary:

The health of people in Worcester City is varied compared with the England average. About 16% (3,000) of children live in low income families. Life expectancy for both men and women is similar to the England average.

Wychavon Summary:

The health of people in Wychavon is varied compared with the England average. About 11% (2,200) of children live in low income families. Life expectancy for both men and women is higher than the England average.

3.3.2 Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) Analysis

The Indices of Deprivation 2015 provide a set of relative measures of deprivation for small areas (Lower-layer Super Output Areas) across England, based on seven different domains of deprivation:

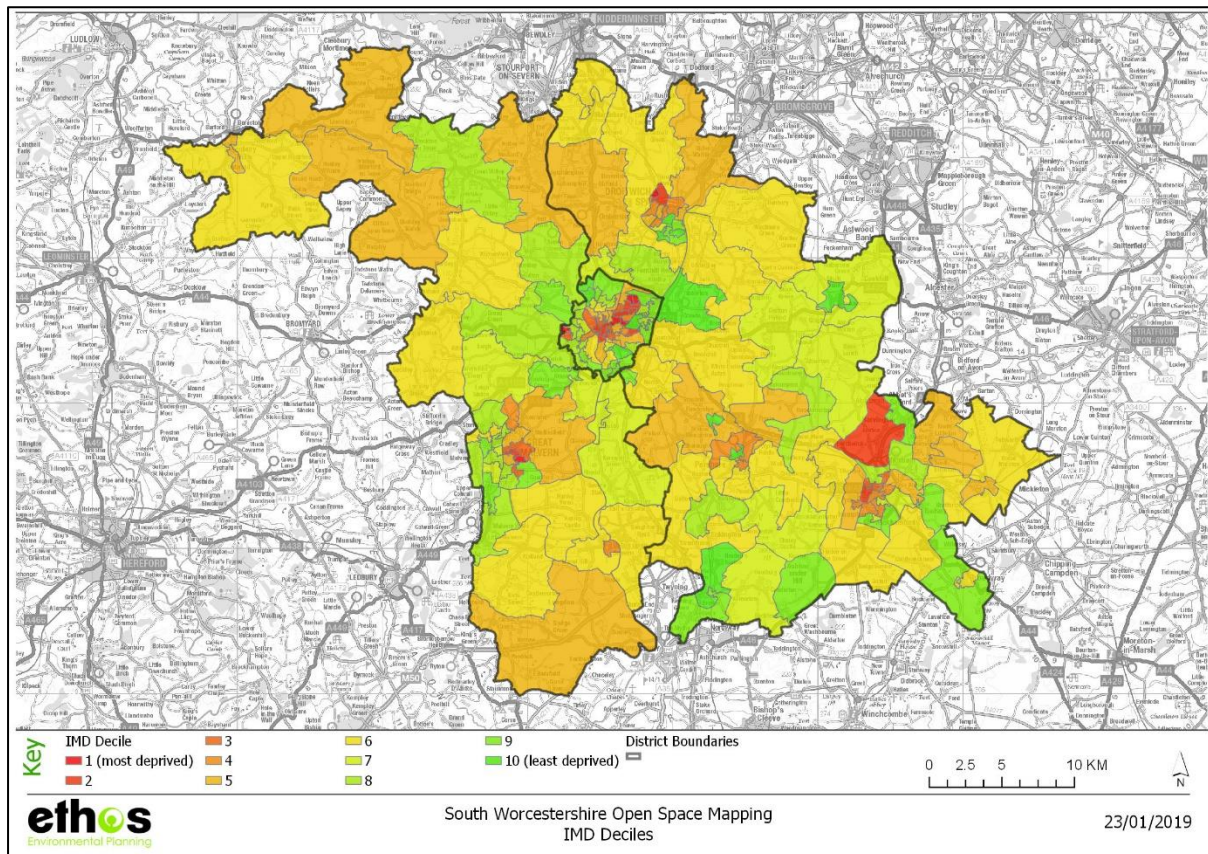
- Income Deprivation
- Employment Deprivation
- Education, Skills and Training Deprivation
- Health Deprivation and Disability
- Crime
- Barriers to Housing and Services
- Living Environment Deprivation

Each of these domains is based on a suite of indicators. As far as is possible, each indicator is based on data from the most recent time point available; in practice most indicators in the Indices of Deprivation 2015 relate to the tax year 2012/13.

The Index of Multiple Deprivation combines information from the seven domains to produce an overall relative measure of deprivation.

Figure 4 below shows the IMD rank for each LSOA within the Study Area, where 1 is most deprived and 10 is least deprived.

Figure 4 IMD ranks in SWC (by LSOA)



As can be seen from figure 4, there are pockets of high levels of deprivation within all three districts, most notably in the following wards:

Malvern Hills

- Pickersleigh ward

Worcester City

- St John ward
- Cathedral ward
- Nunnery ward
- Rainbow Hill ward
- Gorse Hill ward
- Warndon ward

Wychavon

- Droitwich West ward
- Harvington and Norton
- Evesham North

4.0 LOCAL NEEDS ASSESSMENT (STEP 1)

4.1 Introduction

The Community and Stakeholder Consultation Report (2018) examines local need for a wide range of different types of open space and recreation facilities. It draws upon a range of survey and analytical techniques including a review of consultation findings from relevant studies, questionnaire surveys and one to one stakeholder interviews. The work was undertaken from August to October 2018.

Questionnaire surveys were undertaken looking at the adequacy of current provision in terms of the quantity, quality and access, in relation to the various typologies of open space. The surveys were:

- A general household survey – postal and online (sent to 4,500 households, with 591 postal surveys completed, and 450 online surveys completed);
- A survey of town and parish councils; and
- Local groups and organisations' surveys.

In addition to the above a series of one to one stakeholder interviews were undertaken.

The results of this consultation and other analyses have helped amongst other considerations to inform the content of the recommended local standards (section 7 of this report). It has also helped the study to understand local people's appreciation of open space and outdoor recreation facilities, and the wider green infrastructure and the values attached by the community to the various forms of open spaces and facilities. This appreciation will have clear implications for the way in which open space and outdoor recreation facilities are considered as part of the review of the SWDP as well as in dealing with planning applications.

This section summarises the key findings from The Community and Stakeholder Consultation Report (2018) in relation to open space under four main sections:

1. General Community Consultation;
2. Neighbouring local authorities; town and parish councils;
3. Parks, green spaces, countryside, and rights of way; and
4. Play and youth facilities.

4.2 General Community Consultation – Key Findings

Quantity

- 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 three districts. 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).

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%).

Access (Geographical)

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%).

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.

Priorities

- 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, picnics etc.

Public Health and other issues

- Each of the three SWCs have 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 a 'Planning for Health in South Worcestershire' SPD specifically highlighting the importance of public 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 people with disabilities; children and young people; households in the more isolated rural areas and those in the more deprived wards of the study area.

4.3 Neighbouring Local Authorities and Town/Parish Councils - Observations and key issues

Neighbouring Local Authorities – Key Findings

Section 3.1 of the Community and Stakeholder Consultation Report (2018) 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 at 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 Ward members

Section 3.2 of the consultation report provided findings from the parish councils' survey undertaken for the study. 72 of the 127 local town and parish councils responded. Section 3.3 of the consultation report 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 WCC ward members identified were very 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); 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;
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- 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 have 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 of the Community and Stakeholder Consultation Report (2018).

4.4 Parks, Green Space, Countryside and Rights of Way - Key Findings

Overview

- The most important policy document relating to this study is 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 policies 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 sample household survey conducted as part of the core consultation, a majority indicated a belief that for most kinds of open space and recreational facilities across the area district 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 regarding 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 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.

The above 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.

4.5 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 seems 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, 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 reported 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 residents 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.

4.6 Concluding Remarks

The survey work, stakeholder consultation, desk-based research and group sessions have highlighted a wide range of issues of value to the Open Space Assessment. 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 and outdoor recreation facilities have influenced the findings of the study. All the main strategic stakeholders have responded and key issues have been identified.

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

The findings and evidence highlighted in the Community and Stakeholder Consultation report will feed into:

- the development of open space policy statements; and
 - the recommended standards for typologies of open spaces (quantity, quality and access elements).
-

5.0 AUDIT OF EXISTING OPEN SPACE ASSETS

5.1 General approach

This section sets out the typologies for which standards have been developed or have been included within the quantitative or access analysis. The typologies of open space have drawn on guidance provided within PPG17, and through discussions with the project steering group. The agreed list of typologies has been established as locally derived and is appropriate for the type and range of open spaces that exist within South Worcestershire.

Although sites have been categorised into different typologies, the multifunctionality of different types of open space is important to recognise e.g. amenity green space, natural green space, parks and recreation grounds and allotments may all provide numerous functions such as providing space for recreation, habitats for wildlife conservation, flood alleviation, improvements to air quality, and provision of food growing opportunities. Linked to this are the intrinsic benefits of open space, such as providing an attractive landscape for improving health and wellbeing.

The following typologies have been used in this assessment:

Table 3 SWC typologies

Typologies mapped with standards	Typologies mapped but no standards ¹³
• Allotments • Amenity Green Space (>0.15ha) • Park and Recreation Grounds: - <i>Parks and Recreation Grounds</i> - <i>Outdoor Sports Space (Fixed)</i> - <i>Outdoor Sport (Private)</i> • Play Space (Children) • Play Space (Youth) • Accessible Natural Green Space	• Education sites • Churchyards and Cemeteries • Policy SWDP 38 Green Space

¹³ An explanation for not developing standards for these typologies is outlined in the following sections

5.2 Open Space Typologies with Standards

5.2.1 Allotments



Allotments provide areas for people to grow their own produce and plants. It is important to be clear about what is meant by the term 'Allotment'. The Small Holdings and Allotments Act 1908 obliged local authorities to provide sufficient allotments and to let them to persons living in their areas where they considered there was a demand.

The Allotment Act of 1922 defines the term 'allotment garden' as:

“an allotment not exceeding 40 poles in extent which is wholly or mainly cultivated by the occupier for the production of vegetable or fruit crops for consumption by himself or his family”

(n.b. 40 Poles equals 1,210 square yards or 1,012 square metres. A Pole can also be known as a Rod or Perch.)

The Allotments Act of 1925 gives protection to land acquired specifically for use as allotments, so called Statutory Allotment Sites, by the requirement for the need for the approval of Secretary of State in event of sale or disposal. Some allotment sites may not specifically have been acquired for this purpose. Such allotment sites are known as “temporary” (even if they have been in use for decades) and are not protected by the 1925 legislation.

No allotments were quality audited, as access is generally restricted.

5.2.2 Amenity Green Space



The category is considered to include those spaces (minimum 0.15ha in size¹⁴) open to free and spontaneous use by the public, but neither laid out nor managed for a specific function such as a park, public playing field or recreation ground; nor managed as a natural or semi-natural habitat. These areas of open space will be of varied size, but are likely to share the following characteristics:

- Unlikely to be physically demarcated by walls or fences.
- Predominantly lain down to (mown) grass.
- Unlikely to have identifiable entrance points (unlike parks).
- They may have shrub and tree planting, and occasionally formal planted flower beds.
- They may occasionally have other recreational facilities and fixtures (such as play equipment, informal football or ball courts).

Examples might include both small and larger informal grassed areas in housing estates and general recreation spaces. They can serve a variety of functions dependent on their size, shape, location and topography. Some may be used for informal recreation activities, whilst others by themselves, or else collectively, contribute to the overall visual amenity of an area.

It should be noted that amenity green spaces smaller than 0.15 ha and amenity roadside verges were not included within the analysis for this typology, as it is considered that these sites will have a limited recreation function and therefore should not count towards open space provision (although they may have other functions such as visual amenity or biodiversity value, and some areas may be included under policy SWDP 38).

¹⁴ The quality audit only covered those amenity green spaces 0.30 ha or above, due to resources. However, all amenity spaces above 0.15ha in size were included within the quantity and access analysis.

5.2.3 Park and Recreation Grounds (including Outdoor Sport (Fixed) and Outdoor Sport (Private))



This typology brings together the function of Parks and Recreation Grounds and Outdoor Sports Space as identified in the former PPG17 typology. The distinction between the two typologies in the study area is blurred, with very few formal gardens and many parks and/or outdoor sports space having multi-functions used for both informal and formal recreation. The consultation undertaken indicated that people refer to their local park or rec, and communities do not make a distinction between outdoor sports space and parks and recreation grounds. Therefore, for the study an overarching typology for Park and Recreation Grounds has been used.

For the purposes of this study, a Park and Recreation Ground is defined as an open space that:

- Has at least two facilities e.g. a children's play area and tennis courts, or;
- Has provision for formal sport e.g. football or cricket pitch;

Those outdoor sports grounds which are privately managed and have varying levels of public access (but none the less still provide a community facility) have been mapped as Outdoor Sport (Private) and are included within the quantity and access analysis along with the Park and Recreation Ground typology.

This typology also comprises the general open space surrounding play areas, sports facilities etc. used for general recreation and includes those areas laid out as pitches (although the pitches themselves have not been mapped and audited as part of this study) which are accessible i.e. they can be walked over/used informally. Pitches which have no access e.g. they are fenced off/private managed have been mapped as Outdoor Sport (Private).

The quantity analysis for Parks and Recreation Grounds also includes fixed outdoor sports space (comprising all other non-pitch based provision including tennis courts and outdoor gyms which are publicly accessible/available to book).

The quantity figure for Parks and Recreation Grounds excludes the provision of children and youth play spaces which have a separate typology (see below).

As with formal pitches, informal football pitches have not been mapped, and these are generally found within amenity green spaces (see above).

Parks and Recreation Grounds take on many forms, and may embrace a wide range of functions including:

- Play space of many kinds;
- Provision for a range of formal pitch and fixed sports;
- Provision of outdoor gyms and fitness trails;
- Informal recreation and sport;
- Providing attractive walks and cycle routes to work;
- Offering landscape and amenity features;
- Areas of formal planting;
- Providing areas for 'events';
- Providing habitats for wildlife; and
- Dog walking.

The recommended standards for this typology are intended to provide sufficient space for facilities and sport. The current South Worcestershire Playing Pitch Strategy (2015) should be referred to for evidence relating to recommendations for playing pitch requirements and their provision. The quantity standard is designed to be flexible so that the SWCs can make the case for what type of open space/facilities are required where there are multiple use opportunities. For example, this could be where one use is needed more than another, particularly for off-site contributions e.g. in some cases, additional full sports pitches may not be required, however junior pitches or extensions for training may be more appropriate. This would be justified on the analysis of particular local circumstances and on a case-by-case basis.

As already stated above, the quantity analysis (and therefore the standards) for parks and recreation grounds includes fixed outdoor sports space (e.g. tennis, bowls), privately managed outdoor sports space (which have varying levels of access) and ancillary space e.g. footpaths, landscaping etc¹⁵. The proposed standard for park and recreation grounds is designed to include an allowance for formal pitches as per the standard detailed in the current SWC Developer Contributions SPD (2018) of 1.2ha per 1,000 population, based on existing provision and Fields in Trust (FIT) guidelines. This allowance will provide for additional

¹⁵ Section 7 of this reports set out the justification for the proposed standards, and that a quantity standard based on the existing levels of provision of parks and recreation grounds, fixed outdoor sports and privately managed outdoor sports space is justified, as the recent consultation undertaken as part of this study identified that the priority is for improvements to existing facilities, rather than a need for additional parks and recreation grounds.

flexibility in the type of new provision, as mentioned above. Therefore, the proposed quantity standards accommodate the allowance within the SPD and associated ancillary space and fixed outdoor sports facilities and is justified through this assessment.

All parks and recreation grounds were subject to quality audits.

5.2.4 Play Space (Children and Youth)



It is important to establish the scope of the study in terms of this kind of space. Children and young people will play/'hang out' in almost all publicly accessible "space" ranging from the street, town centres and squares, parks, playing fields, "amenity" grassed areas etc. as well as the more recognisable play and youth facility areas such as equipped playgrounds, youth shelters, BMX and skateboard parks, MUGAs etc. Clearly many of the other types of open space covered by this study will therefore provide informal play opportunities.

To a child, the whole world is a potential playground: where an adult sees a low wall, a railing, kerb or street bench, a child might see a mini adventure playground or a challenging skateboard obstacle. Play should not be restricted to designated 'reservations' and planning and urban design principles should reflect these considerations.

The study has recorded the following:

- **Children's Play Space** – Areas of play that cater for the needs of children up to and around 12 years of age. Play Areas are an essential way of creating safe but adventurous places for children of varying ages to play and learn. The emphasis in play area management is shifting away from straightforward and formal equipment such as slides and swings towards creating areas where imagination and natural learning can flourish through the use of landscaping and natural building materials and the creation of areas that need exploring.
- **Youth Play Space** - Informal recreation opportunities for, broadly, the 13 to 16/17 age group, and which might include facilities such as skate parks, basketball courts and 'free access' MUGAs. In practice, there will always be some blurring around the edges in terms of younger children using equipment aimed for youths and vice versa.

Teenagers should not be ignored, it is important to create areas for ‘hanging out’ such as shelters and providing them with things to do such as bike ramps. The stakeholder consultation has highlighted that currently recognisable provision for teenagers is few and far between.

All children’s and youth play spaces were quality audited.

5.2.5 Natural Green Space



For the purpose of this study, natural and semi-natural green space covers a variety of partly or wholly accessible spaces including meadows, woodland and copses all of which share a trait of having natural characteristics and wildlife value, but which are also open to public use and enjoyment.

There are large tracts of open countryside within the study area, much of this is private land used for farming, however, there is access to the countryside provided through the rights of way network. It was not the intention of this audit to survey and map all these areas, but to focus on sites where there are definitive boundaries or areas of natural green space which have some form of public access. In some cases, access may not be fully clear, however there is evidence of some level of informal use and access.

Some sites may provide access in different ways, for example, rivers or lakes are often used for water recreation (e.g. canoeing, fishing, sailing). Whilst access may not be available fully across all areas of these sites (e.g. the middle of a lake or dense scrub in a woodland), the whole site has been included within the assessment.

Some natural green spaces were found to have no access at all, and whilst they cannot be formally used by the general community, they can be appreciated from a distance, and contribute to visual amenity, green infrastructure and biodiversity. Whilst every effort was made to exclude these spaces from the assessment, as already identified, in certain sites the

amount/type of access was not always clear. Although such spaces are not the subject of standards developed by this study, their value is recognised.

The local consultation and strategy review, and research elsewhere (e.g. Natural England¹⁶) have identified the value attached to natural spaces for recreation and emotional well-being. A sense of 'closeness to nature' with its attendant benefits for people is something that is all too easily lost in urban areas. Natural green spaces can make important contributions towards local Biodiversity Action Plan targets and can also raise awareness of biodiversity values and issues.

Due to resources, not all natural green spaces were quality audited. A number of the larger natural green spaces were desktop audited e.g. using google earth and internet searches.

5.3 Open Space Typologies with no Standards

None of the typologies below were subject to quality audits – due to access and resources (for churchyards and cemeteries).

5.3.1 Churchyards and Cemeteries

The study area has many churches and cemeteries, and these provide significant aesthetic value and space for informal recreation such as walking, relaxation and reflection. Many are also important in terms of biodiversity, particularly closed churchyards. Their importance for informal recreation, aesthetic value and their contribution towards biodiversity must be acknowledged, and as such, investment in their upkeep, maintenance and quality is an important factor. Churchyards and Cemeteries have been identified and mapped where known, however, no quantity or access standard for provision have been set, as it is outside the scope of this study to make recommendations related to requirements for new provision.

5.3.2 Education

Many schools and colleges have open space and sports facilities within their grounds. This may range from a small playground to large playing fields with several sports pitches. More often than not, public access to these spaces is restricted and in many cases forbidden. Nevertheless, many of the sports facilities are used by local people on both an informal and formal basis.

Sports clubs may have local informal arrangements with a school to use their pitches, and in some cases more formal 'dual-use' agreements may be in place. School grounds can also contribute towards the green infrastructure and biodiversity of an area.

The following dual-use agreements are in place in Malvern Hills (Dual use is not a consideration in Worcester City¹⁷ and Wychavon):

¹⁶ Natural England have published a variety of health and the natural environment publications at <http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/category/127020>

¹⁷ It is understood that Bishop Perowne School in Worcester is open to Community Use of School Facilities, but there may not be a formal community/dual agreement in place.

Dyson Perrins CofE Academy: Dual Use Agreement between the Council and School, for the Sports Centre which is branded 'Sport Dyson Perrins'. There is also a separate Community Use Agreement between Council and School in relation to the more recently installed 3G pitch.

The Chantry School: Dual Use Agreement between the Council and the School, for the Sports Centre which is branded as 'Sport Martley'.

Malvern College: Community Use Agreement between the Council and Malvern College, for the Sports Centre which is branded 'Malvern Active'.

Malvern St James Girls School: Community Use Agreement between the Council and the school, for the Sports Centre which is branded 'MSJ Sports'.

Quantity, quality and access standards have not been proposed for education sites. This is because they are not openly accessible to the public and whilst important to the local community, there is less opportunity for the SWCs to influence their provision and management.

5.3.3 SWDP 38 Green Space

This Green Space layer shows all green space, as identified on the current SWDP Policies Map. This layer was provided by the SWCs. It includes a range of public and private open spaces and associated community facilities. It highlights where the important GI routes are. The policy outlines the requirements and criteria that must be satisfied for proposals seeking to develop on Green Spaces identified on the Policies Map.

The open space typologies within this open space study have therefore been mapped in the context of the wider green space network. It is also worth noting that a greater GI network exists within South Worcestershire beyond the coverage identified through SWDP 38.

5.4 Existing provision of open space

5.4.1 Open space provision across the Study Area

The existing provision of open space is based on the desktop mapping and site surveys undertaken by Ethos Environmental Planning which included:

- analysis of existing GIS data held by the SWCs and from other sources such as the Ordnance Survey Greenspace layer;
- desktop mapping of open space from aerial photography;
- questionnaires to town and parish councils;
- liaison with council officers; and
- Site visits to check accessibility, boundaries, typologies and complete quality audits.

We understand that new sites will come forward and there may have been sites that are used by the local community that have not been recorded. Local communities are encouraged to share this information with the SWCs for future updates of this assessment.

Table 4 shows the average existing provision of open space in hectares and ha/1000 population across the Study Area, with tables 5 to 7 showing provision by district. The figures for 'Park and Recreation Ground (Combined)' includes a combination of the following typologies:

- Park and Recreation Ground;
- Outdoor Sport (Fixed); and
- Outdoor Sport (Private).

Table 4 Summary of existing provision of open space across the Study Area

Typology	Existing (ha)	Existing (ha/1000)¹⁸
Allotments	83.99	0.28
Amenity Greenspace (>0.15ha)	213.08	0.70
Parks and Recreation Grounds (including Outdoor Sport (Fixed) and Outdoor Sport (Private))	513.32	1.68
<i>Parks and Recreation Grounds</i>	<i>326.08</i>	<i>1.07</i>
<i>Outdoor Sport (Fixed)</i>	<i>3.96</i>	<i>0.01</i>
<i>Outdoor Sport (Private)</i>	<i>183.28</i>	<i>0.60</i>
Play (Child)	14.82	0.05
Play (Youth)	3.06	0.01
Accessible Natural Greenspace	2611.43	8.57
Cemeteries and Churchyards	150.73	0.49
Education	415.25	1.36

¹⁸ Calculated using ONS 2017 mid year population estimates

5.4.2 Open space provision by District

Table 5 *Summary of existing provision of open space within Malvern Hills*

Typology	Existing (ha)	Existing (ha/1000)
Allotments	9.38	0.12
Amenity Greenspace (>0.15ha)	81.15	1.05
Parks and Recreation Grounds (including Outdoor Sport (Fixed) and Outdoor Sport (Private))	119.33	1.55
<i>Parks and Recreation Grounds</i>	62.50	0.81
<i>Outdoor Sport (Fixed)</i>	0.61	0.01
<i>Outdoor Sport (Private)</i>	56.22	0.73
Play (Child)	3.41	0.04
Play (Youth)	0.92	0.01
Accessible Natural Greenspace	1784.31	23.12
Cemeteries and Churchyards	56.11	0.73
Education	154.43	2.00

Table 6 *Summary of existing provision of open space within Worcester*

Typology	Existing (ha)	Existing (ha/1000)
Allotments	27.36	0.27
Amenity Greenspace (>0.15ha)	55.84	0.55
Parks and Recreation Grounds (including Outdoor Sport (Fixed) and Outdoor Sport (Private))	179.21	1.75
<i>Parks and Recreation Grounds</i>	135.50	1.32
<i>Outdoor Sport (Fixed)</i>	1.36	0.01
<i>Outdoor Sport (Private)</i>	42.35	0.41
Play (Child)	4.18	0.04
Play (Youth)	0.74	0.01
Accessible Natural Greenspace	173.05	1.69
Cemeteries and Churchyards	24.81	0.24
Education	119.33	1.17

Table 7 *Summary of existing provision of open space within Wychavon*

Typology	Existing (ha)	Existing (ha/1000)
Allotments	47.25	0.38
Amenity Greenspace (>0.15ha)	76.49	0.61
Parks and Recreation Grounds (including Outdoor Sport (Fixed) and Outdoor Sport (Private))	217.49	1.73
<i>Parks and Recreation Grounds</i>	128.08	1.02
<i>Outdoor Sport (Fixed)</i>	1.99	0.02
<i>Outdoor Sport (Private)</i>	84.70	0.68
Play (Child)	7.24	0.06
Play (Youth)	1.41	0.01
Accessible Natural Greenspace	654.07	5.22
Cemeteries and Churchyards	69.81	0.56
Education	141.49	1.13

5.4.3 Open space provision by Ward

Table 8 Existing provision of open space (hectares) by ward

WARD	Allotments	Amenity Green Space	Parks and Recreation Grounds (combined)	Parks and Recreation Grounds	Outdoor Sport (Fixed)	Outdoor Sport (Private)	Play (Child)	Play (Youth)	Accessible Natural Green Space	Cemeteries and Churchyards	Education
Malvern Hills	9.41	81.13	119.33	62.49	0.60	56.22	3.40	0.91	1784.32	56.12	154.43
Alfrick and Leigh	1.60	0.36	3.15	3.10	0.05	0.00	0.01	0.00	103.90	2.83	3.82
Baldwin	0.00	2.43	7.04	2.30	0.00	4.74	0.03	0.00	0.00	1.72	0.27
Broadheath	1.13	14.88	5.75	2.69	0.00	3.06	0.24	0.04	3.23	1.71	1.91
Chase	0.00	19.74	14.13	0.00	0.00	14.13	0.30	0.03	18.33	0.44	12.99
Dyson Perrins	0.59	3.31	1.05	0.82	0.24	0.00	0.32	0.00	0.71	0.20	8.03
Hallow	0.43	1.39	2.59	2.19	0.00	0.39	0.08	0.12	69.65	1.57	1.39
Kempsey	0.00	2.88	3.95	2.86	0.19	0.89	0.05	0.01	159.82	1.80	0.83
Lindridge	0.00	0.21	0.96	0.96	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	28.45	3.17	1.20
Link	1.72	0.43	11.26	5.81	0.12	5.33	0.34	0.16	26.18	1.70	0.42
Longdon	0.00	0.92	2.80	1.13	0.00	1.67	0.01	0.00	76.68	1.98	20.63
Martley	0.11	1.72	2.09	2.09	0.00	0.00	0.09	0.06	0.64	1.00	7.43
Morton	0.00	0.43	2.07	2.07	0.00	0.00	0.08	0.02	352.92	1.62	1.03
Pickersleigh	0.10	7.54	15.40	6.11	0.00	9.29	0.36	0.08	14.49	5.76	4.13
Powick	0.91	5.88	6.97	4.67	0.00	2.30	0.43	0.05	242.18	11.29	1.88
Priory	0.00	1.60	14.60	4.38	0.00	10.22	0.04	0.00	67.29	1.30	26.11
Ripple	0.16	1.04	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	66.91	0.87	0.00
Teme Valley	0.17	0.00	1.33	1.33	0.00	0.00	0.36	0.00	6.76	2.51	0.45
Tenbury	0.00	3.36	7.84	7.84	0.00	0.00	0.12	0.10	54.22	2.91	13.81
Upton and Hanley	0.99	4.19	10.84	7.99	0.00	2.85	0.31	0.16	85.34	3.44	5.11
Wells	0.00	4.82	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.12	0.00	262.62	5.26	6.79
West	1.50	0.00	5.38	4.03	0.00	1.35	0.06	0.00	140.56	1.59	3.68
Woodbury	0.00	4.00	0.12	0.12	0.00	0.00	0.05	0.08	3.44	1.45	32.50
Worcester	27.37	59.77	179.21	135.48	1.35	42.35	4.17	0.73	169.36	24.81	119.33
Arboretum	4.05	0.45	10.09	4.69	0.01	5.39	0.17	0.06	0.00	0.00	3.82
Battenhall	4.96	1.54	8.38	8.13	0.00	0.24	0.44	0.01	3.29	0.02	21.72
Bedwardine	1.47	2.93	8.82	3.23	0.00	5.59	0.09	0.00	13.03	0.25	27.55
Cathedral	3.38	6.91	40.55	38.48	0.00	2.07	0.45	0.07	14.42	1.37	8.80
Claines	7.73	0.31	55.46	41.82	0.12	13.51	0.22	0.18	2.74	1.42	3.11
Gorse Hill	0.19	0.60	0.32	0.32	0.00	0.00	0.03	0.00	8.67	0.00	1.79
Nunnery	0.00	0.72	17.52	8.46	0.00	9.07	0.45	0.06	47.97	0.00	9.49
Rainbow Hill	0.00	0.08	13.70	13.21	0.28	0.21	0.09	0.13	0.00	0.16	0.00
St Clement	0.37	21.60	0.11	0.00	0.00	0.11	0.02	0.00	0.99	0.00	7.16
St John	3.91	6.37	3.76	2.83	0.93	0.00	0.77	0.05	7.00	3.88	5.17
St Peter's Parish	0.00	1.30	12.55	12.55	0.00	0.00	0.57	0.08	0.00	0.00	2.21
St Stephen	0.89	0.00	4.98	0.00	0.00	4.98	0.00	0.00	0.00	16.86	17.07
Warndon	0.00	3.39	0.00	1.76	0.01	1.18	0.08	0.08	0.06	0.16	0.07
Warndon Parish North	0.00	3.78	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.36	0.00	29.72	0.69	1.47
Warndon Parish South	0.42	5.74	2.95	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.43	0.01	45.16	0.00	9.90
Wychavon	47.24	76.49	217.49	128.07	2.00	84.68	7.23	1.42	654.06	69.82	141.49
Badsey	0.00	0.00	6.97	6.96	0.01	0.00	0.29	0.02	0.00	0.54	1.13

WARD	Allotments	Amenity Green Space	Parks and Recreation Grounds (combined)	Parks and Recreation Grounds	Outdoor Sport (Fixed)	Outdoor Sport (Private)	Play (Child)	Play (Youth)	Accessible Natural Green Space	Cemeteries and Churchyards	Education
Bengeworth	0.00	3.34	11.79	11.43	0.36	0.00	0.88	0.12	1.06	1.99	3.50
Bowbrook	1.08	1.30	3.53	3.35	0.12	0.06	0.19	0.05	42.87	1.28	1.10
Bredon	4.28	0.00	5.86	3.70	0.22	1.94	0.09	0.08	37.58	0.92	0.63
Bretforton and Offenham	0.00	0.00	5.24	4.04	0.00	1.20	0.16	0.00	0.00	1.36	6.43
Broadway and Wickhamford	0.00	0.36	6.70	2.64	0.00	4.05	0.71	0.07	19.78	2.54	1.24
Dodderhill	3.09	1.46	3.25	3.24	0.01	0.00	0.17	0.10	16.36	0.77	0.66
Drakes Broughton	2.01	0.00	1.68	1.68	0.00	0.00	0.09	0.00	12.83	17.97	1.99
Droitwich Central	0.00	2.47	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.07	0.00	0.00	0.44	3.61
Droitwich East	0.28	4.26	22.82	21.70	0.19	0.94	0.61	0.05	3.40	1.95	3.77
Droitwich South East	0.00	6.13	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.08	0.00	5.75	0.00	0.00
Droitwich South West	0.50	2.69	0.06	0.06	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.39	1.01	6.61
Droitwich West	0.94	10.12	12.36	11.69	0.00	0.67	0.07	0.06	11.74	0.00	15.36
Eckington	0.16	0.45	4.50	2.10	0.00	2.40	0.18	0.01	42.68	2.14	0.93
Elmley Castle and Somerville	0.78	0.33	3.44	2.22	0.00	1.22	0.26	0.00	0.06	2.31	1.33
Evesham North	2.65	15.60	9.14	0.00	0.00	9.14	0.00	0.00	0.37	0.00	14.48
Evesham South	0.00	2.69	3.87	3.87	0.00	0.00	0.05	0.07	0.00	3.26	14.14
Fladbury	5.03	0.49	7.14	3.88	0.02	3.23	0.28	0.03	0.00	2.39	0.92
Great Hampton	0.00	4.88	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.01	7.64	0.89	1.08
Hartlebury	1.12	0.38	1.11	1.11	0.00	0.00	0.11	0.11	93.04	1.47	3.38
Harvington and Norton	2.72	0.96	3.19	1.19	0.00	2.00	0.26	0.09	26.71	1.01	0.88
Honeybourne and Pebworth	1.55	6.51	3.43	3.43	0.00	0.00	0.35	0.11	0.00	1.61	0.90
Inkberrow	2.20	0.28	25.53	10.35	0.12	15.05	0.41	0.08	3.43	9.66	1.84
Little Hampton	0.19	0.42	2.92	2.92	0.00	0.00	0.09	0.19	0.00	0.00	0.00
Lovett and North Claines	1.04	1.52	24.34	0.97	0.00	20.66	0.18	0.00	95.29	2.27	25.12
Norton and Whittington	1.32	2.52	4.54	1.86	0.05	2.63	0.39	0.06	0.53	1.27	2.00
Omersley	3.40	0.00	5.44	0.97	0.00	4.47	0.04	0.00	0.00	1.25	1.41
Pershore	8.64	3.52	14.63	10.05	0.27	4.32	0.27	0.04	103.50	2.46	14.24
Pinvin	2.23	1.37	8.04	4.23	0.00	3.81	0.36	0.03	8.87	1.05	2.05
South Bredon Hill	0.81	0.00	6.35	3.98	0.57	1.81	0.13	0.01	2.93	1.65	5.16
The Littletons	0.92	1.95	4.90	2.31	0.00	2.59	0.29	0.02	54.01	1.12	1.30
Upton Snodsbury	0.30	0.49	4.69	2.14	0.06	2.49	0.17	0.01	62.24	3.24	4.30
Total ha	84.02	213.34	516.03	326.04	3.95	183.25	14.80	3.06	2611.43	150.75	415.25

Table 9 Existing provision of open space (hectares per 1000 population) by ward

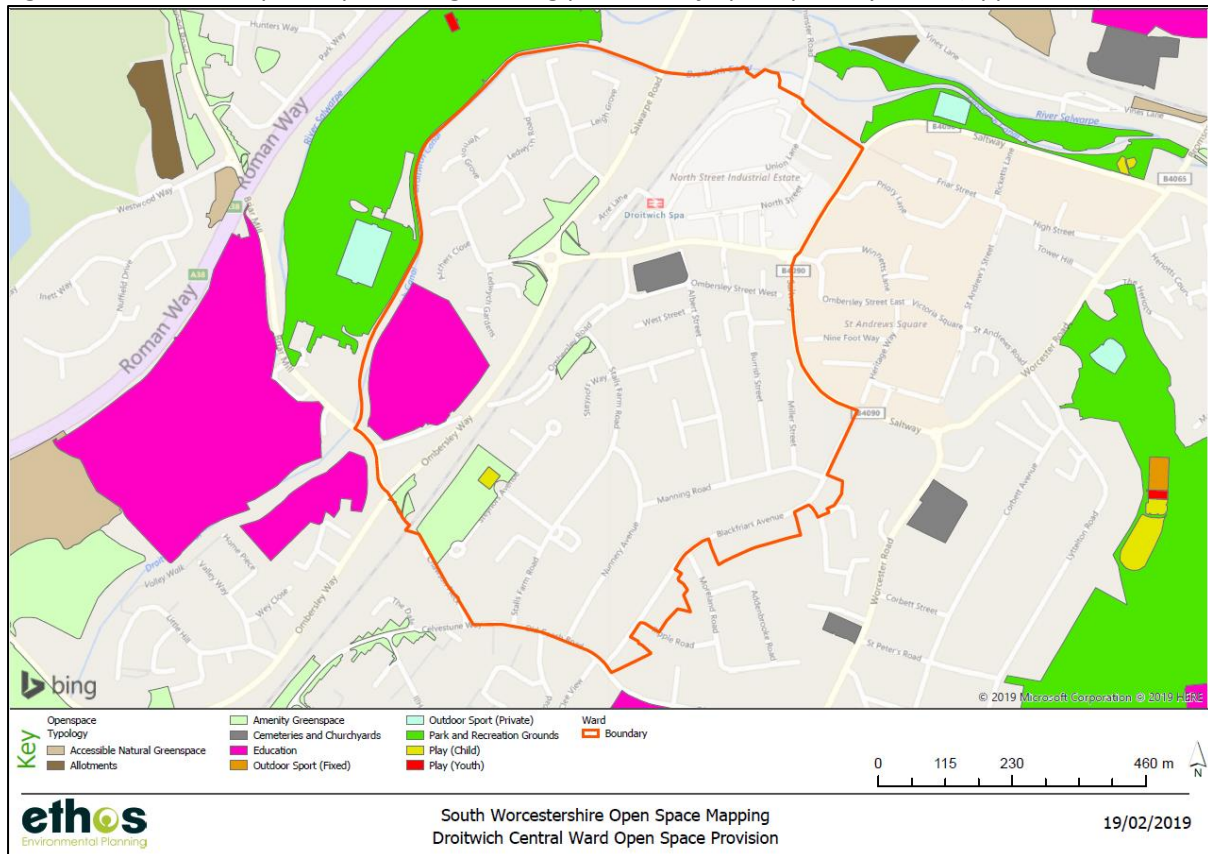
WARD	Allotments	Amenity Greenspace	Parks and Recreation Grounds (combined)	Parks and Recreation Grounds	Outdoor Sport (Fixed)	Outdoor Sport (Private)	Play (Child)	Play (Youth)	Accessible Natural Green space	Cemeteries and Churchyards	Education
Malvern Hills											
Alfrick and Leigh	0.46	0.1	0.9	0.89	0.01	0	0	0	29.75	0.81	1.09
Baldwin	0	1.11	3.22	1.05	0	2.17	0.01	0	0	0.79	0.13
Broadheath	0.31	4.14	1.6	0.75	0	0.85	0.07	0.01	0.9	0.48	0.53
Chase	0	3.23	2.31	0	0	2.31	0.05	0	3	0.07	2.12
Dyson Perrins	0.13	0.71	0.23	0.18	0.05	0	0.07	0	0.15	0.04	1.72
Hallow	0.23	0.75	1.4	1.19	0	0.21	0.04	0.06	37.69	0.85	0.75
Kempsey	0	0.7	0.96	0.7	0.05	0.22	0.01	0	39.02	0.44	0.2
Lindridge	0	0.09	0.43	0.43	0	0	0	0	12.66	1.41	0.53
Link	0.27	0.07	1.77	0.91	0.02	0.84	0.05	0.03	4.11	0.27	0.07
Longdon	0	0.44	1.34	0.54	0	0.8	0	0	36.65	0.95	9.86
Martley	0.06	0.9	1.09	1.09	0	0	0.05	0.03	0.33	0.52	3.88
Morton	0	0.19	0.92	0.92	0	0	0.04	0.01	156.78	0.72	0.46
Pickersleigh	0.02	1.17	2.39	0.95	0	1.44	0.06	0.01	2.25	0.89	0.64
Powick	0.23	1.5	1.78	1.19	0	0.59	0.11	0.01	61.75	2.88	0.48
Priory	0	0.36	3.27	0.98	0	2.29	0.01	0	15.08	0.29	5.85
Ripple	0.09	0.59	0	0	0	0	0	0	37.89	0.49	0
Teme Valley	0.09	0	0.71	0.71	0	0	0.19	0	3.6	1.34	0.24
Tenbury	0	0.83	1.95	1.95	0	0	0.03	0.02	13.47	0.72	3.43
Upton and Hanley	0.24	1.01	2.61	1.92	0	0.69	0.07	0.04	20.55	0.83	1.23
Wells	0	1.49	0	0	0	0	0.04	0	81.01	1.62	2.1
West	0.36	0	1.31	0.98	0	0.33	0.01	0	34.18	0.39	0.9
Woodbury	0	1.75	0.05	0.05	0	0	0.02	0.03	1.5	0.63	14.19
Worcester											
Arboretum	0.64	0.07	1.6	0.74	0	0.86	0.03	0.01	0	0	0.61
Battenhall	0.94	0.29	1.58	1.54	0	0.05	0.08	0	0.62	0	4.1
Bedwardine	0.18	0.35	1.05	0.38	0	0.67	0.01	0	1.55	0.03	3.28
Cathedral	0.29	0.6	3.53	3.35	0	0.18	0.04	0.01	1.26	0.12	0.77
Claines	0.94	0.04	6.75	5.09	0.01	1.65	0.03	0.02	0.33	0.17	0.38
Gorse Hill	0.03	0.1	0.06	0.06	0	0	0.01	0	1.51	0	0.31
Nunnery	0	0.09	2.18	1.05	0	1.13	0.06	0.01	5.98	0	1.18
Rainbow Hill	0	0.01	2.48	2.39	0.05	0.04	0.02	0.02	0	0.03	0
St Clement	0.06	3.58	0.02	0	0	0.02	0	0	0.16	0	1.19
St John	0.43	0.70	0.41	0.31	0.1	0	0.08	0.01	0.77	0.43	0.57
St Peter's Parish	0	0.23	2.27	2.27	0	0	0.1	0.01	0	0	0.4
St Stephen	0.16	0	0.92	0	0	0.92	0	0	0	3.1	3.14
Warndon	0	0.59	0	0.31	0	0.21	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.03	0.01
Warndon Parish North	0	0.7	0	0	0	0	0.07	0	5.53	0.13	0.27
Warndon Parish South	0.07	0.94	0.48	0	0	0	0.07	0	7.39	0	1.62
Wychavon											
Badsey	0	0	2.25	2.25	0	0	0.09	0.01	0	0.17	0.36
Bengeworth	0	0.44	1.54	1.49	0.05	0	0.11	0.02	0.14	0.26	0.46
Bowbrook	0.38	0.45	1.23	1.17	0.04	0.02	0.07	0.02	14.94	0.45	0.38
Bredon	1.61	0	2.2	1.39	0.08	0.73	0.03	0.03	14.1	0.35	0.24
Bretforton and Offenham	0	0	1.77	1.36	0	0.4	0.05	0	0	0.46	2.17
Broadway and Wickhamford	0	0.08	1.44	0.57	0	0.87	0.15	0.02	4.24	0.54	0.27

WARD	Allotments	Amenity Greenspace	Parks and Recreation Grounds (combined)	Parks and Recreation Grounds	Outdoor Sport (Fixed)	Outdoor Sport (Private)	Play (Child)	Play (Youth)	Accessible Natural Green space	Cemeteries and Churchyards	Education
Dodderhill	1.09	0.51	1.15	1.14	0	0	0.06	0.04	5.77	0.27	0.23
Drakes Broughton	0.8	0	0.67	0.67	0	0	0.04	0	5.09	7.13	0.79
Droitwich Central	0	0.96	0	0	0	0	0.03	0	0	0.17	1.4
Droitwich East	0.05	0.77	4.1	3.9	0.03	0.17	0.11	0.01	0.61	0.35	0.68
Droitwich South East	0	1.14	0	0	0	0	0.01	0	1.06	0	0
Droitwich South West	0.1	0.54	0.01	0.01	0	0	0	0	0.28	0.2	1.33
Droitwich West	0.18	1.89	2.3	2.18	0	0.12	0.01	0.01	2.19	0	2.86
Eckington	0.06	0.17	1.68	0.79	0	0.9	0.07	0	15.97	0.8	0.35
Elmley Castle and Somerville	0.32	0.13	1.4	0.9	0	0.5	0.11	0	0.02	0.94	0.54
Evesham North	0.5	2.95	1.73	0	0	1.73	0	0	0.07	0	2.74
Evesham South	0	0.5	0.71	0.71	0	0	0.01	0.01	0	0.6	2.61
Fladbury	1.81	0.18	2.56	1.39	0.01	1.16	0.1	0.01	0	0.86	0.33
Great Hampton	0	1.54	0	0	0	0	0	0	2.41	0.28	0.34
Hartlebury	0.38	0.13	0.38	0.38	0	0	0.04	0.04	31.69	0.5	1.15
Harvington and Norton	1.01	0.36	1.18	0.44	0	0.74	0.1	0.03	9.88	0.37	0.33
Honeybourne and Pebworth	0.56	2.36	1.24	1.24	0	0	0.13	0.04	0	0.58	0.33
Inkberrow	0.39	0.05	4.49	1.82	0.02	2.65	0.07	0.01	0.6	1.7	0.32
Little Hampton	0.03	0.07	0.51	0.52	0	0	0.02	0.03	0	0	0
Lovett and North Claines	0.18	0.27	4.32	0.17	0	3.66	0.03	0	16.89	0.4	4.45
Norton and Whittington	0.36	0.69	1.25	0.51	0.01	0.72	0.11	0.02	0.15	0.35	0.55
Ombersley	1.39	0	2.22	0.4	0	1.82	0.02	0	0	0.51	0.58
Pershore	1.12	0.46	1.9	1.3	0.03	0.56	0.03	0.01	13.41	0.32	1.84
Pinvin	0.74	0.46	2.68	1.41	0	1.27	0.12	0.01	2.96	0.35	0.68
South Bredon Hill	0.33	0	2.63	1.65	0.24	0.75	0.05	0	1.21	0.68	2.13
The Littletons	0.3	0.63	1.58	0.74	0	0.83	0.09	0.01	17.36	0.36	0.42
Upton Snodsbury	0.11	0.18	1.74	0.79	0.02	0.92	0.06	0	23.07	1.2	1.6

Maps showing provision by Ward

Appendix 1 provides a map for each of the wards within the Study Area showing the provision of open space. An example map is shown in figure 5 below.

Figure 5 Example map showing existing provision of open space by ward (appendix 1)



6.0 THE DEVELOPMENT OF STANDARDS

6.1 Introduction

Following the completion of the assessment of local needs (community and stakeholder consultation) and the audit of provision (the first two steps of this study), new standards of provision for open space are proposed below. This section explains how the standards for South Worcestershire have been developed and provides specific information and justification for each of the typologies where standards have been proposed.

Consideration has been given to the need for developing individual standards for each district, or overarching SWC study area wide standards. The justification for SWC study area wide standards is provided in the Draft Standards Paper (appendix 4), which was signed off by the SWC project team and the SWC Officer Steering Group¹⁹.

The standards for open space have been developed in-line with the NPPF. Standards comprise the following components:

- **Quantity standards:** These are determined by the analysis of existing quantity, consideration of existing local and national standards and benchmarks and evidence gathered from the local needs assessment. It is important that quantity standards are locally derived, realistic and achievable. The recommended standards need to be robust, evidence based and deliverable through new development and future mechanisms of contributions through on-site or off-site provision.
- **Accessibility standards:** These reflect the needs of all potential users including those with physical or sensory disabilities, young and older people alike. Spaces likely to be used on a frequent and regular basis need to be within easy walking distance and to have safe access. Other facilities where visits are longer but perhaps less frequent, for example country parks, can be further away. Consideration is also given to existing local or national standards and benchmarks.
- **Quality standards:** The standards for each form of provision are derived from the quality audit, existing good practice and from the views of the community and those that use the spaces. Again, quality standards should be achievable and reflect the priorities that emerge through consultation. The current financial climate (with large cut backs in government funding to Local Authorities) means that achievable quality standards are key, and they are likely to vary depending on the geographical area.

¹⁹ It should be noted that the figures within the Draft Standards Paper (January 2019) are slightly different to the final figures published in this report, due to final updates to the mapping to ensure accuracy in February 2019. However, the updates made were minor, and therefore the figures only differ slightly, and the changes do not impact on the justification for standards. The decision was also taken by the project steering group to slightly increase the youth play space standard in line with the standard for children's play space, as this is justified by the results of the consultation which clearly highlighted a need for more youth provision.

The standards that have been proposed are for **minimum guidance levels of provision**. Certain geographical areas may enjoy levels of provision exceeding minimum standards but this does not mean there is a surplus, as all such provision may be well used.

6.2 Allotments

Table 10 Summary of quantity and access standard for allotments

Quantity Standard	Access Standard
0.30 ha/1000 population	720 metres (15 minutes walk time)

Existing national or local standards

National standards for allotments and other such open spaces are difficult to find. The closest thing to such standards appears to be those set out by the National Society of Allotment and Leisure Gardeners (NSALG). These are as follows:

- Standard Plot Size = 330 sq yards (250sqm)
- Paths = 1.4m wide for disabled access
- Haulage ways = 3m wide
- Plotters shed = 12sqm
- Greenhouse = 15sqm
- Polytunnel = 30sqm

The Worcester City Council PPG17 Assessment (2006) sets the following standards for allotments:

- 0.4ha/1000 (provision at that time fell well below this standard – but waiting lists were identified as significant);
- Minimum size: 1.3ha;
- Allotments are demand led and as such provision should be to the current City Standard of 0.4 ha per 1000 pop as demand exceeds supply with 100+people on waiting lists across the City

The Malvern Hills District Council Open Space, Sport and Recreation Study (2007) sets the following standards for allotments:

- 0.14ha/1000
- All settlement areas within 120m of a site up to 0.66ha and/or 1200m of a site between 0.66ha and 1ha and/or 900m of a site between 1ha and 10ha and/or a site of more than 10ha

The Wychavon District Council Open Space, Sport and Recreation Study (2006) sets the following standards for allotments:

- 0.39ha/1000

- 15-minute walk time

Quantity standard for allotments

- 85% of all respondents from the household survey 'never' use allotments, meaning this is the least used type of open space;
- The existing average level of provision across the study area is 0.28 ha/1000;
- Provision varies greatly by ward;
- The level of provision within the Malvern Hills is comparatively very low (at 0.12 ha/1000), and it was noted from the parish councils within this area that there is demand for more allotments;
- The household survey identified 39% of people felt there should be more allotments, however, 37% felt there are enough;
- However, consultation with Town/Parish Councils and local organisations (including local councils) highlighted specific concern around a lack of provision in some areas, and also long waiting lists;
- The propensity for higher density new housing with smaller gardens is likely to increase demand (this was also highlighted within the consultation);
- Whilst the need and value of allotments is recognised, there is no solid evidence which justifies a large increase against the existing levels of provision at the Study Area;
- The existing standards are considered to be too low for the Malvern Hills, and too high for Worcester City. The existing standard for Wychavon 0.39ha/1000 is acceptable, however, the higher level of provision in this district is caused by a low number of wards that have large/large amounts of allotment space, and therefore a lower standard is considered appropriate when analysing supply and requirements for new provision;
- With the above in mind a standard in line with current study area provision levels is considered appropriate. Therefore, a standard of 0.30 ha/1000 is proposed for analysing existing provision and for new provision of allotments.
- This will highlight the low provision of allotments within Malvern Hills and will be deliverable through new provision.

Access standard for allotments

- Responses received in relation to acceptable travel times to allotments from the household survey identified a mix in responses, with 23% wanting allotments within 5 minutes, 29% between 6 to 10 minutes, 22% between 11 to 15 minutes and 13% between 16 to 20 minutes; and that they access allotments by foot (60%).
 - This suggests that people do not want to travel to far to reach their allotment;
 - It is considered that the availability of allotments is more important than having them very close to home, nevertheless there is some demand for facilities relatively nearby. Therefore, a standard of no more than 15 minutes' walk time (720 metres straight line walk) is proposed.
-

Quality standards for allotments

The household survey identified that only 19% of respondents thought that allotments were either good or very good quality - whereas 27% thought they were average, 26% poor and 28% very poor. This typology was also rated as a high priority for improvement by 39% of respondents. Allotment sites were not subject to quality audits as part of this study, this was agreed by the project group as the majority of allotments are locked/not accessible.

However, a number of general recommendations are made in relation to quality, which should include the following:

- Well-drained soil which is capable of cultivation to a reasonable standard.
- A sunny, open aspect preferably on a southern facing slope.
- Limited overhang from trees and buildings either bounding or within the site.
- Adequate lockable storage facilities, and a good water supply within easy walking distance of individual plots.
- Provision for composting facilities.
- Secure boundary fencing.
- Good access within the site both for pedestrians and vehicles.
- Good vehicular access into the site and adequate parking and manoeuvring space.
- Disabled access.
- Toilets.
- Notice boards.

6.3 Amenity Green Space

Table 11 Summary of quantity and access standard for amenity green space

Quantity Standard	Access Standard
0.70 ha/1000 population (sites > 0.15ha)	600 metres or 12-13 minutes' walk time

Existing national or local standards

The Fields in Trust (Previously known as the National Playing Fields Association) Guidance for Outdoor Sport and Play report 'Beyond the Six Acre Standard' proposes a benchmark guideline of 0.6ha/1000 population of amenity green space, and a walking distance guideline of 480m. FIT recommend that the quantity guidelines are adjusted to take account of local circumstances.

The Worcester City Council PPG17 Assessment (2006) sets the following standards for amenity green space:

- 0.5ha/1000, minimum size: 1.61ha;
- Residents should have access to good quality amenity space within 0.67 miles of their home.

The Malvern Hills District Council Open Space, Sport and Recreation Study (2007) sets the following standards for amenity green space:

- 1.86ha/1000
- All settlement areas within 120m of a site up to 0.66ha and/or 1200m of a site between 0.66ha and 1ha and/or 900m of a site between 1ha and 10ha and/or a site of more than 10ha

The Wychavon District Council Open Space, Sport and Recreation Study (2006) sets the following standards for amenity green space:

- 0.61ha/1000
- 10-minute walk time

Quantity standard for amenity green space

- Existing average level of provision in the study area is 0.70 ha/1000 population (for sites greater than 0.15 ha in size);
- The household survey identified that 39% of people felt there was a need for more informal open space areas, whilst 34% felt there were enough and 27% felt there don't need to be as many;
- Provision varies by ward, with some areas falling well below the average, and others exceeding it; at the district level, provision is similar within Worcester and Wychavon (at 0.55ha/1000 and 0.61ha/1000 respectively, while provision in Malvern Hills is much higher at 1.05ha/1000.
- Considering the above factors, a minimum standard of 0.70 ha/1000 is recommended for analysing existing provision and for new provision of amenity green space;
- The minimum size of a space that will be considered acceptable and count towards open space provision is recommended to be 0.15 ha in size (about the size of a mini football pitch). This will avoid a proliferation of small amenity spaces which have no real recreation function. Any spaces below this size will be acceptable in terms of their visual amenity, but would not count towards the required level of provision.
- When delivering new provision, consideration should be given to combining this with the natural green space standard (i.e. a combined standard of 1.70 ha/1000) in order to provide bigger, more biodiverse spaces.

Access standard for amenity green space

- Responses received in relation to acceptable travel times to informal open space from the household survey identified that people expect informal open space/amenity green space to be close by, with 50% expecting informal open spaces to be within a 10 minute travel time (of which 26% expecting to travel no more than 5 minutes) and a further 22% expecting to travel no more than 15 minutes; and that they access these spaces by foot (76%);
-

- Therefore, a standard of no more than 600 metres (12-13 minutes' walk time) is proposed.

Quality standards for amenity green space

The household survey revealed that the majority (50%) of respondents think that the quality of informal open space is good or very good quality, with 26% stating average quality and 24% poor or very poor. This typology was also rated as a high priority for improvement by 47% of respondents.

The audit of provision as well as the consultation has identified the importance attached by local people to open space close to home. The value of 'amenity green space' must be recognised especially within housing areas, where it can provide important local opportunities for play, exercise and visual amenity that are almost immediately accessible. On the other hand, open space can be expensive to maintain and it is very important to strike the correct balance between having sufficient space to meet the needs of the community for accessible and attractive space, and having too much which would be impossible to manage properly and therefore a potential liability and source of nuisance. It is important that amenity green space should be capable of use for at least some forms of public recreation activity.

It is therefore recommended that in addition to the minimum size threshold identified above (0.15ha), that all amenity green space should be subject to landscape design, ensuring the following quality principles:

- Capable of supporting informal recreation such as a kickabout, space for dog walking or space to sit and relax;
- Include high quality planting of trees and/or shrubs to create landscape structure and biodiversity value;
- Include paths along main desire lines (lit where appropriate);
- Be designed to ensure easy maintenance.

6.4 Park and Recreation Grounds (public and private combined)

Table 12 Summary of quantity and access standard for parks and recreation grounds (public and private combined)

Quantity Standard	Access Standard
1.7 ha/1000 population	600 metres (12-13 minutes' walk time)

Existing national or local standards

The Fields in Trust (FIT) Guidance for Outdoor Sport and Play report 'Beyond the Six Acre Standard' proposes a benchmark guideline of 0.80ha/1000 population for parks and gardens, with a walking distance guideline of 710m. In addition to this they also recommend the following standards:

- Playing pitches: 1.20ha/1000 population with a walking distance of 1,200m
- All outdoor sports: 1.6ha/1000 population with a walking distance of 1,200m
- Equipped/designated play areas: 0.25ha/1000 population, with a walking distance of 100m for Local Areas for Play (LAPs), 400m for Local Equipped Areas for Play (LEAPs) and 1000m for Neighbourhood Equipped Areas for Play (NEAPs).
- Other outdoor provision (MUGAs and skateboard parks): 0.30ha/1000 population and a walking distance of 700m.

The Worcester City Council PPG17 Assessment (2006) sets the following standards for parks and gardens:

- 0.61ha/1000 (based on provision level at that time, and consultation), minimum size of future provision: 6.1ha;
- Residents should have access to a good quality park within 0.67 miles of home

And the following for outdoor sports:

- 1.8ha/1000 (doesn't make clear what this is based on), minimum size of future provision: 1.8ha,
- Residents should have access to a good quality facility within 1.4 miles.

The Malvern Hills District Council Open Space, Sport and Recreation Study (2007) sets the following standards for parks and gardens:

- 0.14ha/1000
- 400m of a local park, 1,200m of a district park and 3,200m of a borough park.

And the following for outdoor sports:

- 1.83ha/1000
- Teams to have access to appropriate site at relevant time

The Wychavon District Council Open Space, Sport and Recreation Study (2006) sets the following standards for parks and gardens:

- 0.76ha/1000
- 15-minute walk time (urban)

And the following for outdoor sports:

- 1.9ha/1000 (excluding golf courses)
-

- 15-minute walk for grass pitches and tennis courts. 15-minute drive for STP's, golf courses and bowling greens.

Quantity of park and recreation grounds

- Existing average level of provision in the Study Area is 1.07 ha/1000
- There is an additional 0.60 ha/1000 of private sports space which includes a variety of uses (excluding golf courses);
- The household survey identified that 54% of people felt there were enough parks and recreation grounds (compared to 39% who felt there was a need for more);
- The consultation revealed that the priority was for improvements to existing facilities (53%) over new provision (32%);
- A proposed standard of 1.70 ha/1000 (combining public and privately managed provision) is therefore proposed for assessing existing provision and for assessing requirements for new provision of park and recreation grounds;
- It should be reiterated that this standard is intended to provide sufficient space for facilities including pitches (whereas play space is provided in addition to this standard).
- A hierarchy approach for provision is not recommended, in order to ensure simplicity in the application of this standard.

Access standard for park and recreation grounds

- 17% of people want facilities to be within a 5-minute travel time, 32% within 10 minutes and 25% within 15 minutes and 77% of people walk to parks and recreation grounds. This indicates that people do not want to travel too far to reach their park and recreation ground.
- A standard of 600 metres (12-13 minutes' walk time) is therefore recommended.

Quality standards for park and recreation grounds

60% of respondents from the household survey felt that the quality of parks and recreation grounds is either good or very good, and 28% average. 43% also felt they are a high priority for improvement, and a further 40% a medium priority for improvement.

National guidance relevant to this typology is provided in the 'Green Flag' quality standard for parks which sets out benchmark criteria for quality open spaces. For outdoor sports space, Sport England have produced a wealth of useful documents outlining the quality standards for facilities such as playing pitches, changing rooms, MUGAS and tennis courts plus associated ancillary facilities. The Rugby Football Union have provided guidance on the quality and standard of provision of facilities for rugby, and the England and Wales Cricket Board have provided guidance for cricket facilities. It is recommended that the guidance provided in these documents is adopted by the SWCs, and that all new and improved provision seeks to meet these guidelines.

6.5 Play Space (children and youth)

Table 13 Summary of quantity and access standards for play space

Typology	Quantity Standard	Access Standard
Children's Play Space	0.05 ha/1000 population	600m (12-13 minutes' walk time)
Youth Play Space	0.05 ha/1000 population	720m (15 minutes' walk time)

Existing National and Local Policies

The FIT guidance 'Beyond the Six Acre Standard' recommends provision of 0.25ha/1000 population of equipped/designated play areas, with a walking distance of 100m for Local Areas for Play (LAPs), 400m for Local Equipped Areas for Play (LEAPs) and 1000m for Neighbourhood Equipped Areas for Play (NEAPs). The guidance does not specifically cover the needs of most teenagers.

The previous FIT guidance (The Six Acre Standard) recommended provision of 0.8 hectares per 1000 people for children's play of which around 0.3 hectares should be equipped provision. These standards had been criticised because they are often seen as undeliverable and can result in a proliferation of play areas that can be difficult to maintain, as well as setting unrealistic aspirations in urban areas where insufficient land is available to provide facilities, especially higher density development on brownfield sites. The level recommended within the new guidance (0.25 ha/1000 population), although lower than previously, is still considered to be high.

The following minimum size guidelines and buffers are recommended by FIT:

Playable space (LAP type - need not be equipped)

1. Minimum active playable space of 100 sq m (need not be equipped).
2. Buffer zone of 5m minimum depth between the active playable space and the nearest dwelling

Equipped play area (LEAP type)

1. Minimum activity zone area of 400 sq m.
2. Buffer zone of not less than 10m in depth between the edge of the equipped activity zone and the boundary of the nearest dwelling and a minimum of 20m between the equipped activity zone and the habitable room facade of the dwelling.

Teen Play including a MUGA (NEAP type)

1. Minimum activity zone area of 1000 sq m divided into two parts; one part containing a range of playground equipment; and the other a hard surface MUGA of at least 465 sq m.
2. Buffer zone of not less than 30m in depth between the activity zone and the boundary of the nearest dwelling. A greater distance may be needed where purpose built skateboarding facilities are provided.

The Worcester City Council PPG17 Assessment (2006) sets the following standards for provision for children and young people:

- 0.6ha/1000, minimum size for future provision: 400m²;
- Residents should have access to good quality play provision within 0.5 miles of their home.

The Malvern Hills District Council Open Space, Sport and Recreation Study (2007) sets the following standards for provision for children and young people:

- 0.04ha/1000
- All settlement areas within 400m of a LEAP (pedestrian route) and/or 1,000m of a NEAP (pedestrian route) and/or 1,000 or a site greater than a SEAP (Straight line distance)

The Wychavon District Council Open Space, Sport and Recreation Study (2006) sets the following standards for provision for children and young people:

- Children: 0.07ha/1000, Urban: 10-minute walk for children, Rural: 10 minute walk for children
- Young People: 0.02ha/1000, Urban: 15-minute walk, Rural: not defined

Quantity standards for play

- Current average levels of provision of children's play space is 0.05 ha/1000 population, for youth space this is 0.01 ha/1000 population;
- The household survey identified that 35% of people felt there was a need for more children's play areas (compared to 52% who felt there are enough); whereas for facilities for teenagers 48% felt there was a need for more (compared to 35% who felt there are enough);
- The household survey also found that when asked about the kind of improvement needed, 70% of respondents thought that additional facilities were needed (where as 27% thought quality improvements were needed), and in relation to children's play space there was less of a clear divide – with 43% identifying that additional facilities are required, compared 49% who felt that quality improvements to existing facilities is the priority.
- It is therefore recommended that existing levels of youth play facilities are increased with a standard of 0.05 ha/1000 for analysing existing and required provision, and that provision of children's play space remains in line with existing levels of provision, at 0.05 ha/1000;
- It should be reiterated that these are **minimum standards for equipped provision** and **do not include the need for surrounding playable space** as recommended by FIT²⁰

²⁰ Fields in Trust Guidance for Outdoor Sport and Play, Beyond the Six Acre Standard – sets out guidance on buffer zones, which should be well designed to enhance play.

and Play England²¹ i.e. this surrounding playable space will need to be provided in addition to the quantity standard.

- N.B. We are not recommending a hierarchy for provision of children's play space, only a standard for children's play space and youth play space. The quality assessment will highlight those spaces where quality and play value could be improved, and the study will recognise that all open space provides 'playable space'.
- The FIT hierarchy approach (LAPs, LEAPs, NEAPs etc.) is considered to be dated and it directs developers towards providing standardised play rather than thinking about what is needed locally, and opportunities for more creative play design e.g. natural play. A single standard for children's play aims to move away from lots of little play areas with low play value which are not sustainable, and providing better designed play areas with high play value.
- To order to achieve this, it is considered that the minimum size of equipped play provision would be 100 sqm. In addition to this, buffer zones (which will take a landscape design approach) will be provided between 5m and 30m, depending on the size of the play area.

Access standards for play

- The household survey identified that for children's play space 57% of people want facilities within 10 minutes and a further 25% within 15 minutes. For teenage facilities 42% of people wanted facilities within 10 minutes, with a further 40% willing to travel up to 15 minutes;
- 81% of people walk to children's facilities, and 66% walk to outdoor teenage facilities.

In light of these findings, the following access standards are recommended:

- Children's provision – 600m (12-13 minutes' walk time),
- Youth Provision – 720m (15 minutes' walk time).

Quality standards for play

Children's play space was considered to be good or very good quality by 62% of respondents of the household survey, whereas 27% felt they were average quality. A similar number felt that facilities for teenagers were average quality (28%), whereas 31% felt they were good or very good quality, and 41% felt they were poor or very poor (compared to 11% for children's play space).

It is expected that the design of play would take a landscape design approach (designed to fit its surroundings and enhance the local environment), incorporating play into the overall landscape masterplan for new development, and could include natural play e.g. grassy mounds, planting, logs, and boulders can all help to make a more attractive and playable setting for equipment, and planting can also help attract birds and other wildlife to literally bring the play space alive. In densely populated urban areas with little or no natural or green space, this more natural approach can help soften the hard urban landscape.

²¹ Design for Play: A guide to creating successful play spaces

The challenge for play providers is to provide the best possible play opportunities, and to create play spaces which will attract children, capture their imagination and give them scope to play in new, more exciting, and more creative ways e.g. moving away from fencing play areas (where it is safe to do so), so that the equipment is integrated with its setting, making it feel more inviting to explore and so people are free to use the space without feeling restricted.

Play England are keen to see a range of play spaces in all urban environments:

- A** Door-step 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.

Moving forward, Play England would like their new Design Guide; '*Design for Play*' to be referenced and added as an SPD in standard configuration. Play England have also developed a '*Quality Assessment Tool*' which can be used to judge the quality of individual play spaces. It has been recommended that all local authorities consider adopting this as a means of assessing the quality of play spaces in their district. Play England also highlight a potential need for standards for smaller settlements and rural areas where the doorstep, local, neighbourhood, and destination hierarchy is unlikely to be appropriate.

Disability access is also an important issue for Play England and they would like local authorities to adopt the KIDS²² publication; '*Inclusion by Design*' as an SPD. Their most recent guidance document, '*Better Places to Play through Planning*' gives detailed guidance on setting local standards for access, quantity and quality of playable space and is considered as a background context for the standards suggested in this study.

6.6 Natural Green Space

Table 14 Proposed quantity and access standard for natural green space

Quantity Standard	Access Standard
1.0ha/1000 population	920m (20 minutes' walk time)
	ANGst Standards

Existing National and Local standards

Natural England Accessible Natural Green Space Standards (ANGSt):

ANGSt recommends that everyone, wherever they live should have accessible natural greenspace:

²² KIDS, is a charity which in its 40 years, has pioneered a number of approaches and programmes for disabled children and young people. KIDS was established in 1970 and in 2003, KIDS merged with KIDSACTIVE, previously known as the Handicapped Adventure Play Association.

- Of at least 2 hectares in size, no more than 300 metres (5 minutes 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
- a minimum of 1 hectare of statutory Local Nature Reserves per thousand population.

The Worcester City Council PPG17 Assessment (2006) sets the following standards for Natural Green Space:

- 2.0ha/1000 (based on English Nature 2ha/1000 national standard), minimum size of future provision: 3.8ha
- Access standard: residents should have access to good quality natural green space within 1.4 miles of home

The Malvern Hills District Council Open Space, Sport and Recreation Study (2007) sets the following standards for provision for natural/semi-natural green space:

- 7.72ha/1000
- All settlement areas within 120m of a site up to 0.66ha and/or 1200m of a site between 0.66ha and 1ha and/or 900m of a site between 1ha and 10ha and/or a site of more than 10ha

The Wychavon District Council Open Space, Sport and Recreation Study (2006) sets the following standards for provision for natural and semi-natural open space:

- 0.75ha/1000
- 15 minute walk time (urban)

Quantity standards for natural green space

- The existing level of provision across the study area is 8.57 ha/1000 population, however this is highly variable by district and ward, and therefore a standard based on this level of provision is not considered deliverable or effective;
 - In terms of analysing existing provision, it is recommended that the ANGst standards are applied, to identify where there are any key gaps in access – although these are aspirational standards;
 - In addition, it is recommended that a standard is set for new provision from development; and also that an access standard is applied for analysing access to all natural green space across the Study Area;
 - The household survey identified that 48% felt there is a need for more woodlands, wildlife areas and nature reserves, compared to 38% who felt there are enough;
 - The purpose of the quantity standard is therefore to ensure that wards with comparatively low quantities of provision do not lose further space, and also that developments provide natural green space in areas of need;
-

- It is therefore recommended that a standard of 1.0ha/1000 is used for assessing existing provision (it will highlight those areas which have particularly low levels of provision) and also for providing new provision through development. As with all standards, this is a minimum requirement;
- Just because a ward may have levels of provision above the minimum standard, it does not necessarily mean these spaces are surplus to requirement;
- The importance of natural green spaces is recognised not only in their contribution to recreation and health and wellbeing, but also importantly in terms of green infrastructure and biodiversity.
- As already mentioned under the quantity standard for amenity green space, when delivering new provision, consideration should be given to combining this with the amenity green space standard (i.e. a combined standard of 1.70 ha/1000) in order to provide bigger, more biodiverse spaces.

Access standards for natural green space

- The household survey identified 11% would like want woodlands, wildlife areas and nature reserves within 5 minutes travel time, 14% within 10 minutes, 21% within 15 minutes, 24% within 20 minutes and 29% more than 20 minutes – of these, 46% walk and 46% drive.
- This indicates that people are generally willing to travel further to access this type of open space compared to other typologies, and therefore a standard of 960m (20 minutes straight line walk time is proposed).

Quality standards for natural green space

52% of respondents from the household survey felt that woodlands, wildlife areas and nature reserves were good or very good, a further 34% felt they were average and 14% felt they were poor or very poor. Natural green space was also noted as a high priority for improvement by significant numbers (54%) in the household survey. Consultation results also highlight the value attached to certain attributes of open space, in particular:

- Good maintenance and cleanliness
- Ease of access
- Lack of antisocial behaviour, noise etc.

This suggests that the provision of new or improved open space cannot be considered in isolation from the means of maintaining such space, perceptions of antisocial behaviour, and ease of access from within the surrounding environment.

The shape and size of space provided should allow for meaningful and safe recreation. Provision might be expected to include (as appropriate) elements of woodland, wetland, heathland and meadow, and could also be made for informal public access through recreation corridors. For larger areas, where car borne visits might be anticipated, some parking provision will be required. The larger the area the more valuable sites will tend to be in terms of their potential for enhancing local conservation interest and biodiversity. Wherever possible these sites should be linked to help improve wildlife value as part of a network.

In areas where it may be impossible or inappropriate to provide additional natural green space consistent with the standard, other approaches should be pursued which could include (for example):

- Changing the management of marginal space on playing fields and parks to enhance biodiversity.
- Encouraging living green roofs as part of new development/ redevelopment.
- Encouraging the creation of mixed species hedgerows.
- Additional use of long grass management regimes.
- Improvements to watercourses and water bodies.
- Innovative use of new drainage schemes / Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS).
- Use of native trees and plants with biodiversity value in high quality soft landscaping of new developments.

In any event, the points above should be principles to be pursued and encouraged at all times.

6.7 Summary of open space standards

Table 15 Summary of open space standards

Typology	Quantity standards for assessing existing provision and requirements for new provision (ha/1000 population)	Access standard
Allotments	0.30	720 metres or 15 minutes' walk time
Amenity Green Space (sites >0.15 ha)	0.70	600 metres or 12-13 minutes' walk time
Park and Recreation Grounds (public and private combined)	1.70	600 metres or 12-13 minutes' walk time
Play Space (Children)	0.05	600 metres or 12-13 minutes' walk time
Play Space (Youth)	0.05	720 metres or 15 minutes' walk time
Natural Green Space	1.0	920 metres or 20 minutes' walk time ANGst Standards
Total for new provision	3.80 ha/1000	

7.0 APPLYING LOCAL STANDARDS

7.1 Introduction

This part of the report uses the recommended standards to analyse provision across the Study Area. This section provides an overview of provision and supply across the Study Area and individual wards, with more detailed maps provided in appendix 1, 2 and 3. This section includes:

Quantity analysis

The quantity of provision is assessed using the recommended quantity standards for each of the typologies where a quantity standard has been developed. Recommended standards are expressed as hectares of open space per 1000 population.

The quantity assessment looks at the existing levels of provision, then uses the recommended standard to assess the required level of provision. From this a calculation is made of the supply, which will either be sufficient or insufficient. Within this section, levels of provision are provided by Ward, District and Study Area.

Access analysis

This section of the report provides analysis of the recommended access standards for each typology across the study area. The maps and analysis in this section are intended to be indicative, providing an overall picture of provision and highlighting any key issues across the Study Area.

However, the key to access analysis, is understanding the picture at a more localised level, therefore, maps showing local access provision by Ward are included in Appendix 2.

Quality analysis

This section of the report makes analysis of each typology across the study area – it highlights any common themes or issues that have arisen from the quality audit. The detailed quality audits have been provided to the SWC's as part of the GIS database, and maps by ward are provided at Appendix 3 which show the ranking of each open space audited (good, average or poor).

7.2 Application of quantity standards

7.2.1 Current supply against the South Worcestershire standards

Tables 16 to 20 below show the existing supply of open space for each typology at the Study Area, District and Ward levels. The supply is calculated using the population figures for each

geographical area, and the quantity of open space compared to what the requirements for open space are against the recommended standards²³.

The figures of 'Park and Recreation Grounds (Combined)' includes a combination of the following typologies:

- Park and Recreation Ground;
- Outdoor Sport (Fixed); and
- Outdoor Sport (Private).

Table 16 Open space supply at the Study Area level against the SWC quantity standards

Typology	Existing (ha)	Existing (ha/1000)	Required Provision (ha)	Standard/ Required Provision (ha/1000)	Supply (ha)	Supply (ha/1000)
Allotments	83.99	0.28	91.46	0.30	-7.47	-0.02
Amenity Greenspace (>0.15ha)	213.08	0.70	213.40	0.70	-0.32	0.00
Parks and Recreation Grounds (Combined)	513.32	1.68	518.26	1.70	-4.94	-0.02
Parks and Recreation Grounds	326.08	1.07	0.00	N/A	N/A	N/A
Outdoor Sport (Fixed)	3.96	0.01	0.00	N/A	N/A	N/A
Outdoor Sport (Private)	183.28	0.60	0.00	N/A	N/A	N/A
Play (Child)	14.82	0.05	15.24	0.05	-0.42	0.00
Play (Youth)	3.06	0.01	15.24	0.05	-12.18	-0.04
Accessible Natural Greenspace	2611.43	8.57	304.86	1.00	2306.57	7.57

Table 17 Open space supply in Malvern Hills against the SWC quantity standards

Typology	Existing (ha)	Existing (ha/1000)	Required Provision (ha)	Standard/ Required Provision ha/1000	Supply (ha)	Supply (ha/1000)
Allotments	9.38	0.12	23.15	0.30	-13.77	-0.18
Amenity Greenspace (>0.15ha)	81.15	1.05	54.02	0.70	27.13	0.35
Parks and Recreation Grounds (Combined)	119.33	1.55	131.18	1.70	-11.85	-0.15
Parks and Recreation Grounds	62.50	0.81	0.00	N/A	N/A	N/A
Outdoor Sport (Fixed)	0.61	0.01	0.00	N/A	N/A	N/A
Outdoor Sport (Private)	56.22	0.73	0.00	N/A	N/A	N/A
Play (Child)	3.41	0.04	3.86	0.05	-0.45	-0.01
Play (Youth)	0.92	0.01	3.86	0.05	-2.94	-0.04
Accessible Natural Greenspace	1784.31	23.12	77.17	1.00	1707.15	22.12

²³ For example, for Alfrick and Leigh the population is 3,493. The existing quantity of allotments within this ward is 1.60 ha, and the required provision (using the standard of 0.30ha/1000) is 1.05 ha. Therefore, the resultant supply is 0.55 ha i.e. there is sufficient supply against the quantity standard.

Table 18 Open space supply in Worcester against the SWC quantity standards

Typology	Existing (ha)	Existing (ha/1000)	Required Provision (ha)	Standard/ Required Provision ha/1000	Supply (ha)	Supply (ha/1000)
Allotments	27.36	0.27	30.69	0.30	-3.34	-0.03
Amenity Greenspace (>0.15ha)	55.84	0.55	71.62	0.70	-15.78	-0.15
Parks and Recreation Grounds (Combined)	179.21	1.75	173.93	1.70	5.28	0.05
Parks and Recreation Grounds	135.50	1.32	0.00	N/A	N/A	N/A
Outdoor Sport (Fixed)	1.36	0.01	0.00	N/A	N/A	N/A
Outdoor Sport (Private)	42.35	0.41	0.00	N/A	N/A	N/A
Play (Child)	4.18	0.04	5.12	0.05	-0.94	-0.01
Play (Youth)	0.74	0.01	5.12	0.05	-4.38	-0.04
Accessible Natural Greenspace	173.05	1.69	102.314	1.00	70.74	0.69

Table 19 Open space supply in Wychavon against the SWC quantity standards

Typology	Existing (ha)	Existing (ha/1000)	Required Provision (ha)	Standard/ Required Provision ha/1000	Supply (ha)	Supply (ha/1000)
Allotments	47.25	0.38	37.61	0.30	9.64	0.08
Amenity Greenspace (>0.15ha)	76.49	0.61	87.76	0.70	-11.27	-0.09
Parks and Recreation Grounds (Combined)	217.49	1.73	213.14	1.70	4.35	0.03
Parks and Recreation Grounds	128.08	1.02	0.00	N/A	N/A	N/A
Outdoor Sport (Fixed)	1.99	0.02	0.00	N/A	N/A	N/A
Outdoor Sport (Private)	84.70	0.68	0.00	N/A	N/A	N/A
Play (Child)	7.24	0.06	6.27	0.05	0.97	0.01
Play (Youth)	1.41	0.01	6.27	0.05	-4.86	-0.04
Accessible Natural Greenspace	654.07	5.22	125.378	1.00	528.69	4.22

Table 20 Open space supply (ha) by Ward against the SWC quantity standards

Row Labels	Allotments	Amenity Greenspace	Parks and Recreation Grounds (combined)	Play (Child)	Play (Youth)
Malvern Hills					
Alfrick and Leigh	0.55	-2.09	-2.79	-0.16	-0.17
Baldwin	-0.65	0.90	3.33	-0.08	-0.11
Broadheath	0.05	12.36	-0.36	0.06	-0.14

Row Labels	Allotments	Amenity Greenspace	Parks and Recreation Grounds (combined)	Play (Child)	Play (Youth)
Chase	-1.83	15.46	3.74	-0.01	-0.28
Dyson Perrins	-0.81	0.04	-6.88	0.09	-0.23
Hallow	-0.12	0.10	-0.55	-0.01	0.03
Kempsey	-1.23	0.01	-3.01	-0.15	-0.19
Lindridge	-0.67	-1.36	-2.86	-0.11	-0.11
Link	-0.19	-4.03	0.43	0.02	-0.16
Longdon	-0.63	-0.54	-0.76	-0.09	-0.10
Martley	-0.47	0.38	-1.17	-0.01	-0.04
Morton	-0.68	-1.15	-1.76	-0.03	-0.09
Pickersleigh	-1.83	3.03	4.44	0.04	-0.24
Powick	-0.27	3.13	0.30	0.23	-0.15
Priory	-1.34	-1.52	7.01	-0.18	-0.22
Ripple	-0.37	-0.20	-3.00	-0.09	-0.09
Teme Valley	-0.39	-1.32	-1.86	0.27	-0.09
Tenbury	-1.21	0.54	1.00	-0.08	-0.10
Upton and Hanley	-0.26	1.28	3.78	0.10	-0.05
Wells	-0.97	2.55	-5.51	-0.04	-0.16
West	0.27	-2.88	-1.61	-0.15	-0.21
Woodbury	-0.69	2.40	-3.77	-0.06	-0.03
Worcester					
Arboretum	2.16	-3.96	-0.62	-0.15	-0.26
Battenhall	3.37	-2.17	-0.62	0.18	-0.25
Bedwardine	-1.05	-2.95	-5.46	-0.33	-0.42
Cathedral	-0.07	-1.13	21.02	-0.12	-0.50
Claines	5.27	-5.44	41.50	-0.19	-0.23
Gorse Hill	-1.53	-3.42	-9.45	-0.26	-0.29
Nunnery	-2.41	-4.90	3.87	0.05	-0.34
Rainbow Hill	-1.66	-3.79	4.31	-0.19	-0.15
St Clement	-1.44	17.37	-10.15	-0.28	-0.30
St John	1.19	0.02	-11.67	0.32	-0.40
St Peter's Parish	-1.66	-2.58	3.14	0.29	-0.20
St Stephen	-0.74	-3.80	-4.25	-0.27	-0.27
Warndon	-1.73	-0.64	-9.78	-0.21	-0.21
Warndon Parish North	-1.61	0.02	-9.14	0.09	-0.27
Warndon Parish South	-1.41	1.46	-7.44	0.12	-0.30
Wychavon					
Badsey	-0.93	-2.17	1.71	0.14	-0.13
Bengeworth	-2.30	-2.02	-1.23	0.50	-0.26
Bowbrook	0.22	-0.71	-1.35	0.05	-0.09
Bredon	3.48	-1.87	1.33	-0.04	-0.05
Bretforton and Offenhams	-0.89	-2.08	0.20	0.01	-0.15
Broadway and Wickhamford	-1.40	-2.90	-1.23	0.48	-0.16
Dodderhill	2.24	-0.52	-1.57	0.03	-0.04
Drakes Broughton	1.25	-1.76	-2.60	-0.04	-0.13
Droitwich Central	-0.77	0.67	-4.37	-0.06	-0.13
Droitwich East	-1.39	0.37	13.37	0.33	-0.23
Droitwich South East	-1.62	2.35	-9.18	-0.19	-0.27

Row Labels	Allotments	Amenity Greenspace	Parks and Recreation Grounds (combined)	Play (Child)	Play (Youth)
Droitwich South West	-1.00	-0.80	-8.41	-0.25	-0.25
Droitwich West	-0.67	6.37	3.24	-0.20	-0.21
Eckington	-0.64	-1.42	-0.04	0.05	-0.12
Elmley Castle and Somerville	0.04	-1.39	-0.74	0.14	-0.12
Evesham North	1.06	11.89	0.14	-0.26	-0.26
Evesham South	-1.63	-1.10	-5.34	-0.22	-0.20
Fladbury	4.20	-1.46	2.41	0.14	-0.11
Great Hampton	-0.95	2.66	-5.39	-0.16	-0.15
Hartlebury	0.24	-1.68	-3.88	-0.04	-0.04
Harvington and Norton	1.91	-0.93	-1.41	0.12	-0.05
Honeybourne and Pebworth	0.72	4.58	-1.26	0.21	-0.03
Inkberrow	0.49	-3.70	15.87	0.13	-0.20
Little Hampton	-1.51	-3.55	-6.71	-0.19	-0.09
Lovett and North Claines	-0.65	-2.43	14.75	-0.10	-0.28
Norton and Whittington	0.23	-0.03	-1.66	0.21	-0.12
Ombersley	2.66	-1.72	1.27	-0.08	-0.12
Pershore	6.33	-1.88	1.51	-0.12	-0.35
Pinvin	1.33	-0.73	2.94	0.21	-0.12
South Bredon Hill	0.08	-1.69	2.24	0.01	-0.11
The Littletons	-0.01	-0.23	-0.39	0.13	-0.14
Upton Snodsbury	-0.51	-1.40	0.10	0.04	-0.12

Table 20 shows that open space provision varies across wards and typologies, with some meeting the standards and some falling below. For example, there is insufficient youth provision across all wards with the exception of Hallow in Malvern Hills. This will be an important consideration when determining the need for on-site open space in allocated housing sites.

Just because a typology is in sufficient supply, this does not mean it is 'surplus' to requirements, as the access and quantity standards also need to be considered alongside the quantity requirements. There may also be other factors such as a sites nature conservation value which mean it should be protected (see section 8.2 of this report).

7.2.2 Future need for open space

This section of the report considers the overall implications for open space provision from the predicted population growth. This is based on the estimated need for approximately 14,000 dwellings for the period up until 2041 (as set out within the SWDPR Issues and Options Consultation, November 2018). Based on an average household size in South Worcestershire of 2.3 persons, the predicted population increase is approximately 32,200 people.

Requirements from predicted population increase across the Study Area

Table 21 Study Area-wide open space requirements from new development (up to 2041)

Typology	Required standard for new provision (ha/1000)	Requirement for 32,200 people (ha)
Allotments	0.30	9.66
Amenity Green Space	0.70	22.54
Park and Recreation Ground (Combined)	1.70	54.74
Play Space (Children)	0.05	1.61
Play Space (Youth)	0.05	1.61
Natural Green Space	1.0	32.20
Total		122.36

The above figures are intended to be for indicative purposes only. More detail relating to the application of the open space standards and a recommended costings methodology for open space provision/contributions is provided in section 8.7 of this report.

7.3 Application of access standards

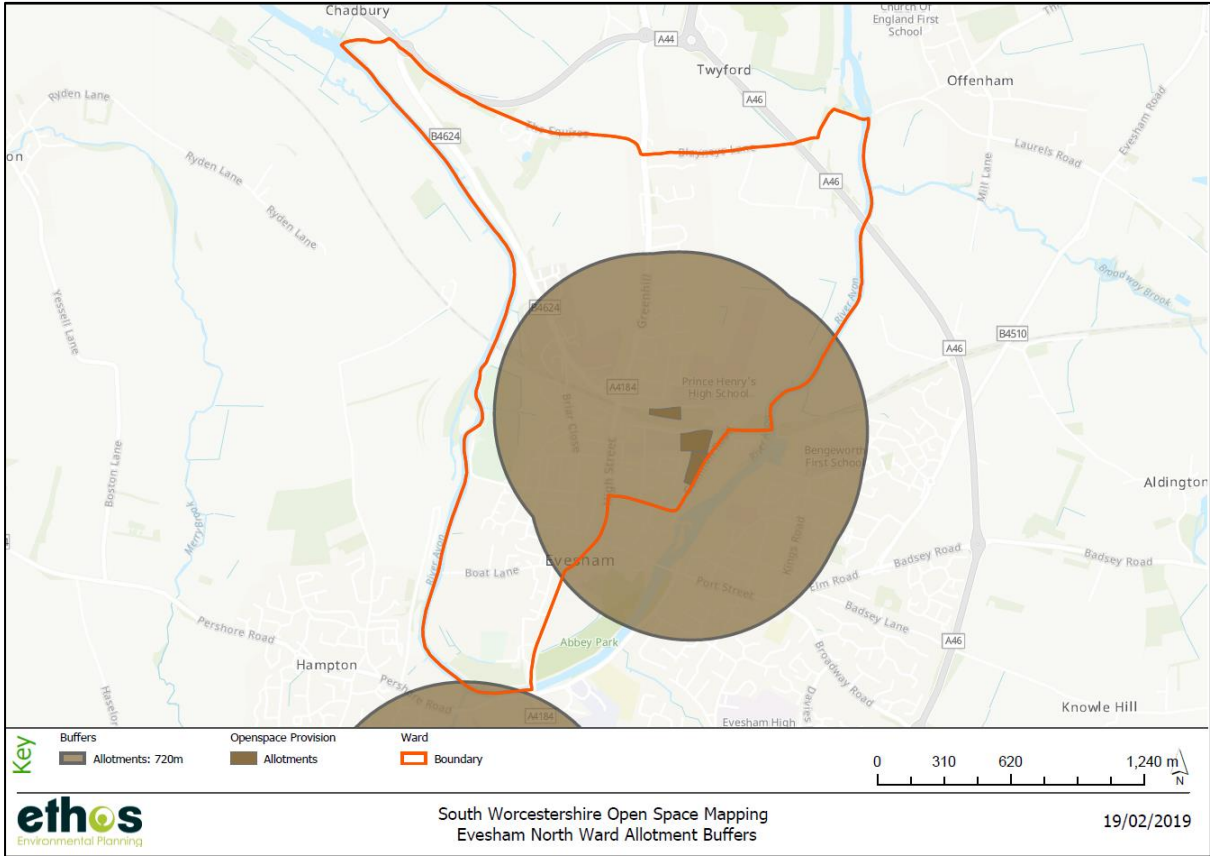
This section provides an overview of access to different types of open space typologies across the Study Area, using the access standards summarised in table 15. The maps are intended to provide an overview and are for illustrative purposes only. They show the straight line distance buffers along with population density (2011 census output areas) so that the key gaps in access can be identified.

As previously explained (see section 2.4 and Table 2), the straight line walking distances do not take into account roads or barriers to access and so the actual route walked (the pedestrian route) is generally further i.e. straight line distances are around 60% of actual distances.

More detailed maps by ward are provided for each typology within appendix 2 (see example at figure 6).

This section also considers access via the public rights of way network, which form an important part of access to open space and the wider countryside.

Figure 6 Example map from appendix 2: access to allotments



7.3.1 Access to open space across the Study Area

Figure 7 Access to allotments (720m buffer)

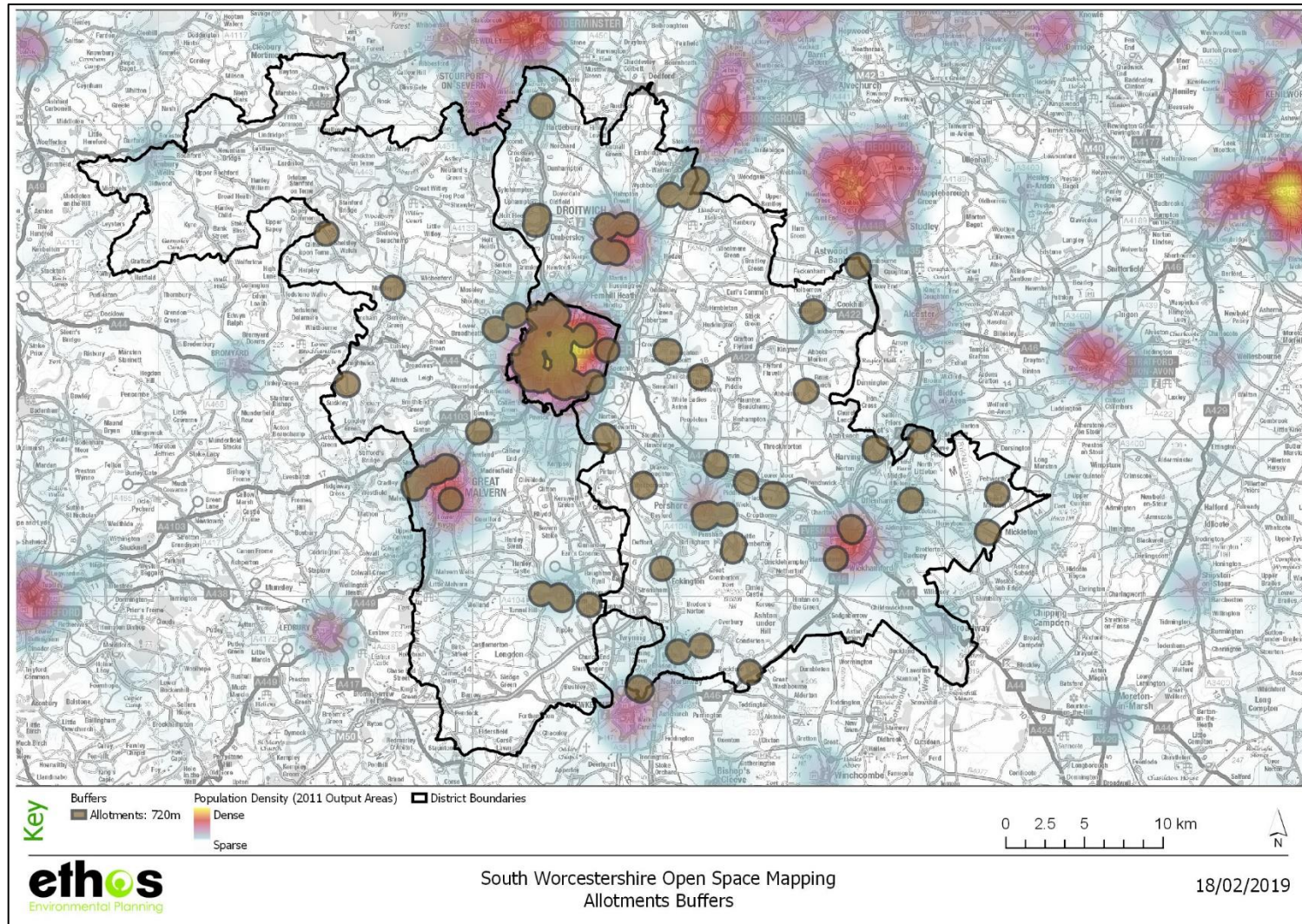


Figure 8 Access to amenity green space (600m buffer)

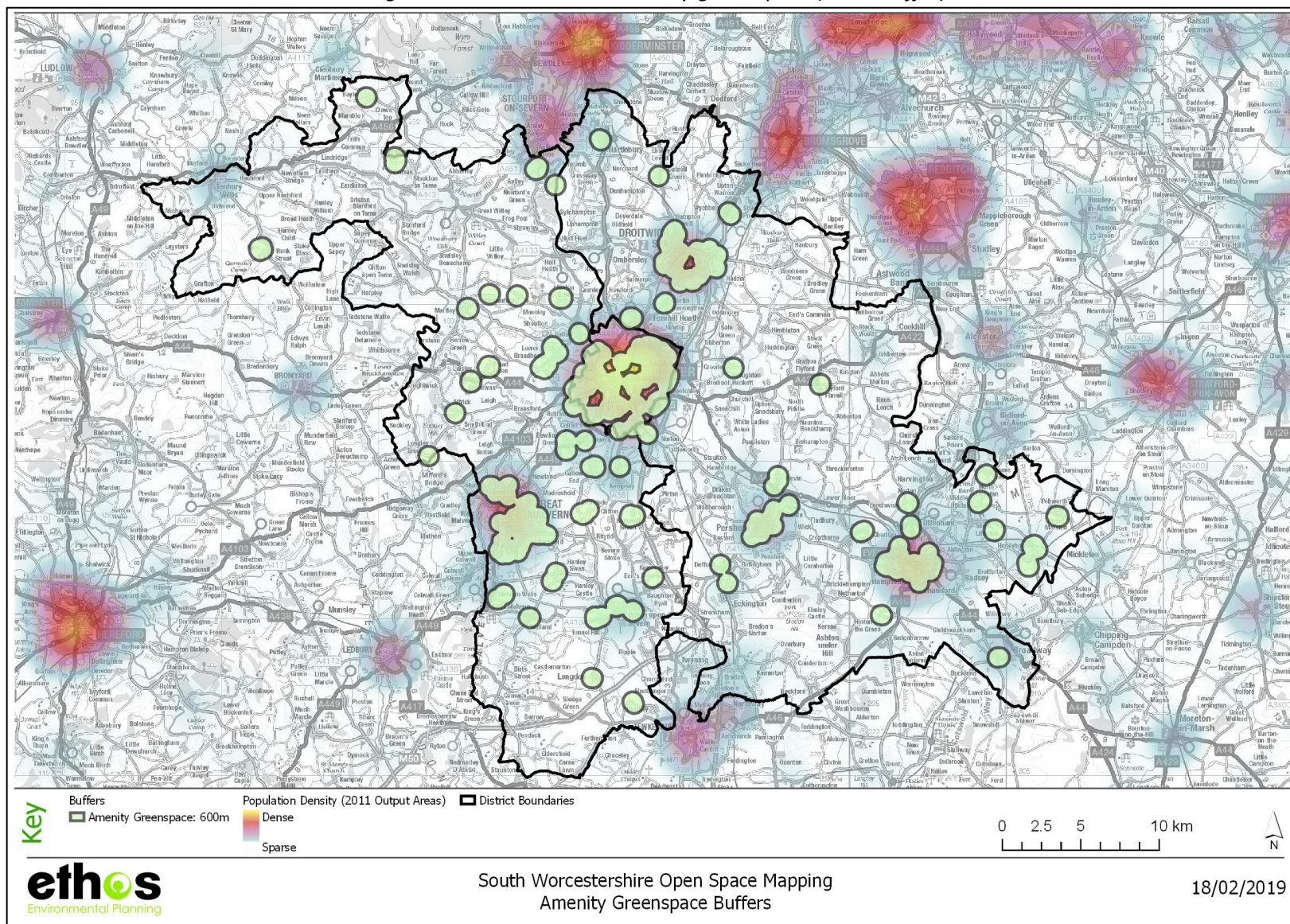


Figure 9 Access to parks and recreation grounds and outdoor sport (private) (600m buffer)

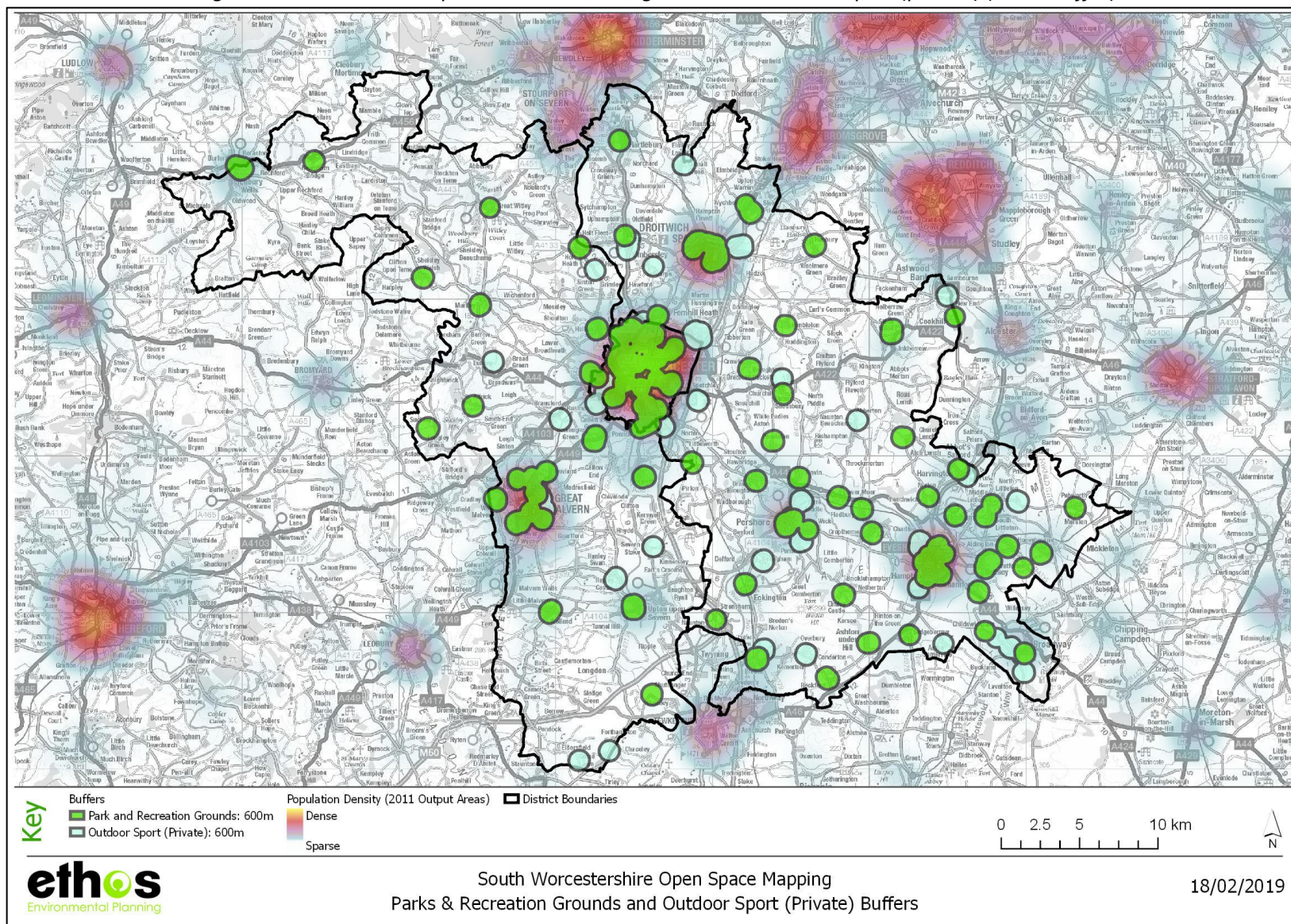


Figure 10 Access to children's play space (600m buffer)

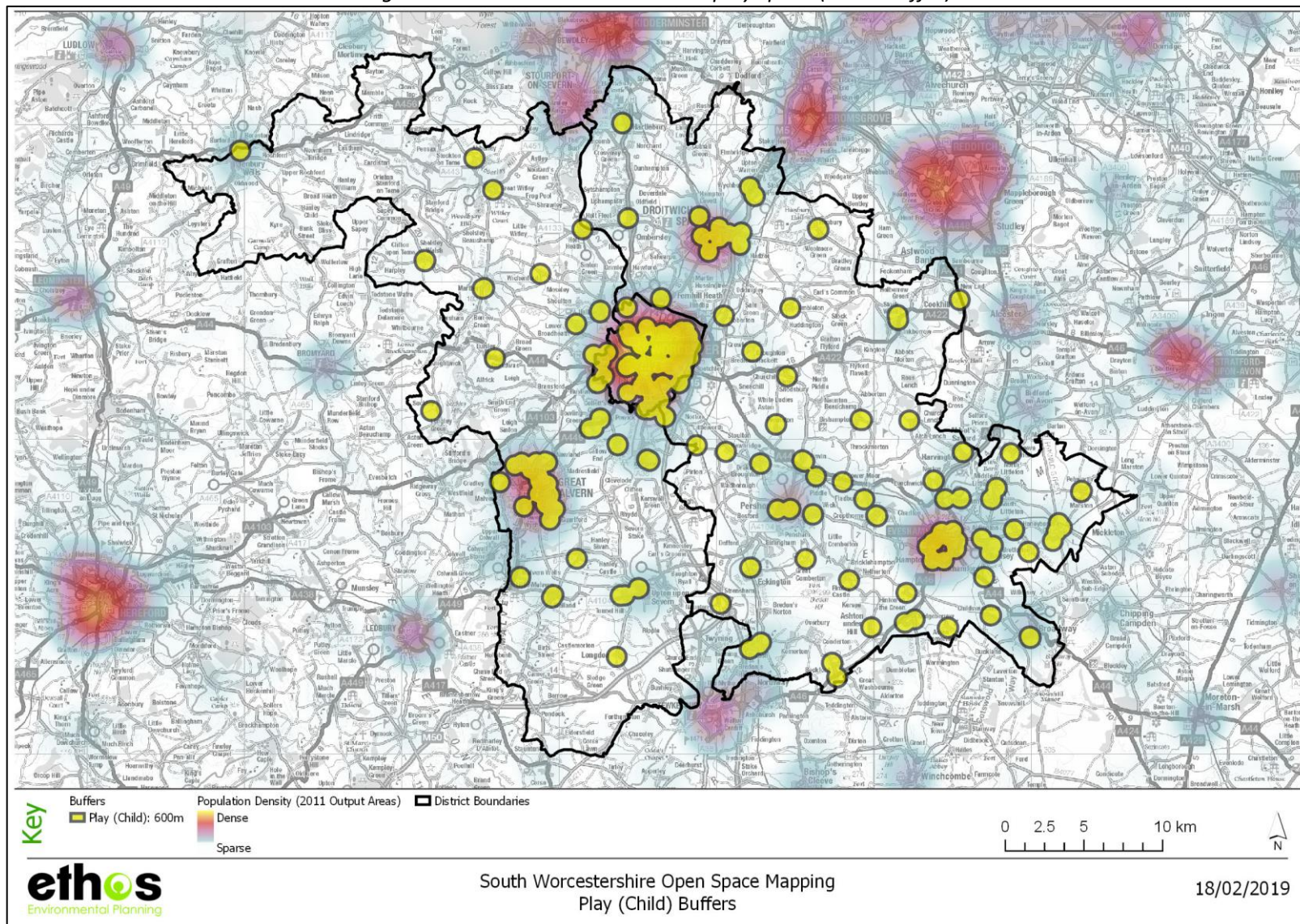


Figure 11 Access to youth play space (720m buffer)

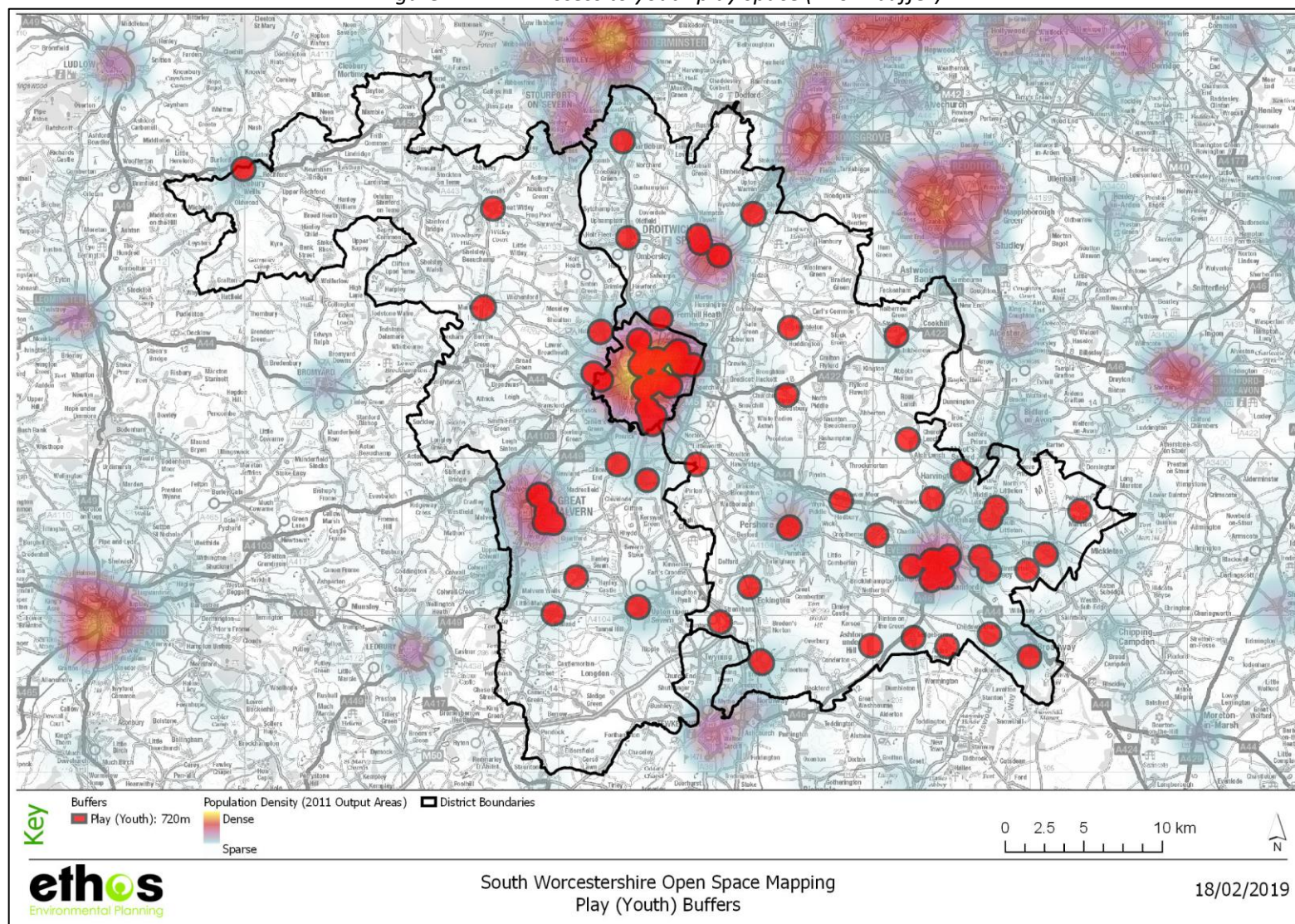


Table 22 Summary of access issues for allotments, amenity green space, parks and recreation grounds and play space (children and youth)

Typology	Key Access Issues
Allotments	Large gaps in access in key populated areas in the eastern half of Worcester, Great Malvern, Droitwich Spa, Evesham and Pershore.
Amenity Green Space	Generally good access across the Study Area, the main gaps in access in key populated areas being in Worcester City, Great Malvern and Evesham.
Parks and Recreation Grounds and Outdoor Sport (Private)	Generally good access across the Study Area, the main gaps in access in key populated areas being in Worcester City, Great Malvern and Droitwich Spa.
Play Space (Children)	Relatively large gaps in access in the western part of Great Malvern, the north and western area of Worcester, and also around Droitwich Spa and Evesham.
Play Space (Youth)	Provision is more sporadic, with large gaps in access in Worcester, Great Malvern and Droitwich Spa, and to a lesser extent around Pershore and Evesham.

7.3.2 Access to natural green space across the Study Area

This section looks at access to natural/semi-natural green space within the Study Area including through the application of ANGSt standards in order to identify the main gaps in access. As previously stated under section 5.2.5, this typology only includes those natural green spaces which have public access (and not the open countryside where the only access is via the Public Right of Way network).

Figure 12 Access to natural green space (920m buffer)

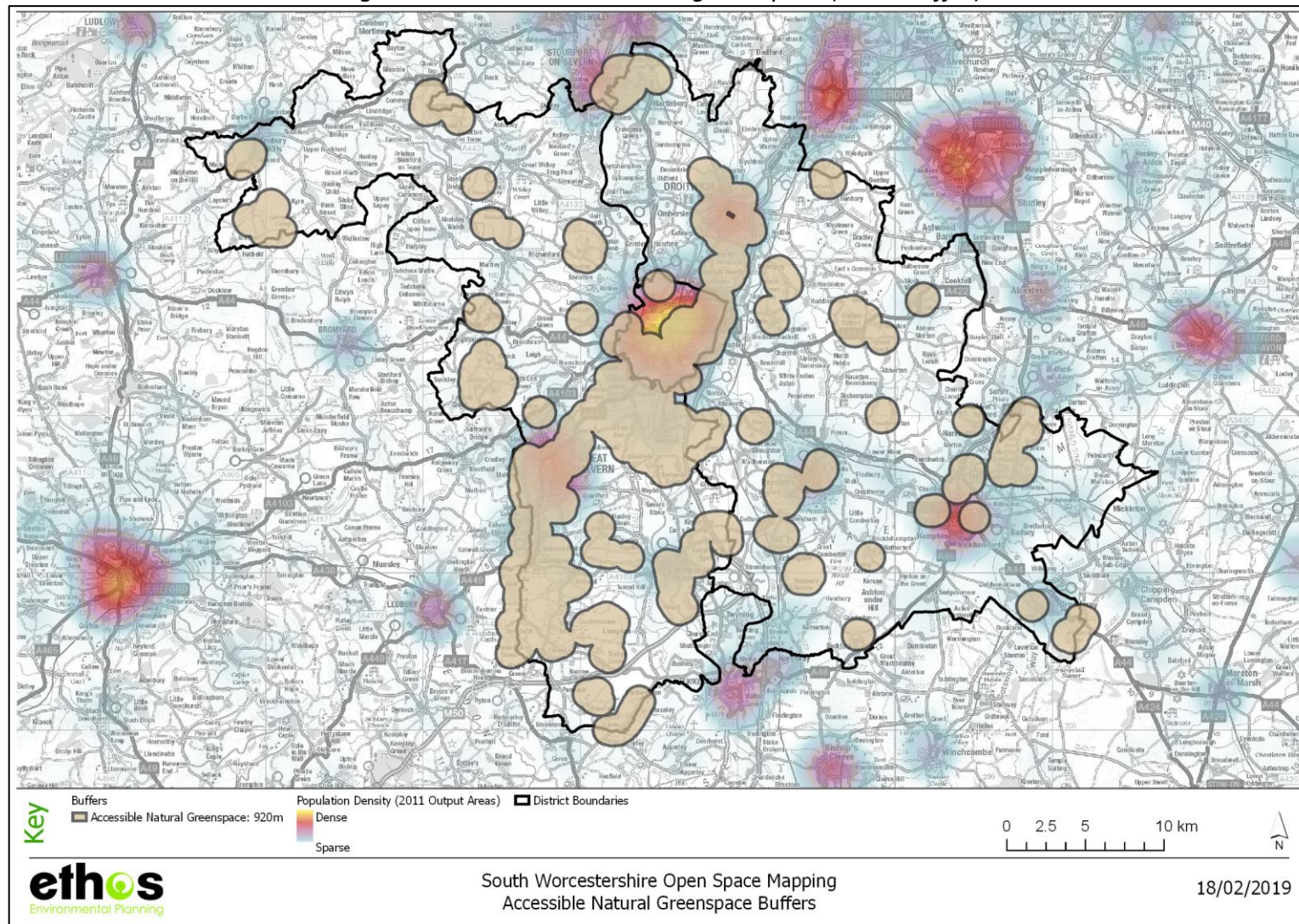


Figure 13 ANGSt Standard: Access to 2 ha+ site within 300m

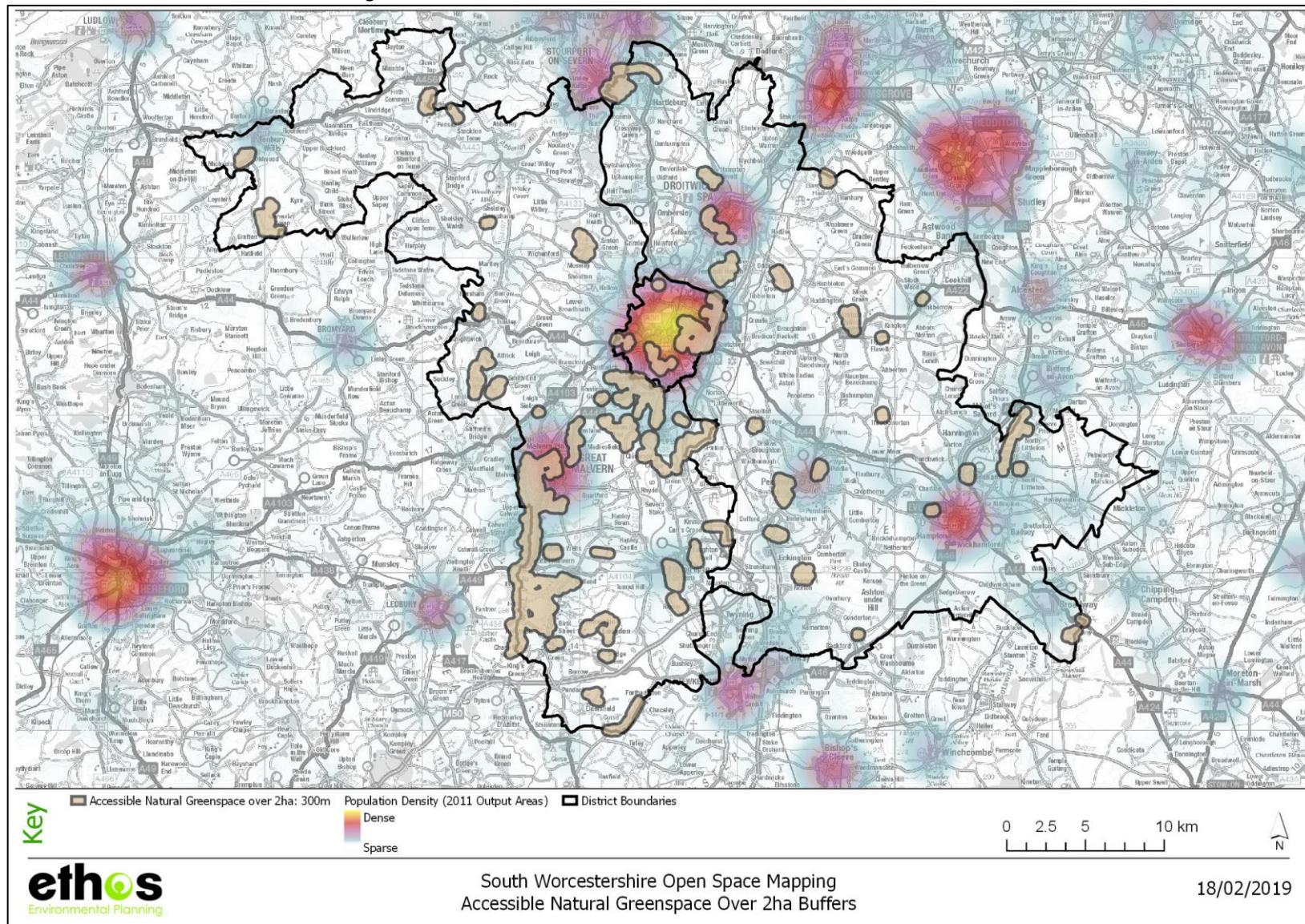


Figure 14 ANGst Standard: Access to 20 ha+ site within 2 km

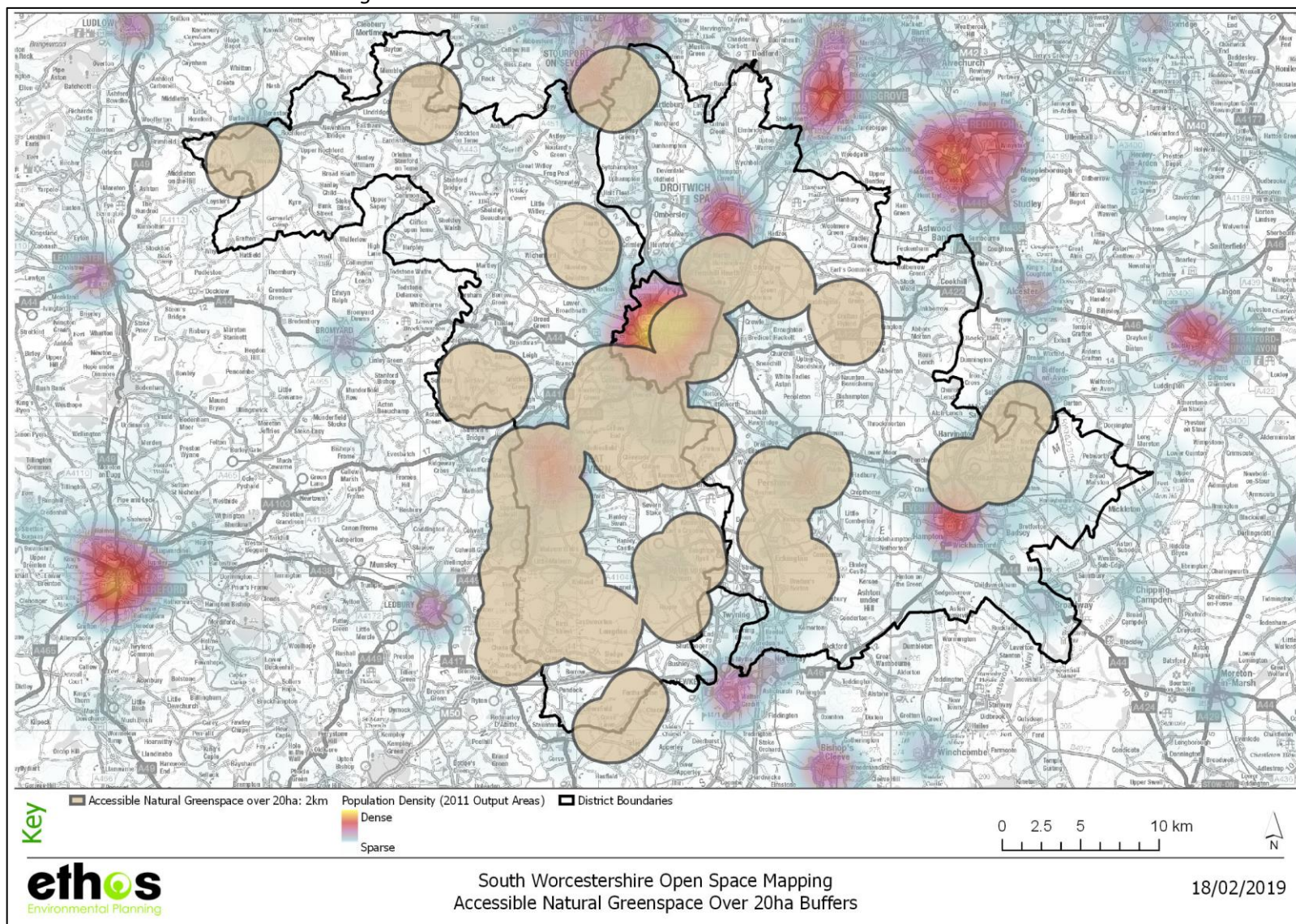


Figure 15 ANGSt Standard: Access to 100 ha+ site within 5km

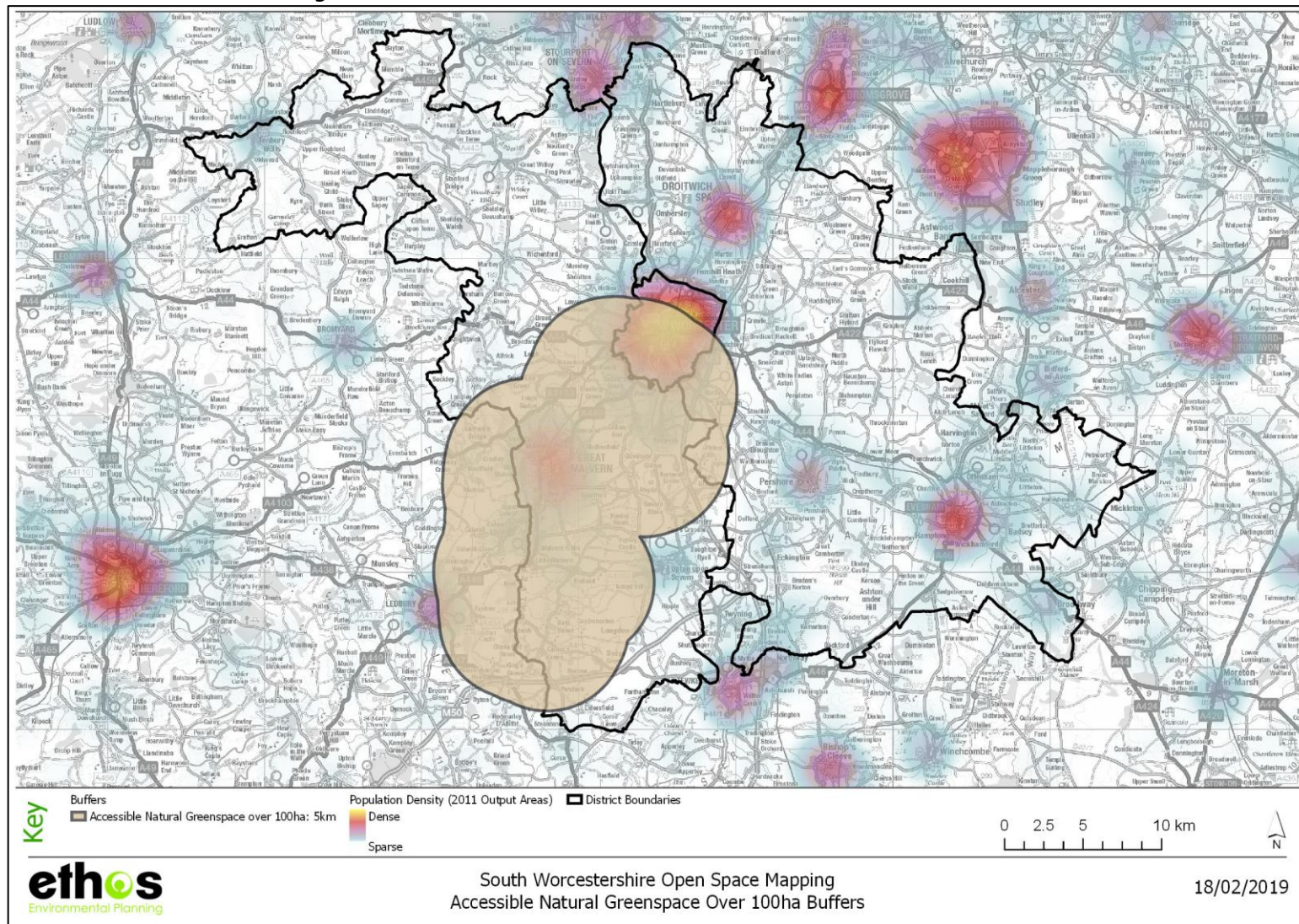


Figure 16 Local Nature Reserves

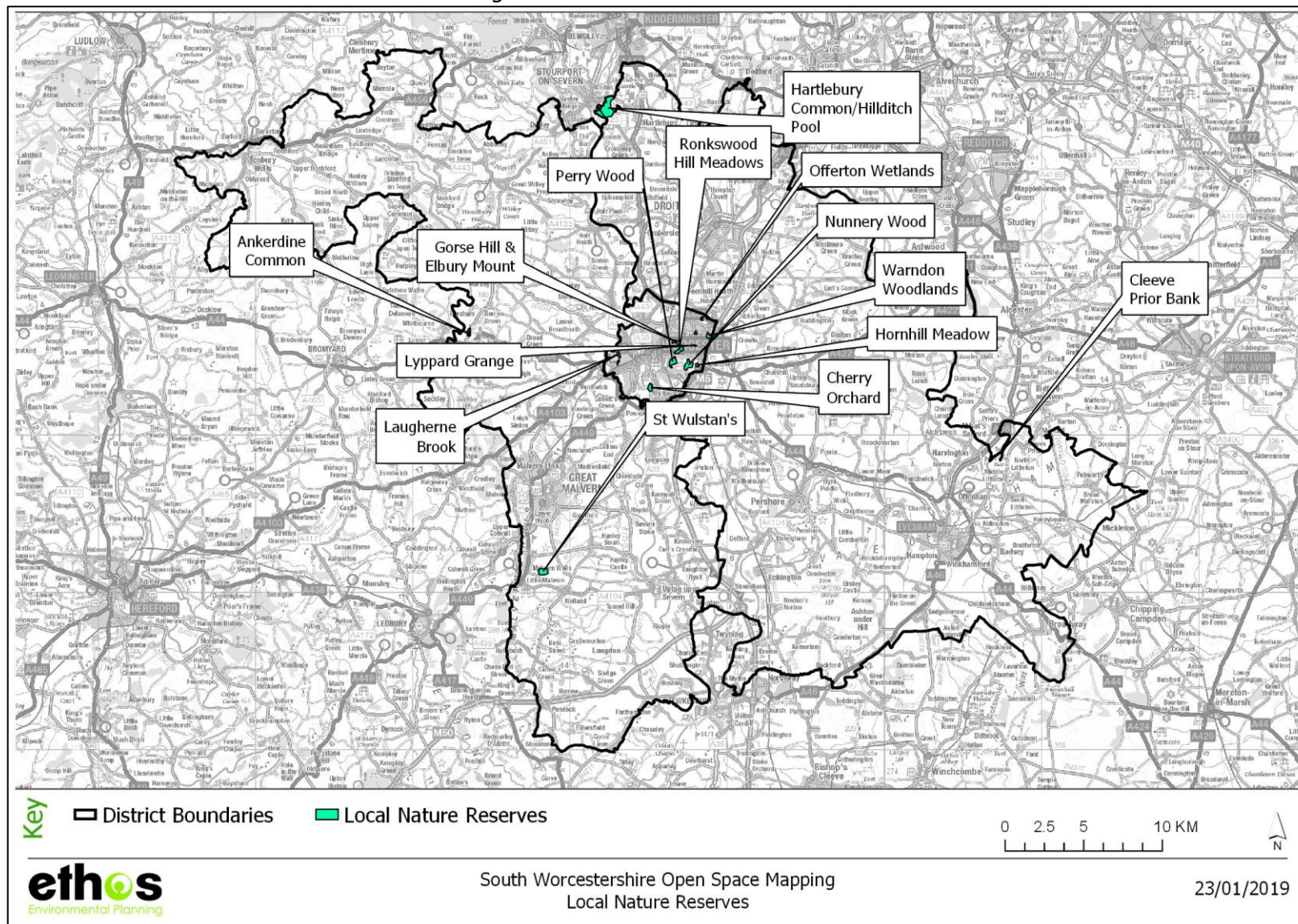


Figure 17 The Public Rights of Way Network

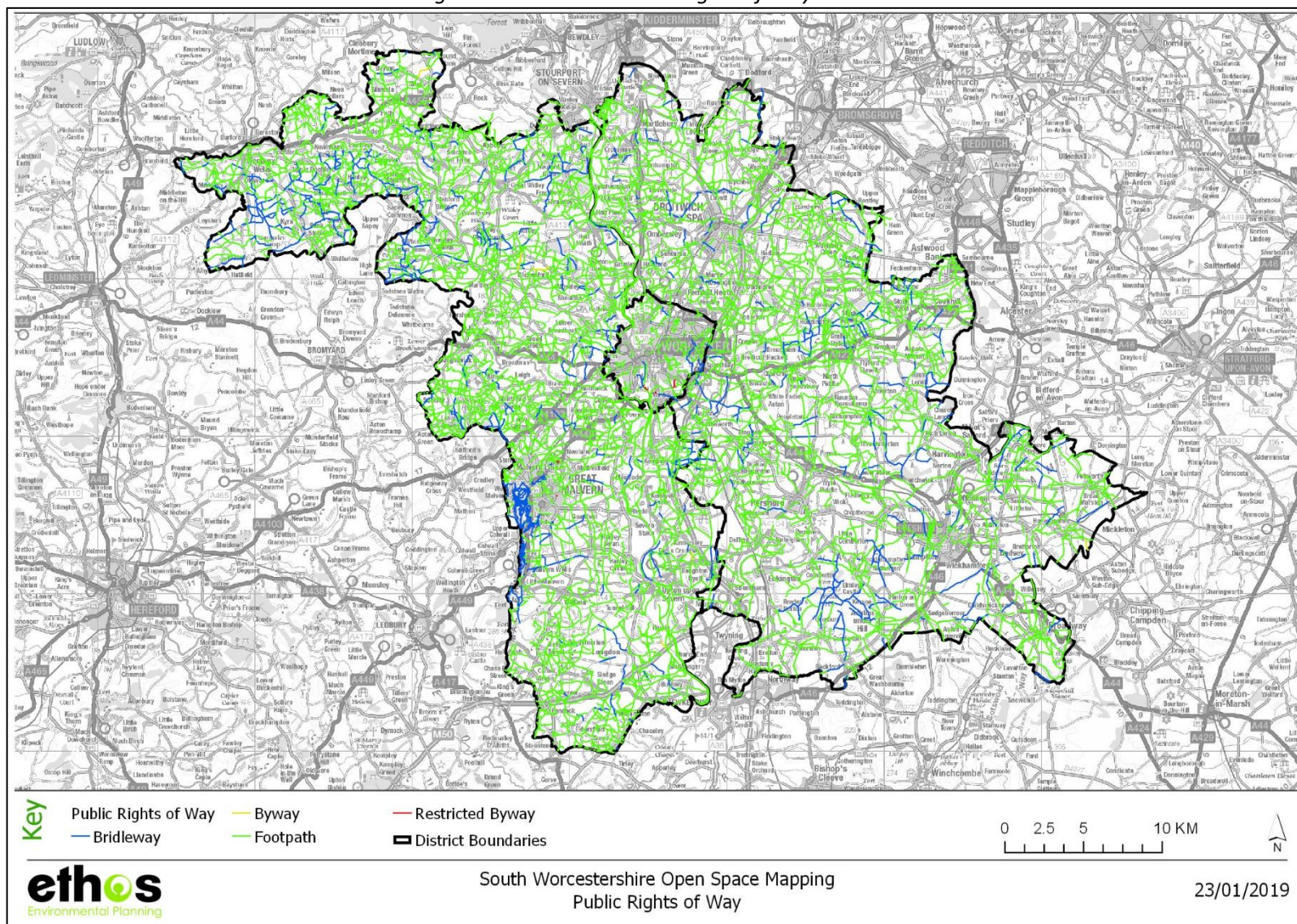


Table 23 Summary of access issues for natural green space

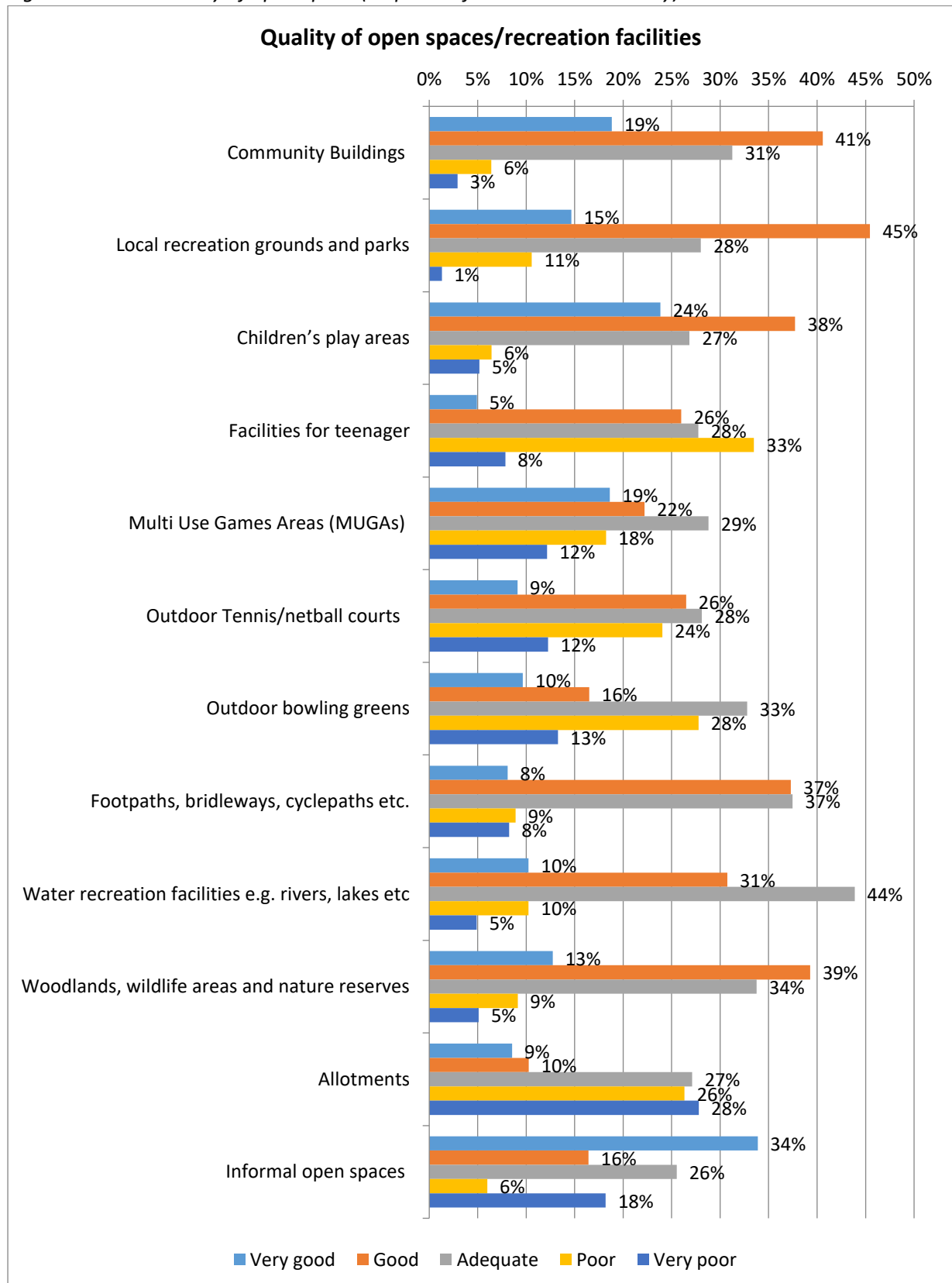
Standard	Key access Issues
Access to natural green space (920m buffer)	Generally good access across the Study Area, the main gaps in access being in Worcester and Evesham.
Accessible green space of at least 2ha in size, no more than 300m (5 minutes walk) from home.	When applying this ANGSt standard, it shows large gaps in access across much of the Study Area. It is considered that this access standard is not very realistic or achievable, and is therefore not very helpful in identifying where the key gaps in access are, as much of the Study Area does not meet this standard.
At least one accessible 20ha site within two kilometres of home	There is generally good access to 20ha+ natural green space across the Study Area, the main gaps in access being Droitwich Spa and Evesham.
One accessible 100ha site within five kilometres of home	There are large gaps in access to natural green spaces above 100ha within the northern and eastern part of the study area (Droitwich Spa, the North of Worcester, Pershore and Evesham). The majority of the southern part half of the Malvern Hills District and Worcester meets the standard.
One accessible 500ha site within ten kilometres of home	There are no 500 ha sites mapped within the Study Area.
A minimum of one 1ha of statutory Local Nature Reserves per thousand population at least 2 hectares in size, no more than 300 metres (5 minutes' walk) from home	There are 14 Local Nature Reserves within the Study Area, the majority situated within the eastern half of Worcester City.
Access via the PROW network	The PROW network provides access between open spaces and provides an important element of access to/within the rural parts of the Study Area. As can be seen, connectivity via the PROW network is generally good, although the network is fragmented in areas e.g. the southern part of Wychavon.

7.4 Application of quality standards

7.4.1 Quality of open space – consultation key findings

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 in Figure 18 below.

Figure 18 Quality of open space (responses from household survey)



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%).

7.4.2 Quality of open space – audit methodology

The quality audits were undertaken using a standardised methodology and consistent approach. However, audits of this nature can only ever be a snap-shot in time and their main purpose is to provide a consistent and objective assessment of a site's existing and potential quality rather than a full asset audit.

The quality audits were designed to focus on the key open spaces. It was not possible to survey all sites due to access restrictions, namely private sports grounds and education sites. Other sites were also excluded due to limitations of resources, these included allotments, amenity green spaces smaller than 0.3ha in size (and also some areas of common land alongside roads), churchyards and cemeteries and some natural green spaces (although 78 natural green spaces were subject to desktop quality audits). This has meant that the quality audits have focused on the key open spaces and play areas within the resources available i.e. parks and recreation grounds, large amenity green spaces, children's and youth play spaces and natural green spaces.

Sites were visited, and a photographic record made of key features, along with a description of the site and recommendations for improvements. An assessment of the quality of the open space was undertaken using the following criteria, which is based on the Green Flag Award criteria:

1. Welcoming
 2. Good and Safe Access
 3. Community Involvement
 4. Safe Equipment and Facilities
 5. Appropriate Provision of Facilities
 6. Quality/Management of Facilities and Infrastructure
 7. Personal Security on Site
 8. Dog Fouling
-

- 9. Litter and Waste Management
- 10. Grounds/Habitat Management

Children's play space and youth play space was also audited separately using the above criteria.

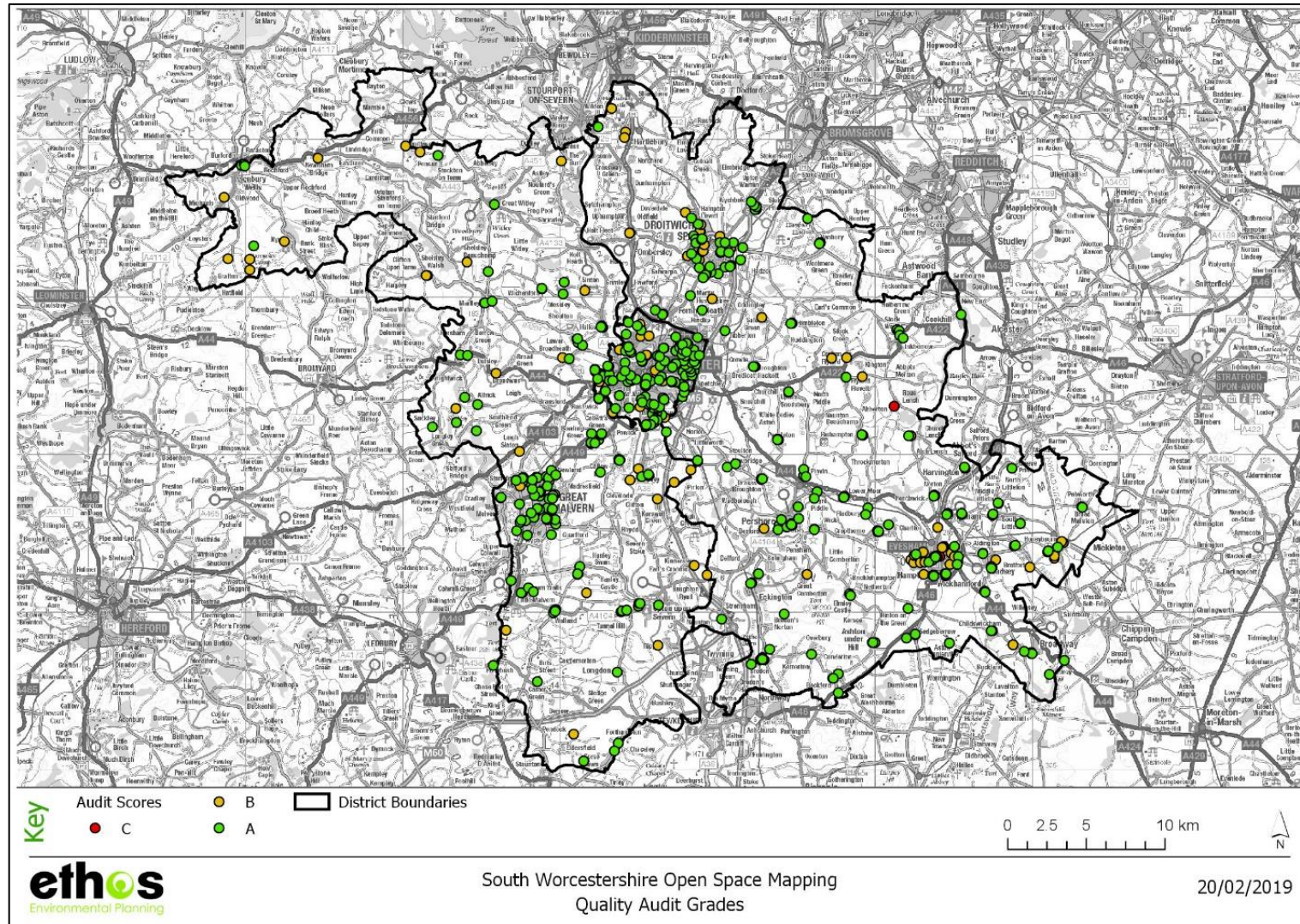
For each of the criteria a score of between 1 -10 is given, where 1 is very poor and 10 is very good. The scores for each site are added together and the mean calculated based on how many criteria were scored (e.g. If 'Community involvement' is given N/A for a site, the total will be divided by 9). This mean is then multiplied by 10 to produce the final score from which sites are grouped into 3 categories – good (those sites with a score of between 70 and 100), average (those sites with a score of between 40 and 70) or poor (those sites with a score of between 10 and 40).

7.4.3 Quality of open space – audit findings

The quality audit was undertaken at 321 open spaces and 228 children and youth play spaces across the Study Area. The details of the quality audits are contained within the GIS database provided to the Council. For each of the wards within the Study Area, a map showing the results of the quality audit has been produced, showing the sites which scored good, average or poor quality (see appendix 3).

Figure 19 below provides an overview of the quality audit results across the Study Area. As can be seen, the majority of open spaces have been assessed as being good quality (A). Detailed maps by ward are included in appendix 3, and a GIS database of all sites and quality audits has been provided to the SWC.

Figure 19 Overview of existing open space quality scores



8.0 STRATEGIC OPTIONS, POLICY & MANAGEMENT RECOMMENDATIONS

This section sets out strategic options and policy recommendations for open space within South Worcestershire. It draws on all the previous steps of the study to bring together informed recommendations and addresses a number of specific requirements of the study brief.

8.1 Strategic Options

8.1.1 Introduction

The strategic options address five key areas:

- 1) Existing provision to be protected;
- 2) Existing provision to be enhanced;
- 3) Opportunities for re-location/re-designation of open space;
- 4) Identification of areas for new provision;
- 5) Facilities that may be surplus to requirement.

8.1.2 Delivering Strategic Options

The NPPF was first published in 2012 and has since been principally updated in July 2018, with further updates following in February 2019. The NPPF sets out the government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied.

The purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. The planning system has three overarching objectives (economic, social and environmental, which are interdependent and need to be pursued in mutually supportive ways. Open spaces (provision, protection, enhancement) and their associated intrinsic benefits are key components of all three of the objectives.

Whilst Local Authorities have an important role in delivering open space, sport and recreation facilities, in some cases their role may move from that of 'deliverer' to 'facilitator'. The aim will be to work with community organisations to make local decisions about how facilities and services will be provided. Organisations such as residents' groups, voluntary organisations, sports clubs and societies will all have a key role in this.

Although local communities (e.g. parish/town councils or neighbourhood forums) are able to define their own priorities within neighbourhood plans, the information provided within this study will provide a robust evidence base to inform the review of the development plan and any decisions related to the provision of open space in future planning applications.

The following sections consider the key issues for open space in the study area, and the recommendations that emerge need to be taken in context with National policy (including the Localism Act) and consider how they can fit into local decision making. The following sections serve to highlight issues, but do not necessarily resolve how they may be delivered.

The information provided within this study will also form the basis for potential future strategies. The recommended policies within this study can also be used to help form the basis of any open space policies proposed by the SWC.

8.2 Existing provision to be protected

The starting point of any policy adopted by the SWCs should be that all open space should be afforded protection unless it can be proved it is not required. Even where open spaces are in sufficient supply within a Ward, this does not necessarily mean there is a 'surplus' in provision of open space, as additional factors such as the supply of other typologies of open space, the quality of open space and where new development is planned needs to be taken into account (as explained further in the sections below).

Existing open space or sport and recreation facilities which should be given the highest level of protection are those which are either:

- Critically important in avoiding deficiencies in accessibility, quality or quantity and scored highly in the quality assessment; **or**
- Are of particular nature conservation, historical or cultural value.

The quantity analysis, summarised in table 20 (section 7.2) shows that in every ward, there is a deficiency in at least one typology of open space. Therefore, the following recommendations are made:

Open Space Policy Direction (protecting open space):

- | | |
|------------|---|
| OS1 | The distribution of open space varies across the Study Area, however, there are identified shortages of at least one typology of open space in all Wards. It is therefore recommended that priority is placed on protecting those open spaces where there is an existing shortfall of supply. |
| OS2 | Sites which are critical to avoiding deficiencies, or making existing deficiencies worse, in quality, quantity or accessibility should be protected unless suitable alternative provision can be provided which would compensate for any deficiencies caused. |
| OS3 | Sites which have significant nature conservation, historical or cultural value should be afforded protection, even if there is an identified surplus in quality, quantity or accessibility in that local area. |

8.3 Existing provision to be enhanced

In areas where there is a quantitative deficiency of provision but no accessibility issues then increasing the capacity of existing provision may be considered. Alternatively, in areas where facilities or spaces do not meet the relevant quality standards, qualitative enhancements will be required.

This includes those spaces or facilities which:

- Are critically important in avoiding deficiencies in diversity, accessibility or quantity, **but**
- Scored poorly in the quality assessment.

Those sites which require enhancement are identified within the quality audit that was undertaken. Some of the key observations related to site enhancement include:

1. The importance of providing high quality provision and maintenance of formal facilities such as Parks and Recreation Grounds and Play Space.
2. The need for additional and improved facilities for young people.
3. The role of private sports spaces to some local communities and the need to provide opportunity for investment.
4. The need to ensure high quality open spaces are designed and provided through new development where feasible.
5. The importance of rights of way and natural green space within the Study Area, and the need to maintain and enhance provision for biodiversity.
6. The role of open space in contributing to wider initiatives and strategies.
7. Extending and enhancing the network of green infrastructure including the connectivity between sites and improved accessibility to existing sites.

Appendix 3 provides maps by Ward showing the sites that were quality audited and their overall score (good, average, poor), as identified within the quality audit database. An overview of the open space quality audit rank scores is provided in section 7.5.3. The following recommendations are made in relation the quality of open space:

Open Space Policy Direction (enhancing open space):

OS4	Where new housing development is proposed, should provision not be able to be provided on site/is not practicable on site, consideration should be given to improving existing open spaces within the Ward or neighbouring Ward the development is located. Priority should be given to those sites identified as poor or average as detailed in the quality audit database ²⁴ .
OS5	Neighbourhood Plans and any potential future open space strategies should consider the opportunities for creating and enhancing a network of both utility and recreation routes for use by foot and bike.
OS6	The findings of the assessment make recommendations for improving the quality of open space across the study area. However, a long term strategy for achieving improvements to the wider components of GI is also required, and could be delivered through a strategic GI/Green Space Strategy.

²⁴ There may also be a demonstrated need to improve the quality of open spaces which were not included within the quality audits (due to resource limitations – see section 7.4.2).

- OS7** Priorities for improvement (identified in the household survey) include the enhancement of footpaths, bridleway and cyclepath provision; woodlands, wildlife areas and nature reserves; play areas and youth facilities; and informal open space.
- OS8** Management plans (if not already established) should be developed for the main parks and recreation grounds. These priorities could also be considered in neighbourhood plans and by the local community.

8.4 Opportunities for re-location/re-designation of open space

In some areas it may be possible to make better use of land by relocating an open space or sport and recreation facility, especially if this will enhance its quality or accessibility for existing users or use land which is not suitable for another purpose. Consideration of the quality, quantity and accessibility of facilities could principally be undertaken through neighbourhood plans, but with recognition that in some cases a wider/higher level assessment may be required.

Such plans could outline the spatial and investment opportunities for green space and set the foundations for green space provision (e.g. for the lifetime of a plan period)). Plans should outline where different types of facilities and space - such as children's playgrounds, sports pitches, young people's facilities etc. are to be located. The plan should also identify if any open space is no longer needed and how its disposal or re use can be used to fund improvements to other spaces.

Plans should apply the standards and be in accordance with the strategic policies set out in the adopted SWDP (as informed by this study) and seek to ensure that where significant investment is anticipated for green spaces that this is prioritised and realised with the help of key stakeholders and the local community.

Some examples of determining opportunities for the re-location or re-designation of open space using the quantity and access analysis in this report have been considered in table 24 below. These are purely examples/recommendations but could be used to guide the SWCs in applying similar solutions to other wards as required/identified.

Table 24 *Example opportunities for re-designating open space*

Ward	Current Provision	Opportunities
Alfrick and Leigh, Malvern Hills	Shortfall of amenity green space, parks and recreation grounds, children's play space and youth play space. Sufficient supply of allotments and natural green space.	Although there is sufficient supply of allotments against the standard, there are large gaps in access with only one allotment site located in the west of the ward. However, due to the rural/dispersed population within the ward, this may not be an issue and there is also little opportunity for new provision within existing open space, as all other typologies are in shortfall. Natural Green Space may have potential to accommodate low impact uses such as food growing or natural play, however their proximity to settlements will limit their potential. There is generally good access to parks and recreation grounds, amenity

Ward	Current Provision	Opportunities
		green space and natural green space in the western half of the ward. There is little opportunity to reduce the gaps in access in the eastern part of the ward, although dual/community use of school facilities in this area could be considered, if not already in place.
Persnore, Wychavon	Shortfalls in amenity green space, children's play space and youth play space. Sufficient supply of allotments, park and recreation grounds and natural green space against the	Although there is sufficient supply of allotments, there is a large gap in access across the northern part of Persnore. There may be potential for natural green space in the north of Persnore to accommodate low impact use such as a food growing area/community orchard, to reduce the gap in access. Although there are shortfalls in amenity green space, there is good access across Persnore, and there is good provision and access to natural green space and parks and recreation grounds. There are shortfalls in provision and access to both children's and youth play space, with gaps in access in the northern part of Persnore. Existing play spaces could be expanded to reduce the shortfalls in supply, and there may be potential for the amenity green space or natural green space in the north to accommodate children's play/natural play, to reduce the gaps in access.
St John, Worcester	Shortfalls in parks and recreation grounds, youth play space and natural green space. Sufficient supply of allotments, amenity green space and children's play space.	Good access to allotments in the ward, and sufficient supply. Although there is sufficient supply of children's play space, there is a gap in access in the central part of the ward, and there may be potential to accommodate natural play within Sanctuary Park amenity green space. The existing play spaces within the ward are good quality, however there may be potential to expand/make improvements to them, rather than providing a new play space. There is good provision of and access to amenity green space within the ward, which may have potential to reduce the shortfalls in parks and recreation grounds and youth provision (e.g. through upgrading/incorporating youth provision). There may also be potential to accommodate youth provision within Cripplegate Park in the east of the ward, in order to reduce shortfalls in provision and access to this typology. Little opportunity to reduce shortfalls in natural green space, but existing spaces could be improved in terms of their management for wildlife/biodiversity.

8.5 Identification of areas for new provision

New provision will be required where there is a new development and a planned increase in population, and/or an existing deficiency in supply or access to facilities exists. Section 7 outlines the existing situation with regards to supply and access to open space. As previously discussed, neighbourhood plans would provide a good mechanism to determine exactly where new provision is required, however, this study can be used as the basis for decision making, as follows:

Quantity

Within the study report, for each typology, there is an identified 'sufficient supply' or 'under supply' for each of the wards. If an area has an existing under supply of any typology, there may be need for additional provision. This could be delivered through developing a new site (for example as part of a housing development), acquiring land to extend the site or changing the typology of an existing space (which may be in over supply).

The supply statistics should be used as part of the decision making process in development management to determine if a new development should provide facilities on-site or enhance provision off site through developer contributions.

The use of the quantity statistics should not be in isolation, and considered alongside the access standards.

Access

This study considers how access to different types of open space varies across wards against the proposed standards. The maps in section 7 (and Appendix 3) show where there are deficiencies and potential over supply of facilities. This information can be used alongside the quantity statistics to determine if new provision or improved accessibility is required in an area. For example, if a new development is proposed, the maps should be consulted to determine if there is an existing gap in provision of a particular typology which could be met by the development.

Therefore, even though the quantity statistics may identify a sufficient supply of a particular typology, there may be gaps in access, and thus new provision may still be required.

Delivering new provision

There are a number of opportunities for delivering new provision through new development – developer contributions and to a lesser extent through capital and grant funding.

New development, Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) and developer contributions

In order to help ensure that future development is matched by the necessary infrastructure SWDP policy SWDP7 requires that all development either provides or makes a contribution towards the provision of infrastructure needed to support it.

The South Worcestershire Developer Contributions SPD sets out the SWC's approach to seeking developer contributions as required by policy SWDP7.

CIL payments are required in accordance with the published CIL Charging Schedules adopted by the SWCs in June (Malvern Hills and Wychavon) and September (Worcester City) 2017. The charges in the levies are based on geographical areas allowing for different market conditions and development viability within each of the SWCs. The aim is to ensure CIL Charges do not put development at risk by making it unviable.

Developer contributions may be required for specific on-site mitigation measures and/or contributions towards off-site infrastructure, such as public open space provision. Any adverse impacts on the local environment or local infrastructure, which will arise as a direct result of development, and which can be made acceptable in planning terms, should be mitigated via a planning obligation. Planning obligations must be made in accordance with the three tests of CIL Regulation 122 (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) and must also adhere to CIL Regulation 123 in terms of 'double dipping' (i.e. it is prohibited to use both CIL and developer contributions to pay for the same infrastructure). CIL regulations make it unlawful for more than five contributions to be pooled together towards the same project or type of infrastructure, if more than five similar agreements have been signed since 6th April 2010.

Although the number and value of planning obligations has been reduced since the introduction of CIL in South Worcestershire, they can still be reasonably sought from some types of development as follows:

- Affordable Housing provision as this is not within the scope of CIL;
- Infrastructure that is required as a result of development and which is not included in the CIL Regulation 123 list (in line with the open space typologies covered in this study, and the Community Building Study);
- Commuted sums for the maintenance of facilities/infrastructure that the developer would like a public authority/parish or town council/community trust etc. to adopt; and
- Mitigation of the impacts of development within the site boundary, for example relating to environmental mitigation, historic environment mitigation, biodiversity, access, travel, etc.

New development will also be required to provide on-site open space in accordance with SWDP policy requirements, as informed by the standards outlined in this study. Whilst not all developments will be of a size that will generate the requirement for on-site open space (see SWDP policies SWDP 5 and SWDP 39 (as updated) and the recommendations/guidance of table 27), when considering future local plan requirements for South Worcestershire,

there will be many that will require open space provision. This study should be used to inform local decisions about where and when new on-site provision will be required.

Figure 20 shows an example flow chart/decision making process to help developers/council officers determine the need for on or off-site provision of open space. This is only a guide and requirements will be determined on a case by case basis using the standards and assessment within this study. Where possible, this should be determined through pre-application discussions with the applicable council. The new open space typologies as part of this study may need to be adapted into a new costings matrix in a revised Developer Contributions SPD. The recommended methodology for costings for on/off site provision is covered in section 8.7 of this report.

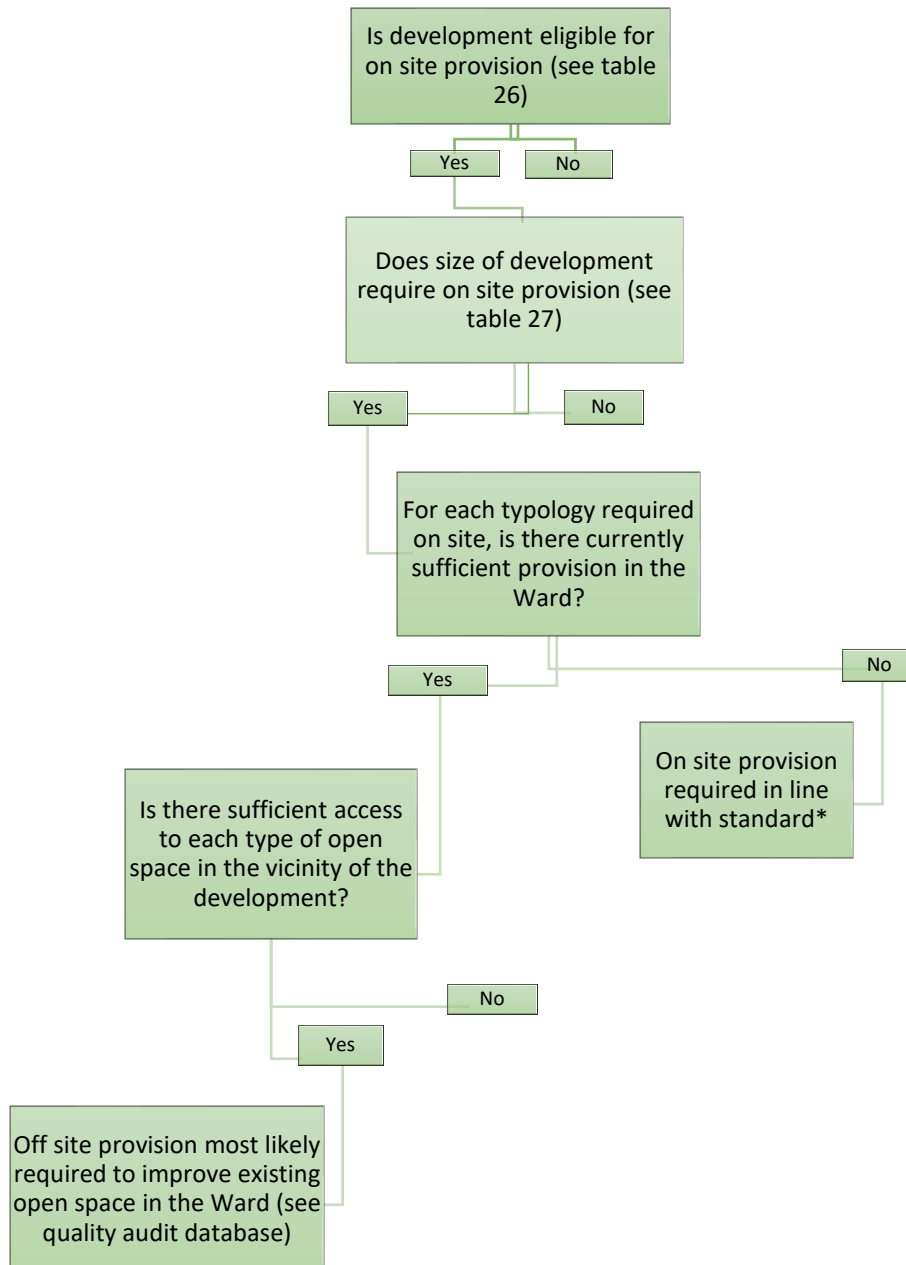
Capital and grant funding

Although the availability of capital and grant funding has diminished in recent years, nevertheless funding does become available for providing facilities for open space, sport and recreation. National and governing bodies for individual sports should be consulted where new infrastructure is required, such as changing rooms and sports pitches. Environmental grants and stewardship schemes are available for managing natural green space. As neighbourhood plans are developed and open space priorities are established within these, funding requirements will be identified and delivery through grant funding could be considered.

Requirements for open space from new housing

Section 7.2.1 outlines the variation in supply of different typologies of open space across wards. As identified, every ward has a shortfall in at least one typology of open space, therefore, the starting point for new housing (of a certain size - see table 27 for recommended thresholds) is to assume that some form of on-site open space provision would be required.

Figure 20 Decision making process for on-site provision of open space, or off-site contributions to enhance existing open space



*if it is not feasible to deliver open space on site due to exceptional circumstances e.g. viability or land availability, then potential to make off site provision will be considered on a case by case basis.

Open Space Policy Direction (new provision of open space):**OS9**

New provision of open space will be required as part of new development. On-site provision should be provided in line with the proposed open space standards.

Where on-site provision is deemed impractical, or not required e.g. for small sites, consideration will be given to opportunities for off-site provision and/or improvements.

Improvements to existing open space will be considered first in the ward within which the development is located, then in open spaces in neighbouring wards. Open spaces requiring improvements will be identified using the results from the quality audit (those sites being of poor or average quality being the highest priority) and also from site management plans and the council's own knowledge of their sites.

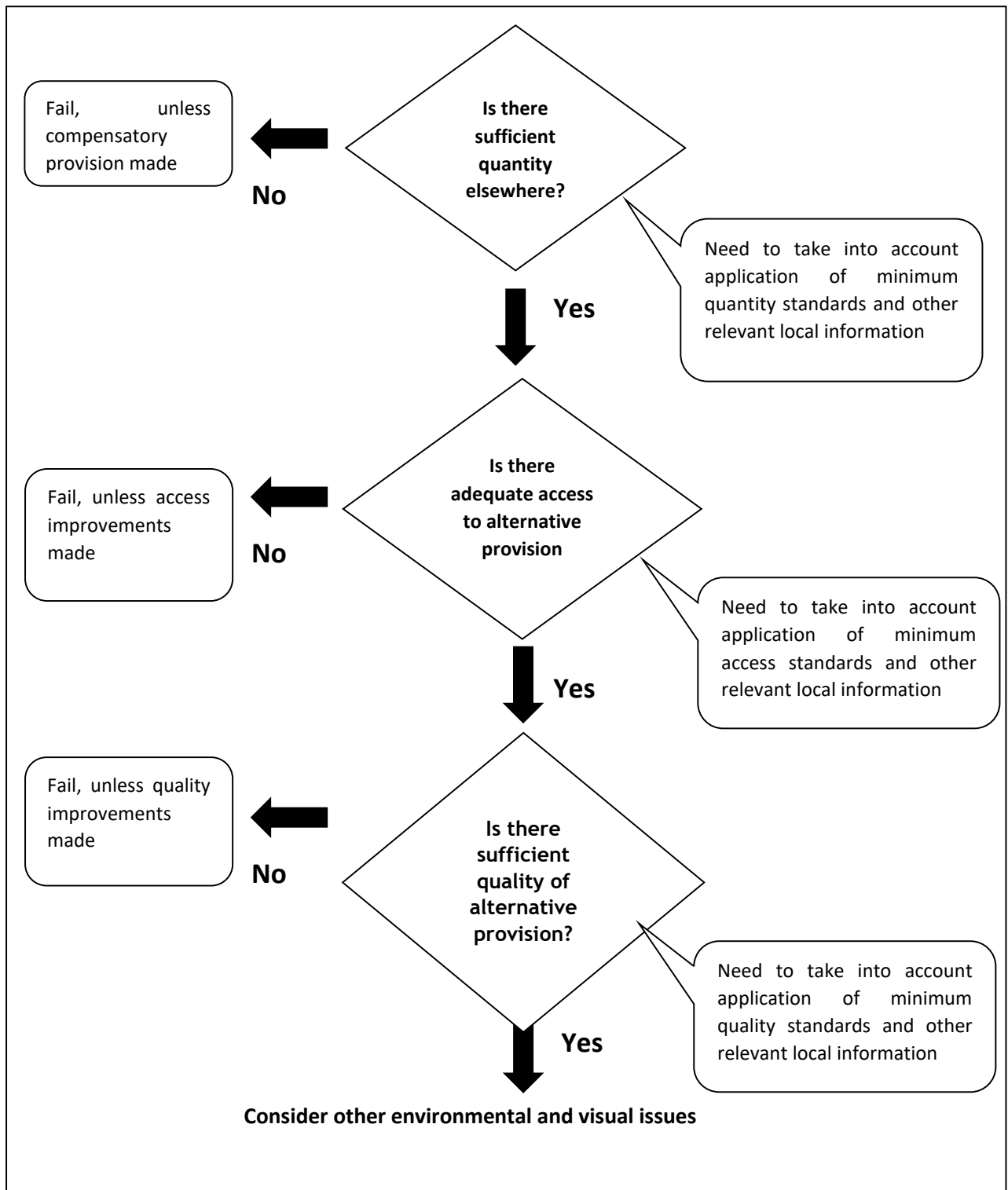
8.6 Facilities that are surplus to requirement

In addition to the strategic options outlined above, consideration should also be given to facilities that are surplus to requirement. There are important issues to resolve in terms of striking the correct balance of open space across the study area before any disposal can be contemplated. Whilst there is under provision relative to the minimum standards in several areas, there are other areas where provision compares favourably with the standards. However, it is once again emphasised that the proposed standards are for *minimum* levels of provision. Factors to be taken into account before any decision to release open space for alternative uses can be taken include:

- The local value and use of a given open space - as it may be a locally popular resource.
- Whether future local development/population growth might generate additional demands for open space.
- Whether there is a demonstrable need for some other type of open space within the locality that a given space (subject to a change of management regime) would be well placed to meet.
- Other non-recreational reasons that suggest a space should be retained (which might include ecological and visual reasons).

Figure 21 and the associated paragraphs below suggests an outline of the decision process that should be followed before the development/alternative use of an open space can be seriously contemplated.

Figure 21 Outline decision making process in relation to sanctioning (re)development of open space



Q. Is there sufficient quantity?

A. If the minimum quantitative standard for amenity green space is exceeded in a defined geographical area, the relative provision of other forms of open space must then be considered (amenity green space can in principle be converted into other forms of open space where the need arises). If a) provision meets the minimum quantitative standard; b) there is no significant local information suggesting a need to retain the site; and, c) there is not a perceived lack of other forms of open space, the next question can be addressed.

Q. Is there adequate access to alternative provision?

A. Within the defined geographical area there may be good overall provision of amenity green space relative to the quantity standard, but is it in the right place and can it be easily reached? Applying the accessibility component of the minimum standards will help to answer this question. If other similar open space cannot be easily reached, the site's disposal for other uses may be unacceptable.

Q. Are other accessible and similar opportunities elsewhere of sufficient quality?

A. If it can be demonstrated that alternative opportunities are sufficient both in quantity and accessibility, there may still exist issues with the quality of these alternative provisions. The quality component of the proposed standards may indicate that certain improvements to alternative opportunities must be made which should be funded and secured before development is permitted.

The quality audit provided as part of this study provides a useful framework for identifying and prioritising open spaces that require improvements. Those open spaces which have been assessed as being of poor or average quality should be prioritised for improvement. If existing open spaces in the vicinity of new development are of poor/average quality, then their improvement (e.g. access improvements, signage, improvements to facilities and/or habitats – as recommended in the quality audit database provided to the SWCs) would need to be secured before any 'surplus' in a particular open space typology could be considered.

Even if these three tests are passed there may be other reasons for the site to remain as open space. For example, it may have value as a natural habitat or be visually important. Such considerations are important, but beyond the scope of this report.

8.7 Developer Contributions

This section draws on the policy recommendations in the previous section and outlines a process for calculating developer contributions for on and off site provision.

8.7.1 Developer Contributions and CIL

This section sets out higher level strategic recommendations and recommends an approach to developer contributions which can be used to inform policy for both on-site and off-site contributions, subject to pooling restrictions as per the CIL regulations²⁵.

1) *Capital cost of providing open space (on and off site).*

In order to calculate developer contributions for facilities, a methodology has been recommended which calculates how much it would cost the SWCs to provide them. These costs have been calculated by Ethos Environmental Planning using Spon's²⁶. A summary of the costs are outlined in table 25 below. These costs may be adopted by the SWC, however up-to-date costings may also be considered from other sources.

Contributions towards the provision or improvement of open space are calculated using the capital cost of provision. The same charges apply to both provision of new facilities and the upgrading/improvement of existing facilities (where related to new development), which more often than not includes new provision. Contribution per person is therefore taken to be a reasonable measure of that impact, irrespective of whether new provision or improvement of existing facilities is required. The calculated costs have drawn on the standards of provision summarised in table 15.

²⁵ The CIL Regulations restrict the pooling of Section 106 contributions to no more than five obligations towards the provision of new infrastructure

²⁶ Spon's Architects' and Builders' Price Book 2017

Table 25 Costs for providing open space²⁷

Typology	Standard (m ²) per person ²⁸	Cost of provision	
		Cost / m ²	Contribution per person
Allotments	3	£22.34	£67.02
Parks and Recreation grounds (Combined) ²⁹	17	£92.94	£1,579.98
Play Space (Children)	0.5	£168.76	£84.38
Play Space (Youth)	0.5	£168.76	£84.38
Amenity green space	7	£20.24	£141.68
Natural green space	10	£20.24	£202.40
Total	38		£2,159.84

Table 25 shows that it costs £2,159.84 per person to provide new open space to meet the South Worcestershire standards for open space in full. These calculations may be used to calculate developer contributions for on-site provision and where required, for off-site contributions. Costs should be updated at least annually to account for inflation based on the Bank of England inflation rate.

A **cost calculator** has been provided to the SWC so that the on and off-site requirements for open space can be calculated for different sized developments. This cost calculator is a recommendation by Ethos that could be taken forward by the SWC, but there is no obligation to do so. It provides an example of how costs might be calculated, but site circumstances will need to be taken into account e.g. topography. Any update to the Developer Contributions SPD (2018) would need to decide what methodology the SWC will use in terms of contributions.

The cost calculator is based on the following assumptions:

- Average household size (the average across the three districts (Census 2011) is 2.34)
- The open space quantity standards (see table 15)
- The costs per m2 (see table 25)
- Thresholds for on-site provision (see table 27)

²⁷ In addition to these requirements there are other suitable GI solutions that could make up the overall percentage requirements of SWDP 5 (as updated).

²⁸ It should be reiterated that these are minimum size requirements

²⁹ The cost of provision for parks and recreation grounds does not include the cost of providing playing pitches or fixed facilities such as tennis and bowls, which are additional costs which would need to be agreed in addition to the open space costs, where new pitches or contributions to existing pitches are required. Costs of a range of types of pitches are set out in Annex A of the SWDP 2018 Developer Contributions SPD, as based on Sport England's Kitbag Facility Costs: <https://www.sportengland.org/media/13346/facility-costs-q2-18.pdf>

Cost calculator: Example

A housing development of 95 dwellings would generate the following minimum requirements for on-site provision of open space and contributions for off-site improvements (this example calculation does not take account of any Local Authority decision as to whether or not the policy should apply to any affordable housing provided on site i.e. reductions (dwelling size discounts) for affordable housing could be adapted into the cost calculator):

On-site provision:

- 0.1556 ha (1556 sqm) of amenity green space
- 0.0111 ha (111 sqm) of equipped children's play space (excluding the need for surrounding buffer zones/playable space)

Contributions for off-site provision/improvements required:

- £14,899 for allotments
- £351,230 for park and recreation grounds
- £18,758 for youth play space
- £44,994 for natural green space

A screenshot from the cost calculator is provided below.

Number of dwellings	Enter number	Equivalent people	Open Space requirement	Required msq per person	Cost per msq	Total requirement (msq)	Cost of provision (£)	On site required ?	Required quantity on site (msq)	Enter actual provision on site (msq)	Value of provision	Contribution required
1 bed	5	11.7	Allotments	3	22.34	667	£14,899	0	FALSE		0	£14,899
2 bed	50	117	Amenity Green Space	7	20.24	1,556	£31,495	Y	1,556	1556.08	31,495	£0
3 bed	10	23.4	Parks & Recreation Grounds	17	92.94	3,779	£351,230	0	FALSE		0	£351,230
4+bed	30	70.2	Play Space (Children)	0.5	168.76	111	£18,732	Y	111	111	18,732	£0
Elderley 1 bed	0	0	Play Space (Youth)	0.5	168.76	111	£18,758	0	FALSE		0	£18,758
Elderley 2 bed	0	0	Natural Green Space	10	20.24	2,223	£44,994	0	FALSE		0	£44,994
TOTAL	95	222.3		38.00		8,447	£480,107		1,667		50,227	£429,880

2) Maintenance Contributions for on-site provision

The Developer Contributions SPD (2018) states the following in relation to maintenance contributions:

"Where new provision of open space is made either within a development or elsewhere developers will also be required to provide secure arrangements for its future management and maintenance. Future maintenance 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. If a developer seeks the adoption of open space then this will be negotiated with the relevant council service manager. In most cases the local authority will require a commuted sum to fund future maintenance for 20 years from the date of adoption."

The characteristics of each new open space will vary as will the future maintenance costs and therefore each adoption agreement will be negotiated on the basis of the bespoke costs associated with the piece of open space to be adopted. An example of commuted sum maintenance costs is provided in Annex B of the Developer Contributions SPD (2018).

3) Eligible types of development for on-site provision

Table 26 acts as a guide showing the types of housing that could be considered eligible for making contributions towards the open space typologies to meet the needs of future occupants.

Table 26 *Eligible types of residential development*

Category	Open Market Housing / Flats	Affordable Housing*	Older People's Accommodation	Permanent mobile homes
Play Space	✓	✓	×	✓
Outdoor Sports Space	✓	✓	On a case by case basis	✓
Parks and Recreation Grounds**	✓	✓	On a case by case basis	✓
Amenity Open Space	✓	✓	On a case by case basis	✓
Natural Green Space	✓	✓	On a case by case basis	✓
Allotments	✓	✓	On a case by case basis	✓

**Contributions are not required if the delivery of GI is off site*

***In terms of the specific facilities to be provided on site or off site, this would be determined on a case-by-case basis by the SWC, taking into account existing nearby facilities and demand (e.g. through the Playing Pitch Strategy), and perhaps through further local consultation e.g. in some cases, whilst additional full pitches may not be required, junior pitches, or extensions for training may be required, or facilities such as tennis, or landscaped areas with paths and flower beds. Contributions towards private sport provision would generally not be in the public interest unless there was a public benefit/community access agreement.*

4) Thresholds for provision

The required open space, sport and recreation facilities should in the first instance be provided on-site, with off-site provision/contributions only to be considered where on-site provision is not possible/practicable. In some cases, provision (i.e. strategic provision, where funding needs to be pooled) could be delivered through funds collected via CIL (if included on

the CIL Regulation 123 list). Otherwise, off-site provision would be via developer contributions (subject to pooling restrictions) – the developer will not pay for both CIL and S106 for the same type of infrastructure (known as ‘double dipping’). Where facilities are to be provided on-site, the SWCs will expect the developer to provide the land for the facility and either:

- Design and build the provision to the satisfaction of the SWCs; or
- Make a financial contribution to the SWCs so that it may arrange for the construction and development of the required facility.

The decision on whether facility provision is to be on-site, off-site or both depends on the following considerations³⁰:

- The scale of the proposed development and site area;
- The suitability of a site reflecting, for example, its topography or flood risk;
- The existing provision of facilities within the neighbourhood and/or the sub area;
- Other sites in the neighbourhood where additional provision is proposed; and
- Existing access to facilities within the neighbourhood and/or sub area.

Table 27 provides guidance on how to assess different scales of development sites that could generate a need for facilities in the categories listed to be provided on-site (also see the flow chart at figure 20, which shows how the quantity, access and quality analysis needs to be taken into account). It should also be considered that where a development is of a size that could generate the need for provision of open space on-site, if there is sufficient provision (quantity and access) of an open space typology within the vicinity, then consideration will be given to improving existing facilities as an alternative to new on-site provision (this may incur off-site contribution costs).

The minimum size of amenity green space considered acceptable as part of new development on-site is 0.15ha. Therefore, developments that require on-site provision, but which would result in less than 0.15ha of amenity green space against the standard, would still be expected to provide for a minimum of 0.15ha on-site (depending on site circumstances and context), in order to avoid a proliferation of very small amenity spaces with no recreational value.

It is also considered that the minimum size of equipped children’s play provision would be 100 sqm. In addition to this, buffer zones/playable space (which will take a landscape design approach) will be provided between 5m and 30m, depending on the size of the play area.

While table 27 acts as a useful guide to the recommended types of provision in relation to the size of a scheme, each proposal will still be considered on a site by site basis, with on-site provision always to be considered as the first solution. It should be noted that the open space requirements will feed into the overall GI requirements as set out in current SWDP policy SWDP 5.

³⁰ Also see flow chart at figure 20

Table 27 Potential open space requirements based on scheme size

Type of Provision	6-19 dwellings	20-49 dwellings	50-99 dwellings	100 – 199 dwellings	200+ dwellings
Allotments	Off-site	Off-site	Off-site	On-site	On-site
Amenity Green Space	Off-site	On-site	On-site	On-site	On-site
Parks and Recreation Grounds	Off-site	Off-site	Off-site	Off-site	On-site
Play Space (children)	Off -site	Off-site	On-site	On-site	On-site
Play Space (Youth)	Off-site	Off-site	Off-site	Off-site	On-site
Natural Green Space	Off-site	Off-site	Off-site	On-site	On-site

9.0 CONCLUSION

This study provides a robust analysis of the status of open space within South Worcestershire in 2019. It includes an audit of provision and a local needs assessment (consultation) with findings used to produce new recommended standards for access and quantity, with quality standards also recommended based on Green Flag criteria. The study also includes a suite of policy recommendations and methodologies for interpreting and informing the needs for the assessed typologies over the proposed revised plan period, up to 2041, as well as process for calculating developer contributions. It should be read in conjunction with the Community and Stakeholder Consultation Report (2018).

The role and value of open space in contributing to the delivery of national and local priorities and targets is clear from this assessment. It is important that the policies and recommendations included within this assessment are considered for inclusion in the SWDPR, and acknowledged in relevant strategies and policy documents, as and when they are reviewed. Council officers and elected members play a pivotal role in adopting and promoting the recommendations within this assessment and ensuring that key stakeholders such as town and parish councils, community groups and agents and developers are suitably informed and engaged in the open space process.
