WYCHAVON DISTRICT COUNCIL

OPEN SPACE, SPORT & RECREATION STUDY

A

FINAL REPORT

BY

PMP

NOVEMBER 2006
### CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Introduction and background</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Undertaking the study</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Strategic context</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Consultation</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Parks and gardens</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Natural and semi natural</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Amenity greenspace</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Application of standards for recreational open space</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Children and young people</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Outdoor sports facilities</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Indoor sports facilities</td>
<td>103</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Allotments and community gardens</td>
<td>118</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Cemeteries and churchyards</td>
<td>130</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Green corridors</td>
<td>135</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Planning overview</td>
<td>140</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix A</td>
<td>Benefits of open space</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------</td>
<td>-----------------------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix B</td>
<td>Open space typology</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix C</td>
<td>Household survey</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix D</td>
<td>Site assessment matrix</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix E</td>
<td>Standard setting process</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix F</td>
<td>National strategic context</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix G</td>
<td>External agencies</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix H</td>
<td>Quantity standards</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix I</td>
<td>Quality standard</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix J</td>
<td>Accessibility standard</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix K</td>
<td>Quality benchmarking</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix L</td>
<td>Leisure report</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix M</td>
<td>Site database</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
SECTION 1

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND
SECTION 1 - INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

Introduction and background

The study

1.1 During November 2005, Wychavon District Council (the Council) appointed PMP to undertake a local open space, sport and recreation study across Wychavon (the District). The study includes an audit of all open space provision providing a clear vision, priorities for future open space, recreation and sport provision and a direction for the allocation of future resources.

1.2 The aims of the study were:

- to gather evidence on open space and recreational matters in order to formulate policies and proposals for the Local Development Framework (LDF)
- to carry out a comprehensive assessment of current and future needs and opportunities for different types of open space, recreational and sporting facilities
- to protect existing facilities from loss to other forms of development unless it can be shown that they are genuinely surplus to requirements
- to comply with the requirements of PPG17.

1.3 The main focus of the study is therefore:

- revising and updating the audit and assessment of all open spaces in line with PPG17 typologies, including indoor sports
- providing an assessment of existing open space, sport and recreational needs of people living, working and visiting the defined areas through a series of consultations
- considering existing national standards and recommending local provision standards (quantity, quality and accessibility) for each type of open space where appropriate, in accordance with local needs
- providing a final report detailing all the analysis and findings.

1.4 The study is undertaken in accordance with the requirements of the latest Planning Policy Guidance Note 17 (Planning for Open Space Sport and Recreation, July 2002) and its Companion Guide (September 2002).

Why public open space?

1.5 PPG 17 states that well designed and implemented planning policies for open space, sport and recreation are fundamental to delivering broader Government objectives, which include:

- supporting an urban renaissance
- supporting a rural renewal
- promotion of social inclusion and community cohesion
- health and well being
• promoting more sustainable development.

1.6 Open space and recreation provision in Wychavon has an important role to play in supporting the implementation of these objectives.

**Function and benefits of open space**

1.7 Open spaces can provide a number of functions within the urban fabric of towns and villages, for example, the provision for play and informal recreation, a landscaping buffer within and between the built environment and/or a habitat for the promotion of biodiversity.

1.8 Each type of open space has various benefits, which depend on the type of open space, for example allotments for the growing of own produce, play areas for children’s play and playing pitches for formal sports events. Open space can additionally perform a secondary function, for example outdoor sports facilities have an amenity value in addition to facilitating sport and recreation.

1.9 There is a required need to provide a balance between different types of open space in order to meet local needs. Not all resident’s needs in particular areas will show a demand for open space in the form of playing pitches or allotments. Some areas will have specific local demand for ‘green corridor’ sites such as nature walks or bridleways.

1.10 Changing social and economic circumstances, changed work and leisure practices, more sophisticated consumer tastes and higher public expectations have placed new demands on open spaces. They have to serve more diverse communities and face competition from various developers including sport and leisure. Open spaces can also promote community cohesion, encourage community development and stimulate partnerships between the public and private sector.

1.11 Parks and open spaces are more accessible to a wider range of people than some sport and leisure facilities and are better able to realise the aims of social inclusion and equality of opportunity. The provision of open spaces and recreation provision is key to an ideal, sustainable and thriving community.

1.12 It is widely recognised that the provision of high quality ‘public realm’ facilities such as parks and open spaces can assist in the promotion of an area as an attractive place to live, and can result in a number of wider benefits. These are highlighted in Appendix A.


1.13 PPG17 states that local authorities should undertake robust assessments of the existing and future needs of their communities for open space, sports and recreational facilities (paragraph 1).

1.14 The document also states that local authorities should undertake audits of existing open space, sports and recreational facilities, the use made of existing facilities, access in terms of location and costs and opportunities for new open space and facilities (paragraph 2).
SECTION 1 - INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

1.15 Paragraph 5 states that “The Government expects all local authorities to carry out assessments of needs and audits of open space and recreational facilities” and that “local authorities should use the information gained from their assessments of needs and opportunities to set locally derived standards for the provision of open space, sports and recreational facilities in their areas” (paragraph 7).

1.16 Significant changes in this planning policy document from the previous 1991 version are:

• the definition of open space should be taken to mean all open space of public value
• a greater emphasis is placed on qualitative considerations – this is particularly important as it will allow local authorities to identify potential for increased use through better design, management and/or maintenance of open space
• it advocates the setting of local standards appropriate to the local area rather than assessment by national standards although these can be used as benchmarks – the Government believes that national standards are inappropriate, as they do not take into account the demographics of an area, the specific needs of residents and the extent of built development
• it provides further guidance on the constituent elements of open space typologies
• it clearly acknowledges the multiple functions that open spaces can perform.

1.17 The policy guidance sets out priorities for local authorities in terms of:

• assessing needs and opportunities – undertaking audits of open space, sport and recreational facilities
• setting local standards
• maintaining an adequate supply of open space
• planning for new open space.

1.18 The companion guide sets out the process for undertaking local assessments of needs and audits of provision. It also:

• indicates how councils can establish the needs of local communities and apply provision standards
• promotes a consistent approach across varying types of open space.

1.19 PMP and the Council have followed the recommendations of PPG17 throughout the study. By following these recommendations, this study has the potential to make a real difference to the quantity, quality and accessibility of open spaces in Wychavon.

Need for local assessments

1.20 This assessment of open space and local needs will enable the Council to:

• plan positively, creatively and effectively in identifying priority areas for improvement and to target appropriate types of open space.
SECTION 1 - INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

- ensure an adequate provision of high quality, accessible open space to meet the needs of the local community
- ensure any accessible funding is invested in the right places where there is the most need
- conduct Section106 negotiations with developers from a position of knowledge with evidence to support.

1.21 Where no assessment exists, developers can undertake their own independent assessment to demonstrate that open space is surplus to requirements. It is therefore desirable for the Council to have robust data to protect open space within the District.

Local features and demographics

1.22 Wychavon District is located in the eastern edges of the county of Worcestershire. Covering an area of 260 square miles, it extends from an eastern border with Warwickshire with its western boundary formed by the River Severn and the city of Worcester. To the north it extends as far as the towns of Bromsgrove and Kidderminster, whilst in the south it commences at the Cotswold boundary with Gloucestershire. Consideration of cross boundary movement travelling to and from local towns outside the district is therefore important.

1.23 The majority of the District is extremely rural containing nearly 100 small settlements. The Urban area is centred around its three main towns of Droitwich, Evesham and Pershore, which are also the main centres for employment and shopping.

1.24 According to the 2001 census, Wychavon had a population of 112,597. Wychavon Planning department estimates suggest that this has increased to a total of 117,300 by 2006 and is likely to further increase to 117,900 by 2011. This increase places both further demands on the needs for local open space and raises the pressure on existing open spaces.

1.25 The population in Wychavon has increased significantly between 1981 and 2001, with a growth of 21% compared to a 2% rise within the West Midlands region as a whole over the same period. Other significant demographics include the fact that only 16.8% of all households have no car (compared to 26.8% nationally) perhaps reinforcing the rural nature of the area and suggesting that residents are willing to drive to use amenities.

1.26 49% of the population are male, children under the age of five accounts for 5% of the population, which is similar to the national average and 21% are of retirement age, higher than the national average of 18.5%. Interestingly 15.8% of the population are below the age of 18, highlighting the importance of open space provision particularly for the young people in Wychavon.
SECTION 1 - INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

Structure of the report

1.27 The report is split into 15 sections. Section 2 sets out the methodology for undertaking the study. Section 3 sets out the strategic context to provide the background and context to the study. Section 4 provides a brief summary of the consultation undertaken and highlights some of the key themes drawn out within each typology section and some overarching strategic issues.

1.28 Sections 5-14 relate to each of the typologies identified within the scope of the report. Each typology chapter sets out the strategic context to that particular typology, the recommended quantity, quality and accessibility standards and the applications of these standards based on the geographical areas and value assessments. These are not applicable to all typologies.

1.29 Section 15 sets out the planning context to the study, highlighting how the application of the PPG17 study can assist with planning applications and the provision of open space in new housing developments.

1.30 There are also a number of appendices that support the report and provide further background detail and statistical calculations. These are referenced throughout the report.
SECTION 2

UNDERTAKING THE STUDY
Undertaking the study

Introduction

2.1 As previously mentioned, this study was undertaken in accordance with PPG17 and its Companion Guide. This companion guide is a guidance process suggesting ways and means of undertaking such a study. It emphasises the importance of undertaking a local needs assessment, as opposed to following national trends and guidelines. The four guiding principles in undertaking a local assessment are:

(i) local needs will vary even within local authority areas according to socio-demographic and cultural characteristics

(ii) the provision of good quality and effective open space relies on effective planning but also on creative design, landscape management and maintenance

(iii) delivering high quality and sustainable open spaces may depend much more on improving and enhancing existing open space rather than new provision

(iv) the value of open space depends primarily on meeting identified local needs and the wider benefits they generate for people, wildlife and the environment.

2.2 PPG17 recognises that individual approaches appropriate to each local authority will need to be adopted as each area has different structures and characteristics. The resulting conclusions and recommendations of this study are therefore representative of the local needs in Wychavon.

Types of open space

2.3 The overall definition of open space within the government planning guidance is:

“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 also act as a visual amenity”.

2.4 PPG17 identifies ten typologies of open space including nine types of open space and one category of urban open space. This study includes the assessment of the following typologies within settlement boundaries:

- parks and gardens
- natural and semi natural open space (with recognition of sites within the rural area)
- amenity greenspace
- provision for children
- provision for young people/teenagers
- outdoor sports facilities
- allotments and community gardens
- green corridors
SECTION 2 – UNDERTAKING THE STUDY

- churchyards and cemeteries
- indoor sports facilities (sports halls, swimming pools and health and fitness).

2.5 Accessible natural countryside has been excluded from the study although the presence of the countryside and the contribution it makes to the wider open space provision in the area will be considered and acknowledged.

2.6 The study takes into account open spaces provided and managed by both the District Council and other wider organisations, providing an accurate picture of current provision within the District. Full details of these typologies, their definitions and primary purpose are outlined in Appendix B.

PPG17 – 5 step process

2.7 The PPG17 Companion Guide sets out a five step logical process for undertaking a local assessment of open space. This process was used in undertaking this study to meet the requirements of the Council to plan, monitor and set targets for their existing and future provision of open space within the District. Although presented as a linear process below, in reality, many stages were undertaken in parallel.

2.8 The 5 step process is as follows:
- Step 1 – Identifying Local Needs
- Step 2 – Auditing Local Provision
- Step 3 – Setting Provision Standards
- Step 4 – Applying Provision Standards
- Step 5 – Drafting Policies – recommendations and strategic priorities.

Our process

2.9 The following steps indicate how the study has been undertaken in accordance with PPG17.

2.10 For the purposes of this study, Wychavon has been divided into five geographical areas for analysis. The use of analysis areas allows the examination of data at a more detailed local level, and provides a geographical background to the analysis, especially where some areas are sparsely populated and very rural in nature. For these reasons, the five analysis areas have been split into the three main urban areas of Droitwich, Evesham and Pershore, with the rural areas split into North and South (the analysis areas can be viewed in appendix C).

2.11 The exact boundaries of these analysis areas can be viewed on map 2.1 overleaf. The adopted local plan (June 2006) indicates that most new development will be accommodated within the main built up areas of the district, specifically Droitwich, Evesham and Pershore with some smaller developments in the villages. For this reason, particular consideration will be given to the adequacy of existing provision and the demand for future provision in these areas.
Step 1 - Identifying local needs

2.12 In order to identify local needs, a series of consultations were carried out including:
(further details are provided in appendix C):

- household questionnaires disseminated across Wychavon (to 5000 randomly
  selected households to consider users and non users). The surveys were
distributed across the district in proportion to the geographical dispersion of
the population.

- sports club surveys to all clubs identified by the Council

- IT young people survey – a survey and guidance pack sent out to all the
  schools in the District encouraging them to allow their pupils to complete the
  questionnaire online. A reminder was also sent out to non-responding
  schools.

- ‘drop in’ neighbourhood sessions at three locations in the area to provide
  local residents and interest groups with the opportunity to comment informally

- press releases, a specific email address and text messaging services were
  set up to allow the general public to submit comments on open space
  provision within Wychavon

- internal one-to-one consultations with Council officers

- consultation with external agencies.

2.13 The results and findings from consultation will be discussed briefly in Section 4,
whilst typology specific comments will be highlighted within Sections 5-14.

Step 2 - Auditing local provision

2.14 The Council had already audited some open spaces in the District through a survey
to Parish Councils during 1998 and up-to-date mapping of council maintained sites.

2.15 A desktop audit was undertaken building on the existing information and considering
Local Plan proposals maps, Internet searches, OS baseline mapping and internet
based aerial photography (to scale available). This audit includes all sites which can
be categorised under the PPG17 typologies outlined in section 1 regardless of
ownership and management.

2.16 A total of 676 sites within settlement boundaries were identified during the audit
process. Where accessible, these sites were assessed according to their quantity,
quality, accessibility and value using a standard matrix and associated definitions,
which can be found in Appendix D. It was agreed that green corridors would not be
assessed. All sites were assessed by the same site assessor ensuring consistency in
approach and opinion.

2.17 Each open space site was then digitised using GIS software and the associated
ratings and characteristics were recorded on a linked Access 2000 database.

2.18 This report is supplemented by the Access database, which will enable further updates
of open spaces and varying forms of analysis to be undertaken. The database ensures
a dynamic reporting and assessment mechanism and enables individual sites or
specific geographical locations to be examined in detail where necessary.
2.19 From the analysis of the significant amount of data collected and site ratings in terms of quality, quantity, accessibility and value of the sites we are able to:

- determine a set of provision standards for each type of open space
- apply such standards for each type of open space
- identify gaps in provision across the different types of open space and therefore recommend areas of priority.

2.20 The analysis has therefore been undertaken by type of open space looking at different areas across the local authority boundary (referred to as analysis areas in this report), which were discussed and agreed by the Council.

2.21 The formulation and use of robust local standards based on assessments of need and audits of existing facilities will form the basis for addressing quantitative and qualitative needs through the planning process.

2.22 The application of each of the specific standards in the district is discussed within typology specific sections 5 – 14.

2.23 Further detail regarding the process for setting and application of each type of provision standard is outlined in Appendix E.

**Step 5 – Drafting policies - recommendations and strategic priorities**

2.24 The application of the standards provide strategic priorities and recommendations which are set out for each typology within the report.

2.25 The report also provides guidance for the application of Section 106 agreements, best practice formula and costings based on the approaches taken by other authorities and best practice.
SECTION 3

STRATEGIC CONTEXT
SECTION 3 – STRATEGIC CONTEXT

Strategic context

3.1 This strategic review sets in context the study and analysis of a local needs assessment.

3.2 For the purposes of this study, Planning Policy Guidance Note 17 and the Companion Guide, Assessing Needs and Opportunities are the key overarching documents (see Section 1).

3.3 However, there are a large number of other national documents and agencies that shape the strategic context to open spaces, sport and recreation facilities across the country and as such influence the provision of facilities in Wychavon and the findings of this report.

3.4 Appendix F sets out the national strategic context, including Living Spaces: Cleaner, Safer Greener which was produced by the ODPM in 2002 and led to the creation of CABE Space, a national government agency which has the overall aim “to bring excellence to the design, management and maintenance of parks and public space in towns and cities”.

3.5 Appendix G consists of external agencies that have an influence and interest in the provision of open spaces and notes some of the key issues and objectives, which are relevant to this study.

3.6 The following sets out the regional and local strategic context for Wychavon.

Regional Policy Documents

West Midlands @ 2021 – A Guide to the Region’s Spatial Strategy

3.7 Formerly Regional Planning Guidance for the West Midlands, the Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) sets out what should happen where and when across the West Midlands Region up to 2021. It covers a wide range of subjects including, housing, economic development, historic and natural environment, renewable energy, minerals, waste and transport. It is therefore an important consideration in open space and recreation policies.

3.8 Contained within the ‘Quality of the Environment’ section of the Spatial Strategy, there are a number of policies of particular relevance to the PPG17. These include:

- QE1 & QE6 - landscapes
- QE4 - urban greenspace and public spaces
- QE2 – restoring degraded land
- QE8 – increasing forestry and woodland
- QE7 – areas for increasing biodiversity

3.9 The environment section aims to protect high-quality areas of open space, whilst improving the quality elsewhere. It also recognises that although environmental considerations may occasionally prevent development (in the form of urban and rural regeneration for housing, retail and employment sites), development can also enhance or create new environmental assets.
3.10 Sport England as the national agency driving sports development, takes a strategic lead on the provision of sport.

3.11 Sign Up For Sport is a plan for sport and physical activity in the region. Its formulation has involved national, regional and local consultations with key stakeholders, agencies and organisations across the private, public and voluntary sectors that fully understand the strategic issues and local needs of the region. It has been facilitated by Sport England under the guidance of the new West Midlands Sports Board.

3.12 The aim of the plan is:

- ‘to significantly increase participation in sport within all age and social groups, leading to improvements in health and other social and economic benefits and providing the basis for progression into higher levels of performance for those with talent and the desire to progress.’

3.13 The plan has seven main outcomes:

- increase participation in club and community sport
- improve levels of sport performance
- widen access to sport
- improve the health and well being of people through sport
- create safer and stronger communities through sport
- improve education through PE and sport
- benefit the economy through sport.

3.14 The West Midland Regional Plan for Sport is a series of action points for the development of sport and physical activity in the region. It links in the major national developments that impacts on the delivery in the West Midland region. These include:

- Community Sports Networks (CSNs) – a locally based network that identifies and coordinates the efficient and effective delivery of programmes to increase sport and physical activity. Wychavon is part of the Herefordshire and Worcestershire CSN.

- County Sports Partnerships (CSPs) – focussed on providing pathways for young people, club development and workforce development at a sub regional level. Also contributing to the wider agendas of health, community safety and regeneration.
Local context


3.15 The existing Local Plan was adopted formally in January 1998 and will eventually be replaced by this revised deposit. It sets out formal policies that the Council will take into account at the local level when planning applications are being considered.

3.16 The overall aim of the local plan is to provide:

“an improvement in the economic and social well being of communities whilst protecting and enhancing the environment in order to improve quality of life”

3.17 Section Four (Protecting the Environment) and Section Five (Social Progress) are of particular relevance to this PPG17 study. Specific policy and proposal areas include:

- Policy COM13 – Provision of Public Open Space – This policy recognises the significance of PPG17 and value of open space to the local community. It also recognises the need to undertake consultation with parishes, local users, children’s groups and providers to assess open space and sport and recreation facilities. This policy also highlights the need to acquire developer contributions to aid the provision on open space in new developments.

- Policy ENV3 – is concerned with sites of importance for nature conservation when being considered for development

- Policy ENV4 – deals with proposals for development on sites of specific scientific interest (SSSI)

- Policy ENV12 – protecting the intrinsic value of historical parks and gardens.

3.18 Standards recognised within the Local Plan that relate to open space and recreation and are of specific relevance to this study will be taken into account. These recommendations include:

- achieve a minimum standard of 2.43ha of open space provision per 1000 population (NPFA standard) – sub-divided in to the relevant standards for children’s play space (formal and informal), outdoor sports space and passive open space (woodland or amenity space)

- provision of open space in association with new housing developments, in relation to the size of the development.

3.19 The recommendations and justification around the policies will be used in the context of the specific typology sections (Sections 5-14).


3.20 The County Community Strategy is prepared by The Worcestershire Partnership, which is the Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) for Worcestershire and consists of public, private, voluntary and community organisations working together to meet local
needs. The County strategy provides the strategic framework to which local strategies link and connect.

3.21 The purpose of the community strategy is to promote the economic, environmental and social well being of the six districts of Worcestershire. This document addresses the following six key themes that reflect the major concerns voiced by local residents through an audit of consultation exercises. The themes are:

- communities that are healthy, and support vulnerable people
- communities that are safe, and feel safe
- learning and skills for everyone, at every age
- economic success that is shared by all
- a better environment – for today and for our children
- connecting Worcestershire

3.22 A number of overarching strategic aims have been identified in relation to the above key themes, this is then broken down into strategic objectives and outcomes with key actions. Key actions relating to open space, sport and recreation include:

- promote a healthy lifestyle by increasing the levels of physical activity of people of all ages
- protect and enhance the landscape and its associated wildlife through the implementation of actions within the Biodiversity Action Plan
- make the countryside more accessible and improve opportunities for informal recreation and leisure through the development of a Countryside Recreation and Access Strategy
- deter fly tipping and reduce litter as part of the ‘Rethink Rubbish’ campaign
- establishing Youth Councils to enable young people to highlight the facilities and services they would like to see and have access to.

Achieving Excellence – Worcestershire County Council Best Value Performance Plan 2005

3.23 The Worcestershire Best Value Performance Plan for 2005 describes the key achievements of the Council over the past year and sets out targets and plans for the year ahead.

Worcesetershire achieved an ‘Excellent’ rating for its performance in 2004, making it one of the best performing councils in the United Kingdom. This is based on a ‘Comprehensive Performance Assessment’ undertaken by the Audit Commission and assesses a wide ranging number of services run by the Council, including: Education, Social Services, Finance, Environment and Corporate Services.

3.24 Recent areas of improvement for Worcestershire laid out in the performance plan highlighted a number of achievements in line with Council priorities. Those related closely to open space include:
• addressing anti-social behaviour problems by employing neighbourhood wardens

• provide greater accessibility with the improvement of public transport services.

**Making life sweeter for you – Wychavon’s Community Plan**

3.25 Wychavon feeds into the County LSP through a Community Plan Core Group and three areas based LSP’s based around the three main towns of Droitwich, Evesham and Pershore also covering the surrounding rural areas. They provide the localised focus and plans for Wychavon through the production of the Wychavon Community Plan and focuses around the six themes set out in the Worcestershire Community Strategy above.

3.26 The key actions relating to open space, sport and recreation in Wychavon are:

• reducing anti social behaviour and vandalism by installing CCTV cameras in Evesham and Pershore Parks

• help create new play areas and improve existing ones by giving Community Grants where local people show there is a priority need

• protect and enhance the landscape and its associated wildlife by designating three local nature reserves

• promote a healthier lifestyle by increasing the number of physical activity classes for older people and

• create new Walking the Way to Health routes across the district

• providing youth facilities by creating skate parks in Droitwich and Evesham

• working with local middle schools and all four high schools to deliver physical activities to young people

• hold ‘party in the park’ events in the summer for young people featuring music and sports

• improving parks and open spaces alongside the river in Evesham

• improve access in the Droitwich area to public art and leisure facilities.

**Park Management Plans**

3.27 Wychavon District Council have produced Parks Management Plans for Abbey Park Evesham, Abbey Park Pershore and Lido Park, St Peter’s Fields and Vines Park, Droitwich, outlining a commitment to improving the parks through funding from the Environment Committee. Some of the key improvements identified across each of the parks include:

• improvements required to pathways/seating, litter bins and signage at entrances – a large proportion of this has already been completed

• protection and enhancement of the historic value of the parks
• provision of areas for informal football, toilets, facilities for young people and MUGAs

• improvements to existing wetland/pool areas – an identified asset but a challenge to manage

• improved biodiversity in line with the Biodiversity Action Plan

• continued use of bandstands/events.

Health

3.28 Open space, sport and recreation facilities have an important role in the health and well being of local communities in the District. By ensuring there is an adequate level of good quality provision local communities will benefit and the Council will make a positive contribution towards the key aims and objectives in relation to the health agenda. This PPG17 study and any resulting strategy therefore has a key role to play in the delivery of this agenda.

3.29 Significant amounts of funding are currently available to aid with the delivery of the health agenda. Strong links between the provision of open spaces and sport facilities and the improvement of the health of residents ensures that these funding sources can be accessed for the benefit of open spaces.

3.30 Analysis of the strategic context reinforces the strong links and connections between the health and open space agendas. In particular:

• the Choosing Health White Paper emphasises the need for a healthier approach to life and this should form a key target and priority of Wychavon District Council. The provision of open space, sport and recreation facilities represents a key opportunity for the Council to achieve these targets, which include increasing opportunities for exercise and physical activity. The recently completed Active People survey indicates that participation in physical activity in Wychavon is marginally above the national average (in terms of the percentage of adults participating in at least 30 minutes moderate intensity sport and active recreation (including recreational walking) on 3 or more days a week) at 20.2% as opposed to 20.1% nationally. It is important that these participation rates are maintained and improved in line with national and local participation targets.

• the strategic documents highlight the benefits of partnership working, involving partners from all sectors including health and the Council. The Council should therefore ensure a joined up thinking approach ensuring close relationships both within Council departments (such as planning, education and leisure) and with all key partners including representatives of the health sector. Examples of good practice should be shared across all partners.

• the West Midlands Regional Plan for Sport further highlights links between sports facilities (and open spaces) and improving participation to reduce health inequalities detailing key objectives including:
  - increasing participation
  - widening access to sports facilities
  - improving health and well being.
• the Council should adopt these principles in order to achieve their own key objectives and may want to consider the implementation of specific programmes in order to focus on ongoing improvements

• locally, the Community Strategy vision, aims and objectives reinforce the importance placed on increasing participation and improving health across the district, prioritising the promotion of a healthier lifestyle across the district through initiatives such as the walking the way to health scheme and other key improvements to open spaces to enhance opportunities for local residents. The strategy also reinforces the links between Council departments, promoting the important role that schools can play in the delivery of the physical activity agenda.

3.31 The London 2012 bid has already created real momentum for sport in the country. The Olympics present a great opportunity to transform sporting infrastructure and inspire a new generation to participate in sport and lead healthier lifestyles. The 2012 ‘Vision’ is that the Games will provide a lasting legacy for future generations; locally, nationally and globally.

3.32 The blueprint for the Games provides initiatives to achieve a sustainable ‘Legacy’, which in turn will improve the environment, health and quality of life for local communities. These initiatives can be the inspiration to ensure that 2012 also has a positive impact on the provision and quality of open space, sport and recreation. Improvements to existing facilities / provision will encourage active engagement in healthier lifestyles in line with Council priorities and contribute positively to the legacy of the 2012 Olympic games.

**Summary and conclusions**

3.33 The provision of open spaces supports wider governmental objectives such as social and community cohesion, urban and rural renaissance and promoting a healthy and enjoyable life.

3.34 Any development of open spaces (i.e. provision of either new or enhancement of existing spaces) should take into account bio-diversity and nature conservation opportunities and develop an increasing environmental awareness.

3.35 Many organisations are willing to work in partnership together to manage and develop existing open spaces and share similar aims and objectives e.g. protecting, enhancing and maximising usage and nature conservation value of open spaces.

3.36 There appears to be a general consensus that involving the community in managing and designing open space sites creates a sense of ownership and will assist in maintaining the quality and maximising the usage of open space sites.

3.37 In Wychavon the main issues which have arisen through the strategic review are:

• parks, open spaces and sports facilities can play a role in achieving priority themes of the community plan and priorities within the corporate plan

• parks and open spaces cut across many wide-ranging issues and can impact on health levels, increasing the well-being of residents, workers and visitors

• the importance of acquiring developer contributions to aid the provision on open space in new developments
• the need to protect and enhance open spaces in the district.

3.38 In summary, this review of strategic documents highlights the local importance of maintaining and improving open space sites within Wychavon. This local needs study and resulting strategy will contribute to achieving the wider aims of a number of local and national agencies.
SECTION 4

CONSULTATION
Consultation

Introduction

4.1 As outlined in Section 2, a series of consultations were carried out as part of the local needs assessments to establish the views on open space provision amongst both users and non-users across the District.

4.2 The key consultations included:

- **household survey** – surveys were distributed to 5000 randomly selected residents across Wychavon, calculated using population statistics for the different analysis areas (Appendix C)
- **sports club surveys** to all sports clubs (contacts provided by the Council)
- **IT young people survey** – a letter and information pack was sent out to all the schools in Wychavon
- **drop in sessions** – drop-in sessions were held in the three main towns across the District (Droitwich, Evesham and Pershore)
- **consultations with external agencies**
- **Parish Council** questionnaires
- **internal consultations** with Council officers.

4.3 The information gained from these consultations has been used to inform the study and to help understand:

- the key issues/problems facing different Council departments and agencies
- the needs and requirements of local residents
- the attitudes and expectations for open space
- good and bad points about the existing provision
- existing open space, sport and recreation provision at a strategic level.

Headline consultation

4.4 The information collected through consultation forms the basis and justification for the recommended local standards. This ensures that all local standards applied are reflective of the aspirations and expectations of local residents.

4.5 Below is a summary of how the consultations have been used to inform the study. An overview detailing some of the key themes on a strategic level is also provided.

Household survey

4.6 The household survey is one of the most important aspects of consultation, providing 5000 randomly selected households with an opportunity to comment on the quantity, quality and accessibility of open space, sport and recreation facilities. Residents are also able to provide site-specific comments where appropriate.

4.7 597 postal surveys were returned, providing a statistically sound sample that can be used to assume responses for the remaining population within the District.
4.8 The results from the household survey can be found in the specific typology sections (Sections 5-14), as well as the justification of standards in the appendices (Appendices H, I and J).

**Sports club survey**

4.9 The sports club surveys forms part of the information collected to inform standards and recommendations on indoor and outdoor sports facilities. 195 surveys were distributed and there was a good response rate, with 74 returned resulting in a 38% response rate. The views of respondents to this survey are particularly important in the establishment of local standards for indoor and outdoor sports facilities.

**IT young people survey**

4.10 The IT young people survey is perhaps one of the more exciting consultation methods, where young people are given the opportunity to comment on open space and sports facilities during their IT or Geography lessons at school. A guidance pack and letter were sent to all the schools across the district, encouraging teachers to set aside time to allow their pupils to complete the questionnaire over the internet.

4.11 106 responses were received to this survey with 42% of respondents aged between 9-11, 20% (6-8), 17% (12-14) and 21% (15-18). This provides an important insight into the viewpoint of children and ensures the views of this otherwise hard to reach group are taken into account. The results of this survey inform not only the standards for provision for young people, but also other types of open space that this group enjoy using such as outdoor and indoor sports facilities and parks.

4.12 The results and analysis from this consultation can be found in the specific typology sections (sections 5-14), as well as the justification of standards in the appendices (Appendices H, I and J).

**Drop-in sessions**

4.13 The drop-in sessions provide the chance for any member of the public within Wychavon to comment informally on open space within their local area. The sessions were advertised in the local press and held across three different locations, providing an opportunity for all those who wished to comment.

4.14 Drop in sessions were well attended and residents provided comments on quality, accessibility, site-specific issues and gave general examples of good and bad practice within the District. These comments are fed into the individual typology sections (5-14) and used to inform the recommended local standards (Appendices H, I and J). These sessions are particularly important to supplement the quantitative and statistical consultation.

**Parish Councils**

4.15 Questionnaires were distributed to the Parish Clerks of each Parish Council in the district. In addition to commenting on the quality of sites in their area, clerks were asked to consider the level of use at each site and also make detailed comments regarding specific sites in their area.

4.16 Key themes emerging from consultations with Parish Councils both informed the setting standards process and ensured the accuracy of the audit.
External agencies

4.17 A contact list of external agencies was compiled and a questionnaire was sent out to all agencies (by post or e-mail) asking for their input into the study. Specifically, agencies were asked to provide details on any spaces they own or manage, and to raise issues regarding the provision of open spaces in Wychavon District. Any plans for future development or partnership working within Wychavon were also raised.

4.18 This information is fed through into the individual sections (5-14) and provides a broad overview of strategic issues relating to open space.

Internal officers

4.19 Internal consultations are another important feature of the study, providing an overview of Council plans, priorities, aspirations and expectations and ensuring that key recommendations and priorities emerging in the report fit in with Council aims and objectives over the coming years.

4.20 In addition to informing the standard setting and application process, this feeds into the separate sections of the report (5-14) and setting of local standards (Appendices H, I and J).

4.21 A brief overview of some of the key strategic issues emerging through consultations in Wychavon is set out below:

- there is a high standard of quality throughout the district and the maintenance regime is considered to be good. Abbey Park in Evesham was highlighted as an example of good practice and has been awarded a green flag award, recognising the quality of the site. Public perception of the quality of green spaces in the district has improved consistently in recent years. Droitwich Community Woodland and the Edge of Broadway have recently been designated as Local Nature Reserves.

- quality improvements funded through the Liveability programme are central to Council plans over the next few years and the Council are part of the West Midlands Partnership who are working together to improve 24 sites across the county. This suggests that the quality of provision is likely to improve and levels of resident satisfaction are likely to increase. Some of the key strategic park sites in the area are likely to benefit and a range of consultations are underway to establish the most appropriate improvements to meet resident demand.

- key issues reported on sites across the district centre around the need to increase security and CCTV is due to be installed at some of the large sites in the district shortly. Some residents also highlighted that they would like to see the presence of wardens at sites, again to enhance security.

- the importance of accessibility is not underestimated and all of the play facilities within the main parks have been assessed to ensure compliance with DDA

- in addition to recognising the benefits of formalised provision of open spaces across the district, residents of Wychavon attach great importance to the accessible countryside with many residents frequently travelling to the country. The importance of ensuring that there are links for both wildlife and
people between rural areas and urban fringes was also highlighted – this reinforces the role that green corridors play.

- there is a high level of cross boundary movement from residents, with many stating that they frequently travel into Worcester and Malvern Hills to visit sites such as Arrowe Valley Country Park and Worcester Woods Country Park. It is important that this is taken into account when considering the level of provision within Wychavon.

**Summary of consultation**

4.22 Key points regarding consultation include:

- good response rate to the household survey provides a good statistical evidence base to be used in justification of setting quantity, quality and accessibility standards

- a wide and representative programme of consultation has been undertaken, including an IT for young people survey which has obtained over 100 responses from an otherwise hard to reach group. Parish Councils have also been instrumental in both the audit and consultation process.

- there is a positive perception of provision of open spaces across the district and the maintenance and cleanliness of sites is perceived to be good. The green flag award awarded to Abbey Park and the recently achieved Local Nature Reserve status on two key sites reinforces this. Future work will be driven by a focus on quality, supported by funding from the Liveability Programme.

- it is important to consider the provision of open space in Wychavon in the context of other strategic open spaces in neighbouring authorities to take into account cross boundary issues.

4.23 The full detail relating to each type of open space will be discussed within the separate sections (5-14) and supported through appendices (H, I and J).
SECTION 5

PARKS AND GARDENS
Parks and gardens

Definition

5.1 This type of open space includes urban parks, formal gardens and country parks that provide opportunities for various informal recreation and community events, within settlement boundaries.

5.2 This typology also has many wider benefits as supported by the site assessments. Parks provide a sense of place for the local community, help to address any social inclusion issues within wider society and also provide some form of structural and landscaping benefits to the surrounding local area. They also frequently offer ecological benefits, particularly in more urban areas.

5.3 Parks and gardens play a similar role to both amenity green spaces and natural and semi natural spaces in providing a local recreational resource for the community. They are of particular value in the urban areas of the district and are located primarily in the main towns.

5.4 This section outlines the strategic context and key consultation findings relating to parks and gardens and concludes with the development of local standards. Recognising the similarities between the different types of open space and the overlapping functions, local standards are then applied in the context of natural and semi natural and amenity green spaces in section 8.

Figure 5.1 – Abbey Park, Evesham
Strategic context and consultation

Strategic context

5.5 The Green Flag Award is the National Standard for parks and greenspaces and represents a benchmark against which the quality of all parks can be measured. Although a large number of sites are parks and gardens, the criteria for an award also extends across recreational greenspaces including nature reserves, millennium greens and allotments. Abbey Park in Evesham has achieved this award and should therefore be considered an example of good practice. The Award states the park to have a “wonderful setting with a natural terrace and excellent views”. It also references the redevelopment that has been undertaken over three years, turning the derelict pools into ornamental gardens and model boat pool, addressing the riverbank erosion and enhancing the entrances to the site.

5.6 Wychavon District Council have produced Parks Management Plans for Abbey Park Evesham, Abbey Park Pershore and Lido Park, St Peter’s Fields and Vines Park, Droitwich, outlining a commitment to improving the parks through funding from the Environment Committee. Some of the key improvements identified across each of the parks include:

- improvements required to pathways/seating, litter bins and signage at entrances – a large proportion of this has already been completed
- protection and enhancement of the historic value of the parks
- provision of areas for informal football, toilets, facilities for young people and MUGAs
- improvements to existing wetland/pool areas – an identified asset but a challenge to manage
- improved biodiversity in line with the Biodiversity Action Plan
- continued use of bandstands/events.

5.7 Wychavon’s Community Plan highlights the aim to provide ‘party in the park’ events in the summer involving young people and featuring music and sports. The Plan also identifies a need to reduce anti social behaviour in parks by installing CCTV.

Consultation

5.8 Consultation specific to parks and gardens was undertaken using a variety of research techniques and findings have been used to inform the local standards, ensuring they are reflective of local needs. Key themes emerging from consultations include:

- parks and gardens as the most frequently used type of open space with 55% of respondents to then household survey using them on a monthly basis or more
- the majority of local residents walk to parks and gardens, although residents living in the rural areas are, perhaps unsurprisingly, more likely to travel by car
there is a perception that provision is about right, with many residents suggesting that the good quantity of provision was complemented by high quality. This indicates that future provision should focus on quality improvements not additional quantity.

the level of satisfaction with the quality of parks is the highest of all the typologies, with 61% of respondents indicating that provision is ‘good quality’. This perception was supported at the drop-in sessions and through internal consultations. The main focuses for improvements highlighted centre around enhanced maintenance and upgrades to the existing facilities available.

the larger strategic sites are amongst the most frequently used open space sites in the district. In particular, Abbey Park (Evesham), Abbey Park (Pershore) and Vines Park (Droitwich) are well used. This suggests that these sites are of high value to residents.

although some degree of anti-social behaviour in parks is evident consultations indicated that there is a general acceptance that levels of misuse are not high compared to other areas in the country.

Current position

5.9 Parks are open spaces that contain a variety of amenities, including provision for children, young people and outdoor sports facilities, fulfilling a variety of functions and providing a valuable asset to the community. In terms of the open space audit, sites with other facilities within them are broken down to the different components (e.g. play areas, sports facilities) with the remaining land included as a park and garden.

5.10 The provision of parks and gardens in the district is summarised below in table 5.1.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Geographical Area</th>
<th>Number of sites</th>
<th>Hectares per 1000</th>
<th>Range of quality scores</th>
<th>Average quality score</th>
<th>Average Accessibility Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Droitwich</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>74% - 100%</td>
<td>89%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evesham</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0.44</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pershore</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.08</td>
<td>94% - 100%</td>
<td>97%</td>
<td>98.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural North</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>68%</td>
<td>68%</td>
<td>93%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural South</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.17</td>
<td>96% - 100%</td>
<td>98%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5.11 The key issues emerging from table 5.1 above include:

• there is a relatively uneven distribution of parks and gardens across the district, with provision in Droitwich and Pershore significantly higher than in the other areas. There are very few parks and gardens in the rural areas and those that are provided are small in size. This suggests that residents in the more rural areas may travel to reach parks in the towns.
• the quality of parks and gardens is high across the district, particularly in Evesham where all sites were given scores of 100%. The only area where the average quality score drops below 70% is in Rural North where there is only one site and this scored 68%.

• similar to the quality of sites, the average accessibility score suggests that parks and gardens within Wychavon is good and there is little differentiation across the different geographical areas.

Setting provision standards

5.12 In setting local standards for parks and gardens there is a need to take into account any national or local standards, current provision, other Local Authority standards for appropriate comparison and consultation on local needs. Full indication of consultation and justifications for the recommended local standards are provided within Appendix H, I and J. The recommended local standards have been summarised below in context with the parks and garden sites in Wychavon.

Setting provision standards

Quantity Standard (see appendix H – standards and justification, worksheet and calculator)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Existing level of provision</th>
<th>Recommended standard</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0.42 ha overall, 0.76 ha urban only</td>
<td>0.76 ha per 1000 population</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Consultation suggests that there is a strong emphasis on the level of provision being about right with 70% of respondents to the household questionnaire indicating that there is sufficient provision. This view was reinforced by consultation findings across the geographical areas of the district. This viewpoint was consistent across the geographical areas of the district and was further reinforced by the fact that quantity of provision of parks was not raised as an issue in any of the drop in sessions. This level of satisfaction is high compared to that experienced in other local authority areas that PMP have completed open space studies and also in comparison to other typologies of open space in Wychavon indicating that additional provision of parks and gardens should not be a priority at the moment although there may be a need for additional parks over the Local Development Framework period.

It is therefore suggested that the standard set to mirror the existing level of provision in the urban areas and should measured only against the population in the urban area. While this standard would ensure that population growth is accompanied by further provision (at a rate of 0.76 hectares per 1000), it supports that current focus on the improvement of the quality of the sites rather than investing in new provision. It also highlights locational deficiencies but should be treated as a minimum standard for provision only.

It is less appropriate to set a standard for the formal provision of parks and gardens in the rural area due to the nature of these settlements and the associated lower levels of provision and access to other types of open space, such as areas of nearby countryside. Should a standard be required, it is recommended that in line with local consultation, a standard mirroring the current level of provision should be set, equivalent to 0.10 hectares per 1000. Again this will serve to protect existing provision and ensure that any population growth results in appropriate additional provision.
Quality Standard (see appendix I)

“A welcoming, clean and litter free site providing a one-stop community facility with a wide range of leisure, recreational and enriched play opportunities for all ages. Sites should have varied and well-kept vegetation, appropriate lighting and ancillary accommodation (including benches, toilets and litter bins) and well-signed to and within the site. The safety of sites should be enhanced wherever possible (e.g. through appropriate planting, CCTV and a park ranger presence)”

Justification

There is a general feeling that the existing parks and gardens are good quality and well-used facilities. The household survey indicated that they were used most frequently (54.7% use more than once a month). As such, the quality vision is based on a combination of the existing features and the key issues highlighted through the management plans. It is important that the quality vision reflects the management plans to ensure it provides an overarching vision for the implementation of the plans. The vision also incorporates elements from the public consultations particularly highlighting safety measures to combat the vandalism/miss-use issues currently experienced, the need for a clean, litter free site, well-kept grass and toilets. In addition, the need for facilities for young people/an interesting environment to visit are reflected in the vision. The Green Flag Award criteria are also incorporated in the vision to ensure that the council can continue to work towards this award.

Quality benchmark - 96%

Quality Benchmarking

5.13 The application of the quality benchmarking standard (set at a score of 96% on the site assessment for children and young people) provides an indication of the desired level of quality suggested at each site and enables a comparison at sites across the District. As described in Appendix K, it highlights sites, which currently meet the visionary standard, and those sites falling below and consequently where improvement is required. A full list of site scores can be found in the parks and gardens section of Appendix L.

5.14 The quality scores of the 13 park and garden sites are highlighted in figure 5.3 overleaf. As can be seen, almost all of the parks and gardens within Wychavon achieve the quality benchmark score, reinforcing the perceptions that sites are of high quality.
Fig 5.3 – Highest and lowest parks and gardens quality scores

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quality</th>
<th>Score Range</th>
<th>Sites</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>V good</td>
<td>90% to 100%</td>
<td>Site ID 1147 – Lido Park – Droitwich (100%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Site ID 1166 – Corporation Meadow Playing Field – Evesham (100%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Site ID 1188 – Crown Meadow – Evesham (100%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Site ID 1193 – Abbey Park – Evesham (100%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Site ID 1216 – Waterside Gardens – Evesham (100%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Site ID 1129 – St Andrew’s Gardens – Pershore (100%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Site ID 1540 – Millennium Gardens, Broadway (100%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Site ID 1195 - Workman Gardens – Evesham (100%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Site ID 1390 – Pershore Agricultural College – Pershore (96%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Site ID 2 – Vines Park, Droitwich (94%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Site ID 1231 – Abbey Park, Pershore (94%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good</td>
<td>70% to 90%</td>
<td>Site ID 1151 – St Peter’s Fields, Droitwich (74%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average</td>
<td>50% to 70%</td>
<td>Site ID 1019 – Memorial Gardens, Hanbury (68%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poor</td>
<td>30% to 50%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V poor</td>
<td>Below 30%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Accessibility Standard (see appendix J)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>15 minutes walk time (URBAN)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Justification</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There is an emphasis in favour of walking to local parks and gardens facilities both in terms of current travel patterns and expectations. The standard is set at 15 minutes walking to local parks and gardens, based on the 75% threshold level district-wide (PPG17 compliant). This encompasses all areas and supports the mode that is 10 minutes. There is a good level of provision in the urban area but limited within the rural areas. Parks tend to be larger facilities offering a range of activities and it would not be realistic to expect this type of facility within each village. As such the standard is set as an urban standard and is also in line with the standard set for other authorities as these range from 10 – 15 minutes.

**Applying local standards**

**Applying provision standards – identifying geographical areas**

5.15 In order to identify geographical areas of importance and those areas with required local needs the quantitative provision of parks and gardens in Wychavon should be considered alongside the recommended local standard for accessibility. The quantity standards enable the identification of areas that do not meet the minimum provision standards, while the accessibility standards will help determine where those deficiencies are of high importance. Applying the standards together is a much more meaningful method of analysis than applying the standards separately and therefore helps with the prioritisation of sites.

5.16 Given the geographical nature of Wychavon, the distribution of open space sites and the overlapping roles that parks, natural and semi natural and amenity green space areas play, standards for these typologies have been applied together. This ensures a full understanding of the interaction between the typologies and an assessment of true deficiencies. An application of the local standards for parks, natural and semi natural and amenity green space is therefore set out in Section 8.
SECTION 6

NATURAL AND SEMI NATURAL
Natural and semi-natural open space

Definition

6.1 This type of open space includes woodlands, urban forestry, scrubland, grasslands (eg downlands, commons, meadows), wetlands, nature reserves and wastelands with a primary purpose of wildlife conservation and bio-diversity within the settlement boundaries.

6.2 Although natural and semi natural open space plays a key role in wildlife conservation and biodiversity the recreational opportunities provided by these spaces are also important. In this respect, natural and semi natural open spaces play a similar role and function to that of amenity green space and parks and gardens.

6.3 This section outlines the strategic context and key consultation findings relating to natural and semi natural open space and concludes with the development of local standards. Recognising the similarities between the different types of open space and the overlapping functions, local standards are then applied in the context of parks and gardens and amenity green spaces in section 8.

Figure 6.1 – Wychavon Nature Reserve
Strategic context and consultation

Strategic context

6.4 The Local Plan places particular emphasis on the protection of natural areas within Wychavon. Policy ENV4 and ENV5 specifically detail protection over development on sites with ENV4 looking specifically at Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and ENV5 considering sites of regional or local wildlife importance.

6.5 Policy ENV1: Landscape Character, in seeking to maintain diversity of habitats within the countryside and built environment.

6.6 In addition Policy ENV2 recognises the importance of the Cotswolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), which includes part of the southeast of Wychavon along the Cotswold Escarpment and Bredon Hill. Only in exceptional circumstances (such as an overriding national need) should there ever be any major development in this area.

6.7 The importance and significance of natural, semi-natural and nature conservation areas are highlighted throughout the environment policies and proposals in the Local Plan. This theme is also reflected in the Community Strategy, where a key action for the Council is, “protect and enhance the landscape and its associated wildlife” through the implementation of actions set out within the Biodiversity Action Plan.

Consultation

6.8 Consultation specific to natural and semi natural open spaces was undertaken using a variety of research techniques and findings have been used to inform the local standards, ensuring they are reflective of local needs. Key themes emerging from consultations include:

- natural open spaces are clearly important to residents of Wychavon District, with 52% of residents using them at least once per month, and only 14% suggesting they do not use them at all

- residents responding to the household survey indicate that there is a split in opinion between those who feel there is insufficient provision and those who suggest that the focus should be on improving the quality

- in addition to those local natural open spaces that have been audited and assessed within this PPG17 study, the significance of some of the more strategically important sites such as SSSI’s is recognised by residents. English Nature suggest that there is some pressure on these existing conservation sites from recreational pursuits.

- natural and semi natural open spaces are perceived to be good quality, with 51% of respondents indicating that the overall quality is good and only 6% suggesting it is poor.
Current position

6.9 The provision of natural and semi natural open spaces in the district is evaluated below in table 6.1.

Table 6.1 – Provision of Natural and Semi Natural Open Spaces in Wychavon

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Geographical Area</th>
<th>Number of sites</th>
<th>Hectares per 1000</th>
<th>Range of quality scores</th>
<th>Average quality score</th>
<th>Average Accessibility Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Droitwich</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>1.06</td>
<td>54% - 100%</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>76%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evesham</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>0.31</td>
<td>30% - 96%</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>69%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pershore</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1.32</td>
<td>40% - 80%</td>
<td>63%</td>
<td>72%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural North</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0.50</td>
<td>70% - 100%</td>
<td>83%</td>
<td>82%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural South</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>0.26</td>
<td>56% - 100%</td>
<td>64%</td>
<td>72%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

6.10 The key issues emerging from table 6.1 above include:

- there is a relatively uneven distribution of natural and semi natural areas across the district, with provision in the urban areas Droitwich and Pershore significantly higher per 1,000 population than in the other areas. There are a good number of sites in the rural south area, but these are generally quite small. However, residents within the rural areas have easy access to the countryside and woodland areas and are also located within close proximity of larger strategic sites such as SSSI which are excluded from quantity calculations but nonetheless offer an important resource to residents.

- the quality of natural and semi natural open space is generally good across the district, particularly in Droitwich and Rural North where the average quality score is above 75%. Despite this, it can be seen that there are greater variations between the quality of natural and semi natural sites than in other types of open space, with a greater range of scores evident. All areas except Pershore have at least one site that is rated at over 95% although both Evesham and Pershore have some sites currently rated at below 50%.

- the average accessibility score suggests that access to natural and semi natural areas within Wychavon is good and there is little differentiation across the different geographical areas.
Setting Provision Standards

**Quantity Standard (see appendix H – standards and justification, worksheet and calculator)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Existing level of provision</th>
<th>Recommended standard</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0.56ha per 1000 population across the district, 0.76 when focusing just on the urban area</td>
<td>0.75 hectares per 1000 population (urban)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Justification**

Consultation highlights a split of opinion regarding the overall level of provision of natural and semi natural open space and there is only a slight emphasis (45%) towards people who think the quantity is about right or more than enough. There was little evidence of quantitative issues emerging through other consultations.

Although opinions with regard the overall level of provision are similar across the district, satisfaction in the rural areas is higher despite the apparent lower levels of provision. This is primarily due to the proximity of nearby countryside in addition to the presence of other natural sites of strategic significance located outside of the settlement boundaries. Demand for provision of natural and semi natural open spaces is therefore lower in the rural areas. To take into account these differences, it is recommended that a standard is only set and applied to Droitwich, Pershore, Evesham. The prevalence of large-scale sites and open countryside in the more rural areas is considered to reduce the overall need for formal natural and semi natural provision.

Given the divided opinions in terms of requirement for new provision and the focus on quality emerging through consultations, it is recommended that a standard equivalent to the existing level of provision across the urban area is set. While this will enable locational deficiencies both now and in the future to be addressed, it will enable a focus on improvements to the quality of natural sites across the district, both inside and outside of settlement boundaries.

**Quality Standard (see appendix I)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Recommended standard</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>‘A spacious, clean, well vegetated, litter free site with clear pathways and natural features that encourages wildlife conservation, biodiversity and environmental awareness across all open space sites, where appropriate. There should be a clear focus on balancing recreational and wildlife needs, while ensuring public access where appropriate.’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Justification**

The main issues identified through local consultations centre around litter and dog fouling which is reflected in the need for sites to be clean and litter free. There is an acceptance that current provision is good and although the audit does not include sites outside of settlement boundaries, these are well used and well valued sites. English Nature do identify some pressures on wildlife sites from over-use and this again is reflected in the vision in the need to balance recreation and wildlife needs. There is also a need for the improvement of biodiversity and wildlife value of all open space sites and for this to be incorporated into current structures.
6.11 The application of the quality benchmarking standard (set at a score of 88% on the site assessment for natural and semi natural open space) provides an indication of the desired level of quality suggested at each site and enables a comparison at sites across the District. As described in Appendix K, it highlights sites, which currently meet the visionary standard, and those sites falling below and consequently where improvement is required. A full list of site scores can be found in the natural and semi natural section of appendix L.

6.12 The 5 highest and 5 lowest scoring sites are highlighted in figure 6.3 below. As can be seen below there are three sites scoring 100%. These sites all exceed the quality benchmark score of 88% and a further 5 sites achieve this benchmark. Despite the overall good quality of sites in the district it can be seen that two sites currently fall into the poor / very poor category in terms of quality.

Fig 6.3 – Highest and lowest natural and semi natural quality scores

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quality Level</th>
<th>Score Range</th>
<th>Sites</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| V good        | 90% to 100% | Site ID 730 – Ombersley Way NSN, Droitwich (100%)  
Site ID 1015 – Himbleton NSN, Himbleton (100%)  
Site ID 1059 – The Green NSN, Charlton (100%)  
Site ID 884 – Bowden Green NSN, Droitwich (96%)  
Site ID 310 – Tagwell Road NSN, Droitwich (96%) |
| Good          | 70% to 90%  | Site ID 904 – Bengeworth Brook NSN, Evesham (56%) 
Site ID 1178 – Inches Lane NSN, Evesham (54%) 
Site ID 1156 – Spring Meadow NSN, Droitwich (54%) |
| Average       | 50% to 70%  | Site ID 1226 – Allesborough Hill NSN, Pershore (40%) |
| Poor          | 30% to 50%  | Site ID 1386 – Woodlands Lane NSN, Evesham (30%) |
| V poor        | Below 30%   | Site ID 1386 – Woodlands Lane NSN, Evesham (30%) |
Accessiblity Standard (see appendix J)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Recommended standard</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>URBAN STANDARD:</strong> 15 minutes walk time - (720 metres)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Justification**

The majority of respondents currently walk to natural and semi-natural open spaces. However in terms of expectations, although the emphasis is still on walking at 47%, 45% would expect to drive, highlighting the rural nature of the district.

The standard has been set at the 75% threshold of 15 minutes walk, although the modal answer is 5 minutes walk time, this is not considered realistic for all areas.

The audit focuses on those sites located within settlement boundaries. Within the rural area, there are a large number of sites in the countryside such as woodland and SSSI's. As such it is not considered appropriate to set an access standard within the rural area, but a spatial analysis will be undertaken.

Applying Local Standards

**Applying provision standards – identifying geographical areas**

6.13 In order to identify geographical areas of importance and those areas with required local needs the quantitative provision of natural and semi natural open space in Wychavon should be considered alongside the recommended local standard for accessibility. The quantity standards enable the identification of areas that do not meet the minimum provision standards, while the accessibility standards will help determine where those deficiencies are of high importance. Applying the standards together is a much more meaningful method of analysis than applying the standards separately and therefore helps with the prioritisation of sites.

6.14 Given the geographical nature of Wychavon, the distribution of open space sites and the overlapping roles that parks, natural and semi natural and amenity green space areas play, standards for these typologies have been applied together. This ensures a full understanding of the interaction between the typologies and an assessment of true deficiencies. An application of the local standards for parks, natural and semi natural and amenity green space is therefore set out in Section 8.
SECTION 7

AMENITY GREENSPACE
Amenity greenspace

Definition

7.1 This type of open space is most commonly found in housing areas. It includes informal recreation spaces and greenspaces in and around housing, with a primary purpose of providing opportunities for informal activities close to home or work or enhancing the appearance of residential or other areas.

7.2 Recommendations for future development of amenity green space are set out in section 8, in the context of the inter-related role of this typology with natural and semi-natural and parks and gardens. This section considers the strategic context, key themes emerging from consultation and the development of local standards for amenity green space.

Strategic context and consultation

Strategic context

7.3 The National Playing Field Association (NPFA) guideline ‘6 acre standard’, sets a minimum standard for overall ‘playing space’ of 2.43ha per 1,000 population. Included within this it recommends there should be provision of 2 acres (i.e. 0.6 – 0.8 ha per 1,000 population) for children's playing space. This should include areas designated for children and young people and casual or informal playing space within housing areas e.g. amenity greenspace.

7.4 In addition, the NPFA also recommend that a Local Area of Play (LAP) of a minimum area size of 100msq should be within a 1-minute walk (60m in a straight line). These areas typically have no play equipment and could therefore be considered as amenity greenspace.

7.5 Wychavon District Council also recognise the need to provide informal areas for walking, jogging, sitting etc within the local plan. As a result the Council have increased the standard for public open space to 7 acres (2.8 hectares) per 1,000 population split accordingly: -

- 0.7 hectares for children's play, including equipped and casual space for outdoor play
- 1.7 hectares for sports grounds at least 1.2ha should be for pitch sports and;
- 0.4 hectares for general use, such as informal areas for walking, jogging, sitting etc.

7.6 As a result of the broad nature of this standard and the types of open space it includes, it is not directly comparable with any of the local standards set for Wychavon District Council under PPG17 typologies. The overall standard set out in the local plan represents an amalgamation of individual typologies.
Consultation

7.7 Consultation undertaken as part of the study highlighted the following key issues:

- amenity greenspaces are used more than once a month by 31% of respondents to the household survey. In contrast, 35% use them less than once a month. Amenity green space is the fourth most frequently used open space. The landscape benefits derived from this type of open space must also not be overlooked.

- IT Young People survey identified “grassy areas within housing developments” as the second most frequently used type of open space (second to play areas). This highlights the importance of these sites as informal play sites for children and young people.

- the quality of amenity greenspaces across the district was considered to be average with 28% of respondents to the household survey feeling sites were good quality and only 15% considering rating them as poor

- there were limited comments regarding amenity green space emerging through qualitative consultations and most of those received relate to specific sites. These comments themselves were contrasting, with comments ranging from sites that were high quality to those that felt that litter and vandalism were significant problems that detracted from the amenity value of the site.

Current position

7.8 Amenity green space sites are sporadically located across Wychavon in both small and large settlements. Sizes of sites vary significantly however. While some sites visually break up the urban area and provide landscape benefits, others are more important for the informal recreation opportunities they provide. Amenity spaces are often of particular importance in the rural areas, providing important recreational spaces such as village greens or recreation grounds that may be the only open space in the village.

7.9 Amenity greenspace sites may also provide a resource to meet deficiencies in other typologies e.g. play provision or outdoor sports facilities.

7.10 The provision of amenity greenspace in the district is summarised overleaf in table 7.1.

Table 7.1 – Provision of Amenity Greenspace in Wychavon

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Geographical Area</th>
<th>Number of sites</th>
<th>Hectares per 1000</th>
<th>Range of quality scores</th>
<th>Average quality score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Droitwich</td>
<td>126</td>
<td>1.19</td>
<td>20% - 100%</td>
<td>76%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evesham</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>0.56</td>
<td>44% - 100%</td>
<td>82%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pershore</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>0.52</td>
<td>34% - 100%</td>
<td>75%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural North</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>0.34</td>
<td>34% - 100%</td>
<td>72%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural South</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>0.49</td>
<td>20% - 100%</td>
<td>80%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
7.11 The key issues emerging from table 7.1 include:

- The amount of amenity green space in Droitwich is far in excess of any other area of the district. At 1.19 hectares per 1000 population, there is over double the amount in any other area. However, many of these sites are small pieces of land located within the streetscape of the residential areas. These sites may have limited functionality in terms of recreation and may be important for their visual and landscape benefits.

- The other urban areas of Evesham and Pershore are very even in terms of the amount of amenity greenspace per 1,000 population and considering the size of the two areas, pro-rata they have a similar number of sites.

- Provision is lowest in the rural areas, particularly the rural north. This may be expected to an extent as there is a reduced reliance on amenity spaces in the more rural areas due to the presence of nearby countryside.

- The quality of amenity greenspace sites across each analysis area varies considerably as indicated by the significant difference in the range of scores. This variation can be seen across all geographical areas, however, all areas have sites that are perceived excellent and have scored 100%. The average quality score is over 70% in each area, suggesting that on the whole provision is good.

Setting provision standards

7.12 In setting local standards for amenity greenspaces there is a need to take into account any national or local standards, current provision, other Local Authority standards for appropriate comparison, site assessments and consultation on local needs. Full justifications for the local standards are provided within Appendix H, I and J. The recommended local standards have been summarised overleaf in context with the amenity greenspace sites in Wychavon.
SECTION 7 – AMENITY GREENSPACE

**Quantity Standard (see appendix H – standards and justification, worksheet and calculator)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Existing level of provision</th>
<th>Recommended standard</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0.61 ha per 1000 population</td>
<td>0.61 hectares per 1000 population</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Justification**

The range of provision across the district is relatively consistent with the exception of Droitwich (where provision is significantly higher), as is the overall perception of the quantity of amenity green spaces being about right. Overall, there is a slight emphasis towards people thinking that there are not enough open space sites. The district wide level of provision is equivalent to 0.61 hectares per 1000 population. Although this is skewed by the presence of a very high number of sites in Droitwich, it is considered appropriate as a recommended local standard as it is representative of the desire for increased provision in other areas and a focus on quality in areas that are well served.

A standard just above the existing level of provision ensures that the perception of insufficient provision across the areas is taken into account and that existing open spaces are protected but does not place unrealistic demands on the Council for new provision now and in the future. Although provision in Droitwich is significantly above the minimum standard, this should be considered in the context of the application of the accessibility standards.

**Quality Standard (see appendix I)**

**Recommended standard**

“A clean and well-maintained site with appropriate ancillary accommodation (seating, dog and litter bins etc), pathways and landscaping in the right places providing a spacious outlook and overall enhancing the appearance of the local environment. Larger sites should be suitable for informal play opportunities and should be enhanced to encourage the site to become a community focus, while smaller sites should at the least provide an important visual amenity function.”

**Justification**

Although based on the consultation responses, the standard also incorporates elements of standards set for other authorities due to the limited response rate. One of the important aspects incorporated into the vision is for a spacious outlook and also ensuring suitability for informal play. This is in line with comments from the IT young people survey and other comments for other open spaces - the need to relieve pressure and conflicts of users on other sites.

Amenity greenspaces can serve an important function in urban areas breaking up the urban fabric and similarly within rural villages, potentially as the only open space within the village itself (village green) and it therefore also has an important visual function if not recreational. Experience from other studies has highlighted problems with providing small functionless areas of open space in new housing development, creating maintenance issues. As such, there is a focus on ensuring that smaller sites do provide an important function.

The household survey indicates relatively low levels of quality and it is important that this is addressed through the application of the quality vision.
Quality Benchmarking

7.13 The application of the quality benchmarking standard (set at a score of 88% on the site assessment for amenity greenspace) provides an indication of the desired level of quality suggested at each site and enables a comparison at sites across the District. As described in Appendix K, it highlights sites, which currently meet the visionary standard, and those sites falling below and consequently where improvement is required. A full list of site scores can be found in the amenity greenspace section of Appendix L. As can be seen, the overall quality of amenity green space sites is good with 92 sites achieving the quality benchmark score. Despite this, along with natural and semi natural open spaces a great variation in terms of the quality of amenity green spaces can be seen, with many sites rated as poor. This not only highlights the varying quality of sites but illustrates key areas for improvement.

7.14 The 5 highest and 5 lowest scoring sites are highlighted in figure 7.3 below

**Fig 7.3 – Highest and lowest amenity green space quality scores**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quality Level</th>
<th>Score Range</th>
<th>Site ID</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>V good</td>
<td>90% to 100%</td>
<td>Site ID 1130 – Steynors Avenue Park, Droitwich</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Site ID 791 – Addyes Way AGS 4, Droitwich</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Site ID 1509 – Elmley Castle</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Site ID 824 – Highfield Road AGS, Evesham</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Site ID 1539 – Broadway</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good</td>
<td>70% to 90%</td>
<td>Site ID 280 – Stouton Croft AGS, Droitwich</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Site ID 1117 – Worcester Road AGS, Wyre Piddle</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Site ID 502 – Off Meadow Road AGS2, Droitwich</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Site ID 532 – Hunters Way AGS, Droitwich</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Site ID 1558 – Worcester Road AGS, Pirton</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average</td>
<td>50% to 70%</td>
<td>Site ID 502 – Off Meadow Road AGS2, Droitwich</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poor</td>
<td>30% to 50%</td>
<td>Site ID 280 – Stouton Croft AGS, Droitwich</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Site ID 1117 – Worcester Road AGS, Wyre Piddle</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Site ID 502 – Off Meadow Road AGS2, Droitwich</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Site ID 532 – Hunters Way AGS, Droitwich</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Site ID 1558 – Worcester Road AGS, Pirton</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V poor</td>
<td>Below 30%</td>
<td>Site ID 502 – Off Meadow Road AGS2, Droitwich</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Site ID 532 – Hunters Way AGS, Droitwich</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Site ID 1558 – Worcester Road AGS, Pirton</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Accessibility Standard (see appendix J)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Recommended standard</th>
<th>Justification</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10 minutes walk (480 metres)</td>
<td>A walking standard has been set in line with the consultation responses and the fact that this is a local type of open space that should be easy for residents to access. The 75% threshold level borough-wide is 10 minutes. Across the analysis areas, the 75% threshold ranges from 5 to 10 minutes (with four out of the five analysis areas 10 minutes). Standards set for other authorities range between 5 and 10 minutes but are generally set around 5 minutes walk. It is therefore a mixed picture with the general emphasis from the consultations on a 10 minute walk time standard. Although benchmarking is important, PPG17 stipulates that the standard should reflect local needs. The standard is set at 10 minutes in line with the 75% level.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Applying local standards

Applying provision standards – identifying geographical areas

7.15 In order to identify geographical areas of importance and those areas with required local needs the quantitative provision of amenity green space in Wychavon should be considered alongside the recommended local standard for accessibility. The quantity standards enable the identification of areas that do not meet the minimum provision standards, while the accessibility standards will help determine where those deficiencies are of high importance. Applying the standards together is a much more meaningful method of analysis than applying the standards separately and therefore helps with the prioritisation of sites.

7.16 Given the geographical nature of Wychavon, the distribution of open space sites and the overlapping roles that parks, natural and semi natural and amenity green space areas play, standards for these typologies have been applied together. This is particularly important for amenity green space sites in the urban area where there are significant overlaps between the functions of local amenity space and parks and gardens.

7.17 Application of these standards in the context of each other ensures a full understanding of the interaction between the typologies and an assessment of true deficiencies. An application of the local standards for parks, natural and semi natural and amenity green space is therefore set out in Section 8.
SECTION 8

APPLICATION OF STANDARDS FOR RECREATIONAL OPEN SPACE
Application of standards for recreational open space

8.1 Given the geographical nature of Wychavon, the distribution of open space sites and the overlapping roles that parks, natural and semi natural and amenity green space areas play, standards for these typologies have been applied together. This ensures a full understanding of the interaction between the typologies and an assessment of true deficiencies. There is a danger that looking at each typology in isolation would lead to unrealistic expectations of what can be delivered and what is required to meet the demand in each area of the district.

8.2 Parks and gardens are primarily located in the main towns, while amenity spaces can provide this functionality in the smaller settlements as well as complementing the provision of parks gardens in the more urban areas. There are a large number of strategically important natural and semi natural sites across Wychavon, and accessibility to these sites is important. Although these have been excluded from the calculation of the quantity standard for natural and semi natural open spaces, the location and significance of these sites will be considered in the context of natural and semi natural sites.

8.3 The application of the local standards is driven by identifying deficiencies in accessibility and also areas of quantitative deficiency or surplus. Deficiencies in accessibility are defined by applying the local derived accessibility standards to give an indication of those areas served and not served by existing provision. Areas of quantitative deficiency or surplus can be identified by applying the quantity standard to the population within the effective catchment of each different type of open space or sport or recreation facility, for each form of provision.

8.4 The focus for additional provision to meet local need is therefore twofold:

- areas outside the distance threshold of existing facilities or spaces
- areas within the distance threshold of existing provision in which there is a quantitative deficiency in provision.

8.5 The level of provision in each analysis area, for each type of recreational open space when measured against the recommended local standard is set out below in table 8.1. Areas of quantitative shortfall are highlighted in red.

8.6 Analysis of the quantitative data provides background information into the spatial distribution of open spaces of each typology across Wychavon and represents a starting point for identifying accessibility deficiencies. For example, where provision is lowest, it could imply that this area may have the greatest need for additional provision to address accessibility deficiencies. Alternatively, application of the accessibility standard may indicate that despite quantitative deficiencies, distribution of sites is good and there are few accessibility deficiencies. This may indicate that some sites within the area are serving high numbers of residents and there are therefore capacity issues. It is important to note that even where levels of provision are above the applied local standard, this does not mean that locational deficiencies do not exist within that analysis area.
Table 5.2 – Shortfalls / Surplus for Informal Open Space (ha)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Analysis Area</th>
<th>Parks current provision</th>
<th>Parks (Current)</th>
<th>Parks (Future)</th>
<th>Natural open spaces current provision</th>
<th>Natural open spaces (current)</th>
<th>Natural open spaces (future)</th>
<th>Amenity Green Spaces Current Provision</th>
<th>Amenity Green Spaces (current)</th>
<th>Amenity Green Spaces (future)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Droitwich</td>
<td>22.96</td>
<td>5.57</td>
<td>4.81</td>
<td>24.22</td>
<td>7.06</td>
<td>6.31</td>
<td>25.90</td>
<td>11.94</td>
<td>11.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evesham</td>
<td>10.98</td>
<td>-7.99</td>
<td>-8.82</td>
<td>7.75</td>
<td>10.87</td>
<td>11.79</td>
<td>13.96</td>
<td>1.27</td>
<td>1.93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pershore</td>
<td>7.9</td>
<td>2.35</td>
<td>2.11</td>
<td>9.62</td>
<td>4.14</td>
<td>3.90</td>
<td>3.77</td>
<td>-0.69</td>
<td>-0.88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural North</td>
<td>0.07</td>
<td>-2.42</td>
<td>-2.53</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>8.53</td>
<td>-6.68</td>
<td>-7.34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural South</td>
<td>5.59</td>
<td>2.30</td>
<td>2.16</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>16.20</td>
<td>-3.86</td>
<td>-4.73</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

8.7 As can be seen above, the application of the local quantitative standard across the geographical areas of Wychavon highlights that:

- Droitwich is the only area of the district with a surplus in all three types of open space. Indeed, it is the only area where the amount of amenity greenspace meets the minimum recommended standard. In contrast, Evesham has a shortfall of all three types of open space.

- although there is sufficient provision of parks and gardens and natural and semi natural open spaces in Pershore, there are small quantitative deficiencies of amenity green space. These shortfalls should be considered in the context of the other open space types, recognising the multifunctionality of these open spaces.

- when measuring current provision against the recommended local standards in quantitative terms, there are deficiencies of amenity green space across the district with the exception of Droitwich. Although there are also shortfalls of parks and gardens, these are not as widespread as deficiencies in amenity spaces. Despite this, where deficiencies are evident these tend to be larger than those related to amenity green space. Only Evesham exhibits a shortfall in the provision of natural and semi natural open space.

- in addition to assessing provision against current demand it is also important to consider the likely adequacy of open spaces in future years, taking into account potential population growth. As illustrated in the above table (which applies current provision to the likely future population in each area), any current shortfalls in provision are likely to increase in future years if not addressed. Deficiencies in the three main towns where growth is likely to be focused are therefore of particular importance. There are currently shortfalls of provision across Evesham of all three types of open space. Residents living within villages generally do not expect the same level of provision and frequently travel to the main towns.
8.8 Map 8.1 below provides an overview of the District and shows the spatial distribution of parks and gardens, amenity greenspace and natural and semi natural areas. Consideration of the provision within the three main towns will then be considered in more detail.

Map 8.1 – Provision of Parks and gardens, natural and semi natural areas and amenity green spaces in Wychavon
8.9 As can be seen from map 8.1, the distribution of recreational open space is relatively even across the district with most residents able to access one or more space falling into the category of parks and gardens, natural and semi natural and amenity green spaces. Although the main towns are the key focus for provision of open space sites, there is also provision within a high proportion of rural settlements in the district.

8.10 Parks and gardens are located predominantly in the main towns serving the larger residential areas. This is not surprising due to the strategic importance and the size and nature of these facilities. The one exception to this is the Memorial Gardens in Hanbury, although this is a small garden site compared to the main town parks.

8.11 Natural and semi natural and amenity areas are more widely dispersed across the district. There are many rural villages with access to natural and semi natural or amenity green space sites. These amenities generally serve the residents of the village in which they are located. Deficiencies in any rural settlement should be considered on an individual basis assessing the demand for types of open space.

8.12 In addition to considering the local provision of parks, natural and semi natural and amenity green space sites, it is important to take into account the influence that wider strategic sites have on the overall level of and access to recreational open space in Wychavon. Maps 8.2 and 8.3 below illustrate the provision of strategic sites across the district including nature reserves and SSSI sites.

Map 8.2 – Wychavon North SSSI’s and Special Wildlife Sites
8.13 As can be seen there is a good spread of Sites of Special Scientific Interest dispersed across Wychavon, located predominantly within the rural areas. These sites vary in size and character but provide additional resources for residents which are complementary to the provision of natural and semi natural sites and also to parks and gardens and amenity spaces.

8.14 A detailed assessment of the provision of parks, natural and semi natural and amenity green space sites in each geographical area of the district is set out below.

**Droitwich**

8.15 Maps 8.4 and 8.5 overleaf illustrate the spatial distribution of parks and gardens, amenity greenspace and natural and semi natural areas within the Droitwich area.
8.16 Map 8.4 highlights accessibility deficiencies across the southern and north western, areas of Droitwich. The lack of access to parks in these areas is due to the location of the three parks, (Vines Park, Lido Park and St Peter’s Field) in the north and central eastern parts of the town.

8.17 The distribution of amenity greenspace and natural areas illustrated on map 8.5 below provides a good example of the interrelationship between parks and gardens and amenity and natural open spaces. It is evident that there are significant areas of both types of open space within the area previously highlighted as deficient in parks and in contrast, residents living within the catchment of parks have more limited access to amenity and natural spaces.

8.18 The accessibility catchments for natural and semi natural areas show an extensive coverage across the town with only a very small group of residents in the centre outside of the distance threshold. This is understandable due to the density of housing and the characteristics of the area. There are also a number of Sites of Special Scientific Interest located close to Droitwich that provide additional natural open space for residents.
8.19 In summary:

- the overall distribution of open space in Droitwich is very good, especially for amenity greenspace and natural and semi natural areas

- the amount of each of the open space types in relation to the quantity standards suggest that there is more than enough space overall to meet the needs of the population of Droitwich

- despite the good levels of provision, there are some accessibility deficiencies of parks and gardens and a small area for natural and semi natural provision. Although there are no areas where residents do not have access to any of the three types of open space.

**Evesham**

8.20 Application of the quantitative standards suggests that the greatest shortfalls of provision across parks and gardens, natural and semi natural open spaces and amenity green spaces are in Evesham.

8.21 There are five parks and gardens within Evesham all of which are all located adjacent to the River Avon that runs through the centre of the town. Abbey Park has
been awarded Green Flag status, reinforcing the excellent quality and continued maintenance of the site. This site is a key strategic site for the district as a whole.

Map 8.6 – Parks and garden distribution across Evesham

8.22 The map indicates there are accessibility deficiencies for residents living in certain areas of the town. Most notably to the north, a small area to the west and the edge of the town from the east down towards the southern tip.

8.23 These deficiencies correlate to the shortfall of provision highlighted through the quantity standards that suggest there may be demand for additional provision. It may also be that current parks are serving higher numbers of residents, as there are insufficient parks to support the total number of residents in the area.

8.24 In contrast, when looking at the provision of natural and semi natural spaces and amenity greenspace (map 8.7), it can be seen that the provision is dispersed very well across the town with the only residents outside the catchment being those that live in the relatively small area in the south which is also deficient in parks and gardens.
8.25 In summary:

- the overall distribution of natural and semi natural and amenity greenspace sites across Evesham is good with only small areas outside of any catchment. Although the quality of parks and gardens in Evesham is excellent all sites are focussed around the centre of the town and there are therefore many residents outside the distance thresholds for parks.

- although distribution on the whole is good, there are large deficiencies with the amount of each type of open space compared to the levels required by the quantity standards. This indicates that the existing sites are likely to be well used and used above their recommended capacity in some instances.

- although there are some residents outside of the catchment for parks and gardens, all residents apart from a small section of those living to the south have got access to at least one open space type. The lack of open space provision in this area should be considered as priority.
Pershore

8.26 The two parks and gardens sites are linked to each other and therefore serve the same residents (see Map 8.8 below). The main park (Abbey Park) is in the southern section of the area and therefore residents in the north of the town are outside of the 15-minute walk time accessibility catchment. Despite these deficiencies, application of the quantity standard suggests that there is sufficient provision to serve the residents of Pershore.

8.27 In contrast, the natural and semi-natural areas cover the northern part of the town leaving a deficiency in the south. However, as shown previously in map 8.3 there are large Sites of Special Scientific Interest to the West and South of Pershore. Although these may fall outside of the walk time accessibility standards they will still provide valuable provision.

8.28 Maps 8.8 and 8.9 below show the spatial distribution of all three typologies across Pershore.

Map 8.8 – Parks and gardens and natural and semi natural distribution across Pershore

8.29 As can be seen from map 8.9 below, there are no areas of deficiency with regards to amenity greenspace and many sites serve the same residents. However, the distribution of the number of sites is weighted towards the southern and central areas with only one small site covering the northern part of the town.
8.30 In summary:

- the overall distribution of amenity greenspace sites is good however there is a small deficiency of this type of open space across the town when assessing the quantity standards indicating that sites may be over capacity in some areas. There is only one site in the north of the town whereas the rest of the town is well catered for.

- the quality of parks and gardens in Pershore is good and although there are access issues for people living in the north of the town, there is an excess of parks and garden space when looking at provision from a quantitative perspective. Likewise with natural and semi natural areas there are areas to the south outside of the catchment but the quantity standards indicate more than enough of this type of open space.

Rural areas

8.31 Map 8.1 shown earlier within this section provides an overview of the district wide distribution of parks and gardens, amenity greenspace and natural and semi natural areas and shows that overall there is a good distribution of recreational spaces in the rural area, despite a focus on provision in the more urban areas. Despite the good level of provision in the rural areas, the application of quantitative standards suggests
that there are deficiencies in both areas in terms of amenity green spaces and in the Rural North area where there is insufficient provision of parks.

8.32 It is also important to consider the Sites of Special Scientific Interest in the context of the provision of the more formal types of open space. These sites provide nationally recognised resources which complement the other types of space provision. They are located predominantly in the rural area and hence represent an important resource for people living in these settlements. Their value must not be underestimated, particularly given that most of the more formal parks and gardens area located in the more urban areas of the district.

8.33 It can be seen from the map that provision of parks is focussed around the three main towns. The strategic nature and quality of the larger park facilities should enable them to be accessed by the majority of the population within the district area and ensures that people are more willing to travel to reach these key sites.

8.34 Parks are usually larger open spaces with a variety of functions and the same amount of space would not be expected in smaller settlements. For rural settlements amenity greenspace sites such as village greens or outdoor sports facilities, such as recreation grounds that have a secondary amenity function, may provide the same multi function as a strategic park but on a much smaller scale.

8.35 It is not appropriate to consider natural and semi natural spaces within the rural areas as the study focuses primarily on settlement boundaries. There are many natural sites such as woodlands within the district that are outside of the settlement boundaries as well as a large amount of accessible countryside. These natural sites have not been plotted but Sites of Special Scientific Interest and Special Wildlife sites can be seen on maps 8.2 and 8.3. These show a number of sites across the district that provide additional provision and are very important to protect.

Value assessment and recommendations

8.36 Good quality, accessible sites generally have a high level of usage as these factors are interrelated. Sites serving a unique catchment are also often of high value.

8.37 It is important to note that the overall quality of provision for these three typologies is very good and there are a large number of excellent quality sites across each type, in particular parks and gardens. Therefore, the aspirational quality benchmark figure for each is set high to reflect this. For sites that have scored below the quality benchmark, many of these sites are still of good quality with only slight improvements needed to reach the standard.

8.38 Although analysis of the geographical distribution of facilities suggests a good spread of provision with the majority of residents within an appropriate catchment of at least one type of facility, there remain some deficiencies, particularly in Evesham. In light of future population growth (in addition to meeting the current needs of residents), the feasibility of providing facilities in areas of deficiency in the towns specifically should be investigated. Existing sites that are of high value or have high usage levels should also be protected.
| PAN1 | Protect all parks and gardens as they are of strategic importance, have high usage and are of high value to residents. Seek to continually improve these sites to maintain the high standards and ensure they meet the quality benchmark. The criteria outlined in the nationally recognised Green Flag assessment should also continue to be viewed as a symbol of good quality provision in the district. |
| PAN2 | Protect all amenity greenspace sites that receive high levels of usage and are well valued by the local community. Consider improving any of these sites that do not meet the quality benchmark to ensure their value to residents is maximised. 
Amenity space sites located in areas where residents are outside of the catchment area for parks and gardens are of particular value and should be enhanced and maintained.
Particular consideration should be given to the amenity green space sites in the district that are considered to be of either poor quality or low use as it may be that they are better suited to an alternative open space function in order to best meet the needs of local residents. These sites may offer opportunities for redesignation, particularly if they also serve overlapping catchments (see PAN 7) |
| PAN3 | Protect natural and semi natural open spaces that are well used or highly valued, enhancing any appropriate sites that do not meet the quality benchmark. 
Particular consideration should be given to the natural and semi natural sites in the district that are considered to be of either poor quality or low use as it may be that they are better suited to an alternative open space function in order to best meet the needs of local residents. |
| PAN4 | Address deficiencies in provision of all three types of open space in the towns. Any new sites should adhere to minimum size criteria and quality visions. This is detailed further in section 15, planning overview. A balance of all three types of open space should be ensured. Deficiencies highlighted include: 
Droitwich | P&G – Large area spanning from the north west corner down the west side of the town towards the south east 
AGS – Small area to the south east |
| Evesham | P&G – Small area to the north, small area to the west and expanse from the eastern edge of the town down to the south 
AGS and NSN – Small area to the south west |
| Pershore | P&G – The north of the town 
NSN – The south of the town |
SECTION 8 – APPLICATION OF STANDARDS FOR RECREATIONAL OPEN SPACE

8.39 It is important to ensure that there is a balance of all types of facilities across each area. Deficiencies of certain types of open space may be addressed through the redesignation of other types of open space. The multifunctionality of informal open space sites (for example parks and gardens play a similar role to amenity space sites but offer more amenities to residents) means that where parks are provided it may not be necessary to also provide more informal amenity open space as the park addresses both functions.

| PAN5 | Where there is a deficiency of parks and gardens, but an oversupply of amenity greenspace, consider enhancing the amenity greenspace to provide a small park or garden facility to ensure that residents have access to as wide as possible variety of provision. |

8.40 Sites that offer the only provision within the area (i.e. serve unique catchments) for any of the three types but do not meet the quality benchmark standard should be protected. Qualitative improvements should be considered to ensure that all residents have access to and benefit from good quality facilities.

| PAN6 | Sites that do not meet the quality benchmark standard but serve unique catchments should be protected and considered for qualitative improvements. |

8.41 Analysis of the current distribution of facilities in the towns highlights a number of overlapping catchments (illustrated on maps 8.4 to 8.9) where sites are serving similar residents. This may negatively impact on the usage of sites and requires higher levels of revenue funding. Relocation of some facilities may ensure that provision meets needs of residents in some areas that are presently deficient.

| PAN7 | Where there are areas with overlapping catchments, further investigation should be made into the value of these sites (quality and access) and the level of usage. Where value is deemed to be low, relocation should be considered. |

8.42 When looking at the rural areas, it may not be appropriate for residents to have access to all types of facilities. Therefore it is essential that the secondary function of open spaces within village settlements is considered when assessing the real need for additional provision. Outdoor sports facilities often have an amenity role to play within villages.

| PAN8 | Protect all open spaces within village settlements. |

| PAN9 | Consider the needs and requirements of each village on an individual basis, enhancing the quality and range of provision where appropriate encouraging the multi-functionality of current provision. New provision will only be required in villages where demand is identified. |
8.43 The role of Sites of Special Scientific Interest and Special Wildlife Sites are extremely important for the natural environment within Wychavon both in terms of public amenity, visual benefits and wildlife enhancements. They offer additional and valuable resources, particularly in the rural areas.

| PAN10 | Protect all SSSI and Special Wildlife sites. Any funding opportunities for the further conservation and development of these sites should be maximised. |

8.44 The Council has devised management plans for the key strategic parks in the district. As a result these sites are all very good quality and there is an ethos of continuous improvement and enhancement. The plans are key to achieving the aims and objectives for specific sites.

| PAN11 | Update current management plans when appropriate and consider the development of further plans for other large sites to ensure they are being used to their full potential and enhanced accordingly to meet the needs of the local population |

8.45 In addition to ensuring the provision of open space in the towns meets current needs, consideration must also be given to future needs in light of future growth aspirations in the district. This is discussed in more detail in section 15, planning overview.

| PAN12 | Any new housing developments should take into account the need for all three open space types. This is particularly important in areas where there is currently no demand (i.e. no houses) but may be allocated for development in future years. |

8.46 The delivery of open space has a key role to play in improving the health and physical activity of everyone nationally, regionally and locally in Wychavon.

| PAN13 | The findings of this study should ensure that future investment is directed into the most appropriate provision to meet current and future needs. A strategy for the future direction of green space provision and an associated action plan for improvement and enhancements should also be developed. |

Summary

8.47 Although Wychavon District Council has a key role to play in the provision of facilities across the district, Parish and Town Councils are also important providers of open spaces.

8.48 Consultation highlighted a high level of satisfaction with the parks and gardens within Wychavon. They are very well used and the quality was commended throughout the consultation process. It is therefore very important to continue the good work to enable them to continue satisfying the residents.

8.49 Amenity greenspace sites should be assessed on an individual basis due to the range of perceptions in each area. There are sites that range from poor to very good
within each area. These areas were deemed to be extremely important to children and young people who are able to use many of these sites as informal play areas.

8.50 It is important to take into account the secondary function of other open space types, especially in rural settlements where outdoor sports facilities often provide an amenity greenspace function and formal facilities such as play equipment.

8.51 The application of the local standards, which highlights significant areas of quantitative deficiency in Evesham. In contrast, Droitwich is deemed to have an adequate amount of provision. Each town has areas of accessibility deficiency, that should be looked into to either provide additional facilities or enhance or re-designate current provision.

8.52 Provision of the parks is a key strategic area and it is extremely important that there is continued maintenance, enhancements and planning to ensure they continue to provide the best possible facilities for the residents. Parks are particularly valued by residents and all parks should be protected.

8.53 The provision of all three types of open space should be considered when dealing with S106 contributions from new developments.
SECTION 9

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE
Provision for children and young people

Definition

9.1 This type of open space includes areas such as equipped play areas, ball courts, skateboard areas and teenage shelters with the primary purpose of providing opportunities for play and social interaction involving both children and young people.

9.2 It is important to re-iterate that play facilities designed for children have been assessed separately to those for young people. Throughout this section they will be considered separately but also in the context of each other.

9.3 This typology also has many wider benefits as supported by the site assessments. All sites were perceived to have social inclusion and health benefits.

Figure 9.1 – The Lenches Play Area

Strategic context and consultation

*Strategic context*

9.4 National Standards for provision for children and young people are set out in the NPFA 6 Acre Standard per 1000 population for “playing space” consisting of 2 acres (0.6 – 0.8 hectares) for children’s playing space – which includes areas designated for children and young people and casual or informal playing space within housing areas.

9.5 The Wychavon Local Plan sets a standard of 0.7 hectares for children’s play, including equipped and casual space for outdoor play per 1,000 population which is in line with the national guidelines. This is not directly comparable with provision for children and young people as outlined in this typology as it includes informal amenity space used for children’s play.
SECTIO N 9 – PROVI SSION F OR CHIL DREN AND YOUNG PE OPLE

9.6 The NPFA has also developed nationally recognised standards for different types of provision for children and young people, specifically NEAPS (neighbourhood areas for play), LEAPS (local equipped areas for play) and LAPs (local areas for play).

9.7 One of the key actions in Wychavon’s Community Plan is to help create new play areas and improve existing ones by giving Community Grants where local people show there is a priority need. This shows the commitment of the Council in providing amenities for children and young people.

Consultation

9.8 Consultation specific to children and young people was undertaken using a variety of research techniques and findings have been used to inform the local standards, ensuring they are reflective of local needs. Key themes emerging from consultations include:

- responses to the household survey indicate a fairly even split in opinion regarding the quantitative provision of play areas with 39% feeling it to be about right and 31% believing there to be deficiencies

- one of the recurring themes at all external consultations was the need for more interesting play equipment. The IT young people survey showed that 65% of respondents believed play facilities to be ‘boring’. The new water play facilities in the three main towns were highlighted as good examples of interesting play areas.

- overall, the quality of play area provision for children and young people across the district is considered to be good. This was reflected as a common theme at drop-in sessions, internal consultations and through the household survey. It shows that a focus on quantitative issues is of greater importance than rectifying qualitative problems.

- the household survey highlighted that the majority of users walk to use play areas (49%). This reinforces the importance of having local facilities close to homes especially for younger children.

Current position

9.9 The provision of children and young people in the district is summarised below in tables 9.1 and 9.2.

Table 9.1 – Provision for Children in Wychavon

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Geographical Area</th>
<th>Number of sites</th>
<th>Hectares per 1000</th>
<th>Range of quality scores</th>
<th>Average quality score</th>
<th>Average Accessibility Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Droitwich</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0.35</td>
<td>56% - 100%</td>
<td>91%</td>
<td>97%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evesham</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0.47</td>
<td>76% - 100%</td>
<td>94%</td>
<td>94%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pershore</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.17</td>
<td>96% - 100%</td>
<td>98%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural North</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>2.18</td>
<td>96% - 100%</td>
<td>98%</td>
<td>91%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural South</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>20% - 100%</td>
<td>88%</td>
<td>82%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 9.2 – Provision for Young People in Wychavon

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Geographical Area</th>
<th>Number of sites</th>
<th>Hectares per 1000</th>
<th>Range of quality scores</th>
<th>Average quality score</th>
<th>Average Accessibility Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Droitwich</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0.43</td>
<td>76% 100%</td>
<td>86%</td>
<td>85%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evesham</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0.25</td>
<td>76% - 100%</td>
<td>84%</td>
<td>57%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pershore</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural North</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural South</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0.55</td>
<td>20% - 96%</td>
<td>61%</td>
<td>57%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

9.10 The key issues emerging from tables 9.1 and 9.2 include:

- the Rural South has by far the greatest amount of provision, however, this area incorporates more village settlements than any other area and many villages have a play facility. Parish Councils are responsible for the provision of facilities in the villages and it may therefore be expected that there is a greater number in this area.

- the three main town areas have significantly less provision than their rural counterparts although they have a greater percentage of the district’s population. Provision per 1000 people is therefore significantly lower. Despite this, all sites scored highly in terms of excellent, indicating that there should be few barriers to usage. Pershore has the smallest amount of area assigned to play facilities with 0.17 hectares in total.

- there are no facilities for young people in Pershore or the Rural North which means that young people in these areas have to travel greater distances to access a suitable facility

- the average quality of children’s facilities is very good with few sites scoring below 75%. This re-iterates the need for quantitative improvements rather than qualitative across most of the district.

- the quality of the existing provision for young people is generally good except for one poor site located within the Rural South area which is the play area off Blacksmiths Lane in Beckford (site ID 1267).

Setting provision standards

9.11 In setting local standards for children and young people provision there is a need to take into account any national or existing local standards, current provision, other Local Authority standards for appropriate comparison and consultation on local needs.

9.12 A full assessment of local needs both district wide and within each area has been undertaken for Wychevnon, and the key messages emerging from this assessment, coupled with an evaluation of the existing audit have been used to determine provision standards required to meet local needs.
9.13 For the purposes of the study, provision for children and young people and the associated recommended standards do not take into account informal play opportunities provided by amenity greenspace, natural areas or outdoor sports facilities. As a result the standards and levels of provision are based on the area and number of designated sites with fixed equipment or boundaries only and are not directly comparable with NPFA standards set out in the Wychavon District Local Plan.

9.14 The process for setting each type of standard is outlined in section two. The rationale for each recommendation, including assessment of local need, existing provision and consultation is provided in Appendix H, I and J. The recommended local standards have been summarised below.

**Quantity Standard (see appendix H – standards and justification, worksheet and calculator)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Existing level of equipped provision</th>
<th>Recommended equipped provision standard</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Children</strong> - 0.05 hectares per 1000 population or 0.46 facilities per 1000 population</td>
<td><strong>Children</strong> - 0.07 hectares per 1000 population</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Young People</strong> - 0.01 hectares per 1000 population</td>
<td><strong>Young People</strong> - 0.02 hectares per 1000 population</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Justification**

**Children**

While the current level of provision is spread evenly across the urban area, provision is higher in the rural areas, reflecting the dispersed nature of these settlements and the high levels of provision by Parish Councils. A key theme emerging from the consultation has been a shortage of provision for children, although this frequently relates to a perceived shortage of equipment at existing sites as opposed to real deficiencies of facilities. These concerns were supplemented by comments regarding the quality of existing sites, although many residents also provided examples of good practice.

The standard has been set above the current level of district wide provision to encourage small quantities of new provision in some areas (the more urban areas), and quality improvements in other areas (the more rural areas). Based on a minimum LAP size of 100m², the standard is equivalent to 1 LAP per 142 population. This should be treated as a minimum level of provision.

The recommended standard would result in a requirement up to 2011 (based on population projections) for an additional 20,800m² to satisfy the local standard (see quantity worksheet). As it currently stands, there are 52 sites in Wychavon, each averaging 1200m². Assuming that sites continue to be delivered at this average size, there would be a requirement for approximately 17 new sites to meet the demands of the existing population and the predicted growth in population. Given the comments from residents regarding the size of the facilities, it is suggested that provision is delivered at an appropriate scale taking into consideration the size of the village / town and the location and type of provision within the area. Application of the recommended quantity standard alongside the accessibility standard would highlight priority areas of deficiency.
SECTION 9 – PROVISION FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

**Young People**

A key theme emerging from the consultation has been a shortage of provision for both young people and children. This is supplemented by comments regarding the quality of existing sites and a perception that there are localised shortfalls. At 0.01 facilities per 1000 population provision is significantly below that for children and the distribution across the district is uneven. Given the strong emphasis on increased requirements for provision for young people and children, it is recommended that the standard is set at above the current level of provision in order to ensure that localised deficiencies are met.

Analysis of the spread of provision across the district highlights an imbalance, with no provision in either Pershore or the rural North but 0.02 ha per 1000 in Droitwich. Given that the district wide level of provision is 0.01, implementation of a standard of 0.02 would recognise the need for increased levels of provision but support the perception that Droitwich is perhaps the best served of the settlements currently.

The recommended standard would result in a requirement up to 2021 (based on population projections) for an additional 11,300m² to satisfy the local standard (see quantity worksheet). As it currently stands, there are 11 sites in Wychavon, averaging approximately 1,100m². Assuming that sites continue to be delivered at this average size, there would be a requirement for approximately 10 new sites, taking into account both current unmet demand and population projections. In general, deficiencies in the larger towns should be prioritised however the application of the quantity and accessibility standards will help identify locational deficiencies across the district.

Within this standard per 1000 population, it is recommended that the Council aim to deliver an appropriate scale of provision for young people in accordance with the size of the village / town and anticipated growth and the level of provision that each facility can sustain.
**Quality Standard (see appendix I)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Recommended standard</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Children</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“A well designed clean site providing a mix of well-maintained and imaginative formal equipment and an enriched play environment in a safe, secure and convenient location. Sites should have clear boundaries, with dog free areas and include appropriate ancillary accommodation such as seating, litter bins and toilets within the larger sites. Sites should also comply with appropriate national guidelines for design and safety”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Young People</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“A site providing a robust yet imaginative play environment for older children in a safe and secure location, with clear separation from younger children facilities, overlooked from some aspects and that promotes a sense of ownership. The site should include clean, litter and dog free areas for more informal play and appropriately designed seating and shelter. Sites should also comply with appropriate national guidelines for design and safety”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Justification</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Children</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The need to address the miss-use of some sites is reflected within the standard in the need to design the site well, to locate in a safe and secure location and to have clear boundaries. This can refer to clear boundaries from older children facilities to try and deter older children using younger children facilities. Play areas within parks are particularly valued but it would be difficult to provide all play areas within parks, particularly within the rural area. As such, the standard reflects the need for the good design of play areas. Toilets were a highly rated aspiration but this will not always be appropriate and is therefore only where appropriate and within the larger sites (e.g. parks and gardens).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Recognition of the need for places to go to meet friends is incorporated in the need for an enriched play environment rather than a focus only on formal equipment. In addition, the promotion of informal play is picked up within the amenity greenspace vision. |

| **Young People** |
| Although based on the consultation responses, the standard also incorporates elements of standards set for other authorities due to the limited response rate. Vandalism and security are issues for young people’s play areas and as such the focus of this standard is on the issue requiring robust and varied equipment and shelter. |

Promoting a sense of ownership with the sites may also help to reduce the level of vandalism. Providing imaginative play reflects comments from the IT Young People survey to ensure facilities are interesting enough to meet needs. |

The existing quality of sites is considered to be poor and it is important that sites are improved.
### Accessibility Standard (see appendix J)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Recommended standard</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>URBAN</strong> - 10 minute walk time for provision for children - (480 metres) and 15 minute provision for young people – (720 metres)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>RURAL</strong> – 10 minute walk time for children - (480 metres)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Justification</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The majority of respondents to the household questionnaire indicate that they would expect to walk to a children or young people facility. This also reflects the fact that young people and children with parents should be able to access play sites easily.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The 75% threshold level for children’s facilities is 10 minutes and for young people 15 minutes. The mode is 5 and 10 minutes for children and young people respectively. However in line with the 75% threshold level and benchmarking against other rural local authorities, the standard for children is set at 10 minutes and considering the nature of the authority young people is set at 75% threshold level of 15 minutes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Young People: Youth facilities can however range from a smaller facility such as a youth shelter and basketball hoop to a floodlit MUGA. However, it may be onerous to have a youth facility within 15 minutes of every resident, particularly in the rural areas. As such, the standard for young people is set for the urban area only, although an assessment of provision in the rural area will be made.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children: Again, it is considered onerous to expect every village to have a play area. This standard will be applied to the rural area, however the analysis will identify areas without access to a play facility and it will be for the council to determine the appropriateness of providing facilities subject to detailed consultation.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Quality Benchmarking

9.15 The application of the quality benchmarking standard (set at a score of 94% on the site assessment for children and 90% for young people) provides an indication of the desired level of quality suggested at each site and enables a comparison at sites across the District. As described in Appendix K, it highlights sites, which currently meet the visionary standard, and those sites falling below and consequently where improvement is required. A full list of site scores can be found in the children and young people sections of Appendix L.

9.16 The 5 lowest and a selection of the highest scoring sites are highlighted in figure 9.3 below. There are a total of 26 sites that have scored 100% in terms of quality, reinforcing the positive perceptions highlighted through consultation:

*Fig 9.2 – Highest and lowest children and young people quality scores*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>V good</th>
<th>91% to 100%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Site ID 1149 – Lido Park MUGA, Droitwich (100%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Site ID 1218 – Abbey Park Skate Park, Evesham (100%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Site ID 1280 – Bretforton Sports Club Play Area, Bretforton (100%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Site ID 1108 – Wick Playground, Wick (100%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Site ID 1232 – Abbey Park Play Area, Pershore (100%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

94% - Quality Benchmark for Children’s facilities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Good</th>
<th>71% to 90%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Site ID 1532 – Bishampton (66%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Site ID 1510 – Westlands Play Area, Droitwich (56%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Site ID 1546 – Upton Snodsbury (50%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

90% - Quality Benchmark for Young People facilities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Average</th>
<th>51% to 70%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Site ID 1358 – Play Area, Aston Somerville (20%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Site ID 1267 – Off Blacksmiths Lane Play Area (20%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

V poor

Below 30%

V poor

Below 30%
**Applying provision standards – identifying geographical areas**

9.17 In order to identify geographical areas of importance and those areas with required local needs the quantitative provision for children and young people in Wychavon should be considered alongside the recommended local standard for accessibility. The quantity standards enable the identification of areas that do not meet the minimum provision standards, while the accessibility standards will help determine where those deficiencies are of high importance. Applying the standards together is a much more meaningful method of analysis than applying the standards separately and therefore helps with the prioritisation of sites.

9.18 For the purpose of this study facilities for young children have been applied separately to those for young people/teenagers. Facilities will however also be considered in the context of each other.

9.19 Overall provision for each category is below the recommended minimum quantity standard (0.07ha per 1,000 population for children and 0.02 ha per 1,000 population for young people). Table 9.3 below illustrates the current level of provision measured against the local standard in each analysis area. When linked with the geographical distribution of the existing provision this will enable the identification and prioritisation of new areas for provision.

**Table 9.3 – Analysis area breakdown for provision of children’s and young people’s facilities in Wychavon**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Droitwich</td>
<td>0.35</td>
<td>-1.25</td>
<td>-1.32</td>
<td>0.43</td>
<td>-0.33</td>
<td>-0.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evesham</td>
<td>0.47</td>
<td>-1.28</td>
<td>-1.35</td>
<td>0.25</td>
<td>-0.25</td>
<td>-0.27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pershore</td>
<td>0.17</td>
<td>-0.34</td>
<td>-0.36</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>-0.15</td>
<td>-0.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural North</td>
<td>2.18</td>
<td>0.43</td>
<td>0.36</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>-0.50</td>
<td>-0.52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural South</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>0.70</td>
<td>0.60</td>
<td>0.55</td>
<td>-0.11</td>
<td>-0.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall</td>
<td>0.05</td>
<td>-1.74</td>
<td>-2.08</td>
<td>1.23</td>
<td>-1.03</td>
<td>-1.13</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

9.20 Reflecting the overall situation across the district, consideration of the breakdown by analysis areas highlights deficiencies in children facilities in all areas except the Rural Areas although the highest deficiencies are within Droitwich and Evesham. There are deficiencies in all areas for young people with Pershore and the Rural North area having no facilities at all.

9.21 Projecting this forward to 2011 the proposed increases in population will result in increased levels of shortfall in all areas. Appendix H1 shows the full calculations for the quantitative supply of open spaces in the District both at the current time and in the future scenario in 2011. The Council should work towards achieving the required minimum level of provision over the strategy period. The map overleaf represents the
spatial distribution of provision for children and young people across Wychavon along with the distribution of amenity greenspace (AGS) that may provide opportunities for informal play.
9.22 As can be seen from the map there is a relatively even distribution of children’s facilities across the district (highlighted by the blue circles) apart from a large area outside of the catchment for any facility in the centre of the Rural North area of the district. As already highlighted there are no facilities for young people (highlighted by green circles) in Pershore and to the North West of Pershore as well as nothing within the Rural North area of the district.

9.23 The rural nature of the district, which is characterised by many small settlements means it may be inappropriate to provide facilities in each village and that some deficiencies are inevitable. Demographics of the settlement i.e. a small number of children and small overall population may impact on the demand for facilities, and any demand must be considered in the context of the associated maintenance costs and initial capital investment.

9.24 The recommended local standard of 0.07ha per 1,000 population for children and 0.02 ha per 1,000 population for young people supports this as it sets out a minimum level of provision. In settlements below this level of population, equipped facilities for children or young people may not be appropriate. To support this, the quantity standard suggests that a facility equivalent to a LAP (100m²) is not required until there are 142 people living in the village. Larger sites should be provided in the key towns and settlements.

9.25 It is important to note that throughout this section, amenity greenspace will be considered alongside facilities for children and young people. These sites often have an informal play usage for example as an informal kickabout area and supplement the more formal provision for children and young people particularly in areas that would otherwise be devoid of provision. They therefore provide opportunities to formalise provision to increase the supply of play areas or young people facilities. These are plotted on the overview map above with red circles and in the following zoomed maps as red polygons.

9.26 Consideration of the geographical distribution in each analysis area is discussed below. Recommendations and the value of sites are then considered.

**Overview of the provision of children and young people facilities across Wychavon**

**Analysis Area One - Droitwich**

- there are a total of five play areas for children and four facilities for young people in Droitwich

- current quantitative provision for children’s play areas is 0.35 ha. Measured against the quantity standard of 0.07 hectares per 1,000 population, this represents an under supply of 1.25 ha.

- current quantitative provision for young people facilities is 0.43 ha. Based against the quantity standard of 0.02 hectares per 1,000 population this is a slight under supply of 0.03 ha.

9.27 The accessibility catchments for the distribution of children’s play areas in Droitwich can be seen on map 9.1 overleaf:
9.28 The play areas are represented as blue polygons located in the centre of the circles, which form the accessibility catchment area of 480 metres (in line with the recommended local standard). As can be seen from map 9.1, there are large areas within Droitwich that do not have access to a children’s play facility within the recommended accessibility threshold. These areas are located within the south of the town and a smaller area within the northern central part. Although the area to the south east of Droitwich does not have any formal play provision, Primsland Way natural area provides a very important opportunity for informal play and amenity areas within the new development that are to be adopted by the council in due course will also enable informal play.

9.29 The deficiencies correlate to the quantitative figures provided against the local standard for provision, which indicates a perceived shortfall of around 12 play areas, assuming a minimum LAP size of 100m².

9.30 There are also facilities to the east of the town with overlapping catchments – these sites therefore serve some of the same residents, although two of the three facilities in this area are located within Lido Park which is the main facility in the town. This reflects the uneven distribution of play areas in Droitwich.

9.31 Accessibility catchments for the distribution of facilities for young people in Droitwich can be seen on map 9.2 below. By overlapping these catchments with those in map 9.1 for children it shows once again that the main area of deficiency is in the south of the town (this will be discussed in more detail later in the section). However, residents living in certain areas deficient of provision for children have access to facilities for young people. The young people facility to the west of Droitwich could
therefore provide an opportunity to alleviate a deficiency in that area by adding a play area to this site.

Map 9.2 – Distribution of facilities for young people in Droitwich

9.32 It is important to note that while it is important to ensure that all residents have access to provision for young people, it is also important to ensure that the facilities meet the needs and aspirations of residents. The most appropriate type of facility for each location should be determined through consultation with young people, creating ownership and ensuring facilities meet there identified needs. It may be that a range of facilities should be provided at each site.

9.33 It is important to recognise the role that amenity greenspace sites play in providing provision for children and young people. Many of these could be used as informal play areas for example to have a kickabout offsetting unmet demand and deficiencies to some degree. In addition to providing an alternative to formalised play provision, these sites offer the opportunity to provide more formal equipment to increase the supply of facilities. These sites complement the provision of more formal sites for children and young people. As mentioned previously within paragraph 9.27 Primsland Way natural area which is owned by the Town Council, also plays a vital role in providing informal play opportunities.

9.34 The main area of deficiency within Droitwich is the south of the town. This is illustrated on map 9.3 overleaf and it can be seen that there are high numbers of residents not within the accessibility catchment standard that has been set for provision for children or young people.
9.35 The lack of provision for children and young people within the other main area of deficiency to the south and south west of Droitwich should be addressed. There are numerous AGS sites within these areas that would provide opportunities to develop formalised facilities.

9.36 Wherever possible facilities at existing sites should be enhanced to provide a greater range of facilities and opportunities for the children and young people.

**Analysis Area Two - Evesham**

- there are a total of seven play areas for children and three facilities for young people in Evesham
- current quantitative provision for children’s play areas is 0.47 ha. Measured against the quantity standard of 0.07 hectares per 1,000 population this represents an under supply of 1.28 ha.
- current quantitative provision for young people is equivalent to 0.25 ha. Based against the quantity standard of 0.02 hectares per 1,000 population this represents a slight under supply of 0.25 ha.

9.37 The accessibility catchments for the distribution of children’s play areas and young people facilities in Evesham can be seen on map 9.4 overleaf:
9.38 As can be seen from the map above there are certain areas outside the accessibility catchment for children’s play areas, particularly Greenhill to the North, Hampton to the West and Bengeworth to the North East. New provision in these areas should be considered to offset deficiencies. There are large areas of the town without access to provision for young people with the only facilities in the town located in Abbey Park. These are identified through the green catchments.

9.39 Similar to Droitwich there are also a number of AGS sites that not only provide informal opportunities for play, but also provide the opportunity to formalise play provision to meet community need. Further research should be undertaken to look at the viability of implementation of new facilities.

9.40 There are some facilities for children, which serve the same residents, offering the opportunity for rationalising facilities. Such rationalisation may enable the conversion to other types of open space (or from children’s provision to teenage).

9.41 PPG17 states that it is important to consider natural barriers that make access more difficult such as railway lines, major roads and rivers. This is of particular importance with regards to children and young people. To this extent it is important to note the impact of the river Avon running through the centre of Evesham. This is of particular relevance to the play areas and young people facilities within Abbey Park.

9.42 From the opposite side of the river to Abbey Park, access to the site is via bridges at either end and the distance required to reach the site is greater than the straight-line accessibility catchment. This means that many residents that are within the catchment highlighted will in fact not be within the recommended walk time standard, creating a further area of deficiency. To show this, the buffer around the facility for
young people in Abbey Park has been severed along the river to show this barrier and its affect on the deficiency. Deficiencies in this area of the town should therefore be considered.

**Analysis Area Three - Pershore**

- there are a total of two play areas for children but no facilities for young people in Pershore
- current quantitative provision for children’s play areas is 0.17 ha. When measured against the quantity standard of 0.07 hectares per 1,000 population this represents an under supply of 0.34 ha.
- as there are no facilities for young people in Pershore there is an under supply of 0.15 ha based against the quantity standard of 0.02 hectares per 1,000 population.

9.43 Provision of children and young people facilities in Pershore can be seen in further detail in map 9.5 below. Amenity greenspace sites have also been included on the map as these sites offer further opportunities for informal recreation for children.

**Map 9.5 – Children and Young People distribution in Pershore**

9.44 Although within the study there are no facilities highlighted for young people within Pershore, it should be recognised that a skate park has been built (opened in August 2006) within Abbey Park since the site audit was undertaken and provision standards were agreed. This now provides some provision for the Town but would still show deficiencies to the north of the Town.
9.45 As can be seen from the map the only current provision for children is also within Abbey Park. There are large areas of deficiency again to the north and also to the northwest.

9.46 The large area of amenity greenspace located at Conningsby Drive provides informal play provision that could be formalised with the implementation of play equipment. This would provide formal access to residents to the north west of the town. This should be looked at further to assess whether the site is suitable for this purpose.

9.47 There are a lack of any open space sites in the north of the town apart from an AGS site on Mill Lane Close. The feasibility of provision of formal facilities for children and young people on this site should be investigated further but this open space could enable access to residents in the north of the town. Opportunities to provide amenities in this area should be investigated.

**Rural analysis areas**

9.48 The accessibility catchments for the distribution of children’s play areas and facilities for young people facilities within the Rural areas can be seen in maps 9.6 and 9.7 over the forthcoming pages highlighted in blue and green respectively. However it is important to re-iterate that Parish Councils often take responsibility for the provision of facilities within each village. Due to the size of many settlements it may not be feasible or appropriate to have provision in every village.

9.49 The amenity greenspace sites have also been plotted on these maps (marked in red) as these are extremely important within villages where they are no formal facilities. For example a village green may have a secondary function of informal play and recreation.

**Analysis Area Four - Rural North**

- there are a total of 11 play areas for children but no facilities for young people in Rural North area. Play facilities are located within separate villages and will generally serve only that settlement.

- current quantitative provision for children’s play areas is 2.18 ha. Measured against the quantity standard of 0.07 hectares per 1,000 population this represents a theoretical surplus of 0.43 ha. It is important however to note that firstly the standard is a minimum standard and all facilities of value should be protected.

- as mentioned previously there are no facilities for young people in Pershore and there is therefore an under supply of 0.50 ha based against the quantity standard of 0.02 hectares per 1,000 population.

9.50 Provision of children and young people facilities in the Rural North area can be seen in further detail in map 9.6 overleaf.
9.51 From looking at the map above you can see that the provision is dispersed across the area. All of the larger rural settlements have some form of formal facility for children. As mentioned previously, there are no facilities for young people in the rural area. This is not totally surprising as the type of facilities used by young people are generally more specialised facilities which support a greater catchment and population than most villages and are therefore unsuitable.
9.52 The quantitative figures suggest that there is a surplus of children’s play facilities. This is reflective of the small population in many villages who would otherwise be isolated without provision in their village. Many of these sites are smaller than the play areas within the town parks as they may be tailored to reflect the need of the village.

9.53 Where villages may not have formal play provision or suitable areas of AGS, any outdoor sports provision should be taken into account as they may also have secondary functions such as amenity greenspace or informal play. For example many recreation grounds that have a football pitch marked out during football season may provide amenity greenspace in the summer.

Analysis Area Five - Rural South

- there are a total of 27 play areas for children and four facilities for young people in Rural South area. These are located within separate villages and will generally serve only that settlement.

- current quantitative provision for children’s play areas is 3.00 ha. Based against the quantity standard of 0.07 hectares per 1,000 population this results in a theoretical surplus of 0.70 ha.

- current quantitative provision for young people facilities is 0.55 ha. Based against the quantity standard of 0.02 hectares per 1,000 population this is an under supply of 0.11 ha.

9.54 Provision of children and young people facilities in the Rural South Area can be seen in further detail in map 9.7 overleaf:
9.55 The Rural South map shows a good distribution of children’s play facilities reflecting the high number of sites it has compared to the other areas.

9.56 There are four facilities for young people within the villages in the south of the district. However these facilities are likely to still only serve that settlement. The need and demand within each specific village should be considered on its own merit.

9.57 As highlighted in the Rural North area, other open space types within the village also offer the opportunity for informal recreation should there be no formal provision for children and young people within that village.

9.58 Provision of one site within a village is often sufficient to exceed the quantity standard and to ensure that all residents have access to facilities. Below is an example of how provision of one facility for both children and young people serves most residents within a smaller settlement when it is appropriately located.
9.59 As can be seen, the vast majority of households (in one of the largest villages in the district) are within the catchment for the appropriate facilities.

9.60 Any deficiency within Broadway could be resolved with providing a formalised facility on the AGS on Bridgemans Close in the north of the village.

**Value assessment and recommendations.**

9.61 Good quality, accessible sites generally have a high level of usage as these factors are interrelated. Sites serving a unique catchment are also often of high value.

9.62 It is important to note that the overall quality of provision for children and young people is very good and there are a large number of excellent quality sites. Therefore, the aspirational quality benchmark figure is set high to reflect this. For sites that have scored below the quality benchmark, many of these sites are still good quality with only slight improvements needed to reach the standard.

9.63 The distribution of facilities across Wychavon is reasonably good, with the majority of residents within an appropriate catchment area of a facility although there are some areas where residents are outside of the catchment area for a facility. Given that there are some quantitative deficiencies, sites considered to receive high levels of use should be protected.
### SECTION 9 – PROVISION FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

**CYP1**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sites that offer the only provision within the area for children and or young people but do not meet the quality benchmark standard should be protected. Qualitative improvements should be considered to ensure that all residents have access to and benefit from good quality facilities.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Examples of such sites include:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All Town Park Facilities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Badsey Recreation Ground Play Area</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Road Play Area – Wychbold</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Brum Playing Area – North Claines</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Norton Parish Playing Fields Play Area, Littleworth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wick Playground</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Lane Play Area - Middle &amp; North Littleton</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Play Area - Great Comberton</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Station Road Play Area - Hinton On The Green</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sally Close Play Area – Wickhamford</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eckington Play Area</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pinvin Play Area</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**CYP2**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sites that do not meet the quality benchmark standard but are the only provision of its type in the area should be protected and considered for qualitative improvements. These include:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>School Lane Play Area - Middle &amp; North Littleton</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pinvin Play Area</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Westlands Play Area – Droitwich</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Badsey Recreation Ground Play Area</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Broadway Recreation Ground Play Area</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Station Road Play Area - Hinton On The Green</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harvington Play Area</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Although analysis of the geographical distribution of facilities suggests a good spread of provision, there remain some deficiencies. In light of future population growth (in addition to meeting the current needs of residents), the feasibility of providing facilities in areas of deficiency in the towns specifically should be investigated.

### CYP3
Address deficiencies in provision in towns. Any new sites should adhere to minimum size criteria and quality visions. This is detailed further in section 15, planning overview. Deficiencies highlighted include:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Location</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Droitwich</td>
<td>South Area (Children &amp; Young people)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>South West Area (Children &amp; Young people)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>South East Area (Children &amp; Young people)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Northern Central Area (Children)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evesham</td>
<td>Greenhill to the North (Children &amp; Young people)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Hampton to the West (Children &amp; Young people)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Bengeworth to the North East (Children &amp; Young people)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Central Areas (Children &amp; Young people)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pershore</td>
<td>North (Children)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>North West (Children)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>West (Children)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>All (Young People)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Analysis of the current distribution of facilities in the towns highlights a number of overlapping catchments (illustrated on maps 9.1 to 9.6) where sites are serving similar residents. This may negatively impact on the usage of sites and requires higher levels of revenue funding. Relocation of some facilities may ensure that provision meets needs of residents in some areas that are presently deficient. Overlapping catchments are particularly evident in certain areas of Evesham and Droitwich.

Where there are play areas with overlapping catchments, further investigation should be made into the value of these sites (quality and access) and the level of usage. Where value is deemed to be low, relocation should be considered.

In addition to ensuring the provision of open space in the towns meets current needs, consideration must also be given to future needs in light of the growth aspirations. This is discussed in more detail in section 15, planning overview.
Any new housing developments should take into account the need for provision for children and young people. This is particularly important in areas where there is currently no demand (i.e. no houses) but may be allocated for development in future years.

The recommended quantity standard suggests that provision of a play area the size of a LAP is only required in smaller settlements where the population exceeds 142. Residents living in all settlements exceeding this population size should therefore have access to a local facility. In order to meet the quantity standard, it could be suggested that residents in villages where the population exceeds 1700 should have access to a facility of 1200m² (the average sized facility for Wychavon). This is based on the application of the local standard of 0.07ha per 1000 population. The Council should support Parish Councils in the delivery of this objective.

Ensure residents living in all small settlements exceeding a population of 1700 have access to provision for children and young people.

Provide support to Parish Councils in areas where there are access deficiencies of play provision. This support should focus firstly on settlements where the number of residents is sufficient to warrant a facility and in others where local need is identified.

Where possible, any new provision should be developed in consultation with local residents.

In any event, where possible, recreational space (whether amenity green space or provision for children and young people) should be provided in smaller settlements of sufficient size. This is particularly relevant where population is above 142 – where at least 100m² should be provided.

As highlighted previously, sites of high quality are often associated with high usage and should be protected.

Protect sites of high quality. Site assessments indicate that 40 sites across the district are currently of high quality and meet the quality standard.

Where sites are poor quality, the level of use should be monitored in order to understand the value of the site. A poor quality site is still of high value if well used. In contrast, a site which has limited use despite high quality may be of limited value. This may signify that the site is inappropriately located or surplus to requirements for the function it is currently trying to fulfil. The play area off Blacksmiths Lane, Beckford is a good example of this, as this was considered to have no usage and to be of poor quality. The following matrix helps to understand the links between quality, usage and value of sites.
### Fig 9.3 – Quality and Value Matrix

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>High Quality / Low Value</th>
<th>High Quality / High Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ENHANCE VALUE</td>
<td>PROTECT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RE-DESIGNATE</td>
<td>Vision: for all open spaces within this category</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Low Quality / Low Value</th>
<th>Low Quality / High Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ENHANCE QUALITY AND VALUE</td>
<td>ENHANCE QUALITY</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RE-DESIGNATE</td>
<td>PROTECT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May be surplus to requirements in terms of present primary purpose</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### CYP9
Monitor usage at poor quality sites. Where usage is low, consider the appropriateness of the facility. Where usage levels are high despite the quality of provision, the site should be prioritised for improvement. Quality improvements should be informed by the site assessments and the quality summaries for each area.

Examples are:

**Usage High / Poor quality**
- School Lane Play Area - Middle & North Littleton
- Station Road Play Area - Hinton On The Green

**Usage Low / Good Quality**
- Claverton Play Area - Hawbridge

### CYP10
The findings of this study should dovetail with and inform the future development of a play strategy, ensuring that future investment is directed into the most appropriate provision to meet current and future needs. An action plan for improvement and enhancement of provision for children and young people should also be developed.
Summary

9.73 Although Wychavon District Council has a key role to play in the provision of facilities for young people and children across the district, Parish and Town Councils are also important providers of play facilities.

9.74 Consultation highlights an overall perception of insufficient facilities particularly for children and young people. The quality of facilities is however perceived to be good, suggesting that the overall priorities should lie with improvements to the quantity of provision.

9.75 This is reflected not only in the consultation, but also in the application of the local standards, which highlights significant areas of deficiency, both in terms of quantity and accessibility across the three main towns.

9.76 Provision for children and young people has emerged as the key area of deficiency across the typologies and should therefore be a key focus of the Council going forward.
SECTION 10

OUTDOOR SPORTS FACILITIES
Outdoor sports facilities

Definition

10.1 PPG 17 guidance considers the provision of both indoor and outdoor sports facilities, although these amenities are separated into two distinct typologies within the document. Indoor facilities are looked at separately within section 11.

10.2 Outdoor sports facilities is a wide-ranging category of open space, which includes both natural and artificial surfaces for sport and recreation that are either publicly or privately owned. Examples include playing pitches, athletics tracks, bowling greens and golf courses with the primary purpose of participation in outdoor sports.

10.3 Outdoor sports facilities are often the focal point of a local community, functioning as a recreational and amenity resource in addition to a formal sports facility. This is particularly true of pitches, which often have a secondary function of a local dog walking and kickabout area.

10.4 Site assessments highlighted many wider benefits of this typology with all sites deemed to have social inclusion and health benefits reinforcing the role that the provision of outdoor sports facilities have on the achievement of the health agenda.

Figure 10.1 – The Lenches Sports Club (site ID 1060)

Strategic context and consultation

Strategic context

10.5 The National Playing Field Association (NPFA) guideline ‘6 acre standard’, sets a minimum standard for overall ‘playing space’ of 1.62ha per 1,000 population for outdoor sport. Included within this are pitches, athletics tracks, bowling greens, tennis courts, training areas and croquet lawns. This standard provides an indication of the levels of outdoor sports facility that are needed.

10.6 Wychavon District Council recognise the importance of outdoor sports facilities and indicate in the Local Plan that there should be at least 1.7ha per 1,000 population allocated to outdoor sports of which 1.2ha should be for pitch sports.
10.7 The importance of sport and recreation facilities within Wychavon is also highlighted through one of the key aims of the Community Strategy for Worcestershire which is to ‘promote a healthy lifestyle by increasing the levels of physical activity of people of all’. Provision of outdoor sports facilities will be central to the achievement of this vision.

10.8 This links with priorities set out in the Sport England West Midlands Delivery plan, where key objectives include increasing participation, widening access and health and well being will only be achieved through strategic planning and delivery of both indoor and outdoor facilities.

10.9 A playing pitch study was undertaken for Worcestershire in 2002. Specific issues relating to Wychavon indicated:

- a shortfall in junior football pitches, junior rugby, hockey and cricket pitches
- a surplus of adult football and adult rugby pitches
- shortfalls of pitches are exasperated in the towns as many pitches in rural areas only serve one team due to their location whilst town pitches carry the bulk of demand and therefore quality diminishes
- the protection of all pitches was a priority due to the deficiencies in other sports
- flooding and drainage were perceived to be the biggest problem on pitches.

**Consultation**

10.10 Consultation specific to outdoor sports facilities was undertaken using a variety of research techniques and findings have been used to inform the local standards, ensuring they are reflective of local needs. Key themes emerging from consultations include:

- overall, the quantity of outdoor sports facilities is perceived to be about right. Household survey responses indicated the level of satisfaction with the provision of grass pitches to be particularly good, with 57% of respondents sharing this perception. However, concerns were raised at the internal consultations that there are deficiencies of facilities in Evesham and the South of Droitwich.
- internal consultations noted the quality of pitches to be variable across the district with dog fouling and drainage considered to be the main quality issues. Sports clubs also highlighted level surfaces/ good drainage and well maintained grass as there top two improvements they would like to see prioritised.
- one of the main issues affecting clubs is the general need for more and better quality ancillary accommodation to accommodate increases in club participation. This was raised through the sports clubs and internal consultation.
- the vast majority of users (67%) would drive to use outdoor sports facilities, which considering the rural nature of the district is not surprising. Plus, it was highlighted that many people travel if the standard of play is better elsewhere or if friends live in other locations.
Current position

10.11 The provision of outdoor sports facilities across the district is summarised in table 10.1 below.

**Table 10.1 – Provision of Outdoor Sports Facilities in Wychavon (excluding golf courses)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Geographical Area</th>
<th>Number of sites</th>
<th>Hectares per 1000</th>
<th>Range of quality scores</th>
<th>Average quality score</th>
<th>Average Accessibility Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Droitwich</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>0.62</td>
<td>73% - 100%</td>
<td>94%</td>
<td>95%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evesham</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>1.03</td>
<td>56% - 100%</td>
<td>90%</td>
<td>95%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pershore</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0.82</td>
<td>76% - 100%</td>
<td>93%</td>
<td>93%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural North</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>3.93</td>
<td>60% - 100%</td>
<td>93%</td>
<td>91%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural South</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>2.00</td>
<td>60% - 100%</td>
<td>91%</td>
<td>90%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

10.12 The key issues emerging from table 10.1 above include:

- on the whole the quality of sites across the district is very high with an average quality score of over 90%. It is important to note that the site visits are only a snapshot in time and qualitative issues relating to drainage or dog fouling may not have been a problem at the time of the visit. Site assessments consider the overall quality of the site, rather than the degree to which the facility is fit for purpose.
- the quantity of provision in terms of hectares per 1,000 population within the rural areas is considerably higher than the urban areas. Many villages have recreation grounds that also function as amenity spaces for recreational purposes.
- of the urban areas Evesham has both the greatest number of sites and area per 1,000 population although consultation suggested there may be a shortfall. This may indicate that there is higher demand and participation in this area.
- there are a number of school sites within the district that have outdoor sports facilities. The degree to which these schools are accessible to the community is variable and in some instances, facilities at these schools may be particularly valuable and provide the only site within the area. It is important to give consideration to the most appropriate role of school facilities in the area.
- the accessibility across the district in and around outdoor sports facilities is very good especially within the three main urban areas.

Setting provision standards

10.13 In setting local standards for outdoor sports facilities there is a need to take into account any national or existing local standards, current provision, other Local Authority standards for appropriate comparison and consultation on local needs.

10.14 A full assessment of local needs both District wide and within each area has been undertaken for Wychavon, and the key messages emerging from this assessment, coupled with an evaluation of the existing audit have been used to determine provision standards required to meet local needs.
10.15 The process for setting each type of standard is outlined in section two. The rationale for each recommendation, including assessment of local need, existing provision and consultation is provided in Appendix H, I and J. The recommended local standards have been summarised below.

**Quantity Standard (see appendix H – standards and justification, worksheet and calculator)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Existing level of provision</th>
<th>Recommended standard</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4.49 ha per 1000 population. This is reduced to 1.86 ha per 1000 when excluding golf courses.</td>
<td>1.9 ha per 1000 population (excluding golf courses)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Justification**

Due to the broad nature of this typology, this standard should be applied for planning need only. Further research into the demand for specific sporting facilities should be undertaken. Golf courses have been removed from these figures due to their size and subsequent tendency to skew figures.

Consultation indicates that the existing level of outdoor sports facilities is about right overall, highlighting the importance of maintaining the current level of provision. Quality is also considered to be particularly important. It is recommended that given the split of opinion between sufficient provision and not enough provision, the standard be set just above current levels (1.9 hectares per 1000 population). This will ensure sites are protected but allow for additional provision to meet locational and sub category deficiencies. It is important to note that a number of schools have been included within the standard, and therefore the achievement of the local standard will be helped by maximising opportunities for dual use of sites where this is not already the case.

**Quality Standard (see appendix I)**

"A well-planned, clean, litter and dog fouling free sports facility site, with level and well-drained good quality surfaces, appropriate good quality ancillary accommodation including changing accommodation and car parking. The site should have appropriate management ensuring community safety and include lighting and the use of CCTV where appropriate to address the miss-use of sites."

**Justification**

The key identified issues with existing sites are dog fouling and drainage which are reflected within the vision. Other issues raised are also reflected such as ensuring a clean and well-kept site and the need for ancillary accommodation such as parking and changing facilities.

The standard incorporates "appropriate management" to ensure that where appropriate, management issues are addressed and also increase the usage of sites to continue to combat the miss-use of sites. Community safety is also incorporated to reflect NPFA design guidelines. There are also some quantitative issues which may be addressed through improved quality of pitches which increases the importance of meeting the quality vision.
**Quality Benchmarking**

10.16 The application of the quality benchmarking standard (set at a score of 96% on the site assessment for outdoor sports facilities) provides an indication of the desired level of quality suggested at each site and enables a comparison at sites across the District. As described in Appendix K, it highlights sites, which currently meet the visionary standard, and those sites falling below and consequently where improvement is required. A full list of site scores can be found in the outdoor sports section of Appendix L. As can be seen below and in appendix L, the quality of outdoor sports facilities is particularly high with many sites exceeding the quality benchmark and no sites falling within the poor category.

10.17 The 5 highest and 5 lowest scoring sites are highlighted in figure 10.2 below:

**Fig 10.2 – Highest and lowest outdoor sports facilities quality scores**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quality Level</th>
<th>Score Range</th>
<th>Site ID</th>
<th>Site Name</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>V good</td>
<td>90% to 100%</td>
<td>Site ID 1319</td>
<td>Ombersley Sports Ground – Ombersley (100%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Site ID 1519</td>
<td>Fernhill Heath (100%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Site ID 726</td>
<td>Stoneford Lane AGS – Bretforton (100%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Site ID 1241</td>
<td>Abbey Park First &amp; Middle Schools, Pershore (100%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Site ID 1292</td>
<td>The Grange, Fernhill Heath (100%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good</td>
<td>70% to 90%</td>
<td>Site ID 1325</td>
<td>Pinvin Sports Ground, Pinvin (70%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Site ID 1306</td>
<td>Norton Playing Field, Norton (70%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average</td>
<td>50% to 70%</td>
<td>Site ID 1011</td>
<td>Cutnall Green C of E First School (60%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Site ID 1310</td>
<td>Offenham Cricket Ground, Offenham (60%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Site ID 691</td>
<td>Woodlands Recreation Ground, Evesham (56%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poor</td>
<td>30% to 50%</td>
<td>Site ID</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V poor</td>
<td>Below 30%</td>
<td>Site ID</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Accessibility Standard (see appendix J)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Recommended standard</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>15 minute walk time for grass pitches and tennis courts (720 metres)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15 minute drive for STP’s, golf courses and bowling greens</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Justification</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Due to the nature of the different types of outdoor sports facilities, it is unrealistic to set one standard that incorporates all outdoor sports. E.g. STP’s are usually built in strategic locations to incorporate local demand and population where as, a football pitches could be located on school playing fields in smaller locations. For this purpose and looking at the local travel patterns and 75% threshold figures two separate standards have been set.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The emphasis for STP’s, Golf Courses and Bowling Greens was on driving to the facility and the 75% threshold for them is 15, 15 and 20 minutes drive time respectively. This would be anticipated due to the rural nature of the district. Therefore the standard set for STP’s Golf Courses and Bowling Greens is 15 minute drive time.

Due to the more localised nature of grass pitches the emphasis is on walking and for tennis courts there is a relatively even split between walking and driving. In line with ensuring sustainable transport choices, to account for the wide mix of pitch facility types within the standard and to meet all expectations (driving expectations will be covered by a walk time standard), a walk time standard of 15 minutes for grass pitches and tennis courts has therefore been set.

Applying provision standards – identifying geographical areas

10.18 The application of the local standards highlights deficiencies in accessibility and also areas of quantitative deficiency or surplus. Deficiencies in accessibility are defined by applying the locally derived accessibility standards to give an indication of those areas served and not served by existing provision. Areas of quantitative deficiency or surplus can be identified by applying the quantity standard to the population within the effective catchment of each different type of open space or sport or recreation facility, for each form of provision.

10.19 The focus for additional provision to meet local need is therefore twofold:

- areas outside the distance threshold of existing facilities or spaces
- areas within the distance threshold of existing provision in which there is a quantitative deficiency in provision.

10.20 As outdoor sports facilities are a demand led typology encompassing a broad range of facilities, the quantitative provision standard should not be used to determine surpluses and deficiencies. It should be applied for broad planning need (i.e. to determine required levels of developer contributions) only and used to inform decisions as to where new facilities may be required.
10.21 Further detailed investigation into the need for each type of facility through analysis of participation rates and demand from clubs and casual players should be undertaken in order to gain an understanding of the formal demand for facilities. This should be used to inform the analysis of the type and quantity of facilities required in each area. The playing pitch strategy provides a good basis for understanding the need for pitches in the district although as this was carried out at a district wide level and findings are not broken down by geographical area. It is therefore difficult to ascertain specifically where in the district any shortfalls are located.

10.22 Analysis of the application of the recommended accessibility standards along with the quantity standards can however still be used to consider the provision and distribution of outdoor sports facilities across the district. It is also important to assess the role that school facilities play in providing outdoor sports facilities and informal recreation for community use.

10.23 Table 10.2 below provides an indication of the overall quantitative level of outdoor sports facilities in the district and the distribution of these facilities. The distribution of these facilities and priority areas for consideration are then outlined in maps 10.1 to 10.5 and the text that follows.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Analysis Area</th>
<th>Outdoor Sports Provision (excl golf courses) in Hectares</th>
<th>Provision per 1,000 population</th>
<th>Accessibility Deficiencies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Droitwich</td>
<td>14.28</td>
<td>0.62</td>
<td>South</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evesham</td>
<td>25.73</td>
<td>1.03</td>
<td>Small area to the west</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pershore</td>
<td>5.97</td>
<td>0.82</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural North</td>
<td>97.96</td>
<td>3.93</td>
<td>To be considered on an individual demand basis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural South</td>
<td>65.89</td>
<td>2.00</td>
<td>To be considered on an individual demand basis</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

10.24 As can be seen above, the vast majority of provision (in hectarage terms) is within the rural areas. Many villages have a recreation ground / sports field that serves its residents. Much of this provision may have an amenity use as well as playing a key role in the delivery of sport.

10.25 Provision is much lower in the more urban areas of the district. Supply of outdoor sports facilities in all of these areas falls below the quantitative standard set. This may indicate that sites are operating at or above capacity and may have an overall detrimental impact on the quality or site or result in a lack of access for local residents.

10.26 Evesham currently has greater quantitative provision per 1,000 population than the other main towns. This differs from the views emerging through consultation, which alluded to a shortage of provision throughout Evesham. This indicates a demand in Evesham for outdoor sports facilities outweighing the level of supply and again, may suggest that facilities are operating at capacity.
10.27 At present, Droitwich has the lowest amount of outdoor sports provision per 1,000 population. This is in line with consultation that suggested a shortage of provision in the town, especially to the south.

10.28 It is assumed that future growth within Wychavon District is likely to be focused in the main towns of Droitwich, Pershore and Evesham. Deficiencies in these areas are therefore of particular importance. Any future increase of the population in these areas will have a detrimental effect on the overall level of provision and is likely to generate an overall increase in the level of demand. Coupled with a possible increase in the number of teams due to a higher population any under supply of outdoor sports facilities could increase significantly.

10.29 Maps 10.1 to 10.5 below illustrate the spatial distribution of outdoor sports facilities within each analysis area along with the applied accessibility catchments.

10.30 For the purposes of the PPG17 study all school fields have been included as they are valuable areas of open space that should be protected wherever possible. When looking at detailed analysis of sporting provision for supply and demand purposes it is very important to understand which school facilities have community use in order to accurately determine the role they play on a practical level. If school facilities do not have community use then the supply of pitches could reduce dramatically, producing a greater shortfall of available pitches for teams.

**Droitwich**

10.31 Droitwich currently has 14 outdoor sports facility sites. The largest of which is King George’s Playing Field (Site ID 1124). There are eight school playing fields within this analysis area.

**Map 10.1 – Outdoor Sports Facility distribution in Droitwich**
10.32 As can be seen from map 10.1 above, accessibility to outdoor sports facility sites for the majority of residents within Droitwich is good, with only two deficient areas to the south. There are three bowling greens, a tennis club and a cricket club in addition to numerous football pitches.

10.33 The area to the southeast is of particular concern as it is devoid of any form of open space type. Consideration should be given to the provision of some type of open space in this area. Where possible, any open space provided should be multi functional as a result of the lack of any type of open space provision in this area.

10.34 It is important that school sites are utilised fully and community use agreements should be encouraged. Although this will not address the deficiencies shown on the map it may provide more facilities for community use and reduce programming constraints at other community facilities.

10.35 As Droitwich Rugby Club lies outside of the main town it falls outside of the Droitwich analysis area and is within the Rural North calculations. However, although it provides a valuable sporting resource for the residents of Droitwich the accessibility standard set means only a small number of residents are within the catchment. Despite this, due to the specialist nature and competition level of the club it players will be willing to travel further to participate. It is likely that this club serves a far wider catchment than may be anticipated.

10.36 It is important to understand the demand for outdoor sports facilities before highlighting any increase in provision or re-designating certain pitches to alleviate deficiencies in some sports. Should there be deficiencies, school sites should be looked at to provide community use. The main issues from consultation concern ancillary accommodation and the quality of the playing surfaces.

**Evesham**

10.37 There are currently 20 sites within Evesham, the largest of which is Evesham Sports Club (Site ID 1184). There are nine schools, with the two High schools (Evesham and Prince Henrys) having large playing field areas.
10.38 The accessibility catchments show an excellent coverage for residents with only a very small number of households to the west, outside of any catchment. This indicates that any problems with accessibility are quantitative in terms of their not being enough facilities to deal with demand. This re-iterates the views from consultation that expressed a shortage of grass pitches in particular.

10.39 Where a school facility is the only outdoor sports facility in the area (i.e. it serves a unique catchment) community use agreements should be prioritised.

10.40 The quantity standards for Evesham suggest that facilities may be at capacity so it is very important to understand the level of demand and the degree they are used by the community. School sites without current community use agreements should be looked into to increase supply. This is especially true of school that serve a unique catchment and are the only provision in an area. The re-designation of existing pitches should also be looked into to suppress quantitative deficiencies in certain areas. i.e. change a adult football pitch into two to three mini football pitches.

**Pershore**

10.41 There are seven sites within Pershore, of which three are schools. The largest site by a considerable way is Pershore High School (Site ID 1220) followed by King Georges Playing Fields (Site ID 1225).
10.42 There are no problems with accessibility and every household is within a 15-minute walk of a grass pitch or tennis court. Therefore any issues with accessibility may again be due to the demand for grass pitches in particular and number of facilities available rather than the location.

10.43 Once again it is essential to understand the capacity of the pitches and any programming constraints that exist. To determine any shortfalls, further investigation would be required to assess the current supply and demand for different sports and deal with any shortfalls appropriately.

**Rural Areas**

10.44 The rural areas offer a large amount of outdoor sports provision given the low populations in the area. This is reflected by the number of sites within these analysis areas. Rural North has a total of 34 sites whilst Rural South has 49 sites, although Rural North has almost double the amount of provision per 1,000 population (3.93 ha compared to 2.00 ha). This is helped by a number of sizeable recreation grounds as well as the big site at Droitwich Rugby Club, plus a much lower population compared to the Rural South analysis area.

10.45 The access to outdoor sports facilities for villages should be treated on an individual village basis as it may not be appropriate for every village to have outdoor sports provision due to its size, demographic profile and demand within. Residents living in a rural settlement do not always expect to have facilities on their doorstep and accept they may have to travel to reach certain types of sports provision.
10.46 It is essential in villages where a school provides the only outdoor sports provision that this is open for community use should there be demand.

10.47 In certain cases, the provision in one village may cater for other neighbouring villages, suppressing the need for those villages to have their own facilities. In addition, many sports grounds within a rural settlement offer secondary uses of the open space, such as for informal play or as an amenity area. Conversely, other types of open space may provide sporting and recreational opportunities in the rural areas.

10.48 As the accessibility standard for Grass Pitches and Tennis Courts is a walk time standard it is not suitable to look at the overview of provision within rural areas as the walk time will only apply to the specific village where the provision is. Villages should be looked at on an individual basis dependant on the demand for provision and possible increases in population. Many residents will also look towards the town for formal sports provision.

10.49 Despite this, application of the accessibility standard in the rural areas can be used to highlight where there may be issues of accessibility. Further analysis of the specific demand within each village can highlight where deficiencies are real as opposed to theoretical. This analysis could also be used to inform any assessment of latent demand.

10.50 It is important however, to look at the more specialist facilities that have a drive time standard. For STP’s, Golf Courses and Bowling Greens it is expected that most residents will have to drive to use these facilities. The following maps (10.4 and 10.5) show the areas that are outside of the accessibility catchments.

10.51 As can be seen on maps 10.4 and 10.5, almost all residents within Wychavon District are able to access synthetic pitches, golf courses and bowling greens within the recommended distance threshold.
Map 10.4 – Rural North Drive time catchments for STP’s Golf Courses and Bowling Greens

Large area of deficiency to the South East

Reproduced from Ordnance Survey Mapping with permission of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationary Office. (C) Crown Copyright. Wychavon District Council Licence Number 100024224, Map Scale 1cm = 1.250km
10.52 As you can see from the Rural North map the majority of the area has access to at least one facility for STP’s, Golf Courses or Bowling Greens. However there is a large area to the South East that is outside of the 15 minute drive time catchment. Although many of the settlements are relatively small, Inkberrow has a relatively large parish with nearly 2,000 residents. This may mean residents have to travel outside of the district to access suitable facilities.
Deficient area

Bredon Hill
10.53 Although the area to the south of Pershore appears to be deficient, this is actually the area of Bredon Hill and there are no residential settlements within the area.

10.54 The only area with a slight deficiency is to the east of the analysis area. However, due to its proximity to the edge of the district residents within the area may have access to facilities within the neighbouring local authority.

**Value Assessment and Recommendations**

10.55 As is evident from the geographical assessment, distribution of outdoor sports facilities in the district is generally good. However, consultation suggests that there is an undersupply of pitches due to demand. Therefore, those sites which are well used and hence valuable to the community should be protected from development in the Local Development Framework. Evidence suggests that all pitches are valuable and well used.

| OSF1 | All OSF sites should be afforded protection within the Local Development Framework. |

10.56 While assessment of local facilities should firstly consider the application of quality and accessibility standards, decisions regarding the need for local facilities should focus on local need and demand from local residents for specific facilities. The overarching nature of the PPG17 outdoor sports facilities typology can disguise localised demand and facility specific needs.

10.57 The development of a more detailed playing pitch strategy focussing on the needs of teams in Wychavon would assess the demand for additional provision. Consultation indicated a demand for additional facilities and deficiencies in Evesham and Droitwich in particular, which also correlates to the overall shortfall in provision highlighted in the County wide playing pitch strategy.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>OSF2</th>
<th>Investigate provision in areas where there are deficiencies in access to local provision. This is particularly important in areas where the application of the quantity standard suggests that additional provision may be required. Initial areas where deficiencies should be further investigated include:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Evesham</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• South Droitwich</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

10.58 As well as looking at the demand for provision it is also important to consider the programming at sites to ensure they are being used effectively. Linking to this consultation on specific facility types should be undertaken to ascertain demand and appropriateness on additional provision.

| OSF3 | Consider the programming of facilities to see whether they are being used effectively and to capacity, whilst undertaking an assessment on the needs of specific facility types. With the possible re-designation of pitches a solution. |
Most sites that have a high level of use would normally have a good or very good quality and accessibility rating. Most sites with a low level of use would have an average or poor quality and accessibility rating. This is because the factors are related and interlinked. Supporting the perception that use of outdoor sports facilities in Wychavon is high, the quality of outdoor sports provision is generally very good, with few sites scoring poorly.

### OSF4
Protect and enhance sites with high quality and high usage as these are extremely important to the overall provision in Wychavon. These include:

- Ombersley Cricket Ground – Site ID 1319
- St Peters Cricket Ground - Droitwich – Site ID 1152
- Evesham Sports Club – Site ID 1184
- Broadway Football Ground – Site ID 1254
- Lenches Sports & Recreation Club - Church Lench – Site ID 1060
- Badsey Sports Ground – Site ID 1263
- King George’s Playing Fields – Pershore – Site ID 1225
- King George's Playing Field – Droitwich – Site ID 1124

### OSF5
Sites that receive high usage but are of a lower quality are extremely important sites and qualitative enhancements should be made where appropriate. These sites include:

- Wychbold Recreation Ground – Site ID 1065
- Badsey Recreation Ground – Site ID 1261
- Carter’s Hill Rec Ground – Hanbury – Site ID 1018
- Eckington Recreation Centre – Site ID 1084

### OSF6
Investigate sites of poorer quality to determine the most appropriate improvements to ensure that usage and value to the local community is maintained. Key sites for attention include:

- Woodlands recreation Ground – Evesham – Site ID 691
- Offenham Cricket Ground – Site ID 1310
- Pinvin Sports Ground – Site ID 1325

Outdoor sports facilities are particularly valuable in some settlements where they are the only type of provision or most significant type of provision of open space.
Some outdoor sports facilities are the only type or most significant type of provision of open space within the settlement. These sites are therefore of particular importance for their amenity function in addition to providing outdoor sports. These sites include:

- Lower Moor – Recreation Ground
- Overbury – Recreation Ground and Bowling Green
- Birlingham – Cricket Ground
- Bretforton – Sports Club
- Hanbury – Carter’s Recreation Ground

For some of the smaller settlements, the only provision of outdoor sports facilities is at school sites. This emphasises the importance of these sites and highlights the need to secure community access outside school hours.

All schools that serve unique catchment areas or settlements where a school site is the only formal sports provision should be secured for community use and demand investigated. Locations where the school site is the only element of formal sports provision include:

- Cleeve Prior
- Defford
- Flyford Flavell
- Tibberton
- Whittington

It is important to consider disabled access to and within facilities. This is especially prevalent for the ancillary accommodation.

Ensure that facilities abide with the Disability Discrimination Act to ensure appropriate access for the disabled

There are a variety of outdoor sports facilities in Wychavon including pitches, bowling greens, tennis courts and synthetic pitches. In total provision equates to 1.70 hectares per 1,000 population that is well dispersed across the district.

As a result of the wide variety of outdoor sports facilities, the recommended quantity standard is set for broad planning need only. Further specific detail on the supply and demand for pitches is needed to ascertain the exact provision requirements.
10.65 Consultation highlights different expectations between the different types of sports facilities. It indicates that people are willing to travel further to synthetic pitches, golf courses and bowling greens, but expect pitches and tennis courts to be more localised.

10.66 Application of the accessibility standards highlights a few areas where residents are unable to access any outdoor sport facilities, however provision is generally well distributed across the towns. There are some smaller settlements without any provision and in other areas the outdoor sports facilities are particularly valuable as they are the only open space provision in the area.

10.67 The analysis highlights the key role that schools play, particularly in smaller settlements. This reinforces the need to secure community use of these sites outside school hours.

10.68 The overall quality of facilities is high and there were few problems identified. Sites of lower quality should be prioritised for improvement to ensure that they meet the needs of the community.
SECTION 11

INDOOR SPORTS FACILITIES
Indoor sports facilities

Introduction

11.1 Indoor Sports Facilities considers the provision of facilities in Wychavon in terms of sports halls and swimming pools. The methodology for the assessment of indoor facilities is slightly different to other PPG 17 typologies in that specific demand modelling can be undertaken in line with Sport England parameters.

Fig 11.1 – Pershore Leisure Centre

Strategic context and consultation

Sign up for sport - A Regional Plan for Sport in the West Midlands (2004-2008) - Sport England (West Midlands)

11.2 Sport England as the national agency driving sports development takes a strategic lead on the provision of sport.

11.3 Sign up for sport is a plan for sport and physical activity in the region. Its formulation has involved national, regional and local consultations with key stakeholders, agencies and organisations across the private, public and voluntary sectors that fully understand the strategic issues and local needs of the region.

11.4 The plan highlights the following seven main outcomes:

- to increase levels of participation in club and community sport
- to improve levels of sports performance
- widening access to sport
- improving the health and well being of people through sport
- creating safer and stronger communities through sport
- improving education through PE and sport
- benefiting the economy through sport.

11.5 The provision of indoor sports facilities that meet local and national standards will be key to the delivery of the above objectives. These objectives are also central to local
policy, with the community plan highlighting the promotion and encouragement of physical activity and healthy lifestyles as a key priority over the strategy period. Long term planning for the delivery of indoor sports facilities is vital to ensure the successful achievement of increased participation.

11.6 Activeplaces.com provides a key resource for the District Council in the long-term management and resource planning for indoor sports.

Consultation

11.7 Consultation specific to indoor sports provision in Wychavon provides an indication of public opinion whilst providing some meaningful statistics. Key findings from consultation provide a justification for setting local standards against local needs:

11.8 Key issues emerging from consultations include:

- 22% of children responding to the IT for young people survey suggested that they visit indoor sports facilities more frequently than any type of open space, reinforcing the importance of these facilities to the community

- respondents to the household survey felt provision of swimming pools to be about right (49%) whilst 30% believe there is not enough. Breaking this down within the towns, 45% of respondents in Droitwich believe there is not enough swimming pool provision compared to 39% in Pershore and only 17% in Evesham.

- the majority (61%) think sports hall provision is about right. This percentage is similar is mirrored across each analysis area.

- the highest rated aspirations from the household survey regarding indoor leisure facilities were (in majority order):
  - cleanliness of changing facilities
  - range of activities
  - cost of facilities
  - maintenance of facility and equipment
  - ease of security and parking

- consultation suggested that many people are unaware both of the facilities available and that the activities and opportunities at these facilities. Raising awareness will be integral to the achievement of increased participation and healthy living.

Current position

11.9 A broad review of indoor sport and recreation facilities has been undertaken to guide future planning within Wychavon. A range of research methods have been used to ensure a comprehensive audit of provision including a review of the online national database of sports facilities, Active Places, supporting desk research and Internet research.
11.10 A full listing of facilities and supporting data is shown in Appendix M. Provision of sports halls and swimming pools has been considered in terms of quality, quantity and accessibility. An overarching quality standard has been set for indoor facilities. Local standards for quantity and accessibility are specific to each type of facility and are detailed in the sections that follow. Full justification for standards can be found in appendix N.

11.11 Public leisure facilities in Wychavon are currently managed by Wychavon Leisure Community Ltd, a not for profit charitable organisation on behalf of the Council. The key objectives of this organisation are to provide easily accessible, high quality and affordable facilities for all residents. Pershore Leisure Centre has recently been redeveloped and there are similar plans to relocate Evesham Leisure Centre.

11.12 There are no facilities within Wychavon at the current times that have achieved Quest accreditation, a benchmark of quality.

Quality

11.13 The PPG17 Companion Guide reinforces that design and management are factors integral to the successful delivery of a network of high quality sport and recreation, stating that:

“Quality depends on two things: the needs and expectations of users, on the one hand, and design, management and maintenance on the other.”

11.14 The quality vision should reflect the views and aspirations of the local community and should be linked to the national benchmark and design criteria. The views and aspirations of the community were highlighted earlier in this section and the suggested quality vision for indoor sports is therefore:

A clean and well-maintained indoor sports facility that provides a wide range of indoor sports facilities and activities and value for money. Indoor sports facilities should provide adequate changing facilities, cycle and car-parking be easily accessible by public transport and be accessible to all.

Benchmarking and design specifications

11.15 In line with PPG17 recommendations, in addition to establishing a quality vision for sports facilities based on local community needs, a quality standard for indoor sport and recreation facilities has been set using national benchmarks, Sport England Technical Design Guidance Notes and Quest Best Practice Standards. Key objectives underpinning this quality standard is:

- to provide clear guidance relating to facility specifications, ensuring suitability of design for the targeted range of sports and standards of play as well as individual requirements for specialist sports and uses
- to ensure high standards of management and customer service are attained, which meet or exceed customer expectation and lead to a quality leisure experience for all users of facilities.

11.16 The quality standard is therefore split into two components:

- QS1 – design and technical
- QS2 – Management and operational.
11.17 It can be seen that some elements of the quality vision derived from local needs and aspirations are linked to the specifications detailed in QS1 and QS2.

**QS1: Quality standard (design and technical)**

| QS1: | All new build and refurbishment schemes to be designed in accordance with Sport England Guidance Notes, which provide detailed technical advice and standards for the design and development of sports facilities. |

11.18 A full list of Sport England Design Guidance Notes can be found on and are available to download free from the Sport England website.

[http://www.sportengland.org/index/get_resources/resource_downloads/design_guidelines.htm](http://www.sportengland.org/index/get_resources/resource_downloads/design_guidelines.htm)

11.19 The space requirement for most sports depends on the standard of play – generally the higher the standard, the larger the area required. Although the playing area is usually of the same dimensions, there is a need to build in provision for increased safety margins, increased clearance height, spectator seating, etc. Similarly, design specification varies according to level of competition with respect to flooring type and lighting lux levels, for example.

11.20 Sport England Design Guidance Notes are based on eight standards of play. Consideration should be given to the desired specification of the facility in question at the outset.

**QS2: Quality standard (facility operation and management)**

| QS2: | All leisure providers to follow industry best practice principles in relation to a) Facilities Operation, b) Customer Relations, c) Staffing and d) Service Development and Review. The detail of the internal systems, policies and practices underpinning implementation of these principles will correlate directly to the scale of facility, varying according to the position of the facility within the levels of the established hierarchy. |

**Supply and demand analysis – developing quantity standards**

11.21 The level of supply is compared to an estimated demand for each type of facility. The foundations of all demand assessments are based on an analysis of the demographic nature of the resident population within an accurate catchment area of site. Demand models are also used in the development of provision standards, set out later in this section. The application of these provision standards will be critical in meeting the needs of the local community in light of the significant anticipated population growth.

11.22 A 3-kilometre buffer around the boundary of Wychavon District has been applied to more accurately take into account the impact of facilities on the periphery of the boundaries and consider immediate cross boundary movement. It is however assumed that the number of people travelling out will roughly equal those travelling in and the main analysis is undertaken on the authority area only.

11.23 For each type of provision, the current facilities are illustrated in the maps and tables that follow. Local standards for quantity and accessibility are then set and applied to enable conclusions to be drawn about future developments within Wychavon.
### Sport halls

#### Supply

11.24 The profile of existing sports hall provision within Wychavon and the 3km buffer is illustrated in the map 11.1 later in this section. A full list of facilities is shown at Appendix N. There are 7 facilities identified within the District boundary.

11.25 The breakdown of the facilities within Wychavon has been summarised in the table below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of sports hall</th>
<th>Sports halls in Wychavon (Number of badminton courts fed into the model)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sports halls with full public access</td>
<td>Pershore Leisure Centre (3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Evesham Leisure Centre (4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Droitwich sports and Leisure Centre (4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sports halls on school sites with dual-use access</td>
<td>Evesham High School (8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pershore High School (4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Droitwich Spa High School (4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Prince Henry’s High School (4)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

11.26 Facility size and accessibility for public use are key factors taken into consideration when assessing the current level of supply. Sports hall facilities that are below 3 badminton courts in size are not included within the audit due to the restrictions this puts on the mix of sports that can be played in the hall.

11.27 Supply at dual use leisure centres that only allow public access during out of school hours and holidays is reduced by 25% when inserted into demand models to reflect these restrictions. There are four dual use centres within Wychavon at the present time.

11.28 The demand modelling has therefore been calculated on the basis of a current supply of 53 badminton courts within Wychavon.

11.29 In addition to provision within Wychavon District, there are 11 facilities lying within 3km of the authority boundary. Some residents may travel out to these facilities, reducing the demand for facilities in the authority, although equally people living in the outlying areas may potentially travel in to Wychavon.

#### Setting and applying standards – Sports Halls

**Quantity**

11.30 The level of quantitative demand for sports hall facilities can be determined by applying accepted sports participation rate standards (by age and gender) and peak usage parameters to the catchment population. The number of total visits during peak times is used to calculate the size of a sports hall (in badminton court units) needed to serve this demand at any one time.
Section 11 – Indoor Sports Facilities

11.31 The key assumptions are as follows:

- 60% visits during peak time
- average visit duration = 1 hour
- normal peak periods = 40.5 hours per week
- at one time capacity = 5 people per badminton court.

11.32 On this basis, for the year 2006 the demand equates to 31.07 courts across Wychavon, or 7.77 sports halls. This therefore indicates that there is currently a surplus of 22 badminton courts.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Calculated demand</th>
<th>Current supply</th>
<th>Surplus/Deficiency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>31 badminton courts</td>
<td>53 badminton courts</td>
<td>Surplus of 22 badminton courts – the equivalent of five and a half four-court (standard sized) sports hall</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

11.33 Provision at the club use facilities, village halls and community facilities will also add additional supply.

11.34 In addition facilities within the 3-kilometre buffer may also increase the supply for residents within Wychavon. However, the scale of the surplus may indicate that there may be high demand for sports hall facilities, ensuring all facilities are still well used.

Setting a quantitative standard

11.35 Sport England has published a good practice tool kit on their website to assist Local Authorities in devising appropriate contributions to open space and sport/leisure provision. A facility calculator has been set up, providing an indication of the expected level of provision based on the population within the local authority boundary.

11.36 On this basis, demand in year 2006 equates to 31.07 courts within Wychavon. Using this data, provision standards per 1000 population can be calculated by:

- total population of Wychavon – 112,957 (Census 2001)
- therefore demand per 1000 people = (31 courts / 112,957) * 1000
- demand per 1000 population = 0.27 courts.

11.37 Consultation highlights that provision of sports halls is perceived to be about right, an opinion shared by 61% of respondents. Of those that felt the level of provision was sufficient, comments focused on the quantity of facilities and indicated that they were accessible. In contrast, people that felt there to be insufficient provision cited a lack of capacity at key sites, feeling that they were always busy. This suggests a potential capacity issue but more strongly highlights that there may be locational deficiencies across the district. Of the clubs that use indoor sports facilities, 53% believe there are not enough.
The role of community centres and village halls was raised within the internal consultations as an important resource and 22% of children responding to the IT for young people survey suggested that they visited indoor sports facilities more frequently than any type of open space. Consultation also highlights the importance of provision in the neighbouring authorities to residents in Wychavon, with many travelling to Bromsgrove, Kidderminster and in particular Worcester to use facilities.

Given that current provision of sports halls in Wychavon is significantly higher than the national standard and the general consensus of local people is that provision is about right, a standard has been set at the existing level of provision. This will ensure that locational deficiencies are identified (through the application of accessibility standards) and will ensure that future provision continues to meet the needs of the population as population growth occurs.

Accessibility

With regards to accessibility, Sport England research indicates that all residents should be within a 15-minute drive time of a sports hall. A recent CPA indicator is the percentage of population that are within 20 minutes travel time (Urban areas – by walk; Rural areas – by car) of a range of 3 different sports facility types of which one has achieved a quality assured standard (standard suggests between 30% and 50%).

Respondents to the household survey indicated that a drivetime of 15 minutes is reasonable. This was reflected by the 75% threshold level overall and was also echoed by residents living in each of the five geographic areas. Although the modal answer was 10 minutes, the 75% level of 15 minutes was also echoed by current users of sports halls and consequently it is recommended that the standard is set at 15 minutes. This directly accords with the national guidance of 15 minutes and should help to identify any localised deficiencies in accessibility.

Map 11.1 overleaf sets out the provision of sports halls in Wychavon and highlights accessibility deficiencies evident in the district.

As can be seen, almost all residents within the district have access to at least one sports hall open to community use within the recommended 15-minute drive time. The only exceptions to this are some residents living in the eastern areas of the district which fall marginally outside of this catchment. These residents are relatively few in number and there is unlikely to be sufficient demand to require additional sports hall provision.

It is important that the role of local village halls is not overlooked, as these facilities can play a key role in local provision in village communities, in particular offering small halls which may be suitable for some sporting activities. These halls complement the more formal provision of sports halls and ensure access to provision within the more rural areas.
Map 11.1 - Sports hall facilities within Wychavon district

Summary – Sports Halls

11.45 A local quantitative standard of 0.47 courts per 1000 population has been set for sports hall provision in Wychavon. This is significantly above the recommended national standard of provision but is equivalent to the current level of provision in the district. Findings emerging from consultation suggest that the current level of provision is about right.
SECTION 11 – INDOOR SPORTS FACILITIES

11.46 Application of the quantity and accessibility standard (a 15 minute drivetime) highlights that almost all residents in the district are able to access sports halls. The role of village halls and community centres must not be overlooked as they provide a particularly important resource ensuring there are local facilities in the rural areas where residents are outside of the catchment for larger facilities.

11.47 Club use facilities are excluded from the calculations due to a lack of casual public access. Improved access to these sites may help to reduce any programming difficulties at key sites in the district where there is high demand. As participation increases, consideration should be given to the maximisation of resources on school sites by the community. Programmes such as Building Schools for the Future and the extended schools programme offer significant opportunities.

11.48 Although the quantity standard suggests that on the whole there is sufficient provision across the district, further consideration could be given to the size of population that each individual facility is serving. It could be that there are high levels of demand for some facilities where a facility is serving a greater population within the distance threshold than it’s size suggests it should.

11.49 All indoor sports facilities should strive to achieve the quality vision and where possible, larger sites should work towards Quest accreditation, the National Benchmark for quality.
Swimming pool provision

Supply

11.50 The profile of existing swimming provision within Wychavon and the 3km buffer is illustrated in the 11.2 later in this section. A full list of facilities is shown at Appendix M. There are 10 facilities identified, although there are only four that sit directly within the District boundaries. These facilities are detailed below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of swimming pool</th>
<th>Swimming Pools in Wychavon (Size of swimming pool fed into the model)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Swimming Pools with full public access</td>
<td>Pershore Leisure Centre (352m²)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Evesham Leisure Centre (250m²)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Droitwich Sports &amp; Leisure Centre (300m²)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Swimming Pools on school sites with dual-use access</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Swimming Pools on school sites with club use only</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Swimming Pools with private membership</td>
<td>The Lygon Arms Spa (88m²)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

11.51 Facility size and accessibility for public use are key factors taken into consideration when assessing the current level of supply.

11.52 Assumptions of the demand model include:

- club facilities - facilities accessible only to clubs making block bookings are excluded from calculations as a result of the lack of casual access to the facilities
- private facilities - excluded from the calculations
- public facilities - pool area in public facilities is included within the demand model.

11.53 The demand modelling has therefore been calculated on the basis of a current supply of 1057m² of swimming pool area within Wychavon.

11.54 There are a number of swimming pools close to the boundaries of Wychavon that may also serve residents in the authority. These are located at leisure centres, schools and private health clubs in Bromsgrove, Worcester, Tewkesbury and Stourport. This was supported by consultation which suggests that many residents of Wychavon visit these sites frequently.

Setting and applying standards – swimming pools

Quantity

11.55 The level of quantitative demand for swimming pools can be determined by applying accepted sports participation rate standards (by age and gender) and peak usage parameters to the catchment population. The number of total visits during peak times is used to calculate the area of swimming water (in m²) needed to serve this demand at any one time.
11.56 The key assumptions are as follows:

- 63% visits during peak time
- average visit duration = 64 minutes
- normal peak periods = 52 hours per week = 49 peak sessions
- at one time capacity = 6m² per person

11.57 On this basis, current demand within Wychavon is equivalent to 1119.31m². Supply is therefore below the minimum level of demand. Full details of the model and the parameters employed within this model can be found in appendix N.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Calculated demand</th>
<th>Current supply</th>
<th>Surplus/Deficiency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>1119.31m²</td>
<td>1057m²</td>
<td>Shortfall of 62m²</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Setting a quantitative standard

11.58 Sport England has published a good practice tool kit on their website to assist Local Authorities in devising appropriate contributions to open space and sport/leisure provision. The Sport England facility calculator sets out the level of provision required based on a series of national parameters.

11.59 On this basis, current demand within Wychavon is equivalent to 1119 m². Using these provision standards, demand per 1000 population can be calculated as:

- total Population of Wychavon – 112,957
- therefore demand per 1000 people = (1119m² / 112,957) * 1000

### LOCAL STANDARD

- 9.9m² water space per 1,000 population

11.60 The demand model indicates that 9.9m² of water space per 1,000 population is required to meet current demand (in year 2006). A pool unit is considered equivalent to 212m² or a 4 lane 25-metre pool.

11.61 Consultation highlighted an emphasis on provision being sufficient across the district, with 49% of residents responding to the household survey suggesting that the level of swimming pools is about right. Almost all respondents justified their opinions with reasons relating to quality. While some thought provision was of high quality, others identified areas for improvement potentially reflecting the different levels of provision across the district.

11.62 Given that the current level of provision is marginally below the national recommendation, the emphasis on provision being about right through consultation and the focus on quality shown by residents, the recommended standard is equivalent to the national standard. This will ensure that locational deficiencies are identified (through the application of accessibility standards) and will ensure that future provision continues to meet the needs of the population.
11.63 With regards to accessibility, Sport England research indicates that all residents should be within a 20-minute drive time of a swimming pool. A recent CPA indicator is the percentage of population that are within 20 minutes travel time (Urban areas – by walk; Rural areas – by car) of a range of 3 different sports facility types of which one has achieved a quality assured standard (standard suggests between 30% and 50%).

11.64 Across the District as a whole, 67% of respondents indicated that they would be willing to travel up to 15 minutes to a swimming pool. 68% indicated that they would expect to travel by car, whilst 25% would expect to walk. The 75% level for the District ranges from 10 – 15 minutes, whilst the modal answer across the District is 10 minutes.

11.65 The accessibility standard for swimming pools has therefore been set at 15 minutes drive time in line with PPG17 guidance. This is slightly lower than the 20 minutes drive time recommended by Sport England however it is considered important to meet the local aspirations of residents in the district.

11.66 Map 11.2 overleaf illustrates the distribution of swimming pools across Wychavon and the surrounding area.

11.67 It can be seen on the map that like sports halls, almost all residents have access to a swimming pool within the recommended distance threshold. Those residents who are outside of the catchment for a facility are the same residents who also do not have access to sports halls and are located in small settlements at the eastern side of the district. It is unlikely that there would be sufficient demand from these residents for additional swimming facilities in the district.
Map 11.2 – Swimming Pools in Wychavon and the surrounding area
Summary – swimming pools

11.68 There are three public swimming pool facilities at Pershore Leisure Centre, Evesham Leisure Centre and Droitwich Sports and Leisure Centre.

11.69 The quantity standard for swimming pools is 9.9m² per 1000 population, a level which is marginally above the current level of provision and in line with national standards. This standard is set in line with public consultation findings which highlight that the overall level of provision is perceived to be about right and that further developments should focus on the enhancement of the quality of existing facilities rather than the development of new facilities.

11.70 Application of the accessibility standard highlights some small deficiencies to the east of the district, reflecting the quantity standard that suggests that provision is perhaps slightly below the recommended level. Those residents outside of the catchment are also outside of the distance threshold for sports hall facilities. It is however considered unlikely that an additional facility would be required to satisfy the demand from these residents.

Summary and recommendations

11.71 An analysis of the provision of sports halls and swimming pool provision within Wychavon District has been undertaken and current provision has been measured against identified demand, enabling an understanding of any additional provision required.

11.72 Consultation highlights that the quality of current facilities within Wychavon is good. An overarching quality vision has been set in line with local community need, Quest and Best Value principles.

A clean and well-maintained indoor sports facility that provides a wide range of indoor sports facilities and activities, that provides value for money. Indoor sports facilities should provide adequate changing facilities, cycle and car-parking be easily accessible by public transport and be accessible to all.

11.73 A local quantitative standard of 0.47 courts per 1000 population has been set for sports hall provision in Wychavon. This is significantly above the suggested national standard although the current supply of sports halls (53 courts) is equivalent to this recommended standard suggesting that in quantitative terms there is sufficient provision although there may be locational deficiencies or high demand for some centres. This should be considered further through detailed analysis looking at the size of the catchment population that each facility is serving.

11.74 Supply of swimming facilities in the district is also almost equivalent to the local standard set, allowing for a future focus on quality improvements rather than a need to provide new facilities. The recommended standard of 9.9m² per 1000 is in line with the national standard and is also reflective of local consultation.

11.75 Application of the accessibility standards for both swimming and sports halls highlights that almost all residents are able to access facilities within the recommended distance threshold. The only exceptions to this are residents living in some of the Eastern Rural areas of the district. The importance of the provision of local community centres / village halls (particularly in terms of offsetting unmet demand for sports halls) should not be overlooked.
11.76 The development and application of these local standards for sports halls and swimming pools should be considered a starting point for the future strategic planning of indoor sports facilities in Wychavon. These standards should be supplemented with further detailed user consultation at key centres across the district and detailed analysis into the size and characteristics of the resident population that each centre is serving.

11.77 As participation increases, consideration should be given to the maximisation of resources on school sites by the community. Programmes such as Building Schools for the Future and the extended schools programme offer significant opportunities.
SECTION 12

ALLOTMENTS AND COMMUNITY GARDENS
Allotments and community gardens

Definition

12.1 This includes all forms of allotments with a primary purpose to provide opportunities for people to grow their own produce as part of the long-term promotion of sustainability, health and social inclusion. This type of open space may also include urban farms.

Figure 12.1 – Evesham Allotment

Strategic context and consultation

Strategic context

12.2 Like other open space types, allotments can provide a number of wider benefits to the community as well as the primary use of growing produce. These include: -

- bringing together different cultural backgrounds;
- improving physical and mental health;
- providing a source of recreation; and
- wider contribution to green and open space.

12.3 The Wychavon Local Plan recognises the importance of allotments by including them within Policy COM14 which protects development on these sites unless the land is shown to be surplus to requirements or an equivalent replacement facility is found.

Consultation

12.4 Consultation specific to allotments was undertaken using a variety of research techniques and findings have been used to inform the local standards, ensuring they are reflective of local needs. Key themes emerging from consultations include:
12.5 The levels of satisfaction from the household survey in the rural areas is much higher than that within the urban areas, especially within Evesham.

12.6 Consultations with town councils that manage allotment plots indicate all allotment sites are being used and there are waiting lists at many sites. The only plots available were at sites that were deemed to be of lower quality. This suggests that there may be demand for additional allotment provision within the district.

12.7 Residents attending drop-in sessions suggested that people were not aware of the allotments in the district and should they be there would be an even greater demand.

**Current position**

12.8 The provision of allotments in the district is summarised below in table 12.1.

**Table 12.1 – Provision of Allotments in Wychavon**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Geographical Area</th>
<th>Number of sites</th>
<th>Hectares per 1000</th>
<th>Range of quality scores</th>
<th>Average quality score</th>
<th>Average Accessibility Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Droitwich</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.04</td>
<td>96% - 100%</td>
<td>98%</td>
<td>92%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evesham</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0.13</td>
<td>72% - 100%</td>
<td>87%</td>
<td>86%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pershore</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.13</td>
<td>76%</td>
<td>76%</td>
<td>77%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural North</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>0.69</td>
<td>20% - 100%</td>
<td>79%</td>
<td>77%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural South</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0.41</td>
<td>20% - 86%</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>65%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

12.9 The key issues emerging from tables 12.1 include:

- There are a total of 24 allotment sites in Wychavon. Although Pershore only has one site, it is the largest allotment site within Wychavon (Defford Road Allotments).
- The variation in quality of allotment sites in the rural areas is particularly apparent, with quality scores ranging from 20 – 100%. Quality in the more urban areas appears much higher, with no sites scoring below 70%.
- The quality of allotment sites in the Rural South area is lower than other areas. This may have a negative impact on the levels of use in this area. Improvements to the quality of the sites may stimulate increased demand.
- The two sites located in Droitwich are both of high quality and have good access but are small in size. However there are a further two allotment sites just outside the analysis area boundary of Droitwich that are larger and may provide those residents of Droitwich who want one with an allotment plot.
- The accessibility of sites is relatively consistent across the district with the average score over 70% in all areas with the exception of Rural South. Access to sites in Droitwich and Evesham is particularly good.
SECTION 12 – ALLOTMENTS & COMMUNITY GARDENS

Setting provision standards

12.10 In setting local standards for allotments there is a need to take into account any national or existing local standards, current provision, other Local Authority standards for appropriate comparison and consultation on local needs.

12.11 A full assessment of local needs both district wide and within each area has been undertaken for Wychavon, and the key messages emerging from this assessment, coupled with an evaluation of the existing audit have been used to determine provision standards required to meet local needs.

12.12 The process for setting each type of standard is outlined in section two. The rationale for each recommendation, including assessment of local need, existing provision and consultation is provided in Appendix H, I and J. The recommended local standards have been summarised below.

Quantity Standard (see appendix H – standards and justification, worksheet and calculator)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Existing level of provision</th>
<th>Recommended standard</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0.38 ha per 1000 population.</td>
<td>0.39 ha per 1000 population</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Justification**

Allotments are very much a demand led-typology. Although consultation suggests that provision is about right overall, other comments made indicate that there may be locational deficiencies. This reflects the overall distribution of allotment plots, which is sporadic across the district with a focus outside the more urban areas.

Given that allotments are a demand led typology, a standard equivalent to the current level of provision has been set – enabling the identification of locational deficiencies and protection of existing sites. Setting a standard at this level supports the need for additional allotments in Droitwich and Evesham, however, analysis of waiting lists and demand should be of utmost importance in triggering new provision. Application of the accessibility standard should highlight areas of priority deficiency.

Quality Standard (see appendix I)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Recommended standard</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“A clean, secure and well-kept site that encourages sustainable development, bio-diversity, healthy living and education objectives with appropriate ancillary facilities (eg litter bins and water supply) to meet local needs, well kept grass and good quality soils. The site should be spacious providing appropriate access and clear boundaries.”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Justification**

Provision of allotments is demand driven. However, in times when the wider health agenda is important such sites need to be promoted. Good quality allotments with appropriate ancillary facilities, which promote sustainable development, will help attract more people to allotment sites in Wychavon.
### Accessibility Standard (see appendix J)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Recommended standard</th>
<th>15 minutes walk time - (720 metres)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Justification</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The emphasis is on walking versus driving to allotment facilities. Therefore a 15 minute walk time standard has been set. However this should be applied as a guide only as it is a demand led typology and will not be appropriate to always have allotments within this catchment.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The 75% threshold for walking was 15 minutes and although the mode is slightly lower at 10 minutes there is not a major discrepancy. In addition, benchmarking across other authorities shows standards set between 10 and 15 minutes.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The application of this standard will identify key areas of deficiency, which should be the focus for further investigation into the demand for allotments in that area.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Quality Benchmarking

12.13 The application of the quality benchmarking standard (set at a score of 86% on the site assessment for Allotments and Community Gardens) provides an indication of the desired level of quality suggested at each site and enables a comparison at sites across the District. As described in Appendix K, it highlights sites which currently meet the visionary standard, and those sites falling below and consequently where improvement is required. A full list of site scores can be found in the allotment section of Appendix L..
12.14 The 5 highest and 5 lowest scoring sites are highlighted in figure 12.2 below:

**Fig 12.2 – Highest and lowest allotment quality scores**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quality</th>
<th>Score Range</th>
<th>Site ID &amp; Location</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>V good</strong></td>
<td>90% to 100%</td>
<td>Site ID – 1006 – Allotments, Broughton Hackett (100%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Site ID – 1024 – Littleworth Allotments, Littleworth (100%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Site ID 1157 – Chawson Lane Allotments, Droitwich (100%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Site ID 1380 – Allotments, Crowle (100%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Site ID 1122 – Westwood Lane Allotments, Droitwich (100%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Good</strong></td>
<td>70% to 90%</td>
<td>Site ID 1298 – Allotments, Hartlebury (60%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Site ID – 1367 – Allotments Little Comberton (54.3%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Average</strong></td>
<td>50% to 70%</td>
<td>Site ID 1318 – The Racks Allotments, Ombersley (44%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Poor</strong></td>
<td>30% to 50%</td>
<td>Site ID 1277 – Kemerton Road Allotments, Bredon (20%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>V poor</strong></td>
<td>Below 30%</td>
<td>Site ID 1044 – Allotments, Upton Snodsbury (20%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Applying provision standards – identifying geographical areas**

12.15 In order to identify geographical areas of importance and those areas where there is potential unmet demand we apply both the quantity and accessibility standards together. The quantity standards identify whether areas are quantitatively above or below the recommended minimum standard and the accessibility standards will help to determine where those deficiencies are of high importance.

12.16 Overall provision for allotments is shown in table 12.3 overleaf. It also illustrates the current level of provision measured against the local standard (0.39 ha per 1,000 population). When linked with the geographical distribution of the existing provision new areas for provision can be prioritised.
Table 12.3 – Analysis area breakdown of provision of allotments in Wychavon

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Droitwich</td>
<td>0.97</td>
<td>-7.95</td>
<td>-8.34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evesham</td>
<td>3.32</td>
<td>-6.41</td>
<td>-6.84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pershore</td>
<td>8.22</td>
<td>5.37</td>
<td>5.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural North</td>
<td>17.21</td>
<td>7.49</td>
<td>7.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural South</td>
<td>13.39</td>
<td>0.57</td>
<td>0.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall</td>
<td>43.11</td>
<td>-0.94</td>
<td>-2.87</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

12.17 Looking at the table above it can be seen that only Droitwich and Evesham currently have a quantitative deficiency of allotment provision when benchmarked against the quantity standard. This is not surprising considering the significantly lower amount of land currently used for allotments, especially in Droitwich. All other areas of the district have sufficient provision at the present time to satisfy the minimum quantity standard.

12.18 Projecting this forward, and taking account any increases in the population by 2011, this further exacerbates the shortfall of allotments within Droitwich and Evesham and the potentially spare capacity in the Rural South area is reduced significantly.

12.19 Map 12.1 overleaf outlines the spatial distribution of allotments across the Rural North area incorporating Droitwich. Sites are plotted in blue with the accessibility catchment of 720 metres (15 minute walk time) applied.
12.20 As can be seen from the map above, allotments are dispersed across the district and are located in both the urban and rural areas. Rural sites generally serve individual villages. There are a number of larger settlements that do not have any provision but as mentioned previously the suitability of having such sites depends on demand for them. Residents within village settlements may have larger gardens thus reducing some of the demand for provision in these areas.
12.21 Allotment provision is demand led and new allotment sites should only be created where there is evidence of public demand. This is of particular importance in areas where existing sites are not used to maximum capacity. It may therefore not be appropriate to create allotment provision to serve every apparent area of deficiency.

12.22 Even when taking into account the two allotment sites on the edge of Droitwich that fall within the Rural North analysis area, there are still a number of deficient areas within the town. In particular, a small area to the North, all across the central area, to the North East and South East (a previously mentioned deficient area of any open space).

12.23 Map 12.2 overleaf focuses on the Rural South area which incorporates Evesham and Pershore.
Map 12.2 – Overview of Allotment Accessibility in Rural South, Evesham and Pershore

Deficiencies in Pershore

Deficiencies in Evesham

Larger settlements without any provision

Reproduced from Ordnance Survey Mapping with Permission of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationary Office (C) Crown Copyright. Wychavon District Council Licence Number 10924224 Map Scale 1cm = 1.20km
12.24 As can be seen from the map above, provision is once again dispersed throughout the area with rural sites generally serving individual villages. Like the Rural North area there are a number of larger settlements that do not have any provision.

12.25 Although the large allotment site in Pershore more than covers the town in quantitative terms, due to its location at the southern edge of the town, there is a large area to the north and northeast outside of the accessibility catchment.

12.26 Evesham also has large areas of deficiency outside the walking catchment areas. In particular across the centre of the analysis area, towards the east and south east. Of the four allotment sites in Evesham two serve the same catchments in the north and the other two serve the same catchments in the south west of the town. This indicates that the distribution of allotments in the town is uneven and the levels of use at each site may be lower than they would otherwise be.

**Value assessment**

12.27 Most sites that have a high level of use would normally have a good or very good quality and accessibility rating. Most sites with a low level of use would have an average or poor quality and accessibility rating. This is because the factors are related and interlinked.

12.28 Of the 12 (out of 24) allotment sites that meet the quality benchmark (86%), all of these have scores above 70% for accessibility. The 12 sites are:

- Vines Lane - Droitwich (site ID 1225)
- Colford Walk - Droitwich (site ID 1158)
- Inches Lane - Evesham (site ID 1179)
- St Mary’s Road - Evesham (site ID 1181)
- Corn Mill Road (site ID 1212)
- Broughton Hackett (site ID 1006)
- Littleworth (site ID 1024)
- Westwood Lane – Edge of Droitwich (site ID 1122)
- Chawson Lane – Edge of Droitwich (site ID 1157)
- Cookhill (site ID 1286)
- Crowle (site ID 1380)
- Fladbury (site ID 1350).

**ALL1**  
Protect all existing allotment sites that are good quality, have good accessibility and high usage as they are very important to the local communities that they serve.
12.29 Although these sites are of good quality and have good accessibility it is very important to ascertain the usage levels and take up of allotment plots at each site.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ALL2</th>
<th>Sites that have high usage levels but do not meet the quality standard benchmark should be enhanced in terms of quality. These sites may include:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Hartlebury Allotments (site ID 1298)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The Racks Allotments – Ombersley (site ID 1318)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ombersley Allotments (site ID 1320)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>South Littleton Allotments (site ID 1324)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pinvin Allotments (site ID 1326)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Little Comberton Allotments (site ID 1367)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

12.30 The shortfall in allotments identified within the three towns should be investigated further in order to ascertain whether there is demand for new allotment provision. If demand is identified, new sites could be met through the conversion of other open space types. Amenity green space sites could be considered in the first instance in Droitwich for example.

| ALL3 | Investigate the demand for allotment provision in areas that are currently deficient for example Droitwich. Examine the option of changing the primary function of some amenity greenspace sites into allotments in areas of deficiency. |

12.31 Sites that have low quality and a low level of usage may be surplus to requirements or re-designated to another open space type. The allotment site in Upton Snodsbury is considered to have poor quality as well as low usage.

| ALL4 | Protect the Racks Allotments (site ID 1318) and Kemerton Road Allotments in Bredon (site ID 1277) and enhance the quality and accessibility of these sites where possible |

12.32 Sites that have low quality and poor accessibility but have high usage rates by residents should be protected and quality and accessibility should be enhanced wherever possible.

12.33 As allotments are a demand led typology it is extremely important to know how many people would like to run an allotment so provision can be provided wherever possible.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ALL5</th>
<th>In order to ascertain exact demand for allotment plots further research should be undertaken with local residents to establish where allotments should be developed. Benefits of allotment plots and the potential contribution of allotments to the health agenda should be promoted.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ALL6</td>
<td>Develop an allotment strategy outlining the future delivery of allotments in the district, taking into account the perceived shortfalls in provision at</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
the current time. The strategy should include consideration of the promotion of allotments and options for raising awareness of the availability of allotments across the district.

Summary

12.34 There are 24 allotment sites in Wychavon which are dispersed across the rural and more urban areas. Although consultation highlights that residents are satisfied with the overall level and quality of provision, it also became apparent that many residents are not aware of the opportunities to get an allotment in the district. A strategy to raise awareness and promote the benefits of allotments to residents is therefore recommended.

12.35 The quality and accessibility of allotment sites in Wychavon on the whole is good, although the site assessments highlighted some strong variations in quality. Three sites fall into the poor or very poor category in terms of quality although twelve allotment sites achieve the quality benchmark score (set at 86% for allotments).

12.36 A quantity standard just above the existing level of provision in the district has been set for allotments. The application of this standard highlights the potential need for additional provision in Evesham and Droitwich. This is reinforced when looking at the distribution of allotment sites across the district and the application of the recommended accessibility standard (15 minutes walk time), with deficiencies highlighted in both of these areas.

12.37 Allotment provision is demand led and new allotment sites should only be created where there is evidence of public demand. This is of particular importance in areas where existing sites are not used to maximum capacity. It may therefore not be appropriate to create allotment provision to serve every apparent area of deficiency and extensive public consultation should be undertaken prior to the development of any new allotment site.
SECTION 13

CEMETERIES AND CHURCHYARDS
Cemeteries and churchyards

Definition

13.1 Churchyards are encompassed within the walled boundary of a church while cemeteries are burial grounds outside the confines of a church. According to PPG17, this typology includes private burial grounds, local authority burial grounds and disused churchyards. While the recognised primary purpose of this type of open space is for burial of the dead and quiet contemplation, the amenity and visual benefits should also be recognised, in addition to the opportunities to promote wildlife conservation and biodiversity.

Figure 13.1 – St James Church - Badsey

Strategic context and consultation

13.2 Cemeteries and churchyards can be a significant open space provider in some areas particularly in urban areas. In other areas they can represent a relatively minor resource in terms of the land, but are able to provide areas of nature conservation importance and areas for local residents to visit.

13.3 Cemeteries and churchyards are an important asset. As well as the value placed upon them by families of the deceased they offer many other benefits, for example they provide sanctuary for wildlife and places for people to reflect undisturbed. They are cherished for the historic value they provide, often respected for their part in creating a historic landscape.

13.4 Consultation highlights that 43% of respondents to the household survey believe the quality of cemeteries and churchyards is good and only 5% feel they are of poor quality. The only problem emerging through the consultation process was that of occasional anti-social behaviour by youths within the churchyards in Pershore.

13.5 Nearly 50% of respondents to the household survey use cemeteries and churchyards with 19% using them once a month or more, reinforcing the importance of these sites as recreational open spaces as well as functional amenities.
Current position

13.6 The quality of the churchyard and cemetery sites (assessed through site visits) within Wychavon is outlined in table 13.1 below:

Table 13.1 – Analysis of Quality of Cemeteries and Churchyards in Wychavon

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Analysis Area</th>
<th>Number of Sites</th>
<th>Range of quality scores</th>
<th>Average quality score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Droitwich</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>28% - 100%</td>
<td>75%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evesham</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>92% - 100%</td>
<td>98%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pershore</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>96% - 100%</td>
<td>98%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural North</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>54% - 100%</td>
<td>92%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural South</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>56% - 100%</td>
<td>89%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- the vast majority of all cemetery and churchyard sites are situated within the rural areas although all of the urban areas also have some provision. Churches within village locations are often a focal point for the community

- the quality of cemeteries and churchyards in both Evesham and Pershore is particularly high, with all sites meeting the quality benchmark. The range of quality scores highlights significant variation between the quality of different facilities across the district in the rural areas. The range is also vast in Droitwich with scores ranging from 28% to 100%.

- the average quality of cemeteries and churchyards is consistent across the district with the exception of Droitwich where some lower scoring sites impact on the overall average.

Setting provision standards

13.7 The process for setting standards is outlined in section two. Whereas provision standards for quality, quantity and accessibility are set for other open space typologies, PPG17 Annex recommends that only a quality vision is established for cemeteries and churchyards stating “many historic churchyards provide important places for quiet contemplation, especially in busy urban areas, and often support biodiversity and interesting geological features. As such many can also be viewed as amenity greenspaces. Unfortunately, many are also run-down and therefore it may be desirable to enhance them. As churchyards can only exist where there is a church, the only form of provision standard which will be required is a qualitative one.”

13.8 PPG 17 Annex also states, “every individual cemetery has a finite capacity and therefore there is steady need for more of them. Indeed, many areas face a shortage of ground for burials. The need for graves, for all religious faiths, can be calculated from population estimates, coupled with details of the average proportion of deaths which result in a burial, and converted into a quantitative population-based provision standard.”

13.9 In line with PPG17 and the Companion Guide, only a quality vision has therefore been set.
**SECTION 13 – CEMETERIES AND CHURCHYARDS**

**Quantity Standard (see appendix H – standards and justification, worksheet and calculator)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Existing level of provision</th>
<th>Recommended standard</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No Local Standard to be set</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Justification**

No quantity standard has been set in line with PPG17. The appropriate level of provision should be calculated taking into account population estimates, birth and death rates. This does not equate to a standard per 1000 population.

**Accessibility Standard (see appendix J)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Recommended standard</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No Local Standard to be set</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Justification**

There is no realistic requirement to set catchments for such typologies as they cannot easily be influenced through planning policy and implementation.

**Quality Standard (see appendix I)**

**Recommended standard**

“A clean and well-maintained site providing long-term burial capacity, an area of quiet contemplation and a sanctuary for wildlife. Sites should have clear pathways and varied vegetation and landscaping and provide appropriate ancillary accommodation (eg. facilities for flowers litter bins and seating.) Access to sites should be enhanced by parking facilities and by public transport routes, particularly in urban areas”

**Justification**

It is important for the Council and the public to acknowledge the important open space function that churchyards and cemeteries provide. This can be particularly the case in rural areas where cemeteries and churchyards may be the only open space in the village. However, it is essential that sites are regularly maintained with clear footpaths so as to increase the ease of access and safety for those who visit the sites. It is important that good practice is promoted throughout the district. Parking facilities as indicated in the aspirations have been incorporated into the visions but it is considered too onerous to include toilet provision.

**Quality Benchmarking**

13.10 In order to further understand the quality of cemeteries and churchyards and the issues they face, the quality benchmarking standard (set at a score of 86% on the site assessment for cemeteries and churchyards) can be applied to provide an indication of the quality suggested at each site, enabling site by site comparisons. As described in Appendix K, it highlights sites, which currently meet the visionary standard, and those sites falling below and consequently where improvement is required. A full list of site scores can be found in the cemeteries and churchyard section of Appendix L.
13.11 Five of the highest scoring sites are illustrated overleaf. These are just five of the 35 sites achieving scores of 100%. (see figure 13.2) The five sites that have quality issues are also illustrated although only one site in the district falls into the poor category in terms of quality. In total there are 59 sites achieving the quality benchmark. This reinforces the public perception that cemeteries and churchyards are of good quality district wide.

**Fig 13.2 – Highest and lowest cemetery and churchyard quality scores**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Score Range</th>
<th>Site ID</th>
<th>Location</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>V good</td>
<td>90% to 100%</td>
<td>Site ID 1064</td>
<td>St Mary’s Church, Crossway Green (100%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Site ID 1070</td>
<td>St Peter &amp; Vincula Church, Tibberton (100%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Site ID 1047</td>
<td>St Philip &amp; St James Church, Whittington (100%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Site ID 1339</td>
<td>St Mary’s Church, Elmley Castle (100%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Site ID 1311</td>
<td>St Mary &amp; St Millburgh’s Church, Offenham (100%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good</td>
<td>70% to 90%</td>
<td>Site ID 1352</td>
<td>St Michael’s Church, Great Comberton (60%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Site ID 1076</td>
<td>Church, Childswickham (56%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Site ID 1295</td>
<td>St James Church, Hartlebury (54%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Site ID 1134</td>
<td>Sacred Heart Church, Droitwich (52%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average</td>
<td>50% to 70%</td>
<td>Site ID 1136</td>
<td>St Mary’s Chapel, Droitwich (28%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poor</td>
<td>30% to 50%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V poor</td>
<td>Below 30%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Summary**

13.12 There is an even distribution of cemeteries and churchyards across the district with high levels of provision in the rural areas. Many cemeteries and churchyards are the only type of open space in the village and offer opportunities for quiet recreation as well as acting as important wildlife sanctuaries. Cemeteries and churchyards may also break up the urban landscape texture.
13.13 The quality of cemeteries and churchyards in the district is consistently high and over half of all sites meet or exceed the quality benchmark standard which is set at 86%. Only one site is considered to be in need of improvement.

| CC1 | The Council should work in partnership with other providers to improve and maintain the quality of cemeteries and churchyards in line with the quality vision and benchmark. |

13.14 Assessing quality and value is fundamental to effective planning. The wider benefits of churchyards are key and it is wrong to place a value on churchyards and cemeteries focusing solely on quality and accessibility. In addition to offering a functional value, many cemeteries and churchyards have wider benefits including heritage, cultural and landscape values.

| CC2 | Stakeholders should recognise and promote the nature conservation value of cemeteries and churchyards and begin to develop more awareness of ecological management of cemeteries and churchyards. |

13.15 Local standards for accessibility and quantity have therefore not been set. The quality vision and quality benchmark should guide the future development and improvement of cemeteries and churchyards across the district.

| CC3 | For the Council to work in partnership with other providers to improve and maintain the quality of cemeteries and churchyards in line with the quality vision and benchmark. |

13.16 Despite the inappropriateness of setting and applying a quantitative and accessibility standard for cemeteries and churchyards it remains important to consider the future delivery of cemeteries and churchyards anticipating future demand as well as assessing the current level of provision.

| CC4 | The Council should produce an action plan for cemeteries and churchyards in the district to ensure that the good quality and accessibility of these sites is maintained. The action plan should consider the likely implications of any future population growth on the requirements for burial grounds. |
SECTION 14

GREEN CORRIDORS
Green corridors

Definition

14.1 The Green Corridors typology encompasses towpaths along canals and riverbanks, cycleways, rights of way and disused railway lines. Green corridors have a primary purpose of providing opportunities for walking, cycling and horse riding whether for leisure purposes or travel and opportunities for wildlife migration.

PPG17 – the role of green corridors

14.2 With regards to green corridors the emphasis of PPG17 is on urban areas. It uses the typology from the Urban Green Spaces Taskforce Report which suggests that it is an ‘urban typology’.

14.3 Furthermore, elements of PPG17 are contradictory to the companion guide on this issue, where despite PPG17 suggesting that all corridors, including those in remote rural settlements should be included, the Companion Guide suggests that unless a green corridor is used as a transport link between facilities i.e. home and school, town and sports facility etc, it should not be included within an audit.

14.4 Although the role that all green corridors play in the provision of open space and recreation within local authority areas is recognised, the focus is on important urban corridors and public rights of way (PROW).

14.5 In addition to providing recreational routes in their own right, green corridors play an important role in linking open spaces together, providing a green infrastructure network across the District. Green corridors are an important resource linking the urban areas with accessible countryside.

Strategic context and consultation

14.6 By undertaking this PPG17 study the Council are recognising the importance of Green Corridors in relation to all the other types of open space. They are a typology in their own right and allow open space to be accessed by a network of linkages.

14.7 This is supplemented by the following specific action within the Wychavon Community Plan to ‘Create new ‘Walking the way to health’ routes across the district’ to encourage people to use these spaces to improve their level of health and well-being. This not only recognises the array of opportunities arising to improve health and well being but also positively impacts on the promotion of sustainable transport in the district. Green corridors will be instrumental in the achievement of targets for increasing participation in physical activity and health encouraging people to use these spaces to become more active.

14.8 The draft Worcestershire Public Rights of Way Improvement Plan indicates that the current quality of green corridors across the County is predominantly good. This was reinforced through responses to the household survey although the quality of provision was perceived to be lower than some other typologies in the district, with 37% rating overall quality as good and only 13% indicating that it is poor.
14.9 The draft Public Rights of Way Improvement Plan highlights a number of current barriers to increased use of public rights of way, specifically;

- physical barriers such as stiles, steps, crops and missing bridges
- a lack of confidence or knowledge on where people can go and what they can do
- a fragmented bridleway network.
- some poor signage and way marking
- some gates and stiles in disrepair
- Some poor path surfaces on some well used paths
- overgrown paths in key areas
- dog fouling problems at key focal points
- blocked paths in some areas
- walking/riding on busy roads to access traffic free public rights of way
- personal safety concerns.

14.10 The improvement plan (and associated action plan) is due to be completed by January 2007 and will look to improve the overall quality of public rights of way in the county by addressing some of the above barriers and to increase the level of use these facilities receive. The action plan identifies specific actions and timescales for delivery of key improvements.

14.11 The household survey highlights the value of green corridors to the residents of Wychavon. Over half of all responding residents use green corridors a minimum of once a month and only 21% never use green corridors. 11% of all respondents suggested that green corridors are their most frequently used type of open space.

Setting provision standards

14.12 In light of the nature of green corridors it is inappropriate to set quantity and accessibility standards for green corridors. Annex A of PPG17 supports this, stating that there is no sensible way of setting an appropriate provision standard.

14.13 PPG17 goes on to state that:

"instead planning policies should promote the use of green corridors to link housing areas to the Sustains national cycle network, town and city centres, places of employment and community facilities such as schools, shops, community centres and sports facilities. In this sense green corridors are demand-led. However, planning authorities should also take opportunities to use established linear routes, such as disused railway lines, roads or canal and river banks, as green corridors, and supplement them by proposals to ‘plug in’ access to them from as wide an area as possible".
14.14 Only a quality vision has therefore been set for green corridors. Further enhancement of the green corridor network should be undertaken through the development of a green infrastructure strategy. However, site assessments have not been undertaken for green corridors, as it is not feasible to assess the length of all footpaths/corridors. However, the quality vision should be used as an aspiration for the introduction of new linkages, linking with the ongoing Rights of Way Improvement Plan. Enhancements to the green infrastructure will provide opportunities to more efficiently link towns both with other towns, with the more rural village areas and with green spaces across Wychavon, encouraging people to use healthier means of transport and promoting the healthy living agenda.

14.15 The rationale surrounding the development of recommended local standards for green corridors is set out below.

**Quantity Standard (see appendix H – standards and justification, worksheet and calculator)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Existing level of provision</th>
<th>Recommended standard</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No Local Standard Set</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Justification**

The Annex A of PPG17 – Open Space Typology states:

“the need for Green Corridors arises from the need to promote environmentally sustainable forms of transport such as walking and cycling within urban areas. This means that there is no sensible way of stating a provision standard, just as there is no way of having a standard for the proportion of land in an area which it will be desirable to allocate for roads”.

**Accessibility Standard (see appendix J)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Recommended standard</th>
<th>No Local Standard Set</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**Justification**

There is no realistic requirement to set catchments for such an open space typology as they cannot be easily influenced through planning policy and implementation and are very much opportunity-led rather than demand-led.

**Quality Standard (see appendix I)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Recommended standard</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“A clean, well-maintained, safe and secure corridor with clear pathways, linking major open spaces together, enhancing natural features and wildlife corridors. Corridors should provide ancillary facilities such as bins, seating and lighting in appropriate places and signage.”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Justification**

Green corridors play an important role in linking communities and provide an opportunity for exercise for local residents. It is therefore important that any new provision meets this local quality standard, which incorporates the Council’s visions and public aspirations. Ultimately sites need to be safe with clear pathways and well maintained to encourage usage. Major routes also need to be well lit and secure.
**Links with Health Agenda**

14.16 In addition to improving sustainability and linking urban areas with nearby rural countryside, green corridors represent an important chance to promote transport by cycle and walking. These opportunities for informal recreation will help towards keeping the public active and improving health within the local area. Provision and use of green corridors will be a key determinant in the achievement of increased participation targets.

14.17 The latest government plan published by the Department for Transport and entitled “Walking and Cycling: an action plan” states:

> “Walking and cycling are good for our health, good for getting us around, good for our public spaces and good for our society, for all these reasons we need to persuade more people to choose to walk and cycle more often”

14.18 It is therefore important to address any qualitative deficiencies of existing green corridors and capitalise on any opportunities to increase and enhance the existing network. Providing a high quality infrastructure will not only increase use of green corridors, but linkages between sites will increase use of individual open space sites and remove barriers to access.

**Applying provision standards**

14.19 Given that it is not appropriate to set any local quantity or accessibility standards. It is also not appropriate to state areas of deficiency or need.

14.20 The aim is to provide an integrated network of high quality green corridors linking open spaces together and opportunities for informal recreation and alternative means of transport. Consideration should also be given to the provision of effective wildlife corridors, enabling the migration of species across the District. Provision of wildlife corridors should be considered in conjunction with the findings and targets of the Local Biodiversity Action Plan.

**Summary and recommendations**

14.21 Green corridors provide opportunities close to peoples homes for informal recreation, particularly walking and cycling, as part of every day routines, for example, travel to work or shops. The development of a linked green corridor network will help to provide opportunities for informal recreation and improve the health and well-being of the local community. Green corridors are key to the achievement of increased participation targets.

14.22 There are already a large number of footpaths and green corridor networks within the study area and consultation indicates that they are well-used and valued. The Public Rights of Way Improvement Plan highlights perceived barriers to use.

14.23 Future development needs to encompass linkage provision between large areas of open space, create opportunities to develop the green corridor network and utilise potential development sites such as dismantled railway lines and cross country nature trails that already exist in the District. Development should consider both the needs of wildlife and humans.
14.24 A network of multi-functional greenspace will contribute to the high quality natural and built environment required for existing and new sustainable communities in the future. An integrated network of high quality green corridors will link open spaces together to help alleviate other open space deficiencies and provide opportunities for informal recreation and alternative means of transport.

| GC1 | Wychavon District Council should work in tandem with Worcestershire County Council and all delivery partners in order to maximise the use of green corridors in the District and ensure the successful implementation of the Public Rights of Way Improvement and Action Plan. |
| GC2 | Actions arising from the Community Plan regarding the development of Walking the Way to Health Routes should be implemented. Involvement of community groups to help contribute, enhance and maximise the provision of green corridors should be encouraged. |
| GC3 | Linking existing green corridors with open spaces in the District should be a key priority for the Council to provide opportunities for informal recreation and alternative means of transport, using all types of open spaces. |
| GC4 | Consider the development of a green infrastructure study to expand on the open space study and link with the biodiversity action plan to maximise the linkages of open spaces and create a network of multi-functional greenspace in Wychavon. |
| GC5 | The Council should aspire to the achievement of the quality vision and benchmark for all green corridors across Wychavon. |
SECTION 15

PLANNING OVERVIEW
Planning overview

Introduction

15.1 The purpose of this section is to provide a planning overview for Wychavon District Council and providing guidance for the application of Section 106 contributions.

Planning Contributions: Strategic Context

15.2 Planning obligations are typically agreements negotiated between local authorities and developers in the context of granting planning consent. They provide a means to ensure that a proposed development contributes to the creation of sustainable communities, particularly by securing contributions towards the provision of necessary infrastructure and facilities required by local and national planning policies.

15.3 The framework for the current system of planning obligations in England is set out in section 106 (s106) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as substituted by the 1991 Act) and Circular 05/2005: Planning Obligations.

15.4 Section 106 provides that anyone with an interest in land may enter into a planning obligation enforceable by the local planning authority. Such an obligation maybe created by agreement or by the person with the interest making an undertaking. Such obligations may restrict development or use of the land; require operations or activities to be carried out in, on, under or over the land; require the land to be used in any specified way; or require payments to be made to the authority either in a single sum or periodically.

15.5 Under the new planning system, the legislative framework is provided by the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Bill, 2004 (Sections 46 and 47). There are a number of documents emerging to interpret and provide guidance on the implementation of planning contributions under the new planning system.

Planning Policy Guidance Note 17: Planning for Open Spaces, Sport and Recreation

15.6 PPG17, published in 2002, emphasises the importance of undertaking robust assessments of the existing and future needs of local communities for open space, sport and recreational facilities.

15.7 Local Authorities should use the information gained from their assessments of needs and opportunities to set locally derived standards for the provision of open space, sports and recreational facilities.

15.8 With regards the use of planning obligations, paragraph 33 of PPG17 states: "Local Authorities will be justified in seeking planning obligations where the quantity or quality of provision is inadequate or under threat, or where new development increases local needs. It is essential that local authorities have undertaken detailed assessments of needs and audits of existing facilities, and set appropriate local standards in order to justify planning obligations."
Circular 05/2005: Planning Obligations

15.9 This Circular replaces the Department of the Environment Circular 1/97, with the changes only concerning the negotiation of planning obligations. This Circular will act in the interim period before further reforms are brought forward.

15.10 Planning obligations are intended to make acceptable development, which would otherwise be unacceptable in planning terms. They may be used to:

- prescribe the nature of a development (e.g. proportion of affordable housing)
- compensate for loss or damage created by a development (e.g. loss of open space)
- mitigate a development’s impact (e.g. through increased public transport provision).

15.11 Planning obligations should only be sought where they meet all of the following tests:

- relevant to planning
- necessary to make the proposed development acceptable in planning terms
- directly related to the proposed development
- reasonable in all other aspects.

15.12 Planning obligations can be in kind or in the form of financial contributions. Policies on the types of payment, including pooling and maintenance payments should be set out in Local Development Frameworks. Developers should be able to predict as accurately as possible the likely contributions they will be asked to pay.

15.13 Local Development Documents should include general policies about the principles and use of planning obligations, for example, matters to be covered by planning obligations and factors to take into account when considering the scale and form of contributions.

15.14 More detailed policies applying the principles set out in the Development Planning Document, for example, specific localities and likely quantum of contributions, ought to then be included in Supplementary Planning Documents.

15.15 Local Planning Authorities may wish to consider the development of codes of practice in negotiating planning obligations, so as to make clear the level of service a developer can expect.

Maintenance

15.16 Where contributions are secured through planning obligations, which are predominantly for the benefit of users of the associated development, it may be appropriate for the development to make provision for subsequent maintenance. Such provision may be required in perpetuity.
15.17 However, when an asset is intended for wider public use, the costs of subsequent maintenance should normally be borne by the authority. Where contributions to the initial support are necessary, maintenance sums should be time limited and should not be required in perpetuity.

*Pooled contributions*

15.18 Where the combined impact of a number of developments creates the need for infrastructure, it may be reasonable for the associated developer contributions to be pooled. In addition, where individual development will have some impact but is not sufficient to justify the need for a discrete piece of infrastructure, local planning authorities may seek contributions to specific future provision.

*Formulae and standard charges*

15.19 Local authorities are encouraged to employ formulae and standard charges where appropriate as part of their framework for negotiating and securing planning obligations. The benefits to the system are as follows:

- speed up the negotiation process
- ensure predictability
- promote transparency and
- assist in accountability.

15.20 Standard charges and formulae applied to each development should reflect the actual impacts of the development or a proportionate contribution.

**Planning Obligations: Practice Guide**

15.21 The guidance aims to provide practical tools and methods to help improve the development, negotiation and implementation of planning obligations specifically with regard to:

- the types of contribution and circumstances in which they should be used
- integration of planning obligation policies within the planning system
- managing the process in terms of speed, predictability and accountability
- informing and developing standard charges
- standardising planning obligations
- using third parties
- involving the community in the development and implementation of obligations
- implementing planning obligations.
15.22 A good practice checklist is provided under each of the above headings. Areas of good practice with specific relevance to contributions to green spaces include:

- Council policy should make it clear under which circumstances they require contributions in kind and when a financial contribution is required. The phasing of payments should also be made clear.

- the LPA should determine the expected time period for maintenance payments and the method to be used. The guidance highlights good practice examples of establishing a community trust to manage and maintain facilities provided.

- Local Authorities are encouraged to use SPDs to expand on the high level policies contained elsewhere in the LDF. Good practice examples containing policy context, threshold triggers, formulae and standard charges are provided.

- the LPA should ensure that all assumptions and sources of evidence used to determine formulae and charges are made available and that both evidence and charges are regularly updated. The guidance cites Sport England as a good evidence base for the provision of playing grounds and sports facilities.

- planning authorities should consider the development of a monitoring system to ensure the implementation of planning obligations and support the handling of public enquiries and enforcement. The Council may wish to involve developers in reviewing the effectiveness of monitoring systems.

**Securing Community Benefits through the planning obligations process – Improving Performance on Section 106 agreements (Audit Commission August 2006)**

15.23 The report reiterates the message set out in Planning Policy Statement 1: Delivering sustainable development and states:

“Planning must go beyond traditional land use planning to bring together and integrate policies for the development and use of land with other policies and programmes which influence the nature of places and how they can function.”

15.24 Effective use of S106 agreements is viewed as a key part of this agenda. The research collated by the Audit Commission seeks to help Councils improve their performance in using Section 106 agreements more cost-effectively and more consistently through gaining an understanding of current decision making processes and an assessment of how effectively Councils are currently using the system.

15.25 The key recommendations emerging from the review suggest that Council’s should:

- put in place detailed policy in supplementary planning documents (SPDs), describing the developer contributions that will be expected through planning obligations;

- engage chief executives, leaders and portfolio holders to integrate the current and potential contributions of planning obligations with the delivery of the community strategy and;
ensure that the other building blocks are in place to improve performance on planning obligations:

- test the potential impact of their policies on development viability;
- set up a system to deal with planning obligations and ensure that an effective process is in place;
- be clear about when and how communities are involved;
- improve transparency by publicising the results and outcomes obtained through planning agreements;
- manage the risks and monitor the outcomes to ensure that contributions are spent on what they were intended for in the agreed timescale; and
- draw on the experience of other councils in similar circumstances.

**Valuing Planning Obligations in England – Department for Communities and Local Government**

15.26 In recognition of the important role that planning applications can have in the delivery of sustainable development, the report aimed to:

- estimate the number of applications attracting planning obligations; and
- estimate the overall value of the contribution through planning obligations.

15.27 The report is based on a survey that was conducted across all English authorities which was supplemented by detailed case studies. A response rate of 31% was received to the study.

15.28 Key findings emerging from the study included:

- the proportion of planning permissions accompanied by planning agreements has risen from 1.5% of all permissions in 1997/98 to 6.9% in 2003/04;
- planning agreements are now attached to 40% of planning permissions for major residential developments;
- there are huge variations in the number and value of obligations secured within local authority families and regions and within individual local authorities;
- in the vast majority of cases, those authorities using standard charging secure more planning obligations than those that do not;
- Open Space obligations are the most numerous, followed by obligations relating to Transport and Travel, Community and Leisure, Affordable Housing and Education. The average value of planning obligations for open space is £25,000 per application.
the overall estimated value of obligations agreed in 2003/04 is about £1.9bn and the total value of all types of obligations delivered in 2003/04 is estimated to be about £1.15bn.

15.29 The overall findings of the report reinforce the value of planning obligations and the values that can be achieved through the efficient and effective delivery of these agreements.

Wychavon District Local Plan

15.30 Section 38 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 states that for the purposes of any area in England other than Greater London, the development plan is:

- the regional spatial strategy for the region in which it is situated, and
- the development plan documents (taken as a whole) which have been adopted or approved in relation to that area.

15.31 Wychavon District Council adopted their Local Plan on 26th June 2006 following the Inspectors Report and subsequent modifications. The Local Plan pre-dates this PPG17 study and therefore the outcomes of the study and revised standards have not been incorporated into the Local Plan.

15.32 However, under the new planning system, Wychavon District Council have produced their Local Development Scheme (LDS) which documents that an Open Space Development Plan Document and Supplementary Planning Document will be produced following the completion of this PPG17 compliant study.

15.33 Wychavon District Council also have existing Supplementary Planning Guidance in place for developer contributions towards service infrastructure, which includes contributions towards open space. As stated, this is due to be revised in light of the findings of the PPG17 study and new guidance (Circular 05/2005).

Policy Assessment and guidance for the implementation of Section 106 contributions

15.34 The main policy that relates to the provision of open space in new developments is COM12: Provision of Public Open Space and the associated Supplementary Planning Guidance.

15.35 Having reviewed these documents, PMP consider that they are in general conformity with the approach taken by a number of other authorities and the approach advocated by PMP on completion of a PPG17 compliant study. As such, the following section highlights the key points from these documents, provides a review of the approach undertaken by other authorities and provides some recommendations for reviewing the policy in light of the findings of the PPG17 compliant study.

15.36 The review of the approach taken by other authorities takes the form of a review of existing Supplementary Planning Guidance. Many of these are taken from the Sport England website. The Sport England website provides important tools for developing Supplementary Planning Documents on planning contributions and this should be viewed
as an important source of information. This website can be viewed at: 
http://www.sportengland.org/index/get_resources/planning_for_sport_front_page/kitbag_front_page.htm

15.37 The flow diagram set out below is based on the review of guidance. It is recommended that this flow diagram be used as the basis for determining the process for planning contributions. This process also provides the structure for assessing the existing approach undertaken by Wychavon and providing guidance for the future application of Section 106 policy.

**Figure 15.1 - Proposed Process for Determining Open Space Requirements**  
(adapted from Swindon Borough Adopted SPG: 2004)
Determine whether the dwellings proposed are required to provide open space

15.38 The first key stage detailed within the flow diagram is to determine whether the dwellings proposed are required to provide open space.

Existing approach:

- Wychavon District Local Plan: policy COM12 applies to 5 dwellings and above.
- Wychavon District Council – Developer Contributions towards Service Infrastructure (2003) – policy is applied to (a) all new residential units built on previously undeveloped sites (b) net additional dwellings resulting from development (c) the conversion of buildings to residential use (d) permanent provision for mobile homes or residential caravans. Cases which are unlikely to generate significant demands but will be judged on their merits include: (a) replacement dwellings, (d) rest homes, nursing homes and other institutional uses and (g) for the purposes of equipped play areas only, residential units with one bedroom.
- Internal document – revised Supplementary Planning Guidance – the types of development included in those the policy is applied to has “some types of commercial and employment development” added.

15.39 The following table provides a summary of the approach taken by other authorities:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number and type of dwellings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tynedale Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Applied to all new dwellings. Requirements for outdoor sports are only applied to three dwelling developments and above.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mid Devon Borough Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All new developments to contribute to the provision of open space including single dwellings, tied accommodation, elderly persons units, conversions, flats, maisonettes and permanent mobile homes. Exceptions to this are replacement dwellings, extensions, wardened accommodation, nursing homes or similar institutional developments and temporary mobile homes. Affordable housing schemes can be unviable if required to contribute to open space provision but still incur a demand. The onus is on the developer to demonstrate that open space contributions would make the scheme unviable.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fareham Borough Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Most types of residential development are considered to generate demand for all categories of open space. This includes market housing, new build dwellings, affordable housing, and permanent permissions for mobile homes. This excludes one for one-replacement dwellings, extensions and annexes. Only specific types of open space are required for elderly accommodation (active/less active/least active) and a case by case basis is applied to specialist accommodations e.g. hostels and conversions or sub-division of dwellings.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Milton Keynes Council

Applied to 10 dwellings or more

Most types of residential development will generate additional demand on open space. The SPG includes a table to assess whether open space is required for each type of dwelling. Open Market housing/flats and affordable housing are required to contribute to all types of open space. Housing for active elderly excludes a requirement for playing fields, local play areas and neighbourhood play areas. Excludes extensions, replacement dwellings, nursing homes and substitute house types.

### Leicester City Council

Applies to all new residential development including flats, maisonettes, student accommodation

### Cambridge City Council

Open space required for developments of 10 and above dwellings and open space requirement is applied to all new build self-contained residential units and conversions or change of use

### Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council

Requires provision of some form of open space for all residential dwellings. Non-residential development may have an impact on existing open space and a financial contribution may be sought for facilities such as footpath lighting.

15.40 In general the approach taken to affordable housing is to include a statement within the guidance stating that affordable housing schemes will require the same level of provision as open market housing but where it can be demonstrated that this would lead to the scheme being unviable, the level of provision required can be reduced.

15.41 It is considered that the three key changes to the existing policy structure that Wychavon District Council should consider are:

- consider applying the policy to all dwellings (i.e. 1 dwelling and above) – the application of the quantity standard ensures that the level of provision required is proportional to the increased demand. This may be particularly important in the rural area where the size of developments will be relatively small.

- devising a matrix approach to clearly state the types of housing mix that will be required to contribute to open space. This can be broken down to indicate the types of open space different housing types will be required to contribute to. This builds in the flexibility that is currently left to negotiation, but ensures a clear implementation of the policy. An example from the Sport England/Milton Keynes Council/English Partnerships, Joint Pilot Project, Draft SPG on Open Space, Sport and Recreation, March 2004 is as overleaf:
SECTION 15 – PLANNING OVERVIEW

15.42 The addition to the policy within the revised Supplementary Planning Guidance to include some types of commercial development is in line with PPG17 (paragraph 20) which states that in identifying where to locate new areas of open space, sport and recreational facilities, local authorities should “look to provide areas of open space in commercial and industrial areas”. As such, this inclusion is supported although it may be difficult to administer the times when open space provision is appropriate.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Open Market Housing/Flats</th>
<th>Affordable Housing</th>
<th>Housing for the Active Elderly</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Playing fields</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local Play Areas</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neighbourhood Play Areas</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community centres/Meeting halls</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local parks</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>District parks</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Swimming pools</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sports halls</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Allotments</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- including a statement to clearly set out the approach to affordable housing.

15.43 The next main step determines whether there is an existing open space need, which if there is no quantitative deficiency identified, leads to the next step of identifying a qualitative deficiency.
SECTION 15 – PLANNING OVERVIEW

15.44 The following table provides a summary of the approach taken by other authorities:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Open space need?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tynedale Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>An assessment of open space, sport and recreation has been completed and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>identifies where there are deficiencies in existing provision. The authority</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>area is divided into 21 sub areas and the strategy concludes that there are</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>deficiencies in each of these sub areas. The implication is that there would be</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>always be a requirement for open space contribution</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leicester City Council, Stockport Metropolitan Council and Hinckley and Bosworth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Borough Council explicitly state that whether an open space contribution should</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>be sought depends on the level of existing provision, determined by:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leicester City Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The existing amount of open space, quality, scale and nature of housing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stockport Metropolitan Borough Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If existing provision exceeds the minimum requirement and can meet increased</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>demand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>An over-supply of public open space is in easy walking distance (400m) of a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>proposed development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fareham BC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Normally only seek to secure provision of open space where it can be</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>demonstrated that the proposed development will exacerbate or create a deficit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>in provision based on the Open Space Survey and catchments of: children’s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>equipped and informal is on a ward basis and outdoor sports facilities and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>recreation facilities is based on catchments of the 4 main built up areas. The</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>only exception is sites accommodating over 200 dwellings where the site will</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>be expected to include play spaces regardless of ward totals.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

15.45 Despite the majority of authorities taking the approach of identifying whether there is an open space need in the area, it is considered that this detracts from the concept of ensuring the requirement on developers is fair and consistent. By applying the quantity standard based on the increased level of demand this ensures the developer is paying directly for the associated impact of the development rather than it being dependent on what open space happens to be around the development. This is consistent with the guidance set out in circular 05/2005: Planning Obligations. If there are no quantitative deficiencies identified within the agreed accessibility catchment, contributions towards quality enhancements where appropriate should be required.
SECTION 15 – PLANNING OVERVIEW

15.46 To identify the level of quantitative, qualitative and accessibility deficiency within the area of the development, the PPG17 study should be applied. The bullet points below provide a theoretical example of the application of the PPG17 study in this situation. A full worked example is set out later in this section.

- estimate the number of residents living in the proposed development (being explicit about assumed occupation rates)
- calculate the existing amount of open space within the agreed accessibility threshold of the new development. For example, there may be an existing quantitative undersupply of parks and gardens, provision for young people and children and allotments in the area of the development site.
- estimate the existing population within the relevant accessibility threshold and combine this with the estimated population of the new development
- compare the existing amount of open space and the total population with the quantity standards developed for that typology in the PPG17 study to decide if after the development there will be sufficient quantity within recommended distances of the development site to meet local needs.

15.47 If when assessed against the relevant PPG17 quantity standards, there is a sufficient amount of that type of open space in the local areas to meet the needs of the total population, the Council may expect a developer contribution to enhance the quality of open spaces within that accessibility threshold.

15.48 Where it has been decided that a contributions is required to improve provision locally, reference should be made to the quality standards for each typology and assessment against these standards. Contributions should only be considered necessary where the quality of local provision is considered below the quality vision as outlined in the PPG17 assessment.

| PLAN 6 | Apply the PPG17 assessment’s local standards to decide whether the development creates a need for new open space or a need to improve the quality of existing open space in the local area |

Determine whether the open space can/should be provided on site

15.49 In instances where a quantitative deficiency has been identified, it is necessary to determine whether the open space should be provided on site. A new area of open space should be required where the existing amount of open space is insufficient to cater for the needs of the total population. The requirement should only be to such an extent as to cover the needs of the people who will be living in the new housing development.

15.50 If a housing development generates a need for new open space then wherever possible this should be provided on-site. However, in many circumstances it will not be possible to achieve this. It is recommended that minimum size standards for each typology are developed to ensure that provision is useable which can be maintained.
15.51 Existing approach:

Wychavon District Local Plan – on site contributions are considered first, however where this is inappropriate the policy requires appropriate financial contributions will be sought to provide new or enhance existing provision.

Discussions with Wychavon District Council indicate that this is currently assessed on a site-by-site basis.

15.52 The following provide examples of the approach taken by other authorities:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Authority</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tynedale Council</td>
<td>Includes a matrix detailing the on and off site provision thresholds: at less than 3 dwellings – financial contribution for children’s play space and no requirement for outdoor sports, 3 – 9 dwellings – financial contribution for children’s play and outdoor sports, 10 or more dwellings, on site provision for children’s play and financial contribution for outdoor sport</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fareham Borough Council</td>
<td>Presumption in favour of on-site. Includes a number of factors to consider e.g. size of development site and whether site located near to existing good open space. Includes a matrix of when on/off site is considered appropriate according to the number of dwellings and open space type.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Milton Keynes Council</td>
<td>On-site provision (in existing Milton Keynes area) is worked out according to number of dwellings and type of open space, e.g. sites of 10 – 49 dwellings – on-site is normally required. Sites of 50-199 dwellings – on-site provision for LEAPs and Local Parks will normally be sought.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mid Devon District Council</td>
<td>On-site provision is usually required when a development is 25 dwellings plus. There is a general preference for on-site provision.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cambridge City Council</td>
<td>Any shortfall in provision, which cannot be accommodated on site, should be met through commuted payments and be spent on identified projects</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stockport Metropolitan Borough Council</td>
<td>Commuted payments are acceptable for small scale developments and funds will be held in an interest earning account until enough is accumulated for improvements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council</td>
<td>Thresholds are set for different types of open space and whether provision is appropriate on or off-site. Off-site provision is generally acceptable when development is too small to reasonably accommodate formal or informal open space and high density schemes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading Borough Council</td>
<td>In most cases, it is more appropriate to seek off-site contributions, especially small developments</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

15.53 It is recommended that to provide greater clarity to the application of the policy/Supplementary Planning Document, a matrix approach is adopted to detail requirements regarding on versus off site provision. Examples are provided by Milton Keynes and Tynedale. The Tynedale approach is particularly relevant due to the similarities in the rural nature of the area:
## PLAN 7

Develop a matrix approach to determine the threshold of dwellings for on versus off site provision as a guide only. A case-by-case approach will still be required. Identify appropriate minimum size thresholds for on site provision for each typology.

### 15.54

If it is not possible to provide the open space required on site, then contributions should be sought towards the new provision or enhancement of that type of open space within the accessibility threshold. Where this is not possible, then contributions towards quality improvements could be considered as an alternative.
15.55 Existing approach:

Wychavon District Local Plan – accessibility catchments are also provided, intended to be used in the assessment of proposals, which are as follows: Toddler play area – within 200m; Children’s play area – within 400m; Small local park – within 800m; Local park – within 1200m.

Discussions with Wychavon District Council indicate that this is applied within the urban area with a case-by-case assessment of the existing facilities in the area. Within the rural area, there is currently an ad hoc approach but efforts have been made recently to involve the parishes at an earlier stage in the process to determine what it is they require.

15.56 The following approach is undertaken by other authorities:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Where should the off-site contribution be spent?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fareham Borough Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mid Devon District Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leicester City Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stockport Metropolitan Borough Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading Borough Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salford City Council</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
15.57 Where off-site provision is expected, it is important in planning policy terms to ensure that the money is spent in a location related to the development. As with the existing approach the revised accessibility catchment standards can be used to ensure that this is the case. For example if a development proposal site was located within the 15 minute catchment of Abbey Park, Evesham and the open space study identified that the priority in this area was for improvements to quality rather than quantity, it would be appropriate to spend the developer contribution on improvements to this park.

15.58 The use of pooled funds are also a strongly recommended tool. Due to the rural nature of the authority there may be a number of developments that are small in size and do not incur a contribution large enough for improvements, yet their development will still incur an additional demand on existing facilities.

15.59 The policy tests of Circular 05/2005 require that contributions are sought only where they are directly related to the proposed development. As such, the use of pooled funds need to be carefully administered and ring fenced within particular areas. This could be undertaken on a parish/ward basis, village/town basis. As with off-site contributions, pooled funds can be based around the accessibility standards identified within the study, however they may be too restrictive within the more rural areas.

15.60 The approach taken in the rural areas of Mid Devon and Tynedale are to set up areas at which to administer contributions based on parishes and expected population increases. Mid Devon undertook a consultation with Parish Councils to agree the grouping of Parishes. A pooled fund approach is currently in place in Wychavon within the urban area but not within the rural area. At the current time, parishes tend to be able to identify improvements that need to be made on a parish level and it may not be necessary to group parishes together. This may be particularly the case in the larger parishes such as Inkberrow.

15.61 In addition, improvements can relate access to facilities or footpaths, which may be particularly relevant within the rural area.

15.62 As a pooled fund, the exact improvement/open space site may not have been identified at the outset and it may therefore be more appropriate to use the parish level/joint parish level as the ring fenced fund. Within the urban area, it may be more appropriate to use the accessibility catchments. It is important that this ring-fenced fund is set up to ensure that the monies gained through Section 106 are spent on their intended use rather than lost within the administration of the council.

| PLAN 8 | Use pooled funds where appropriate and ensure ring-fenced funds are administered correctly |

**Calculate the recommended open space contribution for new open spaces.**

15.63 The level of developer contributions for off-site provision will depend on whether it includes the costs of land acquisition. Standards costs towards the enhancement of existing open space and provision of new open spaces (across all typologies) should be clearly identified and revised annually.
15.64 Existing approach:

Wychavon District Council – Developer Contributions towards Service Infrastructure (2003) – sets a standard occupancy rate of 2.5 per dwelling and applies the quantity standards set out in Policy COM12: (2.8ha - Children’s play – 0.7ha per 1000 population – to include equipped play areas, other opportunities for outdoor play, and casual space, Sports grounds – 1.7ha per 1000 population – of which at least 1.2ha should be for pitch sports, General use – 0.4ha per 1000 population – informal, such as walking, and could be accounted for within the landscaping of the development). Basic formula of: no. of residents (no. of dwellings X 2.5) X quantity standard per person (quantity standard / 1000).

Off site contributions are calculated using a cost for the provision of the quantity standard including the maintenance cost (e.g. £360,000 for 0.7ha play space and £1,244,000 for 1.7ha sports pitches (based on average cost of different sports pitch provision)). Costs are based on actual cost of provision.

15.65 Internal document – revised Supplementary Planning Guidance – revises the occupancy rate to 2.4 per dwelling (2001 census) and breaks this down further to include: one bed unit: equivalent to one person; two bed unit: equivalent to two persons; three bed unit: equivalent to three persons; four + bed unit: equivalent to four persons

15.66 The approach recommended by PMP is as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A</th>
<th>The number of people in a development is usually based on an assessment of existing occupancy rates. Wychavon District Council have already calculated this figure to be 2.4 persons per dwelling and have broken this down by each dwelling size. The Council also need to ensure that the figure is based on the increased demand over capacity within the accessibility catchment of the development and not necessarily the whole resident population.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>The level of open space provision (ha) is directly a result of the quantity standards devised through the PPG17 study and can be set out both within the DPD and SPD. The quantity standard is per 1000 population and will need to be divided by 1000 to provide the provision per person.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>The cost of open space per person relates to off-site provision. These costs have already been determined by Wychavon District Council. This will need to be widened to include the PPG17 typologies rather than just children’s play and sports facilities. It is also recommended that this be updated regularly to ensure it reflects local costs and inflation. Some authorities include the costings as a spreadsheet appendix to the Supplementary Planning Guidance and update this annually.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Open space requirement =

(A) number of people in development (in terms of increased demand over capacity within accessibility catchment of the development) X  (B) level of open space per person (ha) X (C) cost of open space per hectares (£)

Open Space requirement = A x B (x C)
Worked Example: contribution towards amenity greenspace

- The application of this formula ensures that the level of provision required from developments is worked out proportionally as to the level of increased demand the development incurs.

- A housing development for 7 dwellings has been submitted to the Council. The development consists of 3 four-bed dwellings, 3 three-bedroom dwellings and 1 two-bed dwelling. This will result in 23 additional residents living in the locality.

- The agreed accessibility catchment for amenity greenspace is a 10 minute walk time or 480 metres. Within this distance of the housing development there is current 0.4 hectares of provision.

- The estimated population within 480 metres of the housing development is 800 people. Combined with the estimated population (23) this gives a total population of 823.

- The quantity standard for amenity greenspace is 0.61 per 1000 population. Multiplied by the total population (823) produced a requirement for 0.50 hectares of amenity green space. The existing amount of amenity green space is 0.4 hectares.

- 0.4 hectares of amenity green space within 480 metres is a lower level of provision than the required 0.50. The developer will therefore be required to provide further provision.

- The size requirement can be calculated by multiplying the quantity standard per person by the population of the new development. In this example this represents 0.0006 hectares per person multiplied by 23 people, producing a requirement for 0.014 hectares. Given the shortfall in provision is 0.1 hectares, in order to meet the needs of the people who will be living in the new housing development; the full quantity provision should be secured.

- Reference should be made to the agreed minimum size standards to determine whether the requirement should be on site or off site. In this example the minimum acceptable size is 0.2 hectares, so a contribution towards off site provision should be sought.

15.67 It is unreasonable to ask the developer to fund the entire shortfall in the area, and the contribution can only seek to obtain a contribution for the impact of the additional housing.

- If the open space were to be provided off site, the estimated cost for the provision of amenity greenspace is £8,200 on the basis of a site being 0.2ha (2000m2) in size. The cost per hectares is therefore £41,000.

- The agreed local standard for provision is 0.61 ha per 1000 population, or 0.00061ha per person

- Using the formula set out above, the contribution required for a 7 dwelling development is:
SECTION 15 – PLANNING OVERVIEW

- 23 (number of people in development in terms of increased demand over capacity within accessibility catchment of the development) X 0.00061 (requirement per person) X 41000 (cost of provision per hectare)

- The contribution required towards amenity greenspace is £575.23.

15.68 The application of this formula ensures that the level of provision required from developments is worked out proportionally as to the level of increased demand the development incurs.

| PLAN 9 | Continue to use a formula for the calculation of the provision of open space required. Update costings regularly and expand to include all open space types. Replace the existing quantity standards with the revised standard from the PPG17 study |
The following table provides the outline framework for the application of the study. This identifies where the priorities are by analysis area, applying both the quantity standard and accessibility standard. This provides the basis for developing the study into an Open Space Strategy but also provides the framework for determining where planning contributions should be spent. The quality of sites is not included within the matrix but should also be considered.

**Figure 15.4 - Existing Quantity and Accessibility in Wychavon**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ANALYSIS AREA / TYPOLOGY</th>
<th>Droitwich</th>
<th>Evesham</th>
<th>Pershore</th>
<th>Rural North</th>
<th>Rural South</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Parks and Gardens</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Natural and Semi Natural</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amenity Green Space</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teenagers</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Allotments</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Reference | Provision Level        | Description                                          | Colour |
-----------|------------------------|------------------------------------------------------|--------|
1          | Significant Under Provision | Below the minimum standard by at least 5 ha            |        |
2          | Under Provision         | Below the minimum standard between 1 and 5 ha         |        |
3          | About Right             | Within 1 ha above or below the minimum standard       |        |
4          | Over Provision          | Above the minimum standard between 1 and 5ha          |        |
5          | Significant Over Provision | Above the minimum standard by at least 5 ha          |        |
A          | Accessibility Level     | Y=All residents can access sites of this typology, N – some residents outside an acceptable catchment |        |

Note: excludes outdoor sports facilities, as quantity standard is set for broad planning need only.
### Key issues

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Key issues</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Droitwich</td>
<td>Although there is sufficient provision of parks and gardens, natural and semi natural and amenity green space sites in Droitwich area there remain some residents outside of the catchments for these facilities. There are small shortfalls in provision for children and teenagers and there is a large deficit of allotments in quantitative terms.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evesham</td>
<td>Analysis of provision of open spaces in Evesham suggests that there are quantitative deficiencies of all types of open space. These deficiencies are large for almost all types of open space and there are also residents outside of the catchment for each of the open space types.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pershore</td>
<td>In contrast to provision in Droitwich and Evesham, quantitative provision in Pershore exceeds the minimum standards in the majority of typologies and there are no shortfalls greater than 1 hectare. There are large quantities of provision of allotments in relation to the minimum standard.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural Area North</td>
<td>Provision in the rural north area measured against the standards varies significantly. Although there are large deficiencies of amenity green space and a small under provision of parks and gardens, provision of allotments significantly exceeds the minimum standards. Although there are residents in the area outside of the catchment for each typology, it is not considered practical or feasible for all residents in the rural area to have access to each type of open space and provision should be considered on a demand led basis.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural Area South</td>
<td>In a similar manner to the rural north area of the district, there are some residents outside of the catchment for each type of facility although again, it is not considered practical or feasible for all residents in this area to have access to each type of open space. Measured against the quantity standards, there is more than sufficient provision of parks and gardens contrasting with a slight shortfall of amenity green space.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**PLAN 10**

Develop the open space study to provide a framework for the priorities of open space provision in certain areas and where required apply the study on a case by case basis to determine the exact open space requirements for the proposed development.
15.70 The final step identified in the flow diagram is to calculate the level of maintenance required.

Existing approach:

Wychavon District Council – Developer Contributions towards Service Infrastructure (2003) – maintenance is required for a period of 20 years and costs are worked out per 1000 population (i.e. the cost of maintenance for 0.7ha of equipped children’s play space). As previously stated, this figure is also provided as a total costs including the capital cost.

15.71 A review of the approach taken by other authorities is as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Maintenance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Tynedale Council</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Developers are expected to make a contribution equivalent to 25 years maintenance costs, where a) they are providing on site facilities and asking the Council to take on responsibility for management and maintenance or b) making a financial contribution to the capital costs of provision of facilities in the area</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Fareham Borough Council</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maintenance of sites is required. If transferred to the Council, this is usually done after a period of 12 months, following completion of open space. The developer is only liable for maintenance of the amount of open space equivalent to that required by the development where the council demonstrates that the off-site provision is of direct benefit to the residents of the proposed development (based on NPFA defined sphere of influence for equipped and 1 km radius of development site for outdoor sports facilities)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maintenance rates are worked out on a number of beds/open space type basis and are updated annually</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Milton Keynes Council</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Developer will be required to maintain the site for a period of 12 months after completion.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maintenance sum will then be required for a period of 20 years following establishment. The sum is based on contract prices and allows for inflation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Reading Borough Council</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Council will normally adopt and maintain properly laid out open space, subject to a commuted sum payment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The commuted sum payment should cover 20 years of maintenance costs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commuted maintenance sum is calculated using current contract prices and maintenance costs for maintaining open spaces (i.e. work schedules) and multiplied to establish a 20 year figure. This allows for inflation of contract prices and deflation for diminishing present values over time.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Harrogate Borough Council

Sum is calculated for maintaining on-site open space and varies for each typology. The formula is based on a multiplier of 41 years, to reflect the level of commuted sum needed to provide for maintenance in perpetuity. The commuted sums are shown per hectare for everything except “provision for children and young people” which are shown as a cost per play area.

The costs are based on the layout of the open space and use current contract rates or 2006/7 budget paper as the basis for calculations.

### Sedgemoor District Council

Arrangements will be made for the transfer of new areas of open space to the Council (or Parish Council) after a period of 12 months. A commuted maintenance sum will be required for 15 years after the year of adoption by the Council.

The commuted maintenance sum shall equate to the anticipated future expenditure of 15 years annual maintenance costs taking into consideration the cost of inflation and the interest received on the diminishing average balance of the sum.

Sum is calculated by: costs and expenses estimated for the first years maintenance based on the Council’s ground maintenance bills, minus the interest received on the annual maintenance sum, with the cost of inflation added (in accordance with the annual rate of increases in the Retail Price Index at the time of calculation).

### Daventry Council

Maintenance sum will be for a 20 year period.

Maintenance costs should be based on current costs of maintaining the specific type of outdoor space that has been provided with an allowance made for inflation, calculated over a number of years. Examples are provided for the cost of maintenance per sq metre for a range of facilities.

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15.72 Wychavon District Council should continue to provide the maintenance sums within the SPD but it should be possible to update regularly and an attached spreadsheet approach that can be amended annually is a common approach. The costs of maintenance can vary according to the open space and another matrix may be applicable to set out the varying costs for example between a sports pitch and an amenity greenspace. Maintenance costs also vary according to the topography of the site and site access and may be necessary to include an element of flexibility to account for case by case abnormalities. Maintenance sums should be agreed in a Section 106 agreement.

15.73 Where facilities for open space are to be provided by the developer and will be adopted by the Council:

- the Council should normally adopt and maintain properly laid out open space within residential areas subject to the payment, by the developer, of a commuted sum to cover the cost of future maintenance;
- it is anticipated that the developer will be required to maintain the open space for 12 months, or other reasonable period for ‘establishment’;
- a commuted sum payment is payable on transfer of the land covering cost of maintenance for a defined period. From the review of existing supplementary planning policy maintenance periods are normally between 10 – 25 years;
Wychavon District Council are currently using a 20 year period and intend to continue with this period.

- the commuted maintenance sum should be calculated using current maintenance prices to manage open space, multiplied to allow for inflation of prices and the interest received on the diminishing average annual balance of the sum.

**PLAN 11** Set out maintenance (commuted sums) required and update these regularly.

### Summary of recommendations

15.74 The open space sport and recreation study is an invaluable tool in the formulation and implementation of planning policies. This relates to both the protection and enhancing of existing open space and the framework for developing planning obligations.

15.75 The study provides the tools in which the value of an open space can be assessed on a site-by-site basis, as and when a development proposal is submitted for an existing piece of open space. Similarly, this approach can be the basis for determining what type of open space provision is appropriate to be provided within a housing development and for pre-empting growth implications as part of the LDF.

15.76 On the whole therefore it is recommended that Wychavon District Council make minor amendments to their existing approach to developer contributions. The most significant change will be the need to incorporate the local open space standards into the policy framework.

15.77 More generally, it is important to note that the provision standards are only the starting point in negotiations with developments and high quality environments will not result simply from applying them in a mechanical way. This is why is it desirable also to complement provision standards with design guidance that concentrate on effective place making.

15.78 The recommendations for the planning overview section are as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Summary of recommendations</strong></th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>PLAN 1</strong> Consider applying the policy to all dwellings (i.e. 1 dwelling and above)</td>
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<td><strong>PLAN 2</strong> Devise a matrix approach to clearly state the types of housing mix that will be required to contribute to open space</td>
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<td><strong>PLAN 3</strong> Include a statement to clearly set out the approach to affordable housing</td>
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<td><strong>PLAN 4</strong> Continue to apply the policy to commercial development</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>PLAN 5</strong> Require developer contributions for all types of open space, sport and recreation facilities covered in the PPG17 audit (with local standards)</td>
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