

**HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL**

**OPEN SPACE, SPORT AND RECREATION  
NEEDS ASSESSMENT AND AUDIT**



**A**

**FINAL REPORT**

**BY**

**PMP**

**AUGUST 2006**

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### Introduction and background

#### The study

- 1.1 In January 2006, Huntingdonshire District Council (the Council) appointed PMP to undertake an Open Space, Sport and Recreation Needs Assessment and playing pitch strategy across the district. The study provides the Council with **a clear vision, priorities for the future (based on local need) and a direction for the allocation of resources.**
- 1.2 The study is underpinned by the three key objectives:
  - assess the availability of open space across the district
  - establish local standards of provision for planning purposes as required by PPG17
  - through the application of the standards, identify any deficiencies in quantity, quality and accessibility and surpluses in quantity, along with identifying the spatial distribution of unmet demand
  - identify priorities for action.
- 1.3 The open space study is undertaken in accordance with the requirements of the latest Planning Policy Guidance Note 17 (PPG17) Planning for Open Space Sport and Recreation, July 2002, and its Companion Guide published in September 2002. Further details of these documents are set out later in this section.
- 1.4 The Playing Pitch Strategy is undertaken in accordance with the methodology endorsed by Sport England and set out in the guidance document “Towards a Level Playing Field 2002”.

#### Why open space, sport and recreation?

- 1.5 PPG17 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 Huntingdonshire, therefore, has an important role to play in supporting the implementation of these objectives. Key benefits of an understanding of the open spaces across the district include:
  - contributing to key corporate priorities including safe and active communities, healthy population, clean, green attractive environment and accessible services and transport choices

## **SECTION 1 – INTRODUCTION & BACKGROUND**

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- the identification of the opportunities to further improve the provision of open spaces
- improved knowledge of user requirements to assist in the planning and management of facilities
- provision of a robust basis for resisting the loss of open space where appropriate and securing resources to enhance the availability and quality of open space
- provision of detailed information on the usage and demand for playing pitches across the district.

### ***Functions of open space***

- 1.7 Open spaces can provide a number of functions within the urban fabric of cities, towns and villages. For example, the provision for play and informal recreation, a landscaping buffer within and between the built environment and 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 one's own produce, play areas for children's play and 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 providing for sport and recreation.
- 1.9 There is a need to provide a balance between different types of open space to meet local needs. For example, not all areas' needs will show a demand for playing pitches or allotments. Some areas will have specific local demand for green corridors 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.

### ***Benefits of open space***

- 1.11 Open spaces, including parks, playgrounds, amenity green space, nature reserves and the countryside, are diverse locations that provide opportunities for a range of formal and informal leisure, passive and active sport, recreation and play.
- 1.12 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 also key to an ideal, sustainable and thriving community.
- 1.13 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.

### National context – Open Space

#### **“Assessing Needs & Opportunities”- National Planning Policy Background**

- 1.14 PPG17 states “the government expects all local authorities to carry out assessments of needs and audits of open space and sports and recreational facilities.”
- 1.15 The major change in the policy guidance from the previous version is the requirement for local authority decisions regarding open space, to be **informed by local needs assessments and an audit of existing provision**. Such audits should incorporate qualitative, quantitative and accessibility considerations as well as the overall non-monetary value of the land including the level of use. National standards are no longer considered to meet local needs, although they may be used as benchmarks.
- 1.16 Other changes in this planning policy document are:
- 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.



### Pitch Provision – The Context

- 1.19 By virtue of statutory instrument made in 1996, Sport England is a statutory consultee on proposals for development that affect playing fields, land used as playing fields at any time in the last five years which remains undeveloped, or land

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which is identified for use as a playing field in a development plan. All applications that local planning authorities are minded to approve, but have attracted an objection from Sport England, will be referred to the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) for consideration.

- 1.20 The local planning authority must notify Sport England when a relevant planning application is received. Data stored by Sport England on statutory consultations since 1999 reveals the increasing pressure that is being placed upon pitches throughout the country. Sport England therefore advocates the preparation of detailed playing pitch strategies investigating supply and demand.
- 1.21 The loss of playing pitches also remains a real political issue for the government. Sport England, the NPFA and the CCPR demonstrated their commitment to enhancing playing pitch provision by commissioning a review and updating of the 1991 Playing Pitch Strategy. The new document *'Towards a level playing field: A manual for the production of a playing pitch strategy'* was produced in July 2005, The DCMS released statistics indicating that for the first time applications for development on playing fields were resulting in less non-sports projects and more new sports facilities and pitches. During 2003 – 2004, 959 applications were approved for development, 590 involved projects that would greatly improve the quality of sport on offer at the site. These include new sports centres, tennis courts, athletics tracks and Astroturf pitches, as well as changing rooms and floodlights.
- 1.22 The DCMS commended these improvements, highlighting that the development of playing pitches does not always have a negative impact. Sport England continues to safeguard pitches as well as helping to enhance sporting facilities by only giving approval for alterations where there are increased benefits for sporting facilities.
- 1.23 An understanding of pitch and other sporting provision within Huntingdonshire is therefore important in achieving both local and national priorities. With the exception of REFF and Active Places, there are no other reliable data sources concerning the numbers of pitches in England. In addition, there is no nationally established system for monitoring change.
- 1.24 The exact number of pitches being lost to development or neglect is unknown and remains a contentious issue. The DCMS has established a Playing Fields Monitoring Group, tasked with publishing some definitive data.

### **Demographics and local features**

- 1.25 Huntingdonshire District Council is one of five local authorities making up the County of Cambridgeshire and is located in the East of England.
- 1.26 Cambridgeshire has been identified as the fastest growing shire county in the country with a 21.3% growth in population since 1981 (Census 2001). At the heart of this growth is the Cambridge Sub-Region, which is the planning area defined in the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Structure Plan 2003. This growth agenda includes the City of Cambridge, the surrounding ring of market towns within Cambridgeshire such as Ely, St Ives, St Neots, Huntingdon, and Chatteris, and the many villages within this ring, mostly falling within South Cambridgeshire. The growth agenda within Huntingdonshire may see as many as 7500 additional dwellings, generating circa 18000 new residents in the area. The total population living in Huntingdonshire District in 2001 was 156,294.

- 1.27 The district is rural and has a population density below the national and Cambridgeshire average of 1.6 people per hectare. The majority of the population live within the three market towns of Huntingdon, St Neots and St Ives.
- 1.28 The proportion of the population who are economically inactive is lower in Huntingdonshire than in other areas of the county and the proportion of people of ethnic minority is also below the Cambridgeshire average. While the proportion of people aged below 18 is higher than the Cambridgeshire average (potentially suggesting increased demand for play and sports provision), proportions of retired people over the age of 60 are lower than in other areas of the County at present. However demographic trends indicate that the proportion of people over the age of 60 will increase over the structure plan period. This will impact on the demand for open spaces and provision of outdoor sports facilities.

### **Structure of the report**

- 1.29 The report is split into 12 sections. Section 2 sets out the methodology for undertaking the study and section 3 sets out the strategic context to provide the background and context for the study. Section 4 provides a brief summary of the consultation undertaken, where some of the key themes are drawn out within each typology section.
- 1.30 Sections 5 –10 relate to the individual 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 application of these standards through the geographical analysis, quality benchmarking and value assessments. These are not applicable to all typologies.
- 1.31 Sections 11 – 12 sets out a summary of the potential funding sources to help implement the findings of the study and details on the formulae for setting and developing developer contributions.



## **Undertaking the study**

### **Introduction**

- 2.1 The PPG17 companion guide is a guidance note suggesting ways and means of undertaking a local needs assessment. It emphasises the importance of considering local demand and need, as opposed to following national trends and guidelines. The four guiding principles in undertaking a local assessment are:
- local needs will vary even within local authority areas according to socio-demographic and cultural characteristics
  - the provision of good quality and effective open space relies on effective planning but also on creative design, landscape management and maintenance
  - delivering high quality and sustainable open spaces may depend much more on improving and enhancing existing open space rather than new provision
  - 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 the approach needs to be adopted to meet the needs of each authority to accurately reflect the different structures and characteristics. The resulting conclusions and recommendations of this study therefore represent local needs specific to Huntingdonshire.
- 2.3 The provision of sports pitches, tennis courts and bowling greens has been assessed using the Sport England Playing Pitch Methodology outlined in Towards A Level Playing Field. Full details of the methodology and the approach undertaken is set out in section 7.

### **Types of open space**

- 2.4 PPG17 identifies ten typologies of open space. These categories include nine types of green space and one category of urban open space. This study focuses on spaces within settlements only and includes the assessment of:
- parks and gardens
  - natural and semi natural open space
  - amenity greenspace
  - provision for children and young people
  - outdoor sports facilities (including pitches, tennis and bowls)
  - allotments and community gardens
  - green corridors.
- 2.5 While areas of nearby countryside are not assessed as a typology within their own right, their contribution to the green space network is recognised. The study encompasses all publicly accessible open space including spaces not in the ownership of the Council. Full details of the typologies included, their definitions and their primary purpose are outlined in Appendix B.

**PPG17 – 5 step process**

2.6 The PPG17 Companion Guide sets out a logical five-step process for undertaking a local assessment of open space. 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**

2.7 The following steps indicate how the study has been undertaken in accordance with PPG17 and provide an overview of the methodology undertaken.

**Step 1 - Identifying local needs**

2.8 In order to identify local community need a series of consultations have been undertaken. 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.

2.9 The resulting picture of local needs is invaluable and forms the basis of the recommended local standards. The results of the application of these local standards therefore reflect local community need, ensuring that future developments will meet the needs of the residents of Huntingdonshire.

2.10 Results of key consultations undertaken are set out in brief in section 4, consultation and comments relating to different types of open space are provided within typology specific sections 5 to 10.

2.11 Key consultations as part of this process undertaken include:

- household **survey** – surveys were distributed to 5000 randomly selected residents (Appendix C)
- **sports club surveys** to all sports clubs (contacts provided by the Council) who had not previously responded to the Council's own survey (Appendix C)

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- **IT young people survey** – a letter and information pack was sent out to all the schools in Huntingdonshire
- **school survey** to all schools in the district (undertaken by the Council)
- **drop-in sessions** held at five different locations across the district, specifically Huntingdon, St Ives, St Neots, Ramsey and Yaxley
- consultations with **external agencies**
- **internal consultations** with Council officers
- consultations with **Parish Councils** (undertaken by the Council)
- **site specific user consultation** at play areas and a selection of other open spaces across the district (undertaken by the Council).

### **Step 2 - Auditing local provision**

- 2.12 A detailed audit of open space provision within Huntingdonshire was compiled by the Council
- 2.13 The audit builds on work undertaken and represents a comprehensive record of the key local open spaces in all areas of the district and in all ownership. Sites above 0.2ha have been recorded. Whilst the emphasis is on sites within settlements, larger strategic sites (e.g. Hinchingbrooke Country Park) are also noted within the study.
- 2.14 The audit categorises open spaces as follows:

<b>Main Category</b>	<b>Sub Category</b>
Informal Open Space	Parks and Gardens
	Natural Open Spaces
	Amenity Green Spaces
Provision for children and young people	
Outdoor Sports Facilities	Includes golf courses, tennis courts, bowling greens, sports pitches.
Allotments	

- 2.15 Site assessments were undertaken at all sites to provide an indication of the current quality of sites and those requiring improvement. Quality was measured against a predefined set of criteria, enabling a consistent objective approach and comparisons between different sites. A copy of the site assessment matrix used can be found in appendix D.
- 2.16 Sites were rated individually against the above categories and an overall site categorisation was also provided, classifying sites as good, average or poor.
- 2.17 All sites are stored on a GIS layer.

### ***Steps 3 Setting provision standards***

- 2.18 PPG17 advocates that planning policies for open space, including playing fields, should be based upon local standards derived from a robust assessment of local need.
- 2.19 Key themes emerging from consultations in addition to the findings of the open space audit and site assessments were therefore used as a basis to determine provision standards for each type of open space in terms of quality, quantity and accessibility.
- 2.20 The methods used to determine standards are outlined in brief in appendix E. The full justification for each recommended standard for Huntingdonshire, following this process can be found in appendices H, J and I.
- 2.21 The application of these robust local standards based on assessments of need and existing provision will form the basis for addressing quantitative and qualitative needs through the planning process.
- 2.22 Although standards have been set for all areas of the district (market towns, key centres and smaller settlements) and all residents use open spaces, the appropriateness of the application of some of the standards to each individual small settlement is questioned and discussed where necessary.
- 2.23 The standards set are not directly comparable with the nationally recognised 6 acre standard that is currently used within the Huntingdonshire District Council Local Plan. Although the six-acre standard (which is split into two components – provision for outdoor sports (1.6ha) and playing spaces for children (0.8ha)) covers similar types of space as PPG17, types of spaces included are not exactly the same. A good example is the inclusion of some amenity green spaces as provision for children within the six-acre standard, whereas all amenity green space is classified separately under PPG17. The standards in this study are local standards based on local need.

### ***Steps 4 - Applying provision standards***

- 2.24 The application of the recommended local standards enables the identification of areas of deficiency and priorities for action in terms of improving the quantity, quality and accessibility of open space.
- 2.25 In order to fully understand open space provision within Huntingdonshire, quantity, quality and accessibility standards should be considered in conjunction with each other. Application of the local standards enables the assessment of site-specific issues and value in addition to the overall prioritisation of areas. The application of these standards has been considered for each type of open space in the typology specific sections.
- 2.26 Further detail on the methodology for the application of local standards and understanding the value of different open space types can be found in appendix E. The application of local standards will form the evidence base for addressing qualitative, quantitative and accessibility needs through the planning process.

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

- 2.27 The application of the standards provides strategic priorities and recommendations, which are set out for each typology within the report.

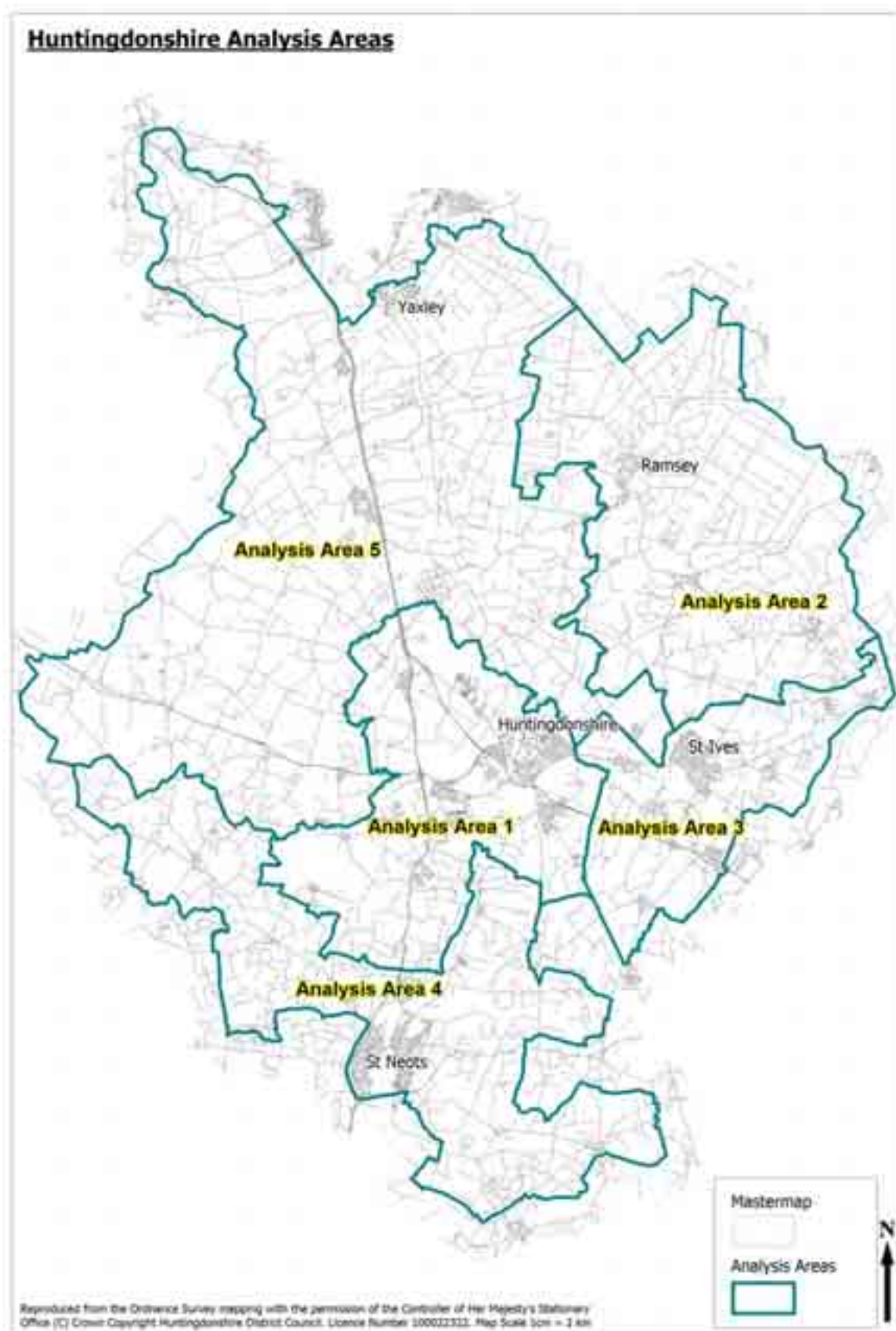
- 2.28 The report also provides guidance for the application of Section 106 agreements and best practice formula and costings based on the approach taken by other authorities and best practice.

**Huntingdonshire District Council – The Geographical Area**

- 2.29 Analysis of the open space across the district has been undertaken by type of open space looking at different areas across the local authority boundary (referred to as analysis areas in this report). These areas were discussed and agreed with the Council.
- 2.30 The use of analysis areas allows examination of data at a more detailed local level, enabling an understanding of the geographical distribution of open spaces and ensuring that differences in perception and opinion of open spaces across the district are understood.
- 2.31 The district has been split into five areas using administrative ward boundaries. These boundaries can be seen in map 2.1 below and are referred to throughout the report as analysis areas. Analysis of different areas can be undertaken using the GIS system and applying the local standards. For example, analysis of provision just in the market towns can be undertaken.
- 2.32 Each analysis area includes a variety of settlements including market towns, key centres and smaller settlements. The analysis areas are based around the larger towns and it is assumed that people in the smaller villages use the amenities in the larger towns that are in their analysis area.
- 2.33 As future housing allocations within the district have not yet been confirmed the distribution of population growth is unclear. The population has therefore been assumed to grow evenly across the analysis areas in proportion to the existing population in each area. More detailed calculations can be undertaken when housing allocations and population projections are confirmed to project future need and shortfall and surpluses of each type of open space.

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Figure 2.1 – Analysis Areas in Huntingdonshire



### 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 provide the strategic context to open spaces, sport and recreation facilities across the country and as such influence the provision of facilities in Huntingdonshire and the findings of this report.
- 3.4 Appendix F sets out the national open space strategic context, including Living Spaces: Cleaner, Safer Greener which was produced by the ODPM in 2002 and led to the creation of CABI 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 national (sporting), regional and local strategic context for the District of Huntingdonshire.

#### ***The Game Plan (December 2002)***

- 3.7 *“Sport is very powerful both in the pursuit of excellence and helping to tackle social and health problems.”* (Tessa Jowell, Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, December 2002.)
- 3.8 Published jointly by the Prime Minister's Strategy Unit and the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) it represents the Government's policy for sport and physical activity and sets out to combat the couch potato culture and improve our international sporting performance. The Game Plan's remit is wider than sport alone as it recognises the links between physical activity and improving health, and the importance of focusing on young people.
- 3.9 The report also highlights the problems of a fragmented approach to the funding of sport and physical activity, with current funding through Local Government, Education Departments, Voluntary Sector (sports clubs and National Governing Bodies (NGBs)) and the private sector. To resolve this fragmented approach calls for greater emphasis to be placed on a partnership approach to the funding of and delivery of sport and physical activity at a local and regional level.
- 3.10 Two overarching objectives of the Game Plan are:
  - increasing participation in sport and physical activity amongst all age groups and sectors of the community, primarily in terms of the health benefits this will produce
  - improving success in international competition, with a focus on those sports in which success will generate a “feel good factor”

### ***Choosing Health: making healthy choices easier***

- 3.11 The Choosing Health White Paper emphasises that the 21st century citizens should actively look towards a healthier approach to life. By listening to people's views and taking into account the realities of lifestyles three core principles towards making healthy choices easier have emerged:
- informed choice - people able to make their own decisions
  - personalisation - support for individuals
  - working together - effective partnerships.
- 3.12 The consultation process also identified the following overarching priorities:
- reducing the number of people who smoke
  - reducing obesity and improving diet and nutrition
  - increasing exercise
  - encouraging and supporting sensible drinking
  - improving sexual health
  - improving mental health.
- 3.13 As consumers, the choices we make can affect our health, so the Government White Paper aims to set out a modern strategy encompassing access to and quality of information. In light of this document, the Council should consider:
- the contribution that open space, sport and recreation facilities can make to achieve these priorities
  - joint working between the Council and other local partners with clearly defined roles and responsibilities to produce effective partnerships.

### ***DfES: Learning through PE and Sport (2003)***

- 3.14 The joint Department for Education and Skills (DfES) document 'Learning through PE and Sport' stresses the importance of PE and sport in schools (curricular and extracurricular).
- 3.15 The key themes of this document include:
- schools as a community resource
  - 'lifelong learning'
  - extended schools programme.
- 3.16 As a result, careful consideration should be given by the Council with regards to opening up of school sports facilities for community use and joint working between the Council and other local partners with clearly defined roles and responsibilities.



- 3.17 Facilities are needed in connection with health, education, community development and youth. The new proposals for academies and extended schools will ensure that through partnership working, increased facilities are available to the community in future years.

### Summary

The key issues emerging from the review of national documents can be summarised as:

- the significance of green space is recognised at national level and is reflected in Government funding priorities
- research confirms the importance of urban green spaces - it is estimated that, in England, over 33 million people make over 2.5 billion visits to urban green spaces each year
- there is a recognition of the role that open spaces can play in urban renaissance and regeneration and it is important to recognise the cross cutting role that open spaces can play in the delivery of local priorities
- provision of open spaces has numerous wider benefits, contributing to the achievement of national government priorities including:
  - contribution to local economy
  - increased health and well being
  - social interaction and development
  - improved community cohesion
- there is real concern regarding the state of parks and open spaces within the country particularly due to lack of investment. It is important to ensure that sites are of sufficient quality to encourage people to use them, and barriers to usage should be addressed
- Key barriers to usage of open space sites include:
  - lack of/poor condition of facilities (including play facilities for children)
  - other users (including anti-social behaviour)
  - concerns about dogs and mess
  - safety and other psychological issues (e.g. feelings of vulnerability and inertia)
  - environmental quality issues such as litter, graffiti and vandalism

- any development of open spaces (either new or enhancement of existing areas) should take into account the biodiversity and nature conservation
- partnership working is essential to make the best use of resources. There appears to be a general consensus that involving the community in managing and designing open space sites creates a sense of ownership and assists in maintaining the quality and maximising the usage of open space sites
- innovative practice and high quality standards do not necessarily equate to high budget spend.

### Regional policy documents

#### ***Regional Planning Guidance 6: Regional Planning Guidance for East Anglia to 2016***

- 3.18 This Regional Planning Guidance (RPG) for East Anglia is provided by the Secretary of State for the Environment, Transport and the Regions and is based on the Regional Strategy for East Anglia (1995–2016).
- 3.19 The primary purpose of this guidance is to set the regional framework for development plans in East Anglia in the period to 2016. Its other main purpose is to provide the long term planning framework for other strategies and programmes, including the Regional Economic Development Strategy prepared by EEDA and the Regional Housing Statement prepared by GO-East and the Housing Corporation.
- 3.20 The RPG provides advice on how local authorities should address the adoption of strategies aimed at ensuring that all development is sustainable with regard to the countryside and the biodiversity.
- 3.21 Relevant key objectives from the guidance are:
- to conserve and enhance the biodiversity of the area
  - to maintain and enhance the quality of the built environment, including historic settlements, buildings, parks and gardens, open space, conservation areas and archaeological sites.
- 3.22 Specific policies of relevance to provision of sporting facilities within this strategy include:
- Policy 64 regarding the provision of sporting facilities noting that ‘local authorities, in consultation with local community groups should set out clear priorities for the provision of community sport and recreation facilities in order to make the most effective use of funding.’
  - Policy 65 in relation the location of sporting facilities noting that ‘development plans should include policies designed to meet the needs for sport and recreation in locations which minimise the need for travel and are not detrimental to the environment. In preparing such plans, local planning authorities should liaise with Sport England and local community groups to determine the best locations for these facilities.’

### ***The Draft East of England Plan, A Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) for the East of England***

3.23 The draft East of England Plan outlines the vision for the East of England to sustain and improve quality of life for all in the region through development of a more sustainable, prosperous and outward-looking region. Once adopted it will replace the Regional Planning Guidance for East Anglia.

3.24 The policies relevant to this study include:

- achieving sustainable development
- land in the urban fringe
- priority areas for regeneration
- health, education and social inclusion
- strategy for the Greater Peterborough Sub-Region
- environmental infrastructure
- landscape character
- biodiversity and earth heritage
- woodlands.

3.25 The key policy related to provision of environmental infrastructure is ENV1, which states that:

*“Environmental infrastructure will be identified, developed and implemented in the region to ensure that a healthy and enhanced environment is provided for the benefit of present and future communities and to contribute to economic objectives. This will be particularly important in the implementation of the Government’s ‘Sustainable Communities Plan’ growth areas.”*

Policy ENV1 continues and states that Local Development Documents will:

- provide connected and substantial networks of accessible multi-functional green space, in urban, urban fringe and adjacent countryside areas to service the new communities in the sub-region by 2021
- have a multiple hierarchy of provision of green infrastructure, in terms of location, function and levels of use, at every spatial scale and all geographical areas of the region
- provide and safeguard green infrastructure based on analysis of existing natural, historic, cultural and landscape assets, provided by characterisation assessments, and the identification of new assets required to deliver green infrastructure
- identify biodiversity conservation areas and biodiversity enhancement areas, to deliver large-scale habitat enhancement for the benefit of wildlife and people
- set targets for the provision of natural green space within development areas.

## SECTION 3 – STRATEGIC CONTEXT

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- 3.26 This study will contribute to Local Development Documents and help these documents to achieve these goals.
- 3.27 Policy ENV3 relates to biodiversity and earth heritage and states that the region's biodiversity, earth heritage and natural resources will be protected and enriched through conservation, restoration and re-establishment of key resources. Relevant actions to achieve this are given as:
- establishing networks of semi-natural green spaces in built up areas as part of the process of developing more sustainable, safer, secure and attractive and built forms
  - ensuring that any new development minimised any damage to the biodiversity and earth heritage resource and where possible, enhances it.
- 3.28 The strategy also refers to strategies specific to the Cambridge sub-region (which includes Huntingdon, St Neots, St Ives and other parts of Huntingdonshire). Policy CSR5 is:
- “A comprehensive approach will be adopted to secure infrastructure, including green infrastructure, needed to support the development strategy for the Cambridge sub-region.”*
- 3.29 Regarding sports provision, specific note is made of Policies C2 relating to strategic sports facilities, and C4, which relates to appropriate locations of sports facilities.
- 3.30 Policy C2 notes that regionally or nationally significant leisure, sport, recreation, arts or tourism facilities, will be supported in locations where proposals:
- satisfy the sequential test. Priority should be given to the location of development in central urban locations before off-centre or out-of-town locations, and to the use of brownfield land in preference to greenfield sites. Exceptionally the specific attributes of a rural site may make it uniquely appropriate for a regionally strategic cultural development proposal.
  - do not adversely affect areas designated for their ecological, landscape or historic value
  - meet sustainable development objectives as outlined in the core spatial strategy of the RSS
  - maximise opportunities to use means of transport other than the car and use transport networks that have adequate capacity to accommodate passenger and rail freight requirements without adverse affect upon rail, bus and other transport services
  - are well related to Regional Interchange Centres as defined in the Regional Transport Strategy'
  - minimise their use of energy and natural resources and their impact on public services, and have satisfactory proposals for minimising their long-term use and impact
  - have appropriate scale and impact

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- meet other relevant criteria or considerations specific to the proposed location of the development.
- 3.31 Policy C2 also notes that these criteria may be met by the introduction of measures to ameliorate or mitigate adverse effects provided these are appropriate and satisfactory to the relevant local planning authority. It is noted that proposals that both meet the above criteria and would bring benefit to an assisted area or priority area for regeneration will be given particular support.
- 3.32 Policy C4 notes that ‘in preparing plans, local planning authorities will liaise with Sport England and local community groups to determine the best locations for appropriate facilities.’
- 3.33 In consultation with local community groups, local authorities should identify needs and set out clear strategies for the provision of additional community sport and recreation facilities, as well as for the protection and enhancement of existing sporting facilities, following an extensive audit of existing recreational open spaces and sports facilities in the area, and a needs assessment of the type of sports facilities required.
- 3.34 The Playing Pitch Strategy undertaken as part of this study will help to identify specific needs within Huntingdonshire for additional community sport and recreation facilities in the form of outdoor sport pitches.

### ***Cambridgeshire Sub-Regional Green Infrastructure Strategy***

- 3.35 The purpose of this strategy is to provide a bold and imaginative strategy for the provision of large scale Green Infrastructure for the sub-region over the next 20 years. This is to complement and support the significant growth in housing provision that is planned for this period.
- 3.36 The overall vision of the strategy is:
- “Create a comprehensive and sustainable network of green corridors and sites that: enhance the diversity of landscape character; connects and enrich biodiversity habitats and: extend access and recreation opportunities.”*
- 3.37 For the purposes of the study, a number of types of categories of open space have been included in the study. These include:
- urban parks and public gardens
  - country parks
  - natural and semi natural greenspaces
  - green corridors
  - amenity greenspaces.
- 3.38 A number of strategic objectives underpin and inform the direction of the Green Infrastructure Strategy.
- multi-functionality – wherever possible, greenspace should be multi-functional

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- connectivity of habitats – provision of improved linkage between existing and proposed Green Infrastructure is key to the success of the strategy
- extended access – enhanced access for all, particularly through sustainable means such as walking, cycling, horse and boat
- landscape and biodiversity enhancement - proposals should always promote and enhance the local diversity and distinctiveness of each area
- landmark projects – some of these will also combine with other features of related interest, which could include major recreational sports facilities, historical cultural sites or centres for sustainable land management practices.

3.39 To provide more specific direction to the strategic objectives a number of recommendations were established. The most relevant of these to this study are listed below:

- promote all existing river corridors in the Sub-Region as focal features for biodiversity and access enhancement and creation
- promote the extension and creation of enhanced biodiversity and access linkages between existing ancient and semi natural woodland clusters
- promote the extension and creation of enhanced biodiversity and access linkages between existing ancient and semi natural woodland clusters
- promote the extension and creation of traditional fen habitats including wetland, meadow and wet woodland with seasonal flooding
- identify and promote opportunities to enhance existing habitats and linkages of chalk habitats
- protect acidic heath habitats, encourage restoration and enhance linkages with sites to the west on the Greensand Ridge and to the east to the Breckland
- promote green bridges over major physical barriers to protect and develop biodiversity connectivity
- create new strategic biodiversity and access corridors linking main settlements and green hubs
- create range of new strategic accessible greenspaces around the fringe of Cambridge, Northstowe and the Market Towns in association with planned major developments
- develop existing and create new orbital and strategic recreational routes to the countryside and around the fringes of Cambridge and the Market towns in association with existing and planned major developments
- promote enhanced and new waterway links within the Fens to provide improved access by water
- promote biodiversity and landscape enhancements in rural areas particularly along the route of existing Strategic Rights of Way

- promote and improve the network, status and quality of strategic/ published routes
- promote the provision of River bridging points in key parts of the Rights of Way network
- support the creation and development of Landmark Projects to focus the delivery of the Green Infrastructure Strategy and encourage linkage with recreational and historic/cultural sites and projects.

***Our environment, Our Future: The regional environment strategy for the East of England, EERA and EEEF, 2003***

- 3.40 The Regional Environment Strategy provides a summary of the current state of the environment in the East of England and describes the main environmental challenges facing the region and provides a series of strategic aims for responding to these challenges. The strategy presents a number of key actions that should be implemented to meet the strategic aims.
- 3.41 The Open Space, Sport and Needs Assessment and Audit will help to contribute to some of the strategic aims of this document, specifically:
- maintain and enhance landscape and townscape character
  - enhance biodiversity
  - accommodate population and economic growth whilst protecting and enhancing the environment.

***A shared vision: The regional economic strategy for the East of England, EERA and EEDA, 2004***

- 3.42 This strategy set the long-term vision for sustainable economic development in the East of England. The relevant goal is to provide high quality places to live, work and visit. A key priority within this goal is to develop and enhance greenspaces and infrastructure to support economic growth. This is to be done through the actions:
- development and management of green networks and infrastructure for the region
  - investment in and enhancement of key environmental assets
  - development of a high quality and accessible urban-rural fringe.
- 3.43 The Open Space, Sport and Needs Assessment and Audit will contribute to the implementation of these actions.

***The Regional Social Strategy: A strategy to achieve a fair and inclusive society in the East of England, EERA, ODPM and EEDA, 2004***

- 3.44 This strategy sets out the vision, objectives and actions to achieve a fair and inclusive society for the East of England. A key action point related to this study is:

*“To directly promote the development of strategic networks of greenspace that benefit health and mental well being, particularly in areas of social deprivation, by providing for more contact with nature for all across the Sustainable Communities Plan growth areas.”*

- 3.45 This study will assist in the development of strategic networks of greenspaces for the benefit of the whole of society.

### **Huntingdonshire District Council: Core Strategy**

- 3.46 The Core Strategy sets out the long term vision and overall approach to managing change in the District up to 2021. The vision is for:

*“Huntingdonshire to continue to provide a good quality of life as a place which offers continued economic success; opportunities for everyone to gain access to suitable homes, jobs and services; and an attractive environment which is conserved and enhanced.”*

- 3.47 There are a number of key principles within the core strategy, related to sustainable development, natural resources, social and economic well being, settlement strategy and hierarchy, development in the countryside, mixed development and flood risk.
- 3.48 The strategy groups settlements within Huntingdonshire into three tiers according to their overall population; specifically market towns (Huntingdon, Ramsey, St Ives and St Neots), key centres (Brampton, Buckden, Kimbolton, Yaxley, Sawtry, Somersham, Little Paxton, Warboys) and smaller settlements (with above 30 dwellings). This open space assessment will provide an indication of the level of provision in each of these tiers
- 3.49 The section of the Core Strategy most relevant to this study is the one related to greenspace. There are seven key policies referred to in this section. The key aspects of these policies are summarised below:
- open space and recreational land – development proposals should not entail the whole or partial loss of open space within settlements, or of outdoor recreation facilities or allotments
  - landscape character – a development proposal should respect and respond appropriately to the distinctive qualities of the surrounding landscape
  - trees, hedgerows and other environmental features – a development proposal should minimise the risk of harm to trees, hedgerows or other environmental features of visual, historic or nature conservation values
  - protected habitats and species – a development proposal should not harm sites of national or international importance for biodiversity or geology
  - historic parks and gardens – a development proposal within or affecting a historic park or garden will only be permitted if it would not have an adverse impact upon the historic importance or special features of the registered historic park or garden
  - areas of strategic greenspace enhancement – these areas are defined on the proposals map and any development proposal should be compatible with objectives associated with these areas



- biodiversity –a development proposal affecting biodiversity should be carefully considered in order for biodiversity in an area not to be adversely affected.

3.50 The assessment of local supply and needs will provide the Council with vital information to assist with the fulfilment of these policies.

### ***Huntingdonshire District Council: Outdoor Recreation Monitoring Report***

3.51 This study investigated the quantitative supply of land for outdoor recreation as defined by the adult/youth component of the (National Playing Fields Association) NPFA standard (ie 1.6ha per 1000 people for outdoor sport). As such, the report does not attempt to measure the amount of land available for formal or informal children's play.

3.52 It is acknowledged that assessing supply of play space in a settlement is of little meaning when considering the adequacy of that supply due to the limited mobility of children, it being much more important to consider location of play areas within walking distance of children in that locality. However, it is reasonable to acknowledge the availability of outdoor sports facilities, contends the report, on a settlement wide basis, due to their wider catchment area. The analysis of both outdoor recreation and children's play spaces at a local level is in line with the principles of PPG17.

3.53 The report was carried out in 26 settlements or paired settlements (whose population exceeded 1,000 people at mid-2000).

3.54 The results of the study indicated that St Neots and Huntingdon have a significant over-provision in terms of NPFA standard when set against their present population levels. The report does note that these town's facilities attract participants from outside of the settlement boundaries. Other settlements found to have a significant excess in terms of the NPFA standard were Ramsey, Bury, Kimbolton, Bluntisham, Great Gransden and Holywell-cum-Needlingworth.

3.55 St Ives, Godmanchester, Fenstanton, Great Paxton and the Alconburys all have a level of provision which is largely in line with the NPFA standard whilst the majority of villages in the District suffered from an inadequate supply of formal outdoor recreation space.

3.56 The greatest shortfall against NPFA standards is in four of the larger villages, namely, Yaxley, Sawtry, Somersham and Brampton.

### **Community strategy**

3.57 The Huntingdonshire District Council community strategy sets out the long-term vision for Huntingdonshire and the means of achieving this vision. The key focuses and vision include:

- continued economic success;
  - a high quality built and natural environment;
  - low crime;
  - low fear of crime; and
  - a healthy population;

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- opportunities for all; and
  - easy and affordable access to services and facilities;
  - good opportunities for learning;
  - good cultural and leisure opportunities; and
  - vibrant, confident and effective communities.
- an environment that is protected and improved;
  - a sustainable, buoyant and balanced local economy;
  - a balanced housing market; and
  - improved and sustainable infrastructure for communities.

3.58 The strategy has been developed by the Huntingdonshire Strategic Partnership following extensive consultation with local communities. It provides a framework for all partners to work towards.

3.59 The strategy sets out key actions and timescales to deliver to achieve each priority. Provision of green space and outdoor sports facilities can play a key role in the achievement of many of the priorities and key actions.

### Summary and conclusions

3.60 As can be seen in the summary below, green space provision is instrumental in the achievement of key priorities at both a national, regional and local level.

Strategy Name	Key Priorities	How this study will help deliver priorities
<i>Community Plan</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• economic success</li> <li>• opportunities for all</li> <li>• protection and improvement of the environment</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• investment in green space provision across Huntingdonshire will improve quality of life</li> <li>• key to play in the delivery of health agenda and increasing physical activity for young people</li> <li>• protection of green spaces to improve the quality of the environment</li> </ul>
<i>Core Strategy</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• sustainable development</li> <li>• maximise natural resources</li> <li>• social and economic well being</li> <li>• develop countryside</li> <li>• protection of greenspace, trees habitats and species</li> <li>• biodiversity</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• evidence base</li> <li>• protection of green spaces</li> <li>• appropriate future development of green infrastructure</li> <li>• understanding of community perception</li> </ul>
<i>Regional Spatial Strategy</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• provide connected and sustainable networks of green space</li> <li>• develop a hierarchy of green infrastructure provision</li> <li>• protect and safeguard green infrastructure</li> <li>• identify biodiversity and conservation opportunities</li> <li>• set targets for the provision of green space in new developments</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• evidence base</li> <li>• understanding of adequacy of current provision</li> <li>• protection of green spaces</li> <li>• basis for determining developer contributions</li> </ul>

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<i>Regional Social Strategy</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• vision, objectives and actions to achieve a fair and inclusive society</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• assist in the development of strategic networks of greenspaces for the benefit the whole of society.</li> </ul>
<i>Regional Economic Strategy</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• manage green networks and green infrastructure</li> <li>• invest and enhance environmental assets</li> <li>• develop high quality accessible urban fringe</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• evidence base</li> <li>• recognition of the role of the provision of greenspace in the economic development of an area</li> </ul>
<i>Regional Environmental Strategy</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• maintain and enhance landscape characteristics</li> <li>• enhance biodiversity</li> <li>• accommodate population and economic growth</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ensure green space is provided in new developments</li> <li>• inform landscape characteristics and improvements</li> </ul>
<i>Cambridgeshire Sub Regional Green Infrastructure Strategy</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• sustainable network</li> <li>• increase diversity of landscape character</li> <li>• enrich biodiversity</li> <li>• extend access and recreation opportunities</li> <li>• connect habitats</li> <li>• encourage multi functionality</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• provide a district focus to link in with the sub regional strategy</li> <li>• provide knowledge of current provision across the district and opportunities for improvement of the infrastructure.</li> </ul>
<i>Regional Planning Guidance</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• conserve and enhance biodiversity</li> <li>• maintain and enhance quality of business environment</li> <li>• consultation with community groups</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• inform future planning needs for green space</li> <li>• evidence base</li> <li>• understanding of community needs</li> </ul>

### Consultation

#### Introduction

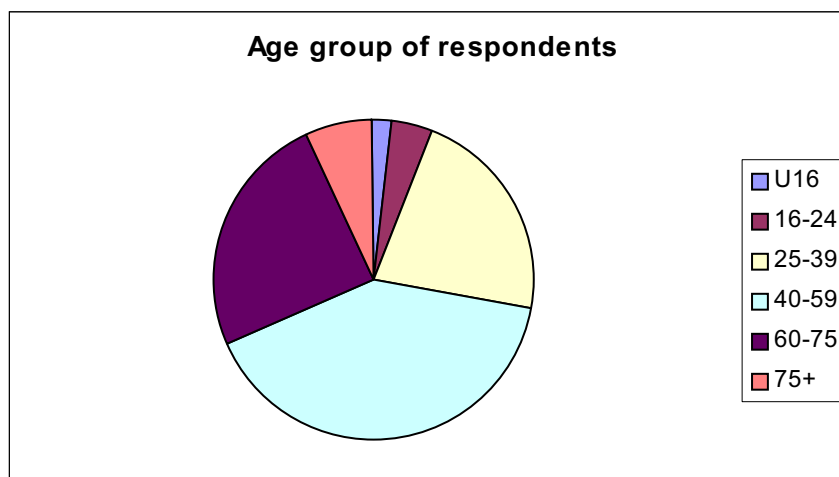
- 4.1 As outlined in Section 2, a series of consultations were carried out as part of the local needs assessments to establish the views on open space provision amongst both users and non-users across the district. Our own consultation was supplemented by the consultation undertaken by the Council immediately before the study commenced.
- 4.2 The key consultations included:
- **household survey** – surveys were distributed to 5000 randomly selected residents (Appendix C)
  - **sports club surveys** to all sports clubs (contacts provided by the Council) who had not previously responded to the Council's own survey (Appendix K)
  - **IT young people survey** – a letter and information pack was sent out to all the schools in Huntingdon
  - **school survey** to all schools in the district (undertaken by the Council)
  - **drop-in sessions** held at five different locations across the district, specifically Huntingdon, St Ives, St Neots, Ramsey and Yaxley
  - consultations with **external agencies**
  - **internal consultations** with Council officers
  - consultations with **Parish Councils** (undertaken by the Council)
  - **site specific user consultation** at play areas and a selection of other open spaces across the district (undertaken by the Council).
- 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.

#### **Household survey**

- 4.4 The household survey is one of the most important aspects of the consultation, enabling 5000 randomly selected households to comment on the overall provision, quality and accessibility of open space, sport and recreation facilities as well as being given the opportunity to comment on any site-specific issues they may face.

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- 4.5 The questionnaire was distributed according to the total population living in each area ensuring that as far as possible, a geographically representative sample of residents living in the District is able to comment.
- 4.6 565 postal surveys were returned, providing a statistically reliable sample at a confidence level of +/-5% at the 95% confidence level. The spread of respondents across age groups is illustrated below. 44% of respondents were male and 56% female.



- 4.7 The results from the household survey can be found in the specific typology sections (Sections 5-10), as well as the justification of standards in the appendices (Appendices H, I and J). Key issues emerging from the household survey include:
- overall, residents indicated that the quantity of open spaces within Huntingdonshire is about right, although there were variations between typologies
  - the most frequently used types of open space are green corridors, natural and semi natural areas and parks
  - natural areas were perceived to be the highest quality open space in the district, with over 50% of respondents indicating that they were of good quality
  - the majority of respondents to the household survey indicated that they would expect to walk to open spaces.

### ***Sports club survey***

- 4.8 A sports club survey was undertaken by the Council to all known football, cricket, rugby, hockey, tennis and bowls clubs during 2005. A further survey was distributed to clubs that had not responded during 2006. Telephone calls were made to all non-responding clubs in order to ensure that all clubs were included within the playing pitch methodology calculations.
- 4.9 The responses primarily inform the application of the playing pitch methodology. They do however also feed into the recommendations and justifications of standards for outdoor sports facilities.
- 4.10 The original sports club survey sent out by the Council was responded to by 62 clubs in the district. These clubs gave indications of a number of factors relevant to both the Open Space Study and the Playing Pitch Strategy.

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- 4.11 Responses to this survey indicated that 77% of the clubs felt that number and availability of pitches met the demand within the district.
- 4.12 In line with this, 47.6% of clubs rated the availability of pitches in the district as very good or excellent. This related to an average score of 3.42 (out of 5) and a modal score of 4 (very good).
- 4.13 59.7% of clubs rated the accessibility of pitches as very good or excellent. This relates to an average score of 3.61 (out of 5) and a modal score of 4 (very good).
- 4.14 Clubs were also asked a number of questions related to the quality of provision in the district. They were asked to rate provision for a number of factors related to pitch quality and ancillary facility quality. Scores between 1 (very poor) and 5 (excellent) were awarded by the clubs. The findings are summarised in Tables 4.1 and 4.2 below.

**Table 4.1 Pitch quality ratings from sports teams**

Pitch quality factor	Mean score	Modal score
Grass cover/ quality of surface	3.39	3
Slope of pitch	3.67	4
Evenness of pitch	3.32	4
Quality of surface	3.33	4
Line markings	3.63	4
Training area	2.98	N/A

- 4.15 Table 4.1 shows that the sports clubs generally felt that the quality of pitch provision in the district was of a good standard. The only aspect that scored less than average was training area. Most clubs did not possess a training area and hence scored this as zero.

**Table 4.2 Ancillary facility quality ratings from sports teams**

Ancillary facility quality factor	Mean score	Modal score
Maintenance	3.47	4
Car parking	3.77	4
Cycle parking	2.43	5
Toilets	3.4	4
Changing accommodation	3.4	4
Disabled access	3.3	5
Sense of personal safety	4.1	5

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- 4.16 Similar to the scores given for pitch quality factors, the scores given for ancillary facilities were good, with only cycle parking scoring below average.
- 4.17 The clubs that did not respond to the original survey were offered the chance to respond to a separate (but similar) survey sent out by PMP in 2006. Responses received and telephone consultations undertaken are summarised below.
- 4.18 Surveys were returned from the following sports clubs:
- Ramsey Town Football Club
  - St. Ives Rangers FC
  - Yaxley Cricket Club
  - Alconbury Cricket Club
  - Bluntisham Baptist FC
  - Eagle Heating Football Club
  - St. Neots Town Girls FC
  - Little Paxton United FC
  - K C Cougars JFC - Catworth
  - Eynesbury Rovers AFC
  - Eynesbury Rovers AFC (Youth)
  - Three Horse Shoes Southoe FC
  - R H Lions FC – St Ives
  - Parkside Juniors FC Under 12's - St Neots
  - Parkside Football Club - St Neots
  - The George Inn FC - St Ives
  - Barley Mow Football Club - St Neots
  - FC Wanderers - Buckden
  - Hampton United Football and Cricket Club
  - St. Neots Hockey Club
  - St. Ives Hockey Club
- 4.19 As is shown above, 17 of the 24 respondents were football clubs, three were cricket clubs and two were hockey clubs. Of all these clubs, only two had a written development plan.
- 4.20 When asked if their own facilities matched league requirements now and if promoted, 17 replied that they did, while six replied that they did not.

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- 4.21 Of the 26 clubs, 19 had experienced increasing membership over the last five years, four clubs membership had remained static and two clubs membership had decreased.
- 4.22 The three most frequently cited problems experienced by clubs responding to the survey were:
- lack of external funding
  - lack of internal funding
  - lack of voluntary assistance (committee members, coaches etc).
- 4.23 Clubs rating their home pitch described the following aspects as poor most frequently:
- pitch being free from litter, dog fouling
  - changing facilities
  - disabled access.
- 4.24 The most commonly given future plans for clubs responding to the survey were:
- increase members
  - expand facilities
  - refurbish existing facilities
  - relocate to different premises.

### ***User surveys***

- 4.25 User surveys were carried out by Huntingdonshire District Council during 2005 at 12 key open space sites across the district.
- 4.26 The information gathered enables the development of a profile of the types of user at each open space site in addition to determining the reasons for visiting the site, the catchment area and the overall perception of each site by current users. These results inform the local standards, providing evidence of community need and perceptions.
- 4.27 There were 279 completed responses to the user survey with the majority being adults (82%) and slightly more being female (58%).
- 4.28 Many of the questions asked by the user surveys are relevant to a specific type of open space and as such, detailed results and analysis can be found in the specific typology sections 5-12 and within appendices J, H and K. However, some questions were related to overall provision of open space and the results of these questions are shown in Table 4.3 below.
- 4.29 Respondents to the user surveys were asked to comment on whether they felt about the overall quantity, quality and accessibility of open space in their local area. This question directly replicates a question asked in the household survey. The findings from this question are shown in the table below:



**Table 4.3 Rating of open space in the local area**

<b>Provision aspect (%)</b>	<b>Very poor</b>	<b>Poor</b>	<b>Ok</b>	<b>Good</b>	<b>Excellent</b>	<b>Don't know</b>
Quantity	2	9	19	40	15	15
Quality	1	5	25	37	17	15
Accessibility	1	3	13	47	21	15

4.30 Table 4.3 shows that generally users responding to the survey were satisfied with all three aspects of open space in the area.

***IT young people survey***

4.31 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 within Huntingdonshire during their IT or Geography lessons at school. A guidance pack and letter were sent to all schools in the District, enabling children to complete the questionnaires over the internet.

4.32 176 children and young people across the District completed this survey, providing opinions on open space provision from what would otherwise be a hard to reach group. Respondents ranged in age from 6 to 18.

4.33 The results of this survey are summarised below.

***Respondee background***

4.34 Surveys were returned from the following schools:

- Godmanchester Community Primary School
- Huntingdon Junior School
- Hollywell Church of England Junior School
- Abbots Ripton Church of England School

4.35 Unfortunately, no responses were received from schools at secondary level. 27% of respondents were aged 6-8 years and the remaining 63% were 9-11 years. The gender split was 62% male and 38% female.

***Open spaces used***

4.36 Respondees were asked which were their favourite activities to participate in. The most frequent responses were:

- playing sport (52%)
- hanging out with friends (49%)
- computer games (30%).

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4.37 Respondees were asked which types of open space they had used in the last year. The responses are displayed in the table below.

Open space type	% of children using in the last year
Grassy area within a housing development, village greens	30%
Play areas	33%
Teenage facility / Youth shelter	4%
Outdoor sports facilities	26%
Indoor sport facilities	8%

4.38 Respondents also listed the sites that they visited most often. The most frequently mentioned sites were:

- Godmanchester Recreation Ground
- Sapley Park
- St Peters Swimming Pool
- Riverside Park.

4.39 In terms of frequency of visits, 73% of respondents visited their most often visited site on more than one occasion every month.

4.40 There was a varied response when questioned as to how they travelled to these open spaces. 42% walked, 31% travelled by car and 25% cycled to the sites.

4.41 The two most common reasons for using the open space were to meet friends and to have a kickabout/informal play.

4.42 Most liked aspects of the open spaces used were:

- located close to home
- free to use
- good for playing sport.

4.43 Conversely, the least liked aspects of the open spaces used were quite varied. The most common responses given were:

- the play facilities are boring
- I am unable to use it in the evening
- it is located too far from my home.

4.44 Children also responded to questions regarding their perceptions of safety at the open space sites. 36% of children reported that there were open spaces where they felt

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unsafe. Lighting, cameras and staff on site were the top three responses when children were asked what would make them feel safer at these sites.

- 4.45 When asked about the overall quantity of open space in the district, children generally perceived there to be a good amount.
- 58% felt there was a good level
  - 26% felt there was a fair level
  - 9% felt there was a poor level.
- 4.46 When asked about the overall quality of open space in the district, children were similarly satisfied.
- 48% felt there was a good quality of provision
  - 33% felt there was a fair quality of provision
  - 11% felt there was a poor quality of provision.
- 4.47 Children were also quite positive when asked about overall provision of play/youth facilities. In terms of quantity of play/youth provision.
- 36% felt there was a good level
  - 38% felt there was a fair level
  - 15% felt there was a poor level.
- 4.48 Responding to the question of the quality of overall provision of play/youth facilities, the children stated:
- 46% felt that quality of provision was good
  - 33% felt that quality of provision was fair
  - 13% felt that quality of provision was poor.
- 4.49 The survey elicited children's views on how they would improve open space; either through an improvement to an existing facility or through a new facility. The most common responses were:
- more interesting play equipment (36%)
  - MUGA / kick about (18%)
  - skate or BMX park (17%).

### ***Drop-in sessions***

- 4.50 Drop-in sessions provide the chance for any member of the public residing or working within Huntingdonshire to comment informally on open space within their local area. The sessions were advertised in the local press and held across five different locations, providing an opportunity for everyone to comment. Drop in sessions were held in:
- Huntingdon
  - St Neots
  - St Ives
  - Yaxley
  - Ramsey.
- 4.51 Attendance at all drop in sessions was good, particularly in Huntingdon and feedback was provided on quality, accessibility, site-specific issues and general examples of good and bad practice within the District. These comments are fed into the individual typology sections (5-12) and used to inform the recommended local standards (Appendices H, I and J).
- 4.52 Key issues emerging from drop in sessions included:
- residents value the green spaces within the district, particularly some of the larger parks and gardens and natural areas
  - overall there are a number of good quality sites, despite some issues occurring district wide with litter, dog fouling and anti social behaviour
  - there is insufficient provision for children and young people in the district and many residents would like to see facilities within their locality.

### ***Parish Councils***

- 4.53 Questionnaires were sent out to all Parish Councils within Huntingdonshire District during 2005 in order to establish the current level and quality of provision within each parish and any future plans for the improvement of sport and recreational facilities in the district. Telephone calls were made to all non responding parishes during 2006 in order to ensure that open space provision within all Parishes was included.
- 4.54 The findings of the Parish Council consultation are discussed in each of the relevant individual typology sections (5-10) and are used to inform the recommended local standards (Appendices H, I and J).

### ***Internal officers***

- 4.55 Internal consultation is another important and key feature of the study, providing an overview and understanding of Council plans, expectations and priorities. All Council officers with roles pertinent to open space, sport and recreation were consulted.
- 4.56 This feeds into the separate sections of the report (5-10) and setting of local standards (Appendices H, I and J). However a list of some of the key issues has been drawn out to provide an overview from an internal officer perspective and set the scene for the remaining consultation analysis:

### Headline consultation

- 4.57 The consultations provide an understanding of local community need and form the basis of justifications for the recommended local standards.
- 4.58 Some of the key findings from consultations are highlighted below, providing a strategic overview of community needs, perceptions and aspirations in Huntingdonshire. More detailed consultation findings on each of the open space typologies can be found in the site-specific sections 5 – 10.
- quality of open space sites across Huntingdonshire is good and there are some excellent examples of good practice, in particular Hinchingsbrooke Country Park and Paxton Nature Reserve
  - there is an overall perception that the quality of open spaces has improved over recent years and it is clear that residents of Huntingdonshire value a good quality environment and a range of opportunities at open space sites. Despite this, a few recurring issues were highlighted with the quality of the open spaces, primarily relating to antisocial behaviour, vandalism and litter.
  - the importance of ensuring that open spaces meet the needs not just of people, but have the flexibility to provide for and encourage local wildlife and biodiversity was highlighted. Similarly, the need to ensure that usage at sites is monitored to ensure that there is no negative impact on the quality of the site or the environment was reinforced.
  - the geographical distribution of open spaces within Huntingdonshire was frequently highlighted as a concern, particularly with regards to the distribution of open spaces in the main market towns of the district. This distribution was highlighted as a key concern, particularly in the face of the anticipated population growth where it will be important to ensure that all communities have access to open space, sport and recreation facilities. A loss of open space was a key theme in all consultations and emerged as the primary area of concern, with residents keen to ensure that all existing open space is preserved. Despite this, many consultees felt there to be sufficient open space, and that the focus should be on the enhancement of sites, both in terms of quality and individual character. Open space provided as part of new housing developments is intended to be of high quality and plans need to be put in place to ensure the appropriate maintenance of these facilities.
  - the importance of the contribution of Parish Councils in the provision of local open space is acknowledged, with many Parish Councils actively providing for and supporting the needs of residents living in their community. Consultees highlighted the importance of both informal and formal open space provision within a reasonable catchment of their house.
  - there is significant work underway focusing on improving the health of the population, ensuring that people become more active and providing options to participate that they would not have. This should be viewed positively, particularly in light of targets surrounding healthy living. The success of London in securing the 2012 games is likely to further increase participation at both recreational and competitive levels and have a consequential impact on the demand for facilities.

## **SECTION 4 – CONSULTATION**

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- linkages between the open space sites are equally as important as the open space sites themselves. The strategic open space study produced for the Cambridgeshire sub region highlights not only the role and function of the key open space sites within the area, but also the importance of the linkages and more local open spaces.
- the opportunity to further enhance usage of open spaces was highlighted, with a number of residents suggesting that increased marketing and awareness would generate higher levels of use and respect for open space sites. This was also supported by a number of other consultees.
- community ownership and management was also perceived to be an integral part of the success of good quality open space provision, with a number of good practice examples across Huntingdonshire highlighted including the recent development and construction of Coneygear Park following extension consultation and involvement with local residents.

### Informal open space

- 5.1 PPG17 defines three types of informal open space, specifically parks and gardens, natural and semi natural open spaces and amenity green spaces. While each has different characteristics and functions, all have similar roles within the community.
- 5.2 The rural nature of Huntingdonshire District and the geographical dispersal of settlements and population across the district mean that in some areas, it would be inappropriate to provide all three types of open space. Amenity spaces in the more rural areas may serve the same function as larger scale parks in the market towns.
- 5.3 For these reasons it is important to consider the provision of parks and gardens, natural and semi natural open spaces and amenity spaces both individually and in the context of each other.
- 5.4 This section therefore sets out the background and definition, strategic context, consultation and current provision for each of the three types of open space. Recommended local standards have been established for each of the three typologies, and these are then applied together later in this section. Key recommendations for the future development of the three typologies, and of all informal open spaces are set out.

### Parks and gardens

#### Definition

- 5.5 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.
- 5.6 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.

#### Strategic context and consultation

##### *Strategic context*

- 5.7 A national survey commissioned by Sport England, the Countryside Agency and English Heritage was undertaken during 2003, studying the provision of parks within England. The aims of the survey were to establish:
  - how many adults in England use parks?
  - what activities people take part in when visiting parks?
  - the reasons why people visit particular parks
  - the levels of satisfaction with the amenities on offer
  - why non-users do not use parks?
- 5.8 The definition of a park used in the survey was very broad and included both formal provision such as town parks, country parks, recreation grounds and also less formal provision such as village greens and common land.
- 5.9 The findings of the study were:

## **SECTION 5 – INFORMAL OPEN SPACE**

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- just under two thirds of adults in England had visited a public park during the previous 12 months
  - there is a distinct bias in the use of parks by social groups, with almost three quarters of adults from the higher social group visiting a park compared with only half of those from the lower social group
  - people from black and ethnic minority communities also have relatively low participation as well as those adults with a disability
  - over 8 in 10 adults who had used a park in the previous 12 months did so at least once a month during the spring and summer with almost two thirds visiting a park at least once a week, and women tended to visit parks more often than men
  - it is estimated that the 24.3 million adults who use parks make approximately 1.2 billion visits to parks during the spring and summer months and 600 million visits during the autumn and winter months – a total of 1.8 billion visits a year
  - the most popular type of park visited was an urban or city park.
- 5.10 There are a number of regional documents that refer to the importance of parks and gardens, solely and as part of the wider green infrastructure equation. The Cambridge Sub-Regional Green Infrastructure Strategy states that wherever possible, open spaces (including parks and gardens) should be multi-functional and accessible to all (particularly through sustainable means such as walking, cycling, horse and boat).
- 5.11 On a local level there is no strategic documentation that refers directly to the quantity, quality and/or accessibility of parks and gardens in Huntingdonshire. The Core Strategy for Huntingdonshire does refer to the fact that development proposals should not entail the whole or partial loss of open space within settlements. It also states that development proposals involving historic parks and gardens will only be permitted if it will not have an adverse impact upon the historic importance or special features of the registered historic park or garden. The value of parks and gardens within the district is therefore appreciated and stated.

### ***Consultation and background***

- 5.12 Consultation on the provision of parks and gardens in Huntingdonshire was undertaken through a variety of methods. The emerging findings, which contribute to the formation of the local standard include:
- Countryside Services manage some parks sites within the district, including the country parks and a range of smaller natural sites. The largest of the sites, Hinchbrooke Country Park, was established in 1987 and now has over 5 staff working there and caters for school and other educational parties throughout the week. Residents travel significant distances to the park (many



from outside of the district) and there are high annual visitor numbers. Although the high level of usage is positive, and reflective of the value and quality of the site, high visitor numbers are creating problems of overuse. There are plans to develop a series of footpaths across the park, and there is potential that these paths will extend over neighbouring farmland. Extension of the catering facilities is also under consideration. The value of Hinchingsbrooke Country Park was further reinforced at drop in sessions, with comments made including:

- nearly unanimous agreement that the site was a 'local treasure' and of extremely high quality
  - people are willing to travel from all over the district and beyond to visit/use Hinchingsbrooke Country Park
  - there is a perception that access to Hinchingsbrooke Country Park is only really possible by car
  - litter and dog fouling are ongoing issues for some users.
- Coneygear Park is a recently developed site, located centrally in the Oxmoor Estate in Huntingdon. The park was developed in consultation with local residents, who have been involved throughout the planning and implementation phases of the project, and has already been the subject of significant positive feedback. This reinforces the value of community involvement at sites, ensuring that the amenities provided meet the needs of users and ensuring the local community respect their new environment.
  - other local park facilities are also highly valued with many residents mentioning the Riverside Parks at Huntingdon and St Neots, highlighting high levels of use in summer and also referring to the amenity value of Priory Park. Huntingdon Town Park was perceived to be less attractive to potential users by residents.

5.13 User surveys were conducted at specific park and garden locations in the district, namely Huntingdon Town Park and Huntingdon Riverside. Although a large proportion (59%) of current users travelled a distance of more than half a mile to park facilities consultation highlights that people expect somewhat lesser distances to reach such than they actually do at present, indicating that there are potentially deficiencies of parks and gardens in the district.

### **Natural and semi-natural open space**

#### **Definition**

5.14 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.

#### **Strategic context and consultation**

##### ***Strategic context***

5.15 Documents published at a regional level, such as Regional Planning Guidance 6; The Draft East of England Plan; Our Environment, Our Future, The Regional Environment Strategy for the East of England; and The Cambridgeshire Sub-Regional Green Infrastructure Strategy all emphasize the importance of maintaining, promoting and enhancing this type of open space.

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- 5.16 The key theme of biodiversity is also referred to frequently in these documents. Since natural and semi-natural areas play such an important role in maintaining biodiversity in the area.
- 5.17 The Core Strategy contains policy related to open space generally (including natural and semi-natural areas) and also specifically related to protected habitats and species and the overall biodiversity of the area.

### **Consultation**

- 5.18 Natural and semi-natural areas are the second most frequently visited type of open space by respondents to the household survey. Over half of respondents indicated that they visited this type of open space more than once a week. Reinforcing the value of these spaces, many residents emphasised the importance of protecting these sites from development, and maintaining the provision of natural sites for the purposes of 'low impact leisure' and biodiversity.
- 5.19 Countryside Services manage 13 sites in total, the majority of which have at least some natural areas. Paxton Pits Nature Reserve is one of the largest natural sites in the district and is of regional importance. The site is a designated Local Nature Reserve (LNR).
- 5.20 There are high levels of community involvement at Paxton, and there are 1600 volunteers registered this year reinforcing the value of the site for both humans and wildlife. An extension of the site is currently underway which will see the nature reserve double in size. Consultations highlighted the importance of ensuring that sites remain of value to wildlife, offering safe habits in addition to ensuring their longevity as a visitor venue. Comments made at the drop in session reinforced the value of these sites to residents.
- 5.21 There are 30 sites of particular nature interest (including LNRs, SSSI etc) within Huntingdonshire District. All nature reserves and natural sites across the district are open access, with the exception of Holt Island, where access is restricted. Portholme Meadow SSSI was frequently referred to at drop in sessions and is a popular site.
- 5.22 User surveys conducted at Stukeley Meadows, suggest that most people had only travelled a short distance to the site

**Table 5.1 - Distance travelled to site**

Site	Less than ¼ mile	¼ to ½ mile	½ mile to one mile	More than one mile
Stukeley Meadows	83	8	0	8

- 5.23 Somewhat surprisingly, this indicates that most users of this site had only travelled a short distance to use the site (83% below a quarter mile) although analysis of people's expectations suggest they would be willing to travel much further.

### Amenity greenspace

#### Definition

- 5.24 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. It also includes village greens. Amenity space is often the only type of provision found in smaller settlements.

#### Strategic context and consultation

- 5.25 Regional documents such as Regional Planning Guidance 6; The Draft East of England Plan; Our Environment, Our Future, The Regional Environment Strategy for the East of England; and The Cambridgeshire Sub-Regional Green Infrastructure Strategy all refer to the importance of maintaining and preserving open space including amenity greenspace.

#### Consultation

- 5.26 Provision of amenity green space is of significant importance for local residents, particularly in villages where there are few recreational opportunities for residents. Despite this, a key theme emerging from consultations was discontent surrounding the restrictions placed on the use of amenity green space, such as no ball game signs which restrict the recreational value to residents. In contrast, misuse of these sites was also highlighted as a key issue across the district.
- 5.27 At drop in sessions, residents highlighted litter and dog fouling problems as ongoing issues although it was felt that some efforts had been made to address this through provision of bins etc. Larger sites such as Millenium Green in St Neots where there was a high level of use, particularly by dog walkers were highlighted as particularly problematic sites in terms of dog fouling and litter.
- 5.28 Also at drop in sessions, residents emphasised the importance of these spaces in terms of breaking up the landscape of urban texture. Because of this visual benefit, residents expressed a desire to protect sites from development.
- 5.29 Surveys conducted at Alconbury Green reinforced that people expect to travel only a short distance to amenity space, with 63% travelling a quarter of a mile or less. Despite this, 13% had travelled more than a mile. Expected travel times mirror those current behaviour patterns.

#### Current position of parks and gardens, natural sites and amenity spaces

##### Quantity

- 5.30 Table 5.2 below shows the quantity of provision for all three types of informal open space in the district (parks and gardens; natural and semi-natural areas; and amenity greenspaces). SSSI and LNR provision is not included within these figures and will be shown separately on maps.

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**Table 5.2 – Quantity of provision for informal open space in Huntingdonshire**

Analysis Area	Type of Open Space	Quantity of Provision (ha)	Provision per 1000 population	Key Sites
St Neots	Parks and Gardens	52.86	1.39	Priory Park Riverside Park
	Natural and Semi Natural	17.47	0.46	Barford Road Pocket Park
	Amenity Spaces	38.55	1.01	various
Huntingdon and Godmanchester	Parks and Gardens	4.81	0.12	Riverside Park Huntingdon Town Park Sapley Park
	Natural and Semi Natural	10.53	0.26	Stukeley Meadows LNR Spring Common
	Amenity Spaces	60.68	1.50	various
St Ives	Parks and Gardens	9.12	0.30	Hillrise Park
	Natural and Semi Natural	4.71	0.15	Holt Island Wilhorn Meadow
	Amenity Spaces	39.21	1.28	various
Ramsey	Parks and Gardens	0	0	N/A
	Natural and Semi Natural	0	0	N/A
	Amenity Spaces	8.77	0.44	various
Yaxley and Sawtry	Parks and Gardens	0	0	N/A
	Natural and Semi Natural	0	0	N/A
	Amenity Spaces	23.48	0.84	various

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- 5.31 Key issues arising from the analysis and assessment of the quantity of provision for parks and gardens, natural sites and amenity sites include:
- St Neots, Huntingdon and Godmanchester and St Ives all have good levels of informal open space. St Neots is the most well provided for in terms of parks and gardens and natural and semi-natural areas per 1000 the population.
  - as may be expected, provision is lower in Ramsey and Yaxley and in both these areas there are no provision of parks and gardens or of natural and semi-natural areas.

- 5.32 The key issues related to the quantity of each of the open space typologies are discussed below:

- there are six formal parks and gardens in the district varying in size from the larger parks (Huntingdon Riverside) to the smaller local urban parks (eg Hill Rise Park)
- provision of formal parks is limited to the main market towns. For those residents living in the more rural areas, provision is predominantly in the form of amenity spaces and local recreation grounds. For this reason, the provision of parks and gardens across the district has been considered in conjunction with provision of amenity spaces and natural open space sites.
- Hinchingsbrooke Country Park and Paxton Pitts are strategic sites that attract visitors from across the district and beyond
- natural and semi natural open space sites vary in size between the smallest, Stukeley Meadows, to the largest, Barford Road Pocket Park
- amenity greenspaces are evident across the district and cover the largest area in terms of hectares in each analysis area. There is a relatively similar level of amenity greenspace per member of population in each of the analysis areas, with Ramsey being the only analysis area with significantly lower provision.
- accessible open countryside is also of key importance, as many residents are able to access natural countryside in addition to the more formal local open spaces. It is important to consider the quantity of parks, natural spaces and amenity spaces in the context of the surrounding countryside.

### ***Consultation findings - quantity***

- 5.33 Findings from the consultation regarding the quantity of provision include:
- respondents to the household survey felt that provision of parks and gardens was about right, although a significant proportion (18.3%) felt that there was not enough. Respondents held the same view for natural and semi natural sites, where 65.5% of respondents to the household survey felt that provision was either more than enough or about right. 18.3% felt that there was insufficient provision.
  - views were mixed regarding the provision of amenity green space, with 31% stating that there was insufficient provision
  - there is a perceived inequality in the distribution of parks within Huntingdonshire District, with consultees highlighting a lack of provision in Ramsey, Yaxley and Godmanchester. There were many comments made about this during the drop in

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sessions, particularly in Ramsey, Yaxley and St Neots indicating that residents would perhaps like more formal parks provision.

- Parish Councils indicated whether they felt provision of all types of open space was adequate. 42% of these Parish Councils indicated that provision was good/very good/excellent and 30% was poor or very poor.

### ***Quality***

5.34 The quality of provision of parks, natural areas and amenity areas is considered in table 5.3 overleaf:

**Table 5.3 – Quality of provision for informal open space in Huntingdonshire**

<b>Analysis Area</b>	<b>Type of Open Space</b>	<b>Quality of Provision (ha)</b>	<b>Key Sites</b>
St Neots	Parks and Gardens	Priory Park was found to be a good site overall with particularly high assessment scores for maintenance, management and quality of paths. The site scored average for only one factor; the sense of personal safety. St Neots Riverside Park was also rated as good, with good scores for maintenance, management and no evidence of vandalism or dog fouling. Despite this, there was some litter present. Car parking was only considered to be average	Priory Park  Riverside Park
	Natural and Semi Natural	This site was judged to be average overall in quality. The aspects which scored highly were quality of paths and quality of signage, whilst the site scored poorly for sense of personal safety.	Barford Road Pocket Park
	Amenity Spaces	Overall assessment for the sites in this analysis area revealed that 26% of sites scored good, 63% scored average and the remaining 11% scored poor.	various
Huntingdon and Godmanchester	Parks and Gardens	Riverside Park was found to be a good site overall with high assessment scores for maintenance, quality of paths and sense of personal safety.  Huntingdon Town Park was also found to be a good site overall with high assessment scores for maintenance, management, quality of paths and signs.  Sapley Park was found to be a good site with high assessment scores for maintenance, management, quality of plants and paths, and sense of personal safety.	Riverside Park  Huntingdon Town Park  Sapley Park
	Natural and Semi Natural	Stukeley Meadows LNR was assessed as a good site overall. Site management, site maintenance, quality of paths and signage all rated as good at the site.  Spring Common was rated as an average site overall and scored average for many of the assessment criteria. The quality of paths was scored as poor.	Stukeley Meadows LNR  Spring Common
	Amenity Spaces	Overall assessment for the sites in this analysis area revealed that 45% of sites scored good, 38% scored average and the remaining 17% scored poor.	various

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St Ives	Parks and Gardens	Hillrise Park (St Ives analysis area) was found to be a good site overall with high assessment scores for maintenance, management and quality of the paths. The site did score poorly for sense of personal safety.	Hillrise Park
	Natural and Semi Natural	Holt Island was rated as a good site overall, with good scores for the aspects of site management and maintenance, quality of paths and quality of signage. Wilhorn Meadow was rated as an average site overall. The site scored good for site management but poor for quality of paths.	Holt Island Wilhorn Meadow
	Amenity Spaces	Overall assessment for the sites in this analysis area revealed that 59% of sites scored good, 38% scored average and the remaining 3% scored poor.	various
Ramsey	Parks and Gardens	N/A	N/A
	Natural and Semi Natural	N/A	N/A
	Amenity Spaces	Overall assessment for the sites in this analysis area revealed that 62% of sites scored good, 23% scored average and the remaining 15% scored poor.	various
Yaxley and Sawtry	Parks and Gardens	N/A	N/A
	Natural and Semi Natural	N/A	N/A
	Amenity Spaces	Overall assessment for the sites in this analysis area revealed that 32% of sites scored good, 56% scored average and the remaining 12% scored poor.	various



### ***Key issues***

- 5.35 Key issues arising from the analysis and assessment of the quality of provision of informal open space (parks and gardens, natural and semi-natural areas and amenity greenspace) in the district include:
- there are a number of high quality sites in the district. The quality of the limited number of parks and gardens and natural and semi-natural areas is particularly high.
  - of the six park and garden sites identified all were assessed as good overall. This indicates high overall quality. Priory Park and Riverside Park Huntingdon were the most highly rated.
  - Holt Island and Stukeley Meadows were also considered to be good, whereas Barford Road Pocket Park was considered the least good natural and semi natural area site in the district. This site was considered poor in terms of sense of personal safety and only average for maintenance and management of the site. Barford Road Pocket Park is the largest natural site in the district.
  - unlike parks and gardens and natural and semi-natural areas, amenity greenspace are often smaller in size and more scattered in location. Quality of provision was particularly high in Ramsey, where 62% of the amenity greenspaces were considered good. In contrast, only 26% of sites in St Neots were considered good.

### ***Consultation findings – quality***

#### ***Parks and gardens***

- 5.36 Findings from the consultation regarding the quality of provision of parks and gardens include:
- almost half of the respondents to the household survey indicated that the quality of provision of parks and gardens was good. Apart from the quality ratings given to natural and semi natural areas, this is the highest quality rating perceptions revealed by the household survey. In contrast, amenity space sites were perceived to be lower, with half of all respondents considering their quality to be average. Very few respondents considered the quality of informal open space to be poor.
  - the Green Flag Award is the National Standard for parks and greenspaces, therefore creating a benchmark of excellence in recreational green areas. Huntingdonshire District Council have not targeted green flag status, but quality of the sites is still maintained, with consultees praising the quality of all parks Green Flag Status.
  - consultations highlighted that one of the key issues at all parks in the district is dog fouling, a problem which occurs despite the presence of dog bins in the majority of public open spaces. Litter was also perceived to be a problem at some sites, another recurring theme across the district. Spring Common was.
  - also highlighted as a key problem area in terms of litter and it appears that problems are particularly apparent on those sites where their location is suitable for their use as through routes. Signage was also highlighted as a key issue across the open space sites in the district.

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- despite some perceived inequalities of distribution, it was highlighted that there are a number of high quality examples of provision across the district apart from Hinchingsbrooke. At drop in sessions, Coneygear Park, Priory Park, Hill Rise Park and Warners Park were all mentioned as being sites of good quality that were well used by the local communities. Despite the successes, some consultees perceive that the district parks are not currently used to their full potential and there are significant opportunities for improvement and further promotion. The intention is that this should include the development of an overall vision with management plans where appropriate, enabling ongoing improvements.
- there are plans for the further development of Priory Park, to include the improvement of sports facilities and ancillary accommodation. Many consultees also highlighted further opportunities to enhance Riverside Park, maximising the presence of the river to ensure that the park is developed to its potential. A study is underway investigating the redevelopment of the Riverside Park, which is estimated to cost £3.6m.
- cleanliness and good maintenance were the key aspirations highlighted across all three types of informal open space.

### Summary

- the value of informal open space to residents is clear, with many residents reinforcing the need to protect these sites
- there are very few park and garden sites in the district and these sites are located in the urban areas. Natural and semi natural and amenity green space sites complement provision of parks and ensure recreational opportunities across the district.
- consultation indicates that that informal spaces are high quality across the district. Feedback regarding the quality of parks and natural open spaces was particularly positive.
- site visits confirmed the positive feedback, highlighting many of the sites as good quality
- sites are well maintained and very well used. Hinchingsbrooke Country Park and some of the larger SSSI / LNR sites such as Portholme Meadow attract visitors from far a field.

**Setting provision standards**

- 5.37 In setting local standards for informal open spaces 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.
- 5.38 A full assessment of local needs both district wide and within each area has been undertaken for Huntingdonshire, 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.
- 5.39 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 overleaf.
- 5.40 Standards are split between parks and gardens, natural areas and amenity greenspace sites to take into account the specific consultation and the findings that indicate that people like to use a variety of different sites. These standards will then be applied in the context of each other. The quantity standard for parks, NSN and amenity green space has also been amalgamated at the end of the quantity standards section,

**Quantity standards**

***Parks and Gardens - quantity standard (see appendix H – standards and justification, worksheet and calculator)***

Existing level of provision	Recommended standard
0.43 hectares per 1000 population.	0.48 hectares per 1,000 population.
Justification	
<p>There is a strong emphasis on the level of provision being about right with over 60% of respondents to the household questionnaire confirming this. However, there are areas of the district that were perceived to have a lower level of park provision through public consultation. This is reinforced by the audit work that shows no parks and gardens in either Ramsey or Yaxley and Sawtry analysis areas. This would suggest setting a standard above existing provision to ensure that this can be addressed where necessary and appropriate but also supporting a focus on improving the facilities and quality of the existing parks and gardens in areas where provision is above this threshold – notably St Neots which benefits from Priory Park.</p> <p>Given that established open spaces are of high quality and well used, PMP would not propose reducing the standard lower than the existing level of provision. In the application of these standards it is also important to consider the impact of the large parks and gardens such as Hinchbrooke Country Park (and other wider strategic sites) that serves both residents in the district and residents travelling from greater distances.</p>	

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### ***Natural and semi-natural – quantity standard (see Appendix H – standards and justification, worksheet and calculator)***

Existing level of provision	Recommended standard
0.21 hectares per 1000 population.	0.23 hectares per 1,000 population.
Justification	
<p>There was a mixed response in terms of the household questionnaire. The level of satisfaction in St Neots analysis area could be expected given that the level of existing provision in this analysis area (when compared to the other areas of the district) is high - 17.47 hectares of a total of 32.71. The rural analysis areas of Ramsey and Yaxley / Sawtry had no existing provision but clearly the consultation reveals that a significant amount of people (over 20% for all these analysis areas) think that provision is required. This would suggest setting a standard above existing provision to ensure that this can be address where necessary but also supporting a focus on improving the facilities and quality of the existing natural and semi natural areas where provision is above this threshold.</p>	

### ***Amenity greenspace – quantity standard (see Appendix H – standards and justification, worksheet and calculator)***

Existing level of provision	Recommended standard
1.09 hectares per 1000 population.	1.09 hectares per 1,000 population.
Justification	
<p>Comparing against other local authorities, the level of provision (1.12 hectares per 1000 people) is consistent with the range from 0.72ha to 1.37ha, with the majority over 1ha. In terms of standards set, they range from 0.5ha to 1.6ha. The consultation responses indicate a mixed message in terms of whether there is enough and there is some concern from a quality perspective about the provision of small areas of functionless open space. In addition to this however, the visual amenity of amenity greenspace sites is also important.</p> <p>The level of provision across the analysis areas varies significantly with a good level of provision in the more urban areas of Hunts and Godmanchester and St Ives. Despite this, 48% of residents in Hunts and Godmanchester thought that was not enough / nearly enough. The level of satisfaction was generally quite high in the rural areas.</p> <p>As such, the standard is set at the existing level of provision. Although it is acknowledged that in some analysis areas the level of satisfaction with existing provision was relevant low, this standard will protect the existing level of amenity green space (addressing the concern that sites are gradual being lost), ensure that the appropriate level of provision will be provided in future development and enable a focus on the qualitative issues that the consultation revealed.</p>	

- 5.41 The above quantity standards can be combined to form an overall informal open space standard of 1.8 ha per 1000 population. This standard represents the total required level of provision per 1000 which should then be split into parks, natural and amenity spaces in order to provide an appropriate balance for residents.

**Informal open space quantity standard**

<b>Existing level of provision</b>	<b>Recommended standard</b>
1.73 hectares per 1000 population.	1.8 hectares per 1,000 population.

**Quality standards**

**Parks and gardens - quality standard (see appendix H – standards and justification, worksheet and calculator)**

<b>Recommended standard</b>
<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)”</i>
<b>Justification</b>
There is a general feeling that the existing parks and gardens are good quality, with a number of sites specifically mentioned as being well used. Cleanliness / maintenance / tidiness were seen to be critical in ensuring satisfaction with parks. The vision incorporates elements from public consultations particularly highlighting safety measures (adequate lighting and CCTV) to combat the vandalism / misuse 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 and an interesting environment to visit are reflected in the vision. The Green Flag Award criteria are also incorporated in the vision.

**Natural and semi-natural areas - quality standard (see appendix H – standards and justification, worksheet and calculator)**

<b>Recommended standard</b>
<i>“A clean and litter free site which balances the need for safe and secure public access whilst encouraging wildlife conservation and safeguarding biodiversity across a range of natural (including water borne) habitats. The site should have clear pathways and appropriate ancillary accommodation (litter bins and toilets etc) and landscaping in the right places to enhance the appearance of the local environment.”</i>
<b>Justification</b>
Natural and semi natural sites were highlighted as having the highest quality of all types of open spaces in the household survey. The main issues identified through local consultations centres around litter and dog fouling, which is reflected in the need for sites to be clean and litter free. There are some pressures on wildlife sites, particularly given their popularity in the district, 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.

## SECTION 5 – INFORMAL OPEN SPACE

### ***Amenity greenspace - quality standard (see appendix H – standards and justification, worksheet and calculator)***

<b>Recommended standard</b>
<b><i>“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.”</i></b>
<b>Justification</b>
The local consultation highlighted the importance of amenity green spaces around the district, particularly in the more rural areas. One of the important aspects in the vision is for a spacious outlook and ensuring suitability for informal play. This is in line with comments from the IT young people’s survey. Amenity green spaces 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.

### **Accessibility standards**

### ***Parks and gardens – accessibility standard (see appendix H – standards and justification, worksheet and calculator)***

<b>Recommended standard</b>
15 minutes walk time - (720 metres)
<b>Justification</b>
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).  In order to ensure that this standard is reflective of the rural nature of the district, this standard should be applied in conjunction with natural and semi natural and amenity green space standards in order to identify real deficiencies.

## SECTION 5 – INFORMAL OPEN SPACE

### ***Natural and semi-natural areas – accessibility standard (see appendix H – standards and justification, worksheet and calculator)***

<b>Recommended standard</b>
15 minutes walk time - (720 metres)
<b>Justification</b>
<p>The majority of respondents currently walk to natural and semi-natural open spaces. In terms of expectations, the emphasis is on walking, across all the analysis areas.</p> <p>The standard has been set at the 75% threshold of 15 minutes walk, in line with the expectations of three out of the five analysis areas and the modal response of 10 minutes walk time.</p> <p>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 SSSIs and areas of accessible countryside. As such it is considered more difficult to set an access standard specific to the rural area, particularly in Huntingdonshire where there are no formal natural and semi natural sites in the rural areas.</p> <p>In order to ensure that this standard is reflective of the rural nature of the district, this standard should be applied in conjunction with natural and semi natural and amenity green space standards in order to identify real deficiencies.</p>

### ***Amenity greenspace – accessibility standard (see appendix H – standards and justification, worksheet and calculator)***

<b>Recommended standard</b>
10 minutes walk time - (480 metres)
<b>Justification</b>
<p>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.</p> <p>The 75% threshold level district-wide is 10 minutes. Across the analysis areas, the 75% threshold always emerged to be 10 minutes. Standards set for other authorities range between 5 and 10 minutes but are generally set around 5 minutes walk.</p> <p>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.</p>

### **Applying provision standards – identifying geographical areas**

- 5.42 In order to identify geographical areas of importance and those areas with required local needs we apply both the quantity and accessibility standards together. The quantity standards enable the identification of areas that do not meet the minimum provision standards whilst the accessibility standards will help to 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 helps with the prioritisation of sites.

## SECTION 5 – INFORMAL OPEN SPACE

- 5.43 It is important however that the appropriate weight is afforded to identify deficiencies. For example, where a significant quantitative and accessibility deficiency is identified, it is a priority to identify sites to meet this deficiency. However, where there is a lower level of deficiency or there is either a quantitative or accessibility deficiency but not the other, if sites can be identified they should be considered to meet this deficiency. Where sites do not exist, the priority should be to seek opportunities within new housing provision, if applicable, rather than investigating new sites.
- 5.44 Given the geographical nature of Huntingdonshire, 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.
- 5.45 Parks and gardens are located in the market towns, while amenity spaces and recreational grounds provide this functionality in the smaller settlements.
- 5.46 The level of provision in each area, for each type of informal open space when measured against the recommended local standard at the current time is set out in table 5.4 below. It must be noted that the inclusion of shortfalls / surpluses for each type of open space does not mean it is appropriate to provide each type of open space in every area. Surpluses and deficiencies for future years are provided in appendix I. The Council should plan towards these figures.
- 5.47 These surpluses / deficiencies are considered in conjunction with the accessibility standards in order to understand where these deficiencies are of priority.

**Table 5.4 – shortfalls / surplus for informal open space (ha)**

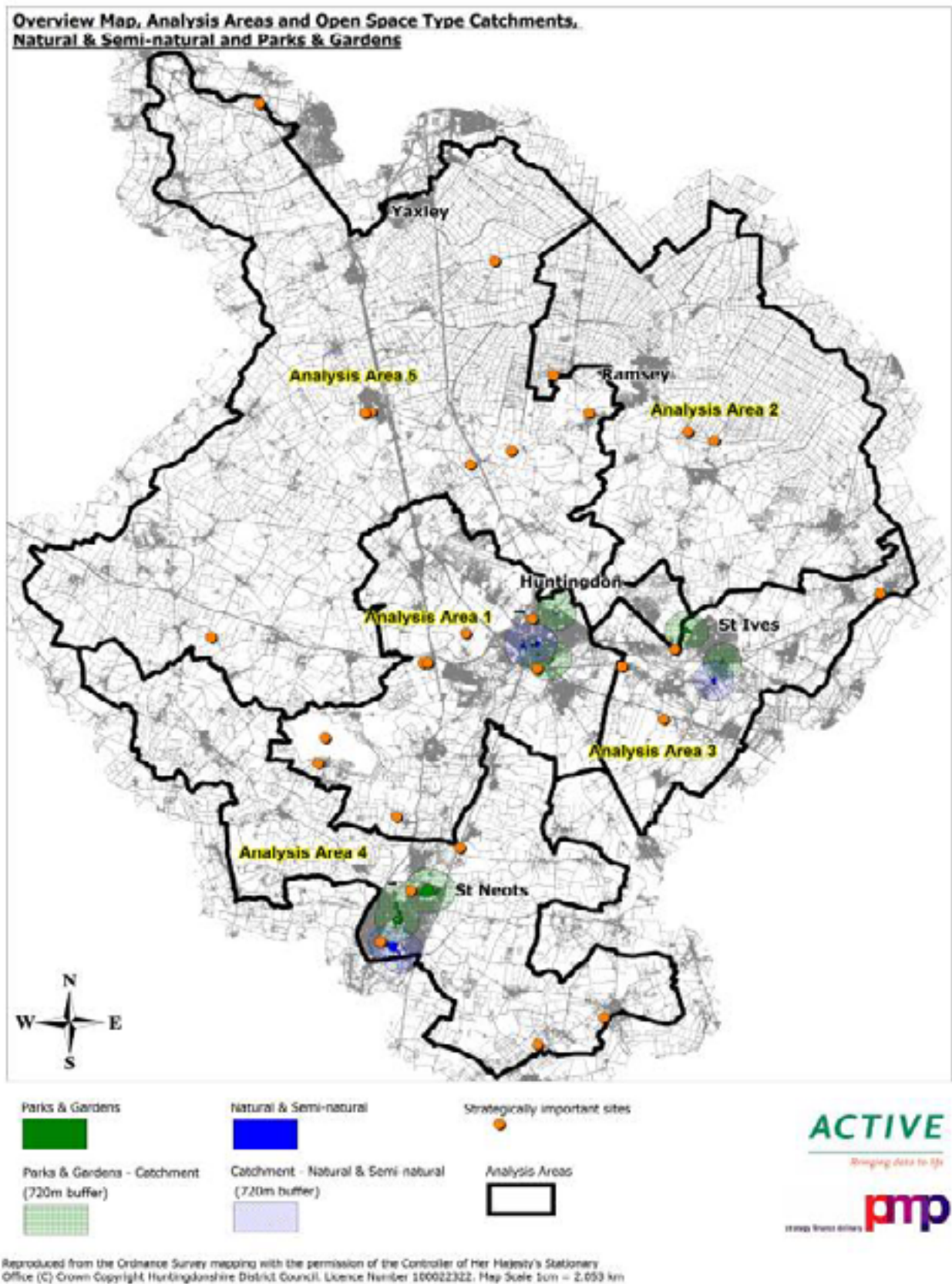
Area	Parks and gardens	Natural and semi natural	Amenity Green Space
St Neots	34.57	8.70	-2.99
Huntingdon and Godmanchester	-14.57	1.24	16.67
St Ives	-5.64	-2.36	5.70
Ramsey	-9.56	-4.58	-12.95
Yaxley and Sawtry	-13.32	-6.39	-6.81

- 5.48 Map 5.1 overleaf illustrates the provision of parks and gardens and natural open spaces in Huntingdon District. Strategically important sites (such as SSSI), large country parks are also shown on the map.



**SECTION 5 – INFORMAL OPEN SPACE**

**Map 5.1 - provision of parks and gardens and natural open spaces in Huntingdon**

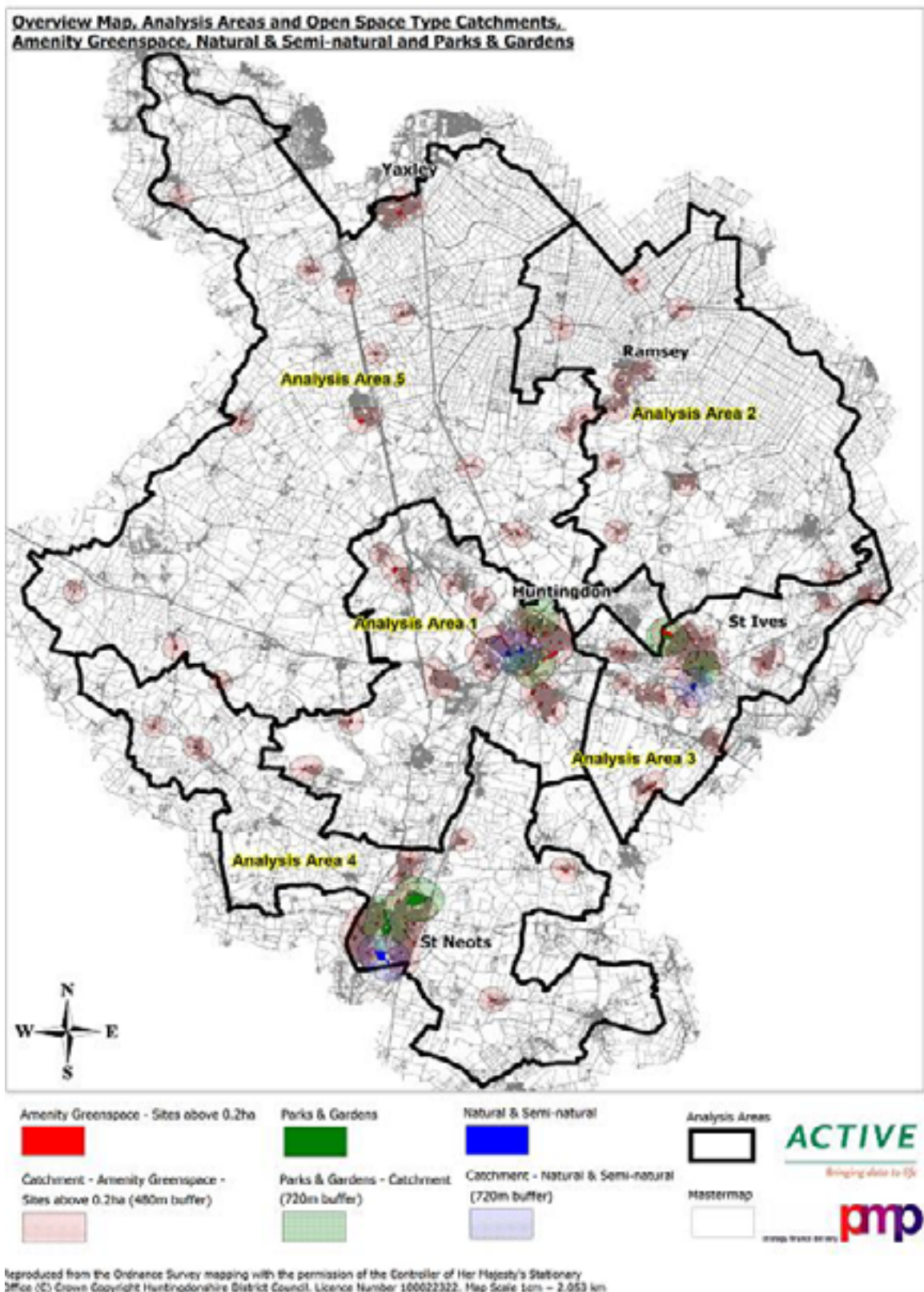


## **SECTION 5 – INFORMAL OPEN SPACE**

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- 5.49 As can be seen on map 5.1 on the previous page, provision of parks and gardens across the district is focused on the market towns, with Ramsey being the only market town without a formal park.
- 5.50 Despite the distribution of parks across the other three market towns, there are large residential areas within these towns without access to parks within the recommended accessibility standard. This reinforces the significance and value of Hinchingsbrooke Country Park on the outskirts of Huntingdon that attracts residents from across the district. As a strategic site, people are willing to travel to this facility, as supported by consultations and user surveys undertaken at the site.
- 5.51 Given the deficiencies in park provision, it is important to consider the function of natural and semi natural spaces in supporting park provision, in addition to the role of amenity green spaces in order to identify priority areas of deficiency.
- 5.52 The map on the previous page highlights a concentration of local natural sites within the market towns. These directly supplement the provision of parks and it can be seen that in some instances, there are overlapping catchments between parks and natural sites. There remain however some residents in market towns that do not live within the recommended catchment for either parks or natural areas. Residents of key centres and smaller settlements are also outside of the local catchments for such facilities, although it is not considered appropriate to expect formal park facilities in each smaller settlement.
- 5.53 The identified gaps in provision reinforce the role that the larger strategic sites play in Huntingdonshire. As can be seen, large strategic sites (many of which are formally designated as highly valuable by English Nature) are evenly distributed across the district. Residents are more likely to travel to these sites and their presence therefore offsets deficiencies somewhat.
- 5.54 Map 5.2 overleaf shows the provision of parks and gardens, natural areas and amenity green spaces across the district. Particularly in the smaller settlements, amenity green spaces are important local recreational resources that fulfil the functions of parks and natural spaces.
- 5.55 Although it can be seen that there are large clusters of amenity green space around the Market towns and key centres, it is evident that there are many amenity spaces providing a recreational resource in the smaller settlements. While the contribution of natural and semi natural open space sites is recognised, these sites are demand led and emerge as a result of natural resources and hence it would be unrealistic to suggest that new natural provision is developed.
- 5.56 Provision of parks, natural areas and amenity spaces is considered for each area in the analysis that follows and then key actions and recommendations are suggested for market towns, key centres and smaller settlements.

Map 5.2 – Parks, Natural Areas and Amenity Greenspace in Huntingdonshire



### **Yaxley and Sawtry**

- 5.57 Although there are no formal parks or natural areas within the settlements in the Yaxley and Sawtry area, there are eight sites of strategic significance (primarily SSSI) which serve residents in addition to areas of nearby countryside. An overview map of the area is provided in Appendix K.

### **Key centres**

- 5.58 Following their designations as key centres with potential for growth within the local plan, it is important that residents of both Yaxley and Sawtry are well provided for in terms of local informal open space as well as accessing the larger strategically significant sites.
- 5.59 Map 5.2 confirms that there is a good level of provision in Yaxley, with all residents able to access amenity green spaces although there is no formal park provision or natural sites. In contrast, residents in the north of Sawtry are unable to access facilities.

### **Smaller settlements**

- 5.60 Provision in smaller settlements is well dispersed although there are some small settlements with no access to amenity space sites. Despite this, residents living in northern Stilton are unable to access amenity facilities and there is no provision in Great Raveley. Many of the smaller settlements in this area on the western side of the district (eg Bythorn, Molesworth) are close to Titchmarsh and Thrapston in East Northamptonshire, where there are formal parks and a nature reserve and hence the likelihood of some cross boundary movement.
- 5.61 Despite the apparent good distribution, the application of quantity standards for all three types of open space in this area suggests there is demand for increased provision. An overview map of the area is provided in Appendix K.

### **Ramsey area**

- 5.62 Like Yaxley and Sawtry, provision in the Ramsey area is limited to amenity green space and there are no parks or natural areas. Despite this, there are three sites of strategic significance which is supplemented by the rural landscape.

### **Market Town**

- 5.63 Although Ramsey has been designated as a market town, there are no formal parks. This may be considered a deficiency when measured against the other market towns in the district. The lack of parks is however compensated for by amenity green space provision which is well distributed across the town and ensures that all residents are within the catchment area for some form of informal open space.

### **Key centres**

- 5.64 The distribution of open spaces in Somersham and Warboys does not meet the needs of all residents in these areas. Although there is some provision in Warboys, residents in the west of the village are not able to access these facilities. There are no sites in Somersham suggesting that there are deficiencies in provision in both these areas.

### **Smaller settlements**

- 5.65 The majority of small settlements in this area contain amenity green space provision over 2 ha with the one notable exception being Wennington. This suggests there is



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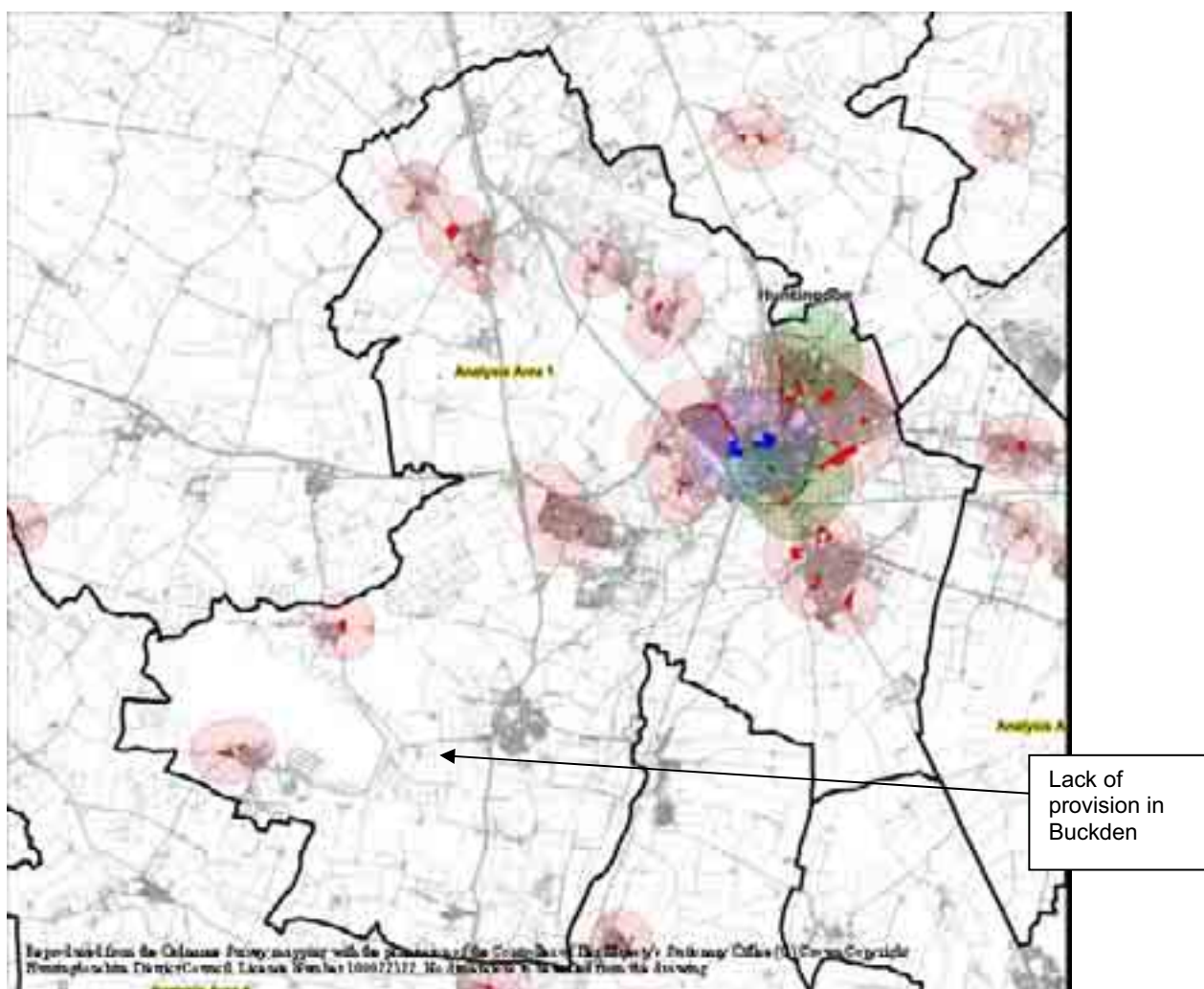
good amenity provision in the smaller villages. These residents may also have access to vast amounts of nearby countryside.

- 5.66 Despite the apparent good level of provision, the application of quantity standards for all three types of open space in this area suggest there is demand for increased provision.

### *Huntingdon and Godmanchester Area*

- 5.67 Map 5.3 below provides an overview of informal open space provision within the Huntingdonshire and Godmanchester area and illustrates an even distribution across the area. In addition to the local open space sites, there are seven strategically important sites in this area, including Hinchingsbrooke Country Park which residents travel great distance to reach.

### **Map 5.3 – Parks, Natural spaces and amenity spaces in Huntingdon and Godmanchester**



### **Smaller settlements**

- 5.68 As can be seen, almost all smaller settlements have access to some provision, predominantly amenity green space. The notable exceptions to this are Easton and Spaldwick although both of these villages have provision for children and young people so have some access to provision.

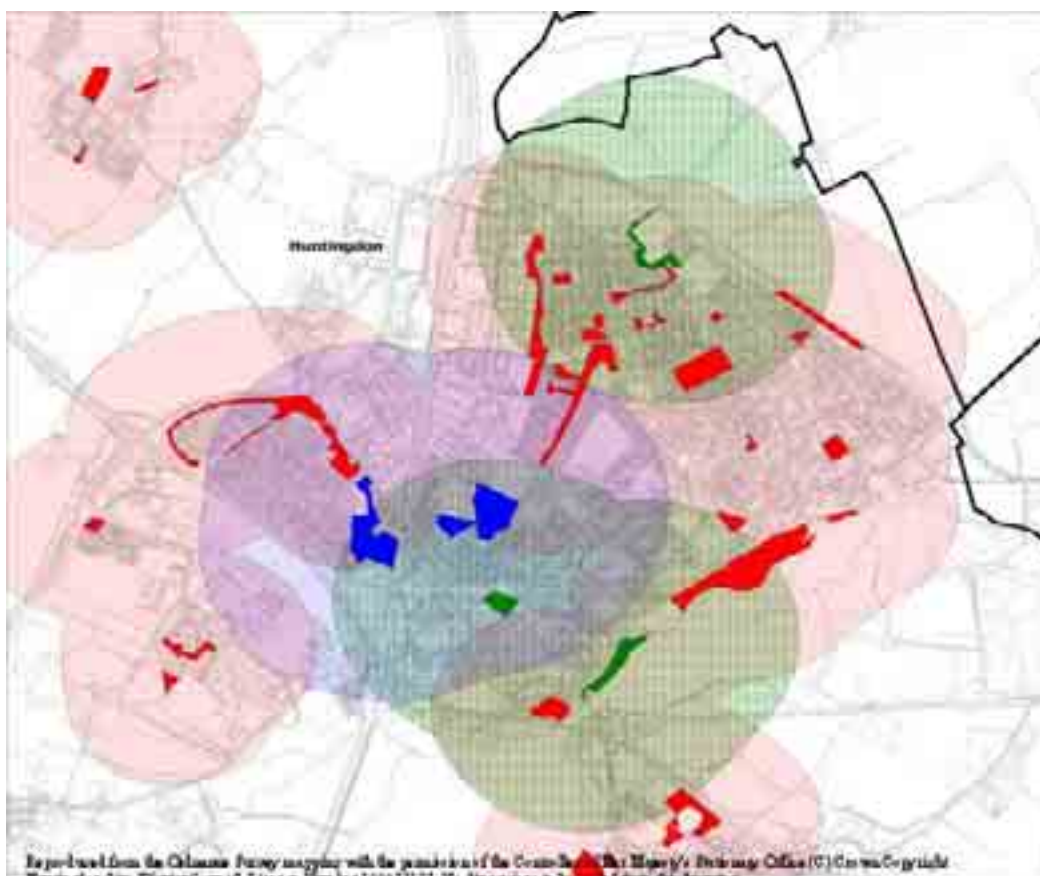
### **Key centres**

- 5.69 Perhaps the most significant deficiencies in this area are in Buckden (where there is no provision) and Brampton. The perceived deficiency in Brampton is however misleading, due to the close proximity of Hinchingsbrooke Country Park. Given the designation of these two areas as key centres for growth, it is important to ensure that people are able to access informal open space. Residents in the other key centres of Godmanchester currently have sufficient access to informal space due to the location of multiple amenity spaces in the town.

### **Market Towns**

- 5.70 As can be seen from map 5.4 below, informal open space provision in the market town of Huntingdon is varied and includes parks, natural open space and amenity green space. This is supported by the application of the quantity standards, which when all applied together, suggests that there is sufficient provision across the geographical area of Huntingdon and Godmanchester. Shortfalls in provision elsewhere in the area indicate that provision may be poorly distributed in parts and there may be opportunities to rationalise provision in the town.

**Map 5.4 – Provision of Informal open space in Huntingdon**

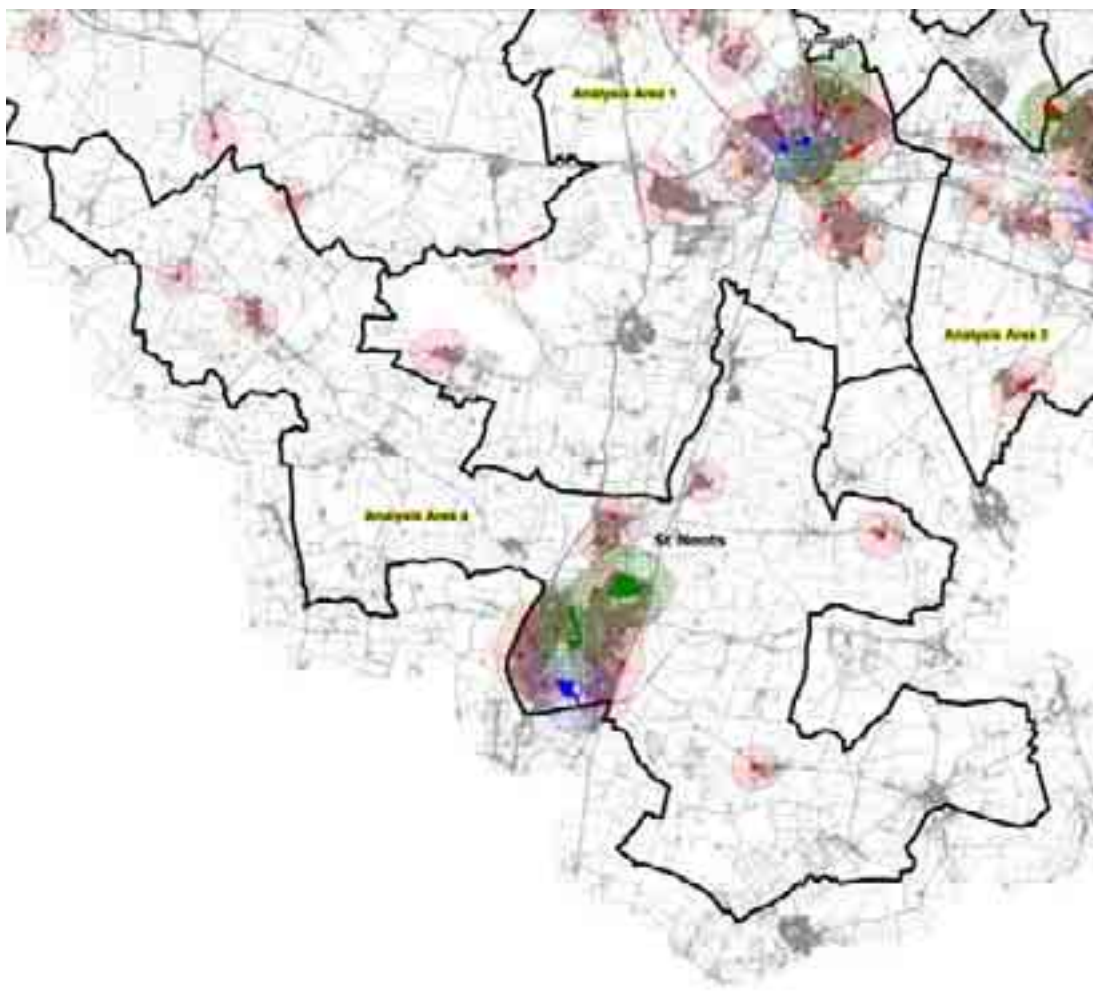


- 5.71 While it is clear that there is sufficient provision overall, many residents are outside the catchment for a formal park. Transformation of an amenity sites on the western side of the town could provide the function of a park and address this deficiency. Access to informal space for all residents remains however the key priority and it appears that this has been achieved.

### **St Neots Area**

- 5.72 The application of the quantity standards suggests that St Neots and the surrounding area is well supplied in terms of informal open spaces, with theoretical oversupplies in parks and gardens and natural provision and only a small shortfall of amenity space. As can be seen from map 5.5 below again provision is well distributed and strategic sites and the location of Grafham Water offers further opportunities for residents.

**Map 5.5 - Provision of Informal open space in St Neots**



### **Smaller settlements**

- 5.73 As can be seen above, provision in the St Neots area is strongly focused in the market town with few amenity spaces in the smaller settlements. In particular, Great Staughton, Hail Weston and Great Gransden residents have no access to amenity spaces or any other informal provision. Neither Great Gransden and Great Staughton have any provision for children and young people either. Despite this, there are four strategically important sites within this area.

### **Key centres**

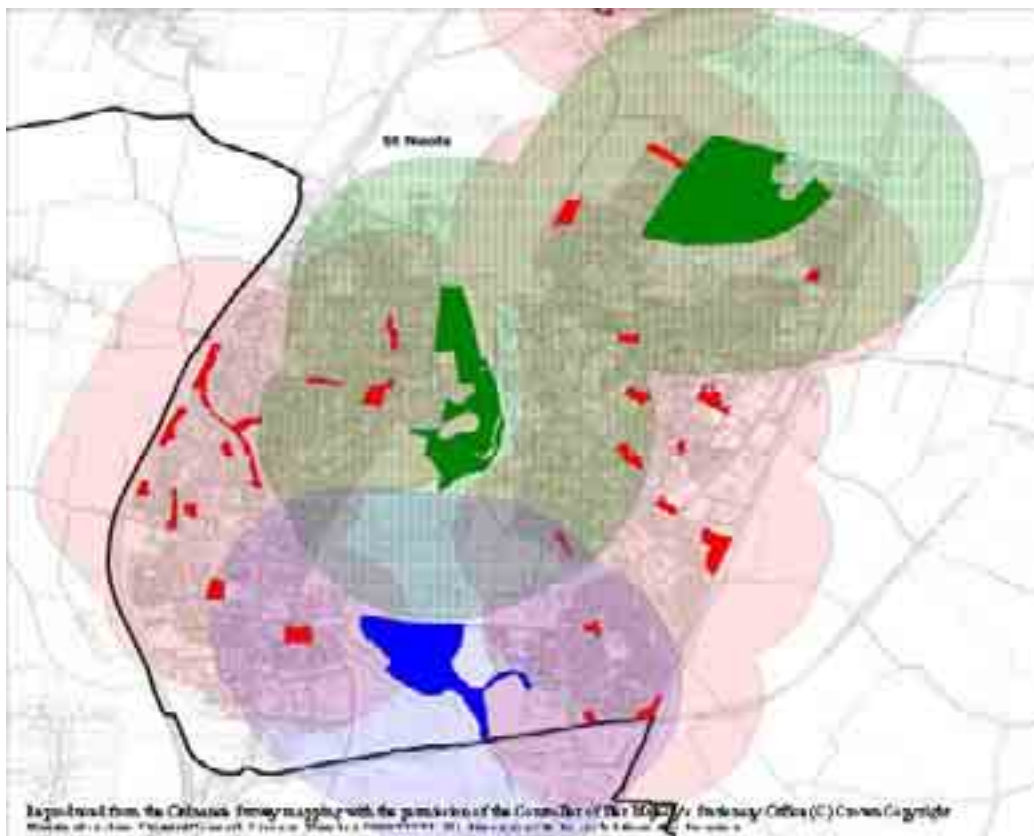
- 5.74 Both Little Paxton and Kimbolton are well served in terms of informal open spaces, and all residents living in these key centres are able to access amenity spaces. There are no parks or natural areas local to either of these towns.



**Market Towns**

5.75 Provision in St Neots market town is illustrated overleaf (Map 5.6). It can be seen that with the exception of the northern tip of the town, residents across the town are able to access some form of amenity space. There are two parks in the area – Priory Park and St Neots Riverside Park. Priory Park serves residents to the north of the Town and has a significantly overlapping catchment with amenity sites. St Neots Riverside Park is centrally located and there is little overlap with the catchment for Priory Park, although again some residents have access to both Riverside Park and amenity green space sites. There is therefore a deficiency of more formal provision of parks in Southern Eastern and Western St Neots, although residents in the South have access to natural sites and all residents in the town have access to at least one area. Formalising an amenity space site in the eastern / western areas of the town to create two small park s may therefore address deficiencies of more formal provision although would increase the quantitative surplus which has occurred due to the large size of the existing parks. This is not of priority due to the overall level of access in the town.

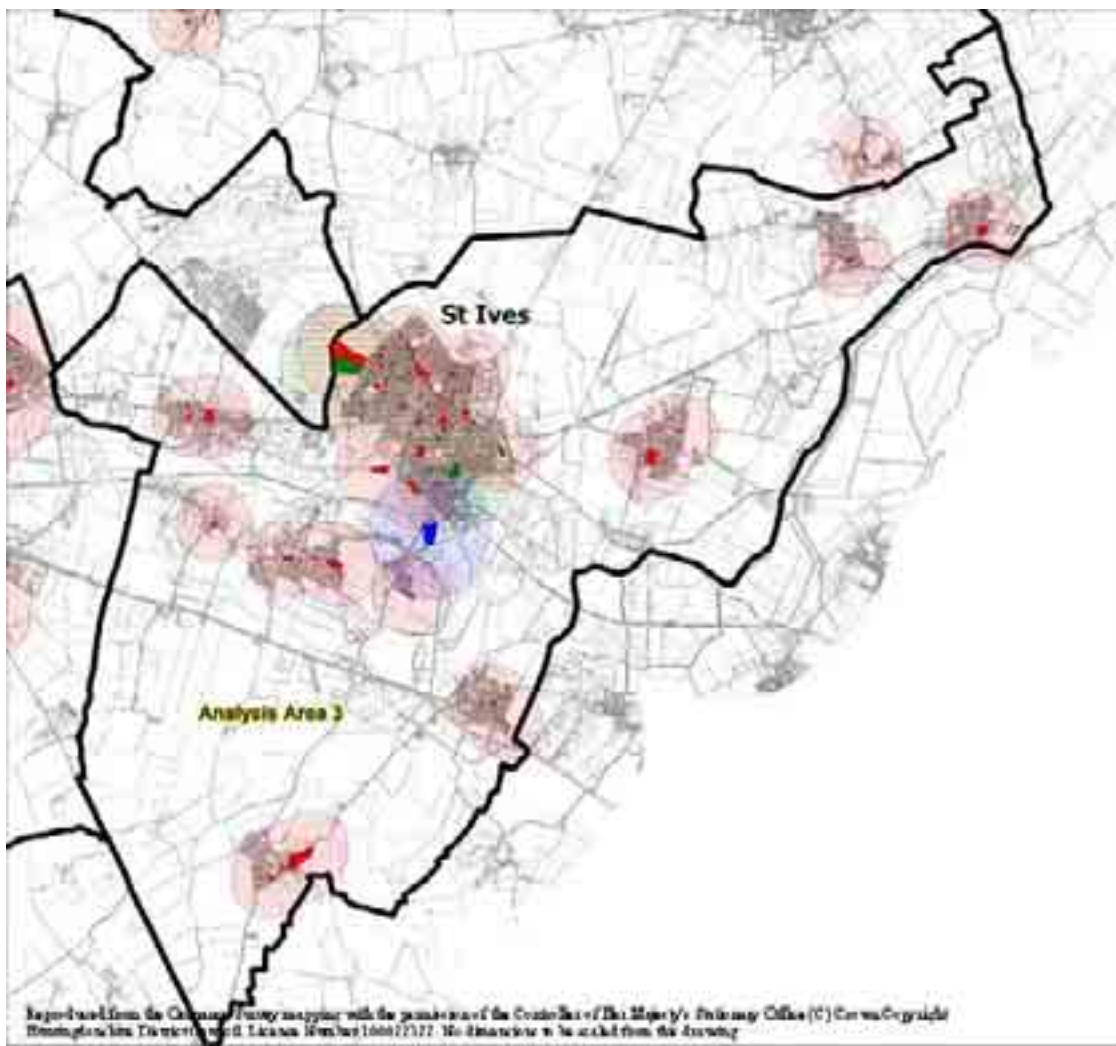
**Map 5.6 - Provision of informal open space in St Neots Town**





**St Ives and Surrounds**

**Map 5.7 – Provision of Informal open space in St Ives area**



5.76 Provision in St Ives and the surrounding area can be seen on Map 5.7 above. Like the other areas, there is a good distribution of provision with almost all residents having some form of access to informal open space provision. Complementing these facilities, there are four strategically important sites.

**Smaller settlements**

5.77 Almost all smaller settlements have a minimum of one amenity space site over 2ha, although there are minor deficiencies in the north of Bluntisham and the north west of Hilton. There are also small deficiencies to the west of Earith.

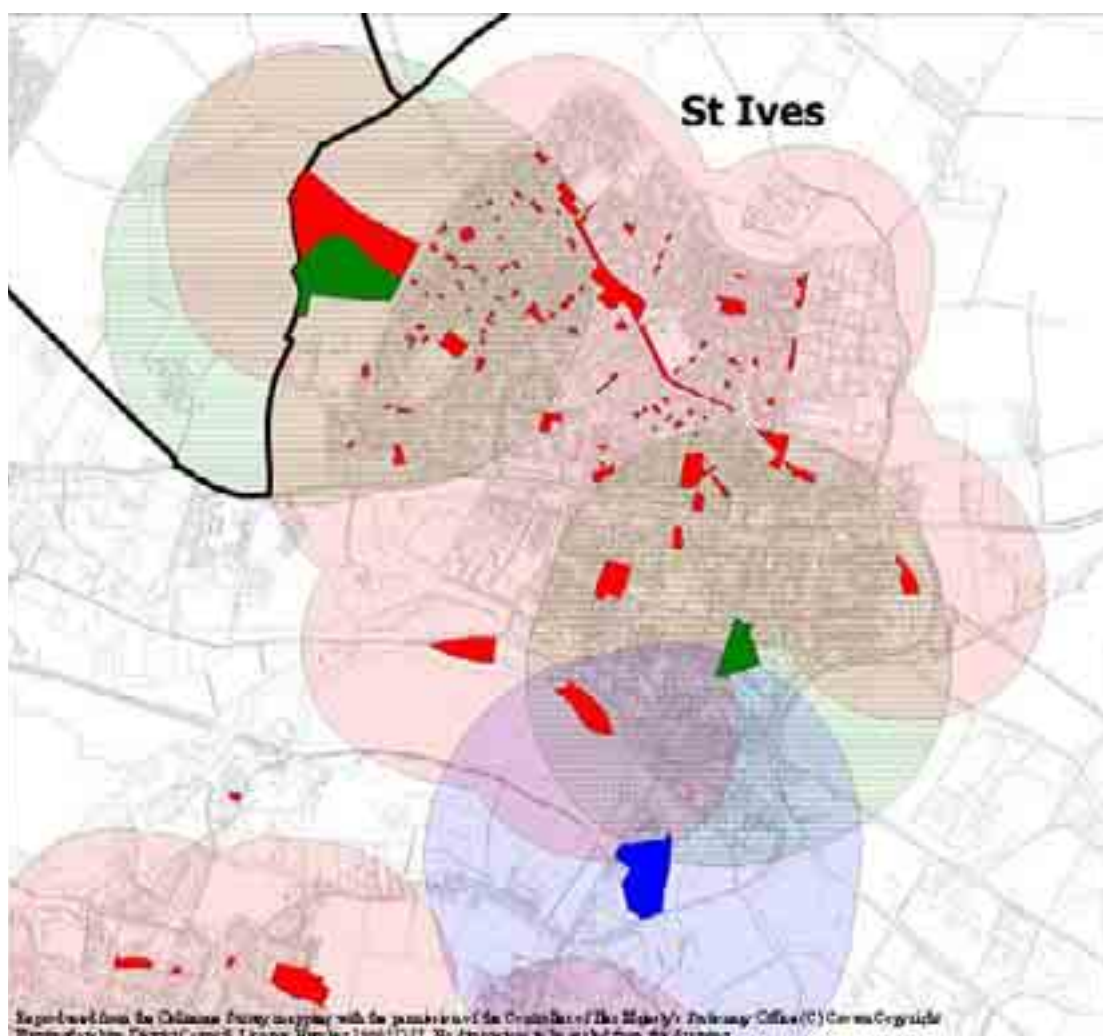
**Key centres**

5.78 Like the smaller settlements, provision in the key centres is good, with the majority of residents living in Fenstanton served by amenity green space sites and only those living in the North West of the village marginally outside the catchment area. Consideration should be given to the need for additional provision in the North West to meet the needs of these residents.

### Market Town

- 5.79 Residents in St Ives Market Town also have access to a good level of provision, although as with the other market towns, where a wider variety of provision may be expected there are deficiencies in certain types of provision.
- 5.80 As can be seen on map 5.8 below, provision in St Ives mirrors that in other market towns. All residents are able to access at least one type of informal open space provision. Although there are, like in other areas, people who are unable to access formal parks, there are opportunities to formalise some amenity space to meet this demand if the need arises.

**Map 5.8 - Provision of informal open space in St Ives Market Town**



### Value assessment and recommendations

- 5.81 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.
- 5.82 Although there are few formal parks within the district, these are supplemented by local and strategic natural sites and by amenity sites. As a consequence of this overall network of provision, the majority of residents, even those living within smaller settlements have access to at least one type of informal open space provision.

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Consultation highlights the value of amenity sites, recognising the landscape benefits as well as wider recreational benefits. Sites should therefore be protected in the Local Development Framework.

- 5.83 Site visits suggest that parks are of high quality. On the whole natural sites were also considered to be high quality, although there is a higher degree of variation in the quality of these sites. Consultation highlights that all parks and gardens and natural areas are well used highlighting the high value and importance of protecting these sites.

<b>INF1</b>	<p>Protect all existing informal open space sites over 0.2ha unless it can be proven that they are surplus to requirements.</p> <p>Protection of sites in areas otherwise devoid of open space is essential.</p> <p>The protection of open space sites is discussed further in section 12, planning implementation.</p>
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- 5.84 Protection of open space sites is particularly important in light of the planned growth agenda and in addition to ensuring provision meets current needs, a view on the future situation must also be considered when assessing the appropriateness both of future development (and associated developer contributions) and also on any proposed loss of open space.

<b>INF2</b>	<p>Any new housing developments should consider the need for informal open space provision. A decision regarding the most appropriate type of space to be provided should be taken in the context of other spaces in the area and access to other facilities. The recommended local standards should be applied to determine developer contributions.</p>
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- 5.85 On the whole, analysis of the distribution of informal open space indicates that residents have access to a good level of provision across the district. Application of the quantitative standards supports this, suggesting that there are locational deficiencies across the district.
- 5.86 As highlighted in the core strategy, residents living in market towns and key centres have greater expectations in terms of access to facilities than residents in small settlements.

### Market Towns

- 5.87 As has been seen through the application of recommended local standards in the market towns, although most residents have access to informal open space, few residents have access to parks, natural spaces and amenity green spaces.
- 5.88 Areas where there are deficiencies of provision of any type of open space should be considered as priority for development of new provision. There are few examples of this across the market towns, with the only example being the North Western area of St Neots. In line with recommendation INF2 above, it is critical that this is monitored in light of housing growth.

## SECTION 5 – INFORMAL OPEN SPACE

- 5.89 Although most residents within the market towns are able to access informal open space of one typology, there are few residents able to access all typologies. Improving the variety of provision in the market towns should be a key long-term aim. This may include formalising amenity green space sites to provide more formal parks and open spaces.

<b>INF3</b>	<p>Deficiencies in provision in market towns should be addressed both now and following future population developments.</p> <p>Any new sites should adhere to minimum size criteria and quality visions. This is detailed further in section 12, planning implementation.</p> <p>Current areas where residents can only access amenity spaces include:</p> <p>Ramsey – no park or natural provision in the town</p> <p>St Ives – residents living in the central band of town</p> <p>Huntingdon – Eastern area</p>
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- 5.90 Sites serving similar catchment areas (a number of examples can be seen, particularly in the market town areas) can be viewed as opportunities for redesignation of spaces and a change in primary purpose.

<b>INF4</b>	<p>Where there are amenity spaces 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, redesignation should be considered. Redesignation of amenity spaces with overlapping catchments should be viewed as a key opportunity to provide additional parks and natural sites.</p>
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### Key centres

- 5.91 Contrasting with the distribution of informal open spaces in the market towns, the geographical analysis of provision in key centres highlights a greater level of deficiency. In some areas, residents are unable to access any type of informal open space within the recommended catchments. Expectations of residents suggest that rectifying these deficiencies should be a priority action. Although there are shortfalls of provision in Brampton, the close proximity of Hinchingbrooke Country Park means that this shortfall should not be treated as priority.

<b>INF5</b>	<p>Deficiencies in provision in key centres should be addressed both now and following future population developments. Priority deficiencies include:</p> <p>Warboys (west)</p> <p>Somersham</p> <p>Buckden</p>
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- 5.92 Like the market towns, an increase in the variety of provision in the key centres should be targeted.

### ***Smaller settlements***

- 5.93 The geographical assessment highlights that the majority of smaller settlements have at least one amenity space site although none have access to any parks or natural areas. Lower levels of provision in smaller settlements should be provided as settlements are catering for smaller populations and it should therefore not be considered necessary to ensure that all residents in smaller settlements can access parks, natural areas and amenity spaces.
- 5.94 Despite this, all settlements containing over 30 dwellings should contain a minimum of one recreational site. This may encompass amenity space, outdoor sports facilities or play provision or a combination. The larger the settlement, the wider the range of facilities that should be provided.
- 5.95 Although the majority of settlements contain some type of provision (informal open space, outdoor sports facilities or play areas), there are some settlements containing no provision at the current time.

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<b>INF6</b>	<p>Provision in areas currently devoid of public open space should be investigated. Support should be provided to Parish Councils in areas of deficiency. This support should focus firstly in areas where local need is identified. Areas currently devoid of public space include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Alwalton</li><li>• Buckworth</li><li>• Bythorn</li><li>• Chesterton</li><li>• Covington</li><li>• Diddington</li><li>• Great Gransden</li><li>• Great Staughton</li><li>• Holywell</li><li>• Leighton Bromswold</li><li>• Molesworth</li><li>• Oldhurst</li><li>• Pidley</li><li>• Ramsey Heights</li><li>• Stibbington</li><li>• Stonely</li><li>• Toseland</li><li>• Upton</li><li>• Waresley</li><li>• Water Newton</li><li>• Winwick</li><li>• Wyton</li><li>• Wyton – on – the - Hill</li></ul>
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5.96 Some villages currently contain one informal open space site and no other type of provision. These sites are therefore of particular value and are usually well used and consequently should be protected as a priority. Where there is only one site in a village and this is rated as poor, improvements should be considered. Settlements where the amenity space is the only public open space in the village and is therefore of particular importance to residents include:

- Abbots Ripton
- Conington
- Elton
- Keyston
- Little Stukeley
- Woodhurst.

<b>INF6</b>	Sites providing provision in areas otherwise devoid of provision should be protected and prioritised for any quality improvements required. Example locations of valuable sites are provided above for smaller settlements, but protection of such sites is critical across the settlement hierarchy.
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**Improving provision of informal space**

5.97 As highlighted previously, sites of high quality are often associated with high usage and should be protected. This is particularly true of the parks in the district, where all have been considered to be of good quality. Hinchingsbrooke Country Park and Stukely Meadows Local Nature Reserve should be considered to be examples of good practice. In contrast, poor quality can sometimes explain why open spaces are not used but a poor quality site is still of high value if well used. Although there are no poor quality parks or natural areas, over 10 amenity sites were considered to be of poor quality.

<b>INF7</b>	<p>Monitor usage at poor quality sites. Where usage is low, consider the appropriateness of the facility. Where use 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 illustrated in table 5.3.</p> <p>Key sites for investigation include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Drayhor Street (Ramsey)</li> <li>• Ugg Mere Court Road (Ramsey St Marys)</li> <li>• Farm Close (Upwood)</li> <li>• Limetree Close (Ramsey)</li> <li>• Nursery Gardens (St Ives)</li> <li>• Williams Close (Brampton)</li> <li>• Loughrigg Close (Huntingdon)</li> <li>• Flamsteed Drive (Huntingdon)</li> </ul>
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5.98 In order to ensure ongoing improvements to the provision and distribution of informal open spaces across the district, the Council should produce an action plan for the protection, development and improvement of parks and gardens and natural areas prioritising those areas outlined in the specific recommendations above. This should include realistic actions with an indicative timeframe and should involve all partners and providers.

## SECTION 5 – INFORMAL OPEN SPACE

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<b>INF8</b>	Produce an action plan for the protection, development and improvement of parks and gardens and natural areas prioritising those areas outlined in the specific recommendations above. This should include realistic actions with an indicative timeframe and should involve all partners and providers.
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- 5.99 Consultation highlighted issues of vandalism, graffiti and litter across informal open space typologies and this issue was also reflected as a key issue during site visits, where issues of vandalism were reported in all analysis areas. Recent work by the Council has seen the development of Coneygear Park following extensive consultation and community involvement, developing ownership of the facility and ensuring amenities provided meet community need. Extensive work by friends groups at Stukeley Meadows further highlights the benefits of community involvement.

<b>INF9</b>	Continue to promote community involvement and ownership at parks and gardens sites and natural and semi natural sites, including the implementation of friends groups, community consultation and promote the development of partnerships.
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- 5.100 To further increase usage of informal open space sites and to promote the health agenda and encourage increased activity, a local green infrastructure strategy should be undertaken. This should link with the Cambridgeshire wide strategic green space strategy and should encourage links between strategic open space sites and local open space sites through the development of green corridors. This should also feed into the Local Biodiversity Action Plan and the future development of wildlife corridors.

<b>INF10</b>	Produce a local green infrastructure strategy linking with the Cambridgeshire wide study identifying key linkages and wildlife corridors.
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### Summary

- 5.101 The value of informal open space to residents is clear, with many residents reinforcing the need to protect these sites. Consultation indicates that informal spaces are high quality across the district. Feedback regarding the quality of parks and natural open spaces was particularly positive and site visits confirmed this perception, providing many good practice examples.
- 5.102 Although local standards are set for each element of informal open space, the key target is to ensure that all residents have access to at least some informal open space, and there should be a variety of provision for residents in the larger settlements.
- 5.103 An overall provision standard of 1.8 ha per 1000 population for informal open space has been set. This compares to an overall existing level of provision equivalent to 1.73



## **SECTION 5 – INFORMAL OPEN SPACE**

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ha per 1000 population. It is suggested that of the total of 1.8 ha of provision, 0.48 ha is formal parks and gardens, 0.23 is natural and semi natural open space and 1.09 is amenity green space.

- 5.104 Analysis of current provision suggests that the overall distribution is good, with minimal deficiencies of provision in the market towns. The key focus for new provision is in the key centres and the majority of smaller settlements are also well served.

### Provision for children and young people

#### Definition

- 6.1 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.
- 6.2 Provision for young people and children also includes Multi Use Games Areas (MUGAs). These facilities which can be varying dimensions (as a minimum the size of a tennis court) and are marked out for multi-sports use (i.e. netball, basketball, five-a-side football) and surrounded by a fence. They can be used in all weather.

#### Strategic context and consultation

##### *Strategic context*

- 6.3 There are no current regional or local level documents related to the provision of children and/or young people's facilities in Huntingdonshire.
- 6.4 The Huntingdonshire District Council, Outdoor Recreation Monitoring Report investigated the quantitative provision of land for outdoor recreation as defined by the NPFA. However, it did not attempt to measure the land available for formal or informal children's play as it was felt, due to children's limited mobility, that analysis of provision should occur on a more local level. This is in line with the process dictated by PPG17 and is followed throughout this study.

##### *Consultation and Background*

- 6.5 Consultation specific to children and young people's facilities highlights some meaningful statistics and provides a justification for setting local standards against local needs. Key findings emerging from consultation include:
- in addition to the District Council who own and manage 31 play facilities, Parish Councils are key providers of play and infrastructure for children and young people within the district and many Councils have cited evidence of remaining unmet demand within their local areas for such facilities. This opinion was also evident amongst residents across the District.
  - in terms of frequency of use, 27.7% of respondents reported visiting children's play areas more than once a week although 50% of responding residents do not use them at all. Users questioned on site at play facilities suggested regular use of facilities, with the most popular response being "a few times per week".
  - people expect local provision, with most people walking to sites. This was reinforced by the user survey, where 70% of users questioned had walked to the site and 23% had cycled. Only 10% of users travel furthered than a mile and 45% visit sites less than a quarter of a mile away. 78% of parents indicated that their child would not be permitted to travel alone to play facilities. When accompanied, parents are willing to travel relatively large distances to sites in comparison to those children using sites alone.
  - the importance of involving young people and children in the development of provision for children and young people was a key theme emerging from consultations. The new skatepark in St Neots was highlighted as an example

of good practice and has been put forward for a National Excellence award. The site was developed following high levels of consultation with young people who were involved at all stages of the process and now attracts high numbers of young people from outside the district in addition to local residents. Although the facility was primarily funded by the Council, children raised £170,000 towards the project themselves showing their commitment to the development. The ongoing success of this site reinforces the principle of ensuring early community involvement and ensuring that the planned facility is in line with the needs and aspirations of the target community.

- meeting the needs of the community was a recurring theme of consultation process. Consultations regarding Coneygear Park indicated that local residents did not want formal play equipment, but preferred other types of open space. Similarly, many residents indicated that the majority of teen shelters are underused and do not meet with the expectations of young people. The play area in St Neots (Pocket Park) is not perceived to meet the needs of the community effectively as it is not of the right quality.
- other specific comments made by residents at drop in sessions were:
  - Godmanchester Skate Park is well used but has issues with misuse during the evening (eg perception of drug and alcohol use)
  - new sites should be located close to new housing estates
  - the equipment contained within sites is very important and should meet the needs of the children using the site
  - there is a immediate need for a children’s play area in Hemingford Grey.

**Current position**

6.6 The provision for children and young people across Huntingdonshire is summarised in Table 6.1 below:

**Table 6.1 – Quantity of provision for children and young people**

<b>Analysis Area</b>	<b>Quantity of Provision</b>	<b>Provision per 1000 population</b>	<b>Average size of facility</b>	<b>Key Sites</b>
St Neots	27 sites	0.71	7.7 pieces of equipment	Skate park is well used site and example of good practice. Large sites also in Priory Park and Riverside Park. Nine sites with over 10 pieces of equipment, the largest of which is Rocket Park. Over 50% of provision is located in St Neots town.
Huntingdon and Godmanchester	40 sites	0.99	5.5 pieces of equipment	Central site in Riverside Park for teenagers. There are seven sites with over 10 pieces of equipment which are significant sites despite this, a number of facilities only have one piece of equipment. Scale of facilities is

## SECTION 6 – PROVISION OF CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE

				therefore not consistent. The largest site is on Nursery Road. 50% of the sites are located in Huntingdon Town.
St Ives	19 sites	0.62	7.5 pieces of equipment	Central locations in Hill Rise Park and Warners Park. There are five sites with over 10 pieces of equipment, the largest of which is in Hilton. Eight of the facilities are focused in the market town of St Ives.
Ramsey	15 sites	0.75	7.5 pieces of equipment	Two larger sites in Ramsey (Mill Lane) and Warboys. Six facilities are in Ramsey.
Yaxley and Sawtry	16 sites	0.58	5.6 pieces of equipment	Yaxley Skatepark is important provision for teenagers. Two sites have over 10 pieces of equipment – one in Yaxley and one in Sawtry.

### 6.7 Key issues arising from the analysis and assessment of the quantity of provision for children and young people include:

- assessment of the provision per 1000 population across the district highlights that there are variations in provision, although the overall level of provision is good
- as may be expected, with the exception of St Ives, provision is higher in the more urban areas of the district. Huntingdon and Godmanchester has the highest level of provision in the district and provision is also high in St Neots. St Neots also contains the skate park, which consultation suggests that people travel significant distances to use.
- reinforcing the rural more dispersed nature of Yaxley and Sawtry and Ramsey, provision is lower in these areas, particularly in Yaxley and Sawtry. This suggests that not all villages have provision.
- size of facilities is consistent across the district, although facilities in Yaxley and Huntingdon and Godmanchester are much smaller than in the other three areas. The variation in sizes of facilities is particularly noticeable within Huntingdon and Godmanchester, where despite there being 10 facilities with over 10 pieces of equipment, there are many with only one piece.

### 6.8 Findings from the consultation regarding the quantity of provision include:

- analysis of the household survey indicates that there are mixed opinions regarding the quantity of provision. There were strong opinions that provision for teenagers was insufficient, a perception shared by 61% of residents. Residents at some drop in sessions also felt there to be some areas of deficiency, in particularly areas mentioned at drop in sessions as being deficient in provision for children and young people included Bury, Ramsey, St Ives, St Neots and Yaxley.

## SECTION 6 – PROVISION OF CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE

- Parish Councils also highlighted deficiencies in provision, with only 33% feeling that the quantity of provision was good or excellent
- these mixed opinions are reinforced by the varying spread of provision across the district.

6.9 The quality of provision for children and young people in the district is set out in table 6.2 below.

**Table 6.2 – Quality of provision for children and young people in Huntingdonshire**

Analysis Area	Site Quality	Key Issues
St Neots	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 50% of sites considered to be good – the highest proportion in the district</li> <li>• despite this – 27% are poor – also the highest proportion in the district</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 4 sites are considered to be poorly maintained. Despite this, on the whole maintenance in St Neots is good</li> <li>• St Neots has the highest incidence of vandalism in the district, with 55% of sites experiencing at least some degree of vandalism</li> <li>• none of the sites have parking facilities</li> <li>• 37% of sites have some access suitable for the disabled</li> </ul>
Huntingdon and Godmanchester	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• overall quality of sites good – only 19% considered poor</li> <li>• 42% good</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 25% of sites have no seating – this is important as most parents accompany their children to sites</li> <li>• maintenance is good on the whole – only 4 sites considered poor</li> <li>• main issue is vandalism and graffiti (16 sites)</li> <li>• personal safety perceived to be poor on five sites</li> </ul>
St Ives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• only 1 site considered to be poor</li> <li>• 37% of sites are good</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 63% of sites are considered to be well laid out</li> <li>• sites are well maintained - only one site considered to be poorly maintained (Hemingford Grey) – the only site also rated as poor overall</li> <li>• like other areas, vandalism is a problem (37% of sites). Litter is more of a problem in St Ives than in others</li> <li>• only two sites do not have seating, although no sites have facilities for storing cycles</li> <li>• good perception of personal safety</li> </ul>

## SECTION 6 – PROVISION OF CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE

Ramsey	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>highest quality sites in the district – no sites rated poor</li> <li>40% of sites good</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>almost 50% of sites offer some facilities for disabled children</li> <li>quality of maintenance is high – there are no sites considered poorly maintained</li> <li>50% of sites have suffered from vandalism although litter is only evident at 2 sites, again reinforcing the high quality maintenance</li> </ul>
Yaxley and Sawtry	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>lowest proportion of good sites – only 20%</li> <li>27% poor</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>lowest proportion of good sites is reflected in the quality ratings – 25% considered to be poorly maintained although 38% were good</li> <li>44% of sites suffered from vandalism and 31% were considered to be poor in terms of personal safety</li> <li>25% of sites have some equipment that is accessible to disabled groups.</li> </ul>

### 6.10 Key issues arising include:

- on the whole, the quality of provision for children and young people is good and there are only 19 sites (16%), which are considered to be of poor quality. This is particularly reflective of the maintenance of sites, which on the whole was good. 45 sites in total were considered to be of good quality overall.
- St Neots contains both the highest proportion of good sites and the highest proportion of poor sites, indicating that there are significant contrasts between the quality of provision in this area
- quality is of the lowest level in Yaxley and Sawtry, where only 20% of sites were good and 27% were poor. There are particularly problems with vandalism and graffiti.

### 6.11 Themes emerging from consultations regarding the quality of current provision include:

- maintenance of play facilities is critical and it is important to ensure that the site can be managed effectively prior to the development. District Council managed play facilities are inspected twice weekly and issues are reported as quickly as possible. Match funding is available for Parish Councils who as a result of consultation and the identification of need wish to develop new facilities for children or young people within their local area. Cleanliness and litter free was perceived to be critical in good play provision by respondents to the household survey.
- maintenance of play facilities was also frequently highlighted at drop in sessions. In Huntingdon and other towns across the District it was highlighted that children's play areas were frequently misused and vandalised by older children. Misuse of the site, dog fouling and litter were the key problems at play areas identified by respondents to the household survey. The household

survey indicated that while 28% of respondents think the quality of provision for children is good, only 7% think teenage provision is of high quality. Parish Councils also suggested that the quality of provision was good, with only 31% indicating that it is poor or very poor. User surveys at play areas reinforced the varying perceptions of quality across the district, with 36% suggesting provision was poor or very poor and only 22% stating good or excellent. This variation in perceived quality is reflective of the varying qualities of provision across the district.

- Parish Councils considering provision to be particularly poor include:
  - Pidley-cum-Fenton
  - Holme
  - Abbots Ripton
  - Yelling
  - Hamerton
  - Elton
  - Barham and Woolley
  - Ramsey St Marys.
- antisocial behaviour has emerged as a key issue affecting all types of open spaces and a lack of provision and activities for young people is perceived as a key contributor to this issue. Again, drop in sessions demonstrated that residents perceived that by providing for young people, the issues of antisocial behaviour could be addressed. This issue of antisocial behaviour is also reflected in the site visits outlined above.
- frequently and across the whole district, it was felt that provision of a skate park or a MUGA would be the most suitable form of provision. Addressing issues of antisocial behaviour and addressing community safety is critical.

6.12 The key issues arising from analysis of the current provision and local needs can be summarised as:

- consultation highlights an overall perception of insufficient facilities particularly for children and young people
- parish and drop in consultation highlighted that although provision is good in some areas, there are locational deficiencies. The size of facilities is relatively consistent across the district although the average size of provision in Huntingdon and Yaxley is smaller than in other areas

- misuse, vandalism and graffiti are perceived to be the main quality issues, although again the perception of the overall quality of facilities varies across the district. This issue is supported by site visits; where in some areas over 50% of sites suffer from vandalism.
- despite problems of vandalism and graffiti, maintenance of sites is good.

**Setting provision standards**

6.13 In setting local standards for children and young people 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 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 children and young people sites in Huntingdonshire.

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

Existing level of provision	Recommended standard
0.75 facilities per 1000 population (children and young people provision)	0.8 facilities per 1,000 population (children and young people provision)
<b>Justification</b>	
<p style="text-align: center;"><b><u>Children</u></b></p> <p>There was a mixed response with a slight emphasis on there not being enough. The reason for answers suggest that where people felt there was not enough provision this was a mixture of quality and quantity reasons indicating there is not a clear cut deficiency – particularly the need for additional equipment at some sites. The lowest level of satisfaction was found in the rural areas of the district, however these analysis areas had in the region of 15 facilities each – suggesting that some villages will have provision and others will not. This indicates that although the quantity may appear to be sufficient, the application of accessibility standards may highlight some deficiencies. Setting a quantity standard slightly above the existing provision will enable quantitative deficiencies to be remedied but also a focus on improving existing sites.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b><u>Young People</u></b></p> <p>There is a relatively strong emphasis on the level of provision of young people facilities not being enough, with a particular issue highlighted in Ramsey. Young people and anti social behaviour is considered to be an issue in Huntingdonshire, although in a number of cases this is site specific rather than across the board and it may be that additional youth facilities would alleviate this issue. As such, the standard is increased slightly to reflect the higher levels of dissatisfaction with the existing level of provision and to provide the flexibility to combat specific areas where youths hanging around and creating a nuisance is a particularly issue due to a lack of alternative facilities.</p>	



## SECTION 6 – PROVISION OF CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE

- 6.14 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 use that each facility is expected to sustain. One facility should be considered equivalent to the average size of play facilities in the district (which is currently 6.6 pieces of equipment – approximately equivalent to the size of a LEAP). Where a facility is expected to serve a larger catchment, it should be above the average size and conversely, smaller catchment areas will warrant a smaller facility. The most appropriate type of facility should be chosen in conjunction with the local community.

### **Accessibility standard (see appendix J)**

<b>Recommended standard</b>
CHILDREN – 10 minute walk time for provision for children - (480 metres)  YOUNG PEOPLE (URBAN) – 15 minute walk time - (720 metres)
<b>Justification</b>
<p>The majority of respondents to the household questionnaire indicate that they would expect to walk to a children or young peoples facility. This also reflects the fact that young people and children with parents should be able to access play sites easily. Care should be taken to ensure that all facilities are appropriately located.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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 more rural areas will be made.</p> <p>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.</p>

### **Quality standard (see appendix I)**

<b>Recommended standard</b>
<u><b>Children</b></u>
<b><i>“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”</i></b>
<u><b>Young People</b></u>
<b><i>“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</i></b>

<b><i>appropriately designed seating and shelter. Sites should also comply with appropriate national guidelines for design and safety”</i></b>
<b>Justification</b>
<b><u>Children</u></b>
<p>The need to address the mis-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).</p> <p>A 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.</p> <p>It is important that the location of the site is suitable for the type of facility provided, but maintains residential / amenity value.</p>
<b><u>Young People</u></b>
<p>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.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>The existing quality of sites is considered to be poor and it is important that sites are improved.</p> <p>It is important that the location of the site is suitable for the type of facility provided, but maintains residential / amenity value.</p>

### **Applying accessibility standards – identifying geographical areas**

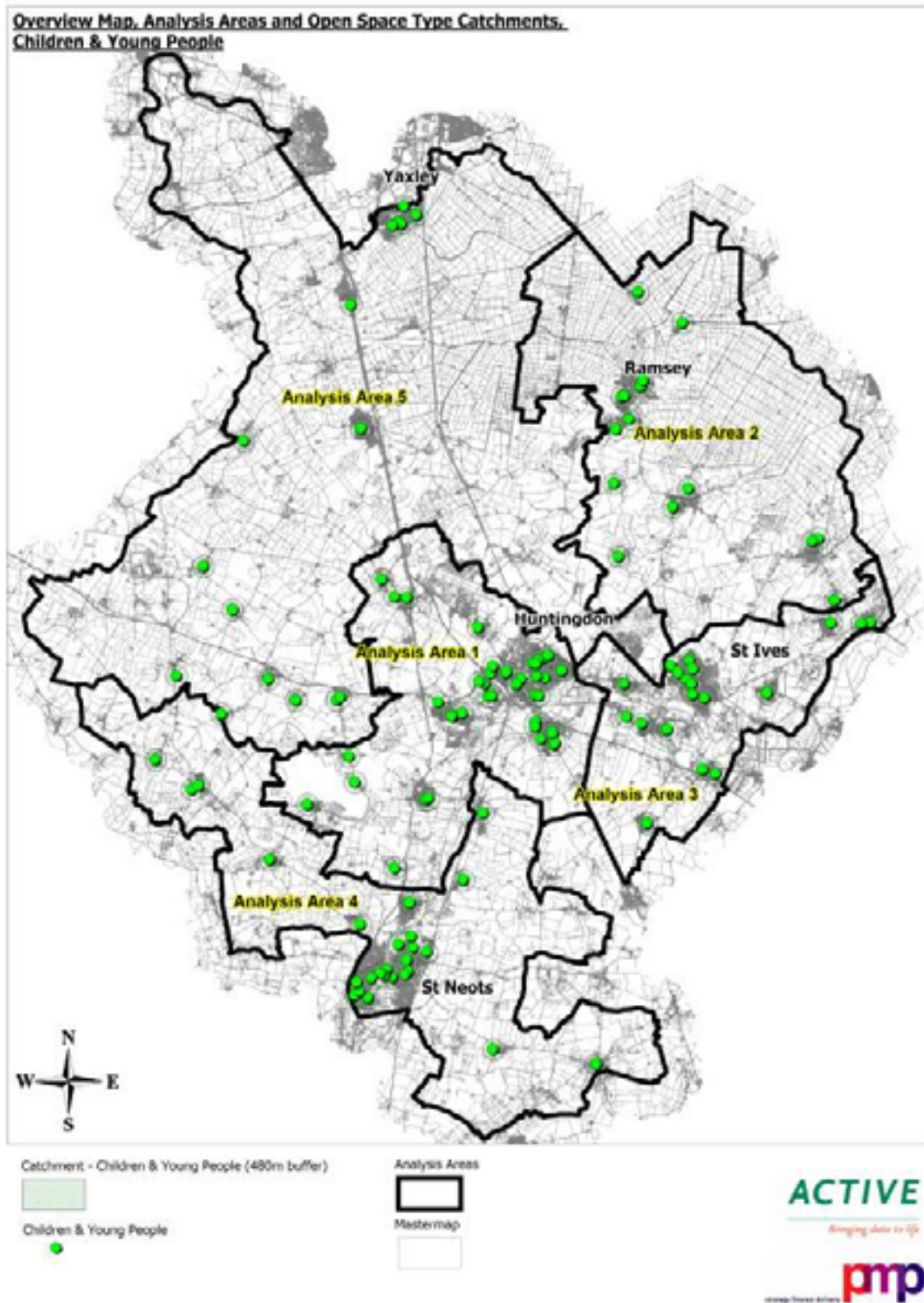
- 6.15 In order to identify geographical areas of importance and those areas with required local needs we can apply both the quantity and accessibility standards together, as mentioned previously. The quantity standards identify areas where provision does not meet the minimum standard and the accessibility standards will help to determine where those deficiencies are of high importance. Applying the standards is therefore a much more meaningful method of analysis than applying the standards separately and therefore helps with the prioritisation of sites.
- 6.16 Provision of facilities for children and young people is currently below the recommended minimum quantity standard (0.8). Table 6.3 illustrates the current level of provision measured against the local standard. When linked with analysis of the geographical distribution of provision for children and young people, this enables areas for new provision to be prioritised.

**Table 6.3 – Analysis area breakdown for provision of children’s facilities in Huntingdonshire**

<b>Analysis Area</b>	<b>Current Provision</b>	<b>Shortfall or Surplus 2005</b>	<b>Future Shortfall or Surplus 2005</b>
St Neots	0.71	-3	-3.6
Huntingdon and Godmanchester	0.99	+8	+8.1
St Ives	0.62	-5.9	-5.8
Ramsey	0.75	0	-1.1
Yaxley and Sawtry	0.58	-6	-6.5

- 6.17 Reflecting the overall situation across the district, consideration of the breakdown by analysis areas highlights deficiencies in children and young people in all areas except Huntingdon and Godmanchester although the highest deficiencies are in Yaxley and St Ives.
- 6.18 Projecting this forward to 2021, levels of shortfall increase significantly. 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 2021. The map overleaf represents the spatial distribution of provision for children and young people across Huntingdonshire.

Map 6.1 – provision for children and young people



- 6.19 As can be seen from the map, there is a relatively even spread of provision across Huntingdonshire, with facilities in all of the market towns and key centres and in many of the smaller settlements.
- 6.20 Due to the local nature of play areas and provision for young people, where residents expect provision within close proximity to their homes, the application of standards has been considered within each analysis area on a settlement hierarchy basis in line with the core strategy.
- 6.21 The rural nature of the district, which is characterised by many small settlements means that it may be inappropriate to provide facilities in each small area and that some deficiencies are inevitable. The recommended local standard of 0.8 play areas per 1000 population supports this, suggesting that in settlements below this level of population, equipped facilities may not be appropriate and larger provision should be provided in the key centres and market towns.
- 6.22 Consideration of the geographical distribution in each area for the market towns, key centres and smaller settlements are discussed below. Recommendations and value of sites is then considered. Overview maps of the Yaxley and Sawtry and Ramsey areas can be found in appendix K.

### **Yaxley and Sawtry area**

- 6.23 In quantitative terms, the greatest deficiency is located in Yaxley and Sawtry. The rural nature of these areas means that some deficiencies are inevitable. Although the majority of settlements are small, both Yaxley and Sawtry are identified as key centres in the core strategy and therefore provision in these settlements is important.

### **Key centres**

- 6.24 Consideration of provision in Yaxley village highlights that almost all residents (with the exception of those living to the north of the town) are able to access facilities within the appropriate distance. Indeed it appears that two facilities serve similar catchment areas, although one does cater for young people.
- 6.25 Despite the good level of provision in Yaxley, as may be expected from the application of the quantity standard, the play area on Green End Road to the west of Sawtry is not sufficient to meet the needs of all residents. In the context of Sawtry as a key centre this deficiency should be addressed.

### **Smaller settlements**

- 6.26 In terms of smaller settlements, decisions as to the appropriateness of provision should be taken on a case-by-case basis and in conjunction both with local residents, and the supply of amenity green space. Some of the larger settlements that may warrant further investigation in terms of facility provision include Stilton (where the play area on the Playing Field does not serve all residents) and Winwick, Holme and Glatton (where there is no provision).

### **Ramsey area**

- 6.27 Although provision in Ramsey and the surrounding area meets the recommended quantitative standard, this area faces the same accessibility challenges as Yaxley and Sawtry given the rural environment and sporadic dispersion of small settlements. Despite this, residents expect local facilities.

### ***Market Towns***

- 6.28 Ramsey and Bury is considered a market town. While provision in Ramsey ensures that almost all residents are able to access a facility within a 10-minute walk (indeed it appears that some facilities serve many of the same residents), map 6.1 clearly illustrates that residents living in the North Eastern area of Bury are outside of the catchment for facilities. Given the status of this area as a market town, this deficiency should be prioritised.

### ***Key centres***

- 6.29 Both Somersham and Warboys are identified as key centres (with limited growth) in the core strategy. Although there are two facilities in Warboys, map 6.1 illustrates that residents living in the centre of the village and to the South are unable to access provision for children and young people. Further investigation into the demand for provision for children and young people should therefore be considered in Warboys. This situation is mirrored in Somersham, where again despite the presence of two facilities, there remain some residents outside of the appropriate catchment for the facility. In this instance, the two existing facilities appear to serve similar catchments.

### ***Smaller settlements***

- 6.30 Consideration of provision in the smaller settlements indicates that on the whole, there is a good distribution with many settlements having play facilities, in particular residents in Wistow, Broughton and Colne.

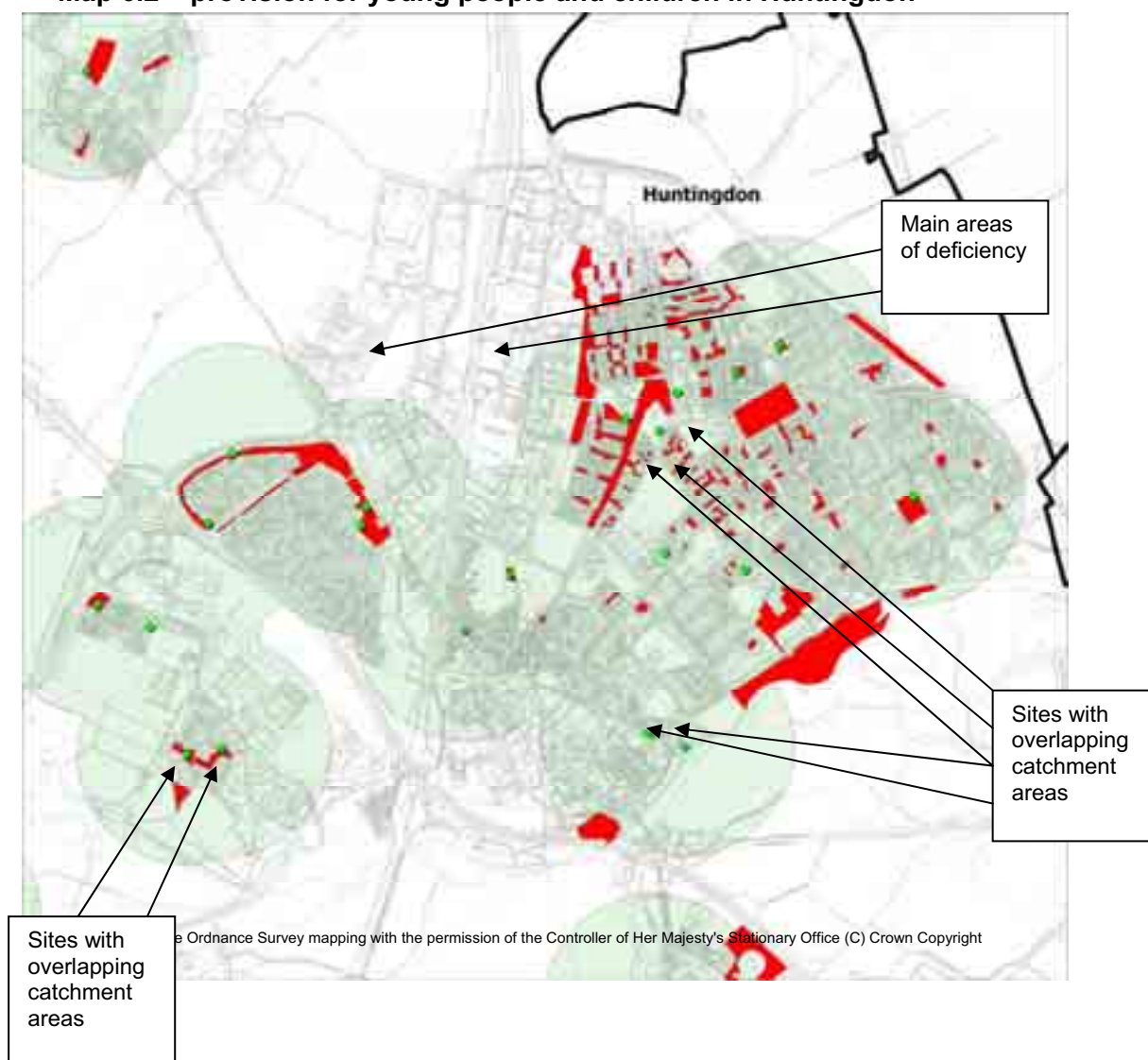
### **Huntingdon and Godmanchester area**

- 6.31 In quantitative terms, when measured against the local standard the only area with sufficient provision is Huntingdon and Godmanchester, the largest analysis area in the district.

### ***Market Towns***

- 6.32 Consideration of the overview map on the previous page reinforces the application of the quantity standard suggesting that there is sufficient provision in the area. With few exceptions (even in the smaller settlements) almost all residents are able to access provision for young people and children. Provision in the market town of Huntingdon can be viewed in further detail in map 6.2 below. Amenity green space sites over 2ha are also included on the map as these sites offer further opportunities for informal recreation for children.

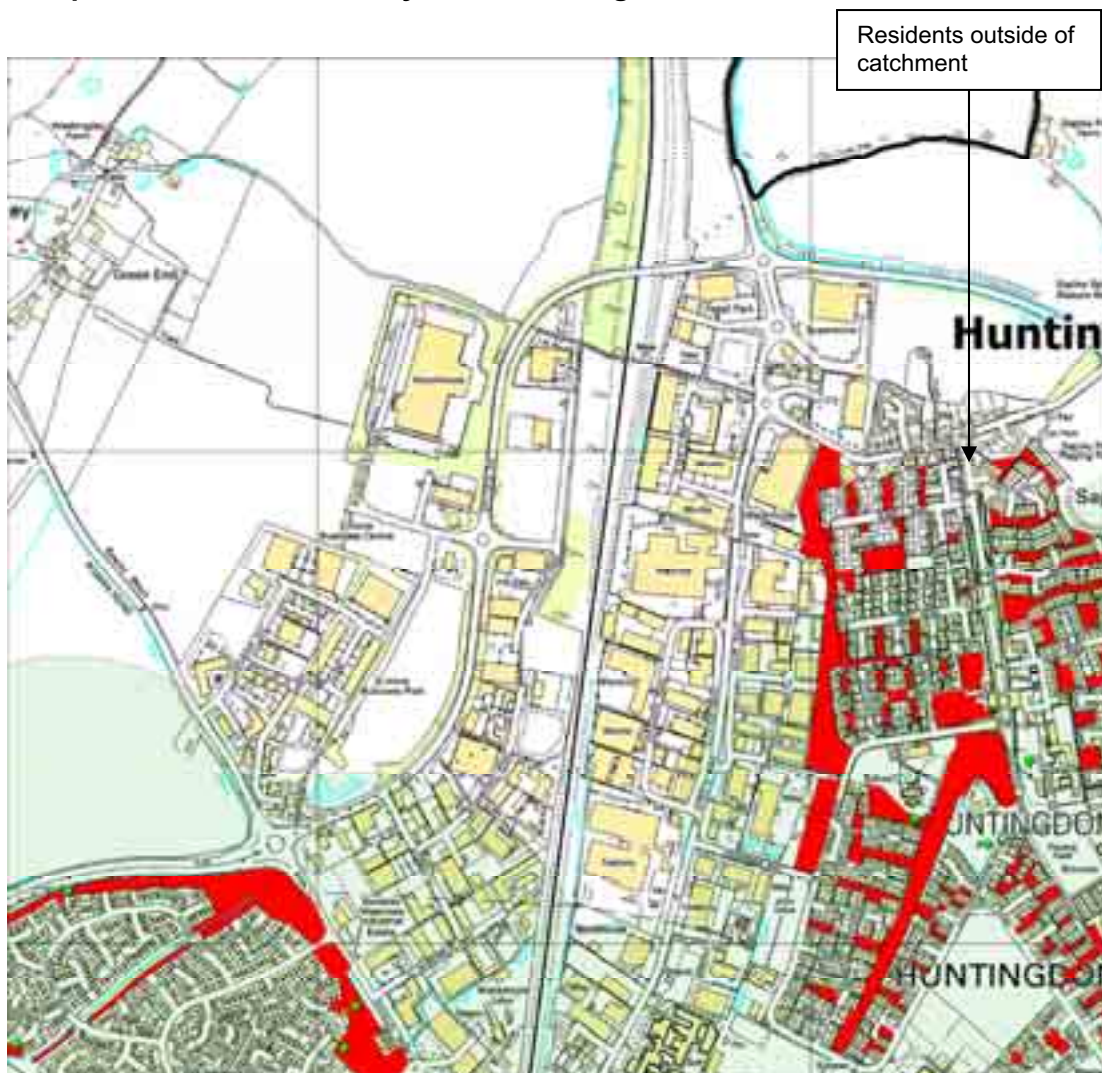
**Map 6.2 – provision for young people and children in Huntingdon**



- 6.33 As can be seen in map 6.2 above, almost all residents within the market town of Huntingdon are able to access facilities for children and young people. Furthermore, there are some facilities that serve the same residents, offering opportunities for rationalisation of facilities. Such rationalisation may enable the conversion to other types of open space (or from children’s provision to teenage).
- 6.34 Map 6.3 overleaf illustrates the main areas of deficiency in Huntingdon in more detail. Close analysis of these site areas highlights that only residents living in the North Eastern area fall outside of the appropriate catchment area. These residents are within the catchment for Sapley Park so there are informal areas to play. Furthermore, the Kings Ripton Park housing development site adjacent to Tescos (which will provide 242 dwellings) is likely to provide a facility for children and young people of equivalent size to a LEAP / NEAP and a small LAP to the north at the site. This should address the deficiencies in this area.
- 6.35 A lack of provision within the industrial area would be expected as facilities for children is not really required in these areas.



**Map 6.3 – area of deficiency within Huntingdon**



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**Key centres**

6.36 Both Brampton and Godmanchester are identified as key centres in the core strategy. Map 6.1 illustrates a good level of provision in Godmanchester and a good distribution across the town. In contrast, residents living in the southern tip of Brampton do not have access to any provision. This suggests there may be an imbalance of provision between the market town of Huntingdon and the key centres. Further consideration highlights that there are two facilities in Buckden (a key centre with limited growth) serving similar catchment areas, and other residents of the village are unable to access facilities. This is further supported by the overlapping catchments identified on Map 6.2.

**Smaller settlements**

6.37 There are few smaller settlements contained within the Huntingdon and Godmanchester analysis area, but application of the accessibility standard highlights a good distribution of facilities. Provision in smaller settlements such as Alconbury, Perry, Southoe, and Grafham is effective in meeting the needs of residents of these villages.



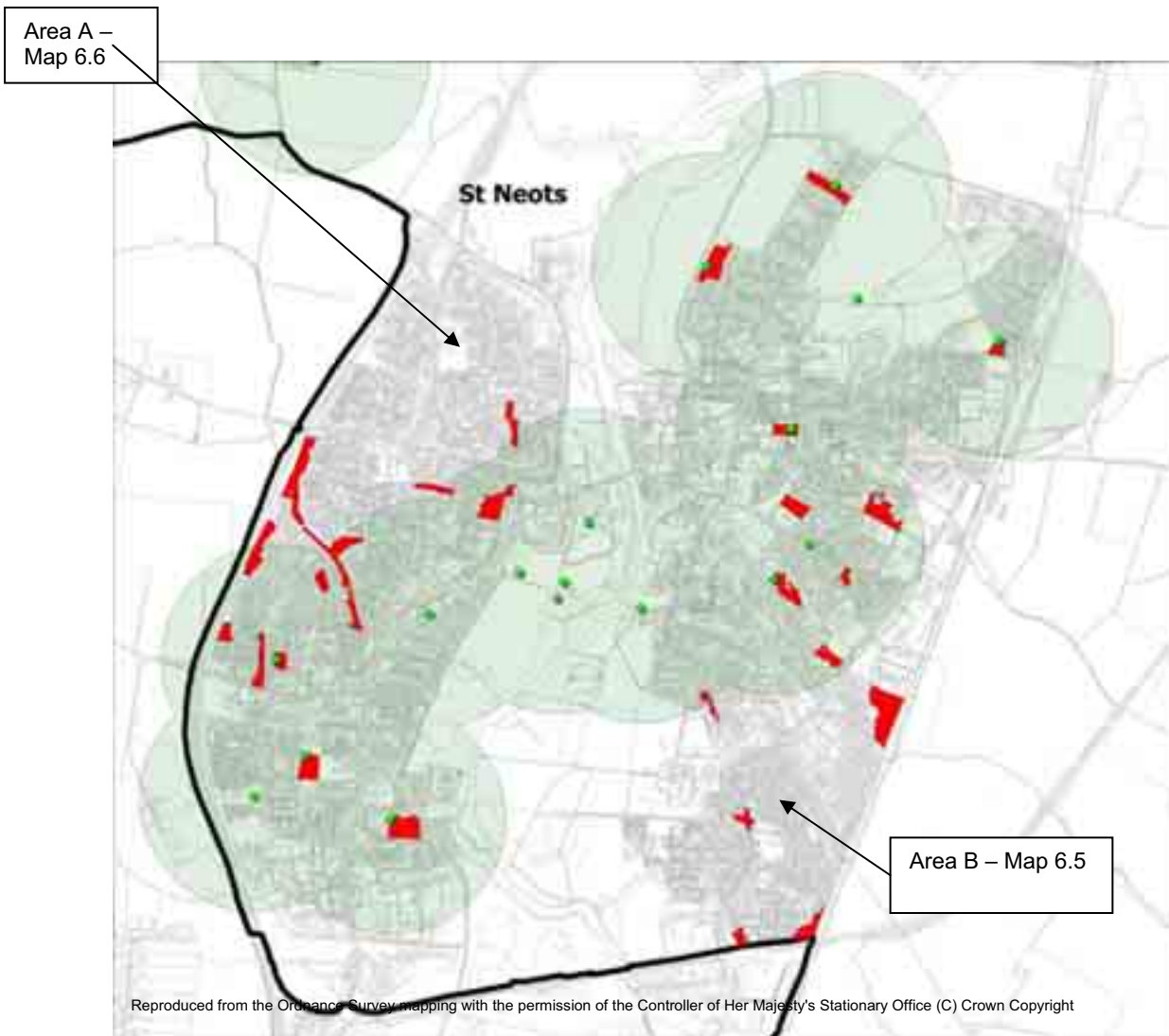
**St Neots area**

6.38 Unlike the Huntingdon and Godmanchester area, provision in St Neots and St Ives is below the minimum quantitative standard.

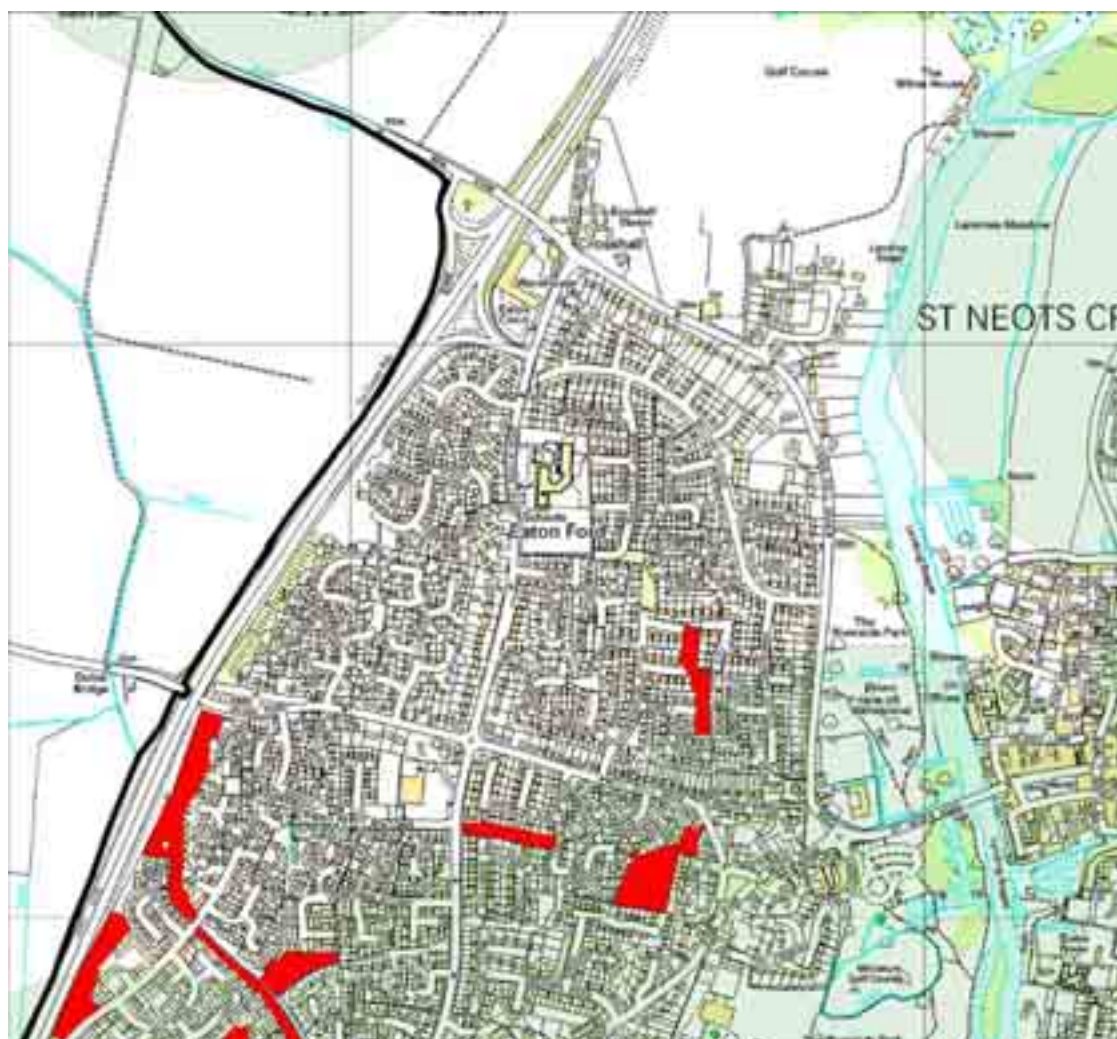
**Market Town**

6.39 Map 6.4 illustrates that there are some residents living within the market towns of St Neots that are outside of the recommended catchments. These areas are illustrated in more detail in maps 6.5 and 6.6 below.

**Map 6.4 – overview of provision in St Neots**



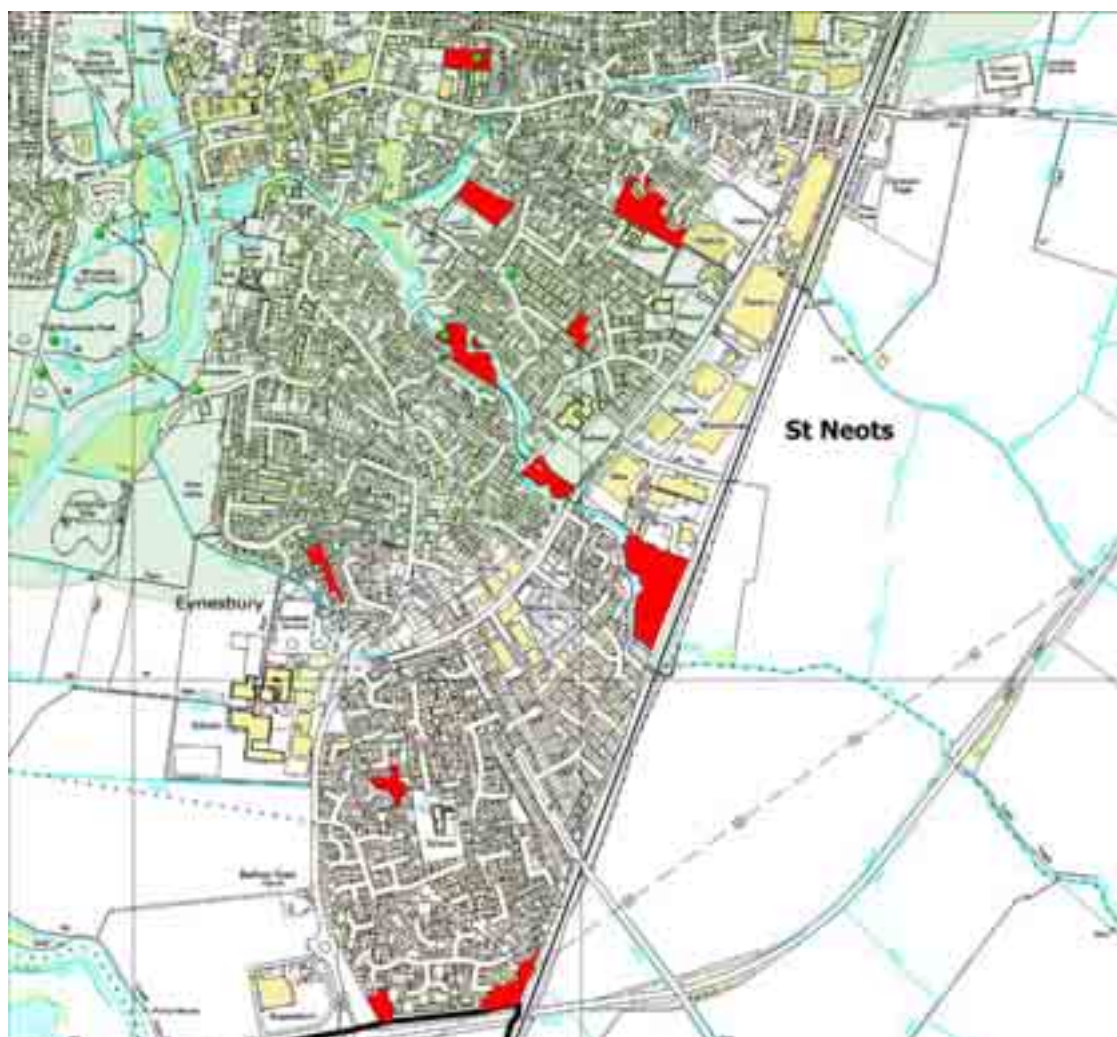
**Map 6.5 – area A in St Neots – outside of the recommended catchment.**



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- 6.40 As can be seen on Map 6.5 above, there is a large residential area outside of the catchment area for provision for children and young people in the North West area of St Neots. In light of planned population growth and low levels of provision for children and young people, new provision in this area should be considered. Development of a play facility on one or more of the amenity green space sites illustrated on the map is an important opportunity.
- 6.41 The remaining area of St Neots market town outside of the catchment area is illustrated on map 6.6 overleaf. Again, similar opportunities regarding the development of existing amenity green space sites to provide formal play facilities are illustrated.

**Map 6.6 – area B – deficiency of provision in St Neots**



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- 6.42 Again, close analysis of provision in the South of St Neots highlights some sites with overlapping catchments. This presents the opportunity for rationalisation and relocation of provision in areas where there is unmet demand.

**Key centres**

- 6.43 Little Paxton is identified as a key centre in the core strategy. Analysis of play facilities in this area indicate that Little Paxton Playing Fields is the only facility serving the village. Although this is one of the largest sites in the district with 18 pieces of equipment, some residents to the South of the village are out of the catchment area. Provision in Kimbolton appears to meet the needs of the majority of residents at present.

**Smaller settlements**

- 6.44 Residents living in smaller settlements in the St Neots area have varying access to local provision. While residents in Abbotsley, Great Gransden, Great Paxton all have



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facilities, there is no provision in other villages, particularly those located on the eastern side of the district.

### **St Ives area**

- 6.45 St Ives and the surrounding area is the least well provided for when provision measured against the quantity standard. The access to facilities in the market town is illustrated on map 6.7 below.

### **Market Town**

**Map 6.7 – provision for children and young people in St Ives.**

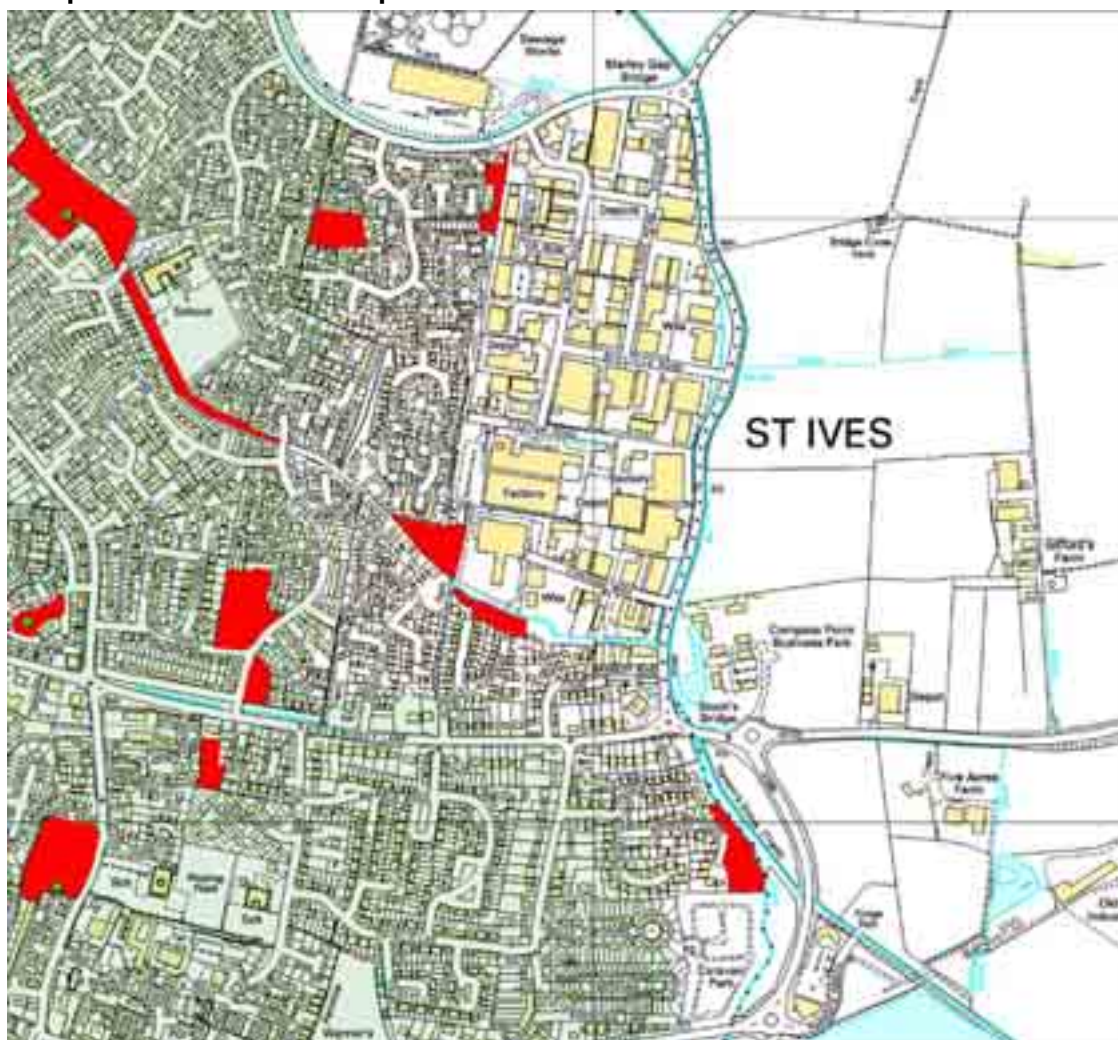


- 6.46 As may be expected given the quantitative deficiencies in St Ives and the surrounding area, there are some residents within the town that are unable to access facilities. These are primarily located in the Eastern and Southern tips of the town. Meeting these deficiencies will be important as part of developments already committed.
- 6.47 Provision in these areas is examined in more detail in map 6.8 overleaf where it can be seen that a large proportion of the area of apparent deficiency is industrial and hence little requirement for provision for children. Despite this, there are a number of residents living on the periphery of the industrial area without facilities. A number of

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recreational spaces are illustrated on the map which may provide an opportunity to provide equipped provision for children.

**Map 6.8 – deficiencies of provision in St Ives.**



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### **Key centres**

- 6.48 Fenstanton is identified as a key centre in the core strategy, and this settlement appears well served, with two well-located facilities serving the whole village.

### **Smaller settlements**

- 6.49 Smaller settlements in the St Ives area also have a good level of facility provision for children, with Hemingford Abbots, Hemingford Grey (albeit poor quality), Needingworth, Bluntisham and Earith all well served. This good distribution in small settlements suggests that unmet demand may be focused in the market town of St Ives.

### **Value assessment and recommendations.**

- 6.50 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.

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- 6.51 The distribution of facilities across Huntingdonshire is good, with the majority of residents within an appropriate catchment area of a facility. Given that there are some quantitative deficiencies and some Parish Councils identifying additional demand, sites considered to receive high levels of use should be protected.

<b>CYP1</b>	Protect all play areas which receive high levels of use as these sites are consequently of high value.
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- 6.52 This is particularly important in the smaller settlements, where in some cases, play facilities are the only informal type of open space. Settlements where play facilities are the only type of significant open space (taking into account only amenity sites over 0.2ha) include:

- Easton
- Ellington
- Great Raveley
- Hail Weston
- Leighton
- Offord Cluny
- Old Weston
- Southoe
- Spaldwick
- Tilbrook.

<b>CYP2</b>	Sites providing provision in areas otherwise devoid of provision should be protected and prioritised for any quality improvements required. Example locations of valuable sites are provided above for smaller settlements, but protection of such sites is critical across the settlement hierarchy.
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- 6.53 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 market towns and key centres should be investigated.

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<b>CYP3</b>	Address deficiencies in provision in market towns and key centres. Any new sites should adhere to minimum size criteria and quality visions. This is detailed further in section 12, planning overview. Deficiencies highlighted include:	
	Market Towns	Huntingdon (North East) St Neots (North West) St Neots (South East) St Ives (East)
	Key Centres	Bury (North East) Buckden Brampton (South) Little Paxton Yaxley (North) Warboys (Centre and South) Somersham

- 6.54 Analysis of the current distribution of facilities in market towns and key centres highlights a number of overlapping catchments (illustrated on maps 6.1 to 6.8) where sites are serving similar residents. This may negatively impact on the usage of sites, and inflate revenue required to manage the facilities. Relocation of some facilities may ensure that provision meets demand more effectively. Overlapping catchments are particularly evident in Huntingdon, Ramsey and St Neots.

<b>CYP4</b>	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. Sites where this may be an issue have been outlined.
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- 6.55 In addition to ensuring the provision of open space in the market towns and key centres 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 12, planning overview.

<b>CYP5</b>	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.
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- 6.56 The recommended quantity standard suggests that provision of a play area in smaller settlements is only required where the population exceeds 1250 (the recommended standard is 0.8 play areas per 1000 people). Residents living in all settlements exceeding this population size should therefore have access to a local facility.

<b>CYP6</b>	Ensure residents living in all small settlements exceeding a population of 1250 have access to provision for children and young people.
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## SECTION 6 – PROVISION OF CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE

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6.57 Although the above application of the quantity standard can be used to determine the appropriateness or otherwise of provision for children and young people within a village, local demand (and availability / access to other facilities serving similar functions) should always be considered and in some instances, it may be considered appropriate to provide facilities.

6.58 Parish Councils consultation highlights dissatisfaction with the quantity of provision in 13 areas where there are currently no facilities for children and young people. This suggests that councillors may have identified local demand that warrants further investigation. Areas for consideration (where there are no facilities and quantity of provision was rated 'very poor' include:

- Pidley
- Covington
- Holme\*
- Stibbington
- Abbots Ripton\*
- Yelling
- Glatton
- Hamerton\*
- Kings Ripton
- Woodhurst\*
- Elton\*
- Barham
- Ramsey St Marys\*.

6.59 In those areas marked with an asterisk, there are amenity green space sites over 2ha which may provide the opportunity to formalise provision for children and young people.

<b>CYP7</b>	<p>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.</p> <p>Where possible, any new provision should be developed in consultation with local residents.</p>
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6.60 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 and local community. There are 24 settlements over 30 dwellings that do not contain either provision for children and young people or amenity space at the current time. The need for this provision should be influenced by local need and village character.

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



<b>CYP8</b>	Protect sites of high quality. Site assessments indicate that 45 sites across the district are currently of good quality.
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- 6.62 Where sites are considered to be poor, 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 is of limited value and this may signify that the site is inappropriately located or surplus to requirements for the function it is currently trying to fill. The play area at Hemingford Grey is a good example of this, as this was advised to be unsafe and as a consequence has little usage.

<b>CYP9</b>	Monitor usage at poor quality sites. Where usage is low, consider the appropriateness of the facility. Where use 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.
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- 6.63 The delivery of provision for children and young people has a key role to play in improving the health and physical activity of young people and children both nationally, regionally and locally in Huntingdonshire.

<b>CYP10</b>	The findings of this study should dovetail with the findings of the play strategy that is under production, 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 be developed.
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### **Summary**

- 6.64 Although Huntingdonshire 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.
- 6.65 Consultation highlights an overall perception of insufficient facilities particularly for children and young people. These perceptions are localised. The size of facilities is relatively consistent across the district although the average size of provision in Huntingdon and Yaxley is smaller than in other areas.
- 6.66 Although the quality of provision is perceived to be good on 45 sites, misuse, vandalism and graffiti are perceived to be the main quality issues, although again the perception of the overall quality of facilities varies across the district. This issue is supported by site visits, where in some areas over 50% of sites suffer from vandalism. Despite problems of vandalism and graffiti, maintenance is good.
- 6.67 Although application of the quantity standards highlights district wide deficiencies (with the exception of Huntingdon and Godmanchester) the geographical distribution of facilities is good although there are localised accessibility deficiencies evident in some market towns and key centres for growth. There are also indications of demand for facilities in some smaller settlements.

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- 6.68 Priorities for future provision in all areas and the value of existing sites are discussed. It is also important to consider the provision for children and young people in the context of amenity green space sites.

### Outdoor sports facilities

#### Definition

- 7.1 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.
- 7.2 This section considers outdoor sports facilities as a whole as per the guidance set out in PPG17 and the companion guide. The supply and demand of pitches is assessed in section 10 using the Playing Pitch Methodology endorsed by Sport England and outlined in “Towards A Level Playing Field” (2002). This provides a detailed position statement of the specific levels of undersupply in football, cricket, tennis and hockey.

#### Strategic context and consultation

##### *Strategic context*

- 7.3 A playing pitch strategy was conducted simultaneously to the open spaces study. The findings of this are shown in Section 8 and provide more detail on provision of playing pitches for football, cricket, rugby and hockey.
- 7.4 As shown in Section 3, there are several national documents that refer to the importance of sport and sports facilities to achieving a number of government objectives. These documents are reviewed fully in Section 3 and include:
- The Game Plan (2002)
  - DfES: Learning through PE and Sport (2003)
  - Choosing Health: Making healthy choices easier (2004).
- 7.5 Outdoor sports facilities are also integral to many regional documents for the East of England, reinforcing the importance of the provision of sports facilities both locally and nationally. Specific references to outdoor sports facilities include:
- Regional Planning Guidance 6: Regional Planning Guidance for East Anglia to 2016 has two key policies related to provision of (outdoor) sports facilities:
    - Policy 64: local authorities, in consultation with local community groups should set out clear priorities for the provision of community sport and recreation facilities in order to make the most effective use of funding
    - Policy 65: development plans should include policies designed to meet the needs for sport and recreation in locations that minimise the need for travel and are not detrimental to the environment.
  - The Draft East of England Plan, A Regional Spatial Strategy for the East of England also has two key policies related to provision of (outdoor) sports facilities:
    - Policy C2: Regionally or nationally significant sport, leisure and recreation facilities will be supported in locations where proposals meet a number of predefined criteria

## **SECTION 7 – OUTDOOR SPORTS FACILITIES**

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- Policy C4: In preparing plans, local authorities will liaise with Sport England and local community groups to determine the best locations for appropriate facilities.

### **Consultation and background**

- 7.6 Consultation specific to outdoor sports facilities highlights some meaningful statistics and provides a justification for setting local standards against local needs. Specific consultation relating to pitch provision can be found in the playing pitch strategy.
- 7.7 25.7% of respondents indicated that they visited outdoor sports facilities more than once a month, while 24% visited less than once a month and 50.3% of respondents did not use outdoor sports facilities.
- 7.8 Overall, the most common travel method for visiting outdoor sports facilities by walking (50.1%), followed by car 38.8%. Although the most expected form of travel to outdoor sports facilities was walking, the actual predominant travel pattern by those using outdoor sports facilities most frequently was via car (63%). The most frequent travel time to the facility was between five and ten minutes (37%), followed by between 11 and 14 minutes (29%). This indicates that people are willing to travel to reach their chosen facility. This was influenced by the overall type of facility, with more people expecting to drive to synthetic pitches.
- 7.9 The sports development team run a significant number of programmes targeting under represented groups in addition to providing many activities for youths. With the aim of ensuring that more people are active in future years, it is likely that these programmes and schedules will result in increased participation in future years and a subsequent increase in the demand for outdoor sports facilities.
- 7.10 Consultation highlights that there is a relatively even distribution of outdoor sports facilities across the district, with a large proportion owned and managed by Parish Councils. Comments regarding quantity of provision were made at Ramsey, where there was felt by residents to be a deficiency of football pitches and recreation areas in general; and at St Ives where there was felt to be a shortage of 'ball playing areas'. Also, some residents at St Neots wished to see the outdoor swimming pool re-opened, although other residents were against this idea.
- 7.11 There are a number of proactive clubs across the district and participation in junior sport is increasing. Substantial increases in participation in female pitch sports are also evident and are likely to continue into the foreseeable future.
- 7.12 The majority of use of the outdoor sports facilities within Huntingdonshire District is by formal clubs, and there is relatively little casual use of pitches. The three Council owned and managed venues are operating close to capacity and there is high demand for pitches in some areas. The demand for mini pitches is also increasing. Despite the popularity of Council owned football pitches, there are no publicly owned cricket pitches. Although cricket pitches used to be provided by the Council, the focus on play at clubs meant that there was limited use of these facilities.
- 7.13 Provision of tennis and bowls within Huntingdonshire District is predominantly focused around the club structure, with most facilities in club ownership or leased to clubs. There is little evidence of demand for casual use.
- 7.14 Work by the sports development team to provide sporting opportunities for disabled groups has been very successful, and following the running of an indoor / outdoor

## SECTION 7 – OUTDOOR SPORTS FACILITIES

festival including football, cricket, bowls, archery and netball teams have now been set up and participation is increasing. St Ives Outdoor Centre is now 95% DDA compliant.

- 7.15 Consultation suggests that access to training facilities is a key issue, with only limited slots available at synthetic pitches for clubs wishing to train midweek. There are few floodlit training areas and teams struggle to access facilities between the peak hours of 6 and 9pm, particularly at the leisure centres where there is high demand for facilities. This issue will be returned to in the playing pitch strategy in the following section.

### Current provision

- 7.16 The provision of formal sports facilities across Huntingdonshire is summarised in table 7.1 below:

**Table 7.1 – Quantity of formal sports facilities**

Analysis Area	Quantity of Provision	Provision per 1000 population	Variation in Provision
St Neots	79.74 hectares (78.00 excluding schools)	2.09	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pitches</li> <li>• Bowls</li> <li>• Tennis</li> <li>• Synthetic pitch</li> </ul>
Huntingdon and Godmanchester	57.09 hectares (56.97 excluding schools)	1.41	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bowls</li> <li>• Pitches</li> <li>• Tennis</li> <li>• Synthetic pitch</li> </ul>
St Ives	49.57 hectares (45.99 excluding schools)	1.61	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pitches</li> <li>• Bowls</li> <li>• Synthetic pitch</li> </ul>
Ramsey	39.13 hectares (37.64 excluding schools)	1.96	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pitches</li> <li>• Bowls</li> <li>• Tennis</li> </ul>
Yaxley and Sawtry	25.66 hectares (20.79 excluding schools)	0.92	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pitches</li> <li>• Bowls</li> <li>• Golf</li> </ul>

## SECTION 7 – OUTDOOR SPORTS FACILITIES

7.17 Key issues arising include:

- there is a good spread of outdoor sports facility provision across the district, particularly in St Neots and Ramsey where levels per 1000 population are highest
- the contribution that school facilities make to the overall level of provision is clear, providing 11.8 hectares of sports provision
- with the exception of the Yaxley and Sawtry geographical area where there is less than 1 hectare per 1000, provision is relatively consistent
- the range of facilities in each area is good, with most areas containing a variety of pitches, bowling greens and tennis courts.

7.18 Key issues arising from consultations regarding the overall quantity of sports provision in Huntingdonshire include:

- there are mixed views regarding the overall quantity of provision in Huntingdonshire, with similar proportions feeling the quantity of provision was about right to the proportion who felt provision was not enough. This is likely to be reflective of the vast array of facilities that the outdoor sports facilities typology covers. Further analysis of the household survey response suggests that perceived shortfalls particularly relate to the provision of tennis and synthetic pitches. Table 7.2 below outlines this in more detail.

**Table 7.2 Provision of outdoor sports facilities in the district**

Typology	More than enough	About right	Not enough	No opinion
Grass pitches	4.9	52.6	17.5	25.0
Synthetic turf pitches	1.5	24.1	25.0	49.4
Tennis courts	1.2	30.4	35.4	32.9
Bowling greens	1.7	30.2	20.3	47.8

7.19 Perceptions of clubs who use outdoor sports facilities differed from the overall public perception slightly, as 77% felt that number and availability of pitches met the demand within the district. Responses from Parish Councils were less definitive, although there was a general consensus that there are insufficient provision of mini soccer pitches and enough cricket pitches. This perception is proved true in the application of the playing pitch methodology, detailed in section 8.

**Table 7.3 - quality of outdoor sports facilities in Huntingdonshire**

<b>Analysis Area</b>	<b>Site Quality</b>	<b>Key Issues</b>
St Neots	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 45% good</li> <li>• 9% poor</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• only two sites considered poorly maintained while 50% were considered good</li> <li>• less than 20% considered to have surface damage</li> <li>• some parking issues</li> <li>• one site poor in terms of perceived personal safety</li> <li>• 15 sites have no access for people with disabilities</li> </ul>
Huntingdon and Godmanchester	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 45% considered to be good</li> <li>• 10% poor</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 55% considered good in terms of maintenance</li> <li>• 55% have litter problems, 26% vandalism problems</li> <li>• almost 50% of sites considered to have some damage to the surface</li> <li>• parking is good, with only 30% having either inadequate or no parking</li> <li>• 33% have no changing facilities</li> </ul>
St Ives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 56% good. Only one site considered to be poor</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• only 1 site considered to be poor maintenance, 63% rated as good</li> <li>• 41% considered to have problems with litter</li> <li>• 37% had inadequate parking and 3 further sites had no parking</li> <li>• all sites perceived to be good in terms of personal safety except for one</li> </ul>
Ramsey	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 63% average and 19% poor</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 41% considered to have good maintenance</li> <li>• over half sites have problems with litter, although only one site has lots. Limited problems with dog fouling</li> <li>• only one changing pavilion considered to be good</li> <li>• access to 5 sites is poor for people with disabilities</li> </ul>
Yaxley and Sawtry	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 57% of sites perceived to be average</li> <li>• 13% poor</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• good maintenance, with only one site considered to be poor</li> <li>• some litter problems, with 47% of sites considered to have litter problems. Vandalism on 3 sites and dog problems on two sites</li> <li>• 37% of sites have inadequate parking and 20% have no parking</li> <li>• 9 sites contain adjacent training pitches</li> </ul>

7.20 Key issues arising include from the assessment of outdoor sports facilities include:

## SECTION 7 – OUTDOOR SPORTS FACILITIES

- overall the quality of provision is good, and only 13 sites are considered to be poor
- maintenance is also good in all areas, with the poorest quality maintenance in Ramsey, although even in Ramsey, 40% of sites were well maintained. Maintenance and quality of sites is particularly good in St Ives.
- key issues across the district include litter (particularly in Huntingdon and Godmanchester) and some degree of vandalism and graffiti
- parking facilities and changing provision are problematic at some sites.

7.21 Consultations conclude that:

- there is a range of opinion regarding the general quality of outdoor sports facilities in the district with a tendency towards positive assessment in terms of quality, with 33% of household survey respondents stating that facilities are good and less than 15% deeming them to be poor
- cleanliness, parking and lighting were perceived to be particularly important at outdoor sports facilities. Despite the focus on cleanliness, similar to other sites, vandalism, graffiti and litter were the main issues experienced.
- ancillary facilities are also perceived to be important and there is an overall positive perception from users. This is highlighted below.

**Table 7.4 Ancillary facility quality ratings from sports teams**

Ancillary facility quality factor	Mean score	Modal score
Maintenance	3.47	4
Car parking	3.77	4
Cycle parking	2.43	5
Toilets	3.4	4
Changing accommodation	3.4	4
Disabled access	3.3	5
Sense of personal safety	4.1	5

7.22 Despite the perception of consultees that the quality of provision is good overall, drop in sessions and other consultations highlight that the facilities are of significantly varying quality, particularly in terms of the presence of adequate ancillary accommodation. The issue of suitable ancillary accommodation has taken on a greater significance for teams playing at Priory Park. Comments regarding pitch provision made during consultations include:

- football pitch at Bury is owned by the local community and is of an excellent standard



## SECTION 7 – OUTDOOR SPORTS FACILITIES

- Slepe Hall Playing Fields is a very good site maintained by St Ives Town Council
- Yaxley Recreation Ground is a well used site and has been recently improved through provision of new equipment. However there is the perception amongst residents of drug and alcohol use on site, leading to antisocial behaviour problems.
- Middleton Road Recreation Ground in Yaxley is a good site and is well used, particularly by footballers. There are ongoing issues with the pavilion at this site.

### Setting provision standards

- 7.23 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.
- 7.24 A full assessment of local needs both borough wide and within each area has been undertaken for Huntingdonshire, 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.
- 7.25 A summary of the key messages emerging from the analysis of existing provision and local need is provided at the end of this section.
- 7.26 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 overleaf.

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

Existing level of provision	Recommended standard
250.19 ha (1.60 per 1000 population)	1.61ha per 1000 popn
Justification	
There was a mixed response across sub-types – however the emphasis is on level of provision being about right. Biggest deficiency seems to be in terms of synthetic pitches, which should be strategically located across the district. The standard has been set just above current provision to prove flexibility to address deficiencies in sub-types of open space. <b>Standard set for broad planning need only – application for surpluses and deficiencies would be meaningless, but refer to Playing Pitch Strategy work.</b>	

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### Accessibility standard (see appendix J)

<b>Recommended standard</b>
<p>15 minute walk time - (720 metres). 15 minute walk time for grass pitches and tennis courts (720 metres)</p> <p>15 minute drive for STP's and bowling greens</p>
<b>Justification</b>
<p>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.</p> <p>The emphasis for STP's and Bowling Greens was on driving to the facility and the 75% threshold for them is 15 minute drive time. Therefore the standard set for STP's and Bowling Greens is 15 minute drive time. For pitches and tennis courts, a walking time has been set, reflective of the 75% threshold level.</p> <p>Further detail on the adequacy of pitch provision both in terms of quantity and distribution will be provided as part of the playing pitch strategy playing pitch methodology calculations.</p>

### Quality standard (see appendix I)

<b>Recommended standard</b>
<p><b><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 mis-use of sites.”</i></b></p>
<b>Justification</b>
<p>The key identified issues with existing sites are vandalism and graffiti, litter problems, dog fouling and mis-use of sites which are reflected within the vision. Other issues raised are also reflected such as the need for ancillary accommodation such as parking and changing facilities. The quality vision also incorporates best practice guidance on provision of level and well-drained surfaces, with although rarely mentioned through consultation is crucial to the provision of usable, high quality sites.</p> <p>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 mis-use of sites. Community safety is also incorporated to reflect NPFA design guidelines. Quantitative issues may also be addressed through improved quality of pitches which increases the importance of meeting the quality vision.</p>

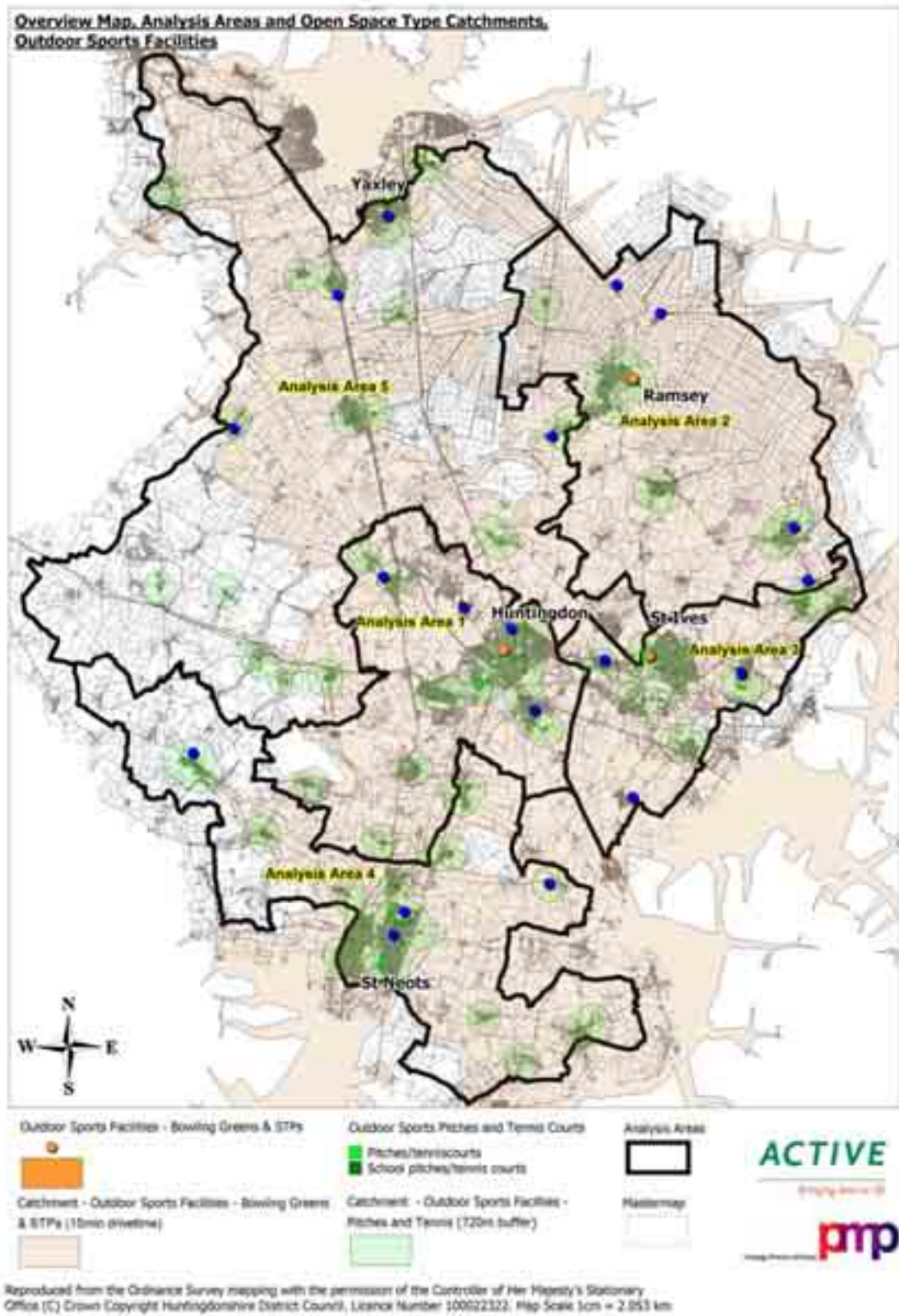
- 7.27 As can be seen in section 8, the application of the playing pitch strategy suggests that of the overall recommended standard for outdoor sports facilities of 1.61 hectares per 1000, 0.81 should be publicly accessible playing fields.

### **Applying provision standards – identifying geographical areas**

- 7.28 In order to identify geographical areas of importance and those areas with required local needs we apply both the quantity and accessibility standards together. The quantity standards identify quantitative surplus and deficiencies and the accessibility standards will help to determine where those deficiencies are of high importance. For sports facilities, it is more important to apply the accessibility catchments, as the quantitative standards are set mainly for planning need and used to assess the required level of new sports provision resulting from housing development.
- 7.29 The playing pitch strategy will consider the quantitative supply of pitches in more detail, the geographical distribution and the adequacy of overall supply of pitches to meet demand. The application of the accessibility standard provides an overview of sports provision in the area as a whole and provides an indication of where facilities are lacking.
- 7.30 Map 7.1 overleaf illustrates the spatial distribution of outdoor sports facilities across Huntingdonshire. School sites are coloured in dark green. Sites providing informal sports facilities (mixed sites) are marked as blue dots. These complement the provision of outdoor sports facilities and can be particularly important in the rural areas.
- 7.31 It can be seen that the distribution of facilities across the district is good, with the majority of residents able to access sports facilities of some kind. As illustrated in table 7.1, the range of facilities provided in each geographical area is also good, with all areas containing pitch provision, bowling greens and tennis courts. In some areas, particularly the smaller settlements, local facilities may also function as informal recreation spaces.
- 7.32 As consultation highlights that people are willing to travel further to bowling greens and synthetic pitches, a drive time standard has been recommended for these facilities. These attract residents from a wider geographical area and local provision is not expected. As can be seen on the map overleaf, almost all residents in the district have access to synthetic pitches or bowling greens. The current distribution of facilities would suggest that any new synthetic pitch is developed in the west or south of the district, to ensure that the travel time for residents currently required to travel further will be reduced.
- 7.33 Access to facilities expected to be provided locally is discussed overleaf.

**SECTION 7 – OUTDOOR SPORTS FACILITIES**

**Map 7.1 – provision of outdoor sports facilities in Huntingdonshire District.**



### **Ramsey**

- 7.34 As can be seen in map 7.1, all residents within the Ramsey geographical area have access to some sports facilities and there are 9 facilities in the market town. In addition, local facilities are well distributed across the key centres and Ramsey the market town, with all residents in Ramsey, Warboys and Somersham able to access both local and district outdoor sports facilities. Somersham is particularly well served with five facilities in total.

### **Yaxley**

- 7.35 As with provision in Ramsey geographical area, the majority of residents in the Yaxley and Sawtry area have access to facilities, with five facilities in each area. Residents in both key centres are able to access local facilities and synthetic pitches and bowling greens. Residents in Yaxley may also choose to access facilities in Southern Peterborough. Despite the good level of provision in the key centres, application of the quantity standards suggests that additional provision may be required in this area.
- 7.36 Residents in almost all smaller settlements are able to access outdoor sports facilities with the exception of Winwick and Hamerton. These villages are located on the edge of Huntingdonshire District near East Northamptonshire and hence may use sports facilities within the neighbouring authority.
- 7.37 Residents in the southern area of the Yaxley and Sawtry area based around Kings Ripton also do not have access to facilities. There is no open space provision of any type within this settlement although residents are in close proximity to Huntingdon where there is a range of facilities available.

### **St Neots**

- 7.38 Again distribution across St Neots geographical area is good, with almost all residents able to access some type of outdoor sports facility. This is reflected by the application of the quantity standard, which suggests that provision is above the minimum standard.
- 7.39 Provision of outdoor sports facilities in St Neots Town is good with all residents able to access a local facility as well as larger sites. There are also two mixed sites providing informal sports facilities in the area. Despite the apparent high level of provision, many of these facilities are located at schools. It is therefore important to ensure community access outside school hours to these facilities.
- 7.40 Residents in the key centre of Kimbolton are also able to access outdoor sports facilities, indicating a good level of provision. Much of this is focused at schools, highlighting the importance of negotiating community access where possible.
- 7.41 The majority of residents in Little Paxton are also able to access outdoor sports facilities.
- 7.42 There are few residents living in smaller settlements outside the catchment area of any facility. Only residents living in smaller settlements in the western areas of St Neots are unable to access sites. These villages include Covington and Tilbrook. There is no open space of any type in Covington.

## **SECTION 7 – OUTDOOR SPORTS FACILITIES**

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### **St Ives**

- 7.43 Like other areas, all residents in St Ives geographical area are able to access outdoor sports facilities of some description.
- 7.44 Provision in the market town is good and all residents are able to access local and larger sites. The synthetic pitch facility at St Ivo Leisure Centre is also in close proximity to these residents.
- 7.45 While there are numerous sports facilities in Fenstanton and all residents are able to access these facilities it is evident that all sites are located in the north and western areas of the town and residents living at the other end of the town must travel further to reach facilities. It will be important that this distribution of outdoor sports facilities is taken into account should significant expansion of the town occur.
- 7.46 Residents in the majority of smaller settlements have access to outdoor sports facilities with the exception of Hilton, where there is a visible lack of provision. Despite this, the presence of a mixed site indicates that there is some element of informal provision within the town.

### **Huntingdon and Godmanchester**

- 7.47 Although all residents living within the Huntingdon and Godmanchester area are able to access some type of outdoor sports facility, this is perhaps the area where there are the highest number of residents outside of the catchment for more local sports facilities such as pitches and tennis courts.
- 7.48 This is reflected through the application of the quantity standard, which suggests that there may be additional demand for outdoor sports provision in this area. The Huntingdon and Godmanchester area has the highest concentration of pitches in the district.
- 7.49 Within the market town, although there is a synthetic pitch and high numbers of outdoor sports facilities, some residents living in the eastern and western edges of the town are outside of the appropriate catchment for pitches and tennis courts. This suggests that many of the outdoor sports facilities in the market town have overlapping catchments and there may be demand for additional provision.
- 7.50 Provision in the key centres is good with most residents able to access local facilities. Provision in Godmanchester serves all residents, and there is a mixed site in the centre of the town that provides further opportunities for informal sport and recreation.
- 7.51 There are only two sites located in Brampton, one of which is the infants school and is inaccessible. As a result, there are some residents outside of the catchment for more local sports facilities. This should be monitored in light of the projected growth agenda. Provision in Buckden is well distributed at the current time.
- 7.52 Smaller settlements located in the northern areas of the district are less well provided for in terms of local sports facilities and there is a scattering of residents outside of the catchment, concentrated in Little Stukeley. At the current time, these residents will need to travel to reach pitch and tennis court amenities. The football pitch in Southoe has a key role to play in provision in this area and was considered to be poor.

## SECTION 7 – OUTDOOR SPORTS FACILITIES

### Value assessment and recommendations

- 7.53 As is evident from the geographical assessment, provision of outdoor sports facilities in the district is good overall. 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. This is returned to in the playing pitch strategy.

OSF 1	All OSF sites should be afforded protection within the Local Development Framework. This is discussed further in the planning implementation section.
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- 7.54 Outdoor sports provision is particularly valuable in some settlements where it is the only type of open space in the area.

OSF 2	<p>Some outdoor sports facilities are the only 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. Sites of particular importance are located in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Brington</li><li>• Farcet</li></ul>
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- 7.55 Facilities which are the only outdoor sports facilities in a village are also of particular importance to the local community and should be protected. Although for the majority of small settlements it may only be reasonable to expect one facility, in 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. The playing pitch strategy highlights sites where demand from sporting teams dictates that provision should be secured for formal community use.

OSF3	<p>Schools which serve unique catchment areas and hence provide an important element of provision should be secured for community use. Locations where the school site is the only element of formal sports provision include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Brington</li><li>• Earith</li><li>• Folksworth</li></ul>
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- 7.56 Although the provision of outdoor sports facilities is good, as highlighted in the geographical areas analysis there remain some deficiencies and areas to be monitored in light of the growth agenda.

## SECTION 7 – OUTDOOR SPORTS FACILITIES

OSF4	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. The playing pitch strategy application should be used to inform specific demand for pitch sports. Areas where deficiencies should be further investigated include:	
	Market Towns	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Huntingdon (East and West)</li> </ul>
	Key Centres	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fenstanton (East)</li> <li>• Little Paxton (North)</li> <li>• Brampton (South)</li> </ul>
	Smaller Settlements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Little Stukeley</li> <li>• Hilton</li> <li>• Winwick</li> </ul>

- 7.57 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 sports facilities typology can disguise localised demand and facility specific needs.
- 7.58 The playing pitch strategy identifies potential demand for an additional synthetic pitch facility for football training and competitive hockey. Any new provision of this type should be considered taking into account the application of quantity and quality standards.
- 7.59 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 Huntingdonshire is high, the quality of outdoor sports provision is good, with few sites scoring poorly.



## SECTION 7 – OUTDOOR SPORTS FACILITIES

OSF5	Investigate sites of poor quality to determine the most appropriate improvements to ensure that usage and value to the local community is maintained. Key sites for attention include:	
	Market Towns	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stukeley Meadows Primary School (Huntingdon)</li> <li>• Town Hall Pitch (Ramsey)</li> <li>• Longsands College – St Neots</li> </ul>
	Key Centres	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adam Lyons Recreation Field (Warboys)</li> <li>• Fenstanton sports facility</li> </ul>
	Smaller Settlements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Great Stukeley Sports Facility</li> <li>• Southoe Football Pitch</li> <li>• Broughton sports facility</li> <li>• Colne Sports facility</li> <li>• Ashbeach – Ramsey St Marys</li> <li>• Abbotsley Sports Pitch</li> <li>• Hail Weston New Town Sports Area</li> <li>• Thornhill Estates archery fields – Offords</li> <li>• Yelling Cricket Club</li> </ul>

### Summary

- 7.60 There is a variety of outdoor sports facilities in Huntingdonshire including pitches, bowling greens, tennis courts and synthetic pitches. In total provision equates to 1.60 hectares that on the whole is well dispersed across the district.
- 7.61 As a result of the wide variety of outdoor sports facilities, the recommended quantity standard is set for broad planning need only. The application of the playing pitch methodology provides further detail on the supply and demand for pitches in the area.
- 7.62 Consultation highlights different expectations between the different types of sports facilities, indicating that people are willing to travel further to synthetic pitches and bowling greens, but expect pitches and tennis courts to be local.
- 7.63 Analysis of these accessibility standards highlights few areas where residents are unable to access any facilities and provision is well distributed across the market towns and key centres. There are few smaller settlements without any provision and in some areas, the outdoor sports facilities are particularly valuable as they are the only open space provision in the district.

## **SECTION 7 – OUTDOOR SPORTS FACILITIES**

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- 7.64 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.
- 7.65 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.

### Playing pitch strategy

#### Introduction

- 8.1 The key areas of this part of the study included:
- analysing the current level of pitch provision within the District
  - assisting the Council in meeting the requirements for playing pitches in accordance with the methodology developed by Sport England in conjunction with the Central Council for Physical Recreation (CCPR)
  - providing information for decision-making and future development proposals.
- 8.2 The application of the playing pitch methodology provides more detail regarding the provision of pitches and builds on the analysis set out in section 7 of this report. An electronic toolkit has also been provided to the Council enabling ongoing updating of data in addition to scenario testing to take into account future changes, including demographic changes, increases in participation and development of new pitch facilities.
- 8.3 The Playing Pitch Methodology (PPM) covers voluntary participation in competitive pitch sports by adults and young people. Therefore this section (8) is primarily concerned with, and will apply the PPM calculations to the following sports (these will be referred to as 'pitch sports' in the body of the report):
- association football (football)
  - rugby
  - cricket
  - hockey.
- 8.4 This section presents the key findings arising from pitch specific survey work and consultation, highlighting areas of concern and opportunity. It is important to note that, in terms of the PPM, the strategy discusses the provision of playing pitches (ie the playing surface, safety margins and the wider area for repositioning the pitch within the playing field) and not playing fields nor open spaces (which include grass or other areas which are not used for sport). This is an important distinction because some of the areas surrounding pitches are not used for sport but are important in terms of open space. Calculations set out in this section may therefore differ from figures quoted in section 7 of this study.
- 8.5 This strategy covers the following key areas:
- the current picture – a review of current participation trends and playing pitch and provision in England for pitch sports and outdoor sports, at national and local levels
  - methodology – a summary of the research process
  - supply and demand – an overview of the playing pitch facilities and pitch sport activity in Huntingdonshire
  - an application of Sport England's PPM

- key actions, recommendations and priorities for the future based on development of the main issues arising from the supply and demand analysis.

### ***The Playing Pitch Methodology***

- 8.6 Our process follows the methodology set out in ‘Towards a Level Playing Field: A manual for the production of a playing pitch strategy’.
- 8.7 The aim of the PPM is to determine the number of pitches required for each activity based on demand in an actual or predicted set of circumstances. The essential difference between the methodology and previous approaches based on national standards is that, instead of using land area per head of population as the basic unit, it measures demand (at peak times) in terms of teams requiring pitches and then compares this with the pitches available, thus enabling a tangible measure of the adequacy of existing supply.
- 8.8 The particular advantage of this methodology is that it is related precisely to the local situation, and the very task of collating and analysing the information highlights problems and issues from which policy options and solutions can be explored.
- 8.9 In line with this methodology, this strategy only applies the PPM to pitch provision for football, rugby, hockey and cricket.
- 8.10 The success of the PPM outlined above depends largely on obtaining as accurate a tally as possible of the number of teams and pitches. To achieve this, a full audit of pitches, users and providers within the District boundary was conducted. Questionnaires (see Appendix C) were sent to:
- all known football, cricket, rugby and hockey clubs (identified in governing body and county association handbooks, league handbooks, pitch booking records, websites, local press, telephone directories, or local knowledge)
  - all known parish councils, schools and colleges and other providers of pitches.

## **Supply and demand of playing pitches**

### **Pitch stock**

- 8.11 Overall, the research methods outlined identified 237 playing pitches in the District. This figure includes all known public, private, school and other pitches whether they are in secured public use or not. The full audit of pitches can be seen in Appendix D. They comprise:
- 88 adult football pitches
  - 54 junior football pitches
  - 14 mini soccer pitches
  - 43 cricket pitches
  - 7 adult rugby pitches
  - 7 junior rugby pitches
  - 1 junior rugby league pitch
  - 7 adult grass hockey pitches

## SECTION 8 – PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY

- 19 synthetic turf pitches.

### Adult pitches

- 8.12 Of these pitches, 164 (68%) are full-size adult football, rugby, cricket, hockey and synthetic turf pitches. This relates to circa one pitch for every 725 adults in the district. As an illustration, the best figure we have encountered is 1:365 in Kennett in Wiltshire and the worst is 1:2,637 in Newham. Provision in Huntingdonshire is similar to that in Lichfield, another District Council. Given that the national average is 1:989, Huntingdonshire District has a better than average number of adult pitches per adult member of the population.
- 8.13 Table 8.1 set of a selection of previous results from studies that PMP has undertaken for illustration purposes.

**Table 8.1 - Ratio of adult pitches per 1,000 adults**

Local Authority	Ratio (Pitches: adults)
Kennett	1: 365
Bath and North East Somerset	1: 574
Colchester	1:655
Elmbridge	1:681
Canterbury	1:720
Maidstone	1:723
Huntingdonshire District	<b>1:725</b>
District	1:743
North Wiltshire	1: 804
<b>England</b>	<b>1: 989</b>
St. Helens	1: 1,050
Portsmouth	1: 1,100
Worcester	1:1,125
Torbay	1: 1,313

- 8.14 The ratio for Huntingdonshire has also been compared with the national averages for each sport (Table 8.2 below) taken from the Sport England database. The comparison shows that Huntingdonshire District has a good number of football, cricket and hockey pitches for formal adult use in comparison to the national average. The supply of rugby pitches is low in comparison to the national average (almost half as many pitches per adult member of population).

**Table 8.2 – Ratio of Pitches to Adult**

Sport	Huntingdonshire District (pitches: adults)	England (pitches: adults)
Football	1:1,351	1: 1,840
Cricket	1:2,765	1: 4,243
Hockey (including STPs)	1:4,573	1: 8,271
Rugby	1:16,986	1: 8,968

**Community pitches**

- 8.15 In line with the updated documentation ‘*Towards a Level Playing Field: A Manual for the Production of a Playing Pitch Strategy*’ our definition of community pitches is those pitches with ‘secured community use’, recognising that this has a considerable bearing upon the value of facilities both individually and collectively to the community at large.
- 8.16 In practice this definition embraces:
- all local authority and parish council facilities
  - any school facilities where they are subject to formal dual/community use agreements between the school/education authority and the Council
  - any other institutional facilities which are available to the public as a result of formal dual/community agreements
  - any facilities owned, used or maintained by clubs/private individuals, which as a matter of policy or practice are available for use by large sections of the public through membership of a club or admission fee. In either case the cost of use must be reasonable and affordable for the majority of the community.
- 8.17 Of the 237 pitches identified, 168 (71%) are secured for the local community. These comprise:
- 76 adult football pitches
  - 26 junior football pitches
  - 6 mini football pitches
  - 34 cricket pitches
  - 6 adult rugby pitches
  - 3 junior rugby pitches
  - 2 adult grass hockey pitches
  - 15 synthetic turf pitches.
- 8.18 Table 8.3 shows how pitches secured for community use in Huntingdonshire compares to other local authorities in the country.

**Table 8.3 - Pitches with secured community use**

Local Authority	% of pitches secured for community use
Huntingdonshire District Council	71%
South Somerset Borough Council	69%
Maidstone Borough Council	61%
Elmbridge Borough Council	60%
Canterbury City Council	50%
Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead	33.2%

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- 8.19 Table 8.3 shows that the proportion of pitches secured for community pitches in Huntingdonshire district is very high in comparison with other local authorities for which data is available.

### Quality of pitch and ancillary facilities

#### *User feedback*

- 8.20 As stated in the Playing Pitch Strategy Towards a Level Playing Field, pitch quality is a key issue. Perceived quality of pitches (and ancillary facilities) is almost as important as actual quality as it can heavily influence the pattern of play. Perceived quality of pitches has been looked at from a user perspective as well as a detailed pitch quality inspection (completed by the Council in 2005).
- 8.21 All sports clubs playing on pitches in Huntingdonshire were asked about their perceptions of pitch quality by postal questionnaire. League secretaries were also telephoned and asked only for basic quantitative information, although many provided additional qualitative feedback verbally, which has been incorporated into the analysis below. Comments and figures discussed below and overleaf are therefore based primarily on questionnaire returns only. This analysis should inform future discussions on pitch improvements and should only be treated as a starting point.

#### *Football clubs*

- 8.22 34 football clubs replied to the initial Council survey and a further 19 to the survey administered by PMP in 2006.

<b>Football – survey returns</b>	
<i>Value for money</i>	77% of respondents to the PMP survey described the value for money at pitches around the district as acceptable or good with the remaining 23% describing value for money as poor.
<i>Pitch availability</i>	72% of respondents to the Council survey felt that there was sufficient number and availability number and availability of pitches to meet demand.
<i>General quality</i>	Clubs responding to surveys gave ratings for a number of different factors, such as surface, slope and evenness of pitch, length of grass and ancillary facilities. 68% of respondents to the PMP survey indicated that overall quality of their pitch was average with the remainder split between good quality and poor. The pitch quality factor most frequently scoring good was pitch availability whilst the factor most frequently scoring poor was pitch being free from litter. The highest scoring factor from the initial Council survey was the slope of the pitch.
<i>Trends in pitch quality</i>	Respondents to the PMP survey indicated whether they felt the quality of their pitch was improving or deteriorating each year. 37% of football clubs felt that their pitch was deteriorating year on year, and 42% felt that their pitch was not deteriorating.

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<i>Ancillary accommodation</i>	There is a split in opinion regarding the quality of changing accommodation with 32% suggesting it is good and 21% suggesting it is poor. Worst rated for ancillary accommodation and access was disabled access rated poor by 32% of clubs responding. Car parking and a sense of personal safety were cited as the best non-pitch related features of the site from the Council administered survey.
<i>Pitch capacity</i>	Respondents to the PMP survey mostly (63%) felt that their main pitch could accommodate one match each week. 26% felt that their main pitch could accommodate matches twice per week.
<i>Best pitches</i>	Priory Park, Millfields, Memorial Fields (Brampton) and Alconbury FC were identified as the best pitches in the district by respondents to the Council administered survey. Ramsey Town FC, Sapley Park and Catworth Recreation Ground were mentioned by more than one responding football team as being one of the best three pitches in the district from the PMP survey.
<i>Worst pitches</i>	Jubilee Park, Buckden Village Hall and Banks Field (Eynesbury) were identified as the worst pitches in the district by respondents to the Council administered survey. Priory Park and Riverside Park (Huntingdon) were both mentioned by more than one respondent to the PMP survey as being one of the worst pitches in the district.

### **Cricket clubs**

- 8.23 16 clubs responded to the Council administered survey and a further three cricket clubs responded to the PMP sports club survey.

<b>Cricket – survey returns</b>	
<i>Value for money</i>	Only three cricket clubs responded to the PMP survey. Of these, two indicated that value for money was good and one club indicated it was acceptable.
<i>General quality</i>	The highest rated pitch quality factors of cricket clubs responding to the Council survey were the slope of the pitch and the evenness of the pitch. The highest rated factors related to the site where the pitch was located were car parking, toilets and a sense of personal safety.
<i>Pitch availability</i>	88% of clubs responding to the Council survey felt that there was sufficient number and availability of pitches to meet demand.
<i>Trends in pitch quality</i>	Since only three cricket clubs responded to the PMP survey, it was not possible to determine overall opinion of clubs on trends in their pitch quality. None of the three clubs mentioned significant changes occurring in their pitch quality.



## SECTION 8 – PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY

<i>Ancillary accommodation</i>	From the Council administered survey, the highest rated factors related to the site where the pitch was located were car parking, toilets and a sense of personal safety.
<i>Best pitches</i>	The original Council administered survey identified that St Ivo Outdoor Centre and Upwood Cricket Club were good pitches in the district.
<i>Worst pitches</i>	The Council survey revealed that respondents felt that Brampton Memorial Fields, Hilton Cricket Club and Buckden Cricket Club were the worst pitches in the district.

### ***Hockey clubs***

8.24 A total of three hockey clubs in the district responded to either the Council survey or the subsequent PMP survey. These clubs were:

- St Ives Hockey Club
- St Neots Hockey Club
- Sawtry Ladies Hockey Club

8.25 Key findings from these clubs' responses to the two surveys were:

- these clubs identified a lack of sufficient, quality provision of pitches in the district
- lack of external funding was identified by both St Ives Hockey Club and St Neots Hockey Club as a major problem for the club
- all three clubs felt that their membership was increasing each year
- all three clubs felt that the quality of their main pitch was deteriorating each year.

### ***Rugby Union Clubs***

8.26 Three rugby union clubs were identified by the playing pitch model:

- St Ives Rugby Club
- St Neots Rugby Club
- Huntingdon Rugby Club.

8.27 None of these clubs responded to either the original Council survey or the PMP survey. As a result of this, all these clubs were telephoned in order to be given the opportunity to comment on provision of rugby pitches within the district.

### ***Rugby League Clubs***

8.28 Only one rugby league club, St Ives Roosters, exists in the district. This club has only one male adult team who play on a pitch at St Ives Rugby club.

### **Site visits – an overview**

- 8.29 In addition to the above responding surveys, the quality of pitches in Huntingdonshire was ascertained through site visits which were undertaken by the Council during 2004. An assessment matrix (Appendix C) was used to assess the overall site and the quality of the pitches and ancillary facilities where available.
- 8.30 Site visits were conducted at all outdoor sports facilities but the analysis below refers specifically to the playing pitches that the Playing Pitch Model is concerned with, namely football, rugby (union and league), hockey (grass and artificial surface) and cricket.
- 8.31 119 playing pitch sites were visited and assessed against a series of criteria including:
- site maintenance
  - evidence of dog fouling
  - evidence of glass, litter
  - evidence of vandalism/graffiti
  - evidence of damage to surface
  - quality of signage
  - car parking
  - cycle parking
  - toilet provision
  - changing accommodation
  - disabled access
  - sense of personal safety
  - grass cover
  - quality of surface
  - slope of pitch/outfield
  - evenness of pitch/cricket field
  - quality of equipment
  - line marking
  - training area.
- 8.32 Sites were also given an overall quality rating of poor, average or good:
- 42 sites scored good

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- 16 sites scored poor
  - 57 sites scored average.
- 8.33 This suggests that on the whole, the quality of formal sports facilities in Huntingdonshire is above average. This is supported by club consultation outlined earlier, where satisfaction and perception of value for money is above average.
- 8.34 The findings of the site visits are revisited later in this section, when considering the carrying capacity of pitches in the district.

### Demand from sports clubs in Huntingdonshire district

- 8.35 Table 8.4 below illustrates the number of football, cricket, hockey and rugby league teams playing on pitches in Huntingdonshire. These include adult, junior and mini teams.

**Table 8.4 - Sports clubs using playing pitches in Huntingdonshire**

	Football	Cricket	Rugby Union	Rugby League	Hockey	TOTAL
Total number of clubs	77	21	3	1	3	<b>104</b>
Total number of teams	281	105	43	1	27	<b>457</b>
Number of adult teams	83	51	11	1	23	<b>168</b>
Number of junior teams	110	54	32	0	5	<b>201</b>
Number of mini-teams	88	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	<b>88</b>

- 8.36 The revised playing pitch methodology, *Towards A Level Playing Field*, assumes that clubs are based in the ward where they play their home matches and does not take into consideration where players live or where they would prefer to play their matches. The key issues emerging from this analysis include:
- the predominant sport in the district is football. More than half of the total number of teams are football. These teams are evenly split between adult, junior and mini teams.
  - cricket teams represent 20% of the total teams in the district. There is a relatively even split of adult and junior teams in the district.
  - three rugby union clubs make up the 43 teams within the district
  - three hockey clubs account for the 27 hockey teams in the district. The majority of these hockey teams are adult age.

## **SECTION 8 – PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY**

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- there is only one rugby league club in the district which has only one adult male team.
- 8.37 Of the clubs responding to the questionnaire, 19 had experienced increasing membership over the last five years, four clubs membership had remained static and two club's membership had decreased. These trends suggest that participation might continue to increase over the coming seasons.
- 8.38 The three most frequently cited problems experienced by clubs responding to the survey were:
- lack of external funding
  - lack of internal funding
  - lack of voluntary assistance (committee members, coaches etc).
- 8.39 The most commonly given future plans for clubs responding to the survey were:
- increase members
  - expand facilities
  - refurbish existing facilities
  - relocate to different premises.

### **The Playing Pitch Methodology**

- 8.40 The Playing Pitch Methodology (PPM) comprises eight stages. Stages one to six involve numerical calculations, whilst stages seven and eight develop issues and solutions. The methodology is employed to analyse the adequacy of current provision and to assess possible future situations, in order that latent and future demand (identified through Team Generation Rates), and the problems with quality, use and capacity of existing pitches can be taken into account.
- 8.41 It is important to note that the methodology deals with each sport individually with a specific set of calculations because, despite some superficial similarities, they exhibit very different patterns of play.
- 8.42 We have further subdivided the analysis of some sports to deal with specific sub-sectors of activity, e.g. junior play or adult play, so that important aspects are not submerged in aggregated data. Football and rugby have been subdivided in this manner, whereas no differentiation has been made between junior and senior cricket and junior and senior hockey teams as they play on pitches of similar dimensions.
- 8.43 The summary of the findings for the district as a whole gives an indication of the shortfall/surplus of pitches for each sport.
- 8.44 The 1991 playing pitch methodology assumed that all pitches are of sufficient standard to sustain two games per week. The 2002 playing pitch methodology suggests that the quality of a pitch should be taken into account. This information can be gained from three sources:
- club surveys
  - site visits (conducted by Council in 2005)

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- consultation with key officers and stakeholders.
- 8.45 Using all of this information, it is possible to make a judgement on the carrying capacity of the District's pitches. It is important to recognise that there is no formula for factors such as weather conditions, age of users, quality of players, etc. However, through local knowledge, user surveys, interviews and an analysis of usage patterns from the previous season it is possible to consider the capacity of each pitch.
- 8.46 To assign a carrying capacity to each pitch, we have used the estimate provided by clubs for their own pitches and utilised the information gathered from surveys and consultation to estimate the carrying capacity for other pitches. Where we have received no specific comments regarding a pitch, the following assumptions have been made:
- carrying capacity weighting of 0.5 for all school facilities as they are not likely to be able to take as many matches as a public facility
  - parish council/local authority pitches have a carrying capacity weighting of one (ie they can carry two matches per week - a standard assumption).
- 8.47 STP sites around the district have been assigned a carrying capacity of two (four hockey games a week) as an artificial surface is able to withstand a far greater degree of usage.
- 8.48 The pitch site assessments conducted allowed for the lowest quality pitches to be identified and their carrying capacity reduced suitably within the playing pitch model. These pitches scored 'poor' for the quality of the site overall as well as scoring poorly on more than one specific pitch quality factor, namely:
- grass cover
  - quality of surface
  - slope of pitch or outfield
  - evenness of pitch
  - quality of equipment.
- 8.49 Those pitches whose carrying capacity was reduced based on the findings for these pitch quality factors were:
- Broughton junior football pitches
  - Colne junior pitches
  - Ellington Recreation Ground
  - Hail Weston pitch
  - Stukeley Meadows Primary School
  - Ramsey Town Hall pitch
  - Ashbeach pitch, Ramsey St Marys

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- Southoe football pitch
- Longsands College
- Upwood playing fields
- Adams Lyons Recreation Field – Warboys
- Yaxley Recreation Ground
- Yelling Cricket Club.

### PPM calculations

- 8.50 Table 8.5 below demonstrates the calculations undertaken to determine the surplus/deficit of pitches in the District. It should be noted that the calculated surplus/deficit is based upon the peak load of games to be played at a specific time during the week (i.e. am or pm on a day). However, for some sports such as mini-soccer it may be possible to spread the games during the course of a Sunday morning and therefore not require the maximum amount of pitches. The calculations take into account the capacity of pitches (determined by quality) available. Improvements to pitch quality would increase the number of games a pitch is able to sustain (capacity) and would therefore reduce any shortfalls.
- 8.51 The PPM calculations can inform the basis of Local Development Framework policies with the objective of resolving deficits and oversupplies of pitches.

**Table 8.5 - PPM calculations for the District (2006)**

		Football	Mini-soccer	Cricket	Rugby Union	Rugby League	Hockey
STAGE ONE		Adult games	83	51	11	1	23
Identifying teams	Junior teams	110	88	54	32	0	5
	Adult games	0.5	0.5	0.7	0.5	0.5	0.5
STAGE TWO		Adult games	0.5	0.7	0.5	0.5	0.5
Calculate home games per week	Junior teams	0.5	0.5	0.7	0.5	0.5	0.5
	Adult games	42	44	36	6	1	12
STAGE THREE (S1x S2)		Adult games	42	36	6	1	12
Assessing total home games per week	Junior teams	55	44	38	16	0	3
	Adult games	0%	100%	0%	0%	0%	0%
STAGE FOUR		Junior teams	10%	0%	0%	0%	0%
		Adult games	80%	0%	45%	100%	100%
Establish temporal demand for pitches		Junior teams	0%	0%	50%	0%	0%
		Adult games	20%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Sunday AM		Junior teams	60%	0%	0%	100%	100%
		Adult games	0%	0%	50%	0%	0%
Sunday PM		Junior teams	30%	0%	50%	0%	0%
		Adult games	0%	0%	50%	0%	0%

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	Mid week 1- Specify day	Adult games	0%	0%	5%	0%	0%	0%	
		Junior teams	0%		0%	0%	0%	0%	
	Mid week 2- Specify day	Adult games	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	
		Junior teams	0%		0%	0%	0%	0%	
STAGE FIVE (S3 x S4)  Defining pitches used each day	Saturday AM	Adult games	0	44	0	0	0	0	
		Junior teams	6		0	0	0	0	
	Saturday PM	Adult games	33	0	16	6	1	12	
		Junior teams	0		19	0	0	0	
	Sunday AM	Adult games	8	0	0	0	0	0	
		Junior teams	33		0	16	0	3	
	Sunday PM	Adult games	0	0	18	0	0	0	
		Junior teams	17		19	0	0	0	
	Mid week 1- Specify day	Adult games	0	0	2	0	0	0	
		Junior teams	0		0	0	0	0	
	Mid week 2- Specify day	Adult games	0	0	0	0	0	0	
		Junior teams	0		0	0	0	0	
	STAGE SIX		Adult games	58	3	26	2	0	19
	Establishing pitches currently available		Junior teams	20			1	0	
STAGE SEVEN (S6-S5)  Identifying shortfall (-) and surplus (+)	Saturday AM	Adult games	57.5	-41.5	26.0	1.5	0.0	18.5	
		Junior teams	14.0			1.0	0.0		
	Saturday PM	Adult games	24.3	2.5	-9.0	-4.0	-0.5	7.0	
		Junior teams	19.5			1.0	0.0		
	Sunday AM	Adult games	49.2	2.5	26.0	1.5	0.0	16.0	
		Junior teams	-13.5			-15.0	0.0		
	Sunday PM	Adult games	57.5	2.5	-10.8	1.5	0.0	18.5	
		Junior teams	3.0			1.0	0.0		
	Mid week 1- Specify day	Adult games	57.5	2.5	24.2	1.5	0.0	18.5	
		Junior teams	19.5			1.0	0.0		
	Mid week 2- Specify day	Adult games	57.5	2.5	26.0	1.5	0.0	18.5	
		Junior teams	19.5			1.0	0.0		

### **Key issues**

8.52 Key issues arising at the District level from Table 8.5 are:

- there is an oversupply (24.3) of full size adult football pitches on the peak day across the District
- there is an undersupply of junior pitches (13.5) on the peak day (Sunday)
- there is an undersupply of (-41.5) mini-soccer pitches on the peak day (Saturday). This indicates that mini soccer teams are likely to be using adult / junior pitches.
- there is a slight shortfall of cricket pitches (-9.0) on the peak day (Sunday)
- there is an undersupply (-4.0) of adult rugby union pitches on the peak day (Saturday)
- there is an undersupply (-15.0) of junior rugby pitches on the peak day
- there is an oversupply of hockey pitches (7.0) on the peak day (Saturday).

8.53 The PPM can then be applied at ward level (see Table 8.6 below) showing the over and under supply compared to the current demand in each ward. However it should be strongly noted that ward boundaries are effectively an artificial barrier in so far as people naturally travel across boundaries to access pitches. Therefore an oversupply in one ward is likely to cater for the needs of a neighbouring ward that may have an undersupply. Nevertheless it is a useful way of displaying the data at a local level.



**Table 8.6 - Summary of PPM results by ward areas**

Ward name	Shortfall of adult football	Shortfall of junior football	Shortfall of Mini-soccer	Shortfall of cricket	Shortfall of adult rugby union	Shortfall of junior rugby union	Shortfall of adult rugby league	Shortfall of junior rugby league	Shortfall of hockey	Total pitches	Sub-area
Alconbury and The Stukeleys	0.6	-2.1	-1.0	-0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	-2.6	Hunts and Godmanchester
Huntingdon East	3.2	-3.3	-1.0	1.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.2	Hunts and Godmanchester
Huntingdon North	-0.2	-2.6	-2.5	0.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	-4.7	Hunts and Godmanchester
Huntingdon West	2.0	0.5	0.0	0.6	0.0	-5.0	0.0	0.0	8.5	6.6	Hunts and Godmanchester
Brampton	2.8	-1.8	-2.0	-0.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	-1.4	Hunts and Godmanchester
Buckden	0.1	-0.9	-2.5	-0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	-3.4	Hunts and Godmanchester
Godmanchester	1.8	1.2	-1.0	-0.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.6	Hunts and Godmanchester
Ramsey	4.7	0.5	-4.0	-0.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.8	Ramsey
Warboys and Bury	0.6	-1.5	-1.5	-1.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	-3.9	Ramsey
Somersham	-0.2	2.0	-1.0	1.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	2.1	Ramsey
The Herringfords	-0.6	-0.6	0.0	1.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	-0.3	St Ives
St Ives East	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	St Ives
St Ives South	2.2	-2.8	-5.5	0.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.5	-5.0	St Ives
St Ives West	0.0	0.0	0.0	-1.8	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	-1.8	St Ives
Fenstanton	-0.2	0.0	0.0	1.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.1	St Ives
Earith	3.0	-1.5	-4.0	0.3	-2.0	-4.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	-8.3	St Ives
Kimbolton and Staughton	1.1	0.0	-2.0	-0.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	-1.3	St Neots
Little Paxton	-0.4	-0.4	-1.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	-1.8	St Neots
Gransden and The Offords	2.0	-0.6	-1.0	-0.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	-0.1	St Neots
St Neots Eaton Ford	-0.8	-0.6	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	-1.4	St Neots
St Neots Eaton Socon	0.0	-0.3	-1.0	-1.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	-2.7	St Neots
St Neots Eynesbury	-2.4	-0.9	-0.5	0.0	-2.0	-6.0	0.0	0.0	-6.0	-17.8	St Neots
St Neots Priory Park	3.4	-3.6	-5.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	-5.7	St Neots
Elton and Folksworth	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.7	Yaxley and Sawtry
Yaxley and Farcot	-0.6	-1.8	-3.0	-0.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	-6.1	Yaxley and Sawtry
Stilton	0.0	7.0	0.0	0.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	2.0	9.7	Yaxley and Sawtry
Stilton	0.0	7.0	0.0	-0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	7.0	Yaxley and Sawtry
Sawtry	1.1	-1.5	-2.0	-1.8	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	2.0	-2.2	Yaxley and Sawtry
Upwood and The Raveleys	1.0	3.0	0.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	4.5	Yaxley and Sawtry
Ellington	0.1	-0.9	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	-0.8	Yaxley and Sawtry
<b>Total</b>	<b>24.3</b>	<b>-6.5</b>	<b>-41.5</b>	<b>-0.9</b>	<b>-4.0</b>	<b>-15.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>7.0</b>	<b>-36.7</b>	

8.54 Table 8.6 shows that there are specific over/undersupplies at ward level across the district. The ward displaying the greatest overall deficiency of pitches was St Neots Eynesbury (17.8 deficiency) and the ward showing greatest surplus was Stilton (9.7 surplus).

**Amalgamation of wards**

8.55 For pitch sports, there is an accepted need for players to travel to games. Therefore, analysis at ward level can misrepresent the real situation by not taking into account cross-boundary issues.

8.56 Table 8.7 overleaf shows the allocation of wards into analysis areas. These analysis areas reflect those used in the remainder of this report when considering open space provision.

**Table 8.7- Analysis areas**

<b>Analysis area</b>	<b>Wards</b>
Huntingdonshire and Godmanchester	Alconbury and Stukeleys, Huntingdon East, Huntingdon North, Huntingdon West, Brampton, Buckden, Godmanchester
Ramsey	Ramsey, Warboys and Bury, Somersham
St Ives	The Hemingfords, St Ives East, St Ives South, St Ives West, Fenstanton, Earith
St Neots	Kimbolton and Staughton, Little Paxton, Gransden and the Offords, St Neots Eaton Ford, St Neots Eaton Socon, St Neots Eynesbury, St Neots Priory Park,
Yaxley and Sawtry	Elton and Folksworth, Yaxley and Farcet, Stilton, Sawtry, Upwood and the Raveleys, Ellington

8.57 Since clubs/teams may travel to adjoining or nearby wards in order to play their home matches the findings of the study were also analysed at an analysis area level. These results are shown in Table 8.8 below.

**Table 8.8 - Summary of PPM result by analysis areas**

<b>Analysis-area name</b>	<b>Shortfall of adult football</b>	<b>Shortfall of junior football</b>	<b>Shortfall of Mini-soccer</b>	<b>Shortfall of cricket</b>	<b>Shortfall of adult rugby union</b>	<b>Shortfall of junior rugby union</b>	<b>Shortfall of adult rugby league</b>	<b>Shortfall of junior rugby league</b>	<b>Shortfall of hockey</b>	<b>Total pitches</b>
Hunts and Godmanchester	10.3	-9.0	-10.0	1.7	0.0	-5.0	0.0	0.0	8.5	-3.6
Ramsey	5.1	1.0	-6.5	-0.6	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	-1.0
St Ives	4.4	-4.9	-9.5	1.4	-2.0	-4.0	0.0	0.0	1.0	-13.6
St Neots	2.9	-6.4	-11.0	-2.3	-2.0	-6.0	0.0	0.0	-6.0	-30.8
Yaxley and Sawtry	1.6	12.8	-4.5	-1.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	4.0	12.7
	<b>24.3</b>	<b>-6.5</b>	<b>-41.5</b>	<b>-0.9</b>	<b>-4.0</b>	<b>-15.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>7.0</b>	

8.58 The key issues arising from Table 8.8 at an analysis level are:

- there is an overall oversupply of adult football pitches in all analysis areas

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- despite the surplus of adult football pitches, there are shortfalls of junior football pitches in three of the five analysis areas indicating that junior teams may also be using adult pitches
- there are significant shortfalls of mini soccer pitches across all of the analysis areas in the district, the most significant being in St Neots analysis area and St Ives. This indicates that there is a concentration of mini soccer in these areas.
- St Ives and St Neots analysis areas both show a small shortfall of adult rugby union pitches
- there are shortfalls of junior rugby pitches in three analysis areas (Huntingdon and Godmanchester, St Ives, and St Neots)
- the undersupply of hockey pitches is limited to St Neots analysis area. Huntingdon and Godmanchester; and Yaxley and Sawtry analysis areas both have surpluses of hockey pitches.

### Predicting the future

#### Team Generation Rates

- 8.59 Team Generation Rates (TGRs) indicate how many people in a specified age group are required to generate one team. TGRs are derived by dividing the appropriate population age band for the relevant sport (eg for adult football it is the 16-45 age group) by the number of teams playing that sport. Calculating TGRs enables fair comparison to be made between different areas where similar studies have been undertaken.
- 8.60 TGRs can be calculated for each of the individual disciplines, such as adult men's football, adult women's football, mini-soccer. Once these TGRs have been calculated, they can be brought together to form one TGR for each sport.
- 8.61 The TGRs for each sport in Huntingdonshire District are shown below and are compared to the national average based on Sport England database of Playing Pitch Strategy information as at March 2004 (supplied for this project).

**Table 8.9 - Football Team Generation Rates**

Age group	Huntingdonshire district TGR	National average
Senior male	404	1:314
Senior female	10,774	10,593
Junior male	64	1:71
Junior female	642	1:818
Mini-soccer	101	1:141
<b>Overall</b>	<b>461</b>	<b>239</b>

**Table 8.10 - Cricket Team Generation Rates**

<b>Age group</b>	<b>TGR</b>
Senior male	858
Senior female	13,736
Junior male	138
Junior female	7330
<b>Overall Huntingdonshire District</b>	<b>925</b>
<b>National average</b>	<b>761</b>

**Table 8.11 - Rugby Union Team Generation Rates**

<b>Age group</b>	<b>TGR</b>
Senior male	3,792
Senior female	0
Junior male	305
Junior female	0
<b>Overall Huntingdonshire District</b>	<b>2,714</b>
<b>National average</b>	<b>1,498</b>

**Table 8.12 - Hockey Team Generation Rates**

<b>Age group</b>	<b>TGR</b>
Senior male	2,486
Senior female	3,232
Junior male	2,673
Junior female	2,673
<b>Overall Huntingdonshire District</b>	<b>2,790</b>
<b>National average</b>	<b>2,567</b>

**What do these numbers mean?**

8.62 The following examples help clarify what TGRs mean:

1:100 → high TGR → relatively low latent (unmet) demand

1:1000 → low TGR → relatively high latent (unmet) demand

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- 8.63 These figures are only a guide and do not specify the sport or refer to local conditions. For example, the national popularity of football will mean that it will almost always have the lowest TGR. Equally, hockey usually has the highest. Therefore, it is more useful to compare Huntingdonshire district's TGRs with other areas.
- 8.64 From our previous work we have found that football TGRs range from 1:118 in Mid-Devon to 1:636 in Waltham Forest, with an England average of 1:239. This means that Huntingdonshire District has a relatively high latent demand for football compared to the other local authority areas. This may be reflective of the rural nature of the district, as it is more difficult to participate due to the dispersion of facilities.
- 8.65 For cricket, the TGRs have ranged from 1:212 in West Devon to 1:9,450 in Newham. The national average TGR for cricket is 1:761, making Huntingdonshire district's TGR of 1:925 lower than average. This would indicate that there could be some latent demand for cricket in the area.
- 8.66 For rugby union, TGRs have ranged from 1:495 in Mid-Devon to 1:6,615 in Newham. Huntingdonshire district's TGR is 1:2,714. In Huntingdonshire, there is a TGR of 1:2,714, indicating that there is potentially high latent demand for rugby union in the district.
- 8.67 For hockey, TGRs have ranged from 1:881 in Bath and North East Somerset to 1:9,890 in Rochdale. Huntingdonshire District's TGR is 1:2,790 which is slightly above the national average suggesting that there may be some latent demand.
- 8.68 These results suggest that Huntingdonshire District has a high latent demand for football, rugby union and cricket but that there is little latent demand for hockey. There may therefore be scope to increase participation in these sports across the district. Sports development initiatives underway may increase participation and raise awareness of these sports, increasing demand for pitch provision in future years.

### **Projections for 2021**

- 8.69 By applying TGRs to the population projections for 2021 we can project the theoretical number of teams that would be generated over the next few years. This can then be applied to the PPM model to forecast any future shortfall of pitches, assuming that no new pitches are provided in the interim.
- 8.70 Small increases in participation in football, cricket and rugby union (5%) have been factored into the model. This assumes that a combination of sports development initiatives, the growth of mini and junior sports (which may have a knock on impact to adult participation) and enhanced promotion of the health agenda and physical activity will have an impact on demand for pitch provision. These increases are therefore reflected in the figures for 2021.
- 8.71 The potential impact of the growth agenda (an expected increase of 5.8%) on the district is also taken into account.
- 8.72 As can be seen in table 8.13 overleaf, this increase in demand is reflected in the increased deficiencies in all the pitches across the district. As currently, the most severe deficiency in 2016 will be in the St Neots analysis area.

**Table 8.13 - PPM calculations by analysis area (2016)**

Sub-area name	Shortfall of adult football	Shortfall of junior football	Shortfall of Mini-soccer	Shortfall of cricket	Shortfall of adult rugby union	Shortfall of junior rugby union	Shortfall of adult rugby league	Shortfall of junior rugby league	Shortfall of hockey	Total pitches
Hunts and Godmanchester	9.3	-10.3	-10.6	-1.1	-0.2	-5.7	0.0	0.0	8.5	-10.1
Ramsey	4.6	0.7	-6.9	-1.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	-3.1
St Ives	3.3	-5.7	-10.0	-1.2	-2.2	-4.4	0.0	0.0	0.2	-20.0
St Neots	2.1	-7.2	-11.6	-5.9	-2.2	-6.7	0.0	0.0	-6.3	-37.9
Yaxley and Sawtry	1.3	5.3	-4.8	-5.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	4.0	0.7
	<b>20.6</b>	<b>-17.1</b>	<b>-44.0</b>	<b>-14.8</b>	<b>-4.6</b>	<b>-16.8</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>6.3</b>	

- 8.73 Also as is the current situation, the most severe pitch shortage is of mini soccer pitches. In 2021, there will be a shortage of these pitches in all of the analysis areas in the district.
- 8.74 The only two pitch types which will continue to have an overall surplus in 2021 are hockey pitches and adult football pitches.
- 8.75 It can be seen from the issues raised above that there can be key changes over a period of years (such as an increase in population and participation) that will change the demand for pitches. The capability to model ‘what if?’ scenarios ensures that a changing local context can always be accommodated and local policies changed to reflect this. The electronic database provided with the playing pitch strategy element of the work ensures that changes can be accounted for and supply and demand in the district can be reassessed.
- 8.76 This section has presented the modelling element of the Playing Pitch Strategy which considers both the quality and quantity of provision. The key conclusions for pitch sports arising from the application of the playing pitch methodology are set out in the paragraphs that follow. These conclusions are specific to pitch sport provision within the district and should complement and supplement those recommendations outlined within the outdoor sports analysis in the previous section.

### **Priorities for action and key recommendations**

- 8.77 Priorities and key recommendations for pitch provision in Huntingdonshire are considered under the following headings:
- protection of existing provision
  - identifying deficiencies

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- improving access to provision
- enhancing the quality of existing pitches
- further opportunities for improvement.

8.78 The principles behind each of the above elements is considered generally across the district and then specific issues within each of the analysis areas are highlighted and solutions to address the issues are discussed.

### **Protection of existing provision Local Development Framework Policies**

- 8.79 The identified deficiencies of certain pitch types (and pressures on the overall pitch stock in the district) emphasise the importance of protecting many of the existing areas of playing pitch land and open space in public, private and educational ownership as playing pitches are often under threat from other, non-sport, development.
- 8.80 Due to the current levels of demand and the pressures on pitches to cope with this demand, all known playing fields sites should be afforded protection within specific policies that benefit sport and physical activity in Huntingdonshire.
- 8.81 Policies R9/10 and R17 in the adopted Huntingdonshire Local Plan identifies the intention of the district to protect open spaces, sport and recreation facilities. This protectionist stance also feeds through into the April 2006 Core Strategy (policy G1) of the Local Development Framework. The application of the playing pitch methodology supports this protectionist stance.
- 8.82 Further comments regarding the specific nature of the policy are included within section 12, planning overview. The suggested addition to the policy wording to enable development on sites surplus to requirement may be of particular importance with regards pitch provision in future years in light of the changing demographics and potential subsequent reductions in demand for pitches.

<b>PPS 1</b>	All pitch sites should specifically be afforded protection within the Local Development Framework. Protection policies should link with policies for other open space typologies. This is discussed further in the planning implementation section.
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- 8.83 In light of the growth aspirations of the district, particularly in relation to the market towns and key centres for growth, a formal requirement for contributions towards new pitch provision (S106 agreements) should be set out in the LDF. The local standard outlined later in this section should be used to ascertain the level of input from developers specifically for pitches (as opposed to outdoor sports facilities in general). The results of the application of the playing pitch methodology should inform the most appropriate use for this money in pitch terms.

<b>PPS 2</b>	The Council should secure developer contributions to improve the quality of existing outdoor playing fields or alternative sporting provision in the District and provide new ones where a shortfall has been identified. Developers cannot be asked to make up existing deficiencies, only to contribute to those caused by or exacerbated by their development. This links with recommendations outlined in the planning implementation section.
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**Pitch issues – dealing with surpluses and deficiencies.**

- 8.84 Deficiencies in pitches arise when there is an absolute shortage and/or when existing pitch(es) cannot accommodate existing demand, particularly at peak periods. Application of the sports pitch methodology to the district as a whole disguises sport and location specific shortfalls and issues. The results of the playing pitch methodology calculations at sub area level indicate that there are locational deficiencies in pitch provision as well as some areas where pitch provision is currently above the minimum level of demand.
- 8.85 Opportunities for optimising pitch provision and addressing deficiencies include:
- redesignation of pitches
  - increasing access to pitches, particularly school sites
  - creation of new pitches.
- 8.86 It must be acknowledged that the recommendations for pitches are a minimum level of provision, based on a pragmatic approach to what may be feasible in the long-term and where the latent demand/pressure for additional pitches both now and in the future has been identified. Key recommendations for addressing pitch provision in each analysis area are set out in tables 8.14 – 8.18.
- 8.87 The principles behind the solutions proposed are outlined in detail in the paragraphs that follow.

***Improving access to school pitches***

- 8.88 Although the quantity of pitches in Huntingdonshire District secured for community use is high, there remain some pitches at school sites that are not dual use facilities at the present time.
- 8.89 Access to these facilities could provide a vital community resource, both in terms of access to open space (particularly in smaller settlements where there is limited provision) but more specifically through meeting the demand for pitch provision.
- 8.90 School facilities permitting community use maximise use of existing assets and such partnerships are attractive to public funding partners. School sites can also be used to address areas of deficiency and to provide training facilities. Developing facilities at school sites offers the opportunity to enhance school club links and to foster development of sports within the school environment at an early age.
- 8.91 Ensuring this open access policy and encouraging schools to permit community use may require genuine financial commitment from the Council to improve playing surfaces and capacity, provide or improve changing accommodation.

<b>PPS 3</b>	Investigate the option of securing additional school facilities for dual use. Schools in areas of deficiency of pitch provision should be prioritised. This links with recommendations in the outdoor sports facility section, which suggests securing community access to school sites that serve a unique catchment area.
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- 8.92 While community use of school pitches should be encouraged in order to maximise the use of assets, it must be acknowledged that school pitches are required to meet



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curricular demand during the week as well as sustaining community use at weekends. It is essential that they can effectively meet this role first, as their primary purpose, and therefore wear and tear on these sites should be minimised.

<b>PPS 4</b>	Where possible, any school pitches used for community use should be assigned for youth games to protect the site and ensure it is able to serve its primary purpose – curriculum use.
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8.93 The development of community use agreements will help to offset some of the unmet demand for junior and mini pitches, but perhaps more importantly, may offer the opportunity for teams to train, reducing pressures on match pitches.

8.94 In addition to making better use of corporate resources, the development of formal long term community use agreements will also help to:

- improve school club links
- develop extended school links
- maximise public assets
- aid junior progression and development routes.

8.95 Where community use agreements are negotiated it should be ensured that these facilities are accessible to community teams and that a clear booking system is in place. Where possible, prices should also be standardised. The inclusion of parish pitches and pitches owned by other providers would further improve the ease of access to pitches within the Huntingdonshire District.

<b>PPS 5</b>	Consider the inclusion of school pitches available to community within the existing pitch booking system.
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### Providing a minimum level of provision

8.96 While it is important to ensure that deficiencies are met for each sport and each pitch type, some degree of spare capacity is an integral part of playing pitch provision for the following reasons:

- to accommodate latent and future demand for existing pitch sport teams
- to enable the development of new clubs and teams
- for the development / expansion of new pitch sports (such as mini-soccer and 'tag' rugby)
- to accommodate backlogs and for rest and recovery periods.

8.97 The playing pitch methodology considers the minimum supply of pitches needed to meet demand. For the reasons highlighted above, it is important to ensure that a strategic reserve of facilities is maintained. Ideally, this should represent about 10% of demand and consideration of the maintenance of this strategic reserve should be taken into account when addressing deficiencies.

8.98 This strategic reserve is of increased importance in Huntingdonshire, given the rural nature of many of the communities and hence increased barriers to participation in

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terms of access to facilities. In many of the smaller settlements, the sports club or playing fields are in a focal point of community life and even if it is not used to maximum pitch capacity (two games per week) the pitch has an important role in enabling local players to participate in sport and providing them with home grounds.

<b>PPS 6</b>	Maintain a strategic reserve of pitches to accommodate backlogs and enable rest and recovery. Ideally this should be around 10% of demand.
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### Enhancement of existing provision

8.99 The overall quality of pitches and ancillary accommodation is important as it impacts not only on the quality of play, but also on the potential capacity of a pitch and hence numerical surpluses and deficiencies.

8.100 The majority of pitches within the District are good quality pitches and maintained to a high standard of play. Despite this, some sites were perceived not to be of sufficient quality to sustain two games per week. Site-specific enhancements have been highlighted in tables 8.14 to 8.18 that follow this section.

8.101 Deficiencies highlighted earlier can be addressed through improvements to the existing pitch stock (as this generates an increase in the capacity of pitches). Some of the key issues specific to the overall quality of pitches in Huntingdonshire include:

- there is a good baseline position from which to improve, with both user perception, consultation and site visits reinforcing this
- on the whole, the quality of pitches is good and there are only 17 sites considered to be poor
- the current provision of changing facilities is varied and there are many sites where facilities are not adequate to meet the needs of clubs. This may lead to issues accommodating female teams and problems for providing for junior teams alongside senior teams for child protection issues. This has already been raised at Priory Park.
- there is limited on site parking at some sites
- although pitch surface, evenness and slope is generally good on the whole, there are some sites where the surface is poor. These sites have been considered to have reduced capacity within the playing pitch methodology calculations.

8.102 Implementation of this playing pitch strategy should drive a programme of improvements that will simultaneously assist in meeting identified deficiencies. Improved facilities will drive increases in participation, improve access for all groups and enable higher participation levels to be maintained over a sustained period.

8.103 Any programme of improvements should bear in mind the following issues:

- the standard of play at the site (including league requirements)
- the intended capacity of the site (number of games and training sessions per week and level of informal use)

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- the need to encourage use by young people, women and other target groups through appropriate ancillary facilities
- facility specifications from National Governing Body (NGB) strategies.

<b>PPS 7</b>	<p>Identify a priority list of pitches for facility improvements driven from the priority pitches highlighted in tables 11.17 to 11.22.</p> <p>The Council should act as an enabler and support Parish Councils and voluntary clubs in the improvement of facilities where necessary.</p> <p>The programme of improvement should concentrate on pitches in areas of deficiency first and should look to target the achievement of the quality vision outlined for all outdoor sports facilities.</p>
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8.104 Access to all sections of the community to facilities is a key priority of the Council highlighted in the community strategy. Furthermore, the development of an accessibility strategy identifying where there are problems or concerns with access to services and devising ways to help local people get the services they need has been prioritised. Accessibility enhancements have been prioritised as one of the five key priorities by the Strategic Partnership Board.

8.105 The Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) of 1995 received additional powers in October 2004 when an additional phase came into force. The implications of this are considerable as all goods, services and facilities – whether charged for or provided free of charge – are covered by the legislation which requires providers to ensure that:

- people are not treated less favourably
- service providers must make reasonable adjustments for people with disabilities, such as providing extra help or making changes to the way they provide their services
- service providers may have to make other reasonable adjustments in relation to the physical features of their premises to overcome barriers to access.

The full Code of Practice is downloadable from <http://www.disability.gov.uk>.

<b>PPS 7</b>	<p>A full access audit should be undertaken ensuring that pitch facilities are accessible to all community groups. This should include an assessment of compliancy with DDA.</p>
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### Ensuring provision meets demand

8.106 As part of this study, we have looked at what could happen in the future, taking into account demographic and participation changes. The spreadsheet provided to the Council ensures that changes to both the pitch stock and the demand for those pitches can be modelled. The continual updating of this spreadsheet to reflect changes to provision and demand will be particularly important in the coming years in light of the proposed growth agenda and the current uncertainty as to the extent of the impact of this.

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<b>PPS 8</b>	Ensure the modelling spreadsheet is kept up to date to reflect the ongoing changes in population, housing developments and sports development initiatives in addition to improvements made to the pitch stock.
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8.107 Tables 8.14 to 8.18 overleaf examine the current issues for pitch provision in each of the analysis areas and propose solutions based on the principles outlined in the previous page. These solutions should be prioritised and turned into an action plan, driving continuous improvement of the pitch stock in Huntingdonshire.

<b>PPS 9</b>	Develop a specific action plan based on the issues lists highlighted in tables 11.17 to 11.22
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8.108 Potential sources of funding are outlined in section 11; Resourcing the Strategy. While the Council should act as the coordinator in ensuring that pitch provision meets the needs of the community, it is important to continue to work in partnership to ensure that effective delivery of sports provision in all areas of the district. Key partners include voluntary clubs, Parish Councils and National and Local Governing Bodies such as the Hunts FA.

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Table 8.14 - Playing pitch issues and solutions: Huntingdon and Godmanchester - QUANTITY	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Huntingdon and Godmanchester 29.60ha of playing pitch provision of which 21ha is secured for community use.</li> <li>➤ A 10% level of provision should be maintained for all sports pitches to allow for a strategic reserve for rest and recovery and for the realisation of latent demand</li> </ul>
<p>i)</p> <p>Adult (10)</p> <p>Junior (-9)</p> <p>Mini (-10)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ An oversupply of adult football pitches in this area indicates a potential need to convert adult pitches into smaller sized pitches alleviating the current deficiency of junior and mini pitches. Potential Adult single pitch sites in the analysis area include: Godmanchester Town Council Recreation Ground, Grafham Recreation Ground, Great Stukeley Playing Field, Perry Playing Field and Southoe Football Pitch.</li> <li>➤ Formalise the community use agreements at schools in the analysis area which do not currently have these agreements in place. Schools that could be considered for this action include: Brington Primary School, Buckden Primary School, Hartford Community College, St Ann’s Church of England Primary School and Huntingdon Junior School. By securing community use at these sites, an extra five junior pitches would be made available and two mini soccer pitches. This would go some way to alleviating the current deficiency.</li> <li>➤ Stukeley Meadows Primary School and Southoe Football Pitch were both identified through site assessments as having poor pitch quality. Improvements to these sites would allow for greater use of the sites by the community and in the case of Stukeley Meadows Primary School provide better facilities for curriculum use. Southoe Football pitch could be considered for disposal, conversion or alternatively leasing to a football club requiring more pitches for its junior teams.</li> <li>➤ New provision of junior and mini football pitches should be considered when none of these policies are effective at sufficiently increasing pitch provision in the analysis area. This could involve utilising other appropriate open space sites, perhaps those which are currently underused or of low quality.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Cricket</b></p> <p>(1.7)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ The current surplus of cricket pitches in the analysis area should be maintained in line with the recommended 10% level of strategic reserve.</li> <li>➤ St Peter’s School has two cricket pitches which are not currently used by the community. If community use at these sites could be established, this would provide the analysis area with a healthy surplus of cricket pitches. This surplus would be strategically important in terms of any expected increase in cricket participation or in terms of shortfalls in adjacent analysis areas.</li> <li>➤ Formalising the community use agreement at St Peter’s School would also provide a training facility, allowing better rest and recovery of other pitches in the analysis area. Forging links with the school in terms of school club links would also assist in recruiting more players</li> </ul>

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<p><b>Rugby</b></p> <p>Adult (0)</p> <p>Junior (-5.0)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ There is currently sufficient provision to meet the demand of adult rugby in this area. The model indicates that there is a shortfall in the supply of junior rugby pitches equivalent to five pitches. These pitches are needed for Huntingdon Rugby club who are based at Hinchingsbrooke School. Consultation reveals that some of older aged junior teams play matches on the adult pitches at Hinchingsbrooke School when these are available. Thus, the shortfall in pitches is somewhat less than is indicated by the model.</li> <li>➤ There is one junior rugby pitch at St Ann’s Primary School which is currently not secured for community use. Formalising a community use agreement at this site would increase the supply of junior rugby pitches and help to alleviate the current identified deficiency.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Hockey</b></p> <p>(4.5)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ There is currently an oversupply of four and a half grass hockey pitches in this area. The oversupply is due to the fact that there are currently no hockey teams based in the analysis area but there exists a pitch at Hinchingsbrooke School and also at St Peter’s Road Recreation Ground. The pitch at St Peter’s Road Recreation Ground is not suitable for competitive play as it is not synthetic.</li> <li>➤ The current, formal dual use agreement at Hinchingsbrooke School secures the full size all synthetic turf pitch for community use. This pitch can be booked for either football or hockey purposes and can accommodate both training and match play. Ongoing use of the site should be monitored to assess the level of demand and bookings for the pitch.</li> </ul>
<b>QUALITY – PITCH SPECIFIC ISSUES</b>	
<p>Stukeley Meadows Primary School</p>	<p>Assessment indicated that it was an overall poor site with particularly low assessment scores for the grass coverage, quality of surface, evenness of pitch and line markings. There may be an option to reallocate the pitch distribution at the site to maximise its use</p>
<p>Southoe Football Pitch</p>	<p>The slope of the pitch and the quality of the surface were found to be of low quality at this site. All other pitch related factors were assessed no better than average and this site was given an overall quality assessment of average. This site is the home ground of two adult football teams and as such it may be required to make improvements to this pitch in order to make it fit for competitive play.</p>

<b>Table 8.15 - Playing pitch issues and solutions: St Neots - QUANTITY</b>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ After Huntingdon and Godmanchester, St Neots and the surrounding area has the highest amount of pitch provision in terms of area. Despite this, only 36% of pitches are secured for community use – the lowest level in the district</li> <li>➤ Priory Park is a key strategic site in the area, providing the focus for football participation in the area.</li> <li>➤ A 10% level of provision should be maintained for all sports pitches to allow for a strategic reserve for rest and recovery and for the realisation of latent demand</li> </ul>
<p>ii)</p> <p>Adult (2.9)</p> <p>Junior (-6.4)</p> <p>Mini (-11)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ There is only a small surplus of adult football pitch provision in this area which should be maintained as a strategic reserve. Improvements to the adult pitch at Hail Weston would increase the capacity of adult football pitches in this area. Improvements to the changing and toilet accommodation and sites would also enhance the quality of provision in the area</li> <li>➤ As in Huntingdon, there are large deficiencies in junior football pitches. Due to the relatively small level of surplus adult football provision, consideration should be given to formalising use of appropriate school sites in the area. There are a number of schools which currently contain mini football pitches which should be considered including Priory Junior School, Crosshall Junior and Middle School and Winhills Primary School.</li> <li>➤ Provision of mini soccer pitches is also significantly below the required level, indicating that there is a lot of pressure on existing pitches to meet demand. There are four mini soccer pitches at Kimbolton School which if opened up for community access would help to offset unmet demand.</li> <li>➤ New provision of junior and mini football pitches should also be considered to ensure that demand is not suppressed by a lack of facilities. This could involve utilising other appropriate open space sites, perhaps those which are currently underused or of low quality.</li> </ul>

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<p><b>Cricket</b>  (-2.3)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ There is a small shortfall of cricket provision in the St Neots analysis area highlighting that there is pressure on existing cricket provision to cope with the level of demand. Yelling Cricket Club is currently considered to be of poor quality. Improvements to this site would increase the overall capacity to host matches in the area.</li> <li>➤ There are four cricket pitches at Kimbolton School which if secured for formal community use, would act as overspill for current cricket provision and offset the unmet demand. If this is not possible and there remains unmet demand, the feasibility of marking out a cricket pitch on Priory Hill Park during the summer months should be investigated. This may also enhance cricket development opportunities through the provision of informal facilities.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Rugby</b>  Adult (-2)  Junior (-6.0)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ As other pitch types in the St Neots area, there is pressure on pitches to meet the demand from rugby teams. St Neots RUFC is the largest club in the area and currently run 16 teams. In order to ensure that this level of play is sustainable, consideration should be given to the provision of overspill facilities. Both Longsands College and Overhills School have rugby pitches at the site and should be considered as an option to provide facilities for the rugby club. It should be ensured that demand is monitored on an ongoing basis to ensure that pitch provision does not suppress demand.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Hockey</b>  (-6)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ The high level of demand for the synthetic pitch in St Neots is evident through the undersupply of six pitches. This is further exacerbated by the demand for synthetic pitches from football teams. Provision of a new synthetic pitch in the district would displace this demand and reduce pressure on the pitch at St Neots. Demand should be monitored on an ongoing basis.</li> </ul>
<b>QUALITY – PITCH SPECIFIC ISSUES</b>	
Yelling Cricket Club	Considered to be a poor site overall, with no equipment and only average grass cover and line markings. The pitch is also moderately sloping. Inadequate parking.
Longsands College	Although the slope of the pitch and line markings were average, the overall quality of equipment was poor suggesting a need for replacement facilities
New Town Pitch – Hail Weston	Moderate slope and an uneven pitch. The quality of line marking and equipment was also considered to be poor
Parish Sports Ground (Kimbolton)	No changing facilities
Tilbrook Playing Fields	No changing facilities or toilets
New Town Playing Fields – Hail Weston	No changing facilities or toilets



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Table 8.16 - Playing pitch issues and solutions: St Ives - QUANTITY	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Provision in St Ives is lower than in Huntingdon and St Neots, with only 9ha available for community use. This equates to just 53% of the total provision.</li> <li>➤ The quality of pitch provision in St Ives is good, with no pitches considered unable to sustain two games per week. There is only one sports facility in Fenstanton considered to be of poor quality.</li> <li>➤ A 10% level of provision should be maintained for all sports pitches to allow for a strategic reserve for rest and recovery and for the realisation of latent demand</li> </ul>	
<p>iii)</p> <p>Adult (4.4)</p> <p>Junior (-4.9)</p> <p>Mini (-9.5)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ There is a surplus of adult football pitch provision in this area some of which should be maintained as a strategic reserve. The remainder may offer the opportunity to redesignate two pitches to mini or junior facilities facilities, offsetting unmet demand. St Ives Leisure Centre already contains two junior football pitches hence redesignation of two further adult pitches to junior pitches may be feasible. Resdesignation to mini pitches however may have more overall benefit for the overall provision as there are no schools with mini pitches.</li> <li>➤ In addition to redesignating adult football pitches to junior facilities, consideration should be given to securing pitches at school sites to offset the remaining unmet demand. Westfields and Eastfields Junior and Infants School contain a total of 5 junior pitches across the two sites.</li> <li>➤ There are no schools with mini football facilities within the area at the current time. New provision of mini football pitches should therefore be considered to ensure that demand is not suppressed by a lack of facilities. This could involve utilising other appropriate open space sites, perhaps those which are currently underused or of low quality.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Cricket</b></p> <p>(1.4)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ The small surplus of provision should be retained to allow for the rest and recovery of pitches.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Rugby</b></p> <p>Adult (-2)</p> <p>Junior (-4.0)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ As can be seen, there is pressure on pitches to meet the demand from rugby teams, particularly junior pitches. St Ives Rugby club run high numbers of teams and it may be that some overspill provision is required. Hemingford Primary School has a rugby union pitch at the present time. Securing this pitch for community access may reduce pressures on existing pitches.</li> </ul>

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<p><b>Hockey</b>  (-3.5)</p>	<p>➤ The high level of demand for the synthetic pitch in St Ives is evident through the undersupply of pitches. This is further exacerbated by the demand for synthetic pitches from football teams. Provision of a new synthetic pitch in the district would displace this demand and reduce pressure on the pitch at St Ivo Leisure Centre. Consultation suggests that programming at this site is always busy. Demand should be monitored on an ongoing basis.</p>
<b>QUALITY – PITCH SPECIFIC ISSUES</b>	
Milfields - Needingworth	There is evidence of significant damage to the surface of the pitch
Earith Primary School	Maintenance is poor
Fenstanton Sports provision	Evidence of dog fouling, glass / litter, vandalism and graffiti and inadequate parking.

<b>Table 8.17- Playing pitch issues and solutions: Ramsey - QUANTITY</b>	
<p>➤ The level of provision secured for the community in Ramsey is the lowest across all of the five geographical areas and is focused on football pitches. There is no rugby played in this area.</p> <p>➤ The quality of pitch provision in Ramsey is reasonable, although there are five sites considered to be of overall poor quality.</p> <p>➤ A 10% level of provision should be maintained for all sports pitches to allow for a strategic reserve for rest and recovery and for the realisation of latent demand</p>	
<p>iv)</p> <p>Adult (5.4)</p> <p>Junior (1)</p> <p>Mini (-6.5)</p>	<p>➤ The oversupply of adult football pitches offers the opportunity to ensure that there is a strategic reserve of pitches, allowing for the rest and recovery of other pitches in the area. Additionally, improvements to the capacity of Ramsey Town Hall pitch and Warboys Adam Lyons Recreation Ground would increase the level of provision. Some degree of space capacity is essential particularly in the rural area where distances between villages mean that sites are important, even if they do not operate at full capacity.</p> <p>➤ Both Broughton and Colne Playing Fields contain junior football pitches that are of poor quality. Improvements to the quality of these sites would increase the level of surplus provision and enable the rest and recovery of sites.</p> <p>➤ There are shortfalls of mini football provision in the area. This can be offset by the redesignation of some adult football pitches or redesignation of junior pitches following improvements to those sites currently operating below capacity. Alternatively, new mini soccer provision should be considered. This could be provided on areas of green space which are unused.</p>

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<b>Cricket</b> (-0.6)	This minimal under provision should be monitored to ensure that a lack of provision does not inhibit demand. Both Ramsey Community College and Ramsey St Marys Ashbeach School contain cricket facilities. If additional pitch provision is required, formal community use agreements should be developed at these sites.
<b>Rugby</b> Adult 0 Junior (0)	No demand at present – this should be monitored on an ongoing basis
<b>Hockey</b> 0)	Demand should be monitored on an ongoing basis
<b>QUALITY – PITCH SPECIFIC ISSUES</b>	
Colne Junior Playing Pitch	Sloping pitch with poor equipment. No toilets and poor signage. There is also no car parking
Broughton Junior Football Pitches	The site was considered to be poorly maintained with poor signage. There is no parking and there was evidence of damage to the surface.
Ramsey Town Hall Pitch	Slightly sloping pitch and although it is relatively even, the quality of equipment and line markings is poor.
Ashbeach Pitches – Ramsey St Marys	Uneven pitch with lots of damage to the surface. Inadequate cycle parking.
Adam Lyons Recreation Ground - Warboys	Some glass and litter evident with no parking or toilets. Poor quality equipment and line markings.

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**Table 8.18- Playing pitch issues and solutions: Yaxley and Sawtry - QUANTITY**

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Despite the lower population in this area, provision in Yaxley and Sawtry is the third highest in the district in terms of hectares secured for community use. 63% of the total provision is available at the current time. Some degree of space capacity is essential particularly in the rural area where distances between villages mean that sites are important, even if they do not operate at full capacity.</li> <li>➤ There are three pitch sites to be perceived of poor quality at the current time, specifically Yaxley Recreation Ground, Upwood Playing Fields and Ellington Recreation Ground.</li> <li>➤ A 10% level of provision should be maintained for all sports pitches to allow for a strategic reserve for rest and recovery and for the realisation of latent demand</li> </ul>	
<p>v)</p> <p>Adult (1.6)</p> <p>Junior (12.8)</p> <p>Mini (-4.5)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ The small oversupply of adult football pitches should be retained to allow for a strategic reserve and rest and recovery of pitches.</li> <li>➤ The large oversupply of junior football pitches offers the opportunity to redesignate sites to smaller sided pitches to meet minimum demand. Although an oversupply of 12.5 pitches exceeds the level required for strategic reserve, further investigation into the use of existing pitches should be undertaken prior to any decisions regarding change of use. The rural nature of the Yaxley and Sawtry area (and hence reduced public transport infrastructure) means that local facilities are of paramount importance to young people in the area.</li> <li>➤ Both Ellington Recreation Ground and Yaxley Recreation Ground contain mini football pitches that are currently of poor quality and hence reduced capacity. Improvements to these sites should be prioritised to reduce the shortfalls of pitches. Consideration should also be given to securing formal community access to Spaldwick County Primary School that contains a mini football pitch.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Cricket</b></p> <p>(-1.2)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ The small shortfall of 1 pitch should be monitored in order to understand whether there is demand for additional cricket provision. If required, consideration should be given to the conversion of one of the adult football pitches into a cricket field.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Rugby</b></p> <p>Adult 0</p> <p>Junior (0)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ No demand at present – this should be monitored on an ongoing basis</li> </ul>
<p><b>Hockey</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Demand should continue to be monitored.</li> </ul>

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QUALITY – PITCH SPECIFIC ISSUES	
Yaxley Recreation Ground	Poor quality surface with litter, glass and high levels of vandalism and graffiti. The site also has inadequate car parking.
Upwood Playing Fields	No toilets or changing facilities and poor quality equipment.
Ellington Recreation Ground	Poor quality surface, line markings and equipment. High levels of damage to the surface.
Yaxley Football Club	Poor quality changing provision
Great Gidding Sports Facility	Inadequate parking facilities
Elton Parish Council Recreation Ground	Inadequate parking facilities
Farcet Recreation Ground	Inadequate parking facilities

**Training facilities**

- 8.109 A lack of training facilities emerged as a key issue in consultations across the district, with both clubs and other consultees highlighting difficulties in accessing appropriate facilities midweek.
- 8.110 This was raised particularly by football clubs who wish to use the synthetic pitches for midweek training and match practice and clearly have competing interests with hockey teams. Further investigation into the availability of synthetic pitches suggests that pitches are usually fully booked (particularly that at St Ivo Leisure Centre) between the hours of high demand (6 – 9).
- 8.111 Provision for training is an important part of pitch provision. Without this, clubs may use match day facilities meaning deterioration in the overall quality of pitches due to the number of matches that they are required to sustain.
- 8.112 Further provision of pitches dedicated to / suitable for training should be considered. The application of the playing pitch strategy for hockey suggests that there are insufficient synthetic pitches to cope with peak day demand for hockey. Provision of a further synthetic facility to be used for competitive hockey on peak competition days may also provide opportunities for football clubs to train. Alternatively, floodlighting training areas located at the side of some existing pitch sites should be considered in order to facilitate evening training for football clubs, while ensuring that the quality of match pitches is sustained.

<b>PPS 9</b>	<p>Further investigate the provision of floodlit training facilities.</p> <p>This may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• additional synthetic pitch provision</li> <li>• provision of small floodlit pitches adjacent to the main pitch area</li> </ul> <p>At least one facility should be made available within each geographical area of the district.</p>
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## Developing a local standard

- 8.113 An important outcome from a playing pitch strategy is the development of local standards of provision, in accordance with national planning policy. Such standards will:
- underpin negotiations with developers over their contributions for new pitch provision to meet the needs of new residential developments
  - provide an additional overview of the general supply of pitches/level of provision
  - assist in protecting land in playing field use
  - assist in benchmarking with other areas/authorities.
- 8.114 Overall quality, quantity and accessibility standards for outdoor sports facilities are set in section 7 of this report. This includes consideration of pitches, tennis courts and bowling greens.
- 8.115 The application of the playing pitch methodology enables the calculation of a more specific local standard for pitches which provides detail on the amount of pitches required. The application of the playing pitch methodology (which measures supply against demand) can then be used to determine the most appropriate balance of pitches between the four pitch sports – football, cricket, rugby and hockey.
- 8.116 The existing and future local standards have been calculated in Table 8.19. The existing local standard is based upon the current supply of pitches (measured in area) in each sub area, divided by the population in that analysis area. The total represents the current standard, which is 0.44 ha per 1000 population.
- 8.117 The future local standard calculation is based upon the findings of this report for the future year 2021. It takes into account the additional (or surplus) pitches identified within this report in 2021 and calculates the required area per 1000 population, which is 0.74ha. This is set out in table 8.19 below.

**Table 8.19 – Calculation of Local Standard**

Sub-area	Population	Total playing pitch area with secured community use (ha)	Playing pitch area per 1,000 population (ha)	Additional pitch area required (ha)	Total future pitch area (ha)	Future population	Future playing pitch area per 1,000 population (ha)
Hunts and Godmanchester	40,380	21.00	0.52	3.25	24.25	42,707	0.57
Ramsey	19,923	6.60	0.33	-0.69	5.91	21,071	0.28
St Ives	30,745	9.00	0.29	12.58	21.58	32,517	0.66
St Neots	38,114	15.00	0.39	25.11	40.11	40,311	0.99
Yaxley and Sawtry	11,773	10.20	0.87	7.99	18.19	12,452	1.46
	0	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0	0.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>140,935</b>	<b>61.80</b>	<b>0.44</b>	<b>48.24</b>	<b>110.04</b>	<b>149,058</b>	<b>0.74</b>

- 8.118 It is important to also allow for rest and recovery of pitches (strategic reserve) as highlighted in recommendation PPS 6. An allowance for a strategic reserve equivalent to 10% should therefore be included within the standard; hence the recommended local standard for future provision should be 0.81 hectares per 1000 population.

## **SECTION 8 – PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY**

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<b>PPS 9</b>	A local standard of 0.81 hectares per 1000 population specific to pitch provision in Huntingdonshire should be applied. This complements the standard set for outdoor sports facilities of 1.61 ha, indicating that a minimum of 0.81 ha of the 1.61 should be made up of pitches available for community use.
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### Allotments and community gardens

#### Definition

- 9.1 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.

#### Strategic context and consultation

##### *Strategic context*

- 9.2 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
  - wider contribution to green and open space.
- 9.3 Although there are no specific regional or local documents referring to the provision of allotments in the district, regional documents such as Regional Planning Guidance 6; The Draft East of England Plan; Our Environment, Our Future, The Regional Environment Strategy for the East of England; and The Cambridgeshire Sub-Regional Green Infrastructure Strategy all refer to open spaces including allotments, recognising the importance of protecting these facilities.

#### Consultation

- 9.4 In terms of frequency of use, 4.8% of respondents to the household reported visiting allotments sites more than once a week, 1.6% reported visiting less than once a month and 93.6% reported that they did not use allotment sites in the district.
- 9.5 Many respondents to the household survey had no opinions on the provision of allotments. Of those who did, there was a perception that there were sufficient. It appears from both the household survey and local consultation that residents expect allotment provision to be near to their house. This perception was further reinforced by Parish Councils; with 56% believing allotments should be within a mile of the house. The household survey also revealed that the most frequent expected method of travelling to allotments was walking (63.1%). Despite this, analysis of current travel patterns (based on responses to the household survey) indicates that more people drive.

#### Current position

- 9.6 The provision of allotments across Huntingdonshire is summarised in Table 9.1 overleaf.

**Table 9.1 – quantity of provision in Huntingdonshire**

Analysis Area	Quantity of Provision	Provision per 1000 population	Number of sites	Key Sites
St Neots	8.614 hectares	0.23	7	Little Paxton allotment site is the largest in the area
Huntingdon and Godmanchester	10.24 hectares	0.25	9	Two large sites in Huntingdon. There are also two sites in Godmanchester
St Ives	9.26 hectares	0.30	5	St Ives allotment site is the largest in this area
Ramsey	21.00 hectares	0.43	5	Somersham allotments
Yaxley and Sawtry	7.92 hectares	0.28	10	Sawtry and Yaxley allotment sites

9.7 The key issues arising from the assessment of the quantity of provision include:

- the largest area of provision is in Ramsey area, which is influenced by a very large site in Somersham
- excluding provision in Ramsey, in hectarage terms, provision is evenly distributed around the borough
- although Yaxley and Sawtry contain the greatest number of sites, the overall area dedicated to allotment provision is the smallest. This is reflective of the size of the sites and the smaller populations living in these areas.
- provision per 1000 population is highest in Ramsey.

9.8 Parish Councils are a key provider of allotment plots in the district, in particular:

- Somersham (200)
- Godmanchester (100)
- Yaxley (95)
- Wistow (64)
- Buckden (46)
- Little Paxton (45)
- Warboys (37)
- Sawtry (30)
- Hemingford Grey (30).

## SECTION 9 – ALLOTMENTS & COMMUNITY GARDENS

9.9 23 of the Parish Councils reported that there was a waiting list for allotments in their Parish, whilst eight stated there was not a waiting list. Despite the presence of waiting lists in some areas, 23 Parish Councils indicated that supply currently meets demand, while only eight felt there to be deficiencies. Other consultations support this view, with those residents of the household survey with an opinion on allotments stating that there was sufficient provision.

### Quality

9.10 The quality of allotment provision in Huntingdonshire is outlined in table 9.2 below:

**Table 9. 2 – quality of allotment provision**

Analysis Area	Site Quality	Key Issues
St Neots	Overall site quality average	No problems identified on sites Poor signage in areas Good vehicle access and parking
Huntingdon and Godmanchester	All sites considered good with the exception of two	Dog /litter / glass problems on some sites Parking average Good maintenance Good safety
St Ives	All sites good with the exception of one	Problems with litter identified on one site Good maintenance 3 considered to be poor in terms of personal safety 50% of sites inaccessible to people with disabilities.
Ramsey	60% of sites considered average	No problems identified at site Good vehicle access and parking All sites accessible to people with disabilities
Yaxley and Sawtry	2 sites considered to be of poor quality – the remainder split equally between good and average	Low usage at some sites Some issues with poor maintenance 2 considered poor for personal safety

- as can be seen above, the quality of provision is good across the district, particularly in St Ives and Huntingdon
- there are few problems at allotment sites with Huntingdon being the only geographical area to experience issues with vandalism, graffiti and litter on more than one site
- access to sites is good and on the whole there is sufficient parking for cars on site

## SECTION 9 – ALLOTMENTS & COMMUNITY GARDENS

- maintenance standards are good on the whole
- personal safety is perhaps the main concern.

9.11 This good quality provision echoes opinions expressed during consultation where;

- residents attending drop in sessions highlighted that allotment sites are perceived to be both high quality and well used and consequently important to protect. Primrose Lane Allotments were frequently cited as being an excellent allotment site and Eynesbury Allotments were also particularly well commended by residents of St Neots.
- of those who returned the household survey and had an opinion on allotments, the majority felt quality to be average or above.
- perhaps in contrast with the findings of the site visits, vandalism and graffiti of sites was highlighted as a key concern for residents at drop in sessions and participating in the household survey.

### Setting provision standards

9.12 In setting local standards for allotments 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 Appendices H, I and J. The recommended local standards have been summarised below in context with the allotment sites in Huntingdonshire.

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

Existing level of provision	Recommended standard
0.28 per 1,000 population	0.32 per 1,000 population
Justification	
<p>It is important to note that the provision of allotments is a demand led typology and any additional provision or removal of sites should be based on localised demand assessments and consultation. This fact has been reflected in the consultation findings, which show a significant variation in comments about the quantity of open space – with some sites underused, whereas other areas have waiting lists for allotments. Concern was raised about the loss of allotment plots in the household survey</p> <p>The comments about quantity provision are reflective of the actual existing provision, with the highest provision in Ramsey (highest degree of satisfaction) and lower levels of provision in Yaxley and Sawtry (lowest satisfaction).</p> <p>It is suggested that the standard is set marginally higher than the existing level of provision across the authority area at 0.32 ha per 1000 population. This standard is significantly higher than the level of provision in most areas but lower than provision in Ramsey where highest levels of satisfaction occur. This standard will protect the existing level of provision but provide the flexibility for more localised assessments into the demand in particular areas. It also takes in account and considers likely future increases in demand for allotments occurring as a result of the likely density living and the consequential lack of gardens.</p>	

**Accessibility standard (see appendix J)**

<b>Recommended standard</b>
15 minutes walk time - (720 metres)
<b>Justification</b>
<p>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 it will not be appropriate to always have allotments within this catchment.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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.</p>

**Quality standard (see appendix I)**

<b>Recommended standard</b>
<i><b>“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.”</b></i>
<b>Justification</b>
<p>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 Huntingdonshire.</p>

**Applying provision standards – identifying geographical areas**

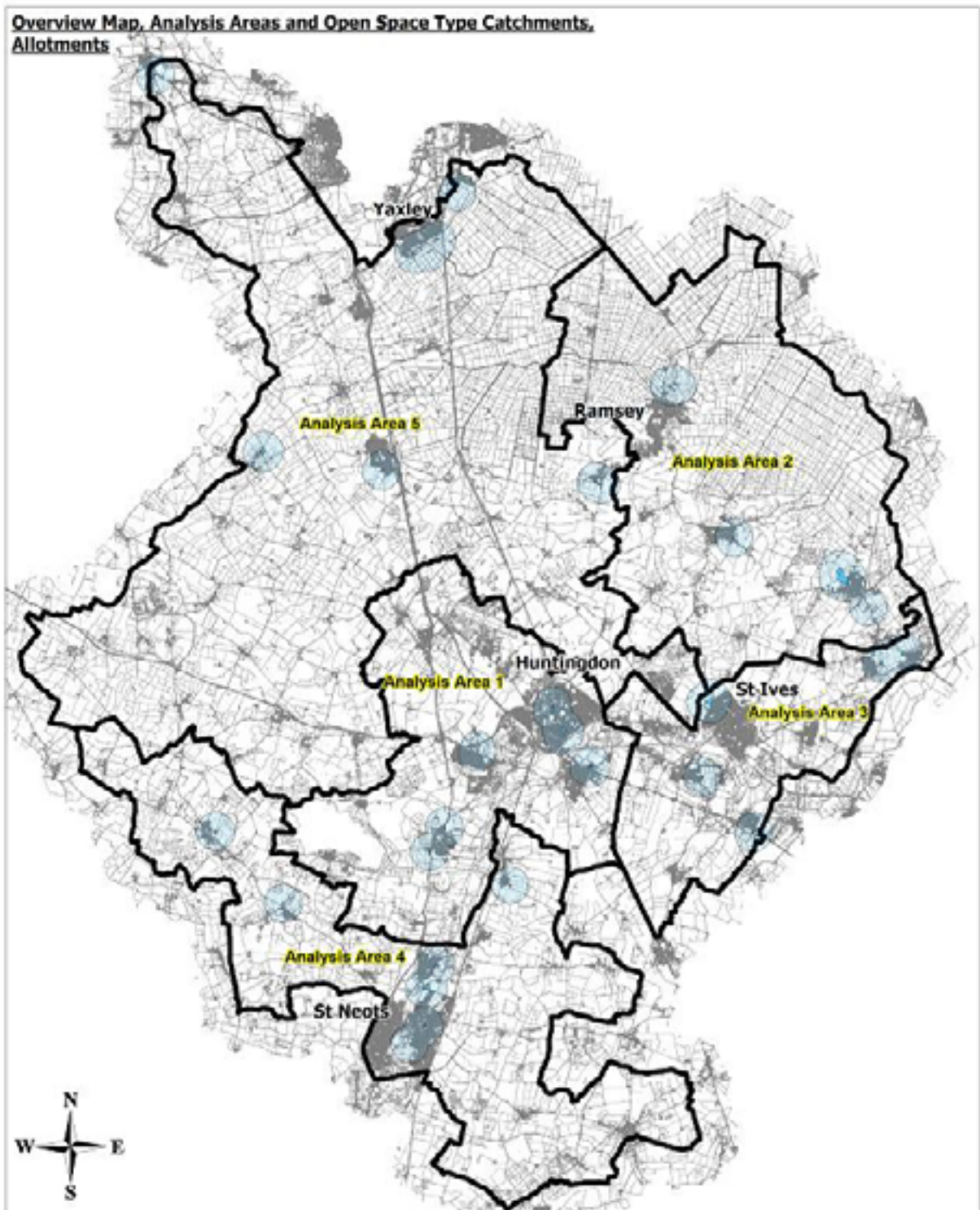
- 9.13 In order to identify geographical areas of importance and those areas where there is potential unmet demand we apply both the quantity and accessibility standards together. The quantity standards identify whether areas are quantitatively above or below the recommended minimum standard and the accessibility standards will help to determine where those deficiencies are of high importance.
- 9.14 The current supply of allotment and gardens in Huntingdonshire is 0.28ha per 1,000 which is below the recommended standard for provision. This standard has been recommended as a consequence of the growth agenda for Cambridgeshire sub region, and the associated likelihood that this will result in greater levels of higher density housing with no gardens.
- 9.15 Application of the recommended accessibility standard (15 minute walk) can be seen on map 9.1 overleaf. It can be seen that there are significant amounts of the district that fall outside of the recommended catchment, including large residential areas.

## **SECTION 9 – ALLOTMENTS & COMMUNITY GARDENS**

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- 9.16 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 is therefore not appropriate to identify areas of deficiency.
- 9.17 In light of the growth agenda and likely increase in high density housing, potential shortfalls in allotment provision both now and in the future should be considered. This is of particular importance in the areas likely to experience growth.
- 9.18 Existing areas that should be investigated include:
- 9.19 Market Towns
- Huntingdon (West and East)
  - St Neots (West)
  - St Ives
  - Ramsey South
- 9.20 Key Centres
- Yaxley (North)
  - Sawtry (south)
  - Warboys (West)
  - Brampton
  - Buckden.

Map 9.1 – provision of allotments in Huntingdonshire



Catchment - Allotments (720m buffer)



Allotments



Analysis Areas



Mastermap



**ACTIVE**

*Bringing ideas to life*



Reproduced from the Ordnance Survey mapping with the permission of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationary Office (C) Crown Copyright Huntingdonshire District Council, Licence Number 100023322, Map Scale 1cm = 2.053 km

**Value assessment and recommendations**

9.21 As identified in the geographical areas analysis, there are many residents outside of the recommended catchment areas for allotments in the market towns and key centres.

<b>ALL1</b>	Further investigate areas of deficiency in market towns and key centres. Specific areas for focus are detailed in the geographical areas analysis.
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9.22 Particularly in the market towns, amenity green space sites with overlapping catchments may present a good opportunity for the redesignation of sites.

9.23 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.

9.24 Of all the allotment sites in the district, only four are considered to be poor in overall quality. All four of these sites also have under 30% usage, or between 30% to 70%. It is of particular significance that all of these sites are also amongst the largest in the district with the exception of the site in Yaxley, which is the smallest. Consideration should be given to enhancing the quality / access to these sites to enhance the usage as due to their low usage and low quality, these sites are currently of low value to the community.

<b>ALL2</b>	<p>Investigate opportunities to increase the value of sites currently considered to be poor including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Somersham Allotments</li> <li>• Yaxley Allotments</li> <li>• Huntingdon West Allotments</li> <li>• Little Paxton Allotments</li> <li>• Great Staughton Allotments</li> </ul>
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9.25 In contrast to the sites highlighted in ALL2 above, where usage and quality is low, in the majority of allotment sites in Huntingdonshire, quality is good and usage is above 70% occupancy and there are waiting lists at some sites. These sites are of particularly high value.

<b>ALL3</b>	<p>Protect sites of high value to the local community, particularly those where usage and quality is high. This includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Brampton</li> <li>• Buckden (2 sites)</li> </ul>
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## SECTION 9 – ALLOTMENTS & COMMUNITY GARDENS

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Godmanchester</li> <li>• Huntingdon (3)</li> <li>• St Neots</li> <li>• Warboys</li> <li>• Great Gidding</li> <li>• Sawtry</li> <li>• Upwood</li> <li>• Yaxley.</li> </ul>
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- 9.26 Allotments can provide alternative means of physical activity for residents and hence can make a key contribution to achieving increased participation and reducing health and obesity problems for residents. In light of this opportunity, allotment sites in the district should be promoted, to increase awareness of sites and encourage increased take up of allotment plots.

<b>ALL4</b>	<p>Promote allotment plots to the general public to raise awareness and encourage usage.</p> <p>This may include promoting the use of allotments to school children and encouraging use of facilities by schools.</p>
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- 9.27 Consultation highlights the benefits of partnership working and community involvement and ownership, both from a provider and community perspective.

<b>ALL5</b>	<p>Encourage the management and ownership of allotment plots by allotment societies and provide support to Parish Councils and other providers to ensure provision of allotments can continue.</p>
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- 9.28 An action plan should be devised setting out the proposed future provision of allotments and key targets for the Council to achieve. This should also include a strategy to increase participation.

<b>ALL5</b>	<p>Devise an action plan for the future provision and usage of allotments in Huntingdonshire.</p>
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### Summary and recommendations

- 9.29 Total provision of allotments in Huntingdonshire equates to 0.28ha per 1000 population. Provision in Ramsey is particularly high both in comparison to other areas and when compared to the population.
- 9.30 While there are waiting lists at some sites, occupancy levels are below 30% at other sites. Despite this, the quantity standard has been set at a level higher than the

## **SECTION 9 – ALLOTMENTS & COMMUNITY GARDENS**

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current level of provision, reflecting the likely increase in high density housing occurring as a result of the growth agenda in the Cambridgeshire sub region.

- 9.31 Although the distribution of allotments is good, there are large residential areas outside of the recommended catchment areas, including areas in each of the market towns and key centres. Amenity green space sites with overlapping catchments in the market town areas may provide opportunities for meeting these deficiencies.
- 9.32 All recommendations should be followed in conjunction with the implementation of an allotment action plan.

### Green corridors

#### Definition

- 10.1 This open space type includes towpaths along canals and riverbanks, cycleways, rights of way and disused railway lines with the primary purpose to provide opportunities for walking, cycling and horse riding whether for leisure purposes or travel and opportunities for wildlife migration.

#### PPG17 – the role of green corridors

- 10.2 With regards to green corridors the emphasis of PPG17 appears to be on urban areas. It uses the typology from the Urban Green Spaces Taskforce Report that is an 'urban typology'.
- 10.3 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.
- 10.4 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 however on important urban corridors and public rights of way (PROW).

#### Strategic context and consultation

- 10.5 The District Council Countryside Services promotes and manages the Ouse Valley Way, which is an important leisure and recreational corridor in Huntingdonshire. There are plans to improve the quality of this corridor around St Neots. Recent promotion has included the organisation of events, designed to raise awareness of the green corridors in the district.
- 10.6 Many green corridors in the district are well used, including circular walks around Huntingdon, St Ives and St Neots, which were frequently highlighted as important to local residents and consultations indicated that the areas by the river are particularly popular. Erosion from the river is an increasing problem in these areas and footpaths have eroded away
- 10.7 The Cambridgeshire County Council Parish Paths Partnership encourages local Parish Councils to work towards increasing access to green corridors within their locality. This scheme will result in an improved green corridor network across the district in the forthcoming years.
- 10.8 People attending drop-in sessions commented on the high quality of some green corridors in the district, particularly walks around the river. A shortage of accessible footpaths was highlighted at drop in sessions at Ramsey. Also commented upon was the issue of dog fouling that was felt to limit the level of use of any green corridors (particularly footpaths).

#### Setting provision standards

- 10.9 In setting local standards for green corridors 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 indication of consultation and justifications for the recommended local standards are

## SECTION 10 – GREEN CORRIDORS

provided within Appendix H, I and J. The recommended local standards have been summarised below in context with the green corridor sites in Huntingdonshire.

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

Recommended standard
No Local Standard to be set
Justification
<p>The Annex A of PPG17 – Open Space Typology states:</p> <p><i>“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 <b>there is no sensible way of stating a provision standard</b>, 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”.</i></p> <p>It is therefore recommended that no provision standard should be set. PPG17 goes onto to state that:</p> <p><i>“instead planning policies should promote the use of green corridors to link housing areas to the Sustrans 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”.</i></p>

### Accessibility standard (see appendix J)

Recommended standard
No Local Standard to be set
Justification
<p>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.</p>

### Quality standard (see appendix I)

Recommended standard
<b><i>“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.”</i></b>
Justification
<p>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.</p>

### **Links with Health Agenda**

10.10 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.

10.11 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”*

10.12 Therefore it is 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**

10.13 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.

10.14 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.

### **Summary**

10.15 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.

10.16 There are already a large number of footpaths and green corridor networks within the study area and consultation indicates that they are well-used. Further promotion of these networks was highlighted during consultation as essential.

10.17 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.

10.18 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.

### Resourcing open space

#### Introduction

- 11.1 Budgets for both the enhancement and maintenance of open spaces have been reduced nationally over the past decade. Parish councils tend to maintain their own open spaces, however this makes it difficult for the Council to control what maintenance is actually being done and likewise the budgets for maintenance are difficult to control by parishes.
- 11.2 CABE Space suggest within their 'manifesto' that:
- a strategic vision is essential
  - political commitment is essential
  - and to start by making the case for high quality green spaces in house (persuading other departments is key – high priority).
- 11.3 It will be essential to gain any financial support (both internally and externally) for any improvements to existing provision or new provision.

#### Section 106 planning agreements

- 11.4 In particular, Section 106 agreements can be used to achieve environmental improvements once a new development has come on stream and this will be dependant on the areas where development proposals are put forward and may not be all areas.
- 11.5 Once a strategy framework has been established, the process of obtaining these improvements will be enhanced because they can be used to achieve specific purposes, eg:
- by opening linear route ways to connect green spaces
  - providing walking and cycling routes
  - obtaining open space in areas of deficiency
  - funding open space improvements
  - some councils have used part of the contributions towards revenue 'Development Officer' posts; eg in Nottinghamshire
  - there are maintenance considerations to be taken into account; ie significant costs may arise, particularly if new open space is acquired and it may therefore be necessary to obtain a commuted maintenance sum wherever possible to cover these ongoing costs. It should of course be noted that such Agreements have to meet the test of Circular 05/2005, and "*planning obligations should not be used solely to resolve existing deficiencies.*"
- 11.6 It is recommended that the Council continue to ensure that revenue is maximised through funding for greenspace from developer contributions and to monitor developer contributions. This is discussed in greater detail in the following chapter.

### **Use of redundant buildings**

- 11.7 Sympathetic use of redundant facilities for leisure and recreational purposes is also a possibility. This could include the establishment of small commercial sports facilities (eg tennis) in parks.

### **Business funding/sponsorships**

- 11.8 Examples from other boroughs include sponsorship of Cardiff City Council's events and festivals programme, and the Body Shop Playground Project in Auchinlea Park, Glasgow.

### **Partnership arrangements with the voluntary sector**

- 11.9 This could include the formation of parks 'friends' groups. The friends of Paxton Pits provides a good example of community ownership and there are now 1600 volunteers registered as part of the group with a variety of different interests and levels of involvement. The nature reserve receives high visitor numbers and has a dedicated visitor centre.

### **Lottery funding**

- 11.10 This could include the Heritage Fund if works are carried out which are of outstanding interest and importance to the national heritage. Funding is provided for whole park projects, the conservation of park features or park activities. Grants are available from £50,000 to £5 million for a period of up to five years. Projects must be designed to involve all stakeholders, must demonstrate sustainability, and must demonstrate the heritage value of the park in question.
- 11.11 The Young People's Fund aims to support projects that will improve local communities and offer more opportunities to young people. The scheme involves young people coming up with ideas for projects and to be involved in making them happen.

### **The Big Lottery Fund**

- 11.12 The Big Lottery Fund will bring together the work of two National Lottery distributors: the Community Fund, which provides funding for charities and the voluntary and community sectors, and the New Opportunities Fund, which provides funding for health, education and environment projects. There are several different funding sources available. Those relating to open space, sport, play and recreation facilities include:
- changing spaces – between 2006 and 2009, £234 million is available to help communities in England improve the environment. The programme has 3 priorities, including community spaces and access to the natural environment.
  - children's play – £124 million has been made available to local authorities from March 2006 with four deadlines for applications through until September 2007. Local authorities are invited to submit their play strategy and a portfolio of project proposals as the basis for their application, which has to be submitted only by a play partnership which is led by the local authority.

- Young People's Fund - the Young People's Fund aims to support projects that will improve local communities and offer more opportunities to young people. Grants are available for individuals, to help them make a difference in their community; grants to voluntary groups and community organisations to run local projects with and for young people and national grants.

11.13 More information can be found at: [www.biglotteryfund.org.uk/default.aspx](http://www.biglotteryfund.org.uk/default.aspx)

### **Review of pricing**

11.14 The Council could consider a review of all pricing where a significant income is obtained, including outdoor sports, allotments and burials in order to establish opportunities for increased income. The review needs to consider:

- charges for similar provision in other local authorities
- the quality of provision
- whether the service can be improved to justify a price increase
- the extent to which the market will bear any future increase
- whether differential pricing can be used to encourage off-peak usage
- concessions for minority groups, or those which the Council particularly wishes to encourage
- pricing at a level which does not deny access
- lower and/or more favourable charges for residents.

### **The Landfill Tax Credit Scheme**

11.15 The Landfill Tax Credit Scheme was revised in April 2003, and allows registered landfill operators to contribute 6.5% of their annual landfill tax liability to environmental bodies approved by the organisation ENTRUST.

11.16 The scheme must be used for social, environmental and community based projects complying with specific "approved objects." These objects are the provision and maintenance of public amenity, and restoration and repair of buildings open to the public with historical or architectural significance.

11.17 The project must be within 10 miles of a landfill/extraction operation.

### **Big Lottery Fund – Childrens' Play Initiative**

11.18 The Big Lottery Fund has recently allocated £155million of funding for provision of children's play facilities. The Play initiative is based on the recommendations of the 2004 play review Getting Serious About Play, which defines children's play as "what children and young people do when they follow their own ideas, in their own way and for their own reasons."

11.19 The initiative aims to:

- create, improve and develop children and young people's free local play spaces and opportunities throughout England, according to need



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- ensure that local authorities work with other local stakeholders to develop children’s play strategies and plans
  - ensure that good, inclusive and accessible children’s play services and facilities are provided locally.
- 11.20 Local authorities applying for funding are required to consult with relevant stakeholders including children and young people, provide a detailed play strategy and include a portfolio of projects. Examples of individual projects that can form part of the portfolio include:
- adventure playgrounds, BMX and skateboard parks
  - small public playgrounds and creating a play area
  - informal sports facilities
  - a mobile play team, playworkers (either paid or volunteers) and holiday and after school play activities.
- 11.21 The play strategy and portfolio of projects will form the key documents that local authorities will be assessed on for allocated funding. This funding stream provides a significant opportunity for Huntingdonshire to improve provision for children and young people across the district.

### **Lottery Small Grants Scheme**

- 11.22 The Lottery Small Grants Scheme offers Awards for All grants of between £500 and £5,000 for small projects, which involve people in their community, and can include local environmental work and community park projects.

### **Barclays Sitesavers**

- 11.23 Barclays Sitesavers is a grant mechanism for community projects, which transform derelict land into community leisure and recreation facilities. Between £4,000 and £10,000 per project is available.

### **The Tree Council**

- 11.24 The Tree Council supports the Community Trees Fund which funds up to 75% of all expenditure on tree planting schemes having a value of £100 to £700.

### **The Esmee Fairburn Foundation**

- 11.25 The Esmee Fairburn Foundation aims to improve quality of life, particularly for people who face disadvantage. Eligible activities include the preservation and enhancement of open space, and good management of woodlands, gardens and allotments. The size of grant is not limited, with the average award for the year 2002 being £33,500. In 2006 they expect to make grants of £26 million across the UK.

### **Others**

- 11.26 These could include other proactive mechanisms such as:
- increased income from events and activities
  - improvements negotiated as ‘added value’ from service providers.

- 11.27 The degree of funding will define the scope and timescale over which any developments could be implemented. It is therefore essential to carefully consider all possible sources of funding.
- 11.28 These should include Council capital and revenue funding, but should also include consideration of the release of existing funds; commercial opportunities such as the franchising of facilities such as catering outlets; the delegated management of facilities such as outdoor sports; commercial sponsorship (eg floral bedding); planning gain (eg through Section 106 agreements); volunteer support; reviews of fees and charges; and increased income from events and activities.
- 11.29 Further detailed information regarding grants can be found in ‘Claiming Your Share: A Guide to External Funding for Parks and Green Space Community Groups’, obtainable from <http://www.greenspace.org.uk>.

### **Funding for further development of playing pitches**

#### **Sources of capital funding**

- 11.30 There are several potential sources of financial aid for pitch provision. These include:
- Football Foundation
  - Sport England Lottery Fund
  - Rugby Football Foundation
  - Big Lottery Fund
  - Landfill Tax Credit
  - Council funding / grant aid support to voluntary clubs.

#### ***Football Foundation***

- 11.31 The Foundation is dedicated to revitalising the grass roots of the game, constructing modern football infrastructure creating facilities that are fit for the game in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The maximum grant for a capital project is £1 million. Grants of this size will only be awarded in exceptional circumstances. The percentage level of support is variable, but in exceptional circumstances could reach 90%.

(See <http://www.footballfoundation.org.uk/> for more information)

#### ***Sport England Community Investment Fund***

- 11.32 The Sport England Community Investment Fund is used for funding applications over £5000. Projects that are eligible for funding are assessed against the priorities of the national framework for sport. However, decisions regarding funds are actually made by the nine regional sports boards and applications must also fit in with the regional funding criteria.
- 11.33 Sport England's mission is to increase participation in sport and active recreation by 1% every year to 2020. They are committed to investing in a coherent system for community sport and promoting a consistent framework for how sport is organised at a local level. County Sports Partnerships have responsibility for achieving increases

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in participation within their area and it is therefore important that discussions about each project are held with this partnership.

11.34 Priority will be given to those projects that take on the challenge of dealing with inequalities in sport and significantly narrow the participation gap for priority groups. (Note: the target is to close the participation gap between these groups and the regional average by 25% by 2008).

11.35 The regional priority groups are:

- People over 45
- Black and Minority Ethnic Groups
- People with disabilities
- Women and girls
- Socio-economic groups with top 20% most deprived communities.

11.36 Applications will be considered in rounds with a maximum of £400,000 being allocated to each round and the decisions on all applications will be within 8 weeks. See <http://www.sportengland.org/> for more information or call the funding line on 08458 508 508.

### ***Rugby Football Union***

11.37 In January 2003, the Rugby Football Union (RFU) announced the commencement of this fund. Community rugby clubs can apply for grants and/or interest-free loans to fund capital facility projects which contribute to the recruitment and retention of players. This funding is available to clubs participating at Level 5 or below.

11.38 There are two different elements to the fund:

- **Ground Match Grant Scheme:** this provides easy-to-access grant funding for capital playing projects which contribute to the recruitment and retention of players. A list of projects that qualify for a grant will be sent to clubs on request as part of the application pack. All projects that qualify for a grant also qualify for the loan (see below).

At present, clubs can apply for between £1,500 and £5,000, which they must equally match (ie 50:50). Clubs may only apply for one grant per project.

- **Interest-free loan schemes:** The interest-free loan scheme provides loans to clubs to help finance capital projects which contribute to the recruitment and retention of players. The key features of the scheme are:
  - loans will be interest-free (though if a club defaults on a capital payment, the whole loan will be subject to interest until the outstanding amounts are paid)
  - the maximum loan available is £100,000
  - the maximum loan period will be 15 years, including an initial two-year capital holiday

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- security will be required for the loan scheme in the form of either a charge over property or personal guarantees.

11.39 Clubs may apply for both a grant and a loan for the same project (providing that the appropriate conditions are met). A club could, therefore, apply for a maximum grant of £5,000 (providing it matches it with £5,000 of other funding) and a maximum loan of £100,000. Grants and loans will be awarded by the Trustees of the Rugby Football Foundation.

11.40 Information packs are available from the Secretary of the Rugby Football Foundation, Graham Hancock. He can be contacted on 020 8831 6538 or by e-mail ([grahamhancock@rfu.com](mailto:grahamhancock@rfu.com)) or at the Rugby Football Foundation, Rugby House, Rugby Road, Twickenham, Middlesex, TW1 1DS.

### Planning overview

#### Policy Assessment and guidance for the implementation of Section 106 contributions

##### *Introduction*

- 12.1 The purpose of this section is to provide a planning overview for Huntingdonshire District Council, in particular;
- assessing existing Local Plan policies and emerging Core Strategy policies in light of the PPG17 study undertaken (as set out in Sections 5 to 13 of this report), and
  - providing guidance for the application of relevant Section 106 contributions to inform the proposed developer contributions SPD which is due for adoption in April 2007.

##### *Background*

- 12.2 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 (RSS) for the region in which it is situated, and
  - the Development Plan Documents (DPDs) which have been adopted or approved in relation to that area.
- 12.3 Whilst not part of the statutory development plan, local planning authorities can also produce Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) that expand upon the policies and proposals in the development plan. Alongside the DPDs these form the Local Development Frameworks (LDFs) that the new legislation demands. This open space assessment forms part of the evidence base to ensure that the policies and proposals in the LDF are sound.
- 12.4 Huntingdonshire District Council Local Plan was adopted in 1995. The 2002 Local Plan Alteration has superseded some of the policies. The policies within the Local Plan continue to form part of the development plan whilst the Council progresses with work on its LDF. Local authorities have a minimum of three years to complete this transitional process. Work is currently well underway of the LDF, with the Core Strategy reaching submission stage at April 2006 and examination programmed for 2007.
- 12.5 The Local Development Scheme (LDS) outlines the programme for preparing the documents that will form the LDF. The Council is preparing three development plans documents – a core strategy, a planning proposals document and one relating to gypsy and traveller sites. The Council initially intended to produce a planning contributions DPD to focus on district specific requirements, which would be complemented by a further document detailing strategic needs (such as strategic open space). However, district specific guidance on planning contributions will be produced in SPD format consistent with Local Plan Alteration Policy OB1-2.
- 12.6 The current Local Plan policies pre-date Planning Policy Guidance Note 17 (2002) and this study. These policies form the basis of the following analysis in light of both the study and updated guidance, although reference has also been made to emerging policies in the submission draft Core Strategy to set them in the context of the findings of this study.

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12.7 The following pages provide an assessment of these policies.

## Local Plan Policy Assessment

12.8 Through the review of policies as part of the LDF process, Huntingdonshire District Council will be able to feed the results and analysis of this study into the preparation of policies. The following policy assessment section sets out some key considerations.

Policy name and number	Description of policy	Comments and recommendations
<b>Huntingdonshire District Council Local Plan (1995)</b>		
<b>R1/2 Promotion of leisure and recreation facilities</b>	The policy aims to support recreation and leisure projects of district wide significance and generally support facilities commensurate with population levels, housing development and identified need	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The provision of good quality leisure and recreation facilities is fundamental to creating a good environment for people to live in. As such the principles of this policy are strongly supported.</li> <li>• Where new provision is made, it should be to the standard set out in the relevant quality vision. Explicit reference should be made to the requirement to deliver facilities to this standard.</li> <li>• It is considered that this policy could become more concise by the provision of a policy for all new recreation facilities rather than just outdoor sports.</li> <li>• Consideration should be given to the implications of known settlement hierarchies and housing growth in the LDF on the implementation of the quantity standards and accessibility thresholds when considering new provision.</li> <li>• The findings of the playing pitch strategy should be used to support the need for a policy encouraging the provision of new facilities.</li> </ul>
<b>R3 /7 Minimum standards of recreational open space provision and</b>	This policy sets out how the council will aim to deliver recreation open space based on the NPFA Six Acre Standards. They relate to playing space and exclude amenity areas. Breakdown includes youth and adult	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This policy should be amended to reflect the open space standards devised for the typologies of children and provision for young people based on local consultation.</li> </ul>

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Policy name and number	Description of policy	Comments and recommendations
<p><b>contributions towards provision</b></p> <p><b>R12 Provision of children’s play areas in housing estate developments.</b></p>	<p>use, children’s equipment and children use – casual or informal play.</p> <p>This policy sets out how on new development sites, provision for recreation and open space will normally be made on site, having regard to the scale of the development and in accordance with recognised standards.</p> <p>Thresholds have been identified of 10 dwellings and 30 dwellings towards children’s play space and formal adult and youth playspace respectively.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Given the need to increase the levels of provision for children and young people, it is recommendation that contributions should be sought at a lower level than current thresholds. A large number of developments in the District are very small in the area and this can lead to no open space requirements and growing deficiencies as the population gradually grows. However, they may still be relevant as “minimum sizes” for on site provision.</li> <li>• The policy should be expected to include all of the local standards developed through the open space assessment to ensure that all local needs are addressed through the development plan. This is particularly important in the context of expected growth.</li> <li>• Whilst the setting of minimum sizes for on site provision is supported, contributions can be sought below this level for off site contributions. Further detail on the provision of open space as part of new housing developments is provided later in this section.</li> <li>• The supplementary text to the policy notes that application of the standards should take account the size of the resulting playspace, its location in the proposed development and its ease of maintenance.</li> </ul>
<p><b>R8 Off site contributions in lieu of requirements in R7</b></p>	<p>This policy sets out the circumstances in which off site contributions can be made in lieu of open site provision of recreation and open space – provided it is in the vicinity of the new development.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The accessibility standards can also provide clear guidance as to existing open spaces within the accessibility catchment that would serve the new development/require quality enhancements.</li> <li>• The requirement for off site contributions in lieu of on site provision is certain circumstance is supported. It is suggested that this is a criteria based policy that clearly</li> </ul>



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Policy name and number	Description of policy	Comments and recommendations
		identifies the minimum size thresholds and includes a standard formula for contributions.
<b>R9/10 Open Space Allocations in the Towns and Recreation Ground Allocations in Villages</b>	These policies outline how the council will seek to deliver open space at the locations named in the policy.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It is important to ensure that open space allocations are located based on the spatial distribution of unmet needs (areas outwith the distance threshold of existing facilities and spaces and those areas within the distance threshold of existing provision in which there is a quantitative deficiency of provision. This same approach should be followed in the LDF.</li> <li>• There is a need to ensure that new provision of open space is accessible by non car modes of transport on the basis that a number of the accessibility standards are set as a walk time.</li> </ul>
<b>R17 Where developments may be permitted on existing or proposed recreation or amenity areas</b>	Proposals for developing existing open spaces the proposals will be considered in light of the relevant minimum standards, the need for an adequate provision of amenity areas, accessibility and availability of alternative provision, and the environmental effects of the proposed development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• See comments of Core Strategy Policy G1 below.</li> </ul>

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<b>Huntingdonshire District Council Local Plan Alterations (2002)</b>		
<p><b>OB1 Nature and Scale of Obligations</b></p> <p><b>OB2 Maintenance of Open Space</b></p>	<p>OB1 – The nature and scale of obligations sought from development will be related to the size of development and the impact of physical infrastructure, social and community facilities and services.</p> <p>OB2 - Financial contributions may be required for the maintenance of small areas of open space, children’s play space and recreational facilities</p>	<p>The SPD on developer contributions, which is foreshadowed in the LDS, will be supplementary to policy OB1 in the local plan alterations. A similar policy will also be included in the core strategy as the Local Plan Alteration policy will only be saved for a limited time span. In the longer term, an overarching policy on developer contributions will be required in the Core Strategy for the SPD to remain pertinent.</p> <p>The principle of seeking obligations based on the impact of the development is supported, as this does not prohibit the collection of contributions for even the smallest of developments where there is a known impact of the quantity or quality of open space provision.</p> <p>Setting thresholds for contributions (in relating to small developments) – costs of negotiation and administering a planning agreement is higher than the value of the benefit gained for the local community.</p>

<b>Core Strategy Submission Document (April 2006)</b>		
<p><b>Policy G1 – Open Space and recreational land</b></p>	<p>Development proposals should not entail the whole or partial loss of open space within settlements, or of outdoor recreation facilities or allotment. Open Space includes land such as parks, village greens, play areas, sport pitches, undeveloped plots, semi-natural areas and substantial private gardens.</p> <p>The policy also safeguards all such sites of recreation value, unless there would be no shortfall of recreation land when assessed against the Council's standards, any replacement facility provides net benefits to the community, and there would be no visual harm as a result of development.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continued inclusion of policy protecting open spaces from development is supported.</li> <li>• The local standards for open spaces set as part of this study support the retention of the policy. The policy should continue to protect all open spaces, using the individual standards to inform the delivery of open spaces across all typologies.</li> <li>• The Council have undertaken a criteria based approach to ensure that key sites are not omitted and that all relevant sites are protected.</li> </ul>

### Planning contributions

#### Strategic context

- 12.9 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.
- 12.10 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). Under the new planning system, provisions have been made in the 2004 Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act to make legislative changes to the developer contributions system. However, in the interim period the Government has decided to provide further advice on working within the current system by publishing a Planning Obligations Circular 05/2005 whilst it considers further reforms. “Good practice” guidance on the implementation of developer contributions was published during August 2006 and is intended to improve the development, negotiation and implementation of planning obligations through the provision of case studies, methodologies and ideas.
- 12.11 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 may be 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.

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

- 12.12 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.
- 12.13 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.
- 12.14 With regards the use of planning obligations, paragraph 33 of PPG17 states; “Planning obligations should be used as a means to remedy local deficiencies in the quantity or quality of open space, sports and recreation provision. 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.”

#### Assessing needs and opportunities: A companion guide to PPG17

- 12.15 Whilst the advice within the companion guide was written at a time when the guidance on developer contributions was contained with Circular 1/97, its recommendations on the implementation of developer contributions are still highly relevant.

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- 12.16 Diagram 1 of the Companion Guide outlines a recommended approach to how to deal with the redevelopment of an existing open space or sports / recreation facility, using the appropriateness of developer contributions and planning conditions.
- 12.17 Crucially para 9.1 states that provided authorities have undertaken assessments of need and audits of existing facilities compliant with PPG17, locally determined provision standards will meet the tests of reasonableness set out in para 7 of DoE Circular 1/97, Planning Obligations. Whilst Circular 05/2005 has superseded this circular, the reference to “reasonableness” remains.
- 12.18 The Companion Guide states that additional provision will be needed when the total amount of provision within the appropriate distance threshold of the site is or will be below the amount required in the area following the development. The decision as to whether on-site provision or a contribution to off-site provision will be more appropriate depends primarily on whether the total quantity of each form of new provision required as a result of the proposed development is above the minimum acceptable size in the adopted provision standards. If it is, then new provision should normally be on-site; if not, the developer should normally be required to contribute to off-site provision.
- 12.19 Before seeking contributions to off-site provision, authorities should be satisfied that they will be able to use them within the distance threshold of the proposed development site. If they do not use them within an agreed time frame, developers are able to submit a s106 application for their return. This underlines the importance of ensure planning obligations are implemented or enforced in an efficient and transparent way, in order to ensure that contributions are spent on their intended purposes and that the associated development contributes to the sustainability of the areas. This will require monitoring by the local planning authority.
- 12.20 Whilst the Council will be justified in seeking contributions for the full range of open space sport and recreation facilities for which they have adopted provision standards, in practice they will have to be realistic and in many instances prioritise within the findings of the local needs and audit assessment findings.

### **Circular 05/2005: Planning Obligations**

- 12.21 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.
- 12.22 Planning obligations are intended to make acceptable development that would otherwise be unacceptable in planning terms. They may be used to:
- prescribe the nature of a development (eg proportion of affordable housing)
  - compensate for loss or damage created by a development (eg loss of open space)
  - mitigate a developments impact (eg through increased public transport provision).
- 12.23 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
- fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind to the proposed development; and
- reasonable in all other aspects.

### ***Planning Obligations: Practice Guide***

12.24 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.

12.25 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 implementation 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.

### ***Plan Led System***

- 12.26 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.
- 12.27 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.
- 12.28 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. The inclusion of a developer contribution SPD in the Councils LDF is supported. Dependent of the scope of the SPD, the Council may wish to also 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***

- 12.29 Where contributions are secured through planning obligations that 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. (For example, children’s play areas to serve a new housing development)
- 12.30 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. (such as outdoor sports facilities, which will serve a wider area)

### ***Pooled contributions***

- 12.31 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. This can be determined through the application of the quantity standards and the agreed accessibility thresholds developed in the study. However, a degree of certainty is needed that cumulatively sufficient developments will come forward in that locality within an agreed time frame or else the contributions will need to be returned to the developer. This should be closely linked to emerging Local Development Framework work on site specific allocations and know areas of significant development.
- 12.32 Alternatively, in cases where an item of infrastructure necessitated by the cumulative impact of a series of developments is provided by a local authority before all the developments have come forward, the later developers may still be required to contribute the relevant proportion of costs. Therefore it is recommended that the council develops a strategy for the provision of new open space, sport and recreation as required ensuring contributions are maximised in areas which are known to have a quantitative shortfall and where housing growth is expected.

### ***Formulae and standard charges***

12.33 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.

12.34 Standard charges and formulae applied to each development should reflect the actual impacts of the development or a proportionate contribution.

### ***Revisions to the Developer Contributions system***

12.35 Government policy about developer contributions has been under review in recent years, desiring to speed up the process and improve transparency and reduce uncertainty. The Government has been examining the possibility of augmenting site-specific agreements with tariffs where developers can opt to pay a prescribed contribution (optional planning charge) set out in a plan as an alternative to negotiation obligations.

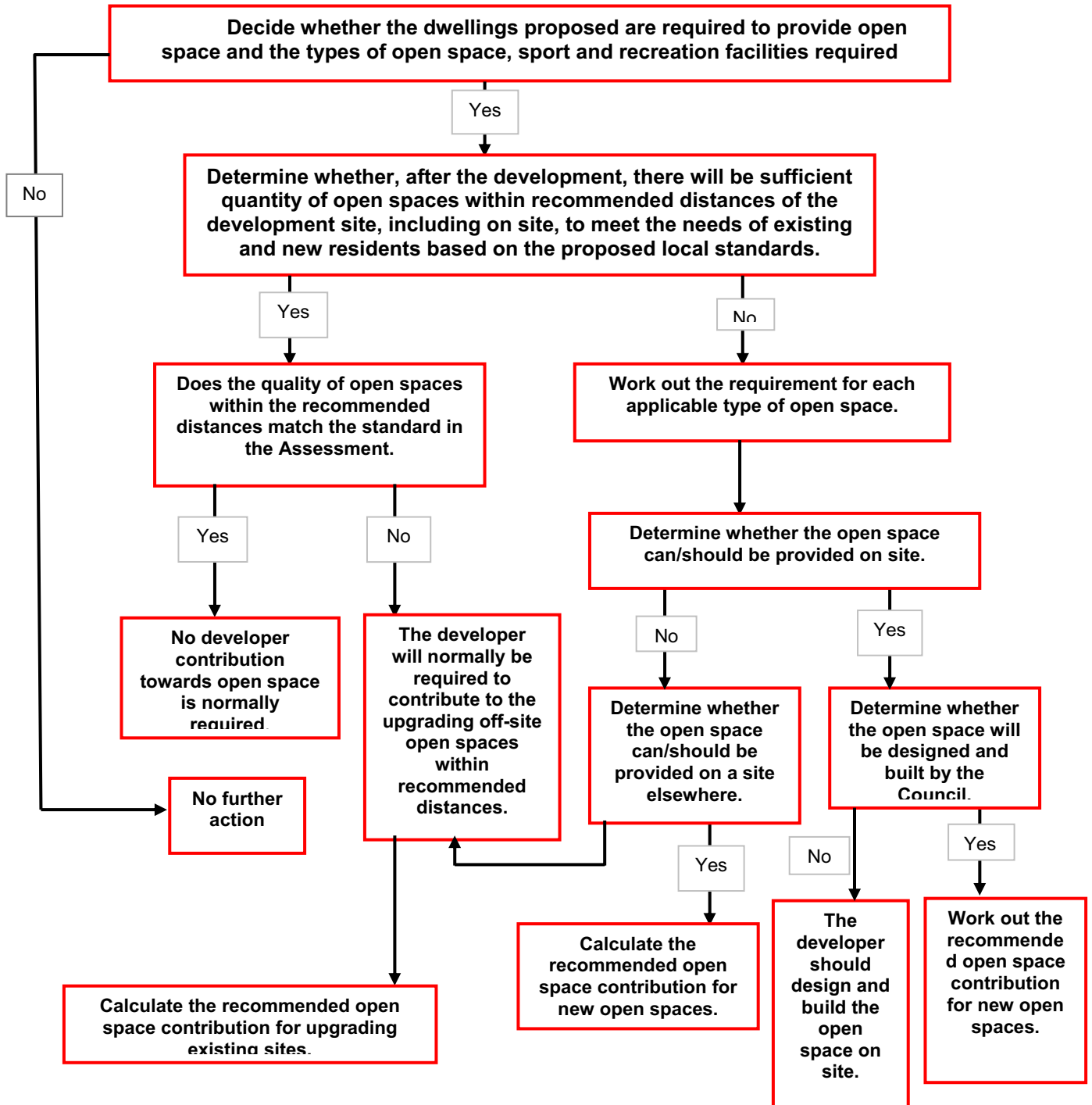
12.36 Planning obligations have become a prominent feature of land use policy because they enable local authorities to agree significant benefits from developers that go beyond compensating third parties for the negative externalities and have become something of an informal tax on land betterment. In a review of housing supply for the government, economist Kate Barker recommended that as a solution planning obligations should be scaled back and restricted to dealing with the mitigation of development impact and to agreeing affordable housing contributions. A tax – planning gain supplement – would be used to extract some of the windfall gain and the majority of the money returned to local authorities to finance strategic infrastructure requirements. The Government has accepted Barker’s recommendations and consulted on the proposed planning gain supplement (PGS), indicating that it might well come into force in the near future. The consultation documents reveals that open space would continue to be considered under planning obligations but leisure facilities would come under the scope of the PGS

### **Policy assessment and guidance for the implementation of Section 106 contributions**

12.37 The following flow diagram is based on the review of guidance and provides a step-by-step process for determining developer contributions. This is intended as a guide for Huntingdonshire to develop the process for determining developer contributions and forms the structure of the rest of this section.



Figure 16.1 - 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**

12.38 The first key stage detailed within the flow diagram is to determine whether the dwellings proposed are required to provide open space and what types of open space, sport and recreation facilities will require developer contributions. The following table provides a summary of the approach taken by other authorities:

<b>Number and type of dwellings</b>	
Tynedale Council	Applied to all new dwellings. Requirements for outdoor sports are only applied to three dwelling developments and above.
Mid Devon Borough Council	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.
Fareham Borough Council	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, 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.
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	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

<b>Number and type of dwellings</b>	
Council	for facilities such as footpath lighting.

- 12.39 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.
- 12.40 The existing approach undertaken by Huntingdonshire District Council is that major residential developments should normally make provision for open space / community recreational facilities (excluding incidental open space) at least commensurate with the standards set out in the recreation and leisure chapter of the local plan. Policy R7 sets out how on new development sites, provision for recreation and open space will normally be made on site, having regard to the scale of the development and in accordance with recognised standards. Thresholds have been identified of 10 dwellings and 30 dwellings towards children’s play space and formal adult and youth playspace respectively. Local Plan Alteration policy OB1 states the nature and scale of obligations, providing the background for commuted sum payments for small sites as well as major residential developments.
- 12.41 Based on the review of existing guidance, it is recommended that the following approach be taken:

- continue to base the nature and scale of obligations sought from development on the size of development and the impact on open space, sport and recreation provision ensuring that all developments (1 dwelling +) could make a proportionate contribution if in an area has a quantity deficiency within the relevant accessibility catchment. This may be particularly important in the rural area where the size of developments will be relatively small to mitigate against the cumulative impact.
- the Council require developers to provide and / or contribute towards all typologies of open space, sport and recreation facilities set out in the PPG17 audit which have their own local standards
- 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 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 follows:

<b>Category</b>	<b>Open Market Housing/Flats</b>	<b>Affordable Housing</b>	<b>Housing for the Active Elderly</b>
Playing fields	✓	✓	X
Local Play Areas	✓	✓	X
Neighbourhood Play Areas	✓	✓	X

Category	Open Market Housing/Flats	Affordable Housing	Housing for the Active Elderly
Community centres/Meeting halls	✓	✓	✓
Local parks	✓	✓	✓
District parks	✓	✓	✓
Swimming pools	✓	✓	✓
Sports halls	✓	✓	✓
Allotments	✓	✓	✓

- including a statement to clearly set out the approach to affordable housing.

12.42 The fact that industrial development of a strategic scale is included is in line with paragraph 20 of PPG17 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.

<b>PLAN1</b>	Ensure developer contributions can be made to all dwellings where necessary in local policies (i.e. one dwelling and above)
<b>PLAN2</b>	Devise a matrix approach to clearly state the types of housing mix that will be required to contribute to open space
<b>PLAN3</b>	Include a statement to clearly set out the approach to affordable housing
<b>PLAN4</b>	Apply the policy to commercial development
<b>PLAN5</b>	Require developer contributions for all types of open space, sport and recreation facilities covered in the PPG17 audit (with local standards)

- **determine whether, after the development, there will be sufficient quantity of open spaces within recommended distances of the development site, including on site, to meet the needs of existing and new residents based on the proposed local standards**
- **does the quality of open spaces within the recommended distances match the standard in the Assessment.**

12.43 The next main step determines whether there is an existing open space need that if there is no quantitative deficiency identified leads to the next step of identifying a qualitative deficiency. The following table provides a summary of the approach taken by other authorities:

<b>Open space need?</b>	
Tynedale Council	An assessment of open space, sport and recreation has been completed and identifies where there are deficiencies in existing provision. The authority area is divided into 21 sub areas and the strategy concludes that there are deficiencies in each of these sub areas. The implication is that there would always be a requirement for open space contribution
Leicester City Council, Stockport Metropolitan Council and Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council explicitly state that whether an open space contribution should be sought depends on the level of existing provision, determined by:	
Leicester City Council	The existing amount of open space, quality, scale and nature of housing development
Stockport Metropolitan Borough Council	If existing provision exceeds the minimum requirement and can meet increased demand
Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council	An over-supply of public open space is in easy walking distance (400m) of a proposed development
Fareham BC	Normally only seek to secure provision of open space where it can be demonstrated that the proposed development will exacerbate or create a deficit in provision based on the Open Space Survey and catchments of: children’s equipped and informal is on a ward basis and outdoor sports facilities and recreation facilities is based on catchments of the 4 main built up areas. The only exception is sites accommodating over 200 dwellings where the site will be expected to include play spaces regardless of ward totals.

12.44 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 deters away 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. In addition, by applying the open space study it is likely that if there is no quantitative or accessibility deficiency there is likely to be a qualitative deficiency that needs to be addressed.

12.45 To identify the level of quantitative, qualitative and accessibility deficiency within the area of the development, the PPG17 study should be applied for each of the types of open space. In simple terms, this is as follows (a worked example is shown later in this section):

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- 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.

12.46 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 developer contributions to enhance the quality of open spaces within that accessibility threshold.

- where it has been decided that a contribution 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.

<b>PLAN6</b>	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
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- **determine whether the open space can/should be provided on site.**

12.47 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.

12.48 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.

<b>When should development be provided off-site?</b>	
Tynedale Council	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

<b>When should development be provided off-site?</b>	
Fareham Borough Council	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.
Milton Keynes Council	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.
Mid Devon District Council	On-site provision is usually required when a development is 25 dwellings plus. There is a general preference for on-site provision.
Cambridge City Council	Any shortfall in provision, which cannot be accommodated on site, should be met through commuted payments and be spent on identified projects
Stockport Metropolitan Borough Council	Commuted payments are acceptable for small scale developments and funds will be held in an interest earning account until enough is accumulated for improvements
Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council	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
Reading Borough Council	In most cases, it is more appropriate to seek off-site contributions, especially small developments

<b>PLAN7</b>	Identify appropriate minimum size thresholds for on site provision for each typology. 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.
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12.49 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. Some different approaches to where off-site contributions should be spent are outlined below:

<b>Where should the off-site contribution be spent?</b>	
Fareham Borough Council	Open Space Survey provides a framework for open space requirements. SPG sets out a list of appropriate items developer contributions can be spent on.
Mid Devon District Council	<p>Catchment areas are used to ensure provision is related to the development. Contributions generated within a catchment area will be spent within a catchment area. Catchments are based on the grouping of parishes, based on: anticipated rate of future residential development in an area and the location of existing facilities that could be extended or improved and the potential locations for the provision of new facilities.</p> <p>The SPG advocates the use of a pooled fund for these catchment areas.</p>
Leicester City Council	For larger developments, the Council will be able to indicate exactly where any contributions made by developers will be spent
	Smaller developments – may be appropriate to pay into an area based open space fund. Fund will be ring-fenced within the area based budget
Stockport Metropolitan Borough Council	Funds will be used within the area easily accessible from the funding development. For children’s/casual play space this will be within up to 1000 metres from the funding development
Reading Borough Council	Open Spaces Audit and Strategy points to a need for qualitative improvements to meet the needs of both existing population and those occupying new developments.
	Developments will contribute separately towards improvements on the basis of needs in relation to borough wide facilities and the needs in respect of smaller localised facilities. Capital expenditure to meet the needs of existing and future population is a key requirement in Reading and as such new developments should make contributions towards identified areas of open space that serve the whole borough. Additional contributions are also required to improve play and other facilities in the local area. This will include specific works or improvements set out in the Open Space, Sport and Recreation Strategy or other approved programmes.
Salford City Council	When identifying a suitable site, the City Council will look at the availability of sites within a reasonable walking distance of the development. Where local play facilities are deemed adequate, the City Council will seek the contribution for alternative outdoor recreation needs in the area.



- **Calculate the recommended open space contribution for new open spaces.**

12.50 The level of developer contributions for off-site provision will depend on whether it includes the costs of land acquisition. Standard costs towards the enhancement of existing open space and provision of new open spaces (across all typologies) should be clearly identified and revised annually.

12.51 The cost of open space can be difficult to determine based on what elements of open space provision to include within the costing, for example, whether the cost of a facility should include site preparation, e.g. levelling, drainage, special surfaces and what ancillary facilities to include within costings, what level of equipment and land costs. The costs should be based on local costings but a guide can be found on the Sport England website: [http://www.sportengland.org/kitbag\\_fac\\_costs.doc](http://www.sportengland.org/kitbag_fac_costs.doc) and the NPFA Cost Guides for Play and Sport.

**For each typology, the size of provision or contributions should be based on:**

**number of people (in terms of increased demand over capacity within accessibility catchment of the development) x quantity provision per person x cost of provision per hectare**

12.52 A worked example is provided as follows:

***Worked Example: contribution towards amenity greenspace***

- a housing development for 7 dwellings has been submitted to the Council. The development consists of 3 four-bed dwellings, 3 three-bed dwellings and 1 two-bed dwellings. 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 0.7 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 1.12 per 1000 population. Multiplied by the total population (823) produced a requirement for 0.92 hectares of amenity green space. The existing amount of amenity green space is 0.8 hectares.
- 0.8 hectares of amenity green space within 480 metres is a lower level of provision than the required 0.92. 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 0.001 hectares per person multiplied by 23 people, producing a requirement for 0.03 hectares. Given the shortfall in provision is 0.12 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.

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- reference should be made to the agreed minimum size standards to determine whether to 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.
- 12.53 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 per hectare on the basis of a site being 0.2ha (2000m<sup>2</sup>) in size. The cost per hectares is therefore £41,000.
  - the agreed local standard for provision is 1.12 ha per 1000 population, or 0.00112 ha per person
  - using the formula set out above, the contribution required for a 7 dwelling development is:
  - 23 (number of people in development in terms of increased demand over capacity within accessibility catchment of the development) X 0.00112 (requirement per person) X 41000 (cost of provision per hectare)
  - the contribution required towards amenity greenspace is £1056.16.
- 12.54 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.
- 12.55 The study can be used as a tool to determine the level of open space and indoor facilities required in major new urban extensions as well as within smaller new housing developments. The existing level of provision is measured against the projected population within Appendix H which shows how much open space should be provided to meet the open space standards, however this includes existing deficiencies.
- 12.56 The worked example above can be applied to an urban extension area to calculate the required level of open space and indoor facilities for the overall area as part of site specific proposals in the LDF.

<b>PLAN8</b>	Continue to use a formula for the calculation of the provision of open space requirement. Update costings regularly and expand to include all open space types.
<b>PLAN9</b>	Utilise the methodology above to assess the impact of major growth against agreed quantity standards to proactively plan for emerging open space, sport and recreation needs.

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12.57 Maintenance sums are also an important element of any section 106 process. A review of the approach taken by other authorities is as follows:

<b>Maintenance</b>	
Tynedale Council	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
Fareham Borough Council	<p>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)</p> <p>Maintenance rates are worked out on a number of beds/open space type basis and are updated annually</p>
Milton Keynes Council	<p>Developer will be required to maintain the site for a period of 12 months after completion.</p> <p>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.</p>
Reading Borough Council	<p>The Council will normally adopt and maintain properly laid out open space, subject to a commuted sum payment.</p> <p>The commuted sum payment should cover 20 years of maintenance costs</p> <p>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.</p>
Harrogate Borough Council	<p>Where the provision of open space is principally of benefit to the occupants of a proposed development rather than the wider public, the developer will normally be required to pay a commuted sum to cover the cost of future maintenance</p> <p>New provision of open space should be maintained by the developer for 12 months and will be transferred to the Council after this period with the commuted sum</p>

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<b>Maintenance</b>	
	Revise figures annually for the cost of maintaining different types of open space. Total commuted payment is calculated by adding 10% contingencies to the annual costs and multiplied by the number of years
	Maintenance is required for a period of 5 years
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.

12.58 Where appropriate new developments should therefore make contributions towards the capital expenditure required to provide/enhance areas of open space and for its on going maintenance.

12.59 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 – 20 years;

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- 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.

<b>PLAN10</b>	Set out maintenance (commuted sums) required and update these regularly.
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### Summary and recommendations

- 12.60 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.
- 12.61 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.
- 12.62 The use of a standard formula for open space provision in new housing developments based on the cost of provision will greatly aid the negotiation process and provide a transparent approach in line with Circular 05/2005.
- 12.63 There are many other factors to consider in administering planning obligations such as determining occupancy rates, costings and on versus off site provision. The Council's approach should be set out clearly within a Supplementary Planning Document. This has already been pinpointed in the Local Development Scheme.
- 12.64 Maintenance sums are an important element of open space provision. It is not considered reasonable to expect maintenance in perpetuity, however the authorities reviewed are requiring between 10 and 20 years maintenance.
- 12.65 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.
- 12.66 The recommendations for the planning overview section are as follows:

### Summary of recommendations

<b>PLAN1</b>	Ensure developer contributions can be made for all dwellings where necessary in local policies (ie one dwelling and above)
<b>PLAN2</b>	Devise a matrix approach to clearly state the types of housing mix that will be required to contribute to open space
<b>PLAN3</b>	Include a statement to clearly set out the approach to affordable housing

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<b>PLAN4</b>	Apply the policy to commercial development
<b>PLAN5</b>	Require developer contributions for all types of open space, sport and recreation facilities covered in the PPG17 audit (with local standards)
<b>PLAN6</b>	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
<b>PLAN7</b>	Identify appropriate minimum size thresholds for on site provision for each typology. 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.
<b>PLAN8</b>	Continue to use a formula for the calculation of the provision of open space requirement. Update costings regularly and expand to include all open space types.
<b>PLAN9</b>	Utilise the methodology above to assess the impact of major growth against agreed quantity standards to proactively plan for emerging open space, sport and recreation needs.
<b>PLAN10</b>	Set out maintenance (commuted sums) required and update these regularly.

**Quantity**

The open space audit developed enables an understanding of the quantity of provision of each type of open space in each area of Huntingdonshire. The collection of this level of detail enables the calculation of the provision of each type of open space per 1000 population. This information is provided within typology specific sections and is also summarised within appendix H1.

In order to ensure that any standards set are reflective of local community needs and opinions, key themes emerging from consultations in each geographical area relating to the quantity of each type are analysed. Key messages are summarised in section 4, and the key issues for each type of open space are assessed within typology specific sections. Local standards are subsequently set taking into account the current level of provision compared to the perceived community need.

The overall aim of the quantity assessment is to:

- provide an understanding of the adequacy of existing provision for each type of open space in the district
- establish areas of the district suffering from deficiency of provision of each type of open space
- provide a guide to developers as to the amount of open space expected to be provided in conjunction with new developers.

Provision standards should then be applied, in conjunction with accessibility and quality standards to determine shortfalls, surpluses and priority areas.

The table below summarises the process undertaken to set local quantity standards. The application of this process for each type of open space in Huntingdonshire can be found in appendix H.

**Table 2.1 – The key stages of the setting local quantity standards**

<b>Process Stage</b>	<b>Methodology</b>
National Standards	Analysis of any existing national standards for each typology. These are usually provided by national organisations e.g. National Playing Fields Association for playing pitches. It is important to ensure that national standards are taken into account as part of determination of local standards.
Existing Local Standards	Consideration of existing local standards for each typology that are currently applied by the Council. These include standards set out in the local plan and in other strategies and documents.
Current Provision (per 1,000 population)	Assessment of the current quantity of provision within the local authority area as a whole and within each of the 5 analysis areas.
Benchmarking	Figures detailing actual provision and subsequent local standards set by PMP within other green space and open space projects to provide a comparison benchmark when setting local standards.

## **APPENDIX E – SETTING AND APPLYING STANDARDS**

Consultation (household survey)	Consideration of the findings of the household survey with regards the quantity of provision for each type of open space. This analysis provides a robust indication (at the district wide 95% confidence level) of public perception of the existing level of provision of all different types of open spaces.
Consultation Comments (Quantity)	PPG 17 indicates that where local provision is regarded as inadequate it is important to establish why this is the case. A feeling of deficiency can sometimes be due to qualitative issues of existing open space sites rather than actual quantity issues. It is therefore important to assess findings of both the household survey in addition to the emerging issues from the more qualitative consultations such as workshops and drop in sessions in order to gain a thorough understanding of local community need and perception.
PMP Recommendation	PMP recommendation of a local standard. The standard is based on an assessment of the local community need and perceptions of the adequacy of existing levels of provision across the district.
PMP Justification	Full justification for the recommended local standard based on qualitative and quantitative consultations are provided for each typology.

### **Accessibility**

Accessibility is a key assessment of open space sites. Without accessibility for the public the provision of good quality or good quantity of open space sites would be of very limited value. The overall aim of accessibility standards should be to identify:

- how accessible sites are
- how far people are willing to travel to reach open space
- areas of the district deficient in provision (identified through the application of local standards).

Similar to quantity standards, accessibility standards should be derived from an understanding of the community views, particularly with regards to the maximum distance that members of the public are willing to travel.

Distance thresholds (i.e. the maximum distance that typical users can reasonably be expected to travel to each type of provision using different modes of transport) are a very useful planning tool especially when used in association with a Geographical Information System (GIS). PPG17 encourages any new open space sites or enhancement of existing sites to be accessible by environmentally friendly forms of transport such as walking, cycling and public transport. There is a real desire to move away from reliability on the car.

Accessibility standards are set in the form of a distance in metres where walk is considered to be the most appropriate mode of travel, and a drive time where driving to the open space site would be more appropriate.

The table below outlines the key stages in setting local accessibility standards.



**Key stages in setting an accessibility standard**

<b>Process Stage</b>	<b>Methodology</b>
National Standards	Analysis of any existing accessibility standards for each typology.
Existing Local Standards	Consideration of existing local standards for each typology that are currently applied by the Council. These include standards set out in the local plan and in other strategies and documents.
Benchmarking	Figures detailing local standards set by PMP within other green space and open space projects to provide a comparison benchmark when setting local standards.
Consultation (household survey)	Consideration of the findings of the household survey with regards the distance expected to travel to each type of open space and the 75% threshold. The use of the 75% threshold is consistent with recommendations in PPG17 and is used to ensure that extreme responses are discounted.
Consultation Comments (Quantity)	Findings of qualitative consultations regarding access to open space sites and the distances people expect to travel to reach open space sites.
PMP Recommendation	PMP recommendation for a local accessibility standard. The standard is based on an assessment of the local community need and perceptions of the adequacy of existing levels of provision across the district.
PMP Justification	Full justification for the recommended local standard based on consultations and local expectations are provided for each typology.

**Quality**

Quality and value of open space are fundamentally different and can sometimes be completely unrelated. An example of this could be:

- a high quality open space is provided but is completely inaccessible. Its usage is therefore restricted and its value to the public limited; or
- a low quality open space may be used every day by the public or have some significant wider benefit such as biodiversity or educational use and therefore has a relatively high value to the public.

The overall aim of a quality assessment should be to identify deficiencies in quality and key quality factors that need to be improved within:

- the geographical areas of the district
- specific types of open space
- specific quality factors that ensure a high quality open space

This enables resources to be concentrated on areas that need to be improved.

## **APPENDIX E – SETTING AND APPLYING STANDARDS**

In line with PPG17, quality visions for each type of open space have been set. These visions should represent an ideal quality of provision for each space within that category and should be the target for future improvement.

The quality visions set are intended as an aspirational target, reflecting the key quality features that the community wants. The vision should be applied both to existing open spaces and also as a benchmark when designing and creating new areas of open space.

It is reflective of both local community needs and desires. The key steps to setting a quality vision are set out below:

### **Setting a quality vision**

<b>Process Stage</b>	<b>Methodology</b>
National Standards	Analysis of any existing qualitative standards for each typology.
Existing Local Standards	Consideration of existing local standards for each typology that are currently applied by the Council. These include standards set out in the local plan and in other strategies and documents.
Consultation (household survey)	Consideration of the findings of the household survey with regards the key quality features expected in each type of open space and consideration of the key issues experienced at existing open space sites
Consultation Comments (Quantity)	Findings of qualitative consultations regarding the importance of different quality features at each site, in addition to problems experienced at current sites used
PMP Recommendation	PMP recommendation for a local quality vision. The standard is based on an assessment of the local community need and the key features that people like to see for each different type of open space.
PMP Justification	Full justification for the recommended local standard based on consultations and local expectations are provided for each typology.

**Wider Benefits of Open Space**

<p><b>Social</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• providing safe outdoor areas that are available to all ages of the local population to mix and socialise</li> <li>• social cohesion - potential to engender a sense of community ownership and pride</li> <li>• providing opportunities for community events, voluntary activities and charitable fund raising</li> <li>• providing opportunities to improve health and take part in a wide range of outdoor sports and activities.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Recreational</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• providing easily accessible recreation areas as an alternative to other more chargeable leisure pursuits</li> <li>• offers wide range of leisure opportunities from informal leisure and play to formal events, activities and games.</li> <li>• open spaces, particularly parks, are the first areas where children come into contact with the natural world</li> <li>• play opportunities are a vital factor in the development of children.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Environmental</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• reducing motor car dependence to access specific facilities</li> <li>• providing habitats for wildlife as an aid to local biodiversity</li> <li>• helping to stabilise urban temperatures and humidity</li> <li>• providing opportunities for the recycling of organic materials</li> <li>• providing opportunities to reduce transport use through the provision of local facilities.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Educational</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• valuable educational role in promoting an understanding of nature and the opportunity to learn about the environment</li> <li>• open spaces can be used to demonstrate virtues of sustainable development and health awareness.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Economic</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• adding value to surrounding property, both commercial and residential, thus increasing local tax revenues</li> <li>• contribution to urban regeneration and renewal projects</li> <li>• contributing to attracting visitors and tourism, including using the parks as venues for major events</li> <li>• encouraging employment and inward investment</li> <li>• complementing new development with a landscape that enhances its value.</li> </ul>

**OPEN SPACE TYPES AND DESCRIPTIONS – APPENDIX B**

Type		Definition	Primary Purpose/Examples
<b>Informal Open Space</b>	<b>Parks and Gardens</b>	Includes urban parks, formal gardens and country parks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>informal recreation</li> <li>community events.</li> </ul>
	<b>Natural and Semi-Natural Greenspaces</b>	Includes publicly accessible woodlands, urban forestry, scrub, grasslands (e.g. downlands, commons, meadows), wetlands, open and running water and wastelands.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>wildlife conservation,</li> <li>biodiversity</li> <li>environmental education and awareness.</li> </ul>
	<b>Amenity Greenspace</b>	Most commonly but not exclusively found in housing areas. Includes informal recreation green spaces and village greens.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>informal activities close to home or work</li> <li>enhancement of the appearance of residential or other areas</li> </ul>
<b>Provision for Children and Young People</b>	<b>Provision for Children and Young People</b>	Areas designed primarily for play and social interaction involving children and young people.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>equipped play areas</li> <li>ball courts</li> <li>outdoor basketball hoop areas</li> <li>skateboard areas</li> <li>teenage shelters and 'hangouts'</li> </ul>
<b>Outdoor Sports Facilities</b>	<b>Outdoor Sports Facilities</b>	Natural or artificial surfaces either publicly or privately owned used for sport and recreation. Includes school playing fields.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>outdoor sports pitches</li> <li>tennis and bowls</li> <li>golf courses</li> <li>athletics</li> <li>playing fields (including school playing fields)</li> <li>water sports</li> </ul>
<b>Allotments</b>	<b>Allotments</b>	Opportunities for those people who wish to do so to grow their own produce as part of the long-term promotion of sustainability, health and social inclusion. May also include urban farms.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>growing vegetables and other fruit</li> </ul> <p>N.B. does not include private gardens</p>

There are a number of types of land use that have not been included in this assessment of open space in conjunction with PPG17, namely:

- grass verges on the side of roads
- small insignificant areas of grassland or trees – for example on the corner of the junction of 2 roads
- SLOAP (space left over after planning i.e in and around a block of flats)
- farmland and farm tracks
- private roads and private gardens.

As a result of the multifunctionality of open spaces there is a requirement to classify each open space by its 'primary purpose' as recommended in PPG17 so that it is counted only once in the audit.

This should be taken into account when considering additional provision. For example - in areas of deficiency of amenity greenspace, playing pitches may exist that provide the function of required amenity greenspace but its primary purpose is as an outdoor sports facility.

## What do you think of open space, sport and recreational facilities in Huntingdonshire District?

Dear Resident,

Huntingdonshire District Council is working in partnership with PMP, a specialist sport and leisure consultancy to undertake an assessment of open space across the District. The study will look at how open spaces, sport and recreation facilities are currently being used and whether they meet the needs of residents both now and in the future.

We very much **hope you can spare 15 minutes to complete the attached survey**. It will be used to help us to continue to improve our existing open spaces, sport and recreation facilities and make sure future provision is based on your needs and views.

Your household is one of 5000 randomly selected to provide us with an insight into residents' opinions. Even if you don't use open spaces or sport and recreation facilities we are keen to hear your views. All the answers you give will be treated as confidential. When completing the survey please answer the questions in relation to the open spaces near to your home.

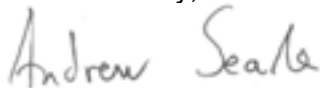
**The survey is quick and easy to answer.** Please try to answer as many questions as possible by placing a tick in the boxes or writing your answer in the space provided. Please return your survey even if you are unable to answer all of the questions, as any information you provide will be of great use to us.

We would like to hear the views of the widest possible range of people. Therefore **please ask the person in your household who will next have their birthday to complete the survey**. This includes children aged 10 and over.

If you have any questions or need any help completing the questionnaire please phone Andrew Searle at PMP on 0207 5343947. Alternatively, you write to Andrew Searle or email your views to [openspaceinhunts@pmpconsult.com](mailto:openspaceinhunts@pmpconsult.com)

Please return your completed survey in the pre-paid envelope provided by Friday 10<sup>th</sup> March 2006. Many thanks for your help with this important study. **There is a £50 Marks and Spencer voucher prize available to those who complete the survey (Huntingdonshire District Council Councillors, employees and their family members are not eligible to win this prize).**

Yours sincerely,



**Andrew Searle**  
**Research Consultant**  
**PMP**

✂

**FOR YOUR CHANCE TO WIN A £50 Marks and Spencer voucher,**

Please complete (and enclose with your completed questionnaire in the pre-paid envelope):

**Name:** .....

**Address:**.....  
.....  
.....

**Telephone Number:**.....

## DLTR

### Green Spaces, Better Places - The Final Report of the Urban Green Spaces Taskforce, DTLR (2002)

The main messages to emerge from Green Spaces, Better Places are:

- urban parks and open spaces remain popular, despite a decline in the quality as well as quantitative elements
- open spaces make an important contribution to the quality of life in many areas and help to deliver wider social, economic and environmental benefits
- planners and planning mechanisms need to take better account of the need for parks and open spaces including related management and maintenance issues
- parks and open spaces should be central to any vision of sustainable modern towns and cities
- strong civic and local pride and responsibility are necessary to achieve the vision reinforced by a successful green spaces strategy
- there is a need for a more co-ordinated approach at the national level to guide local strategies.



### Living Places: Cleaner, Safer, Greener ODPM (October 2002)

The Government stated that parks and green spaces need more visible champions and clearer structures for co-ordinating policy and action better at all levels.

Several existing national bodies have responsibilities or programmes with impact on various aspects of urban green spaces including English Heritage, Sport England, Groundwork, English Nature, the Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment (CABE), the Countryside Agency and the Forestry Commission.

Instead of setting up a new body, the Government stated it would take action on three levels to improve co-ordination of policy and action for urban parks and green spaces. It will:

- provide a clearer national policy framework
- invite CABE to set up a new unit for urban spaces (CABE Space)
- encourage a strategic partnership to support the work of the new unit and inform national policy and local delivery.



**Improving urban parks, play areas and green space, DTLR (May 2002)**

In May 2002 the DTLR produced this linked research report to Green Spaces, Better Places which looked at patterns of use, barriers to open space and the wider role of open space in urban regeneration.

The vital importance of parks and other urban green spaces in enhancing the urban environment and the quality of city life has been recognised in both the Urban Taskforce report and the Urban White Paper.



**Wider Value of Open Space**

There are clear links demonstrating how parks and other green spaces meet wider council policy objectives linked to other agendas, like education, diversity, health, safety, environment, jobs and regeneration can help raise the political profile and commitment of an authority to green space issues. In particular they:

- contribute significantly to social inclusion because they are free and accessible to all
- can become a centre of community spirit
- contribute to child development through scope for outdoor, energetic and imaginative play
- offer numerous educational opportunities
- provide a range of health, environmental and economic benefits.

The report also highlights major issues in the management, funding and integration of open spaces into the wider context of urban renewal and planning:

**Community Involvement** - Community involvement in local parks can lead to increased use, enhancement of quality and richness of experience and, in particular, can ensure that the facilities are suited to local needs.

**Resources** - The acknowledged decline in the quality of care of the urban green space resource in England can be linked to declining local authority green space budgets but in terms of different external sources for capital development, the Heritage Lottery Fund and Section 106 Agreements are seen as the most valuable.

**Partnerships** - between a local authority and community groups, funding agencies and business can result in significant added value, both in terms of finances and quality of green space.

**Urban Renewal** - Four levels of integration of urban green space into urban renewal can be identified, characterised by an increasing strategic synergy between environment, economy and community. They are:



- attracting inward economic investment through the provision of attractive urban landscapes
- unforeseen spin-offs from grassroots green space initiatives
- parks as flagships in neighbourhood renewal
- strategic, multi-agency area based regeneration, linking environment and economy.

## Sport England

### Planning for Open Space, Sport England (Sept 2002)

The main messages from Sport England within this document are:

- Sport England's policy on planning applications for development of playing fields (A Sporting Future for the Playing Fields of England) provides 5 exceptions to its normal stance of opposing any loss of all or part of such facilities and are reflected in PPG 17 (paragraphs 10-15)
- Sport England must be consulted on development proposals affecting playing fields at any time in the previous 5 years or is identified as a playing field in a development plan
- it is highly likely that planning inspectors will no longer accept a Six Acre Standard approach in emerging development plans and therefore increasing the importance of setting local standards
- in undertaking a playing pitch assessment as part of an overall open space assessment, local authorities will need to consider the revised advice and methodology '*Towards a Level Playing Field: A manual for the production of Playing Pitch Strategies*'.



### A Sporting Future for the Playing Fields of England / Playing Fields for Sport Revisited, Sport England (2000)

These documents provide Sport England's planning policy statement on playing fields. It acknowledges that playing fields:

- are one of the most important resources for sport in England as they provide the space which is required for the playing of team sports on outdoor pitches
- as open space particularly in urban areas are becoming an increasingly scarce resource
- can provide an important landscape function, perform the function of a strategic gap or provide a resource for other community activities and informal recreation.



## CABE Space

CABE Space is part of the Commission for the Architecture and the Built Environment (CABE) and is publicly funded by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM). CABE Space aims :

*“to bring excellence to the design, management and maintenance of parks and public space in towns and cities.”*



Through their work, they encourage people to think holistically about green space, and what it means for the health and well being of communities, routes to school and work, and recreation through play and sport. Their ultimate goal is to ensure that people in England have easy access to well designed and well looked after public space.

Lessons learnt for some of CABE Space's case studies include:

- strategic vision is essential
- political commitment is essential
- think long-term
- start by making the case for high quality green spaces in-house (persuading other departments is key – high priority)
- a need to market parks and green spaces
- a need to manage resources more efficiently
- work with others - projects are partnerships
- keep good records: monitor investments and outcomes
- consult widely and get public support for your work

## Green Space Strategies – a good practice guide CABE Space (May 2004)

The guidance draws on the principles of the Government's Planning Policy Guidance Note 17 and will help contribute to national objectives for better public spaces, focusing on three broad stages in producing a green space strategy.

- **Stage 1: Preliminary activities**
  - provides the foundation of a successful strategy
- **Stage 2: Information gathering and analysis**
  - provides the objective and subjective data necessary to make informed judgements
- **Stage 3: Strategy production**
  - preparing a consultation draft and final strategy drawing on consultation responses



The document demonstrates why a green space strategy is important and the potential opportunity and benefits that it can provide, including:

- reinforcing local identity and enhancing the physical character of an area, so shaping existing and future development
- maintaining the visual amenity and increasing the attractiveness of a locality to create a sense of civic pride
- securing external funding and focusing capital and revenue expenditure cost-effectively
- improving physical and social inclusion including accessibility, particularly for young, disabled and older people
- protecting and enhancing levels of biodiversity and ecological habitats

### **Is the grass greener...? Learning from the international innovations in urban green space management, CABE Space (July 2004)**

This is an international perspective using examples of good and bad practice that demonstrate the many issues common to English local authorities that international cities also face and providing practical solutions that have combat the problems overseas.

The guide focuses in particular on aspects of management and maintenance practice, providing a series of challenging and inspiring solutions to common issues that are not dissimilar to current English practice.

#### **The problem in England!**

The document describes the problems faced by green space and how English towns and cities are often criticised for:

- **being poorly maintained** – uncoordinated development and maintenance activities
- **being insecure** – the hostile nature of many green spaces
- **lacking a coherent approach to their management** – conflicting interventions by a multitude of agencies, without clear overall responsibility
- **offering little to their users** – lacking in facilities and amenities and being a haven for anti-social behaviour
- **being poorly designed** – unwelcoming to people, created with poor quality materials

### **Manifesto for better public spaces, CABE Space (2003)**

There is huge national demand for better quality parks and public spaces. Surveys repeatedly show how much the public values them, while research reveals how closely the quality of public spaces links to levels of health, crime and the quality of life in every



neighbourhood. CABA Space 'manifesto for better public spaces' explains the 10 things we must do to achieve this:

- 1) ensure that creating and caring for well-designed parks, streets and other public spaces is a national and local political priority
- 2) encourage people of all ages – including children, young people and retired people – to play and active role in deciding what our parks and public spaces should be like and how they should be looked after
- 3) ensure that everyone understands the importance of good design to the vitality of our cities, towns and suburbs and that designers, planners and managers all have the right skills to create high quality public spaces
- 4) ensure that the care of parks and public spaces is acknowledged to be an essential service
- 5) work to increase public debate about the issue of risk in outside spaces, and will encourage people to make decisions that give more weight to the benefits of interesting spaces, rather than to the perceived risks
- 6) work to ensure that national and local health policy recognises the role of high quality parks and public space in helping people to become physically active, to recover from illness, and to increase their general health and well-being
- 7) work to ensure that good paths and seating, play opportunities, signs in local languages, cultural events and art are understood to be essential elements of great places – not optional extras that can be cut from the budget
- 8) encourage people who are designing and managing parks and public spaces to protect and enhance biodiversity and to promote its enjoyment to local people
- 9) seek to ensure that public spaces feel safe to use by encouraging councils to adopt a positive approach to crime prevention through investment in good design and management of the whole network or urban green spaces
- 10) encourage people from all sectors of the community to give time to improving their local environment. If we work together we can transform our public spaces and help to improve everyone's quality of life.

### **The Value of Public Space, CABA Space (March 2004)**

CABA Space market how high quality parks and public spaces create economic, social and environmental value, as well as being beneficial to physical and mental health, children and young people and a variety of other external issues. Specific examples are used to illustrate the benefits and highlight the issues arising on the value of public space :

- (a) The economic value of public spaces - A high quality public environment is an essential part of any regeneration strategy and can impact positively on the local economy. For example - property prices
- (b) The impact on physical and mental health - Research has shown that well maintained public spaces can help to



- improve physical and mental health encouraging more people to become active.
- (c) Benefits and children and young people - Good quality public spaces encourage children to play freely outdoors and experience the natural environment, providing children with opportunities for fun, exercise and learning.
  - (d) Reducing crime and fear of crime - Better management of public spaces can help to reduce crime rates and help to allay fears of crime, especially in open spaces.
  - (e) Social dimension of public space - Well-designed and maintained open spaces can help bring communities together, providing meeting places in the right context and fostering social ties.
  - (f) Movement in and between spaces - One of the fundamental functions of public space is to allow people to move around with the challenge of reconciling the needs of different modes of transport.
  - (g) Value from biodiversity and nature - Public spaces and gardens helps to bring important environmental benefits to urban areas, as well as providing an opportunity for people to be close to nature.

## **A Guide to Producing Park and Green Space Management Plans, CABE Space (May 2004)**

A primary intention of the guide is to encourage wider use of management plans by dispelling the myth that the creation of a site management plan is an exceptionally difficult task that can be undertaken only by an expert.

The guide presents ideas on benefits of management plans identifying steps to be taken to writing the plan. It also provides a list of subject areas that need to be addressed in any comprehensive management plan. The document has been split into two sections, providing a logical explanation of the management process:



### **Part 1: Planning the plan**

- the who, what, when, where and how questions that may arise in the preparation of a park and green space management plan.

### **Part 2: Content and structure of the plan**

- what information needs to be contained in the final management plan and how should that information be presented?

## **Decent parks? Decent behaviour? – The link between the quality of parks and user behaviour, CABE space (May 2005)**

Based on research that supports public consultation that poor maintenance of parks, in turn, attracts anti-social behaviour. Encouragingly it provides examples of places where a combination of good design, management and maintenance has transformed no-go areas back into popular community spaces.



There are nine case studies explored in the report. Below are some of the key elements that have made these parks a better place to be:

- take advantage of the potential for buildings within parks for natural surveillance e.g. from cafes, flats offices
- involve the community early in the process and continually
- involve 'problem' groups as part of the solution where possible and work hard to avoid single group dominance in the park
- provide activities and facilities to ensure young people feel a sense of ownership. Address young peoples fear of crime as well as that if adults

The evidence in this report suggests that parks were in decline and failing to meet customer expectations long before anti-social behaviour started to become the dominant characteristic, however by investing and creating good-quality parks and green spaces, which are staffed and provide a range of attractive facilities for the local community, can be an effective use of resource.

## **External agencies**

There are a number of external agencies that impact on the provision of open space within Huntingdonshire District Council.

### ***English Nature***

English Nature is a government agency concerned with wildlife and geology and is a key partner of the Countryside Agency, which aims to achieve an improved understanding of the relationship between access and nature conservation. English Nature is responsible for selecting and designating Sites of Specific Scientific Interest (SSSI's).

English Nature attempts to:

- facilitate and encourage access to National Nature Reserves
- support initiatives aimed at increasing the quantity and quality of open cohabitats
- monitor the effects of access on wildlife sites across the country
- stress the value of local sites and recommend that local authorities develop partnerships for the provision of local sites and SSSI's.

The English Nature Accessible Natural Greenspace Standards (ANGSt) require:

- that no person should live more than 300m from their nearest area of natural greenspace of at least 2ha in size
- provision of at least 1ha of Local Nature Reserve per 1,000 population
- that there should be at least one accessible 20ha site within 2km from home
- that there should be one accessible 100ha site within 5km
- that there should be one 500ha site within 20 km.

The standards were justified in the following ways:

- everyday contact with nature is important for well-being and quality of life
- everyone should be able to enjoy this contact, in safety, without having to make any special effort or journey to do so
- natural greenspace in towns and cities can play an important role in helping safeguard our national treasure of wildlife and geological features
- accessible natural greenspaces give everyone an excellent chance to learn about nature and help to protect it in practical ways
- adequate provision of vegetated areas helps to ensure that urban areas continue to function ecologically.

In 2001 a review of the standards was commenced as English Nature was concerned to find that its accessible natural green space standards seemed to be little used.

The key recommendations of the review include:

- that **English Nature** should provide additional support to the model by providing practical guidance, implementing an outreach strategy to raise the profile of the model



- that **local authorities should develop green space strategies** as a means of ensuring balanced green space planning, and should set locally appropriated green space standards
- that **central government** should work towards the development of a single framework for integrated green space planning.

### ***The Environment Agency***

The Environment Agency is the leading public body for protecting and improving the environment in England and Wales. Its remit covers air, land and water.

### ***Wildlife Trust***

The Wildlife Trust is the leading conservation charity dedicated exclusively to wildlife. There are 47 county/local Wildlife Trusts, with the Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire, Northamptonshire and Peterborough Trust covering the local area. The Wildlife Trust campaigns for the sensitive and sustainable management of wildlife in the countryside and the urban landscape and manages areas for wildlife and people.

### ***National Children's Bureau – Children's Play Council***

A review of children's play was undertaken between October 2002 and April 2003. This review takes into account the needs, aspirations and "play" of children between the ages of 0 and 16. The report identified four principles of successful projects:

- they are centered on children and young people – it was suggested that the most successful play spaces focus on a neighbourhood rather than catering for a whole town
- they have an attractive location with high quality play opportunities
- they fit in well with local circumstances
- they give both children and young people and parents a sense of security.

In addition, the report promotes the use of school facilities out of hours, as this offers additional play opportunities and space for young people. Young people were questioned as to the type of facility that they would like to see, and it was concluded that young people appreciated both sites that were not staffed by adults and sites where adult helpers were present.

Suggestions for facilities included:

- adventure playgrounds
- play centres
- youth cafes
- bike tracks
- skateparks
- informal shelter and youth shelters.



The report discusses the appropriate size of provision for young people and children, and consultation questioned the benefits of providing a small number of large-scale sites in comparison to a larger number of smaller local sites. Findings indicated that young people prefer a larger number of smaller facilities that are closer to their home where they are able to meet with friends on an informal basis.

	Local Authority Benchmarking		
Typology	LA Name	Provision per 1,000 pop	Local Standard Set
Park and gardens	South Northamptonshire DC	1.18 (Recreational Open Space inc. P&G & AGS)	1.55 (urban inc 0.4 formal)
	East Northamptonshire	0.58	0.6
	Corby BC	2.85	2 (Urban) and 1 pocket park per rural village
	Tamworth BC	0.51	0.6
	Northampton BC	1.79	1.8
	Oswestry BC	0.25	0.35
	Wellingborough	0.7	0.7
	Stevenage BC	0.73	0.73
	Knowsley MBC	0.59	0.8
Natural and Semi-natural	South Northamptonshire DC	0.59	1.15 (Urban) and 0.5 (Rural)
	East Northamptonshire	1.3 (exc. Rural)	1.3 (urban) and 8.79 (rural)
	Corby BC	1.84	1.6 (Urban) and 4.12 (Rural)
	Tamworth BC	2.68	2.7
	Northampton BC	2.44	2.45
	Oswestry BC	3.11	0.9 (urban) / 5 (rural)
	Wellingborough	1.93	1.8 urban / 0.38 rural
	Stevenage BC	1.78	1.78
	Knowsley MBC	1.18	No standard set
Amenity greenspace	South Northamptonshire DC	1.18 (Recreational Open Space inc. P&G & AGS)	1.55 (urban inc 0.4 formal)
	East Northamptonshire	0.72	0.8
	Corby BC	1.4	1.51 (Urban) and 0.37 (Rural)
	Tamworth BC	1.15	1.15
	Northampton BC	1.37	1.07
	Oswestry BC	0.97	1.2 (urban) / 0.5 (rural)
	Wellingborough	1.2	1.6 urban / 0.5 rural
	Stevenage BC	1.09	1.1
	Knowsley MBC	1.31	0.5

<b>Provision for Children and Young People</b>	South Northamptonshire DC	0.85 play areas per 1000 population - CHILDREN 0.13 play areas per 1000 population - YOUNG PEOPLE/TEENAGERS	0.95 play areas (CHILDREN) 0.2 facilities (YOUNG PEOPLE)
	East Northamptonshire	0.07 (Urban) and 0.13 (Rural)	0.1 (Urban) and 0.14 (Rural)
	Corby BC	0.05ha per 1,000 pop (Children) 0.05ha per 1,000 pop (Young People)	0.8 Play areas(Children) 0.35 young people facilities (Young People)
	Tamworth BC	0.27 (number)	0.5 (number)
	Northampton BC	0.02 (Children) 0.01 (Young People)	0.12 (Children) 0.12 (Young People)
	Oswestry BC	0.18	0.3
	Wellingborough	0.55 play areas	0.625 urban / 0.5 rural
	Stevenage BC	1.35 play areas	0.8 play areas (result of rationalisation programme)
	Knowsley MBC	0.03	0.2
<b>Outdoor Sports Facilities</b>	South Northamptonshire DC	2.48	2 (excl. golf courses)
	East Northamptonshire	1.69 (exc. Golf)	1.69 (exc. Golf)
	Corby BC	2.02 (exc. Golf)	1.8 (exc. Golf)
	Tamworth BC	1.92	1.5 (excl golf courses)
	Northampton BC	1.78 (exc. Golf)	1.88
	Oswestry BC	2.69	2.5
	Wellingborough	2.37	2.4
	Stevenage BC	2.2 (excl. golf courses)	2.2
	Knowsley MBC	1.77 (excluding golf courses)	1.85 (exc. Golf courses)

<b>Allotments and Community Gardens</b>	South Northamptonshire DC	0.38	0.383
	East Northamptonshire	0.34	0.34
	Corby BC	0.16	0.15
	Tamworth BC	0.05	0.05
	Northampton BC	0.47	0.2
	Oswestry BC	0.03	0.05
	Wellingborough	0.75	0.38 urban / 1.3 rural
	Stevenage BC	0.17	0.09
	Knowsley MBC	0.03	0.05

## Huntingdonshire District Council – Setting Quantity Standards

Field	Comment
National Standards	Details of any existing national standards for each typology usually provided by national organisations e.g. National Playing Fields Association for playing pitches
Current Provision (per 1,000 population)	This is the current provision in hectares per 1,000 population within the Local Authority area
Existing Local Standards	There maybe some existing local standards that will need to be taken into account and used as a guidance benchmark when setting new local standards
Benchmarking	These are figures detailing actual provision and local standards set by PMP within other green space and open space projects and provide another comparison benchmark when setting local standards for other Local Authorities. This is provided as a separate sheet.
Consultation (too much / about right / not enough)	Some statistical information that will come from the household questionnaire and needs to be applied and reported by analysis area to provide some detailed local analysis.
Consultation Comments (Quantity)	A summary of reasons behind peoples choices of whether they feel the provision is about right or not enough in some areas. PPG 17 indicates that where local provision is regarded as inadequate it is important to establish why this is the case. The feeling of deficiency can sometimes be due to qualitative issues of existing open space sites rather than actual quantitative issues. Any other qualitative consultation / information that has been extracted on local needs in terms of quantity of provision e.g. from neighbourhood drop-in sessions and local strategic documents
PMP Recommendation	PMP recommendation of a local standard for discussion and approval by the client - standard should be in hectares per 1,000 population
PMP Justification	PMP reasoning and justification for the local standard that has been recommended
CLIENT APPROVAL	Client to approve local standard before analysis undertaken - any changes in standards at a later date during the project will impact on re-doing calculations, analysis and report - the standards drive the analysis

**HUNTINGONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL – SETTING QUANTITY STANDARDS  
PARKS AND GARDENS**

<b>National Standards</b>	No National Standards
<b>Current Provision ha per 1,000 population (ha)</b>	0.43 hectares per 1000 population.
<b>Existing Local Standards</b>	None
<b>BENCHMARKING</b>	See attached sheet
<b>Consultation (too much / about right / not enough)</b>	4% - More than enough 61% - About Right 12% - Nearly Enough 18% - Not Enough
<b>Consultation Comments (quantity)</b>	<p>Household survey: Across the district the feeling is that the level of provision of parks and gardens is about right. However nearly one in five people perceived there to be an insufficient quantity of parks and gardens. It is in the rural areas where the largest levels of satisfaction exist, (Ramsey analysis area) and (Yaxley and Sawtry analysis area) where 23% and 31% respectively thought that there were not enough parks and gardens. In St Neots nearly 80% of respondents thought that there was either more than enough or about the right level of provision – this being the highest level of satisfaction.</p> <p>Of those respondents who thought that there was about the right level of provision, a range of reasons were suggested, however a recurring theme was the accessibility of these sites. Those respondents who thought that there was not enough provision mentioned that the level of growth in Huntingdonshire has not been matched by provision of new parks and gardens and many rural respondents sited issues over the distances having to travel to parks and gardens.</p> <p>There is a perceived inequality in the distribution of parks within Huntingdonshire District, with consultees highlighting a lack of provision in Ramsey and Godmanchester. There were many comments made about this during the drop in sessions, particularly in Ramsey, Yaxley and St Neots. Analysis of the existing level of provision highlights that there are currently no formal parks and gardens in the rural areas.</p> <p>User surveys at sites across the District indicated that 45.2% of respondents felt that there was good or excellent amount of open space and 10.8% felt that there was very poor or poor amount of open space.</p> <p>Of those councils responding to the Parish/Town Council Survey, the most frequent rating when asked if they felt that the quantity of informal open space was sufficient was 4 out of 5. The mean score for this question is slightly lower at 2.97.</p>
<b>PMP Recommendation</b>	<b>0.48 hectares per 1,000 population.</b>

<b>(per 1,000 population)</b>	
<b>PMP Justification</b>	<p>There is a strong emphasis on the level of provision being about right with over 60% of respondents to the household questionnaire confirming this. However, there are areas of the district that were perceived to have a lower level of park provision through public consultation. This is reinforced by the audit work that shows no parks and gardens in either Ramsey or Yaxley and Sawtry analysis areas. This would suggest setting a standard above existing provision to ensure that this can be addressed where necessary and appropriate but also supporting a focus on improving the facilities and quality of the existing parks and gardens in areas where provision is above this threshold – notably St Neots which benefits from Priory Park.</p> <p>Given that established open spaces are of high quality and well used, PMP would not propose reducing the standard lower than the existing level of provision. In the application of these standards it is also important to consider the impact of the large parks and gardens such as Hinchingsbrooke Country Park (and other wider strategic sites) which serves both residents in the district and residents travelling from greater distances.</p>
<b>Client Approval</b>	<b>Local Quantity Standard</b>

**HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL – SETTING QUANTITY STANDARDS  
NATURAL AND SEMI-NATURAL**

<b>National Standards</b>	<p>English Nature Accessible Natural Greenspace Standard (ANGSt) recommends at least 2 ha of accessible natural greenspace per 1,000 people based on no-one living more than: 300m from nearest natural greenspace / 2km from a site of 20ha / 5km from a site of 100ha / 10km from a site of 500ha</p> <p>English Nature Accessible Natural Greenspace Standard (ANGSt) recommends 1 ha of LNR per 1,000 population</p>
<b>Current Provision ha per 1,000 population (ha)</b>	0.21 hectares per 1000
<b>Existing Local Standards</b>	None
<b>BENCHMARKING</b>	See attached sheet
<b>Consultation (too much / about right / not enough)</b>	<p>6% - More than enough            51% - About Right            16% - Nearly Enough            21% - Not Enough</p>
<b>Consultation Comments (quantity)</b>	<p>Household survey: Only 57% thought that the level of provision was about right or more than enough, with a significant amount thinking that there was not enough or nearly enough. Levels of satisfaction were higher in St Neots analysis area (where 70% thought there was about right / more than enough). Ramsey analysis area had the highest level of unhappiness about quantity provision with over half (53%) thinking there was nearly enough / not enough – the same figure for Yaxley and Sawtry analysis area was 41%. This suggests that again it is the rural areas where there are perceptions of insufficient provision and people have to travel further to reach natural and semi natural sites.</p> <p>Of those respondents who thought that the level of provision was about right, the reasons given for this answer were far ranging, but the importance of preserving the sites was commonly mentioned. Of those who thought that the level of provision was not enough the level of development in the district was thought to be putting pressure on the existing quantity of natural and semi natural sites. Quality issues were cross-referenced in terms of the wildlife benefits should levels of provision be increased.</p> <p>User surveys at sites across the District indicated that 45.2% of respondents felt that there was good or excellent amount of open space and 10.8% felt that there was very poor or poor amount of open space.</p> <p>Of those councils responding to the Parish/Town Council Survey, the most frequent rating when asked if they felt that the quantity of informal open space was sufficient was 4 out of 5. The mean score for this question is slightly lower at 2.97.</p>



<b>PMP Recommendation (per 1,000 population)</b>	<b>0.23 hectares per 1000</b>
<b>PMP Justification</b>	There was a mixed response in terms of the household questionnaire. The level of satisfaction in St Neots analysis area could be expected given that the level of existing provision in this analysis area (when compared to the other areas of the district) is high - 17.47 hectares of a total of 32.71. The rural analysis areas of Ramsey and Yaxley / Sawtry had no existing provision but clearly the consultation reveals that a significant amount of people (over 20% for all these analysis areas) think that provision is required. This would suggest setting a standard above existing provision to ensure that this can be address where necessary but also supporting a focus on improving the facilities and quality of the existing natural and semi natural areas where provision is above this threshold.
<b>Client Approval</b>	<b>Local Quantity Standard</b>

**HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL – SETTING QUANTITY STANDARDS  
AMENITY GREENSPACE**

<p><b>National Standards</b></p>	<p>NPFA - 6 acre standard (2.43ha) per 1,000 population for 'playing space' consisting of 2 acres (ie 0.81 ha per 1,000 population) for children's playing space - includes areas designated for children and young people and casual or informal playing space within housing areas</p> <p>NPFA - in the past some LA's have added 1 acre (0.4ha) arbitrary to cover 'amenity areas' and 'leisure areas' or something similar that mat not be covered within the NPFA standard. In almost all cases, this additional requirement are intended for residential areas and do not cover open spaces such as parks or allotments</p> <p>LAPs - aged 4-6; 1 min walk or 100m (60m in a straight line); min area size 100msq; LAPs typically have no play equipment and therefore could be considered as amenity greenspace</p>
<p><b>Current Provision ha per 1,000 population (ha)</b></p>	<p>1.09 per 1,000 population.</p>
<p><b>Existing Local Standards</b></p>	<p>None</p>
<p><b>BENCHMARKING</b></p>	<p>See attached sheet</p>
<p><b>Consultation (too much / about right / not enough)</b></p>	<p>5% - More than enough 44% - About Right 15% - Nearly Enough 27% - Not Enough</p>
<p><b>Consultation Comments (quantity)</b></p>	<p>Household survey – There is a fairly mixed response in terms of whether people feel there is enough / not enough Amenity Greenspace with 44% of respondents feeling it is about right versus 27% stating there is not enough. When added to those who feel there is nearly enough provision (42%), the analysis area with the highest degree of satisfaction is St Ives Analysis Area – where 58% thought there was more than enough or about right. The analysis areas with the lowest level of satisfaction were St Neots and Huntingdon / Godmanchester – where 48% thought there was nearly enough / not enough. This highlights that there is little difference between opinions of residents living in market towns and in the more rural areas of the district.</p> <p>Of those respondents that felt there is enough greenspace, there were no common themes, although a number of respondents did comment that although there was a good level of provision, there were issues over the poor maintenance of some sites. Of those that thought there is not enough amenity greenspace, the key themes included the perception that the sites that are provided are too small and often too close the housing development, the gradual loss of sites and the level of facilities provided on site. Some respondents suggested that amenity green spaces should be of sufficient size to be able to provide for children and young people to play. The importance of amenity green space to young people was reiterated with those people who state it is their most commonly used type of open space is that they like the fact it is near their homes and a good place to meet friends. However at the same time they</p>

	<p>state that the play facilities are boring.</p> <p>User surveys at sites across the District indicated that 45.2% of respondents felt that there was good or excellent amount of open space and 10.8% felt that there was very poor or poor amount of open space.</p> <p>Of those councils responding to the Parish/Town Council Survey, the most frequent rating when asked if they felt that the quantity of informal open space was sufficient was 4 out of 5. The mean score for this question is slightly lower at 2.97.</p>
<b>PMP Recommendation (per 1,000 population)</b>	<b>1.09 per 1,000 population</b>
<b>PMP Justification</b>	<p>Comparing against other local authorities, the level of provision (1.09 hectares per 1000 people) is consistent with the range from 0.72ha to 1.37ha, with the majority over 1ha. In terms of standards set, they range from 0.5ha to 1.6ha. The consultation responses indicate a mixed message in terms of whether there is enough and there is some concern from a quality perspective about the provision of small areas of functionless open space. In addition to this however, the visual amenity of amenity greenspace sites is also important.</p> <p>The level of provision across the analysis areas varies significantly with a good level of provision in the more urban areas of Hunts and Godmanchester and St Ives. Despite this, 48% of residents in Hunts and Godmanchester thought that was not enough / nearly enough. The level of satisfaction was generally quite high in the rural areas.</p> <p>As such, the standard is set at the existing level of provision. Although it is acknowledged that in some analysis areas the level of satisfaction with existing provision was relevant low, this standard will protect the existing level of amenity green space (addressing the concern that sites are gradual being lost), ensure that the appropriate level of provision will be provided in future development and enable a focus on the qualitative issues that the consultation revealed.</p>

<b>Client Approval</b>	<b>Local Quantity Standard</b>

**HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL – SETTING QUANTITY STANDARDS  
PROVISION FOR CHILDREN**

<b>National Standards</b>	<p>NPFA - 6 acre standard (2.43ha) per 1,000 population for 'playing space' consisting of 2 acres (ie 0.81 ha per 1,000 population) for children's playing space - includes areas designated for children and young people and casual or informal playing space within housing areas</p> <p>NPFA - in the past some LA's have added 1 acre (0.4ha) arbitrary to cover 'amenity areas' and 'leisure areas' or something similar that may not be covered within the NPFA standard. In almost all cases, this additional requirement is intended for residential areas and do not cover open spaces such as parks or allotments</p> <p>1) LAPs - aged 4-6; 1 min walk or 100m (60m in a straight line); min area size 100msq; LAPs typically have no play equipment and therefore could be considered as amenity greenspace</p> <p>(2) LEAPs - aged min 5; min area size 400msq; should be located 400 metres or 5 minutes walking time along pedestrian routes (240 metres in a straight line)</p>
<b>Current Provision ha per 1,000 population (ha)</b>	0.75 facilities per 1000 population (children and young people provision)
<b>Existing Local Standards</b>	None
<b>BENCHMARKING</b>	See attached sheet
<b>Consultation (too much / about right / not enough)</b>	<p>4% - More than enough  38% - About Right  19% - Nearly Enough  29% - Not Enough</p>
<b>Consultation Comments (quantity)</b>	<p>Household survey: Across the whole district there was a fairly even split between people who felt that provision was about right (38%) and those that felt that it not enough (29%). There is a greater emphasis on there not being enough when nearly enough and not enough are considered together (48%). The analysis area with the highest degree of satisfaction is St Neots – where 51% thought there was more than enough or about right. The analysis areas with the lowest level of satisfaction were the rural areas of Ramsey and Yaxley / Sawtry – were 58% thought there was nearly enough / not enough.</p> <p>Of those respondents who felt that the level of provision was enough, a large proportion of comments centred on specific facilities that were felt to be good and that facilities were good. Emphasis was placed on maintaining a high quality at sites and a number of respondents mentioned that some sites are currently underused. Of those that felt the level of provision was not enough, there was a mix of comments between quantitative and qualitative reasons. Some respondents stated the need for more equipment within the existing facilities, abuse of provision by older children and better quality of sites while others indicated there was not enough, that there was a need for more local facilities in some areas and there is concern over the gradual loss of facilities.</p>

	<p>Areas of the district that were mentioned at drop in sessions as being deficient in provision for children and young people were Bury, Ramsey, St Ives, St Neots and Yaxley. This again reinforces comments made as part of the household survey where residents in the rural areas specifically highlight poor levels of provision. Many residents made links between a lack of facilities for children and young people and vandalism, anti social behaviour and mis-use of other sites, indicating that a lack of specific facilities has a negative impact on the overall quality of provision in the town.</p> <p>Key themes at the internal consultation included inadequate provision of play areas in new housing development and insufficient provision for youth in general.</p> <p>User surveys conducted at play areas asked how users would rate the overall number of play areas from 1 to 5 (where 1= very poor and 5= excellent). The most frequent response was 1, very poor, and the mean score was slightly higher at 2.25.</p> <p>The IT Young people's survey reveals that 36% thought that the amount of play / youth facilities was good, 41% fair and 15% poor. Of those children who use play areas most regularly out of all types of open space, the two most favoured elements of the play areas were their proximity to home and also the fact they were good places to meet. Interestingly, going to use the play equipment was less important. This reinforces the importance of the provision of local facilities and highlights the value placed both on provision for children and young people and amenity spaces.</p> <p>User surveys at sites across the District indicated that 45.2% of respondents felt that there was good or excellent amount of open space and 10.8% felt that there was very poor or poor amount of open space.</p> <p>Of those councils responding to the Parish/Town Council Survey, the most frequent response to the question of how they would rate the overall number of play areas in their parish or town was very poor. The mean response was slightly higher (2.72 out of 5)</p>
<b>PMP Recommendation (per 1,000 population)</b>	<b>0.8 facilities per 1,000 population</b>
<b>PMP Justification</b>	<p>There was a mixed response with a slight emphasis on there not being enough. The reason for answers suggest that where people felt there was not enough provision this was a mixture of quality and quantity reasons indicating there is not a clear cut deficiency – particularly the need for additional equipment at some sites. The lowest level of satisfaction was found in the rural areas of the district, however these analysis areas had in the region of 15 facilities each – suggesting that some villages will have provision and others will not. This indicates that although the quantity may appear to be sufficient, the application of accessibility standards may highlight some deficiencies. Setting a quantity standard slightly above the existing provision will enable quantitative deficiencies to be remedied but also a focus on improving existing sites.</p>

<b>Client Approval</b>	<b>Local Quantity Standard</b>

**HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL – SETTING QUANTITY STANDARDS  
PROVISION FOR YOUNG PEOPLE**

<p><b>National Standards</b></p>	<p>NPFA - 6 acre standard (2.43ha) per 1,000 population for 'playing space' consisting of 2 acres (ie 0.81 ha per 1,000 population) for children's playing space - includes areas designated for children and young people and casual or informal playing space within housing areas</p> <p>NPFA - in the past some LA's have added 1 acre (0.4ha) arbitrary to cover 'amenity areas' and 'leisure areas' or something similar that mat not be covered within the NPFA standard. In almost all cases, this additional requirement is intended for residential areas and do not cover open spaces such as parks or allotments</p> <p>1) LAPs - aged 4-6; 1 min walk or 100m (60m in a straight line); min area size 100msq; LAPs typically have no play equipment and therefore could be considered as amenity greenspace</p> <p>(2) LEAPs - aged min 5; min area size 400msq; should be located 400 metres or 5 minutes walking time along pedestrian routes (240 metres in a straight line)</p>
<p><b>Current Provision ha per 1,000 population (ha)</b></p>	<p>0.75 facilities per 1000 population (children and young people provision)</p>
<p><b>Existing Local Standards</b></p>	<p>None</p>
<p><b>BENCHMARKING</b></p>	<p>See attached sheet</p>
<p><b>Consultation (too much / about right / not enough)</b></p>	<p>2% - More than enough 9% - About Right 9% - Nearly Enough 61% - Not Enough</p>
<p><b>Consultation Comments (quantity)</b></p>	<p>Household survey: The emphasis of responses is on the level of provision not being enough (61%) and nearly enough / not enough (70%). This is reflected across the analysis areas, however in Ramsey Analysis Area, 77% stated that there was not enough provision.</p> <p>Of those limited number of respondents that felt that there is enough young people facilities, people were concerned that any increase in provision would just lead to problems that are currently experienced on existing sites such as vandalism, anti-social behaviour etc. However the facilities in St Neots (skatepark) were singled out for praise. Of those respondents that felt that there is not enough provision it was felt that more facilities would keep teenagers off the streets and give them something to do.</p> <p>Areas of the district that were mentioned at drop in sessions as being deficient in provision for children and young people were Bury, Ramsey, St Ives, St Neots and Yaxley. In general, more comments were made regarding provision for young people in these areas than children's provision highlighting that it may be young people where the main</p>

	<p>deficiencies lie.</p> <p>There is a relatively comprehensive distribution of facilities across the district for young children although provision for older children and teenagers is lacking. Drop in sessions emphasised this most strongly in Ramsey and Yaxley.</p>
<b>PMP Recommendation (per 1,000 population)</b>	0.8 facilities per 1,000 population
<b>PMP Justification</b>	<p>There is a relatively strong emphasis on the level of provision of young people facilities not being enough, with a particular issue highlighted in Ramsey. Young people and anti social behaviour is considered to be an issue in Huntingdonshire, although in a number of cases this is site specific rather than across the board and it may be that additional youth facilities would alleviate this issue. As such, the standard is increased slightly to reflect the higher levels of dissatisfaction with the existing level of provision and to provide the flexibility to combat specific areas where youths hanging around and creating a nuisance is a particularly issue due to a lack of alternative facilities.</p>

<b>Client Approval</b>	<b>Local Quantity Standard</b>

**HUNTINGDON DISTRICT COUNCIL – SETTING QUANTITY STANDARDS  
OUTDOOR SPORTS FACILITIES**

<b>National Standards</b>	<p>NPFA - 6 acre standard (2.43ha) per 1,000 population for 'playing space' consisting of 4 acres (ie 1.62 per 1,000 population) for outdoor sport - includes pitches, athletics tracks, bowling greens, tennis courts training areas and croquet lawns</p> <p>NPFA - in the past some LA's have added 1 acre (0.4ha) arbitrary to cover 'amenity areas' and 'leisure areas' or something similar that mat not be covered within the NPFA standard. In almost all cases, this additional requirement are intended for residential areas and do not cover open spaces such as parks or allotments</p>		
<b>Current Provision ha per 1,000 population (ha)</b>	1.60 per 1,000 population (with schools included)		
<b>Existing Local Standards</b>	None		
<b>BENCHMARKING</b>	See attached sheet		
<b>Consultation (too much / about right / not enough)</b>	<p>Grass pitches: 5% more than enough <b><u>53% about right</u></b> 18% not enough 25% no opinion</p>	<p>Synthetic turf pitches: 2% more than enough 24% about right <b><u>25% not enough</u></b> 49% no opinion</p>	<p>Tennis Courts: 1% more than enough <b><u>30% about right</u></b> 20% not enough 48% no opinion</p>
	<p>Bowling Greens: 2% more than enough <b><u>31% about right</u></b> 20% not enough 48% no opinion</p>		
<b>Consultation Comments (quantity)</b>	<p>Household survey – Breaking down the level of satisfaction according to some of the sub-categories of outdoor sports facilities indicates that the emphasis is on provision being about right across the sub-categories. This is particularly the case with grass pitches with 53% indicating provision was about right. The amount of synthetic turf pitches was the only example where more people thought there was not enough that those who though that provision was about right.</p> <p>When looking at grass pitch provision across the analysis areas – the highest level of satisfaction was in Ramsey Analysis Area – where 68% though the level of provision was either more than enough or about right. Conversely, 32% thought there was not enough provision – which is significantly higher that any other area, where the same figure was 15% or less.</p> <p>When looking at synthetic turf pitches, there is very little variation in results across analysis areas, with all showing a</p>		



	<p>significant degree of dissatisfaction. However, the biggest issues were highlighted in analysis area 5 – where over 34% thought that there was not enough provision.</p> <p>Tennis courts – Although the average score for “not enough” was 20%, this rose to a high point of 43% for Analysis Area 5. Bowling Greens – Although the average score for “not enough” was also 20%, this increased to 31% in Analysis Area 4.</p> <p>When asked the reason why respondents felt that the level of outdoor sport facilities was about right, reference is made not only to the satisfactory level of provision but also the quality of many sites. When asked the reasons why respondents felt that the level was not enough, a number of issues relating to the lack of tennis courts were made, as well as the lack of public access to a number of sites which meant that actual quantity was far less than it would appear.</p> <p>The application of the playing pitch strategy will present further detail on the level of provision, both perceived and in comparison to actual demand of pitch provision.</p>
<b>PMP Recommendation (per 1,000 population)</b>	<b>1.61 hectares per 1000 population</b>
<b>PMP Justification</b>	<p>There was a mixed response across sub-types – however the emphasis is on level of provision being about right. Biggest deficiency seems to be in terms of synthetic pitches, which should be strategically located across the district. The standard has been set just above current provision to provide flexibility to address deficiencies in sub-types of open space. <b>Standard set for broad planning need only – application for surpluses and deficiencies would be meaningless, but refer to Playing Pitch Strategy work.</b></p>

Client Approval	Local Quantity Standard

**HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL – SETTING QUANTITY STANDARDS  
ALLOTMENTS**

<b>National Standards</b>	<p>National Society of Allotment and Leisure Gardeners - 20 allotment plots per 1,000 households (ie 20 allotments plots per 2,200 people (2.2 people per house) or 1 allotment plot per 200 people. With an average allotment plot of 250 sq/m this equates to 0.125 ha per 1,000 population</p> <p>1970 Thorpe Report suggested 0.2 ha per 1,000 population</p>
<b>Current Provision ha per 1,000 population (ha)</b>	0.28 per 1,000 population
<b>Existing Local Standards</b>	None
<b>BENCHMARKING</b>	See attached sheet
<b>Consultation (too much / about right / not enough)</b>	<p>4% - More than enough  33% - About Right  10% - Nearly Enough  17% - Not Enough</p>
<b>Consultation Comments (quantity)</b>	<p>Household survey: the emphasis is on the level of provision being about right (33%) versus 17% of respondents who felt that provision was not enough. However when considering those who felt the level of provision was not enough / nearly enough (10%) there was a much more even split. This varied across the analysis area, with the highest levels of satisfaction in Ramsey analysis area (49% thought more than enough, about right). The lowest level of satisfaction was in Yaxley Analysis area, where 24% thought that there were not enough allotments.</p> <p>With regards reasons for answers, of those that felt there is enough allotments, there were no common themes with some people mentioning inequality in quantity provision (plenty in some areas, very little in others), some people feeling there were enough and that they were underused, some stating the existing were not well kept / vandalised. Of those that felt there is not enough, great emphasis was placed on the importance of allotments and that there were none in the local area or that waiting lists were in operation. There was concern about the gradual loss of allotments to housing development and the fact that smaller residential gardens were increasing the demand for allotments.</p> <p>The household survey revealed that 14% of respondents who do not own / manage / use an allotments would be interested in usage one within Huntingdonshire. When asked the reason why they didn't already have one, the most commonly mentioned factor was the lack of sites near to homes. The fact there would be a waiting list was also mentioned on a number of occasions.</p> <p>Of the 63 parish and town councils responding to the Parish/Town Council Survey, 37% felt that allotment provision in</p>

	<p>their town/parish met the level of demand while 12.6% felt that provision did not meet demand. Responses to another question in the survey showed 19% of councils reported a waiting list for allotments while 41% reported that there was not a waiting list.</p>
<b>PMP Recommendation (per 1,000 population)</b>	<b>0.32 per 1,000 population</b>
<b>PMP Justification</b>	<p>It is important to note that the provision of allotments is a demand led typology and any additional provision or removal of sites should be based on localised demand assessments and consultation. This fact has been reflected in the consultation findings, which show a significant variation in comments about the quantity of open space – with some sites underused, whereas other areas have waiting lists for allotments. Concern was raised about the loss of allotment plots in the household survey</p> <p>The comments about quantity provision are reflective of the actual existing provision, with the highest provision in Ramsey (highest degree of satisfaction) and lower levels of provision in Yaxley and Sawtry (lowest satisfaction).</p> <p>It is suggested that the standard is set marginally higher than the existing level of provision across the authority area at 0.32 ha per 1000 population. This standard is significantly higher than the level of provision in most areas but lower than provision in Ramsey where highest levels of satisfaction occur. This standard will protect the existing level of provision but provide the flexibility for more localised assessments into the demand in particular areas. It also takes in account and considers likely future increases in demand for allotments occurring as a result of the likely density living and the consequential lack of gardens.</p>

<b>Client Approval</b>	<b>Local Quantity Standard</b>

## Huntingdon District Council - Setting Quality Standards

Field	Comment
National Standards and/or Benchmarks	Details of any existing national standards for each typology usually provided by national organisations e.g. Green Flag criteria for parks produced by Civic Trust
Existing Local Quality Standards	There maybe some existing local standards that will need to be taken into account and used as a guidance benchmark when setting new local standards
Consultation (Household Survey - aspirations)	Results from the household survey with regards to users of each typology in relation to their aspirations and needs and existing quality experiences
Consultation (other)	Results from all the consultations undertaken with regards the quality issues for each typology
PMP Recommendation	PMP recommendation of a local quality standard for discussion and approval by the client
PMP Justification	PMP reasoning and justification for the locals standard that has been recommended
CLIENT APPROVAL	Client to approve local standard before analysis undertaken

**HUNTINGDON DISTRICT COUNCIL – SETTING QUALITY STANDARDS / VISION  
PARKS AND GARDENS**

<b>National Standards and/or Benchmarks</b>	GREEN FLAG CRITERIA - Welcoming Place / Healthy, Safe and Secure / Clean and Well-maintained / Sustainable / Conservation and Heritage / Community Involvement / Marketing / Management
<b>Existing Local Quality Standards</b>	None
<b>Consultation (Household Survey - aspirations) (Of those that rated parks and gardens as their most frequently used open space)</b>	<p>Highest rated aspirations (in descending order): clean and litter free, well kept grass, flowers / trees / shrubs, toilets, footpaths, and facilities for young people. Respondents to the survey highlighted specifically adequate lighting and staff on site and CCTV as being key to providing safe open spaces. The two most significant problems with open spaces identified by those residents who visit parks more frequently that other types of open space are dog fouling (73% of respondents have experienced problems) and vandalism and graffiti (75%). 30% of respondents thought that dog fouling was a significant problem. The fewest problems experienced relate to maintenance, with over 60% having no problem</p>
<b>Consultation (Other)</b>	<p>Only 7% of respondents thought that the quality of parks and gardens in Huntingdonshire were poor, with 46% thinking that quality is good.</p> <p>Despite this, other consultation undertaken did unearth some specific issues in relation to quality of provision. Consultations highlighted that one of the key issues at all parks in the district is dog fouling; a problem that occurs despite the presence of dog bins in the majority of public open spaces. Litter was perceived to be a problem at some sites, another recurring theme across the district. Spring Common was highlighted as a key problem area in terms of litter and it appears that problems are particularly apparent on those sites where their location is suitable for their use as through routes. Signage was also highlighted as a key issue across the open space sites in the district.</p> <p>At drop in sessions, Coneygear Park, Priory Park, Jubilee Park, Hill Rise Park and Warners Park were all mentioned as being sites of good quality that were well used by the local communities. Specific praise was given to Hinchingsbrooke Country Park – with several comments made at all drop in sessions across the district. There are summarised below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• nearly unanimous agreement that the site was a ‘local treasure’ and of extremely high quality.</li> <li>• people are willing to travel from all over the district and beyond to visit/use Hinchingsbrooke Country Park</li> <li>• there is a perception that access to Hinchingsbrooke Country Park is only really possible by car</li> <li>• litter and dog fouling are ongoing issues for some users.</li> </ul> <p>Many consultees highlighted that there are further opportunities to enhance Riverside Park, Huntingdon, maximising the presence of the river to ensure that the park is developed to its’ potential. A study is underway investigating the redevelopment of the Riverside Park, which is estimated to cost £3.6m. Consultation highlights that staffing at parks is</p>

	<p>key to effective management and maintenance of the sites. Despite this, a number of positive comments were made by residents at drop in sessions regarding the high quality of Riverside Park. It was felt to be a very well used site.</p> <p>User surveys conducted at this type of open space around the District gave scores for tidiness, seating, litter bins, information boards, car parking, cycle parking, feelings of safety and users also gave overall quality ratings for quality of open space. 53% indicated they felt that quality of good or excellent and 17% indicated it to be very poor or poor. Improvements to tidiness, lighting and adding a play area were the most frequently cited ways given to make these types of open space better by users of the sites. This overall level of satisfaction is representative of findings at drop in sessions and household surveys.</p> <p>User surveys conducted at Huntingdon Town Park revealed that 55% of residents rated the overall quality of open space in the local area as good or excellent. Only 9.7% rated the quality as very poor or poor. At Huntingdon Riverside, 48% felt that the quality of provision in the area was good or excellent. Despite this, some attendees at drop in sessions indicated that Huntingdon Town Park was a poor quality site in relation to many others across the district.</p> <p>47% of respondents to the Parish/Town Council survey rated the quality of this type of open space as excellent or good and 31% as poor or very poor.</p>
<p><b>PMP Recommendation</b></p>	<p><b><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)”</i></b></p>
<p><b>PMP Justification</b></p>	<p>There is a general feeling that the existing parks and gardens are good quality, with a number of sites specifically mentioned as being well used. Cleanliness / maintenance / tidiness were seen to be critical in ensuring satisfaction with parks. The vision incorporates elements from public consultations particularly highlighting safety measures (adequate lighting and CCTV) to combat the vandalism / misuse 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 and an interesting environment to visit are reflected in the vision. The Green Flag Award criteria are also incorporated in the vision.</p>

Client Approval	Local Quality Standard

**HUNTINGDON DISTRICT COUNCIL – SETTING QUALITY STANDARDS / VISION  
NATURAL AND SEMI-NATURAL**

<b>National Standards and/or Benchmarks</b>	Countryside Agency - land should be managed to conserve or enhance its rich landscape, biodiversity, heritage and local customs
<b>Existing Local Quality Standards</b>	None
<b>Consultation (Household Survey - aspirations) (Of those that rated natural and semi-natural as their most frequently used open space)</b>	<p>The highest rated aspirations from the household survey include (in descending order) clean / litter free, nature features, footpaths, water features, flowers / trees, dog walking facilities and toilets. The three most commonly sited safety factors desired were (in descending order) staff-on-site, reputation and the presence of other users. When asked to identify problems experienced at natural and semi-natural sites, dog fouling was thought to be a significant issue by 35% of respondents. To a lesser extent litter was identified by 66% as either a minor or significant problem. Conversely, 76% had no problem with maintenance.</p>
<b>Consultation (Other)</b>	<p>Less than 5% of respondents thought that the quality of natural areas is poor, with over 53% thinking that sites were good, demonstrating a high level of satisfaction with natural and semi natural sites in Huntingdonshire (this was the highest level of “good” ratings across all typologies)</p> <p>Paxton Nature Reserve is one of the largest natural sites in the district and is of regional importance. The site is a designated Local Nature Reserve (LNR). There are high levels of community involvement at Paxton, and there are 1600 volunteers registered this year reinforcing the value of the site for both humans and wildlife. An extension of the site is currently underway which will see the nature reserve double in size. Consultations highlighted the importance of ensuring that sites remain of value to wildlife, offering safe habits in addition to ensuring their longevity as a visitor venue. Also at the drop in sessions, many positive comments were made regarding Paxton.</p> <p>Other comments regarding natural and semi natural areas centred around Portholme which was considered to be a high quality, well used and valued site. General comments were also made across the district regarding the need to maintain the provision of natural sites for the purposes of ‘low impact leisure’, biodiversity and not permanently losing these types of open space to development.</p> <p>All nature reserves and natural sites across the district are open access, with the exception of Holt Island, where access is restricted. Portholme SSSI is of particular value, being one of the highest quality natural sites in the region.</p> <p>User surveys conducted at this type of open space around the District gave scores for tidiness, seating, litter bins, information boards, car parking, cycle parking, feelings of safety. Users also gave overall quality ratings for quality of open space. 53% indicated they felt that quality was good or excellent and 17% indicated it to be very poor or poor.</p>

	<p>Improvements to tidiness, lighting and adding a play area were the most frequently cited ways given to make these types of open space better by users of the sites.</p> <p>User surveys conducted at Huntingdon Town Park revealed that 55% of residents rated the overall quality of open space in the local area as good or excellent. Only 9.7% rated the quality as very poor or poor. At Huntingdon Riverside, 48% felt that the quality of provision in the area was good or excellent.</p> <p>47% of respondents to the Parish/Town Council survey rated the quality of this type of open space as excellent or good and 31% as poor or very poor.</p>
<b>PMP Recommendation</b>	<p><b><i>“A clean and litter free site which balances the need for safe and secure public access whilst encouraging wildlife conservation and safeguarding biodiversity across a range of natural (including water bourn) habitats. The site should have clear pathways and appropriate ancillary accommodation (litter bins and toilets etc) and landscaping in the right places to enhance the appearance of the local environment.”</i></b></p>
<b>PMP Justification</b>	<p>Natural and semi natural sites were highlighted as having the highest quality of all types of open spaces in the household survey. The main issues identified through local consultations centres around litter and dog fouling, which is reflected in the need for sites to be clean and litter free. There are some pressures on wildlife sites, particularly given their popularity in the district, 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.</p>

<b>Client Approval</b>	<b>Local Quality Standard</b>



**HUNTINGDON DISTRICT COUNCIL – SETTING QUALITY STANDARDS / VISION  
AMENITY GREENSPACE**

<b>National Standards and/or Benchmarks</b>	No national quality standards
<b>Existing Local Quality Standards</b>	None
<b>Consultation (Household Survey - aspirations) (Of those that rated amenity greenspace as their most frequently used open space)</b>	The highest rated aspirations (limited response rate) were well kept grass and clean and litter free (both identified by over half of respondents as being in their top five features required). To a lesser extend (i.e. mentioned less frequently) respondents wanted to see flowers / trees. Adequate light and the reputation of the site were the highest rated factors that would enhance safety. The issues most commonly mentioned as being significant problems were litter problems and dog fouling. However vandalism and graffiti was raised by over 50% of respondents as being a minor problem. Safety and age of equipment was the area of fewest complaints.
<b>Consultation (Other)</b>	<p>The provision of amenity green space was considered to be of significant importance for local residents, particularly in villages where there are few recreational opportunities for residents. Despite this, a key theme emerging from consultations was discontent surrounding the restrictions placed on the use of amenity green space, such as no ball game signs which restrict the recreational value to residents. In contrast, misuse of these sites was also highlighted as a key issue across the district.</p> <p>At drop in sessions, residents highlighted litter and dog fouling problems as ongoing issues although it was felt that some efforts had been made to address this through provision of bins etc. Larger amenity green space sites such as Millenium Green (where there was a high level of use, particularly by dog walkers) were highlighted as particularly problematic sites in terms of dog fouling and litter.</p> <p>Also at drop in sessions, residents emphasised the important of these spaces in terms of breaking up the landscape of urban texture. Because of this visual benefit, residents expressed a desire to protect amenity green space sites from development.</p> <p>The IT Young People Survey revealed that for those children who most often use amenity green space, the site being good for playing sport was important, as was it being a good place. The most commonly referenced things that young people did not like about this typology were that the play facilities were boring and also being unable to use it in evenings.</p> <p>In relation to amenity areas, the household survey revealed that 12% rated the sites as poor, whilst 29% thought that</p>

	<p>sites were good, suggesting a degree of satisfaction overall.</p> <p>User surveys conducted at this type of open space around the District gave scores for tidiness, seating, litter bins, information boards, car parking, cycle parking, feelings of safety. Users also gave overall quality ratings for quality of open space. 53% indicated they felt that quality as good or excellent and 17% indicated it to be very poor or poor. Improvements to tidiness, lighting and adding a play area were the most frequently cited ways given to make these types of open space better by users of the sites.</p> <p>47% of respondents to the Parish/Town Council survey rated the quality of this type of open space as excellent or good and 31% as poor or very poor.</p>
<p><b>PMP Recommendation</b></p>	<p><b><i>“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.”</i></b></p>
<p><b>PMP Justification</b></p>	<p>The local consultation highlighted the importance of amenity green spaces around the district, particularly in the more rural areas. One of the important aspects in the vision is for a spacious outlook and ensuring suitability for informal play. This is in line with comments from the IT young people’s survey. Amenity green spaces 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.</p>

Client Approval	Local Quantity Standard

**HUNTINGDON DISTRICT COUNCIL – SETTING QUALITY STANDARDS / VISION  
PROVISION FOR CHILDREN**

<b>National Standards and/or Benchmarks</b>	LAPs, LEAPs and NEAPs indicate some quality aspirations in terms of needing seating for adults, varied range of equipment and teenager meeting place
<b>Existing Local Quality Standards</b>	None
<b>Consultation (Household survey - aspirations) (of those that rated children facilities as their most frequently used open space)</b>	<p>The highest rated aspirations were (in descending order) clean / litter free (mentioned by 88% of respondents) facilities for young people (73%), dog free area (43%), well kept grass (42%) and toilets (40%). The top three things which were identified as increasing safety were adequate lighting, reputation and other users.</p> <p>The most commonly mentioned “significant problems” were dog fouling and miss-use of sites. However, when considering “minor problems” vandalism / graffiti and litter problems were frequently mentioned (along with misuse of sites again).</p>
<b>Consultation (Other)</b>	<p>In terms of residents quality rating of play areas for children, 16% thought that sites were poor, whilst 28% thought that sites were good, showing a relatively big different of opinion. This could relate to quality variations across the district.</p> <p>Maintenance of play facilities was also frequently highlighted at drop in sessions. In Huntingdon and other towns across the District it was highlighted that children’s play areas were frequently misused and vandalised by older children. Other specific comments raised at drop in sessions were about the equipment contained within sites is very important and should meet the needs of the children using the site.</p> <p>The IT Young people’s survey elicited children’s views on how they would improve open space; either through an improvement to an existing facility or through a new facility. The most common response was more interesting play equipment (36%). More generally, 46% of young people responding thought that the quality of existing provision was good, whereas only 13% thought that it was bad. Of those young people who use play area’s more regularly than any other types of open spaces specifically, the two most common things they least like about the areas are that the play facilities are boring and that they are unable to use it in evenings.</p> <p>The assessment of usage undertaken by the Council shows that of those people surveyed, 28% thought that when talking about their local area they would rate the quality of play areas very poorly. The figure was less than 22% thinking the quality of provision was good or very good.</p>
<b>PMP Recommendation</b>	<p><b><i>“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”</i></b></p>

<b>PMP Justification</b>	<p>The need to address the misuse 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. 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).</p> <p>A 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.</p>
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<b>Client Approval</b>	<b>Local Quality Standard</b>

**HUNTINGDON DISTRICT COUNCIL – SETTING QUALITY STANDARDS / VISION  
PROVISION FOR TEENAGERS AND YOUNG PEOPLE**

<b>National Standards and/or Benchmarks</b>	LAPs, LEAPs and NEAPs indicate some quality aspirations in terms of needing seating for adults, varied range of equipment and teenager meeting place
<b>Existing Local Quality Standards</b>	None
<b>Consultation (Other)</b>	<p>Resident's opinions on the quality of provision for teenagers show a significant degree of dissatisfaction with 36% rating the provision as poor quality. This is significantly higher than any of the other typologies. Only 6% thought that sites were of good quality, clearly pinpointing the quality of teenage facilities as a key issue. When asked to rate which type of open space they used the most regularly very few selected provision for teenagers and young people, reinforcing those sites that do exist being of sufficiently poor quality to reduce usage.</p> <p>The importance of involving young people and children in the development of provision for children and young people was a key theme emerging from consultations. The new skatepark in St Neots was highlighted as an example of good practice and has been put forward for a National Excellence award. Similarly, many residents indicated that the majority of teen shelters are underused and do not meet with the expectations of young people. The play area in St Neots (Rocket Park) is not perceived to meet the needs of the community effectively as it is not of the right quality.</p> <p>Other specific comments made by residents at drop in sessions were Godmanchester Skate Park is well used but has issues with misuse during the evening (e.g. perception of drug and alcohol use) and also that new sites should be located close to new housing estates.</p> <p>The IT Young people's survey elicited children's views on how they would improve open space; either through an improvement to an existing facility or through a new facility. The most common response was more interesting play equipment (36%) – but this was also followed by a MUGA / Kickabout area (18%) and a skate or BMX park (17%).</p> <p>More generally, 46% of young people responding thought that the quality of existing provision was good, whereas only 13% thought that it was bad.</p> <p>User surveys conducted at play areas across the District revealed that 38% of respondents felt that the quality of play area provision was very poor or poor. 22% felt quality was good or excellent.</p> <p>Of those parish councils responding to the Parish/Town Council Survey, 44% of respondents felt that provision was</p>

	very poor or poor, versus 46% who felt that provision was good or excellent.
<b>PMP Recommendation</b>	<b><i>“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”</i></b>
<b>PMP Justification</b>	<p>Resident’s opinions on the quality of provision for teenagers show a significant degree of dissatisfaction; therefore the delivery of the quality vision is crucial. 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.</p> <p>Promoting a sense of ownership with the sites may also help to reduce the level of vandalism and involving young people was a key theme from consultations – the new skatepark in St Neots was highlighted as an example of good practice. Providing imaginative play reflects comments from the IT Young People survey to ensure facilities are interesting enough to meet needs.</p>
<b>Client Approval</b>	<b>Local Quality Standard</b>

**HUNTINGDON DISTRICT COUNCIL – SETTING QUALITY STANDARDS / VISION  
OUTDOOR SPORTS FACILITIES**

<b>National Standards and/or Benchmarks</b>	NPFA - quality of provision could include gradients, orientation, ancillary accommodation, planting and community safety
<b>Existing Local Quality Standards</b>	None
<b>Consultation (Household Survey - aspirations)</b>	The highest rated aspirations were clean and litter free (mentioned by 61%), parking facilities (53%) and well kept grass (41%). The highest rated safety factor was adequate lighting (cited by 51%) and to a lesser extent reputation was considered important. The worst quality issues at the present time are considered to be vandalism and graffiti, litter problems, dog fouling and miss-use of sites.
<b>Consultation (Other)</b>	<p>The Outdoor sport facilities in Huntingdon were classed as being of good quality by one in three respondents, whereas only 13% thought that facilities were poor - showing that in general residents think that there are more good facilities than bad ones.</p> <p>Despite the perception of consultees of good overall provision, the facilities are of significantly varying quality, particularly in terms of the presence of adequate ancillary accommodation. The issue of suitable ancillary accommodation has taken on a greater significance for teams playing at Priory Park. At drop in sessions, the following quality issues were mentioned:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Football pitch at Bury is owned by the local community and is of excellent standard</li> <li>• Yaxley Recreation Ground is a well used site and has been recently improved through provision of new equipment on site, leading to antisocial behaviour problems.</li> <li>• Middleton Road Recreation Ground is a good site and is well used, particularly by footballers. There are ongoing issues with the pavilion at the site.</li> </ul> <p>IT Young People – of those who said that outdoor sport facilities were the type of open space they use most regularly, this was most commonly as part of participation in a team sport, for informal play but also as a meeting place for friends. The most common problems identified were distance needed to travel.</p> <p>Respondents to the Sports Club Survey were asked to rate the quality of pitches across a range of factors (maintenance, car parking, cycle parking, toilets, changing accommodation, disabled access and sense of personal safety. The most frequent response across these factors was ‘average’</p>
<b>PMP Recommendation</b>	<b><i>“A well-planned, clean, litter and dog fouling free sports facility site, with level and well-drained good quality</i></b>

	<b><i>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.”</i></b>
<b>PMP Justification</b>	The key identified issues with existing sites are vandalism and graffiti, litter problems, dog fouling and mis-use of sites which are reflected within the vision. Other issues raised are also reflected such as the need for ancillary accommodation such as parking and changing facilities. The quality vision also incorporates best practice guidance on provision of level and well-drained surfaces, with although rarely mentioned through consultation is crucial to the provision of usable, high quality sites.
	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. Quantitative issues may also be addressed through improved quality of pitches which increases the importance of meeting the quality vision.

<b>Client Approval</b>	<b>Local Quality Standard</b>



**HUNTINGDON DISTRICT COUNCIL – SETTING QUALITY STANDARDS / VISION  
ALLOTMENTS**

<b>National Standards and/or Benchmarks</b>	None
<b>Existing Local Quality Standards</b>	None
<b>Consultation (Other)</b>	<p>When asked about the quality of allotments the household survey reveals that 16% thought quality was good whereas only 6% thought that quality was bad. However, these needs to be considered with caution given the small number of people within Huntingdonshire who own / manage / use an allotment.</p> <p>At the drop in sessions, a large number of residents commented upon allotment provision in Huntingdon. Although, there were some litter and vandalism issues, similar to other open space typologies, it was generally felt by residents that allotments were both high quality, well used and important to protect. Primrose Lane Allotments were frequently cited as being an excellent allotment site.</p> <p>In St Neots, local residents at drop in sessions highlighted Eynesbury Allotments as being a valuable site that is important to preserve.</p>
<b>PMP Recommendation</b>	<b><i>“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.”</i></b>
<b>PMP Justification</b>	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 Huntingdon. Given the limited response to the household survey from allotment users, the recommendation has drawn on best practice from other local authorities.

<b>Client Approval</b>	<b>Local Quality Standard</b>

**HUNTINGDON DISTRICT COUNCIL – SETTING QUALITY STANDARDS / VISION  
GREEN CORRIDORS**

<b>National Standards and/or Benchmarks</b>	Countryside Agency - what the user should expect to find is i) a path provided by the protection and reinforcement of existing vegetation; ii) ground not soft enough to allow a horse or cycle to sink into it; iii) a path on unvegetated natural surfaces.
<b>Existing Local Quality Standards</b>	None
<b>Consultation (Household Survey - aspirations)</b>	The household survey indicated green corridors to be one of the most frequently used of all open space typologies in the district. Those features, which were most commonly identified when describing ideal provision, were clear and litter free, footpaths, nature features, litter bins and good site access. Out of these, clean / litter free was clearly the highest priority. Highest rated safety factors included reputation and adequate lighting. Dog fouling and litter problems were considered to be the worst quality issues at the current time.
<b>Consultation (Other)</b>	<p>People attending drop-in sessions commented on the high quality of some green corridors in the District, particularly around the river and The Thicket, Houghton. A shortage of accessible footpaths was highlighted at drop in sessions in Ramsey. Also commented upon was the issue of dog fouling which was felt to limit the level of use of any green corridors (particularly footpaths)</p> <p>The household survey indicates that 36% consider existing green corridors to be good quality, 42% to be average and 11% to be poor (remainder were unsure / didn't know).</p>
<b>PMP Recommendation</b>	<b><i>“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.”</i></b>
<b>PMP Justification</b>	Green corridors play an important role in linking communities and provide an opportunity for exercise for local residents, and are clearly seen as highly important to the residents in Huntingdonshire. It is therefore important that any new provision meets this local quality standard that 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.

<b>Client Approval</b>	<b>Local Quality Standard</b>

## Huntingdonshire District Council – Setting Accessibility Standards

<b>Field</b>	<b>Comment</b>
<b>National Standards and/or Benchmarks</b>	Details of any existing national standards for each typology usually provided by national organisations e.g. English Nature make recommendations of access for 'Natural Greenspace'.
<b>Existing Local Accessibility Standards</b>	There maybe some existing local standards that will need to be taken into account and used as a guidance benchmark when setting new local standards.
<b>Other Local Authorities Standards (by PMP)</b>	These are figures detailing other local standards set by PMP within other green space and open space projects and provide another comparison benchmark when setting local standards for other Local Authorities.
<b>Consultation (Household Survey - establish 75% threshold catchments)</b>	Some statistical information that will come from the household questionnaire - need to take the 75% level as recommended by PPG 17 Companion Guide (ie from a list of responses - what is the time 75% are willing to travel).
<b>PMP Recommendation</b>	PMP recommendation of a local standard for discussion and approval by the client - standard should be in time and/or distance.
<b>PMP Justification</b>	PMP reasoning and justification for the locals standard that has been recommended.
<b>CLIENT APPROVAL</b>	Client to approve local standard before analysis undertaken - any changes in standards at a later date during the project will impact on re-doing calculations, analysis and report - the standards drive the analysis.
<b>LOCAL ACCESSIBILITY STANDARD</b>	Final Local Standard agreed and approved. This will be stated in the report and used for analysis purposes - standard should be in time and/or distance.

## Accessibility standards – assumptions

<b>Walking</b>	<b>All areas</b>	<b>Average of 3mph</b>
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### Conversion (walking)

<b>Time (mins)</b>	<b>Miles</b>	<b>metres</b>	<b>Factor Reduction</b>	<b>metres (straight line to be mapped)</b>
5	0.25	400	40%	<b>240</b>
10	0.5	800	40%	<b>480</b>
15	0.75	1200	40%	<b>720</b>
20	1	1600	40%	<b>960</b>
25	1.25	2000	40%	<b>1200</b>
30	1.5	2400	40%	<b>1440</b>

### Assumption

National Guidelines reduce actual distances into straight line distances by a 40% reduction. This is to allow for the fact that routes to open spaces are not straight line distances but more complex. The 40% reduction is based on robust research by the NPFA in numerous areas using a representative sample of pedestrian routes.

**HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL – SETTING ACCESSIBILITY STANDARDS  
PARKS AND GARDENS**

<b>National Standards and/or Benchmarks</b>	No national standards		
<b>Existing Local Accessibility Standards</b>	The Cambridge Sub Regional Green Infrastructure Strategy states that the catchment area for parks and gardens, natural and semi natural areas and amenity greenspaces should be 1.2-2km for sites over 20ha and 300m for sites over 2ha but under 20ha.		
<b>Other Local Authorities Standards (by PMP)</b>	Harborough DC – 10 min (drive)	Corby BC – 10-15 min (walk)	South Northamptonshire – 5 min (walk) (incorporated amenity greenspace)
	South Ribble – 15 min (walk)	Oswestry – 15 min (walk)	East Northamptonshire – 15 min (walk)
<b>Consultation</b>	<p><b><u>Current travel patterns:</u></b>  Household questionnaire: 62% of people (who stated parks and gardens as their most frequently used open space) currently walk to park and gardens facilities and 35% drive. 31% travel less than 5 minutes, 60% up to 10 minutes and 81% up to 15 minutes.  IT Young People Survey – across all open spaces, the most popular transport method was walking (42%), followed by car (31%) and cycling (25%).  User surveys at these types of open space revealed that 40.9% of people travelled less than a quarter of a mile, 15.1% travelled a quarter of a mile to a half a mile, 29% of people travelled between half a mile and a mile and 22.6% travelled over a mile. 66.2% of users had travelled to the site on foot and 15.8% of users of these sites travelled by car/van to the site.  User surveys conducted specifically at Huntingdon Town Park, revealed that 32.3% had travelled more than one mile the site.</p>		
	<p><b><u>Expectations</u></b>  64% of respondents to the household questionnaire would expect to walk to a local park facility, while 27% expect to drive.  User surveys conducted at this type of sites across the District revealed that 47% of people expected to travel less than half a mile to reach this type of site.  75% threshold level: 15 minutes walking  Mode: 10 minutes walking  Across analysis areas: 75% threshold level ranges from 10 to 15 minutes walk times. In Analysis Areas 1, 2 and 4, the 75% threshold level is a 15 minutes walk time. In Analysis Areas 3 and 5, the 75% threshold level is 10 minutes walk time.</p>		

	<p><b>Other consultations:</b>          Consultation revealed that residents were more willing to travel from great distances to visit high quality sites such as Hinchbrooke Park, although several drop in sessions comments related to the fact that access to this site was limited to car.          Of those Councils responding to the Parish/Town Council Surveys, the most frequent response for accessibility of this type of open space was 'good'.          User surveys conducted at Huntingdon Town Park revealed that 61% of users felt that accessibility to open spaces across the District was good or excellent. At Huntingdon Riverside, this figure was 69%.</p>
<b>PMP Recommendation</b>	<b>15 minutes walk time - (720 metres)</b>
<b>PMP Justification</b>	<p>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).</p> <p>In order to ensure that this standard is reflective of the rural nature of the district, this standard should be applied in conjunction with natural and semi natural and amenity green space standards in order to identify real deficiencies.</p>

<b>Client Approval</b>	<b>Local Accessibility Standard</b>

**HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL – SETTING ACCESSIBILITY STANDARDS  
NATURAL AND SEMI-NATURAL**

<b>National Standards and/or Benchmarks</b>	English Nature Accessible Natural Greenspace Standard (ANGSt) recommends at least 2 ha of accessible natural greenspace per 1,000 people based on no-one living more than: 300m from nearest natural greenspace / 2km from a site of 20ha / 5km from a site of 100ha / 10km from a site of 500ha. Woodland Trust Access Standard recommend that no person should live more than 500m from at least one area of accessible woodland of no less than 2ha in size and that there should also be at least one area of accessible woodland of no less than 20ha within 4km (8km round-trip) of people’s homes		
<b>Existing Local Accessibility Standards</b>	The Cambridge Sub Regional Green Infrastructure Strategy states that the catchment area for parks and gardens, natural and semi natural areas and amenity greenspaces should be 1.2-2km for sites over 20ha and 300m for sites over 2ha but under 20ha.		
<b>Other Local Authorities Standards (by PMP)</b>	Harborough DC – 20 min (walk)	Corby BC – 15 min (walk)	South Northamptonshire – 10 min (walk)
	South Ribble – 15 min (walk)	Oswestry – 10-15 min (walk)	East Northamptonshire – 15 min (walk)
<b>Consultation</b>	<p><b>Current travel patterns:</b> Household questionnaire: 67% of respondents (who stated natural and semi-natural open space as their most frequently used open space) currently walk to natural and semi-natural open spaces. 34% of respondents travel up to 5 minutes, 59% travel up to 10 minutes and 82% travel up to 15 minutes. IT Young People Survey – across all open spaces, the most popular transport method was walking (42%), followed by car (31%) and cycling (25%). User surveys at these types of open space revealed that 40.9% of people travelled less than a quarter of a mile, 15.1% travelled a quarter of a mile to a half a mile, 29% of people travelled between half a mile and a mile and 22.6% travelled over a mile. 66.2% of users had travelled to the site on foot and 15.8% of users of these sites travelled by car/van to the site.</p> <p><b>Expectations</b> 57% of respondents to the household survey would expect to walk to a natural and semi-natural open space and 33% would expect to drive 75% threshold level: 15 minutes walk Mode: 10 minutes walk Across analysis areas: 75% threshold level ranges from 10 to 20 minutes walk time. In Analysis Areas 1,3 and 5, the threshold is 15 minutes, in Analysis Area 2 it is 10 minutes and in Analysis Area 4 it is 20 minutes.</p>		

	<p><b>Other consultations:</b> Initial consultations revealed that all nature reserves and natural sites across the district are open access, with the exception of Holt Island, where access is restricted. User surveys conducted at Stukeley Meadows revealed that 83% of visitors to this site had travelled less than a quarter of a mile to the site. Expectations for reaching a site such as Stukeley Meadows were; 58.3% less than a quarter of a mile, 20.8% quarter of a mile to half a mile and 12.5% greater than half a mile. Of those Councils responding to the Parish/Town Council Surveys, the most frequent response for accessibility of this type of open space was 'good'.</p>
<b>PMP Recommendation</b>	<b>15 minutes walk time - (720 metres)</b>
<b>PMP Justification</b>	<p>The majority of respondents currently walk to natural and semi-natural open spaces. In terms of expectations, the emphasis is on walking, across all the Analysis Areas. The standard has been set at the 75% threshold of 15 minutes walk, in line with the expectations of three out of the five Analysis Areas (1, 3, 5) and the modal response of 10 minutes walk time.</p> <p>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 and areas of accessible countryside. As such it is considered more difficult to set an access standard specific to the rural area, particularly in Huntingdonshire where there are no formal natural and semi natural sites in the rural areas.</p> <p>In order to ensure that this standard is reflective of the rural nature of the district, this standard should be applied in conjunction with natural and semi natural and amenity green space standards in order to identify real deficiencies.</p>

<b>Client Approval</b>	<b>Local Accessibility Standard</b>



**HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL – SETTING ACCESSIBILITY STANDARDS  
AMENITY GREENSPACE**

<b>National Standards and/or Benchmarks</b>	No national standards		
<b>Existing Local Accessibility Standards</b>	The Cambridge Sub Regional Green Infrastructure Strategy states that the catchment area for parks and gardens, natural and semi natural areas and amenity greenspaces should be 1.2-2km for sites over 20ha and 300m for sites over 2ha but under 20ha.		
<b>Other Local Authorities Standards (by PMP)</b>	Harborough DC – 10 min (walk)	Corby BC – 5 min (walk)	South Northamptonshire – 5 min (walk) (incorporating parks and gardens)
	South Ribble – 10 min (walk)	Oswestry – 10 min (walk)	East Northamptonshire – 5 min (walk)
<b>Consultation</b>	<p><b>Current travel patterns:</b>  Household questionnaire: 80% of respondents (who stated amenity greenspace as their most frequently used open space) currently walk to amenity greenspaces.  IT Young People Survey – across all open spaces, the most popular transport method was walking (42%), followed by car (31%) and cycling (25%).  User surveys at these types of open space revealed that 40.9% of people travelled less than a quarter of a mile, 15.1% travelled a quarter of a mile to a half a mile, 29% of people travelled between half a mile and a mile and 22.6% travelled over a mile. 66.2% of users had travelled to the site on foot and 15.8% of users of these sites travelled by car/van to the site.</p> <p><b>Expectations:</b>  80% of respondents would expect to walk to an amenity greenspace site  75% threshold level: 10 minutes walk  Mode: 5 minutes walk  Across all analysis areas 75% threshold level is 10 minute walk</p> <p><b>Other consultations:</b>  Of those Councils responding to the Parish/Town Council Surveys, the most frequent response for accessibility of this type of open space was 'good'.</p>		
<b>PMP Recommendation</b>	<b>10 minutes walk (480 metres)</b>		

<p><b>PMP Justification</b></p>	<p>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.</p> <p>The 75% threshold level borough-wide is 10 minutes. Across the analysis areas, the 75% threshold always emerged to be 10 minutes. Standards set for other authorities range between 5 and 10 minutes but are generally set around 5 minutes walk.</p> <p>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.</p>
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<p><b>Client Approval</b></p>	<p><b>Local Accessibility Standard</b></p>

**HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL – SETTING ACCESSIBILITY STANDARDS  
PROVISION FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE**

<p><b>National Standards and/or Benchmarks</b></p>	<p>(1) LAPs - aged 4-6; 1 min walk or 100m (60m in a straight line); min area size 100msq; LAPs typically have no play equipment and therefore could be considered as amenity greenspace</p> <p>(2) LEAPs - aged min 5; min area size 400msq; should be located 400 metres or 5 minutes walking time along pedestrian routes (240 metres in a straight line)</p> <p>(3) NEAPs aged min 8; min area size 1000msq; should be located 1,000 metres or 15 minutes walking time along pedestrian routes (600 metres in a straight line)</p>		
<p><b>Existing Local Accessibility Standards</b></p>	<p>None</p>		
<p><b>Other Local Authorities Standards (by PMP)</b></p>	<p>Harborough DC – 5-10 min (walk)</p>	<p>Corby BC – children 8 min (walk), young people 10 min (walk)</p>	<p>South Northamptonshire – 10 min (walk)</p>
	<p>South Ribble – Children – 10 min (walk), Young People - 15 min (walk)</p>	<p>Oswestry – 10 min (walk)</p>	<p>East Northamptonshire – 10 min (walk)</p>
<p><b>Consultation</b></p>	<p><b><u>Current travel patterns:</u></b>  Household questionnaire: The household survey asked residents about provision of both play areas for children and teenage facilities.  Children – 76% of respondents (who stated play areas for children as their most frequently used type of open space) walk to a facility.  IT Young People – Perhaps surprisingly, only three children indicated that provision for young people (eg skate parks) was their most frequently visited open space.  Play areas were indicated as the most frequently visited open space by respondents to this survey. Across all open spaces, the most popular transport method was walking (42%), followed by car (31%) and cycling (25%).  User surveys at play areas across the District revealed that 67% of users walk to play areas, 19% travel by bicycle and 11% drive a car or van. These surveys also revealed that 49% of users travel a quarter of a mile and 22% travel between a quarter of a mile and a half mile. 11% travel more than one mile.</p>		

	<p><b><u>Expectations</u></b></p> <p><b><u>Children:</u></b>  82% of respondents to the household survey would expect to walk to a children’s facility  75% threshold level: 10 minutes walk  Mode: 5 minutes walk  Across analysis areas 75% threshold level is at 10 minutes in all areas</p> <p><b><u>Young people:</u></b>  60% of respondents to the household survey would expect to walk to a young people facility  75% threshold level: 15 minutes walk  Mode: 10 minutes walk  Across analysis areas 75% threshold level: ranges from 10 minutes to 20 minute walk (three out of five analysis areas had a 15 minute walk time threshold)</p>
	<p><b><u>Other consultations:</u></b>  User surveys at play areas asked parents how far they would be willing to let their children travel to play area. Travelling on their own, 13% of parents would allow their child to travel up to a quarter of a mile, 20% would allow their child to travel up to half a mile and the remaining 64% would not allow their child to travel unaccompanied. Travelling with their child, 42% of parents would be prepared to travel more than one mile to a play area</p>
<p><b>PMP Recommendation</b></p>	<p><b>CHILDREN – 10 minute walk time for provision for children - (480 metres)</b>  <b>YOUNG PEOPLE (URBAN) – 15 minute walk time - (720 metres)</b></p>
<p><b>PMP Justification</b></p>	<p>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.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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 more rural areas will be made.</p> <p>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.</p>

<p><b>Client Approval</b></p>	<p><b>Local Accessibility Standard</b></p>

**HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL – SETTING ACCESSIBILITY STANDARDS  
OUTDOOR SPORTS FACILITIES**

<b>National Standards and/or Benchmarks</b>	No national standards		
<b>Existing Local Accessibility Standards (includes any past surveys)</b>	No existing standards		
<b>Other Local Authorities Standards (by PMP)</b>	Harborough DC – 10 min (drive)	Corby BC – 15 min (walk)	South Northamptonshire - Grass pitches, MUGA's, Tennis Courts - 10 min (walk). Golf Courses, Bowling Clubs, STP's - 20 min (drive)
	South Ribble - Grass pitches, tennis courts and bowling greens - 15 minute walk time (0.72 km) and Golf Courses and STP's - 25 minute drive time (10 km)	Oswestry – 15 min (drive)	East Northamptonshire – 15 min (drive)
<b>Consultation</b>	<p><b>Current travel patterns:</b> 31% of respondents (who stated outdoor sports as their most frequently used open space) walk and 63% drive to facilities. 20% would travel up to 5 minutes, 72% would travel up to 10 minutes and 87% would travel up to 15 minutes IT Young People Survey – 26% of respondents to this survey had visited this type of site in the last year, making it one of three most visited typologies.</p>		
	<p><b>Grass pitches Expectations:</b> Mode of transport: 58% walk / 32% drive 75% threshold: 15 minutes walk</p>	<p><b>STPs Expectations:</b> Mode of transport: 36% walk / 53% drive 75% threshold: 15 minutes drive</p>	
	<p><b>Tennis Courts Expectations:</b> Mode of transport: 45% walk / 41% drive 75% threshold: 15 minutes drive/ 15 minute walk time</p>	<p><b>Bowling Greens Expectations:</b> Mode of transport: 43% walk / 45% drive 75% threshold: 15 minutes drive / 20 minute walk</p>	
	<p><b>Other consultations:</b> 81% of clubs responding to the sports club survey felt there was enough pitch provision to meet demand. 53% of clubs felt that pitch availability in the Borough was good or excellent. Internal consultation suggests that access to training facilities is a key issue, with only limited slots available at synthetic pitches for clubs wishing to train midweek. There are few floodlit training areas and teams struggle to access facilities between the peak hours of 6 and 9pm, particularly at the leisure centres where there is high demand for facilities.</p>		

<b>PMP Recommendation</b>	<p><b>15 minute walk time for grass pitches and tennis courts (720 metres)</b>  <b>15 minute drive for STP's and bowling greens</b></p>
<b>PMP Justification</b>	<p>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.</p> <p>The emphasis for STP's and Bowling Greens was on driving to the facility and the 75% threshold for them is 15 minute drive time. Therefore the standard set for STP's and Bowling Greens is 15 minute drive time. For pitches and tennis courts, a walk time has been set, reflective of the 75% threshold level.</p> <p>Further detail on the adequacy of pitch provision both in terms of quantity and distribution will be provided as part of the playing pitch strategy playing pitch methodology calculations.</p>

<b>Client Approval</b>	<b>Local Accessibility Standard</b>

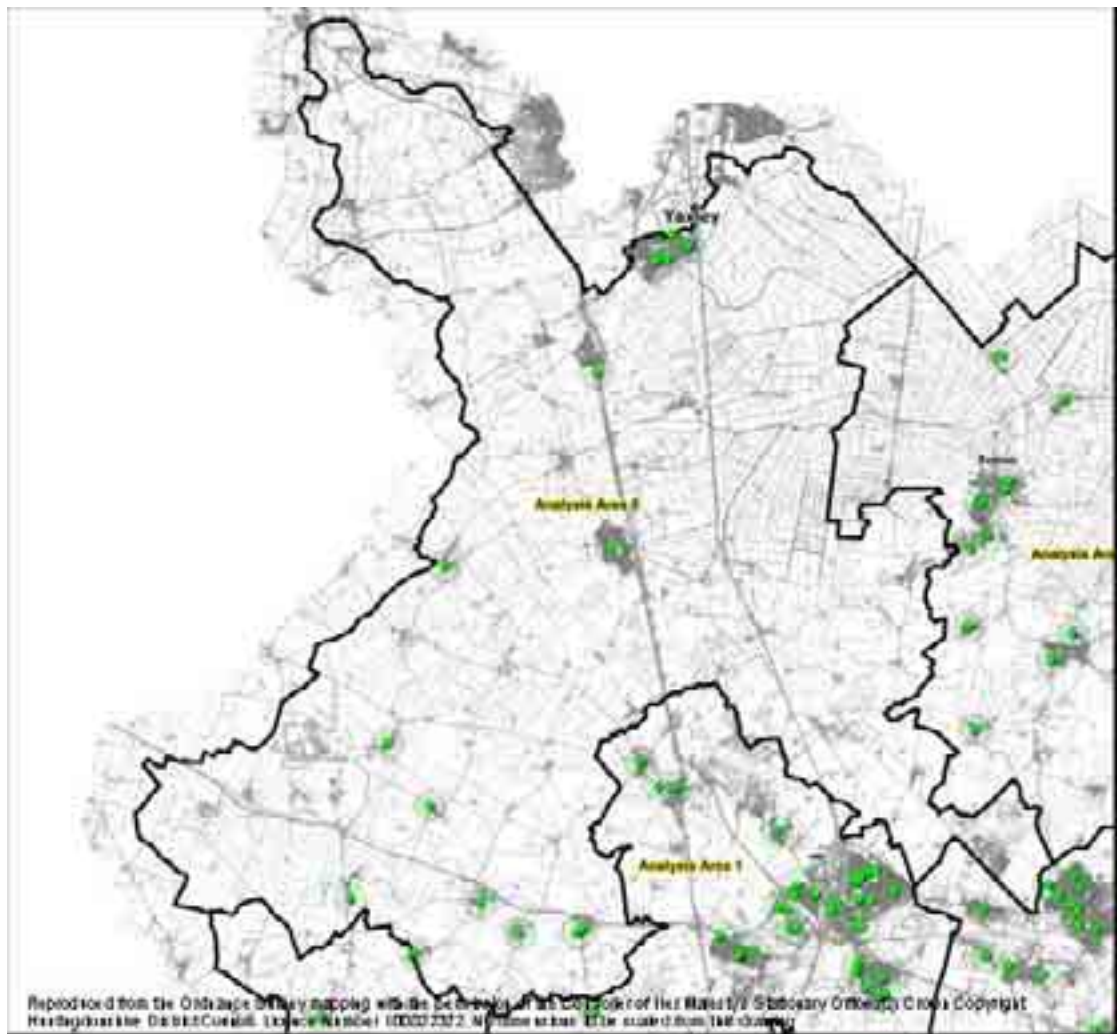
**HUNGINTDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL – SETTING ACCESSIBILITY STANDARDS  
ALLOTMENTS**

<b>National Standards and/or Benchmarks</b>	No national standards		
<b>Existing Local Accessibility Standards (includes any past surveys)</b>	No existing standards		
<b>Other Local Authorities Standards (by PMP)</b>	Harborough DC – 10 min (drive)	Corby BC – 15 min (walk)	South Northamptonshire – 10 min (walk)
	South Ribble – 10 min (drive)	Oswestry – 15 min (walk)	East Northamptonshire – 15 min (walk)
<b>Consultation</b>	<p><b>Expectations:</b>          63% of respondents would expect to walk to an allotment and 25% would expect to drive          75% threshold level: 15 minutes walk          Mode: 10 minutes walk          Across analysis areas 75% threshold level: ranges from 10 to 15 minute walk time</p> <p>Respondents to the Parish and Town Council Survey were asked how far they felt that people should have to travel to get to an allotment. The most frequent response to this question was less than 1 mile.</p>		
<b>PMP Recommendation</b>	<b>15 minutes walk time - (720 metres)</b>		
<b>PMP Justification</b>	<p>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 it will not be appropriate to always have allotments within this catchment.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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.</p>		

<b>Client Approval</b>	<b>Local Accessibility Standard</b>

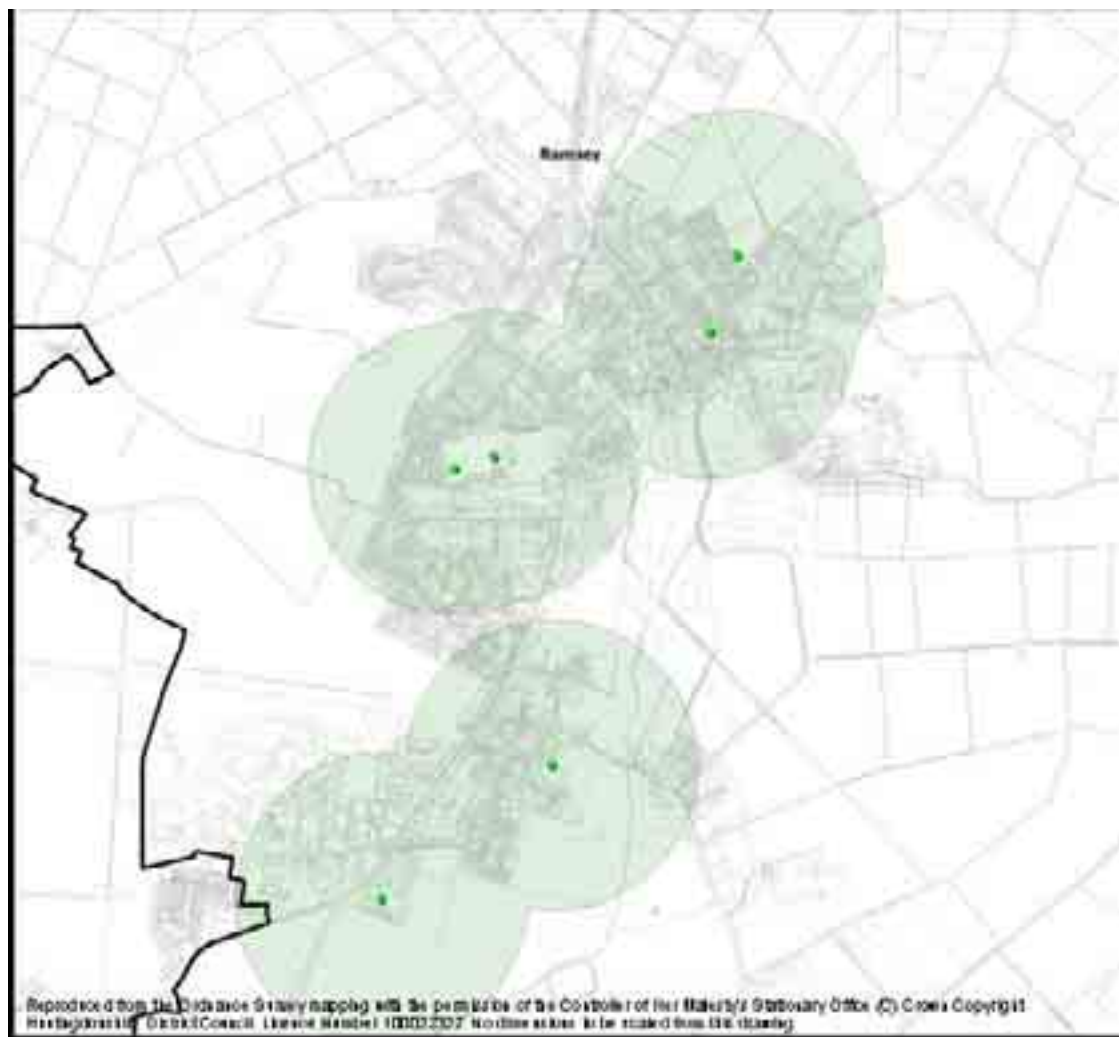
<b>Typology</b>	<b>Comments</b>
Green Corridors	As per PPG 17, no realistic requirement to set catchments for such typology as cannot be easily influenced through planning policy and implementation

## Provision for children and young people in Yaxley and Sawtry Analysis Area

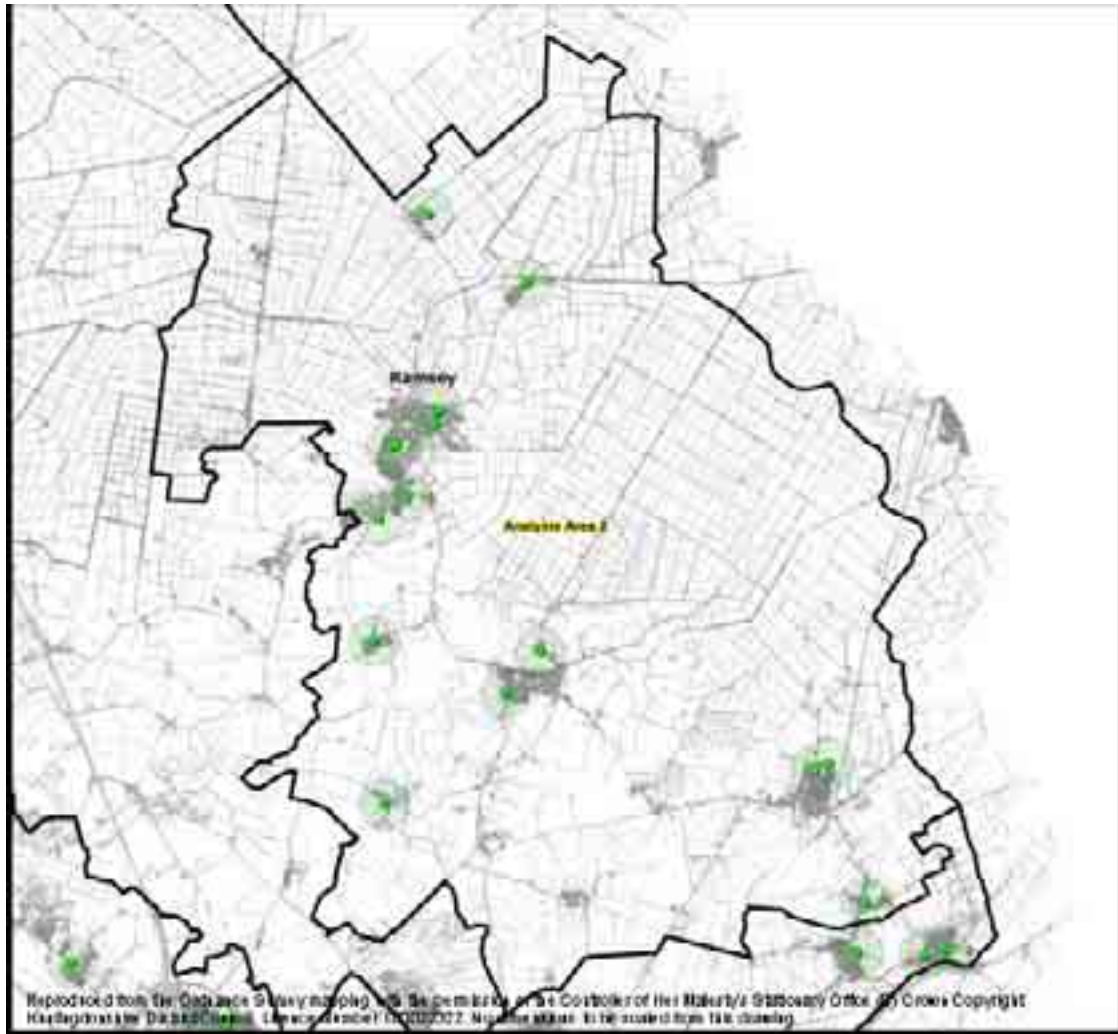




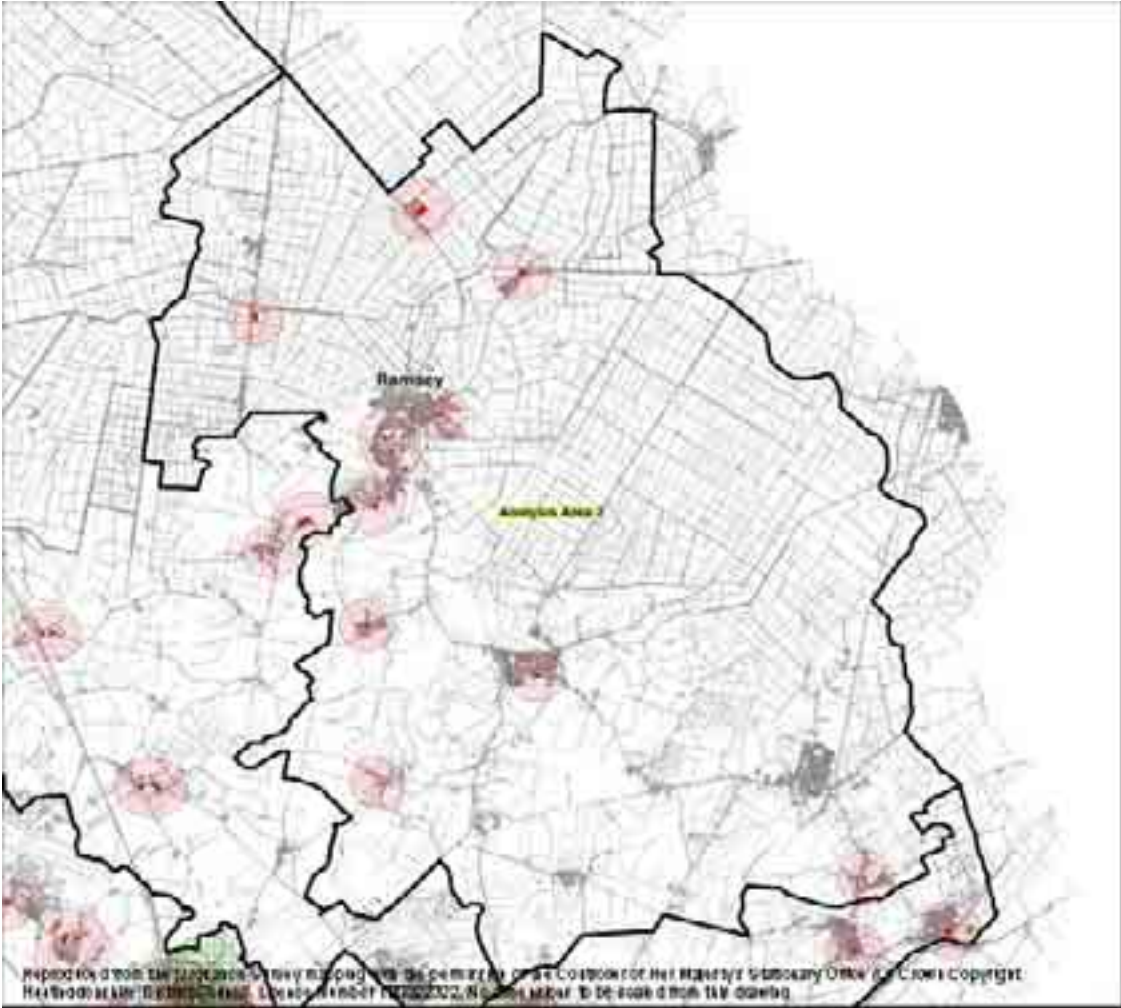
## Provision for Children and Young People in Ramsey Market Town



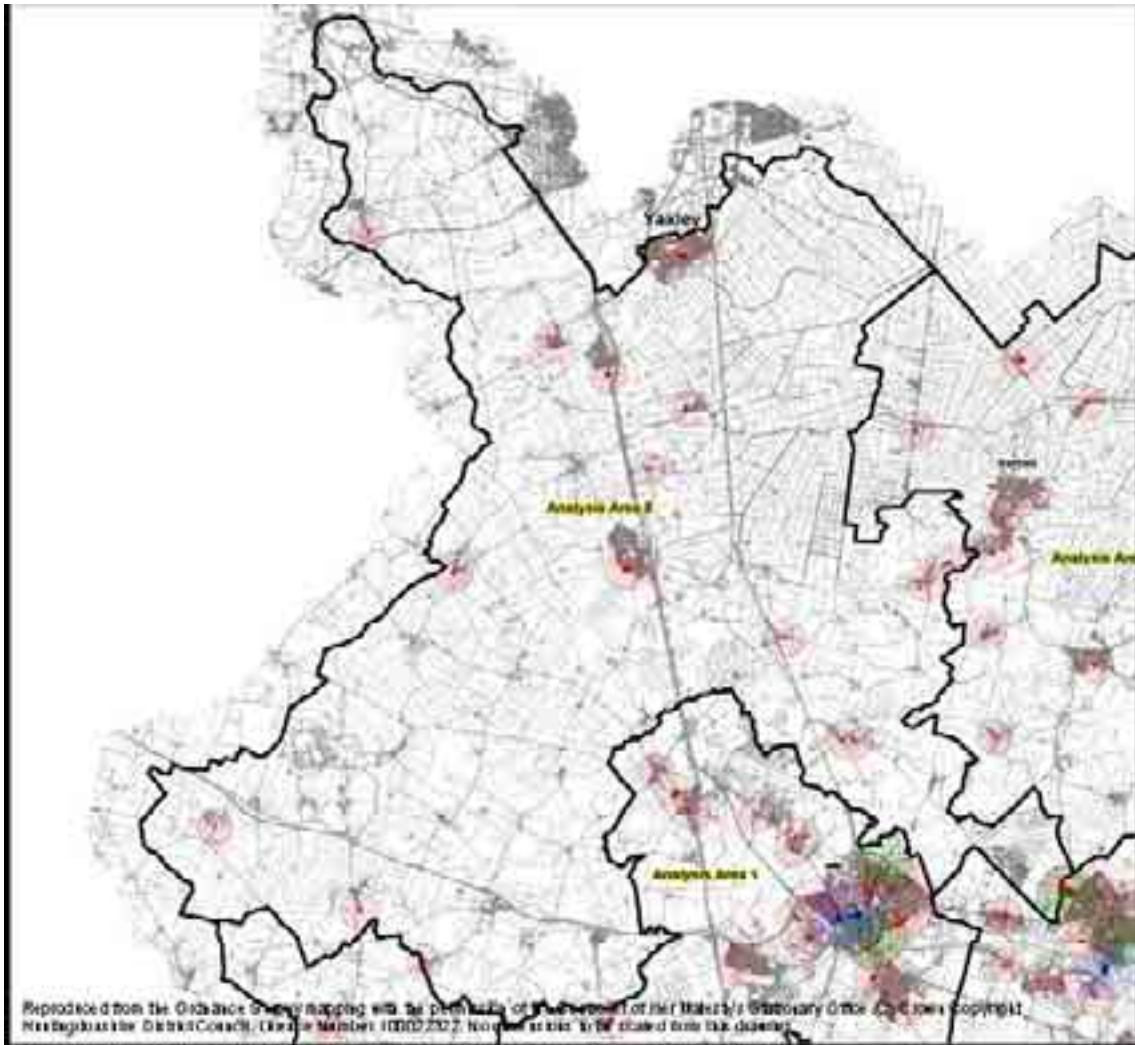
## Provision for Children and Young People in Ramsey Analysis Area



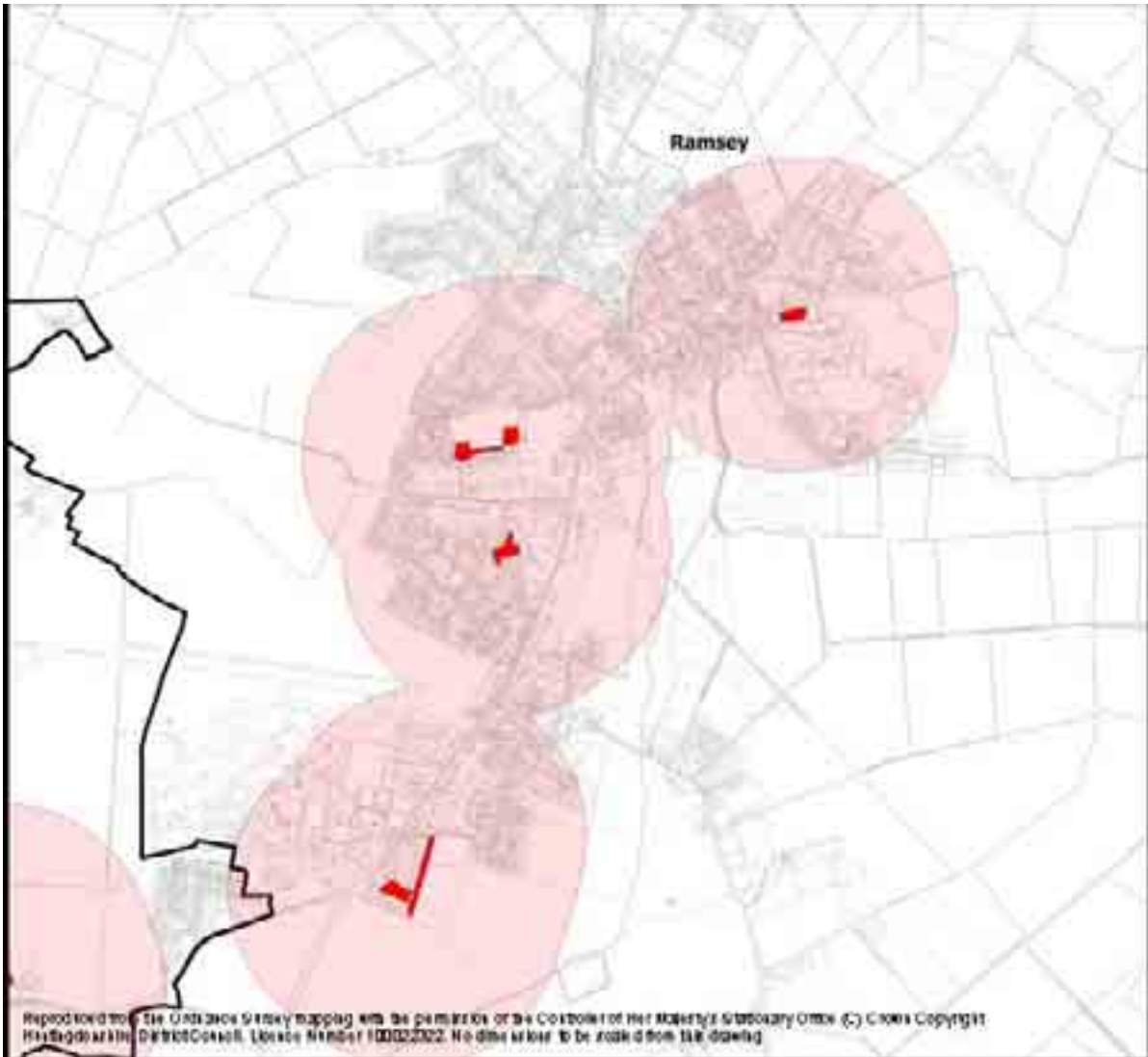
# Provision of Informal Open Space in Ramsey Analysis Area



# Provision of Informal Open Space in Yaxley and Sawtry Analysis Area



# Provision of Informal Open Space in Ramsey Market Town



Dear xxxx

**HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL - PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY**

Huntingdonshire District Council has recently appointed PMP, a specialist sports and leisure consultancy, to prepare a Playing Pitch Strategy for the area. The main aims of the strategy are to:

- inform the development plan process
- provide information to inform decisions and determine future development proposals
- assist the council in meeting the demand for sports pitches and secure, as appropriate, external funding for improvements.

As part of an extensive programme of consultation, we will be consulting with local sports clubs/organisations, governing bodies, neighbouring local authorities, and key pitch and other outdoor sports facility providers.

As part of this process, we would be very grateful if you could fill in the enclosed questionnaire and return it to us no later than Friday 10<sup>th</sup> February. You may have received previous questionnaires from other organisations but it is important that you take the time to fill in this questionnaire as the District Council are looking to ensure that a comprehensive district wide survey is undertaken which will be updated on a regular basis

If you have any comments/ information you would like to share with us in addition to the questionnaire, please call Andrew Searle on 0207 534 3947.

Many thanks for your assistance. I look forward to receiving your questionnaire.

Yours sincerely

**Andrew Searle**  
**Research Consultant**

E-mail: [andrewsearle@pmpconsult.com](mailto:andrewsearle@pmpconsult.com)



# Huntingdonshire District Council

## Open Space, Sport and Recreation Needs Assessment and Audit



**A Final Report  
by PMP**