

## Recreational Open Space Review 2011



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# 1. Introduction

- 1.1 Attractive, safe and accessible green spaces form an essential part of our local neighbourhoods. They are important for social wellbeing by providing places to socialise and exercise, they help to define local identity and promote economic development and regeneration.
- 1.2 In an urban borough like Tamworth, it is important that residents are able to experience contact with green space close to their homes, without having to travel far. This is particularly important in the disadvantaged neighbourhoods where an attractive network of open spaces performs the dual function of a sustainable transport network. The Council's focus will be to ensure that the Borough's green spaces meet the needs of our local communities.
- 1.3 A large part of the green space network in Tamworth is made up of publicly accessible open space, most of which is maintained by the Borough Council. In order to plan positively for open space, Planning Policy Guidance Note 17 'Planning for open space, sport and recreation' requires local authorities to undertake robust assessments of current and future need. The Borough Council undertook the original open space audit and assessment in 2004/2005 to provide a comprehensive picture of open space provision within the Borough.
- 1.4 The study made a number of recommendations, including local standards for the different open space typologies and a number of specific recommendations to address local deficiencies. It also highlighted the need for a vision and over-arching open space strategy, management and action plans and the need to prepare playing pitch and sport strategies. In respect of the last recommendation, the audit and assessment was supplemented by the Joint Sports Strategy in 2009, which looked in greater detail at pitches and built sports facilities and was the first comprehensive assessment of the Borough's sports facility resources.
- 1.5 The Local Plan was adopted in 2006 and saved Policy ENV14 uses the historic national standard of 2.43 hectares per 1000 population (NPFA 6 Acre Standard). In advance of local standards being adopted, the Council produced an SPD which interpreted the use of the national standard for new residential development.

Why is the review needed?

- 1.6 The starting point for the review is the need for up to date robust evidence for the local development framework in order to provide a sound basis for policies and SPD. The Council is still using the national standard and has yet to adopt local standards. It is likely that some of the site details have changed since 2005 and a review is therefore appropriate in advance of the publication of the Core Strategy in 2011.
- 1.7 The second reason for the review stems from the need for an over-arching green space strategy which was highlighted by the previous

study as being essential. The progression of a green space strategy assumes that a recent PPG17 audit and assessment has been produced. Green space has a broader definition to the traditional definition of open space as it encompass not only public open space but the wider landscape, including land that is not in the public domain or publicly accessible. The strategy will deliver a shared vision that acknowledges the value of green space and develops it in the best way to meet those local needs. It will provide a strategic framework for design, provision and enhancement to prioritise resource allocation.

- 1.8 The Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment (CABE)<sup>1</sup> exists to provide expert independent design advice to improve the quality of new development in England. CABE Space was a specialist unit within CABE which advised on parks and green space networks. It has provided assistance to the Borough Council on conducting the review and has worked with the Council on an advisory basis to advise on how best to develop the methodology and take the review forward into a green space strategy.
- 1.9 The review has been undertaken in accordance with PPG17 and the accompanying companion guide.

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<sup>1</sup> Replaced the Royal Art Commission in 1999

## **2. Site Review**

### **Methodology for 2004/2005 study**

2.1 The 2004/2005 audit and assessment was a comprehensive study and resulted in the production of a range of data on the quantity, quality and distribution of open space. The methodology used in the 2004/2005 study reflects the guidance set out in the PPG17 companion guide and is set out in section 2 of the final study document<sup>2</sup>. In simple terms it involved the following steps:

- Step 1 – identifying local needs
- Step 2 – auditing local provision
- Step 3 – setting provision standards
- Step 4 – applying provision standards
- Step 5 – drafting implementation and action plan

2.2 Green space was classified according to the types recommended in PPG17, as set out below:

- urban park
- amenity open space
- outdoor sport facilities
- cemeteries
- natural/semi-natural green space
- allotments
- facilities for children and young people
- green corridors

### **Methodology for the review**

2.3 The purpose of the review is to update the site data for the LDF and green space strategy, which is the equivalent of step 2 above. The methodology reflects the need for data to be rigorously tested and reviewed and is set out in detail below (stages 5 and 6 are in chapters 3 and 4 respectively).

- Stage 1 – site selection
- Stage 2 – sample survey
- Stage 3 – survey all sites
- Stage 4 – record sites
- Stage 5 – analysis
- Stage 6 – setting standards

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<sup>2</sup> Tamworth Borough Council: Open Space Study 2004

## **Stage 1 - site selection for review**

### *Types of sites removed*

- 2.4 The sites for the review have been selected on the basis that they are publicly accessible and used for recreation (formal and informal). The following types have been deleted from the list considered in the 2004/05 study:
- Allotments
  - Roadside verges and roundabouts
  - Outdoor sport facilities
  - Facilities for children and young people
  - Green corridors (in part)
- 2.5 Allotments were removed because use and access is restricted to allotment holders. Roadside verges and roundabouts were deleted because the review concentrated on those sites that are genuinely publicly accessible and used for recreation purposes. Formal sports pitches were considered in detail in the Joint Sport Strategy and were therefore not reviewed again, although amenity open spaces that contain informal pitches are considered under the primary type of amenity open space.
- 2.6 Facilities for children and young people, which include play areas and multi-use play areas, were previously considered separately. However, because they frequently form part of a wider open space, usually amenity open space, parks and semi-natural green space, it was decided to delete them as a separate type. The existence and condition of play facilities was, however, noted in the quality part of the surveys.
- 2.7 Green corridors included canals, rivers, cycleways and rights of way that provide opportunities for informal recreation, travel and biodiversity. For the review, the canals and rivers have been removed and cycleways and rights of way only included where they form part of other open space types.

### *Sites included in the review*

- 2.8 Civic space is a type listed in PPG17, but was not included in the 2004/2005 study. These predominantly pedestrianised spaces are found in the town centre and some of the local centres and are considered to be of vital importance to the social and economic functioning of the town, hence their inclusion in the review.
- 2.9 The review was therefore updated to include the following types of open space:
- Urban parks
  - Amenity open space
  - Cemeteries
  - Semi-natural green space

- Civic space

2.10 The Council confined sites in the review to the urban area and the immediate urban fringe. This is because of the difficulty in defining a precise boundary for accessible countryside which may consist of a field containing a single right of way. The Council is, however, aware of the opportunities for recreation presented by the surrounding rural area and the importance of maintaining physical links from the urban area. This is brought out in the green space background paper.<sup>3</sup>

#### *Minimum site size*

2.11 A lower size threshold of 0.2 hectares was set for the review because this size helps to avoid provision which will be too small to benefit local communities, or unnecessarily expensive to maintain. The layout of some areas of social housing, such as the Balfour estate, Leyfields, Belgrave and Glascote Heath neighbourhoods, has resulted in a network of small areas of open space, which on their own do not constitute useful space. However, where they form a linked network, they have been combined and considered as a single space.

#### *Analysis areas*

2.12 The 2004/2005 study divided the Borough into six analysis areas, the Joint Sports Strategy also divided the Borough into six analysis areas however these were based on lower super output areas and slightly different. For ease and consistency, the review has adopted the same analysis areas as the more recent work. The analysis areas comprise the following and are shown on the maps in Appendix 2:

- North - Lichfield Road, Coton Green, Leyfields, Gillway, Perrycrofts
- Mid west - the Leys, town centre, north Kettlebrook, Fazeley
- North east - Bolehall, Amington, Glascote
- East - Glascote Heath, Stonydelph
- South west - south Kettlebrook, Two Gates, Dosthill
- South east - Belgrave, Wilnecote, Hockley

#### ***Stage 2 – Provision audit: sample survey***

2.13 A decision had to be made whether to rely on the quality and accessibility results from the previous study. A sample of around ten sites in the north and west analysis areas was selected and surveyed to check if quality and accessibility scores were broadly similar and if there was any correlation between them. Limited correlation suggested the need for a full re-survey of all the sites. The sample also highlighted the importance of checking site boundaries and to consider merging sites where they are adjacent and contiguous.

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<sup>3</sup> Tamworth Borough Council Green Space Background Paper 2011

### ***Stage 3 – Provision audit: full site survey***

2.14 In order to ensure the robustness of the evidence for the LDF, the most important aspect is to ensure that the sites are accurately captured in terms of boundary, purpose, quality and accessibility attributes. All sites selected for the review were visited to accurately record the information, as set out below:

1. Types checked and corrected if necessary.
2. Boundaries checked and corrected if necessary, adjoining sites of the same type were merged.
3. Primary type/purpose assigned and secondary purposes and activities noted
4. Sites scored for quality under the headings of:
  - Cleanliness and maintenance (7 factors)
  - Security and safety (3 factors)
  - Vegetation (2 factors)
  - Ancillary accommodation (6 factors)
  - Play environment (1 factor)
5. Sites scored for accessibility, in terms of physical access and ease of access, under the headings of:
  - General (3 factors)
  - Transport (3 factors)
  - Signage (1 factor)
6. Sites scored for wider benefits under the headings of:
  - Structural and landscape
  - Ecological
  - Educational
  - Social inclusion
  - Health
  - Cultural and heritage
  - Economic

#### *Primary and secondary purposes*

2.15 Many open spaces are multi-functional and are used for children's play, dog walking, formal or informal recreation and contain areas of natural planting. An example of primary and secondary purpose is a seasonal football pitch laid out on amenity open space or an urban park containing a wide range of different facilities. In the previous study the pitch area was recorded separately from the amenity space around it, which lead to confusion and potential double counting. PPG17 advises adopting the concept of 'primary purpose' so that each open space is counted only once in the audit. The approach in the Review was to assign a primary purpose and note secondary purposes separately. In the example above, amenity open space is the primary type/purpose and because the pitch is

only used once or twice a week, it is classed as a secondary purpose or activity. Similarly, a large site such as the Castle Grounds contains a number of different facilities and activities and these are recorded as secondary purposes, within the urban park type.

#### *Scoring criteria for site visits*

- 2.16 The scoring factors and criteria for quality and accessibility are the same as those used in the previous study. It should be noted that the quality scores reflect the conditions of the day on which they were surveyed and represent a snapshot of quality at that time, another time of year may result in different scores. All sites were surveyed within a period of 14 days in August 2010.
- 2.17 The previous wider benefits scoring method was considered to be insufficiently detailed as it only gave the option of 'yes' and 'no' answers. For the review the Council expanded the scoring to five criteria under each wider benefit factor to provide a more informed score. This brought it in line with the scoring for quality and accessibility and gave it the same level of importance. Scores range from 1 (poor), through to 5 (very good). The scoring criteria for quality, accessibility and wider benefits are reproduced in full in Appendix 1.

#### ***Stage 4 – recording of sites***

- 2.18 The site surveys resulted in 116 sites being identified. The sites were assigned unique identification reference numbers and were digitised in the Council's geographical information system (GIS). GIS is a useful tool for expressing graphically the results of the site surveys and enables analysis of quantity, quality, accessibility and value, which will inform LDF policy and investment via a future green space strategy. All open spaces are shown by type on Map 1 in Appendix 2.

#### *Assigning sites to a hierarchy*

- 2.19 Sites were assigned to a hierarchy depending on their significance, whether it is borough-wide, neighbourhood or local. At the top of the hierarchy, sites tend to be large, strategic, high quality, have a larger catchment (possibly beyond the Borough boundary) and are likely to be accessed by car or public transport. Local sites tend to be locally significant, smaller, have a limited catchment and be accessed on foot or bicycle.

#### *Site scoring*

- 2.20 The quality and accessibility factors were weighted according to the previous study, which reflects the relative importance of the various factors. Under the quality heading, cleanliness and maintenance, vegetation and play environment factors were given more weight than security and safety and ancillary accommodation. Under accessibility, general factors (covering entrance, roads/pathways/cycleways and

disabled access) were weighted highest, followed by transport mode and signage.

- 2.21 Some of the quality factors were not relevant to all the sites, most commonly toilets, parking and signage. Similarly, signage was not relevant for most sites under accessibility, nor was culture and heritage under wider benefits. In these cases, a 'not applicable' or 'n/a' was recorded against these factors. A decision was made to attribute all amenity open spaces with a score of 3 for accessibility by public transport. This reflects the fact that they are of local significance and even if bus stops are convenient for the sites, public transport is unlikely to be the first choice of mode of transport.
- 2.22 The total weighted scores for quality were calculated for each site. This calculation took into account the maximum possible score for a site, which reflected the number of n/a's. As an example, if a site did not have any car parking, a score of 'n/a' was recorded. The maximum total score under ancillary accommodation is 30, but an n/a score for parking would reduce the maximum possible score for that site to 25. The final score is expressed as a percentage of the maximum possible score. This approach results in greater parity in ranking and comparing sites. The quality scores are shown on Map 2 in Appendix 2.
- 2.23 The sites were scored for the six wider benefit factors explained in paragraphs 2.17 and the scores averaged to give a single wider benefits score for each site.

#### *Measuring accessibility using buffers*

- 2.24 Applying catchment buffers to the sites in GIS according to hierarchy helps to assess the accessibility of sites and highlights deficiencies in provision, whether in general or particular typologies. Buffers were applied from the edge of the site boundaries at distances of 400 metres, 600 metres and 1200 metres for local, neighbourhood and borough wide sites respectively. The distances were based on the access standards put forward in the 2004/2005 study and were supported by CABE Space.
- 2.25 The buffers were made more credible by considering the effects of severance by railway lines, major roads, canals and rivers, which would restrict accessibility. Access points such as bridges, crossings and underpasses mitigate the severance effect and the buffers were adjusted where these are known to exist. In actual fact, severance is not a particular problem in this Borough because of the existence of numerous bridges and underpasses which help increase the permeability of the urban area. The only feature where severance was a real barrier was the rivers.
- 2.26 The total value scores were calculated for each site as the aggregate score of context (proximity, quantity and hierarchy), level and type of use

and wider benefits. All factors were weighted equally. The final score is expressed as a percentage of the maximum possible score.

### *Measuring Value*

2.27 Value is a different and separate concept from quality and is an expression of how important a site is to the community. The methodology for measuring value is set out below and took into account the following three factors:

- context
- level and type of use
- wider benefits

### Context

2.28 The context of a site relates in part to its surrounding area or neighbourhood, which will usually include other open spaces. Three considerations have a bearing on the definition of context for each site: quantity, proximity and hierarchy. In terms of quantity, if an area contains a large amount of open space, the sites may be valued less than in an area with very little provision, irrespective of quality. The Council has considered the quantity of open space within each analysis area to provide an amount of open space per 1000 population; all sites in an analysis area have the same score. The less open space per 1000 population, the higher the score and vice versa. Scores range from 0.5 to 5.

2.29 The second consideration relates to the proximity of open spaces to each other. As with quantity, the closer open spaces are to each other, the less valuable they will be to the community. Proximity was measured by the application of a standard 400 metre buffer to each site and the number of overlaps with other site buffers was noted. The scoring system reflects the number of overlaps so that sites with fewer overlaps have a higher score, scores range from 1 to 5. Map 3 shows the buffers around every open space, darker overlaps represent high proximity and vice versa.

2.30 Hierarchy is the third element and directly relates to the hierarchy assigned to each open space. Sites were scored 1, 3 or 5 depending on whether they are of local, neighbourhood or borough-wide significance respectively.

### Level and type of use

2.31 With regard to level and type of use, a lack of recent consultation has placed reliance on the 2005 household surveys for sites previously surveyed. Sites were scored 1, 3 or 5 based on a low, medium or high level of use. This information was cross referenced with the social inclusion factor under wider benefits to ensure consistency i.e. if a site scored well under level of use, it should also score well under social inclusion. For new sites the level of use was gauged from the Street

Scene Team and also local knowledge. Anecdotal evidence on open space from a Citizen's Panel survey<sup>4</sup> of 550 people in January 2010 revealed that only 11% of respondents visit a park or open space most days. The most valued open spaces were the Castle Grounds and the respondents' local open space.

#### Wider benefits

2.32 The sites were assessed for wider benefits as set out in paragraphs 2.14, 2.17 and 2.23. The criteria are set out in full in Appendix 1.

#### *Combining quality and value*

2.33 Combining quality and value of sites is fundamental to effective planning and considering a future strategy for management and maintenance. It provides an objective way of identifying the sites that need to be given the highest levels of protection, sites that need to be improved and sites that may no longer be needed in their present use and could be considered for other uses. In order to assess quality/value, the sites are fed into a matrix with quadrants denoting high quality/high value, high quality/low value, low quality/low value or low quality/high value (see below). Average scores for both quality and value informed the definition of the matrix. The spatial distribution across the Borough can be appreciated by importing the results into GIS and the resulting map can be viewed in Appendix 2 (Map 4).

Figure 1 Quality/Value Matrix

High quality/low value	High quality/high value
Low quality/low value	Low quality/high value

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.tamworth.gov.uk/docs/Citizens%20panel%20report%2020101.doc>

### 3. Site Analysis

#### *Hierarchy*

3.1 All sites were assigned to a hierarchy comprising three levels, borough-wide, neighbourhood and local (see paragraph 2.19). As would be expected, there are far more sites at the local level (83 sites or 71.5%), with only the Castle Grounds and town centre pedestrian precincts of borough-wide significance. The other two urban parks (Wigginton and Dosthill), cemeteries, local centre civic spaces and most semi-natural green spaces are of neighbourhood significance. With a few exceptions amenity open space tends to be of only local importance.

#### *Quantity*

3.2 The amount of open space surveyed totalled 445.7 hectares, which is shown on Map 1 and broken down by analysis areas and types in Tables 1 and 2 respectively below.

Table 1 Open space by analysis area

<b>Analysis area</b>	<b>Total amount of open space (ha)</b>	<b>% of borough total</b>
North	42.2	9.5
Mid west	159.5	35.8
North east	36.7	8.2
East	53.2	12.0
South west	85.6	19.2
South east	68.5	15.4
<b>Total</b>	<b>445.7</b>	<b>100</b>

Table 2 Amount of open space by type

<b>Type</b>	<b>Amount of open space (ha)</b>	<b>% of total space</b>	<b>Number of sites</b>
Urban park	41.6	9.3	3
Amenity open space	102.9	23.1	80
Cemeteries	10.8	2.4	5
Semi-natural green space	287.5	64.5	21
Civic space	2.9	0.7	7
<b>Total</b>	<b>445.7</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>116</b>

3.3 In purely quantitative terms, at 159.5 hectares the mid west area, contains the most open space and largest proportion of the total amount. This is not surprising as it incorporates a number of the larger open spaces including the Castle Grounds, Borrowpit Lake, Broad Meadow and Tameside Nature Reserve. Most of this is semi-natural green space which radiates south and west from the town centre. All types with the exception of cemeteries are represented in this area. The south west area also benefits from a relatively large amount of open space (85.6 hectares), which again is mainly semi-natural green space. The areas that are most deficient in purely quantitative terms are the north and

north east at 42.2 and 36.7 hectares respectively. Both of these areas contain less than 10% of the Borough's open space resource.

3.4 A different method of measuring the quantity of open space is to calculate the amount per 1000 population across each analysis area. The results are shown in Table 3 below. Amount per 1000 population is one of the contributory factors to context, as explained in paragraph 2.24. A smaller amount of open space per person means that what open space exists is all the more important and could be enhanced. The areas with the least open space per 1000 population are the north east and north with 2.1 and 3.1 hectares per 1000 population respectively. The north east area incorporates Amington Heath and Glascote Heath, which are two of the locality working neighbourhoods. This compares with 21.9 hectares per 1000 population in the mid west area, which has a combination of the smallest population and most open space.

Table 3 Amount of open space per 1000 population

Analysis area	Population	Amount of open space (ha)	Amount per 1000 population (ha)
North east	17,572	36.7	2.1
North	13,664	42.2	3.1
East	14,583	53.2	3.6
South east	12,975	68.5	5.3
South west	9,345	85.6	9.2
Mid west	7,262	159.5	21.9
<b>Total</b>	<b>75,401</b>	<b>445.7</b>	<b>-</b>

3.5 In terms of the distribution of open space types, Table 4 shows the amount by analysis area, whilst Table 5 shows the percentages by area. The tables show that all the analysis areas contain amenity open space and a minimum of two other types, although none contain all types. The total amount of semi-natural green space far exceeds that of all other typologies but the north area is unique in not containing any. Predictably, the least commonplace types are urban park, civic space and cemeteries.

Table 4 Amount of open space by analysis area and type

Type	Analysis areas (ha)					
	North	Mid west	North east	East	South west	South east
Urban park	21.7	15.6	0	0	4.3	0
Amenity open space	14.2	12.3	15.3	30.5	8.9	21.7
Cemeteries	6.3	0	2.5	0	0	2.0
Semi-natural green space	0	129.6	18.7	22.1	72.4	44.7
Civic space	0	2.0	0.2	0.6	0	0.1
<b>Total (ha)</b>	<b>42.2</b>	<b>159.5</b>	<b>36.7</b>	<b>53.2</b>	<b>85.6</b>	<b>68.5</b>

3.6 In terms of open space within areas, the largest proportion is generally amenity open space or semi-natural green space, although in the north area, the urban park accounts for over half of the open space in this area.

Table 5 Percentage of open space by analysis area and type

Type	Analysis areas (%)					
	North	Mid west	North east	East	South west	South east
Urban park	51.4	9.8	0	0	5.0	0
Amenity open space	33.6	7.7	41.7	57.3	10.4	31.7
Cemeteries	15.0	0	6.8	0	0	3.0
Semi-natural green space	0	81.2	51.0	41.6	84.6	65.2
Civic space	0	1.3	0.5	1.1	0	0.1
<b>Total (%)</b>	100	100	100	100	100	100

### **Quality**

3.7 Sites were individually scored for quality according to the criteria in Table A, Appendix 1. Map 2 shows the quality scores for all sites which range from 47.7% to 85.6% with an average score of 68.8%. Based on a statistical range, a threshold of 70% has been used to define good quality and 54 (46.5%) sites emerge as being of good or very good quality, only 2 sites (1.7%) are poor with a score of less than 50%. There is no pattern to quality and typology, with variations across all types. Of the three urban parks, Dosthill Park and Castle Grounds are good quality (78% and 78.6% respectively), Wigginton Park (62.1%) is of average quality. On sites of average or low quality, seating and bin provision consistently score poorly with either insufficient or poorly maintained equipment.

### **Value**

3.8 All sites were assessed for value as described in paragraphs 2.27-2.32. Scores range from 26% to 84.6%, with an average score of 51.1%. Examples of high value sites include Wigginton Park (72.7%), Amington and Perrycrofts Cemeteries (both 76%), Buckingham Road (84%) and one of the large Stonydelph amenity open spaces (80%). Examples of low value sites include Glascote Road/Amington Road, three of the Kettlebrook sites, all of which score less than 30%.

3.9 All the civic spaces are of above average value, the lowest scoring 54.7% (Exley Centre) and the highest, 69.3% (Town Centre pedestrianised area).

## ***Quality/Value***

- 3.10 Combining quality and value is useful for longer term strategy planning. Even if a site is high quality, it may be poorly valued and it would be useful to understand why, similarly, a site may be highly valued but poor quality and this may point to a need to improve quality elements through management. The sites are fairly evenly divided between high quality/high value (31), high quality/low value (28), low quality/high value (27) and low quality/low value (30) sites. All areas contain at least one high quality/high value open space.
- 3.11 Map 4 interprets the quality/value matrix. Seven sites, all amenity open spaces, are very high quality with scores of more than 80%, however, only three of these are also high value. In the case of the other four, low value can be attributed to low scores for hierarchy (all are amenity spaces so are of only local importance), a low score for level and type of use and limited wider benefits. This suggests that they are not well used by the community and there may be a case for encouraging greater use. Borrowpit Lake, just south of the town centre, stands out as a sizeable semi-natural green space that is within easy reach of the town centre but scores poorly on value. Improving access to the site by installing surfaced paths and providing benches and bins may attract more users to this high quality open space.
- 3.12 Low quality/low value sites are either amenity open space or semi-natural green space and are found in five out of six of the analysis areas. They include networks of small amenity spaces within Belgrave and Glascote Heath and large areas of natural green space on the west side of the Borough. Broad Meadow, to the west of the town centre, is of very high biodiversity value but scores poorly in all other factors because it is not easily accessible and not being actively managed.
- 3.13 The north area is unique in not containing any low quality/low value open space. Wigginton Park is low quality/high value and the largest open space in this area. It attracts a wide range of users and it is therefore important to ensure that low scoring elements, such as the toilets, pathways and signage are addressed. Priority should also be given to other sites that are classed as being of low quality/high value, as they are valued by the community, such as Buckingham Road and the southern part of the Kettlebrook LNR.
- 3.14 There are seven areas of civic space, the town centre pedestrianised areas, St, Editha's Church precinct, Peace Garden and purpose built shopping parades at the Kerria, Exley, Caledonian and Ellerbeck. The town centre, Kerria and Caledonian Centres are classed as high quality/high value. Exley and Ellerbeck are both of high value but low quality, suggesting that public realm improvements should be a priority for these two civic spaces.
- 3.15 Anecdotal evidence from the Citizen's Panel found that unsurprisingly, the Castle Grounds is well used by most respondents and the facilities

and floral display are appreciated and highly valued. Many people expressed disappointment that a similar level of provision does not exist in their local open spaces. It was suggested that the Council could do more to encourage use of open spaces and parks by improving on quality issues such as cleanliness, provision of basic facilities (seats and bins), footpath improvements and steps to increase the feeling of personal safety. The parks should be used more for events and activities and would benefit from more parking provision.

### ***Accessibility***

- 3.16 Sites were scored for accessibility using the criteria in Table B, Appendix 1. Scores ranged from 36% to 86.7%, with an average of 61.7%. The main areas of concern are poor entrance, roads/paths/cycleways, signage and disabled access.
- 3.17 Maps 5-9 in Appendix 2 shows accessibility modelling for good quality open space, three open space types and play space. Map 5 shows accessibility modelling for good quality open space using buffers of 400 – 1200 metres. This shows that there are some gaps in coverage, with parts of Coton Green, Lichfield Road, Stonydelph, Belgrave and Hockley being outside a reasonable walking distance of good quality open space. All of these deficient areas contain some open space, which are of poor or average quality, so the situation would be remedied by improving the quality of these spaces.
- 3.18 Some provision deficiencies can be compensated for by higher level sites. In the case of amenity open space, accessibility modelling is shown on Map 6 and uses 400-600 metre buffers to correspond with local and neighbourhood significance. This reveals two small gaps where residential properties are located, parts of the town centre and Dosthill. Gaps also exist in the mid west, north east, east and south east areas as well but these only affect employment areas and are therefore not relevant. The town centre deficiency in amenity open space would be compensated for by the Castle Grounds urban park, which is a high level site of Borough importance and likely to be used by town centre residents. Similarly, the Dosthill amenity open space deficiency will be addressed by the proximity of Dosthill Park.
- 3.19 Accessibility to semi-natural green space is shown on Map 7. Buffers of 400-600 metres reveal large deficiencies in the north, east and north east areas and a small gap in provision in Hockley. There is no semi-natural green space at all in the part of the north area bounded by the west coast main line and Birmingham-Derby line. Changing the management regime to incorporate some more naturally planted areas could contribute towards addressing this deficiency. Introducing more areas of semi-natural green space will assist in reinforcing the linkages between green spaces for biodiversity.
- 3.20 Wigginton Park is a substantial open space that offers the opportunity to fill part of the gap in the north through appropriate management. This

part of the Borough is also close to the open countryside, which offers alternative opportunities for contact with the natural environment. Similarly, a deficiency in parts of Bolehall, Glascote Heath, Stonydelph and large parts of Amington could be addressed by a change of management of an amenity open space that runs from Sheepcote Lane to the Kerria Centre.

3.18 English Nature has published 'Nature Nearby' guidance<sup>5</sup> to encourage the delivery of publicly accessible natural green space, with the overall aim of connecting people with the natural environment. There are three aspects to this, accessibility and quantity standards (ANGSt or Access to Natural Green space Standard), service standard and a national quality standard (Green Flag). ANGSt is English Nature's tool for assessing current levels of accessible natural green space and planning for better provision. The standard recommends that:

*"Everyone, wherever they live, should have an accessible natural green space:*

- *At least 2 hectares in size, no more than 300 metres (5 minutes walk) from home;*
- *At least one accessible 20 hectare site within two kilometres of home;*
- *One accessible 100 hectare site within five kilometres of home;*
- *One accessible 500 hectare site within ten kilometres of home;*
- *A minimum of one hectare of statutory Local Nature Reserves/1000 population. "*

3.19 In terms of the first recommendation of the standard, Map 7 also shows 300 metre buffers for sites over 2 hectares in size. The standard hierarchy buffers are 400 and 600 metres and the application of the 300 metre buffer clearly has the effect of significantly reducing the number of residents who have access to semi-natural green space. This is an issue that will need further consideration, some of the larger amenity spaces and urban parks may be adapted through management to include an area of semi-natural space, but it is unlikely that sufficient space will be found to greatly increase coverage to meet this standard.

3.20 In terms of the recommendation for accessible Local Nature Reserves (LNR), the total amount of land in the Borough's five LNRs is 96.63 hectares which equates to 1.28 hectares per 1000 population, just marginally more than the standard recommends. The designation and management of LNRs is co-ordinated through the Wild about Tamworth project, a joint initiative between the Borough Council and Staffordshire Wildlife Trust.

3.21 There are three urban parks in the Borough, the Castle Grounds, Wigginton and Dosthill Parks. All are located on the west side of the Birmingham-Derby railway line, which leaves a clear deficiency on the eastern side of the Borough. There is a network of highly accessible spaces of different typologies in the Glascote/Stonydelph

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<sup>5</sup> English Nature 'Nature Nearby – Accessible Natural Green space' March 2010

neighbourhoods, including part of the Kettlebrook LNR (Stonydelph Lakes), Burgess Nature Park and amenity open space (incorporating pitches and play areas) which provide a range of activities and experiences. There is scope to designate all or part of this area as an urban park, which would serve the eastern part of the Borough and has the added benefit of being close to a number of locality neighbourhoods.

3.22 Play space, which is defined as facilities for children and young people, include equipped play areas, skate parks and multi-use play areas. Map 9 shows the location of play spaces with a 400 metre buffer applied from the boundary of the open space on which they are located. All areas apart from the east have significant areas deficient in accessible play space. The locality area of Amington is particularly deficient. This highlights a need to provide more play space in areas of family housing, within amenity open space, particularly in the locality working areas.

3.23 Appendix 3 contains summaries for each of the analysis areas.

3.24 The approach of some authorities is to consider sites in neighbouring authorities. Tamworth is a predominantly urban Borough and it will only be necessary to consider these if there are deficiencies in the borough.

## **4. Standard setting**

- 3.1 Open space standards are needed to ensure that open space is provided that meets the needs of the local area. They will be used as a transparent basis for negotiating planning obligations in respect of open space provision for new residential developments, so it is important that they are based on robust evidence.
- 3.2 The adopted Local Plan uses the historic 2.43 hectares/1000 population standard, which was based on the National Playing Fields Association's "Six Acre Standard". This is a widely used national standard that applied to all local authority areas, irrespective of the amount or type of open space available locally. In line with PPG17 it makes more sense to set standards at a local level that reflect local circumstances and are based on sound local evidence. Locally set standards will also promote local distinctiveness and lead to more effective place making.
- 3.3 Local standards are set in terms of quantity, quality and accessibility and are dealt with in turn below. In all cases, it is the approach to standard setting that is set out, the standards will be taken forward and adopted through the LDF, detailed implementation will follow in the green space strategy and SPD.

### **Quantity standard**

- 3.4 Applying a 400 metre buffer to all unrestricted open space (irrespective of quality, see Map 2) reveals that all residential areas are within 400 metres of an open space, in other words, there is no overall shortage of open space. Some areas cannot accommodate any additional open space, because of a lack of space or opportunity.
- 3.5 It is recommended that a single standard is set because the Borough is largely urban and contains only one settlement. The amount of open space across the Borough is 5.9 ha/1000 population. Bearing in mind that there is currently sufficient open space in the Borough, it is recommended that 5.9 ha/1000 is used as an overall standard for new development, but that it is applied in a flexible manner according to the location, size of site, type of housing and proximity of existing open space. In many circumstances it would be preferable to ask for a contribution towards improvement of nearby open space (defined as an urban park, amenity open space or semi-natural green space within 400 metres, a distance which equates to a "local" open space) rather than on-site provision. It is recommended that a threshold of 14 dwellings is used as a general guide for on-site provision because this equates to 4.66 ha/1000 population and a minimum size of open space of 0.2 ha to ensure a site that is usable and viable for maintenance (see paragraph 2.10). For developments of less than 14 dwellings and developments of 14 or more dwellings where off-site contributions are requested, contributions would be used to fund quality and physical accessibility improvements. The green space strategy and SPD will set out priority open spaces for enhancement.

3.7 It is not considered appropriate to include civic space and cemeteries and churchyards within the quantity standard. Whilst they are publicly accessible open spaces they have a specific function which is quite different from green spaces.

### Quality standard

Quality is more of an issue in Tamworth, it is more important to have a smaller number of good quality sites than a large number of average or poor quality ones

3.8 It is recommended that the quality standard contains two elements, a quality vision statement for each type which sets out the “ideal” in terms of maintenance and facilities, plus a numerical target. With regard to the quality vision statement, this would apply to existing open spaces and any new provision. It is recommended that the visions set out in the previous PPG17 study are still applicable. Civic space was not assessed in the previous study and an appropriate “new” vision has been added for this reason. A quality vision has also been included for children’s play, even though it is not a separate open space type.

<b>Typology</b>	<b>Quality vision</b>
Urban parks	A welcoming, clean and litter free site providing a range of leisure, recreational and enriched play opportunities for all ages, varied and well-kept vegetation, appropriate lighting and ancillary accommodation (including benches, toilets and bins) and well-signed to and within the site.
Amenity open space	A clean and well maintained green space site with well kept grass and other vegetation, easily accessible with clearly marked footpaths and big enough to encourage informal play. Site should have appropriate ancillary accommodation (benches, bins etc.) and landscaping in the right places providing a spacious outlook and overall enhancing the appearance of the local environment.
Semi-natural green space	A spacious, clean and litter free site with clear pathways and natural features that encourage wildlife conservation, biodiversity and environmental education and awareness and also informal recreation and play where appropriate. Site should have appropriate ancillary accommodation (benches, bins etc.). Management of local sites should involve the community if at all possible.
Cemeteries & churchyards	A well maintained, clean site with long term burial capacity, provision of seating areas, bins, clear pathways and varied vegetation and landscaping that provides a sanctuary for wildlife in areas devoid of green space and one that encompasses biodiversity.
Civic space	A welcoming, clean, well lit, litter and clutter free public realm, with ancillary accommodation (benches, bins, cycle stands etc.) and appropriate

	vegetation and signage. Materials and street furniture should be appropriate to the location.
Play space	A site providing a mix of well maintained formal equipment and enriched play environment in a safe and secure convenient location close to housing that includes clean, litter and dog free areas for more informal play and seating for adults.

3.9 In terms of a numerical standard, “good” quality has been defined as a score of 70% (see paragraph 2.35). It is recommended that where new provision is to be made on-site it should meet this standard in addition to the quality vision. Where it is more appropriate to make off-site provision a contribution should be made to improve the quality of an open space within 400 metres of the development site (amenity open space, semi-natural green space or urban park) to this standard. Existing sites of all types should aspire to meet this target over time, whilst accepting that resources will limit this in practical terms, particularly on the smaller amenity open spaces. The green space strategy will need to explore this in greater detail. Management plans should be prepared for the larger sites.

3.10 The quality analysis shows that there are particular factors that consistently score poorly. With regard to existing sites, improvements to quality can be made by changing the approach to maintenance and by providing or improving the standard of ancillary accommodation i.e. bins and seating. Qualitative improvements can also be made to physical access with particular attention to disabled access.

### **Accessibility**

3.11 CABE’s best practice guidance on open space strategies<sup>6</sup> advises that there should be separate accessibility standards for each open space type. Based on the evidence there could be two approaches to accessibility standards in Tamworth, the first would follow guidance and apply separate standards according to hierarchy and the relative distances that people would be prepared to walk to access local and neighbourhood sites. The second approach would apply a single accessibility standard across the whole borough.

3.12 It is not considered appropriate to include accessibility standards for urban parks, civic space and cemeteries and churchyards. There are only three existing parks, even after applying a 600 metre buffer to Wigginton and Dosthill Parks, a 1200 metre buffer to the Castle Grounds (Map 8) and providing a new urban park in the east, there would still be a large % population outside this buffer and no realistic prospect of additional provision taking place in the future. It is not considered appropriate to set accessibility standards for civic spaces and cemeteries and church yards for the reasons set out in paragraph 3.7.

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<sup>6</sup> CABE ‘Open Space Strategies Best Practice Guidance’ 2009

***Approach 1 - separate standards for amenity open space, semi-natural green space and play space***

All residential areas should be within 400 metres of a good quality amenity open space, 600 metres of a good quality semi-natural green space and 600 metres of a good quality urban park. All residential areas should be within 400 metres of a good quality play space which can be a formal equipped space or area with suitable opportunities for informal or 'wild' play.

- 3.13 This approach would be satisfactory for amenity open space because there is a relatively small gap in provision, but there is a more significant gap in semi-natural green space and even with changes to green space management, it may be an unrealistic standard to achieve. Play space has not been considered as a separate type within the review, however, it is an important community facility and it is therefore relevant to include an accessibility standard. There are significant gaps in formal play space provision but some spaces, particularly the larger ones, already contain features that offer opportunities for informal wild play. There is also scope to provide new equipped play space on existing open spaces.

***Approach 2 - single standard to cover amenity open space and semi-natural green space, separate standard for play space***

All residential areas are to be within 400 metres of a high quality open space (over 0.2 hectares and scoring 70% or more) irrespective of type and hierarchy. All residential areas should be within 400 metres of a good quality play space which can be a formal equipped space or area with suitable opportunities for informal or 'wild' play.

- 3.14 This approach takes into account the local character of the Borough, which is small and predominantly urban, all residential areas are within 400 metres of unrestricted green space (amenity open space, semi-natural green space and urban parks) and there are limited land and opportunities for creating new open space. The issue in Tamworth is more around quality and it may be more appropriate to have a single accessibility distance standard for the Borough that focuses on improving quality.
- 3.15 In terms of applying the standard, the Council would expect developments of less than 14 dwellings to make a contribution to off-site provision or improvement of quality and accessibility of sites within the relevant distance threshold in lieu of on-site provision. On sites of 14 dwellings or more there will be need to provide new on-site open space of the appropriate type where there are no existing sites within 400 metres.

## **5. Implications for the LDF and Green Space Strategy**

- 4.1 The findings from the survey work are around quantity, quality, quality: value and accessibility. Using the evidence collected as a starting point, the LDF can address the strategic aspects by identifying areas of deficiency, setting priorities and seeking improvements in these areas, whether through new provision or enhancement of existing facilities. The LDF can also set out a framework for securing funding through planning obligations. The recommendations for the LDF are set out below.
- 4.2 The Core Strategy will be taking a neighbourhood approach to policy as far as possible, so it will be appropriate to identify spatial deficiencies and proposals to address them. The headline open space needs are as follows:
- Lack of an urban park on the eastern side of the Borough which can be addressed by considering the re-designation of the network of spaces around Glascote Heath and Stonydelph.
  - Public realm improvements are needed at Ellerbeck and Exley civic spaces.
  - A deficiency in play space in all areas except the east can be addressed by requiring new developments in these areas to include a play area or contribute towards enhancement of existing play spaces in need of improvement.
  - Consideration of more detailed site specific issues in neighbourhood plans.
  - Approach to contributions - amount, where to spend, priority schemes
  - Include strategic sites and improvements in IDP.
  - Standards will be taken forward as a supplementary planning document within the LDF.
  - Protect what we have in general, but consider disposal of low quality/low value sites. Identify sites for alternative uses.
- 4.3 Allotments were not included in the open space review because although they form part of the overall green space network they are not classed as offering unrestricted access. It will be necessary to pick up the issue of allotment provision in the LDF.
- 4.4 The audit should be kept up to date to detail changes to the open spaces in terms of quantity, quality and accessibility and to enable losses and additions to be recorded. The exercise will also be crucial in measuring improvements. It is recommended that all sites are re-surveyed every three years.
- 4.5 It will be the role of the green space strategy to deal with the detailed management of green spaces, in consultation with the community. The strategy will establish a vision, aims and objectives for green space in the Borough. It will identify priorities for green space improvements based on the findings of the survey and analysis, in terms of areas and

spaces to focus on. It will set out how changes in management can make up for deficiencies in typologies, in particular semi-natural open space and urban parks. The Council will base the methodology on best CABE's best practice guidance, which recommends that the strategy will cover the following:

- Vision for green spaces
- Summary of national, regional and local context
- Summary of audit results
- Description of local needs and demands
- Statement of key issues to be addressed and priorities for action/improvement
- Management policies
- An action plan

4.6 It is recommended that the Strategy takes forward the following issues:

- A strategy for maintenance based on type, size and hierarchy, but with the aim of ensuring all residents live within 400m of a good quality open space.
- Linked to the above, addressing deficiencies in good quality open space in the north, mid-west, east and south east by targeting improvements to sites in those areas.
- Focusing on improving the quality and accessibility of open spaces in areas with a low proportion of open space/1000 population.
- Addressing deficiencies in semi-natural green space by setting aside parts of larger sites for more informal planting and management.
- Giving priority to improving sites of low quality/high value, particularly where they are located in areas with a low proportion of open space/1000 population.
- Consideration of options and alternative uses for low quality/low value sites, unless they are located in areas with a low proportion of open space/1000 population. Take into account how the loss of open space will impact on accessibility modelling.
- Preparation of management plans for all parks and consideration given to meeting Green Flag/Pennant standards.
- Implementation of the urban park designation in the east of the Borough
- Consideration of how improvements will be funded, including planning contributions and bids to HLF
- Maximisation of the use of all parks for events and activities (not just the Castle Grounds)
- Consideration of green infrastructure cross boundary issues

4.7 The strategy will be a joint collaboration across service areas, with input from Planning, Environmental Management and Property Services. It will be essential to secure Member support for the strategy at the outset because it involves a long term action plan and significant resource commitment.

- 4.8 Public consultation with the community and key stakeholders will be essential to underpin the strategy and give it support. This could usefully form part of the future development of neighbourhood plans or SPDs. The status of the strategy is presently unclear but it could form a supplementary planning document in its own right.
- 4.9 Strategic provision or improvements will be detailed in the infrastructure delivery plan. It is anticipated that new open space or improvements to existing spaces and facilities will be funded directly by the Council or through developer contributions. The latter will necessitate the development of a tariff system. The section 106 fund contains contributions from housing developments, it should be reviewed to see if any of the monies could be used to address local deficiencies.

## **Appendix 1 – Scoring Criteria for Surveys**

Table A: Scoring Criteria for Quality

Table B: Scoring Criteria for Accessibility

Table C: Scoring Criteria for Value

<b>Table A Quality scoring and criteria</b>		<b>Very Good (5)</b>	<b>Good (4)</b>	<b>Average (3)</b>	<b>Poor (2)</b>	<b>Very Poor (1)</b>
<b>Cleanliness and Maintenance</b>	<b>Vandalism and Graffiti</b>	No evidence of vandalism or graffiti	Limited evidence of vandalism or graffiti	Some evidence of vandalism or graffiti but doesn't really detract from the cleanliness or attraction of the area	Increasing evidence of vandalism and graffiti which would probably deter some users	Clear evidence of vandalism and graffiti which would probably deter any usage of the open space site
	<b>Litter problems</b>	No evidence of litter	Limited evidence of litter	Some evidence of litter but doesn't really detract from the cleanliness or attraction of the area	Increasing evidence of litter which would probably deter some users	Clear evidence of litter which would probably deter any usage of the open space site
	<b>Dog Fouling</b>	No evidence of dog fouling; specific dog fouling wastage bins provided where appropriate	Limited evidence of dog fouling	Some evidence of dog fouling but doesn't really detract from the cleanliness or attraction of the area	Increasing evidence of dog fouling which would probably deter some users; no specific bins provided in appropriate areas	Clear evidence of dog fouling which would probably deter any usage of the open space site
	<b>Noise</b>	Very quiet and peaceful site; no intrusion by any noise	Limited intrusion by noise; i.e. site located away from roads, railways, works sites etc	Little intrusion by noise (e.g. busy road, railway nearby) but wouldn't really deter usage of the site	Noise intrusion apparent; may have some affect on potential usage	Noise intrusion clearly apparent by a number of sources and would probably deter some usage
	<b>Equipment</b> (e.g. condition and maintenance of equipment in play areas or recreation provision)	Equipment in excellent condition and provides an attraction for users;	Equipment in good condition	Equipment in reasonable condition; some potential improvements but not a necessity at this stage	Some equipment in poor condition and obvious that improvements could be made	Majority of equipment in poor condition and in a state of disrepair; no signs of the issue being addressed
	<b>Smells</b> (unattractive)	No unattractive smells	Limited unattractive smells	Little unattractive smells or some smells that would be a one-off; shouldn't deter any usage	Some unattractive more permanent smells; may deter some users	Clearly apparent unattractive permanent smells; would deter some potential users
	<b>Maintenance and Management</b>	Clean and tidy; well-maintained site that is inviting to users; possibly an example of good practice	Clean and tidy site; good maintenance	Reasonably clean and tidy site; some potential improvements	Some questions regarding the cleanliness of the site; some obvious improvements could be made	Poor cleanliness; clear evidence of a lack of maintenance
<b>Security and Safety</b>	<b>Lighting</b>	Appropriate lighting that promotes the safety of the open space; well-maintained	Appropriate lighting; well-maintained	Some lighting; some general improvements could be made	Limited lighting; or appropriate lighting in poor condition	Limited lighting in poor condition; or no lighting in places required
	<b>Equipment</b> (e.g. protection of equipment and appropriate flooring and surfaces)	Equipment in excellent condition; excellent surfaces provided throughout the site; appropriate fencing of site to protect equipment and/or ensure safety of users	Equipment in good condition; appropriate and suitable surfaces provided throughout the majority of the site; sufficient measures provided to protect equipment and/or ensure safety of users	Equipment in reasonable condition; appropriate surfaces provided but some potential improvements; some measures provided to protect equipment and/or ensure safety of users	Equipment in poor condition; some questions regarding safety of use; appropriate surfaces provided but in poor condition or some clear concerns regarding surfaces; limited measures to protect equipment of users	Equipment in very poor condition; clear questions regarding safety of use; inappropriate surfaces; no measures to protect equipment of users
	<b>Boundaries</b> (including hedges, fencing and gates)	Clearly defined and well-maintained to a high standard	Clearly defined and maintained to a reasonable standard	Mostly clearly defined but possibly improvements to be made to the standard and condition.	Poorly defined and some questions regarding the standard and condition.	Poorly defined and in a state of disrepair.
<b>Vegetation</b>	<b>Planted areas</b>	Numerous planting, with appropriate mix of plants, installed and maintained to a very high standard; no weeds	Numerous planting, with appropriate mix of plants, installed and maintained to a reasonable standard; very few weeds	Appropriate range of vegetation and plants but with some patchy maintenance	Limited range of vegetation and plants but reasonable maintenance	Limited range of vegetation and plants; poor maintenance with some areas clearly suffering
	<b>Grass areas</b>	Full grass cover throughout; cleanly cut and in excellent colour and condition	Full grass cover throughout and cleanly cut; few weeds but generally in good condition	Grass cover throughout but with some thin patches or excessive growth in some areas; some bald areas and a few weeds; but generally in good condition	General grass cover but some significant areas thin, saturated and/or poorly maintained; cut infrequently with obvious clippings still in existence	General grass cover but with some serious wear and tear and/or limited grass cover in many areas; little or no serious attempt to correct the problem
<b>Ancillary Accommodation</b>	<b>Toilets</b>	Provided where appropriate; easy to access; signed and well-maintained	Provided where appropriate; easy to access; some minor improvements could be made (e.g. cleanliness)	Provided where appropriate; reasonable access; generally not very well maintained;	Insufficient toilets provided; or those provided are in poor condition and likely to be generally avoided by open space users; uninviting	No toilets in a place that should be provided; or some provided but in a state of disrepair that are unlikely to be used
	<b>Parking</b> (related to open spaces)	On-site parking provided; adequate number; clean and in good condition; well signposted	On-site or appropriate off-site parking provided; adequate number; generally clean but some improvements could be made;	Appropriate off-site parking provided; some limit in terms of spaces; generally clean	No on-site and limited off-site parking provided; or adequate number of spaces but in poor condition	Parking provision limited and in poor condition
	<b>Provision of bins for rubbish/litter</b>	Numerous bins provided and in good condition; in right locations and clearly labeled for appropriate purpose	Numerous bins provided and in average condition; clearly visible and in appropriate locations	Adequate number provided and in average condition; some signs of overuse/ damage etc	Insufficient number provided but in average/good condition; or appropriate number but with significant signs of damage or limited maintenance	Insufficient number provided and in poor condition;
	<b>Seats / Benches</b>	Numerous for the size of site and in good condition	Numerous for the size of site and in average condition	Adequate number for the size of site and in good condition	Insufficient number but in good condition; or adequate number but in poor condition	Insufficient number and in poor condition
	<b>Pathways</b> (within the open space sites)	Suitable materials, level for safe use, edges well defined; surfaces clean, debris and weed free and in excellent condition;	Suitable materials, level for safe use, edges well defined; little debris and/or weeds but overall in good condition; good disabled access in most areas	Suitable materials, level for safe use, edges reasonably well defined; some debris and/or weeds but doesn't detract too much from overall appearance; disabled access in some areas	Suitable materials but some faults; some difficulty with defined edges; debris and/or weeds detract slightly from appearance; some difficulties with disabled access	Inappropriate materials and/or significant faults; edges not clearly defined; significant debris and/or weeds; limited disabled access or very restricted
	<b>Information &amp; Signage</b>	Information clearly displayed in various formats (e.g. noticeboards, leaflets etc); signage in good condition	Information clearly displayed in appropriate format; signage in good condition	Appropriate information displayed in some format; condition of signage reasonable	Limited information displayed; signage that is provided in poor condition and uninviting	No information displayed in appropriate areas; no signage;
<b>Play Environment</b>	<b>Enriched Play Environment</b>	A varied and interesting natural environment with landscape maintained at different levels, offering physical challenge, places to hide and features that inspire the imagination.	A well maintained natural environment providing areas suitable for informal recreation ie ball games.	A maintained natural environment which could with minor attention support elements of play and informal recreation.	A natural environment which whilst containing natural features is poorly maintained and would not generally support safe informal play.	An environment that is not maintained has fallen into a general state of disrepair and, does not offer any opportunities for safe informal play.

<b>Table B Accessibility scoring and criteria</b>		<b>Very Good (5)</b>	<b>Good (4)</b>	<b>Average (3)</b>	<b>Poor (2)</b>	<b>Very Poor (1)</b>
<b>General</b>	<b>Entrance to the sites</b> (i.e. are the entrances to sites easily seen, easily accessible etc)	Easy to find, with a welcoming sign; appropriate size, clean and inviting and easily accessible for all users including less able bodied people.	Clear entrance and well-maintained, appropriate size and clean.	Fairly obvious entrance that is maintained to a reasonable level and which is clean and accessible to most potential users	Apparent as an entrance but no clear signage; not as well-maintained as it could be; some users may have difficulty with access	Poor or limited entrance; no signage; difficulty with access and not maintained appropriately
	<b>Roads, pathways, cycleways and/or accesses</b>	Suitable materials, level for safe use and in excellent condition; cycle stands provided and separate clearly marked routes for cycles, pedestrians and other traffic etc	Suitable materials and overall in good condition; some cycle stands provided where appropriate and easy and safe access within the site for cycles, pedestrians and other traffic etc	Suitable materials; reasonable access for pedestrians and cycles etc but no real separate defined areas where appropriate	Some potential improvements to some surfaces; some difficulty with general access within the site	Inappropriate surfaces and/or significant faults; limited restrictions of access for pedestrians and cycles; usage would be clearly affected
	<b>Disabled Access</b>	Good disabled access throughout; specific facilities and pathways provided	Good disabled access in most areas	Disabled access in some areas; some improvements could be made	Some difficulties with disabled access	Limited disabled access or very restricted
<b>Transport</b>	<b>Accessible by public transport</b>	Excellent public transport links provided where appropriate; bus stop located at the site and/or train station in very close proximity	Good public transport links; bus stop located nearby; and/or train station within reasonable walking distance	Reasonable public transport links but would not be first choice of accessible transport; bus stop located within reasonable walking distance;	Limited public transport links; bus stop located a significant walking distance away (more than 10-15minutes);	No public transport links within any reasonable walking distance of the site
	<b>Accessible by cycleways</b>	Clear separated cycle routes to and within the site; cycle stands provided in appropriate places	Some cycle routes to and/or within the site; local roads quiet and safe for cyclists; cycle stands provided in some places	Easy access for cyclists although no specific routes provided; local roads fairly quiet and safe; cycle stands provided or suitable areas to lock cycles are evident	Limited access for cyclists; not really encouraged by design and/or location of site; no cycle stands provided but some areas to lock cycles	No real access for cyclists; not really encouraged by design and/or location of site; access via busy dangerous roads; no cycle stands provided and/or no clearly evident areas to lock cycles
	<b>Accessible by walking</b>	Clearly defined pathways / walkways to and within the open space site; pedestrian crossings provided where appropriate	Pathways / walkways provided to and within the open space site; some crossing of roads required without assistance but no real safety issues regarding access for pedestrians	Some pathways / walkways provided to and/or within the open space site; some crossing of roads required without assistance; some potential for improvements	Limited pathways / walkways provided to and/or within the open space site or pathways provided not clearly defined; some safety issues regarding access for pedestrians	No clear pathways / walkways provided to and/or within the open space site; significant safety issues regarding access for pedestrians
<b>Signage</b>	<b>Signage</b> (i.e. is the signage to the open spaces appropriate where required and clear to see and easy to follow)	Site clearly signposted outside the site; signage in good condition; signage within site easy to follow and understand	Site is signposted with signage in good condition; some signage within the site	Signage provided within or outside the site; some improvements could be made; condition of signage reasonable;	Site not signposted and/or signage that is provided in poor condition and uninviting	No information displayed in appropriate areas; no signage;

**Table C Wider benefits scoring and criteria**

		<b>Very Good (5)</b>	<b>Good (4)</b>	<b>Average (3)</b>	<b>Poor (2)</b>	<b>Very Poor (1)</b>
<b>Structural and landscape benefits Amenity benefits &amp; sense of place</b>	Defines character and identity of area  Buffer  Greenbelt land Edge of settlement forming local landscape Creates specific neighbourhoods  Landmarks Visible from most areas Softens urban texture	Acts as Buffer (neighbourhoods, uses, urban / rural)  Contribute positively to character and identity of the town  Landmark Softens urban texture  Highly visible	Buffer  Positive contribution locally  Structural benefits Landscape benefits	Buffer  Not locally distinctive  Structural or landscape Does not link into wider landscape  Visible to neighbourhood	Buffer  Only visible to small area  Limited visual impact	Does not contribute positively to character / identity of area  Not visible to local area
<b>Ecological benefits</b>	Level of importance for biodiversity	Site is of national importance and designated as a SSSI	Site is of county importance and designated as a SBI or RIGS	Site is of local importance, designated as a LNR or BAS and is in appropriate management	Site not currently designated but with appropriate management has the potential to reach standard. Alternatively, site forms part of a wildlife corridor	Site is low in ecological interest
<b>Education Benefits</b>	Use for formal or informal education for the local community	Actively used as part of school education programmes and/or local group involved which provide opportunities for involvement in practical conservation	Used to complement school programmes or is used by children and young people for informal learning	Occasional use but needs development through links with schools/the community or provision of additional facilities	Not currently used but has potential	Not used for education programmes and no potential
<b>Social Inclusion</b>	Age groups Use by community groups  (non organised e.g. dog walkers, footballers) and Organised community activities  Social, cultural or community facilities  Valued by local community for events	Used by everyone  Used frequently by organised groups and non organised groups  Community centre for hire, benches, bins, amphitheatre, teen shelter, MUPA, children's play equipment  Borough wide importance for cultural events	Used by families and other groups  Used by more than 1 organised group more than twice a year  Bins, benches plus 2 others	Used by two age groups  Used by one type of organised group once a year  Bins benches plus one	Used by one particular age group  Used only by non organised groups  Bins benches	Very low usage by one group  Used by no groups  none
<b>Health Benefits</b>	Facilities for health  Field  Cycle path  Outdoor gym Tennis courts Bowls Jogging trail Location / accessibility for communities	4 or more opportunities for health  Town centre site  Accessible by choice of transport and by different users (disabled access)	2-3 health facilities  Located close to several communities with more than 2 access points.  May not allow access by all (e.g. disabled access)	Informal and formal health facilities (e.g cycle path)  Located close to local communities (x metres)  More than 1 access point	Informal health facilities e.g. green field  Located away from local community  Poor accessibility (e.g. one access at the end of cul-de-sac)	No opportunities to undertake health activities (e.g. small amenity open space)  Outside of urban area  No public transport links  Small number of access points
<b>Cultural and heritage benefits</b>	Wider use of space for cultural activities, presence of interpretation, contribution to local identity and local association	Site is of inherent heritage value and presence of interpretation	Located adjacent to a statutorily listed building or scheduled ancient monument and forms an integral part of the setting	Located within a conservation area where it forms an important public space, it may be bordered by historic buildings (not necessarily listed).	Within a conservation area but not an important site	No heritage value
<b>Economic Benefits</b>	Site currently has following economic benefits:  -Tourism -Income from sports facilities -Enhancing or devaluing surrounding property -Potential hosting of major events -Offers employment opportunities -Has regeneration benefits	4 or more different opportunities for economic benefits on the site and positive affect on surrounding property/area	2-3 different opportunities for economic benefits	Site has 1 economic benefit	Site has no potential for economic benefits at this stage but does not negatively affect surrounding property/area	Site has no potential for economic benefits and could lead to devaluing of surrounding property/area

## **Appendix 2 – Maps**

- Map 1: All sites surveyed by typology
- Map 2: All sites with quality scores
- Map 3: Proximity to unrestricted green space
- Map 4: All sites by quality:value
- Map 5: Good quality score accessibility modelling
- Map 6: Accessibility modelling for amenity green space
- Map 7: Accessibility modelling for semi-natural green space
- Map 8: Accessibility modelling for urban parks
- Map 9: Accessibility modelling for play space