

APPENDIX 11 – DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

A11.1 Accessible Natural and Semi Natural Greenspace (ANSNG)

ANSNG is the typology that has the greatest coverage in the borough, covering 10%. This is broken down to 51 sites with a total area of 2876ha. This gives 28.26 ha per 1000 population, the highest provision in terms of hectares than the other typologies and consequently there is a low population figure per hectare of 172 people. The wards with the most provision were Tillingbourne, The Pilgrims and Lovelace; this is due to a small number of very large sites. The urban wards had little or no provision. Therefore it is important for any new ANSNG to be located on the urban fringe, and existing sites such as Pewley Downs protected, to ensure ANSNG is accessible to urban residents.

ANSNG is generally well distributed around the borough. When applying a 1km straight-line buffer then it is evident that most of the urban areas have access to such a site. Accessibility is greater, with more choice of larger sites in the south east of the borough, where Holy Trinity and Tillingbourne wards have an abundance of ANSNG with just over 14% and 30% respectively of the wards covered in such provision. This is because this area is part of the AONB and AGLV and heavily protected. In fact there is a correlation between this typology and wider protection. As the larger significant sites tend to be protected via planning policy by being in the AGLV, AONB or being an SCNI or SPA for example, particularly the commons in the north of the borough. Residents in the west of Guildford's Urban Area and the rural wards beyond tend to have less choice over accessing ANSNG, particularly in Normandy.

When applying the English Nature Accessible Natural Greenspace Model (ENANGS) to those sites defined as ANSNG it is relatively clear that most areas of the borough are within the straight-line buffer of sites over a set area (over 20ha, 100ha and 500ha). The only 500ha site is Hackhurst Down, which stretches out of the borough. It is located to the east of the borough so again the west is slightly under provided if applying the ENANGS and looking at sites just within the borough. It is however worth noting that many sites defined in this typology are located close to one another and therefore in a way form large site. A notable example is Pewley Down, Chantry Wood, St Martha's Hill and Newlands Corner, which are so well linked that they could be considered one site.

Due to the nature of the provision, ANSNG often has few facilities, is harder to move around and access and is less suited to multiple uses. The qualitative scores are therefore usually quite low. The borough average was 49%, with the highest ward average being 65% and the lowest being 40%. There is only a range of 20% between the highest and lowest scoring sites, which means that the quality of the typology is quite constant across the borough.

However issues such as views from the site were not considered in the assessment, as these are value judgements, which are hard to assess. Residents may therefore not use local sites due to personnel preference. It was clear however that many residents were not aware of local sites for example only 32% of people asked were aware of Chilworth Gun Powder Mill and 44% Chantry Wood, both of which scored relatively well in terms of quality and are two significant open spaces close to Guildford Urban Area. Residents could be travelling further distances to access other sites, when sites like these are closer.

The consultation showed that walking is one of the most popular recreational activities in the borough and with the abundance of provision, that is generally well located and accessible, it is considered that there is at present sufficient ANSNG. But many sites do

require improved facilities such as toilets, picnic and kick about areas and signage to, and within the site, to increase the qualitative score and ultimately increase their usage. Newlands Corner (Site 141) should be used as a bench mark for ANSNG as it scored well above average with 70%.

Newlands Corner in Tillingbourne just south of Guildford is an excellent ANSNG. It is close to the urban area, it is part of a pedestrian network linked to other sites such as St Martha's Hill and Pewley Downs. Onsite there are numerous facilities such as toilet and a visitor centre. This site provides a base for a number of recreational activities from just taking in the view to going on a long walk in the countryside and therefore scored high in quality.

Visitor Centre

Bench and View

Fixed Equipment Playground

Toilets

Parking at St Martha's Hill

Parking at White Lane

Map

Picnic Tables

Visitor Centre Interior

A11.2 Amenity Open Space and Playing Field or parks

There are 95 sites that are considered Amenity Open Space (AOS) for the purpose of this study covering 133.76ha or 0.49% of the borough. Many of the sites are small, often Local Areas of Play or Local Equipped Areas of Play. The urban areas tend to be better supplied in terms of AOS, this is in part because access to open countryside for informal play is harder from the urban areas. Onslow has the most sites, 10 sites totalling 28.79 ha. That works out at 3.52ha per 1000population, 284 people per hectare of provision, which is below that for the borough, which has on average 969.65 people per hectare of AOS provision. The provision of fixed equipment playgrounds is comprehensively addressed in the Fixed Equipment Playground strategy 2003, the PPG17 audit did however identify 54 sites with fixed play equipment.

The ward with the least AOS is Lovelace, where no sites were recorded where the primary purpose or use of the site was for local amenity excluding ANSNG. Many of the rural wards had only one site; these were Pirbright, Normandy, The Pilgrims and Effingham. However it must be noted that many sites in other typologies can also be used as AOS, notable Playing Pitches or Parks, this was the problem of assigning sites

to a specific typology as they could have many uses, but if entered into two typologies then that site would be double counted. Therefore the situation arises where Christchurch has only one AOS measuring 1.09ha even though it contains Stoke Park a significant, large site that was recorded as a Playing Field or Park even though it can also be an AOS. It therefore becomes essential to assess AOS with Playing Fields and Parks, but not vice versa as AOS can not double as a Playing Fields or Park, often because they are too small or of an irregular shape.

So when comparing the two typologies together it in terms of accessibility with AOS having a 400m buffer and Playing Fields and Parks an 800m one, it is clear that most settlement areas have access to either a playing field, park or AOS for informal play or recreation. Notable exceptions are Flexford, Puttenham and Send Marsh.

Accessibility is key when assessing AOS as their purpose is to provide an accessible area for informal recreation, an excellent example is Bellfield's Open Space off of Oak Tree Drive

Bellfield's Open Space off Oak Tree Drive is an important open space as it is one of the few AOS in the north of Guildford. It is a relatively large space with an ornamental pond. The site is adjacent to house and acts as a focal point and centre to the residential area of Bellfield's in a similar way to a village green. The site is excellent for informal play and recreational undertaken by the surrounding residents. However the site is too steep to enable pitch sports and lacks a fixed equipment play area.



The Ornamental Pond



Bench and Bin



View Down the Site

It is not an effective strategy to have only one or two large areas of open space acting as an AOS as it is very likely such sites will be over the 400m distance that is considered an acceptable distance to travel to access them. It is essential that new developments incorporate small areas of AOS into the scheme and that existing AOS are protected and of sufficient quality to enable safe and accessible play.

The quality of AOS is very important as these spaces more than any other typology are part of a neighbourhood or community due to their small size and that they are designed for local residents. Therefore a site of poor quality, particularly if maintenance is bad can have a detrimental effect on the community that it is supposed to support. These spaces can become an eyesore and at worse an area that attracts crime into a neighbourhood.

Cedar Way Play Area is an AOS not meeting its full potential. There are no signs and the site is accessed via a small, narrow uninviting path. There is no natural surveillance and poor natural light as high hedges surround the site. In the middle of the site is a large mound of earth, which precludes many activities. The site has no facilities and is consequently under used, uninviting and potentially dangerous. There are few AOS in this area of Guildford so this site is not meeting its full potential. The site is however well located and flat, and could be a useful AOS, or junior playing pitch.



Site Entrance



View Across the Site



View Across the Site

The average qualitative score for AOS was 49%, the lowest average score of all typologies. There is a considerable fluctuation between the highest scoring ward which was Ash Wharf with 72% and the lowest, Normandy with 33%. This shows that there is scope to improve many AOS sites to bring them more in line with sites in Ash Wharf. Sites such as Coronation Gardens (316) in Ash Wharf should be used as a benchmark for successful AOS.

Coronation Gardens is an excellent diverse AOS. Aspects of the site cater for many age ranges with a basketball court, skate park, informal play area, picnic area and woodland path. It is easy to access and well located and maintained giving a relaxed safe atmosphere.



Basket Ball Court



Car Park



Amenity Play Area



Skate Park



Woodland Path and Litter Bins



Picnic Benches

A11.3 Allotments

A comprehensive quantitative and qualitative assessment of allotments was undertaken for the Allotment Strategy 2004-2014. The study focussed on the allotments owned by the Council. It sets out the public perception of allotments and identifies the necessary infrastructure and facility improvements.

The audit identified that between Guildford Borough Council and Parish Councils, there are 26 allotments sites giving approximately 925 plots. This works out at 0.24ha per 1000 population or 44487 people per hectare of allotments. The Best Value Review Consultation in 2002 identified that 0.61% of the population use GBC allotments on average visiting 2.8 times a week. The average occupancy rate for GBC allotments is 65% where as it is 75% for rural allotments. Therefore supply is higher than demand so at present there is no need to increase the provision of allotments in the borough, but there is a need to improve the quality.

However it must be noted that there are wards that do not have access to an allotment when applying the 1500m (1 mile) buffer recommended in the Allotment Strategy. Clandon and Horsley, The Pilgrims, Pirbright and Ash Vale have no allotments and the

residents are nearly all excluded from the buffers. The Guildford and Ash urban areas are however well provided for with the majority of sites.

The average qualitative score for allotments is 56%. The Allotment Strategy has however set out a ten-year plan for improving the infrastructure and facilities connected with GBC owned sites, this could increase the use of allotments so in the future there may be a need for new allotment sites to be identified. The improvements proposed in the ten-year Allotment Strategy will greatly enhance the quality of the GBC sites, however these improvements could displace users from the rural allotments to the GBC owned sites due to the improvement in quality which could lead to an under supply.

A11.4 Built Sports Facilities

The audit identified 74 built sports facilities from a range of sports; playing pitches were included under the Playing Pitch or Park typology. This typology did include golf courses, which has led to a slight skew in the data resulting in Built Sports Facilities covering 2.26% of the borough. It must also be noted that community halls can often be used as a built sports facility for all number of sports. The audit identified 102 community halls, 89 of which had a floor space that would provide a badminton court with a 2m buffer around it. These halls would also be big enough for other indoor activities and sports such as martial arts, yoga and dance classes.

There are 7.62 hectares of built sports provision per 1000 people, or 211 people per facility. When applying an 800m buffer around the site it is clear that the facilities are relatively well distributed around the borough, but if the golf courses are discounted it is clear that the facilities are centred on the urban areas. This leads to rural residents travelling into the urban areas to access the significant built sports facilities such as the Spectrum, Lido and Ash Manor Sports Centre. This situation could be improved by providing some basic facilities such as tennis courts on local recreation grounds and large amenity open spaces where there is demand, this is particularly important as intensification of the urban provision could lead to over crowding and inconvenient or difficult timing; two significant reasons for why residents did not use such facilities.

At present there is not comprehensive data detailing demand for sports facilities in the borough, however in 2006 Sports England will undertake this assessment. Sports England has also developed a database of sports sites called 'Active Places'. When this is fully developed it will also provide evidence of sports facilities out side of the borough, for example a search of Gyms within 7 miles of Guildford had 26 results that included Woking and Godalming. This data will allow a future assessment that is more spatial and not borough specific, which this audit was due to resources.

The quality of built Sports facilities is generally high, averaging 67%, the highest for any typology. The score is high because the facilities are usually accompanied by a toilet and changing rooms and are accessible. Due to the fact these facilities often charge and are public facilities they are usually clean and well maintained. The consultation did however show a need for a greater range of sporting facilities and upgrading of some of the existing facilities.

Kingston Meadows is a good example of how a large site can cater for many different sporting activities from pitch sports to tennis.



Basketball Court



Fixed Equipment Playground



A11.5 Playing Field or Park (PFoP)

The audit identified 54 PFoP sites covering an area of 251ha or 0.93% of the borough, leading to an average site area of 4.65 ha. There are 2.64ha of playing pitch or park per 1000 population, which is 516 people per hectare of provision. However Stoughton has 4985 people per hectare of provision, as there is only one site measuring 1.61ha, this is the most under supplied ward in terms of PFoP. The ward with the most sites is Tillingbourne, but the site with the most provision in terms of hectares is Christchurch with 61 hectares due to Stoke Park, but only a third of this is considered as actual playing pitches, so this figure was reduced for the NPFA assessment.

The sites are well distributed around the borough with most settlements having access to playing fields. The urban areas are nearly all covered by the buffer, as are most of the rural settlements, which often have a village recreation ground.

What is significant with PFoP is the qualitative element, as there needs to be a range of sites catering for different levels of sporting activity. Different leagues, within sports, often have different requirements, for example in football, a pitch catering for players at a medium to high league standard would have to be flatter with more ancillary facilities than a lower league pitch. There are also different requirements between Saturday and Sunday league football. This was a problem raised during the consultation.

The audit assessed the overall quality, which averaged at 64%. Stoke park in Christchurch scored the highest in quality with 87%, whereas the lowest average score

was recorded in Tillingbourne (40%), but there is little difference between quality in rural or urban areas. However a full Playing Pitch Strategy is necessary to assess usage, as this could identify sites that are under used and could be improved to increase the boroughs capacity, and the level of quality needed in regard to individual sports.

Norney Recreation Ground is a site that is under used due to its poor quality. The playing field is over grown with no facilities. The site could be a much need sports field and amenity open space.



Abandoned Goal Posts



Over Grown Pitch



Uninviting Entrance



Over Grown Pitch

A11.6 Amenity Urban Cemetery

Three sites of amenity value within the urban area were identified, these were Ash Cemetery in Ash South and Tongham, Guildford Cemetery in Friary and St Nicolas and Stoke Cemetery in Stoke. The sites totalled 15.21ha and all scored highly in the qualitative assessment averaging 61%. These sites are considered as areas for quite contemplation and relaxation, intensification of these sites for further recreational use could have a detrimental impact on their key characteristics.

A11.7 Community Hall

Most community halls are listed in the 'Halls For Hire' directory prepared by the Council annually. 102 community halls were identified within the borough averaging 500sq m in floor space. This is significant as Sports England recommends that a sports hall should be 594sq m (33m x18m and 7.6m high), as a hall this size would provide four badminton courts, a basketball court, a five-a-side football pitch, netball court, volleyball court and a facility for martial arts, dancing and gymnastics. One fifth of sites were approximately 600sq m but over half were 300sq m or less.

There are approximately 1271 people per community hall. Shalford Ward and Clandon and Horsley Ward have the most halls with 10 each, the wards with the fewest halls are Stoughton and Pirbright.

When adding an 800m buffer around the community halls it is clear that most settlements have a hall, and that the urban areas are well provided for being almost completely

covered by the buffer. Many of the halls audited were not running at capacity so this would point towards an over supply, but it is possible that a few high quality halls are used instead of halls of low quality, for example in Clandon and Horsley Ward sites 97, 90 and 175 all scored highly and are well used, whereas site 50 scores below average and has significant capacity. If the overall quality of halls was raised then activities requiring a hall could be dispersed around the borough and would not have to focus on a number of high quality halls.

Manor Fruit Farm Community Hall is a multi purpose hall that caters for leisure, recreation and sports. Its facilities include badminton courts; indoor bowls facilities, a gym, a kitchen, meeting room and stage. Different groups can use different facilities at the same time. It is located on a multi purpose sites that also has a community garden and archery field.



no significant difference between the quality of halls in urban and rural areas.

A11.8 Cultural Facility

Cultural facilities are theatres, cinemas, museums, historic parks and gardens, libraries and galleries. For the purpose of this study sports facilities are not included as a cultural facility 20 cultural facilities (excluding the Civic) were identified. Therefore there are 6485 people per cultural facility. The cultural facilities all scored highly averaging 85% as they are often high quality paying visitor attractions. The Cultural Strategy 2003 for the Borough outlines an action plan for increasing the provision of cultural facilities and involvement in cultural activities and events including, sport and leisure.

A11.9 School Facilities

School facilities are by their nature distributed around the borough in population centres. 69 school facilities were recorded during the audit. All the schools audited had a hall, there were also 233 sports pitches. Only 32 of the 69 schools had a facility open for public use, therefore there is the potential, where appropriate, for schools to share facilities with the wider community. For example King George V Playing Field (Site 16) in Effingham is a public playing field but also acts as the playing fields for Howard of Effingham County Secondary School and other sports clubs such as Effingham and Leatherhead RFC. Another example is Kings Manor School (Site 586) in Westborough, which has a dual usage agreement with Guildford Borough Council.

A11.10 NPFA Analysis

The NPFA standards are used in the current 2003 Local Plan in Policies R3 and R2 and expanded in the Open Space SPG 2002. These policies are based on the 1997 Open Space Survey, which identified a deficit of 96ha Borough wide; this only included the urban areas. The deficit has risen in the urban areas since 1997 as no new significant open spaces have been established and the population has risen significantly since the

1991 Census, which provided the population data for the 1997 assessment. In the urban areas the deficit is now 109ha.

The PPG17 audit also included the rural areas. There was some fluctuation between deficits and surpluses depending on the ward. Overall the rural areas are in surplus by 13.7ha. This is due in part to the large provision in Lovelace leading to a surplus in this ward of 17.26. The borough wide deficit is 97ha, which works out at 4.3ha per ward and is almost the same as the 1997 borough wide deficit – however it is un accurate to compare 1997 and 2005 data like for like.

The population forecast for the borough is that by 2021 the population would have increased by 23,449 people. This would lead to the borough wide deficit of 167ha if no new NPFA open space is provided, a deficit increase of 42.5%. Therefore new sites that meet the NPFA criteria will be needed, particularly where they will be accessible to the urban area. Effectively 71ha of new provision will be needed in the next 15 years (4.7ha a year) just to keep current levels of provision (at the current deficit of 96ha). Between 1997 and 2005 however there has been no significant increase in provision.

The NPFA standards do state that schools where facilities are as a matter of practice and policy open to the public can be included as NPFA complaint sites. School facilities at present cover 193ha of the borough. Greater partnership working with schools to allow their fields to be available for public use alongside the diversification of other types of open space to meet NPFA requirements and the retention of current open spaces are essential to combat the deficit. But a potential problem is that at present 106 monies are often used to improve existing facilities, facilities that often need improvement to intensify use, and not establish new provision.

Therefore it can be argued that Policy R2 is failing to secure additional open space. Developers often make a financial contribution instead of providing open space on site. Policy R2 is failing as the threshold is too low to make it viable for developers to provided on site playing space and any open space provided is too small to enable the council to adopt it as its management is uneconomic. For example a development of 25 units would be asked to provide

- 0.1ha adult and youth play
- 0.05ha children's play
- 0.026ha amenity space

Or 0.175ha in total that is 1750sq m.

If the development were on 0.4ha site (4000sq m) this would be almost half the site (43%) of the development area set aside for open space this would result in a density of 142dph on the rest of the site. Therefore there is a choice of approaches where there could be high densities and on site open space, or lower densities and money to improve existing open space. A new policy should seek a combination of the two where a LEAP or NEAP is provided on site and money is given on top of this to increase the carrying capacity of surrounding sites.

Normandy Common is an excellent example of a site that has diverse uses. The sites includes a tennis club, full size football pitch, cricket club with two pitches and nets, fixed equipment playground facilities, woodland walks, car parking, equipment storage, cricket pavilion, tennis club house and on site information.



