

Guildford Open Space, Sport & Recreation Assessment

2017



**GUILD F O R D
B O R O U G H**

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Guildford Open Space, Sport & Recreation Assessment

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Glossary of Terms

Term	Meaning
ANGSt	Accessible Natural Green Space Standard
AONB	Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty
CIL	Community Infrastructure Levy
DPD	Development Plan Document
FIT	Fields In Trust (originally known as the 'National Playing Fields Association')
GI	Green Infrastructure
GIST	Green Infrastructure Strategy
GIS	Geographic Information Systems
LAP	Local Area for Play
LDPD	Local Development Plan Document
LEAP	Local Equipped Area for Play
MUGA	Multi Use Games Area
NEAP	Neighbourhood Equipped Play Area
NEWP	Natural Environment White Paper
NGB	National Governing Body
NPPF	National Planning Policy Framework
ONS	Office for National Statistics
PPG17	Planning Policy Guidance Note 17
SANG	Suitable Alternative Natural Green Space
SPA	Special Protection Area
SPD	Supplementary Planning Document
PPS	Planning Policy Statement
WASSt	Woodland Access Standard

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Overview

This Open Space, Sport & Recreation Assessment has been undertaken by Ethos Environmental Planning to inform the Council's decision making process up to 2033.

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

The study has been carried out in-line with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (*Para 73 and 74*). Since the adoption of the NPPF, there have been major changes to national planning policy. Open space assessment has primarily been affected by the omission of Planning Policy Guidance Note 17 (PPG 17) from the new national policy framework. Whilst the government has not published anything specifically to replace this document (it does signpost the Sport England guidance for sports facilities assessments¹), there is however, still a clear reference made in the new guidance to the principles and ideology established within PPG17. As such the underlying principles of this study have been informed by the former guidance provided in '*Planning Policy Guidance Note 17: Planning for Open Space, Sport and Recreation*', and its Companion Guide '*Assessing Needs and Opportunities*', which is a tried and tested methodology and takes a consistent approach with many other local authorities.

1.2 Scope of Study and Objectives

1.2.1 Overall Aim of the Study

The aims of the study are to provide a robust assessment of needs and deficiencies in open spaces in order to establish local provision standards and create an up to date evidence base which can be maintained to aid implementation of the policies and the provision of open spaces during the new Local Plan period.

1.2.2 Scope of Study and Objectives

This study covers all forms of public open space as referred to in Annex A of the PPG17 Companion Guide. Indoor Facilities are not included.

The brief for the study highlighted that the overall aims are to:

¹ <http://planningguidance.planningportal.gov.uk/blog/guidance/open-space-sports-and-recreation-facilities-public-rights-of-way-and-local-green-space/open-space-sports-and-recreation-facilities>

- Robustly determine appropriate standards for the provision of open space, sports and recreation facilities for Guildford borough. The study brief notes that the Parks and Countryside service have completed a review of play space provision using Fields in Trust standards;
- provide a robust assessment of the provision of open space, sports and recreation facilities in terms of quantity, quality and accessibility;
- provide an assessment of the suitable uses for identified open spaces, for example identifying opportunities for the installation of fixed play equipment where there is a shortage of play spaces;
- build upon evidence from the Council's emerging Play Space Strategy on the quantity and quality of fixed play equipment;
- identify areas of surplus and deficit in open space, sports and recreation facilities with regards to quantity, quality and accessibility and;
- be concise and present factual evidence to meet the requirements of paragraph 73 of the NPPF.

1.3 Structure of the report

The open space study follows the five key stages as summarised below:

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

1.4 The Study Area

1.4.1 Overview of Guildford

Guildford Borough is situated in the western part of Surrey some 30 miles from Central London and 45 miles from the South Coast. It is bordered by Waverley Borough to the south, the District of Mole Valley to the east, by Elmbridge, Woking and Surrey Heath Boroughs to the north and Rushmoor Borough (in Hampshire) to the west.

The Borough of Guildford is Surrey's most populous District with a population of approximately 141,009 (ONS mid year population estimate). The two principal urban areas are the town of Guildford and in the west of the Borough the urban area of Ash and Tongham.

Approximately half the Borough's population live in Guildford Town, a thriving county town with an attractive historic core and a wide range of commercial, retail and leisure facilities. The University of Surrey is located in the town while the Guildford Cathedral is a dominant

landmark. The town is situated in a valley at a point where the River Wey cuts through the North Downs. This has been a significant influence in the town's historic development.

Four major roads pass through the Borough. The M25 enters the Borough briefly at Wisley at its junction with the A3. The A3 runs from north to south through the Borough and provides road links to both London and the South Coast. The A31 runs along the top of the Hogs Back and joins with the A331 Blackwater Valley Road at the western end of the Borough. The Borough is well served by rail with direct lines to London, Portsmouth, Reading and Gatwick.

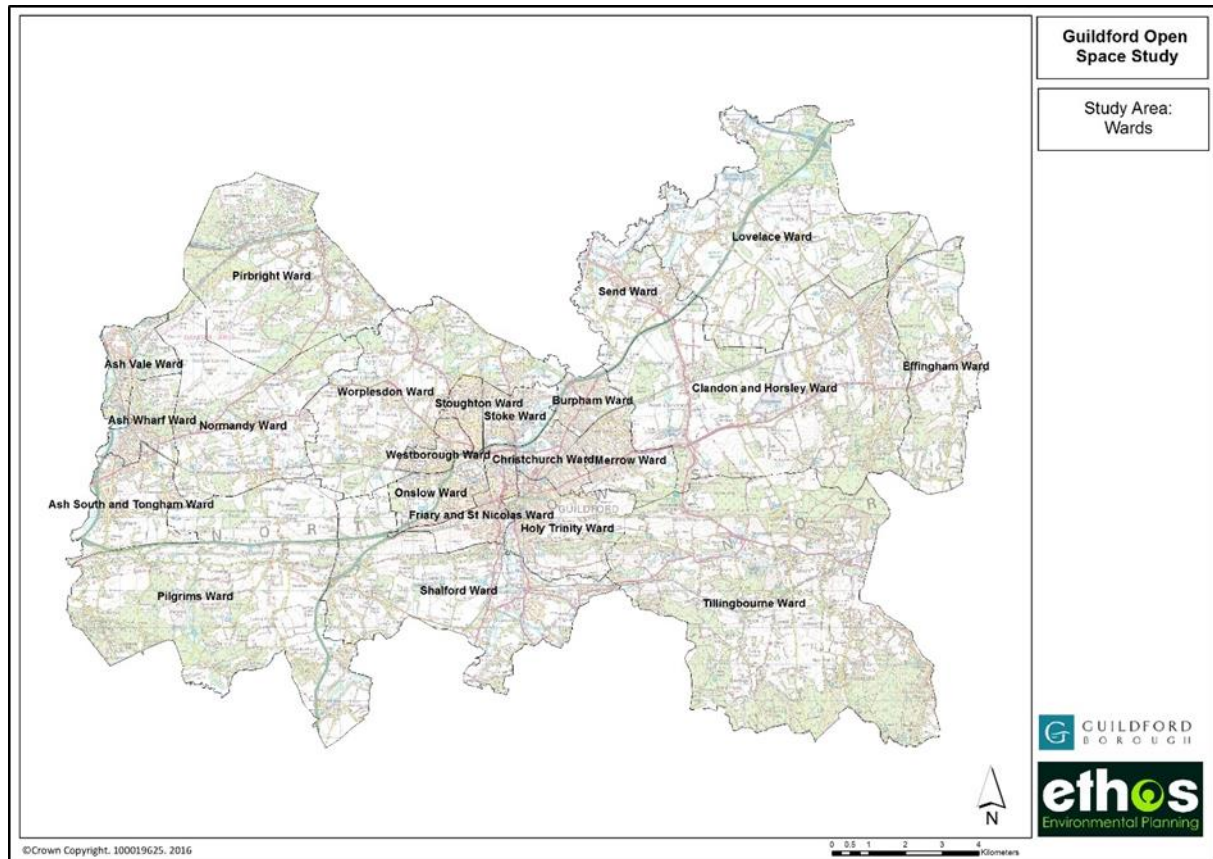
The countryside of the Borough is extensive and contains a number of villages, isolated areas of housing, long established businesses, farms and woodland. The landscape is generally attractive, and exceptionally so in the south of the Borough in the Surrey Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, of which the North Downs forms a part.

1.4.2 Administrative Boundaries

In order to analyse the current provision and future requirements for open space across Guildford, wards have been used as the geographical areas (as shown in figure 1). This was agreed by the project steering group as the most effective way to analyse provision.

These boundaries are the basis for collating census data across the council area. Of particular relevance to this study are population statistics (Census, 2011), which have been used as the basis for much of the current and future assessment of need for open space.

Figure 1 Ward Boundaries



1.4.3 Population Statistics

Table 1 Ward population statistics (Census 2011)

Ward Name	Population 2011
Ash South and Tongham	7,674
Ash Vale	5,686
Ash Wharf	6,120
Burpham	5,696
Christchurch	5,101
Clandon and Horsley	8,749
Effingham	2,711
Friary and St Nicholas	8,990
Holy Trinity	7,793
Lovelace	2,624
Merrow	8,036
Normandy	2,981
Onslow	9,492
Pilgrims	2,613
Pitbright	3,691
Send	4,245
Shalford	5,655
Stoke	6,187
Stoughton	9,805
Tillingbourne	5,498
Westborough	9,307
Worplesdon	8,529

2.0 METHODOLOGY

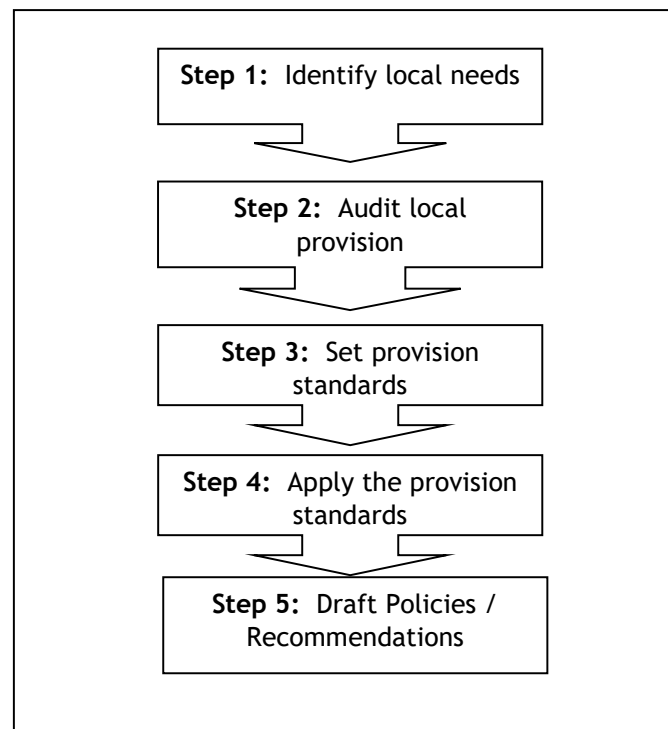
2.1 General

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

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

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

Figure 3 Summary of methodology



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

2.2 Identifying Local Need (Step 1)

The report examines identified local need for various types of open space, sports and recreational opportunities. It has drawn upon a range of survey and analytical techniques as well as a detailed review of existing consultation data and other relevant documentation. The report details the community consultation and research process that has been undertaken as part of the study as well as the main findings. The findings of this assessment are summarised in this document and full details are provided at appendix 1.

2.3 Audit of Existing Open Space Assets (Step 2)

2.3.1 Defining the scope of the audit

In order to build up an accurate picture of the current open space and play provision in Guildford, an initial desktop audit of the open space asset was carried out, this included:

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

Following this, site visits were undertaken by Ethos at 400 sites to assess the existing and potential quality issues with sites. The quality audit drew on criteria set out in the 'Green Flag Award²', and sites were given an 'existing', 'potential' and 'gap' quality score. The audits were undertaken using a standardised methodology and consistent approach. However, audits of this nature can only ever be a snap-shot in time and their main purpose is to provide a consistent and objective assessment of a sites existing and potential quality rather than a full asset audit. Clearly, local communities may have aspirations which are not identified in the quality audit, but it is hoped that these can be explored further through site management plans and neighbourhood/parish plans as appropriate.

2.3.2 Approach to mapping

As part of the audit process, sites were mapped into their different functions using a multi-functional approach to mapping. The advantage of the multi-functional approach is that it gives a much more accurate picture of the provision of open space. This is more advantageous than the primary typology approach which tends to result in an over assessment of provision, and which can significantly impact decisions on quantity standards. The differences in approach are demonstrated in figures 4 and 5.

² <http://www.greenflagaward.org.uk/judges/judging-criteria>

Figure 4 Primary approach to open space mapping

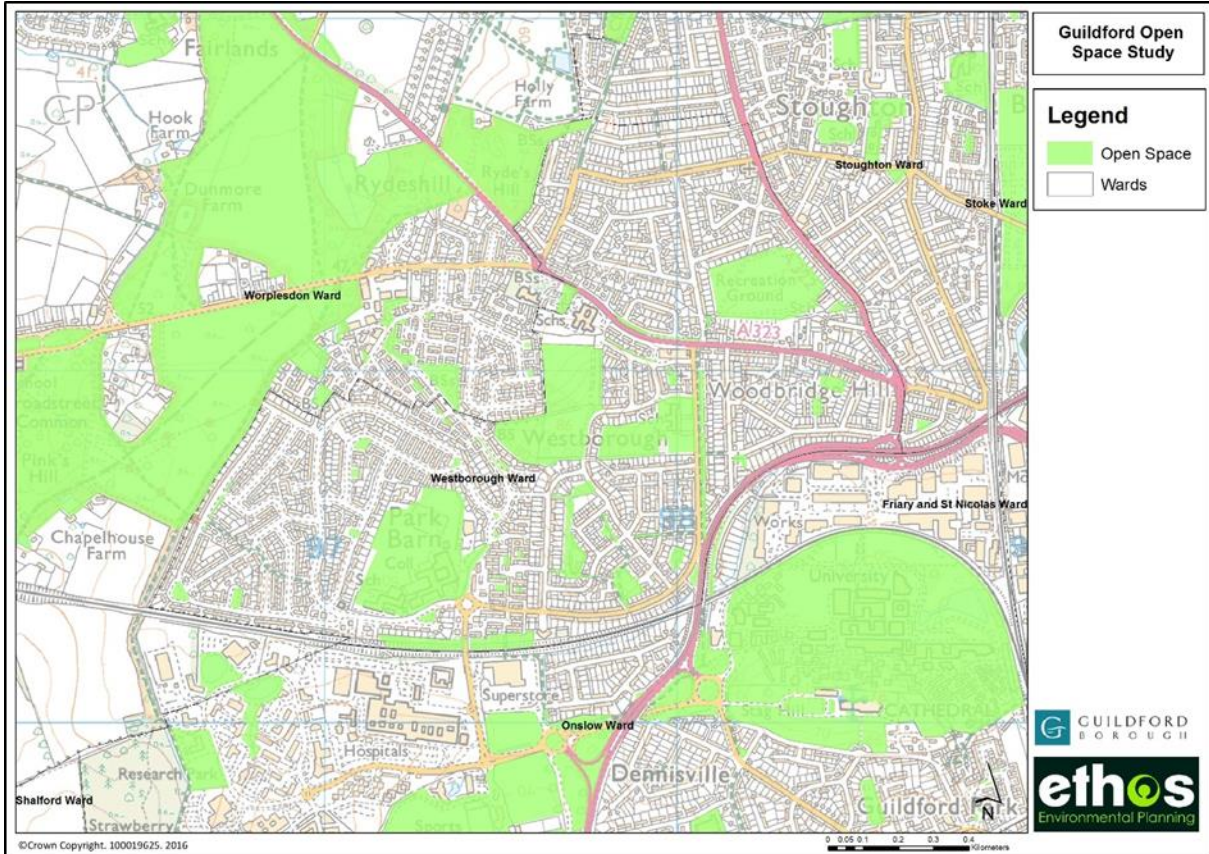
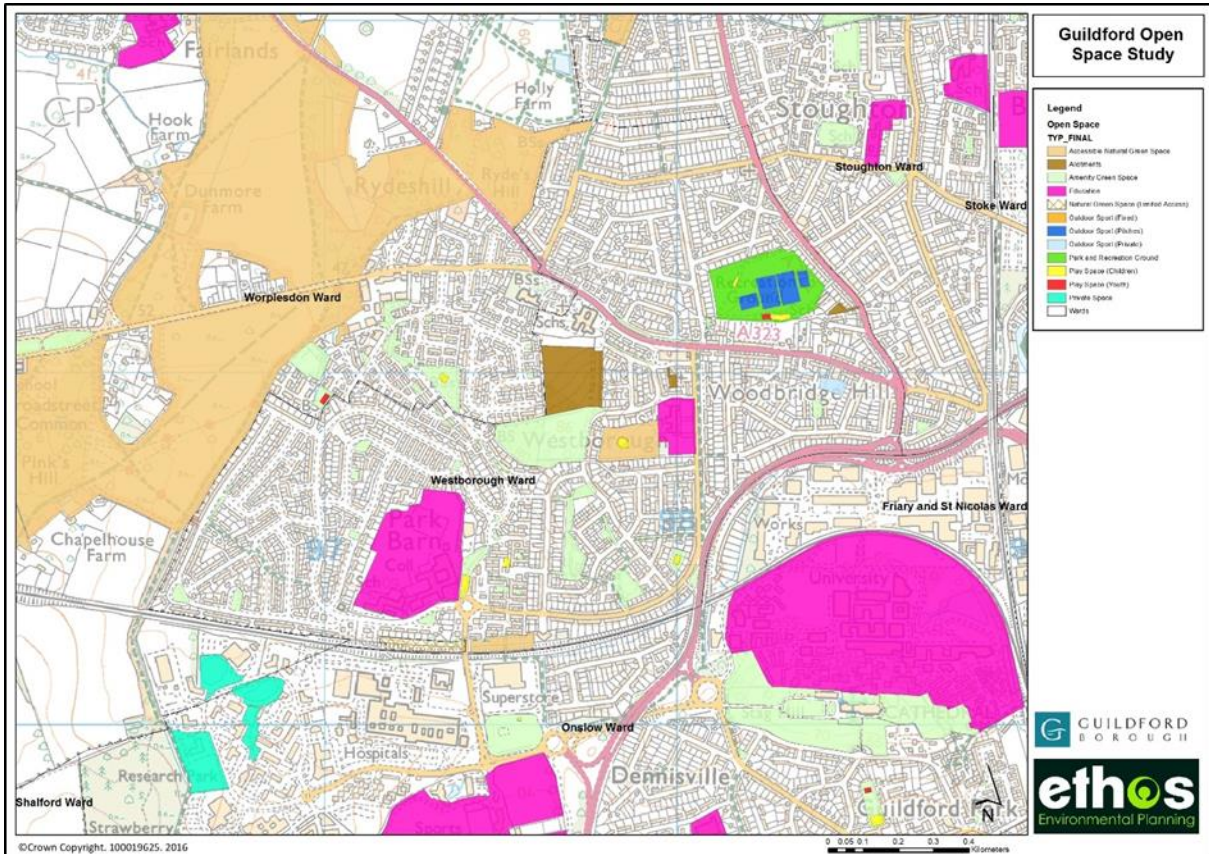


Figure 5 Multi-functional mapping of open space



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

Local provision standards have been set, with three components, embracing:

- quantity;
- accessibility;
- quality.

Quantity

The GIS database and mapping has been used to assess the existing provision of open space across the study area. The existing levels of provision are considered alongside findings of previous studies, the local needs assessment and consideration of existing and national standards or benchmarks. The key to developing robust local quantity standards is that they are locally derived, based on evidence and most importantly achievable. Typically, standards are expressed as hectares per 1000 people. The recommended standards are then used to assess the supply of each type of open space across the study area.

Access

Evidence from previous studies, the needs assessment and consideration of national benchmarks are used to develop access standards for open space. Typically, standards are expressed as straight line walk times. A series of maps assessing access for different typologies are presented in the report.

Quality

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

2.5 Drafting Policy Recommendations (Step 5)

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

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

3.0 STRATEGIC CONTEXT

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

3.1 Introduction

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

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

3.2 National Strategic Context

3.2.1 National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

The NPPF sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how they should be applied. Local plans must be consistent with the NPPF and neighbourhood plans must have regard to it, and it is a material consideration in planning decisions. The NPPF contains the following references that relate to green infrastructure and open spaces:

- **Para 17 - Achieving Sustainable Development - Core Planning Principles:** Within the overarching roles that the planning system ought to play, a set of core land-use planning principles should underpin both plan-making and decision-taking.
 - **Para 58** - Local and neighbourhood plans should develop robust and comprehensive policies that set out the quality of development that will be expected for the area.
Para 73 - Access to high quality open spaces and opportunities for sport and recreation can make an important contribution to the health and well-being of communities. Planning policies should be based on robust and up-to-date assessments of the needs for open space, sports and recreation facilities and opportunities for new provision. The assessments should identify specific needs and quantitative or qualitative deficits or surpluses of open space, sports and recreational facilities in the local area. Information gained from the assessments should be used to determine what open space, sports and recreational provision is required.
 - **Para 75** - Planning policies should protect and enhance public rights of way and access. Local authorities should seek opportunities to provide better facilities for users, for example by adding links to existing rights of way networks including National Trails.
-

- **Para 99** - Local Plans should take account of climate change over the longer term, including factors such as flood risk, coastal change, water supply and changes to biodiversity and landscape.
- **Para 109** - The planning system should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment.

3.2.2 Green Infrastructure

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

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

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

The white paper³ recognised that a healthy natural environment is the foundation of sustained economic growth, prospering communities and personal wellbeing. It sets out how the value of nature can be mainstreamed across our society by facilitating local action; strengthening the connections between people and nature; creating a green economy and showing leadership in the EU and internationally.

3.2.4 Biodiversity 2020: A strategy for England's wildlife and ecosystem services

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

The vision for England is:

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

The mission of this strategy is to *'halt overall biodiversity loss, support healthy well-functioning ecosystems and establish coherent ecological networks, with more and better places for nature for the benefit of wildlife and people'*.

The Strategy contains four outcomes to be achieved by the end of 2020. These are:

³ <http://www.official-documents.gov.uk/document/cm80/8082/8082.pdf>

1. Habitats and ecosystems on land (including freshwater environments)

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

2. Marine habitats, ecosystems and fisheries

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

3. Species

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

4. People

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

3.2.5 Sport England Strategy 2012-17 (creating a sporting habit for life)

The 2012-17 Youth and Community Strategy for Sport England was launched in January 2012⁴. It describes how Sport England will invest over £1 billion of National Lottery and Exchequer funding over five years into four main areas of work;

- 1) National Governing Body (NGB) 2013-17 funding;
- 2) facilities;
- 3) local investment; and
- 4) the 'School Games'.

The overall ambition is to increase the number of people who play sports regularly and reduce the number of young people who stop playing when they finish school. Funding for governing bodies will be tied to their own specific participation targets.

3.3 Local Context

3.3.1 Guildford Emerging Local Plan

Guildford Borough Council are in the process of producing a new Local Plan for Guildford borough to 2033. In autumn 2013, consultation on the Local Plan Strategy and Sites Issues and Options document was undertaken. This set out some of the strategic issues facing the borough and some of the possible options to address them. The representations made during this consultation fed into the draft Local Plan Strategy and Sites, which was published for

⁴ <http://www.sportengland.org/media/130949/DCMS-Creating-a-sporting-habit-for-life-1-.pdf>

consultation on 1 July 2014, and ran until 26 September 2014. Over 20,000 comments from over 7,000 individuals, organisations and stakeholders were received.

The council produced a summary of key themes from all the comments received.

After analysing the results of the 2014 consultation, the Council produced a proposed submission Local Plan Strategy and Sites which will be consulted on in June and July 2016. Subject to the consultation outcome, the intention is to submit the plan to the Secretary of State for Examination in Public. The Council also intends to produce a Local Plan Development Management document which will set out non-strategic, development management policies for the borough. When adopted, these documents will form the new Local Plan for the borough.

This Open Space, Sports and Recreation Assessment has been undertaken to create an up-to-date evidence base to inform the development of planning policy and to aid the implementation of the policies and the provision of open spaces during the new Local Plan period. The assessment will be updated in due course.

3.3.2 Local Plan (2003)

Adopted in 2003, it sets the Borough Council's policies for control of development and use of land. The Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government gave a direction in 2007 that the Local Plan policies are saved and remain in effect, with the exception of those listed below. These policies no longer apply (and are covered by the NPPF):

- Policy H1 housing provision
- Policy H10 new residential development
- Policy S1 major new retail development
- Proposal GT4 Seeboard site, Woodbridge Road
- Policy RE7 protection of the best and most versatile agricultural land
- Policy HE11 scheduled ancient monuments and other sites and monuments of national importance
- Proposal U1 University of Surrey.

The Plan's overall aim (set out at paragraph 3.9) is to:

Promote Development that Meets the Needs of the Present Without Compromising the Ability of Future Generations to Meet Their Own Needs.

This will be achieved by seeking to:

1. Maintain and Provide for a Range of Good Quality Housing, Affordable by All Residents Throughout the Borough
 2. Support the Maintenance and Renewal of the Local Economy
 3. Protect and Enhance Guildford's Town Centre Role as a Regional Shopping Centre and as a Focal Point of Commercial, Arts, Cultural and Entertainment Facilities
 4. To Protect and Enhance the Quality of the Urban and Rural Environment
-

5. Reduce the Demand for Travel by Car
6. Make the Best Use of Scarce Land Resources Minimising the Impact of Development on Greenfield Sites
7. Encourage and Facilitate Access for all People to all Buildings
8. Recognise the Importance of Local Communities Within the Borough by Promoting Local Identity and the Provision of a Wide Range of Facilities at the Local Level
9. To Protect the Countryside from Inappropriate Development and Maintain It's Open Rural Character
10. Support the Provision of High Quality Recreational, Tourist and Community Facilities in the Borough

Standards of provision for recreational space are included in policy as follows:

Policy R1: LOSS OF LAND AND FACILITIES FOR SPORT AND RECREATION

The Borough Council will resist the loss of land and buildings used for recreation purposes or with the potential for recreational use unless:

- 1. A suitable alternative is provided nearby;*
- 2. There is an excess of recreation land and buildings in the area; and*
- 3. Sports and recreation facilities can best be retained and enhanced through the redevelopment of a small part of the site.*

Policy R2: RECREATIONAL OPEN SPACE PROVISION IN RELATION TO LARGE NEW RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENTS

New residential developments of 25 or more dwellings, or more than 0.4ha (1 acre) will require new recreational open space according to the following standard:

- 1.6ha (4.0 acres) of formal playing field space per 1,000 people;*
- 0.8ha (2.0 acres) of children's play space per 1,000 people;*
- 0.4ha (1.0 acres) of amenity space per 1,000 people.*

These standards are based on an occupancy rate of 2.5 persons per dwelling. No requirement or a reduced requirement may be made under this policy where the provision of an open space locally is, and will remain after the development, adequate by these standards. Where the type of dwellings proposed does not generate a need for formal play space, such as sheltered accommodation for the elderly, the provision required will be for informal open space only.

These standards are based on the old Fields in Trust recommended standards and are considered within section 6 of this report.

Policy R3: RECREATIONAL OPEN SPACE PROVISION IN RELATION TO NEW SMALL RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENTS

Residential development of between 5 and 25 units, will require either:

- 1. Recreational open space provision based on the standards in policy R2 above; or*
- 2. A contribution towards recreational provision in the area at an appropriate scale to the size of the development, unless the provision of open space in the ward is, and will remain after the development adequate, based on the standards set out in R2.*

Policies R2 and R3 are based upon the 1997 Open Space audit. The audit was updated and broadened to include rural wards in the 2006 PPG17 Audit. The Open Space Audit (2006) completes steps one and two of a PPG17 Audit by identifying local needs and, existing provision by concluding that:

- there is an overall deficit in amenity open space, playing field and parks and children's playgrounds compared with the Fields in Trust standards (breakdown by ward),
- new developments rarely provide public open spaces on site, and
- useful and economically viable open space is unlikely to be provided on sites of 25 units or 0.4 ha as indicated in Policy R2.

The Open Space Audit (2006) identifies the deficits in open space, sport and recreation facilities in the Borough based upon Fields in Trust standards and states that a different standard should be investigated. This Open Space Study is the first assessment since 2006 to do this.

3.3.3 Corporate Plan (2015-2020)

The Corporate plan was agreed by the council in October 2015 and provides an essential part of the council's strategic framework.

Vision: *For Guildford to be a town and rural borough... ..that is the most desirable place to live, work and visit in South East England. A centre for education, healthcare, innovative cutting edge businesses, high quality retail and wellbeing. A county town set in a vibrant rural environment which balances the needs of urban and rural communities alike. Known for our outstanding urban planning and design, and with infrastructure that will properly cope with our needs.*

A number of fundamental themes that support the vision have been identified as follows:

- **Our Borough** - ensuring that proportional and managed growth for future generations meets our community and economic needs.
- **Our Economy** - improving prosperity for all by enabling a dynamic, productive and sustainable economy that provides jobs and homes for local people.
- **Our Infrastructure** - working with partners to deliver the massive improvements needed in the next 20 years, including changes to tackle congestion issues.
- **Our Environment** - improving sustainability and protecting our countryside, balancing this with the needs of the rural and wider economy.
- **Our Society** - believing that every person matters and concentrating on the needs of the less advantaged.
- **Your Council** - ensuring a sustainable financial future to deliver improved and innovative services.

This open space study will contribute towards the achievement of the vision and fundamental themes, through providing a framework to deliver good quality open space where there is genuine need.

3.3.4 Play Strategy (2016-2021)

The play strategy establishes that 'play provision is part of the necessary infrastructure for healthy communities'. It outlines the evidence for the enormous value of outdoor play for healthy learning and development. The importance of play in natural outdoor spaces is highlighted, with research emphasising physical health benefits; mental health benefits; social benefits; risk awareness and improved behaviour.

The strategy proposes four key themes for the future development of play provision in Guildford:

1. Widening accessibility and participation in play;
2. to advocate for play;
3. improve children's health and wellbeing through play; and
4. balancing risk in play.

The Fixed Play Equipment Strategy forms part of the overall Play Strategy and looks to address a detailed breakdown of the refurbishment and development of fixed play structures within Guildford Borough Council's and Parish Councils ownership.

As part of the process to produce the strategy, consultation with children and young people, parents, and residents took place. Where key responses are available relating to quantity, quality and access, these have been included under the relevant headings below.

It provides guidance on standards for provision as follows:

Quantity

It recommends as a policy the standard of 0.8ha of play space per 1000 population (the same as recommended by FIT). This is in accordance with the Council's current SPD for planning contributions (March 2011) and the Local Plan 2003 policies R2 and R3. The strategy does not recommend new quantity standards.

Quality

The strategy states that a Guildford play space will follow ten design principals (In accordance with Play England 'Design for play'), as follows:

1. designed to enhance its setting – inspired by the background, whether that's a park, open space or urban landscape
 2. located in the best possible place – where children naturally play, away from dangerous roads, noise and pollution, but near through routes and well-used public footpaths
-

3. close to nature – many studies have shown that children benefit from access to natural environments. In densely populated urban areas, the use of grassy mounds, planting, logs and boulders can help to make a more attractive and playable setting for equipment
4. designed so that children can play in different ways, incorporating different ages, abilities and interests
5. designed so that disabled and non-disabled children play together
6. loved by the community
7. a space where children of all ages have the opportunity to play together where there is space to do so
8. a space where children can stretch and challenge themselves in every way
9. maintained for play value and environmental sustainability
10. a space that evolves as children grow where there is space to do so

Almost a third of respondents (30%) from the parents and residents survey said better maintenance and modernisation of play areas would help make Guildford a better place to live and 26% felt a broader range of activities and facilities were required. When children and young people were asked the same question, 62% felt a wider range of facilities and activities were needed, 24% wanted better maintenance and 19% suggested an increase in the number of play areas in the Borough.

Access

The strategy states that the PPG17 target for accessibility is to use the Fields in Trust median accessibility standard, which is defined in terms of walking distances from home to play areas: Local Areas of Play (LAPs): accompanied walking distance 100m (2-3 minutes' walk). Local Equipped Areas of Play (LEAPs): walking distance 400m (5 minutes' walk). Neighbourhood Equipped Areas of Play (NEAPs): walking distance 1,000m (15 minutes' walk).

It references the PPG17 study, which proposes that open spaces used for other purposes be opened up to play and that existing areas offer a greater variety of play opportunities where space allows. The strategy does not include policy or recommendations regarding access standards.

The majority of respondents from the parents and residents survey said that less than 15 minutes was a reasonable travel time for children and young people to travel to a play area. Travelling for between 15 and 30 minutes was considered more reasonable when travelling by car (41%), although less so then thinking about traveling by cycle (19%) or walking (17%).

Children and young people's views differed from the parents and residents – around a third said that less than 5 minutes would be how far they would travel to get to a play area if walking (30%) or on their bike (32%). The majority said that they would walk under 15 minutes (61%) to get to a play area or cycle under 15 minutes (48%) to get to play area).

Priority sites for improvement

Play value assessments were commissioned for all sites within the ownership of Guildford Borough Council and Parish Councils in order to establish priorities for improvement and investment.

The following components of playground provision and value were assessed:

- General access and safety
- Landscape and environmental quality
- General play layout
- Ancillary facilities
- Equipment
- Safety
- General

Priority sites for improvement have been included within an action plan.

3.3.5 A Vision for Guildford's Countryside DRAFT (2016)

Vision Statement:

Guildford Borough Council aims to manage its Countryside estate to maintain and enhance its landscape, natural capital and ecological value to continue providing benefits for future generations.

We will work in Partnership with residents and organisations to improve sustainability and to protect our countryside, whilst balancing this with the needs of the rural and wider economy.

Guildford's natural environment and landscapes will form part of the overall provision of Surrey's ecosystem services, creating a coherent network, for people, recreation and wildlife, through supporting the implementation of traditional management.

This vision statement will provide a framework to enable proactive management of Guildford's Countryside and development of appropriate action plans for site management. The importance of partnership working is highlighted, and existing local partnerships and initiatives are set out within the document.

The council have developed objectives for their Countryside Sites that outline their ambitions of what they want these sites to deliver. The objectives are directed by legislation and national policies (also set out within the document) for the countryside and biodiversity, and are as follows:

- Guildford Borough Council (GBC) provides an accessible, high quality and sustainable open space network, which ensures that the social, environmental and economic benefits of open spaces are enhanced for current and future generations of our community.
- GBC's Countryside sites contribute to the vision set out in the Governments' Environment White Paper (The Natural Choice: securing the value of nature, 2011) to create better, bigger and more connected wildlife habitat networks.
- Habitats are enhanced in line with the landscape character and habitat types, in order to create a resilient ecological network.
- Sites of Special Scientific Interest are in favourable ecological condition.
- The River Wey and its catchment is a clean, valued and ecologically functioning river catchment area.
- GBC's Countryside Sites provide an outdoor recreation resource for sustainable and managed recreation activities outside the Thames Basin Heath SPA to ensure visitor pressure does not damage what we have.
- Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspaces reduce pressure on the Thames Basin Heath SPA without compromising nature conservation values of existing sites.
- Characteristic landscape features, archaeological areas and important views are enhanced and maintained in favourable condition.
- GBC's Countryside sites contribute to the provision of Eco System Services to benefit Guildford Borough's communities.
- GBC's sites are recognised as GBC owned green spaces and provide a safe and pleasant environment to visit.
- The management of GBC's Countryside engages the community by providing an educational resource and enabling and supporting volunteering.
- GBC plays an active role in working with partnerships towards achieving countryside management on a landscape scale.

The document identifies opportunities and challenges, and policies to manage these factors on specific habitats, within which Guildford's countryside sites have been grouped.

For each habitat type (heathland, Wey Valley meadows, woodland, downland, open commons, mixed urban fringe habitat, conservation road verges), the habitat resource is set out (including a list of sites), along with issues, objectives, policies, actions and the stakeholders involved in delivering the objectives.

An action plan outlining the major steps over the next five years towards implementing the vision is included, and will be reviewed in 2020.

3.3.6 Biodiversity and Planning in Surrey (May 2014)

The Surrey Nature Partnership has produced this manual offering advice to those involved in planning to ensure that development within the county protects and enhances biodiversity. Through this the aim is to also help local authorities honour their statutory 'Biodiversity Duty' under Section 40 of the Natural Environment & Rural Communities Act, 2006.

The document describes protected sites, habitats and priority habitats and species.

3.3.7 Biodiversity Opportunity Areas: the basis for realising Surrey's ecological network

Guildford Borough – Policy Statements

Prior to 2012, the Surrey Biodiversity Partnership implemented the Surrey Biodiversity Action Plan. The Partnership has now become the Biodiversity Working Group of the Surrey Nature Partnership and it is producing Biodiversity Opportunity Area Policy statements to align with the outcomes in Biodiversity 2020.

The aim of Biodiversity Opportunity Areas (BOAs) is to establish a strategic framework for conserving and enhancing biodiversity at a landscape-scale, making wildlife more robust to changing climate and socio-economic pressures. BOAs are those areas where targeted maintenance, restoration and creation of Natural Environment & Rural Communities (NERC) Act 'Habitats of Principal Importance', i.e. Priority habitats will have the greatest benefit towards achieving this aim.

BOAs identify the most important areas for wildlife conservation remaining in Surrey and each include a variety of habitats, providing for an 'ecosystem approach' to nature conservation across and beyond the county. By working with larger, more dynamic ecosystems, it will be possible to create a wider range of habitats and their variants, which will in turn increase the ability of the landscape to support the largest variety of species.

The Guildford Borough BOA consists of 13 policy statements, with objectives and targets for each area including priority habitat and species recovery. These are:

TBH03: Colony Bog, Bagshot Heath & Deepcut Heaths

TBH04: Ash, Brookwood & Whitmoor Heaths

TBH06: Wisley, Ockham & Walton Heaths

TBL01: Wanborough & Normandy Woods & Meadows

TBL02: Clandon to Bookham Parkland

ND01: North Downs Scarp; The Hog's Back

ND02: North Downs Scarp & Dip; Guildford to the Mole Gap

WG01: Puttenham & Crooksbury

WG06: Blackheath, Chilworth & Farley Heaths

WG07: Winterfold & the Hurtwood

WG12: Albury & Shere Heaths & Parkland

R03: Blackwater River

R04: River Wey (& tributaries)

3.3.8 Naturally richer: A natural capital investment strategy for Surrey

The Surrey Nature Partnership have developed this document as the beginning of an important initiative – to plan and coordinate collective investment in the natural environment of Surrey to:

- ensure that the natural environment continues to provide multiple benefits into the future.
- future-proof the county against current and future risks such as climate change and extreme weather events.
- help build a prosperous and secure future for everyone who lives and works in Surrey.
- demonstrate that an innovative approach to natural capital at the local level has to happen.

This document provides a strategic basis to define the direction of travel and the vision and direction for a wider programme of work. It is a starting point for defining aims and how these will be achieved.

Vision: *A thriving, resilient and attractive county providing natural benefits to all who live and work here.*

Strategic priorities:

In response to the pressures upon natural capital and in order to achieve the vision, the following strategic priorities have been developed. These reflect and build upon the national priorities recommended by the Natural Capital Committee, but importantly do so within the context for Surrey:

Sustainable land management

- Halt losses of natural capital – we will strive to halt net loss and degradation across the county.
- Enhance and expand – we will seek net gains in the quality and quantity of natural capital through positive management, habitat restoration and re-creation.

Smart economic growth

- Grow Surrey's intelligent, networked, innovative economy as the best place in the UK to do business in a sustainable location.
- Supporting the creation of jobs – we will promote a healthy attractive environment which enhances the desirability of Surrey for business.
- Developing skills – we will support the development of skills to enhance natural capital investment and management as part of a wider approach to sustainable growth.
- New space for business and local government – we will support the development of new business models and opportunities to provide multiple partnership benefits.

Health, wellbeing and quality of life

- We aim to bring more benefits - to more people, where they live and work. We will target the reduction of risks (for example pollution, flooding) and the enhancement of
-

benefits, improving opportunities for exercise, recreation and mitigating the impacts of climate change.

3.3.9 Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area Avoidance Strategy (2009-2016)

In March 2005, the government designated areas of heathland within the Thames Valley as the Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area (TBH SPA) under the EC Birds Directive. The TBH SPA includes areas of heathland across Surrey, Hampshire and Berkshire, covering 11 different local authorities, including Guildford Borough.

The TBH SPA has been identified as an internationally important habitat for three rare species of bird - the Dartford warbler, woodlark and nightjar.

Within Guildford Borough, there are a number of areas included within the Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area. Natural England believes that recreational use of the heaths arising from housing developments up to five kilometres away from a SPA will create disturbance to rare bird populations. As a result, all housing development within five kilometres of a SPA is subject to stringent tests and impact assessments.

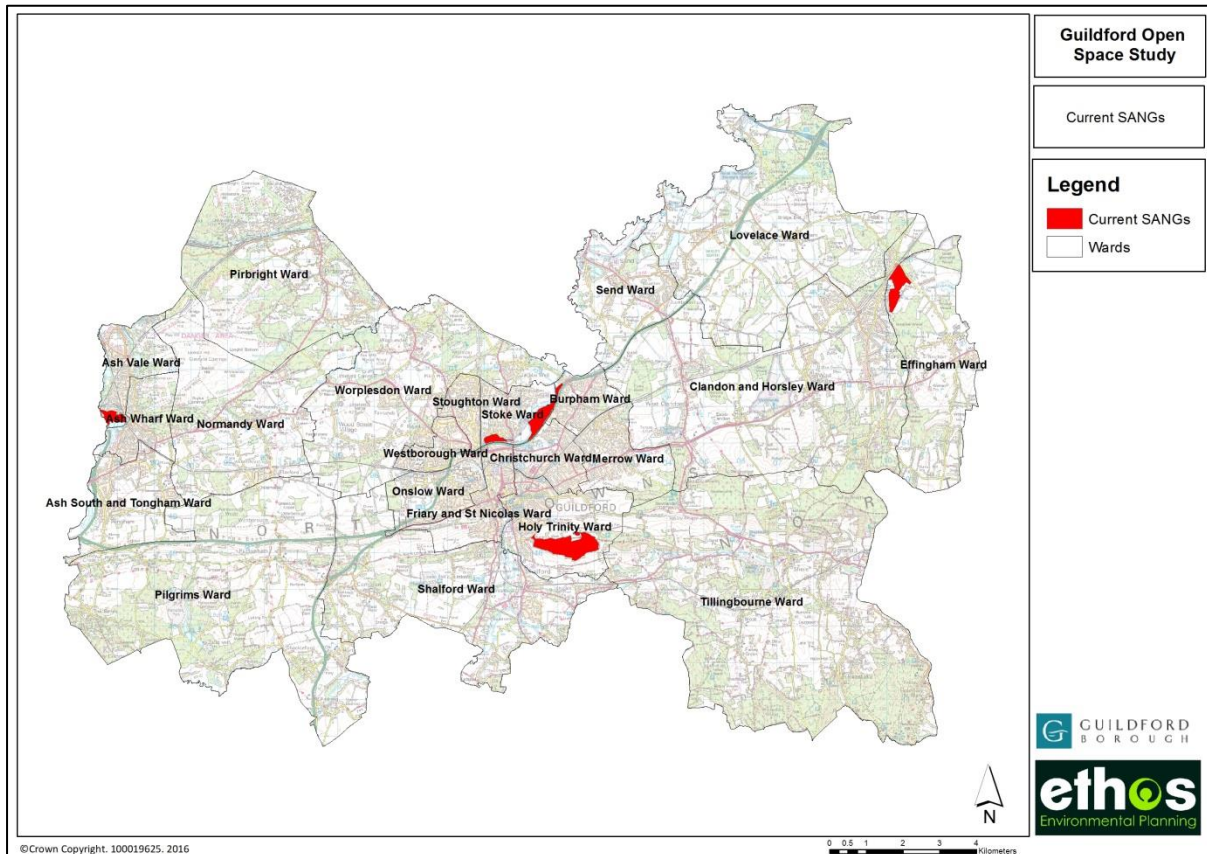
The SPA Avoidance Strategy 2009-2016 has been prepared in consultation with Natural England and facilitates the Council in considering planning applications where these fall within five kilometres of a SPA. This strategy enables residential development to take place which would otherwise be prevented by the provisions of European legislation relating to the protection of the SPA.

In order to avoid a likely significant effect on the SPA, avoidance land may either be provided in the form of new alternative semi-natural open space, and/or by improved access to **Suitable Alternative Natural Green Spaces (SANGs)** which are already in public use.

Suitable alternative natural green space (SANG) will be delivered by the Council (or a group of Councils) and funded by developer contributions, or by individual developers, as appropriate. SANG will be provided on the basis of at least 8ha per 1,000 population. This is a separate/additional requirement to the open space standards set out within this report.

Existing SANG provision within the Borough is shown in figure 6 below.

Figure 6 Existing SANG within Guildford Borough



3.3.12 River Wey Catchment Implementation Plan (Consultation Draft April 2012)

The Catchment Implementation Plan (CIP) is a living document that presents a prioritised programme of actions to achieve Good Ecological Status (GES) or in the case of heavily modified water bodies, Good Ecological Potential (GEP) for the Wey catchment. It builds on the First Thames River Basin Management Plan (ftRBMP) published in December 2009 for meeting the requirements of the EU Water Framework Directive.

The CIP sets out how the partnership of the Surrey Wildlife Trust Living Landscape Partnership (chosen by Defra as the host for the Wey catchment), the Environment Agency and all local delivery partners will achieve GES/GEP.

Key objectives for the Catchment Implementation Plan are:

1. Act as a tool to assist delivery of good ecological status and avoid deterioration
2. Provide a working document to engage partners to achieve actions to improve water environments
3. Classify status of water in the Wey catchment and set out ways to improve confidence in our data

The main issues that are a priority for the Wey catchment are phosphates from point source pollution and diffuse pollution and physical modification due to weirs and other obstructions

to fish migration. Two known universal issues include invasive non-native species and urban development.

The Wey Landscape Partnership was formally established in 2012 primarily to improve local waters in the catchment of the River Wey. Their vision is as follows:

“Our vision is for a healthy and diverse catchment where all interested sectors, groups or individuals may contribute effectively towards restoring the natural environment for the sustainable use of its essential resources, whilst preserving other valued heritage assets; to benefit both people and wildlife today and in the future”

3.3.11 Rights of Way Improvement Plan for Surrey (Revised 2014)

This Plan is part of the County Councils third Local Transport Plan, known as the Surrey Transport Plan. This is the first revision of the 2007 Rights of Way Improvement Plan.

The Plan has been written to consider the status of the network, the needs of its users, and investigate how the network could be improved to reflect changing patterns of use and the changing requirements being placed upon it.

Since 2007 the County Council has consistently scored highly for Best Value Performance Indicator 178, which is the percentage of the network that is ‘easy to use’, also the National Highways and Transport Public Satisfaction Survey 2013 ranked Surrey 1st for Key Benchmark Indicator (KBI) 16 ‘Satisfaction - Rights of Way (aspects)’ and 3rd for KBI 15 – ‘Rights of Way’, out of twenty four County Councils.

The overall aim of the rights of way improvement plan is to enhance and promote the rights of way network to make it more useful and attractive for everyone.

Five main objectives for improving rights of way within Surrey have been identified as follows:

- to improve accessibility to services, facilities and the wider countryside along rights of way
- to improve connectivity of rights of way and to reduce severance
- to improve the quality of the rights of way network
- to increase recreational enjoyment
- to secure coordinated implementation of the Rights of Way Improvement Plan within resources available.

For each objective a number of priorities are set out, and there is an Action Plan which sets out the actions intended to be taken to meet the priorities/objectives. The delivery of the Action Plan is reviewed annually by the Surrey Countryside Access Forum.

Key Issues

Whilst horse riders and cyclists are relatively well served in terms of the amount of access available, it is not all of equal quality and much of it has become fragmented by busy roads.

Reducing severance of the public bridleway network is a key issue. Connectivity and severance of routes has been identified as a major problem in some parts of Surrey.

One of the objectives of this Plan is to increase the accessibility of the network for all users, including blind and partially sighted people and those with mobility difficulties. It is proposed that this will be achieved by assessing every improvement on the basis of “least restrictive access”⁵.

⁵ Least restrictive access includes minimising barriers and considering the needs of every potential user at the earliest stage in the design of a scheme aiming for the highest possible standards of construction.

4.0 LOCAL NEEDS ASSESSMENT (STEP 1)

4.1 Introduction

This study examines local need for a wide range of different types of recreational open space. It draws upon a range of survey and analytical techniques including questionnaire surveys and one to one stakeholder interviews. The consultation and research programme was undertaken in March and April 2016. The full Community and Stakeholder consultation report and detailed findings are available as an appendix (appendix 1).

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

- A postal general household survey
- A survey of parish councils
- A survey of neighbouring local authorities (for cross-border issues)

In addition to the above a series of one to one stakeholder interviews was undertaken with key Guildford Borough Council and Surrey County Council Officers.

The results of this consultation and other analyses will help amongst other things to inform the content of the recommended local standards. Crucially it has also helped the study to understand local people's appreciation of open space, sport and recreation facilities, and the wider green infrastructure and the values attached by the community to the various forms of open spaces and facilities. This section summarises key findings under 4 sections:

1. General Community Consultation
2. Consultation with neighbouring local authorities and parish councils
3. Key Stakeholder interviews

4.2 General Community Consultation– Key Findings

4.2.1 Quantity

The typologies where a majority of respondent households suggest there is a shortfall are:

- Outdoor facilities for teenagers (66%)
- Children's play areas (53%).
- Wildlife areas and nature reserves (53%)

Over 60% of households think that overall there are enough local recreation grounds; water recreation facilities; bowling greens; parks and gardens; and 59% believe there are enough tennis/netball courts.

Smaller majorities think that in general there are enough country parks, countryside and woodlands; allotments; footpaths, bridleways and cycle paths; and MUGAs.

4.2.2 Quality

For all kinds of outdoor facilities/open spaces a majority of households suggested that in general they were of average or better quality. However, for some typologies there were notable levels of dissatisfaction with general levels of quality.

- 48% of households highlighted the overall quality of outdoor facilities for teenagers as being either poor or very poor.
- 35% rated the quality of Multi-Use Games Areas as poor or very poor.
- 35% similarly rated the quality of allotment provision as poor or very poor.

By contrast, some kinds of facilities/open spaces were rated relatively highly by significant numbers in terms of quality.

- Parks and gardens (74% rate quality in general as being good or very good);
- Country parks/countryside/woodlands (67% similarly);
- Local Recreation Grounds (59% similarly).

4.2.3 Access (geographical)

Respondents are more likely than not (61%) to drive to wildlife areas/nature reserves. Of the transport options driving is also the most common means of getting to water recreation sites (49% compared to 45% who would walk or cycle).

However, walking is the norm for all of the other typologies most notably play areas (78%); local recreation grounds (76%); teen facilities (69%); and informal open spaces (67%).

Cycling as a form of transport is of importance to some households notably for access to water recreation sites (14%); footpaths/bridleways etc (13%); teenage facilities (11%); and tennis/netball courts (11%). For a number of household's public transport is also important in relation to accessing some kinds of open space; for example, bowling greens (8%), and wildlife areas/nature reserves (7%).

A considerable number of users are prepared to travel for a relatively long time (20 minutes plus) to gather certain kinds of facility e.g. Country parks, countryside and woodlands; water recreation facilities and wildlife areas/nature reserves

In contrast, for significant numbers of residents, facilities need to be much more locally accessible before they will be used (for example, play areas, allotments, and local recreation grounds).

- 56% of users would expect play areas to be within a 10 minute travel time. 10% of this 56% would not wish to travel more than 5 minutes.
- 48% of users would expect allotments to be within a 10 minute travel time, of which 5% would not wish to travel more than 5 minutes.
- 35% of users would expect local recreation grounds to be within a 10 minute travel time, of which 26% would not wish to travel more than 5 minutes.

Over 80% of households confirmed that they would be prepared to walk/cycle further if the quality of the route was improved and that if the quality of the route was improved they would make the journey more often.

4.2.4 Priorities and other issues

- The categories highlighted by the largest number of households as a high priority for potential improvement/new provision were wildlife areas/nature reserves and footpaths, bridleway and cyclepath provision.
- Other notable high priorities for improvement noted by significant numbers were country parks, local countryside and woodlands; children's play areas; and teenage facilities;
- Improvements to water recreation facilities and local recreation grounds also scored quite highly as priority needs.
- A clear majority identify a primary need for more provision for teenagers and significant numbers highlight a shortfall of MUGAs.
- For other typologies quality improvements to existing provision is clearly the more common kind of improvement need suggested, for example, local recreation grounds; informal open spaces; parks and gardens; informal open spaces; and bowling greens.
- Improved access is quite significant for some categories, most notably for water recreation sites.

4.3 Neighbouring Local Authorities and Parish Councils – Key Findings

4.3.1 Neighbouring Local Authorities

Section 3.1 of the consultation report briefly reviewed feedback from neighbouring Local Authorities in relation to the status of their open space strategies/associated studies and any cross border issues of significance. The variety of documents and strategies in place (and their relevance to current planning policy) is considerable, embracing green infrastructure studies, open space strategies, and sport, recreation and play strategies. The approach adopted by each authority is very much locally derived.

It is notable that many authorities are currently involved with commissioning new open space related studies or updating previous strategies that are out of date.

There is scope for neighbouring local authorities to work more together to make the most of accessible natural green space resources and to develop some common themes and agendas. It is suggested that much could be learnt in regard to best practice by better sharing of information between authorities and ensuring that local authority strategies afford some importance to considering developments and proposals in neighbouring authorities.

4.3.2 Parish Councils

Section 3.2 of the consultation report provided findings from the parish councils survey undertaken for the study. 15 of the 23 parish councils responded to the survey.

General Overview

- The individual parishes are quite different in relation to size, demographics, geography, needs and demand/aspirations. It is important that the study takes this variation into account.
- 13 of the 15 parish councils who responded were directly responsible for the management of various local spaces and facilities.
- Ten of the 15 local councils who responded noted that there was a need for additional or improved open space, play and recreation facilities within their parish.
- The sector of the community most commonly identified as being poorly served in relation to their needs were children and young people.

Common areas of concern

For the parish councils, the areas of most common concern are:

- Not enough areas for teenagers e.g. skateparks, shelters etc. and the quality of existing play areas.
- The need for improvements to footpaths, bridleways and cycle paths.
- The need for additional Multi-use games areas and improvements to tennis courts in some parishes.
- Other fairly commonly identified areas of concern relate to a lack of allotment plots; and the need for improvements to wildlife areas and nature reserves.

Quality considerations

The parish councils were asked to highlight what they thought, in general, were priorities as regards qualitative factors of recreational open spaces. The quality factors most commonly deemed to be of a high priority as regards recreational public open spaces are that:

- They should be safe and secure for those using them.
-

- They should be easy to get to (and get around within) for all members of the community.
- Equipment and grounds should be of high quality and well maintained

Additional aspects of quality commonly highlighted included:

- There should be good footpath and cycleway links to and between them.
- They should be clean and free from litter and graffiti.
- There should be control of noise and unsocial behaviour.
- There should be adequate opportunities for dog walking and freedom from dog fouling.

Detailed responses on open space typologies

Many of the parish councils provided detailed responses relating to aspects of quantity and quality of the various elements of open spaces surveyed. These responses can be found in the associated excel spreadsheet.

4.4 Stakeholders - Key Findings

4.4.1 Overview

- The Borough Council Parks and Countryside Services cover 2600 acres of land including 7 green flag parks and open spaces, 61 play areas, 13 MUGAs, 2 skate parks, 1 BMX, 9 outdoor gyms, mini golf and table tennis. The service is also responsible for the management of bowling greens, netball, and tennis.
- Overall, there appears to be sufficient general recreation space across the Borough, but a deficiency of sports pitches to accommodate demand. There are some areas such as Guildford town centre where open space is limited.
- The quality of existing green spaces is high as reflected by the number of Green Flag awards. There are currently 7 Green Flag Award sites, and potential for 2 additional sites to meet the standard.
- While access to open space is generally good, access to some sites could be improved. The availability of parking and slow public transport (Guildford is very congested) are issues.

4.4.2 Public Health

- Providing opportunities for physical activity by developing and maintaining appropriate facilities such as parks, play areas and open spaces is very important in relation to promoting better public health and reducing health inequalities.
 - Ash and Stoke and Westborough are the Council's public health target areas having higher rates of smoking, biggest difference in life expectancy etc. These are areas where increased physical activity would have most impact, and hence the ones that the council focus on.
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4.4.3 Parks

- The Stoke Park development bid is a current priority for the Borough Council. The Council is applying for funding to improve infrastructure including drainage, paths, refurbishment of the paddling pool etc.
- Key aspirations/plans include getting people connected with biodiversity/wildlife in the urban parks and balancing the needs of different users.

4.4.4 Outdoor Sports (non pitch)

- Tennis: There are 8 public tennis courts managed by the Borough Council. The council also lease a number of tennis courts to private clubs (the private clubs deal with the management/maintenance of these). The courts that the council manage seem to meet demand as they are never fully booked.
- Bowls: The Borough Council maintain 5 bowling greens which are all leased to private clubs. Some of the Bowls clubs are finding sustainability difficult and there may be a need to rationalise provision.
- Netball: There are only two dedicated netball courts (at Stoke Park). All other netball provision is through the use of MUGAs (of which there are 13). The provision of MUGAs seems to be adequate at present.

4.4.5 Children's play

- Many locations have open spaces which are lacking play areas and play equipment. For example, Friary St Nicholas Ward has a deficiency in play provision (which the council is trying to address).
- Safe access to play areas (for children to walk to) is also a key issue, and is picked up in the Play Strategy.

4.4.6 Countryside Sites

- Nature reserves are very popular, with around 140 visitors a year to each reserve. At some sites, certain activities and access is restricted e.g. due to the designation of the site, but generally sites are open access.
 - There is pressure on a number of sites that are closer to the town centre, and other areas are also very popular e.g. Pewley Down (chalk grassland).
 - Forest Schools are in such high demand that their use needs to be restricted. There is demand for new areas for forest school, which could be accommodated through new provision of open space/woodland (although they generally like to be in walking distance from school).
 - One of the main issues is conflicts between different user groups (pedestrians, cyclists, equestrians) and the need to provide separate access – conflicts between different users is the main source of complaints.
 - There are a number of strategic partnership projects that the council are involved with e.g. the council are funding partners in the Blackwater Valley Countryside Partnership, the Basingstoke Canal Partnership and the Surrey Heathland Partnership. They are also part of the Landscape Partnership which develops a landscape scale approach to
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the River Wey catchment area, and the Surrey Nature Partnership (led by Surrey Wildlife Trust) where a number of the council's sites are key in delivering landscape-scale aims.

- The delivery of Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG) is key in order to mitigate the impacts of new developments/population growth on internationally important sites.

4.4.7 Rights of Way

- The Rights of Way Improvement Plan for Surrey ROWIP (Revised 2014) is the overall policy and strategy guiding the rights of way service. The emphasis of the ROWIP is on multi-user routes and green transport.
- There are a total of 816 recorded Rights of Way (ROW) in the Borough, which equates to 602,812m of paths.
- The ROW network is generally reasonably well connected and there is good information on the County Council's website e.g. there is an interactive map which shows furniture along routes. There are a set of easy access routes on the council's website (suitable for disabled access).
- The County Council use the principal of 'least restrictive access' and encourage the replacement of stiles etc with kissing gates (or a gap if appropriate).
- Common issues include overgrowing vegetation in the summer and muddy paths/surface issues during the winter. Landowner encroachment issues are also a common issue.
- The Downs Link (disused railway line) and North Downs Way are examples of highly promoted, good quality routes.
- New Roads and developments needs to take account existing ROW and retain routes and improve linkages/condition of routes. However, landowner negotiations can cause hold-ups.
- New development needs to mitigate traffic impacts, and creating new paths/linking paths/upgrading existing paths is cheaper than widening roads. This means that new housing developments generally result in improvements to the network.

4.4.8 Other issues and observations

- Maintaining existing quality standards is important (quality of sites and outdoor facilities is generally good), and replacement of old facilities is key. The service is fairly well resourced, but there is a budget gap to close e.g. the cost of implementing the play strategy is £1.2 million.
- Off-site marketing of sites (e.g. council's website) could be improved, and bylaws need refreshing.

4.5 Concluding remarks

The survey work and stakeholder consultation has highlighted a wide range of issues of value to the wider Open Space, Sports and Recreation Facility Study. There is a strong degree of consistency across the various sources on key areas of local need and aspiration from which

we can be confident that the findings are robust and reliable, providing a strong evidence base to be combined with the detailed facilities audit.

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

- The development of green space policy statements
 - The recommended standards for typologies of green spaces (quantity, quality and access elements)
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5.0 AUDIT OF EXISTING OPEN SPACE ASSETS

5.1 General approach

This section sets out the proposed typologies which will have standards developed or have been included within the quantitative or access analysis. The typologies of open space have drawn on guidance provided within PPG17, and through discussions with the project Steering Group. The agreed list of typologies are seen to be locally derived and appropriate for the type and range of open spaces that exist within Guildford. The following typologies are proposed:

Table 6 Guildford typologies

Typologies with standards	Typologies mapped but no standards ⁶
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allotments • Amenity Green Space (>0.15ha) • Park and Recreation Grounds: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Outdoor sports space (Pitches) - Outdoor Sports Space (Fixed) • Play Space (Children) • Play Space (Youth) • Natural Green Space 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Education sites • Churchyard and Cemetery • Outdoor Sports Space (Private) • Private Space e.g. paid access sites • Fishing lakes and golf courses

5.1.1 Allotments



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

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

⁶ An explanation for not developing standards for these typologies is outlined in the following sections

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

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

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

5.1.2 Amenity Green Space



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

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

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

It should be noted that sites <0.15ha (about the size of a mini football pitch) have not been included within the quantity analysis or quality audit. This is because amenity spaces that are smaller than this generally have very limited recreation value.

5.1.3 Park and Recreation Grounds



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

- **Park and Recreation Ground.** This comprises the general open space surrounding play areas, sports facilities etc. used for general recreation.
- **Outdoor Sports Space (Pitches).** This comprises publicly accessible sports pitches (including football and rugby).
- **Outdoor Sports Space (Fixed).** This comprises all other non-pitch based provision including publicly accessible tennis courts and bowling greens.

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

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

- Dog walking

The multi-functional approach to mapping has provided detail to the range of functions that exist within parks and recreation grounds, with all outdoor sport and play facilities being mapped (see section 2.3.2). This has meant that more accurate assessment of these facilities can be undertaken.

The recommended standards for this typology (set out in Section 6 below) are intended to provide sufficient space for recreation. Specific requirements for playing pitches and fixed sports facilities are not dealt with within the study, as these require a specific assessment set out by Sport England in the *'Assessing needs and opportunities guidance'* (also referenced in the NPPF).

5.1.4 Play Space (Children and Youth)



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

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

The study has recorded the following:

- **Children's Play Space** – Areas of play that cater for the needs of children up to and around 12 years. Play Areas are an essential way of creating safe but adventurous places for children of varying ages to play and learn. The emphasis in play area management is shifting away from straightforward and formal equipment such as slides and swings towards creating areas where imagination and natural learning can

flourish through the use of landscaping and natural building materials and the creation of areas that need exploring.

- **Youth Play Space** - informal recreation opportunities for, broadly, the 13 to 16/17 age group, and which might include facilities like skateboard parks, basketball courts and 'free access' Multi Use Games Areas (MUGAs). In practice, there will always be some blurring around the edges in terms of younger children using equipment aimed for youths and vice versa.

Teenagers should not be ignored, it is important to create areas for 'hanging out' such as shelters and providing them with things to do such as bike ramps. Currently recognisable provision for teenagers is few and far between.

5.1.5 Natural Green Space



For the purpose of this study, the typology of natural green space covers all publicly accessible spaces including meadows, woodland and copses all of which share a trait of having natural characteristics and biodiversity value, but which are also accessible for informal recreation.

This typology does not include Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG), which is a separate requirement (as explained under section 3.3.9). It does include part of the Thames Basin Heaths SPA which is accessible, as shown in figure 7 below. As can be seen from figure 7, a large part of the SPA is not included within this typology, as access is limited.

Research elsewhere (Natural England) and the local consultation for this study have identified the value attached to such space for recreation and emotional well-being. A sense of 'closeness to nature' with its attendant benefits for people is something that is all too easily lost in urban areas. Natural green spaces can make important contributions towards local Biodiversity Action Plan targets and can also raise awareness of biodiversity values and issues.

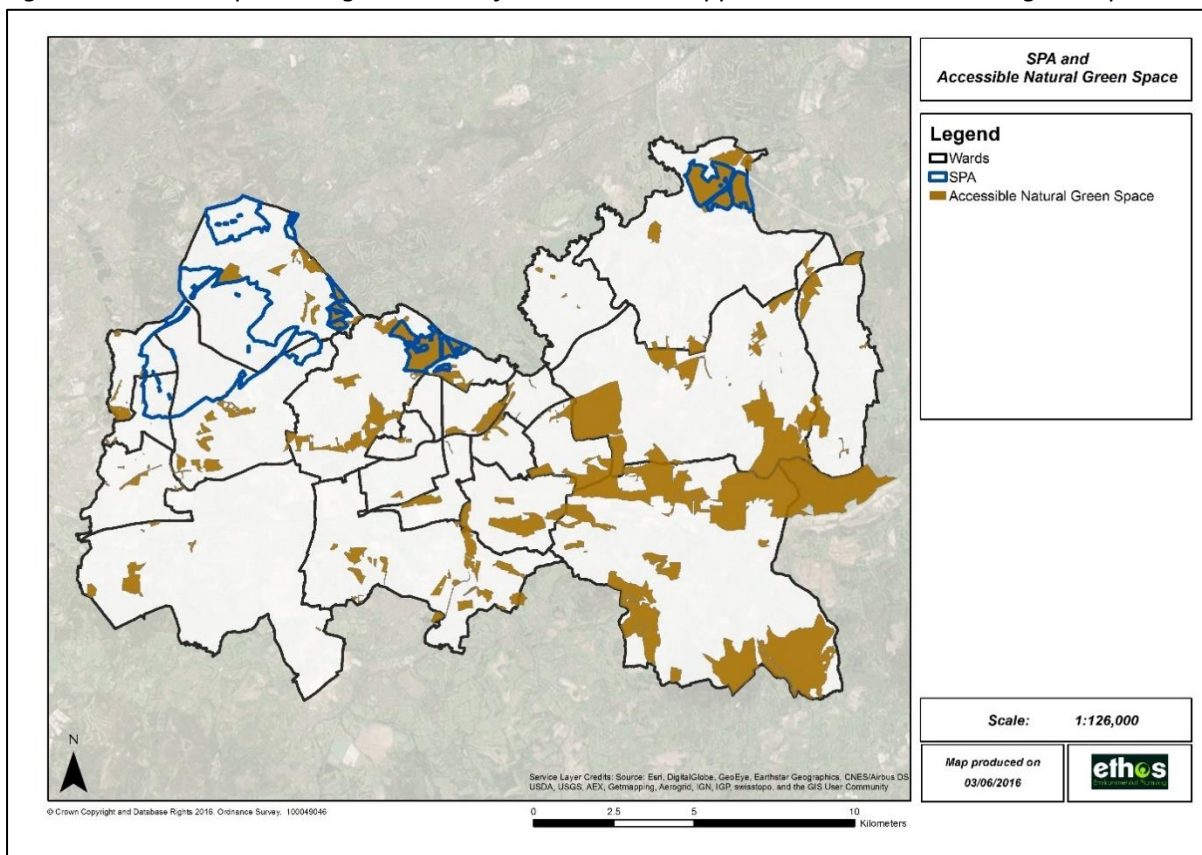
Some sites will have statutory rights or permissive codes allowing the public to wander in these sites. Others may have defined Rights of Way or permissive routes running through them. For the remainder of sites there may be some access on a managed basis. It should be noted that permissive routes are granted by the landowner, and can be revoked at any point in time.

Natural Green Spaces can form important ‘green corridors’ for both wildlife and people, especially when linked with the public rights of way network, cycle paths and rivers etc. These spaces form an important part of the Green Infrastructure of an area, and can be important in delivering ecosystem services and attracting visitors across administrative boundaries.

Many natural spaces may not be ‘accessible’ in the sense that they cannot be entered and used by the general community, but they can be appreciated from a distance, and contribute to visual amenity. Although such spaces are not the subject of standards developed by this study, their value is recognised.

The nature of the geography of Guildford means there are large tracts of open countryside in and around settlement areas. Much of this is private land used for farming, however, there is significant access to the countryside provided through the rights of way network. It is not the intention of this audit to survey and map all these areas, but to focus on sites where there are definitive boundaries or areas of natural green space which have some form of public access.

Figure 7 Map showing the areas of SPA that are mapped as accessible natural green space



5.1.6 Outdoor Sport (Private)

Outdoor sports space with limited public access (e.g. private sports grounds), have also been recorded and mapped where known. Private sport space makes up an important part of outdoor sports provision across the District, and forms an important part of the community facilities. The private sports spaces have been mapped separately to publicly accessible sites, to determine exact provision of the different types of provision.

5.1.7 Churchyards

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

However, the quality of churchyards can be influenced by this study, particularly closed churchyards which have become the responsibility of the Local Authority. This reflects the priorities established through consultation, which identifies the need to provide and improve open spaces. Churchyards can provide important open space, particularly closed churchyards, where the ownership is often transferred to the local authority to manage and maintain.

5.1.8 Education

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

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

Quantity and access standards have not been proposed for education sites. This is because they are not openly accessible to the public and whilst important to the local community, there is less opportunity for the Borough Council to influence their provision and management. However, their existence is still an important factor of local provision, and as such they will be subject to the same policy considerations as publicly accessible space.

5.1.9 Private Space e.g. paid access sites and land with no access

During the audit of open space, a number of sites were identified which were in private ownership, largely these sites were not openly accessible to the public and required payment or membership to access them e.g. Loseley House and Park in Shalford Ward. This typology does not include private sports facilities (e.g. golf courses, bowling greens and tennis courts – which are covered elsewhere), but those open spaces which contribute to green infrastructure and the overall open space asset. Private space also includes land considered during the course of the assessment that was found to have no level of public access.

5.1.10 Golf courses and fishing lakes

More often than not, public access to these spaces is restricted. Nevertheless, these facilities are used by local people and they form part of the Green Infrastructure network. Golf courses and fishing lakes have been identified and mapped where known, however, no quantity or access standard for provision have been set, as it is outside the scope of this study to make recommendations related to requirements for new provision.

5.2 Existing provision of open space

5.2.1 Provision across the Borough

The following table shows the average existing provision of open space in hectares and ha/1000 population across the Borough. The figures for 'Park and Recreation Ground (Public Combined)' include a combination of the following typologies:

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

The figures for 'Park and Recreation Ground (Public and Private Combined)' include the above typologies, plus 'Outdoor Sport (Private)'.

Table 7 Summary of existing provision of open space across the Borough⁷

Typology	Existing Provision (Ha)	Existing Provision (Ha/1000)
Allotments	31.31	0.23
Amenity Green Space	144.42	1.05
Park and Recreation Ground (Public Combined)	101.14	0.74
Park and Recreation Ground (Public and Private Combined)	184.43	1.35
<i>Park and Recreation Ground</i>	76.9	0.56
<i>Outdoor Sport (Pitches)</i>	21.62	0.16
<i>Outdoor Sport (Fixed)</i>	2.62	0.02
<i>Outdoor Sport (Private)</i>	83.29	0.61
Play Space (Children)	5.06	0.04
Play Space (Youth)	1.4	0.01
Accessible Natural Green Space ⁸	4416.04	32.19
Education	192.29	1.4
Churchyards and Cemeteries	40.37	0.29

⁷ It should be noted that these figures do not include small amenity spaces (less than 0.15ha), roadside verges, golf courses, fishing lakes and private/paid access sites.

⁸ The area of accessible natural green space that is covered by the SPA designation is 404.63 Ha

5.2.2 Provision in Wards

Quantity Statistics

The following tables shows the average existing provision of open space in hectares (table 8) and ha/1000 population (table 9) for each of the wards in the Borough.

Table 8: Existing provision of open space (hectares) in wards⁹

Ward	Allotments	Amenity Green Space	Park and Recreation Ground (Public Combined)	Park and Recreation Ground (Public and Private Combined)	Park and Recreation Ground	Outdoor Sport (Pitches)	Outdoor Sport (Fixed)	Outdoor Sport (Private)	Play Space (Children)	Play Space (Youth)	Accessible Natural Green Space
Ash South and Tongham	1.35	9.71	2.8	2.95	2.55	0.09	0.16	0.15	0.11	0.03	44.33
Ash Vale	0	6.49	0.11	0.11	0	0	0.11	0	0.46	0.12	35.02
Ash Wharf	2.13	2.6	1.48	4.56	1.48	0	0	3.08	0.31	0.3	9.13
Burpham	1.77	3.35	6.26	8.94	4.31	1.5	0.45	2.68	0.14	0.03	60.62
Christchurch	1.13	8.05	29.6	33.14	23.77	5.15	0.68	3.54	0.18	0.08	34.48
Clandon and Horsley	1.33	8.49	5.69	17.04	4.55	0.92	0.22	11.35	0.36	0.15	1731.6
Effingham	0.9	1.38	9.4	10.9	5.71	3.51	0.18	1.5	0.13	0.08	1079.1
Friary and St Nicolas	1.63	1.72	2.58	6.28	1.45	1.13	0	3.7	0.1	0	36.58
Holy Trinity	2.29	5.69	9.25	16.29	5.66	3.49	0.1	7.04	0.14	0.13	469.13
Lovelace	1.04	0	5.62	11.08	4.94	0.66	0.02	5.46	0.09	0.03	415.59
Marrow	2.14	4.43	1.81	4.66	1.8	0	0.01	2.85	0.08	0.03	543.46
Normandy	0.83	1.2	0.59	9.49	0	0.57	0.02	8.9	0.62	0	134.85
Onslow	0	10.59	2.27	18.95	1.72	0.55	0	16.68	0.17	0.05	38.01
Pilgrims	0	7.42	0.47	1.57	0	0.47	0	1.1	0.15	0	309.91
Pirbright	0	6.68	1.94	2.05	1.91	0	0.03	0.11	0.28	0.06	147.15
Send	0.61	4.33	1.72	3.11	1.27	0.34	0.11	1.39	0.39	0.06	8.29
Shalford	6	7.94	5.07	10.46	4.97	0.1	0	5.39	0.21	0.01	146.18
Stoke	4.69	12.23	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.22	0.05	384.32
Stoughton	0	5.39	2.36	2.36	2.36	0	0	0	0.08	0.03	34.91
Tillingbourne	0.99	6.4	2.71	5.64	1.22	1.24	0.25	2.93	0.26	0.02	1969.78
Westborough	3.18	5.95	5.03	5.31	3.7	1.29	0.04	0.28	0.4	0.04	90.11
Worplesdon	0	24.27	4.33	5.81	3.49	0.6	0.24	1.48	0.18	0.09	225.09

⁹ It should be noted that these figures do not include small amenity spaces (less than 0.15ha), roadside verges, golf courses, fishing lakes and private paid access sites.

Table 9: Existing provision of open space (ha/1000 population) in wards¹⁰

Ward	Allotments	Amenity Green Space	Park and Recreation Ground (Public Combined)	Park and Recreation Ground (Public and Private Combined)	Park and Recreation Ground	Outdoor Sport (Pitches)	Outdoor Sport (Fixed)	Outdoor Sport (Private)	Play Space (Children)	Play Space (Youth)	Accessible Natural Green Space
Ash South and Tongham	0.18	1.27	0.36	0.38	0.33	0.01	0.02	0.02	0.01	0	5.78
Ash Vale	0	1.14	0.02	0.02	0	0	0.02	0	0.08	0.02	6.16
Ash Wharf	0.35	0.42	0.24	0.74	0.24	0	0	0.5	0.05	0.05	1.49
Burpham	0.31	0.59	1.1	1.57	0.76	0.26	0.08	0.47	0.02	0.01	10.64
Christchurch	0.22	1.58	5.8	6.49	4.66	1.01	0.13	0.69	0.04	0.02	6.76
Clandon and Horsley	0.15	0.97	0.66	1.96	0.52	0.11	0.03	1.3	0.04	0.02	197.92
Effingham	0.33	0.51	3.47	4.02	2.11	1.29	0.07	0.55	0.05	0.03	398.05
Friary and St Nicolas	0.18	0.19	0.29	0.7	0.16	0.13	0	0.41	0.01	0	4.07
Holy Trinity	0.29	0.73	1.19	2.09	0.73	0.45	0.01	0.9	0.02	0.02	60.2
Lovell	0.4	0	2.14	4.22	1.88	0.25	0.01	2.08	0.03	0.01	158.38
Merrow	0.27	0.55	0.22	0.57	0.22	0	0	0.35	0.01	0	67.63
Normandy	0.28	0.4	0.2	3.19	0	0.19	0.01	2.99	0.21	0	45.24
Onslow	0	1.12	0.24	2	0.18	0.06	0	1.76	0.02	0.01	4
Pilgrims	0	2.84	0.18	0.6	0	0.18	0	0.42	0.06	0	118.6
Pirbright	0	1.81	0.53	0.56	0.52	0	0.01	0.03	0.08	0.02	39.87
Send	0.14	1.02	0.41	0.74	0.3	0.08	0.03	0.33	0.09	0.01	1.95
Shalford	1.06	1.4	0.9	1.85	0.88	0.02	0	0.95	0.04	0	25.85
Stoke	0.76	1.98	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.04	0.01	62.12
Stoughton	0	0.55	0.24	0.24	0.24	0	0	0	0.01	0	3.56
Tillingbourne	0.18	1.16	0.5	1.03	0.22	0.23	0.05	0.53	0.05	0	358.27
Westborough	0.34	0.64	0.54	0.57	0.4	0.14	0	0.03	0.04	0	9.68
Worplesdon	0	2.85	0.51	0.68	0.41	0.07	0.03	0.17	0.02	0.01	26.39

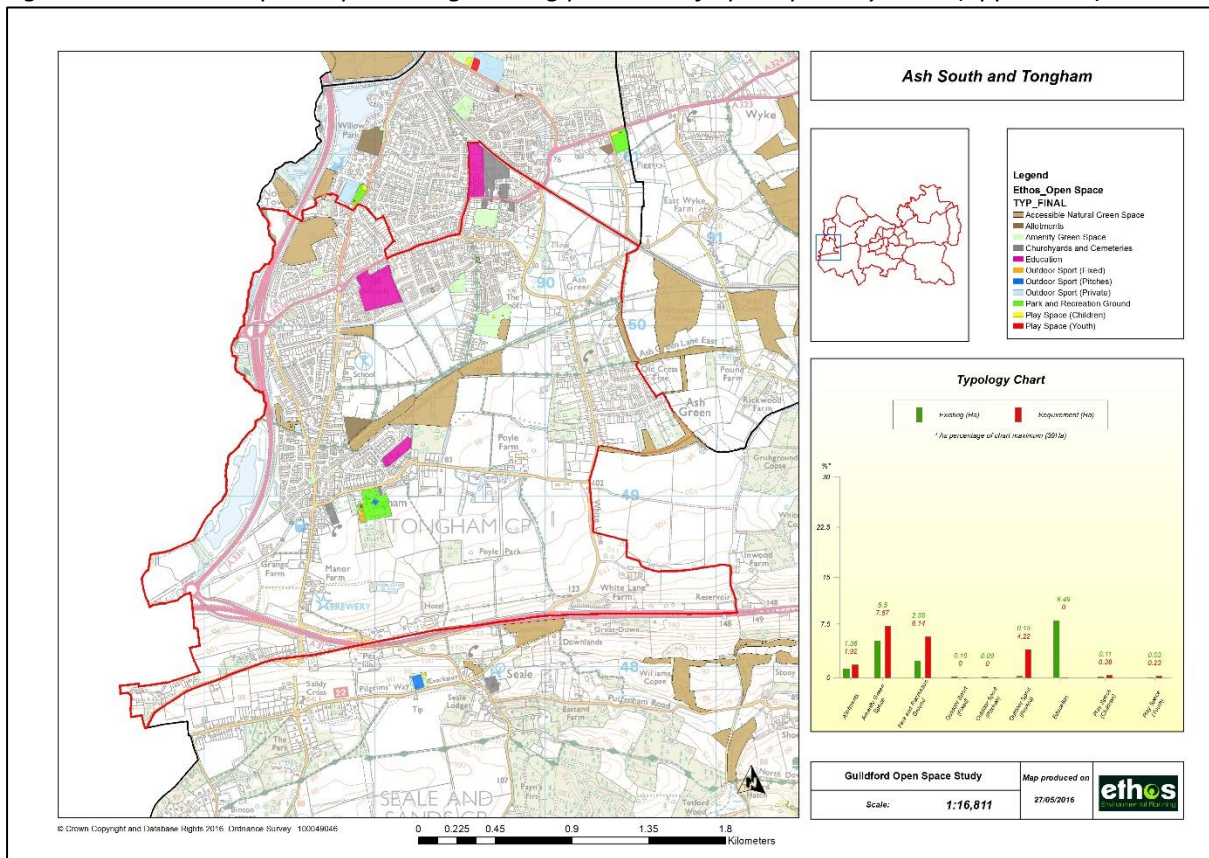
¹⁰ It should be noted that these figures do not include small amenity spaces (less than 0.15ha), roadside verges, golf courses, fishing lakes and private paid access sites.

Maps showing provision by Ward

Appendix 2 provides maps for each of the wards within the Borough showing the provision of open space.

Maps are provided which show the provision of all open space recorded as part of the study (i.e. including amenity spaces less than 0.15 ha, roadside verges, golf courses, fishing lakes and private paid access sites) and separate maps showing only those spaces which have been included within the quantity analysis (i.e. excluding those aforementioned sites), an example map is shown in figure 8.

Figure 8 Example map showing existing provision of open space by ward (appendix 2)



6.0 THE DEVELOPMENT OF STANDARDS

6.1 Introduction

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

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

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

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

6.2 Allotments

Table 10 Summary of quantity and access standard

Quantity Standard	Access Standard
0.25 ha/1000 population	480m (10 minutes' straight line walk time)

Existing national or local standards

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

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

There are no existing local standards for allotments.

Quantity standard for allotments

Quantity:

- 95% of all respondents from the household survey 'never' use allotments, meaning this is the least used type of open space;
- The existing average level of provision across the study area is 0.23 ha/1000;
- The household survey identified 32% of people felt there should be more allotments, however, 53% felt there are enough;
- Consultation with Parish Councils identified a lack of allotment plots as a fairly common area of concern;
- The propensity for higher density new housing with smaller gardens is likely to increase demand;
- A small increase against the current average is recommended of 0.25 ha/1000 for analysing existing provision and for new provision.

Access standard for allotments

- Responses received in relation to acceptable travel times to allotments from the household survey identified a mix in responses, with 5% wanting allotments within 5 minutes, 43% within 10 minutes, 28% within 15 minutes and the remaining 24% more than 16 minutes;
- This suggests that people do not want to travel to far to reach their allotment and the majority of people are prepared to travel no more than 10 minutes' walk time;

- It is considered that the availability of allotments is more important than having them very close to home, nevertheless there is some demand for facilities relatively nearby. Therefore, a standard of no more than 10 minutes’ walk time (480 metres straight line walk) is proposed.

Quality standards for allotments

The majority (45%) of respondents from the household survey felt allotments are ‘average’ quality. 20% thought they are good or very good, and 35% poor or very poor.

The information gathered in relation to allotments is more difficult to assess in comparison to other types of open space. The reason for this is twofold: firstly, the number of people who actually use allotments is very low compared to the numbers who use other types of open space and, therefore specific comments related to the quality of allotments are less frequent; Secondly, the majority of allotments sites are locked, and the quality audit only allows for assessment against key criteria such as the level of cultivation and general maintenance, which is less comprehensive than the assessments of other open space.

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

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

6.3 Amenity Green Space

Table 11 Summary of quantity and access standard

Quantity Standard	Access Standard
1.0 ha/1000 population for sites > 0.15ha	720 metres or 15 minutes’ walk time

Existing national or local standards

The Fields in Trust (Previously known as the National Play Fields Association) Guidance for Outdoor Sport and Play report ‘Beyond the Six Acre Standard’ proposes a benchmark guideline of 0.6ha/1000 population of amenity green space, and a walking distance guideline

of 480m. FIT recommend that the quantity guidelines are adjusted to take account of local circumstances.

The standard set out within the adopted Local Plan is 0.4ha of amenity space per 1000 people.

Quantity standard for Amenity green space

- Existing average level of provision in the study area is 1.05 ha/1000 population (for sites greater than 0.15 ha in size);
- The household survey identified that 48% of people felt there was a need for more informal open space areas, whilst 50% felt there were enough;
- Provision varies greatly with some areas having no provision or falling well below the average, and others far exceeding it;
- Whilst a significant number of people in the household survey identified the need for additional informal spaces, the current average levels of provision already exceed national standards, therefore current levels of provision are sufficient;
- Therefore, the aim should be to address shortfall in areas with identified deficiencies;
- The minimum size of a space that will be considered acceptable and count towards open space provision is recommended to be 0.15 ha in size (about the size of a mini football pitch). This will avoid a proliferation of small amenity spaces which have no real recreation function. Any spaces below this size will be acceptable in terms of their visual amenity, but would not count towards the required level of provision.
- It is recommended that this provision is considered in tandem with provision of natural green space in **new development**, and the natural green space standard reflects this (section 6.6).
- Considering the above factors, a minimum standard of 1.0 ha/1000 is recommended for analysing existing provision and for new provision of amenity and natural green space.

Access standard for amenity green space

- Consultation identified people want spaces relatively close to home (23% less than 5 minutes, 15% less than 10 minutes, 21% less than 15 minutes and 30% less than 20 minutes), and that they access these spaces by foot (67%);
- Therefore, a standard of 720 metres (15 minutes' walk time) is recommended.

Quality standards for amenity green space

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

amenity green space should be capable of use for at least some forms of public recreation activity.

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

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

6.4 Park and Recreation Grounds

Table 12 Summary of quantity and access standard

Quantity Standard	Access Standard
0.8 ha/1000 population for public provision	720 metres (15 minutes' straight line walk time)
1.35 ha/1000 population for public and private provision	

Existing national and local policies

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

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

The standard set out within the adopted Local Plan is 1.6ha of formal playing field space per 1000 people.

Quantity of park and recreation grounds

- Existing average level of provision in the study area is 0.74 ha/1000;

- There is an additional 0.61 ha/1000 of private sports space which includes a variety of uses (excluding golf clubs and fishing lakes);
- The household survey identified the following in relation to this typology:
 - 64% of people felt there are enough parks and gardens; and 72% felt there are enough local recreation grounds
 - 59% felt there are enough tennis and netball courts;
 - 69% felt there are enough outdoor bowling greens.
- A standard of 0.8 ha/1000 population is recommended for publicly accessible provision to bring the standard in line with national guidance, for new provision;
- In addition to this a standard of 1.35 ha/1000 population is proposed for public and private parks and recreation grounds, for analysing existing provision in order to ensure the value of private facilities is recognised and afforded suitable protection;
- It should be reiterated that this standard (0.8 ha/1000) is intended to provide sufficient space for recreation. Requirements for playing pitches and specific outdoor sports facilities are not covered in this standard.

Access standard for park and recreation grounds

- The majority (45%) of people want local recreation grounds within 15 minutes of home, and for parks and gardens 56% would travel over 16 minutes;
- 76% of people walk to local recreation grounds, and 50% walk to parks and gardens;
- A standard of 720 metres (15 minutes’ walk time) is recommended.

Quality standards for park and recreation grounds

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

6.5 Play Space (children and youth)

Table 13 Summary of quantity and access standards

Typology	Quantity Standard	Access Standard
Children’s Play Space	0.05 ha/1000 population	• 480m (10 minutes’ straight line walk time)
Youth Play Space	0.03 ha/1000 population	• 720m (15 minutes’ straight line walk time)

Existing National and Local Policies

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

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

The standard set out within the adopted Local Plan is 0.8ha of children's play space per 1000 people. This is based on the old FIT recommended standard.

Quantity standards for play

- Current average levels of provision of children's play space is 0.04 ha/1000 population, for youth space this is 0.01 ha/1000 population;
- The household survey identified that 45% of people felt there was sufficient children's play space (with 53% identifying a need for more), in contrast only 29% of people felt there was sufficient youth facilities, with 66% of people identifying a need for more;
- It is therefore recommended that existing levels of children's play facilities are slightly increased with a standard of 0.05 ha/1000, and that there is a larger increase in facilities for young people with a standard of 0.03 ha/1000.
- It should be reiterated that these are minimum standards for equipped provision and do not include the need for surrounding playable space as recommended by Play England¹¹ i.e. this surrounding playable space will need to be provided in addition to the quantity standard.

Access standards for play

- The household survey identified that for children's play space 46% of people want facilities within 10 minutes and a further 31% within 15 minutes. For teenage facilities 48% of people wanted facilities within 15 minutes, with a further 30% willing to travel up to 20 minutes;
- 78% of people walk to children's facilities, the figure for teenage facilities is less with 69% walking, the rest using other modes (car, bus, bike).

¹¹ Design for Play: A guide to creating successful play spaces

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

- Children's provision – 480m (10 minutes' straight line walk time), and
- Youth Provision – 720m (15 minutes' straight line walk time).

Quality standards for play

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

- A** Door-step spaces close to home
- B** Local play spaces – larger areas within easy walking distance
- C** Neighbourhood spaces for play – larger spaces within walking distance
- D** Destination/family sites – accessible by bicycle, public transport and with car parking.

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

Disability access is also an important issue for Play England and they would like local authorities to adopt the KIDS¹² publication; '*Inclusion by Design*' as an SPD. Their most recent guidance document, '*Better Places to Play through Planning*' gives detailed guidance on setting local standards for access, quantity and quality of playable space and is considered as a background context for the standards suggested in this study.

6.6 Natural Green Space

For Natural Green Space, there are a number of national standards recommended by Natural England and the Woodland Trust, which are summarised below.

6.6.1 Natural England Accessible Natural Green Space Standards (ANGSt)

- at least one accessible 20 hectare site within two kilometre of home;
- one accessible 100 hectare site within five kilometres of home; and
- one accessible 500 hectare site within ten kilometres of home; plus
- a minimum of 1 hectare of statutory Local Nature Reserves per thousand population at least 2 hectares in size, no more than 300 metres (5 minutes' walk) from home.

¹² KIDS, is a charity which in its 40 years, has pioneered a number of approaches and programmes for disabled children and young people. KIDS was established in 1970 and in 2003, KIDS merged with KIDSACTIVE, previously known as the Handicapped Adventure Play Association.

6.6.2 Local standards

For this purpose of this study, it is recommended that the analysis should include both the Natural England ANGSt and the Woodland Trust standards to identify current levels of provision and gaps.

It is also recommended that local standards are adopted for providing new levels of provision through new development. It is recommended that this provision is considered in tandem with provision of amenity green space in new development. The aim would be to provide guidance for development to provide amenity/natural green spaces which have both a recreational value and biodiversity value through native planting. There should be a move away from providing numerous small amenity grass area, to providing fewer, larger amenity/natural spaces in new development. This is reflected in the natural green spaces standards below:

Table 14 Summary of natural provision standards

Typology	Quantity standards (ha/1000 population)		Access standard
	For assessing current and future provision	Requirement from new development	
Natural Green Space	ANGSt	1.0 to include natural and amenity green space	ANGSt

It is important to note that this natural green space standard excludes SANG provision, which is a separate requirement (as explained under section 3.3.9).

6.6.4 Quality of natural green space

Satisfaction levels with the quality of natural green space are above average, with over 60% of people in the household sample survey rating the quality of country parks, local countryside and woodlands as good or very good. 52% also rated the quality of wildlife areas/Nature Reserves as good or very good. Consultation results also highlight the value attached to certain attributes of open space, in particular:

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

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

The shape and size of space provided should allow for meaningful and safe recreation. Provision might be expected to include (as appropriate) elements of woodland, wetland, heathland and meadow, and could also be made for informal public access through recreation

corridors. For larger areas, where car borne visits might be anticipated, some parking provision will be required. The larger the area the more valuable sites will tend to be in terms of their potential for enhancing local conservation interest and biodiversity. Wherever possible these sites should be linked to help improve wildlife value as part of a network.

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

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

The above should in any event be principles to be pursued and encouraged at all times. Further guidance in this regard should be included in appropriate SPDs.

6.7 Summary of open space standards

Table 15 Summary of open space standards

Typology	Quantity standards (ha/1000 population)	Access standard
Allotments	0.25	480 metres or 10 minutes' walk time
Amenity Green Space	1.0 (see standard for Natural Green Space).	720 metres or 15 minutes' walk time
Parks and Recreation Grounds	0.8 for public provision 1.35 for public and private provision	720 metres (15 minutes' straight line walk time)
Play Space (Children)	0.05	480 metres or 10 minutes' walk time
Play Space (Youth)	0.03	720 metres (15 minutes' straight line walk time)
Natural Green Space	1.0 to include natural and amenity green space for new provision	ANGSt for analysing existing provision
Churchyards and Cemeteries	None, but sites mapped and quantity analysed	None
Education	None, but sites mapped and quantity analysed	None

7.0 APPLYING LOCAL STANDARDS

7.1 Introduction

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

Quantity analysis

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

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

For each typology, a table showing quantity analysis is shown, it provides:

- Existing provision (hectares);
- Required provision against the standards (hectares);
- Surplus or deficiency of Supply (hectares);

Access analysis

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

However, the key to access analysis, is understanding the picture at a more localised level, therefore, maps showing local access provision by ward are included in appendix 3.

Quality analysis

This section of the report makes analysis of each typology across the study area – it highlights any common themes or issues that have arisen from the quality audit.

7.2 Application of quantity standards

7.2.1 Current supply against the Guildford standards

Table 16 Shows the existing provision of open space across the Borough. Table 17 shows the existing provision of open space in hectares for each typology of open space for each of the wards, against the quantity standards summarised in Table 15.

The figures for 'Park and Recreation Ground (Public Combined)' include a combination of the following typologies:

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

The figures for 'Park and Recreation Ground (Public and Private Combined)' include the above typologies, plus 'Outdoor Sport (Private)'.

Table 16: Provision of open space across the Borough

Typology	Existing Provision (Ha)	Existing Provision (Ha/1000)	Required Provision (Ha)	Required Provision (Ha/1000)	Supply (Ha)	Supply (Ha/1000)	Overall Supply
Allotments	31.31	0.23	34.3	0.25	-2.99	-0.02	UNDER SUPPLY
Amenity Green Space	144.42	1.05	137.2	1	7.22	0.05	SUFFICIENT SUPPLY
Park and Recreation Ground (Public Combined)	101.14	0.74	109.76	0.8	-8.62	-0.06	UNDER SUPPLY
Park and Recreation Ground (Public and Private Combined)	184.43	1.35	185.22	1.35	-0.79	0.00	SUFFICIENT SUPPLY
Park and Recreation Ground	76.9	0.56	109.76	0.8	-32.86	-0.24	N/A
Outdoor Sport (Pitches)	21.62	0.16	0	0	21.62	0.16	N/A
Outdoor Sport (Fixed)	2.62	0.02	0	0	2.62	0.02	N/A
Outdoor Sport (Private)	83.29	0.61	75.46	0.55	7.83	0.06	N/A
Play Space (Children)	5.06	0.04	6.86	0.05	-1.8	-0.01	UNDER SUPPLY
Play Space (Youth)	1.4	0.01	4.12	0.03	-2.72	-0.02	UNDER SUPPLY
Accessible Natural Green Space	4416.04	32.19	0	0	4416.04	32.19	N/A
Education	192.29	1.4	0	0	192.29	1.4	N/A
Churchyards and Cemeteries	40.37	0.29	0	0	40.37	0.29	N/A

Table 16 shows that at the Borough level there is an under supply of the majority of open space typologies, with the exception of amenity green space and outdoor sport (private) which results in sufficient supply of park and recreation grounds when combined with the figures for public provision – highlighting the importance of private provision.

Table 17: Supply of open space by ward (hectares)

Ward	Allotments	Amenity Green Space	Park and Recreation Ground (Public Combined)	Park and Recreation Ground (Public and Private Combined)	Park and Recreation Ground	Outdoor Sport (Pitches)	Outdoor Sport (Fixed)	Outdoor Sport (Private)	Play Space (Children)	Play Space (Youth)
Ash South and Tongham Ward	-0.57	2.04	-3.34	-7.41	-3.59	0.09	0.16	-4.07	-0.27	-0.2
Ash Vale	-1.42	0.8	-4.44	-7.57	-4.55	0	0.11	-3.13	0.18	-0.05
Ash Wharf	0.6	-3.52	-3.42	-3.71	-3.42	0	0	-0.29	0	0.12
Burpham	0.35	-2.35	1.7	1.25	-0.25	1.5	0.45	-0.45	-0.14	-0.14
Christchurch	-0.15	2.95	25.52	26.25	19.69	5.15	0.68	0.73	-0.08	-0.07
Clandon and Horsley	-0.86	-0.26	-1.31	5.23	-2.45	0.92	0.22	6.54	-0.08	-0.11
Effingham	0.22	-1.33	7.23	7.24	3.54	3.51	0.18	0.01	-0.01	0
Friary and St Nicolas	-0.62	-7.27	-4.61	-5.85	-5.74	1.13	0	-1.24	-0.35	-0.27
Holy Trinity	0.34	-2.1	3.02	5.77	-0.57	3.49	0.1	2.75	-0.25	-0.1
Lovelace	0.38	-2.62	3.52	7.54	2.84	0.66	0.02	4.02	-0.04	-0.05
Merrow	0.13	-3.61	-4.62	-6.19	-4.63	0	0.01	-1.57	-0.32	-0.21
Normandy	0.08	-1.78	-1.79	5.47	-2.38	0.57	0.02	7.26	0.47	-0.09
Onslow	-2.37	1.1	-5.32	6.14	-5.87	0.55	0	11.46	-0.3	-0.23
Pilgrims	-0.65	4.81	-1.62	-1.96	-2.09	0.47	0	-0.34	0.02	-0.08
Pirbright	-0.92	2.99	-1.01	-2.93	-1.04	0	0.03	-1.92	0.1	-0.05
Send	-0.45	0.08	-1.68	-2.62	-2.13	0.34	0.11	-0.94	0.18	-0.07
Shalford	4.59	2.28	0.55	2.83	0.45	0.1	0	2.28	-0.07	-0.16
Stoke	3.14	6.04	-4.95	-8.35	-4.95	0	0	-3.4	-0.09	-0.14
Stoughton	-2.45	-4.42	-5.48	-10.87	-5.48	0	0	-5.39	-0.41	-0.26
Tillingbourne	-0.38	0.9	-1.69	-1.78	-3.18	1.24	0.25	-0.09	-0.01	-0.14
Westborough	0.85	-3.36	-2.42	-7.26	-3.75	1.29	0.04	-4.84	-0.07	-0.24
Worplesdon	-2.13	15.74	-2.49	-5.7	-3.33	0.6	0.24	-3.21	-0.25	-0.17

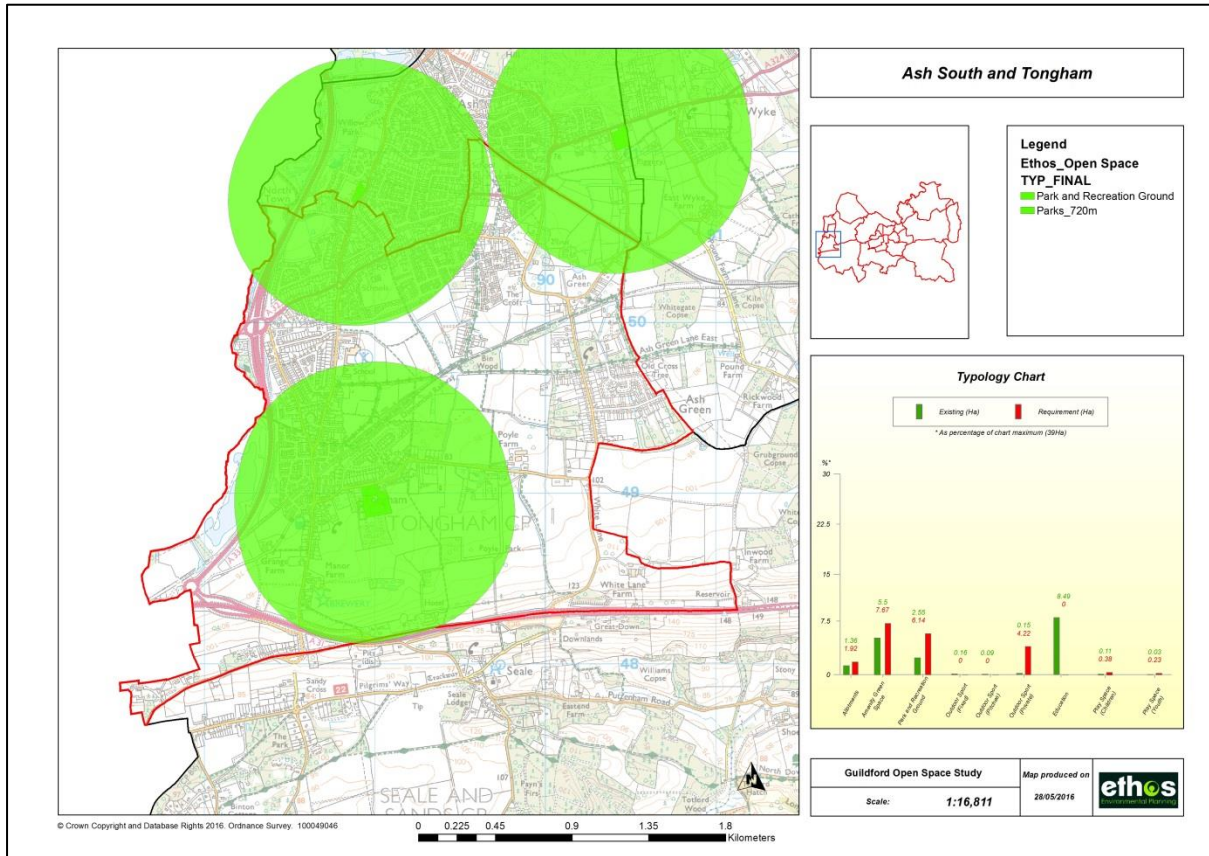
Table 17 shows that provision varies across wards and typologies, with some meeting the standards and some falling below. There is an under supply of the majority of typologies across the majority of the wards, most notably youth provision. This will be an important consideration when determining the need for on-site open space in allocated housing sites.

Natural green space has not been assessed against quantity standards, as it is assessed using the Natural England ANGSt standards under section 7.3.2 below. The existing quantity (hectares) of natural green space in provided by Ward in table 8.

7.3 Application of access standards

This section provides an overview of access to different types of open space typologies across the whole study area. The maps are intended to provide an overview and are for illustrative purposes only. More detailed maps by ward are provided for each typology within **appendix 3** (see example at figure 9).

Figure 9 Example map from appendix 3: access to parks and recreation grounds in Ash South and Tongham Ward



7.3.1 Access to open space across the Borough

Figure 10 Access to allotments (480 metres)

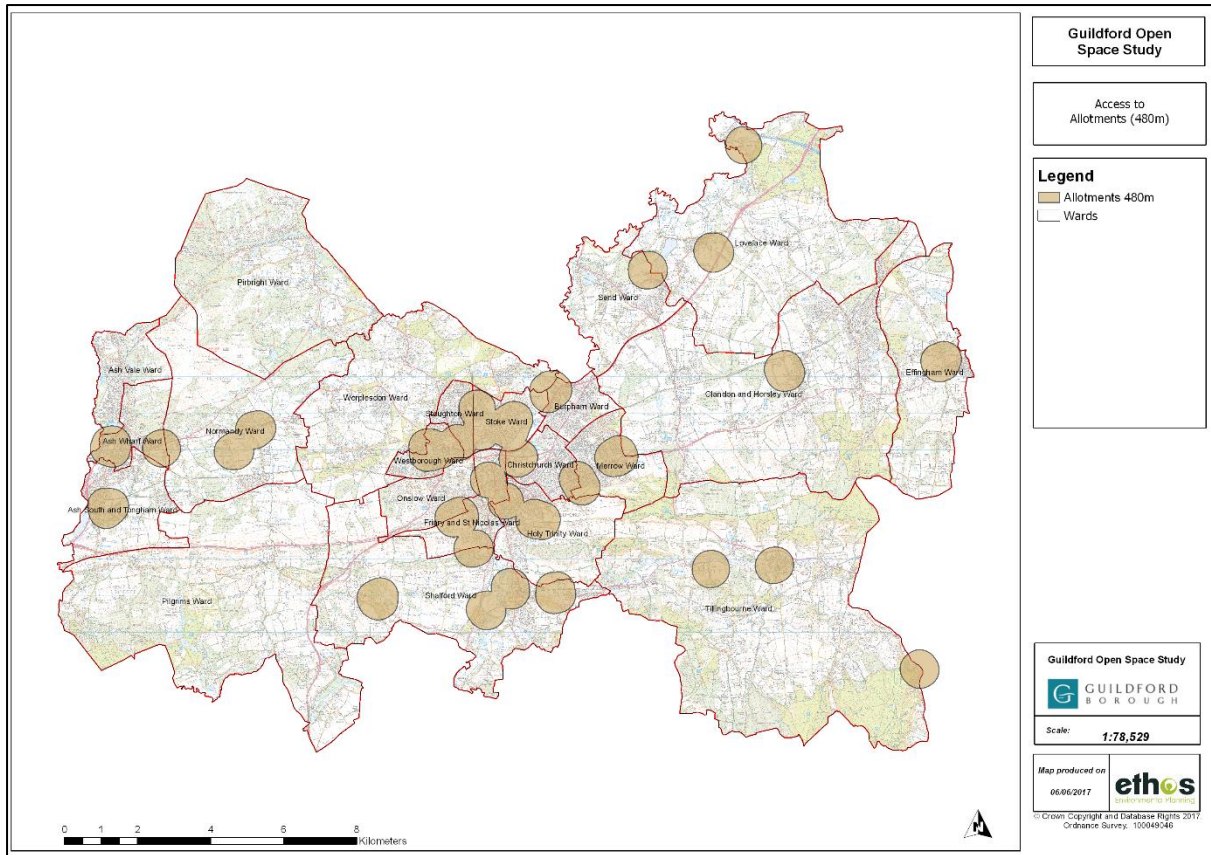


Figure 11 Access to amenity green space (720 metres)

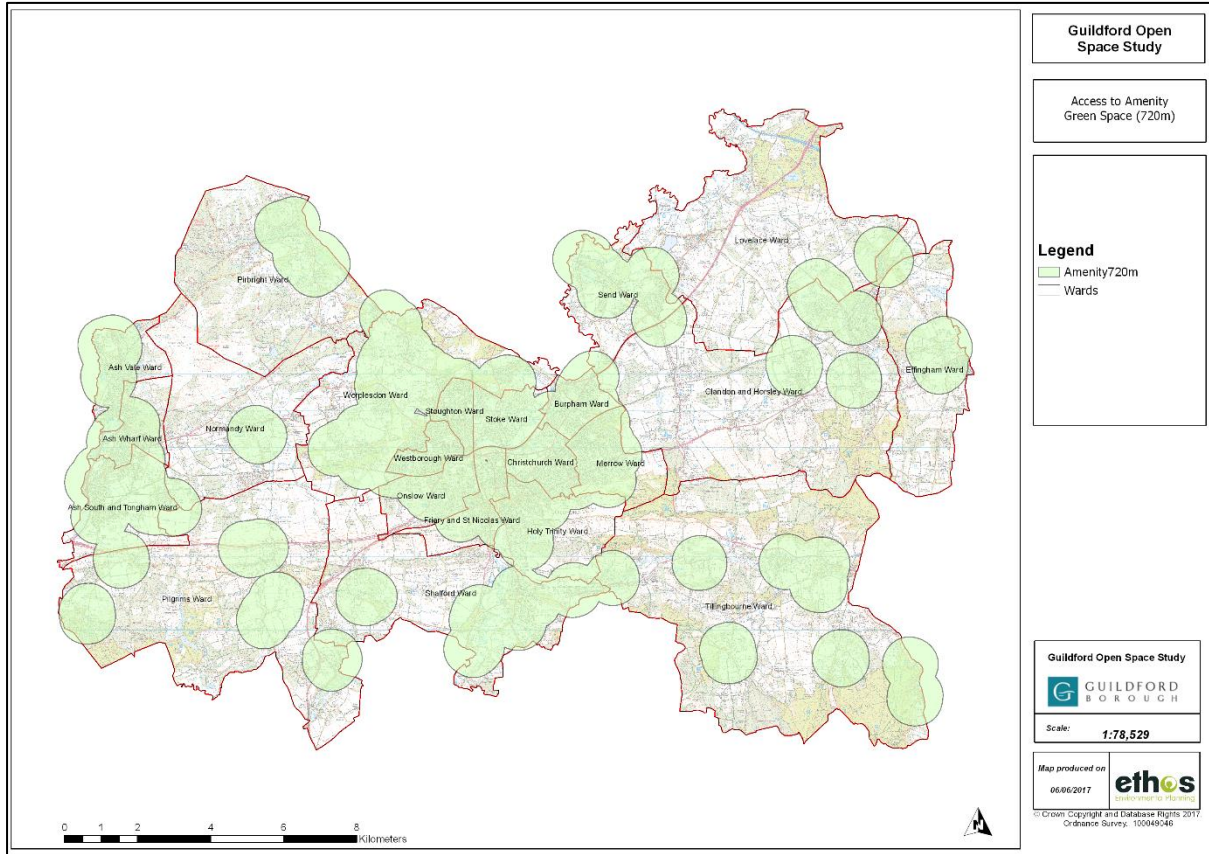


Figure 12 Access to parks and recreation grounds (720 metres)

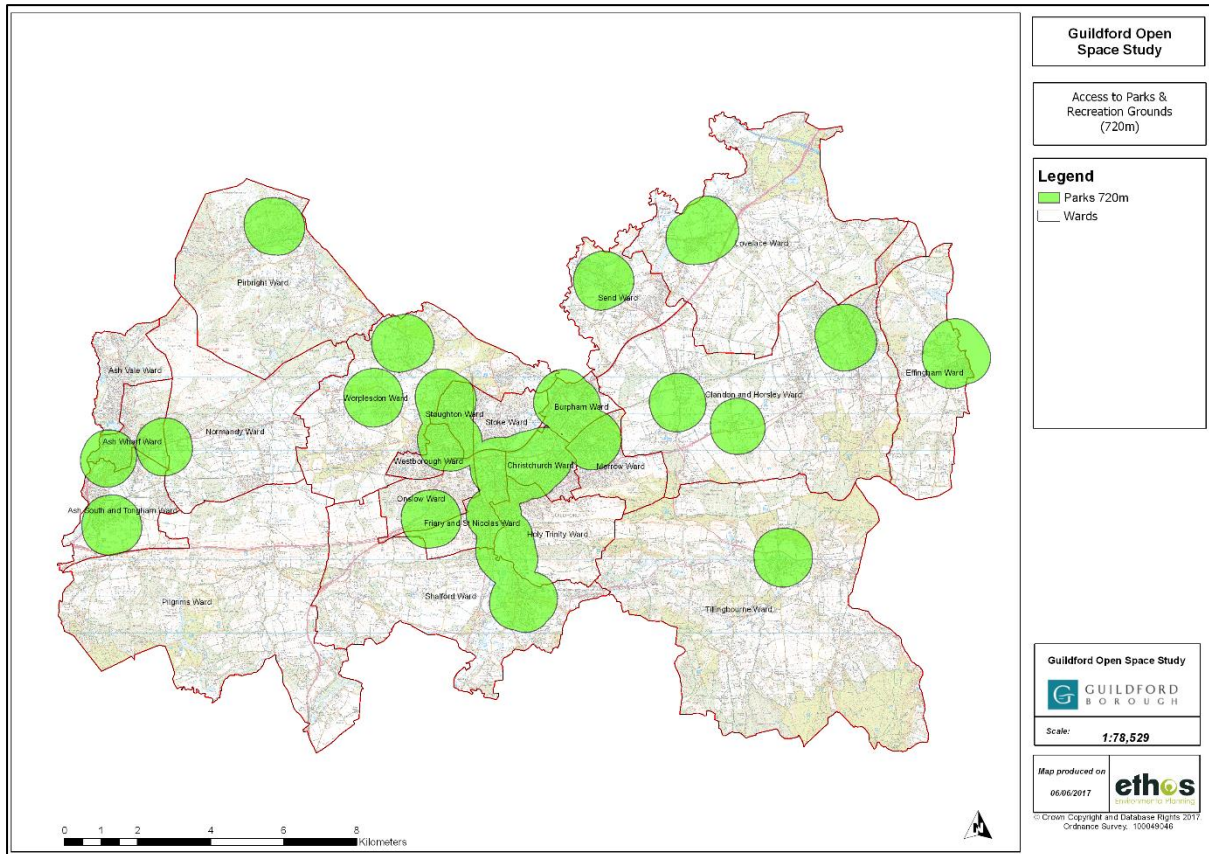


Figure 13 Access to children's play space (480 metres)

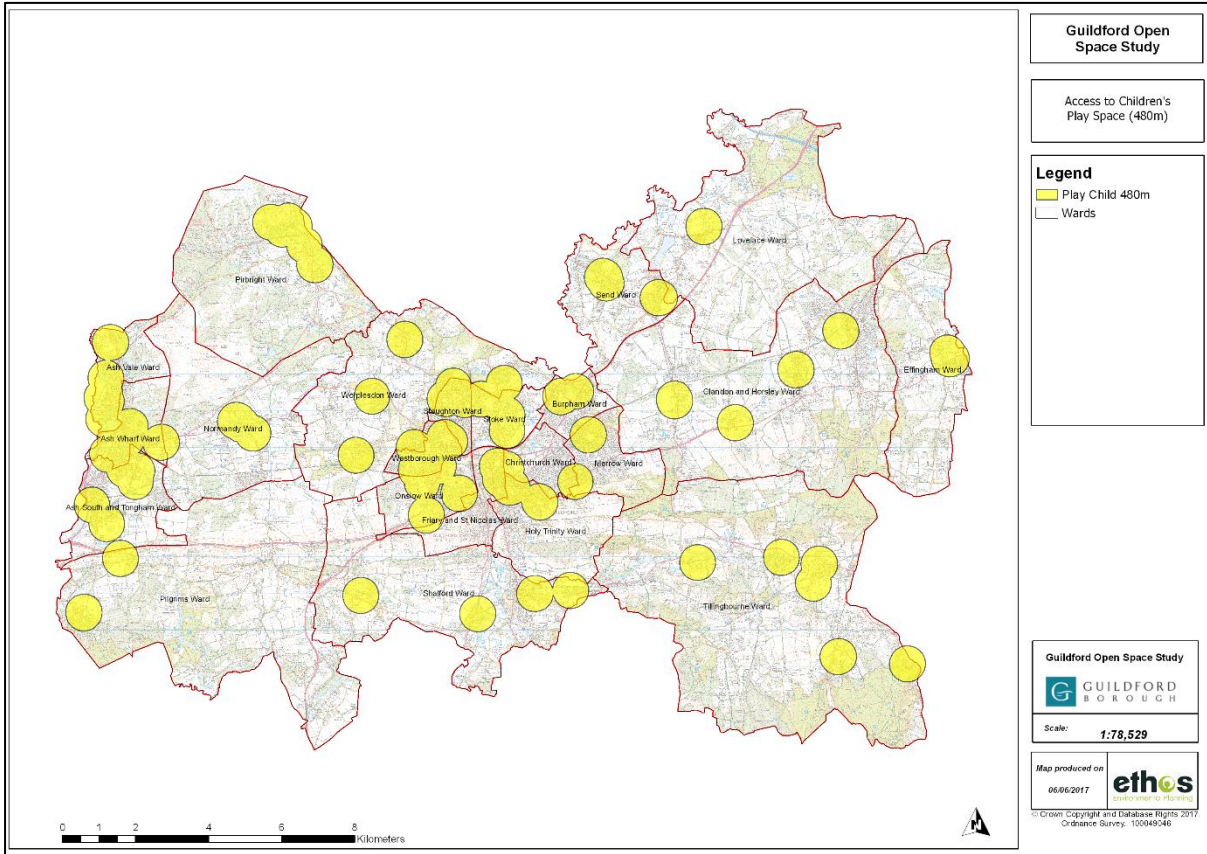
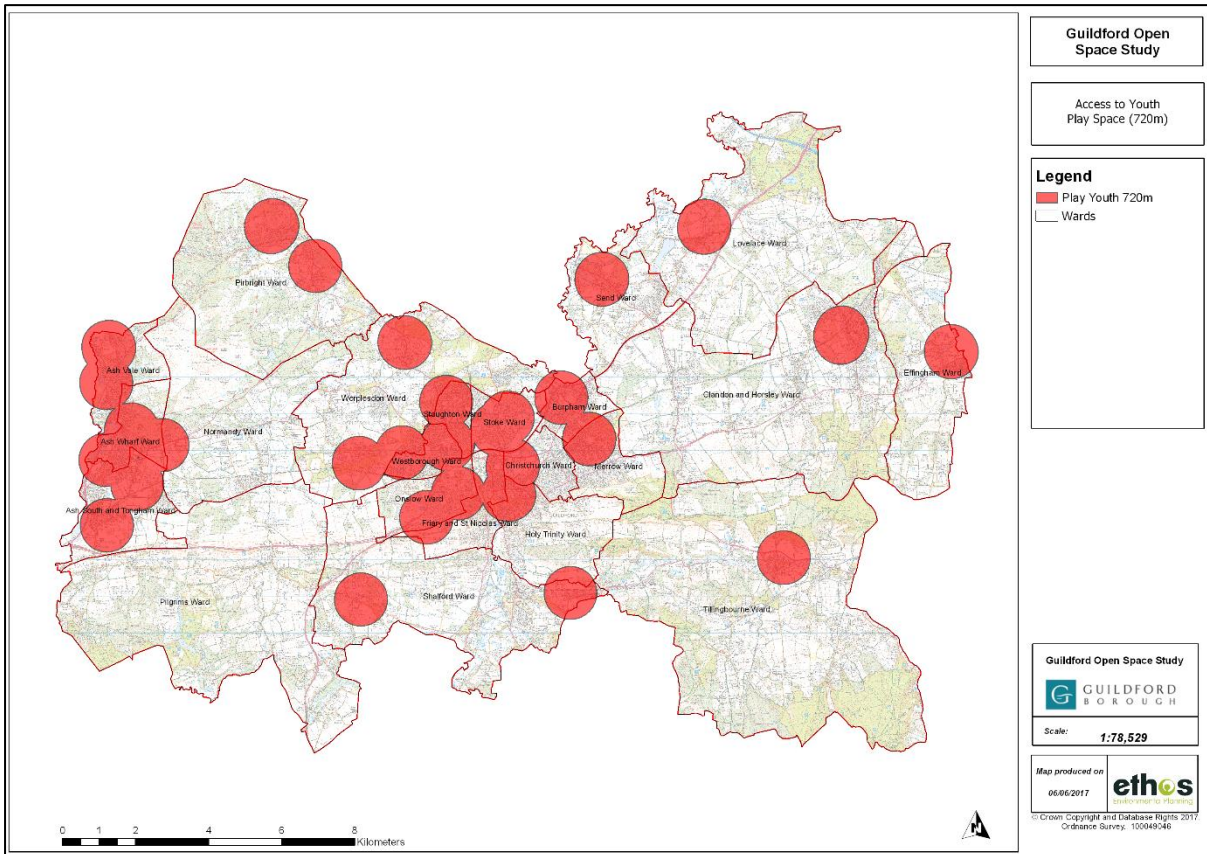


Figure 14 Access to youth play space (720 metres)



7.3.2 Application of standards (natural green space)

This section looks at the application of standards for natural green space.

Accessible Natural Green Space Standards (ANGST)

The ANGST are:

- at least one accessible 20 hectare site within two kilometre of home;
- one accessible 100 hectare site within five kilometres of home; and
- one accessible 500 hectare site within ten kilometres of home; plus
- a minimum of one hectare of statutory Local Nature Reserves per thousand population at least 2 hectares in size, no more than 300 metres (5 minutes' walk) from home;

Figure 15 Access to 20 ha site within 2km

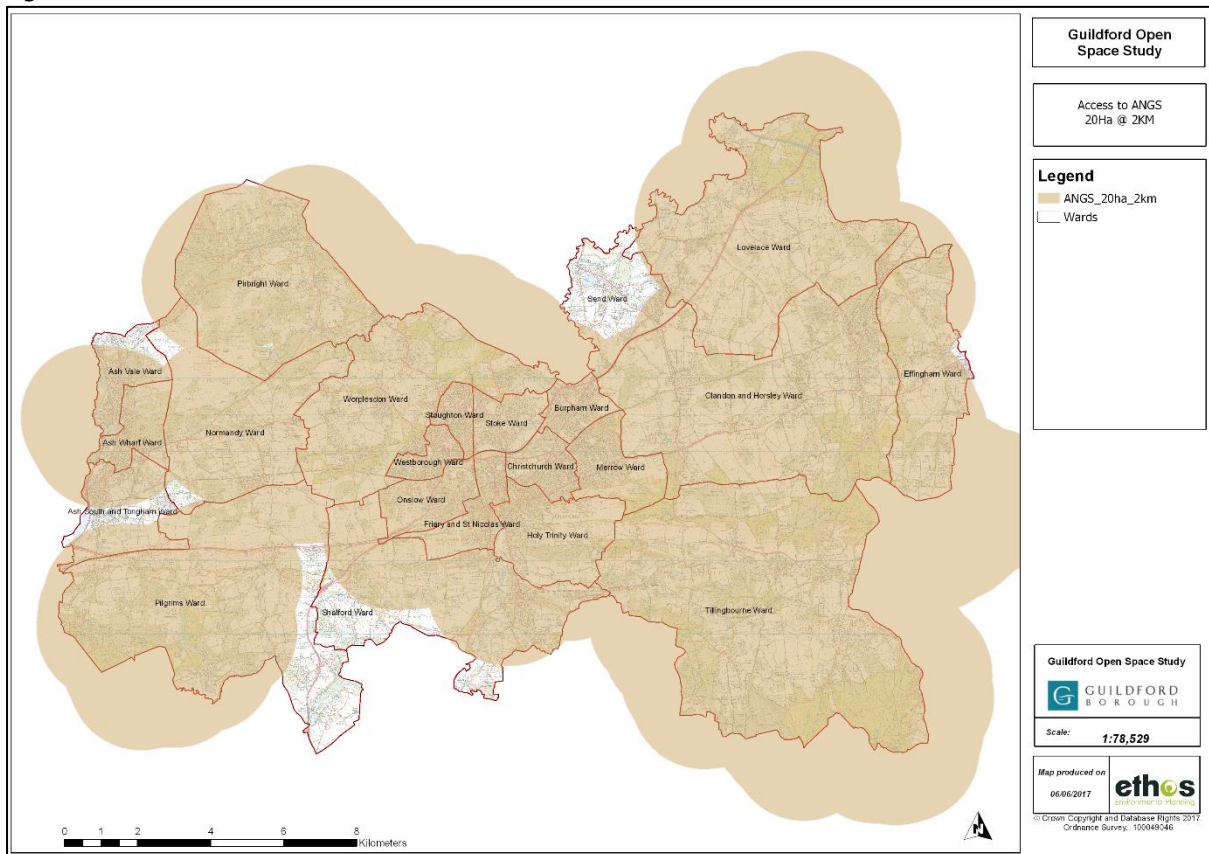


Figure 16 Access to 100 ha site within 5 km

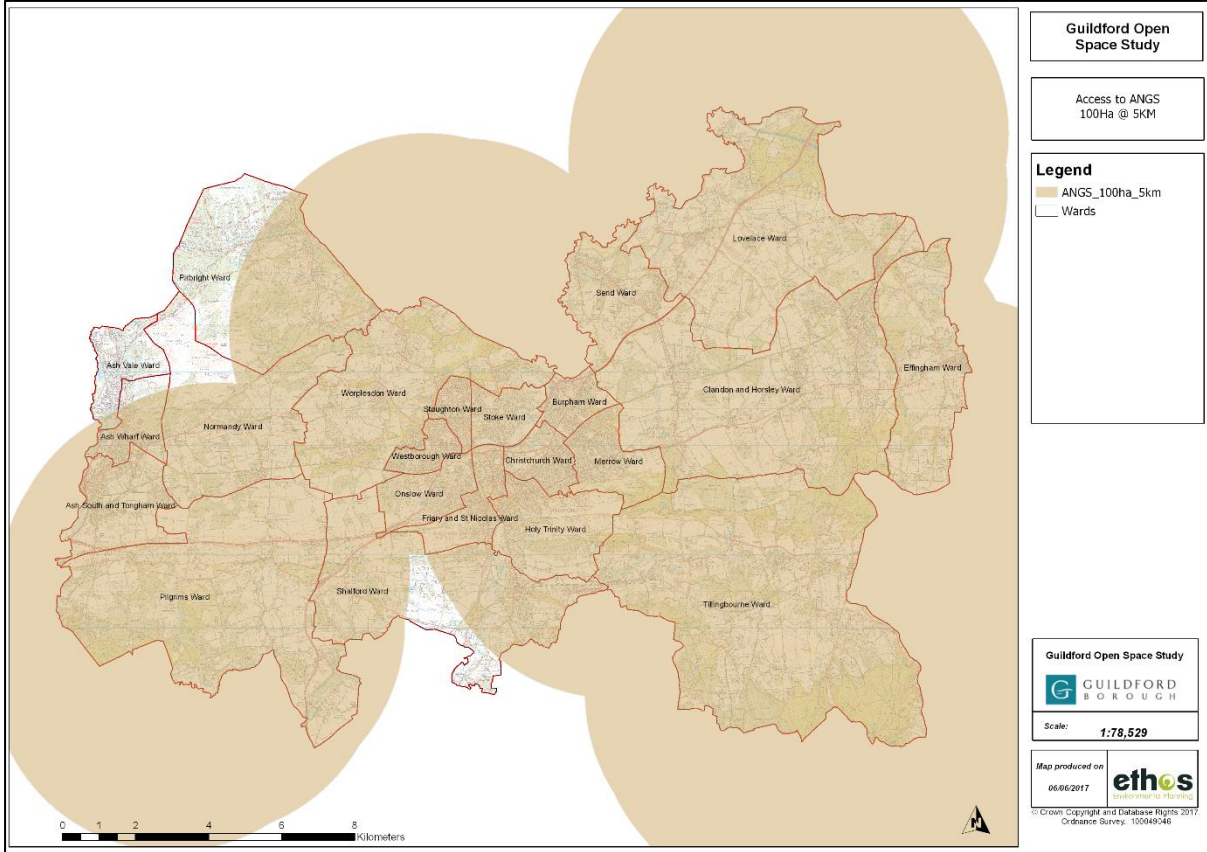


Figure 17 Access to 500 ha site within 10 km

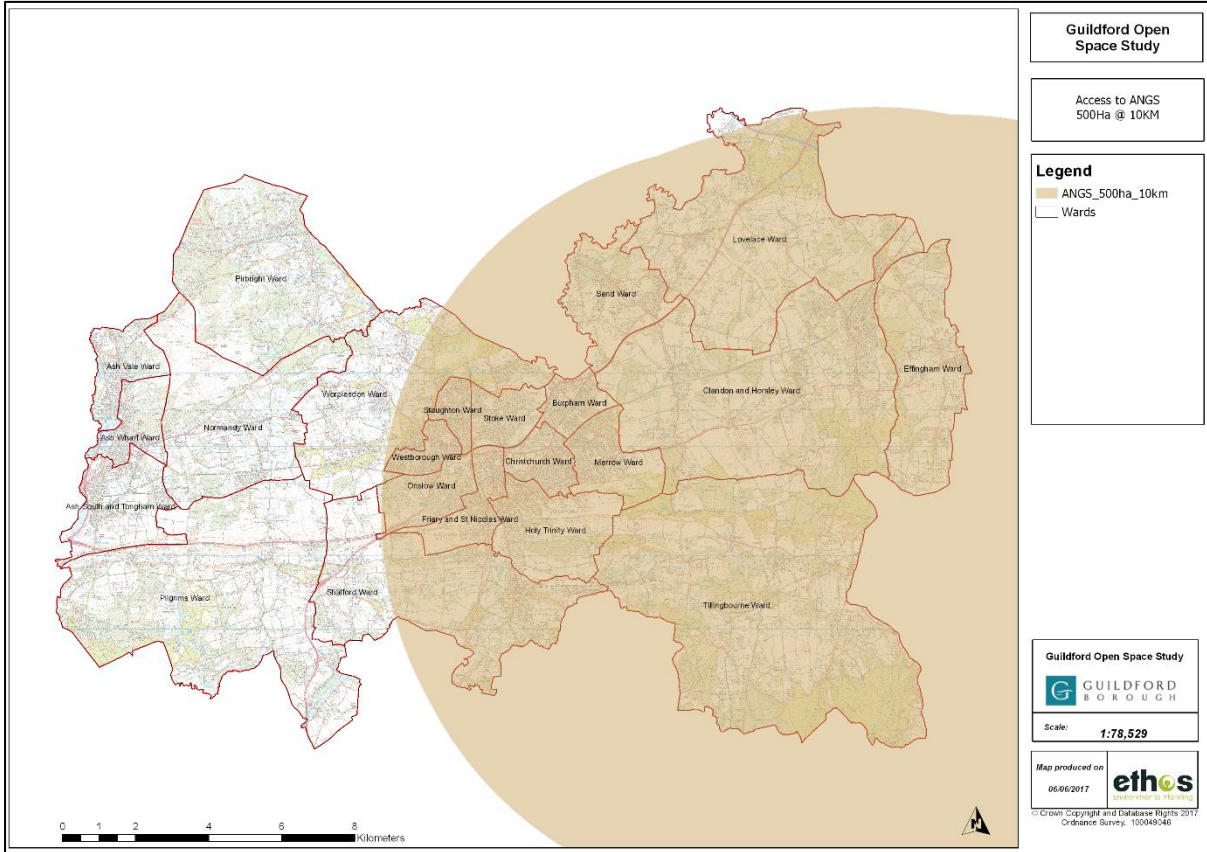


Table 18 Summary of access issues for natural green space

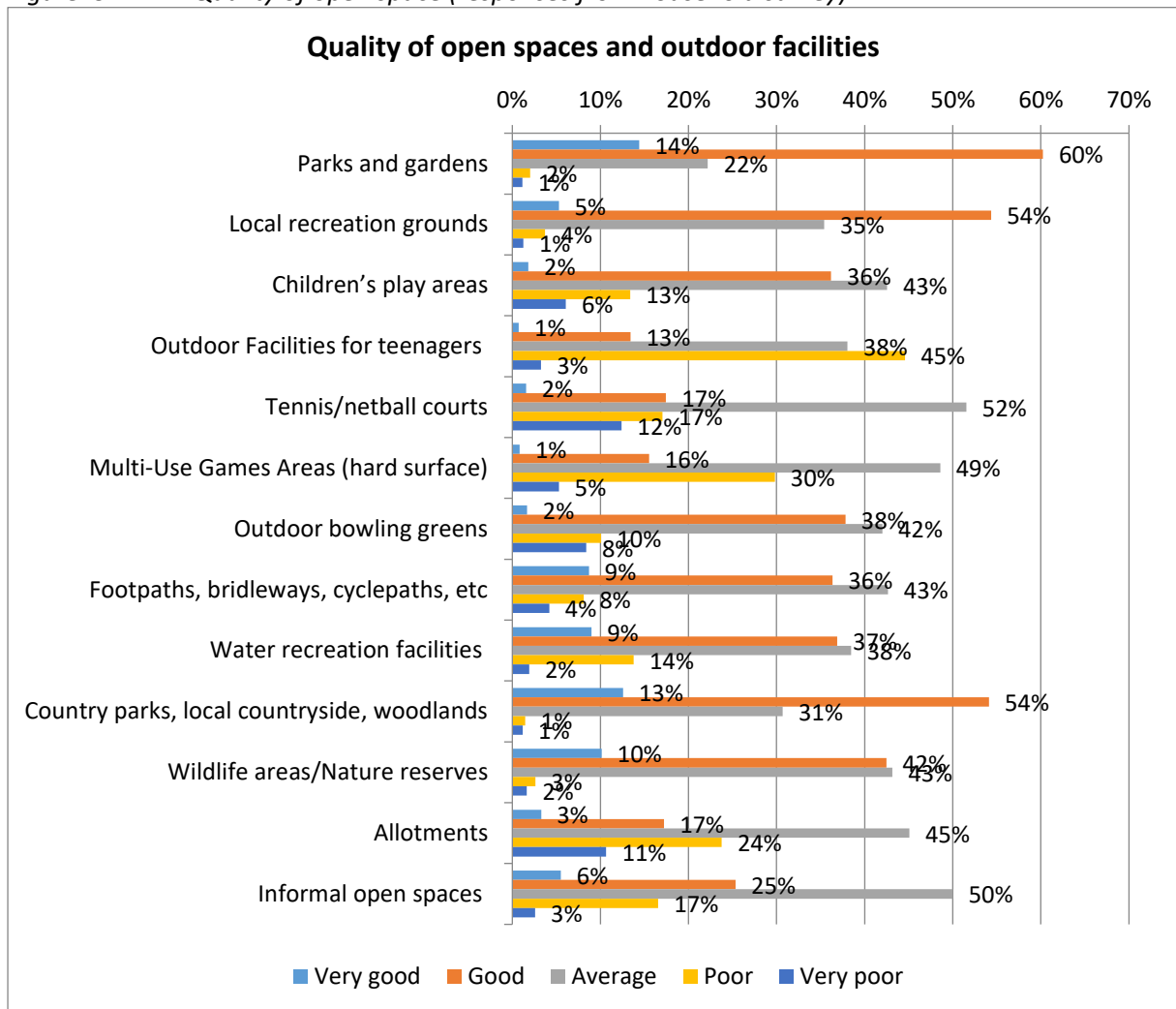
Standard	Key access Issues
ANGST:	
at least one accessible 20 hectare site within two kilometres of home	Generally very good access (meeting the standard) across the Borough, with the largest gaps in access in Send and Pilgrim's Wards. Access is overlapping in a number of wards.
one accessible 100 hectare site within five kilometres of home	The central and eastern parts of the Borough meet the standard, but the western wards/parts of western wards have no access.
one accessible 500 hectare site within ten kilometres of home	Again, good access for the central and eastern wards, but the western wards have no access.

7.5 Application of quality standards

7.5.1 Quality of open space – consultation key findings

Respondents were asked how they rated various types of facilities in the study area in terms of quality. The responses of those expressing an opinion on specific categories of facility are illustrated below:

Figure 19 Quality of open space (responses from household survey)



For all kinds of outdoor facilities/open spaces a majority of households suggested that in general they were of average or better quality. However, for some typologies there were notable levels of dissatisfaction with general levels of quality.

- 48% of households highlighted the overall quality of outdoor facilities for teenagers as being either poor or very poor.
- 35% rated the quality of Multi-Use Games Areas as poor or very poor.
- 35% similarly rated the quality of allotment provision as poor or very poor.

By contrast, some kinds of facilities/open spaces were rated relatively highly by significant numbers in terms of quality.

- Parks and gardens (74% rate quality in general as being good or very good);
- Country parks/countryside/woodlands (67% similarly);
- Local Recreation Grounds (59% similarly).

7.5.2 Quality of open space - audit methodology

Sites were visited and a photographic record made of key features, along with an assessment of the quality of the site. Quality was assessed using the following criteria which is based on the Green Flag Assessment¹³:

- Access;
- Welcoming;
- Management and Maintenance;
- Healthy, safe and secure;
- Community Involvement.

The details of the quality audit are held within the quality database. Within these area profiles, a summary of the sites included within the quality audit has been provided (appendix 1). Each site is listed and the following provided:

- Site name;
- A brief description of the site;
- Typology;
- Parish/Ward;
- Existing score/rank;
- Potential score rank

Existing score/rank

A rank from A – D has been given for the average existing total score as follows:

- The existing quality score of the site is totalled;
- This is divided by the number of criteria for which a score was given to give an average total score;
- The scores are ranked from A – D, where sites with rank 'A' are within the top 25% of quality, and sites with rank 'D' are in the bottom 25% of quality – i.e. sites with rank 'A' have the best existing quality, and sites with rank 'D' have the poorest quality

Potential score/rank

A rank from A – D has been given for the average gap/potential score as follows:

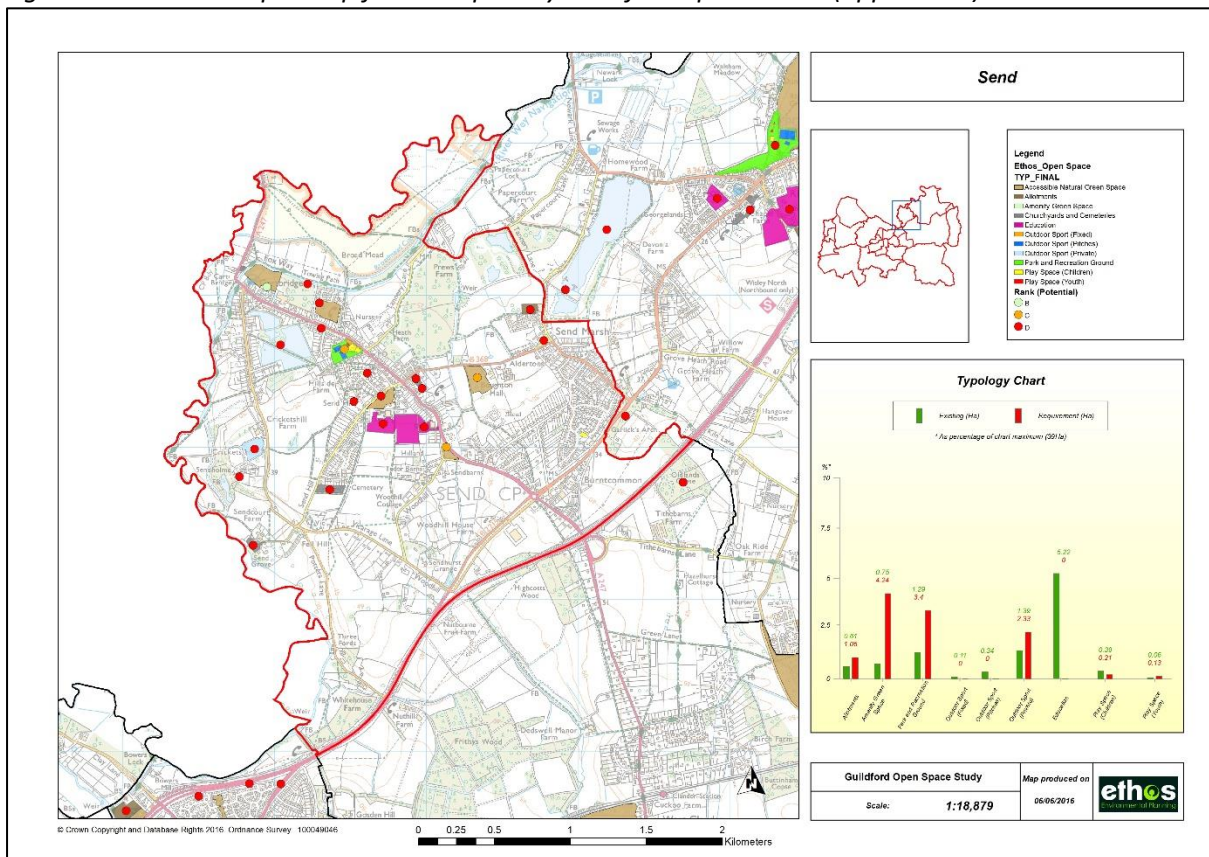
¹³ <http://www.greenflagaward.org.uk/awards/green-flag-award/>

- The potential quality score of the site is totalled;
- This is divided by the number of criteria for which a score was given to give an average potential score;
- The scores are ranked from A – D, where sites with rank ‘A’ are within the top 25% of potential improvement and sites with rank ‘D’ are in the bottom 25% of potential improvement – i.e. sites with rank ‘A’ have the most potential to be improved, and sites with rank ‘D’ have the poorest potential to improve.

7.5.3 Quality of open space -- audit findings

The quality audit was undertaken at 400 sites across the study area. The details on the sites audited are provided in a quality audit database which has been provided as an electronic document as part of this study. For each of the wards within the Borough, a map showing the existing quality rank of open space and priority sites for improvement has been produced (see appendix 4). Each map is based on the quality audit database, and shows those sites which had ‘potential for improvement’. An example map is shown at figure 17.

Figure 20 Example map from the priority sites for improvement (appendix 4)



Summary of quality audit sites across the Borough

The maps below provide an overview of the quality audit across the borough. These maps are intended for indicative purposes only. The ward maps and quality audit database (appendix 4) provides more detailed information.

Figure 21 Existing scores for open space

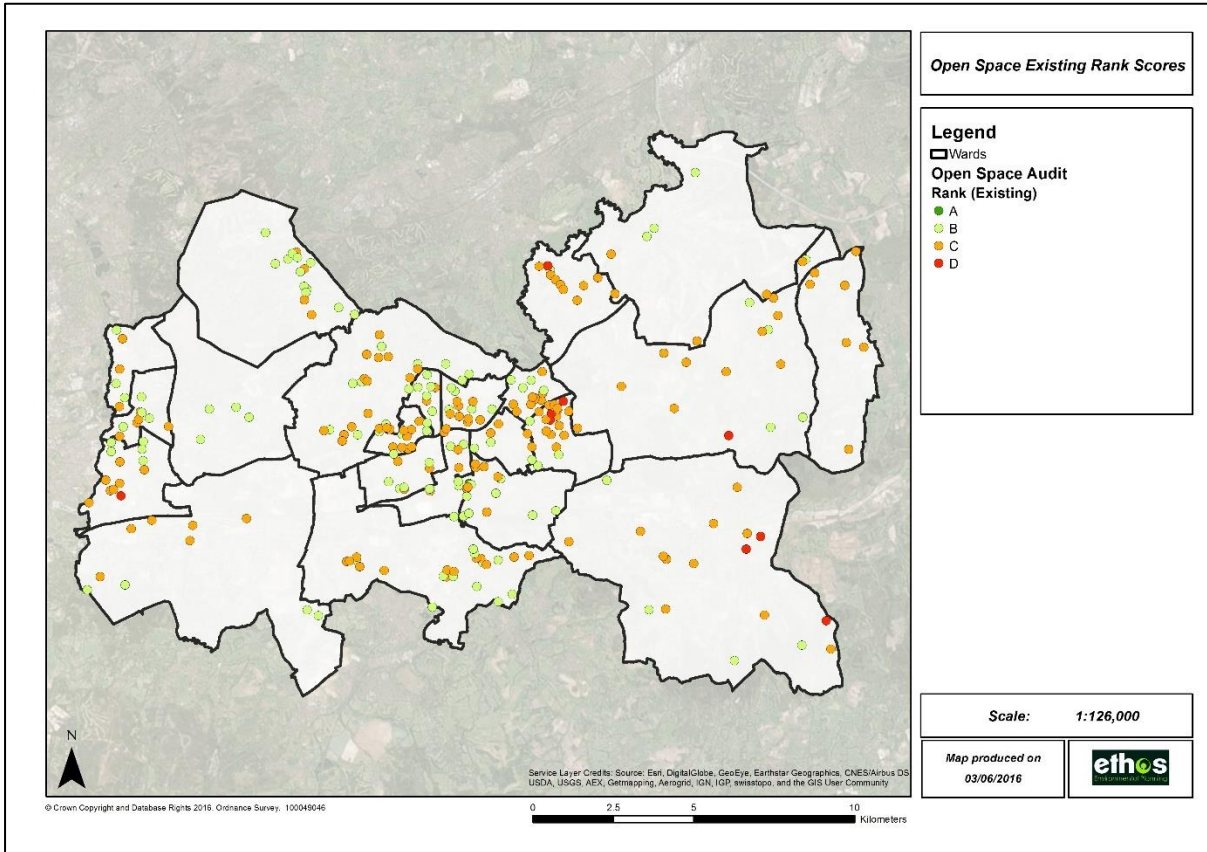


Figure 22 Existing scores for child and youth play space

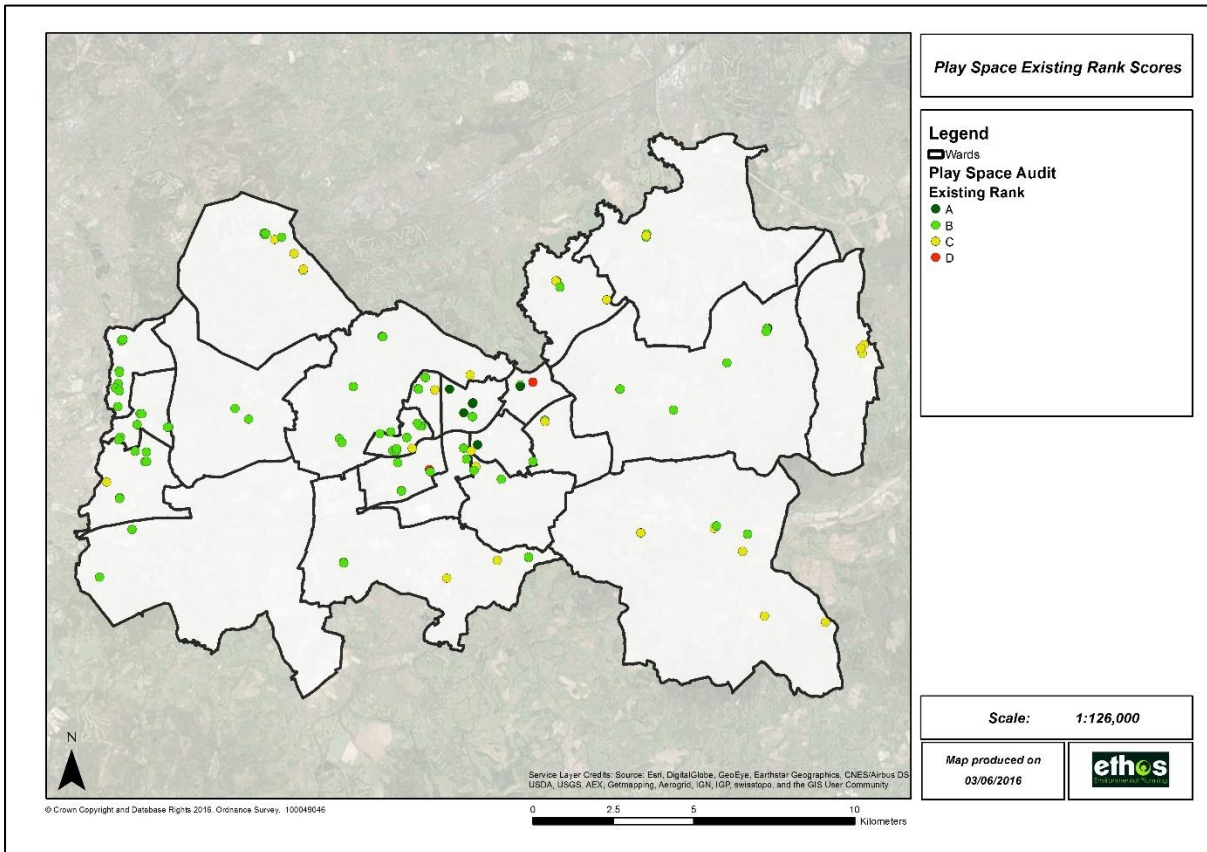


Figure 23 Open space with potential for Improvement

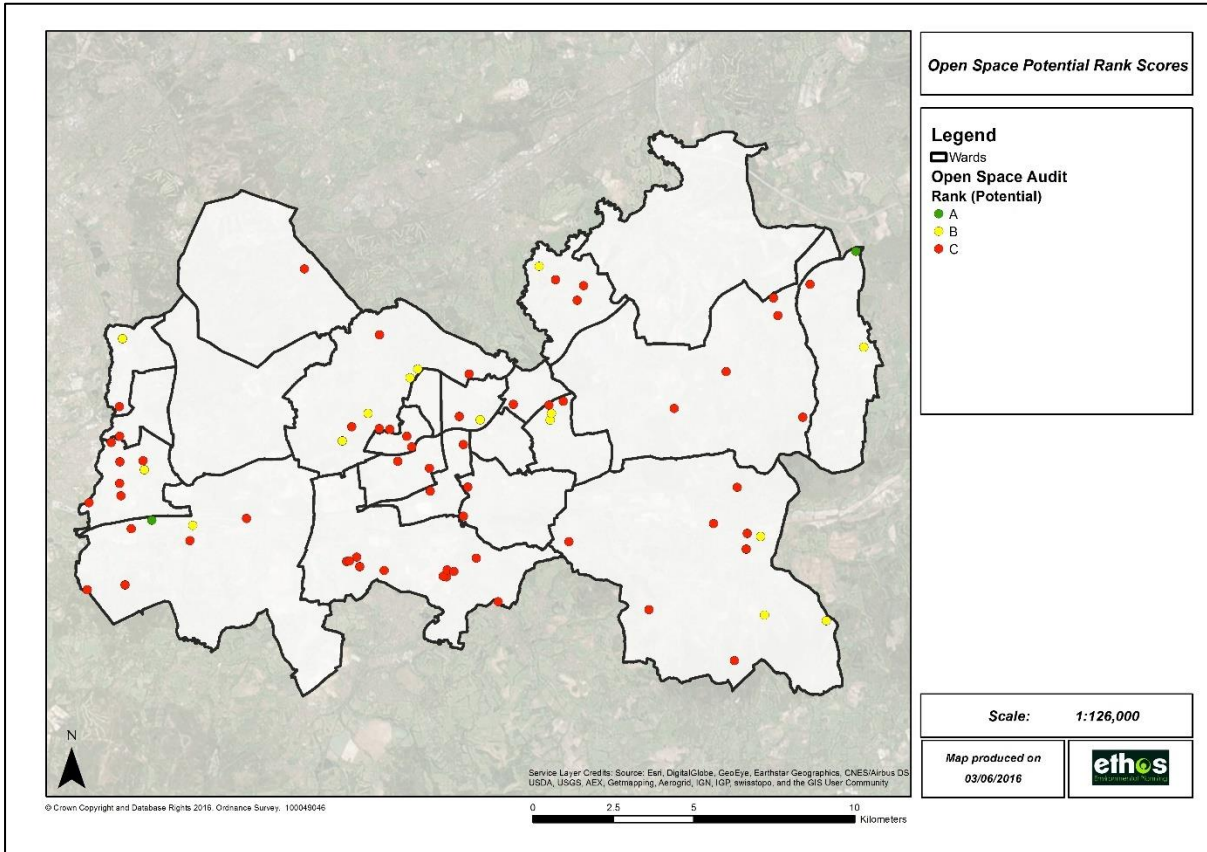
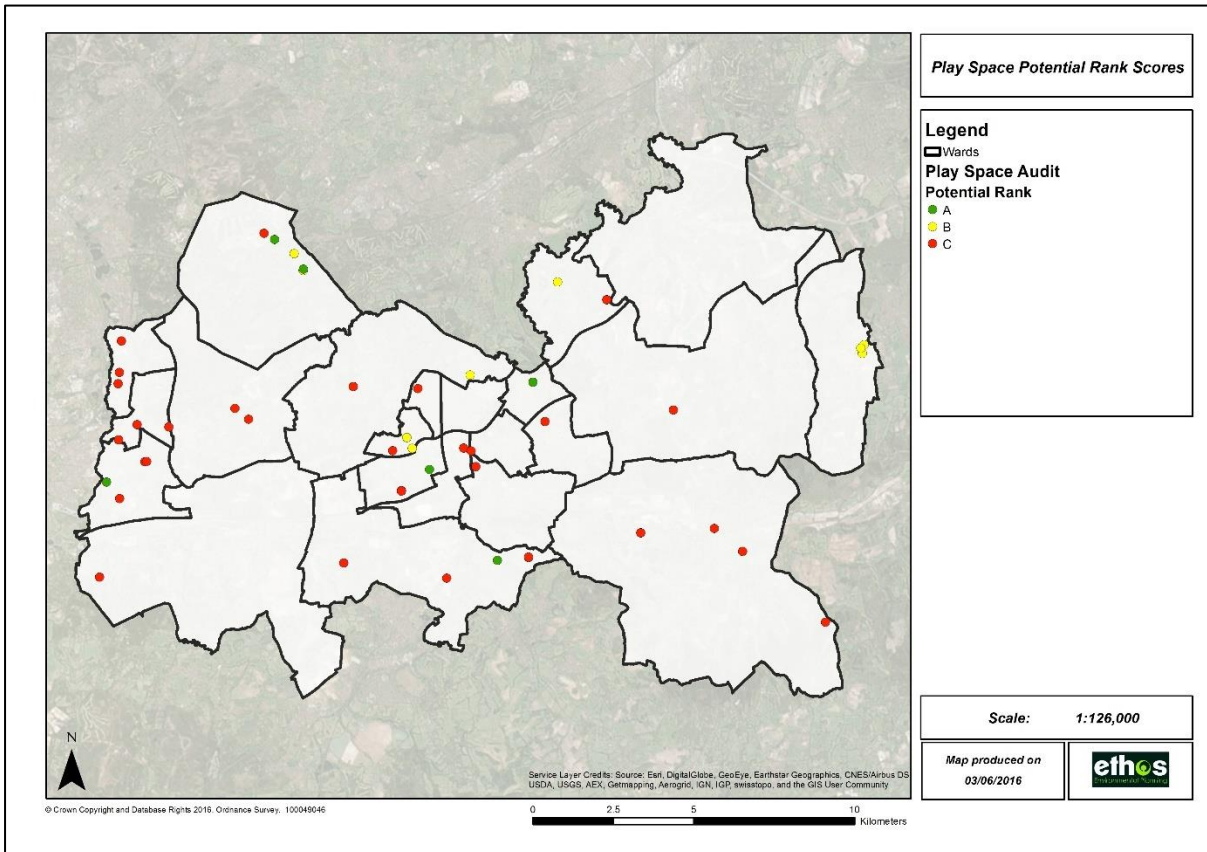


Figure 24 Child and Youth play space with potential for improvement



8.0 STRATEGIC OPTIONS, POLICY & MANAGEMENT RECOMMENDATIONS

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

8.1 Strategic Options

8.1.1 Introduction

The strategic options address four key areas:

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

8.1.2 Delivering Strategic Options

Since the adoption of the National Planning Policy Framework in 2012, the planning environment is still in a state of change and flux.

The abolition of regional spatial strategies, and the move towards localism, puts more focus on local authorities to work with local communities to make decisions and deliver services, rather than relying on national or regional guidance. This will clearly impact how some of the recommendations in this study will be delivered.

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

One of the emerging priorities from localism is for there to be much more local decision making with regards to planning, and for local communities to develop neighbourhood plans. Although it is up to local communities to define their own priorities within neighbourhood plans, the information provided within this study will form a good basis to inform any decisions related to the provision of open space.

The following sections, which consider the key issues for open space in the study area, and the recommendations that emerge need to be taken in context with the Localism Act and consider how they can fit into local decision making. With this agenda still relatively new, the following sections serve to highlight issues, but do not necessarily resolve how they may be delivered.

8.2 Existing provision to be protected

The starting point of any policy adopted by the Council should be that all open space should be afforded protection unless it can be proved it is not required.

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

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

The quantity analysis, summarised in table 17 (section 7.2.1) shows that in every ward, there is a deficiency in at least one typology of open space. Therefore, the following recommendations are made:

Open Space Policy Recommendations (protecting open space):

- | | |
|------------|---|
| OS1 | The distribution of open space varies across the study area, however, there are identified shortages of at least 1 typology of open space in all Wards. It is therefore recommended that priority is placed on protecting those open spaces where there is an existing shortfall of supply. |
| OS2 | Sites which are critical to avoiding deficiencies, or making existing deficiencies worse, in quality, quantity or access should be protected unless suitable alternative provision can be provided which would compensate for any deficiencies caused. |
| OS3 | Sites which have significant nature conservation, historical or cultural value should be afforded protection, even if there is an identified surplus in quality, quantity or access in that local area. |
| OS4 | The importance of privately managed spaces (e.g. sports grounds) as a community facility has been highlighted in this study. Therefore, it is recommended the above policies apply to both public and private open space protection. |

8.3 Existing provision to be enhanced

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

This includes those spaces or facilities which:

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

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

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

Section 7.5.3 provides a summary of the sites which have been identified as having 'potential for improvement' as identified within the quality audit. The following recommendations are made in relation the quality of open space:

Open Space Policy Recommendations (enhancing open space):

- | | |
|------------|--|
| OS5 | Where new housing development is allocated, consideration should be given to improving existing open spaces within the ward where the development is located. Priority should be given to those sites identified as having 'potential to improve' as detailed in the quality audit, and highlighted in section 7.5.2. |
| OS6 | Future LDPD's and Neighbourhood Plans should consider the opportunities for creating and enhancing a network of both utility and recreation routes for use by foot and bike in both urban and rural areas. Creative application of the amenity green space/natural green space components of the proposed overall standard in respect of new development should be explored. |
| OS7 | The study makes recommendations for improving the quality of open space across the study area. However, a long term strategy for achieving improvements is |

required which could be delivered through a Green Space Strategy or neighbourhood plans.

OS8 Priorities for improvement include the enhancement of the rights of way network; wildlife areas/nature reserves; country parks, local countryside and woodlands; children's play areas and youth provision.

OS9 Management plans should be developed for the main parks and recreation grounds. These priorities could be considered in neighbourhood plans and by the local community.

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

In some areas it may be possible to make better use of land by relocating an open space or sport and recreation facility, especially if this will enhance its quality or accessibility for existing users, or use land which is not suitable for another purpose. This needs to be determined at a local level, considering the quality, quantity and access to facilities at neighbourhood level and in some cases across the study area.

Although it is up to local communities to define their own priorities within neighbourhood plans, the information provided within this study will form a good basis to inform any decisions related to the provision or replacement of open space, sport and recreation facilities. Some settlements may seek a consolidation of facilities on a single site, such as a new sports hub.

These decisions could include the spatial and investment plans for green space, and set the foundations for green space provision (e.g. for the next 20 years). They should outline where different types of facilities and space - such as children's playgrounds, sports pitches, young people's facilities etc. are to be located. It will also identify if any green space is no longer needed and its disposal or re use can be used to fund improvements to other spaces.

Each plan should apply the standards and policies set out in this study and ensure that the significant investment anticipated for green spaces is prioritised with the help of stakeholders and communities. The standards agreed in this study can determine a minimum level of quality and quantity of green space provision and the maximum distance people should have to travel to access different types of green space.

This study provides information on the existing supply of different types of open space, an analysis of access and identifies local issues related to quality. It will act as a good starting point for feeding into neighbourhood plans in consultation with the local community.

In determining opportunities for re-location or re-designation of open space, the quantity and access provision have been considered at a ward level, and some general observations made for each ward:

Table 19 Opportunities for ‘re-designating open space’

Ward Name	Current provision	Opportunities
Ash South and Tongham	Shortfall of all typologies with the exception of amenity green space.	Amenity green space could potentially accommodate play space and youth provision (or extend existing facilities) and allotments. Natural green space could also potentially accommodate natural play facilities and/or community food growing e.g. orchards.
Ash Vale	Shortfall across the majority of typologies with the exception of amenity green space and children’s play space.	Little opportunity, although Carrington Lane amenity green space could potentially accommodate allotments and there is space to expand the existing youth provision.
Ash Wharf	Shortfall of amenity green space and park and recreation grounds.	Limited opportunity.
Burpham	Shortfall of amenity green space, children’s play space and youth provision.	Little opportunity, although space to extend existing play and youth provision in Sutherland Memorial Park.
Christchurch	Shortfall of allotments, children’s play space and youth provision	Potential for Stoke Park or amenity green spaces within the ward to accommodate allotments. Youth provision and children’s play at Stoke Park could be extended, also potential for amenity spaces to accommodate children’s and/or youth provision.
Clandon and Horsley	Shortfalls across all typologies with the exception of park and recreation grounds (public and private combined – due to the quantity of private outdoor facilities).	Limited opportunity, although natural green space could potentially accommodate natural play facilities and/or community food growing e.g. orchards.
Effingham	Shortfall of amenity green space and children’s play space.	Little opportunity, although natural green space could potentially accommodate natural play facilities.
Friary and St Nicolas	Shortfall across all typologies.	Limited opportunity, although natural green space e.g. The Mount could potentially accommodate natural play facilities and/or community food growing e.g. orchards.
Holy Trinity	Shortfall of amenity green space children’s play space and youth facilities.	Potential for Shalford Park to accommodate children’s and/or youth provision. Natural green space could potentially

Ward Name	Current provision	Opportunities
		accommodate natural play facilities.
Lovelace	Shortfall of amenity green space, children's play space and youth provision.	Play provision in Dunsborough Park/Ripley Green could be extended. Natural green space could potentially accommodate natural play facilities.
Merrow	Shortfall of amenity green space, park and recreation grounds (public combined), children's play space and youth provision.	Little opportunity. Natural green space could potentially accommodate natural play facilities.
Normandy	Shortfall of amenity green space, park and recreation grounds (public combined) and youth provision.	Little opportunity. Potential for Normandy Common to accommodate youth provision (based on existing facilities).
Onslow	Shortfall of allotments, park and recreation grounds (public combined), children's play space and youth provision.	Little opportunity. Potential for amenity green space to accommodate allotments. Existing children's play and youth facilities could be extended.
Pilgrims	Shortfall of allotments, park and recreation grounds and youth provision.	Little opportunity. Amenity green space may have potential to accommodate allotments.
Pirbright	Shortfall of allotments, park and recreation grounds and youth provision.	Little opportunity. Amenity green space may have potential to accommodate allotments.
Send	Shortfall across the majority of typologies with the exception of amenity green space and children's play space.	Little opportunity.
Shalford	Shortfalls in children's play space and youth provision.	Potential for amenity green space to accommodate children's and/or youth provision. Natural green space could potentially accommodate natural play facilities. Existing play and youth provision could also be extended.
Stoke	Shortfalls of park and recreation grounds, children's play space and youth provision.	Oak Tree Drive amenity green space could potentially be upgraded to a park and rec to include children's play space and youth provision.
Stoughton	Shortfall across all typologies.	Little opportunity.
Tillingbourne	Shortfalls across all typologies, with the exception of amenity green space.	Amenity green space e.g. Towerhill Rise could potentially accommodate allotments, children's play space and/or youth provision.
Westborough	Shortfall across all typologies with the exception of allotments.	Little opportunity.
Worplesdon	Shortfalls across all typologies, with the exception of amenity green space.	Potential for amenity green space to be upgraded to park and rec

Ward Name	Current provision	Opportunities
		accommodating children’s play space and youth provision.

Open Space Policy Recommendations (relocating open space):

OS10 Develop a pilot project within one of the settlements to develop a neighbourhood plan which incorporates green space planning.

8.5 Identification of areas for new provision

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

Quantity

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

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

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

Access

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

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

Delivering new provision

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

New development, CIL and developer contributions

This open space study clearly identifies that there are needs for new and /or enhanced open space provision, particularly where new development is planned.

Outside of S106/CIL, new development will also be required to provide on-site open space in line with the standards outlined in this study. Whilst not all developments will be of a size that will generate the requirement for on-site open space (see table 21), when considering future housing numbers for Guildford, there will be many that will. This study should be used to make local decisions about where and when new on-site provision will be required.

Capital and grant funding

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

Requirements for open space from new housing

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

The Local Plan identifies the number of homes to plan for over the next 20 years. The Proposed Submission Local Plan: strategy and sites (2016) aims to provide 13,860 new homes across the borough between 2013 and 2033. The new Local Plan is still subject to consultation and independent examination, and is therefore not yet finalised. Once finalised, the amount of open space required for the increased population can be calculated using the quantity standards summarised in table 15.

Open Space Policy Recommendations (new provision of open space):**OS10**

New provision of open space will be required as part of new development in towns where housing is allocated in the local plan where there are existing deficiencies in quantity or access to open space and/or where the new development will result in deficiencies.

Where on-site provision is required, it should be provided in line with the proposed open space standards.

Where on-site provision is deemed impractical, or not required e.g. for small sites, consideration will be given to opportunities for off-site provision and/or improvements, including through pooling of S106 contributions and through CIL.

Improvements to existing open space will be considered first in the ward within which the development is located, then in open spaces in neighbouring wards. Priority sites requiring improvements will be identified using the ranking scores from the quality audit and also from site management plans and the councils own knowledge of their sites.

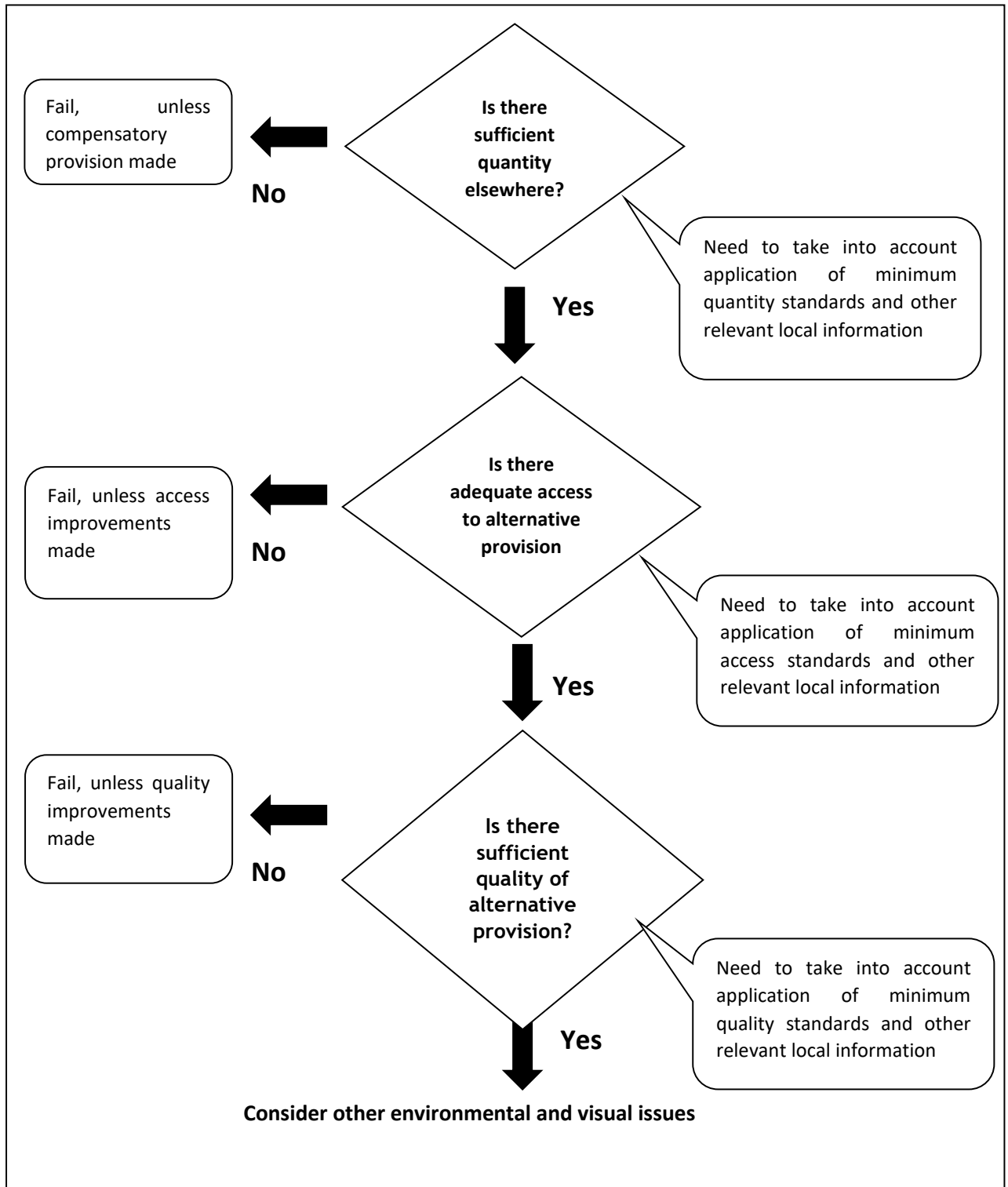
8.6 Facilities that are surplus to requirement

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

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

Figure 25 suggests an outline of the decision process that should be followed before the development of an open space can be seriously contemplated.

Figure 25: Outline decision making process in relation to sanctioning (re)development of open space



Q. Is there sufficient quantity?

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

Q. Is there adequate access to alternative provision?

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

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

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

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

8.7 Developer Contributions

This section draws on the policy recommendations in the previous section and outlines a process for calculating developer contributions for on-site provision and recommendations for management and maintenance procedures and costs.

8.7.1 Developer contributions and Community Infrastructure Levy

This section sets out higher level strategic recommendations and recommends an approach to developer contributions which can be used to inform policy for on-site contributions and to inform the feasibility for any off site investment proposed (through CIL or other external funding mechanisms).

1) Capital cost of providing open space

In order to calculate developer contributions for facilities, a methodology has been adopted which calculates how much it would cost the Local Authority to provide them. These costs have been calculated using local information, and have also been benchmarked against other Local Authorities costs for providing facilities. A summary of the costs are outlined in table 20 below.

Contributions towards the provision or improvement of open space are calculated using the capital cost of provision. The same charges apply to both provision of new facilities and the upgrading/improvement of existing facilities, which more often than not includes new provision. Contribution per person is therefore taken to be a reasonable measure of that impact, irrespective of whether new provision or improvement of existing facilities is required.

Table 20 Costs for providing open space

Typology	Standard msq per person	Cost of provision (msq)	Contribution per person
Allotments	2.5	£30.00	£75.00
Amenity and Natural Green Space	10	£15.00	£150.00
Parks and Recreation grounds (Public)	8	£72.00	£576.00
Play Space (Children)	0.5	£170.00	£85.00
Play Space (Youth)	0.3	£170.00	£51.00
			£937.00

This shows that it costs £937 per person to provide new open space to meet the Guildford standard for open space. These calculations are to be used to calculate developer contributions for on-site provision and where feasible any off site projects.

2) Maintenance Contributions for on-site provision

If a development is required to provide open space on-site, the developer would be expected to maintain the open space for a minimum period of 1 year. Developers will then be asked to maintain the new provision through a management company. It is expected that a management plan for the open space would be submitted and approved by the council as a planning condition.

In the unlikely event that the open space would be adopted by the council, they **may be** willing to accept a commuted sum and make arrangements for management of the open space through the council or a third party. The amount payable for the commuted sum will be calculated using the figures in table 21.

Table 21 Maintenance sums payable for open space

Typology	Cost/m ² per annum
Play Space (Children’s and Youth Provision)	£4.59
Parks and Recreation Grounds	£4.59
Amenity and Natural Green Space	£0.62
Allotments	£0.13

The figures in table 21 show how much it costs to maintain open space per metre squared. The figures have been calculated from average unit rates for maintenance of different types of open space, drawn from standard rates (Spons).

3) Eligible types of development for on-site provision

Table 22 outlines the type of housing that will be considered eligible for making contributions towards open space to meet the needs of future occupants.

Table 22 Eligible types of residential development

Category	Open Market Housing / Flats	Affordable Housing *	Housing for the active elderly	Permanent mobile homes
Play Space	✓	?	×	✓
Outdoor Sports Space	✓	?	✓	✓
Parks and Gardens	✓	?	✓	✓
Amenity Open Space	✓	?	✓	✓
Natural Green Space	✓	?	✓	✓
Allotments	✓	?	✓	✓

[* Should recognise that affordable housing generates a need for new green infrastructure, but it is a policy decision as to whether GI contributions should be provided]. Includes agricultural workers’ dwellings. Excludes extensions (for administrative reasons) Excludes replacement dwellings and nursing houses types.

4) **Thresholds for provision**

The required open space, sport and recreation facilities can be provided by on-site provision, or through CIL (if included in adopted policy). Where facilities are to be provided on-site, the Council will expect the developer to provide the land for the facility and either:

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

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

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

Table 23 provides a guide to assess which scales of housing generate a need for facilities in the categories listed to be provided on-site. For developments 20 – 49 dwellings the minimum size of amenity green space or parks and recreation grounds is 0.15Ha.

Table 23 Requirement for open space, sport and recreation facilities on site

Type of Provision	1-19 dwellings	20-49 dwellings	50-99 dwellings	100+ dwellings	250+ dwellings
Allotments	X	X	X	X	✓
Amenity/Natural Green Space	X	✓	✓	✓	✓
Parks and Recreation Grounds	X	X	X	X	✓
Play Space (children)	X	X	✓	✓	✓
Play Space (Youth)	X	X	X	X	✓

KEY: ✓ on-site provision normally sought
 X off-site provision normally required

Where a development falls below the minimum threshold for on-site provision, a financial contribution in line with table 20 would be required.