

HEREFORDSHIRE COUNCIL

PPG17 Open Spaces
Assessment

A Report

By

Herefordshire Council and
Strategic Leisure Limited

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SECTION I - INTRODUCTION

Introduction

- 1.1 Strategic Leisure Limited (SLL) was appointed in January 2005 to undertake an assessment of open space, outdoor sport and recreation facilities (PPG 17¹ compliant) to identify local needs for provision, and opportunities for enhancement, development or replacement of current facilities.

Scope of the Study

- 1.2 The study adheres to the guidance detailed in *“Assessing Needs and Opportunities: A Companion Guide to PPG17”* which details guidance on undertaking local assessments of open space, sport and recreation provision. The study has included an audit of outdoor open space, sport and recreational facilities in terms of:

- Quantity
- Quality
- Accessibility

- 1.3 The study has also given consideration to the following factors:

- Different uses of facilities
- Classification and differing typologies of provision
- The scale and availability of resources for maintenance / management
- English Natures *“Natural Accessible Greenspace Standards”*

- 1.4 The study undertaken has included:

- A review of existing open space, leisure and recreation policies contained within the revised deposit draft 2004
- A review of existing and undertaking a range of consultation exercises to ascertain the views of the local community, key interest groups and wider stakeholders
- Consideration to all appropriate facilities within the County including provision by the local authority (including education), private and voluntary sectors
- An assessment of playing pitch provision using the methodology detailed in *“Toward a Level Playing Field: A Guide to the Production of Playing Pitch Strategies”* (Sport England, 2002)
- Recommendations for local standards of provision with regard to quantity, quality and accessibility for inclusion within the developing Local Development Framework

The Vision

- 1.5 It is important that a vision is adopted to reflect the aspirations for open space, sport and recreation in meeting the Council's corporate objectives. An extension of the vision detailed in the Community Strategy for Herefordshire *“A Sustainable Future for the County”* has been adopted:

¹ PPG17 – Planning Policy Guidance Note 17

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“Herefordshire will be a place where people, organisations and businesses working together within an outstanding natural environment will bring about sustainable prosperity and well-being for all”

Overview of Herefordshire

- 1.6 Herefordshire is located just to the south of the West Midlands, between Worcestershire to the east, and the Brecon Beacons of Wales to the west. Hereford is the administrative centre for Herefordshire Council..
- 1.7 Herefordshire Council is a unitary authority that was created following Local Government re-organisation on 1st April 1998. Herefordshire is a predominantly rural county with population concentrations in Hereford and the market towns of Leominster, Ross, Bromyard, Kington and Ledbury with much of the remaining area of the County sparsely populated.
- 1.8 This is a large rural area covering 218,283 hectares or 843 square miles. The County has the fourth lowest population density of all English authorities. The population is predicted to increase by 14,300 by the year 2011, and the current population contains a high proportion of people aged 49 years or older, the area has 5.5% of people aged 65-69 compared to 4.5% of people in the same age group in England and Wales.
- 1.9 23% of the total population are at retirement age compared to 19% for England and Wales.
- 1.10 There is a very small black and minority ethnic population in the area with 99.1% being predominantly white, compared to 88.7% for the west midlands. However, the area is a significant work area for Travellers and their families, with around 5% of the total population having settled into the area permanently. In total there are about 6,000 migrant and seasonal workers from the new EU accession states (Poland, Lithuania, Latvia and others) and the Eastern Bloc countries.
- 1.11 It is also important to consider the demographic make up of the County as key demographic and socio-economic characteristics are known to influence demand characteristics. For example certain age-groups are known register higher participation rates in a number of sport and leisure activities; deprived communities often experience issues relating to access to services and opportunities; cultural backgrounds may result in some passive and active recreation pursuits being favoured over others; car ownership levels can impact on the range of facilities that can be accessed. A brief review of the key demographics for the area show that:
- **Overall population;** The County has a population of 174,869 of which 49% are male and 51% female
- 1.12 The Office of National Statistics (ONS) profile of the County population (2001 Census) shows that the distribution across key age groups is not in line with the average in England & Wales.

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- 1.13 Just over a fifth (23%) of the resident population was retirement age in mid-2004. This is markedly higher than the percentage for England and Wales (19%).
- 1.14 The age structure is essentially a middle aged one. It is important to consider key differences in profile as some age groups have a higher propensity to participate in sport and active recreation than others (particularly young people). Key differences within the County are:
- A lower percentage of people aged 20-44 years old than the average in England & Wales.
 - A lower percentage of children 0-15years
 - A lower percentage of young people aged 16-19 when compared to the national average for England and Wales
 - A higher percentage of middle aged(45 years) to retirement and retirement age and over are all above the average for England and Wales
 - Herefordshire's ethnic mix differs slightly from that of England and Wales as a whole due to the increased percentage of white individuals (99% compare to 91. %). The area is home to very few black or black British people (0.1%) when compared with the England and Wales figure of 2.19%.
- 1.15 **Deprivation Indices.** Levels of deprivation are measured on a localised basis through data from "super output areas". These provide a clearer picture to ward data (on which previous indices of deprivation were based) of deprivation at a local level.
- 1.16 In the Indices of Deprivation 2004, Herefordshire, County of was ranked at 202 out of 354 local authorities in England, where 1 was the most deprived area and 354 the least deprived. This rank was derived from the average deprivation score of the LSOAs in the local authority. The wards of Belmont, St Martins, Hereford Central and Leominster East and South rank in the lowest 25% of all wards in the UK. The highest ranking wards are Bircher and Clehonger which rank in the top 75% of the UK.
- 1.17 **Employment Rates** Of the people in Herefordshire County who were of working age (i.e. those aged 16 to 64 for men or 16 to 59 for women) the employment rate was 79 % during the Summer of 2004 (June to August), compared with an average for Great Britain of 75 %. Over the same three months in 1999, the number of people in employment in Herefordshire, County of as a proportion of those of working age was 77 % and the rate for Great Britain was 75%.

Strategic Review & Policy Background

National Policy

- 1.18 The need for improved use and management of open spaces particularly public parks in urban areas has seen increased commitment demonstrated in national regional and local government policy.

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- 1.19 The following key documents summarised in Figure 1.1 below have provided the impetus for the development and preparation of this strategy. They include:

Figure 1.1 National and Local Planning Guidance Strategic Framework

PLANNING GUIDANCE	Objective
Planning Policy Guidance Note 17.	Outlines the importance for local authorities to undertake robust assessments of the local need for quality open spaces. In order to develop local standards which are based on local supply and demand for facilities.
<i>“Living Places – Cleaner, Safer, Greener”</i> (Office of the Deputy Prime Minister 2002)	Gives a commitment to develop a clearer national framework for urban parks and greenspaces.
Urban Greenspaces Task Force <i>“Greenspaces, Better Places”</i>	Recognises that parks and open spaces have the potential to make a significant contribution to urban regeneration by making places more liveable and sustainable whilst also enriching the quality of people's lives and local communities.
The Framework for Sport in England	These documents provide the national sporting context for this study. The importance of a range of facility provision is identified, encompassing formal sporting facilities, and an environment that facilitates informal active recreation.
Herefordshire Unitary Development Plan Revised Draft Deposit May 2004	The Local plan forms the basis for decisions on planning applications and provides the policies and proposal framework the Council believe will strike the right balance between the need to cater for development requirements across the County and the need to protect and enhance the environmental qualities of the area. The Local Plan is due to be replaced by new planning guidance and is discussed in more detail below.
The Community Strategy for Herefordshire “A sustainable for future for the county”	The Herefordshire Community Strategy sets out the aspirations for the County by 2020 and how we may achieve them. It has the following one vision: Herefordshire will be a place where people, organisations and businesses working together within an outstanding natural environment will bring about sustainable prosperity and well being for all. The strategy has five guiding principals:

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PLANNING GUIDANCE	Objective
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Realise the potential of Herefordshire, its people and communities • Integrate sustainability into all our actions • Ensure an equal and inclusive society • Build on achievements of partnership working and ensure continual improvement • Protect and improve Herefordshire's distinctive environment <p>Outcomes: priorities for the county, which will form the basis of a single Action Plan – these outcomes are divided into Four Themes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Economic Development and Enterprise • Healthier Communities and Older People • Children and Young People • Safer and Stronger Communities. <p>Under the Children and Young people theme a key local issue is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Better access to sport and recreational facilities.
<p>Herefordshire Cultural Consortium 2005/2006 Action Plan for the Cultural Ambition of the Herefordshire Partnership</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The strategy aspires to connect communities through a shared vision namely "To develop Herefordshire as an active vibrant and enjoyable place to be" <p>The purpose of the Action Plan is to profile major Cultural activities taking place in Herefordshire and to fulfil the Cultural Consortiums ambitions which are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For culture and leisure to be at the heart of the County's development • To encourage participation in culture and leisure by breaking down the barriers to involvement, meeting the wide range of needs and aspirations of Herefordshire Community • To improve the quality and variety of experience for visitors and local people throughout the County • To promote the Cultural distinctiveness and diversity of the County • To sustain and grow the County's cultural assets through attracting additional resources

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- 1.20 In the recent **Urban Parks Assessment** undertaken through the DETR the study illustrates the shortfall in budgets for public Greenspace nationally to be in excess of £1.3 billion.
- 1.21 A prescribed methodology for the assessment of playing pitch provision is detailed in *"Toward a Level Playing Field"* (Sport England, CCPR, 2002). In addition to the assessment methodology, a number of policies to oppose the loss of playing fields are detailed.

Rationale: Why Develop a Strategy?

- 1.22 The provision of good quality, accessible open spaces, sport and recreation facilities can make a positive contribution to a number of key social objectives. These include:
- 1.23 **Promoting and supporting the urban renaissance** agenda through the provision of local networks of well maintained and well managed, open spaces sports and recreational facilities help to create urban environments that are safe, attractive and clean. Green spaces in urban areas perform vital functions as areas for nature conservation and biodiversity and by acting as 'green lungs' can assist in meeting objectives to improve air quality.
- 1.24 **Supporting rural renewal** – the countryside can provide opportunities for recreation and visitors can play an important role in the regeneration of the economies of rural areas. Open spaces within rural settlements and accessibility to local sport and recreational facilities contribute to the quality of life and well being of those people that live in the remoter areas.
- 1.25 **Promoting social inclusion and community cohesion** – well planned and maintained open spaces and good quality sports and recreational facilities can play a major part in improving people's sense of well being in the place they live. As a focal point for community activity, they can bring people from deprived communities together providing opportunities for wider social interaction.
- 1.26 **Health and well being** – open space, sports and recreational facilities have a vital role to play promoting healthy living and preventing illness and in the social development of children of all ages through play, sporting activities and interaction with others.
- 1.27 **Promoting more sustainable development** – by ensuring that open space, sports and recreational facilities (particularly in urban areas) are easily accessible by walking or cycling and that more heavily used or intensive sports and recreational facilities are planned in locations well served by public transport.
- 1.28 By undertaking an assessment at a local level, the development of a strategy can help to Improve, Protect and widen involvement in the open space, sport and recreation provision.

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- 1.29 **Improve** open spaces, sport and recreation facilities and to encourage greater use by all members of the community. A key driver for this is to provide the residents of the County with safe, accessible, attractive provision and facilities that are of the right type and meet the needs of the communities that use them.
- 1.30 **Protect** valuable provision from development, ensuring that new open space outdoor sport and outdoor recreation schemes contribute to improving an area and to ensure quality is maintained by making sure the correct levels of funding are in place.
- 1.31 Identify processes for **involvement** – the Council is keen to involve local communities in the management of green spaces and wishes to create opportunities for people to be involved and have ownership, working together to improve the green space.

Key Principles of the Strategy

- 1.32 There are several key principles in the development of Strategy they are to:
- To concentrate on providing quality provision
 - To develop wider use of facilities with restricted access e.g. school facilities
 - To secure high levels of access at a local level to a range of facilities (variety of greenspaces and sport/recreation facilities)
 - To ensure the Council is providing 'Good' quality sustainable services and facilities
 - To identify opportunities for partnership working and encourage cross service working whilst also providing opportunities for the local community to be proactively involved in local facilities
 - To respond to local needs when there is a clear articulated consensus of opinion
 - To concentrate on providing sports pitches at strategic locations fit for purpose
 - To develop local standards to meet local needs

Summary of Key Tasks

- 1.33 In summary the following key tasks have been undertaken to inform the study:
- Site visits to 200+ sites
 - A review of previous postal surveys to more than 100+ sports clubs views about quantity, quality and access
 - Stakeholder Interviews with key identified stakeholders
 - A Door to Door survey encompassing 500 interviews with local residents
 - A postal questionnaire to all schools
 - A review of existing consultation and market research undertaken
 - Limited consultation with young people across the County through the Youth Service
 - The use of GIS Digital Mapping to plot and capture site boundaries to assess levels of provision and accessibility

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- Demand Modelling for outdoor sport using the Sport England 'Towards a Level Playing Field Methodology' The use of demographic data sets to determine the propensity to participate in key leisure activities
- The development of a comprehensive database of site information

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Types of Open Space, Sport and Recreation Facilities

- 2.1 In order to assess in some detail the adequacy of open space, sport and recreation provision, it is necessary to consider the different types of provision and their primary role and function. Knowing why and what an open space or sports facility is there “to do” is critical to making judgements about its adequacy in respect of quantity, quality and accessibility.

Herefordshire Approach: Methodology

- 2.2 For the assessment, the Companion Guide to PPG17 identifies five key Stages to undertaking an assessment of playing pitches, indoor facilities and open space. These are broadly:

- Stage 1 – Identifying Local Needs
- Stage 2 – Auditing Local Provision
- Stage 3 – Setting Provision Standards
- Stage 4 – Applying Provision Standards
- Stage 5 – Policy Options

- 2.3 The desirable outcomes from undertaking a PPG 17 Assessment are to provide local people with networks of accessible, high quality open spaces and sports and recreation facilities in both rural and urban areas, which will meet the needs of **LOCAL** people and visitors. PPG 17 strives to provide a balance between enhancing existing provision and new provision. The study undertaken in the County has followed the framework provided.

- 2.4 A number of key tasks have been undertaken to complete the assessment and develop standards of provision and recommendations. These are summarised below:

- 2.5 **Stage 1: Identification of local needs:** The following key tasks have been undertaken:

- A review of the implications and priorities of existing strategies to identify links with existing strategic priorities.
- A review of previous consultation and the outcomes
- A review of existing policies and provision standards relating to open space, sport and recreation facilities.
- Consultation with the community and stakeholders via sports club surveys, school surveys, young people survey and face-to-face meetings. Additionally a door to door survey to 500 householders has been undertaken across the parishes to capture the views of facility users and non-users

- 2.6 **Stage 2: Audit of local provision:** The following key tasks have been undertaken:

- Review of quantitative information held by the County
- Site visits to identified known open space, sport and recreation facilities with community use (across all sectors)

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- Consultation with facility providers
- Mapping facilities in respect of location and catchment area

2.7 **Stage 3: Setting Provision Standards:** The following key tasks have been undertaken:

- Quantity Standards set using the findings of facility audits, local consultation and demand modelling.
- Quality Standards set using the findings of facility audits and local consultation.
- Accessibility Standards set using the findings of facility audits, local consultation and mapping catchment areas.

2.8 **Stage 4: Application of Provision Standards:** On the basis of the set standards, application of these, such as defined catchment areas, the impact of poor quality, allows the:

- Identification of deficiencies in accessibility
- Identification of deficiencies in quality
- Identification of surpluses or deficiencies in quantity

2.9 **Stage 5: Recommendations:** The findings of the process undertaken have allowed a number of key recommendations to be made and the identification of a number of key strategic priorities for the future.

2.10 The assessment and strategy development have been undertaken with consideration to the **quantity, quality and accessibility of facilities**. The **value** of facilities has also been considered.

2.11 The assessment has considered:

Quantity. A number of key questions have been considered, including:

- Is there enough provision to adequately serve the needs of local residents and the sporting community?
- Is current provision in the right place?
- Is there enough provision to adequately serve the County in the future, taking into account changes to demography and the national and local strategic context?
- What is the current mix of provision across all providers?

Assessing Quantity

2.12 The assessment of quantity has been undertaken on the basis of:

- A review of the number of sites and size of provision, in relation to local population
- Comparison of specific types of facilities e.g. playing pitches and allotments against known demand

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2.13 **Quality.** The assessment has considered a number of key questions, including:

- Is the provision available of sufficient quality to be “fit for purpose”?
- Does the quality of provision affect usage and potential usage?
- How is quality perceived by users and non-users?

Assessing Quality

2.14 The assessment of quality has been undertaken on the basis of:

- Site visits to community accessible facilities to rate a number of key criteria affecting quality.
- Quality ratings from key users, residents and specific user groups

2.15 The site quality audits undertaken are based upon the National quality standard for parks and open space ‘The Green Flag Award’. The assessment considers sites from a visitor’s perspective. Appendix 1 contains the site audit proforma

2.16 The overall quality scores place a site within certain key categories along the “quality value line”. Given the variations in quality assessments undertaken for certain typologies, the various quality lines are illustrated below:

Quality Line – Open Space (Parks, Natural, Green Corridors, Amenity)

0% - 15%	16% - 30%	31% - 45%	46% - 60%	61% - 75%	76% +
Very Poor	Poor	Average	Good	Very Good	Excellent

Quality Line - Allotments

0% - 19%	20% - 39%	40% - 59%	60% - 79%	80% +
Very Poor	Poor	Average	Good	Excellent

Quality Line – Playing Pitches

0% - 30%	31% - 39%	40% - 59%	60% - 89%	90% +
Poor	Below Average	Average	Good	Excellent

Quality Line – Bowling Greens, Tennis Courts,

0% - 19%	20% - 39%	40% - 59%	60% - 79%	80% +
Very Poor	Poor	Average	Good	Excellent

2.17 Play areas are assessed against a model based on the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (ROSPA) play value criteria, these are identified later in the report in Section 3, Provision for Young People and Children. (Appendix 1a contains the play area proforma)

2.18 **Accessibility.** In relation to accessibility, a number of key questions were posed, including:

- Is provision physically accessible to the local community?

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- Is pricing (where prices apply), and the level of fees and charges a barrier to usage?
- Is provision in the right place to serve local communities?
- How does the management of facilities impact on access?

Assessing Access

2.19 The assessment of accessibility has been undertaken on the basis of:

- Auditing factors known to affect the access to certain types of facility
- Consultation with local residents
- Mapping exercises to identify catchment areas for different types of provision

2.20 **Map 1** (in the attached document) shows the location of all sites by Typology,(colour coded to reflect the primary typology of the site).

2.21 The assessment has looked at facilities on both a County-wide basis and within the eight identified areas, associated wards and parishes. The eight areas are

Figure 2.1 – Area, Ward and Parish Breakdown

AREA	WARD	PARISH
Bromyard Area	Bringsty	Bredenbury CP
		Brockhampton CP
		Edwyn Ralph CP
		Linton CP
		Norton CP
		Tedstone Delamere CP
		Tedstone Wafer CP
		Thornbury CP
		Upper Sapey CP
		Whitbourne CP
		Bromyard
	Bromyard & Winslow CP	
	Felton CP	
	Little Cowarne CP	
	Ocle Pychard CP	
	Pencombe with Grendon Warren CP	
	Stoke Lacy CP	
	Frome	Ashperton CP
		Bishop's Frome CP
		Castle Frome CP
		Little Marcle CP
		Much Cowarne CP
		Pixley CP
		Putley CP
		Stanford Bishop CP

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AREA	WARD	PARISH
		Stretton Grandison CP
		Yarkhill CP
Central Herefordshire	Backbury	Dormington CP
		Fownhope CP
		Hampton Bishop CP
		Mordiford CP
		Tarrington CP
		Weston Beggard CP
	Burghill, Holmer & Lyde	Burghill CP
		Holmer & Shelwick CP
		Pipe & Lyde CP
	Credenhill	Breinton CP
		Credenhill CP
		Kenchester CP
		Stretton Sugwas CP
	Hagley	Bartestree CP
		Lugwardine CP
		Westhide CP
		Withington CP
	Hampton Court	Bodenham CP
		Ford & Stoke Prior CP
		Hope Under Dinmore CP
		Humber CP
	Sutton Walls	Marden CP
		Moreton-on-Lugg CP
		Sutton CP
	Wormsley Ridge	Bishopstone CP
		Bridge Sollers CP
		Brinsop & Wormsley CP
		Byford CP
Canon Pyon CP		
Mansell Lacy CP		
Wellington CP		
Yazor CP		
Golden Valley	Golden Valley North	Blakemere CP
		Bredwardine CP
		Clifford CP
		Cusop CP
		Dorstone CP
		Peterchurch CP
		Tyberton CP
	Golden Valley South	AbbeyDore CP
		Craswall CP

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AREA	WARD	PARISH
		Dulas CP
		Ewyas Harold CP
		Llancillo CP
		Llanveynoe CP
		Longtown CP
		Michaelchurch Escley CP
		Rowlstone CP
		St. Margarets CP
		Walterstone CP
	Stoney Street	Clehonger CP
		Eaton Bishop CP
		Madley CP
	Valletts	Allensmore CP
		Kenderchurch CP
		Kentchurch CP
		Kilpeck CP
		Kingstone CP
		Much Dewchurch CP
		Treville CP
Wormbridge CP		
Hereford - North City	Aylestone	Hereford City CP
	Central	Hereford City CP
	St. Nicholas	Hereford City CP
	Three Elms	Hereford City CP
	Tupsley	Hereford City CP
Hereford- South City	Belmont	Belmont Rural CP
		Hereford City CP
	St. Martins & Hinton	Hereford City CP
		Lower Bullingham CP
Ledbury Area	Hope End	Bosbury CP
		Coddington CP
		Colwall CP
		Cradley CP
		Mathon CP
		Wellington Heath CP
	Ledbury	Donnington CP
		Eastnor CP
		Ledbury CP
Leominster Area	Bircher	Croft & Yarpole CP
		Kingsland CP
		Lucton CP
		Orleton CP
		Richards Castle CP

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AREA	WARD	PARISH
	Leominster North	Leominster CP
	Leominster South	Leominster CP
	Upton	Brimfield CP
		Eye, Moreton & Ashton CP
		Eyton CP
		Kimbolton CP
		Leysters CP
		Little Hereford CP
		Luston CP
	Kington Area	Castle
Brilley CP		
Brobury with Monnington-on-Wye CP		
Eardisley CP		
Huntington CP		
Kinnersley CP		
Sarnesfield CP		
Staunton-On-Wye CP		
Willersley & Winforton CP		
Golden Cross with Weobley		Birley with Upper Hill CP
		Dilwyn CP
		Eardisland CP
		Monkland & Stretford CP
		Weobley CP
Kington Town		Kington CP
		Kington Rural CP
		Lower Harpton CP
Mortimer		Aymestrey CP
		Brampton Bryan CP
		Buckton & Coxall CP
		Burrington CP
		Byton CP
		Downton CP
		Kinsham CP
		Leintwardine CP
		Lingen CP
Wigmore CP		
Pembridge & Lyonshall with Titley		Knill CP
		Lyonshall CP
		Pembridge CP
		Shobdon CP
		Staunton on Arrow CP
Titley CP		

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AREA	WARD	PARISH
Ross-on-Wye Area	Hollington	Ballingham CP
		Callow CP
		Dewsall CP
		Dinedor CP
		Holme Lacy CP
		Little Dewchurch CP
		Lower Bullingham CP
	Kerne Bridge	Ganarew CP
		Goodrich CP
		Walford CP
		Whitchurch CP
	Llangarron	Bridstow CP
		Llangarron CP
		Llanrothal CP
		Peterstow CP
		Sellack CP
		Welsh Newton CP
	Old Gore	Brampton Abbots CP
		Brockhampton CP
		Kings Caple CP
		Much Marcle CP
		Woolhope CP
		Yatton CP
	Penyard	Aston Ingham CP
		Hope Mansell CP
		Lea CP
		Linton CP
		Weston Under Penyard CP
	Pontrilas	Garway CP
		Hentland CP
		Little Birch CP
		Llanwarne CP
		Much Birch CP
Orcop CP		
St. Weonards CP		
Tretire with Michaelchurch CP		
Ross-on-Wye East	Ross Rural CP	
	Ross-on-Wye CP	
Ross-on-Wye West	Ross-on-Wye CP	

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Herefordshire Unitary Development Plan & Supplementary Planning Guidance

- 2.22 The Plan provides a land use framework to:
- Promote opportunities for new and improved recreation, sport and tourism facilities, including criteria for location, siting, layout and design
 - Embrace sustainable use of physical resources
 - Protect existing facilities
 - Embrace specialised provision for individual activities
- 2.23 Recreation, sport and tourism issues touch on a range of other land uses such as housing, transport, and natural and historic heritage.

Aims and Objectives

- 2.24 Policies aim to:
- Promote sustainable development of facilities and attractions in locations appropriate to local character and needs
 - Seek equality of opportunities for access and participation
 - Realise positive benefits for residents and visitors alike
 - Contribute to regeneration (urban and rural social and economic)
 - Promote planned approach to provision based on local assessment of existing provision and future needs
 - Protect existing facilities and safeguarding future resources
 - Secure safe and convenient access by choice of transport
- 2.25 Uses and activities of recreation, sport and tourism embraced are:
- Formal facilities provided by Council or other agencies (including dedicated pitches and buildings)
 - Informal recreation (casual) in countryside. No significant use of built facilities
 - Tourist accommodation and attractions
- 2.26 Where possible, allocate land for formal or informal open space in settlements according to assessments of local characteristics, activity participation rates, deficiencies in provision and accessibility profiles. Provision should reflect PPG2 and 3 (close to point of need, balanced with home and work opportunities, and accessible by a choice of means of transport).
- 2.27 Priority will be given to:
- Addressing deficiencies in recreation provision in main areas of population
 - Meeting needs arising from new residential development
 - Reducing land take and duplication of provision by ensuring shared use of facilities by different user groups
 - Develop networks of open space

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- Develop facilities in locations that can cater for a wide range of users

Criteria for Recreation, Sport and Tourism development

2.28 Proposals for the development of facilities (including change of use, improvement or extension), will be permitted when proposal:

- Is appropriate to needs of community it serves, having particular regard to nature of use, mode of operation, scale and design
- Would not harm amenity of nearby residents
- Respects environmental character and resources (including designated landscape, historic heritage, archaeology, biodiversity, geological features and rights of way).
- Is accessible by choice of modes of transport, helping to support the further growth of walking and cycling tourism, ensuring access for all
- Developments should respect the character of Herefordshire and the locality, and avoid intrusion on local communities. Must balance the valuable social and economic impacts of sports and tourism against environmental impacts. Beware not to damage appearance. Must sustain the environment.

Areas of Outstanding National Beauty

2.29 Herefordshire includes 46% of the Wye Valley AONB and 60% of the Malvern Hills AONB, which were designed to protect and enhance landscape, and embrace biodiversity and features of geological interest. They therefore should be given precedence over the development of facilities for recreation, sport and tourism. Developments must:

- Respect and be in keeping with inherent distinctiveness of the local landscape:
- Be small-scale and constructed from appropriate materials; and
- Make a positive contribution to the understanding and quiet enjoyment of the natural beauty of the AONB.

Existing standards for outdoor playing and public open space

2.30 The following overall minimum standards of open space provision to meet the needs of all (as set by the National Playing Fields Association) will be sought throughout the County until such a time an assessment of need has been produced and local standards of provision established. These are

- Outdoor playing space: 2.4 hectares per 1000 population, comprising 1.6 hectare for outdoor sport and 0.8 hectare for children's playing space
- Public open space: 0.4 hectares per 1000 population

2.31 The standards will be applied in considering further provision, including open space to be provided as part of housing schemes, and in assessing proposals that could lead to the loss of existing facilities.

SECTION II -METHODOLOGY

Safeguarding existing recreational open space

- 2.32 Emphasis on protecting open spaces such as playing fields, parks and gardens, allotments, village greens, informal recreational areas, children's play areas and other land of amenity value. Changes from public to private open space will only be permitted where it secures enhanced provision for the community. Development proposals that result in the loss of these spaces will not be permitted unless:
- There is a clear excess of outdoor playing space provision and/or open space in the area taking account of the wider recreational value of such provision
 - Alternative provision of at least equivalent community benefit is provided in a convenient and accessible location

(Development of playing fields which have not been shown to be surplus to requirements will not be permitted unless the development is ancillary and without prejudice to their continued recreational use, only affects land incapable of forming a pitch, or can be justified in terms of overall benefit to sport or criterion 2 above.)

New Open Space in/adjacent to Settlements

- 2.33 Sites have been identified on the proposals map at the locations below to provide new public recreational, amenity and open space uses and facilities:

Urban Areas	Rural Areas
• Aylestone Hill, Hereford	• Ewyas Harold
• Haywood Country Park, Hereford:	• Leintwardine
• Bradbury Estate, Hereford	• Moreton on Lugg
• Whitecross High School	• Peterchurch
• Grandison Rise / Prospect Walk, Hereford	• Stretton Sugwas
• Wyeside, Hereford	• Whitchurch
• Yazor Road, Hereford	• Withington
• Leominster landfill site	

- 2.34 PPG 17 guidance advises the setting of standards for different types (typology) of open space provision and to move away from the traditional NPFA type standards as outlined below. However in order to review the effectiveness of existing planning policy it is necessary to draw some similarities from the typologies developed and the former NPFA classification.
- 2.35 The key weakness in utilising the NPFA standards is that the standard does not currently include parks or natural/semi-natural greenspace within the breakdown standards of provision.
- 2.36 English Nature has recommended that a standard of Natural and semi natural greenspace should equate to 2 hectares per 1000 population. The setting of standards of provision is discussed in greater detail in section IV of this strategy.

SECTION II -METHODOLOGY

- 2.37 The above provision standards do not appear to consider the long term maintenance and staff resource implications to ensure the facilities are maintained to appropriate standards. Nor is it based on demand for facilities; this often results in facilities that do not best fit with local people's needs or aspirations. This can potentially lead to conflict of opinion e.g. the standards stipulate that play provision is to be made, it does not identify for which age group the play area is to cater, nor recognise that the demands made by toddlers and juniors is far different from the needs of teenagers.
- 2.38 The current provision standards are generic in approach and do not appear to consider the need for quality e.g. provision of a sport pitch on its own is inadequate and will have a limited purpose if it is not supported by appropriate drainage, car parking and changing facilities; most importantly it needs to be clear that there is a need for such provision. Likewise the provision of allotments, which is very much demand led; as a minimum quality, provision should be served by water, toilets and car parking to ensure best practice standards are met, and are not just quantitative provision standards. The quantitative findings and an overview of the effectiveness of these provision standards are detailed in Section V of this strategy.
- 2.39 Developers are given clear guidance as to the amount of space or type of provision required dependant upon the size of the potential development proposed. What appears to be lacking is design guidance to ensure provision is made to a 'good quality' and is consistent with recognised 'Best Practice,' or the requirement for additional provision based on local need.
- 2.40 The PPG 17 guidance advocates a move away from the NPFA standard and for Local Government to develop standards of provision that best fits the typology of provision of the local area.

SECTION IIa – IDENTIFYING LOCAL NEEDS

Identifying Local Needs

Background and Methodology

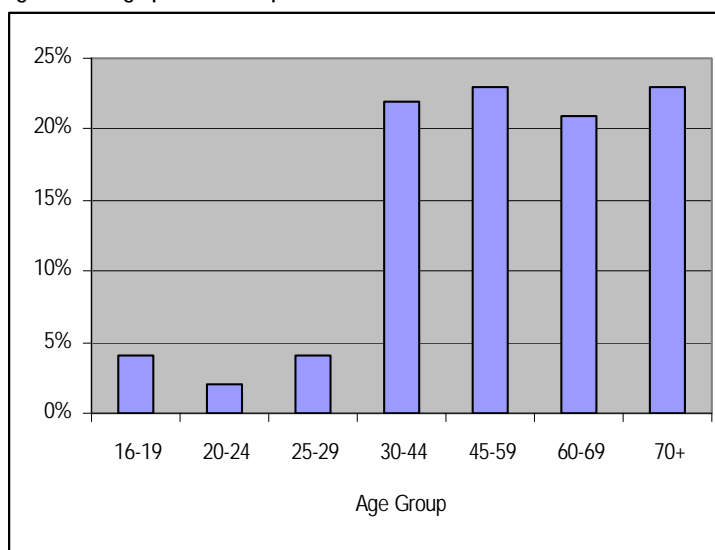
- 2.41 In order to develop a Strategy and set local policies from it, it is essential to consult with the local community to gain an insight into local needs and aspirations. It is also important to ascertain the views of local communities as part of the Best Value and community planning process.
- 2.42 Previous consultation with organisations clubs and groups held by the County has been reviewed along with a door to door survey of 500 resident households that were randomly selected across the County. The questionnaire responses have been analysed, and a database has been established that will provide Council with detailed analysis for types of open space and areas of residence.
- 2.43 The resident survey simplified the typologies in order that local people could relate to the spaces in Herefordshire, for example recreation grounds are categorised within parks and garden, amenity space is open space near to home, natural and semi natural greenspace are identified as wild areas and green corridors are categorised as off road pathways. It was important that respondents understood the difference between a green corridor and a public right of way. These were explained to residents by the market researchers to ensure they understood.
- 2.44 The survey was designed to assess views of residents, their attitude and aspirations with regard to open space, indoor and outdoor sport and community recreational facilities across the County. In particular the survey set out to identify and establish the following:
- The usage of open space, sport and community recreational facilities by residents within the County
 - The value local people attach to open space, sport and community recreational facilities
 - The attitude of local residents towards open space, sport and community recreation facilities
 - Attitudes to the level of existing provision and facilities
 - The frequency of use by local residents to the differing types of provision
 - Main mode of transport local resident use to access open space, sport and community recreational facilities
 - The views of residents to the accessibility of open space, sport and community recreational facilities
 - The barriers that prevent or reduce local use of open space, sport and community recreational facilities
 - Local needs and expectations

SECTION IIa – IDENTIFYING LOCAL NEEDS

Sample Selection

- 2.45 Participants from the random sample addresses, provided by the Council, were selected to cover all demographic aspects of the population. The results of the door to door survey are attached as Appendix 2.
- 2.46 45% of all respondents were male and 55% were female with the majority of people surveyed being white (99.8%).
- 2.47 A variety of key findings has emerged from the household survey and highlights the appropriateness of parks and open spaces to the residents of Herefordshire.
- 2.48 Figure 2.2 illustrates the age profile of those surveyed. All age categories between 30 and 70+ were well represented within the survey. 10% of those surveyed were under 30.

Figure 2.2 : Age profile of respondents



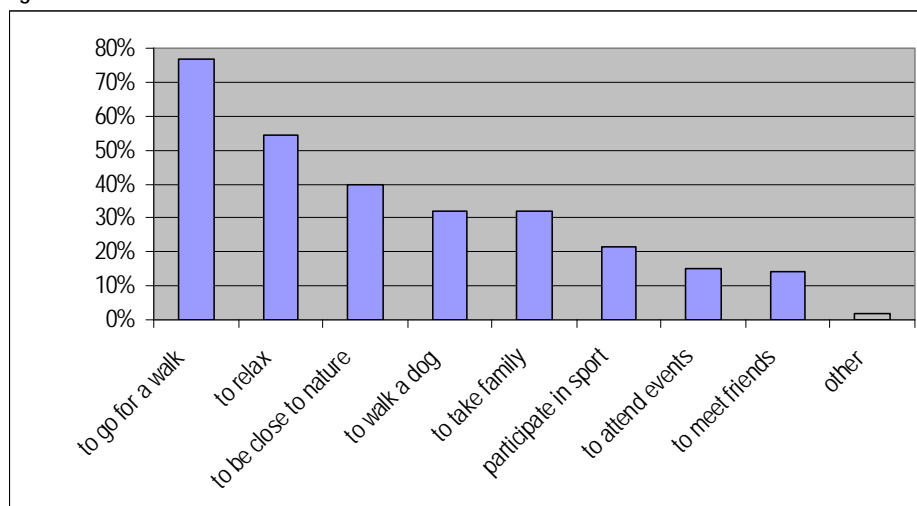
- 2.49 13% of all respondents considered themselves to be disabled.
- 2.50 50% of those questioned classified themselves as unemployed. This high level also includes those respondents who are now retired.
- 2.51 71% of all households questioned had no children living at home, 9% had one child, 16% two children and 3% had three children.

Usage of parks and open spaces

- 2.52 81% of all respondents reported that they use parks or open spaces. Residents were asked to indicate their reasons for using parks or open spaces. Figure 2.3 summarises the responses.

SECTION IIa – IDENTIFYING LOCAL NEEDS

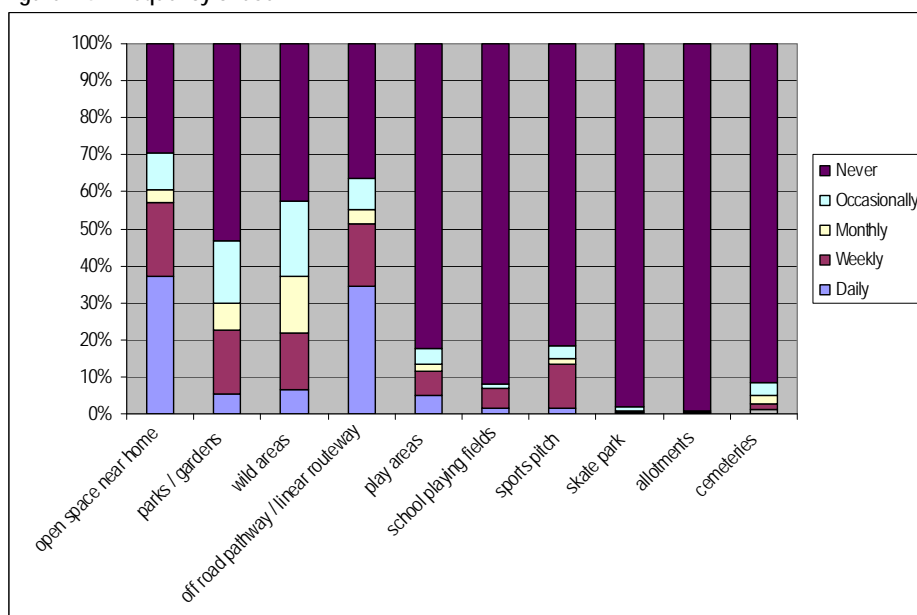
Figure 2.3 Reasons for use



2.53 Walking is the most common response given for using a park or open space in Herefordshire (77%). Other popular reasons include; to relax (54%), to be close to nature (40%), dog walking (32%) and to take the family (32%). All of the reasons given for using parks and open spaces were in the pursuit of leisure and recreation.

2.54 Residents were also asked to indicate how often they use the different types of facility. Figure 2.4 summarises the response to this question.

Figure 2.4: Frequency of use



2.55 From the diagram, four typologies stand out as the most used facilities by those questioned.

SECTION IIa – IDENTIFYING LOCAL NEEDS

- 2.56 These are; open spaces near home, off road pathways, parks/gardens and wild areas. Between 15% - 20% of respondents use these facilities weekly. Open spaces near home and off road pathways are used most frequently on a daily basis by respondents (37% and 35% respectively).
- 2.57 Play areas and sports pitches are used by 18% of all respondents. Together with school playing fields these facilities are most commonly used on a weekly basis.
- 2.58 Of those questioned, the least most used facilities are skate parks and allotments. Both typologies have specialised usage.

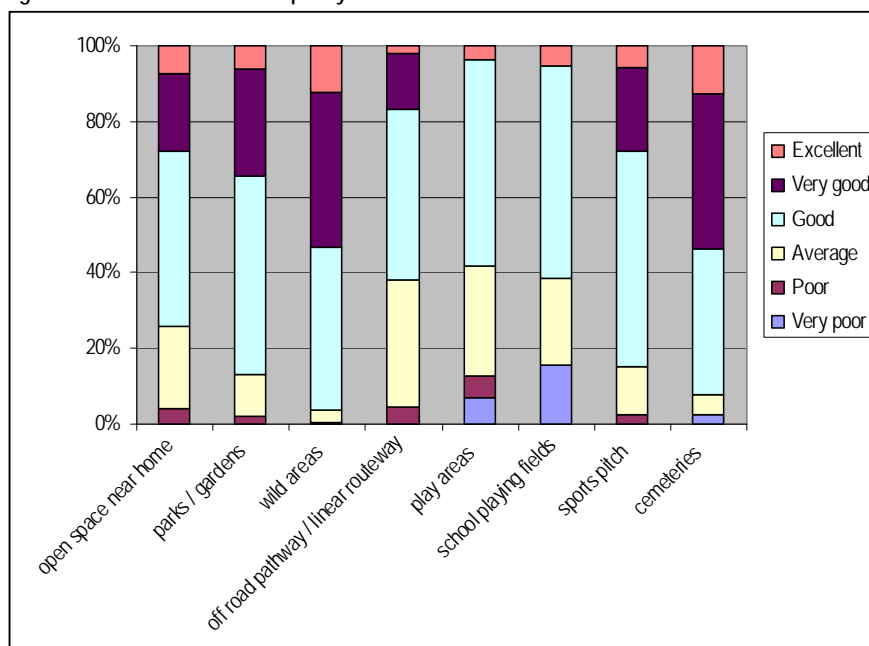
Local residents' perceptions on the quantity of open space

- 2.59 Local residents were asked to comment on the quantity of open space within their area. 78% of respondents believe there to be sufficient open space within their area. This is important when planning for future provision. Furthermore, 89% of those questioned considered there to be sufficient open space within their area to meet theirs and their families' needs for outdoor recreation.

Local residents' perception of the quality of provision

- 2.60 Local residents were asked to rate the quality of facilities using the descriptions – excellent, very good, good, average, poor and very poor. Figure 2.5 summarises the responses of those residents who use the facilities. Skate parks and allotments have not been included due to the limited number of respondents.

Figure 2.5: Residents view of quality



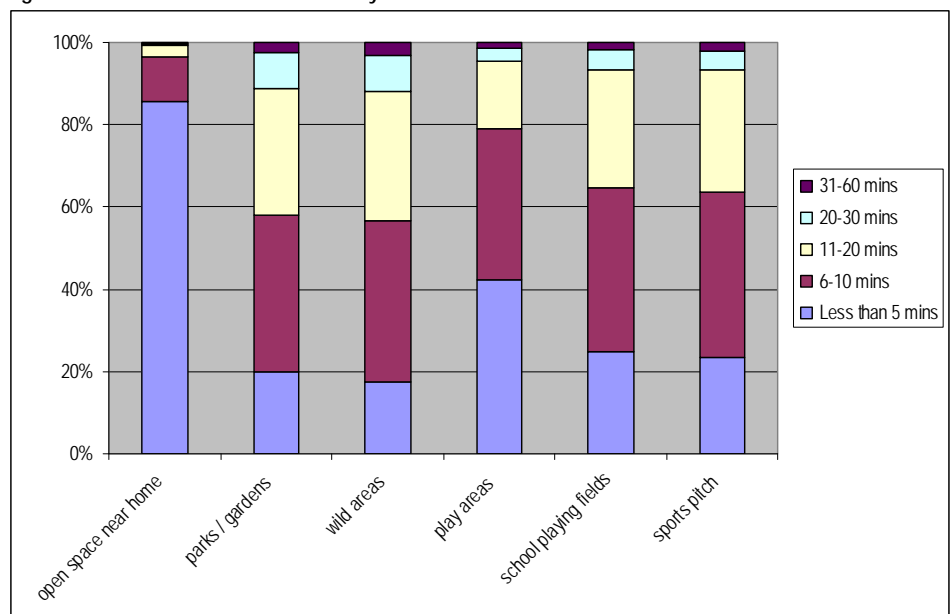
SECTION IIa – IDENTIFYING LOCAL NEEDS

- 2.61 The majority of residents rated each facility positively. Play areas and school playing fields were the only two typologies rated poor or very poor by more than 10% of users. This is important when considering future provision. As previously stated, respondents considered there to be sufficient open space to meet their needs. Future investment is therefore required to improve the quality of existing space.
- 2.62 96% of residents who use the county's wild areas rated them above average. Cemeteries were also highly rated with 92% of users scoring these above average.
- 2.63 Only 58% of users rated play areas above average. Other facilities that did not score as well include off road pathways and school playing fields. Both were considered above average by 62% of users.

Local residents' perceptions on the accessibility of open space

- 2.64 Local residents were asked how long it takes them to travel to each of their nearest open space facilities. The results are summarised in Figure 2.6.

Figure2.6: Travel time to nearest facility

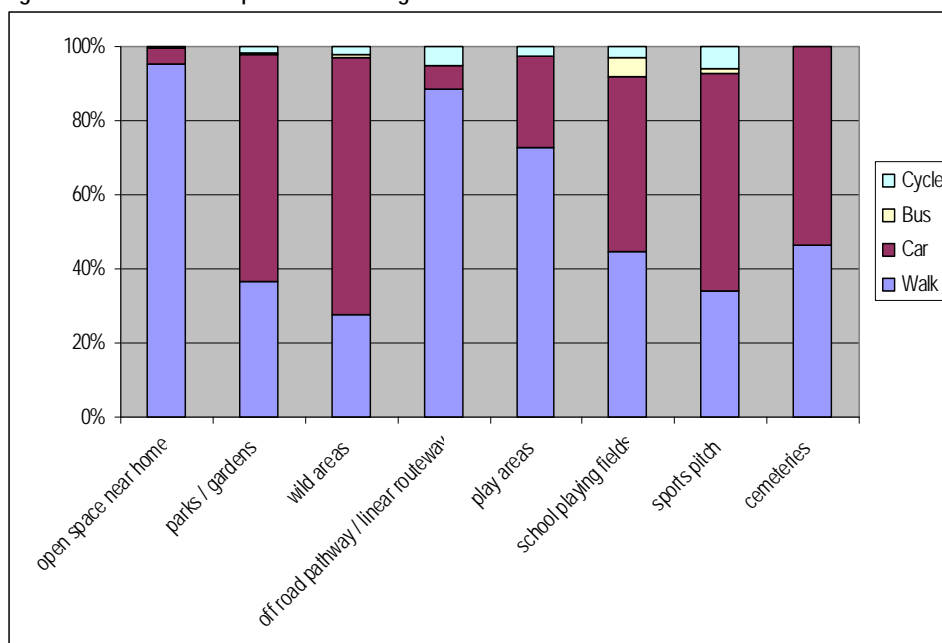


- 2.65 Open spaces near to home and off road pathways are the most accessible areas with 86% and 79% of respondents less than 5 minutes from their nearest facilities respectively.
- 2.66 Play areas are considered the third most accessible areas. 79% of those questioned are within 10 minutes of a play area.
- 2.67 Approximately 60% of residents considered themselves to be within 10 minutes of a park or garden, wild area, school playing field, sports pitch and cemetery.

SECTION IIa – IDENTIFYING LOCAL NEEDS

- 2.68 Residents were also asked about their mode of transport when visiting open spaces near to their home. Figure 2.7 summarises residents' responses.
- 2.69 Due to the close proximity of open spaces near to residents' homes 95% walk to these facilities. Walking is also popular to access off road pathway areas (89%) this high percentage reflects their main use. Play areas were also popular areas to walk to with 73% of respondents travelling by foot.
- 2.70 Residents used their car most frequently to travel to wild areas (69%), parks/gardens (61%), sports pitches (59%), cemeteries (54%) and school playing fields (48%).
- 2.71 Only a small percentage of residents reported to cycle to open space in Herefordshire. 7% of respondents cycle to sports pitches, 5% to off road pathways, 3% to school playing fields, 2% to parks/gardens, 2% to wild areas and 2% to play areas.
- 2.72 Very few people use the bus to travel to open space facilities. 5% of respondents use the bus to travel to school playing fields and 1% to travel to wild areas and sports pitches.

Figure 2.7: Mode of transport when visiting facilities



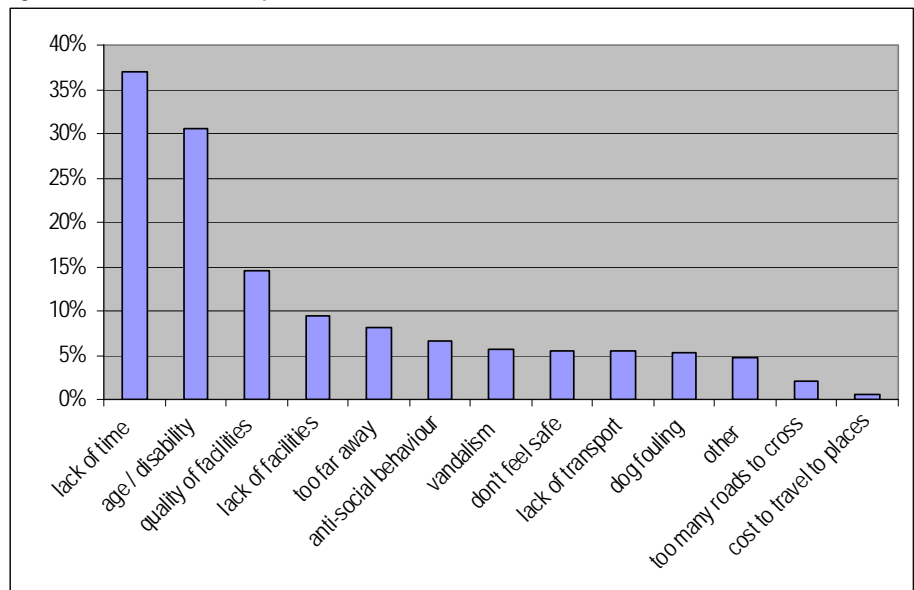
Local residents perceived barriers to use

- 2.73 Residents were asked if there was anything that prevented them from visiting parks, open spaces or play areas.

SECTION IIa – IDENTIFYING LOCAL NEEDS

2.74 The most common reasons given as a barrier for use were; lack of time (37%) and age/disability (31%). Other reasons include quality of facilities (15%), lack of facilities (9%), too far away (8%) and anti-social behaviour (7%). All responses are summarised in Figure 2.8.

Figure 2.8: Local residents perceived barriers to use

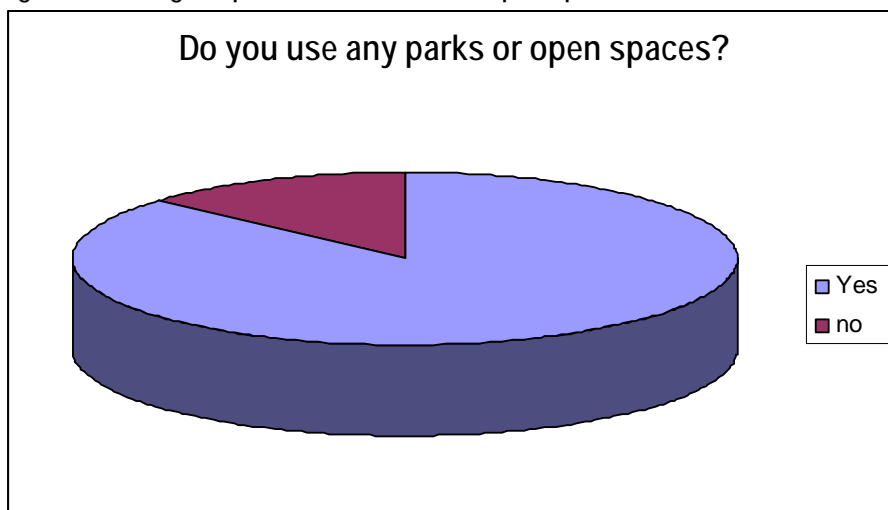


SECTION IIa – IDENTIFYING LOCAL NEEDS

(B) Young People Consultation

- 2.75 It was agreed that the most effective way of consulting with young people was to meet them face to face as groups in their own environment. Unfortunately this proved difficult to organise through the Youth Service As a result a very small group of young people have been consulted and as a result no detailed analysis of findings would prove statistically valid. The findings are outlined below as a point of interest only. The young people 15+ in number were polite, interested in the work being undertaken and completed a questionnaire survey to establish their opinion. 87% of respondent's use parks and open spaces, 75% of the on a regular basis. The key findings are outlined below

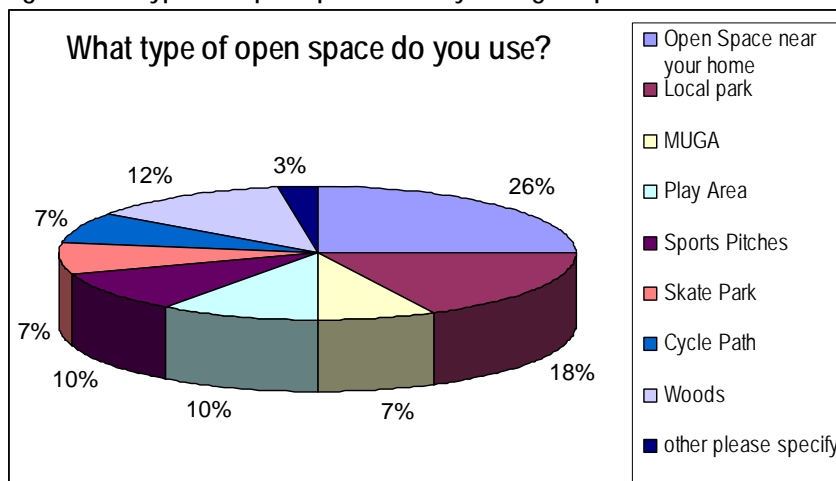
Figure 2.9 Young People's Use of Parks and Open Spaces



- 2.76 The young people were asked to identify the type of open space they use on a regular basis, 67% of respondents identified using the open space (amenity land) near to where they live (26% of the total responses given). 47% of respondents identified using local parks (18% of total responses given) and 33% identified using wild areas (natural and semi natural greenspace) with 12% of the total response given. 27% identified using sports pitches (10% of the total response given) and 27% identified using play areas (10% of the total response given). 20% of respondents identified using cycle paths (green corridors) and 20% of respondents identified using skate parks or multi use games areas (MUGA'S, 7% of the total response respectively).

SECTION IIa – IDENTIFYING LOCAL NEEDS

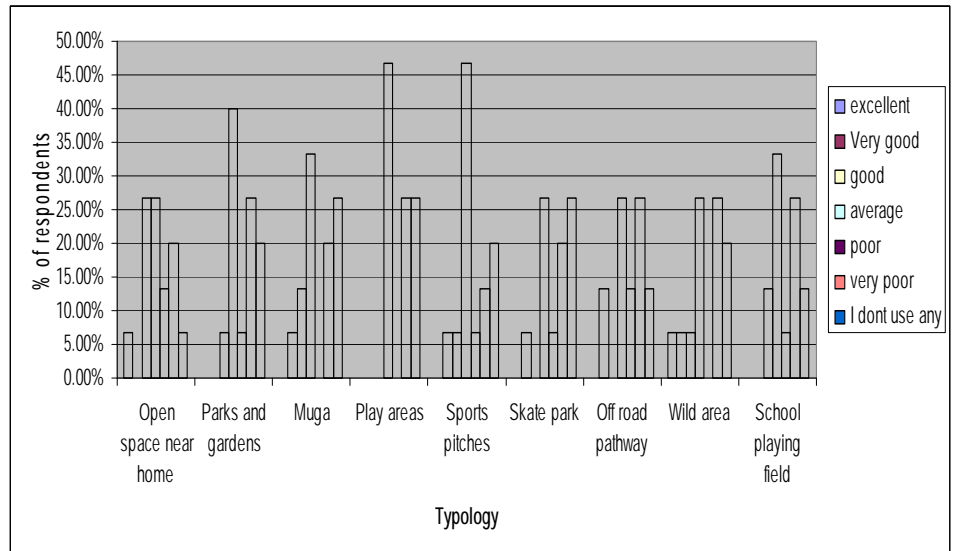
Figure 2.10 Types of Open Space Used By Young People



- 2.77 Open space near to home and school playing fields are used by 20% of respondents on a daily basis, 13% identified using play areas and off road pathways(green corridors) on a daily basis. 6.7% identified using parks and gardens, sports pitches, skate parks and wild areas on a daily basis. None of the respondents identified using Multi use games areas (MUGA's) on a daily basis.
- 2.78 Young people rated the outdoor provision in their area as poor or very poor and 67% of respondents identified that there was not enough open space provision in their area.
- 2.79 11% of the young people rated open space as poor, 2% of the respondents rated indoor sports facilities as poor and none of the respondents rated the community recreational facilities as poor. Figure 2.11 below identifies young people's overall rating of facilities

SECTION IIa – IDENTIFYING LOCAL NEEDS

Figure 2.11 Young people's overall facility rating

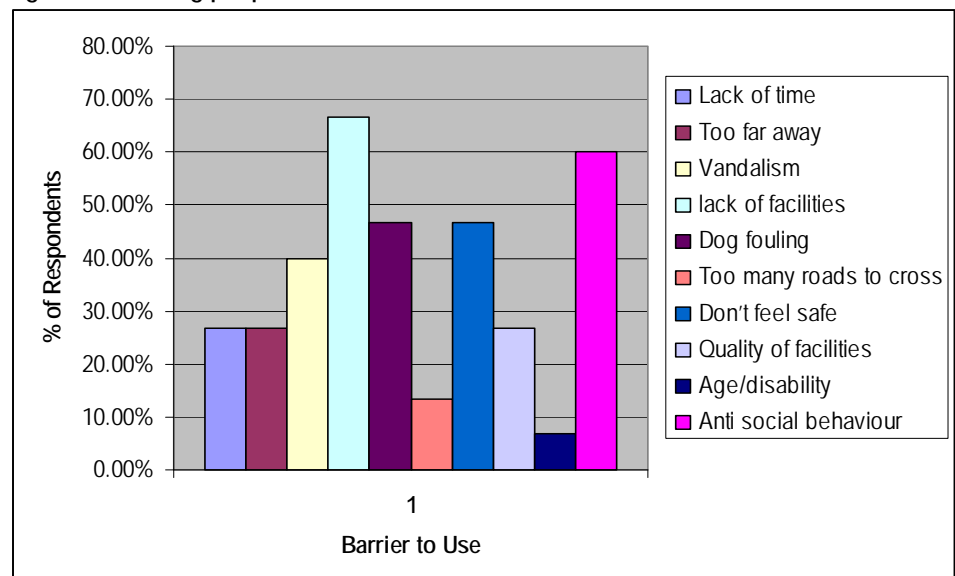


2.80 Young people generally rated the outdoor facilities they use as average, open space near to home(amenity space) rated as good to average, parks and gardens where generally rated as average although the second largest response from respondents rated parks and gardens as very poor. Almost a quarter of respondents identified not using any outdoor facilities.

Young people's perceived barriers to use

2.81 Young people were asked to identify what prevents them from making use of the facilities and spaces provided. Figure 2.12 below outlines the responses given.

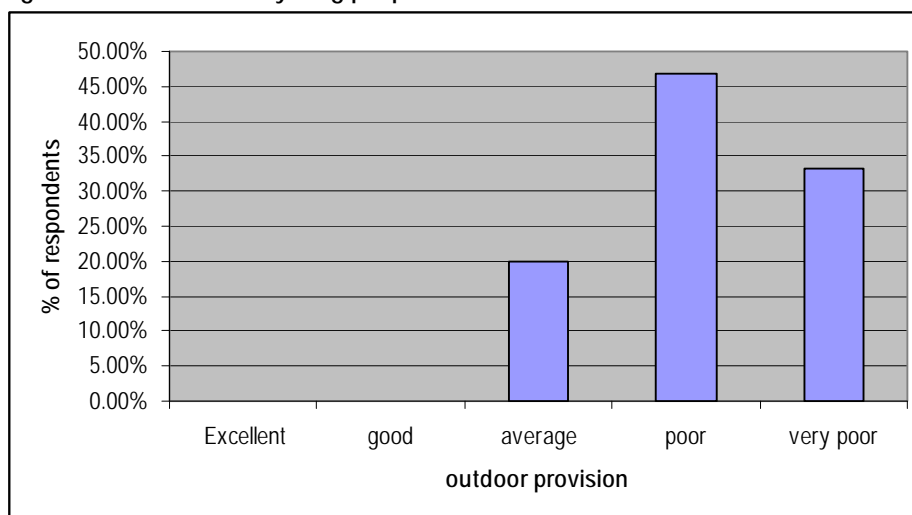
Figure 2.12 Young people's barriers to use



SECTION IIa – IDENTIFYING LOCAL NEEDS

- 2.82 Similar to responses given through the door to door survey, young people have identified a lack of time as the biggest barrier to their use of facilities and anti social behaviour was the second biggest barrier to use. Dog Fouling and not feeling safe where also key barriers to use for young people. Age and Disability where not perceived as great barriers for young people's use of greenspace
- 2.83 Young people where asked to rate the provision made for young people in their area and Figure 2.13 below identifies the opinion of the respondents regarding the provision made in there are for young people

Figure 2.13 Provision for young people



- 2.84 The majority of young people respondents believe that provision in their area for young people is poor(over 45% of the responses given) or very poor (over 32% of the responses given). None of the young people who participated believed that provision for young people is good or excellent.
- 2.85 Young people identified that in order to access indoor sports facilities they would expect to travel between 6and 20 minutes and 73% of respondents would travel by car. To access community recreational facilities 61% of the respondents identified travelling by car with 52% of the respondents travelling 5 minutes or less. For parks and open spaces respondents were asked to identify travel times to the differing types of provision , below identifies the respondents travel times to the varying open space typologies in Herefordshire
- 2.86 Accessibility to provision is discussed in detail within each typology in section III of this strategy

SECTION IIa – IDENTIFYING LOCAL NEEDS

Figure 2.14 Local Resident Travel times

Questionnaire	Typology	Average Travel Time Door to Door	Average Travel Time Young People
Parks & Gardens	Parks and Gardens	11.62 Minutes	15.8 Minutes
Wild Areas e.g. common	Natural and Semi Natural Greenspace	12.06 Minutes	29 Minutes
Open Spaces near your home	Amenity Space	3.65 Minutes	7.7 Minutes
Play areas	Provision for Children and Young People	7.94 Minutes	9.9 Minutes
Skate park		25.96 Minutes	25 Minutes
School Playing field	Outdoor Sport	10.30 Minutes	18.2Minutes
Sports Pitches	Recreation Ground	10.52 Minutes	14 Minutes

Other Consultation

Herefordshire Partnership Survey April 2001 'Quality of Life'

2.87 In 2001 the Herefordshire Partnership Panel undertook a Quality of Life Survey through the Citizen's Panel with the following being identified and applying to this report:

- The majority of residents who participated in the survey do not see litter as being a serious problem in Public open spaces and residents are less likely to express concern over litter in open space at a County level than at their local level
- Respondents to the survey on average have more concern over the level of dog fouling on pavements than in public open spaces
- Respondents were asked to rate the extent to which they agree that graffiti is most common in public places such as parks, public toilets and bus shelters 65% agree that it is a problem in such public places(This needs to be kept in context as it does not break down the level within the specified places)
- The respondents expressed greater concern over the vandalism to play areas in their neighbourhood and surrounding areas and in the County

Herefordshire Voice Survey July 2002

2.88 A survey undertaken on behalf of the Herefordshire Partnership in July 2002 considered opinion regarding Leisure Services with the following being identified and applying to this report:

- 91% of Respondents identified having facilities that are easy to access is important in their choice of how they spend their leisure time generally
- 89% cited cost as an influence

SECTION IIa – IDENTIFYING LOCAL NEEDS

- 71% rated transport as being a key factor in choice
- 57% cited childcare as being an important factor when making a choice of facility
- 93 % of respondents agree that improved leisure or sports opportunities would benefit Herefordshire in terms of health, 83% believe it would support involving communities, 74% see improved facilities as contributing to creating safer neighbourhoods and 64% believe improved facilities would improve the environment

2.89 Respondents were also asked to rate five factors when choosing a leisure activity, 94% stated that enjoyment or getting fit and staying healthy (90%) as being important, 89% highlighted the importance of being able to relax whilst fewer responses identified meeting friends(31%) or the physical challenge (18%) as critical factors

Consultation with Schools

2.90 In 2002 as part of the development of a playing pitch strategy every school in the County received a questionnaire survey regarding their levels of provision and facilities and any issues they have. 106 responses were received. From the response the schools identified the following with regards to outdoor facilities and the issues they face:

- 49% of respondents do not have community use of their facilities
- 19% of respondents identified having community use
- 32% did not respond to the question
- 22% of respondents identified that pitch drainage was a problem at their site
- 5% identified problems with moles and other pests as an issue on their site
- 9% identified the level and slope of their pitch as a problem

Internal Stakeholder Consultation

2.91 It is important to seek the views of those internal stakeholders who have a direct influence over the level and provision of greenspace across the County. A series of face to face interviews were undertaken with 15+ key stakeholders and the following outlines the issues and opportunities raised:

General Issues

- The rural nature and size of the County is an issue with 80% of the population living in 20% of the area
- Funding development and new initiatives in greenspace is an issue due to limited resources at the City and County level
- The fact that the service and facilities are not statutory means that Elected Members are often sidetracked into supporting those services that are statutory and therefore opportunities are missed through a lack of support
- There is a general lack of revenue to fund the service and the work required to maintain the estate

SECTION IIa – IDENTIFYING LOCAL NEEDS

Play provision Issues

- The Council own 58 play areas
- The main priority needs to be to improve the condition and quality of the provision
- Many of the safety surfaces put down in the early 1980's have deteriorated and do not meet current safety standards
- Living Spaces is providing funding for new provision, however it needs match funding beyond certain thresholds and other external funding is providing for new provision, especially the Countryside Agency
- In terms of anti social behaviour it is more people causing a nuisance and leaving bottles everywhere than vandalism
- Recommendations needed for investment – i.e. – not just need 5 pieces of equipment in playgrounds but should have minimum £80k investment instead.
- The stakeholders identified that they would advocate and would clearly benefit from s106 funding being held in a central pot that bids can be made against for improvements with this being possibly based on local needs areas.
- At present there is good consultation between the planning department with parks – on the whole they do communicate new developments
- 13 extra housing trusts have been formed and are responsible for some of the play areas – 2 areas have recently been removed as don't want to maintain – many others could be lost in same way

Countryside provision issues

- Commons – BAP(Bio Diversity Action Plan) targets 200 in County, currently 100 are accessible and some others partially accessible
- New Act - possible additional 80 to be added and the Service to be responsible for but if this is the case there is unlikely to be any funding with it that will subsidise the additional responsibility with the maintenance regime
- 12 council owned and 5/6 Nature Reserves – have management plans
- Rural tourism issue – a lot of smaller attractions in the form of parks and countryside spaces. Queenswood Park – has majority of visitor numbers. Cathedral only has 60% of the amount of visitors at Queenswood Park.
- There has also been a vehicle count over the last 18 months
- Queenswood Park is SSSI (Site of Special Scientific Interest) and therefore limited in development terms
- Staff in countryside team include 6 full-time overseeing 20 sites. rights of way – footpaths wider access harder
- Most sites low profile – do not charge for parking. Relatively low problem with fly-tipping on the whole.
- 783 acres over 20 sites, plus 581 acres of Herefordshire council commons

Parks provision issues

- Signage probably one of worst areas of provision across all parks.

SECTION IIa – IDENTIFYING LOCAL NEEDS

- Ground Maintenance budget £46k per month across Hereford City. South area approx £15.5k and North approx £12k. Overall - £696k per year. Routine cyclic maintenance only
- Difficulty in adding elements to contract - lack of budget
- £100k Children's play maintenance budget – no development budget for play
- Market Towns – Hereford City – vandalism more of issue
- Grandstand Road also has problems – this is not in a particularly deprived area
- 2 Bowling Greens managed by the Council. A lot more a privately owned
- 2 tennis courts sites plus some others that are Town Council managed
- Hereford City Council pays for the Maintenance of some County Council provision...
- The Council on the whole is not interested in 'badge-hunting' and gaining many awards unless it offers real benefits to the provision.
- The In-bloom groups are seen to be the standard that the council is working to on the whole – some of the in-bloom groups have further developed and developed initiatives eg Leominster People in Partnership
- No management plans in parks – previous plans that have been developed have not always been supported due to cost and sustainability of provision. The service is more hands-on and fire-fighting by nature and there is an issue with time for planning and monitoring/ evaluation.
- Commuted sums paying supplement revenue budgets where possible
- Cathedral Close – parks management plan – applying for Heritage funding
- Trees tagged – recorded detail and have a replacement programme for all trees
- Tree survey carried out by external Arboricultural consultant every 3 years on average
- There is a memorial bench programme in operation in parks and countryside areas – each cost around £600 – there is no corporate programme of maintenance.
- Partnership with community groups is good. Associate member of the Cultural Consortium, Ledbury Greenspaces in-bloom,
- Work with residents groups – opportunities for funding

BMG Research Report 2003 Herefordshire Voice Panel Survey 9

- 2.92 The research considered the use of outdoor facilities and identified the following:
- Use is high – people use public footpaths, woodland areas town parks + playing fields every week
 - In contrast there is polarisation of usage of children's play areas
- 2.93 The research investigated what people perceived the benefits of involvement in outdoor recreation activities are:
- Main benefits were- feeling physically better – 61% feeling more relaxed 60% to a lesser extent feeling mentally stimulated 50%
- 2.94 The research asked what would be necessary to increase involvement in outdoor recreation activities:

SECTION IIa – IDENTIFYING LOCAL NEEDS

- More information on local facilities is an important improvement would result in more participation in outdoor recreation
- More local activities and a wider range of activities

2.95 The research sought to identify the levels of satisfaction with recreation + outdoor activities:

- Almost 1/2 of all residents are satisfied with the provision of recreation + outdoor activities whilst 12% remain dissatisfied.
- There were no significant differences in dissatisfaction levels across profile groups.

SECTION III - AUDIT OF LOCAL PROVISION

Introduction

- 3.1 The results and findings of the various consultation, research and audit tasks undertaken are reported in this section of the report. A number of key research exercises were undertaken during the period of the study to supplement the findings of other recent research and consultation exercises undertaken over the last two years.

Types of Open Space, Sport and Recreation Facilities

- 3.2 In order to assess in some detail the adequacy of open space, sport and recreation provision, it is necessary to consider the different types of provision and their primary role and function. Knowing why, and what, an open space or sports facility is there "to do" is critical to making judgements about its adequacy in respect of quantity, quality and accessibility.
- 3.3 The PPG17 Companion Guide provides guidance on a number of key categories (Typology) of open space, sport and recreation provision.

SECTION III - AUDIT OF LOCAL PROVISION

Figure 3.1 - Herefordshire Open Space Typology

Typology		Primary Purpose
Parks and Gardens:	Major Park, Large Park	These include Formal Urban and Country Parks These are high quality parks that offer a wide range of facilities for formal and informal recreation and events
	Local Park Recreation Ground	These include small parks and recreation grounds that offer a limited range of facilities for informal and formal sport, play and recreation. These sites offer more than just areas for children's play
	Formal Garden	Normally high quality laid out gardens including memorial gardens that include formal grass areas, floral and permanent landscaping and seating.
Natural and semi natural greenspaces	Commons	These are sites that are managed or promoted for a countryside experience or to promote wildlife habitat. They are sites that are readily accessible to the public. They are not the public right of way network and they do include sites promoted as Nature Reserves, Woodlands. Wildlife conservation, bio diversity, environmental education awareness and countryside recreation such as walking, or cycling. They also include disused railway lines that are promoted a long distance cycleways, bridle ways etc
	Green Corridors	
	Natural sites	
	Nature Reserves	
	Picnic Sites	
Amenity Green space	Informal Recreational Green Space	Opportunities for informal activities close to residential areas and improve the visual appearance of residential or other areas
	Visual Amenity Green Space	
Outdoor sports facilities		Participation in outdoor sports such as pitch sports, tennis, bowls, athletics or countryside and water sports
Provision for children and young people		Areas designed primarily for play and social interaction involving children and young people, such as equipped play areas, multi use games areas, skateboard areas and teenage play zones

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- 3.4 This section sets out the relevant audit finding and key issues for each of the typologies in terms of the quantity, quality and accessibility of provision.
- 3.5 In terms of quantity analysis the sites have been identified through a variety of methods including a postal and telephone survey to all parish councils within the County, site visits for quality assessment, consultation and information provided by council officers, and plotting sites using GIS. Where there has been no response from parish council sites have been identified via the alternative methods. In addition, those sites that have been stated by the parish councils in response to the survey have been verified via the site visits across the County in order to provide a comprehensive assessment as far as possible.
- 3.6 All identified sites have been plotted using GIS system (Maps included in Appendices) and the total size of these sites (hectares) has been determined via this method, to provide an indication of the level of provision across the County and within each of the Wards or parishes.. Where information has been difficult to obtain then the use of existing or identified GIS Layers have been incorporated for example the identification of Commons was through the use of GIS layer of Commons in Herefordshire that was developed after the site auditing had taken place. Therefore during the site auditing relatively few Commons had been identified and therefore a small snapshot have been audited for quality whilst in quantity terms they are now all included within the quantity findings for the typology natural and semi natural greenspace
- 3.7 In terms of quality the following figure summarises the key assessment criteria applied to each of the typologies when carrying out a quality rating.

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Figure 3.2 Quality Assessment Criteria

TYOLOGY	ASSESSMENT CRITERIA		
Parks and Gardens (Local Park / recreation Ground)	• Entrance areas		
	• Presence and quality of signage and information		
	• Boundary fencing and hedges		
	• Tree management		
	• The quality of key furniture including seats, bins, toilets		
	• The quality of maintenance, grass cutting, pathways		
	• Cleanliness		
	• The quality of specific facilities including play provision, bowls greens and multi-use games areas (shown as separate assessment)		
Natural & Semi Natural Greenspace	• Entrance areas		
	• Presence and quality of signage and information		
	• Boundary fencing and hedges		
	• Tree management mature and young trees		
	• The quality of key furniture including seats, bins, dog bins		
	• The quality of maintenance, grass cutting, pathways		
	• Cleanliness		
Amenity Green Space	• Presence and quality of signage and information		
	• Boundary fencing and hedges		
	• Tree management		
	• The quality of key furniture including seats, bins, dog bins		
	• The quality of maintenance, grass cutting, pathways		
	• Cleanliness		
Outdoor Sports Facilities	Sports pitches	Bowling Greens	Tennis Courts
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Entrance • Signage • Car Park • Line Marking • Pitch level • Grass Surface • Weed free surface • Stones/Glass 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Entrance • Signage • Seating • Bins • Gullies • Grass surface • Weed free 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Entrance • Signage • Perimeter • Fencing • Court markings • Net • litter

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Parks and Gardens

Definition

Parks and Gardens:	Major Park Large Park	These include Formal Urban and Country Parks These are high quality parks that offer a wide range of facilities for formal and informal recreation and events
	Local Park Recreation Ground	These include small parks and recreation grounds that offer a limited range of facilities for informal and formal sport, play and recreation. These sites offer more than just areas for children's play
	Formal Garden	Normally high quality laid out gardens including memorial gardens that include formal grass areas, floral and permanent landscaping and seating.

- 3.8 Parks and Gardens provide accessible high quality opportunities for a range of informal recreation, sporting opportunities and community events., they are increasingly being recognised for the role they play in developing local communities and contributing to the wider social agendas such as health, social inclusion and environmental sustainability to name but a few. Good quality parks are now on the Government agenda and the introduction of National Award schemes such as the Green Flag Award are raising the profile of parks further.
- 3.9 Parks provision has been sub categorised into Gardens, Large Parks, Local Parks, Major Parks and Recreation Grounds on the basis of discussions with Leisure and Planning Services about the primary role and function of the parks facilities across the County
- 3.10 The management of parks is split between the Council and the Parishes and clearly the delivery of quality and accessibility is affected by devolved responsibility.

Quantity Parks and Gardens

- 3.11 The audit has revealed a total of 56 sites that have been classified as parks and gardens covering 195.52 hectares across Herefordshire. The sites are identified in appendix 3 and the provision is as follows:

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Figure 3.3 Parks and garden provision across Herefordshire

Provision Type	Number	Hectares of Provision	Total Hectares	Provision per 1000 Population
Gardens	11	22.63	195.52	1.12
Large Parks	0	0		
Local Parks	25	30.72		
Major Parks	9	121.11		
Recreation Grounds	11	21.06		

3.12 Figure 3.3 above shows that the County has a current standard of 1.12 hectares per 1000 population.

3.13 Figure 3.4 overleaf gives a more detailed breakdown of provision across the eight identified area.

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Figure 3.4 Parks and Garden Provision by Area

Area	Population	Sub typology	Number of sites	Hectares	Total Hectares	Provision per 1000 population
Bromyard	11,880	Gardens	0	0	2.696	0.22
		Large Parks	0	0		
		Local Parks	1	0.258		
		Major Parks	0	0		
		Recreation Grounds	3	2.438		
		Total	4	2.696		
Central Herefordshire	21,401	Gardens	1	15.380	83.532	3.90
		Large Parks	0	0		
		Local Parks	3	0.745		
		Major Parks	1	67.110		
		Recreation Grounds	1	0.297		
		Total	6	83.532		
Golden Valley	11,953	Gardens	0	0	0	0
		Large Parks	0	0		
		Local Parks	0	0		
		Major Parks	0	0		
		Recreation Grounds	0	0		
		Total	0	0		
Hereford City North	34,686	Gardens	5	4.836	46.029	1.32
		Large Parks	0	0		
		Local Parks	4	5.161		
		Major Parks	2	28.165		
		Recreation Grounds	2	7.867		
		Total	14	46.029		
Hereford City South	20,156	Gardens	0	0	22.664	1.12
		Large Parks	0	0		
		Local Parks	3	1.347		
		Major Parks	2	18.891		
		Recreation Grounds	2	2.426		
		Total	7	22.664		
Ledbury	14,953	Gardens	1	0.213	7.583	1.13
		Large Parks	0	0		
		Local Parks	4	2.628		
		Major Parks	2	4.036		
		Recreation Grounds	1	0.706		
		Total	8	7.583		
Leominster	16,673	Gardens	1	0.167	8.069	0.48
		Large Parks	0	0		
		Local Parks	4	5.938		
		Major Parks	0	0		
		Recreation Grounds	1	1.964		
		Total	6	8.069		
Kington	15,459	Gardens	0	0	5.570	0.36
		Large Parks	0	0		

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Area	Population	Sub typology	Number of sites	Hectares	Total Hectares	Provision per 1000 population
		Local Parks	1	0.201		
		Major Parks	0	0		
		Recreation Grounds	1	5.369		
		Total	2	5.570		
Ross-on Wye	27,710	Gardens	3	2.029	19.380	0.69
		Large Parks	0	0		
		Local Parks	5	14.439		
		Major Parks	1	2.912		
		Recreation Grounds	0	0		
		Total	9	19.380		
TOTALS (County-Wide)	174,871	Gardens	11	22.63	195.520	1.12
		Large Parks	0	0		
		Local Parks	25	30.72		
		Major Parks	9	121.11		
		Recreation Grounds	11	21.06		

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- 3.14 From the figure above a number of observations can be made regarding the quantity of parks and gardens across Herefordshire these are:
- The distribution of parks and gardens is uneven with the number and type of provision varying across the County. It is important to recognise the rural nature of the County and the fact that traditionally parks were provided in the major towns and cities as a means of recreation for the urban workforce, in rural areas it was primarily the main market towns that provided parks or formal gardens as a means of civic pride.
 - In terms of total hectares Golden Valley one of the most rural part of the county has no parks and gardens, Bromyard has the lowest provision with 2.696 hectares, Central Herefordshire has the largest amount of land (83.53 hectares) classified as parks and gardens, Hereford City North and South have the second and third largest amount of provision (46.03 ha and 22.66 ha respectively) Ross on Wye has 19.38 ha of parks and garden provision.
 - In terms of provision per 1000 population people living in Central Herefordshire, Hereford City North, Hereford City South have the largest provision, people living in the rural areas such as Bromyard, Golden Valley, Ledbury, and Kington have the least provision of Parks and Gardens per person.

Quality: Parks and Gardens

- 3.15 Quality Inspections have been undertaken via a site visit to **40** (71 %) of the 56 sites within this typology and completion of a scored proforma. The quality assessment proforma is based on a number of key criteria encompassing the quality aspects of the Green Flag Programme, ILAM Parks Management Guidance and the Tidy Britain Scheme. The assessment considered the physical, social and aesthetic qualities of each individual formal open space site. In summary the scoring included the criteria of:
- Entrance areas
 - Presence and quality of signage and information
 - Boundary fencing and hedges
 - Roads, paths and cycle ways
 - Quality of planted areas (flower and shrub beds)
 - Tree management
 - The quality of key furniture including seats, bins, toilets
 - The quality of specific facilities including play provision, bowls greens and multi-use games areas
- 3.16 The quality audit provides an indicative rating of quality out of 100%. It is important to note that the quality score represents a "snapshot" in time and records the quality of the site at the time of the visit audit. The quality scores are then measured against a "quality value line that is based on the Green Flag Award Judges Scoring Assessment. The quality value line is outlined below, sites that achieve a quality value of 61% or above would meet the Green Flag Award standard for maintenance.

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Quality Line –Parks, Gardens and Recreation Grounds

0% - 15%	16% - 30%	31% - 45%	46% - 60%	61% - 75%	76% +
Very Poor	Poor	Average	Good	Very Good	Excellent

3.17 The following Figure demonstrates the quality ratings of those parks and garden sites audited:

Figure 3.5 Quality Findings for Parks and Gardens in Herefordshire

Area	Sub typology	Number of sites	Number of sites Audited	Minimum Rating (%)	Maximum Rating (%)	Average Rating (%)
Bromyard	Gardens	0	0	-	-	-
	Large Parks	0	0	-	-	-
	Local Parks	1	1	29	29	29
	Major Parks	0	0	-	-	-
	Recreation Grounds	3	2	48	67	57
Central Herefordshire	Gardens	1	1	62	62	62
	Large Parks	0	0	-	-	-
	Local Parks	3	2	33	50	40
	Major Parks	1	1	82	82	82
	Recreation Grounds	1	0	-	-	-
Golden Valley	Gardens	0	0	-	-	-
	Large Parks	0	0	-	-	-
	Local Parks	0	0	0	0	0
	Major Parks	0	0	-	-	-
	Recreation Grounds	0	0	-	-	-
Hereford City North	Gardens	5	3	59	72	65
	Large Parks	0	0	-	-	-
	Local Parks	4	4	51	79	67
	Major Parks	2	1	35	35	35
	Recreation Grounds	2	1	60	60	60
Hereford City South	Gardens	0	0	-	-	-
	Large Parks	0	0	0	0	0
	Local Parks	3	3	46	61	48
	Major Parks	2	0	-	-	-
	Recreation Grounds	2	0	-	-	-
Ledbury	Gardens	1	1	66	66	66
	Large Parks	0	0	-	-	-
	Local Parks	4	3	62	66	65
	Major Parks	2	1	68	68	68
	Recreation Grounds	1	0	-	-	-

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Area	Sub typology	Number of sites	Number of sites Audited	Minimum Rating (%)	Maximum Rating (%)	Average Rating (%)
Leominster	Gardens	1	1	59	59	59
	Large Parks	0	0	-	-	-
	Local Parks	4	4	31	65	44
	Major Parks	1	1	45	45	45
	Recreation Grounds	1	1	54	54	54
Kington	Gardens	0	0	-	-	-
	Large Parks	0	0	-	-	-
	Local Parks	1	1	49	49	49
	Major Parks	0	0	-	-	-
	Recreation Grounds	1	1	48	48	48
Ross-on Wye	Gardens	3	2	66	75	70
	Large Parks	0	0	-	-	-
	Local Parks	5	5	39	69	61
	Major Parks	1	0	-	-	-
	Recreation Grounds	0	0	-	-	-
TOTALS (County-Wide)	Gardens	11	8	59%	75%	67%
	Large Parks	0	0	-	-	-
	Local Parks	25	22	29%	79%	55%
	Major Parks	9	4	35%	82%	58%
	Recreation Grounds	11	6	48%	67%	57%
Overall Totals	All Parks and Gardens	56	40	29%	82%	57%

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Accessibility

- 3.18 Accessibility has been assessed using a variety of techniques including mapping exercises and consultation. The key findings show that:
- 81% of respondents to the residents survey stated that they parks and open spaces
 - Walking is the most common response given for using provision (30%)
 - 40% of respondents would like to see more provision within their area
 - A relatively large proportion of respondents travel by car to use this provision
 - The most common reasons given as a barrier to the use of formal open space were vandalism (20%) and dog fouling (18%)
 - The average acceptable travel time to formal open space is 8.6 minutes which equates to either 0.41 miles walking distance or 2.73 miles by car

Key Findings – Parks and Gardens

- 3.19 The following observations can be made from the Figure above::
- The majority of provision in this category is classed as local park and 88% of the overall total of these that have been identified have been audited
 - The site that scored the lowest quality rating was a local park in Bromyard East This site scored 29% or 'poor' against the quality value line
 - The highest rated site was the Queenswood Country Park, which is a Major Park in Central Herefordshire. This site scored the highest rating overall, 82% which equates to an 'excellent' rating when measured against the quality value line
 - Of the sites audited 15 sites were found to have no signage to indicate the name of the site, ownership or contact detail
 - 3 of the sites audited as parks and gardens were lacking bins, 5 sites had no seating or benches
 - The average quality rating for the main entrances of the sites audited (of those sites found to have a main entrance) is 3.78 (out of a rating of 5), the average quality rating of signage is 2.33 (out of 5), grass rated 3.89 (out of 5), bins rated 3.24 and seats rated 3.45 out of 5. Of the sites with flower beds the average quality of the flower beds scored an impressive 4.23 out of 5 for the quality of planting and lack of weeds.
 - The average rating of all parks and gardens visited was 57% 'good'
 - It is important to note that in terms of the quality of Parks and Gardens when measured against the National quality standard for parks and gardens, the average quality of parks and gardens is 4% away from achieving the Green Flag Award standard.
 - The audit revealed that there was scope for more facilities for those with a disability
 - Few sites had lighting provision which potentially restricts usage to daylight hours

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Accessibility

- 3.20 Accessibility has been assessed using a variety of techniques including mapping exercises and consultation. The key findings show that:
- 81% of respondents to the residents survey stated that they visit Parks and Open Space
 - 78% of respondents believe they have sufficient provision in their local area
 - A relatively large proportion of respondents 61% travel by car to use this provision
 - The average acceptable travel time to parks and gardens is 11.62 minutes which equates to 0.58 miles walking (at 3 mph) and 3.87 miles driving (at an average speed of 20 mph)

Key Findings

- 3.21 A number of key findings and conclusions in relation to the provision of parks and gardens can be reported. These are:
- High satisfaction with the quality of parks provision (Measured by the Door to Door residents Survey)
 - High levels of usage
 - Parks and gardens are of a generally high quality, with an average quality of 57% rated as 'Good.' Residents also rated the quality of parks and gardens highly
 - A number have concerns over vandalism, dog fouling and general maintenance which are seen as barriers to use
 - Sites need to provide for people with disabilities
 - The County has a provision of 1.12 hectares of parks and gardens per 1000 head of population
 - Local people believe they have enough parks in their local area

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Natural and Semi Natural Greenspace

- 3.22 Natural and semi-natural open space has been categorised into Woodland, Green Corridors and Commons, all of which have been assessed separately and the findings are set out in this section.

Natural and semi natural greenspaces	Commons	These are sites that are managed or promoted for a countryside experience or to promote wildlife habitat. They are sites that are readily accessible to the public. They are not the public right of way network and they do include sites promoted as Nature Reserves,. Wildlife conservation, bio diversity, environmental education awareness and countryside recreation such as walking, or cycling. They also include disused railway lines that are promoted a long distance cycle-ways, bridle-ways etc
	Green Corridors	
	Natural sites	
	Nature Reserves	
	Picnic Sites	

Quantity: Natural and Semi Natural Greenspace

- 3.23 The audit undertaken has revealed that there are **220 sites** occupying **4,143.28 hectares** that have been classified as natural and semi natural greenspace. The sites identified within this typology are attached in Appendix 3. The location of these sites is presented on Map xx. The breakdown of provision across the county is as follows;

Figure 3.6 Natural and Semi Natural Greenspace provision across Herefordshire

Provision Type	Number	Hectares	Total Hectares	Provision per 1000 population
Common	131	2,075.597	4,143.28	23.69
Green Corridor	30	92.710		
Natural	41	1,905.240		
Nature Reserve	6	66.135		
Picnic Site	12	3.601		
Total	220	4,143.28		

- 3.24 In assessing natural and semi-natural greenspace, consideration has been given to English Nature's Accessible Natural Greenspace Standards. English Nature present a number of recommendations in relation to provision levels, specifically: Provision of at least 2ha of accessible natural greenspace per 1,000 population. This equates to 349.74ha of provision within the County. The County currently has 4,143.38 ha or 23.69 ha per 1000 population

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- 3.25 A more detailed analysis of the provision of natural and semi natural greenspace across the eight areas is provided in the Figure below

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Figure 3.7 Natural and Semi Natural Greenspace provision by Area

Area	Population	Sub typology	Number of sites	Hectares	Total Hectares	Provision per 1000 population
Bromyard	11,880	Common	8	247.975	258.450	21.75
		Green Corridor	3	10.143		
		Natural	0	0		
		Nature Reserve	0	0		
		Picnic Site	1	0.332		
		total	12	258.450		
Central Herefordshire	21,401	Common	36	244.415	349.688	16.33
		Green Corridor	1	12.940		
		Natural	3	40.730		
		Nature Reserve	2	51.381		
		Picnic Site	1	0.222		
		total	43	349.688		
Golden Valley	11,953	Common	32	455.778	2,161.457	180.82
		Green Corridor	10	3.256		
		Natural	11	1,701.786		
		Nature Reserve	0	0		
		Picnic Site	2	0.637		
		total	55	2,161.457		
Hereford – North City	34,686	Common	0	0	21.64	0.62
		Green Corridor	4	14.006		
		Natural	0	0		
		Nature Reserve	2	7.635		
		Picnic Site	0	0		
		total	6	21.64		
Hereford City South	20,156	Common	1	0.613	19.892	0.98
		Green Corridor	5	10.588		
		Natural	1	1.913		
		Nature Reserve	1	6.778		
		Picnic Site	0	0		
		total	8	19.892		
Ledbury	14,953	Common	6	16.533	118.999	7.96
		Green Corridor	1	4.846		
		Natural	4	97.280		
		Nature Reserve	1	0.340		
		Picnic Site	0	0		
		total	12	118.999		
Leominster	16,673	Common	13	302.365	319.332	19.15
		Green Corridor	0	0.00		
		Natural	4	16.967		
		Nature Reserve	0	0		
		Picnic Site	0	0		
		total	17	319.332		

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Area	Population	Sub typology	Number of sites	Hectares	Total Hectares	Provision per 1000 population
Kington	15,459	Common	4	547.719	614.31	39.73
		Green Corridor	2	23.042		
		Natural	15	42.701		
		Nature Reserve	0	0.00		
		Picnic Site	2	0.849		
		total	23	614.31		
Ross-on Wye	27,710	Common	31	260.214	279.513	10.09
		Green Corridor	4	13.889		
		Natural	3	3.849		
		Nature Reserve	0	0.00		
		Picnic Site	6	1.561		
		total	44	279.513		
TOTALS (County-Wide)	174,871	Common	131	2,075.61	4,143.28	23.69
		Green Corridor	30	92.70		
		Natural	41	1,905.24		
		Nature Reserve	6	66.13		
		Picnic Site	12	3.60		
		Total	220	4,143.28		

3.26 From Figure 3.7 above. The identified natural and semi-natural greenspace provision covers 4,143.28 ha across the County. From the Figure, a number of observations can be made:

- 52% of the identified provision is within one area –Golden Valley
- The provision in terms of hectares varies significantly across the County from 2,161 hectares in the Golden Valley area to 19.89 hectares in Hereford City South
- There is a variance also in terms of the amount of theoretical provision per 1,000 population due to the varying size of provision and significant differences in population. The County average equates to 23.69 hectares per 1000 population. This reflects the nature of this type of provision and highlights the fact that commons and woodland in particular generally cover a large area.
- Hereford City North and Hereford City South both fall well below the 2ha per 1000 population identified by English Nature
- The more urban areas of Hereford City North and Hereford City South has the least provision per 1000 population as would be expected, urban areas tend to have more formal provision in the form of parks and gardens as has been demonstrated already with the Parks and Garden typology findings
- Accessible Nature Reserves occupy 66.94 hectares
- It is important to note that limited data is available regarding the accessibility of some of these sites

Quality: Natural and Semi Natural Greenspace

3.27 Quality Inspections have been undertaken via a site visit to 31 of the 220 sites identified (14%) within this typology and completion of a scored proforma. The quality assessment proforma is

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based on a number of key criteria encompassing the quality aspects of the Green Flag Programme, ILAM Parks Management Guidance and the Tidy Britain Scheme.

- 3.28 The quality audit provides an indicative rating of quality out of 100%. It is important to note that the quality score represents a “snapshot” in time and records the quality of the site at the time of the visit audit. The quality scores are then measured against a “quality value line that is based on the Green Flag Award Judges Scoring Assessment. The quality value line is outlined below, sites that achieve a quality value of 61% or above would meet the Green Flag Award standard for maintenance

Quality Line –Natural and Semi Natural Greenspace

0% - 15%	16% - 30%	31% - 45%	46% - 60%	61% - 75%	76% +
Very Poor	Poor	Average	Good	Very Good	Excellent

- 3.29 The following Figure demonstrates the quality ratings of those natural and semi natural greenspace sites audited.

Figure 3.8 Quality Rating of Natural and Semi Natural Greenspace

Area	Sub-typology	Number of Sites	Number of Sites Audited	Minimum Rating (%)	Maximum Rating (%)	Average Rating (%)
Bromyard	Common	8	0	-	-	-
	Green Corridor	3	0	-	-	-
	Natural	0	0	-	-	-
	Nature Reserve	0	0	-	-	-
	Picnic Site	1	0	-	-	-
Central Herefordshire	Common	36	2	38	43	40
	Green Corridor	1	0	-	-	-
	Natural	3	3	40	61	47
	Nature Reserve	2	2	46	73	59
	Picnic Site	1	0	-	-	-
Golden Valley	Common	32	0	-	-	-
	Green Corridor	10	0	-	-	-
	Natural	11	0	-	-	-
	Nature Reserve	0	0	-	-	-
	Picnic Site	2	0	-	-	-
Hereford City North	Common	0	0	-	-	-
	Green Corridor	4	4	46	63	58
	Natural	0	0	-	-	-
	Nature Reserve	2	0	-	-	-
	Picnic Site	0	0	-	-	-
Hereford City South	Common	1	0	-	-	-
	Green Corridor	5	3	47	63	54
	Natural	1	0	-	-	-
	Nature Reserve	1	1	43	43	43
	Picnic Site	0	0	-	-	-
Ledbury	Common	6	0	-	-	-
	Green Corridor	1	1	68	68	68

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Area	Sub-typology	Number of Sites	Number of Sites Audited	Minimum Rating (%)	Maximum Rating (%)	Average Rating (%)
	Natural	4	1	69	69	69
	Nature Reserve	1	0	-	-	-
	Picnic Site	0	0	-	-	-
Leominster	Common	13	0	-	-	-
	Green Corridor	0	0	-	-	-
	Natural	4	0	-	-	-
	Nature Reserve	0	0	-	-	-
	Picnic Site	0	0	-	-	-
Kington	Common	4	4	36	56	37
	Green Corridor	2	2	33	40	37
	Natural	15	3	27	47	37
	Nature Reserve	0	0	-	-	-
	Picnic Site	2	0	-	-	-
Ross-on Wye	Common	31	0	-	-	-
	Green Corridor	4	4	26	70	50
	Natural	3	0	-	-	-
	Nature Reserve	0	0	-	-	-
	Picnic Site	6	1	58	58	58
TOTALS (County-Wide)	Common	131	6	36%	56%	43%
	Green Corridor	30	14	26%	70%	50%
	Natural	41	7	27%	69%	46%
	Nature Reserve	6	3	43%	73%	52%
	Picnic Site	12	1	58%	58%	58%
Overall Totals	All Natural/ Semi-Natural Green Space	220	31	26%	73%	48%

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Quality of Natural and Semi Natural Greenspace-Key findings

- 3.30 From the Figure above a number of observations can be made these are:
- The quality of sites significantly varies across the subtypologies (Commons, green corridors, natural, nature reserves and picnic sites). The highest rated site was a Nature reserve in Central Herefordshire (Bodenham Lake Nature Reserve). This site scored 73% (very good)
 - A total of 31 natural and semi-natural sites were audited for quality across Herefordshire to provide an indication as to the level of quality (note commons were identified as a separate typology after the quality audit which is why there are so few audited)
 - The lowest rated site was a green corridor site in Ross-on-Wye (Wye Valley walk land), which scored 26%. This equates to 'poor' against the quality value line
 - The average score for all natural and semi-natural greenspace sites that were audited for quality was 48% which equates to 'good'
 - 22 sites were found to lack signage, 14 sites had no bin provision and 17 sites had no seating
 - Signage varied in quality and the average quality score was 2.57 out of 5
 - The average quality score for those sites audited that provide bins was 2.78 out of 5
 - The average quality score for those sites audited that provide benches was 2.78 out of 5
 - The average score for cleanliness of those sites audited was 3.97 out of 5

Accessibility

- 3.31 From the door to door consultation 60% of respondents that answered the question regarding travel times identified that they considered themselves to be within 10 minute travel time of Natural and semi natural greenspace
- 3.32 89% of respondents identified walking to make use of green corridors, whilst 69% of respondents identified travelling by car to access natural areas, woodlands etc
- 3.33 Residents in the more urban areas namely Hereford City North, Hereford City South, have a limited choice of options of available natural and semi natural greenspace within their area
- 3.34 The 12.06 minutes travel time identified by respondents equates to 0.60 miles walking at 3 mph and 4.02 miles driving at an average speed of 20 mph.

Key Findings:

- 3.35 A number of key conclusions can be drawn from the research undertaken. These are summarised as:
- Sites are generally good in quality, and local residents rate quality positively
 - Quantity varies across the County, both in terms of the number of sites and hectares / size of provision

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- Accessibility issues identified through consultation are that these sites are generally less well used than formal space.
- In assessing Countryside and Woodland, consideration has been given to English Natures Accessible Natural Greenspace Standards. English Nature present a number of recommendations in relation to provision levels, specifically
- Provision of at least 2ha of accessible natural green space per 1,000 population. (Taking into account all identified countryside and woodland sites, there is currently 23.69ha per 1000 population of provision within Herefordshire)

3.36 **Assessment against English Nature Standards of Provision** is considered in more detail within Section IV of the report (Standards of Provision). Initial findings reveal that:

- There is more than sufficient provision to meet the quantitative standards set by English Nature, to meet the standard (2ha of provision per 1,000 population).
- Against the standards there is a minimum requirement for 349.74ha hectares
- It is very important to recognise that the County is mainly rural by nature and the English Nature standard is very much an urban based model that recognises the value of the association with nature for busy City dwellers
- The Council should therefore work to ensure that the main urban areas do provide the recognised 2ha per 1000 recommended by English Nature
- The Council should therefore consider the identified provision within each of the identified areas to ensure that change in use is acceptable, that habitat is protected and that the rural nature of the County is not compromised.

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Amenity Greenspace

- 3.37 Amenity greenspace serves an important role, especially in urban areas where it provides space amongst residential dwellings for people, especially children to play. In more rural areas it is equally important and often provides space for people to meet or is used to demonstrate pride in the local village in the form of the village green or a monument or memorial.
- 3.38 Amenity greenspace is frequently around housing areas and fulfils a number of primary purposes, including enhancing the appearance of local areas and providing opportunities for informal activities such as jogging, dog walking and informal play. In built up areas, amenity greenspace can also provide space for workers or visitors to eat lunch or go for a walk.
- 3.39 Amenity greenspace can also help reduce noise and generally provide a natural break in the urban street scene. Amenity greenspace sites can be large useful areas, or small parcels of land sporadically scattered within housing estates that are too small to have any recreational value. They may however contribute to the overall appeal of an area through adding to the aesthetic quality within housing areas.
- 3.40 Given the different uses and potential purpose of amenity greenspace, sites within this typology have been divided into 4 categories, Amenity, Village Green, Civic Space and Allotments.

Amenity Green space	Amenity	Opportunities for informal activities close to residential areas and improve the visual appearance of residential or other areas
	Civic Space	
	Village Green	
	Allotments	

- 3.41 Figure 3.9 below identifies the County wide provision of amenity greenspace. The County has a provision of 80.89 ha or the equivalent of 0.46 ha per 1000 population. The amenity greenspace has been given the sub-typology representative of the sites primary purpose

Figure 3.9 Amenity Greenspace Provision

Provision Type	Number	Hectares	Total Hectares	Provision per 1000 population
Amenity	130	62.612	80.89	0.46
Civic Space	9	1.268		
Village Green	36	12.172		
Allotments	7	4.838		
Total	182	80.89		

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Quantity: Amenity Greenspace

3.42 The audit undertaken has revealed that there are **182 amenity greenspace sites** within Herefordshire County. The key statistics relating to the number of Amenity Greenspaces are detailed in the Figure below.

Figure 3.10 –Amenity Greenspace Provision by Area

	Population		Number of sites	Hectares	Total Hectares	Provision per 1000 population
Bromyard	11,880	Amenity	4	0.235	1.84	0.15
		Civic Space	0	0		
		Village Green	38	1.605		
		Allotment	0	0		
		Total	12	1.840		
Central Herefordshire	21,401	Amenity	12	4.816	4.89	0.22
		Civic Space	0	0		
		Village Green	2	0.075		
		Allotment	0	0		
		Total	14	4.891		
Golden Valley	11,953	Amenity	1	0.165	2.92	0.19
		Civic Space	0	0		
		Village Green	6	2.758		
		Allotment	0	0		
		Total	7	2.923		
Hereford City North	34,686	Amenity	34	17.624	21.41	0.62
		Civic Space	8	1.211		
		Village Green	0	0		
		Allotment	3	2.584		
		Total	45	21.419		
Hereford City South	20,156	Amenity	39	28.833	29.60	1.47
		Civic Space	0	0		
		Village Green	0	0		
		Allotment	2	0.77		
		Total	41	29.604		
Ledbury	14,953	Amenity	7	2.223	6.03	0.40
		Civic Space	0	0		
		Village Green	9	3.816		
		Allotment	0	0		
		Total	16	6.039		
Leominster	16,673	Amenity	17	4.379	4.80	0.29
		Civic Space	0	0		
		Village Green	2	0.423		
		Allotment	0	0		
		Total	19	4.802		
Kington	15,459	Amenity	3	0.201	2.45	0.16
		Civic Space	0	0		

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	Population		Number of sites	Hectares	Total Hectares	Provision per 1000 population
		Village Green	8	2.254		
		Allotment	0	0		
		Total	11	2.455	2.45	0.16
Ross-on Wye	27,710	Amenity	13	4.136	6.91	0.25
		Civic Space	1	0.057		
		Village Green	1	1.241		
		Allotment	2	1.483		
		Total	17	6.917		
TOTALS (County-Wide)	174,871	Amenity	130	62.612	80.89	0.46
		Civic Space	9	1.268		
		Village Green	36	12.172		
		Allotment	7	4.838		
		Total	182	80.89		

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- 3.43 Figure 3.10 above shows a significant variance of amenity greenspace provision. The more urban areas of Hereford City North and Hereford City South combined have 63% of the total amenity greenspace provision. Kington and Bromyard have the lowest levels of amenity greenspace provision.
- 3.44 In terms of provision per 1000 Hereford City South provides the most amenity greenspace per 1000 residents with 29.6ha. Kington (0.16ha per 1000 population), Bromyard (0.15 ha per 1000 population), and Golden Valley (0.19 ha per 1000 population) have the lowest levels of provision per 1000 population.
- 3.45 The Figure shows a County standard of provision of 0.46 ha per 1000.
- 3.46 7 of the 9 areas fall below that standard Bromyard, Central Herefordshire, Golden Valley, Leominster, Ledbury, Kington and Ross on Wye.
- 3.47 It is important to note that PPG 17 is very much about setting local standards of provision that in this case are specific to Herefordshire. If it is necessary to benchmark against any national standards of provision then the only national standard for amenity greenspace provided is 0.5 hectares per 1000 population. This is based on the current U.K average of all applicable local authorities' provision standards as highlighted in the Government's Rethinking Open Space Report (2001). The current provision across the County equates to 0.46 hectares per 1000 population and therefore there is a County wide deficiency of amenity greenspace. It is important to note that in establishing the quantity standards for amenity greenspace sites have been identified by Council officers and the Parish Councils and in the main only sites of 0.1 ha in size or above have been included (the exception being locally important and identified village greens or civic space such as war memorials and cenotaphs)

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Quality – Amenity Greenspace

Figure 3.11 - Quality Findings for Herefordshire Amenity Greenspace

Area	Sub typology	Number of Sites	Number of Sites Audited	Minimum Rating (%)	Maximum Rating (%)	Average Rating (%)
Bromyard	Amenity	4	2	34	54	44
	Civic Space	0	0	-	-	-
	Village Green	8	1	39	39	39
	Allotments	0	-	-	-	-
Central Hereford	Amenity	12	1	35	35	35
	Civic Space	0	0	-	-	-
	Village Green	2	0	-	-	-
	Allotments	0	-	-	-	-
Golden Valley	Amenity	1	1	68	68	68
	Civic Space	0	0	-	-	-
	Village Green	6	1	45	45	45
	Allotments	0	-	-	-	-
Hereford City North	Amenity	34	5	53	77	66
	Civic Space	8	2	75	80	77
	Village Green	0	0	-	-	-
	Allotments	3	-	-	-	-
Hereford City South	Amenity	39	4	26	31	29
	Civic Space	0	0	-	-	-
	Village Green	0	0	-	-	-
	Allotments	2	-	-	-	-
Ledbury	Amenity	7	4	38	62	54
	Civic Space	0	0	-	-	-
	Village Green	9	1	59	59	59
	Allotments	0	-	-	-	-
Leominster	Amenity	17	1	48	48	48
	Civic Space	0	-	-	-	-
	Village Green	0	0	-	-	-
	Allotments	0	-	-	-	-
Kington	Amenity	3	3	41	67	50
	Civic Space	0	-	-	-	-
	Village Green	8	4	49	67	59
	Allotments	0	-	-	-	-
Ross-on Wye	Amenity	13	4	32	59	46
	Civic Space	1	0	-	-	-
	Village Green	1	1	69	69	69
	Allotments	0	-	-	-	-
TOTALS (County-Wide)	Amenity	130	25	26%	77%	49%
	Civic Space	9	2	49%	80%	65%
	Village Green	36	8	39%	69%	57%
	Allotments	7	-	-	-	-
Overall Totals	All Amenity Greenspace	182	35	26%	80%	52%

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Key Findings Quality – Amenity Greenspace

- 3.48 The following observations can be made from the Figure above:
- 35/182 of all amenity greenspace has been audited in Herefordshire. 25 of which were Amenity sites, 2 civic space and 8 village greens
 - This equates to 19% of the overall number of identified sites but nevertheless provides an indication as to the quality level of amenity greenspace provision
 - The lowest score for amenity sites was 26% which equates to a 'poor' rating against the quality value line. The site was in the Hereford City South area.
 - The highest rated sites were in Hereford City North with an amenity site that rated 77% (Hampton Park Court Road Open Space) and a civic space that rated 80% (St Peter Street)
 - The average overall score for each sub-typology was;
 - 49% (good) for amenity sites
 - 63%(very good) for civic spaces
 - 57% (good) for village greens
 - The average score for all amenity greenspace that was audited was 52% which equates to 'good' against the quality value line
 - Of the sites that have a main entrance, the average quality rating is 2.91 out of 5 in terms of the overall quality of the entrance
 - From the sites that have been audited the following has been identified; 24 sites where found to have no signage, 32 have no bins and 32 sites have no seating
 - The average quality of the grass in terms of maintenance is 3.48 out of 5 and for cleanliness the average score is 3.92 out of 5

Accessibility

- 3.49 38% of respondents who replied to the frequency of use question in the door to door survey stated they use open space near to their home (this was the definition given to residents at the time of the survey to represent amenity greenspace), on a daily basis.
- 3.50 From the door to door consultation 83% of respondents that answered the question regarding travel times identified that they considered themselves to be less than 5 minute travel time of amenity greenspace.
- 3.51 95% of the respondents identified walking to amenity greenspace.
- 3.52 Residents in the more urban areas namely Hereford North, Hereford South, have a wider choice of options of available natural and semi natural greenspace within their area.
- 3.53 The 3.6 minute travel time identified by respondents equates to a travel distance of 0.18 miles at a walking speed of 3 mph and 1.2 miles at a driving speed of 20 mph.

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Summary of Key Findings

- 3.54 Amenity greenspace is generally average in quality across the County. Residents generally make conscious use of provision.
- 3.55 Whilst many of the sites are relatively small in size it is important that local people are confident in using the sites and know who to contact if something is wrong with the grass area in front of their home. That is why all sites should have appropriate signage stating clearly who owns the land and who to contact.
- 3.56 The provision of amenity space is best provided in future developments
- 3.57 Some key findings relating to amenity greenspace include:
- The quality of amenity space is 52% good across the County although quality is varied amongst the sub-typologies (Amenity 49%, Civic Spaces 65% and 57% for Village Greens)
 - The amount of amenity greenspace varies across the County and in the urban/rural areas
 - The average quality from the sites audited equates to a quality rating of good

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Outdoor Sports Facilities

Definition

Outdoor sports facilities	Sites that provide for participation in outdoor sports such as pitch sports, tennis, bowls, athletics or countryside and water sports
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3.58 Outdoor sports facilities, for the purposes of the assessment have been sub-divided in to the following facilities:

- **Playing Pitches** – provision for Football, Cricket, Rugby and Hockey have been assessed using the prescribed methodology detailed within *“Toward a Level Playing Field”*. The assessment methodology is provided in more detail within the appendices to this report.
- Where **Bowling Greens** are present in parks, they have formed part of the overall quality score for the facility. Bowling greens have been identified where possible but no further information has been obtained within the scope of this study.
- Similarly where **Tennis Courts** are present in parks they have contributed to the overall score for the park or open space. Tennis courts have been identified where possible but no further information has been obtained within the scope of this study.
- **Athletics** and **Rounders** have not been assessed as part of this study owing to tracks and pitches not being readily identifiable at the time of the site auditing.

3.59 More informal facilities have been included within the other listed typologies. For example, a number of Multi-Use Games Areas (MUGAs) were identified. Given their intended use, these have been included as part of the assessment of play areas and provision for young people. The various types of outdoor sports facilities are considered in brief below.

3.60 The Audit has identified that Herefordshire has 255 sites classified as outdoor sports covering 4,860.77 hectares, however this includes schools, golf course and private provision. Given the size of golf courses in relation to participation, these have been excluded from the calculations as their inclusion would disproportionately distort the figures. Athletics tracks are also excluded from the calculations as further research is required to identify the extent of community use.

3.61 From the GIS mapping the following outdoor sports provision has been identified:

- 255 sites identified as outdoor sport occupying 4,860.77 ha
- 108 school sites occupying 204.913 ha (82 school sites occupying 120.184 ha have no community use),
- 26 schools provide 84.729 ha of community accessible provision
- 10 bowling greens providing 2.59 ha
- 24 cricket grounds providing 33.04 ha
- 15 golf courses providing 546.866 ha

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- 73 sports pitch sites providing 156.47ha including 2 synthetic turf pitches 1.13ha
- 21 tennis court sites providing 5.71 ha
- If golf courses and schools with no community use are excluded the accessible provision equates to 308.348ha

3.62 This would give a current standard for community accessible outdoor sport of 1.76 ha per 1000 population. If schools with no community use are included the standard of provision becomes 2.45 ha per 1000

Consultation Findings

3.63 A number of consultation exercises have been undertaken to inform the study. This has largely comprised of a number of stakeholder interviews, consultation with a number of sports specific forums and governing bodies and a postal questionnaire to all known sports clubs.

3.64 As part of the Councils previous work in developing the Playing Pitch Strategy in 2002 consultation exercise was undertaken with all identified sports pitch clubs within Herefordshire County boundary. **However, the Playing Pitch Strategy is in the process of being updated (2008) and will take the form of a facilities strategy, which will affect the following quantitative analysis. The figures in 3.61 have been updated, but information from 3.67 to 3.76 will be updated in accordance with the GIS data once the Facilities Strategy is complete, so the figures are to be treated with caution as a guide only.**

3.65 The results show that

- Football clubs varied in their opinions on pitch quality. The most common rating was "average"
- Cricket clubs and rugby clubs generally rated pitches positively – most clubs felt that their pitches were good

3.66 A questionnaire survey was sent to every school within Herefordshire County boundary. 106 responses were returned, raising the following issues;

- 19% of respondents identified having community use
- 22% identified pitch drainage as a problem
- 5% identified moles as a problem
- 9% identified that the slope and level of their pitch was an issue

3.67 **The following "Quantity" information is based on the findings of the 2002 Playing Pitch Strategy and will be updated.**

Quantity: Playing Pitches

3.68 The audit of facilities has revealed the total number of pitches for each sport on an area basis. Information has been obtained via the site visits in the first instance, and if this has not been possible to access (particularly in the case of school provision) the level of provision that is available at each site has been identified via A) school or parish questionnaire or B) site capture using the GIS. The identified pitch provision (with formal community access) is summarised in the Figure below;

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Figure 3.12 – Herefordshire County: Community Accessible Pitch Provision

Area	Number of pitches										
	Senior Football	Junior Football	Mini Soccer	Senior Cricket	Junior Cricket	Senior Rugby	Junior Rugby	Senior Hockey	Junior Hockey	STP	TOTALS
Bromyard	4	1	0	3	0	2	0	0	0	0	10
Central Herefordshire	8	6	9	3	1	0	1	0	1	0	29
Golden Valley	5	2	2	3	0	0	1	0	3	0	16
Hereford City North	14	3	8	3	3	4	3	0	2	1	41
Hereford City South	7	4	4	2	0	0	3	0	1	0	21
Ledbury	6	4	1	6	0	3	4	0	0	0	24
Leominster	2	4	0	4	0	5	3	0	1	1	20
Kington	4	8	3	5	5	1	0	1	2	0	29
Ross-on-Wye	5	1	4	6	0	1	3	1	1	0	22
TOTALS	55	33	31	35	9	16	18	2	11	2	212

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3.69 There are total of 212 identified pitches in Herefordshire which breaks down as follows:

- 119 football pitches
- 44 cricket pitches
- 34 rugby pitches
- 13 hockey pitches
- 2 STPs

Figure3.13 – Herefordshire County: Ownership of Community Accessible Pitches

Ownership Category	Type of Pitch										
	Senior Football	Junior Football	Mini Soccer	Senior Cricket	Junior Cricket	Senior Rugby	Junior Rugby	Senior Hockey	Junior Hockey	STP	Total
Herefordshire Council	22	1	8	7	0	4	0	0	0	2	44
Clubs	16	1	0	17	0	11	1	0	0	0	46
Parish/Town Councils	16	9	5	9	1	0	0	1	0	0	41
Companies	1	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	3
Schools - LEA	0	22	18	0	8	1	17	1	11	0	78
Schools - Private	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
TOTALS	55	33	31	35	9	16	18	2	11	2	212

3.70 Pitches are owned by a number of different organisations as follows:

- 44 pitches owned by Herefordshire Council (21%)
- 48 pitches owned by Clubs (22%)
- 41 pitches owned by Parish or Town Councils (19%)
- 3 pitches owned by Companies (1%)
- 78 pitches owned by LEA Schools (37%)

3.71 37% of all pitches with secured community use are located on school sites owned by the LEA. No private schools within Herefordshire were identified as having community use. Herefordshire Council were identified as owning 21% of all pitches and parish or town councils 19%. Sports clubs own 22% of all available pitches in Herefordshire. Three pitches (1%) were identified at two sites privately owned by companies Frank H Dale (1 cricket ground) and Bulmers (1 cricket and 1 senior football).

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Football Pitch Findings

- 3.72 In terms of Football the findings of the Playing Pitch Strategy identified;
- 57% of all identified pitches in Herefordshire are used for football (120 pitches out of 212)
 - 56 are senior pitches (46%)
 - 33 are junior pitches (28%)
 - 31 are mini pitches (26%)
- (Further information provided identifies that 73 pitches are now senior and 21 are mini)
- 3.73 Analysis of key figures demonstrates that;
- Herefordshire Council provide 40% of all senior pitches, both the parish/town councils and sports clubs each provide a further 29% of senior pitches.
 - However, the majority of both junior and mini pitches are located on LEA School sites (67% and 58% respectively)
 - The distribution of football pitches throughout the County is varied.

Cricket Pitch Findings

- 3.74 Cricket pitches make up 21% of the overall identified pitches in Herefordshire
- 35 (80%) are senior pitches and 9 (20%) are junior pitches
 - 48% of all senior pitches are owned by sports clubs, 20% by Herefordshire Council, 26% by Parish/Town Councils and the remaining 6% by companies.
 - The majority of the junior pitches are owned by LEA schools but there are no identified adult cricket pitches on LEA school sites.

Rugby Pitch Findings

- 3.75 Rugby pitches account for 16% of the overall identified pitches in Herefordshire.
- 47% of all rugby pitches are adult pitches and 53% are juniors.
 - There are no community accessible rugby pitches in private school, company or parish/town council ownership.
 - All but one of the community accessible junior rugby pitches are located at LEA Schools.
 - The majority of senior pitches alone are owned by Clubs. These account for 69% of the total provision of community accessible senior pitches.

Hockey Pitch Findings

- 3.76 13 grass hockey pitches account for 6% of the overall provision of community accessible pitches in Herefordshire
- 15% of the identified pitches are senior and 85% are junior
 - The majority of hockey pitches are located at LEA Schools (92%)

Synthetic Turf Pitches (STP) Findings

- 3.77 2 community accessible Synthetic Turf Pitches were identified in Herefordshire.

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- The pitches are located in North Hereford City and the other in Leominster.
- Both are owned by Herefordshire Council.

Quality: Playing Pitches

3.78 Quality Inspections have been undertaken via a site visit and completion of a non-technical visual inspection at a sample of sites. The pitch visit proforma provided as part of the Sport England Electronic Toolkit has been used. This will allow comparison with pitch quality findings in future years with other local authorities who have completed local assessments. The key qualitative aspects of provision include:

- Pitch Slope
- Pitch Evenness
- Grass Cover
- Condition of equipment
- Presence of ancillary facilities
- Presence of common problems
- Proximity to transport network
- Presence of training facilities

3.79 As identified earlier the playing pitch quality is measured against the quality value line as outlined below.

Quality Line – Playing Pitches

0% - 30%	31% - 39%	40% - 59%	60% - 89%	90% +
Poor	Below Average	Average	Good	Excellent

3.80 The results of the quality assessments are summarised in figure 3.14 below

Figure 3.14 -: Summary of Quality Assessment Findings

Type of pitch	Pitches	Quality	Average	Rating
Senior Football	42	37-94%	76%	Good
Junior Football	19	47-89%	69%	Good
Mini Soccer Pitches	13	40-87%	71%	Good
Rugby Pitches	15	73-100%	87%	Good
Cricket Pitches	18	63-94%	79%	Good
TOTALS	107	-	76%	-

3.81 The quality audit of pitches has revealed that:

- Quality varies significantly across sites with ratings varying from 37% (Catley Rough Field) through to 100% (Luctonians Sports Club).
- **Senior football pitches** varied greatly in quality, with 37% being the lowest score and 94% being the highest. The average (mean) was 76%, 'good' when measured against the quality value line.
- **Junior football pitches** also varied in quality ranging from 47% to 89%. Junior pitches had the lowest mean score of 69%.
- The quality range for **mini soccer pitches** is 40-87% with an average of 71% (good).

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- **Rugby Pitches** varied from a score of 73% through to 100%. The average score was 87%, 'good' when measured against the quality value line.
- **Cricket pitches** varied from a score of 63% through to 94%. The average (mean) pitch score was 79% (good).
- **Synthetic Turf Pitches** were not rated as part of this audit.
- **Overall Grass Pitch Provision** The County wide average for pitch quality was 76%, this rates as 'good' when measured against the quality value line.

3.82 These ratings provide a comprehensive guide to the varying quality across the County, but need to be treated with caution for the following reasons:

- The inspections were non-technical, based on a visual assessment only
- The inspections are a snapshot view of provision – scores are recorded based on what is seen on site at one particular visit
- The presence of changing room facilities also boosts the score for a pitch by 15% regardless of the quality of the changing facilities. Although a significant number of the senior football pitches scored were rated as 'good' this was largely due to the existence of changing rooms, which took the scores for many pitches from an average rating to good.
- All pitch and ancillary provision should be of a 'good' standard. In general the pitches rated as 'good' this needs to be kept in context as the pitches were rated for quality at the start of the season and as such the rating reflects this.

Accessibility: Playing Pitches

3.83 Access to pitch provision is influenced by a number of factors and needs to be viewed differently to access factors for more general open space provision. The following factors need to be considered:

- The need for ancillary facilities, such as changing rooms and car parking to ensure that some league standards are met
- The level of fees and charges for use of the facility – playing pitches have been assessed from the perspective of being formal sports facilities
- The demand "unit" is different to that of other types of open space. A team may not necessarily comprise of residents from the same locality

3.84 It is important to consider the "spread" and distribution of facilities to ensure that access for local teams is in theory equitable. It is also important to consider the nature and ownership of provision that is available as this can influence access.

3.85 From the door to door survey local people identified a travel time of 10.52 minutes to access a sports pitch, this equates to a walking distance of 0.58 miles to a sports pitch. It equates to driving distance of 3.51 miles to sports pitches

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Audit of Current Demand

- 3.86 As part of the Playing Pitch Strategy (July 2003) the following numbers of clubs and teams have been identified as playing regular fixtures throughout the relevant season:

Figure 3.15 – Numbers of Clubs and Teams

Sport	Number of clubs	Number of teams
Football	103	288
Cricket	47	137
Rugby	6	60
Hockey	8	28
Total	164	513

- 3.87 In the Playing Pitch Strategy prepared by Herefordshire Council and Sports Project Services, the following comparisons show where pitch supply meets or fails to meet demand in Herefordshire.

Figure 3.16 - Summary of Pitch Supply and Demand

	Senior Football	Junior Football	Mini Soccer	Senior Cricket	Junior Cricket	Senior Rugby	Junior Rugby	Senior Hockey	Junior Hockey
Pitch Demand	63	61	21	46	22	16	12	8	7
Existing Pitch Supply	56	41	125*	42	20*	19	29*	7	30*
Pitch Shortfall	7	20	-	4	2	-	-	1	-
Pitch Surplus	-	-	-	-	-	3	-	-	-

*mainly schools pitches with limited access

- 3.88 Given the estimated shortfall in football, cricket and hockey provision, there is a need to :
- Protect and preserve existing pitch sites.
 - Improve the quality of existing pitch sites
 - Seek to provide additional pitches e.g. securing formal community access to additional school pitches,
 - Work through Education to develop hub sites within schools that provide quality dual use facilities that benefit the school during working hours and the community out of school hours. An initial start would be to work with key secondary schools in each area to investigate the needs of the school and the local community and then to secure investment through development within the area to create the provision. This needs to consider the building schools for the future programme.

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Provision for Children and Young People

- 3.89 Provision for Children and Young People consists of equipped play areas and specialist provision for young people, including skateparks, Multi-Use Games Areas and Teen Shelters. The provision of facilities for children and young people is important in facilitating opportunities for physical activity and the development of movement and social skills. Provision for children's play is sub-divided into categories in line with the National Playing Fields Association play area categories. These include Local Areas of Play (LAP), Local Equipped Areas of Play (LEAP) and Neighbourhood Equipped Areas of Play (NEAP).
- 3.90 A number of play areas do not fall into any of these categories. In addition to fixed children's play areas the County also has three main types of youth provision that have been identified, specifically skate park facilities (facilities for skateboarding and BMX), ball courts (MUGA) and teen shelters.

Provision for children and young people	Areas designed primarily for play and social interaction involving children and young people, such as equipped play areas, multi use games areas, skateboard areas and teenage play zones
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Consultation Findings

- 3.91 **Consultation** was undertaken with the Council's Play Area Officer, Recreation officer and Parks Manager and through the door to door resident's survey. The consultation has revealed a number of varying opinions about the current quantity and quality, and whether play facilities in place at present are adequate. Key findings from stakeholder interviews include:
- Many of the play areas are devolved to the Parish Council's and therefore are maintained to differing standards
 - Schools provide fixed play and again standards differ across the County, the majority of which are not accessible for community use
 - The Council are reviewing their play provision and developing a play strategy
- 3.92 The **door to door survey** revealed a number of key findings in relation to current play provision. These included:
- Little opinion overall on current quantity of provision. Of those expressing a view, the majority perceived there to be too few play facilities across the County. A similar finding was reported for specialist youth provision
 - The majority of play area users make use of their nearest facility and walk or drive to access provision
 - Travel time to facilities varied considerably amongst local residents
 - The main barriers to use are the perceived condition of the play areas and the levels of dog fouling and vandalism to which they are subjected, and people's perception that they do not feel safe when using the sites

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Quantity: Provision for Children & Young People

- 3.93 The audit undertaken has revealed that there are **129 sites** that have provision for children and young people. Of these sites, **22 (17%)** are owned by Housing Associations, **38 (29%)** by Parish or Town Councils, **57 (44%)** are owned by Herefordshire Council and **7 (5%)** are owned by Voluntary Groups. Limited information was available on the remaining 5 sites. In addition to these sites there are a total of **80** primary school sites in the County that provide equipped play areas. However, as these sites are predominantly provided for the use by the pupils of that particular school, they are not described as having 'community use' and therefore have not been included within the calculations
- 3.94 The provision is split between sites that are specifically provided for children and young people and provision within other typologies. The total number of sites specifically provided for children and young people is **60** stand-alone play area sites (5.37 ha) and **69** play areas within other typologies such as a park or recreation ground (7.18 ha). The distribution of sites specifically provided for children and young people per Area are summarised in Figure 3.17 below:

Figure 3.17: Current Provision for Children & Young People

Area	Population (aged 2-19)	Number of stand-alone sites	Hectares of stand alone sites	Number of sites in other typologies	Hectares within other typologies	Total Number of sites	Total Hectares
Bromyard	2,553	1	0.064	2	0.399	3	0.463
Central Herefordshire	4,793	10	0.875	6	0.432	16	1.307
Golden Valley	2,690	2	0.243	5	1.536	7	1.779
Hereford City North	7,384	5	0.783	12	0.959	17	1.742
Hereford City South	5,130	5	0.822	11	1.062	16	1.884
Ledbury	3,020	9	0.577	7	1.006	16	1.583
Leominster	3,439	10	0.336	8	0.916	18	1.252
Kington	3,206	11	0.822	5	0.336	16	1.158
Ross-on-Wye	5,850	7	0.854	13	0.534	20	1.388
	38,065	60	5.376	69	7.18	129	12.556

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- 3.95 It is important when considering the level of provision for children and young people that any quantity standards are based on the population of children and young people and not the total population. The population of children and young people aged 2 - 19 is 38,065 (ONS 2001). The provision for children and young people equates to **12.55 hectares**. As such the provision for children and young people in Herefordshire, equates to **12.55 ha or 0.33 ha per 1000**
- 3.96 Some play area sites are situated within other typologies. It is important to note that the size of the land that they occupy has been calculated separately from the rest of the area and has been included in the overall provision for children and young people.

Quality: Provision for Children & Young People

- 3.97 Quality Inspections have been undertaken via a site visit and completion of a scored proforma. Visits have been undertaken to sites with equipment and play features. Not all LAPs have been rated as part of the quality assessment as they tend to provide limited if any play equipment. The quality assessment proforma for play areas has been based on the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (ROSPA) "Play Value Assessment" and looks at a variety of criteria including the overall appearance of the site, the ambience and the type of equipment by age range.

- Balancing
- Climbing
- Crawling
- Gliding
- Group Swinging
- Single Swinging
- Ball Play
- Jumping
- Rotating
- Sliding
- Rocking
- Agility Bridges
- Viewing Platform
- Wheeled Play

- 3.98 A copy of the proforma is contained within the appendices to this report. In summary the following criteria have been used to rate quality and value of local play facilities. It is important to note that play provision is not simply providing equipment it is also about the environment that equipment is situated in, the proforma considers elements that best practice play areas have been found to promote. These include diversity in textures, use of wildflowers and landscaping. In supporting the generation of a sense of place it considers whether the play area is locally related to reflect some local significance. This could be for example if the site is near a famous railway, then the play area's design reflects this through themed equipment designed around trains and railways.
- 3.99 Site scores not only consider the condition of the equipment they also consider the play value of the entire designated play area. This includes consideration for the different types of activity that the play area allows including:
- **Overall site features** including access gates, whether the area is pollution and noise free, presence of shade, access for the disabled, appropriate signage, locally related features and seating

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- **Ambience** including layout, visual appeal, presence of litter or graffiti
- **Equipment for Toddlers, Juniors and Teenagers** have been assessed as discrete elements within the overall play value assessment

3.100 The assessment proforma allows compilation of two key results – a total numerical score to reflect the “value” and importance of a local play area, and a quality score (presented as a percentage) to reflect variances in the quality of facilities across the County. The score can be rated against a value line that reflects the overall quality of the site and also the age range the equipment is designed for. The value lines are outlined below:

Site Overall Value

Poor	Below Average	Average	Good	Excellent
<29%	29% - 41%	42% - 51%	52% - 68%	69% +

3.101 A total of 53 of the 129 (41%) equipped play areas have been visited and rated. A summary of the main findings in relation to quality is provided in the Figure 3.18 below:

Figure 3.18: Summary of Quality Assessment Findings

Area	No of Sites in area	No. of sites Audited	% Score a Range for overall site (out of 69)	Score Average % and Rating
Bromyard	3	3	49% - 77%	61% (Good)
Central Herefordshire	16	8	23% - 59%	47% (Average)
Golden Valley	7	5	40% - 62%	49% (Average)
Hereford City North	17	7	41% - 61%	46% (Average)
Hereford City South	16	4	36% - 71%	54% (Good)
Ledbury	16	2	52%	52% (Good)
Leominster	18	7	35% - 71%	47% (Average)
Kington	16	11	10% - 71%	43% (Average)
Ross-on-Wye	20	6	29% - 58%	47% (Average)
TOTAL	129	53	10% - 77%	48% (Average)

AV = Average score

3.102 Against the quality value line the County's overall average quality of play provision is **48% 'Average'** it is important to note that this is not a reflection on the quality or quantity of the actual equipment on these sites (a number of sites having been recently refurbished to a high standard in terms of equipment range). The quality audit of provision is concerned with the play value of a site overall and therefore considers if a play area has a number of stimuli for children and young people such as different textures and gradients, learning opportunities through sand play or water etc. A number of observations can be made from the Figure above regarding the quality of play provision in all areas of Herefordshire;

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- The lowest rated site was in Kington (Kington Recreation Ground) which scored 10% (Poor)
- The highest scoring site was Whitbourne Playing Fields in Bromyard (77%, Excellent). This is a new play area recently installed next to the Village Hall
- The highest average score in terms of quality was in Bromyard, with the lowest in Kington.
- 3 of the 9 areas have an average rating of 'good', 6 are 'average'
- Each of the areas have at least one site that scored a 'good' quality rating

Accessibility: Provision for Children and Young People

- 3.103 Access to play provision is influenced by a number of key factors. These include:
- Geographical location and proximity to key residential areas
 - The appropriateness of facilities provided and target user group
 - External factors such as community safety
- 3.104 Currently the Council makes use of the catchment areas defined by the National Playing Fields Association for each category of play area (i.e. LAP, LEAP or NEAP). These catchments have long been established and tested and provide usable areas for planning purposes.
- 3.105 Only 18% of the respondents to the door to door survey identified visiting a children's play area, 66% of which visit on a weekly or daily basis.
- 3.106 The most popular mode of travel is by foot with 73% of respondents walking to play areas. 79% of all respondents are within 10 minutes of a play area.
- 3.107 The average travel time to access provision for young people is 7.94 minutes by foot this equates to a travel distance from home of 0.4 miles. These figures need to be treated with caution as they are responses made by adults and not children and young people, further research is needed to identify children and young people's views on provision and how far they travel to access provision and the barriers they face.
- 3.108 A mapping exercise has been undertaken to illustrate geographical proximity to play areas. This is illustrated in maps ***.
- 3.109 Large areas of the County have deficiencies in play when the walking buffers (0.4 miles) are considered. However in highly populated areas very few deficiencies are present. One notable area of deficiency is in north-east Hereford around the areas of Aylestone Hill, Folly Lane and Whittern Way. One other small area of deficiency can be found in south-east Ledbury. The towns of Leominster and Ross-on-Wye are well covered.
- 3.110 When driving buffers are considered for play areas (2.65 miles) most of the needs within the County are met. Larger areas of deficiency are present in the following areas; west section of Golden Valley, north-west section of Kington Area, north and west Bromyard, east Leominster and central Ross-on-Wye.

SECTION III - AUDIT OF LOCAL PROVISION

Key Findings

- 3.111 The following key conclusions can be made in relation to provision for children and young people on a County-wide level:
- Provision is varied across the County and within the 9 areas
 - Standards of provision vary in terms of quality across the County with the overall average quality being 48% (average)
 - Local people believe there to be too few play areas within their local area
 - The main barriers to use of play provision are dog fouling, vandalism and people's perception of not feeling safe when using the sites
 - Travel time to play areas varies across the County with the average travel time for young people being 8 minutes (7.95) or a distance of 0.4 miles if walking
 - On a County wide basis the current level of provision per 1,000 population (of young people aged 2-19 years) is 0.33 hectares per 1,000
 - With the exception of the larger towns, large deficiencies can be found throughout the County if walking buffers are used (0.4 miles).
 - Better coverage of the County can be achieved if residents are more willing to drive to their nearest play area but deficiencies are still present.
 - Future provision needs to be developed as part of a hierarchy of provision, this will reduce the number of play areas but will increase the quality and size of play areas across the County

SECTION IV- PPG17 STAGE III SET PROVISION STANDARDS

Introduction

- 4.1 This section examines the development of local standards for the open space typologies as classified in Section I Methodology (Figure 2.1). The local standards consider surpluses and deficiencies in provision on the basis of the quantitative assessments undertaken. GIS mapping has been utilised to illustrate a number of key aspects, in particular dispersal and access.
- 4.2 The door to door survey of local residents and other consultation findings have been used to inform the appropriate distance thresholds (spreadsheet in the appendices shows these figures in more detail). The consultation and survey findings also reveal the local communities perception of accessibility, quantity and quality or provision. The responses have been used to set provision standards, which have then been applied using GIS mapping.
- 4.3 PPG17 advocates the development of local standards rather than the use of national standards, which do not take into account the local context. The standards have therefore been developed based on the findings of site assessments, quantitative data made available and consultation with local people for consideration and possible adoption by the Council.
- 4.4 This strategy has also been developed to provide a guidance framework that will aid the Council in the future management and designation of open spaces
- 4.5 From the audit of provision as identified in Section III of this strategy and in accordance with the PPPG 17 guidance a local 'Typology' has been developed to 'best fit' the types of provision with the County. It is from this typology, the quantity, quality audit and the assessment of local needs identified through public consultation and key stakeholders that the following standards of provision in terms of quantity, quality and accessibility have been set. It is important to note that the provision standards are based on per 1000 population as no further guidance or model has yet been developed by Central Government as a means to calculate provision.
- 4.6 PPG 17 guidance advocates the use of Sport England 'Towards a Level Playing Field ' Methodology when accessing provision for playing pitches, the guidance also recommends the use of English Nature 2ha per 1000 population for the provision of accessible natural green space.
- 4.7 The Figure overleaf highlights the current provision by typology and establishes the current provision per 1000 population. This therefore establishes a minimum quantitative standard by Typology for the County. (It is important to note that allotments are a demand based provision and from the consultation and site audits a number of sites are vacant or empty and as such the future provision does need careful consideration as the sites provided have capacity due to vacant plots). A more detailed assessment is required to consider the future of these semi redundant sites.

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- 4.8 The figure provided for outdoor sports has been calculated on the number of pitches, bowling greens and tennis courts with community use, this figure again needs to be treated with caution as the audit of provision using Sport England methodology has identified a surplus of pitches across the County. The pitch figure is subject to change as pitches are provided for community use through schools and this can change if schools withdraw pitch use.
- 4.9 The development of standards for outdoor sport (pitches) should be based on demand, The Sport England methodology has identified the need for pitches based on demand. This needs to be treated with caution as the modelling does not take into consideration the need for teams to play locally, nor does it allow for pitches that may need to be rested. As a result the Council should continue to provide pitches and work with local schools with a view to developing greater community use of pitches. The modelling has identified a significant surplus of senior pitches, this need to be utilised to address the deficiencies identified in other sport
- 4.10 Research into open space standards by such organisations as the Scottish Executive is increasingly recommending a move away from standards reflecting quantities to preferred standards reflecting quality and accessibility. As the location, accessibility and quality of open space is important in ensuring that the areas are well used and appropriate to the needs of the community.

Figure 4.1 - Current Levels of community accessible provision

PPG17 Typology	Hectares Total	Current Level per 1000 Population
Parks and Gardens	195.52	1.12 hectares per 1000 population
Natural and Semi Natural Green space	4,143.28	23.69 hectares per 1000 population
Amenity Green Spaces	80.88	0.46 ha per 1000 population
Outdoor Sports Facilities (Excluding Golf)	428.53	2.45 ha per 1000 Population
Provision for Children & Young People	12.55	0.33 ha per 1000 head of children and young people

* Indicates identified provision with community use

Quantity Standards

- 4.11 The County currently has approximately **4,860.77 hectares** of accessible open space this equates to **27.80 hectares** per 1000 population
- 4.12 Figure 4.2 below identifies the current level of provision by typology across the Area Boards

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Figure 4.2 Current Provision by Typology and Area Board

Total Provision - Existing Open Space (ha)							
Area	Populations	Parks & Gardens	Nat & Semi Nat Open Space	Amenity Greenspace	Outdoor Sports Facilities		Provision for Children and Young People
					CU	Overall exclude Golf	
Bromyard	11,880	2.70	258.45	1.84	26.28	32.28	0.46
Central Herefordshire	21,401	83.53	349.68	4.90	44.84	54.69	1.31
Golden Valley	11,953	0.00	2,161.46	2.29	14.90	30.83	1.78
Hereford City North	34,686	46.03	21.64	21.42	72.97	91.34	1.74
Hereford City South	20,156	22.66	19.89	29.60	15.23	32.08	1.88
Ledbury	14,953	7.58	119.01	6.03	31.63	40.79	1.58
Leominster	16,673	8.07	319.33	4.80	25.37	41.46	1.25
Kington	15,459	5.57	614.31	2.46	33.68	41.61	1.16
Ross-on Wye	27,710	19.38	279.51	6.91	43.41	63.46	1.39
Overall	174,871	195.52	4,143.28	80.88	308.31	428.54	12.55

- 4.13 From the consultation with residents 78% of the respondents stated there are enough parks and open spaces in their local area.

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Figure 4.3 Current County wide and Area Provision per 1000 population

Total Provision - Existing Open Space (ha)						
Area	Populations	Parks & Gardens	Nat & Semi Nat Open Space	Amenity Greenspace	Outdoor Sports Facilities	Provision for Children and Young People
Bromyard	11,880	0.22	21.75	0.15	2.72	0.18
Central Herefordshire	21,401	3.90	16.34	0.22	2.55	0.24
Golden Valley	11,953	0.00	180.83	0.19	2.58	0.66
Hereford City North	34,686	1.33	0.62	0.62	2.67	0.24
Hereford City South	20,156	1.12	0.98	1.47	1.60	0.37
Ledbury	14,953	0.50	7.96	0.40	2.72	0.52
Leominster	16,673	0.48	19.15	0.29	2.48	0.36
Kington	15,459	0.35	39.74	0.16	2.70	0.36
Ross-on Wye	27,710	0.70	10.09	0.25	2.30	0.24
Overall	174,871	1.12	23.69	0.46	2.45	0.33

* Note figure for children and young people based on actual population of children and young people

** indicates identified provision with community use (excluding Golf Courses)

- 4.14 Figure 4.3 above shows the actual provision by typology per 1000 population on a County wide and Area basis. The Figure shows the variance by typology per 1000 population across the County, with the spread of provision varying significantly across the typologies and by Area.
- 4.15 The actual provision can be used as a guide to establish provision standards for the future. The County does not currently have a standard for parks and there is no recognised national standard of provision for parks. Therefore to ensure that the current level of provision is met in the future the **1.12 hectares per 1000 population** currently provided should be adopted as the **Minimum** standard for future provision. This follows the guidance identified within the PPG17 companion guide as a means of establishing standards and is supported by local residents who have identified that they believe they have enough open space within their area. Therefore future provision needs to be discussed with local people to prioritise any future supply of facilities.
- 4.16 For natural/ semi natural greenspace there is a nationally recognised standard of provision, (English Nature 2ha per 1000 population standard). The County currently provides **23.69 hectares** of natural/ semi natural greenspace per 1000 population and therefore has surplus against the English Nature standard by **21.69 hectares** per 1000 population. However it is important to recognise the rural nature of the County. The English Nature model when applied to the more urban areas of Hereford City North and Hereford City South show that residents in the more

SECTION IV- PPG17 STAGE III SET PROVISION STANDARDS

densely populated urban areas have major deficiencies of natural and semi natural greenspace provision. It is not feasible that the Areas of Hereford City North Hereford City South, Bromyard, Central Herefordshire, Leominster, Ledbury or Ross on Wye in falling below the current level of 23.69 ha per 1000 can meet the generic standard. As a guide therefore it is recommended that this is given further consideration on an area by area basis. Within the urban areas of Hereford City North and Hereford City South there is scope to diversify areas within other typologies to create natural and semi natural areas and these two areas should aspire through future provision to be brought up to the recommended 2 ha per 1000 population advocated by English Nature. It is also important to note that woodlands have not been included as part of this assessment as further information regarding accessibility and community use will need to be collated. The exception being Queenswood Country Park, which has been included under the typology of Parks and Gardens. All commons have been included which explains the exceptionally high provision in the Golden Valley area.

- 4.17 The current standard for amenity space is **0.46 hectares** per 1000 population. If it is necessary to benchmark against any national standards of provision then the only national standard for amenity greenspace provided is 0.5 hectares per 1000 population. This is based on the current U.K average of all applicable local authorities' provision standards as highlighted in the Government's Rethinking Open Space Report (2001). The current provision across the County equates to 0.46 hectares per 1000 population and therefore there is a County wide deficiency of amenity greenspace. It is important to note that in establishing the quantity standards for amenity greenspace, sites have been identified by Council officers and the Parish Councils. In the main only sites of 0.1 ha in size or above have been included (the exception being locally important and identified village greens or civic space such as war memorials and cenotaphs). This figure needs to be kept in context as amenity space can vary from the informal kick about areas to visual amenity space designed simply to contribute to the overall appearance. It also includes allotments.
- 4.18 The Council needs to consider is the need to provide accessible greenspace that is safe and of good quality.
- 4.19 A minimum size for future provision is therefore important and active amenity spaces should not be provided in new development below 0.2 ha in size as they offer limited scope or recreational value. As the Council wants to ensure that future provision of amenity space serves a valuable purpose and is useable, often small fragmented spaces can be a drain on resources. The Council should move away from adopting the provision of visual amenity sites as they do offer limited opportunities and are often costly to maintain appropriately.
- 4.20 The current outdoor sports provision established as being accessible for community use is **428.54 hectares or 2.45 ha** per 1000 population (note this includes schools provision with no current community use but with the potential to meet current demand). PPG 17 guidance advocates the use of the Sport England 'Towards a level Playing Field' Methodology. The methodology advises the use of provision based on supply and local demand for pitches, which are publicly accessible. The surplus and deficiencies of pitch provision have been discussed in Section III.

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However it is important to recognise that the Sport England Model does not cater for teams needing to play locally and is a demand based model

- 4.21 The current provision for children and young people shows that the across the County the provision for children and young people for fixed play is 12.55 hectares or 0.33 ha per 1000 young people aged between 2-19 years. This is the actual provision across the county, which includes play areas within other typologies. Therefore the calculation has been made to include additional land occupied by play areas, multi courts and skate parks within these other typologies.
- 4.22 The consultation has identified that local people believe more provision for young people should be one of the Council's priorities.
- 4.23 The recommended standards for the outdoor typologies of parks and gardens, natural and semi natural greenspace, amenity space, outdoor sport, provision for children and young people is outlined below and is based on the current quantitative findings.

Figure4.4 - Herefordshire Council Recommended Provision per 1000 population for Outdoor Typologies

Typology	Current Provision per 1,000 population	Recommended Standard per 1000 population	Comment
Parks and Gardens	1.12	1.12	The actual provision can be used as a guide to establish provision standards for the future. The County does not currently have a standard for parks and there is no recognised national standard of provision for parks. Therefore to ensure that the current level of provision is met in the future the 1.12 hectares per 1000 population currently provided should be adopted as the Minimum standard for future provision. This follows the guidance identified within the PPG17 companion guide as a means of establishing standards and is supported by local residents who have identified they believe they have enough open space within their area.
Natural/ Semi-natural Greenspace	23.69	2 ha for urban areas	For natural/ semi natural greenspace there is a nationally recognised standard of provision, (English Nature 2ha per 1000 population standard). The County currently provides 23.69 hectares of natural/ semi natural greenspace per 1000 population and is surplus against the English Nature standard by 21.69 hectares per 1000 population. The standard has been set at 2 ha per 1000 population within the main urban areas.

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Typology	Current Provision per 1,000 population	Recommended Standard per 1000 population	Comment
Amenity Greenspace	0.46	0.50	<p>The standard has been raised to the nationally recommended standard as it is Amenity Greenspace that often provides the only space within a community for play or recreation however it needs to be of value to the local community and appropriately designed and resourced in terms of future maintenance to ensure it remains as an asset. Sites should not be provided as active amenity space below 0.2 ha in size.</p>
Outdoor Sports	2.45	2.45	<p>The County has 428.54 hectares of identified outdoor sports provision this equates to a provision of 2.45 hectares per 1000 population. It is important to note that it is not recommended to increase this standard any further, rather to improve existing quality and accessibility especially to school sites in areas where there is a shortage of pitches available to community use.</p> <p>The Unitary Development Plan identifies through the application of the NPFA Standards that provision for outdoor sport should be 1.8 ha per 1000 population. The Audit has identified that 308.31 ha of the outdoor sport provision has community use. It is important to recognise that the overall provision is used to calculate the standard as it is based like the other standards on actual provision. What would be more practical is the opportunity to develop a hierarchy of provision in terms of outdoor playing pitches with multi pitch sites (4 or more pitches) and facilities to cater for a wide range of sports serving a County wide catchment area; sites of 2 or more pitches being aimed at the community level catchment area, and single pitch sites being used by a very local catchment area. The Council should look to work with secondary schools in each of the recognised areas to develop hub site dual use facilities that benefit the school and the local community and are improved through developer contributions. This approach would create opportunities at all levels,</p>

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Typology	Current Provision per 1,000 population	Recommended Standard per 1000 population	Comment
			enabling clubs to develop and to have access to facilities for out of season training whilst also being able to play competitively in their local area.
Provision for Children and Young People	0.33	0.33	This figure includes all play areas including those within other typologies. The recommended standard has been set the same as current provision and rather than increase the number of sites the Council is advised to create a hierarchy of provision based on population the development of a hierarchy of provision that would lead to the development of larger 'super' play areas that may provide the opportunity to reduce the number of actual play areas whilst providing bigger' better quality across the County. Alternatively the council may wish to raise the standards to ensure teenage provision is increased this is as a result of the consultation with local residents who saw more provision for children and young people as a priority. The Council needs to consider moving away from the lower tiers recommended by the NPFA (LAP's) and move towards larger provision at both the local and County Level. As such the Council should aspire to deliver only LEAP/NEAP or above standard play areas, these cater for all ages and provide more play value to young people and have a larger catchment

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- 5.1 PPG 17 guidance advocates that Councils move away from the NPFA Standard and establish standards based on local need and what best fits the local area.
- 5.2 The development of a hierarchy of provision would be a means of ensuring that all children and young people in the County have access to some form of space that enables them to experience play.
- 5.3 It is recommended that the County establishes a hierarchy of play provision and that the hierarchy recognises the need to provide good quality diverse play opportunities. The Hierarchy should be based on the size of population
- County Equipped Play Area (C.E.A.P) one should be developed in each of the 9 areas of the County. A C.E.A.P in effect would be a 'Large or Super Play Areas' that attract users from across the County. They will have a wide range of equipment and provide excellent opportunities for children with disabilities. They will represent Centres of Excellence in play standards and play value providing opportunities to enhance social development through play activity and interaction. CEAP'S will provide a comprehensive range of equipment and ancillary facilities such as toilets and an accessible car park. It is primarily aimed at providing a play facility that will attract people from the whole County and certainly from within the Township areas.. They should be provided within other substantial outdoor family recreation.
 - In the main parishes (over 1000+ population) there should be Neighbourhood Equipped Areas for Play, large play areas that cater for all ages, providing fixed play, multi activities and teenage activities including seating.
 - In parishes 500+ population there should be provision of a Local Equipped area for play and teenage provision
 - In parishes under 500 population there should be an area for young people and children to play, these areas may have equipped play or hard standing with activities such as a basketball post, However the provision's primary purpose is for informal play rather than fixed play equipment.
 - In support of this and to cater the remote rural areas the County the Council in partnership with other agencies such as the town and parish councils should provide access to play equipment through the use of mobile play equipment.

Qualitative Standards

- 5.4 The County should aspire to provide 'Good' Quality Facilities'. As such the County needs to allocate adequate resources to improve those open spaces that fall below that standard to ensure that all residents have access to good quality facilities. As a bare minimum every site that the public use and that is owned by the Council should have signage. If the public use it for recreation it should have a bench and a bin, be clean and well maintained as a minimum standard of provision.
- 5.5 Each Typology has a quality vision developed as a guide. This vision is based on best practice standards at the national and local level and through consultation with users and non users.

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- 5.6 It is envisaged that the site audits undertaken can be built upon and used as a tool to benchmark against providing a picture of the condition of the sites now and the progressive improvements in quality in coming years. The assessment can be broken down into a detailed matrix covering all elements of the infrastructure.

Accessibility Standards

- 5.7 Future provision needs to ensure that it is compliant to the recommended Disability Discrimination Act accessibility guidance.
- 5.8 Without accessibility for the public the provision of good quality or a good quantity of open space sites would be of little benefit to the community.
- 5.9 Sustainable methods of transport such as walking and cycling are actively encouraged within PPG17, especially for any new open space provision or where existing spaces are being improved. Improvements should ensure that accessibility by environmentally friendly transport modes are encouraged.
- 5.10 The consultation undertaken with local residents through the door to door survey confirms that they are generally happy with the provision and amount of open spaces in their local area and that the time taken to travel to them is acceptable. Residents do have concerns about personal safety, which is not so much a physical access issue it is more of a social issue. The community friends groups involved in the more informal countryside areas were concerned over the nuisance caused by motorbikes. People with disabilities find it difficult to access the semi natural greenspaces (they do not particularly want access to the whole site; they would be happy with a route or a circular route on site).
- 5.11 Local residents are generally satisfied with the quality of their open space provision. However, the biggest issue was people not feeling safe when visiting parks and open spaces.
- 5.12 The door to door consultation has provided specific information that has enabled accessibility standard thresholds to be established for each open space typology as defined by PPG17. Figure 5.1 illustrates the accessibility thresholds recommended for the open space typologies in Herefordshire County.

Figure 5.1 - Accessibility Standards

Hereford Typology	Description used in door to door survey	Average Acceptable travel time	Equivalent distance walking At 3mph (Miles)	Equivalent distance by car At 20mph (Miles)
Parks and Gardens	Parks and Gardens	11.62 Minutes	0.18 miles	1.22miles
Natural and Semi Natural Greenspace	Wild Areas (eg commons, local nature reserves)	12.06 Minutes	0.58 miles	3.87 miles

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Hereford Typology	Description used in door to door survey	Average Acceptable travel time	Equivalent distance walking At 3mph (Miles)	Equivalent distance by car At 20mph (Miles)
Amenity Open Space	Open space near your home	3.65 Minutes	0.60 miles	4.02 miles
Provision for Children and Young People	Play Areas	7.94 Minutes	0.40 miles	2.65 miles
	Skate Parks	25.96 Minutes	1.30 miles	8.65 miles
Outdoor Sport	School Playing field	10.30 Minutes	0.52 miles	3.43 miles
	Sports Pitches	10.52 Minutes	0.53 miles	3.51 miles

- 5.13 Setting distance thresholds for each type of open space for all areas is not easy to achieve as many factors will influence travel times. The figures are based on generic average travel times. However these standards, as PPG17 recommends, provide guidance that helps to identify gaps in provision and meet the local needs as identified through the sample door to door survey of local residents in Herefordshire. The residents who responded to the survey stated that the time taken to travel to the different typologies was acceptable.

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Applying Provision Standards

- 5.14 It is important when setting standards of provision to recognise that the distribution of provision by Typology varies significantly across the County. The Unitary Development Plan (UDP) does not identify specific standards of provision for formal parks and gardens or natural/ semi natural greenspace. As such it is difficult to compare the current provision of parks against the UDP standards. Therefore the current provision for parks (1.12 ha per 1000 population) should be used as a **minimum** standard to guide future provision, so as to ensure, at least, the current level of provision is maintained.
- 5.15 The recommended standards for open space have been developed using current provision per typology measured against the total population. The exception to this has been for natural and semi natural greenspace (where the English Nature 2ha per 1000 population has been applied).
- 5.16 For outdoor sport (playing pitches) Sport England's 'Towards a level playing field' methodology provides a supply and demand based assessment. The methodology has identified against current demand that the County wide provision needs to be as set out in Figure 5.2 below.

Figure 5.2 – Pitch Surplus and Deficiency Identified by Sport

	Senior Football	Junior Football	Mini Soccer	Senior Cricket	Junior Cricket	Senior Rugby	Junior Rugby	Senior Hockey	Junior Hockey
Pitch Demand	63	61	21	46	22	16	12	8	7
Existing Pitch Supply	56	41	125*	42	20*	19	29*	7	30*
Pitch Shortfall	7	20	-	4	2	-	-	1	-
Pitch Surplus	-	-	-	-	-	3	-	-	-

Figure 5.3 - Pitch Requirements against Demand

Recommended Provision standard
<p>Senior Football Pitches: Requirement for 63 pitches, based on the current population of senior football playing age Therefore there is deficiency of 7 pitches in accordance with the Council's Playing Pitch Strategy</p>
<p>Junior Football Pitches: Requirement for 61 pitches, based on the current population of junior football playing age Therefore there is deficiency of 20 pitches in accordance with the Council's Playing Pitch Strategy</p>
<p>Mini Soccer Pitches: Requirement for 21 pitches, based on the current population of mini soccer playing age</p>

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Recommended Provision standard
Therefore there is Surplus of 121 pitches in accordance with the Council's Playing Pitch Strategy
<p><u>Cricket Pitches:</u> Requirement for 46 senior pitches and 22 junior pitches based on the current population of cricket playing age in accordance with the Council's Playing Pitch Strategy However it is important to note that Junior Cricket is normally played on an adult sized wicket unless it is in a school</p>
<p><u>Senior Rugby Pitches:</u> Requirement for 16 pitches, based on the current population of rugby playing age <u>Junior Rugby Pitches</u> Requirement for 12 pitches, based on the current population of rugby playing age</p>

- 5.17 The playing pitch assessment has identified a deficiency in most types of provision. The recommended standards are based on the results of the assessment and consideration of likely future demand of the number of pitches required to meet these needs. However this does need to be treated with caution and recognise that a number of pitches within schools that allow for community use could change and seriously affect provision supply even further.
- 5.18 If consideration is given to the amount of land available for outdoor sport (428.54 ha) and the land actually used with community use (308.31 ha) it is clear that the Council should seek to engage in partnership working with the facilities that do not have community use i.e. the schools and the role they have to play in future provision.
- 5.19 These figures need to be treated with caution as they do not take into consideration the ability and need for teams to play locally, nor do they consider that teams may operate in conflicting leagues, thereby impacting on the demand for pitches.
- 5.20 It is also important to consider how the schools have interpreted the term 'Community Use'. As the Sport England Methodology identifies community use through a formal written agreement.
- 5.21 It is recommended that for outdoor sports provision the County develop a hierarchy of provision to ensure people have access to good quality pitches and can also have access to local pitches. The planning policy should reflect the opportunity to develop a hierarchy of provision in terms of outdoor playing pitches with multi pitch sites (4 or more pitches) and facilities to cater for a wide range of sports serving a County wide catchment area; sites of 2 or more pitches being aimed at the community level catchment area, and single pitch sites being used by a very local catchment area. This approach would create opportunities at all levels, enabling clubs to develop and to have access to facilities for out of season training whilst also being able to play competitively in their local area.
- 5.22 The Council should identify and work with key secondary schools in each of the recognised areas to provide dual use facilities including 3rd generation floodlit

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synthetic turf pitches that can accommodate the needs of the community whilst meeting the demands of the schools. The schools should also be encouraged through appropriate investment to open pitch sites to organised and formal community use.

- 5.23 The recommended standards outlined above are set as a minimum standard for future provision, where the County has a surplus of one typology this should not be seen as a reason for disposal rather an opportunity to potentially change the use to address deficiencies in other typologies within local areas.
- 5.24 Figure 5.3 below illustrates the variance in provision of open space across the County by Typology. The figures provide an assessment of the current County wide standard for each particular typology against the actual provision per 1000 population. This is then compared against the recommended standard to demonstrate on an Area Board basis the surplus/deficiency in the actual level of provision.

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Figure 5.3 - Surplus and Deficiency in Quantity by Typology

Total Provision - Existing Open Space (ha)							
Area	Populations	Parks & Gardens +/-	Nat & Semi Nat Open Space +/-	Amenity Greenspace +/-	Outdoor Sports Facilities +/-		Provision for Children and Young People
					Inc Non Com Use	All Com Use	
Bromyard	11,880	-10.61	234.68	-3.63	3.18	-2.82	-0.38
Central Herefordshire	21,401	59.56	306.87	-4.94	2.26	-7.59	0.27
Golden Valley	11,953	-13.38	2,137.56	-3.20	1.55	-14.38	0.89
Hereford City North	34,686	7.18	-47.76	5.46	6.36	-12.01	-0.69
Hereford City South	20,156	0.09	-20.37	20.34	-17.3	-34.15	0.19
Ledbury	14,953	-9.16	78.70	-0.85	4.16	-5.0	0.59
Leominster	16,673	-10.60	286.05	-2.85	0.62	-15.47	0.12
Kington	15,459	-11.74	583.32	-4.66	3.74	-4.19	0.01
Ross-on Wye	27,710	-11.65	224.14	-5.37	-4.42	-24.47	-0.54

5.25 The above shows the surplus or deficiency within each Area Board against the new standards set for each typology.

5.26 Figure 5.4 below highlights the areas above or below the minimum standard within the County across the following typologies formal open space, natural and semi natural greenspace, amenity greenspace, provision for children and young people, allotments. The analysis has been based on the following thresholds

- Extensive Over Provision (**EOP**) – above the minimum standard by over 5 hectares
- Over Provision (**OP**)- above the minimum standard by between 1- 5 hectares
- Average (**AV**)-above or below the minimum standard by up to 1 hectare
- Under provision (**UP**)- below the minimum standard by 1 – 5 hectares
- Extensive under provision (**EUP**) – below the minimum standard by 5 hectare or more

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Figure 5.4 Level of Provision per Typology Compared Against the Recommended Standards

Area	Level Of Provision	Typology					Provision Against Minimum Standards
		Parks and Gardens	Natural and Semi Natural	Amenity Greenspace	Provision for Children and Young People	Outdoor Sport based on Community Use only.	
Bromyard	EOP		+234.68				Extensive under provision of parks and Gardens
	OP						Extensive over provision of natural and semi natural greenspace
	Av				-0.38		Under provision of amenity greenspace and outdoor sport
	UP			-3.63		-2.82	Average provision for children and young people
	EUP	-10.61					
Central Herefordshire	EOP	+59.56	+306.87				Extensive over provision of parks and gardens and natural and semi natural greenspace
	OP						Under provision of amenity greenspace
	Av				+0.27		Extensive under provision outdoor sport
	UP			-4.94			Average provision for children and young people
	EUP					-7.59	
Golden Valley	EOP		+2,137.56				Extensive over provision of natural and semi natural greenspace
	OP						Extensive under provision of parks and gardens and outdoor sport
	Av				-0.89		Under provision of amenity greenspace
	UP			-3.20			Average provision for children and young people
	EUP	-13.38				-14.38	
Hereford City North	EOP	+7.18		+5.46			Extensive under provision of natural and semi natural greenspace and outdoor sport
	OP						Extensive over provision of parks and gardens
	Av				-0.69		Average provision for children and young people
	UP						Over provision of amenity greenspace
	EUP		-47.76			-12.01	
Hereford City South	EOP			+20.34			Average provision of parks and gardens
	OP						Extensive under provision of natural and semi natural greenspace and outdoor sport
	Av	+0.09			+0.19		Average provision for children and young people
	UP						Extensive over provision of amenity greenspace
	EUP		-20.37			-34.15	
Ledbury	EOP		+78.70			8.92	Extensive under provision of parks and gardens and outdoor sport
	OP						Extensive over provision of natural and semi natural greenspace
	Av			-0.85	+0.59		
	UP					-5.0	

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Area	Level Of Provision	Typology					Provision Against Minimum Standards
		Parks and Gardens	Natural and Semi Natural	Amenity Greenspace	Provision for Children and Young People	Outdoor Sport based on Community Use only.	
	EUP	-9.16					Average provision for amenity greenspace and children and young people
Leominster	EOP		+286.05				Extensive under provision of parks and gardens and outdoor sport
	OP						
	Av				-0.12		Extensive over provision of natural and semi natural greenspace
	UP			-2.85			Under provision of amenity greenspace
	EUP	-10.60				-15.47	Average provision for children and young people
Kington	EOP		+583.32				Extensive under provision of parks and gardens
	OP						Extensive over provision of natural and semi natural greenspace
	Av				+0.01		
	UP			-4.66		-4.19	Under provision of amenity greenspace and outdoor sport
	EUP	-11.74					Average provision for children and young people
Ross on Wye	EOP		+224.14				Extensive under provision of parks and gardens , amenity greenspace and outdoor sport
	OP						
	Av				-0.54		Extensive over provision of natural and semi natural greenspace
	UP						
	EUP	-11.65			-5.37		-24.47

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- 5.6 From the above figure it is clear that the County has to make some informed decisions with regards to future provision, the information above needs to be considered in terms of where can planning policy govern a change of land use to ensure that residents have equal accessibility to provision.
- 5.7 Planning policy needs to redress the surplus and deficiencies on an area by area basis; policy needs to consider the disposal of sites in areas above the minimum standard to cater for the deficiencies in other typologies or to ensure that disposal secures funding for outdoor sport and open space facilities.
- 5.8 The County needs to implement area focused protective policies guided by the local development framework for those areas low in provision.
- 5.9 In terms of future provision, outlined below in Figure 5.4 are an indication of where the County needs to protect, provide new provision or potentially change use to fill the gaps in the provision across the wards. It is important that disposal of sites is seen very much as a last resort. Disposal also should only be considered following further consultation with the local community that will be most affected.
- 5.10 It is important to note that no recommendations regarding allotments have been made. Allotments are demand led and further to the consultation undertaken it is not clear if the current allotments are in the right place to meet local needs as sites have traditionally been hard to let or generate low interest

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Figure 5.5 Future Provision

Area	Level Of Provision	Typology				
		Parks and Gardens	Natural and Semi Natural	Amenity Greenspace	Provision for Children and Young People	Outdoor Sport
Bromyard	EOP		Change of Use			
	OP					
	Av				Review	
	UP			Protect		Review
	EUP	New Provision				
Central Herefordshire	EOP	Change of Use	Change of Use			
	OP					
	Av				Review	
	UP			Protect		
	EUP					New Provision/Demand led
Golden Valley	EOP		Change of Use			
	OP					
	Av				Review	
	UP			Protect		
	EUP	New Provision				New Provision/Review
Hereford City North	EOP	Change of Use		Change of Use		
	OP					
	Av				Review	
	UP					
	EUP		New Provision			New Provision/Review
Hereford City South	EOP			Change of Use		
	OP					
	Av	Protect			Review	
	UP					
	EUP		New Provision			New Provision/review
Ledbury	EOP		Change of Use			
	OP					
	Av			Protect	Review	
	UP					Review
	EUP	New Provision				

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Area	Level Of Provision	Typology				
		Parks and Gardens	Natural and Semi Natural	Amenity Greenspace	Provision for Children and Young People	Outdoor Sport
Leominster	EOP		Change of Use			
	OP					
	Av				Review	
	UP			Protect		
	EUP	New Provision				New Provision/Review
Kington	EOP		Change of Use			
	OP					
	Av				Review	
	UP			Protect		Review
	EUP	New Provision				
Ross on Wye	EOP		Change of Use			
	OP					
	Av				Review	
	UP					
	EUP	New Provision		New Provision		New Provision/Review

(note that since the completion of the playing pitch strategy it is reported that the number of teams has since changed for football and that the number of clubs is now 125 and the number of teams is 342. this will have a marked effect on supply and demand calculations, but will not change the overall findings in terms of the need to develop school sites to meet demand rather than provide more)

New Provision	PPG 17 Guidance advocates where there is extensive under provision of a typology the sites that do exist should be protected. Planning policies should seek to secure new provision within new development or through developer contribution
Protect-	Natural and semi natural greenspace contributes to the wider environment and bio diversity value of the County and therefore should be protected/ local people through the consultation exercise believe that there should be more provision for children and young people
Change of Use-	As outlined within PPG17, where there is a provision above the minimum standard, local planning authorities are actively encouraged to consider a change of use between typologies
Demand Led	Provision is for a specific audience and is based on demand and therefore needs to be considered on an area by area basis
Review	This is to be undertaken as part of the development of a hierarchy of provision

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Introduction

- 6.1 The PPG17 audit and assessment has identified several specific issues relating to the provision, quality, accessibility and quality of open space, indoor sport and indoor community recreation facilities across the County.
- 6.2 The key priority the County Council needs to consider is to redress the deficiencies in provision both in terms of quantity and quality. The GIS has identified accessibility issues faced by local residents when trying to use facilities at a local level.
- 6.3 The following recommendations are made to address the findings of the assessment undertaken. A number of recommended actions are proposed relating to sites in general, and in relation to specific typologies.

Generic Recommendations

- 6.4 A number of recommendations are made in relation to all sites and the assessment undertaken. These are concerned with the use of information gathered and the further development of the study in future years. The following recommendations are made:
 - a) Audit sport, leisure and open spaces on a regular basis (every two/three years) and publish findings. This will allow trend data to be collated and improvements to be tracked. It is important that findings are published to enable wider stakeholders to track progress.
 - b) Develop a central record of all sports and leisure facilities (indoor and outdoor), and open space to include the findings of the assessment undertaken. Currently many different sections of the Council hold this information; this information is not always consistent (sites listed by different names etc). The central record should include access to GIS mapping.
 - c) Establish a central consultation database for the Council, using the data and contacts gathered through this study. This information is held currently by a number of different sections/individuals in the Council; in the course of this study, a number of inaccuracies/wrong contact details etc have been identified; establishing a central database, which is regularly updated, will address these issues for the future.
 - d) Establish a consultative Steering Group, involving representatives from both sport and leisure, and planning, to consider specific site development proposals relating to existing, former and proposed sport and leisure provision. This inter-departmental group should be established to share, and utilise the expertise of leisure and planning officers, to ensure that specific site development issues are fully considered, and the implications shared, before a planning decision is made.

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- e) Continue to develop the marketing information produced about the parks and open space facilities available, key activities accommodated and access arrangements. The Council should seek to work with key partners in future marketing, such as the local Primary Care Trust (PCT), the wider voluntary sector, education, the Youth Service etc to ensure that open space fulfils a valuable role in meeting wider social objectives (e.g. health improvement, increased active participation).
- f) Develop an access standard regarding physical access for those users and potential users with a disability
- g) Review maintenance standards for open space, and agree with local people any changes. Report on performance annually. It is important to set quality standards for each of the open space categories.
- h) Develop and fund a programme of signage installation. The absence of signage or the presence of outdated signage was found to be a key weakness of many sites audited. Develop a consistent approach to the provision of signage at all sites, through a rolling programme of installation and improvement. All sites should have a sign with site details, ownership and contact numbers. This can address a number of issues including helping with the reporting of vandalism and improving community safety.
- i) Continue to work towards the reduction of the effects of crime and anti-social behaviour in parks and open spaces.
- j) Establish and implement a programme of action to address the actual, and perceived, issues of safety in parks and open spaces. This could take the form of installing CCTV at identified sites, resourcing Park Warden posts, or investing in park/open space infrastructure to encourage increased use, which in turn may have a positive impact on the fear of crime because more people are likely to be around.
- k) Establish a working group to deliver the standards identified on an area basis

Parks and Gardens

6.5 Management plans are needed for some of the major formal greenspaces; the County should recognise the growing importance of the Green Flag Award and aspire to secure the award for its major Greenspaces including formal and natural and semi natural sites. The recommendations detailed below form a response to the assessment undertaken and need to be viewed as complementary to any policies developed within an Open Space Strategy. This principle applies to all managed open space. The recommendations made in this report are focused on addressing facility deficiencies. On the basis of the assessment undertaken the following recommendations are made:

- a) Develop an Open Space Strategy for the County utilising the results, issues and recommendations from the Sport, Recreation and Open Space Study.
- b) Identified provision deficiencies are addressed as a priority in the production of a Local Development Framework (LDF).
- c) Develop and support Friends Groups for key parks and open spaces to increase local involvement and ownership
- d) Develop and improve site Management Plans and extend the practice of management planning to a greater range of parks and open spaces

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- e) Continue to test the quality and “performance” of formal spaces through entering externally judged competitions and quality recognition schemes (e.g. Green Flag/ Britain in Bloom).

Natural / Semi-natural greenspace

- 6.6 A number of recommendations are made in response to the assessment findings. These are:
- a) Identified provision deficiencies are addressed as a priority in the production of a Local Development Framework (LDF).
 - b) Develop a greenspace database and consider utilising the results, issues and recommendations from the Sport, Recreation and Open Space Study.
 - c) Work with the parishes to develop a rolling programme of renewal and improvements, e.g. bins, signage and seating.
 - d) Develop a walking strategy to set out how the County's existing walking networks link together.
 - e) Further develop the County's footpath network and link into wider footpath networks outside of the County
 - f) Increase awareness of the opportunities for walking in the County
 - g) Link the use of both open space and sport and recreation facilities with travel awareness initiatives
 - h) Take a strategic approach to the development and provision of cycling routes across the County given the importance and health benefits of this mode of transport in a congested area
 - i) Develop the Biodiversity Action Plan for the County
 - j) Adopt appropriate management and maintenance programmes for the Nature Conservation sites to reflect their natural characteristics, and thereby preserving their special characteristics.
 - k) Develop an education/resource centre to develop better local awareness and understanding of open space, and in particular nature conservation sites
 - l) Protect all existing nature conservation sites

Outdoor Sports Facilities

- 6.7 **Playing Pitches.** The following recommendations are made in response to the findings of the Playing Pitch Assessment. These are:
- Adopt the provision standards identified in this report
 - Use the results of the quality audit to help inform the ratings currently used to set pitch hire fees and charges
 - Establish the Hierarchy of provision across the County working with clubs to develop flagship sites that cater for male and female, boys and girls football whilst also providing adequate training facilities for out of season development
 - On an area basis develop links to the main large schools with a view to working to provide dual use facilities that benefit the school and the local community
 - On the basis of the audit undertaken, develop a priority list for the development/improvement of changing room facilities based on the deficiencies identified

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- Establish a policy to ensure that all multi-pitch sites are served by good quality changing facilities
- Work with the Education Department to improve pitch quality across school sites where there is regular community use
- Work with Private Clubs to ensure pitch quality is maintained, particularly in relation to cricket and rugby provision
- Review hire fees and charges
- Develop opportunities to participate especially for girls and women in outdoor sport and undertake an audit of facilities to identify opportunities for dual use by men and women, boys and girls.
- Consider the implications of loss of school sites for sport such as Cricket if community use was withdrawn for whatever reason
- Re-assess pitch provision using the Toward a Level Playing Field methodology in 2009 and on a rolling 5 year cycle to ensure that changes in demand and supply are considered

(note it is reported that the number of teams has since changed for football and that the number of clubs is now 125 and the number of teams is 342. this will have a marked effect on supply and demand calculations, but will not change the overall findings in terms of the need to develop school sites to meet demand rather than provide more)

Amenity Greenspace

6.8 The following recommendations are made in relation to Amenity Greenspace:

- Identified quantitative deficiencies in provision should be addressed in the urban areas as a priority through the targeting of resources.
- The Council should adopt a policy of providing “Good” quality sites. Prioritise improvements to quality in the areas where the average quality is below the County Average
- Consider the use of amenity greenspace, where there is substantial provision, for change of use to other types of open space
- The provision of signage, bins and seating (where appropriate) is seen as key to improving the quality of current provision. There is a need to develop a rolling programme of renewal and improvements
- Provision of amenity greenspace should be fit for purpose and in the first instance when working with developers the sites should be above 0.2 hectares as a minimum size.

Provision for Children and Young People

6.9 The following recommendations are made in relation to provision for children and young people:

- a) To provide ‘Good’ quality sites as a minimum
- b) Improve the security of play areas through introduction of CCTV or staff presence
- c) Expand signage on all sites with site details and contact numbers

SECTION IV – DEVELOPING AND APPLYING LOCAL PROVISION STANDARDS

- d) Improve provision for Young People, especially Teenagers and Toddlers, through a wider range of facilities
- e) Seek to address the deficiencies in teenage facilities, through the provision of an additional MUGA area, together with appropriate access arrangements, and equipment
- f) Develop equipment that caters for children and young people with disabilities
- g) Involve young people in the design and choice of provision
- h) To develop a hierarchy of provision
- i) To move away from the provision of small fragmented sites and to provide larger better play value spaces that serve a wider audience of young people, are cost effective to maintain.