

# West Oxfordshire Open Space Study



WEST OXFORDSHIRE  
DISTRICT COUNCIL

**2013 - 2029**

Final Report



# West Oxfordshire Open Space Study

## Contents

Section	Title	Pages
1.0	Introduction	4 - 10
<b>Part 1</b>	<b>Developing local standards</b>	<b>11 - 46</b>
2.0	Methodology	
3.0	Policy Context	
4.0	Assessment of local need	
5.0	Audit of local provision	
<b>Part 2</b>	<b>Area Profiles</b>	<b>47 - 78</b>
6.0	Witney	
7.0	Carterton	
8.0	Chipping Norton	
<b>Part 3</b>	<b>Strategic recommendations</b>	<b>79 - 96</b>
9.0	Hierarchy of provision	
10.0	Strategic options	
11.0	Developer contributions	

Appendix 1 Background consultation data

## Glossary of Terms

Term	What it means
ANGSt	Accessible Natural Greenspace Standard
CIL	Community Infrastructure Levy
DPD	Development Plan Document
FIT	Fields In Trust (originally known as the 'National Playing Fields Association')
GIS	Geographic Information Systems
LAP	Local Area for Play
LDD	Local Development Document
LDF	Local Development Framework (a component of the revised statutory land use planning system)
LEAP	Local Equipped Area for Play
LSP	Local Strategic Partnership
MUGA	Multi Use Games Area
NEAP	Neighbourhood Equipped Area for Play
NGB	National Government Body
NPPF	National Planning Policy Framework
PPG17	Planning Policy Guidance Note 17
SEP	South East Plan
SPD	Supplementary Planning Document
STP	Synthetic Turf Pitch
WODC	West Oxfordshire District Council

## Acknowledgments

Many individuals, groups and organisations have provided information, views and support in preparing this study. Input from these stakeholders is fundamental to the report, and provides the basis for the evidence in supporting the standards, options and recommendations in relation to open space, sport and recreation facilities. The study has been carried out by JPC Strategic Planning & Leisure in partnership with Leisure and the Environment.

## **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1 Overview**

This report presents the findings of an open space study of the three main towns in West Oxfordshire District: Witney, Carterton and Chipping Norton. The study has been undertaken jointly by JPC Strategic Planning & Leisure Consultants & Leisure and the Environment on behalf of West Oxfordshire District Council. The study covers the period up to 2029, which is the current timescale for the local plan.

Following the publication of the adopted National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) on 27<sup>th</sup> March 2012 there have been major changes to national planning policy. Open space assessment has primarily been affected by the omission of PPG17 from the new national policy framework. However, there is still a clear reference made in the new guidance to the principles and ideology established within PPG17 and as such the underlying principles of this study have been informed by the former guidance provided in 'Planning Policy Guidance Note 17: Planning for Open Space, Sport and Recreation' (PPG17), and its Companion Guide 'Assessing Needs and Opportunities'.

The study has been written to meet the requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and the methodology set out in the PPG17 Companion Guide.

### **1.2 Purpose of the study**

The brief for the study identified the following:

*The primary purpose of the study is to evaluate the current quantity, quality and accessibility of open space, sports and recreational provision in the three main towns in West Oxfordshire - Witney, Carterton and Chipping Norton. This should be compared with an assessment of current and likely future needs in order to identify any deficits or surplus in terms of quality and/or quantity. From this, recommended standards should be developed and effective mechanisms recommended in order to ensure that appropriate provision is made to meet current and future needs.*

### **1.3 Scope of the Study**

The study follows 5 key stages as summarised below:

- Step 1 - Identifying Local Needs
- Step 2 - Audit Local Provision
- Step 3 - Setting Provision Standards
- Step 4 - Application of Provision Standards
- Step 5 - Drafting Policies and Implementation Plan.

The study includes an assessment of open spaces, but does not consider any built facilities (e.g. swimming pools, leisure centres).

## **1.4 Project deliverables**

The following key deliverables are required:

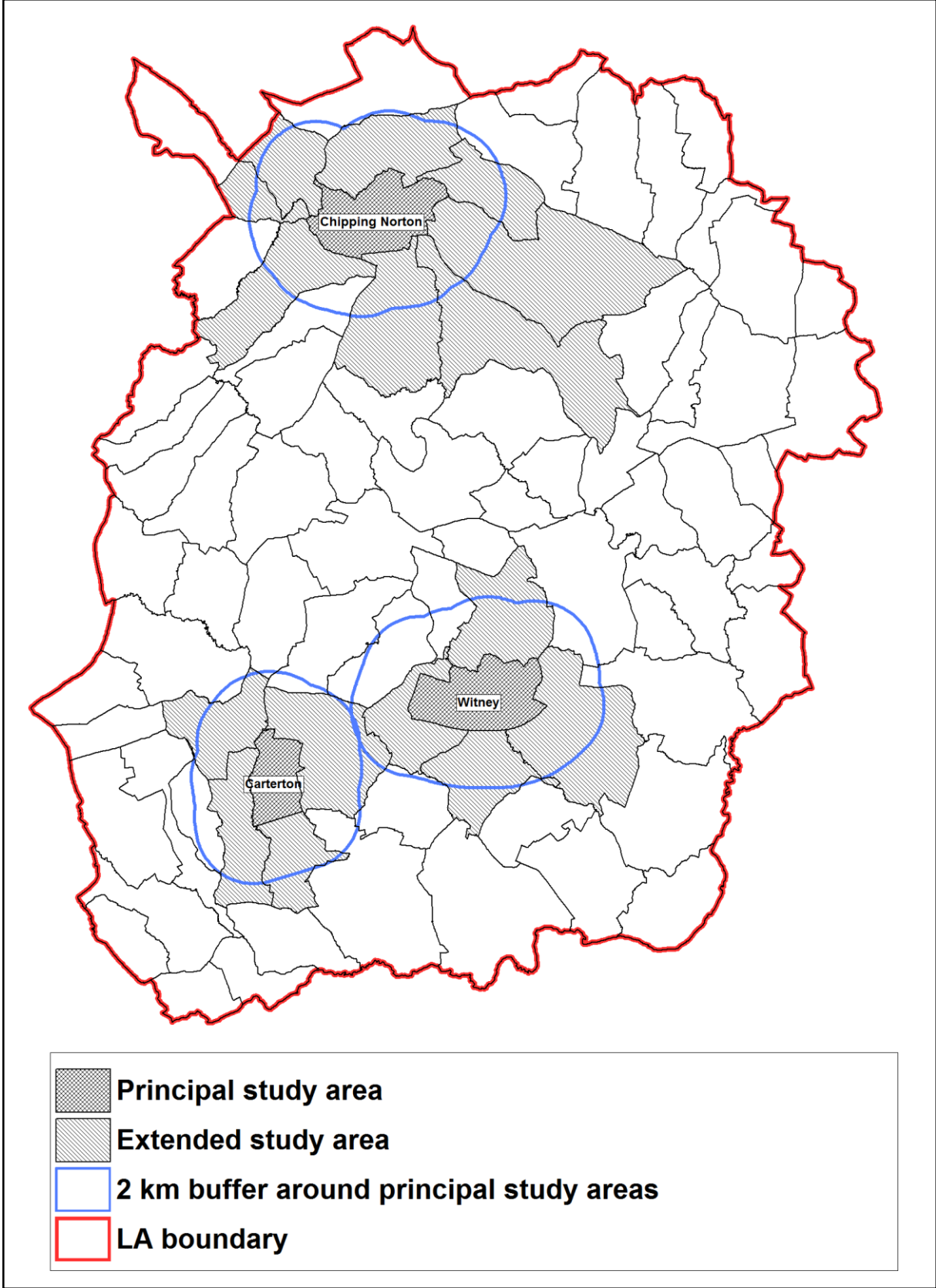
- Plans showing location and extent of existing provision for open space, sports and recreational facilities in the three main towns;
- A report for each of the three towns, analysing provision and identifying any quantitative and qualitative deficits. Where appropriate, recommendations should be made on potential new sites or site areas or improvements to existing areas to address any deficiencies that have been identified;
- The application of these provisional standards. This should take account of the present situation and the effects of the forecast development and demographic changes;
- Identification of strategic options for addressing needs/securing provision;
- A realistic yet creative assessment of the potential use of developer contributions in monetary / land terms (sites, equipment, improvement, maintenance etc.) in addressing any shortfall in need. This should be linked to potential future development;
- A hierarchy of the location for sports, recreation and open space facilities in relation to the identified catchments.

## **1.5 The study area**

### **1.5.1 General approach**

The key focus of the study is on the three main market towns of Witney, Carterton and Chipping Norton - the proposed focus for growth under the emerging Local Plan. However, to set provision within these areas in context with facilities in neighbouring parishes, the study broadly covers neighbouring parishes or an area of 2km around the principle study areas, as shown on figure 1. This provides a more robust approach to the development of local standards and assessing current provision and future requirements.

Figure 1 Proposed study area and approach



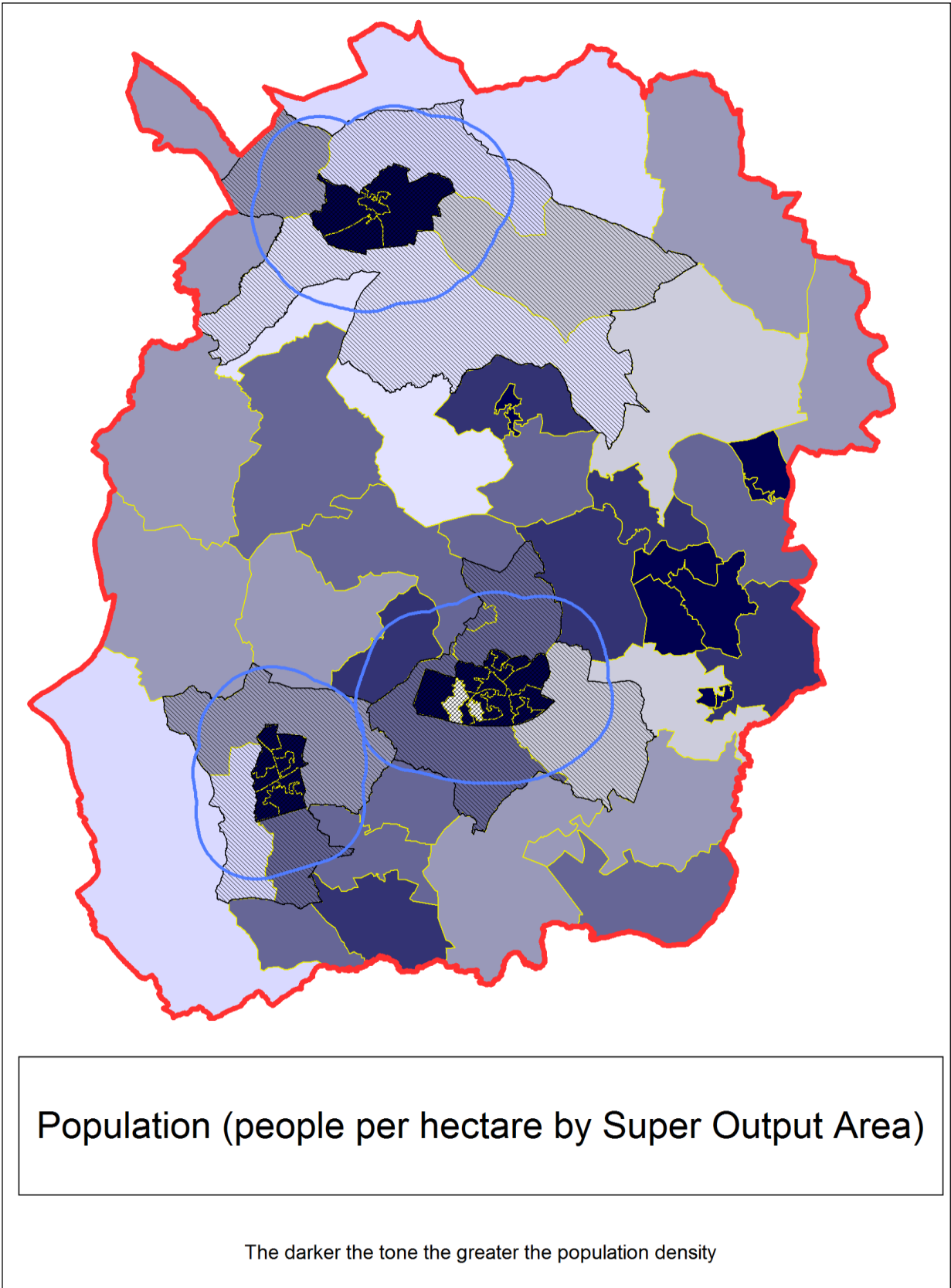
## 1.5.2 Population

The population of the parishes within the study area are shown in table 1. Following this, figure 2 shows the population densities of the study area in context of the whole district:

*Table 1: Population data of study area (2011 census)*

<b>Parish</b>	<b>Population 2011</b>
Alvescot	472
Black Bourton	266
Brize Norton	938
<b>Carterton</b>	<b>15769</b>
Chadlington	829
<b>Chipping Norton</b>	<b>6337</b>
Churchill	665
Cornwell	66
Curbridge	529
Ducklington	1581
Enstone	1139
Hailey	1208
Heythrop	93
Over Norton	498
Salford	356
Shilton	626
South Leigh	336
Spelsbury	305
<b>Witney</b>	<b>27522</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>59535</b>

Figure 2 Population density





1.5.3 Indices of multiple deprivation

Figure 3 Indices of multiple deprivation

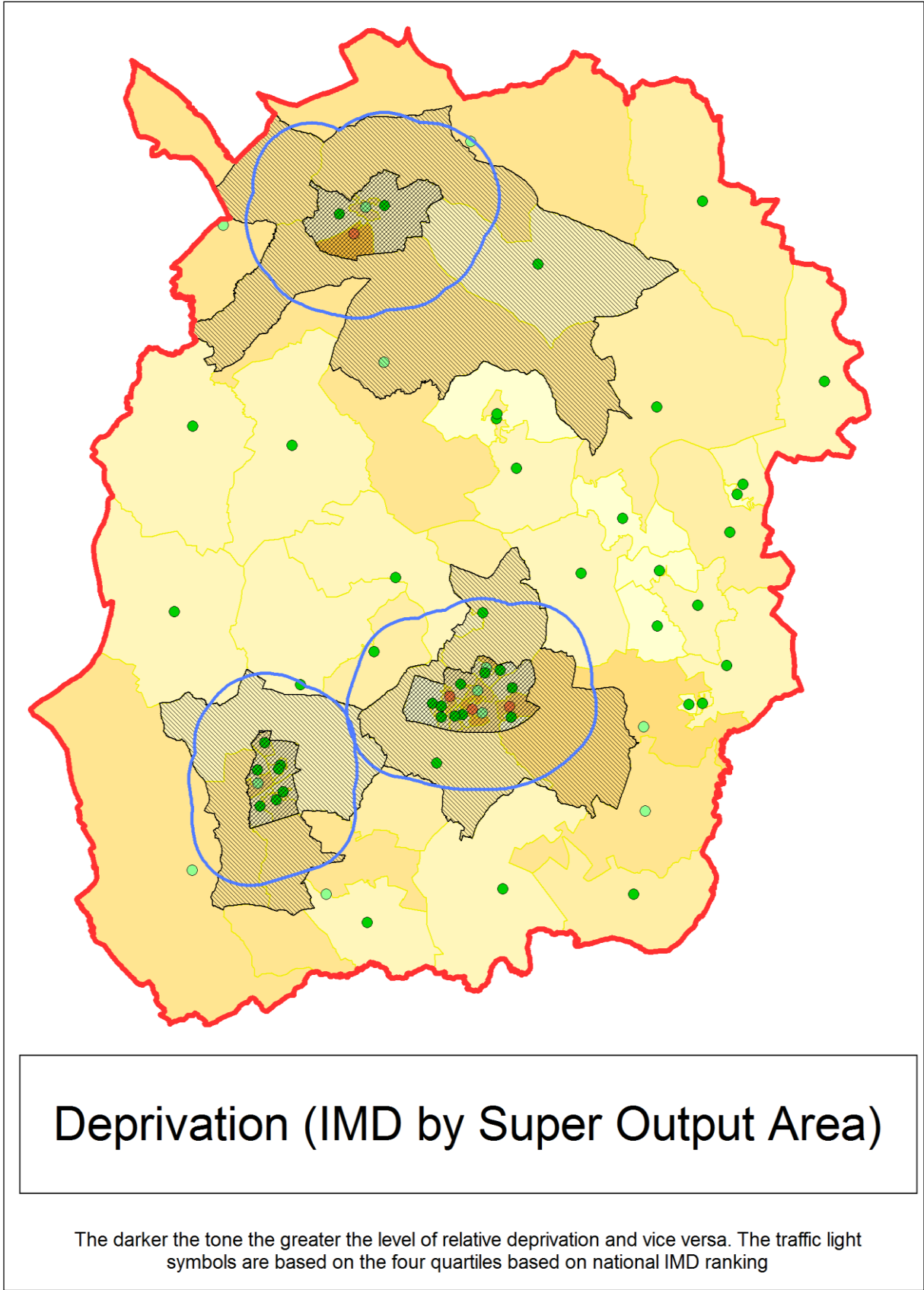


Figure 3 shows the Rank of Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) Scores. The IMD is the official government measure of deprivation and is based on a suite of indicators reflecting access to services, economic, social, health considerations amongst others. The scores are at the level of census 'Super Output Area' (SOA). The darker the tone the more deprived an area. In the 'traffic light' system Red dots highlight those areas ranking in the worst 25% of SOAs in England.

## **1.6 Report Structure**

The report is split into three main parts:

### ***Part 1: Developing local standards***

This section of the report covers steps 1 to 3 of the methodology:

- Step 1 - Identifying Local Needs
- Step 2 - Audit Local Provision
- Step 3 - Setting Provision Standards

### ***Part 2: Area Profiles***

This information is then used to undertake the analysis within three area profiles for each of the main towns of Witney, Carterton and Chipping Norton. The area profiles deal with the following steps of the methodology:

- Step 4 - Application of Provision Standards
- Step 5 - Drafting Policies and Implementation Plan.

### **Part 3: Strategic recommendations**

This considers all the analysis and recommendations in parts 1 and 2 of the study, and includes:

- Recommendations for a hierarchy of provision of open space;
- Broad strategic options for open space for the Study area;
- Recommended approach to developer contributions.

# **PART 1: DEVELOPING LOCAL STANDARDS**

## 2.0 METHODOLOGY

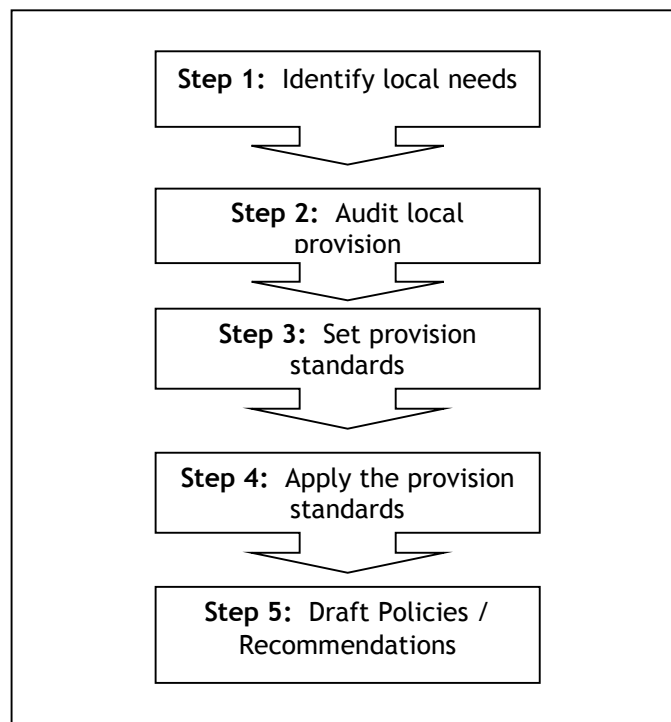
### 2.1 General

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

PPG17 placed a requirement on local authorities to undertake assessments and audits of open space, sports and recreational facilities in order to:

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

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



Within this overall approach the Companion Guide suggests a range of methods and techniques that might be adopted in helping the assessment process and these have been used as appropriate. These methods and techniques, where they have been used, are explained at appropriate points in this report. However, they are summarised in the following paragraphs.

## **2.2 Identifying Local Need (Step 1)**

This report examines identified local need for various types of open space, sports and recreation opportunity. It has drawn upon a range of survey and analytical techniques as well as a detailed review of existing consultation data and other relevant documentation. The report details the community consultation and research process that has been undertaken as part of the study as well as the main findings. Further details are provided in section 4.

## **2.3 Audit of local provision (Step 2)**

### **2.3.1 Defining the scope of the audit**

In order to build up an accurate picture of the current provision of open space, an audit of open space was carried out, this included:

- Analysis of existing GIS data held by WODC;
- Desktop mapping of open space from aerial photography;
- Questionnaires to town and parish councils.

Following this exercise, a database of 381 open spaces was mapped onto GIS. This was used as the basis for selecting sites to be visited to gather data on quality. The resources available for the study allowed for 150 sites to be included within the quality audit. A number of sites mapped on GIS were excluded from quality assessment based on the following criteria:

- Private or inaccessible sites;
- Education sites;
- Amenity Green Spaces smaller than 0.2 hectares;
- Churchyards;
- Civic Spaces.

This allowed the available resources to be directed to auditing those sites which are most likely to benefit from future improvements or have the potential to provide alternative uses.

### **2.3.2 Approach to mapping**

During the site visits, the range and types of facilities within each open space was recorded and mapped. Sites were mapped into their different functions a multi-functional approach to mapping. The advantage of the multi-functional approach is that it gives a much more accurate picture of the provision of open space. This is more advantageous than the primary typology approach which tends to result in an over assessment of provision, which can significantly impact decisions on quantity standards. The differences in approach are demonstrated in figures 4 and 5:



Figure 4 Primary typology approach to mapping

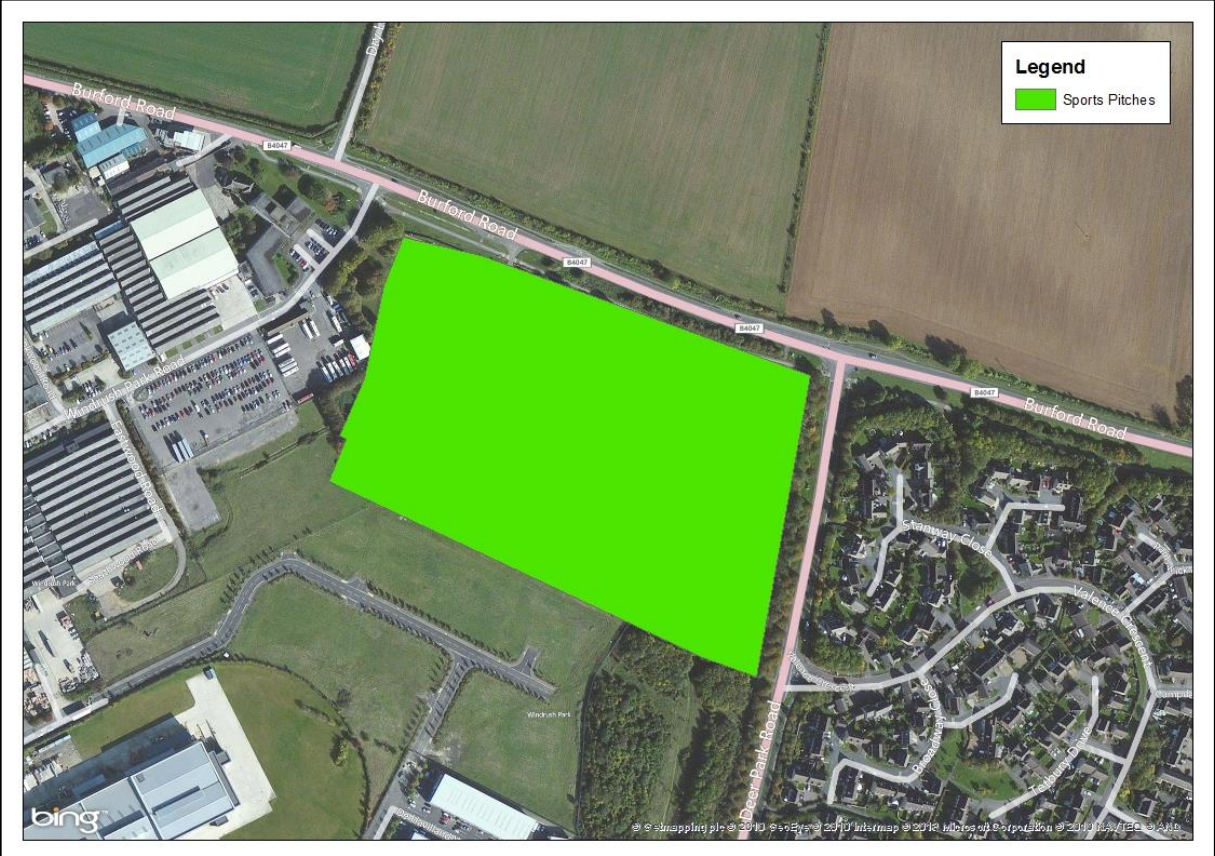


Figure 5 Multi-functional approach to mapping



### 2.3.3 Quality audit criteria

The quality audit of sites included an assessment of the existing quality and ‘potential for improvement’ of sites against a number of set criteria (based on the national green flag assessment criteria):

- Welcoming;
- Access;
- Design;
- Management and maintenance;
- Safety and Security;
- Community Involvement.

Each criteria was scored from 1 - 5, where 1 is ‘very poor’ and 5 is ‘very good’. A score for the sites potential was also made on the same score scale. The total of the scores was used to provide a total existing score and a total potential score. This has been used to assess those sites with different priorities for future retention and investment. The details of the quality audit are held within the quality database.

A summary of the quality audit is provided in the area profiles (part 2 of this report). Within these area profiles each site that was assessed is listed and the following provided:

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

#### ***Existing score/rank***

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

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

#### ***Potential score/rank***

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

- The potential quality score of the site is totalled;
- This is divided by the number of criteria for which a score was given to give an average potential score;

- The scores are ranked from A - D, where sites with rank 'A' are within the top 25% of potential improvement and sites with rank 'D' are in the bottom 25% of potential improvement - i.e. sites with rank 'A' have the most potential to be improved, and sites with rank 'D' have the poorest potential to improve.

### **Using this data**

The quality data can be used to identify differences in the quality of sites, and to inform future plans for open space in the sub area. Within this section, the scores and ranks for quality of sites have been used to draw out sites where quality is poor (rank C or D), and potential for improvement is high (rank A or B). These should be the priority sites for improvement/investment.

## **2.4 Set and apply provision standards (Steps 3 and 4)**

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

- Quantity
- Accessibility
- Quality

### ***Quantity***

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

### ***Access***

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

### ***Quality***

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



## **2.5 Town profiles and strategic recommendations (Step 5)**

A profile has been developed for each of the main towns which includes an assessment of the current and future requirements for open space.

All the above information is used to propose strategic options and recommendations for the future provision of open space across each area. This has also been used to recommend an approach to developer contributions for open space.

## 3.0 POLICY CONTEXT

This section sets out a brief review of the most relevant national, regional and local policies related to the study, and that have been considered in developing the methodology and findings of the study.

### 3.1 National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

Section 8 of the NPPF ‘*Promoting Healthy Communities*’ states under points 73 and 74:

*‘73. Access to high quality open spaces and opportunities for sport and recreation can make an important contribution to the health and well-being of communities. Planning policies should be based on robust and up-to-date assessments of the needs for open space, sports and recreation facilities and opportunities for new provision. The assessments should identify specific needs and quantitative or qualitative deficits or surpluses of open space, sports and recreational facilities in the local area. Information gained from the assessments should be used to determine what open space, sports and recreational provision is required.*

*74. Existing open space, sports and recreational buildings and land, including playing fields, should not be built on unless:*

- an assessment has been undertaken which has clearly shown the open space, buildings or land to be surplus to requirements; or*
- the loss resulting from the proposed development would be replaced by equivalent or better provision in terms of quantity and quality in a suitable location; or*
- the development is for alternative sports and recreational provision, the needs for which clearly outweigh the loss’.*

### 3.2 West Oxfordshire Draft Local Plan (October 2012)

The draft local plan will replace the most recent adopted plan which covered the period up to 2011. The District Council are currently in the process of finalising the revised local plan which will cover the period up to 2029. This open space study will inform policy within the revised plan, and as such will be subject to consultation as part of the local plan consultation process.

As the plan is still at draft stage, there are a number of saved policies within the 2011 plan which are still in place, albeit the intention is that the revised plan will replace them. For the purpose of this report, a number of the saved local plan policies are relevant.

#### 3.2.1 Policies from 2011 local plan

*POLICY TLC5 - Existing Outdoor Recreational Space*

*Development proposals should not result in the loss of existing recreational open space (including school playing fields, allotments and amenity areas) unless:*

*a) the development is for buildings and/or facilities ancillary to, or enhancing, the amenity or recreational value of the open space; or*

- b) alternative provision of at least equivalent suitability and accessibility, particularly by foot, is made; or*
- c) there is clear evidence that now, and in the future, the land will no longer be needed for its current purpose or for recreational uses by the wider community.*

#### *POLICY TLC6 - Provision of Facilities in Relation to New Development*

This policy has been deleted, although it is useful to note that the policy was based on the National Playing Fields Association (NPFA) standard for provision. These standards are that at least 2.4 hectares (6 acres) should be provided for every 1,000 population (1.6 hectares for outdoor sports, including 1.2 hectares for pitch sports, plus 0.8 hectare for children's playing space).

The deletion of this policy is testimony to the district council's acknowledgement that the policy is now not in line with the requirements of the national planning policy framework for locally derived standards - which is the key objective of this open space study.

#### **3.2.2 Draft Local Plan (2012): Sport, Recreation and Children's Play**

The draft local plan identifies the following in relation to open space, sport and recreation facilities:

*Play parks, playing fields, country parks, sailing lakes, golf courses, allotments and the like, while primarily designed for formal and/or informal recreation purposes, all contribute to the District's open space provision and fulfil the multi-functionality of green infrastructure. Recreational open space and built facilities, such as the Carterton Leisure Centre, are also fundamental to the quality of life and wellbeing of West Oxfordshire's residents, contributing to community-life and bringing health and social benefits.*

*Local assessments of recreation provision show some inconsistency in the quantity and quality of facilities within West Oxfordshire. Given the aim of raising recreation participation levels, especially amongst young people, combined with a growing population, there is likely to be greater demand and pressure on existing facilities, giving added emphasis to the need for their retention. The general principle of protecting existing facilities is especially relevant for open spaces with recreational value in built-up areas, where demand is greatest and replacement space can be difficult to provide (see Core Policy 19 - Public Realm and Green Infrastructure and Core Policy 5 - Supporting Infrastructure).*

*Additional provision will need to be made, both through new facilities and maximising the use of existing facilities such as in schools and village halls. We will work in partnership with schools and other organisations to make facilities available to the wider community by maximising the range, quality and effectiveness of joint use provision. The draft Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) identifies a number of necessary improvements to sport, recreation and play facilities across the District. New development will be expected to provide or contribute towards the provision of enhancements where appropriate.*

### 3.2.3 Draft local plan (2012): Providing new homes

The other key policy related to this study is the identified need for new housing, which will have an impact on the future requirements for open space, sport and recreation facilities. The key policy is:

*The proposed level of housing for West Oxfordshire is 5,500 new homes in the period 1st April 2011 - 31st March 2029. This level of growth is in line with the South East Plan, takes account of the need to increase housing supply to provide for economic growth and tackle housing affordability, but is balanced with the likely capacity of existing and planned infrastructure, the availability of suitable housing sites and the need to achieve a 'sustainable' level of development for the District. The housing target is not however a 'ceiling' and may be exceeded.*

Further assessment of the housing needs of each of the three key towns include within this study are considered in section XX.

### 3.3 Other policies

The above summarises the most relevant policies to this study, other policies which have been considered include:

Landscape assessment and biodiversity

<http://www.westoxon.gov.uk/planning/LandscapeAssessments.cfm>

PPG17 Study

<http://www.westoxon.gov.uk/files/download/4243-2373.pdf>

Oxfordshire Play Strategy

<http://www.oxford.gov.uk/Direct/83663OxfordshirePlayStrategy200911.pdf>

Oxfordshire Play Policy

[http://www.oalc.org.uk/documents/OxfordshirePlayPolicy2009\\_FINAL\\_.pdf](http://www.oalc.org.uk/documents/OxfordshirePlayPolicy2009_FINAL_.pdf)

Interim West Oxfordshire Green Infrastructure Study (also a series of other related documents)

<http://www.westoxon.gov.uk/files/download/8371-4456.pdf>

Public Open Space Audit (also a series of other related documents)

<http://www.westoxon.gov.uk/files/download/5680-3045.pdf>

## **4.0 ASSESSMENT OF LOCAL NEED**

### **4.1 Introduction**

Appendix 1 provides full details of the local needs assessment undertaken as part of the study. This part of the report provides a brief overview of key findings which have been used to inform the rest of the study.

### **4.2 General Community consultation - Key Findings**

#### **General**

- Residents place a high value on their parks, recreation grounds and public green spaces.
- In general the various kinds of open space appear to be well used by many local residents, particularly so in relation to local open spaces near their home, play areas, and natural/wild green spaces.
- Respondents recognise the health and social benefits of access to public recreational green spaces of all kinds.

#### **Quantity**

- Overall, respondents believe that existing levels of open space are sufficient to meet quantitative needs.
- Many respondents suggest there is a shortfall in facilities for teenagers. In addition respondents consistently highlight a shortage of allotments.
- There is a widespread view that the towns do not have enough playing field and recreation ground provision, particularly in relation to football.

#### **Quality**

- Around 68% of residents say they are very or fairly happy with parks and open space provision; which is less than for Oxfordshire, the South East and England as a whole.
- Respondents highlight that it is important that facilities, equipment and grounds should be of high quality and well maintained
- Categories of open space rated highly in terms of quality include local open spaces near residents' homes, village greens and informal green space areas.
- Kinds of open space that people are less satisfied with in terms of quality are play areas, sports fields and off-road pathways.

#### **Access**

- Broadly speaking people reported that the distance they needed to travel to access their most used public open space was acceptable.
- Walking was the preferred mode of travel to most kinds of open space which is likely to include amenity and informal open space, civic spaces, play areas, local parks, outdoor youth facilities, allotments, grass sports pitches, tennis courts and footpaths.

- 10% of respondents drive to their most used open space so comparisons should be made with similar areas to help judge what kinds of open space are commonly accessed by car. This is likely to include spaces like bowling greens, churchyards/cemeteries, golf courses and synthetic turf pitches.
- Significant numbers cycle to their most used open space so it is important to consider access for bicycles and associated facilities, for example, provision of bicycle parking/stands. A small proportion also use public transport so whenever possible locations should consider access by public transport, in particular for larger or more specialist provision which are likely to have a wider catchment.
- Respondents highlighted that it is important that public open spaces are easy to get to and once there they are easy to get around and that there should be provision for all ages and all abilities.

#### **Other observations and issues**

- A number of stakeholders highlighted the importance of footpaths, bridleways and cycle paths and that there was potential for improvements to this network in terms of quantity and quality.
- Another factor noted by many was the importance of ensuring public open spaces feel safe and secure, which is important in relation to planning in relation to location and also in design terms.
- It was noted that parks and open space should include natural and wild areas to benefit biodiversity as well as creating an attractive environment for visitors.

### **4.3 Town and Parish Councils - Key Findings**

#### ***Quantity***

- The Town Councils indicate a particular shortfall in terms of sports pitches, particularly to accommodate the high local demand for football.
- Four out of the six councils highlight a shortage of facilities for teenagers
- With the exception of Brize Norton (who indicate a shortage of teenage facilities and footpaths/bridleways/ cycle paths) the smaller parish councils did not highlight a general shortfall in terms of the quantity of any specific kind of open space.

#### ***Quality***

- The councils recognise the importance that equipment and grounds are of high quality and are well maintained
- They note the importance that outdoor recreational facilities need to be and feel safe and secure for those using them
- They also note that there needs to be adequate opportunities for dog walking and freedom from dog fouling
- Four out of the six Councils highlight the need for improvements in the quality of children's play areas

- All of the councils highlight specific facilities in their town or parish where quality needs to be improved.

### **Access**

- As regards access it was highlighted that it is of great importance that facilities should be easy to get to for all members of the community
- They also highlighted that there should be good footpath and cycle-path links to and between them

### **Town Specific**

- Carterton TC highlighted shortfalls in all of the various categories of open space (particularly sport) in terms of both quantity and quality. They have proposed detailed options for future options re outdoor sports.
- Chipping Norton TC specifically highlights the need for more football pitches, tennis courts and outdoor facilities for teenagers.
- Witney TC indicated a need for more football pitches, tennis courts/MUGAs, bowling greens, teenage facilities and publically accessible wildlife areas. They also highlighted the current poor quality of much of the provision.

### **Other Issues**

- All of the councils were directly responsible for the management of some local facilities and the Town Councils are major providers
- Only Chipping Norton TC highlighted opportunities for increased community use of school outdoor facilities.

## **4.4 Key Findings - Outdoor Sports**

### **Football**

- Overall, unlike a lot of counties, Oxfordshire has not suffered a decline in adult male 11v11 football and adult female 11v11 has remained fairly stable.
- Youth male football, 7v7, 9v9 and 11v11, continues to grow across the county although this is not so strong in West Oxfordshire. Youth female has suffered a decline countywide although this is less so in West Oxfordshire.
- Disability football team provision is poor compared to the rest of the county as there is at least 1 disability club in each of the three other districts.
- All of the three towns appear to have a shortfall of grass football pitches for both adult and junior play. A lack of available 11v11 facilities has left new teams with little choice but to discontinue as there have been no pitches available to play on.
- The implementation of The FA Youth Development Revue will see the mandatory introduction of 9 v 9 football, at U11 & U12 in 2013/14, more pitches and goalposts, of the required sizes, will need to be provided to enable young players to participate.

- There is a general need for 3G artificial grass pitches for both training and league play (the latter for juniors). There are no indoor facilities for training and no Futsal opportunities.
- The quality of pitches is variable with some being very poor due to drainage issues. Many of the changing facilities are of poor quality and in need of refurbishment. Some sites still do not have any changing and shower facilities

## Cricket

- Demand for male cricket is fairly static but women's and girl's cricket is a major growth area.
- Junior cricket is particularly strong in West Oxfordshire.
- Overall across the study areas there appear to be enough cricket pitches to meet current levels of demand
- With the exception of Witney Swifts all the clubs wish to expand and/or refurbish their facilities. Chipping Norton CC note that they are currently running at full capacity and have an aspiration to expand.
- Quality is very variable e.g. facilities at Chipping Norton CC are excellent while Witney Swift's facilities at The Leys recreation ground are very poor.
- There is a need for quality artificial pitch facilities available for clubs to hire as well as a lack of good quality indoor practice facilities.
- The main barriers to club development appear to be a shortage of volunteers, cost of hiring/using facilities and a lack of external funding.
- The NGB suggest that the main priorities are to assist clubs to improve their playing surfaces; better management of facilities which are shared by cricket and other sports; supporting clubs who want to improve their changing facilities; and assisting clubs to install all-weather surfaces.

## Rugby

- Rugby Union is very strong in West Oxfordshire and with active participation at junior and secondary schools demand is growing.
- There are two very active Clubs in the study area (Chipping Norton RUFC and Witney RUFC) - both having a range of teams from under 13s to adults.
- Carterton is in proximity to Brize Norton and rugby is played there. However, no Brize Norton teams play in the RFU leagues.
- Witney RUFC has developed an active disability section and has a team (Witney Wolves). Both clubs are developing girls and ladies participation
- Overall, with the facilities on schools sites for schools rugby and the two clubs' own facilities there are enough pitches available to meet demand for league play.
- Chipping Norton RUFC however is short of pitches to accommodate training and has an aspiration for a 3G pitch. Witney RUFC is currently working to secure funding to provide floodlights for their main pitch (supported by the RFU).
- The quality of pitches and ancillary facilities are reported as good, though it is noted that training use damages the pitches for league play.



- Barriers to development noted are a shortage of all-weather pitches for matches and training; a shortage of indoor training facilities; the cost of hiring/using their facilities and a lack of funding; and a shortage of volunteers.

## Hockey

- Demand is increasing. There is a growing demand for youth opportunities within the district. There has been an increase in adult membership for males and females at Witney HC.
- Witney HC report that they have insufficient pitches for both their fixture and training needs and that the quality of their changing and ancillary facilities is poor.
- Witney ATP is very tired and the playing surface is at the end of its life. Wood Green School pitch is acceptable though is very slippery which can be a risk to players. Ideally two pitches next to each other would create a significantly better proposition for Witney HC.
- Kingham Hill School near Chipping Norton is acceptable but hockey would definitely benefit from a synthetic turf facility in Chipping Norton. The school in Chipping Norton are looking at a pitch development which could be a great asset for hockey in the West Oxon area.

## Bowls

- In common with most Counties, demand is decreasing rather than increasing. Hence the efforts being made by the NGB and clubs to attract the interest of the various age groups.
- Most if not all clubs appear to be able to accommodate the matches they contract to play.
- Broadly speaking most of the clubs make do and mend where necessary. However realistically there is always a need for more money to be invested in the sport at both Club and County level.
- Witney Town Bowls Club has specific aspirations and detailed plans for refurbishing their facilities. Their membership has increased over the past year.

## Tennis

- The majority of clubs in West Oxfordshire own their own facilities and co-ordinate their own activity e.g. Witney Lawn Tennis Club.
- The Town/Parish Councils also provide tennis courts at local recreation grounds e.g. Witney Town Council and Brize Norton PC. Some secondary schools provide tennis courts for community use e.g. Chipping Norton and Carterton though the extent of community use is not clear.
- One of the key issues for the LTA is around planning for new courts/floodlights to allow the various clubs to grow. Something the LTA is also looking at currently is the park/community tennis that is available and supporting developments at strategic sites.
- The LTA would be supportive of improvements at Witney Lawn Tennis Club and acknowledge a lack of courts in Chipping Norton and Carterton. There is a group

in Chipping Norton with a facebook site highlighting an aspiration to develop new tennis courts in the town.

## 4.5 Key Findings - Parks and Greenspace

### General

- It is clear that in general residents highly value their parks and natural/amenity green spaces.
- Parks and amenity/natural green spaces are frequently and regularly used by many residents for informal recreation and are appreciated for their attractiveness and in relation to benefits to health and wellbeing.
- A number of stakeholders highlighted the importance of footpaths, bridleways and cycle paths and that there was potential for improvements to this network in terms of quantity and quality.

### Quantity

- Overall, in terms of parks and amenity/natural green space provision (in contrast to sports pitches and courts) it appears that there is no significant shortfall in the quantity of provision.
- There is a need to ensure that areas of green space are retained within the larger new developments, as the countryside can quickly become remote.
- There is a shortage of allotment plots in Witney and Carterton.
- Carterton TC have highlighted a need for additional cemetery/burial ground space.

### Quality

- In relation to parks and open spaces the 2008 Place survey indicated about 68% are very or fairly happy with provision, less than for Oxfordshire and the South East and very slightly less than for England as a whole.
- Local groups rate the quality of parks as good or at least average and they are fairly satisfied with the quality (rated good or average) of natural/ amenity type green space.
- The town/parish councils highlight the importance that parks and open spaces should be of high quality and well maintained.
- Management of the towns' open spaces in general may benefit from a more varied cutting regime better suited to biodiversity

### Access

- Many stakeholders and community groups highlighted the importance of parks and open spaces being easy to get to for all members of the community; and the need for there being good links - by footpaths and cycleway - to them and between them.
- It appears that in general access to parks and natural/amenity green spaces by foot is reasonably good though there is potential to improve access by bicycle to some facilities.
- The need for enabling easier physical access to parks and the countryside for

disabled people has been highlighted by stakeholders.

#### **Other observations and issues**

- Natural England stress the need to take into account the ANGSt standard as a starting point for developing a standard for natural and semi-natural green space. Variation from this standard should be justified.
- The Woodland Trust also has recommended standards for woodland provision that they would like the study to take into account.
- The Oxfordshire County Council Rights of Way Improvement Plan highlights priorities for footpaths, cycle routes and bridleways.

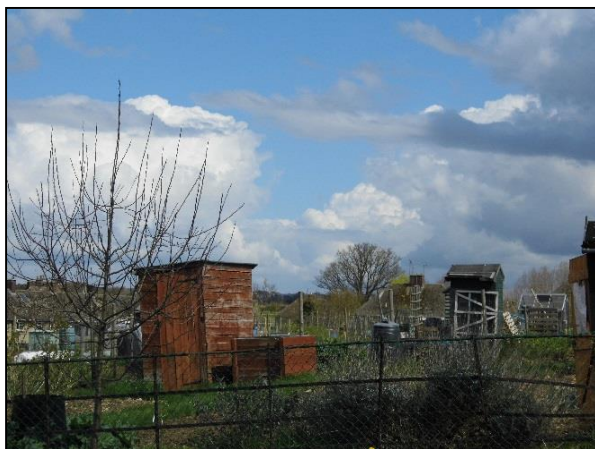
## 5.0 AUDIT OF LOCAL PROVISION

The following typologies of open space have been developed for the study:

Typologies with all standards (Quantity, Access and Quality)	Typologies mapped but with no standards
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Allotments</li> <li>• Amenity Green Space;</li> <li>• Natural/Semi-Natural Green Space (covering two categories: Accessible Natural Green Space (ANGS); and, Private Natural Green Space (PNGS);</li> <li>• Parks &amp; Recreation Grounds, including:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Outdoor Sports Space (Pitches)</li> <li>- Outdoor Sports Space (Fixed);</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Play Space (Children);</li> <li>• Play Space (Youth);</li> <li>• Outdoor Sport (Limited Access).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Churchyard &amp; Cemeteries;</li> <li>• Education Sites.</li> </ul>

The following section provides a summary of the typologies included within the open space study.

### 5.1.1 Allotments



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

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

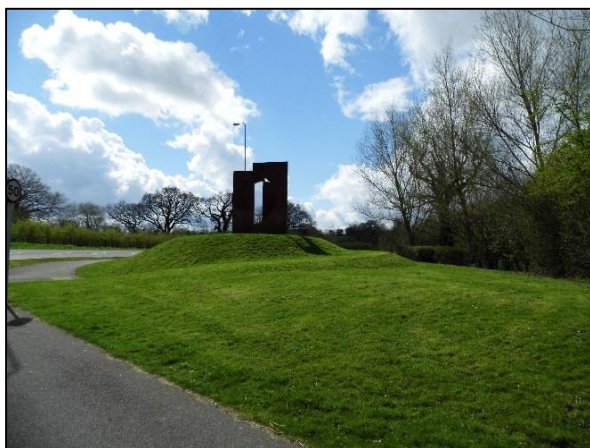
*“an allotment not exceeding 40 poles in extent which is wholly or mainly cultivated by the occupier for the production of vegetable or fruit crops for consumption by himself or his family”*

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

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

Throughout the audit, all identified allotments were visited, however, in many cases access to the sites was not possible, therefore limited information may have been recorded at some sites.

### 5.1.2 Amenity green space



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

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

Examples might include both small and larger informal grassed areas in housing estates and general recreation spaces. They can serve a variety of functions dependent on their size, shape, location and topography. Some may be used for informal recreation activities, whilst others by themselves, or else collectively, contribute to the overall visual amenity of an area. For the purpose of this study, amenity spaces below 0.2 hectares in size have been excluded from the quantity analysis, and have been classified as ‘visual amenity space’ - typically consisting of roadside verges, roundabouts and incidental areas of grass.



### 5.1.3 Natural/Semi-Natural Green Space



For the purpose of this study, natural and semi-natural green space covers a variety of partly or wholly accessible spaces including meadows, woodland and copse all of which share a trait of having natural characteristics and wildlife value, but which are also open to public use and enjoyment.

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

Some sites will have statutory rights or permissive codes allowing the public to wander in these sites. Others may have defined Rights of Way or permissive routes running through them. For the remainder of sites there may be some access on a managed basis. Many natural spaces may not be ‘accessible’ in the sense that they cannot be entered and used by the general community, they can be appreciated from a distance, and contribute to visual amenity. Although such spaces are not covered by this study, their value is recognised. Although such spaces are not the subject of standards developed by this study, their value is recognised. This distinction is reflected here by use of the terms Accessible Natural Green Space (ANGS); and, Private Natural Green Space (PNGS).

## 5.1.4 Parks and Recreation Grounds



This typology brings together the function of Parks and recreation grounds and Outdoor Sports Space as identified in the PPG17 typology. The distinction between the two typologies in West Oxfordshire is blurred, with very few formal gardens and the vast majority of parks and/or outdoor sports space having multi-functions used for both informal and formal recreation. The consultation undertaken indicated that people refer to their local park or rec, and communities do not make a distinction between outdoor sports space and parks and recreation grounds. Therefore, for West Oxfordshire an overarching typology for Parks and Recreation Grounds has been used. The typology takes on many forms, and may embrace a wide range of functions including:

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

The multi-functional approach to mapping (see section 2.3) has provided detail to the range of functions that exist within parks and recreation grounds, with all outdoor sport and play facilities being mapped. This has meant that more accurate assessment of these facilities can be undertaken. The following two sections add clarity to the types of outdoor sports space and play space found within West Oxfordshire.

### 5.1.5 Play Space



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

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

However, there are a number of recognised types of play area including Local Areas for Play (LAPs), Local Equipped Areas for Play (LEAPs), Neighbourhood Equipped Areas for Play (NEAPs), School Playgrounds, informal ball courts, and 'hang out' areas.

The study has recorded the following:

- Equipped children's space (for pre-teens and toddlers).
- Provision for teenagers.

The former comprises equipped areas of play that cater for the needs of children up to and around 12 years. The latter comprises informal recreation opportunities for, broadly, the 13 to 16/17 age group, and which might include facilities like skateboard parks, basketball courts and 'free access' Multi Use Games Areas (MUGAs). In practice, there will always be some blurring around the edges in terms of younger children using equipment aimed for older persons and vice versa.

#### *Play space - Children*

Play Areas are an essential way of creating safe but adventurous places for children of varying ages to play and learn. The emphasis in play area management is shifting away from straightforward and formal equipment such as slides and swings towards creating areas where imagination and natural learning can flourish through the use of



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

### *Play Space - Youth*

This category includes skate parks/BMX tracks and Multi-Use Games Areas (MUGA) for ease, as most of these are predominantly used by young people and have been installed with this key client group in mind.

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

#### **5.1.6 Outdoor Sport (Limited Access)**

Outdoor sports space with limited public access (e.g. private sports grounds), have also been recorded and mapped where known. Throughout the audit, it was not always possible to gain access to private sites. As such, limited information may have been collected at some sites. Private sport space makes up an important part of outdoor sports provision across the District, and forms an important part of the community facilities. The private sports spaces have been mapped separately to publicly accessible sites, to determine exact provision of the different types of provision.

#### **5.1.7 Churchyards**

The District has many churches and cemeteries and these provide significant aesthetic value and space for informal recreation such as walking and relaxing. Many are also important in terms of biodiversity. Their importance for informal recreation, aesthetic value and contribution towards biodiversity must be acknowledged, and as such, investment in their upkeep, maintenance and quality is an important factor. Churchyards and Cemeteries have been identified and mapped where known, however, no quantity or access standard for provision have been set.

This reflects the priorities established through consultation, which identifies the need to provide and improve open spaces. Churchyards can provide important open space, however, there is little opportunity to have a strategic influence over them (the ultimate end goal in PPG17). Whilst there may be the opportunity to enhance the quality of provision, there is little scope to provide 'new' or 'relocated provision' through the recommendations in this study.

#### **5.1.8 Education**

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

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

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

## 5.2 Existing provision of open space

The GIS mapping of open space has been used to assess the existing quantity of open space by neighbourhood. A summary of existing provision is shown in table 2 below. Full details of provision for all typologies is outlined in the area profiles (part 2).

**Table 2** Existing provision of open space (hectares)

PARISH	Allotments	Amenity Green Space	Parks and Recreation Grounds (Public)	Parks and Recreation Grounds (Public & Private)	Accessible Natural Green space	Private Natural Green space	Play Space (Children)	Play Space (Youth)
Alvescot	0	0	0.41	0.41	0	8.43	0.04	0
Black Bourton	0	0.26	0.57	0.57	0.16	0	0.02	0
Brize Norton	0.93	0	8.95	14.72	19.45	0	1.12	0
<b>Carterton</b>	<b>1.5</b>	<b>16.12</b>	<b>3.61</b>	<b>8.66</b>	<b>3.71</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0.51</b>	<b>0.06</b>
Chadlington	0.43	0.32	2.17	2.17	0	0	0.17	0
<b>Chipping Norton</b>	<b>8.91</b>	<b>1.08</b>	<b>2.37</b>	<b>13.16</b>	<b>10.47</b>	<b>19.84</b>	<b>0.84</b>	<b>0.05</b>
Churchill	0	0	1.5	1.5	0	0	0.05	0.01
Cornwell	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Curbridge	0	0.64	0	3.19	0	0	0.17	0
Ducklington	3.5	0.64	2.88	2.88	11.89	0	0.03	0
Enstone	0.93	0	0.75	2.76	0	0	0.11	0
Hailey	0	0	1.56	9.83	10.69	0	0.16	0.08
Heythrop	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Over Norton	2.75	0	0	0	0	5.57	0.02	0
Salford	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.1	0
Shilton	0	1.03	0	0.69	1.79	0	0	0
South Leigh	0	0	1.32	1.32	0	0	0.12	0
Spelsbury	0.2	0	0	0	0	0	0.07	0
<b>Witney</b>	<b>1.47</b>	<b>20.27</b>	<b>26.52</b>	<b>29.22</b>	<b>32.57</b>	<b>22.15</b>	<b>1.06</b>	<b>0.18</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>20.62</b>	<b>40.36</b>	<b>52.61</b>	<b>91.08</b>	<b>90.73</b>	<b>55.99</b>	<b>4.59</b>	<b>0.38</b>
<b>Total (main towns)</b>	<b>11.88</b>	<b>37.47</b>	<b>32.5</b>	<b>51.04</b>	<b>46.75</b>	<b>41.99</b>	<b>2.41</b>	<b>0.29</b>

**Table 3 Existing provision of open space (ha/ 1000)**

PARISH	Allotments	Amenity Green Space	Parks and Recreation Grounds (Public)	Parks and Recreation Grounds (Public & Private)	Accessible Natural Green space	Private Natural Green space	Play Space (Children)	Play Space (Youth)
Alvescot	0	0	0.87	0.87	0	17.86	0.08	0
Black Bourton	0	0.98	2.15	2.15	0.6	0	0.08	0
Brize Norton	0.99	0	9.54	15.69	20.74	0	1.19	0
<b>Carterton</b>	<b>0.1</b>	<b>1.02</b>	<b>0.23</b>	<b>0.55</b>	<b>0.24</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0.03</b>	<b>0</b>
Chadlington	0.52	0.39	2.62	2.62	0	0	0.21	0
<b>Chipping Norton</b>	<b>1.41</b>	<b>0.17</b>	<b>0.38</b>	<b>2.08</b>	<b>1.65</b>	<b>3.13</b>	<b>0.13</b>	<b>0.01</b>
Churchill	0	0	2.26	2.26	0	0	0.08	0.02
Cornwell	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Curbridge	0	1.21	0	6.03	0	0	0.32	0
Ducklington	2.21	0.4	1.83	1.83	7.52	0	0.02	0
Enstone	0.82	0	0.66	2.42	0	0	0.1	0
Hailey	0	0	1.29	8.14	8.85	0	0.13	0.07
Heythrop	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Over Norton	5.52	0	0	0	0	11.18	0.04	0
Salford	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.28	0
Shilton	0	1.65	0	1.1	2.86	0	0	0
South Leigh	0	0	3.93	3.93	0	0	0.36	0
Spelsbury	0.66	0	0	0	0	0	0.23	0
Witney	0.05	0.74	0.97	1.07	1.18	0.8	0.04	0.01
<b>Total</b>	<b>0.35</b>	<b>0.68</b>	<b>0.88</b>	<b>1.53</b>	<b>1.52</b>	<b>0.94</b>	<b>0.08</b>	<b>0.01</b>
<b>Total (main Towns)</b>	<b>0.24</b>	<b>0.76</b>	<b>0.65</b>	<b>1.03</b>	<b>0.94</b>	<b>0.85</b>	<b>0.05</b>	<b>0.01</b>

## 5.3 Proposed standards for West Oxfordshire

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

### 5.3.1 The development of Standards

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

- **Quantity standards:** These are determined by the analysis of existing quantity, consideration of existing local and national standards and benchmarks and evidence gathered from the local needs assessment. It is important that quantity standards are locally derived and are realistic and achievable. The recommended standards need to be robust, evidence based and deliverable through new development and future mechanisms of contributions through section 106 and/or the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL).
- **Accessibility standards:** These reflect the needs of potential users. Spaces likely to be used on a frequent and regular basis need to be within easy walking distance and to have safe access. Other facilities where visits are longer but perhaps less frequent, for example country parks, can be further away. Consideration is also given to existing local or national standards and benchmarks.
- **Quality standards:** The standards for each form of provision are derived from the quality audit, existing good practice and from the views of the community and those that use the spaces. Again, quality standards should be achievable and reflect the priorities that emerge through consultation.

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

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

### 5.3.2 Allotments

#### *Summary of quantity and access standard*

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

#### *Existing national or local standards*

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

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

#### *Quantity standard for allotments*

The average existing level of provision of allotments across the three main towns is 0.24ha/1000 people, and 0.35 ha/1000 across the wider study area. The consultation identified that there are waiting lists for all allotments in all the main towns. The quality audits also confirmed that all allotments appeared to be fully occupied and well used. Considering this, and the tendency for smaller gardens in new development that new provision for allotments through development is important, and that this should be at least a level with the average existing provision in the main towns. It is therefore recommended that a target of 0.25 ha/1000 is adopted for allotments.

#### *Access standard for allotments*

With no national benchmark standard for allotments, the key driver for establishing a local standard is from feedback from the local needs assessment. This identified that 30% of people are willing to travel up to 5 minutes, and a further 30% up to 10 minutes. This indicates a strong desire by people to have allotments within walking distance of home. Therefore a standard of 480 metres straight line walking distance, equivalent to 10 minutes walking time is recommended.

#### *Quality standards for allotments*

Few comments were received in relation to the quality of allotments, furthermore the information gathered in relation to allotments is more difficult to assess in comparison to other types of open space. The reason for this is twofold: Firstly, the number of people who actually use allotments is very low compared to the numbers who use other types of open space and, therefore specific comments related to the

quality of allotments are less frequent; Secondly, the majority of allotments sites are locked, and the quality audit only allows for assessment against key criteria such as the level of cultivation and general maintenance, which is less comprehensive than the assessments of other open space.

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

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

### 5.3.3 Amenity Green Space

#### *Summary of quantity and access standard*

Quantity Standard	Access Standard
0.75 ha/1000	480 metres or 10 minutes walk

#### *Existing national or local standards*

There is no national guidance suggesting a standard for the provision of Amenity green space. The FIT ‘Six Acre Standard’ proposes casual or informal playing space should be provided within housing areas as part of the overall standard. This is equivalent to 0.4 - 0.5 ha/1000 of informal space for play.

#### *Quantity standard for Amenity green space*

The average existing level of provision of amenity green space across the main towns is 0.76ha/1000 and across the study area is 0.68 ha/1000 (this only includes spaces greater than 0.2 ha in size). Discussions with the District Council have identified the potential of amenity green space to fulfil other functions, including development for other types of open space and potential for housing development.

With these factors in mind, it is recommended that a standard of 0.70 ha/1000 is set. This standard will be used to assess the existing provision of amenity green space across each area to identify current supply. This standard will also be used as the basis for seeking new provision through development, but will be considered alongside

the requirements for natural green space, as there is often much cross over in the form and function of these two typologies provided in new developments. This is further clarified in section 5.3.4.

Finally, the audit identified a lot of small amenity green spaces which are unusable in terms of recreation and are more aesthetic in their purpose - typically grass verges and roundabouts. Therefore, the new policy should be to provide amenity green space which is useable, with a minimum size of 0.2 ha. Space which is provided below this size will not be considered to contribute towards the requirement.

### ***Access standard for amenity green space***

The consultation identified that nearly 80% of people want open space near their home. 60% also identified the need for village and town greens to be within 5 minutes walk. Clearly people want open space near to home and therefore, an access standard of 480 metres straight line walking distance, equivalent to 10 minutes walking time is recommended.

### ***Quality standards for amenity green space***

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

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

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



### 5.3.4 Natural & Semi-Natural Green Space

#### *Summary of quantity and access standards (for Accessible Natural Green Space)*

Quantity Standard	Access Standard
2.0 ha/1000 (for new provision this can be combined with the 0.7 ha/1000 amenity green space standard)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 600 metres or 12-13 minutes walk</li><li>• Target to achieve ANGSt</li></ul>

#### *Existing National and Local Policies*

Natural England has proposed national guidance on an Accessible Natural Green Space Standard (ANGSt)<sup>1</sup> which suggests that at least 2 ha of accessible green space should be available per 1000 people. Other components of the standard include:

- no person should live more than 300 m from an area of natural green space;
- there should be at least one accessible 20 ha site within 2 km from home;
- there should be one accessible 100 ha site within 5 km; and,
- there should be one accessible 500 ha site within 10 km.

There are no local standards relating specifically to the provision of accessible natural green space.

#### *Quantity standards for natural and semi-natural green space*

The existing average level of provision of Accessible Natural Green Space across the three main towns is 0.94 ha/1000, and 1.52 ha/1000 across the whole study area. This takes into account only sites categorised through the study as ANGSt. Other sites that have more limited access for the public (PNGS) have thus been excluded from these calculations. In reality, such sites can make an important contribution to local amenity and recreation opportunities - especially when access and views are enhanced through the Public Rights of Way network, as is shown in the sub area profiles.

For the purpose of assessing the existing provision of natural green space, it is recommended that the ANGSt of **2.0 ha per 1000 people** is adopted. This will be used as a tool to assess the current spread of provision across the study area.

This standard will also be used as the basis for seeking new provision through development, but will be considered alongside the requirements for amenity green space, as there is often much cross over in the form and function of these two typologies provided in new developments.

In the longer term there might be value in developing a hierarchy of provision as suggested by the ANGSt guidance, offering a range of smaller and larger opportunities

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.naturalengland.org.uk/ourwork/enjoying/places/greenspace/greenspacestandards.asp>

set within a geographical dimension. However, it is felt strongly that the focus should be initially on improving provision and accessibility within easy walking distance.

### ***Access to natural and semi-natural green space***

The consultation identified around 40% of people want natural areas within 5 minutes of home, and a further 35% want natural space within 10 minutes. The proposed standards for natural green space are therefore:

- 1) A local standard of 480 metres or 10 minute walk to an area of accessible natural/semi-natural green space;
- 2) A target to achieve the Natural England ANGSt of:
  - at least one accessible 20 ha site within 2 km from home;
  - one accessible 100 ha site within 5 km; and,
  - One accessible 500 ha site within 10 km.

### ***Quality of natural and semi-natural green space***

Satisfaction levels with the quality of natural green space are above average, with the highest number of people taking part in the household sample survey rating their value 7 out of 10 (10 being the highest score). Consultation results also highlight the value attached to certain attributes of open space, in particular:

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

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

The shape and size of space provided should allow for meaningful and safe recreation. Provision might be expected to include (as appropriate) elements of woodland, wetland, heathland and meadow, and could also be made for informal public access through recreation corridors. For larger areas, where car borne visits might be anticipated, some parking provision will be required. The larger the area the more valuable sites will tend to be in terms of their potential for enhancing local conservation interest and biodiversity. Wherever possible these sites should be linked to help improve wildlife value.

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

- Changing the management of marginal space on playing fields and parks to enhance biodiversity.
- Encouraging living green roofs as part of new development/ redevelopment.
- Encouraging the creation of mixed species hedgerows.
- Additional use of long grass management regimes.

- Improvements to watercourses and water bodies.
- Innovative use of new drainage schemes / Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS).
- Use of native trees and plants in landscaping new developments.

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

### 5.3.5 Parks and Recreation Grounds

Quantity Standard	Access Standard
1.25 ha/1000 for public and private provision  For new provision a standard of 1.0 ha/1000 of publicly accessible space is required	600 metres (12-13 minutes straight line walk time)

#### *Existing national and local policies*

Fields in Trust (FIT), previously known as the National Playing Fields Association promoted the Six Acre Standard of 2.4 hectares (6 acres) per 1000 persons, but with a specific provision of 1.6-1.8 hectares per 1000 persons of outdoor sports space (and 0.8 hectares per 1000 people for children’s play of which around 0.3 hectares should be equipped provision.) The new FIT ‘Benchmark Standards for Outdoor Sport and Play’ also suggest similar overall levels of provision as a guide to local authorities, although FIT does accept the importance of developing locally researched standards.

#### *Quantity of parks and recreation grounds*

For the purpose of the study, the quantity of this type of provision considers both public and private space. Existing provision is:

- Publicly accessible spaces: an average of 0.65 ha/1000 across the three main towns and an average of 0.88 ha/1000 across the study area;
- Public and private spaces combined: an average of 1.03 ha/1000 across the three main towns and an average of 1.53 ha/1000 across the study area;

Looking at the spread of provision across the study area it does fluctuate significantly, (see tables 2 and 3), so in developing a quantity standard, it is important to adopt a standard which considers national guidance, but is also deliverable at a local level. It is considered that the FIT standards are undeliverable in many of the towns and parishes, and is not appropriate as a local standard.

The proposed quantity standard for assessing existing provision is 1.25 ha per 1000 people which covers both public and private space. For new provision, it is recommended that 1.0 ha/1000 of fully publicly available space is provided.

### ***Access standard for parks and recreation grounds***

The consultation identified that around 30% of people want playing fields within 5 minutes walk of home, and 40% are willing to travel up to 10 minutes. Therefore an access standard of 480 metres, or 10 minutes walk time is proposed.

### ***Quality standards for parks and recreation grounds***

Satisfaction levels with the quality of facilities such as sports pitches were average, with the vast majority of people scoring quality at 5 or 6 out of 10.

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

### **5.3.7 Play Space**

#### ***Summary of quantity and access standards***

<b>Typology</b>	<b>Quantity Standard</b>	<b>Access Standard</b>
Play Space (Children)	0.05 ha/1000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Junior Provision - 480m (10 minutes straight line walk time)</li></ul>
Play Space (Youth)	0.02 ha/1000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Youth Provision - 600 m (12-13 minutes straight line walk time)</li></ul>

#### ***Existing National and Local Policies***

The FIT guidance (see 5.3.6) recommends provision of 0.8 hectares per 1000 people for children’s play of which around 0.3 hectares should be equipped provision. These standards have been criticised in recent years because they are often seen as undeliverable, and can result in a proliferation of play areas that can be difficult to maintain, as well as setting unrealistic aspirations in urban areas where insufficient land is available to provide facilities, especially higher density development on brownfield sites. An additional problem is that the current FIT guidance does not specifically cover the needs of most teenagers within the ‘Standard Youth Provision’.

### ***Quantity standards for play***

Children's play space: The existing average level of provision across the three main towns is 0.05 ha/1000 and 0.08 across the study area.

Youth play space: The existing average level of provision across the three main towns and the study area is 0.01 ha/1000.

The existing FIT standards are more than eight times the level of existing provision across the three main towns, and as such, it is argued that this standard is undeliverable. The consultation does identify the need for additional facilities, and there is a strong need for this to be made in the form of provision for young people (skate parks, MUGAs etc).

It is therefore recommended that the standards for children's play space is 0.05 ha/1000 but the standard for youth provision is increased to a standard of 0.02 ha/1000. Therefore the combined provision for play space is 0.07 ha/1000.

The guidance provided in Play England's 'Design for Play' makes specific recommendations in relation to this, and it is recommended that this guidance is adopted for all new provision of play space. Therefore, new provision will include a designed landscape and buffers around any equipped provision, and this will exceed 0.07 ha/1000.

### ***Access standards for play***

Around 45% of people are willing to travel up to 5 minutes to children's play space and a further 35% up to 10 minutes, indicating people want play space near to home. For facilities such as skate parks, there was a willingness to travel slightly further, with 30% willing to travel 10 minutes and a further 20% of to 20 minutes. Therefore, the following access standards are recommended:

- Junior Provision - 480m (10 minutes straight line walk time)
- Youth Provision - 600 m (12-13 minutes straight line walk time)

### ***Quality standards for play***

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

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

Moving forward, Play England would like their new Design Guide; '*Design for Play*' to be referenced and added as a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) in standard configuration. Play England have also developed a '*Quality Assessment Tool*' which can be used to judge the quality of individual play spaces. It has been recommended that West Oxfordshire consider adopting this as a means of assessing the quality of

play spaces in their District. Play England also highlight a potential need for standards for smaller settlements and rural areas where the doorstep, local, neighbourhood, and destination hierarchy is unlikely to be appropriate.

Disability access is also an important issue for Play England and they would like West Oxfordshire to adopt the KIDS<sup>2</sup> publication; *'Inclusion by Design'* as an SPD. Their most recent guidance document, *'Better Places to Play through Planning'* gives detailed guidance on setting local standards for access, quantity and quality of playable space and is considered as a background context for the standards suggested in this study.

### 5.3.8 Summary of standards

This section summarises the proposed quantity, access and quality standards for open space in West Oxfordshire.

Table 4 Quantity and Access standards for West Oxfordshire

Typology	Quantity standards (ha/1000)		Access standard
	For assessing current and future provision	Requirement from new development	
Allotments	0.25	0.25	480 metres or 10 minute walk time
Amenity Green Space	0.70	See below	480 metres or 10 minutes walk time
Natural Green Space	2.00	2.00 to include natural and amenity green space	480 metres or 10 minutes walk time Analysis will also include ANGSt
Parks and Recreation Grounds	1.25 to include both public and private grounds (excluding education sites)	1.00 of publicly accessible provision	480 metres or 10 minutes walk time
Play Space (Children)	0.05	0.05	Childs space: 480 metres or 10 minute walk time
Play Space (Youth)	0.02	0.02	Teenage space: 600 metres or 12-13 minute walk time

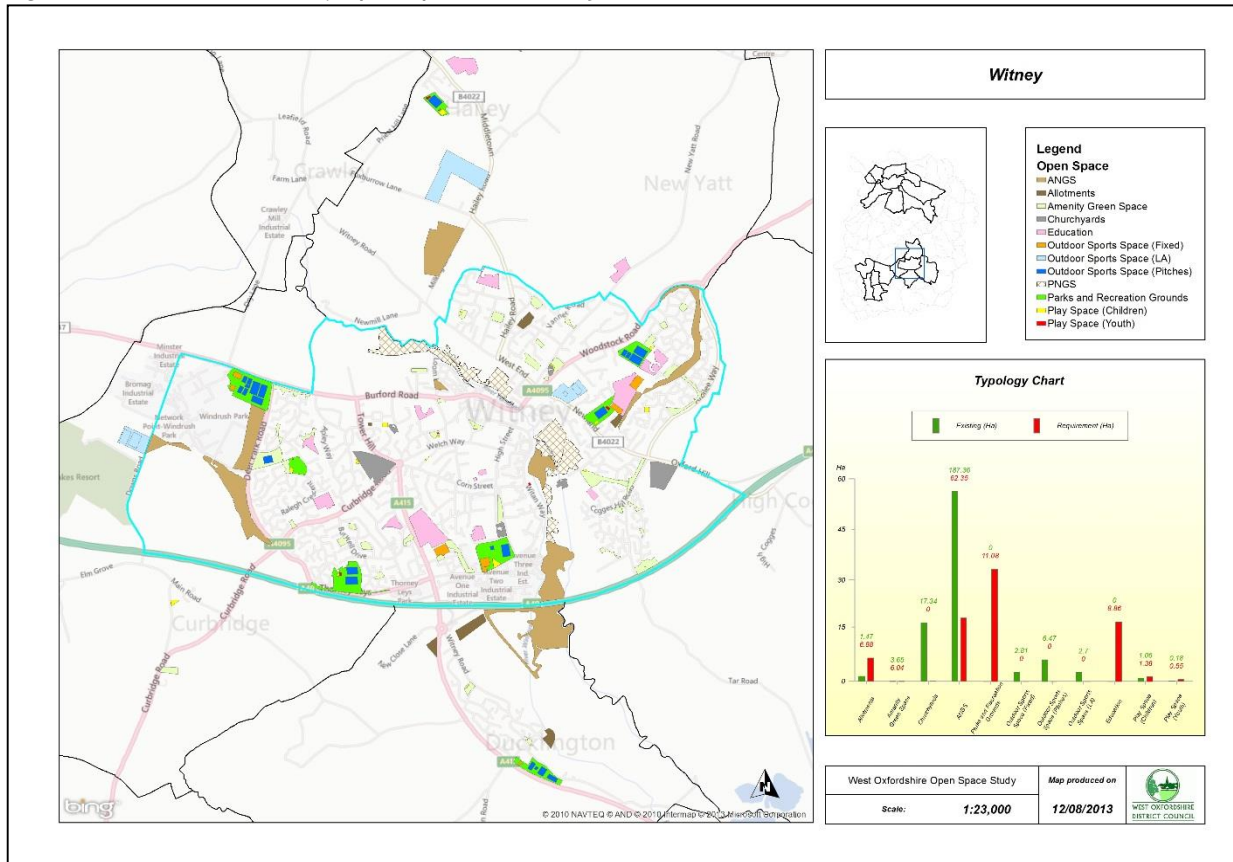
<sup>2</sup> KIDS, is a charity which in its 40 years, has pioneered a number of approaches and programmes for disabled children and young people. KIDS was established in 1970 and in 2003, KIDS merged with KIDSACTIVE, previously known as the Handicapped Adventure Play Association.

## **PART 2: AREA PROFILES**

## 6.0 WITNEY AREA PROFILE

### 6.1 Current provision of open space

Figure 6 Provision of open space in Witney



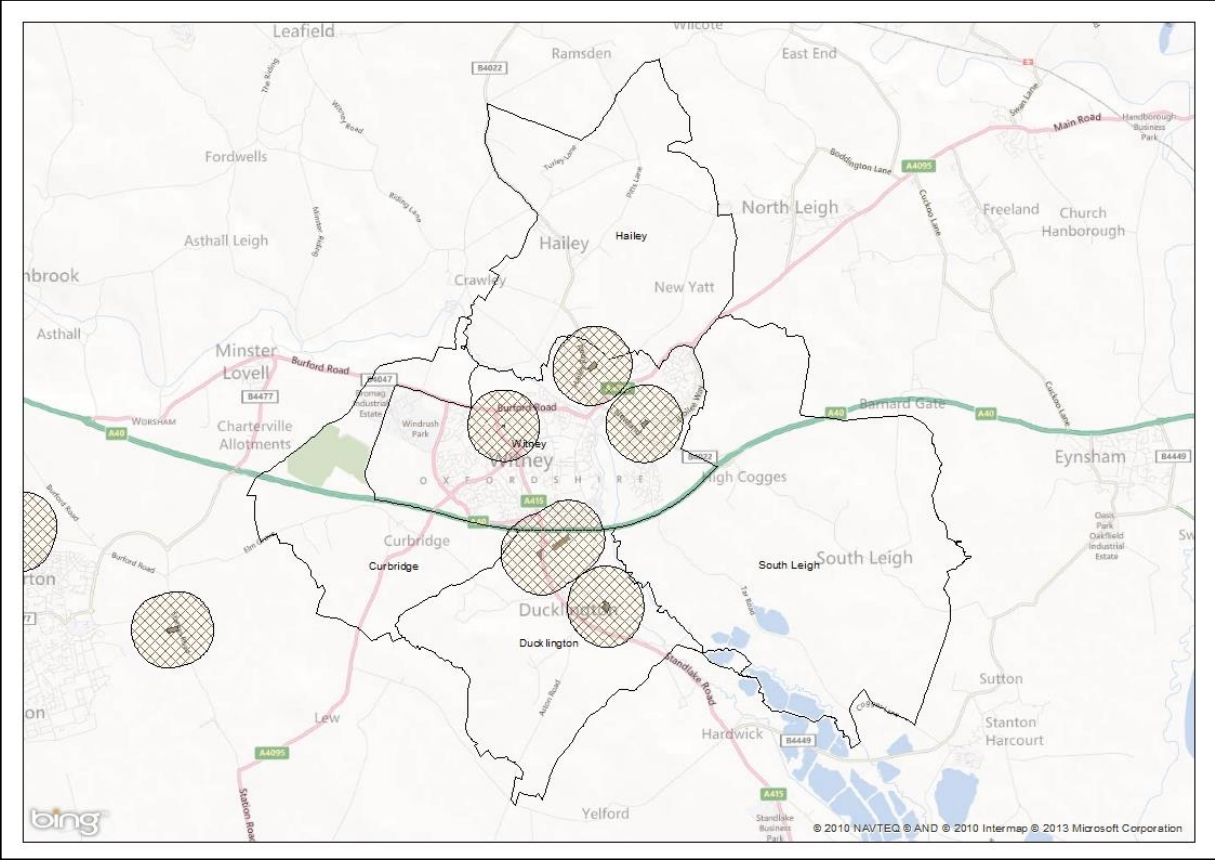
### 6.2 Quantity of open space

Typology	Existing provision (ha)	Existing provision (ha/1000)	Required provision (ha)	Required provision (ha/1000)	Supply (ha)	Supply (ha/1000)	Supply
Allotments	1.47	0.05	6.88	0.25	-5.41	-0.2	UNDER SUPPLY
Amenity Green Space	20.27	0.74	19.27	0.7	1	0.04	SUFFICIENT SUPPLY
Parks and Recreation Grounds (public & private)	29.22	1.07	34.4	1.25	-5.18	-0.18	UNDER SUPPLY
Parks and Recreation Grounds (public)	26.52	0.97	34.4	1.25	-7.88	-0.28	N/A
Parks and Recreation Grounds	17.24	0.63	34.4	1.25	-17.16	-0.62	N/A
Outdoor Sports Space (Pitches)	6.47	0.24	0	0	6.47	0.24	N/A
Outdoor Sports Space (Fixed)	2.81	0.1	0	0	2.81	0.1	N/A
Outdoor Sports Space (LA)	2.7	0.1	0	0	2.7	0.1	N/A
Accessible Natural Green Space	32.57	1.18	55.04	2	-22.47	-0.82	UNDER SUPPLY
Private Natural Green Space	22.15	0.8	0	0	22.15	0.8	N/A
Play Space (Children)	1.06	0.04	1.38	0.05	-0.32	-0.01	UNDER SUPPLY
Play Space (Youth)	0.18	0.01	0.55	0.02	-0.37	-0.01	UNDER SUPPLY
Churchyards	9.31	0.34	0	0	9.31	0.34	N/A
Education	17.34	0.63	0	0	17.34	0.63	N/A

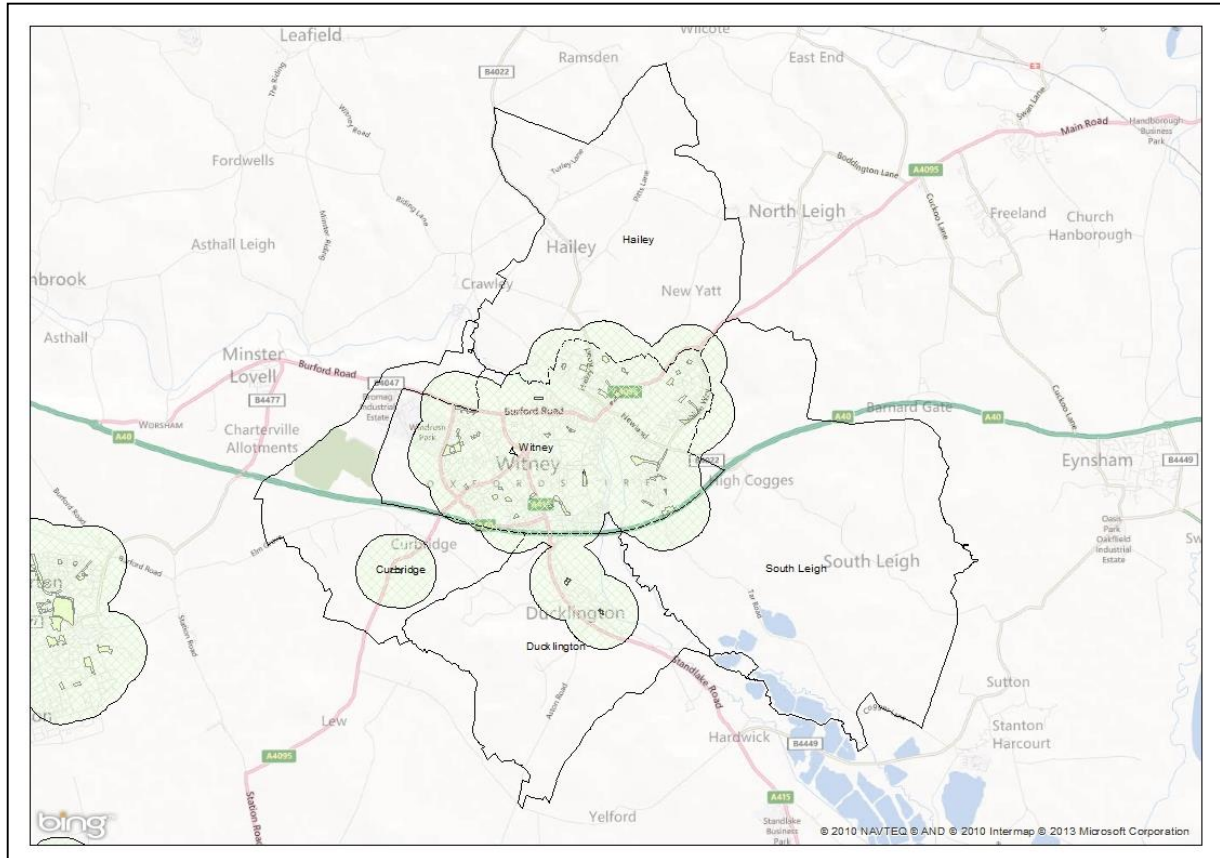


6.3 Access to open space

Figure 7 Access to allotments in Witney and surrounding parishes



**Figure 8** Access to amenity green space in Witney and surrounding parishes



**Figure 9** Access to Parks & Recreation Grounds in Witney and surrounding parishes

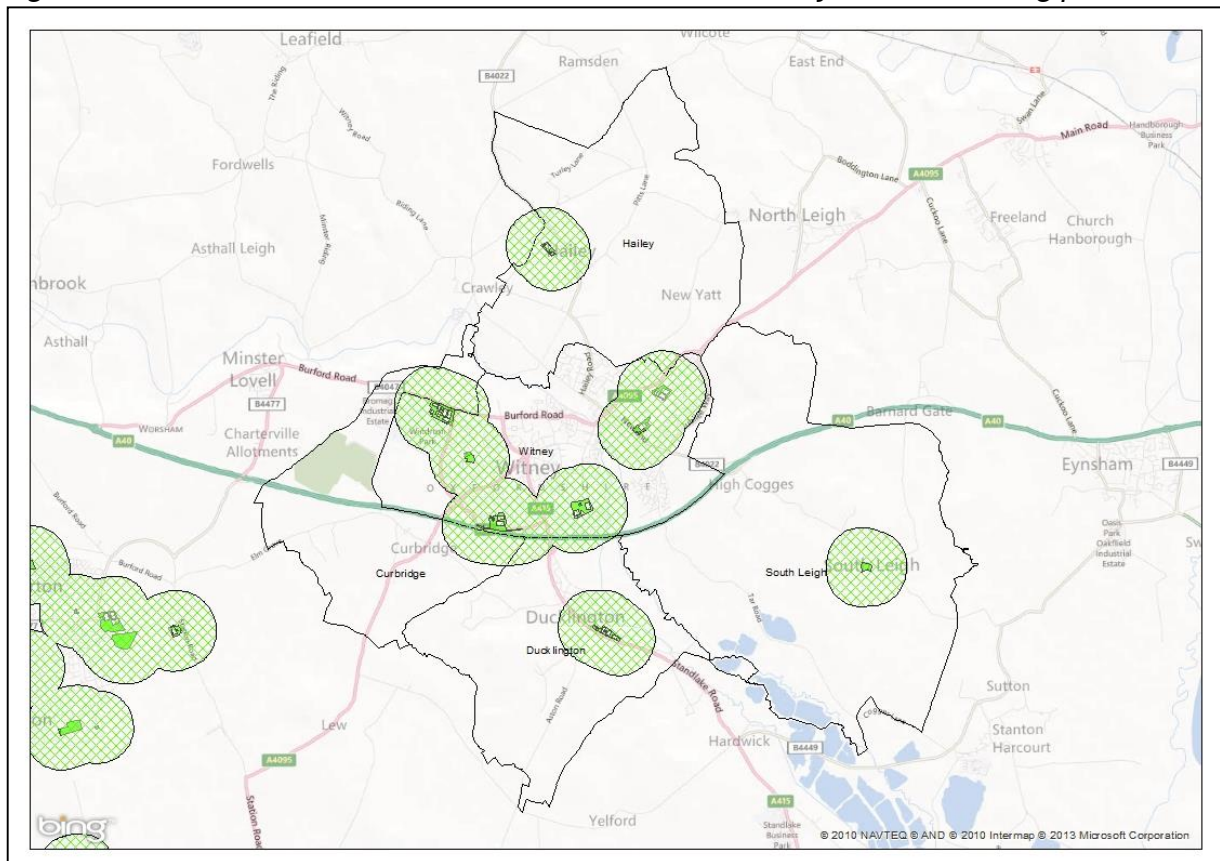




Figure 10 Access to Natural Green Space in Witney and surrounding parishes (480m)

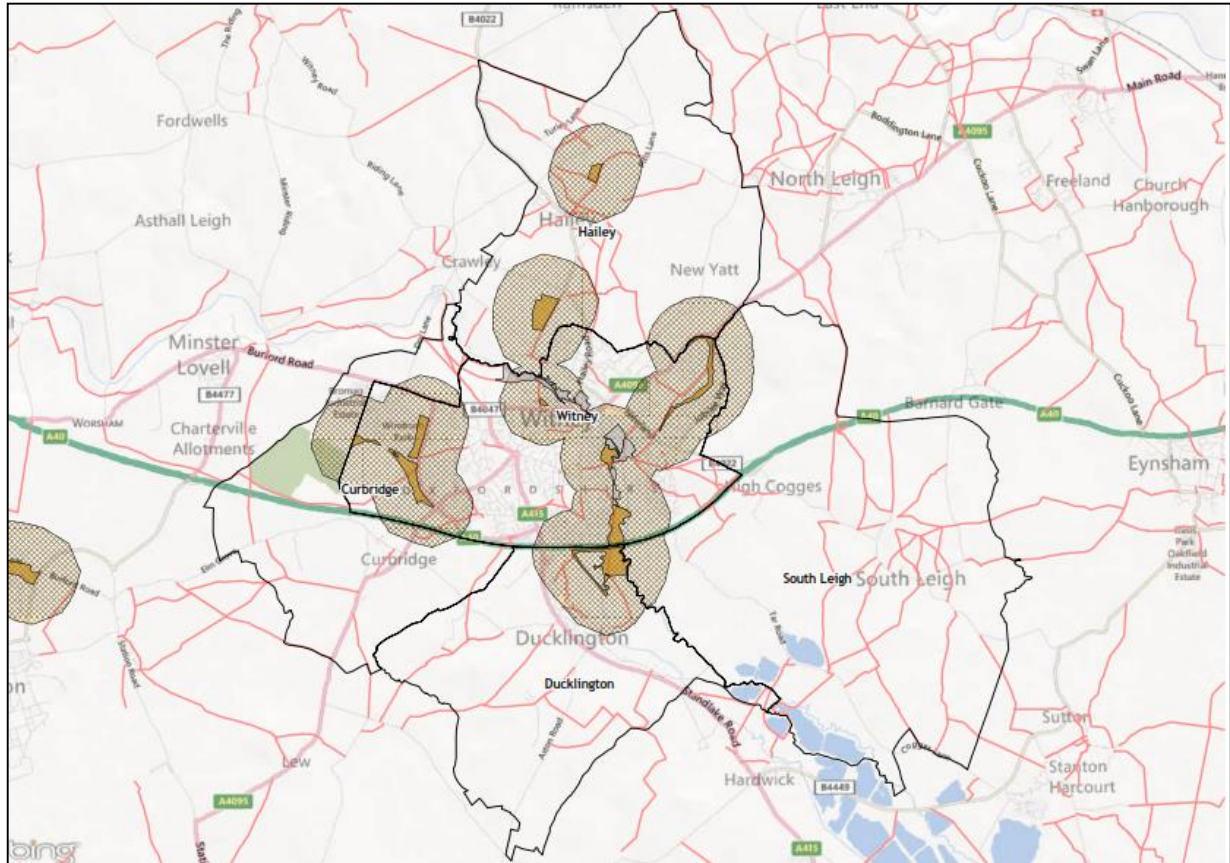


Figure 11 Access to Children's play space in Witney and surrounding parishes

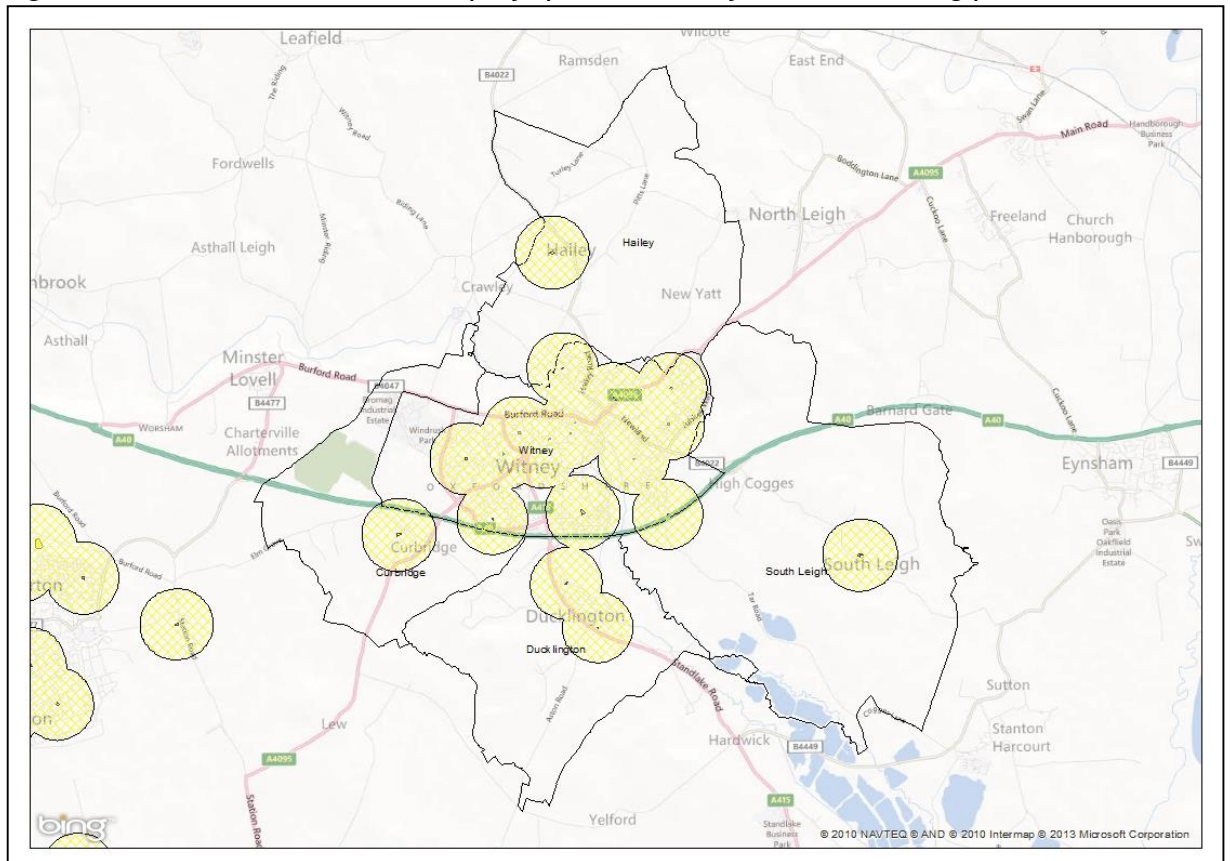
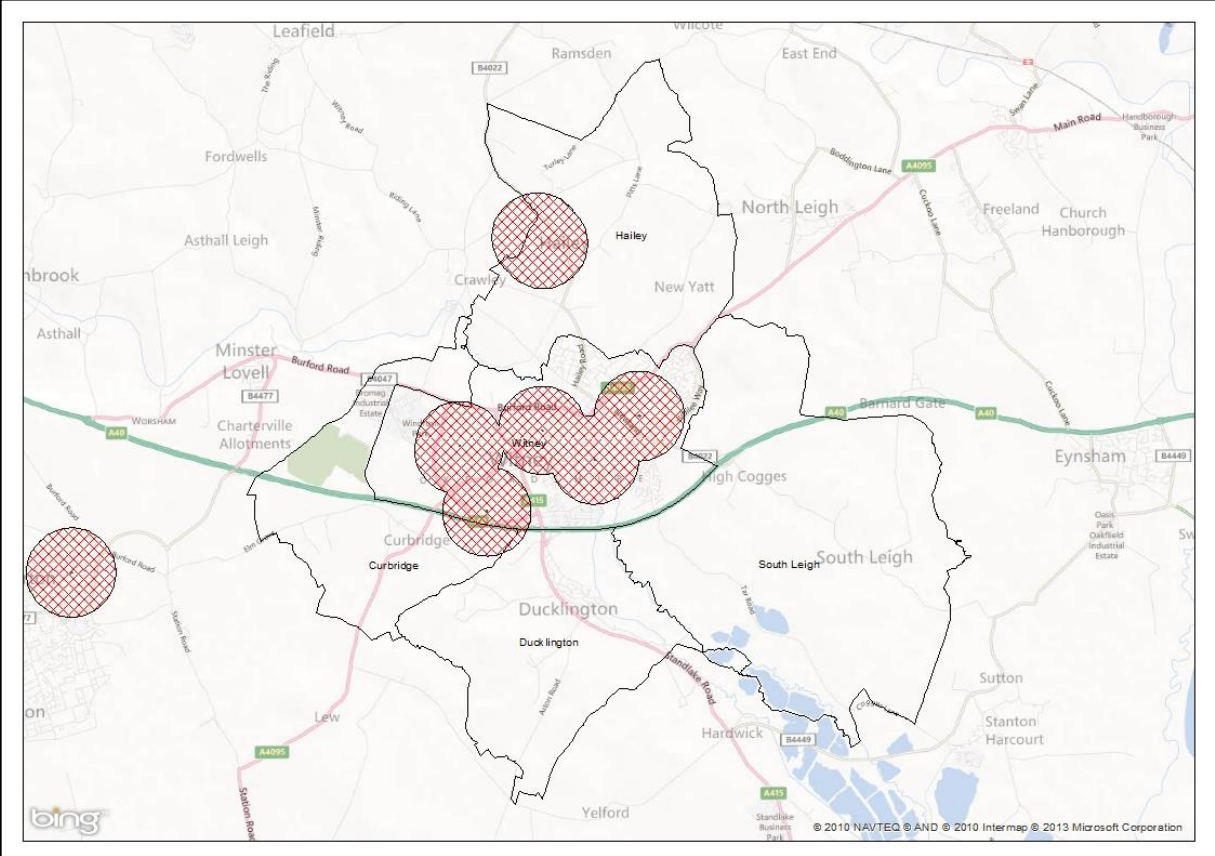


Figure 12 Access to Youth play space in Witney and surrounding parishes



## 6.4 Quality of open space in Witney

This section provides a summary of quality scores of sites that were included within the quality audit (see section 2.3.3).

Site Name	Description	Typology	Parish	Existing Score/Rank	Potential Score/Rank
Glebelands Playing Field	Pavilion, cricket nets, cricket wicket, football, play area, car park, small floodlit training area, tennis	Parks and Recreation Grounds	Ducklington	B	D
Hailey Recreation Ground	Recreation ground, village hall, car park, bmx track, basketball, open play area, small skate area, 1 x senior football	Parks and Recreation Grounds	Hailey	B	D
Deer Park	Park with informal kickabout area with posts, teen shelter, basketball, fenced play area	Parks and Recreation Grounds	Witney	B	D
West Witney Pitches	Recreation ground with football, cricket, tennis courts, bowls, clubhouse and changing, car park	Parks and Recreation Grounds	Witney	B	D
King Georges Field	Recreation ground, 1 x senior football, MUGA, fenced play area, entrance, mature trees	Parks and Recreation Grounds	Witney	B	D
Madley Brook School Field	Recreation ground with 2 x senior football, 1 x junior football, play area on adjacent site	Parks and Recreation Grounds	Witney	B	D
The Leys	Recreation ground, car park, toilets, cricket pavilion, cricket wicket, teen shelter, skate park, tennis courts, junior football, mini golf, excellent play area, bowling green	Parks and Recreation Grounds	Witney	B	D
Burwell Recreation Ground	Recreation ground, community centre, MUGA, car park, fenced play area, 2 x senior football, hedgerow, paths.	Parks and Recreation Grounds	Witney	B	D
Park Road Playground	Grass, swings, slide, horse - poor dated equipment	Play Space	Witney	C	C
Fieldmare Close Play Area	Small play area, fenced, swings, slide/climb, spring, bench, bin	Play Space	Witney	B	C
Witney Road	Amenity space with open play area (climb, slide, swings, rocker), informal kickabout with posts	Amenity Space	Ducklington	C	C
Village Green	Village green and pond	Amenity Space	Ducklington	B	D
Cogges Hill Road	Small amenity space with trees	Amenity Space	Witney	B	D
Windrush River Corridor	Green corridor with lit path, trees, small play area, bins, benches	Amenity Space	Witney	B	D
Tap House Avenue	Grass with a few trees	Amenity Space	Witney	B	C
Farmers Close/Narrow Hill	Amenity space, trees, path	Amenity Space	Witney	B	D
Eastfield Road	Grass, few trees, informal kickabout area with posts	Amenity Space	Witney	C	C
Burwell Drive	Amenity space with trees	Amenity Space	Witney	C	C
Woodgreen	Amenity with mature trees, new fenced play area	Amenity Space	Witney	B	D
Quarry Road	Grass, sloping bank, fenced play area	Amenity Space	Witney	C	D
Church Green	Village/Church Green, benches, grass, floral bedding, trees	Amenity Space	Witney	B	D
Burwell Meadow	Amenity space with trees	Amenity Space	Witney	C	C
Blenheim Drive	Amenity space with trees	Amenity Space	Witney	C	C

Burwell Drive	Amenity space with trees	Amenity Space	Witney	C	C
Snowhill Drive	Amenity space with trees	Amenity Space	Witney	C	C
Springfield Oval	Grass area with a few trees	Amenity Space	Witney	B	D
Moorland Road	Amenity space with basketball area and fenced play area	Amenity Space	Witney	C	C
Deer Park Road	Large amenity space with small tree plantation, lit cycle path	Amenity Space	Witney	C	C
Farmers Close	Amenity space with trees	Amenity Space	Witney	C	C
Bramble Bank	Amenity space with trees at boundary, fenced play area	Amenity Space	Witney	B	D
Champion Way	Amenity space with newly planted trees	Amenity Space	Witney	B	D
Harvest Way	Amenity grass area	Amenity Space	Witney	C	D
Eton Close Play Area	Amenity space with open play area, informal kickabout with posts, hedgerows	Amenity Space	Witney	C	C
Henry Box Close	Grass area with trees, shrubs	Amenity Space	Witney	C	C
Woodley Green	Amenity with young trees	Amenity Space	Witney	B	D
Jubilee Way	Amenity buffer/verge, young trees/hedge, artwork, grass	Amenity Space	Witney	B	D
Cogges Hill Road	Linear amenity space with trees - more aesthetic than recreation value	Amenity Space	Witney	B	D
Burford Road	Amenity space with trees	Amenity Space	Witney	D	D
Chedworth Drive	Amenity space with trees, path	Amenity Space	Witney	B	D
New Yatt Road	Amenity space with trees, path	Amenity Space	Witney	B	D
Woodgreen	Grass verge with trees	Amenity Space	Witney	B	D
Curbridge Road	Trees to rear of car park	Amenity Space	Witney	C	D
Gordon Way	Amenity green corridor, path, shrub, trees	Amenity Space	Witney	B	D
Manor Road	Amenity space with trees, path	Amenity Space	Witney	B	D
Bibury Close	Amenity/Natural greenspace with plantation trees, lit path	Amenity Space	Witney	D	B
Burford Road	Amenity space with trees, path	Amenity Space	Witney	B	D
The Moors Allotments	Allotments, well used	Allotments	Ducklington	B	D
Church Street Allotments	Allotments, well used	Allotments	Ducklington	B	D
Allotments Ducklington	Allotments, well used	Allotments	Ducklington	B	D
Farmers Close Allotments	Well used allotments	Allotments	Witney	B	D
Kingsfield Crescent Allotments	Well used allotments	Allotments	Witney	B	D
Witney Football Club	Witney Town FC, stand, clubhouse	Outdoor Sports Space (LA)	Curbridge	B	D



Witney RFC	Witney RFC, several pitches, clubhouse, car park, excellent facility	Outdoor Sports Space (LA)	Hailey	B	D
Newland Cricket and Football Ground	Witney Mills cricket ground, pavilion/changing, 1 x senior football and cricket	Outdoor Sports Space (LA)	Witney	B	D
Madley Brook	Natural green space/corridor, ponds, plantation trees, grass, right of way	Natural	Witney	B	C
Deer Park Wood	Natural greenspace with woodland, grassland, signage, meadow, outdoor classroom	Natural	Witney	B	D

## 6.5 Future requirements for open space

The focus of new housing, supporting facilities and additional employment opportunities will be the urban area of Witney. New development in the rest of the sub-area will be limited to meeting local community and business needs and will be steered towards the larger villages. Proposals for development in the sub-area should be consistent with the strategy which includes (see Core Policy 28):

- delivery of around 1,900 new homes to be focused on Witney and to include affordable housing and homes for older people and newly forming households - this equates to an increase in population of 4,560 people;
- a Strategic Development Area of around 1,000 dwellings on the western side of Witney (Core Policy 27); and,
- a Strategic Development Area of around 300 dwellings on the eastern side of Witney

Typology	2011 provision (ha)	2029 provision (ha)	Total requirement from proposed housing
Allotments	-5.41	-6.55	1.14
Parks and Recreation Grounds (public & private)	-5.18	-10.88	5.70 (public & private) 4.56 (public)
Accessible Natural Green space	-22.47	-31.59	9.12 (combined amenity and natural green space)
Amenity Green Space	1.00	-2.19	(3.19)
Play Space (Children)	-0.32	-0.54	0.22
Play Space (Youth)	-0.37	-0.46	0.09

## 6.6 Summary of key issues

### 6.6.1 Allotments

The Witney area has a significant shortfall in the provision of allotments against the standard. Whilst there are two sites in the immediate parish to the south of the town in Ducklington, these only equate to 2.6 ha, and are already at capacity. The quality of existing allotments is generally good, its just there is not enough of them. Although the consultation response specifically in relation to allotments was limited, waiting lists of 8 years + were identified. Access to allotments is also poor, with many parts of the town falling short of the standard. It is therefore recommended that the

provision of new allotments in line with the proposed standard is delivered through the proposed housing development. There is also the need to find additional allotment sites to meet the existing shortfall.

### **6.6.2 Amenity Green Space**

The area currently has a sufficient supply of amenity green space, however, the current provision would not meet the needs of additional development. The proposed development generates a requirement for 3.19 ha of amenity green space. As the standard allows for this provision to be combined with natural green space, in total there is a requirement for 9.12 ha of amenity/natural green space from new development.

Existing access to amenity green space is generally good, however, there is no provision within the proposed housing extension areas. Therefore, it is recommended that the new development includes provision for at least 9.12 ha of amenity/natural green space within the development boundary.

### **6.6.3 Parks & Recreation Grounds**

There is currently a shortfall of 5.18 ha of parks and recreation grounds, including both public and private facilities. This is exacerbated by the proposed new housing, which generates the requirement for 4.56 ha of new provision (using 1.0 ha/1000 population). There is a shortfall in access in parts of the town (mainly the north), and there is no major development proposed for this area. This part of the town also has poor access to any larger school sites which could potentially meet community needs. Therefore, any new provision in this part of the town would need to be met through acquiring new land.

Existing facilities are generally good quality, although there is an identified opportunity to increase the capacity of the pitches at West Witney Pitches.

As there is an identified shortfall of provision, it is recommended that the proposed new development should allow for the provision of 4.56 ha of publicly accessible parks and recreation grounds.

### **6.6.4 Accessible Natural Green space**

In relation to the ANGS standard, there is a deficiency within the Witney urban area (the overall provision is 0.82 hectares/000 people compared with the standard of 2 hectares/000). However, there is a swathe of PNGS (grey on the map) following the Windrush Valley, that has a network of Public Rights of Way (red on map) running through it, and this helps to augment local provision. Much of the central parts of the Witney urban area are outside 480 metres (10 minutes notional walk-time) of any form of ANGS, and there are no sites of at least 20 hectares within the sub area that are less than 2 km from any part of the sub area

Based on the recommended standards, the requirement for new provision (directly, or in kind) of ANGS is considerable. There is little opportunity to change this situation within central parts of the urban area, although improved access to and through



existing PNGS within the Windrush Valley could help improve the situation. Much of the new development within the Witney urban area will be concentrated on the western side, where there is a significant area of ANGS. Additional residential development will generate extra pressures for access into this site, (as well as into the Windrush Valley). To a lesser extent, the same issues will arise with the ANGS on the eastern side of the urban area, which are close to the smaller strategic development area proposed at eastern Witney.

New development would provide an opportunity to facilitate access to larger areas of ANGS (greater than 20 hectares) within 2 km of the urban area (in particular). Meeting this element of the standard may require providing, through negotiation with landowners, new areas of ANGS outside the urban area, in conjunction with improved PRow networks (see below).

The importance of PRow and other linear routes in offering ‘connectivity’ as well as recreation opportunities in their own right has been emphasised by several respondents in the study’s consultation process.

For example, in West Oxfordshire Sustrans have identified two principal route corridors for development, including a route for utility and leisure cycling linking Oxford, Eynsham and Witney, connecting with the existing route to Burford and Gloucestershire.

The County Council Local Transport Plan’s Area Strategies aim for “a high quality cycle network” for each town, “with a particular focus to improve accessibility to key destinations”. An equal challenge is access to Eynsham (via bridleway) and South Leigh, the identified route for NCN 57, because of fast motor traffic at Shores Green.

Elsewhere, the British Horse Society (BHS) believe that improvements that could be implemented include enhancing the equestrian routes through the Lower Windrush Valley and across the A40 at Hill Farm where the bridleway becomes a footpath. As more development occurs in West Oxfordshire, access across the urban areas of Lower Windrush Valley (Witney) and Carterton needs to be improved by creating more linear north-south and East-West routes.

#### **6.6.5 Play Space (children & youth)**

There is an existing shortfall of play space for children and young people. Access to both types of provision is generally good. The quality audit identified the need to improve some existing facilities.

There is a requirement for new development to provide additional play space within the developments to include 0.22 of children’s play space and 0.09 ha of youth play space.

## 6.7 Priorities for the area

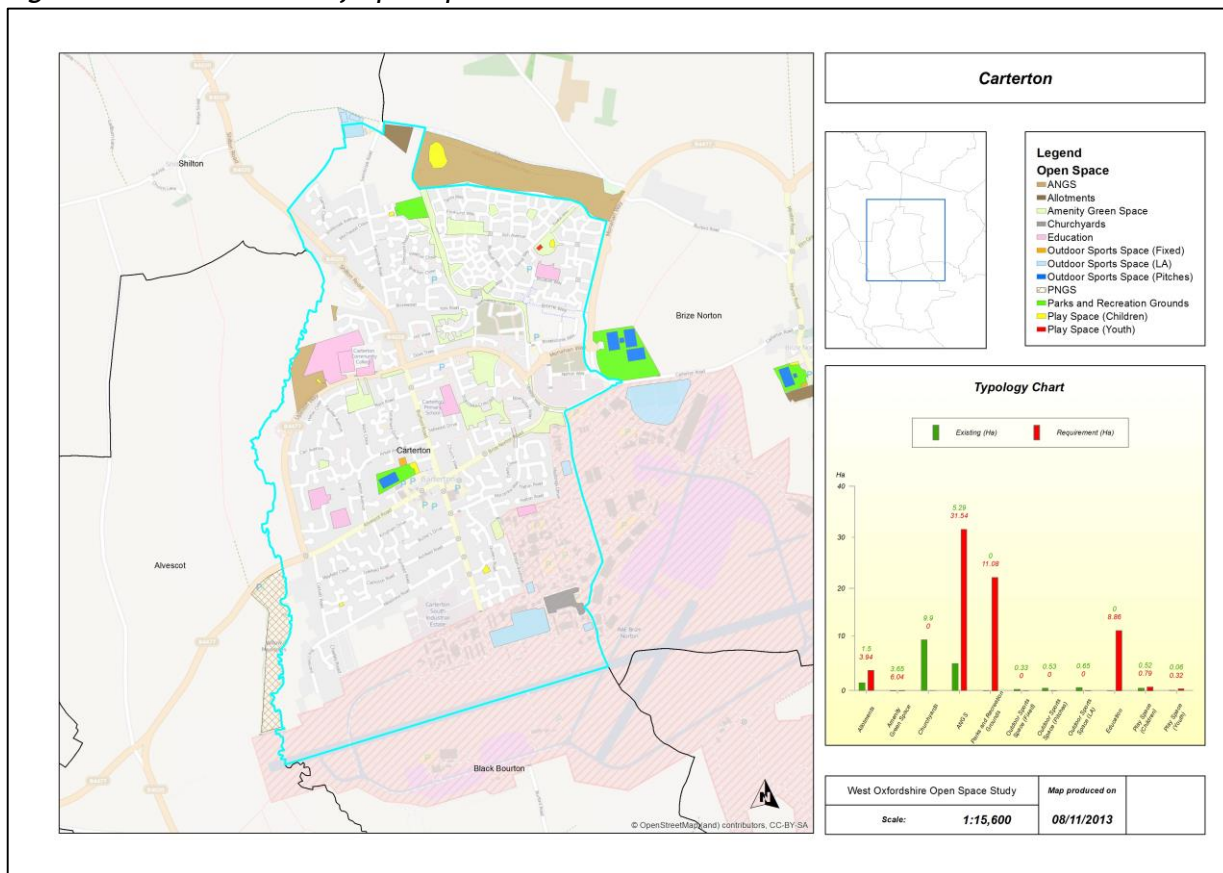
- There is considerable new development planned for Witney. Considering the existing shortfall of open space across all typologies (except amenity green space), it is recommended that new developments provide open space on site in line with the recommended standards;
- There is a need for additional provision across all typologies (except amenity green space), compared to the recommended standards. It is accepted that securing new land for this purpose may be difficult to deliver, however, this opportunity should be sought where possible, and should be a key consideration in the future planning and proposals for the town.
- The existing shortfall of open space means that all existing facilities should be protected. There is also a need to improve the quality of existing facilities to increase their capacity to cope with extra demand;
- Any smaller developments (e.g. 1 - 50 dwellings), should contribute towards improving the quality of existing facilities within the town;
- A number of specific recommendations are made in relation to natural green space:
  - Improve the quality and capacity of existing ANGS within the urban area of Witney, so as to help absorb additional demand for access to such space resulting from future growth.
  - Where appropriate, seek to secure and improve access to significant areas of PNGS, where there are otherwise limited opportunities to provide and/or improve ANGS.
  - Within the sub area as a whole assess the potential for negotiating with landowners to secure access to larger areas of ANGS (of at least 20 hectares in size) to help achieve this element of the standard.
  - Seek to improve bridleway links within the Lower Windrush Valley.
- It should also be acknowledged that Witney Town Council have commissioned a Sports Facility Study that will consider the suitability and quality of the outdoor sports facilities in Witney and prioritise the options for investment. The exercise will follow many of the principles of the Sport England guidance “Towards a Level Playing Field”, encompassing Site Quality Assessments and consultation with users and relevant NGBs. The views of clubs using facilities across the Town will be considered, however, the primary focus of the exercise is on the Town Council’s facilities at:
  - Burwell Recreation Ground
  - King George V Memorial Ground

- Leys Recreation Ground
- West Witney Sports Ground.

## 7.0 CARTERTON AREA PROFILE

### 7.1 Current provision of open space

Figure 13 Provision of open space in Carterton

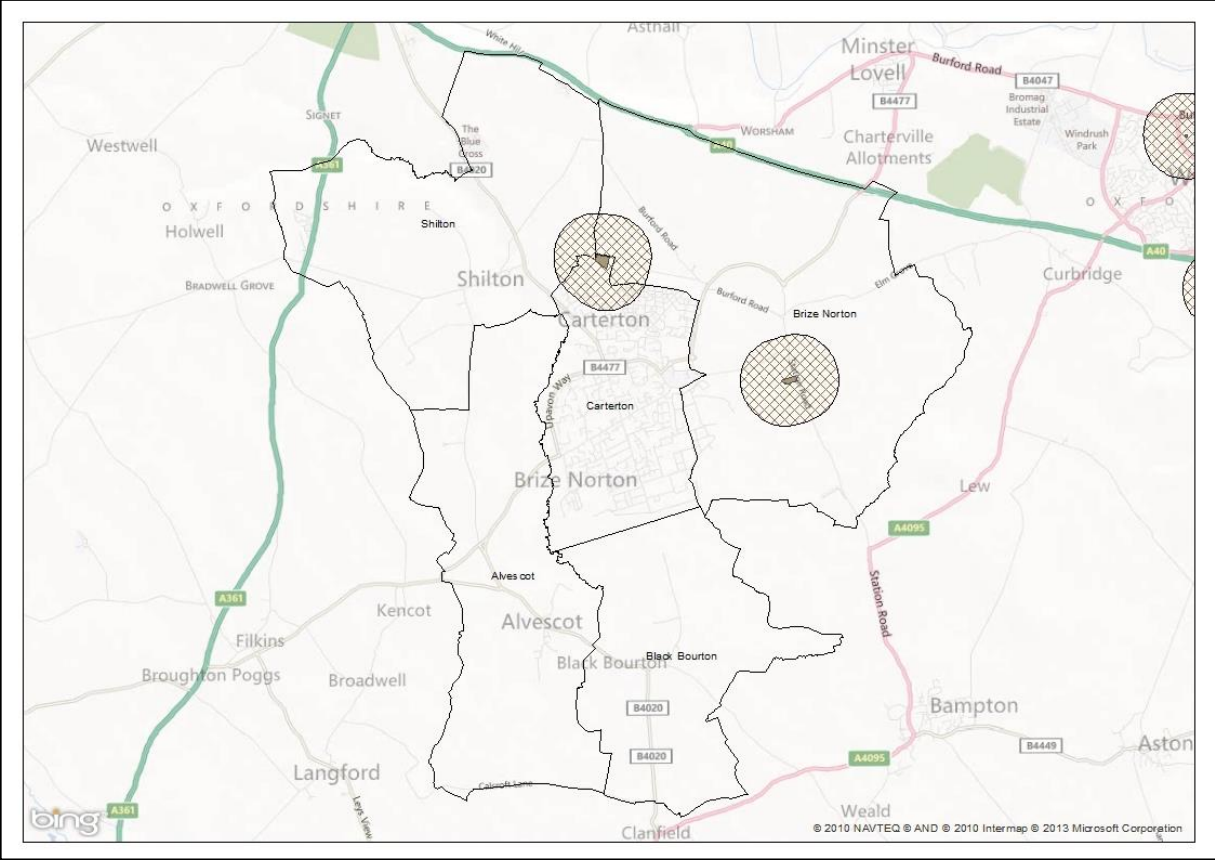


### 7.2 Quantity of open space

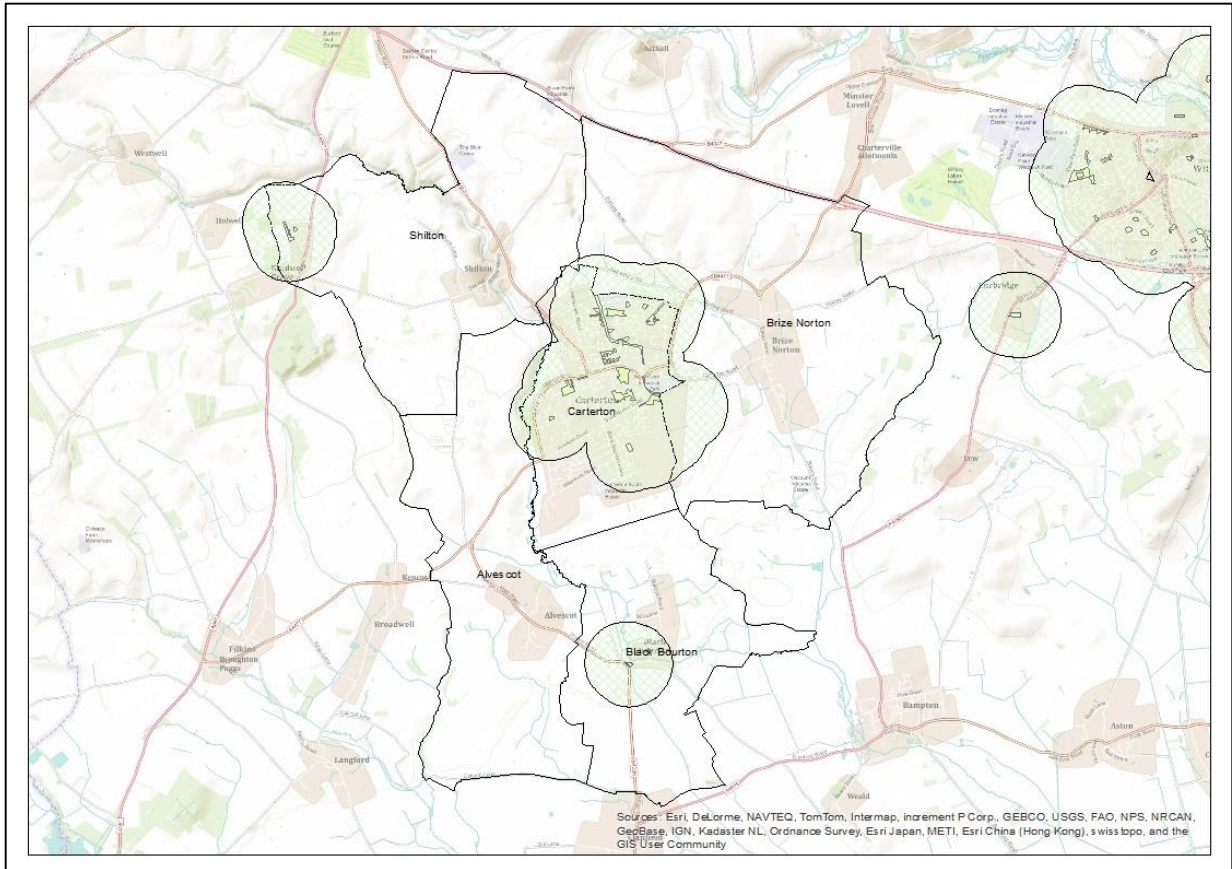
Typology	Existing provision (ha)	Existing provision (ha/1000)	Required provision (ha)	Required provision (ha/1000)	Supply (ha)	Supply (ha/1000)	Supply
Allotments	1.5	0.1	3.94	0.25	-2.44	-0.15	UNDER SUPPLY
Amenity Green Space	16.58	1.05	11.04	0.7	5.54	0.35	SUFFICIENT SUPPLY
Parks and Recreation Grounds (public & private)	8.66	0.55	19.71	1.25	-11.05	-0.7	UNDER SUPPLY
Parks and Recreation Grounds (public)	3.61	0.23	19.71	1.25	-16.1	-1.02	N/A
Parks and Recreation Grounds	2.94	0.19	19.71	1.25	-16.77	-1.06	N/A
Outdoor Sports Space (Pitches)	0.53	0.03	0	0	0.53	0.03	N/A
Outdoor Sports Space (Fixed)	0.14	0.01	0	0	0.14	0.01	N/A
Outdoor Sports Space (LA)	5.05	0.32	0	0	5.05	0.32	N/A
Accessible Natural Green space	3.71	0.24	31.54	2	-27.83	-1.76	UNDER SUPPLY
Private Natural Green space	0	0	0	0	0	0	N/A
Play Space (Children)	0.51	0.03	0.79	0.05	-0.28	-0.02	UNDER SUPPLY
Play Space (Youth)	0.06	0	0.32	0.02	-0.26	-0.02	UNDER SUPPLY
Churchyards	1.69	0.11	0	0	1.69	0.11	N/A
Education	10.36	0.66	0	0	10.36	0.66	N/A

7.3 Access to open space

Figure 14 Access to allotments in Carterton and surrounding parishes



**Figure 15** Access to amenity green space in Carterton and surrounding parishes



**Figure 16** Access to parks and recreation grounds in Carterton and surrounding parishes

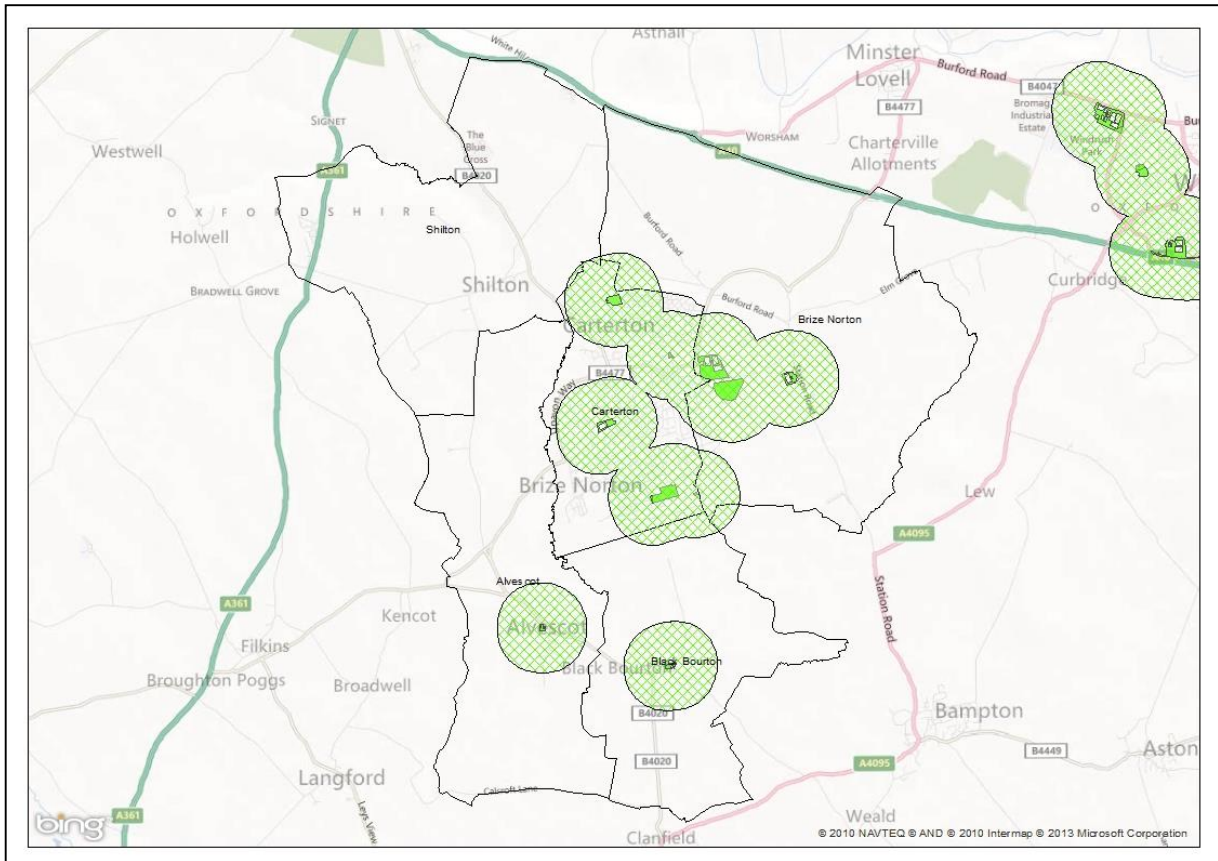




Figure 17 Access to Natural Green Space in Carterton and surrounding parishes (480m)

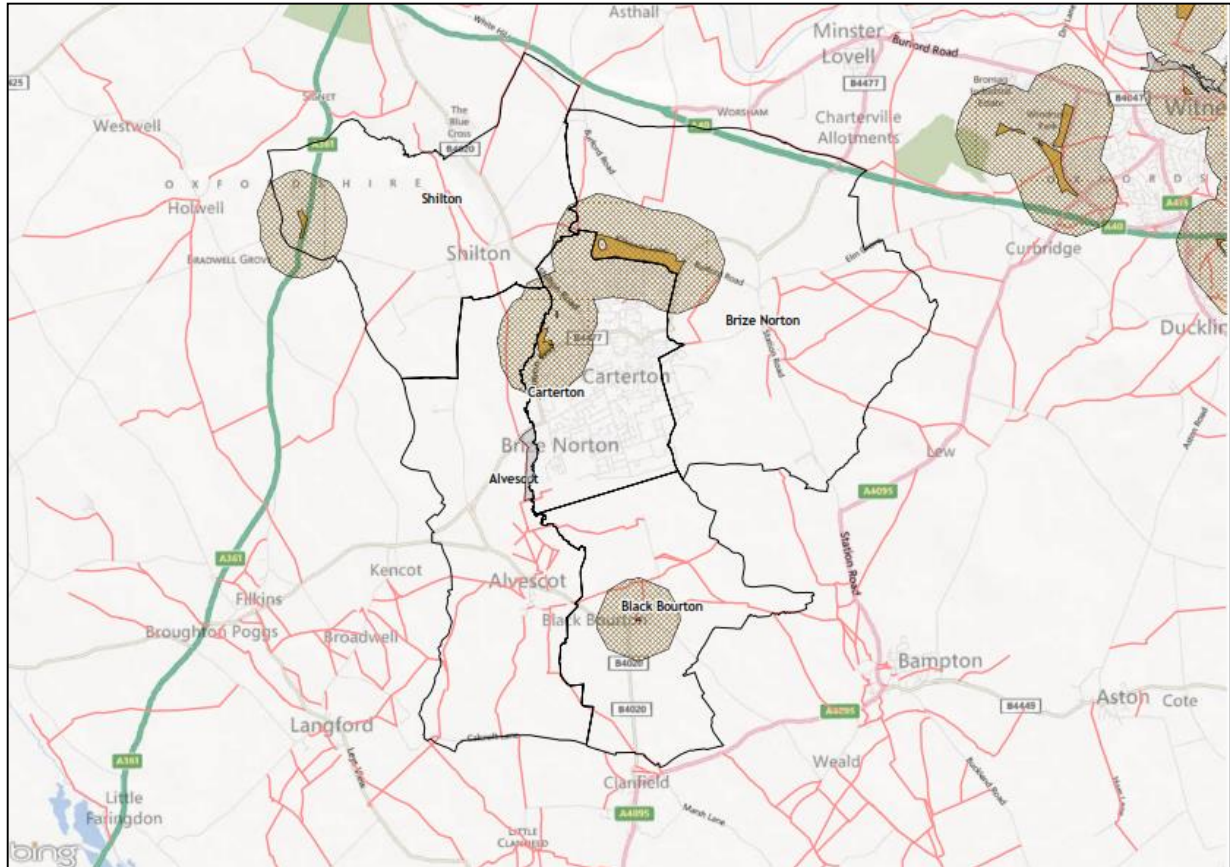


Figure 18 Access to Children's play space in Carterton and surrounding parishes

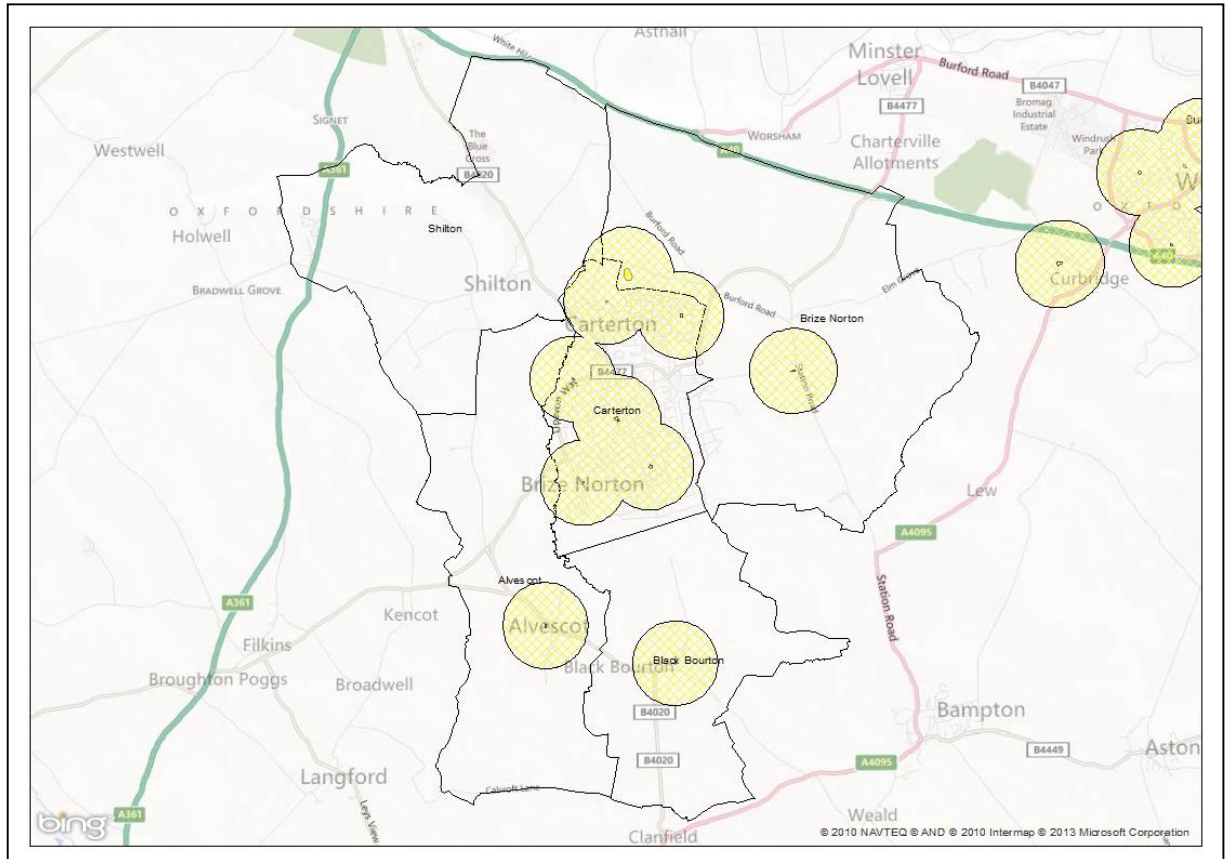
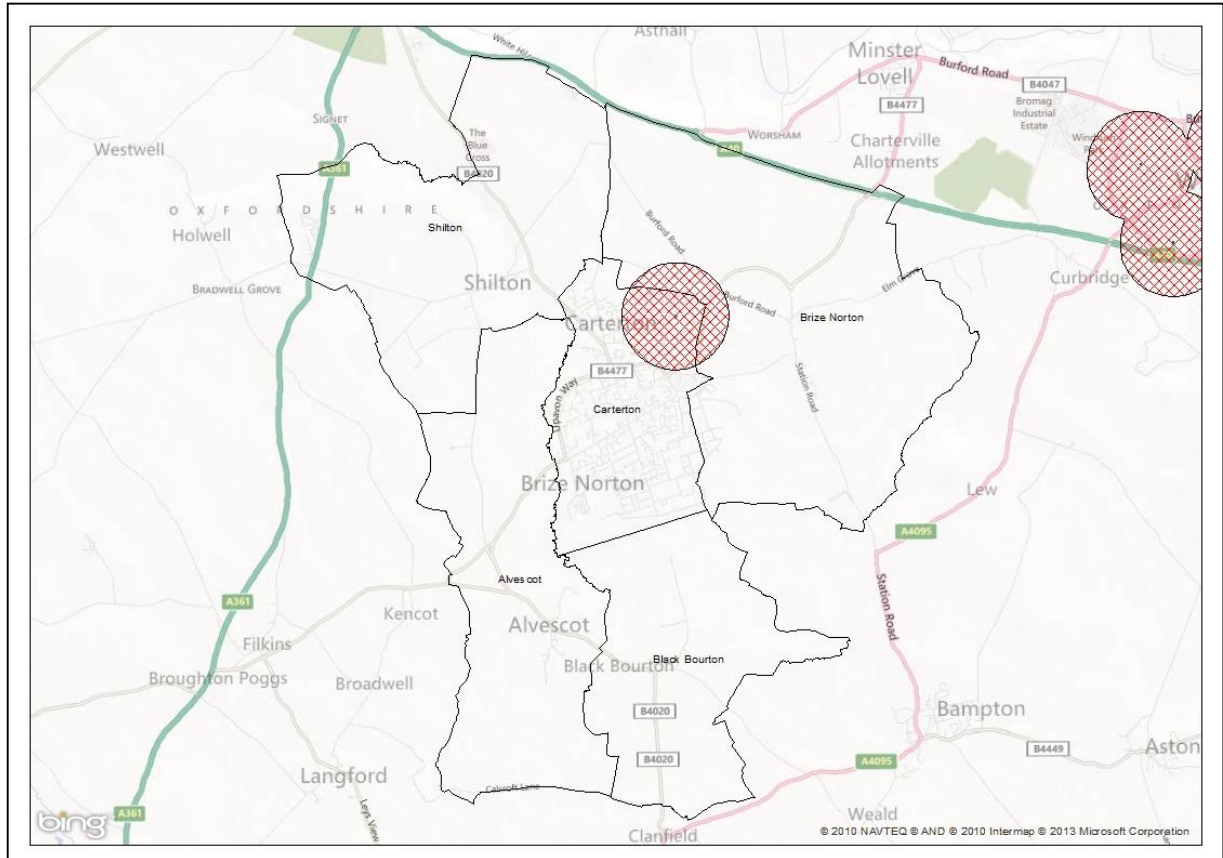


Figure 19 Access to youth play space in Carterton and surrounding parishes





## 7.4 Quality of open space

This section provides a summary of quality scores of sites that were included within the quality audit (see section 2.3.3).

Site Name	Description	Typology	Parish	Existing Score/Rank	Potential Score/Rank
Main Road	Tennis courts, basketball, fenced play area, informal kickabout with posts, cricket net and square, car park	Parks and Recreation Grounds	Alvescote	B	D
School Lane	recreation ground, informal kickabout with posts, tennis, open play area	Parks and Recreation Grounds	Black Bourton	C	C
Monahan Way	Recreation ground, 2 x senior football, cricket, good new pavilion	Parks and Recreation Grounds	Brize Norton	B	D
Station Road	recreation ground, 1 senior football, cricket, pavilion, tennis, play area	Parks and Recreation Grounds	Brize Norton	B	D
Swinbrook Road	recreation ground with new play area, grass area suitable for informal kickabout, trees, hedges, signage, bins, benches	Parks and Recreation Grounds	Carterton	B	D
Alvescote Road	Recreation ground, 1 x senior football, bandstand, car park, changing, play area, bowling green	Parks and Recreation Grounds	Carterton	B	D
The Maples	Play area, slide, cradle, logs, planting	Play Space	Carterton	B	D
Pampas Close	Grass area with small play area (climb/slide)	Play Space	Carterton	C	D
Station Road	Village Green with trees and steam	Amenity Space	Black Bourton	B	D
Boundary Lane	Amenity space/buffer in housing area	Amenity Space	Carterton	C	D
Cedar Road	Amenity space/buffer in housing area	Amenity Space	Carterton	C	D
Upavon Way	Grass, flower beds, path, trees	Amenity Space	Carterton	B	D
Lord Close	Amenity with trees, hedge, bin, good size for informal kickabout/recreation	Amenity Space	Carterton	B	D
Richens Drive	Amenity space, trees, path	Amenity Space	Carterton	B	D
Britanna Close	Amenity space/buffer in housing area	Amenity Space	Carterton	C	D
Brize Norton Road	Natural buffer, visual amenity	Amenity Space	Carterton	C	D
Stanmore Crescent	Large amenity space, with trees, car parking, lit path	Amenity Space	Carterton	C	D
Netheravon Close	Area of grass in housing	Amenity Space	Carterton	C	D
Innsworth Road	Large amenity space with trees and path	Amenity Space	Carterton	C	D
Berryfield Way	Amenity space/buffer in housing area	Amenity Space	Carterton	C	D
Lilac Way	Amenity space/buffer in housing area	Amenity Space	Carterton	C	D
Speyside and Strathmore Close	Amenity space/buffer in housing area	Amenity Space	Carterton	C	D
Northwood Crescent	Amenity space/buffer in housing area	Amenity Space	Carterton	C	D

Trefoil Way	Amenity space/buffer in housing area	Amenity Space	Carterton	C	D
Carterton Road	Natural buffer, visual amenity	Amenity Space	Carterton	C	D
Trefoil Way	New amenity space with good play area and MUGA	Amenity Space	Carterton	B	D
Unknown	Natural/amenity with trees, path	Amenity Space	Shilton	B	D
Unknown	Grass and trees	Amenity Space	Shilton	B	D
Station Road Allotments	Well used allotments	Allotments	Brize Norton	B	D
Kilkenny Lane	Large allotment site, well used	Allotments	Carterton	B	D
Carterton Town FC	Carterton Town FC, private facility	Outdoor Sports Space (LA)	Carterton/Shilton	B	D
Kilkenny Lane Country Park	Large newly set out area of natural greenspace, car park paths, planting, sculptures, excellent adventure playground for all ages, signage	Natural	Brize Norton	A	D
Scholars Acre	Woodland copse	Natural	Carterton	C	D
The Dell	Natural greenspace, woodland and hedgerows, skate park and teen shelter	Natural	Carterton	B	D

## 7.5 Future requirements for open space

The Core Strategy identifies the following in relation to new housing for Carterton:

*The focus of new development within the sub area will be the urban area of Carterton. New development in the rest of the sub-area will be limited to meeting local community and business needs and will be steered towards the rural service centre and larger villages. Proposals for development in the sub-area should be consistent with the strategy which includes: delivery of around 1,850 new homes to be focused on Carterton and to include affordable housing and homes for older people and newly forming households. More specifically:*

- *a Strategic Development Area of about 700 dwellings to the east of the town (see Core Policy 31); and*
- *redevelopment of existing sub-standard MOD housing including a Strategic Development Area of about 400 dwellings (net) at REEMA North and Central (see Core Policy 32)*

Assuming the above levels of housing growth, the increase in population in Carterton would be 4,440 people (assuming an average occupancy of 2.4). This increase in population will result in an increased demand and need for public open space. The following table illustrates the current and future supply of open space based on this predicted level of housing growth.

<b>Typology</b>	<b>2011 provision (ha)</b>	<b>2029 provision (ha)</b>	<b>Requirement from new provision</b>
Allotments	-2.44	-3.55	1.11
Parks and Recreation Grounds (public & private)	-11.05	-16.60	5.55
Accessible Natural Green space	-27.83	-36.71	8.88 (combined natural and amenity green space)
Amenity Green Space	5.08	2.43	
Play Space (Children)	-0.28	-0.50	0.22
Play Space (Youth)	-0.26	-0.34	0.08

## **7.6 Summary of key issues**

### **7.6.1 Allotments**

The Carterton area has an existing shortfall of 2.44 hectares of allotments against the standard. Access to allotments is also restricted to the north of the town. It is therefore recommended that the provision of new allotments in line with the proposed standard is delivered through the proposed housing development. There is also the need to find additional allotment sites to meet the existing shortfall.

### **7.6.2 Amenity Green Space**

The area currently has a sufficient supply of amenity green space, which would also meet the needs of additional development. The proposed development generates a requirement for 2.65 ha of amenity green space. As the standard allows for this provision to be combined with natural green space, in total there is a requirement for 8.88 ha of amenity/natural green space from new development.

Existing access to amenity green space is generally good, however, there is no provision within the proposed housing extension areas. Therefore, it is recommended that the new development includes provision for 8.88 ha of amenity/natural green space within the development boundary - the focus of this should be on more natural types of provision, considering the existing good supply of amenity green space.

### **7.6.3 Parks and Recreation Grounds**

There is an existing shortfall in the provision of parks and recreation grounds, which includes outdoor sports facilities. However, it should be noted that there is a large facility on the eastern fringe of the town at Monahan Way which is 7.71 ha in size. Although the site falls within the Brize Norton Parish, it is used by Carterton residents, and does meet some of the existing shortfall. However, even with this site included, there remains a shortfall in provision. There are also facilities at Carterton Community College (5.6 ha), which could contribute significantly to meeting existing shortfall if community use can be secured in the long term. There are some gaps in access to facilities, mainly in the south west of the town. Considering the above, consideration needs to be given to improving the capacity of existing facilities, including opportunities for investment and secured community use of the community college

facilities. However, with considerable development planned for the town, there will also be a need for new facilities for outdoor sports and recreation, and this should be provided in line with the recommended standards.

#### **7.6.4 Accessible Natural Green Space**

In relation to the ANGSt standard, there is a deficiency within the Carterton urban area (the overall provision is 0.24 hectares/000 people compared with the standard of 2 hectares/000). Much of this provision is located just outside the built-up area of Carterton, and within Brize Norton parish. There is little by way of PNGS within the sub area, that might otherwise help offset the relative lack of ANGS. Worse still, the PRoW network in and around Carterton is relatively sparse. Much of the built-up areas of both Carterton and Brize Norton are outside 480 metres (10 minutes notional walk-time) of any form of ANGS, and there are no sites of at least 20 hectares within the sub area that are less than 2 km from any part of the sub area (although the site within Brize Norton parish is almost 20 hectares in size).

There is little opportunity to change this situation within the urban area, although a change in the nature of some of the areas Amenity Open Spaces would introduce a more natural feel to the urban landscape. The creation and integration of green corridors for walkers, cyclists and riders into planned new development would also improve access and to improve access and connectivity.

The importance of PRoW and other linear routes in offering ‘connectivity’ as well as recreation opportunities in their own right has been emphasised by several respondents in the study’s consultation process. This may also provide the basis for linking to and strengthening the wider off-road network, which is rather sparse.

The County Council Local Transport Plan’s Area Strategies aim for “a high quality cycle network” for each town, “with a particular focus to improve accessibility to key destinations”. Sustrans has noted that cycle connections to nearby settlements are poor with particular reference to Carterton

Elsewhere, the British Horse Society (BHS) believe that improvements that could be implemented include enhancing the equestrian routes through the Lower Windrush Valley. As more development occurs in West Oxfordshire, access across the urban areas of Lower Windrush Valley (Witney) and Carterton needs to be improved by creating more linear north-south and East-West routes.

#### **7.6.5 Play Space (children and youth)**

There is an existing shortfall of play space for children and young people. Access to children’s provision is generally good with gaps limited to the eastern edge of the town, however, access to youth facilities is poor. The quality audit identified the need to improve some existing facilities.

There is a requirement for new development to provide additional play space within the developments to include 0.22 of children’s play space and 0.08 ha of youth play space.

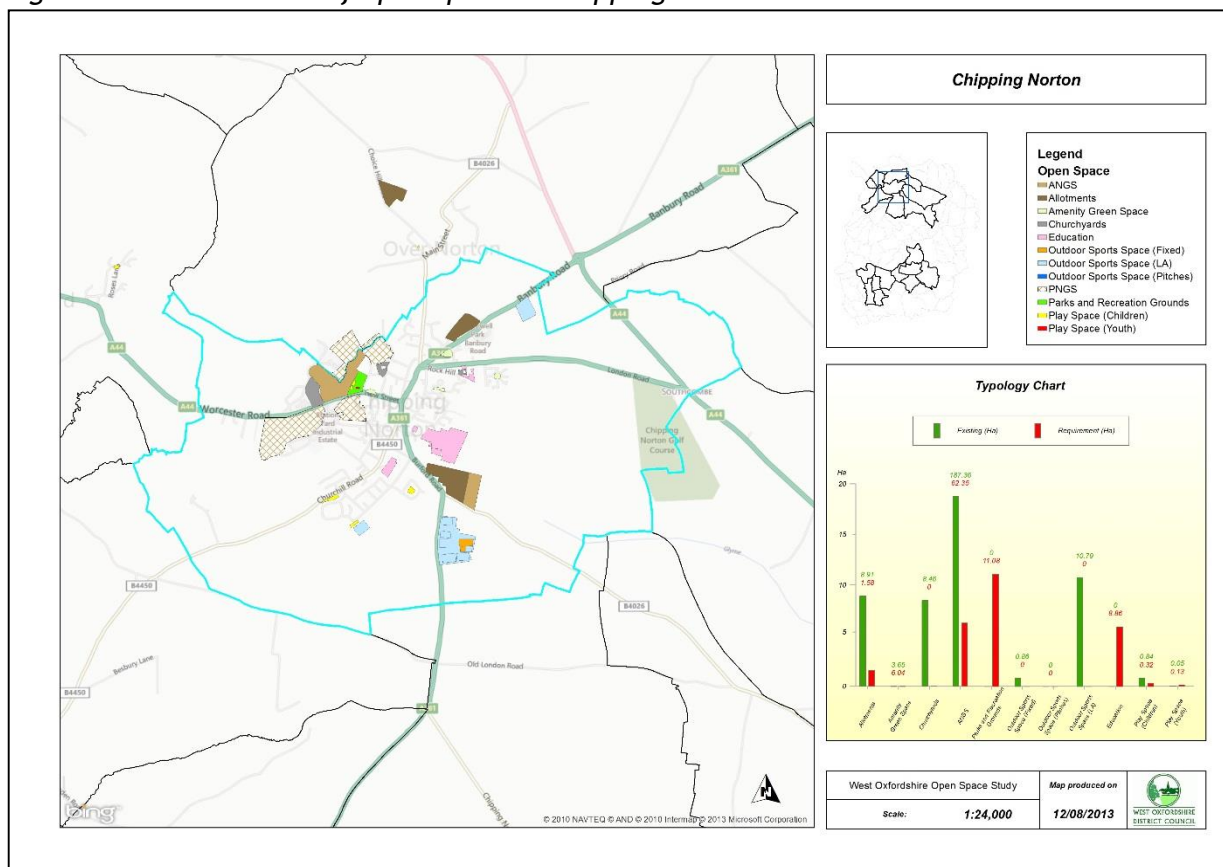
## 7.7 Priorities for the area

- There is considerable new development planned for Carterton. Considering the existing shortfall of open space across all typologies (except amenity green space), it is recommended that new developments provide open space on site in line with the recommended standards;
- There is a need for additional provision across all typologies (except amenity green space), compared to the recommended standards. It is accepted that securing new land for this purpose may be difficult to deliver, however, this opportunity should be sought where possible, and should be a key consideration in the future planning and proposals for the town.
- The existing shortfall of open space means that all existing facilities should be protected. There is also a need to improve the quality of existing facilities to increase their capacity to cope with extra demand;
- The facilities at Carterton Community College could contribute towards meeting some of the existing shortfall in provision of outdoor sports facilities, and this should be pursued as an option for the town;
- Any smaller developments (e.g. 1 - 50 dwellings), should contribute towards improving the quality of existing facilities within the town;
- Specific recommendations in relation to natural green space are:
  - The provision of additional ANGS to serve the needs of proposed development areas in the centre and east of Carterton urban area. The 'search' for such a site would be best focused on the eastern side of Carterton, to be close to the eastern strategic growth area, and also within reasonable distance of the central (REEMA) growth area.
  - Associated improvements in off-road walking, cycling and riding routes not only to comply with the Local Transport Plan area strategy for Carterton, but also to strengthen the sparse local PRow network, and provide connectivity between residential areas and ANGS.
  - Within the sub area as a whole assess the potential for negotiating with landowners to secure access to larger areas of ANGS (of at least 20 hectares in size) to help achieve this element of the standard.

## 8.0 CHIPPING NORTON AREA PROFILE

### 8.1 Current provision of open space

Figure 20 Provision of open space in Chipping Norton

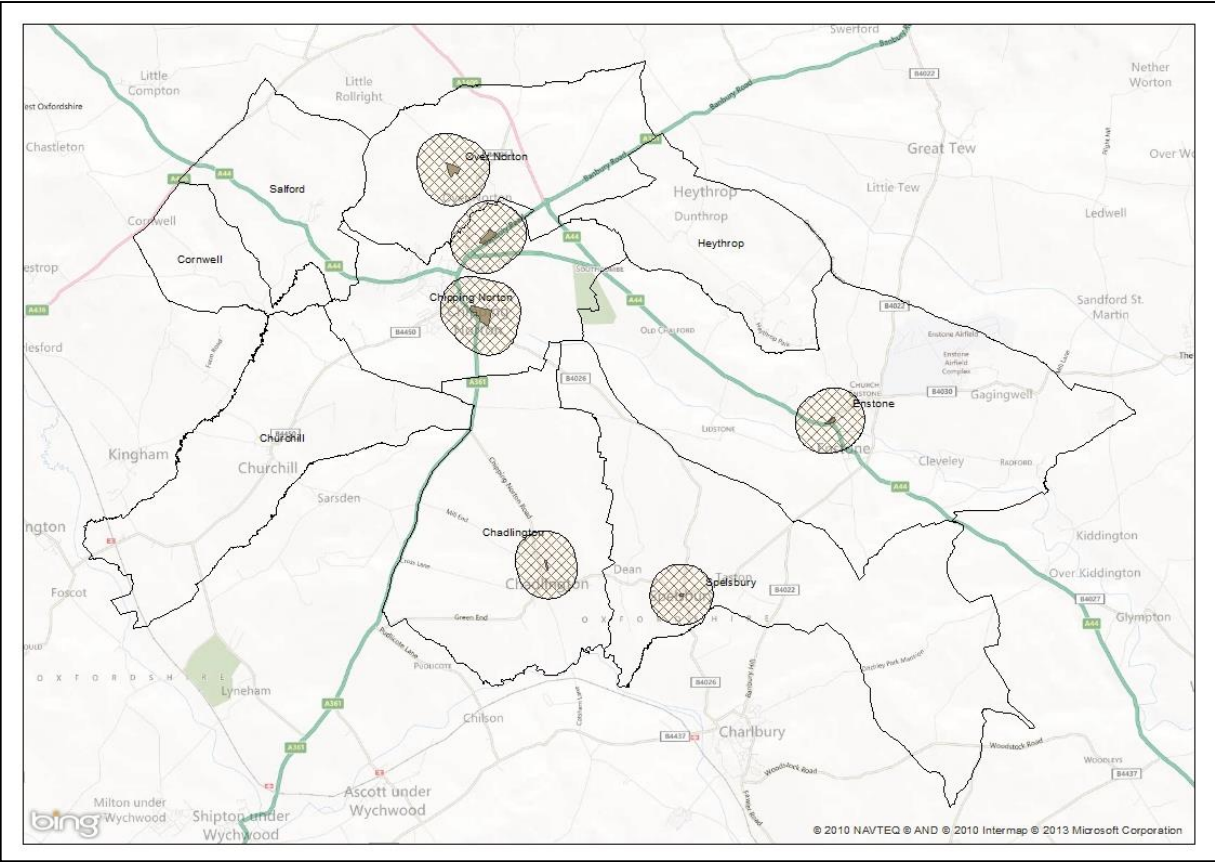


### 8.2 Quantity of open space

Typology	Existing provision (ha)	Existing provision (ha/1000)	Required provision (ha)	Required provision (ha/1000)	Supply (ha)	Supply (ha/1000)	Supply
Allotments	8.91	1.41	1.58	0.25	7.33	1.16	SUFFICIENT SUPPLY
Amenity Green Space	1.08	0.17	4.44	0.7	-3.36	-0.53	UNDER SUPPLY
Parks and Recreation Grounds (public & private)	13.16	2.08	7.92	1.25	5.24	0.83	SUFFICIENT SUPPLY
Parks and Recreation Grounds (public)	2.37	0.38	7.92	1.25	-5.55	-0.87	N/A
Parks and Recreation Grounds	1.51	0.24	7.92	1.25	-6.41	-1.01	N/A
Outdoor Sports Space (Pitches)	0	0	0	0	0	0	N/A
Outdoor Sports Space (Fixed)	0.86	0.14	0	0	0.86	0.14	N/A
Outdoor Sports Space (LA)	10.79	1.7	0	0	10.79	1.7	N/A
Accessible Natural Green space	10.47	1.65	12.67	2	-2.2	-0.35	UNDER SUPPLY
Private Natural Green space	19.84	3.13	0	0	19.84	3.13	N/A
Play Space (Children)	0.84	0.13	0.32	0.05	0.52	0.08	SUFFICIENT SUPPLY
Play Space (Youth)	0.05	0.01	0.13	0.02	-0.08	-0.01	UNDER SUPPLY
Churchyards	3.22	0.51	0	0	3.22	0.51	N/A
Education	8.46	1.34	0	0	8.46	1.34	N/A

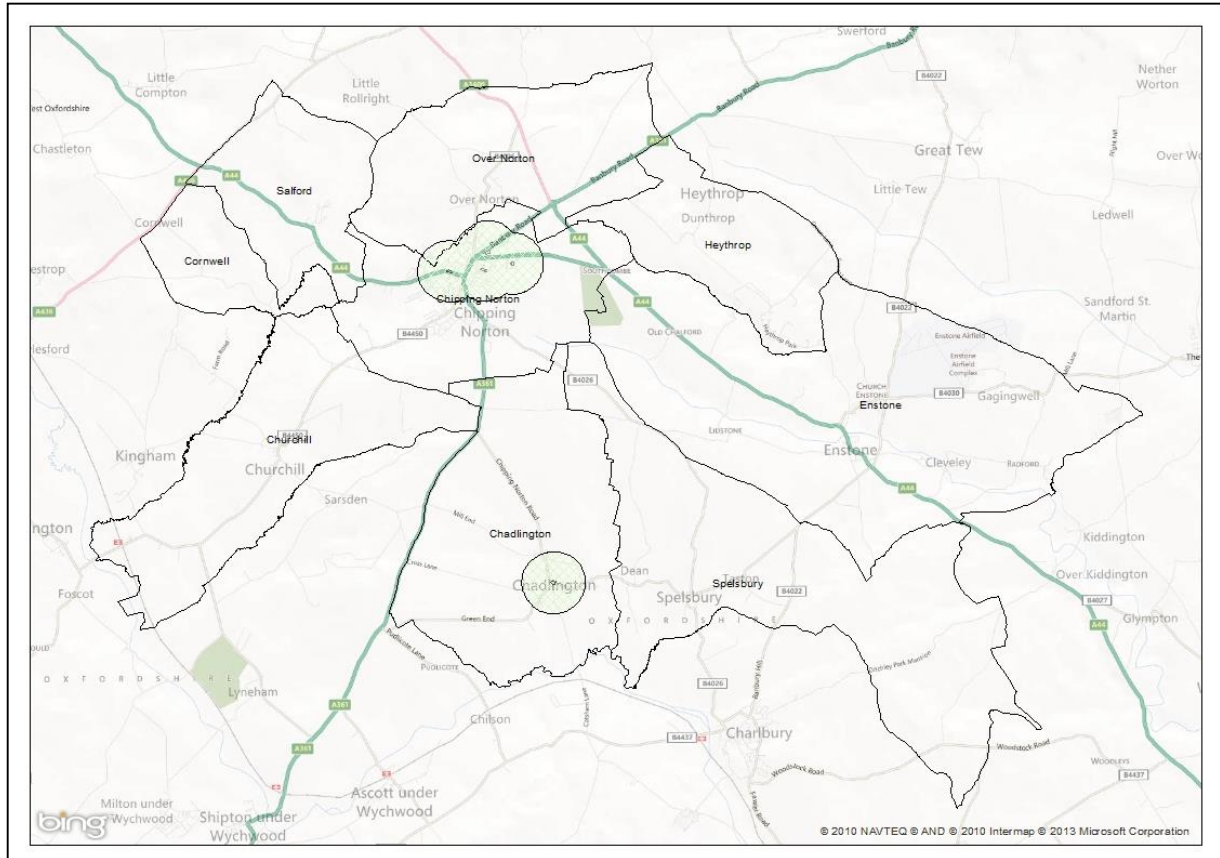
8.3 Access to open space

Figure 21 Access to allotments in Chipping Norton and surrounding parishes





**Figure 22** Access to amenity green space in Chipping Norton and surrounding parishes



**Figure 23** Access to Parks & Recreation Grounds in Chipping Norton and surrounding parishes

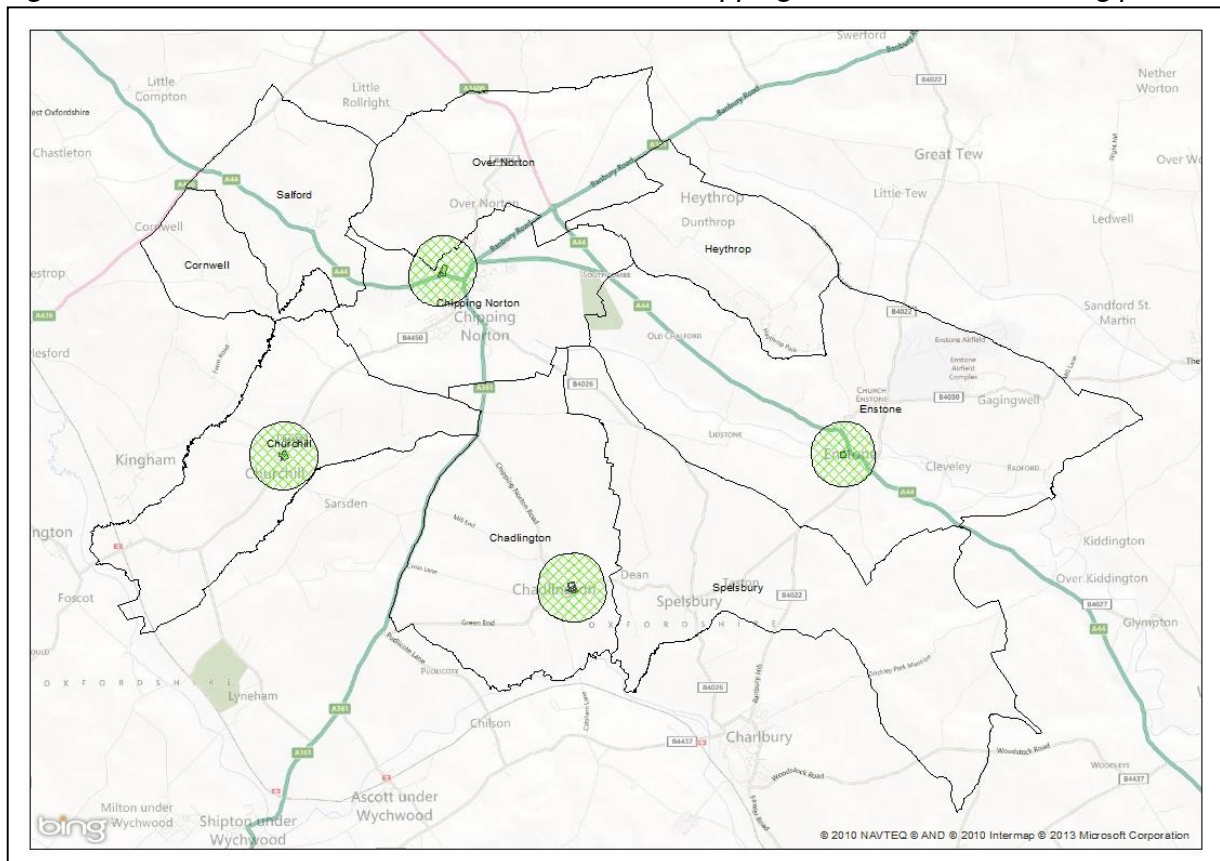




Figure 24 Access to natural green space in Chipping Norton and surrounding parishes (480m)

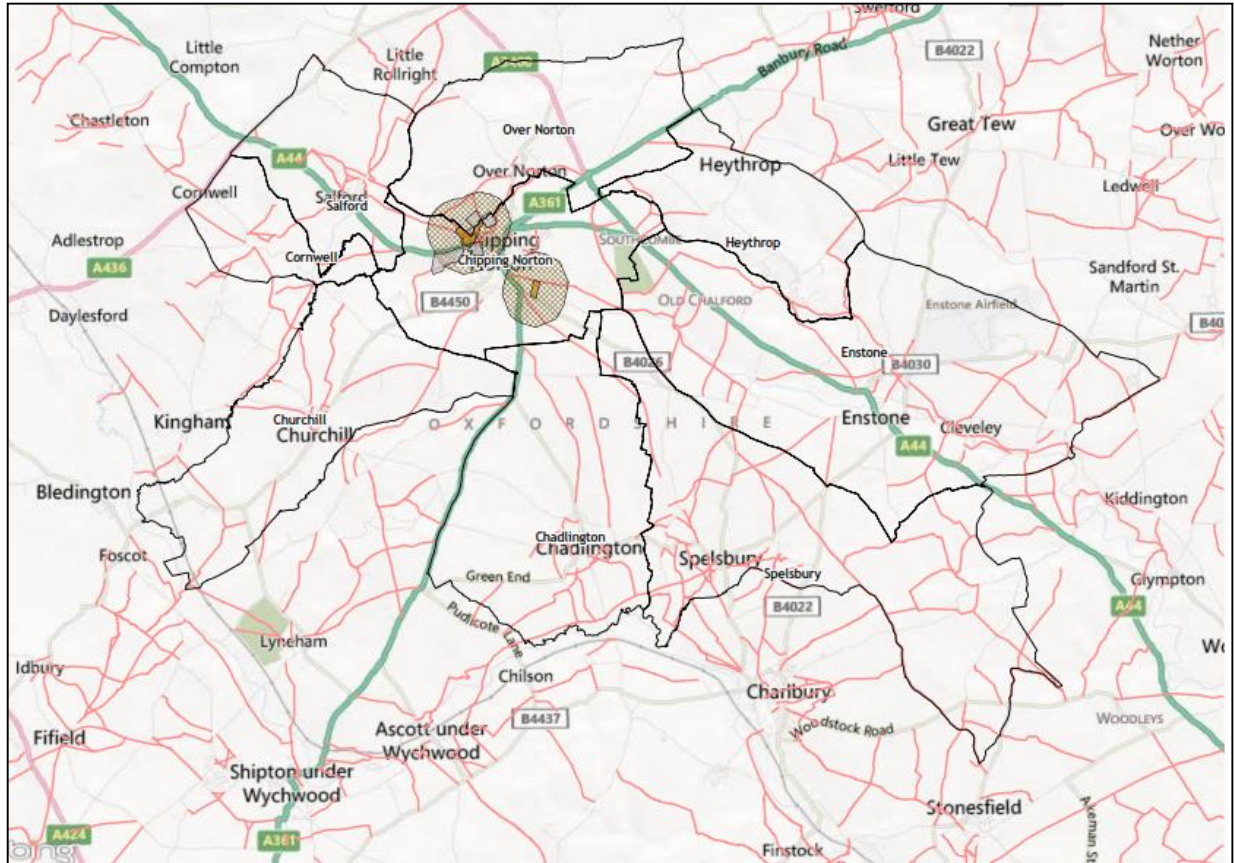


Figure 25 Access to children's play space in Chipping Norton and surrounding parishes

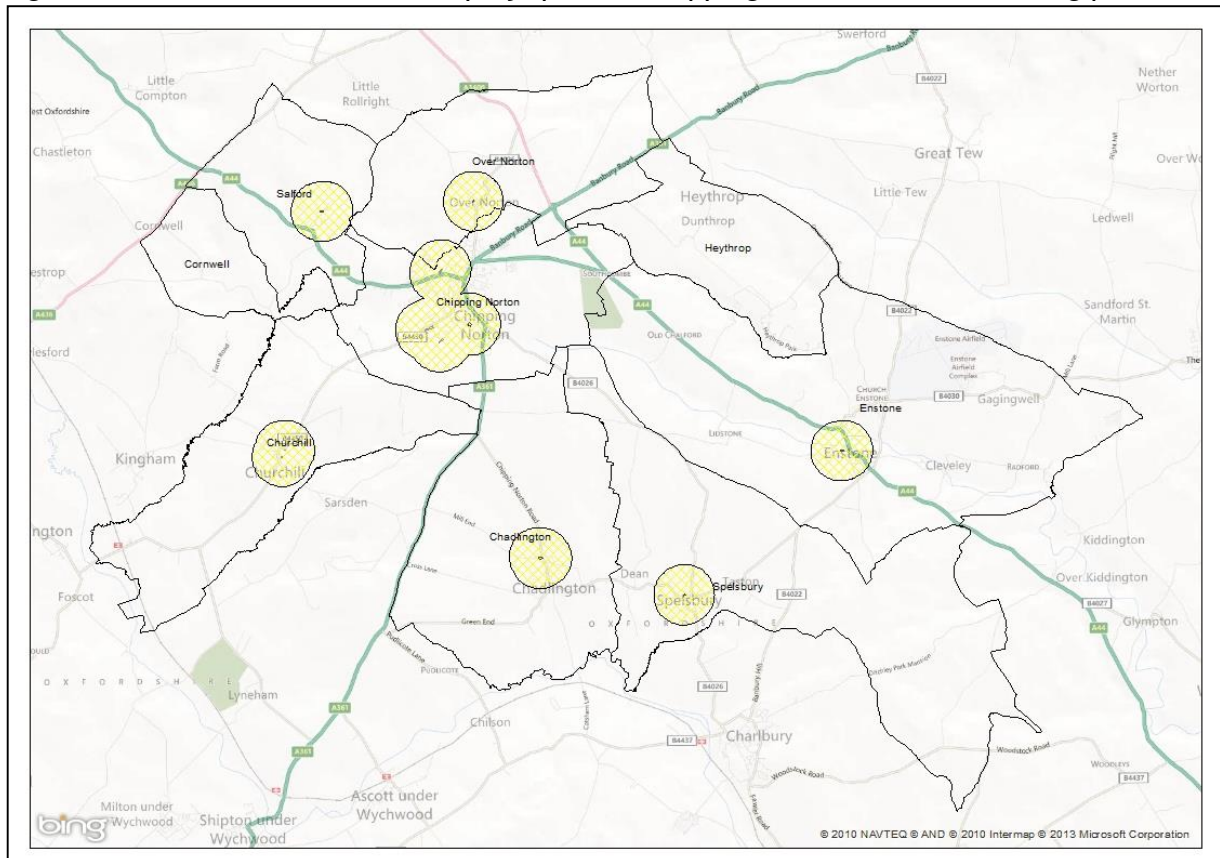
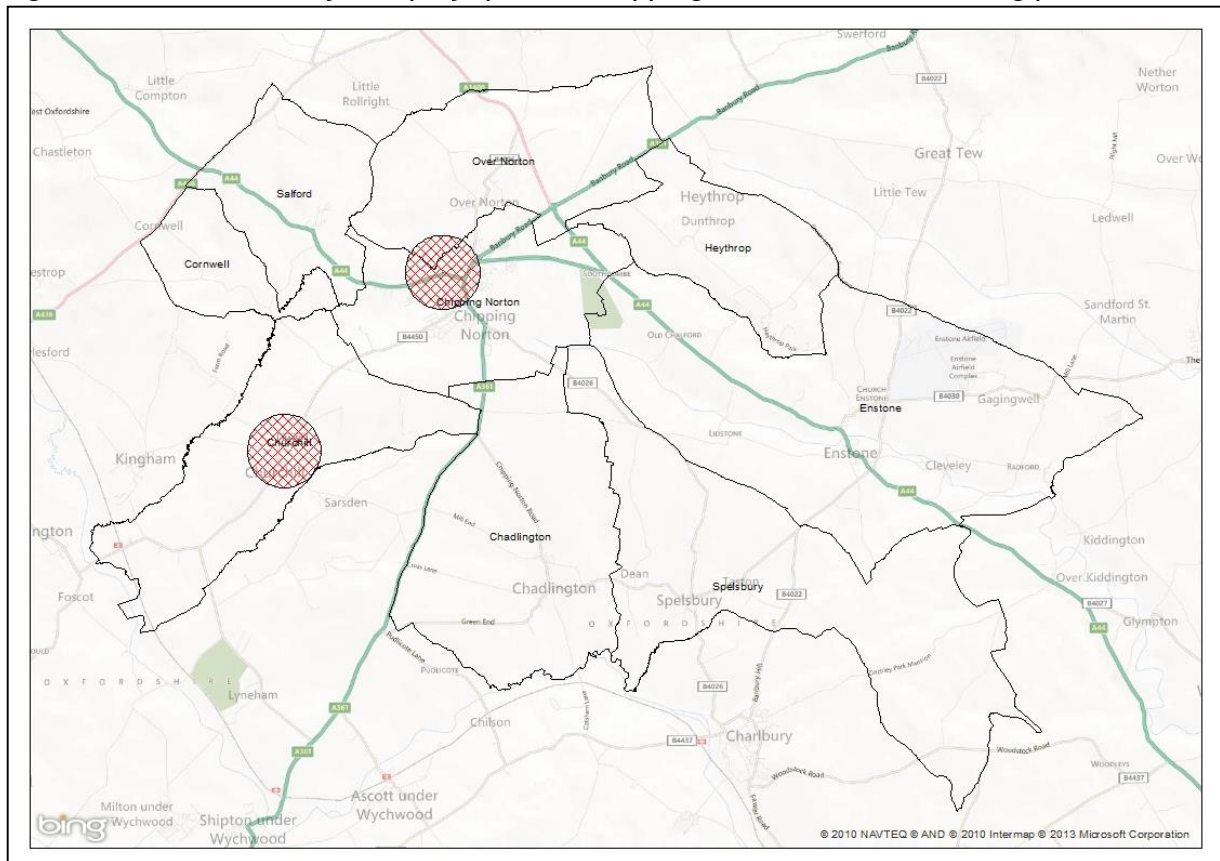


Figure 26 Access to youth play space in Chipping Norton and surrounding parishes



## 8.4 Quality of open space

This section provides a summary of quality scores of sites that were included within the quality audit (see section 2.3.3).

Site Name	Description	Typology	Parish	Existing Score/Rank	Potential Score/Rank
Recreation Ground	Recreation ground with MUGA, two play areas, informal kickabout with posts	Parks and Recreation Grounds	Chipping Norton	B	D
Chadlington Sports & Social Club	Sports and social club, clubhouse/changing, car park, football, cricket	Parks and Recreation Grounds	Chadlington	B	D
Church Road	Recreation ground, open CPG, basketball, cricket, informal football, mature trees	Parks and Recreation Grounds	Churchill	B	D
Lidstone Road	Car park, play area (fenced), kick wall/basketball	Parks and Recreation Grounds	Enstone	B	D
Cotswold Crescent	Play space with basketball, swings, see saw	Play Space	Chipping Norton	C	C
Walterbush Road	Play space with kickboard, climber	Play Space	Chipping Norton	C	C
Cornish Road	Play space with swings, basketball, slide, grass area, dog, litter, bench	Play Space	Chipping Norton	C	C
Mill Close	Play area with trail, slide, swings, basketball, balance, climb/slide	Play Space	Chadlington	B	D
Chipping Norton Road	Amenity space with young trees	Amenity Space	Chadlington	B	D
Cotshill Gardens	New amenity space with semi-mature trees	Amenity Space	Chipping Norton	B	D
Penhurst	Amenity with mature trees, roadside buffer	Amenity Space	Chipping Norton	B	D
Shepard Way	Amenity space with trees and path	Amenity Space	Chipping Norton	B	D
Parkers Circus	New amenity space with grass, path, planting	Amenity Space	Chipping Norton	B	D
Chadlington Allotments	Allotments, well used and maintained	Allotments	Chadlington	B	D
Burford Road Allotments	Large allotments, well used	Allotments	Chipping Norton	A	D
Banbury Road	Large allotments, well used	Allotments	Chipping Norton	A	D
Enstone Allotments	Large allotment site, well used	Allotments	Enstone	B	D
Over Norton Allotments	Large allotment site, well used	Allotments	Over Norton	B	D
Chipping Norton Football Ground	Chipping Norton FC, good pitch, clubhouse, car park	Outdoor Sports Space (LA)	Chipping Norton	B	D
Chipping Norton Cricket Ground	Cricket club, excellent ground and clubhouse	Outdoor Sports Space (LA)	Chipping Norton	A	D
Greystones Leisure Centre	Chipping Norton RFC ground. Clubhouse, pitches, also has bowls club, car park	Outdoor Sports Space (LA)	Chipping Norton	B	D
Enstone sports & social club	Enstone sports & social club, private facility, 1 x senior football, cricket, clubhouse - excellent facility	Outdoor Sports Space (LA)	Enstone	A	D

## 8.5 Future requirements for open space

The Core Strategy identifies the following in relation to new housing for Chipping Norton:

*The focus for development will be Chipping Norton. New development in the rest of the sub-area will be limited to meeting local community and business needs and will be steered towards the larger villages. Proposals for development in Chipping Norton will be taken forward through the Chipping Norton Neighbourhood Plan and should be consistent with the strategy which includes about 600 new homes within the sub-area including affordable housing and homes for older people and newly forming households.*

Assuming the above levels of housing growth, the increase in population in Chipping Norton would be 1,440 people (assuming an average occupancy of 2.4). This increase in population will result in an increased demand and need for public open space. The following table illustrates the current and future supply of open space based on this predicted level of housing growth.

Typology	2011 provision (ha)	2029 provision (ha)	Requirement from new provision
Allotments	7.33	6.97	0.36 (see 8.6.1)
Parks and Recreation Grounds (public & private)	5.24	3.44	
Parks and Recreation Grounds (public)	-5.55	-7.35	1.80
Accessible Natural Green space	-2.20	-5.08	2.88 (combined natural and amenity green space)
Amenity Green Space	-3.36	-4.36	(1.00)
Play Space (Children)	0.52	0.45	0.07
Play Space (Youth)	-0.08	-0.11	0.03

## 8.6 Summary of key issues

### 8.6.1 Allotments

The town is well provided for with allotments, and existing provision exceeds the standards. Access is good within the main settlement area. With such good levels of provision, it is sensible that no new allotments are provided within the town, but the focus is on improving the quality of existing facilities.

### 8.6.2 Parks and Recreation Grounds

Considering the provision of both public and private facilities, overall, there is sufficient supply of provision. However, when looking at this in more detail, it can be seen that much of this is made up of facilities in private ownership (Chipping Norton

RFC and the Cricket Club). In addition to the private facilities, there are also outdoor sports facilities at Chipping Norton School (6.7 ha), which could contribute to meeting some of the additional shortfalls if community use can be secured. Without these sites, there is a significant shortfall of facilities with full public access - currently 5.55 ha shortfall. There is also a significant gap in access to publicly accessible facilities across most of the town. However, due to the lack of fully publicly accessible facilities, it is recommended that new provision within the town is required, and this could best be delivered through new development. To achieve this, priority should be given to potential development sites that could provide a recreation ground as part of the proposed development.

### *8.6.3 Amenity Green Space*

There is an existing shortfall of this typology, and access is limited. It is therefore recommended that existing provision is protected, and new provision (in combination with requirements for natural green space provision) is provided through new development.

### *8.6.4 Accessible Natural Green Space*

In relation to the ANGS standard, there is a deficiency within the Chipping Norton urban area (the overall provision is 1.65 hectares/000 people compared with the standard of 2 hectares/000). However, there are areas of PNGS (grey on the map) such as Chipping Norton Common that can be accessed by the public, including through the Public Rights of Way network, and this helps to augment local provision. A large part of the town of Chipping Norton is within easy reach by foot of ANGS, but there are no sites of at least 20 hectares within the sub area that are less than 2 km from any part of the sub area.

The importance of PRoW and other linear routes in offering ‘connectivity’ as well as recreation opportunities in their own right has been emphasised by several respondents in the study’s consultation process.

The County Council Local Transport Plan’s Area Strategies aim for “a high quality cycle network” for each town, “with a particular focus to improve accessibility to key destinations”.

### *8.6.5 Play Space (children and youth)*

There is an under supply of provision of both children and young people’s space and access to both types of facilities also falls below the standard. There is a need for provision of these facilities through new development - for example a major facility within a new park and recreation ground would contribute significantly to meeting needs.

## 8.7 Priorities for the area

- There are up to 600 new homes planned for the area and this will place additional pressure on the already under provided open space facilities. The key priority for the town is to provide a major new park and recreation ground with a range of facilities to meet community needs, this would include provision for playing pitches, children and youth provision, space for informal recreation and natural areas - ideally this would be provided through a major development site within the town;
- The existing shortfall of open space means that all existing facilities should be protected. There is also a need to improve the quality of existing facilities to increase their capacity to cope with extra demand;
- The facilities at Chipping Norton School could contribute towards meeting some of the existing shortfall in provision of outdoor sports facilities, and this should be pursued as an option for the town;
- The provision of privately managed facilities at Chipping Norton RFC and the cricket club are important in providing facilities for formal outdoor sport, but do not over-ride the need for publicly accessible facilities;
- Any smaller developments (e.g. 1 - 50 dwellings), should contribute towards improving the quality of existing facilities within the town;
- Specific recommendations in relation to natural green space are:
  - Within the sub area as a whole assess the potential for negotiating with landowners to secure access to larger areas of ANGS (of at least 20 hectares in size) to help achieve this element of the standard.
  - Ensure the topic of ANGS provision and connectivity via off-road routes for walkers, horses and cyclists is addressed satisfactorily in the proposed Neighbourhood Plan.

## **PART 3: STRATEGIC RECOMMENDATIONS**



## **9.0 HIERARCHY OF PROVISION OF OPEN SPACE**

### **9.1 Introduction**

The planned growth in the district presents an opportunity to develop a hierarchy of provision of open space, sport and recreation facilities. A hierarchy of provision essentially means splitting facilities into categories based on their size and use. For example, a small local recreation ground may always be intended for local use, and may only attract people from the immediate town or parish, whereas a large recreation ground with multiple facilities may attract people from further afield.

Developing a hierarchy of provision is not appropriate for all types of open space, for example, there is little value in developing a hierarchy for amenity space or allotments, which the study has identified as having very local use and demand. However, other typologies, namely Parks and Recreation Grounds and Play Space have the potential to function at different levels. The hierarchy of provision of natural green space is more complicated in the district for reasons already outlined, and recommendations in relation to this are outlined in previous sections on natural green space.

### **9.2 Parks and Recreation Grounds**

This type of provision does function in different ways and at different levels. Indeed across the district, the audit has identified a range of different types of provision, sizes, functions and facilities. The area profiles consider this type of provision in more detail, and where appropriate make recommendations for this typology. The following section makes some recommendations in relation to a hierarchy for this typology.

It is proposed to keep the hierarchy straightforward and it is recommended that two classifications are adopted: Local Sites and Hub Sites. The following makes some recommendations based on observations from the study - it is fully intended that this would be subject to further consultation with town and parish councils, in particular through the neighbourhood planning process.

#### *Local Sites*

As suggested, these are local sites providing facilities for the immediate town/parish or its immediate neighbours. Sites of this size are likely to be below 2 hectares in size, and typically have only 1 sports pitch (or possibly football and cricket), along with a play area. Provision for sport is at a local level, and may not have changing facilities. Identification of these local sites is made in the sub area profiles.

#### *Hub Sites*

These are larger sites, typically greater than 2 hectares in size and will currently or be capable of performing a range of functions for outdoor sport and recreation. Typically, they will have more than one sports pitch, play facilities for children and young people, changing rooms, village hall or pavilion, car parking and space for events and informal recreation.



Although they may not currently have all the facilities, the sites would have the potential to perform this range of functions with investment. These sites would be the priority for investment in sport, particularly developing pitches which are capable of accommodating a higher standard of play than local sites - this may include additional drainage, fenced sports pitches and modern changing facilities.

Figures 27 - 28 suggests a number of publicly accessible sites which have the potential to perform as hub sites. As a guide, a 2km buffer has been applied to each potential hub site, but further analysis could be applied to consider drive times if these sites are deemed suitable, and if the hub site policy is adopted.

Figure 27 Hub sites in Chipping Norton sub area

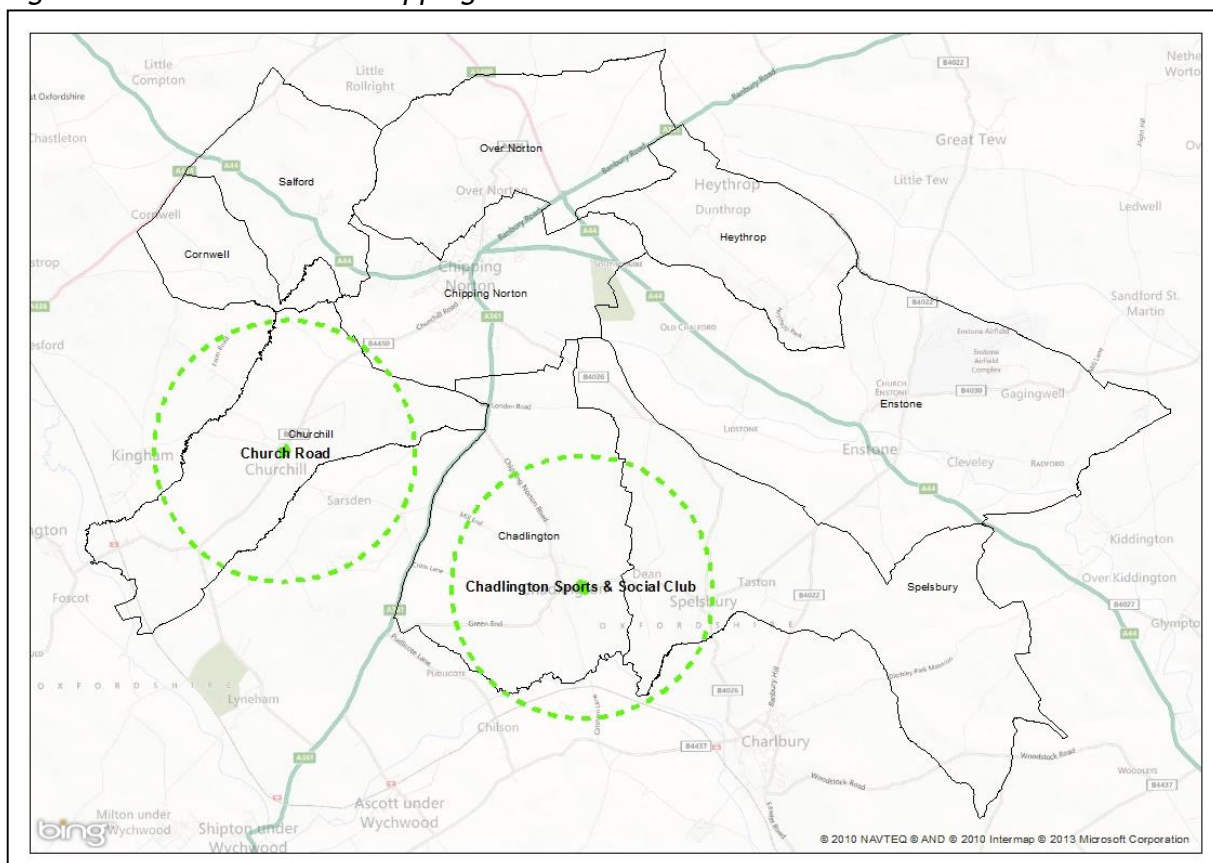
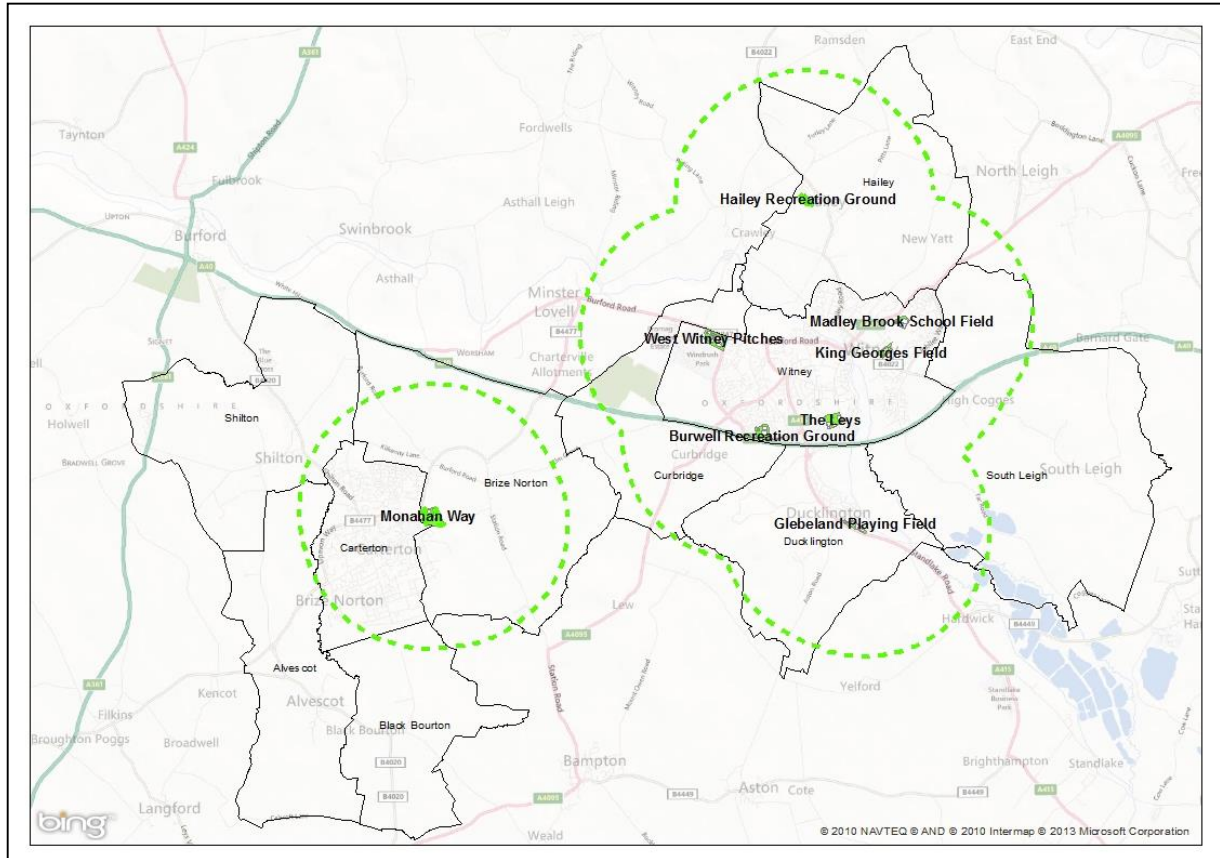


Figure 28 Hub sites in Witney and Carterton sub areas



### 9.3 Play Space

Play spaces also lend themselves to the development of a hierarchy of provision, Chichester has previously used the NPFA standards for providing play spaces which seeks the provision of Local Areas of Play (LAPs), Local equipped Areas of Play (LEAPs) and Neighborhood Equipped Areas of Play (NEAPs). This study has recommended moving away from this type of classification, and recommends the Play England classification of play is adopted:

**A** Door-step spaces close to home

**B** Local play spaces - larger areas within easy walking distance

**C** Neighbourhood spaces for play - larger spaces within walking distance

**D** Destination/family sites - accessible by bicycle, public transport and with car parking.

Analysis of this type of provision is made in the sub area profiles, however, as some general principles, the following is recommended:

*A Door-step spaces close to home*

These may include non-equipped areas which are large enough to support informal play or a kickabout - this provision may well be met through the amenity open space typology.

*B Local play spaces - larger areas within easy walking distance*

These would typically be equipped with provision for toddlers and juniors. The site is unlikely to have provision for young people. It is expected that there would be at least one type of provision within each settlement area.

*C Neighbourhood spaces for play - larger spaces within walking distance*

These would typically be equipped with provision for toddlers and juniors, and likely to have one form of provision for young people. It is expected that there would be at least one type of provision within each parish.

*D Destination/family sites - accessible by bicycle, public transport and with car parking*

These would be larger play facilities for a range of ages including toddlers, juniors and young people. Provision for young people may include a skate park and MUGA. It is recommended that these sites are provided at the hub sites suggested in figures 27-28.

## 10.0 STRATEGIC RECOMMENDATIONS

### 10.1 Introduction

The area profiles in section 8 of this report provide priorities for each area, highlighting current issues, potential impact of new development and requirements for future open space provision. This section outlines higher level strategic options which may be applicable at town, parish and study area wide level.

The strategic options addresses four key areas:

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

### 10.2 Delivering Strategic Options

Since the change in government in 2010, and the subsequent adoption of the National Planning Policy Framework, the planning environment is still in a state of change and flux.

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

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

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

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

### 10.3 Existing provision to be protected

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

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

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

The area profiles in section 8 of this study provide more detailed results at neighbourhood level as to the above considerations. The following draws on this and makes some more general observations and recommendations.

#### ***Open Space Policies:***

- OS1** The distribution of open space varies across the study area, however, there is a general lack of provision across the key towns against the recommended standards (despite a number of these standards being set lower than some national guidance). It is therefore recommended that priority is placed on protecting those open spaces where there is an existing shortfall of supply as highlighted in the neighbourhood profiles.
- OS2** Sites which are critical to avoiding deficiencies in quality, quantity or access should be protected unless suitable alternative provision can be provided.
- OS3** Sites which have significant nature conservation, historical or cultural value should be afforded protection, even if there is an identified surplus in quality, quantity or access in that local area.
- OS4** Considering the general under supply across most typologies (with the exception of amenity green space in some areas), loss of any existing provision should be avoided, unless alternative new provision can be provided.
- OS5** The importance of privately managed spaces (e.g. sports grounds) as a community facility has been highlighted in this study. Therefore it is recommended they should be afforded protection. Loss of these spaces could be considered if:
- there is an identified overall surplus of open space and surplus of that typology in the local area and locality,
  - alternative provision can be made or an acceptable mitigation package developed,
  - the development results in an overriding community benefit,
  - Sport England are consulted and satisfied with the proposals,

**OS6** There is a significant supply of semi-natural green space across the study area which has limited access. Nevertheless, these spaces are important in providing opportunities for informal recreation, walking, cycling etc. and should be afforded protection for their recreational value.

**OS7** Future LDD's and Neighbourhood Plans should consider the opportunities for creating both utility and recreation routes for use by foot and bike in both urban and rural areas. Creative application of the amenity open space and the semi-natural green space components of the proposed overall standard in respect of new development should be explored.

## 10.4 Existing provision to be enhanced

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

This includes those spaces or facilities which:

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

Those sites which require enhancement are identified within the neighbourhood profiles in this study, and in the quality audit that was undertaken as part of the 2008 open space study. Some of the key observations related to site enhancement include:

1. The importance of providing high quality provision of formal facilities such as Parks and Recreation Grounds and Play Space.
2. The role of private sports spaces to some local communities and the need to provide opportunity for investment.
3. The need to ensure high quality open spaces are designed and provided through new development where feasible.
4. The importance of semi-natural green space within the Study area, and the need to maintain and enhance provision for biodiversity.
5. The role of open space in contributing to wider initiatives and strategies, for example providing background information for the Districts emerging green infrastructure strategy.

### ***Open Space Policies:***

**OS8** The study makes recommendations for improving the quality of open space across the study area. However, a long term strategy for achieving improvements is required which could be delivered through a Green space

	Strategy, neighbourhood plans and be considered within the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL).
<b>OS9</b>	Priorities for improvement include the enhancement of the existing provision for children and young people and the improvement of sports pitches.
<b>OS10</b>	Management plans should be developed for the main parks, sport and recreation grounds. These priorities could be considered in neighbourhood plans and by the local community.
<b>OS11</b>	Contributions received through CIL should enable investment in all typologies of open space.

## 10.5 Opportunities for re-location/re-designation of open space

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

Although it is up to local communities to define their own priorities within neighbourhood plans, the information provided within the neighbourhood profiles in this study will form a good basis to inform any decisions related to the provision of open space, sport and recreation facilities.

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

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

The area profiles provided with this study provide information on the existing supply of different types of open space, an analysis of access and identify local issues related to quality. They will act as a good starting point for feeding into neighbourhood plans in consultation with the local community.



## **Open Space Policies:**

**OS12** Develop a pilot project within one of the main towns to develop a neighbourhood plan which incorporates green space planning.

### **10.6 Identification of areas for new provision**

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

#### **Quantity**

The area profiles show the existing provision of open space against the proposed standards. For each typology, there is an identified 'sufficient supply' or 'under supply' for each neighbourhood.

If an area has an existing under supply of any typology, there may be need for additional provision. This could be delivered through developing a new site (for example as part of a housing development), acquiring land or changing the typology of an existing space (which may be in over supply).

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

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

#### **Access**

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

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

### ***Delivering new provision***

There are a number of opportunities for delivering new facilities through new development - CIL and Section 106 and to a lesser extent through capital and grant funding.

#### ***New development, CIL and Section 106***

West Oxfordshire District Council are in the process of developing their priorities and policy for the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL). The provision of new open space will sit alongside many other community needs and aspirations which will have a call on this levy. This open space study clearly identifies that there are needs for new and /or enhanced open space provision, particularly where new development is planned.

Whilst accepting other priorities will be considered in relation to CIL, it is the duty of this study to highlight the need for open space to be a priority within CIL for West Oxfordshire District.

Outside of CIL, new development may also be required to provide on-site open space through section 106 agreements. Whilst not all developments will be of a size that will generate the requirement for on-site open space, when considering future housing numbers for the District, there will be many that will. This study should be used to make local decisions about where and when new on site provision will be required.

#### ***Capital and grant funding***

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

### ***Open Space Policies:***

**OS13** New provision of open space may be required as part of new development in towns or parishes where there are existing deficiencies in quantity or access to open space and/or where the new development will result in deficiencies.

Where on site provision is required, it should be provided in line with the proposed open space standards. Where on site provision is deemed impractical, or not required, off site contributions will be required to meet the quantity, access and quality standards where possible.

**OS14** CIL plays a crucial role in delivering open space, sport and recreation facilities through new development, and open space should be considered as a priority in the CIL.

**OS15** The priorities for new provision are for allotments and young people's space.

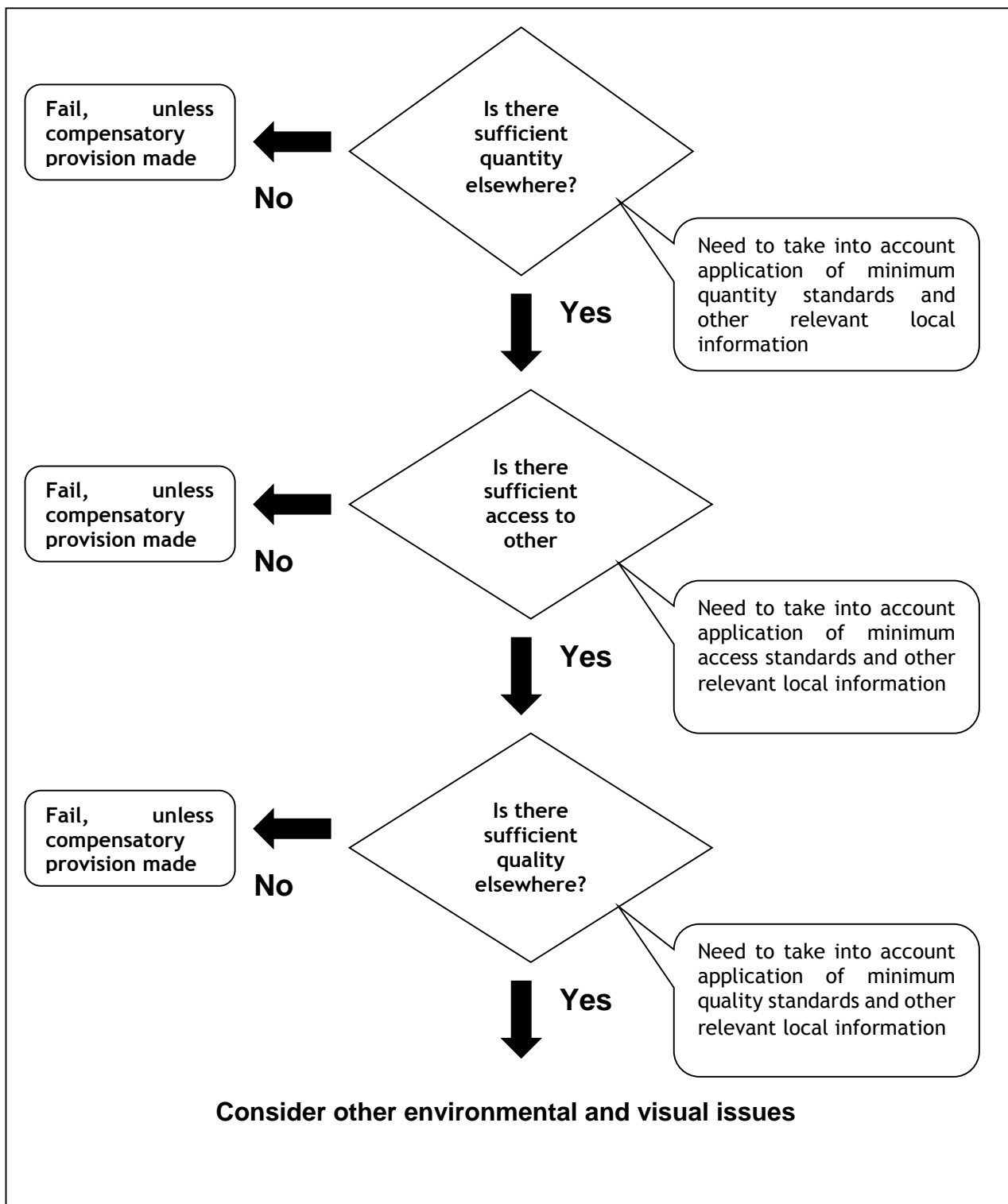
## 10.7 Facilities that are surplus to requirement

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

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

Figure 29 suggests an outline of the decision process that should be followed before the development of an open space can be seriously contemplated.

Figure 29: Outline decision making process in relation to sanctioning (re)development of open space



**Q. Is there sufficient quantity?**

**A.** If the minimum quantitative standard for amenity green space is achieved in a defined geographical area, the relative provision of other forms of open space must then be considered. (Amenity green space can in principle be converted into other forms of open space where the need arises). If a) provision meets the minimum

quantitative standard; b) there is no significant local information suggesting a need to retain the site; and, c) there is not a perceived lack of other forms of open space. The next question can be addressed.

**Q. Is there sufficient access to other opportunities?**

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

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

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

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

## 11.0 DEVELOPER CONTRIBUTIONS

This section sets out higher level strategic recommendations and recommends an approach to developer contributions in accordance with the CIL regulations.

### 11.1 Capital cost of providing open space

In order to calculate developer contributions for facilities, a methodology has been adopted which calculates how much it would cost the Local Authority to provide them. These costs have been calculated using local information, and have also been benchmarked against other Local Authorities costs for providing facilities. A summary of the costs are outlined in table 4 below.

Contributions towards the provision or improvement of open space are calculated using the capital cost of provision. The same charges apply to both provision of new facilities and the upgrading/improvement of existing facilities, which more often than not includes new provision. This is in line with Paragraph B9 of Circular 05/2005, according to which obligations “should be fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind to the proposed development”. Contribution per person is therefore taken to be a reasonable measure of that impact, irrespective of whether new provision or improvement of existing facilities is required.

Table 4 Costs for providing open space

Typology	Standard (m <sup>2</sup> )	Cost of provision	
		Cost / m <sup>2</sup>	Contribution per person
Allotments	2.5	£30.00	£75.00
Play Space (children’s and Youth combined)	0.7	£170.00	£119.00
Parks and Recreation grounds	12.5	£72.00	£900.00
Natural Green Space and amenity green space (new provision)	20.0	£15.00	£300.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>42.20</b>		<b>£1,394</b>

This shows that it costs £1,394 per person to provide new open space to meet the West Oxfordshire standard for open space. These calculations are to be used to calculate developer contributions required through CIL, which is discussed below.

If the open space study identifies the need for a development to provide open space on site, CIL will not be applicable, but the development will be required to provide open space in line with the West Oxfordshire Standards.

## 11.2 Applying costs to CIL

CIL is charged per square metre of development. The above calculations show costs per person, therefore a conversion rate has been applied using average dwelling sizes (CABE, 2010<sup>3</sup>). Using the average rates, the contribution for open space required would be £37.57 per square metre, as shown in table 5 below.

Table 5 *Costs for providing open space per metre square of new development*

Dwelling Size	Household Size	Open space contribution	Size of dwelling (square metres)	Contribution per metre square of new development
1 bed	1.5	£2,091	64.3	£32.52
2 bed	2.5	£3,485	71.2	£48.95
3 bed	2.5	£3,485	95.6	£36.45
4+ beds	2.8	£3,903	120.6	£32.36
<b>Average rate</b>				<b>£37.57</b>

## 11.3 Maintenance Contributions

If a development is required to provide open space on site, the developer would be expected to maintain the open space for a minimum period of 1 year. Developers will then be asked to maintain the new provision for up to 10 years, after which arrangements must be put in place for a management company and/or third party to manage the open space.

If the developer does not wish to assume responsibility for maintaining the open space, the council may be willing to accept a commuted sum and make arrangements for management of the open space through the council or a third party. The amount payable for the commuted sum will be calculated using the figures in table 6.

Table 6 *Committed sums payable for open space*

Typology	Cost/m <sup>2</sup>
Children & Young People's Space	£3.67
Parks and Gardens	£2.20
Outdoor Sports Space	£0.92
Amenity Green Space	£0.62
Natural Green Space	£0.42
Allotments	£0.13

<sup>3</sup> Housing standards: evidence and research (CABE, 2010)



## 11.4 Eligible types of development

Table 7 outlines the type of housing that will be considered eligible for making contributions towards open space.

*Table 7 Eligible types of residential development*

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

Includes agricultural workers' dwellings. Excludes extensions (for administrative reasons)  
Excludes replacement dwellings and nursing houses types.

## 11.5 Thresholds for provision

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

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

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

- The size of the proposed development;
- The existing provision of facilities within the neighbourhood and/or the sub area;
- Existing access to facilities within the neighbourhood and/or sub area.

Table 8 provides an indicative guide to assess which types of housing generate a need for facilities in the categories listed - developers will have the opportunity to determine precise arrangements within these overall guidelines.

Table 8 Requirement for open space, sport and recreation facilities

Type of Provision	1-9 dwellings	10-49 dwellings	50-199 dwellings	200-599 dwellings	600+ dwellings
Play Space	*	✓	✓	✓	✓
Amenity Green Space	*	✓	✓	✓	✓
Outdoor Sports Space	*	*	✓	✓	✓
Allotments	*	*	✓	✓	✓
Parks and Gardens	*	*	*	✓	✓
Natural Green Space	*	*	*	✓	✓

KEY: ✓ on site provision normally sought \* off site provision normally required