

Open Space Audit and Assessment
Adopted August 2004

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Executive Summary

1.1 What is the purpose of the Audit and Assessment?

- 1.1.1 The audit and assessment is being carried out to provide up to date information on open space within in Swindon. This can then be used to support the implementation of policies in the Local Plan and also to inform the preparation of the Parks and Open Space strategy.
- 1.1.2 The audit and assessment has been carried out taking account of guidance in Planning Policy Guidance Note 17: Open Space, Sport and Recreation (PPG17)

1.2 How is it being done?

- 1.2.1 The process involves 5 steps as follows;
 - Identify local needs - Reviewing information and consulting
 - Auditing local provision - Carrying out the audit
 - Setting provision standards for accessibility, quality and quantity
 - Applying provision standards - Identifying deficits/surpluses
 - Drafting policies - Local Plan and Supplementary Planning Guidance
- 1.2.2 Importantly these five steps do not always follow a strict sequence due to the availability of information, resources and the need to fit round other timetables.

1.3 Learning from experience

- 1.3.1 A review of existing Local Plan policy indicates that the policies have been successful in achieving a good level of new provision in the major development areas. However they have been less successful at achieving appropriate levels of maintenance or securing open space contributions in relation to smaller developments. There are difficulties in securing sufficient

resources for the on-going maintenance of new open spaces. The Community Forest initiative has also led to some success in securing new woodland accessible to the public.

1.4 Learning from others

- 1.4.1 A review of national policy has shown that there are common themes such as the need to consider accessibility and quality as well as quantity, the need for locally based standards, the need to protect important open spaces and to provide open space in new development.
- 1.4.2 Information from other authorities has shown that our quantitative standard for open space is in the mid range of a cross section of others.

1.5 Community consultation

- 1.5.1 Consultation has shown that Swindon's open spaces are highly valued for a variety of reasons including quiet recreation, children's play, sport and wildlife.
- 1.5.2 A number of Swindon's open spaces, particularly the Country Parks, Town Gardens and Queens Park are highly valued and well used.
- 1.5.3 Other key findings are set out below;
 - Overall results suggest that open spaces are important in people's lives. An estimated 73% of the population use open space for informal recreation every 2 – 3 months. 68% of people surveyed spend 1 – 3 hours at their most important open space.
 - As regards formal sports 25% of people surveyed (including children) take part in outdoor sports. The most popular sport was football followed by golf, cycling, tennis and running.
 - Overall the results show greater concern over the quality and maintenance of open spaces rather than the amount of open space available.

- Results on user satisfaction are variable. A 1999 survey indicated that three quarters of people surveyed were satisfied with parks and open spaces. However a further survey in 2002 showed that for 60% of people surveyed there were factors that discouraged them from using open space such as dogs and dog faeces, noisy children and teenagers, management, safety, personal circumstances, weather and access to facilities.
- Surveys in Parks, Walcot and Penhill have indicated that the main concerns surround the lack of or quality of facilities available (e.g for play), safety and security, rather than the total amount of green space available.

1.6 Setting standards

- 1.6.1 Standards for open space were derived by looking at published guidance from the National Playing Fields Association, English Nature, and Sport England together with local experiences in Swindon and the views of the local community.
- 1.6.2 Accessibility standards take account of a hierarchy of open spaces on the basis that people will be willing to travel further to larger open spaces with greater facilities. All residents should have local open spaces within easy walking distance.
- 1.6.3 Local standards for quality were established for different types of open spaces with the exception of play areas where the National Playing Fields Association standards have been used.
- 1.6.4 Quantitative standards were established based on national guidance, local experience and were reviewed in light of the results of the audit.

1.7 Key findings on open space provision

- 1.7.1 A total of 1815 open spaces were identified totalling 1542 Ha. Of the open space identified approximately 1017 Ha (66 %) is publicly accessible recreational open space. The remainder comprises incidental green space in public and private ownership

and school playing fields. There is a considerable range in provision with six major Country Parks and over 100 neighbourhood parks serving local needs.

- 1.7.2 Most of the Borough has a reasonably good level of accessibility to a range of open spaces. Those areas with the most significant problems are the central and eastern parts of Swindon. Accessibility to allotments and public sports pitches is more variable across the Borough.
- 1.7.3 A survey of the quality of open spaces in the Borough shows that there is a considerable variation in quality across the Borough. Central, Old Town and Lawns, St Margaret, Freshbrook and Grange Park, Haydon Wick, Ridgeway, Shaw and Nine Elms and Toothill and Westlea appear to have the better quality open spaces.
- 1.7.4 In terms of overall quantity, most wards have a relatively good level of provision above the draft Local Plan standard. The highest levels are in Old Town and Lawn (both 13 Ha/1000 population). The wards below the standard of 3.2 Ha/1000 population are Eastcott, Covingham and Nythe, Haydon Wick, Moredon, Parks, St. Margaret and Walcot. It is worth noting that although overall provision within some of these wards is very low, some such as Eastcott benefit from good accessibility to open spaces in other adjacent wards.
- 1.7.5 The overall conclusions of the Playing Pitch Assessment indicate that there is surplus in the provision of adult football pitches and cricket pitches in the Borough and a shortfall in junior football pitches, rugby pitches and hockey pitches. Regardless of the conclusions of the Playing Pitch Assessment the Council would not, however, wish to see a reduction in the overall level of available adult football pitches and cricket pitches. Some of the shortfall in pitches may be offset by informal community use of school pitches which is not formally acknowledged in the assessment.

2 Introduction

2.1 Aims and Objectives

- 2.1.1 The overall aim is to carry out an audit and assessment of the accessibility, quality and quantity of open spaces within the Borough in accordance with current Government Guidance. This is intended to provide supporting information to help implement Local Plan policy on open space and to inform the preparation of a Parks and Open Space strategy.
- 2.1.2 The Audit and Assessment is intended to provide information on open spaces for the Borough Council, public, developers and other organisations to assist in decision making about planning, managing and protecting open spaces. Whilst the Audit and Assessment report provides considerable information on open spaces in Swindon it is not at this stage entirely comprehensive. There are some gaps in the information available and some further work is required. These are made clear in the report and further planned areas of work are addressed in Section 7.
- 2.1.3 The specific objectives of the assessment and audit are set out below;
- To identify the current accessibility, quality and quantity of provision of open space within the Borough against relevant standards.
 - To determine the current and future needs for use of open space within the Borough.
 - To identify areas with a deficiency or surplus of open space
 - To identify opportunities for the improvement of open spaces across the Borough.

2.2 Background

- 2.2.1 As part of the Local Plan review, the Borough Council carried out an audit and assessment of all open spaces which have a recreational or amenity function. The audit looked at the

accessibility, quality and quantity of open spaces within the Borough. An interim report was published in March 2003 and subject to targeted stakeholder consultation. A final draft was published for a six week period of consultation in October 2003.

- 2.2.2 The audit and assessment has been prompted by a number of factors which are listed below;
- The need to update information in light of new government guidance.
 - The need to establish and justify standards for local open space provision within the Local Plan.
 - To provide supporting information for Local Plan policies on the provision of open space in relation to new developments.
- 2.2.3 The last open space survey of the Borough was carried out in 1993. Since that time there have been significant changes both in the provision of open space within the Borough and in the way that open space is audited and assessed.
- 2.2.4 The government has published revised Planning Policy Guidance Note 3: Housing and Planning Policy Guidance Note 17: Open Space, Sport and Recreation (PPG 17). The former seeks to direct housing development towards brownfield land and seeks to restrict new Greenfield developments. This is beginning to be reflected in development trends with an increasing number of schemes taking place within the urban area on previously developed land. Much of this development is occurring at higher densities in line with government guidance.
- 2.2.5 The emerging Local Plan seeks to identify a number of brownfield land allocations within the urban area. In addition the New Swindon Company¹ suggest increasing the number of houses in the centre of Swindon, by up to 3000 by 2016, in order to increase its' vibrancy and vitality.
- 2.2.6 On many brownfield sites it will be difficult to provide useful areas of open space within the developments themselves yet these

¹ New Swindon Company – The Urban Regeneration Company for Swindon's Central Area

sites will still create a demand for provision of open space and play areas and will increase the usage of existing facilities.

- 2.2.7 In addition it is apparent that in the case of certain urban development where there is currently a serious deficiency of open space (e.g. the central area) it will be very difficult to provide new open space to meet traditional standards within or close to the development site. Pressure on existing open spaces is likely to increase, which in turn will increase the need to maintain and upgrade these existing facilities.
- 2.2.8 Current Local Plan policy only deals with major development areas and in the case of children's play, developments over 25 dwellings. It relates to the provision of facilities on site only. This system is therefore no longer appropriate to deal with the changing emphasis in development. Officers also consider that the current system of securing commuted payments towards maintenance should be reviewed to ensure that this properly meets the requirements to maintain play areas, open space and other types of public space in a fit condition for their use. This relates both to the payments and length of time over which this is provided. Issues relating to developer contributions towards open space are being addressed through the preparation of Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG). An adopted SPG was published in September 2004.
- 2.2.9 PPG 17 and its companion guide "Assessing Needs and Opportunities" set out the principle that Local Authorities should set standards for open space locally. Such standards should be informed by robust assessments of needs and opportunities. Specifically and unlike in the past local standards should cover the accessibility and quality of open space as well as the quantity. In line with this guidance a comprehensive audit and assessment of open space has been undertaken to inform and support Local Plan policy.

3 Methodology

3.1 Overall Approach

3.1.1 The approach to carrying out the audit and assessment was derived from “Assessing Needs and Opportunities” the companion guide to PPG 17 although this has been altered to take account of local circumstances and the timetable of the Local Plan. In summary the following steps have carried out.

Step 1 : Identify Local Needs	Review existing strategies, guidance and their impact. Review existing policies, standards and their effectiveness Consult local communities
Step 2: Audit Local Provision	Plan and undertake audit of open spaces.
Step 3: Set Provision Standards	Determine quantity, quality and accessibility standards Determine minimum acceptable size and design standards Determine hierarchy of open space provision Determine normalised costs
Step 4: Apply the provision standards	Identify deficiencies against quality and accessibility standards Identify deficiencies against quantity standards
Step 5 : Draft Policies	Draft Local Plan policies Draft Open Space audit and assessment Draft Supplementary Planning Guidance Consult on draft documents and revise accordingly.

3.1.2 The steps outlined above do not follow a strict sequence due to the availability of information, resources and the requirement to fit

into the Local Plan timetable. For example it was necessary to prepare standards in advance of the completion of the audit in order to set these down in the Local Plan First Deposit Draft. However the Local Plan process allows the opportunity to review these standards in light of new information and consultation feedback.

- 3.1.3 It should also be stated that it is not an objective of this process to produce a Parks and Open space strategy. This is in recognition of the need for the consideration of open space provision corporately in relation to other service provision, the need for wider consultation on priorities for future investment, and the significant role of the Parish and Town Councils in managing open spaces within their areas. For these reasons a Parks and Open space strategy for Swindon Borough Council's open space is being prepared separately from this process however it is intended that the results of the audit and assessment should inform that strategy.

Identifying Local Needs

3.2 Review of existing strategies, guidance and other Local Authority policy

- 3.2.1 A review has been undertaken of available national guidance on open space and of other Local Authorities policies. In terms of guidance there are a number of key documents which will help to shape future policy such as Planning Policy Guidance Note 17: Sport, Open Space and Recreation and it's Companion Guide, Urban Space Green Taskforce Report, National Playing Fields Association Six Acre Standard (2001), Sport England Good Practice Guide - Providing for Sport and Recreation through new development and Towards a Level Playing Field.
- 3.2.2 There are some common key themes in this guidance for Local Authorities which can be summarised as follows;

- Assessment of the existing and future needs for open spaces should be carried out based around the quantity, quality and accessibility of provision.
- Locally based standards of provision should be identified.
- Need to protect open spaces that are of value and importance to the community.
- Need to include policies to secure the provision of open space in new developments.

3.2.3 In terms of other local authorities, it is apparent that a range of approaches and policies exist in different areas and this is demonstrated in Appendix 1 which compares overall standards and thresholds of different Local Authorities.

3.2.4 In terms of protecting open space very few authorities appear to have policies which provide for absolute protection of open spaces and in such cases the sites are listed in the policy. Most Authorities have policies which are conditional, that is applications for development on open space are assessed against a series of criteria. The most common criteria are listed below;

- whether or not the area has a shortfall or surplus of open space against Council standards.
- the loss of part of the site may be acceptable if this leads to enhanced provision or improved community access on the remainder of the site.
- the development of the site will not be permitted unless alternative provision is made of equivalent size, quality and accessibility.
- whether the land is capable of recreational use due to its size, location or physical condition.
- In the case of school playing fields, whether the development of the land is required for educational provision or is permanently surplus to the needs of individual schools.

3.2.5 In terms of provision most authorities specify an overall requirement per 1000 population and these are shown in the Table in Appendix 1. From this it can be seen that Swindon Borough Council's current standard is in the middle of the range of figures specified. Appendix 1 also shows the thresholds at which developer contributions apply and these vary considerably.

3.3 Review of existing Local Plan policy and standards and their effectiveness.

3.3.1 A simple SWOT² analysis was undertaken by relevant Borough Council officers and key stakeholders to examine views on open space provision in Swindon. Some of the key conclusions of this group are set out below;

² Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats

An overview of Open Space Provision
Strengths
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A Good level of infrastructure has been secured in new development areas which is above the National Playing Field Association standard. • The Borough has well established and tested system of securing provision in major development areas - good experience of using section106 agreements. • The Borough has several valuable historic parks e.g. Town Gardens, Lydiard Park which have received Historic Park and Garden status. • Community Forest initiatives have helped secure public access green space where otherwise there wouldn't have been. • A good number and range of accessible open spaces • Excellent country parks • High level of biodiversity in open spaces
Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a lack of open space in certain areas especially the central area and deprived areas of the town • Poor perception of open spaces • Limited resources including developer contributions towards open space maintenance have affected the quality of maintenance of new open space. • The overall quality of open space has suffered due to lack of resources. • Lack of communication, co-ordination and promotion for open spaces. Poor awareness amongst ethnic minority groups.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of specific facilities such as skate parks and motorcycle trial parks. • Narrowly focused Local Plan policy has limited the opportunity for appropriate developer contributions towards open space. • There is a lack of assessment of needs and opportunities for open space and a lack of a strategy
Opportunities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Easy access to high quality countryside around the town • Potential economic, social and health benefits from improving open spaces • Range of funding opportunities including developers, lottery etc • Potential for innovative approaches to managing open spaces by working with other organisations • Increased community involvement • New spaces with different purposes e.g. new public squares in the central area • Enhanced biodiversity
Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vandalism • Perceived fear of crime • Development on open spaces • Lack of funding • Lack of political priority • Perceived fear of crime • Pressure to use previously developed land

3.3.2 An assessment of housing applications was undertaken to examine the extent to which the current Local Plan policies and thresholds on open space addressed development within the Borough. This was undertaken by examining housing applications data for the last 3 years. This showed that about 95% of completions within the Borough outside of the Northern

Development Area (NDA)³ were on sites of less than 25 dwellings. This is significant, as the lowest threshold for developer contributions in the current Local Plan is 25 dwellings in relation to the provision of children's play areas.

- 3.3.3 It appears that despite the narrowly focused Local Plan policies the Borough has achieved some success in negotiating ad hoc agreements with developers towards open space provision in circumstances where the policies do not strictly apply. Some examples are listed below;

Rushey Platt - Bloor Homes £10k toward restoration of the canal & £90k toward Public Open Space works. This enabled Swindon Borough Council to make a Heritage lottery bid, of well over £½ million to restore a significant length of the Wilts and Berks canal as well as improvements to Open space.

Mannington - Bellwinch Homes, - £50k toward development of open space including improved access to existing Mannington Recreation Ground via a new pedestrian bridge and path.

New College redevelopment - £39k toward improvements to existing Public Open Space including land drainage to improve football pitches.

- 3.3.4 This provides an indication that there is potential to negotiate off site contributions towards open space improvements within the Borough.

3.4 Consulting Local Communities

- 3.4.1 A review was undertaken of existing known survey information on open space recently carried out in the Borough. The list below indicates those surveys identified and summaries of these are provided in Appendix 2.

³ The NDA was not included in this analysis as it's development is set down through a Master Plan and Framework Plans which determine the level of open space provision. To include this area would distort the conclusions about residential development elsewhere in the Borough.

- “Have Your Say” Questionnaire – Peoples Voice 1999
- Local Cultural Strategy 2001
- Parks and Walcot Community Consultation 2001
- Penhill Forum Consultation 2002

3.4.2 These surveys were not directly related to the Open Space Audit and Assessment however they have provided a range of useful information both general and area specific.



Community Consultation exercise in Wroughton Source: ajt consultants

3.4.3 Overall responses to the Local Cultural Strategy showed that parks and green spaces are important in people’s lives and they highlighted that green spaces and parks must be maintained, improved and cared for. There were also comments that children’s play areas and playgrounds were of poor quality and needed to be better maintained. The ‘Have your say’ questionnaire result suggested that almost three quarters of respondents were satisfied with parks and open space provision in Swindon.

3.4.4 In both the Parks and Walcot and Penhill consultation concerns were expressed about the under-use and in some cases loss of

open space and in particular the lack of facilities for play and sport.

- 3.4.5 In order to gain a further insight into needs and attitudes towards open space a community consultation project was carried out by ajt consultants on behalf of the Council. This survey used a combination of a random household telephone survey and selected community workshops to examine both the formal and informal use of open space. The survey revealed that people want to use open spaces for a wide range of pursuits from relaxation to active sports. Nearly all users of open space (96%) are doing so every two to three months with most users visiting open space for relaxation and general exercise (88%). This represents some 73% of the adult population (109,500 people) who undertake approximately 5,500,000 visits to open space annually. With regard to sport 25% (including children) of those surveyed participate in outdoor sport. The survey also looked at factors which encourage and discourage the use of open space. The problems relating to using open space include personal circumstances, user interaction, management, quality of provision and access. 60% of people are discouraged from using open space and 80% of adults do not participate in active sports.
- 3.4.6 The survey stresses the importance of open spaces to the population for informal recreation in particular. However there are factors which discourage a significant proportion of people from using these spaces. Whilst this indicates a latent demand for open space, the survey itself together with the other consultations suggest that it is not necessarily a shortage of open space which is the problem but rather a lack of suitable facilities within them. This emphasises the need to look at both the quality as well as the quantity of open space provision.

3.5 Consultation on the Open Spaces Audit and Assessment – Interim Report

3.5.1 Following the publication of the Interim Report in March 2003 consultation was undertaken with a number of stakeholders during Summer 2003. Each organisation was provided with a copy of the Interim report and where appropriate a plan showing open spaces in the local area and invited to comment. In addition a seminar was arranged to allow those organisations to discuss issues relating to open spaces in Swindon. This process and the results is summarised in Appendix 2 and was used to inform the preparation of the final draft report.

3.6 Consultation on the Final Draft Open Spaces Audit and Assessment

3.6.1 The Final Draft report was published for consultation in November 2003 together with the Revised Deposit Draft Local Plan. Comments were received from 5 organisations and related to detail regarding individual sites and concerns that the Audit did not include an assessment of biodiversity. The latter point is dealt with in Section 4.

3.7 Swindon Biodiversity Action Plan

3.7.1 From September 2002 to January 2003 consultation was carried out in relation to the Swindon Biodiversity Action Plan, which is being carried out in partnership with the Wiltshire Wildlife Trust. This highlighted the value of many of Swindon's open spaces for wildlife. A summary of the key results is set out in Appendix 2.

3.8 Conclusions

3.8.1 From the consultation carried out to date there are a number of key conclusions which can be drawn and these are set out below;

- Open spaces are highly valued for a variety of reasons including quiet recreation, children's play, sport and wildlife.

- A number of Swindon's open spaces, particularly the Country Parks, Town Gardens and Queens Park are highly valued and well used.
- Most of the concerns about open spaces centre around the quality of the spaces, underuse and lack of facilities rather than the overall quantity.

4 Auditing Local Provision

4.1 Introduction

4.1.1 The process of auditing involved examining all open spaces within the Borough in turn. This involved carrying out a major survey which commenced in 2001 using a standard survey form to record the location, type of use and character of each area.

4.2 Information Sources

4.2.1 Information on open spaces within the Borough was gained from a variety of sources which are listed below;

- Aerial Photographs
- Selected site visits
- Recreation Services records on Parks and play areas
- Swindon Borough Council's Playing Pitch Assessment 2001
- Parish Council consultations.

4.2.2 Once collected data for each site was recorded on an MS Access Database and mapped on a Geographical Information System (GIS).

4.3 Categorising Open Space

4.3.1 A system for categorising open space was derived based on a modified version of that set out in PPG17. The Revised Deposit Draft Local Plan defines recreational open space as primarily open land whether green or hard surfaced which has an important recreational function for the community. A detailed description of the individual categories is provided in Appendix 3 however these are summarised below;

- **General Recreation including parks and gardens and amenity green space**
- **Outdoor sports facilities including school playing fields**
- **Children and Teenagers Play areas**
- **Allotments**

- **Incidental Green Space (Public) including highway verges**
- **Incidental Green Space (private) including landscaped grounds to offices.**
- **Cemeteries and Churchyards**
- **Civic Spaces**

4.3.2 Not all of the open space types listed above are covered in detail in this report. The focus is given to recreational open space which has public access. This includes General recreation, outdoor sports, Children and Teenagers Play and allotments which are the categories intended to make up the Local Plan standards.

4.4 The wider value of open space

4.4.1 It is recognised that this audit and assessment focuses on the recreational use of open space. However recreation is only one of the functions of open spaces. They also have equally valuable roles in enhancing the landscape of the Borough, biodiversity and in some cases providing transport routes. Much of the recreational value of the open spaces is dependent on these other benefits which they offer.

4.4.2 Resources do not currently allow for this audit to provide for a detailed biodiversity assessment of Swindon's open spaces. The Urban Wildlife Survey for the Great Western Community Forest within Swindon and Wroughton" (November 1996) did begin to assess the biodiversity potential of some open spaces. In addition there are close links between this audit and assessment and the Swindon Biodiversity Action Plan which is currently being developed.

4.4.3 The Borough Council is however proposing to include biodiversity criteria in future audits of the quality of parks and open spaces. This information will be fed into future reviews of the Open Space Audit and Assessment.

5 Setting Provision Standards

5.1 Progress to date

- 5.1.1 The work on setting standards commenced prior to the completion of the open space audit. This was due to the timetable requirements of the 1st Deposit Draft Local Plan. For this reason the Plan set out interim standards pending completion of the audit. Standards were outlined for the quantity, quality and accessibility of open spaces.
- 5.1.2 Work on completing the Open Space audit provided an opportunity to review the standards set out in the First Deposit Draft Local Plan.

Accessibility

- 5.1.3 It is important to ensure that residents are able to access open spaces within a reasonable distance of their home. Clearly appropriate thresholds should relate to the size and range of facilities offered at any particular site. Accessibility thresholds were established on an interim basis using existing published guidance and subsequently reviewed on completion of the Open Space Audit. These are based on straight line distances and there is a recognition that barriers to access may exist. Account has been taken of these in drawing conclusions.
- 5.1.4 In order to set thresholds it was necessary to establish a hierarchy of open spaces in the first instance. This reflects the fact that open spaces serve variable catchment areas according to their size and the facilities provided. The hierarchy put forward is based on the existing approach towards the provision of open space which has been adopted in planning major new development areas within the Borough. A modified version of the table in Appendix 9 of the Revised Deposit Draft Local Plan is set out below in Table 1. Using this hierarchy accessibility thresholds were determined based on existing local standards and other guidance. The thresholds for each level of the hierarchy are set out below in Table 2 together with the source of the threshold

used and appropriate notes. This is a modified version of the table published in the Revised Deposit Draft Local Plan.

- 5.1.5 This information has been reviewed in light of consultation and completion of the audit. The accessibility thresholds did not attract significant objection during consultation and it was therefore concluded that they were on the whole realistic. However accessibility thresholds could be more accurately assessed by detailed site user surveys as is suggested in PPG17. These have not been possible to date due to availability of resources therefore the distances suggested form the basis of this assessment.
- 5.1.6 Accessibility was assessed by plotting the thresholds onto the MapInfo GIS system.



Lydiard Park – one of six country parks in Swindon **Source: Swindon Borough Council**

Table 1: Hierarchy of Open Space Provision

Country Parks

Strategic areas of open space serving a large part of the Borough and surrounding area. They contain a range and diversity of facilities, have controlled car parking and are managed by the Council's Ranger Service.

Major Open Spaces (or Townwide Park)

Area designated principally for passive recreation serving the recreational needs of the local population. May vary in size, formality and may include within them other types of open space including children's play areas. Major open spaces includes areas that may form part of Swindon's green corridor network.

Town Parks

Formal parks and gardens with planting, seating and often other features such as bandstands and ponds. By virtue of the number of features present they generally serve the whole town rather than the just the immediate area.

Local Open Space (or Neighbourhood Park)

Normally these are located within housing areas and serve the immediate population with emphasis on informal recreation for all ages and active play for all children. Newly created LOS's will have equipped play areas for children aged 2-6 years and 6 – 14 years (NEAP). LOS's may also have seating, on site information and access paths.

Intermediate Play Area or Locally Equipped Area for Play (LEAP)

An equipped children's play area with facilities for toddlers/young children to play set within a framework of background planting. Typically this provides for children aged 2 – 6 years

Other Incidental Open Space

These are generally small areas of open space with very limited facilities. They may be areas of mown grass or other land which receives little or no direct management. They are generally located within or close to housing areas and may be used incidentally for recreation.

Allotments

An area containing allotment plots which are mainly cultivated by the occupier for the purpose of producing fruit or vegetables for consumption by himself/herself and family.

Table 2 : Accessibility Thresholds for Open Space			
Type of Open Space	Accessibility Threshold (straight line distance)	Source	Notes
Children and Teenagers Play Area (or Intermediate Play Area)	250 metres (approx. 5 minutes walking time)	Swindon Borough Council's adopted Planning Standards for Toddler/Young Children's Play Areas within new residential areas 1988	This is similar to the NPFA six acre standard for Locally Equipped Areas for Play (LEAP) which is 240 metres.
Neighbourhood Park or Local Open Space	500 metres (approx 10 -15 minutes walking time)	Swindon Borough Council's adopted Planning Standards fro Toddler/Young Children's Play Areas within new residential areas 1988.	This is considered to be a reasonable walking distance and has been applied in the major development areas
Town Park	2000 metres	English Nature access to natural greenspace recommendations	These thresholds are based on recommended standards for access to natural greenspace. They are considered to be appropriate also for open spaces and reflect the more strategic role that larger open spaces perform.
Townwide Park or Major Open Space 2-20 Ha Greater than 20 Ha	2000 metres 5000 metres	English Nature access - to natural greenspace recommendations.	

Type of Open Space	Accessibility Threshold (straight line distance)	Source	Notes
Country Park	5000 metres	English Nature access to natural greenspace recommendations.	Country parks in the Borough have been provided on a strategic basis. They are large areas over 20 Ha and therefore the 5 Km threshold is considered to be appropriate.
Allotments	600 metres (approx 15 minutes walking time)		This is considered to reflect a reasonable walking time to allotments.
Outdoor Sports Facilities	<p>600 metres (approx 15 minutes walking time) to public playing pitches.</p> <p>Thresholds are likely to vary significantly according to the type of facility and sport – No further standards have been set to date</p>		<p>It is considered that 600 metres reflects a reasonable walking distance to a public pitch which is available for use both formally and informally.</p> <p>However due to the nature of adult sports fixtures and the distribution and variety of provision across the Borough no further standards have been set at this stage.</p>

NB The accessibility target is for > 75% of the ward to be within the accessibility threshold.

Quality

- 5.1.7 The quality of open spaces depends both on it's fitness for purpose i.e. it's design management and maintenance and also the needs and expectations of users. With regard to the latter this has to be determined through seeking the views of the community. Some progress has been made with this aspect as set out in Section 2.4 of this report although clearly there is scope for further targeted work in this area. The former is more readily determined through the application of quality standards, although such standards should also be informed by community views.
- 5.1.8 The quality assessment of open spaces has focused on identifying appropriate standards for different types of open space. These have been derived from published sources with some local adjustment where it was felt appropriate. The quality standards used are set out in Table 3 together with an indicator which could be potentially used to monitor quality over time. These standards were set out in the Interim Open Spaces Audit and Assessment and have been reviewed in light of consultation. Only those open spaces where a standard has been devised have been included in this table. The details of these standards is set out in Appendix 4.

Table 3: Open Space Quality Standards		
Open space type	Standard	Notes
Children's Equipped Play Area	<p>National Playing Field Association: Six Acre Standard (2001) using Locally Equipped Areas for Play (LEAPs) and Neighbourhood Equipped Areas for Play (NEAPs).</p> <p><i>Indicator: % of sites meeting LEAP criteria standard.</i></p>	The NPFA standard also refers to Local Areas for Play (LAPs). These are no longer created in Swindon due to a history of difficulties regarding impacts on residential amenity.
Parks and Amenity areas	<p>Local Standard derived from Green Flag Award scheme criteria and Annex B, Assessing Needs and Opportunities.</p> <p><i>Potential Indicator: Relevant % score for each hierarchy of site as follows in relation to targets as follows (as compared with previous audit);</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Country Parks 67%.</i> • <i>Town Parks 52%</i> • <i>Major Open Space 42%</i> • <i>Local Open Space 49%</i> • <i>Incidental Open Space 63%</i> 	This standard comprises a checklist which results in a percentage score for each site. Such scores will vary according to the hierarchy of the site. Minimum target scores should be set for each level of site.

Playing Fields	<p>Local standard derived from Sport England Playing Pitch Methodology.</p> <p><i>Indicator: % of sites meeting a score of over 75 points for playing pitches.</i></p>	<p>This standard is based on a checklist and weighting system, which results in a total points score for each site.</p>
Allotments	<p>Local Standard derived from a local quality assessment survey of allotments.</p> <p><i>Indicator: % of sites meeting a score of over 75 points.</i></p>	<p>This standard is based on a rating criterion which results in a points score for each site.</p>

Quantity.

5.1.9 Initially examination of other Local Authorities and experience in applying the previous Local Plan policies led to the conclusion that there was no apparent need to significantly alter the adopted Local Plan standard. There is evidence that the standard has in the past been successfully applied in major new developments although clearly older parts of the existing Borough fall below this. As an interim standard for public consultation the existing figure of 2.85 Ha/1000 population was rounded to 2.9 Ha per 1000 population in the First Deposit Draft Local Plan. It was also decided that the standard should be broken down into component open space types. This was to ensure that a range of appropriate open space provision was provided. Specific provision for children's play areas already exists within the Council Planning Toddlers/Young Children's Play Area Standards approved in 1988. It was felt that this could also be extended to other types of open space. The NPFA Six Acre Standard has provided a useful starting point for devising standards and this has been extended to take account of land for general recreation purposes. The standards set out in the Local Plan First Deposit Draft have been reviewed in light of completion of the open space Audit. These are incorporated into the Local Plan Revised Deposit Draft and give an overall figure of 3.2 Ha per 1000 population as set in Table 4.

Table 4: Quantity standards for open space.	
Type of Open Space	Requirement
Children's Equipped Play Area	0.3 Ha (0.75 acres/1000 population)
Youth and Adult Play Area	1.6 Hectares (4 Acres/1000 population) <i>of which 1.2 Hectares (3 acres/1000 population) is for pitch sports</i>
General Recreational Area	1 Ha (2.47 acres/1000 population) <i>of which 0.5 Ha should be suitable for children's casual play.</i>
Allotments	0.3 Ha (0.75 acres/1000 population)

- 5.1.10 As regards children's play area provision in the Borough is below the interim standard set (0.3 Ha/1000 population) and concerns have been expressed about the lack of provision for children's play in certain areas. On this basis it is not considered appropriate to alter the standard at this stage.
- 5.1.11 For outdoor sports the interim standard reflects the National Playing Field Association (NPFA) standard (1.21Ha/1000 population). In the case of playing pitches the standard also reflects advice in the Playing Pitch Assessment 2001. Overall provision is below the interim standard. The playing pitch assessment has revealed shortfalls in respect of some sports and surpluses in others. Overall it is considered appropriate to maintain the interim standard however any assessment of need does need to take account of the more detailed Playing Pitch Assessment.
- 5.1.12 In terms of general recreation the audit has shown that provision is significantly above the Local Plan standard across the Borough as a whole. Consultation has suggested that the main concerns surround the quality not quantity of this type of space. Given this information there may appear to be a case of increasing the standard to more closely reflect current levels of provision. On balance however it is considered that the current interim standard should remain. This is considered to be a reasonable level of requirement for new developments particular as the audit suggests that improving the quality of spaces may be more of a priority than improving the quantity. Again this simple standard should be applied in conjunction with any detailed assessments of need which may be carried out and any priorities put forward in the Parks and Open Spaces Strategy.
- 5.1.13 Finally the Council has reviewed the position regarding allotments. Overall provision in the Borough is about 0.2 Ha per 1000 population and is distributed unevenly across the Borough. In particular concerns have been expressed about the lack of facilities

in the newer development areas. For this reason it has been decided to include an allowance for allotments of 0.3 Ha per 1000 population. Existing provision will be assessed against this standard and also against any detailed assessments of need. The Borough Council has recently commenced a review of allotment provision.

- 5.1.14 There are alternatives ways of determining quantity standards for example no. of different facilities per 1000 population, however these have not been developed to date, with the exception of playing pitches. The Playing Pitch Assessment carried out for the Borough Council used Sport England Methodology to examine playing pitch shortfalls and surpluses based on using population data, team generation rates and information on pitch usage.

6 Audit and Assessment Results

- 6.1.1 The results of the assessment cover all wards of the Borough and are set out Annex 1 which provides detailed profiles on open space provision for each ward. This provides an analysis of the accessibility, quality and quantity of open spaces across the Borough as measured against the relevant standards. A summary of how open space provision compares against the accessibility, quality and quantity standards in each ward is set out below in Table 5.
- 6.1.2 Set out below is an overview of Borough wide provision based on the hierarchy set out in Table 1 (where data is available).

Table 5: Open Space Summary Table

Wards	General Recreation					
	Quantity Local Plan Standard 2001	Major Open Spaces		Town Parks	Local Open Spaces	
		Accessibility	Quality*	Quality	Accessibility	Quality
Abbey Meads	Above	Excellent	49% Good	No sites	Good	66% Good
Blunsdon	Above	Excellent	57% Good	No sites	Poor	38% Poor
Central	Above	Excellent	No sites	47% Poor	Good	52% Good
Covingham & Nythe	Above	Excellent	No sites	No sites	Excellent	41% Poor
Dorcan	Above	Excellent	38% Poor	No sites	Excellent	51% Good
Eastcott	Below	Excellent	No sites	57% Good	Excellent	33% Poor
Freshbrook & Grange Park	Above	Excellent	51% Good	No sites	Excellent	48% Poor
Gorsehill and Pinehurst	Below	Excellent	35% Poor	No sites	Excellent	51% Good
Haydon Wick	Below	Excellent	No sites	No sites	Excellent	53% Good
Highworth	Above	Excellent	46% Good	No sites	Excellent	43% Poor
Moredon	Below	Excellent	No sites	No sites	Excellent	44% Poor

Note - Country Parks are not included directly in this table because they are considered to provide a strategic resource to the Borough as a whole. However Country Parks do provide accessible open space to local communities and therefore the accessibility assessments for Major and Local Open Spaces do take account of these areas.

Note – Grey shading indicates where overall quality, accessibility or quantity of open space falls below the standards set. In these cases it is likely that developers will be asked to contribute towards the provision or upgrading of open space.

*Average % scores from open space survey, 2002

**Playing Pitch Assessment 2000

For individual site details see Annex 1 - Ward Profiles

Table 5 Open Space Summary Table (Continued)

Wards	Children's Play Areas			Allotments			Outdoor Sports		
	Accessibility	Quality	Quantity	Accessibility	Quality***	Quantity	Accessibility	Quality***	Quantity
			Local Plan Standard 2001			Local Plan Standard 2001			Local Plan Standard 2000**
Abbey Meads	Poor	Good	Below	n/a	n/a	n/a	Poor	Not assessed	Below
Blunsdon	Poor	Poor	Below	n/a	n/a	n/a	Poor	Poor	Above
Central	Excellent	Excellent	Below	Good	Excellent	Above	Good	Good	Below
Covingham & Nythe	Good	Poor	Below	n/a	n/a	n/a	Poor	n/a	n/a
Dorcan	Good	Poor	Below	n/a	n/a	n/a	Poor	Not assessed	Below
Eastcott	Good	Excellent	Below	n/a	n/a	n/a	Poor	Not assessed	Above
Freshbrook & Grange Park	Good	Poor	Below	n/a	n/a	n/a	Poor	Good	Below
Gorsehill and Pinehurst	Poor	Poor	Below	Good	Poor	Above	Good	Good	Above
Haydon Wick	Good	Poor	Below	Good	Not assessed to date	Below	Poor	n/a	n/a
Highworth	Poor	Poor	Below	Poor	Not assessed to date	Above	Poor	Not assessed	Below
Moredon	Good	Poor	Below	Good	Poor	Below	Excellent	Poor	Above

*Average % scores from open space survey, 2002

**Playing Pitch Assessment 2000

***SBC Owned Sites and selected Parish Council Owned Sites Assessed

Table 5: Open Space Summary Table (Continued)

Wards	General Recreation					
	Quantity Local Plan Standard 2001	Major Open Spaces		Town Parks	Local Open Spaces	
		Accessibility	Quality	Quality	Accessibility	Quality
Old Town and Lawns	Above	Excellent	47% Good	59% Good	Excellent	35% Poor
Parks	Above	Excellent	34% Poor	No sites	Excellent	33% Poor
Penhill	Above	Excellent	36% Poor	25% Poor	Excellent	32% Poor
Ridgeway	Above	Excellent	57% Good	No sites	Poor	47% Poor
Shaw & Nine Elms	Above	Excellent	49% Good	No sites	Excellent	54% Good
St.Margaret	Above	Excellent	No sites	No sites	Good	50% Good
St.Philip	Above	Excellent	No sites	No sites	Excellent	82% Excellent
Toothill & Westlea	Above	Excellent	48% Good	No sites	Excellent	50% Good
Walcot	Below	Excellent	No sites	No sites	Excellent	42% Poor
Western	Above	Excellent	29% Poor	No sites	Excellent	35% Poor
Wroughton and Chiseldon	Above	Excellent	48% Good	No sites	Poor	42% Poor

Note - Country Parks are not included directly in this table because they are considered to provide a strategic resource to the Borough as a whole. However Country Parks do provide accessible open space to local communities and therefore the accessibility assessments for Major and Local Open Spaces do take account of these areas.

Note – Grey shading indicates where overall quality, accessibility or quantity of open space falls below the standards set. In these cases it is likely that developers will be asked to contribute towards the provision or upgrading of open space.

*Average % scores from open space survey, 2002

**Playing Pitch Assessment 2000

For individual site details see Annex 1 - Ward Profiles

Table 5: Open Space Summary Table (Continued)

Wards	Children's Play Areas			Allotments			Outdoor Sports		
	Accessibility	Quality	Quantity	Accessibility	Quality***	Quantity	Accessibility	Quality***	Quantity
			Local Plan Standard 2001			Local Plan Standard 2001			Local Plan Standard 2000**
Old Town and Laws	Poor	Good	Below	Good	Excellent	Above	Poor	Good	Below
Parks	Poor	Poor	Below	Excellent	Poor	Below	Poor	n/a	n/a
Perhill	Excellent	Poor	Below	Good	Poor	Below	Excellent	Good	Above
Ridgeway	Poor	Poor	Below	n/a	n/a	n/a	Poor	Not assessed	Above
Shaw & Nine Elms	Good	Poor	Below	n/a	n/a	n/a	Poor	n/a	n/a
St. Margaret	Good	Poor	Below	Poor	Not assessed to date	Below	Good	Not assessed	Below
St. Philip	Poor	Good	Below	Good	Poor	Above	Good	Not assessed	Below
Toothill & Westlea	Good	Poor	Below	Poor	Excellent	Below	Poor	Not assessed	Below
Waldot	Good	Poor	Below	Excellent	Poor	Below	Excellent	Good	Below
Western	Good	Poor	Below	Good	Poor	Above	Excellent	Good	Standard
Wroughton and Chiseldon	Poor	Poor	Below	Poor	Not assessed to date	Above	Poor	Not assessed	Above

*Average % scores from open space survey, 2002

**Playing Pitch Assessment 2000

***SBC Owned Sites and selected Parish Council Owned Sites Assessed

Description of categories in Table 5

General Recreation		Allotments	
Accessibility	Description	Accessibility	Description
Excellent	More than 75% of the ward is within 500 metres of general recreation	Excellent	> 75% of the ward is within 600 metres of allotments
Good	More than 50% of the ward is within 500 metres of general recreation	Good	> 50% of the ward is within 600 metres of allotments
Poor	Less than 50% of the ward is within 500 metres of general recreation	Poor	< 50% of the ward is within 600 metres of allotments
Quality*	Description	Quality	Description
Excellent	> 20% above target	Excellent	More than 75% of allotments meet the local standard
Good	Up to 20% above target	Good	More than 50% of allotments meet the local standard
Poor	Below target	Poor	Less than 50% of allotments meet the local standard
Quantity	Description	Quantity	Description
Above	Provision is above the Local Plan Standard	Above	Provision is above the Local Plan Standard
Standard	Provision is at Local Plan Standard	Standard	Provision is at the Local Plan Standard
Below	Provision is below the Local Plan Standard	Below	Provision is below the Local Plan Standard
Outdoor Sports		Children's Play Areas	
Accessibility	Description	Accessibility	Description
Excellent	More than 75% of the ward is within 600 metres of a playing pitch	Excellent	> 75% of the ward is within 250 metres of a play area
Good	More than 50% of the ward is within 600 metres of a playing pitch	Good	> 50% of the ward is within 250 metres of a play area
Poor	Less than 50% of the ward is within 600 metres of a playing pitch	Poor	< 50% of the ward is within 250 metres of a play area
Quality	Description	Quality	Description
Excellent	Average score 90% or above	Excellent	> 75% of children's play areas meet LEAP standards
Good	Average score 75 - 90%	Good	> 50% of children's play areas meet LEAP standards
Poor	Average score < 75%	Poor	< 50% of children's play areas meet LEAP standards
Quantity	Description	Quantity	Description
Above	Provision is above the Local Plan Standard	Above	Provision is above the Local Plan Standard
Standard	Provision is at Local Plan Standard	Standard	Provision is at the Local Plan Standard
Below	Provision is below the Local Plan Standard	Below	Provision is below the Local Plan Standard

* Targets: Major Open Spaces - 42%, Town Parks - 52%, Local Open Space - 49%

Table 6: Summary of Quality of Country Parks

	Quality Audit Score
Barbury Castle	
Overall Score	59%
Coate Water	
Overall score	77%
Children's Play Area	Not LEAP standard
Lydiard Park	
Overall score	80%
Childrens Play Area	LEAP standard
Mouldon Hill	
Overall Score	31%
Stanton Park	
Overall Score	59%

6.2 Overall Provision

6.3 Country Parks and Major Open Spaces over 20 Ha

6.3.1 The Borough has five existing Country Parks some well established like Coate Water and Lydiard Park whilst others such as Stanton Park and Moulden Hill are at an early stage of development. In addition there are a further six major open spaces which are in excess of 20 Hectares. These are;

- Clouts Wood, Wroughton
- The Lawns
- Richard Jefferies Parkway
- Seven Fields
- Kingsdown Woodland
- Shaw Forest Park (not yet complete)

6.3.2 Again these are at varying stages of development. Shaw Forest Park is still in the process of development and this will take a number of years to complete. In addition these sites provide a variety of recreational experiences, from the more formal spaces at the Lawns and Richard Jefferies Parkway to areas of managed woodland at Clouts Wood. All of the sites listed have considerable biodiversity value in addition to their value as recreation sites and in some cases this is recognised by formal designation, for example part of Coate Water is a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI).

6.4 Townwide Park or Major Open Space

6.4.1 There are around 11 other major open spaces which are between 2 – 20Ha. Many of these were planned into the major expansion areas of the town such as Shaw Ridge within West Swindon. Others are more recently developed areas such as Woodland Trust land at Wanborough. These areas vary in nature from mown grassland, established or newly planted woodland.

6.5 Town Parks

- 6.5.1 These are formal parks and include most notably the Victorian Town Gardens in Old Town and Queens Park near the town centre, created in the 1950s. Faringdon Road Park and Penhill Park are also town parks although they lack the range of facilities available at Town Gardens and Queens Park.



Faringdon Road Park Source: ajt consultants

6.6 Local Open Spaces or Neighbourhood Parks

- 6.6.1 There are a large number of local open spaces or neighbourhood parks across the Borough, particularly in the west and north of the town where they have been specifically planned into town expansion proposals. They vary considerably in size however they usually comprise an area of mown grass sometimes with additional vegetation and a children's play area.

6.7 Children's and Teenagers Play Areas

- 6.7.1 There are over 100 play areas distributed across the Borough. Many of these fall within Local Open Spaces, Major Open Spaces or Country Parks, although a number are located within housing estates.

6.8 Other Recreational Space

- 6.8.1 This covers other areas of open space which have perhaps fallen out of their original use e.g. disused allotments that are not specifically managed for recreational purposes. These tend to be located in those parts of the town developed in the post war period for example in Penhill, Parks and Walcot.

6.9 Outdoor Sports Facilities

- 6.9.1 There is a range of outdoor sports facilities across the Borough including sports pitches, bowling greens, and tennis courts. Football is the dominant sport and there over 100 adult football pitches across the Borough. There are 26 cricket pitches and 13 adult rugby pitches. In terms of other sports the most significant facility is the Delta Tennis Centre in West Swindon which serves the Borough as a whole. There are a number of other tennis courts including grass courts at St Marks Recreation Ground. There are 11 bowling greens across the Borough, mainly in the older parts of the town.

6.10 Allotments

- 6.10.1 Allotment sites are mainly found in the older parts of Swindon. Outside the town there are allotments located at Highworth, Wroughton, Chiseldon and Wanborough.

6.11 Accessibility

6.12 Country Parks and Major Open Spaces over 20Ha

- 6.12.1 These areas are relatively well distributed across the Borough. In terms of Country Parks, Lydiard Park, Coate Water, Moulden Hill

and Stanton Park are evenly distributed around the edge of the urban area whilst Barbury Castle is located at the southern end of the Borough. As a result of this distribution virtually the whole Borough falls within the 5km threshold of these large open spaces. Given that many of these are located within or on the edge of the urban area it is considered that residents and visitors alike have a good level of accessibility to these sites. Most of the areas can be accessed through the Borough's cycle network although those sites east of the A419 are perhaps less accessible due to the barrier of the Trunk Road.

6.13 Major Open Spaces or Townwide Parks

6.13.1 Major open space or townwide parks of between 2 and 20 Hectare are generally well located across the Borough although provision is poorer in the central and eastern parts of the urban area. It is the case however that all of the urban area and most of the rest of the Borough is within the 2km threshold of these sites or of larger open spaces described above. There are however significant barriers to access including the railway lines, the A419 and the M4 which will restrict residents ability to access some areas easily. It is considered that this is particularly significant in the central area due to the railway lines which restrict north/south movement.



Cycle route, Penhill – Swindon’s extensive cycle network aids accessibility to open space Source: ajt consultants

6.14 Local Open Spaces or Neighbourhood Parks

6.14.1 Local Open Spaces are well distributed across the urban area although provision is poorest in the eastern, central and southern parts of the town. The majority of the town is within the 500 metre threshold distance of these areas although parts of the central area and Upper Stratton are not. It should also be noted that areas used as public playing fields are not included under Local Open Spaces although in reality they are used for general recreation when not in sporting use. This helps to improve residents access to open space locally. It is acknowledged that there are significant barriers to access which affect parts of the town and locally these may comprise roads, railway lines or large industrial areas through which there may be very limited access. It is considered that this problem is particularly acute on the eastern side of town where

large industrial areas adjacent to residential areas affectively limit resident's ability to access open spaces in the immediate locality.



A neighbourhood park – Guildford Avenue Source: Swindon Borough Council

6.15 Outdoor Sports

- 6.15.1 Outdoor sports facilities have been assessed to see whether residents have access within 600 metres. This is considered to be an appropriate walking distance. Against this standard Central, Moredon, Penhill and Western wards have the best accessibility. Much of the Borough has poor accessibility against this standard.
- 6.15.2 Notwithstanding the above assessment it is acknowledged that the nature of adult sports fixtures means that teams may need to travel greater distances to pitches. The Council therefore considers that it is equally important to achieve a distribution of pitches to enable reasonable access by all means of transport including the private car. In general terms playing pitch provision is best in the western and northern parts of the town and poorer in the south and east. Provision in the south will be significantly improved by proposals for pitches in the Southern Development Area.

6.16 Allotments

6.16.1 In the older parts of Swindon namely Gorsehill, Rodbourne, Stratton, Parks, Walcot and Penhill residents generally have access to allotments within 600 metres of their homes. There is however no provision in the northern development and very limited provision in west Swindon. Residents of Old Town, Eastcott, Dorcan and Covingham also have poor access to allotments.

6.17 Quality Audits

6.18 Children's and Teenagers Play Areas

6.18.1 All Borough Council managed play areas are subject to annual inspection. In addition Parish Council play areas have also been assessed. In terms of the standards set out in Table 3 above the inspection results in 2003 were as follows;

- 8% (6 No.) passed the Neighbourhood Equipped Play Area Standard (NEAP)
- 43% (34 No.) passed the Locally Equipped Play Area Standard (LEAP)
- 49% (39 No.) were unclassified

6.18.2 Some of the LEAP sites technically fail the standard because kickabout areas are not fenced but are included in the above figures.

6.18.3 In terms of the pattern of distribution it is clear that proportionally more sites meet the NEAP and LEAP in the newly developed areas of the town i.e. the Northern and Western areas of the town. There is also a concentration of LEAP sites within the Old Town and Central areas. Many other parts have primarily unclassified play areas.



A LEAP standard play area Source: Swindon Borough Council

6.18.4 Other types of play areas such as Outdoor Basketball goals have not to date been subject to a quality audit.

6.19 Parks and Amenity Areas

6.19.1 A quality audit of the Borough has been undertaken to date using the checklists set out in Appendix 4. The overall results of this audit are shown in Table 6 below.



Example of Local open space/Neighbourhood Park, Ellendune Hall , Wroughton

Source: Swindon Borough Council

Table 7: Summary of Quality Audit Scores for Parks and Amenity Areas

Park Type	No. of sites audited	Average % score	Range (%)	Notes
Other Incidental Open Space	38	47	19 - 68	Only a sample of other recreational spaces has been audited. Few sites scored over 62%.
Neighbourhood Parks/ Local Open Spaces	95	46	21 - 90	Neighbourhood Parks appear to vary greatly in quality. Poorer quality sites lack children's play areas, on site information/signage and public art. Around 40 of the sites scored over 49%.
Town Parks	4	47	20 - 59	Only 4 town parks have been identified at Queens Park, Town Gardens and Faringdon Road and Penhill. The former two achieved the highest quality scores.
Townwide parks /major open spaces	38	44	14 - 61	In terms of quality 13 sites scored over 42%. Poorer quality sites lacked good access, information and signage and related recreational facilities. Those sites at Old Town, Shaw and Nine Elms and Wanborough scored most highly.
Country Park	5	61	31 - 80	Only Coate Water and Lydiard Park scored above 67%. These scored highest due to the range of related facilities available.

6.20 Playing Pitches

- 6.20.1 A quality audit of Council owned playing pitches has been carried out. The audit has been based on the Sport England's revised Playing Pitch Methodology as set out in Appendix 4. The results are summarised in Table 8.
- 6.20.2 Overall, the playing pitches assessed in Central, Gorsehill and Pinehurst, Old Town and Lawns, Penhill, Toothill and Westlea, and Walcot wards all score above the local standard. 50% of playing pitches in Moredon meet the local standard while 27% of playing pitches in Western meet the local standard.

Table 8 : Summary of Swindon Borough Council Playing Pitch Quality Audit

	Percentage Scores					
Wards	Bowling Greens	Croquet	Cricket Pitches	Football Pitches*	Rugby Pitches	Average Score
Central	88%	-	Not assessed	73%		81%
Freshbrook & Grange Park	-	-	91%	80%		86%
Gorsehill and Pinehurst	84%	-	-	70%		77%
Moredon	-	-	-	69%		69%
Old Town & Lawns	90%	-	-	69%	75%	78%
Penhill	100%	-	-	77%		89%
Walcot	-	-	-	87%		87%
Western	-	92%	81%	79%		84%

Table 9 : Summary of Parish Council Playing Pitch Quality Audit

	Percentage Scores					
Parish Council	Bowling Greens	Croquet	Cricket Pitches	Football Pitches	Rugby Pitches	Average Score
Blunsdon Parish Council	-	-	-	69%	-	69%
Highworth Parish Council	-	-	-	Not assessed	-	-
South Marston Parish Council	-	-	-	58%	-	58%
Stratton St Margaret Parish Council	-	-	-	Not assessed	-	-
Wanborough Parish Council	-	-	-	Not assessed	-	-
Wroughton Parish Council	-	-	-	Not assessed	-	-

***Please Note:** The number of games cancelled per season on a pitch are included as part of the quality audit of playing pitches. In circumstances where a game is cancelled on a Council owned pitch, the game is normally reassigned to another pitch elsewhere in the Borough. As part of the audit this is not recorded as a cancellation and therefore the quality scores may not truly reflect the number of Council games played on each pitch. This issue will be addressed as part of the future review of the audit.

6.21 Allotments

- 6.21.1 A quality audit of Council owned allotments has been undertaken. A standard checklist and points scoring system was used to assess each site (see Appendix 4). The overall results of this audit are shown in Table 10 below.
- 6.21.2 All of the allotments in Central, Old Town and Lawns, and Toothill and Westlea wards score above the local standard. 50% of the allotments in Moredon meet the local standard, 33% of allotments in Walcot meet the local standard, 25% in Parks, 16% in western and 0% in Gorsehill and Pinehurst and Penhill wards.

Table 10: Summary of Quality Audit Scores for Borough Council Owned Allotments

Ward	No. Of sites Assessed	Average % Score	Range (%)	Notes
Abbey Meads	0	-	-	No sites
Blunsdon	0	Not assessed	Not assessed	
Central	3	90	85-100	The allotments in this ward are several of the highest quality sites in the Borough.
Covingham & Nythe	0	-	-	No sites
Dorcan	0	-	-	No sites
Eastcott	0	-	-	No sites
Freshbrook & Grange Park	0	-	-	No sites
Gorsehill and Pinehurst	2	48	25-71	Kembrey Grass Field allotment scores a very low rating.
Haydon Wick	0	Not assessed	Not assessed	
Highworth	0	Not assessed	Not assessed	
Moredon	1	62	62	Ventnor Close is the only allotment in this ward.

Ward	No. of sites Assessed	Average % Score	Range (%)	Notes
Old Town & Lawns	4	93	90-100	The sites in this ward are the best performing in terms of quality in the whole Borough.
Parks	4	58	36-76	The sites in this ward are of average to poor in quality.
Penhill	2	62	51-73	The sites in this ward of are average quality.
Ridgeway	0	Not assessed	Not assessed	
Shaw & Nine Elms	0	-	-	No sites
St. Margaret	0	Not assessed	Not assessed	
St. Philip	1	73	73	There is one Council owned allotment that has been assessed.
Toothill & Westlea	1	77	77	This allotment has been assessed as good in quality.
Walcot	3	74	53-95	This ward contains a range of very good and poor allotments.
Western	6	71	58-88	The highest number of allotments in any ward.
Wroughton & Chiseldon	0	Not assessed	Not assessed	

6.22 Conclusions of Quality Audits

- 6.22.1 The quality audit of open space is partially completed and comprehensive information is not available for all of the open space types yet. Taking account of the shortfalls in information the audit to date has revealed a number of significant conclusions.
- 6.22.2 With regard to play areas more than 50% of the Borough Council's sites meet the NEAP or LEAP standard. There is a concentration of these sites in the newer development areas and also in the central and old town areas. This suggests that improvements to play areas are most likely to be required in the older residential areas of Swindon particularly on the eastern and southern side of Swindon.
- 6.22.3 With regard to parks and amenity areas there is considerable variation in the quality of these areas across the Borough. The highest quality sites have good access for all users, paths, dog bins, and on site information together with a range of related facilities such as play areas and other recreational facilities. In relation to the suggested targets in Table 3, the % of sites meeting the target are as follows;
- 42% of neighbourhood parks
 - 63% of major open spaces
 - 50% of town parks (2 out of 4) – Queens Park and Town Gardens
 - 40% of country parks (2 out of 5)
- 6.22.4 In geographical terms the following wards had the better quality open spaces; Central, Old Town and Lawns, St Margaret, Freshbrook and Grange Park, Haydon Wick, Ridgeway, Shaw and Nine Elms and Toothill and Westlea.
- 6.22.5 As regards allotments, those that have achieved the highest quality rating can be found in the Old Town and Central areas. The

poorest performing allotments in terms of quality can be found in the Penhill, Parks and Walcot areas.

- 6.22.6 Football pitches, cricket wickets and bowling greens have been assessed as part of the quality audit of playing pitches. As regards other sporting facilities no quality audit has as yet been undertaken.
- 6.22.7 The audit showed that the majority of the pitches achieved a score of over 70%. Bowling greens tend to achieve the highest scores with all sites scoring in excess of 80%. In terms of cricket and pitches both scored over 80% whilst Lydiard and Moredon football pitches performed best scoring 87% and 73% respectively. The lowest scoring pitch was Southbrook at 67%.

6.23 Quantity

- 6.23.1 An assessment of open space provision per 1000 population has been undertaken for the Borough as a whole, each ward and also the Central area. The results of this assessment are shown by open space type in Table 11. Annex 1 also includes an assessment of the likely impact of population growth by 2011 on the quantity of open space provision in each ward. This is a relatively crude method of assessing future needs as it does not take account of how participation rates and the age profile may change by 2011. However it does provide a useful indicator of areas where deficiencies may become apparent in the future.
- 6.23.2 It should be noted that these figures are subject to continual review in light of new information and development proposals and that the figures may therefore alter with time.

6.24 Conclusions on Quantity Audit

- 6.24.1 The overall quantitative provision is 5.9 Ha per 1000 population which is significantly above the draft Local Plan standard. In addition there are the five Country Parks which do not contribute to

the Local Plan standard. There are however a number of other comments which can be made in respect of the figures.

- 6.24.2 There is considerable variation across the Borough and there are seven wards which do not meet the Local plan standard; namely Eastcott, Covingham and Nythe, Haydon Wick, Moredon, Parks, St. Margaret and Walcot⁴. It is worth noting that although overall provision within some of these wards is very low, some such as Eastcott benefit from good accessibility to open spaces in other adjacent wards. Therefore the ability of residents to access open space may be less problematic than would appear at first glance. Provision within the New Swindon Company Zone is in excess of the Local Plan standard however much of this is on the periphery of the area and is provided for surrounding residential areas. The highest levels of provision is in Old Town and Lawn at 13 Ha/1000 population. Blunsdon, Ridgeway and Western at 11 Ha/1000 population have the next highest levels. In general terms the new development areas have larger amounts of space than the older areas.
- 6.24.3 Provision of general recreation space appears to be good across the Borough at 4.68 Ha per 1000 compared with the standard of 1 Ha per 1000 population. It should be noted many of the recreation grounds do not exclude the public on days when sport is not being played and therefore also have a role for general recreation by the community. Provision of Children's Play area is however rather poorer at 0.05 Ha/1000 population compared with a standard of 0.3 Ha per 1000 population. Notwithstanding this apparent paucity it should be noted the many of the general recreation areas have a very important role for casual children's play. Most of them can be used for kickabout games and for cycling using the extensive cycle network. The multifunctional role of open spaces in the Borough is an important factor, although it is possible that this may lead to

⁴ Based on Figures shown in Table 7 rounded to one decimal place.

increased user interaction problems for example those associated with dogs and dog faeces.

- 6.24.4 As regards outdoor sports the overall provision is below standard at 0.78 compared with a draft Local Plan standard of 1.6 Ha. The Playing Pitch Assessment indicated that there was overall shortfall in provision of 0.6 Ha compared with the Local Plan standard of 1.21Ha.
- 6.24.5 Looking in more detail at open space types only one ward Eastcott fails to meet the draft Local Plan standard of 1 Ha per 1000 population for general recreation space. This is somewhat offset by proximity to open spaces in other wards as set out above. Old Town and Lawn has the highest level of provision at 11 Ha and Ridgeway and Shaw and Nine Elms have 9 Ha/ 1000 population.
- 6.24.6 Blunsdon, Western, Shaw and Nine Elms and Old Town and Lawn have the highest levels of provision of children's play areas all being over 0.1Ha/ 1000 population. The poorest level of provision is in Eastcott, Highworth, Parks, Ridegway and St Philip. The lack of provision in Eastcott is to some degree offset by play areas nearby in adjacent wards.
- 6.24.7 As regards outdoor sports facilities, provision is highest in Western at 2.7 Ha/1000. Several wards currently have no provision at all including Covingham and Nythe, Parks and Shaw and Nine Elms.
- 6.24.8 The detailed assessment of pitches showed that the largest shortfalls were in Old Town and Lawn (-10), Freshbrook and Grange Park (-9) with the highest surpluses in Penhill (8) and Ridgeway (13). By 2011 the largest shortfalls would appear to occur in the wards experiencing the greatest development growth namely Abbey Meads and Wroughton. These figures do not however take account of playing pitch provision which may be provided as part of these developments.
- 6.24.9 The overall conclusions of the Playing Pitch Assessment indicate that there is surplus in the provision of adult football pitches and

cricket pitches in the Borough and a shortfall in junior football pitches, rugby pitches and hockey pitches.

- 6.24.10 It should however be noted that in considering recreational requirements playing pitch provision should be based strategically across the Borough and therefore ward based assessments need to be considered in this context.
- 6.24.11 With regard to junior football pitches there is a shortfall identified of 16.9 pitches. Subsequent research has identified considerable informal usage of school pitches and this would have not appeared in the playing pitch assessment as it is not secured through a formal agreement. This suggests that securing formal community use of school sites may significantly reduce this apparent shortfall in junior pitches. There is a surplus of 28.9 adult football pitches however current usage of adult football pitches by the Borough Council is high. The Playing Pitch Assessment recommends retaining existing pitch capacity given the rapid expansion in the town's population. For these reasons the Council would not therefore wish to see a reduction in the overall level of available adult football pitches.
- 6.24.12 There is a surplus of 8 cricket pitches, although again the Council would not wish to a reduction in the overall level of available cricket pitches. The shortfall in adult rugby pitches may be offset to a degree by informal use of school pitches, which again have no secured community use. There is a shortfall of 10.5 junior rugby pitches which does not appear to be offset by informal community use elsewhere. In the case of hockey there is an identified shortfall of 8.5 pitches which may be partially offset by informal use of 2 synthetic turf pitches.
- 6.24.13 In relation to allotments results indicate that overall provision is about 0.2 Ha per 1000 population. Some wards exceed the Local Plan standard including Central, Western and Wroughton whilst seven wards have no allotments at all. The overall vacancy rate for Swindon Borough Council including sites which are not available is

25% and there is a waiting list at 3 sites. Most of the Parish sites also have waiting lists

Table 11 : Quantity of Open Space Provision

Ward			General Recreation			Children and Teenagers Play Areas			Outdoor Sports Facilities (community access)			Allotments			Total		
Name	Area (ha)	Population	Area (ha)	% of Ward Area	Ha Per 1,000 Pop.	Area (ha)	% of Ward Area	Ha Per 1,000 Pop.	Area (ha)	% of Ward Area	Ha Per 1,000 Pop.	Area (ha)	% of Ward	Ha Per 1,000 Pop	Area (ha)	% of Ward Area	Ha Per 1,000 Pop.
Abbey Meads	556.8	4,288	27.11	4.9	6.32	0.29	0.1	0.07	0.16	0.0	0.04		0.0	0	27.56	4.95	6.43
Blunsdon	4554.0	3,300	24.67	0.5	7.48	0.41	0.0	0.12	10.95	0.2	3.32	1.61	0.0	0	37.64	0.83	11.41
Central	239.3	8,780	18.01	7.5	2.05	0.73	0.3	0.08	13.80	5.8	1.57	5.90	2.5	0.67	38.44	16.06	4.38
Covingham and Nythe	190.9	8,569	21.78	11.4	2.54	0.37	0.2	0.04	0.00	0.0	0.00		0.0	0	22.15	11.60	2.58
Dorcan	293.9	8,974	60.39	20.5	6.73	0.46	0.2	0.05	2.16	0.7	0.24		0.0	0	63.01	21.44	7.02
Eastcott	155.4	9,231	7.07	4.5	0.77	0.07	0.0	0.01	0.61	0.4	0.07		0.0	0	7.75	4.99	0.84
Freshbrook and Grange Park	336.3	10,383	26.56	7.9	2.56	0.62	0.2	0.06	5.80	1.7	0.56		0.0	0	32.98	9.81	3.18
Gorsehill and Pinehurst	253.1	9,195	18.71	7.4	2.03	0.52	0.2	0.06	6.68	2.6	0.73	3.62	1.7	0.48	29.53	11.67	3.21
Haydon Wick	207.7	10,211	25.16	12.1	2.46	0.65	0.3	0.06	0.15	0.1	0.01	0.81	0.4	0.08	26.77	12.89	2.62
Highworth	3109.0	8,347	46.56	1.5	5.58	0.07	0.0	0.01	14.89	0.5	1.78	3.13	0.1	0.37	64.65	2.08	7.74
Moredon	213.3	9,563	20.85	9.8	2.18	0.17	0.1	0.02	8.40	3.9	0.88	0.88	0.4	0.09	30.30	14.20	3.17

Table 11: Quantity of Open Space Provision

Ward			General Recreation			Children and Teenagers Play Areas			Outdoor Sports Facilities (community)			Allotments			Total		
Name	Area (ha)	Population	Area (ha)	% of Ward Area	Ha Per 1,000 Pop.	Area (ha)	% of Ward Area	Ha Per 1,000 Pop.	Area (ha)	% of Ward Area	Ha Per 1,000 Pop.	Area (ha)	% of Ward	Ha Per 1,000 Pop.	Area (ha)	% of Ward Area	Ha Per 1,000 Pop.
Old Town and Lawn	684.0	9,058	104.01	15.2	11.48	0.96	0.1	0.11	7.83	1.1	0.86	4.46	0.7	0.49	117.26	17.14	12.95
Parks	171.0	9,419	22.71	13.3	2.41	0.03	0.0	0.00	0.00	0.0	0.00	1.59	0.9	0.17	24.33	14.23	2.58
Penhill	143.2	6,068	32.40	22.6	5.34	0.10	0.1	0.02	11.12	7.8	1.83	0.24	0.6	0.04	43.86	30.63	7.23
Ridgeway	5184.0	2,958	25.91	0.5	8.76	0.06	0.0	0.02	5.16	0.1	1.74	0.99	0.0	0.33	32.12	0.62	10.86
Shaw and Nine Elms	336.5	9,608	91.52	27.2	9.53	0.93	0.3	0.10	0.00	0.0	0.00		0.0	0.00	92.45	27.47	9.62
St Margaret	553.3	9,367	12.26	2.2	1.31	0.44	0.1	0.05	8.22	1.5	0.88	1.01	0.2	0.11	21.93	3.96	2.34
St Philip	307.7	9,055	47.06	15.3	5.20	0.09	0.0	0.01	11.35	3.7	1.25	3.21	1.0	0.35	61.71	20.06	6.82
Toothill and Westlea	229.6	7,876	50.69	22.1	6.44	0.48	0.2	0.06	0.32	0.1	0.04	0.65	0.3	0.08	52.14	22.71	6.62
Walcot	153.8	6,888	13.19	8.6	1.91	0.15	0.1	0.02	5.80	3.8	0.84	0.76	0.5	0.11	19.90	12.94	2.89
Western	515.8	9,437	68.54	13.3	7.26	0.96	0.2	0.10	25.68	5.0	2.72	7.91	1.0	0.84	103.09	19.99	10.92
Wroughton and Chiseldon	4556.0	9,476	72.97	1.6	7.70	0.44	0.0	0.05	10.31	0.2	1.09	4.65	0.1	0.49	88.37	1.94	9.33
Total	22944.6	180051	842.8		4.68	9.2		0.05	141.3		0.78	41.40		0.23	1034.7		5.75

Table 12: Quantity of Open Space Provision in New Swindon Company/Central Area

New Swindon Company Zone : OPEN SPACES - Total Areas (Hectares) and Percentage of Total Central Area

Area (ha)	Population	Allotments			General Recreation			Children and Teenagers Play Areas			Outdoor Sports Facilities (Community Access)		
		Area ha	% of Central Area	Ha Per 1,000 Pop	Area ha	% of Central Area	Ha Per 1,000 Pop	Area ha	% of Central Area	Ha Per 1,000 Pop	Area ha	% of Central Area	Ha Per 1,000 Pop
205.9	2,544	0.0	0.0	0.00	10.29	3.12	4.05	1.27	0.62	0.50	2.42	1.2	0.95

Area (ha)	Population	Total		
		Area ha	% of Central Area	Ha Per 1,000 Pop
205.9	2,544	13.98	6.79	5.50

7 Overall Conclusions

- 7.1.1 A number of conclusions can be made from the work and these are set out below.
- 7.1.2 Overall it is considered that existing Local plan policies have been relatively successful at achieving a good infrastructure of open space in major new development areas. This has often been at higher levels than the Local Plan standard. The standard is however in the middle of the range adopted by other Local Authorities. Contributions towards maintenance have however been less successful in achieving satisfactory maintenance of new open spaces.
- 7.1.3 Community consultation has confirmed the importance of open spaces to the local community, although there are concerns about the quality and maintenance of facilities provided. Further consultation work is required on this issue in particular to look at the value of different types of open space within the hierarchy and perhaps on specific areas of the Borough.
- 7.1.4 Accessibility to open spaces against the standards used is relatively good although there are some significant barriers to access such as the railway, major roads and industrial estates. More work may be required to confirm if these published standards are appropriate locally. This will require examining catchment areas for different levels of provision as it suggested in PPG17.
- 7.1.5 Over 50% of the Borough Council's play areas meet the LEAP quality standard. The standard of parks and amenity areas is variable although the best ones have good access paths, seating and dog bins, information on site and public art. The higher order parks e.g. Country Parks and Town Parks tend to score relatively highly, whilst scores for the lower order parks are more variable.
- 7.1.6 The quantity of provision is relatively good across the Borough although there are significant geographical variations. Provision in the newer areas tend to be better and provision for general recreation purposes is better than for children's play or outdoor sports. It is important to recognise that there is considerable overlap between the categories. For example public sports pitches are used for general recreation when formal sport is not

being played on them. Similarly general recreational areas can be very important for children's play.

8 *Monitoring and Review*

8.1 Further work required

- 8.1.1 It is recognised that the audit and assessment is not entirely comprehensive and that additional work is required to complete the assessment of open spaces. This work principally falls into three areas; outstanding gaps in audit information, further user surveys and further assessment of future needs. These are dealt with in turn below.
- 8.1.2 There are some gaps in the audit information where it has not been possible to complete the work prior to the publication of this report. Much of this work is being carried out or is being planned for the near future and mainly concerns information on quality. These are set out in the table below. This information will be published either as an update or will be incorporated in the next Audit and Assessment report.

Table 13: Further Open Space Audit Work

Audit Information	Intended completion date
Quality audit of Borough Council pavilions/changing facilities	September 2004
Quality audit of other playing pitches and changing facilities	September 2004

- 8.1.3 Further user surveys are considered important in order to help establish the need for different types of open spaces and also to clarify appropriate standards for accessibility to facilities. The nature and timing of such further work is under consideration by the Borough Council however it is intended that this would be used to inform the preparation of the next Audit and Assessment.
- 8.1.4 Finally further work is required to establish the future need for open space as set out in PPG17, however this is dependent on obtaining more detailed population information which is currently not available at the time of writing. Again this will be included in future reviews of the Open Space Audit and Assessment as appropriate.

8.2 Monitoring

8.2.1 The Borough Council intends to monitor the provision of open space against the standards as set out in the Local Plan. It is acknowledged that the Local Plan standards are not yet formally adopted however monitoring will be carried out in relation to the most recent version of the Local Plan as it progresses towards adoption. Monitoring will be carried out against indicators which relate to the Local Plan standards for accessibility, quality and quantity. These are set out in the table below;

Table 14: Open Space Indicators and Targets

	Indicator
1. Accessibility	% of the Borough which meets accessibility standards (as set out in Table 2)
2. Quality	% of open spaces which meet relevant standards for each type of open space (as set out in Table 3)
3. Quantity	Provision in Ha/1000 population for each category of open space

8.3 Review

8.3.1 In order that the Open Space Audit and Assessment remains a beneficial source of information for the Borough Council and others it should be subject to periodic review. Given that the auditing process is time consuming and resource intensive it is proposed that the report will be reviewed every 2 years. If however important new information becomes available during the interim this will be published as an update as and when required.

APPENDIX 1

Comparison of Local Authority Open Space Quantity Standards

Local Authority	Standard (Ha per 1000 population)	<u>Dwelling thresholds for developer contributions</u>
Birmingham	2.0	20
Brighton & Hove	2.4	Not specified
Chelmsford	2.76	10
Derby	3.8	10
Harrogate	3.4	1
Monmouthshire	3.0	1
Poole	3.2	1
Portsmouth	1.0	15
Stroud	2.4	1
Swindon (adopted Local Plan 2001)	2.85	25
Swindon (Revised Deposit Draft Local Plan 2011)	3.2	1
Telford & Wrekin	2.43	75
Warrington	4.0	15
Winchester	2.8	1
Worthing	2.4	10

APPENDIX 2

1 Summary of community consultation relevant to open space

1.1 Introduction

1.1.1 With regards to parks and open space there have been a number of community consultations that have been performed throughout the Borough. The following summarises the main findings of community consultations that have been carried out in recent years with an attempt to consider the current and future demands for use of open space within the Borough. The requirements needed for future community consultation is also considered.

1.2 Borough-Wide Consultation

1.2.1 The Local Cultural Strategy completed quite extensive consultation throughout the Borough, as this was an important element of preparing the Strategy. The consultation involved the direct mailing of questionnaires to the community, cultural groups, stakeholder organisations, regional bodies and Swindon Borough Council staff and over 1,700 responses were received. They also used the People's Voice panel in July 2001 to include questions on recreation.

1.2.2 Overall responses showed that parks and green spaces are important in people's lives and they highlighted that green spaces and parks must be maintained, improved and cared for. There were also comments that children's play areas and playgrounds were of poor quality and needed to be better maintained. There were also concerns over the costs of some leisure activities for some families.

1.2.3 The 'Have your say' questionnaire, completed in 1999, also used the People's Voice panel and included a question relating to parks and open space provision in Swindon. Results showed that almost three quarters of respondents were satisfied with parks and open space provision in Swindon.

1.2.4 The most recent of all consultations on parks and open space has been the open space analysis completed by Ajt in 2002. There was a slightly different approach to the consultation process where both workshops and telephone household surveys were completed. Although a significant number of local residents in Swindon were consulted by telephone interviews, 736 in total, the workshops did not work that well.

1.2.5 The workshops held in Wroughton and Parks were well attended whilst Central and Stratton attendances were very disappointing. Results achieved by the telephone

interviews highlighted that parks and gardens are the most important open spaces and that almost three quarters of respondents undertake some informal outdoor recreation.

1.2.6 The survey covered aspects on how often local residents use open space. Nearly all users of open space (96%) are doing so every two to three months with most users visiting open space (88%) for relaxation and general exercise.

1.3 Parks and Walcot

1.3.1 Supported by Swindon Borough Council, Shillam and Smith performed community consultation in Parks and Walcot in May 2001. They used unconventional methods in an attempt to counter apathy within the local population where Artsite, a Swindon arts collective, helped to form six projects to be undertaken in the Parks and Walcot community area.

1.3.2 The projects were very creative and local people were encouraged to express their ideas and feelings visually rather than verbally where the artist's work attracted a great deal of attention.

1.3.3 Results found that facilities such as sport and games were not widely available or well known in Parks and Walcot and although people liked the fact that the area had plenty of green space they felt it was currently underused.

1.3.4 Results from the children's survey highlighted that nearly all children, 90%, reported outdoor sports and games as their favourite activity whilst almost half would like to see an increase in the number of outdoor facilities available.

1.4 Penhill

1.4.1 The Penhill Forum group carried out community consultation in early 2002. Although there were a number of prizes offered to encourage imaginative responses only 99 responded out of the 2,500 questionnaires that were distributed.

1.4.2 Regardless of the small sample views regarding parks and open space were still apparent. In general there were concerns over the loss or under use of green space in Penhill and the lack of leisure and other facilities in the area.

1.4.3 The significance of the Penhill paddling pool and the Penhill Carnival fete are remembered with much affection both in Penhill and across North Swindon.

1.5 Success

1.5.1 The success of different approaches to community consultation is of major significance when adopting consultation exercises for the future. The interactive

projects carried out by Shillam and Smith in the Parks and Walcot community were clearly substantially different to the questionnaires distributed by the Penhill Forum Group. The art projects used in Parks and Walcot actively involved the local community and stimulated a higher level of debate than standard questionnaires alone. To a degree the success of the projects reflected the funding available for the two surveys which was significantly greater in Parks and Walcot.

1.5.2 People's Voice, a panel of approximately 2,500 people, generally obtains a better response rate than other surveys completed. This is because the panel were set up to provide a robust consultation resource and are a good representation of the residents of Swindon. There is a 50-70% response rate, with the panel completing about 5 surveys each year. Their opinions are of key importance to consultation exercises that are performed throughout the Borough.

1.6 Publicity

1.6.1 The extent to which community consultation is publicised is of major significance when adopting consultation exercises for the future.

1.6.2 Both the Local Cultural Strategy and the Parks and Walcot community Forum publicised consultation events on the Local radio and in the local press whilst the Parks and Walcot community also published a special issue of the forum's local newsletter.

1.6.3 The Local Cultural Strategy and the Parks and Walcot community consultation were successful and may be a reflection on how effective publicising local consultation events can be. Publicity raises awareness of events and helps educate local communities on the types of consultation processes they can get involved in.

1.7 Consultation on Interim Open Space Audit and Assessment report.

1.7.1 Consultation on the Interim Report was carried out between June and August 2003.

1.7.2 The consultation involved three elements; detailed consultation with Parish and Community Councils on the audit information, a stakeholder seminar and written consultation with other organisations.

1.7.3 Comments were received from some Parish and Community Councils on the audit information and it's accuracy. Where appropriate changes have been discussed and agreed for the relevant area.

1.7.4 The stakeholder seminar sought comments on the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) of Swindon's open spaces. This is reproduced in detail in 3.3.1 in main report.

1.7.5 Written comments were received from 5 organisations. The main issues raised were; lack of reference to biodiversity in the document, concerns about the timing and quality of new provision in the Northern Development.

1.8 Consultation on Final Draft Open Space Audit and Assessment October 2003

1.8.1 The Final Draft report was published for consultation in November 2003 together with the Revised Deposit Draft Local Plan. Comments were received from 5 organisations. Most of these comments are requests to alter details about specific sites. Where appropriate, changes have been discussed and agreed for the relevant area. A further objection was received from the Wiltshire Wildlife Trust who expressed their concern that the Audit did not include an assessment of biodiversity. Resources did not permit a biodiversity audit of all open spaces to be carried out. However, officers have considered this matter and in response now propose to include biodiversity indicators in future audits of the quality of parks and open spaces. Although this would not comprise a full audit, it will begin to address these concerns and help to make the overall audit more robust.

1.9 Swindon Biodiversity Action Plan

1.9.1 From September 2002 to January 2003 consultation was carried out in relation to the Swindon Biodiversity Action Plan by the Wiltshire Wildlife Trust. This highlighted the value of many of Swindon's open spaces for wildlife and some of the key findings are listed below;

- 92 % of those surveyed regularly visit a green space within a short walk of their home office or school
- 72% felt that parts of their green space had been set aside for wildlife
- 58% felt that more could be done in their greenspace for wildlife.
- 61% would like to be involved in surveys of wildlife.
- Concerns exist about the loss of wildlife spaces to development.

1.10 Conclusion

1.10.1 In conclusion, it is clear that parks and open spaces are important to the people of Swindon, for a variety of reasons including quiet recreation, play, sport and for wildlife. There is a need for parks and green spaces, including children's play

areas, to be better maintained. Regular maintenance and improvements would ultimately improve the quality of parks and open space in Swindon.

1.10.2 Further consultation needs to take into account the requirements of open space provision as this differs across community areas in Swindon. The requirements for children should also be a key consideration.

1.10.3 Consultation to date does not include any geographical representation of open space users. This should be included in any future consultations where user catchments can be determined in accordance with the different types of open space used.

1.10.4 It is also important to consider publicising community consultation events in order to raise awareness of local residents. The People's Voice panel remains to be a key resource when obtaining views and opinions from the local population.

Consultation Documents 1999-2003

Swindon Biodiversity Action Plan – Comments and Feedback 2003

Open Space Analysis, Final Report. Ajt Consultants November 2002

Penhill Forum 2002, Questionnaire Results

Local Cultural Strategy for Swindon, Swindon Borough Council

Shillam & Smith 2002, Parks and Walcot: A Community in process of regeneration

Have your Say questionnaire, 1999

APPENDIX 3

Swindon Borough Local Plan First Deposit Draft :Open Space Definitions

Open space contributing to the Local Plan Standard		
General	Detail	Notes
<p>Children’s and Teenagers Play Areas All equipped children’s play areas, skateboard parks, outdoor basketball goals and similar facilities</p>	<p>Equipped Children’s Play Areas Cycle/ Skateboard Parks Outdoor Basketball Goals</p>	<p>Children’s play areas are further categorised based on the National Playing Field Association 6 acre standard. This standard sets out specifications for Neighbourhood Equipped Area for Play (NEAP) and Local Equipped Area for Play (LEAP). The third category Local Areas for Play (LAP) are no longer implemented in Swindon due to a history of residential amenity problems. All play areas not categorised as LEAPS or NEAPS are referred to as Equipped Play Areas.</p>
<p>Outdoor Sports Facilities Includes all outdoor sports facilities whether naturally or artificially surfaces e.g. playing pitches, bowling greens & tennis courts.</p>	<p>Playing Fields (Community Access) Playing Fields (Educational) (not included in the Local Plan standard) Playing Fields (Private) (not included in the Local Plan standard) Tennis Courts Bowling Greens Athletics Tracks Golf Courses (not included in the Local Plan standard) Other Outdoor Sports Areas</p>	<p>Outdoor sports facilities are also divided into community access and non-community access based on the National Playing Field Association 6 acre standard. Community access facilities are those in the ownership of local government, facilities within the voluntary or private sector that serve the recreational needs of their members or the wider public and educational facilities which are available for public use by written agreement. Non community access facilities are not included within the Local Plan standard for outdoor sports facilities.</p> <p>The National Playing Field Association 6 acre standard excludes golf courses from the definition of outdoor playing space. Golf courses are not therefore included within the Local Plan standard and are listed separately.</p>
<p>General Recreation All areas of public open space which have a significant recreational function but do not fall in the above categories e.g. parks and gardens, amenity areas, accessible wildlife</p>	<p>Parks and Gardens New Woodland* Established Woodland*</p>	<p>General recreation areas should have some level of public access and should of an appropriate size and location which allows for either active or passive recreation.</p>

<p>areas.</p>	<p>Wetland Areas*</p> <p>River/Canal Corridors*</p> <p>Grasslands*</p> <p>(*only include these if they have public access)</p> <p>Open Unmanaged Land (e.g. disused allotments)</p> <p>Other Recreational green spaces</p> <p>Village Greens</p>	
<p>Allotments</p> <p>An area containing allotment plots which are wholly or mainly cultivated by the occupier for the purpose of producing fruit or vegetables for consumption by himself/herself and family. Allotments are defined more precisely by the Allotments Act 1922</p>	<p>Allotment gardens used for the growing of fruit and vegetables.</p>	<p>Access to allotment gardens should be safe and secure and not in itself a barrier to any group of users, such as people with disabilities. An accessible water supply is essential, the allotment authority should ensure every plot holder has access to a mains water supply that is easy for elderly and disabled gardeners to use it.</p>

Open space not contributing to the Local Plan standard

<p>Country Parks</p> <p>These are major areas of open space with a range and diversity of facilities which may include general recreation, play equipment, fishing and visitor facilities. They are managed by the Council's ranger service and have controlled car parking.</p>		<p>Country Parks are considered by the Borough Council to be strategic facilities for the whole Borough. They are not therefore included in the figures for open space provision at ward level</p>
<p>Incidental Greenspace (public)</p> <p>(includes all areas of greenspace which are incidental to other forms of development and do not have a significant recreational function e.g. highway verges, incidental space in housing areas)</p>	<p>Highway Verges/Corridors</p> <p>Housing Green Spaces</p> <p>(incidental green spaces in housing areas)</p> <p>Other Incidental Space around public buildings</p>	<p>Incidental greenspaces are considered to be those which have only a limited recreational value by virtue their size, difficult accessibility or lack of opportunity for safe recreation (e.g. due to proximity to roads or properties). They are not therefore included in the recreational open space standard figures</p>

	<p>buildings</p> <p>Footpath or Cycle links with incidental green space.</p>	
<p>Incidental Greenspace (private)</p> <p>(includes all areas of private greenspace which are incidental to other forms of development yet provide some visual amenity benefit as viewed from the public highway e.g. landscaped grounds to office campuses)</p>	<p>Industrial/Commercial Green Spaces</p> <p>(Incidental green spaces around office or industrial buildings)</p> <p>Other Private green space (with no public access)</p>	<p>Incidental greenspaces are considered to those which have only a limited recreational value by virtue their size, difficult accessibility or lack of opportunity for safe recreation (e.g. due to proximity to roads or properties). They are not therefore included in the recreational open space standard figures</p>
<p>Cemeteries and Churchyards</p> <p>(includes both historic churchyards associated with churches as well as cemeteries which are currently used for burial purposes)</p>		<p>Cemeteries and churchyards can be important places for quiet contemplation and often have biodiversity interests. Whilst they can therefore have a valuable amenity function their main function is as a place of burial and they are not therefore included in the recreational open space standard figures.</p>
<p>Civic Spaces</p> <p>(areas mainly in town and district centres, providing a setting for civic buildings, such as town halls, opportunities for open air markets, demonstrations and civic events)</p>		<p>Civic spaces are normally provided on an opportunistic and urban design led basis and as such the only appropriate standard would be a qualitative one. They are not therefore included in the Local Plan standards.</p>

APPENDIX 4

Quality Standards

Children's Play Areas

Main characteristics of a Locally Equipped Play Area

1. For children 4 – 8 years
2. within 5 minutes walking time of home
3. Beside a pedestrian pathway on a well used route
4. On a well drained site with grass or hard surface with appropriate impact absorbing surface
5. Activity zone a minimum of 400 m² in area
6. Contains at least 5 pieces of play equipment, of which at least two are individual pieces
7. Adequate space around the equipment to enable children to express their natural exuberance
8. It has fencing, at least 1 metre in height around the perimeter of the activity zone with two outward opening and self closing gates.
9. It has a barrier to limit the speed of a child entering or leaving the facility
10. A buffer zone of not less than 10 metres in depth between the edge of the activity zone and the boundary of the nearest dwelling.
11. The buffer zone includes planting to enable children to experience natural scent , colour and texture.
12. Some individual seats are provided for parents or carers.
13. It has notice to indicate:
 - a. That the area is solely for use by children
 - b. That adults are not allowed unless accompanied by children
 - c. That dogs should be excluded
 - d. The name and telephone number of the operator of the facility to report any incident or damage to the play equipment.
 - e. Location of nearest telephone
14. It has a litter bin
15. The area of the activity zone contributes to meeting the Children's playing space part of the Six Acre Standard.

Neighbourhood Equipped Area for Play (NEAP)

16. Caters predominantly for older children
17. within 15 minutes walking time of home
18. Beside a pedestrian pathway on a well used route
19. On a well drained site with grass or hard surface with appropriate impact absorbing surface
20. Activity zone a minimum of 1000 m² in area that is divided into two parts; one containing a range of play equipment and the other provided with a hard surface of at least 465 m².
21. Contains at least 8 types of play equipment, of which at least two are individual pieces
22. Adequate space around the equipment to enable children to express their natural exuberance
23. It has fencing, at least 1 metre in height around the perimeter of the activity zone with two outward opening and self closing gates.
24. It has a barrier to limit the speed of a child entering or leaving the facility
25. A buffer zone of not less than 30 metres in depth between the edge of the activity zone and the boundary of the nearest dwelling.
26. The buffer zone includes planting to enable children to experience a part of the natural environment
27. Some individual seats are provided for parents or carers in the vicinity of the play equipment and other seating provided within the hard surfaced games area.
28. It has notice to indicate:
 - a. That the area is solely for use by children
 - b. That adults are not allowed unless accompanied by children
 - c. That dogs should be excluded
 - d. The name and telephone number of the operator of the facility to report any incident or damage to the play equipment.
 - e. Location of nearest telephone
29. It has litter bins at each access point and in proximity of each group of seats.
30. The area of the activity zone contributes to meeting the Children's playing space part of the Six Acre Standard

Parks and Amenity Areas

Park Quality Check List for:
Fieldwork Questionnaire

Yes No Comments

1 A Welcoming Park

Q1 Signage to the park

Is the park signposted from the surrounding roads?

Are the signs easy to read?

Are the signs clean & clear of graffiti?

Q1 Do the signs within the park give basic information about the park

name of owner?

managing body?

individual with on- site responsibility / head of parks?

"helpline" telephone number?

details of opening and closing times?

Q2 Physical Access to the Park

Is the park gated?

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Pedestrians

Are there bus stops close, within a 10 minute walk, of the park entrance(s)?

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Are there safe road crossings close to the park entrance(s)?

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	Yes	No	Comments
Is there safe cycle parking within the park?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Car Drivers			
Is there carparking within a 5 minute walk of the park?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Are there specific spaces for disabled visitors in the general carpark?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Are there additional spaces near key points in the park?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

Q3 Other considerations about the signage

Is the design of the signs appropriate to the park?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Are signs erected where they are needed?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Do they include information to enhance the visit?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Do they include maps?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Are they translated into other languages?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

Q4 Social (equal) access

Are there appropriate facilities for the disabled? ¹	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Are there appropriate facilities for children? ²	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Are there appropriate facilities for teenagers? ³	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Are benches placed to take advantage of views?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Are benches placed at changes in gradient?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Are benches placed for quiet contemplation?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Are dogs controlled? (lead only or excluded)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Is the park an events venue to attract new visitors?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

	Yes	No	Comments
Design⁴			
Is the overall design of the park attractive?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Does the design reflect contemporary needs and historic associations?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Does the design reflect the local environment and surrounding neighbourhood?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Are materials appropriate to the overall stylistic intent?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Are materials used durable with a low environmental impact?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Is there evidence of innovative design?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Is public art and craftsmanship used to create a unique sense of place?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Are working areas discretely located?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Does the path network reflect desire lines?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

2 Healthy Safe and Secure

Q5 Provision of basic facilities

Are the following provided and safely maintained:

Information about first aid?

Emergency equipment e.g. Lifebelts?

Q6 Personal security

Is there a network of safe footpaths which have:

open views on at least one side?

a minimum of 4m forward visibility ?

Yes	No	Comments
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Are there on site staff?

Are they identifiable / in uniform?

In contact with a base?

Is there an emergency phone number on display ?

Is there a public telephone within the park?

Are there directions to the nearest public telephone?

Q7 Control of Dogs

Are there bins for the disposal of dog excrement

Are there any dog free zones in the park?

Q8 Appropriate provision of facilities

Are the following facilities provided within the park:

Children's play areas

Refreshment facilities

Sports facilities:

bowling green

tennis courts

others, please specify

Yes	No	Comments
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Q9 Quality of facilities

Do the Children's play facilities meet the relevant British and European standards?

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Are sports facilities maintained to a standard that allows them to be used for the purpose for which they were designed?⁶

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Are seats etc. fit for purpose i.e. sitting on?⁷

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3 Well Maintained and Clean

Q10 Litter and Waste management

Are there litter bins in the park?

--	--

Are they appropriately located e.g. in proximity to seats/ entrances/ refreshment facilities?

--	--

Emptied on a regular cycle? e.g. daily / weekly

--	--

Are there separate recycling bins for cans and glass?

--	--

Is all horticultural waste composted / chipped?

--	--

Q11 Grounds maintenance

Are the shrubs pruned in a horticulturally correct manner?⁵

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Are flower beds weed free?

--	--

Are lakes managed as a healthy ecosystem?

--	--

Are grass edges trimmed?

--	--

Are grass areas mown to maintain a healthy

and attractive sward?

--	--

Yes	No	Comments
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Are the public involved in maintenance tasks where appropriate?

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Q12 Buildings maintenance

Are repairs addressed immediately?

--	--

Are new buildings appropriately designed to reflect the ambience of the park?

--	--

Is there graffiti?

--	--

Is there fly posting?

--	--

Q13 Infrastructure and other facilities

Are paths and hard surfaces swept regularly?

--	--

Q13 Equipment maintenance public

Is there information on how members of the public may report faults?

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Conservation and Heritage

Q20 Water management

Do water bodies have:

aquatic & marginal vegetation?

--	--

sloping margins?

--	--

	Yes	No	Comments
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Community involvement

Q23 Community involvement in park

management & development

Are community groups and committed

individuals involved with the park? (e.g.

voluntary wardens or friends groups)

Q24 Facilities

does the park provide appropriate levels of

recreational facilities for all sectors of the

community?

Marketing

Q27 Promotion

Is the park actively promoted by:

clear signage?

noticeboards that allow for exchange of info.?

involving partner organisations?

It may be helpful to refer to the following notes when filling out this questionnaire:

- 1 appropriate facilities for the disabled might include:
- 2 an area of scented planting for the blind,
- 3 seating at frequent intervals,
- 4 smoothly surfaced paths for wheel chairs
- 5 level access or low gradient ramps at level changes through out the park
- 6 others, please specify
- 7 appropriate facilities for children might include
- 8 play areas
- 9 safe waterside access for feeding ducks
- 10 others please specify
- 11 appropriate facilities for teenagers might include
- 12 play equipment
- 13 meeting point
- 14 others, please specify

- 15 for example are pitches, courts and tracks marked out and sufficiently well drained to provide a
16 playing surface throughout the appropriate season?
- 17 are they sound, secure and clean (so that they do not mark clothes) and set within an a firm
18 surface that does not become muddy during the winter thus making the seat inaccessible
- 1 i.e. with secatures/saws in the correct season to maintain the correct habit for the shrub and not
2 just side arm flailed from a tractor

Quality audit checklists for Parks and Green spaces

Park attributes	Scores	0	1	2	3	4	5
1. COUNTRY PARKS		A	B	C	D	E	F
Signage to the park							
Signage within the park							
Access to the park							
Main entrance							
Design							
Boundaries							
Roads paths and access							
Woodland							
Other planted areas							
Grass areas							
Dogs							
Facilities	Litter bins						
	Dog bins						
	Toilets						
	Lighting						
	Water						
	Children's play areas						
	Seats						
	Recreation facilities						
	Special features						
	Public art						
	Refreshment facilities						

Information								
Cleanliness								
Events programme								
(Total score/maximum score (92)) X100 = %	Total score = sum A - F							

Park attributes	Score	0	1	2	3	4	5

2. TOWN PARKS		A	B	C	D	E	F
Signage to the park							
Signage within the park							
Access to the park							
Main entrance							
Design							
Boundaries							
Roads paths and access							
Woodland							
Other planted areas							
Grass areas							
Dogs							
Facilities	Litter bins						
	Dog bins						
	Toilets						
	Lighting						
	Water						
	Children's play areas						
	Seats						
	Recreation facilities						
	Special features						
	Public art						
	Refreshment facilities						

3. MAJOR OPEN SPACES (TOWN WIDE PARKS)		A	B	C	D	E	F
Park attributes		0	1	2	3	4	5
Signage to the park							
Signage within the park							
Access to the park							
Main entrance							
Design							
Boundaries							
Roads paths and access							
Woodland							
Other planted areas							
Grass areas							
Dogs							
Facilities	Litter bins						
	Dog bins						
	Toilets						
	Lighting						
	Water						
	Children's play areas						
	Seats						
	Recreation facilities						
	Special features						
	Public art						
	Refreshment facilities						
Information							
Cleanliness							
Events programme							
(Total score/maximum score (85)) X100 = %	Total score = sum A - F						

 = max score for each attribute

4. LOCAL OPEN SPACES (NEIGHBOURHOOD PARKS)		A	B	C	D	E	F
Park attributes		0	1	2	3	4	5
Signage to the park							
Signage within the park							
Access to the park							
Main entrance							
Design							
Boundaries							
Roads paths and access							
Woodland							
Other planted areas							
Grass areas							
Dogs							
Facilities	Litter bins						
	Dog bins						
	Toilets						
	Lighting						
	Water						
	Children's play areas						
	Seats						
	Recreation facilities						
	Special features						
	Public art						
	Refreshment facilities						
Information							
Cleanliness							
Events programme							
(Total score/maximum score (68)) X100 = %	Total score = sum A - F						

 = max score for each attribute

5. INCIDENTAL OPEN SPACE		A	B	C	D	E	F
Park attributes		0	1	2	3	4	5
Signage to the park							
Signage within the park							
Access to the park							
Main entrance							
Design							
Boundaries							
Roads paths and access							
Woodland							
Other planted areas							
Grass areas							
Dogs							
Facilities	Litter bins						
	Dog bins						
	Toilets						
	Lighting						
	Water						
	Children's play areas						
	Seats						
	Recreation facilities						
	Special features						
	Public art						
	Refreshment facilities						
Information							
Cleanliness							
Events programme							
(Total score/maximum score (51)) X100 = %	Total score = sum A - F						

 = max score for each attribute

Outdoor Sports

Quality Assessment – Individual Pitch Assessment

About the Pitch/ outfield

Grass cover – entire pitch/ outfield?	<94% (5pts)	85-94% (4pts)	
	70-84% (3pts)	60-69% (2pts)	<60pts (1pt)
Length of grass? Excellent (10pts)	Good (8pts)	Average (6pts)	Poor (4pts)
	Very Poor (2pts)		
Drainage - % of games cancelled	None (10pts)	1-10% (8pts)	
	11-30% (6pts)	31-49% (4pts)	>50% (2pts)
Size of pitches?	Yes – for adults (5pts)	Yes – for juniors (3pts)	
(Does it meet the NGB Standard?)	No (0pts)		
Adequate safety margins?	Yes – for adults (5pts)	Yes – for juniors (3pts)	
(Does it meet the NGB Standard?)	No (0pts)		
Slope of pitches (gradient and cross fall)	Excellent (10pts)	Good (5pts)	Poor (1pt)
Evenness of pitch	Excellent (10pts)	Good (5pts)	Poor (1pt)
Problem Areas:	None (5pts)	Yes –some (3pts)	
(Evidence of Dog fouling)	Yes – lots (0pts)		
Problem Areas:	None (5pts)	Yes –some (3pts)	
(Evidence of Glass/ stones/litter)	Yes – lots (0pts)		
Problem Areas:	None (5pts)	Yes –some (3pts)	
(Evidence of Unofficial use)	Yes – lots (0pts)		
Problem Areas:	None (5pts)	Yes –some (3pts)	
(Evidence of Damage to surface)	Yes – lots (0pts)		
Exposure of pitch to elements	Yes (0pts)	No (5pts)	

Equipment

Goal posts/ nets/ wicket square - quality Excellent (10pts) Good (5pts) Poor (2pts)
Very Poor (1pt)

Line markings – quality Excellent (15pts) Good (10pts) Poor (2pts)
Very Poor (1pt)

Points Scoring

Each playing pitch is given a total score out of a maximum of 100 points (except football, 105 points). Pitches are rated as follows;

90+ Excellent

75 – 90 Good

0 – 75 Below Average

Allotments

Rating Criteria for Assessing Allotment Quality

- A. Number of tenants Each percentage of tenanted plots carry a value of 0.25. i.e a site with a 100% tenancy is allocated 25 points.
- B. Problems. Problems such as vandalism, theft, Fly Tipping, and the poor condition of fencing and gates are considered to detract from the quality of allotments. A site with a long term problem will have 5 points deducted from the allocation of 25 points. i.e. a site with multiply problems of 5 or more will receive no points, a site with one problem will receive 20 points.
- C. Neighbouring sites. For every site within a half a mile radius, 5 points will be deducted from the allocation of 25 points. If however, a neighbouring site is full tenanted then the 5 points will not be deducted.
- D. Condition And importance An Allotment of good quality is expected to be have fresh water facilities provided, well-maintained pathways and fencing, and provision for car parking. A site that is in good condition and is of significant importance will be allocated a score from 1 to 25.

Allocation of Points

- A. 25 points Number of tenants
- B. 25 points Problems
- C. 25 points Number of allotments within area (neighbouring sites)
- D. 25 points Overall condition and importance

Point Scoring

A point's score of below 44 the site is classified as a very poor allotment.

A point's score of between 45 and 59 and the site is classified as a poor allotment.

A point's score of between 60 and 74 is classified as an average allotment.

A point's score of between 75 and 89 is classified as a good allotment.

A points score of 90 + and the site is classified as an excellent allotment.

