

Chelmsford Open Space Study



2016 – 2036

Part 1 of 2

Chelmsford Open Space Study

Contents

1.0	Introduction	3 - 10
2.0	Methodology	11 - 15
3.0	Strategic Context	16 - 32
4.0	Local Needs Assessment	33 - 44
5.0	Audit of existing open space assets	45 - 54
6.0	The development of standards	55 - 66
7.0	Applying local standards	67 - 79
8.0	Strategic options, policy and management recommendations	80 – 90
9.0	Concluding Remarks	90

Glossary of Terms

Term	Meaning
ANGst	Accessible Natural Green Space Standard
CIL	Community Infrastructure Levy
DPD	Development Plan Document
FIT	Fields In Trust (originally known as the 'National Playing Fields Association')
GIST	Green Infrastructure Strategy
GIS	Geographic Information Systems
LAP	Local Area for Play
LPDP	Local Development Plan Document
LEAP	Local Equipped Area for Play
MUGA	Multi Use Games Area
NEAP	Neighbourhood Equipped Play Area
NEWP	Natural Environment White Paper
NGB	National Governing Body
NPPF	National Planning Policy Framework
PPG17	Planning Policy Guidance Note 17
SPD	Supplementary Planning Document
PPS	Planning Policy Statement
NCAAP	North Chelmsford Area Action Plan
CTCAAP	Chelmsford Town Centre Area Action Plan
SADPD	Site Allocations Development Plan Document
WASst	Woodland Access Standard

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Overview

1.1.1 This Open Space Study is one of six reports provided within the overall Chelmsford Open Space, Sports and Recreational Facilities Study. The six reports are:

1. Chelmsford Community and Stakeholder Consultation Report (Local Needs Assessment);
2. Chelmsford Open Space Study (this report - comprising a main report and six area profiles);
3. Chelmsford Playing Pitch and Outdoor Sports Needs Assessment (Part A, B and C);
4. Chelmsford Playing Pitch and Outdoor Sports Strategy and Action Plan (Part D of Playing Pitch and Outdoor Sports Needs Assessment);
5. Chelmsford Indoor/Built Sports Facility Needs Assessment; and
6. Chelmsford Indoor/Built Sports Facility Strategy and Action Plan.

1.1.2 This report is the **main report** (part 1 of 2) of the Open Space Study. There are also six area profiles which provide further analysis at a localised level (part 2 of 2). The study has been undertaken by Ethos Environmental Planning to inform the Council's decision making process up to 2036. It will replace the Open Spaces Assessment published by the Council in 2005.

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

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

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

1.2 Scope of Study and Objectives

Overall Aim of the Study

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

Scope of Study and Objectives

1.2.2 The Open Space Study covers all forms of public open space (with the exception of outdoor sports which are covered in the Playing Pitch and Outdoor Sports Needs Assessment and Strategy and Action Plan) as referred to in Annex A of the PPG17 Companion Guide.

1.2.3 Indoor sports facilities are covered within the Indoor/Built Sports Facility Sport Needs Assessment.

1.2.4 In order to deliver the aims of the Open Space Study, the following objectives will be met:

- Evaluate the quantity, quality and accessibility of open space, identifying any specific needs or deficiencies;
- Identify mechanisms to meet future needs including recommendations for appropriate standards of provision by new development;
- Provide a robust and comprehensive evidence base to underpin the development and implementation of detailed planning policies, and facilitate the future management of open space and recreational assets;
- To provide information to justify the collection of developer contributions towards open space;
- To provide information to help to inform the spending of Community Infrastructure Levy.

1.3 Structure of the report

1.3.1 The open space study is presented in two key parts.

1.3.2 Part 1: Main Report follows the five key stages as summarised below:

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

1.3.3 Part 2: Area Profiles have been developed for six areas. These are based on groupings of parishes by their population density which were discussed and agreed by the project Steering Group (see section 1.4.4).

1.3.4 Within each of the area profiles, there will be the following information:

- A description of the area;
- Maps showing the provision of green space;
- Quantitative analysis of current provision of open space'
- Analysis of access to open space;
- Summary of quality issues and opportunities;
- Analysis of future need for open space;
- Priorities for the area.

1.3.5 The area profiles are intended to be a starting point to inform other strategies and plans, including neighbourhood plans, planning policies, development control policies, parks and open spaces service and action plans.

1.3.6 The area profiles will be presented as part 2 of the overall open space study. Part 1 will form an overview of open space at a more strategic level, and set out details of the wider open space strategy. However, it is intended that parts 1 and 2 of the report would be considered together in decision making.

1.4 The Study Area

Overview of Chelmsford

1.4.1 Located 30 miles northeast of London, the Chelmsford administrative area covers 130 square miles and includes Chelmsford (the only city in Essex), open countryside, attractive villages, and small towns.

1.4.2 The area has a population of around 170,000 and is the focus for government, business, retail, leisure and culture in Essex. It will continue to be a major centre of development, with an estimated population of 192,000 by 2022.

1.4.3 Chelmsford has many attractive rural areas including the Metropolitan Green Belt and landscape features and habitats of regional, national and international importance.

1.4.4 The area is rich in history and includes many places of interest.

1.4.5 Further information regarding population, age structure, affluence and deprivation (and information regarding levels of participation in sport and active recreation) can be found in section 3 of the Chelmsford Playing Pitch and Outdoor Sports Needs Assessment (and repeated in section 2 of the Indoor/Built Facility Sport Needs Assessment).

Administrative Boundaries

1.4.6 Chelmsford is split into Wards and Parishes as shown in figures 1 and 2. These boundaries are the basis for collating census data across the council area. Of particular relevance to this study are population statistics (Census, 2011), which have been used as the basis for the current and future assessment of need for open space.

Figure 1 *Parish Boundaries*

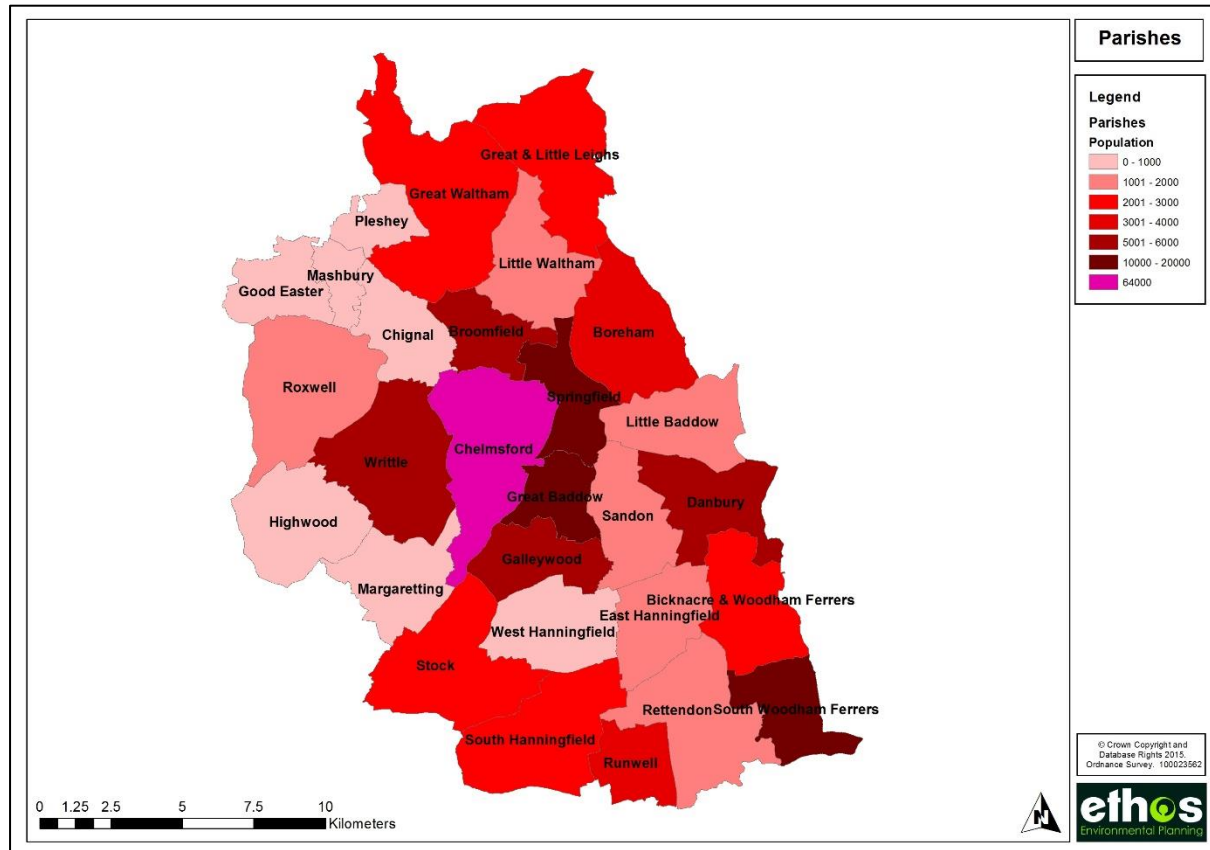
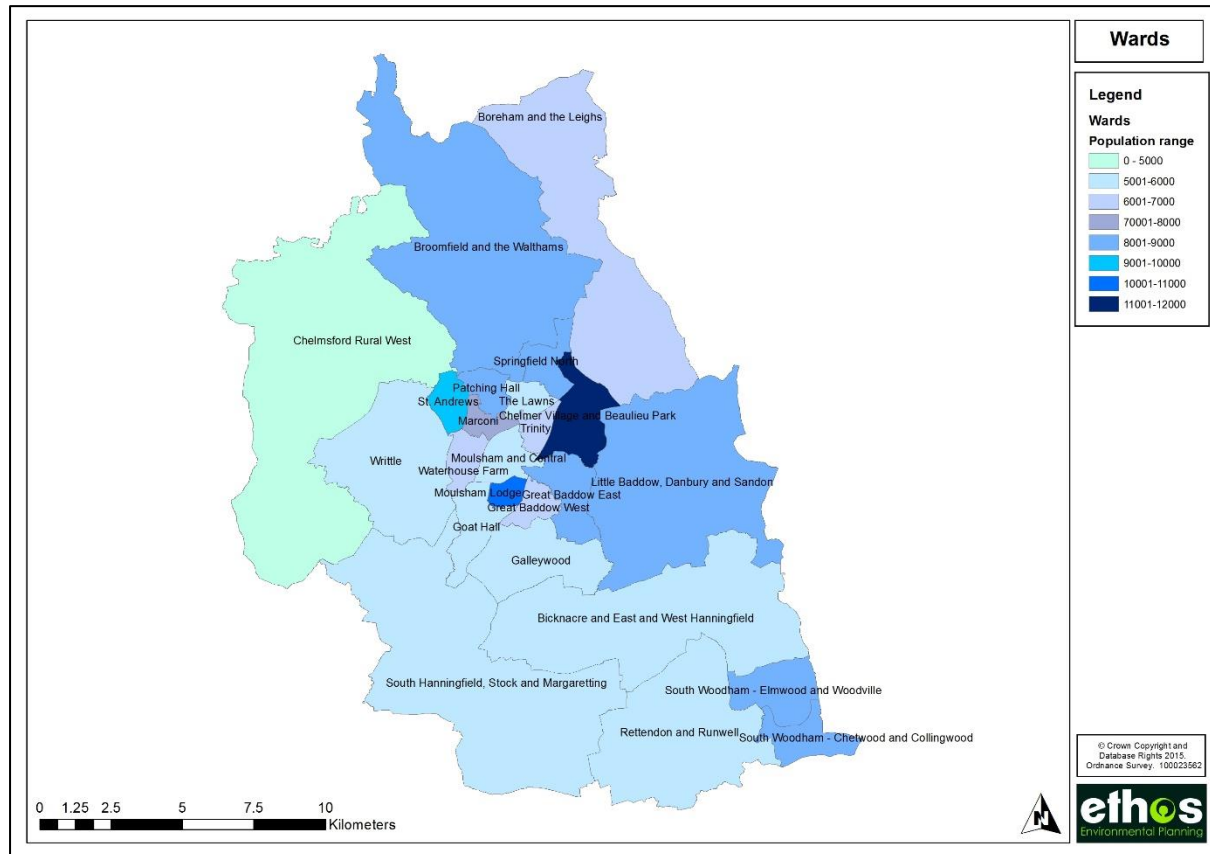


Figure 2 Ward Boundaries



Population Statistics

1.4.7 The total population of Chelmsford (based on the 2011 Census) is **168,310**. Table 1 and 2 below shows the breakdown by Parish and Ward. The Playing Pitch and Outdoor Sports and Built Facilities reports use the population projections (outlined in section 3.3).

Table 1 *Parish population statistics (Census, 2011)*

Parish	Population	Parish	Population
Bicknacre & Woodham Ferrers	2,889	Margaretting	847
Boreham	3,597	Mashbury	Local information indicates the population is <80, which shows as 0 on the Census
Broomfield	4,575	Pleshey	373
Chignal	311	Rettendon	1,627
Danbury	5,087	Roxwell	1,044
East Hanningfield	1,171	Runwell	3,394
Galleywood	5,738	Sandon	1,612
Good Easter	382	South Hanningfield	2,629
Great & Little Leighs	2,709	South Woodham Ferrers	16,453
Great Baddow	14,650	Springfield	20,084
Great Waltham	2,172	Stock	2,100
Highwood	654	West Hanningfield	975
Little Baddow	1,586	Writtle	5,383
Little Waltham	1,316		

Table 2 *Ward population statistics (Census, 2011)*

Ward	Population	Ward	Population
Bicknacre and East and West Hanningfield	5,035	Moulsham Lodge	5,624
Boreham and The Leighs	6,306	Patching Hall	8,939
Broomfield and The Walthams	8,063	Rettendon and Runwell	5,021
Chelmer Village and Beaulieu Park	11,277	South Hanningfield, Stock and Margaretting	5,576
Chelmsford Rural West	2,764	South Woodham-Chetwood and Collingwood	8,366
Galleywood	5,738	South Woodham-Elmwood and Woodville	8,087
Goat Hall	5,690	Springfield North	8,807
Great Baddow East	8,377	St Andrews	9,081
Great Baddow West	6,273	The Lawns	5,402
Little Baddow, Danbury and Sandon	8,285	Trinity	6,295
Marconi	7,401	Waterhouse Farm	6,319
Moulsham and Central	10,201	Writtle	5,383

Defining geographical areas

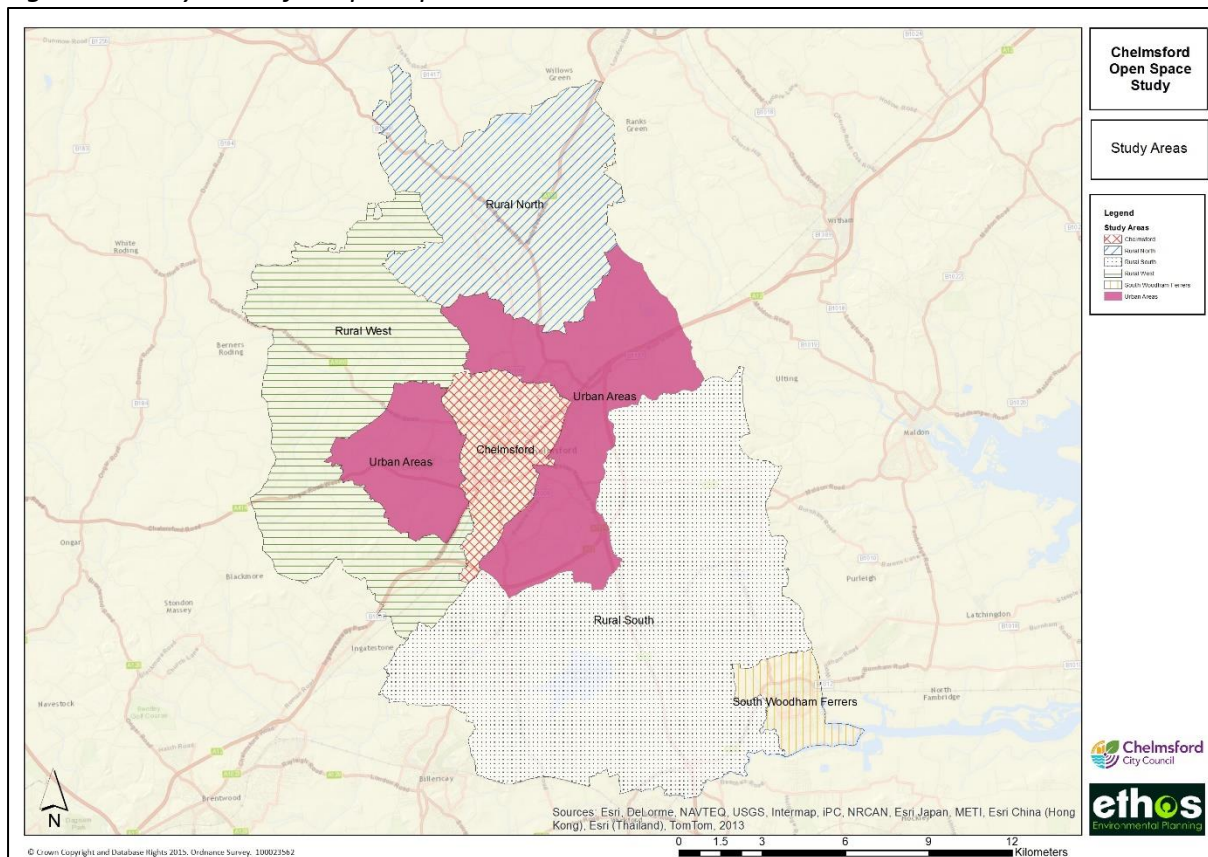
1.4.8 In order to analyse the current provision and future requirements for open space across Chelmsford, it is necessary to define 'open space analysis areas'. The following areas were agreed by the project steering group, by looking at groupings of parishes (with the

exception of Chelmsford where wards have been used as the area is unparished) based on the density of the population and physical geography:

- **Chelmsford (City Centre)** - Consisting of the following wards: Goat Hall, Marconi, Moulsham and Central, Moulsham Lodge, Patching Hall, St Andrews, The Lawns, Trinity and Waterhouse Farm
- **Urban Areas** - Consisting of the following parishes: Boreham, Broomfield, Galleywood, Great Baddow, Springfield and Writtle.
- **Rural North** - Consisting of the following parishes: Great and Little Leighs, Great Waltham and Little Waltham.
- **Rural South** – Consisting of the following parishes: Bickenacre and Woodham Ferrers, Danbury, East Hanningfield, Little Baddow, Rettendon, Runwell, Sandon, South Hanningfield, Stock and West Hanningfield.
- **Rural West** - Consisting of the following parishes: Chignal, Good Easter, Highwood, Margaretting, Mashbury, Pleshey, Roxwell.
- **South Woodham Ferrers** - Consisting of the parish of South Woodham Ferrers.

1.4.9 These areas have been used as the basis for defining geographical areas for the purpose of analysing the provision of open space across Chelmsford. Figure 3 below shows these six study areas.

Figure 3: Study Areas for Open Space



1.5 Monitoring and Review

1.5.1 The analysis of open space within this report is based on information gathered in 2015 and 2016. The council recognises that over the longer term timetable for this study (up to 2036) that there will be change in the baseline used for the assessment (e.g. new open spaces will be created). In applying the policies and recommendations from this study, the council will use the information within this study, and will review the baseline information every five years.

2.0 METHODOLOGY

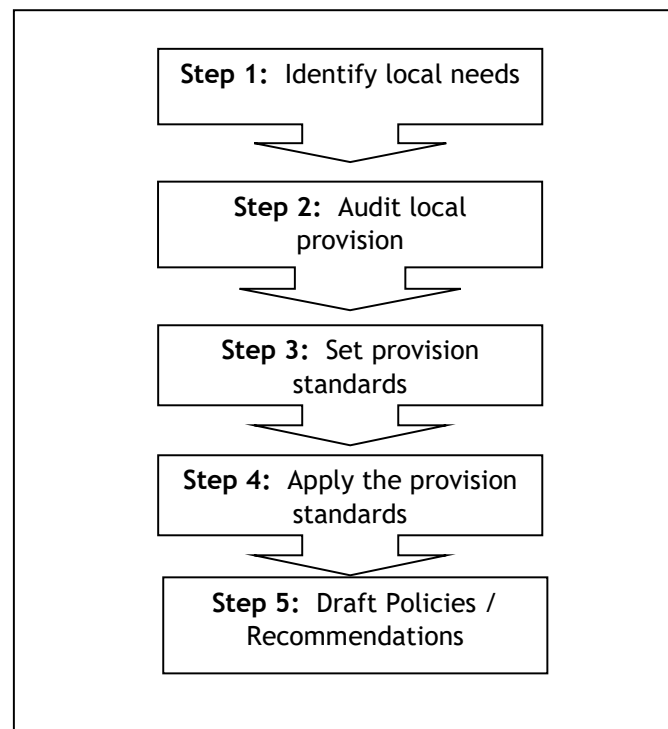
2.1 General

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

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

2.1.2 The Companion Guide to PPG17 recommended an overall approach to this kind of study as summarised in Figure 4 below:

Figure 4 Summary of methodology



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

2.2 Identifying Local Need (Step 1)

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

2.3 Audit of Existing Open Space Assets (Step 2)

Defining the scope of the audit

2.3.1 In order to build up an accurate picture of the current open space and play provision in Chelmsford, an audit of assets was carried out, this included:

- analysis of existing GIS data held by Chelmsford City Council;
- desktop mapping of open space from aerial photography;
- questionnaires to town and parish councils;
- liaison with council officers;
- discussions with local user groups and clubs.

2.3.2 Site visits were undertaken by Ethos at over 345 sites to assess the existing and potential quality issues with sites. The quality audit drew on criteria set out in the 'Green Flag Award²', and sites were given an 'existing', 'potential' and 'gap' quality score. The audits were undertaken using a standardised methodology and consistent approach. However, audits of this nature can only ever be a snap-shot in time and their main purpose is to provide a consistent and objective assessment of a sites existing and potential quality rather than a full asset audit. Clearly, local communities may have aspirations which are not identified in the quality audit, but it is hoped that these can be explored further through site management plans and neighbourhood/parish plans as appropriate.

2.3.3 During the site visits, a number of sites which were included within the original open space database provided by the council, appeared to have changed use since they were originally classified. In some cases, sites previously classified as open space now appeared to have different uses (e.g. arable fields), or did not fit the criteria and typologies for open space within this study i.e. have some form of managed permissible public access. It is accepted that some of these sites may or may not come back into use as open space in the future, and as such, whilst the sites are not included in the current assessment, they have been recorded and are listed in appendix 8 of the green space area profiles. The exclusion of these sites from the assessment is not a presumption that they will not be subject to the same policies and recommendations made within this report.

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

2.3.4 As part of the audit process, sites were mapped into their different functions using a multi-functional approach to mapping. The advantage of the multi-functional approach is that it gives a much more accurate picture of the provision of open space. This is more advantageous than the primary typology approach which tends to result in an over assessment of provision, and which can significantly impact decisions on quantity standards. The differences in approach are demonstrated in figures 5 and 6 below:

Figure 5 Primary approach to open space mapping

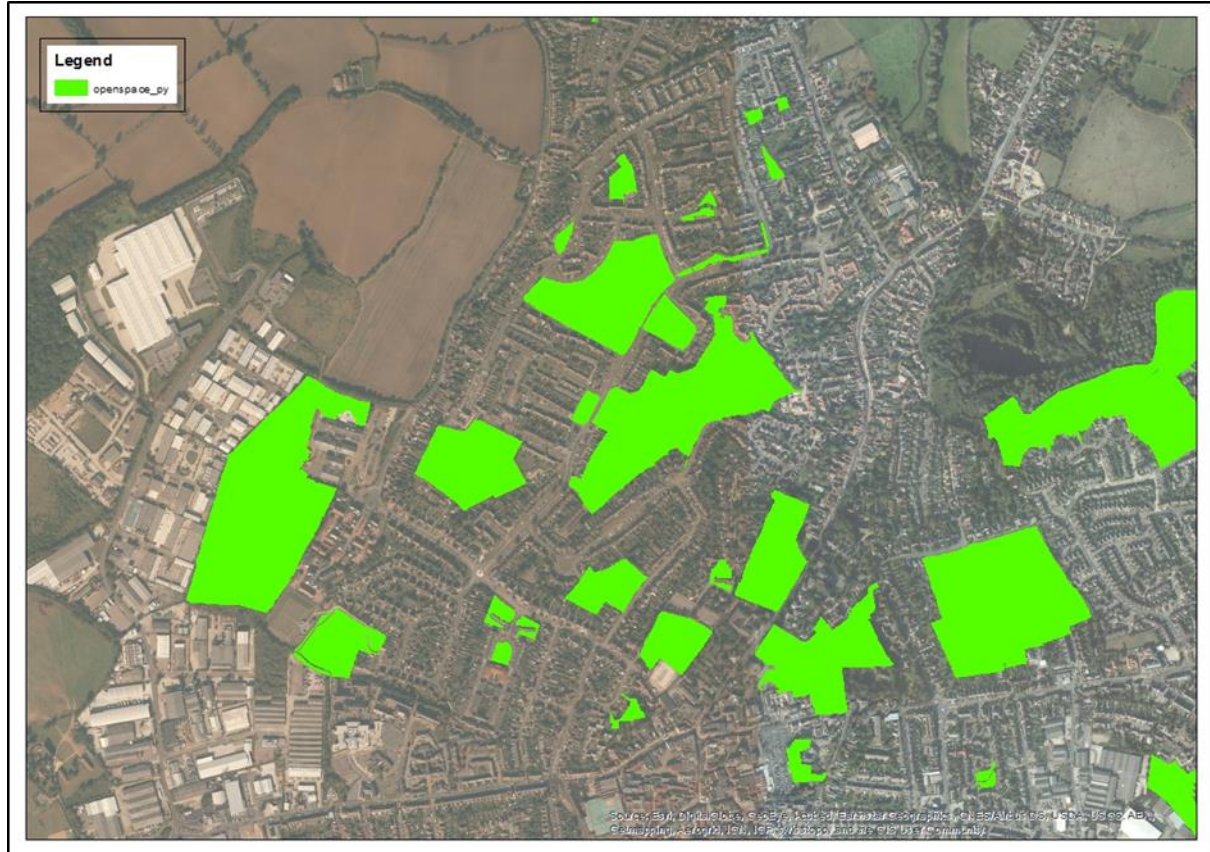
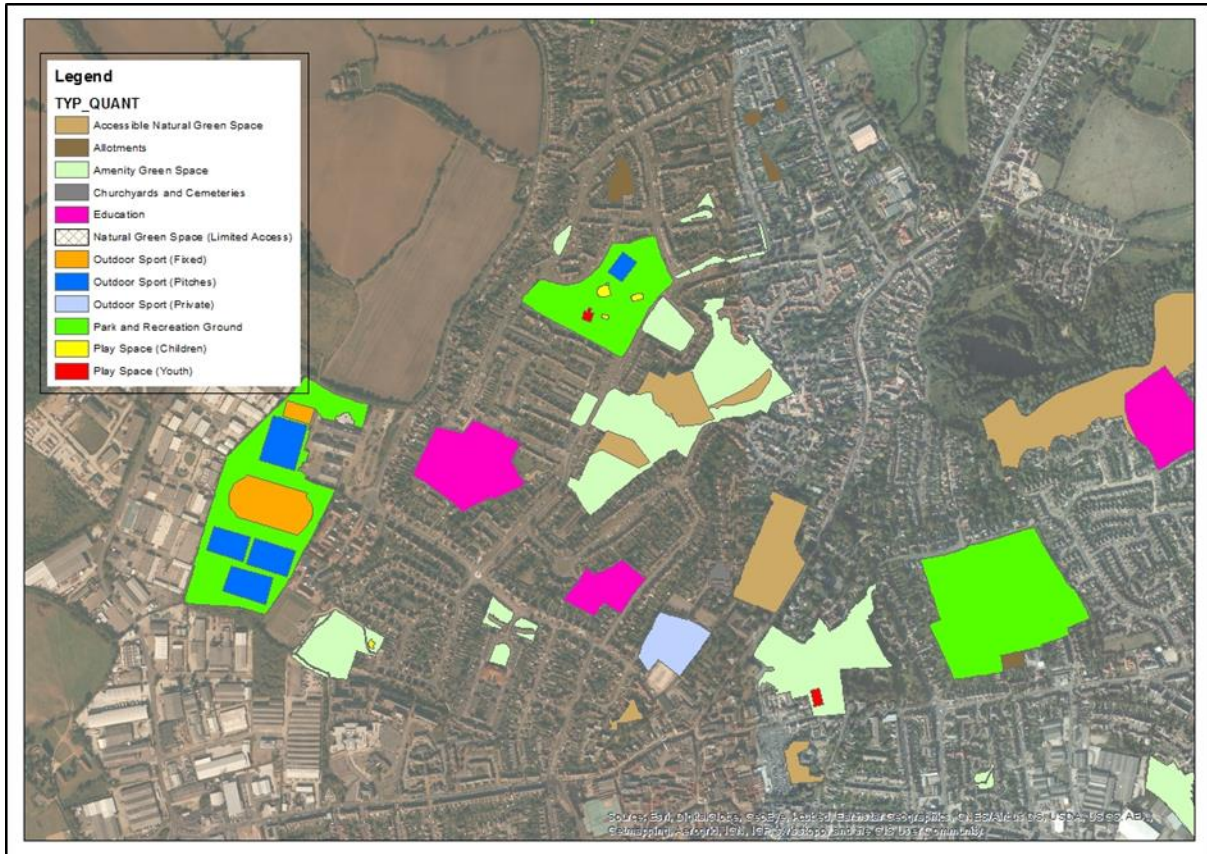


Figure 6 Multi-functional mapping of open space



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

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

- quantity;
- accessibility;
- quality.

Quantity

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

Access

2.4.3 Evidence from previous studies, the needs assessment and consideration of national benchmarks are used to develop access standards for open space. Typically, standards are

expressed as straight line walk times. A series of maps assessing access for different typologies are presented in the report.

Quality

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

2.5 Drafting Policy Recommendations (Step 5)

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

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

2.5.2 In addition, this section will also draw a number of conclusions in relation to the requirements of the brief, specifically:

- To identify alternative mechanisms for meeting local need within areas shown to be deficient.
-

3.0 STRATEGIC CONTEXT

3.1 Introduction

3.1.1 This section sets out a brief review of the most relevant national and local policies related to the Open Space Study, which have been considered in developing the methodology and findings of the study.

3.1.2 The strategic context/policy overview is set out within each of the reports associated with the overall Chelmsford Open Space, Sports and Recreational Facilities Study (outlined in section 1.1), with the exception of the Community and Stakeholder Consultation report and the Playing Pitch and Outdoor Sports Strategy and Action Plan. A number of the strategies and policies are relevant to each of the studies and are therefore included within each separate report, and in addition, each study also includes strategies and policies that are only relevant to that study.

3.1.3 Policies and strategies are subject to regular change, therefore the summary provided in this section was correct at the time of writing. Chelmsford City Council reserve the right to change and update this section as policies change.

3.1.4 The policy overview will include analysis of the councils' existing strategies and policies. It also includes a review of other strategies of relevance at national and local levels and assesses their implications for the provision of open space, sport and recreation opportunities. In addition, an assessment of the relationship between the proposed study and other relevant council strategies and initiatives is included.

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

3.2 National Strategic Context

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

3.2.1 The NPPF sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how they should be applied. The NPPF must be adhered to in the preparation of local and neighbourhood plans, and is a material consideration in planning decisions. The NPPF contains the following references that relate to green infrastructure and open spaces:

- **Para 17 - Achieving Sustainable Development - Core Planning Principles:** Within the overarching roles that the planning system ought to play, a set of core land-use planning principles should underpin both plan-making and decision-taking.
 - **Para 58 - Local and neighbourhood plans should develop robust and comprehensive policies that set out the quality of development that will be expected for the area.**
-

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

- **Para 74** – Existing open space, sports and recreational buildings and land, including playing fields, should not be built on unless:
 - An assessment has been undertaken which has clearly shown the open space, buildings or land to be surplus to requirements; or
 - The loss resulting from the proposed development would be replaced by equivalent or better provision in terms of quantity and quality in a suitable location; or
 - The development is for alternative sports and recreational provision, the needs for which clearly outweigh the loss.
- **Para 75** - Planning policies should protect and enhance public rights of way and access. Local authorities should seek opportunities to provide better facilities for users, for example by adding links to existing rights of way networks including National Trails.
- **Para 99** - Local Plans should take account of climate change over the longer term, including factors such as flood risk, coastal change, water supply and changes to biodiversity and landscape.
- **Para 109** - The planning system should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment.

Sporting Future - A New Strategy for an Active Nation

3.2.2 This cross-government strategy seeks to address flat-lining levels of sport participation and high levels of inactivity in this country. Through this strategy, government is redefining what success in sport means, with a new focus on five key outcomes: physical wellbeing, mental wellbeing, individual development, social and community development and economic development. In future, funding decisions will be made on the basis of the outcomes that sport and physical activity can deliver.

3.2.3 It is government's ambition that all relevant departments work closer together to create a more physically active nation, where children and young people enjoy the best sporting opportunities available and people of all ages and backgrounds can enjoy the many benefits that sport and physical activity bring, at every stage in their lives.

3.2.4 Government is reaffirming its commitment to Olympic and Paralympic success but also extending that ambition to non-Olympic sports where it will support success through grassroots investment in those sports, and by sharing UK Sport's knowledge and expertise. The strategy outlines what is expected of the sector to deliver this vision, and how the government will support it in getting there.

3.2.5 Public investment into community sport is to reach children as young as five as part of a ground-breaking new this new strategy. The move will see Sport England's remit changed from investing in sport for those aged 14 and over to supporting people from five years old right through to pensioners, in a bid to create a more active nation.

3.2.6 Investment will be targeted at sport projects that have a meaningful, measurable impact on how they are improving people's lives – from helping young people gain skills to get into work, to tackling social inclusion and improving physical and mental health.

3.2.7 Funding will also be targeted at groups who have low participation rates to encourage those who do not take part in sport and physical activity to get involved. This includes supporting women, disabled people, those in lower socio-economic groups and older people. Sport England will set up a new fund in 2016 to get inactive people physically active and will support and measure participation in sport and wider physical activity going forward.

Sport England Strategy – 2016-2021

3.2.8 In response to the government's strategy, Sport England's new strategy vision is that that everyone in England, regardless of age, background or ability, feels able to take part in sport or activity. Sport England's new vision and its supporting aims will therefore contribute to achieving the government's strategy.

National Governing Body (NGB) 2013-17 funding

3.2.9 NGB 2013-17 funding is the centrepiece of Sport England's strategy with over £450 million to be invested in work with NGBs. Young people (14-25 years old) will benefit from 60% of this investment. Programmes will include helping young people move from school sport into club sport and working with universities and colleges to create more sporting opportunities for students. Additional funding will be available to governing bodies that are successfully increasing participation.

Green Infrastructure

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

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

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

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

3.3 Local Context

Chelmsford City Corporate Plan 2012

3.3.1 The Council's Corporate Plan has six strategic priorities which are largely all relevant to the overall Chelmsford Open Space, Sports and Recreational Facilities Study. These are:

- Attracting investment and delivering infrastructure;
- Facilitating suitable housing for local needs
- Providing high quality public spaces;
- Promoting a more sustainable environment;
- Promoting healthier and more active lives;
- Enhancing participation in cultural activities.

3.3.2 The Corporate Plan sets out how each of the strategic priorities will be achieved and identifies ways in which it considers success can be measured.

3.3.3 Changes in central government policy and legislation have seen local authorities take more responsibility for improving levels of public health. Studies show that living a healthy lifestyle and maintaining a healthy weight can reduce the risk of developing chronic disease, improves quality of life and increases life expectancy. The Council is now responsible for many factors which impact on mental and physical health, including sports and leisure provision in the area, environmental health, green spaces and housing standards. The Council is therefore now aiming to support its residents and encourage health improvements by implementing the new Public Health Strategy alongside the Council's other policies and strategies.

Chelmsford Core Strategy and Development Control Policies Development Plan Document (2001-2021)

3.3.4 This document which is a statutory part of the Council's Local Development Framework (LDF), sets out the Council's strategy to manage strategic development growth alongside the day-to-day planning policies for determining planning applications. It was adopted in February 2008. In 2013 the Council adopted a 'Focused Review' of the Core Strategy (in light of the publication of the NPPF) to replace specific policies and text⁴.

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

⁴ <http://www.chelmsford.gov.uk/csdpd>

3.3.5 It sets out the Council's vision, objectives, spatial strategy and core policies that will guide and shape development until 2021. It also identifies general areas for new housing and employment, transport infrastructure and areas where development will be limited. The second part of the document includes detailed policies that are used to make decisions on planning applications.

3.3.6 Currently, the overall planned housing growth within the local authority between now and 2036 (i.e. the study horizon of this study) has yet to be determined with geographical precision, either in respect of the local authority-wide targets, or in terms of the geographic location of strategic growth allocations. However, based on previous trends observed in the local authority the latest population projections adopted by the Council for planning purposes would suggest a growth in population from an estimated 172,370 in 2015, to 195,880 in 2036 – an overall net increase of 23,510⁵.

3.3.7 What is certain is that much of the new housing proposed within the local authority up to 2021 will be provided on the northern edge of the existing urban area of Chelmsford, and the NCAAP, which runs to this time horizon, and allocates 4,000 houses to this part of the local authority. As with all successful and sustainable major developments, these additional houses will need to be provided in conjunction with a phased creation of infrastructure, including that for open space, sport and active recreation. All allocations in the NCAAP area have already been granted planning permission, which includes committed sports and community infrastructure within it.

3.3.8 It may be that, when the impact of all new housing allocations up to 2036 (yet to be determined) are taken into account, the levels of population growth will be even higher, and this will certainly be the case in those areas where new major housing allocations are made.

3.3.9 Beyond the 2021 time horizon, the City Council will assume that the requirement for new homes up to an extended time horizon (up to 2036) will run at around 775 per annum. This is based on Chelmsford's Objectively Assessed Housing Need figure. This shows a population increase of 22,549 for period 2015-2025⁶.

3.3.10 The Council has adopted the following vision in its Core Strategy to describe the type of place they want the area to be in 2021 and beyond:

'Chelmsford will be at the leading edge for economic, social and environmental excellence at the heart of Essex, where people choose to live, work and visit because of the ever-improving quality of life available to all, now and for future generations'.

3.3.11 The vision is the same as the Community Plan Our Future 2021 – as it is essential that there is integration and recognition that the LDF is the delivery vehicle and spatial

⁵ These were from a forecast produced on 19/03/2015 using POPGROUP software developed by Bradford Council, the University of Manchester and Andelin Associates

⁶ This is based on the EPOA Phase Report 7 report from Edge (POPGROUP). This shows a population increase of 22,549 for period 2015-2025.

representation of the Community Plan. The Strategic Objectives for the Core Strategy relate back to the seven priorities of the Community Plan and are grouped into the five themes of:

- Managing Growth (MG)
- Environmental Protection and Enhancement (EPE)
- Balanced Communities (BC)
- Quality of Life (QL)
- Economic Prosperity (EPC)

3.3.12 The key elements of the Spatial Strategy are:

- the focus of development on existing built-up areas including an urban renaissance within Chelmsford Town Centre;
- the development of two new neighbourhoods to the North of Chelmsford with necessary infrastructure;
- the safeguarding of the Metropolitan Green Belt and the protection and enhancement of valuable landscapes and the natural and historic environments;
- promoting the economic and cultural role of Chelmsford as the 'Capital of Essex' and the revitalisation of an economic gateway in North-East Chelmsford.

3.3.13 The current Core Strategy recognises the importance of open space and built sport and leisure facilities, with relevant policies including:

Core Policy (CP) 12 – Protecting and enhancing recreational provision, which seeks to maintain and enhance the provision of formal and informal recreational facilities including parks and gardens, country parks and other public open spaces.

Core Policy CP16 – Promoting Social Inclusion: In considering proposals for new development, the Borough Council will promote social inclusion through equality of opportunity and equality of access for all to social, educational, health, employment, recreational, green space, community buildings and cultural facilities. Proposals which would maintain or improve local services will therefore be considered favourably, subject to meeting the tests set out in any other relevant policies in this Development Plan Document.

Core Policy CP18 – Providing New Community and Social Facilities in Major New Development: The Borough Council will ensure that new community facilities, including health, education, social, sports and leisure, parks and green spaces, arts and cultural facilities, are developed as an integral part of any proposals for major new residential development in accordance with the requirements identified by the Borough Council and other agencies. Such facilities will be accessible to all sections of the community, and will be secured by a range of funding measures and planning contributions including standard charges and/ or standard formulae where necessary.

Site Allocations Plan (2001-2021)

3.3.14 The Site Allocations Development Plan Document (SADPD) forms part of the Council's LDF and allocates land for certain uses, such as housing and employment; and site designations primarily for environmental protection including Coastal Protection Belt and Green Wedges, recognising the importance of green infrastructure. It was adopted in February 2012.

3.3.15 It sets out how the council will manage development growth up to 2021. The document covers most of Chelmsford urban area, South Woodham Ferrers and many villages and the surrounding countryside. It does not cover areas dealt with by the Chelmsford Town Centre Area Action Plan or North Chelmsford Area Action Plan.

3.3.16 The allocation of specific sites for development will help to ensure that the strategic housing and employment requirements outlined in the Core Strategy are delivered in the most suitable locations and through high quality development.

Chelmsford Town Centre Area Action Plan (2001-2021)

3.3.17 The Chelmsford Town Centre Area Action Plan (AAP) forms part of the Council's LDF and promotes development and new investment in Chelmsford City Centre. It was adopted in August 2008. Chelmsford was granted City Status in March 2012, and the AAP still applies - references to town or city mean the same thing.

3.3.18 The vision set out within the plan is:

"The dynamic capital of Essex, anchored upon Chelmsford's historic identity as a market town, cathedral city and technological powerhouse, embracing compact urban living, superb shops, leisure and culture, built around neighbourhoods of distinctive character".

3.3.19 The plan supports the creation of:

- new jobs
- shops
- leisure facilities
- homes
- improved pedestrian and cycle links
- flood risk management measures, and
- better connections to the waterfront

It also sets out steps to be taken to make sure the plan is delivered.

North Chelmsford Area Action Plan (2001-2021)

3.3.20 The North Chelmsford Area Action Plan (NCAAP) forms part of the Council's LDF and helps to guide large scale new development in North Chelmsford up to 2021. It was adopted in July 2011.

3.3.21 The plan explains in detail the proposals for creating new areas to live and work to the North West and North East of Chelmsford. The plan identifies land for around 4,000 new houses. It also includes proposals for new:

- roads
- a railway station
- schools
- jobs
- shops
- sports facilities, and
- green spaces

3.3.22 The vision for the new neighbourhoods is:

To create places where there is:

- Multiple choice of travel;
- Environmental innovation;
- Exemplar solutions for housing;
- Integrated economic activity;
- Locally distinctive character;
- Places responding to history and landscape

A Plan for South Woodham Ferrers (2008)

3.3.23 Adopted in 2008, the plan forms part of the Council's LDF and helps to guide development in South Woodham Ferrers up to 2021. It sets out the vision for the town, as follows:

"A town where development is in keeping with its surroundings and where there are open spaces and leisure facilities for all age groups.

A town centre where residents and visitors want to shop and spend their leisure time in a safe and pleasing environment at any time.

A town where there is an affordable, integrated transport system both within the town and with convenient connections further afield".

New Local Plan

3.3.24 It should be noted that work has started on a new Local Plan that will provide the planning framework for the future growth and development of Chelmsford City Council's area until 2036. This will set out how the Council deliver their Objectively Assessed Need for homes and jobs over the plan period. Once adopted, the new Local Plan will replace a number of existing adopted Development Plans including the Core Strategy, Town Centre Area Action Plan, North Chelmsford Area Action Plan and Site Allocations Document.

3.3.25 This Open Space Study will be used to inform the new Local Plan.

PPG17 Open Space Assessment (2005)

3.3.26 In integrated open spaces, playing pitch and indoor sports and recreation facilities assessment was adopted by the council in 2005.

3.3.27 The aim of the Open Space Assessment was to provide an overall framework to inform the Council's Local Development Framework to the year 2021 prioritising open space planning policies over the next 5-10 years. The following section provides a brief summary of the quantity, access and quality criteria adopted for this previous study.

3.3.28 Quantity standards were set based on an audit of existing open space provision and a local needs assessment. Recommended minimum provision standards are shown in Table 3 below (extracted from the report).

Table 3 *Provision standards set out in 2005 Open Space Assessment*

PPG17 typology	Analysis Area							
	Urban Chelmsford		South Woodham Ferrers		Rural North		Rural South	
	Standard (per 1000 pop)	Balance (ha)	Standard (per 1000 pop)	Balance (ha)	Standard (per 1000 pop)	Balance (ha)	Standard (per 1000 pop)	Balance (ha)
Parks and Gardens	2.0	-132.60	2.0	9.05	NA	NA	NA	NA
Natural and Semi-natural	2.0	-36.80	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Amenity Green Space	0.81	-10.32	0.81	3.19	0.81	-2.93	0.81	-2.77
Young People and Children	0.81	-65.09	0.81	-12.27	0.81	-11.94	0.81	-19.85
Allotments	0.30	0.24	0.30	-4.42	0.30	5.94	0.30	1.35
Outdoor Sports Facilities	1.25	46.68	1.25	6.93	1.25	50.50	1.25	56.41
Green Corridors	0.20	0.36	0.20	-2.79	0.20	-0.44	0.20	0.55

3.3.29 Recommended accessibility standards are shown in Table 4 below (extracted from the report).

Table 4 Access standards set out within 2005 Open Space Assessment

Open space type	Recommended travel time (minutes)	Estimated equivalent distance
Parks and gardens	10 mins drivetime	4km
Natural and semi-natural green space	20 mins walk	1.6km
Green corridors	20 mins walk	1.6km
Amenity green Space	10 mins walk	800m
Provision for young people and children	5 – 10 mins walk	400 - 800m
Outdoor sports facilities	10 – 15 mins drivetime	4- 6km
Allotments	10 mins drivetime	2-4km

3.3.30 The overall aim of the quality assessment was to establish a vision for the quality of spaces in the Chelmsford City Council administrative area to work towards and to identify current deficiencies in quality and key quality factors that need to be improved. This vision for an ideal open space was:

“a clean, litter and dog fouling free area that is well-lit and provides a level of varied vegetation and biodiversity, including well-kept grass and other natural features where suitable. The site should be regularly maintained and have suitable parking in close proximity where appropriate. Consideration should be given to the provision of public toilet facilities, CCTV and on-site park wardens at appropriate sites.

Sites should aspire towards meeting the ‘good’ to ‘very good’ criteria stated in the Quality standard matrix”.

Chelmsford Parks and Green Spaces Strategy (2004-2014)

3.3.31 This document sets out a vision and direction for the future development and use of parks and green spaces in the city; with the objectives of improving the quality of and access to green spaces, balancing their use and increasing community involvement, whilst maximising the broader environmental benefits.

3.3.32 The Council’s vision for green spaces is that:

“Chelmsford’s green spaces belong to local people. They should be safe, cherished and accessible to all; managed for the future in order to co-ordinate and balance the needs of various interest groups fairly, and to achieve an ever-improving quality of life for all our residents and visitors”

3.3.33 This strategy does not involve classifying green spaces into different typologies or developing proposed standards for provision.

Policy for the provision of equipped play areas (2012)

3.3.34 The report sets out the policy and standards (quality, quantity and access) for the provision of children’s equipped play throughout the City Council area in order that the spatial catchment and quality standards set out in the policy can be met. A phased delivery programme of specific site improvement, upgrades and decommissioning is also included.

3.3.35 Key aspects of the report include:

- The spatial targets and standard for play space are based on the open space typology outlined in Planning Policy Guidance [PPG] 17: Planning for Open Space, Sport and Recreation. The method for assessing needs and opportunities is described in a companion guide.
- The standards are embodied in the Local Development Framework.

Table 5 Standards for quantity and accessibility as set out in Chelmsford City Councils’ Policy for the provision of equipped play areas

Quantity standard [hectares per 1,000 population]	Accessibility standard (travel time or equivalent distance)
0.81ha (8,100m ²) Borough wide split into:	
Equipped play areas and informal ball games areas: 0.405ha (4050m ²) split into:	
Local Play Areas Designed for pre-school children and children up to 8 years of age should contain a variety of static and moving play equipment and	Within 400m of any dwelling and accessible without crossing major traffic flows or similar obstructions.

seats for accompanying adults. The minimum size for each play area should be 600m ²	
NB This category combines pre-school play areas and infant play areas into one category and designated a 'local play area'	
Neighbourhood Play Areas Designated for children up to 12 years of age. The play areas should contain a variety of static and moving play equipment, some more challenging play features for older children, seating, and where possible be associated with other recreational facilities, space for ball games etc. The minimum size for each play area should be 2,400m ² NB this category was previously defined as a junior play area.	Within 1,000 m of each family dwelling (within 5 – 10-minute walk)
Informal ball games space: defined as being designed for informal ball games by children of all ages. These should include a basketball station and/or hard surface of 10x10 square metres. The minimum size of each area should be 1ha (10,000m ²)	Within 400m of any dwelling.
Informal Youth Space: 0.405ha (4,050m ²)	
Defined as being intended to provide for the informal meeting and play of youth. They will initially be laid to grass and contain a youth shelter. Careful consideration should be given to their location in terms of possible noise nuisance. These should be a minimum of 1200m ²	Within a 1,000m of any dwelling.

3.3.36 It is acknowledged that different targets and standards need to be applied in rural areas making adjustments in the catchment criteria. The policy sets a target to provide at least one equipped play area in each village or significant settlement irrespective of the population served or the distance to be travelled. Designated areas are listed in the document.

3.3.37 The spatial strategy is complemented by a qualitative assessment of equipped play provision including:

- The play value of the equipment provided, including its diversity
- Social factors leading to co-operative and stimulating play
- The provision of inclusive play opportunities
- The opportunity to interact with natural features and the surrounding environment generally
- The security, safety and standard of maintenance afforded to the play area

3.3.38 Quality:

- The policy is for all neighbourhood play areas to achieve a quality benchmark of at least 70% and for all local play areas and those serving rural communities to achieve a quality benchmark of at least 60%.

3.3.39 Delivery:

- Rationalisation and improvement of existing facilities, tested against the standards is laid out in the development plan on a site-by-site basis.
- The development programme includes site specific actions to improve access and quality and improve provision in areas currently lacking.
- In some cases, some substandard or inappropriately sited play areas are proposed for removal.

Be Moved: Sports & Arts Strategy for Chelmsford (2012-2016)

3.3.40 The strategy recognises that both sport and art have a key role to play in keeping citizens both physically and mentally healthy, reducing social exclusion and shaping the identity and feel of a place.

3.3.41 The vision for the strategy is:

"To encourage people who live, work & visit Chelmsford to get actively involved in sport & arts, to support local organisations and to develop the City's high quality of life & reputation in the East of England".

3.3.42 The strategy identifies how this vision can be achieved, including where resources will be allocated and how new and existing funding streams can be utilised.

Consultation was undertaken with the public and stakeholders which led to the development of a 'Triple A' approach (Services will be: Active, Affordable and Accessible) and 5 goals for the Leisure and Cultural Services to Work towards as follows:

1. To promote health and wellbeing
2. To build an Olympic and Paralympic legacy
3. To facilitate community initiatives to enrich society
4. To deliver a high quality and varied programme of sport and arts
5. To ensure our services are right for you

Allotment Strategy (2012)

3.3.43 The strategy was developed to "review and analyse allotment provision throughout the City, to determine existing and future needs and to set standards for provision in the context of future land use planning". It was adopted by the City Council in 2013.

3.3.44 The standard adopted by cabinet was 13.5 plots per 1000 population, with sites no further than 1.5km from residential areas. It is proposed to adopt 125sqm or 5 rods as the standard plot size wherever it is practical to do so and no more than one plot per tenant will be allocated, in order to ensure the most efficient use of sites.

3.3.45 Other priorities for maintenance and improvements were laid out, including the development of new sites in areas currently under provided for, and including the standard and updated relevant planning guidance as part of the Councils emerging Green Infrastructure Strategy.

3.3.46 As part of the development proposals in North East Chelmsford, to mitigate shortfalls and secure adequate provision, allotments provision has been included in the North East Chelmsford Action Plan and it is anticipated 170 plots will be secured through the planning process.

Public Health Strategy (2012)

3.3.47 The strategy sets out an integrated approach to contributing to the health and wellbeing of Chelmsford residents, in response to the 2010 the Government Public Health White Paper *Healthy Lives, Healthy People*. It represents the needs of local residents, whilst promoting the capacity of the Council as a provider of public health services. It aims to tackle isolated health and social problems, such as:

- alcohol consumption and binge drinking
- obesity, smoking
- increasing the amount of physical activities

3.3.48 The Council's vision for public health in Chelmsford is:

'One in which all individuals and families are able to pursue healthy, ambitious and prosperous lives. Where active and responsible citizens work together with healthcare providers and local institutions to help tackle detrimental health-related behaviour, reduce health inequalities, and tackle pockets of deprivation to improve the health and wellbeing of the whole community'.

3.3.49 Many of Chelmsford City Council's services contribute directly or indirectly to improving public health, for example Leisure, Public Health & Protection Services and Parks. The Council has worked with the Primary Care Trust either directly or through the Local Strategic Partnership's Health and Wellbeing Group to contribute to reducing health inequalities and improving public health.

3.3.50 One of the priority actions within the strategy is to increase the use and accessibility of green spaces.

Chelmsford Biodiversity Action Plan (2013-2017)

3.3.51 Since the first Chelmsford Biodiversity Action Plan (CBAP) was launched in 2002 the Chelmsford Biodiversity Forum (CBF) partners have delivered significant biodiversity improvements across the City. As well as delivering physical improvements, engagement with local communities in projects that benefit their local area has also taken place.

3.3.52 The Forum is made up of representatives from Chelmsford City Council, Essex County Council, Essex Wildlife Trust, the RSPB, Writtle College, Anglia Ruskin University, Essex and

Suffolk Water, Environment Agency, The Conservation Volunteers, Royal Horticultural Society at Hyde Hall, National Trust, The Environment Bank and Essex Biodiversity Project.

3.3.53 The current CBAP sets out examples of successes over the last five years and how this work will continue over the next five years until 2017. It supports the priorities set out in the Council's Corporate Plan, "Promoting a more sustainable environment" and "Providing high quality public spaces."

3.3.54 A key purpose of the Chelmsford BAP has been to deliver the Essex BAP targets locally. In February 2012 the new Essex BAP was launched giving detailed assessments of the status and condition of 20 habitats (www.essexbiodiversity.org.uk). The Chelmsford BAP focuses on the key habitats that occur within the City, identifying projects that will help deliver the County BAP targets.

3.4 Cross border issues and Duty to Cooperate

3.4.1 Chelmsford shares boundaries with seven other planning authorities: Basildon Borough Council; Braintree District Council; Brentwood Borough Council; Epping Forest District Council; Maldon District Council; Rochford District Council; and Uttlesford District Council.

3.4.2 Neighbouring local authorities provide facilities/open space that may be used by residents in Chelmsford, and vice versa. This largely applies to built facilities and playing pitches, but also to large open spaces e.g. natural green space/country parks. However, much open space is provided locally, and therefore cross boundary use is less relevant.

3.4.3 Where there is an undersupply of open space within an area adjoining a neighbouring authority, the open space provision within the neighbouring local authority areas should be considered, as provision within these areas could potentially be serving residents within Chelmsford.

3.4.4 The Community and Stakeholder Consultation report (section 6.2) identified a number of open space cross border issues which should be taken into consideration, as follows⁷:

Basildon Borough Council

3.4.5 Hanningfield Reservoir Provides the main water source for Basildon. Basildon Council would support any local standards of provision that would allow residents of the Basildon Borough to be able to gain improved access to open space, sport or recreation in the neighbouring Chelmsford areas. For example, a significant proportion of Ancient Woodland surrounding the settlements of Billericay and Wickford is located in the Chelmsford City area.

3.4.6 Stock Brook Manor Country Club and Queens Park Country Park are both located north of Billericay in close proximity to the Chelmsford City area.

⁷ It should be noted that paragraphs 3.4.5 to 3.4.9, 3.4.13 to 3.4.14 and 3.4.16 to 3.4.18 are the views of the local authorities consulted.

3.4.7 Runwell/Wickford - Wickford has lowest ha of Open Space per population head of the Basildon Borough and it may be that Chelmsford would need to help meeting levels of provision within the Chelmsford City area. Wickford Memorial Park is also of excellent quality and high intrinsic benefit, and is located to the north of Wickford and crosses the boundary with Chelmsford. Therefore, any sites identified for future development in either Runwell or Wickford, or as part of a cross-boundary allocation identified through the production of respective Basildon and Chelmsford Council's Local Plans, will need to consider open space provision. It is worth noting that residents of Wickford will need to access open space and recreation facilities in Chelmsford and vice versa for Runwell residents accessing open space and recreation in Wickford.

3.4.8 Provision of play areas in Runwell could meet the needs of Wickford residents and vice versa.

3.4.9 Norsey Woods is a large area of Ancient Woodland to the east of Billericay, which is in close proximity to the Chelmsford boundary. Basildon Council is keen to ensure due consideration of this area as part of any assessment of open space.

What Chelmsford City Council will do

3.4.10 Where opportunities arise e.g. new development, consideration will be given to improving access to open space, sport and recreation facilities in the areas of Chelmsford that border Basildon e.g. Billericay and Wickford.

3.4.11 Where opportunities arise e.g. new development in the South of the District, particularly in the vicinity of Runwell and Wickford, consideration will be given to the shortfalls of provision of open space in these cross boundary areas.

3.4.12 The Council note the proximity of specific sites noted above, and whilst not included within this assessment, these will be considered in any specific and relevant proposed developments.

Braintree District Council

3.4.13 Great Notley Country Park - although located within the Braintree District it is within close proximity to Chelmsford.

3.4.14 Great Leighs Race Course – equestrian facility. We are not sure if equestrian facilities are included within the brief. If so, considering the close proximity to the Braintree boundary and possible impacts this might be relevant issue for Braintree and Chelmsford.

What Chelmsford City Council will do

3.4.15 The Council note the proximity of specific sites noted by Braintree District Council above, and whilst not included within this assessment, will be considered in any specific and relevant proposed developments.

Brentwood Borough Council

3.4.16 A key recommendation of the draft (Green Infrastructure Study) report is to collectively protect key landscape assets forming the distinctive character of Brentwood e.g. Wooded farmland, fenland, river valley, and ancient woodlands with coppicing; in consultation with neighbouring authorities so that features are protected and enhanced in their entirety across the Council boundaries as part of a community led, multi-functional, accessible, countryside.

3.4.17 The Open Space and Sports Facilities Study currently being commissioned by Brentwood will be required to assess the impact that open space and sports facility provision in neighbouring local authorities has on future provision and planning.

3.4.18 Potential need for reference to cemeteries, need, demand, importance etc.

What Chelmsford City Council will do

3.4.19 The Council note the recommendation of Brentwood Borough Council's draft Green Infrastructure (GI) Study report, but does not currently have a GI Study in place. The Council would support the approach in principal.

3.4.20 The current development of Brentwood's Open Space and Sports Facilities Study is noted and the Council awaits to see the findings.

4.0 LOCAL NEEDS ASSESSMENT

4.1 Introduction

4.1.1 The local needs assessment informs each of the key components of the study: open space; playing pitches and outdoor sport; and indoor recreational facilities. The following section provides a summary of the key findings in relation to open space (the full local needs report is provided as a separate document – the Community and Stakeholder Consultation Report).

4.1.2 The open space study examines local need for a wide range of different types of recreational open space. It draws upon a range of survey and analytical techniques including a review of consultation findings from relevant studies, questionnaire surveys and one to one stakeholder interviews. The work was undertaken from October 2014 to February 2015.

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

- An online general household survey (Leisure Plus Household Survey);
- Schools and Colleges Survey;
- A survey of Town/Parish Councils;
- A survey of local groups and organisations;
- A survey of sports National Governing Bodies (NGBs); league secretaries and local clubs;
- Casual user survey (Parks);
- Play and Youth Organisations Survey.

4.1.4 In addition to the above a series of one to one stakeholder interviews were undertaken.

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

1. General Community Consultation (Leisure Plus Household Survey, Place survey and subsequent Chelmsford residents' surveys and Stakeholder views – Public health);
2. Town and Parish Councils;
3. Parks, green spaces, countryside and rights of way;
4. Children and Young People;
5. Cross Boundary Issues – Neighbouring Authorities;

4.1.6 It should be noted that **the paragraphs/comments provided within sections 4.2 to 4.7 below are a summary of the views of the groups and stakeholders consulted, and are**

not the recommendations of this report. However, the results of the consultation have been used to inform the recommendations and open space standards within this report.

4.2. General Community Consultation – Key Findings

Use of open spaces

4.2.1 It is Chelmsford's parks, gardens and recreation grounds that are most commonly used by most respondent households on a regular monthly basis (81%); followed closely by rights of way - footpaths, bridleways and cyclepaths (79%);

4.2.2 Other spaces used at least weekly by at least 30% of respondent households are country parks/countryside and woodlands and informal open spaces (for ball games, picnics, hobbies, dog walking etc.);

4.2.3 Play areas, areas for water recreation and wildlife areas/nature reserves are also fairly frequently used but with fewer respondent households (at least 40%) using them on a regular basis (at least monthly).

Quantity

4.2.4 Other than for youth facilities and footpaths, bridleways and cyclepaths, a majority of respondent households reported that there were currently enough of all of the various kinds of open space, sport and recreational facilities;

4.2.5 A clear majority (67%) of respondent households think there is a need for more facilities for teenagers and a majority (54%) thought that there are not enough footpaths, bridleways and cyclepaths. In addition, just over 47% highlighted a need for more wildlife areas /nature reserves;

4.2.6 Following this, other aspects where there was considered to be a shortfall by many were: play areas; allotments and informal open spaces (for ball games, picnics, hobbies, dog walking etc.). 40% or over indicated a need for more of such facilities.

Quality

4.2.7 42% respondent households highlighted the quality of outdoor facilities for teenagers as being either poor or very poor. Around 21% thought that the quality of allotments was poor or very poor;

4.2.8 Outdoor facilities/open spaces with high levels of satisfaction noted are parks/recreation grounds (over 70% rate quality as good or very good); and country parks/countryside/ woodlands (67%);

4.2.9 Other facilities where a majority of respondent households rate quality as being good (or better) are play areas and wildlife areas/nature reserves (55%).

Access

4.2.10 There is great variance in respondent households willingness to spend time travelling to different types of facility and open space;

4.2.11 50% or more of users are prepared to travel 16 minutes or more to use some facilities such as wildlife areas/nature reserves (71%); country parks, countryside and woodlands (65%); areas for water recreation (55%); and specialist indoor sports facilities (50%);

4.2.12 In contrast, for a significant number of respondent households, facilities need to be much more locally accessible before they will be used (for example, play areas, allotments, and informal open space areas informal open spaces - for ball games, picnics, hobbies, dog walking etc.);

4.2.13 Respondent households are more likely than not to drive to many facilities most notably country parks, countryside and woodlands; and wildlife areas/nature reserves;

4.2.14 Walking and cycling are the norm for facilities such as play areas; parks and recreation grounds; and informal open spaces for ball games, picnics, hobbies, dog walking etc.;

4.2.15 Ensuring good foot and cycle path access to facilities is likely to encourage residents to walk/cycle further to access facilities and to use them more often.

Priorities and other issues identified from the consultation

4.2.16 The categories highlighted by the largest number of respondent households (55%) as a high priority for potential improvement/new provision was for footpaths, bridleway and cyclepath provision;

4.2.17 Other notable high priorities for improvement noted by significant numbers were children's play areas (39%); outdoor facilities for teenagers (38%); parks/gardens/local recs. (34%); and informal open spaces (33%);

4.2.18 The only category where it is clear cut that the primary need identified is for more facilities is provision for teenagers (73%);

4.2.19 For others quality/access improvements to existing provision is clearly the more common kind of improvement suggested e.g. churchyards (89%);

4.2.20 Improved access is particularly significant for some categories e.g. access to country parks, woodland etc.; water recreation; and wildlife areas/nature reserves;

4.2.21 Providing opportunities for physical activity by developing and maintaining appropriate facilities such as sports and leisure centres, parks and open spaces is very important in relation to promoting better public health and reducing health inequalities;

4.2.22 Some sectors of the community face particular barriers to access such as disabled people; children and young people; households in the more isolated rural areas and those in the more deprived urban wards of the study area.

4.3 Town and Parish Councils – Key Findings

General overview

4.3.1 Within the Chelmsford City Council area there are 27 parishes. Surveys were sent to all Town/Parish Councils together with two reminders to chase responses as needed. In total 13 Town/Parish Councils responded. If a Town/Parish Council response was not received the latest parish plan (where available) was reviewed in relation to identified sport/recreation issues and plans/aspirations. Some broad findings from the survey were that:

- All of the Town/Parish councils who responded were directly responsible for the management of various local spaces and facilities;
- 10 of the 12 local councils who have responded noted that there was a need for additional or improved open space, sport, play and recreation facilities within their town or parish;
- Most of the Town/Parish Councils were not aware if there was scope for greater community use of outdoor sport and recreation spaces at local schools but three (Bromfield PC, Great Waltham PC and Springfield PC) highlighted potential for community use (See Community and Stakeholder Consultation Report, Para 6.3.1.4);
- The sector of the community most commonly identified as being poorly served in relation to their needs was young people/teenagers.

Common areas of concern

4.3.2 The areas of most common concern highlighted by Town and Parish Councils are:

- The need for more and better access to footpaths, bridleways and cyclepaths;
- The need for additional Multi-use games areas/tennis courts in some parishes (primarily MUGAs);
- Not enough areas for teenagers e.g. skateparks, shelters etc. and the quality of existing play areas;
- Winter pitches for football and rugby - need for more and improvements in quality.

Quality considerations

4.3.3 The quality factors most commonly deemed to be of a high priority as regards open spaces are that:

- Equipment and grounds should be of high quality and well maintained;
 - They should be safe and secure for those using them;
 - They should be easy to get to for all members of the community;
-

- There should be adequate opportunities for dog walking and freedom from dog fouling;
- They should be clean and free from litter and graffiti.

Detailed responses on open space typologies

4.3.4 Many town and parish councils provided detailed responses relating to aspects of quantity and quality of the various elements of open spaces surveyed. These responses can be found in the Community and Stakeholder Consultation report.

4.4 Parks, Green Space, Countryside and Rights of Way

Introduction and overview

4.4.1 Chelmsford City Council does not have a formal green infrastructure strategy. The evidence and outcomes presented from the open spaces study will help support the development of a strategy in the future;

4.4.2 Natural England stress the need to take into account the Accessible Natural Greenspace Standard (ANGst) as a starting point for developing a standard for natural and semi natural green space. Variations from this standard should be justified;

4.4.3 The Woodland Trust Woodland Access Standard (WAS - endorsed by Natural England) provides guidance on access to Woodland, which should be taken into consideration;

4.4.4 The Essex Wildlife Trust published an access to Natural Greenspace Analysis document in 2009, which lays out standards of access that should be expected. GIS layers and datasets are available to facilitate the development of future greenspace strategic planning;

4.4.5 There is widespread and cohesive activity focused on natural open spaces, biodiversity and wildlife in the city with the potential to increasing the value of natural open spaces and improving access;

4.4.6 Stakeholders are keen to improve partnership working to improve facilities and influence planning, particularly in the North of the City where development proposals are in place.

Quantity

Leisure Plus Household Survey

4.4.7 54% thought that there are not enough footpaths, bridleways and cyclepaths. In addition, just over 47% highlighted a need for more wildlife areas /nature reserves;

4.4.8 A further 40% indicated a need for more allotments and informal open spaces.

General observations

4.4.9 It is noted that Country Park provision in the city is heavily used at peak periods, with limited access during large-scale events. This leads to over usage in the summer;

4.4.10 Applying the Woodland Trust – Woodland Access standard in Chelmsford, and comparing to nearby local authorities, Chelmsford has comparatively low provision of woodlands;

4.4.11 Chelmsford currently only has three Local Nature Reserves, (one further site due to be declared) falling short of the Natural England ANGSt target;

4.4.12 National Trust research indicated an increasing (unsustainable) pressure on existing wildlife sites and SSSI's. People are less willing to travel long distances, increasing the use of local sites.

Quality

Leisure Plus Survey

4.4.13 Outdoor facilities/open spaces with high levels of satisfaction noted are parks/recreation grounds (over 70% rate quality as good or very good); and country parks/countryside/ woodlands (67%);

4.4.14 Around 21% of Leisure Plus respondents thought that the quality of allotments was poor or very poor.

Casual Users Survey (Parks)

4.4.15 The quality of the Chelmsford Parks included in the study is considered to be of a high standard with 82% giving park overall design and appearance a top score of 1 or 2, 87% for maintenance and 67% rating cleanliness at the same standard demonstrating the overall feel of the parks are positive and welcoming;

4.4.16 Infrastructure also has a positive review with 56% of respondents giving a score of a 5 – extremely satisfied, or a 4. Paving and fencing received 60% rating and benches and seating 57%;

4.4.17 Qualitative feedback praises Chelmsford Parks as being well maintained and looked after.

Community Groups Survey

4.4.18 68% of user groups surveyed are happy with the overall quality of their local recreation grounds and parks (rating them as good or very good);

4.4.19 50% were happy with the overall quality of wildlife areas, nature reserves and accessible woodlands and 47% with Country Park provision;

4.4.20 The quality of footpaths, bridleways and cyclepaths are not considered high with 37% rating them adequate and 27% rating them poor, or very poor. General comments support these findings noting that infrastructure issues (drainage and overgrown) and poor connectivity of cycle and footpaths make them problematic to users;

4.4.21 All respondents who considered allotment provision relevant reported standards to be either adequate 45% or good 15%.

General observations

4.4.22 The high standards of maintenance and management of parks and recreation grounds stands out amongst respondent's comments. This is particularly relevant to city centre sites such as Central Park, Bell Meadow and Admirals Park;

4.4.23 The quality of parks and recreation sites in Chelmsford is high, with a large number of green flag and green heritage sites; the aspiration to continue achieving more green flags demonstrates the drive to improve quality;

4.4.24 A good working relationship between the key stakeholders working to protect biodiversity and nature conservation is evident, facilitating access to sites and making improvements;

4.4.25 The integrity of the natural landscape at Danbury Common/Blake's Wood has been raised as a concern due to overuse of footpaths by mountain bikers. A need for a separate dedicated facility is something that should be considered⁸.

Access

Leisure Plus Household Survey

4.4.26 Where households make use of the typologies identified, 50% or more of users are prepared to travel 16 minutes or more to use some facilities such as wildlife areas/nature reserves (71%); country parks, countryside and woodlands (65%); and areas for water recreation (55%);

4.4.27 Other facilities however are expected to be more locally accessible, with respondents less willing to travel, for example, 63% of users would expect allotments to be within a 10-minute travel time, of which 27% would not wish to travel more than 5 minutes;

4.4.28 55% of users would expect informal open spaces to be within a 10-minute travel time, of which 23% would not wish to travel more than 5 minutes;

4.4.29 The Leisure Plus findings show a wide variance in the maximum travel times people are willing to undertake and this should be taken into consideration when setting access standards.

⁸ It should be noted that Danbury Common/Blake's Wood is not part of Chelmsford City Council's ownership and responsibility.

Casual Users Survey

4.4.30 A majority of respondents report having excellent access to their nearest park with 48 respondents travelling less than 5 minutes to reach the site. It is also evident that people are willing to travel to reach the facilities they require with a total of 62 respondents willing to travel in excess of 11 minutes upwards;

4.4.31 The added attraction of the museum increased the maximum time respondents were willing to travel to Oakland's Park with 38% willing to travel 20 plus minutes.

General Observations

4.4.32 The need for good provision of public transport linking the natural environment to rail or bus stations is important when considering improvements and development;

4.4.33 There is very poor and very limited access for the horse-riding community to bridleways and generally poor facilities for horse riders;

4.4.34 Limited access to interpretation materials/boards and general information in wildlife areas and nature reserves is a repeated comment made by local organisations;

4.4.35 General direction and access information is also considered lacking directing visitors to Wildlife sites and Natures reserves;

4.4.36 Long term provision of natural open space – Boreham Airfield and the quarry provides a good future development opportunity considered by a number of key stakeholders;

4.4.37 River access is hampered on both wildlife and recreational levels by old weirs and structures that have a negative impact and disrupt river flow rates;

4.4.38 Planned improvements by the PROW team in 2015 should improve efficiency in programming and producing clear and digitised cutting maps and schedules;

4.4.39 It is considered that some sites of SSSI such as Hanningfield Reservoir should only give limited access to the general public – protecting the habitat located there.

4.4.5 Priorities/other issues identified from the consultation

4.4.40 The opportunity to develop 'Bulls Quarry' in Boreham into recreational facilities including a country park has been identified by stakeholders as a long term aspiration that should be included in planning policy;

4.4.41 Chelmsford has no formal green infrastructure policy and this should be addressed;

4.4.42 The presence of the Canal and River is part of the cities identity and offers good recreational value. A fully functioning 'honeypot' water based facility is an aspiration including marina moorings and visitor facilities. Increase use of the river by canoe and local educational groups is putting pressure on existing facilities;

4.4.43 There is considerable interest in improving links between the Chelmer and Blackwater Navigation and River Chelmer – through infrastructure projects such as improving bridges, and in particular the provision of a new ‘cut’;

4.4.44 Clear need for development of facilities for horse riders given the existing significant limitations noted on access to bridleways. New developments to give access to horse riders;

4.4.45 Good, safe cycle access to open spaces is highlighted as a priority by many stakeholders including Natural England and Sustrans. This is supported with a majority of stakeholders commenting on poor provision in specific areas.

4.5 Children and Young People

Quantity

4.5.1 A clear majority (67%) of residents responding to the Leisure Plus household survey think there is a need for more facilities for teenagers;

4.5.2 The most commonly identified shortfall across the surveys and discussions undertaken as part of this study was for the provision of teenage facilities;

4.5.3 55% of respondents to the Play and Youth Organisations Survey for teenagers felt there were not adequate youth facilities (age 13-19) in parks, more specifically 76% stating there are not enough youth shelters, and 62% not enough skateboard and BMX facilities. Outdoor sport is better catered for with 62% agreeing there is adequate provision;

4.5.4 43% of groups felt that there are not enough ‘formal’ equipped playgrounds for children of 12 years and under. Informal space is better provided for with 52% agreeing there is enough;

4.5.5 90% of teenagers responding to the Youth Council survey disagreed with the statement ‘there are enough outdoor youth facilities and spaces for young people (13+) to meet in your area.

4.5.6 The ‘Provision of equipped play areas’ strategy is adopted and part of an established programme of change and improvement that should help ensure improved and rationalised provision of facilities across the city;

4.5.7 Skate park provision is good in the South and Central Parts of the city with improvements to equipment currently underway. There is a gap in provision in the north of the city;

4.5.8 There is a consistent view from respondents that wilder, natural green space should be available for young people.

Quality

4.5.9 Over 50% of groups were generally satisfied with the overall quality of Chelmsford's Children's play areas, (rating quality as either good, or very good);

4.5.10 There were much lower levels of satisfaction with outdoor youth facilities, and skate parks with 68% rating them adequate or poor, and only 27% rating them very good or good;

4.5.11 Respondents would like to see more interesting and creative play equipment in local parks, citing Hylands Park as a good example of exciting play equipment;

4.5.12 When asked to identify aspects that most need improvement 33% of respondents in the 2012/13 Chelmsford City Council residents survey identified activities for teenagers (ranked 3rd overall);

4.5.13 Various stakeholders highlighted the importance and value of provision of natural informal green space and planning for play in the future should take this into account, in addition to formal equipped play spaces;

4.5.14 Leisure plus survey respondents highlighted notable high priorities for improvement of children's play areas (39%) and outdoor facilities for teenagers (38%);

4.5.15 90% of youth Council respondents felt playgrounds with teenage equipment would be priority for improvement – and 60% included it in their top 3. Wild natural play areas such as grass, ponds, and trees for climbing, sand and mud were also considered a priority.

Access

4.5.16 69% of users in the Leisure Plus household survey would expect play areas to be within a 10-minute travel time, of which 27% of those would not wish to travel more than 5 minutes. Access standards should take this into consideration;

4.5.17 Location and proximity of facilities for young people are important considerations – in terms of being too close to young children's facilities, but not too far away from the boundary of the park – particularly if being used in darker months;

4.5.18 It is important that younger children have access to some kind of play space within easy walking distance from home and that teenagers have access to spaces to hang out independently with friends;

4.5.19 80% of teenage Youth Council respondents felt they would be happy to walk further to bigger, better facilities, only 3 respondents felt it important to have somewhere nearby;

4.5.20 Teenagers are happy to increase their travel time to have access to bigger, better facilities;

4.5.21 Disability groups have identified a range of access needs which should be taken into consideration as part of any new playground design and installation.

Other Issues and priorities identified from the consultation

4.5.22 Fees and license requirements for using parks and green spaces act as a deterrent to organised groups to use local parks, and country park facilities;

4.5.23 Partnership working across departments including youth services, sports and parks is important to maximize investment into and use of facilities;

4.5.24 Security and lighting is a significant issue for teenagers in using green spaces;

4.5.25 Clearly identified 'teenage' facilities would help young people feel more comfortable using open space and less likely to be told not to 'hang around' by adults;

4.5.26 The Natural England campaign for natural play is supported through the findings of this study with respondents keen to see more provision of this type.

4.6 Cross Boundary Issues – Neighbouring Local Authorities

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

4.6.2 It is noteworthy that few strategies currently appear to look in depth at cross boundary issues or identify networks of green infrastructure or open space which cross local authority boundaries; and officers highlight a relatively small number of specific cross border issues and plans (with the notable exception of Basildon – see Consultation Report, Table 18).

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

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

4.7 Concluding remarks

4.7.1 The survey work, stakeholder consultation, desk-based research and group sessions have highlighted a wide range of issues of value to the wider Open Space, Sports and Recreation Facility Study. There is a strong degree of consistency across the various sources on key areas of local need and aspiration from which we can be confident that the findings are robust and reliable, providing a strong evidence base to be combined with the detailed facilities audit.

4.7.2 The findings and evidence highlighted above (extracted from the Community and Stakeholder Consultation Report) will feed into:

- The development of green space policy statements;
 - The recommended standards for typologies of green spaces (quantity, quality and access elements);
 - The six area profiles;
 - The recommended action plans.
-

5.0 AUDIT OF EXISTING OPEN SPACE ASSETS

5.1 General approach

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

Table 6 Chelmsford typologies

Typologies with standards	Typologies mapped but no standards ⁹
Formal provision: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allotments • Amenity Green Space (>0.15ha) • Park, Sport and Recreation Grounds: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Park and Recreation Ground - Outdoor Sport (Pitches) - Outdoor Sport (Fixed) - Outdoor Sport (Private) • Play Space (Children) • Play Space (Youth) • Natural Green Space 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Education sites • Churchyards and Cemeteries

Allotments



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

⁹ An explanation for not developing standards for these typologies is outlined in the following sections

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

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

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

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

5.1.5 The Council’s Allotment Strategy sets out provision, access and quality standards which have been considered in Section 6.

Amenity Green Space



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

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

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

5.1.8 It should be noted that amenity green space sites less than 0.15ha in size were not included in the access or quantitative assessment. This is because these sites were considered too small to be of genuine recreational value, so whilst they may have aesthetic value, their size constricts their functionality as an open space. The sites less than 0.15ha have been mapped and are shown as amenity green space (<0.15ha) on the open space maps in part 2 of the study. All the figures and analysis provided for amenity green space within both parts of the report are for sites greater than 0.15 ha, unless otherwise stated.

Park, Sport and Recreation Grounds



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

- **Park and Recreation Ground.** This comprises the general open space surrounding play areas, sports facilities etc. used for general recreation.
- **Outdoor Sport (Pitches).** This comprises publicly accessible sports pitches (including football and rugby).
- **Outdoor Sports (Fixed).** This comprises all other non-pitch based provision including publicly accessible tennis courts and bowling greens.
- **Outdoor Sport (Private).** Outdoor sports space with limited public access (e.g. private sports grounds), have also been recorded and mapped where known. Private sport space makes up an important part of outdoor sports provision across the City Council area, and forms an important part of the community facilities. The private sports

spaces have been mapped separately to publicly accessible sites, to determine exact provision of the different types of provision.

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

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

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

5.1.12 The recommended standards for this typology (set out in Section 6 below) are intended to provide sufficient space. The Playing Pitch Strategy deals with the detail i.e. current and future supply of pitches.

Play Space (Children and Youth)



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

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

5.1.15 The council's Policy for the provision of equipped play areas includes the following categories:

- Local play areas – designed for pre-school and children up to 8 years of age
- Neighbourhood play areas – designed for children up to 12 years of age
- Informal ball games space – designed for the playing of informal ball games by children of all ages
- Informal youth space – for the informal meeting and play of youth

5.1.16 The study has recorded the following:

- Children's Play Space
- Youth Play Space

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

Play space (Children)

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

Play Space (Youth)

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

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

5.1.21 The strategic provision of skate parks is considered under section 7.3 (Para 7.3.2 and Figure 12).

Natural Green Space



5.1.22 For the purpose of this study, natural and semi-natural green space covers a variety of spaces including meadows, woodland, copses, river valleys and lakes all of which share a trait of having natural characteristics and biodiversity value, and are also partly or wholly accessible for informal recreation.

5.1.23 Research elsewhere (Natural England) and the local consultation for this study have identified the value attached to such space for recreation and emotional well-being. A sense of ‘closeness to nature’ with its attendant benefits for people is something that is all too easily lost in urban areas. Natural Green spaces can make important contributions towards local Biodiversity Action Plan targets and can also raise awareness of biodiversity values and issues. Some sites will have statutory rights or permissive codes allowing the public to wander in these sites. Others may have defined Rights of Way or permissive routes running through them. For the remainder of sites there may be some access on a managed basis.

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

5.1.25 Many natural spaces may not be ‘accessible’ in the sense that they cannot be entered and used by the general community, but they can be appreciated from a distance, and contribute to visual amenity, green infrastructure and biodiversity. Although such spaces are not the subject of standards developed by this study, their value is recognised. Whilst every effort was made to exclude these spaces from the assessment, in certain sites access was not always clear. The open space provision maps in part 2 of the report show such spaces as **‘Natural Green Space (Limited Access)’**.

Education

5.1.26 Many schools and colleges have open space and sports facilities within their grounds. This may range from a small playground to large playing fields with several sports pitches.

More often than not, public access to these spaces is restricted and in many cases forbidden. Nevertheless, many of the sports facilities are used by local people on both an informal and formal basis.

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

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

Churchyards and Cemeteries

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

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

5.2 Existing provision of open space

Existing Provision across the whole study area

5.2.1 The GIS mapping of open space has been used to assess the existing quantity of open space across the whole study area. A summary of existing provision is shown in table 7. These figures have been used as the basis for developing the open space standards.

The figures for 'Park, Sport and Recreation Ground (public and private combined)' include a combination of the following four typologies:

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

Table 7 Existing provision across the whole study area

Typology	Existing Provision (ha)	Existing Provision (ha/1000)
Allotments	42.65	0.25
Amenity Green Space	76.98	0.46
Park and Recreation Ground (public and private combined)	273.47	1.63
<i>Park and Recreation Ground</i>	<i>165.83</i>	<i>0.99</i>
<i>Outdoor Sport (Pitches)</i>	<i>50.22</i>	<i>0.3</i>
<i>Outdoor Sport (Fixed)</i>	<i>8.69</i>	<i>0.05</i>
<i>Outdoor Sport (Private)</i>	<i>48.73</i>	<i>0.29</i>
Play Space (Children)	8.21	0.05
Play Space (Youth)	1.4	0.01
Accessible Natural Green Space	1829.83	10.87
Education	176.69	1.05
Churchyards and Cemeteries	36.39	0.22

Existing provision in parishes

5.2.1 The GIS mapping of open space has been used to assess the existing quantity of open space within the parishes. A summary of existing provision is shown in tables 8 – 9.

Table 8 Existing provision of open space (hectares) in parishes

PARISH	Allotments	Amenity Green Space	Park, Sport and Recreation Ground (public and private combined)	Park and Recreation Ground	Outdoor Sport (Pitches)	Outdoor Sport (Fixed)	Outdoor Sport (Private)	Play Space (Children)	Play Space (Youth)	Accessible Natural Green Space	Education	Churchyards and Cemeteries
Bicknacre and Woodham Ferrers	0	0.39	9.43	8.26	1.17	0	0	0.08	0.15	121.04	1.23	0.89
Boreham	0.61	1.2	3.49	2.42	0.99	0	0.08	0.12	0.04	13.02	21.98	0.54
Broomfield	1.9	2	7.13	1.05	0.86	0.08	5.14	0.39	0	52.21	22.64	1.04
Chelmsford	23.91	17.71	100.45	75.77	13.05	4.26	7.37	2.62	0.43	306.74	67.33	13.7
Chignal	0	2.48	1.53	0	0	0	1.53	0	0	0.45	0	0.21
Danbury	1.11	1.21	7.03	4.85	1.76	0.42	0	0.39	0	306.06	2.54	0.97
East Hanningfield	0	0.46	4.81	2.35	0.68	0.12	1.66	0.15	0.08	0	0.82	0.34
Galleywood	3.56	0.96	28.2	16.8	5.25	1.61	4.54	0.26	0.01	43.04	2.28	2.98
Good Easter	0	0	1.04	0.84	0.2	0	0	0.14	0	7.59	0	0.54
Great Baddow	1.31	9.01	16.52	9.22	1.56	0.86	4.88	0.35	0.21	38.94	12.76	1.12
Great and Little Leighs	0	4.01	3.63	2.6	1.03	0	0	0.29	0.11	49.32	0.71	1.05
Great Waltham	0.65	4.95	3.65	1.56	0.67	0	1.42	0.22	0.01	5.31	13.15	1.35
Highwood	0	0.17	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	237.89	1.21	0.42
Little Baddow	0	0	1.57	1.47	0.1	0	0	0.2	0	224.73	0	0.53
Little Waltham	0.74	0.85	3.58	1.92	0.08	0.06	1.52	0.11	0	45.28	12.68	0.46
Margaretting	0.4	0.29	2.33	1.73	0.6	0	0	0.03	0.01	305.07	0.59	0.68
Mashbury	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.87	0	0.46
Pleshey	0.28	0	1.27	0.79	0.37	0.11	0	0.13	0	0	0	0.44
Rettendon	0	1.41	3.16	0	0.53	0	2.63	0.06	0	26.26	0.42	0.87
Roxwell	1.18	1.61	3.49	2.74	0.75	0	0	0.09	0.01	12.05	0.04	0.93
Runwell	1.5	0	19.81	4.55	1.85	0	13.41	0.03	0.07	0	0.91	0.46
Sandon	0.25	4.04	4.65	1.45	1.19	0	2.01	0.02	0	92.43	8.41	0.77
South Hanningfield	1.25	1.05	5.62	3.08	1.7	0.11	0.73	0.12	0.01	484.05	1.72	1.09
South Woodham Ferrers	0.56	2.1	18.47	11.52	6.5	0	0.45	0.7	0.12	132.8	12.53	0
Springfield	0.28	20.44	20.2	14	3.5	0.52	2.18	1.36	0.02	55.48	33.99	0
Stock	0	0.16	6.97	3.29	1.33	0.16	2.19	0.04	0	515.81	0.49	2.94
West Hanningfield	0	2.35	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.07	475.42	0.76	0.45
Writtle	3.73	1.34	17.89	9.86	4.5	0.36	3.17	0.29	0.05	215.28	18.38	1.16

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

PARISH	Allotments	Amenity Green Space	Park, Sport and Recreation Ground (public and private combined)	Park and Recreation Ground	Outdoor Sport (Pitches)	Outdoor Sport (Fixed)	Outdoor Sport (Private)	Play Space (Children)	Play Space (Youth)	Accessible Natural Green Space	Education	Churchyards and Cemeteries
Bicknacre and Woodham Ferrers	0	0.13	3.26	2.86	0.4	0	0	0.03	0.05	41.9	0.43	0.31
Boreham	0.17	0.33	0.97	0.67	0.28	0	0.02	0.03	0.01	3.62	6.11	0.15
Broomfield	0.42	0.44	1.56	0.23	0.19	0.02	1.12	0.09	0	11.41	4.95	0.23
Chelmsford	0.37	0.27	1.55	1.17	0.2	0.07	0.11	0.04	0.01	4.72	1.04	0.21
Chignal	0	7.97	4.92	0	0	0	4.92	0	0	1.45	0	0.68
Danbury	0.22	0.24	1.38	0.95	0.35	0.08	0	0.08	0	60.17	0.5	0.19
East Hanningfield	0	0.39	4.11	2.01	0.58	0.1	1.42	0.13	0.07	0	0.7	0.29
Galleywood	0.62	0.17	4.91	2.93	0.91	0.28	0.79	0.05	0	7.5	0.4	0.52
Good Easter	0	0	2.72	2.2	0.52	0	0	0.37	0	19.87	0	1.41
Great Baddow	0.09	0.62	1.13	0.63	0.11	0.06	0.33	0.02	0.01	2.66	0.87	0.08
Great and Little Leighs	0	1.48	1.34	0.96	0.38	0	0	0.11	0.04	18.21	0.26	0.39
Great Waltham	0.3	2.28	1.68	0.72	0.31	0	0.65	0.1	0	2.44	6.05	0.62
Highwood	0	0.26	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	363.75	1.85	0.64
Little Baddow	0	0	0.99	0.93	0.06	0	0	0.13	0	141.7	0	0.33
Little Waltham	0.56	0.65	2.73	1.46	0.06	0.05	1.16	0.08	0	34.41	9.64	0.35
Margaretting	0.47	0.34	2.75	2.04	0.71	0	0	0.04	0.01	360.18	0.7	0.8
Mashbury	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Pleshey	0.75	0	3.4	2.12	0.99	0.29	0	0.35	0	0	0	1.18
Rettendon	0	0.87	1.95	0	0.33	0	1.62	0.04	0	16.14	0.26	0.53
Roxwell	1.13	1.54	3.34	2.62	0.72	0	0	0.09	0.01	11.54	0.04	0.89
Runwell	0.44	0	5.84	1.34	0.55	0	3.95	0.01	0.02	0	0.27	0.14
Sandon	0.16	2.51	2.89	0.9	0.74	0	1.25	0.01	0	57.34	5.22	0.48
South Hanningfield	0.48	0.4	2.14	1.17	0.65	0.04	0.28	0.05	0	184.12	0.65	0.41
South Woodham Ferrers	0.03	0.13	1.13	0.7	0.4	0	0.03	0.04	0.01	8.07	0.76	0
Springfield	0.01	1.02	1.01	0.7	0.17	0.03	0.11	0.07	0	2.76	1.69	0
Stock	0	0.08	3.32	1.57	0.63	0.08	1.04	0.02	0	245.62	0.23	1.4
West Hanningfield	0	2.41	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.07	487.61	0.78	0.46
Writtle	0.69	0.25	3.33	1.83	0.84	0.07	0.59	0.05	0.01	39.99	3.41	0.22

Existing provision by Analysis Areas

5.2.2 The GIS mapping of open space has been used to assess the existing quantity of open space within the six analysis areas. A summary of existing provision is shown in tables 10 and 11.

Table 10 Existing provision of open space (hectares) in Analysis Areas

Study Area	Allotments	Amenity Green Space	Park, Sport and Recreation Ground (public and private combined)	Park and Recreation Ground	Outdoor Sport (Pitches)	Outdoor Sport (Fixed)	Outdoor Sport (Private)	Play Space (Children)	Play Space (Youth)	Accessible Natural Green Space	Education	Churchyards and Cemeteries
Chelmsford	23.91	17.71	100.45	75.77	13.05	4.26	7.37	2.62	0.43	306.74	67.33	13.7
Rural North	1.4	9.8	10.86	6.08	1.77	0.06	2.95	0.62	0.12	99.91	14.62	2.87
Rural South	4.11	11.07	61.4	29.3	10.31	0.82	20.97	1.1	0.39	990.48	17.3	9.32
Rural West	1.86	4.55	9.67	6.1	1.93	0.11	1.53	0.39	0.02	454.39	1.85	3.67
South Woodham Ferrers	0.56	2.1	18.47	11.52	6.5	0	0.45	0.7	0.12	132.8	12.53	0
Urban Areas	11.38	34.95	88.91	53.35	16.66	3.44	15.46	2.77	0.34	378.31	90.69	6.84

Table 11 Existing provision of open space (ha/1000 population) in Analysis Areas

Study Area	Allotments	Amenity Green Space	Park, Sport and Recreation Ground (public and private combined)	Park and Recreation Ground	Outdoor Sport (Pitches)	Outdoor Sport (Fixed)	Outdoor Sport (Private)	Play Space (Children)	Play Space (Youth)	Accessible Natural Green Space	Education	Churchyards and Cemeteries
Chelmsford	0.37	0.27	1.55	1.17	0.2	0.07	0.11	0.04	0.01	4.72	1.04	0.21
Rural North	0.23	1.58	1.76	0.98	0.29	0.01	0.48	0.1	0.02	16.12	2.36	0.46
Rural South	0.18	0.48	2.67	1.27	0.45	0.04	0.91	0.05	0.02	42.93	0.75	0.4
Rural West	0.52	1.26	2.67	1.69	0.53	0.03	0.42	0.11	0.01	125.83	0.51	1.02
South Woodham Ferrers	0.03	0.13	1.13	0.7	0.4	0	0.03	0.04	0.01	8.07	0.76	0
Urban Areas	0.21	0.65	1.65	0.99	0.31	0.06	0.29	0.05	0.01	7	1.68	0.13

Summary of provision

5.2.3 As can be seen from tables 8 to 11, levels of provision across parishes is sometimes higher compared to analysis areas. The reason for this is that a number of open spaces (especially accessible natural green space) cross parish boundaries, so are counted more than once, giving a higher quantity figure.

6.0 THE DEVELOPMENT OF STANDARDS

6.1 Introduction

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

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

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

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

6.2 Allotments

Table 12 Summary of quantity and access standard

Quantity Standard	Access Standard
0.3 ha/1000 population	720m (15 minutes straight line walk time)

6.2.1 Existing national or local standards

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

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

6.2.1.2 Standards set out within the Chelmsford Allotments Strategy (2012) are as follows:

- Plot Size = 125 sqm
- Provision per 1000 population = 13.5 plots
- Distance/catchment area = 1.5km

6.2.1.3 This standard equates to the provision of 0.16ha of plots per 1000 people (0.0125 x 13.5). It should be noted that this does not allow for any associated infrastructure. In order to make it clearer to planners and developers, our preferred approach is to set out a total amount of space required. From the recent consultation work carried out as part of this study, it is also clear that people want their allotments closer by than the Allotment Strategy recommends.

6.2.1.4 The quantity standard recommended within this study is also in line with that recommended within the 2005 Open Space Assessment.

6.2.2 Quantity standard for allotments

- 86% of all respondents from the household survey 'never' use allotments, meaning this is the least used type of open space;
- The existing average level of provision across the study area is 0.25 ha/1000;
- The household survey identified 43% of people felt there should be more allotments, however, 52% felt there are enough;
- Other consultation identified several areas where there are long waiting lists and an unmet demand for allotments;
- Discussions with Council Officers highlight the need to at least maintain existing levels of provision, and ensure new development provides allotments;

- A minimum standard of 0.30 ha/1000 is proposed for analysing existing provision and for new provision. This is higher than the current average, but reflects the current propensity for higher density housing with smaller gardens, and potential increased demand for allotments.

6.2.3 Access standard for allotments

- Responses received in relation to acceptable travel times to allotments from the household survey identified a mix in responses, with 27% wanting allotments within 5 minutes, 37% within 10 minutes, 25% in 15 minutes, and only 12% beyond this;
- This suggests that people do not want to travel too far to reach their allotment and the majority of people are prepared to travel no more than 15 minutes' walk time;
- It is considered that the availability of allotments is more important than having them very close to home, nevertheless there is some demand for facilities relatively nearby. Therefore, a standard of no more than 15 minutes' walk time (720 metres straight line walk) is proposed.

6.2.4 Quality standards for allotments

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

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

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

6.3 Amenity Green Space

Table 13 Summary of quantity and access standard

Quantity Standard	Access Standard
0.4 ha/1000 population for sites > 0.15ha	480 metres or 10 minutes' walk time

6.3.1 Existing national or local standards

6.3.1.1 The Fields in Trust (Previously known as the National Play Fields Association) Guidance for Outdoor Sport and Play report 'Beyond the Six Acre Standard' proposes a benchmark guideline of 0.6ha/1000 population of amenity green space, and a walking distance guideline of 480m. FIT recommend that the quantity guidelines are adjusted to take account of local circumstances.

6.3.1.2 The previous 2005 Open Space Assessment recommended a quantity standard of 0.81ha/1000 people and an access standard of 10 minutes' walk time (800m).

6.3.2 Quantity standard for Amenity green space

- Existing average level of provision in the study area is 0.46 ha/1000 population (for sites greater than 0.15 ha in size);
- The household survey identified that 45% of people felt there was a need for more informal open space areas, whilst 54% felt there were enough;
- Provision varies greatly with some areas having no provision or falling well below the average, and others far exceeding it;
- There is no strong need or justification for significantly increasing current levels of provision, therefore, a minimum standard of 0.4 ha/1000 population is recommended;
- The minimum size of a space that will be considered acceptable and count towards open space provision is recommended to be 0.15 ha in size (about the size of a mini football pitch). This will avoid a proliferation of small amenity spaces which have no real recreation function. Any spaces below this size will be acceptable in terms of their visual amenity, but would not count towards the required level of provision;
- It is recommended that this provision is considered in tandem with provision of natural green space in new development, and the natural green space standard reflects this (section 4.6).

6.3.4 Access standard for amenity green space

- Consultation identified people want spaces relatively close to home (56% less than 10 minutes'), and that they access these spaces by foot (70%);
- Proposed standard in urban areas of 480 metres (10 minutes' walk time).

6.3.5 Quality standards for amenity green space

6.3.5.1 The audit of provision as well as the consultation has identified the importance attached by local people to open space close to home. The value of 'amenity green space' must be recognised especially within housing areas, where it can provide important local

opportunities for play, exercise and visual amenity that are almost immediately accessible. On the other hand, open space can be expensive to maintain and it is very important to strike the correct balance between having sufficient space to meet the needs of the community for accessible and attractive space, and having too much which would be impossible to manage properly and therefore a potential liability and source of nuisance. It is important that amenity green space should be capable of use for at least some forms of public recreation activity.

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

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

6.4 Park, Sport and Recreation Grounds

Table 14 Summary of quantity and access standard

Quantity Standard	Access Standard
1.65 ha/1000 population for public and private provision	600 metres (12-13 minutes' straight line walk time)

6.4.1 Existing national and local policies

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

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

6.4.1.2 FIT also recommend minimum sizes for formal outdoor space as set out in Table 15 below.

Table 15 FIT recommendations for minimum sizes for formal outdoor space

Open Space Typology	Minimum sizes	Minimum dimensions	Buffer zones
Playing Pitches	<u>Association football</u> Adult soccer: 0.74ha Mini soccer U7/U8 pitch: 0.14ha Mini soccer U9/U10 pitch: 0.25ha <u>Rugby Union</u> 0.70ha <u>Hockey</u> Mini hockey: 0.31ha <u>Lacrosse</u> 0.66ha <u>Cricket</u> Senior recreational 12 pitch: 1.43ha	106x70m 43x33m 60x42m 100x70m 65x48m 100x60m 111.56x128.04m	- - - - - - -
Other outdoor (non-pitch) sports	<u>Athletics</u> 6 lane track: 1.51ha <u>Tennis courts</u> 1 recreational court: 0.06ha 2 recreational courts: 0.11ha For each adjacent court <u>Bowling greens</u> Flat green: 0.12ha Crown green: 0.08ha	172.03x87.64m 34.75x17.07m 34.75x31.70m 34.75x14.63m 34.4x34.4m 27.4x27.4	- - - - -
Equipped/ designated play area	LAP: 0.01ha LEAP: 0.04ha NEAP: 0.1ha	10x10m (100sqm) 20x20m (400sqm) 31.6x31.6m (minimum activity zone of 1,000sqm comprising an area for play equipment and structures and a hard surfaced area of at least 465sqm (the minimum needed to play five-a-side football)).	5m 20m 30m
Other outdoor provision (MUGAs and skateboard parks).	MUGA: 0.1ha	40x20m	30m

6.4.1.3 The previous 2005 Open Space Assessment recommended a quantity standard of 2.0ha/1000 population for Parks and Gardens, with an access standard of 10 minutes' drive (4km).

6.4.2 Quantity of parks and recreation grounds

- Existing average level of provision in the study area is 1.34 ha/1000;
- There is an additional 0.29 ha/1000 of private sports space which includes a variety of uses (excluding Golf Clubs);
- In total, there is 1.63 ha/1000 of public and private parks and recreation grounds;
- The household survey identified the following in relation to this typology:
 - 70% of people felt there was enough local parks and recreation grounds;
 - 63% felt there were enough tennis courts and bowling greens;
- A proposed standard of 1.65 ha/1000 population is proposed for public and private park, sport and recreation grounds. Although this figure is below the recommended standard within the previous 2005 Open Space Assessment, it is set just above the FIT standards and the existing average levels of provision. Whilst the public consultation identified no strong demand for an increase in provision of this typology, the proposed standard is considered to be realistic and deliverable.
- This standard will be used for analysing existing provision and the requirements for new provision.
- It should be reiterated that this standard is intended to provide sufficient space. The Playing Pitch Strategy deals with some of the detail i.e. supply of pitches and how they will be laid out.

6.4.3 Access standard for parks and recreation grounds

- 56% of people want facilities within 10 minutes of home, with a further 24% within 15 minutes;
- 72% of people walk to these facilities;
- A standard of 600 metres (12-13 minutes' walk time) is recommended.

6.4.4 Quality standards for parks and recreation grounds

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

6.5 Play Space (children and youth)

Table 16 Summary of quantity and access standards

Typology	Quantity Standard	Access Standard
Play Space (Children)	0.05 ha/1000 population	• 480m (10 minutes' straight line walk time)
Play Space (Youth)	0.05 ha/1000 population	• Youth Provision – 600m (12-13 minutes' straight line walk time)

6.5.1 Existing National and Local Policies

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

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

6.5.1.3 Chelmsford's Policy for the provision of equipped play areas (2012) sets out the following provision and access standards:

- Equipped play (Local and Neighbourhood play areas) and informal ball games = 0.405ha per 1000 people and within 400m for local play areas and informal ball games and 1000m for neighbourhood play areas.
- Informal youth space (laid to grass and containing a youth shelter) = 0.405ha per 1000 people and within 1000m from any dwelling

6.5.1.4 These are deemed to be out of date and the quantity standards appear to be based on the old FIT standards. There are concerns about the deliverability and sustainability around these quantity standards. The standards recommended within this study are based on more up-to-date information.

6.5.1.5 The access standards recommended within this study for children's play are very similar to that of the local play category within the 2012 policy, although there is no distinction between local and neighbourhood play areas, and overall this means the travel distance is less for children's play space. This study also recommends a shorter travel distance for youth play space, based on the most recent consultation undertaken.

6.5.1.6 The 2012 Policy also sets a target to provide at least one equipped play area in each village or settlement for rural areas, irrespective of the population served or the distance to be travelled. The villages/settlements where this standard is considered to apply are also listed within the 2012 policy. This will be considered in more detail in the analysis of each of the 6 area profiles (part 2).

6.5.1.7 The strategic provision of skate parks is considered under section 7.3 (Para 7.3.2 and Figure 12).

6.5.2 Quantity standards for play

- Current average levels of provision of children's play space is 0.05 ha/1000 population, for youth space this is 0.01 ha/1000 population;
- The household survey identified that 58% of people felt there is sufficient children's play space, in contrast, only 30% of people felt there was sufficient youth facilities, with 67% of people identifying a need for more;
- The play and youth organisations survey identified that 55% of respondents thought there were not enough youth facilities. 76% thought there were not enough youth shelters/informal hangout space. The survey also identified that 43% of groups thought there were not enough formal equipped playgrounds;
- It is therefore recommended that there is no significant increase in children's play facilities, with a standard of 0.05 ha/1000, and an increase in facilities for young people with a standard of 0.05 ha/1000.
- It should be reiterated that these are minimum standards for equipped provision and do not include the need for surrounding playable space as recommended by Play England¹⁰ i.e. this surrounding playable space will need to be provided in addition to the equipped provision.

6.5.3 Access standards for play

- The household survey identified that for children's play space around 50% of people want facilities within 10 minutes. For teenage facilities, this figure was less with just over 32% of people stating 10 minutes, with a further 33% willing to travel up to 15 minutes;
- 75% of people walk to children's facilities, the figure for teenage facilities is less with 57% walking, the rest using other modes (car, bus, bike).
- The youth survey found that 81% of young people said that they would be prepared to walk further than normal to somewhere that had more to do and was more interesting.
- 72% of young people thought that it is more important to keep and improve their nearest open space facility/area than have a new more exciting area further away.

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

¹⁰ Design for Play: A guide to creating successful play spaces

- Children's provision – 480m (10 minutes' straight line walk time), and
- Youth Provision – 600m (12-13 minutes' straight line walk time).

6.5.4 Quality standards for play

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

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

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

6.5.4.3 Disability access is also an important issue for Play England and they would like local authorities to adopt the KIDS¹¹ publication; '*Inclusion by Design*' as an SPD. Their most recent guidance document, '*Better Places to Play through Planning*' gives detailed guidance on setting local standards for access, quantity and quality of playable space and is considered as a background context for the standards suggested in this study.

6.6 Natural Green Space

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

6.6.2 Natural England Accessible Natural Green Space Standards (ANGSt)

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

¹¹ KIDS, is a charity which in its 40 years, has pioneered a number of approaches and programmes for disabled children and young people. KIDS was established in 1970 and in 2003, KIDS merged with KIDSACTIVE, previously known as the Handicapped Adventure Play Association.

6.6.3 Woodland Trust Access Standards (WASt)

- that no person should live more than 500m from at least one area of accessible woodland of no less than 2ha in size;
- that there should also be at least one area of accessible woodland of no less than 20ha within 4km (8km round-trip) of people's homes.

6.6.4 Local standards

6.6.4.1 For this purpose of this study, it is recommended that the analysis should focus on the Natural England ANGSt to identify current levels of provision and gaps.

6.6.4.2 It is also recommended that local standards are adopted for providing new levels of provision through new development. It is recommended that this provision is considered in tandem with provision of amenity green space in new development. The aim would be to provide guidance for development to provide amenity/natural green spaces which have **both** a recreational value and biodiversity value. The provision of SUDs alone which have no recreational value would not be accepted as contributing to the open space requirements. There should be a move away from providing numerous small amenity grass areas, to providing fewer, larger amenity/natural spaces in new development. This is reflected in the natural green spaces standards below:

Table 17 Summary of natural provision standards

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

6.6.5 Quality of natural and semi-natural green space

6.6.5.1 Satisfaction levels with the quality of natural green space are above average, with over 60% of people in the household sample survey rating their quality as good or very good. Consultation results also highlight the value attached to certain attributes of open space, in particular:

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

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

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

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

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

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

6.7 Summary of open space standards

Table 18 Summary of open space standards

Typology	Quantity standards (ha/1000 population)	Access standard
Allotments (and Community Gardens)	0.30	720 metres or 15 minutes' walk time
Amenity Green Space	0.40 for assessing existing provision. Included in Natural green space for new provision	480 metres or 10 minutes' walk time
Park, Sport and Recreation Grounds (public and private combined)	1.65	600 metres or 12-13 minutes' walk time
Play Space (Children)	0.05	480 metres or 10 minutes' walk time
Play Space (Youth)	0.05	600 metres or 12-13 minutes' walk time
Natural Green Space	1.0 to include natural and amenity green space for new provision	ANGSt and Woodland Trust for analysing existing provision
Churchyards and Cemeteries	None, but sites mapped and quantity analysed	None
Education	None, but sites mapped and quantity analysed	None

7.0 APPLYING LOCAL STANDARDS

7.1 Introduction

7.1.1 This part of the report uses the recommended standards to analyse provision across the study area. This section provides an overview of provision across the six 'study areas', with further detail being provided in the Green Space Area Profiles in part 2 of the report. This section includes:

Quantity analysis

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

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

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

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

Access analysis

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

7.1.6 However, the key to access analysis, is understanding the picture at a more localised level, therefore, maps showing local access provision are provided within the area profiles (part 2 of the report).

Quality analysis

7.1.7 This section of the report makes analysis of each typology across the study area – it highlights any common themes or issues that have arisen from the quality audit. Again, local recommendations are highlighted within the area profiles (part 2 of the report).

7.2 Application of quantity standards

Current supply against the Chelmsford standards

7.2.1 Table 19 shows the existing provision of open space in hectares for each typology for each of the six analysis areas. The figures for 'Park, Sport and Recreation Ground (public and private combined)' include a combination of the following typologies:

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

7.2.2 Table 20 shows the average provision of open space in hectares per 1000 population for each typology across the six analysis areas.

7.2.3 Table 21 shows the supply of open space against the recommended standards (this does not apply to accessible natural green space (which is analysed under section 7.3); education; and churchyards and cemeteries, which have therefore been excluded from the table). This is expressed in hectares and shows where the supply is sufficient or deficient.

7.2.4 A more detailed breakdown of quantity provision is shown for each of the analysis areas in the green space area profiles in part 2 of the report.

Table 19 Existing provision of open space (hectares) in analysis areas

Study Area	Allotments	Amenity Green Space	Park, Sport and Recreation Ground (public and private combined)	Park and Recreation Ground	Outdoor Sport (Pitches)	Outdoor Sport (Fixed)	Outdoor Sport (Private)	Play Space (Children)	Play Space (Youth)	Accessible Natural Green Space	Education	Churchyards and Cemeteries
Chelmsford	23.91	17.71	100.45	75.77	13.05	4.26	7.37	2.62	0.43	306.74	67.33	13.7
Rural North	1.4	9.8	10.86	6.08	1.77	0.06	2.95	0.62	0.12	99.91	14.62	2.87
Rural South	4.11	11.07	61.4	29.3	10.31	0.82	20.97	1.1	0.39	990.48	17.3	9.32
Rural West	1.86	4.55	9.67	6.1	1.93	0.11	1.53	0.39	0.02	454.39	1.85	3.67
South Woodham Ferrers	0.56	2.1	18.47	11.52	6.5	0	0.45	0.7	0.12	132.8	12.53	0
Urban Areas	11.38	34.95	88.91	53.35	16.66	3.44	15.46	2.77	0.34	378.31	90.69	6.84

Table 20 Existing provision of open space (hectares/1000) in analysis areas

Study Area	Allotments	Amenity Green Space	Park, Sport and Recreation Ground (public and private combined)	Park and Recreation Ground	Outdoor Sport (Pitches)	Outdoor Sport (Fixed)	Outdoor Sport (Private)	Play Space (Children)	Play Space (Youth)	Accessible Natural Green Space	Education	Churchyards and Cemeteries
Chelmsford	0.37	0.27	1.55	1.17	0.2	0.07	0.11	0.04	0.01	4.72	1.04	0.21
Rural North	0.23	1.58	1.76	0.98	0.29	0.01	0.48	0.1	0.02	16.12	2.36	0.46
Rural South	0.18	0.48	2.67	1.27	0.45	0.04	0.91	0.05	0.02	42.93	0.75	0.4
Rural West	0.52	1.26	2.67	1.69	0.53	0.03	0.42	0.11	0.01	125.83	0.51	1.02
South Woodham Ferrers	0.03	0.13	1.13	0.7	0.4	0	0.03	0.04	0.01	8.07	0.76	0
Urban Areas	0.21	0.65	1.65	0.99	0.31	0.06	0.29	0.05	0.01	7	1.68	0.13

Table 21 Supply of open space in analysis areas against the Chelmsford Standard (Ha)

Study Area	Allotments	Amenity Green Space	Park, Sport and Recreation Ground (public and private combined)	Park and Recreation Ground	Outdoor Sport (Pitches)	Outdoor Sport (Fixed)	Outdoor Sport (Private)	Play Space (Children)	Play Space (Youth)
Chelmsford	4.42	-8.27	-6.72	-31.40	13.05	4.26	7.37	-0.63	-2.82
Rural North	-0.46	7.32	0.63	-4.15	1.77	0.06	2.95	0.31	-0.19
Rural South	-2.81	1.84	23.33	-8.77	10.31	0.82	20.97	-0.05	-0.76
Rural West	0.78	3.11	3.71	0.14	1.93	0.11	1.53	0.21	-0.16
South Woodham									
Ferrers	-4.38	-4.48	-8.68	-15.63	6.50	0.00	0.45	-0.12	-0.70
Urban Areas	-4.83	13.34	-0.23	-35.79	16.66	3.44	15.46	0.07	-2.36

7.3 Application of access standards

7.3.1 This section provides an overview of access to different types of open space typologies across the whole study area. The maps are intended to provide an overview and are for illustrative purposes only. More detailed maps by analysis area are provided within the green space area profiles in part 2 of this report.

Access to open space in analysis areas

Figure 7 Access to allotments (720 metres)

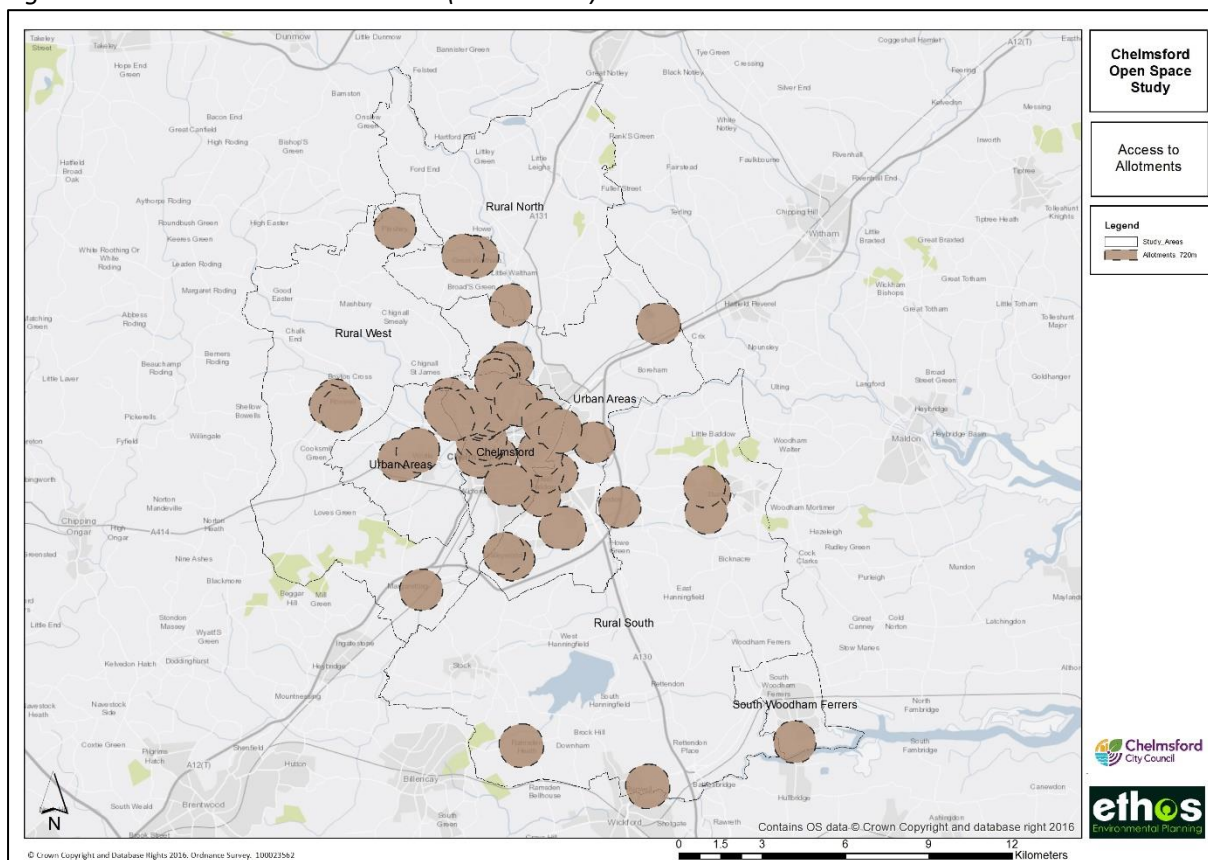


Figure 8 Access to amenity green space (480 metres)

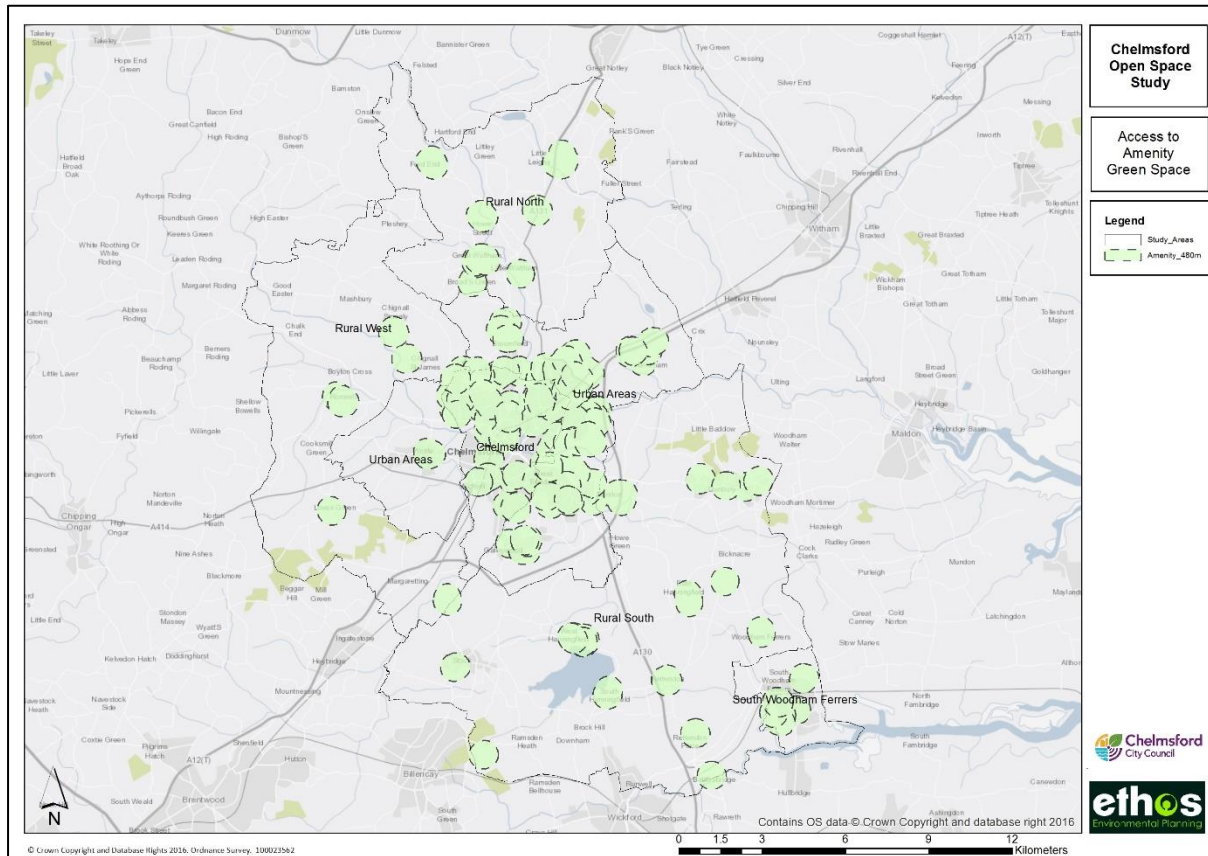


Figure 9 Access to parks and recreation grounds (600 metres)

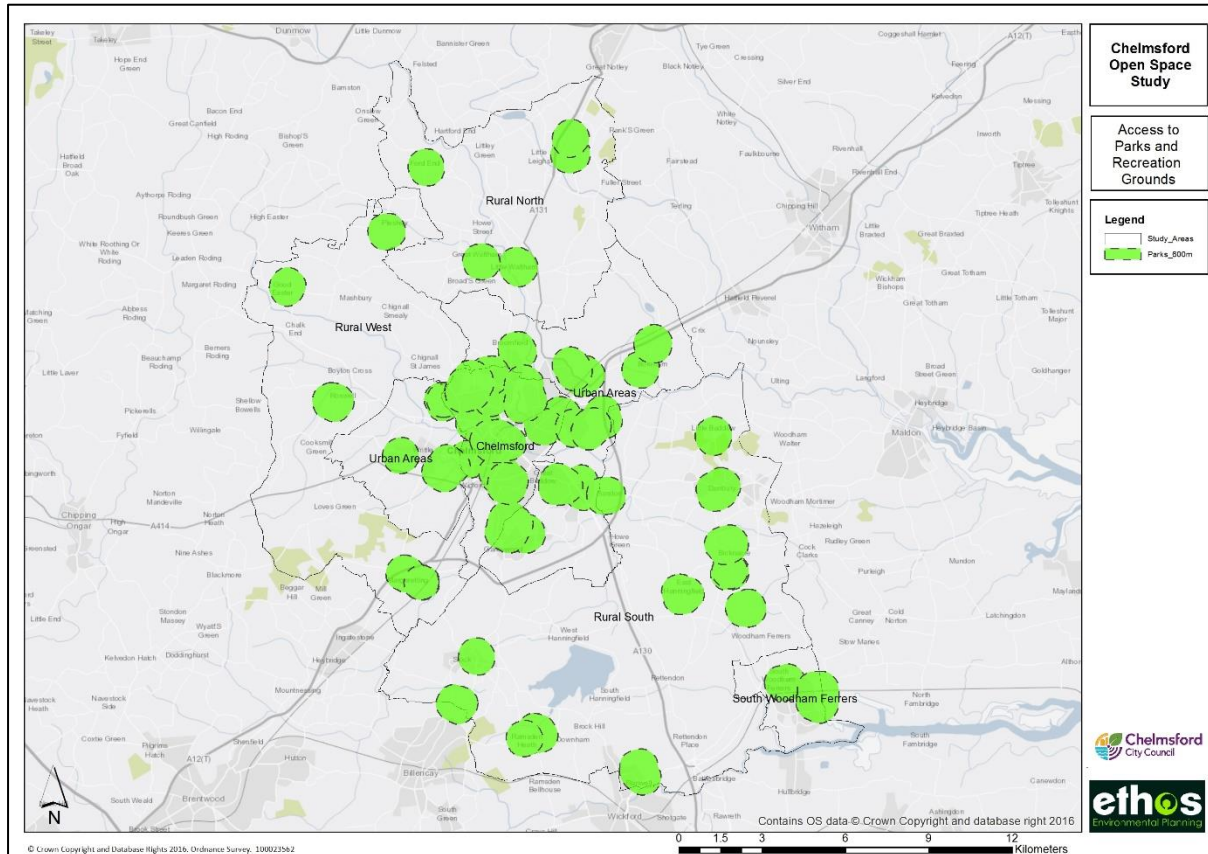


Figure 10 Access to children's play space (480 metres)

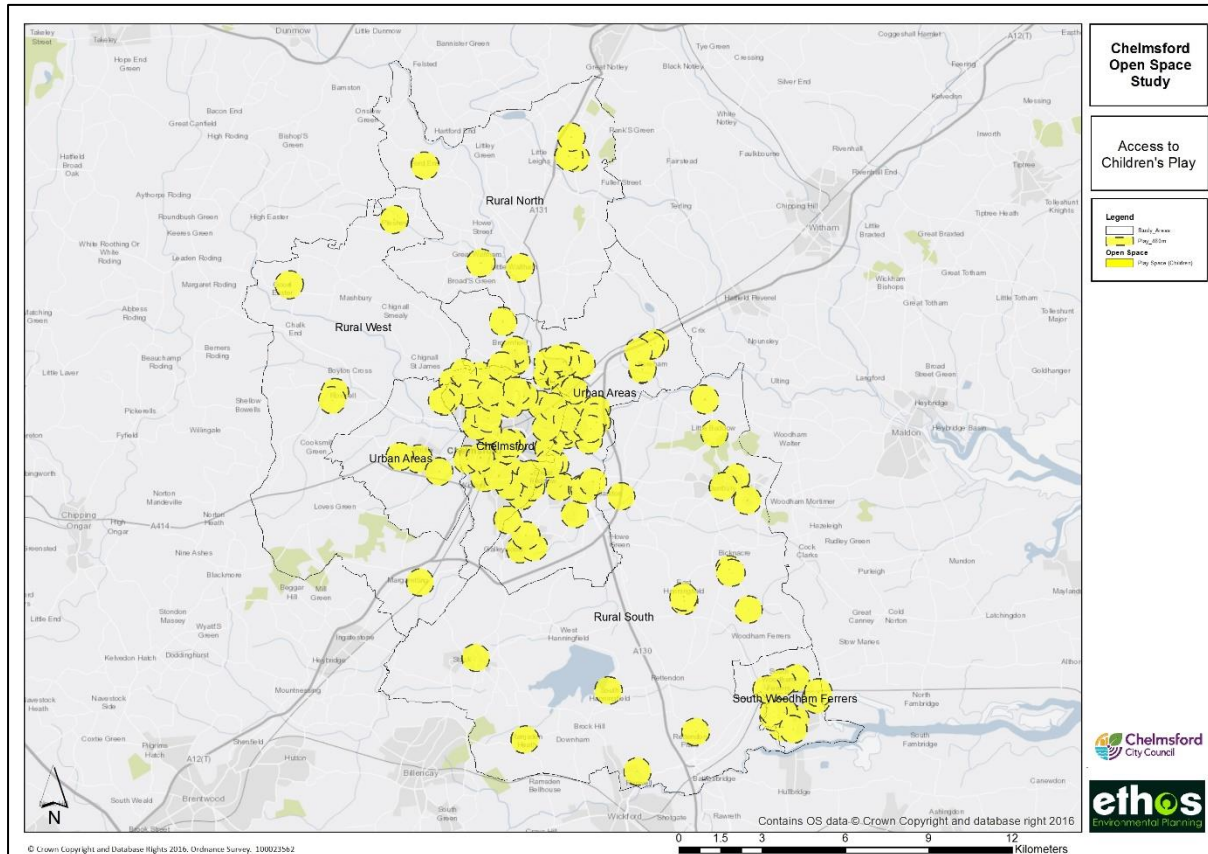
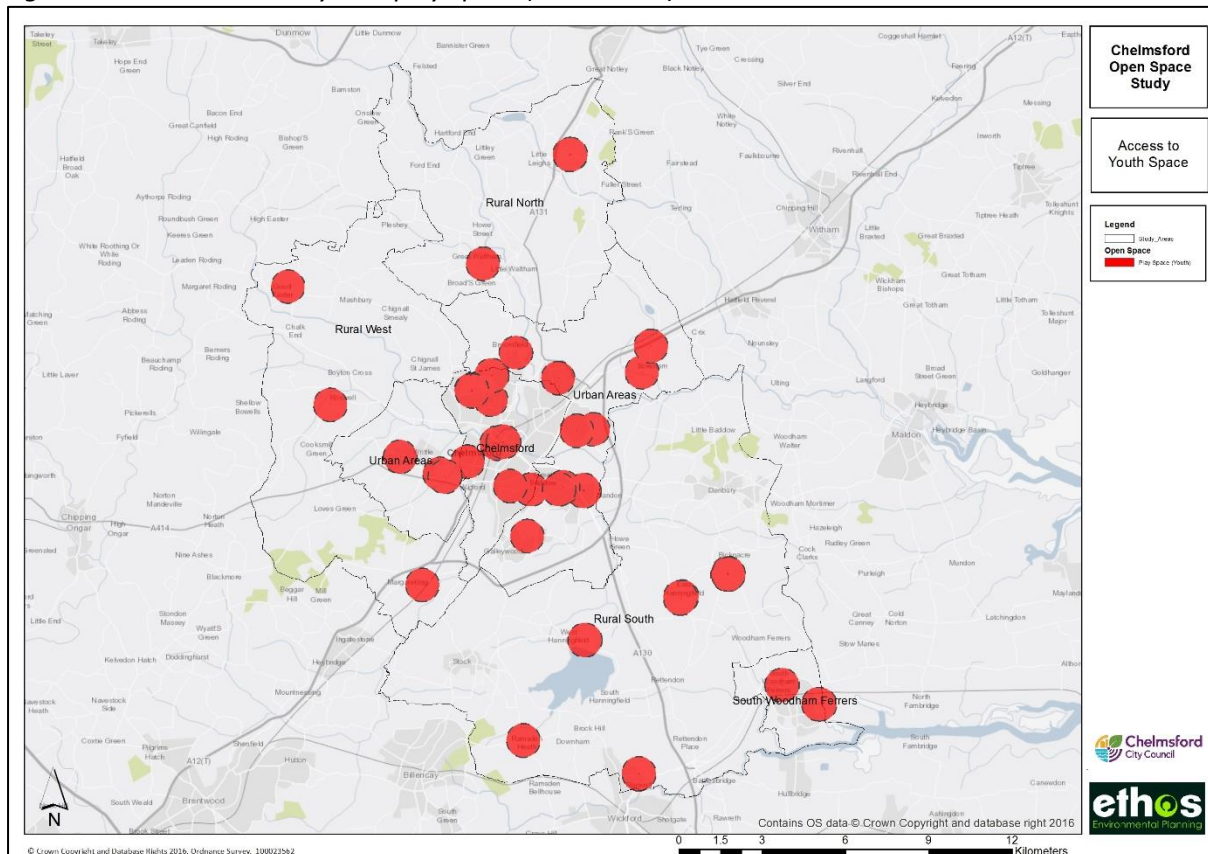


Figure 11 Access to youth play space (600 metres)



Provision and access to skate parks and key youth facilities

7.3.2 During the study, a specific issue around the strategic provision of skate parks was identified. Figure 12 shows where skate parks are located in the City Council area. For the purpose of analysing access for illustrative purposes, the standard of 600 metres (12-13 minutes' walk time) has been used. Figure 13 shows the provision of stake parks alongside other key youth facilities (BMX and MUGAs).

Figure 12 Access to skate parks (600m)

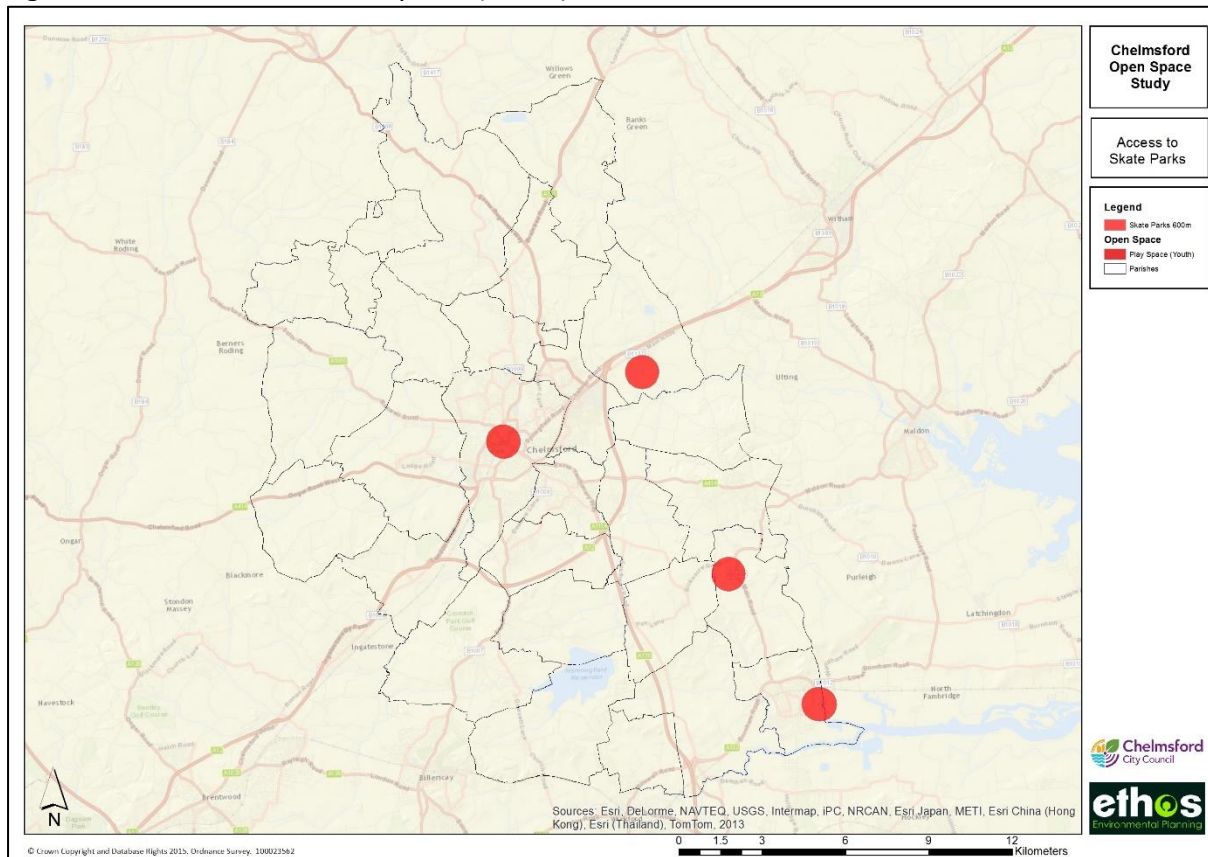
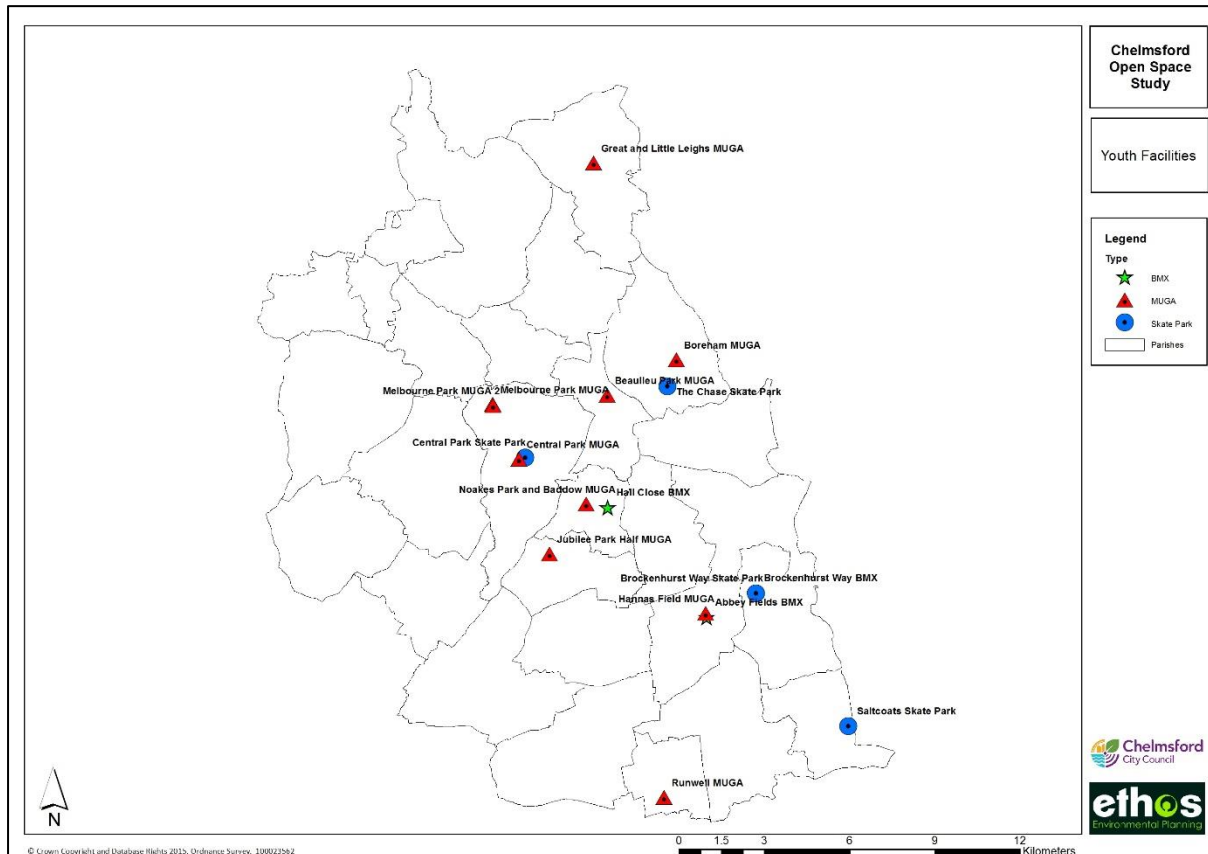


Figure 13 Provision of key youth facilities



7.3.3 As can be seen from Figure 12 and 13 there is very little provision key youth facilities within the study area, with significant gaps across Chelmsford.

Application of standards for natural green space

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

7.3.5 The Natural England Accessible Natural Green Space Standards (ANGST) are:

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

Figure 14 Access to 20 ha site within 2km

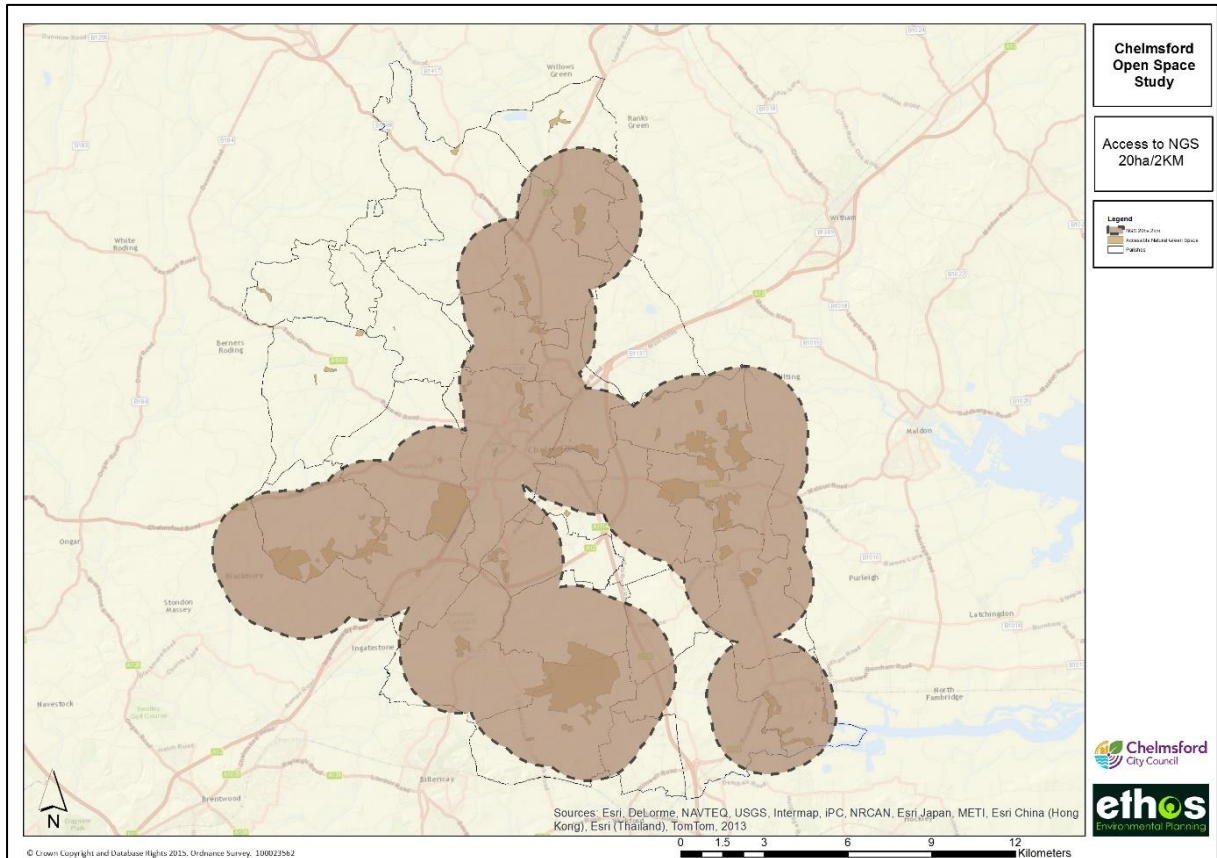


Figure 15 Access to 100 ha site within 5 km

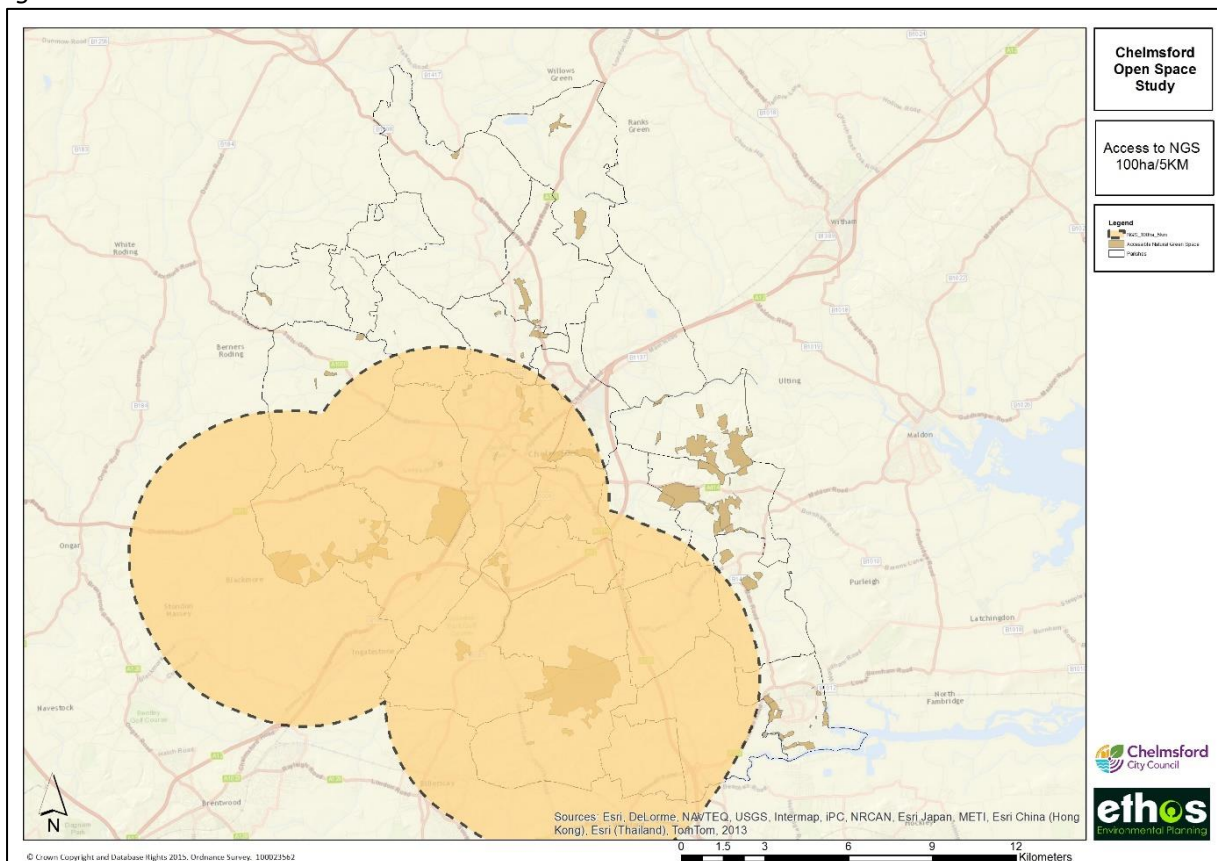
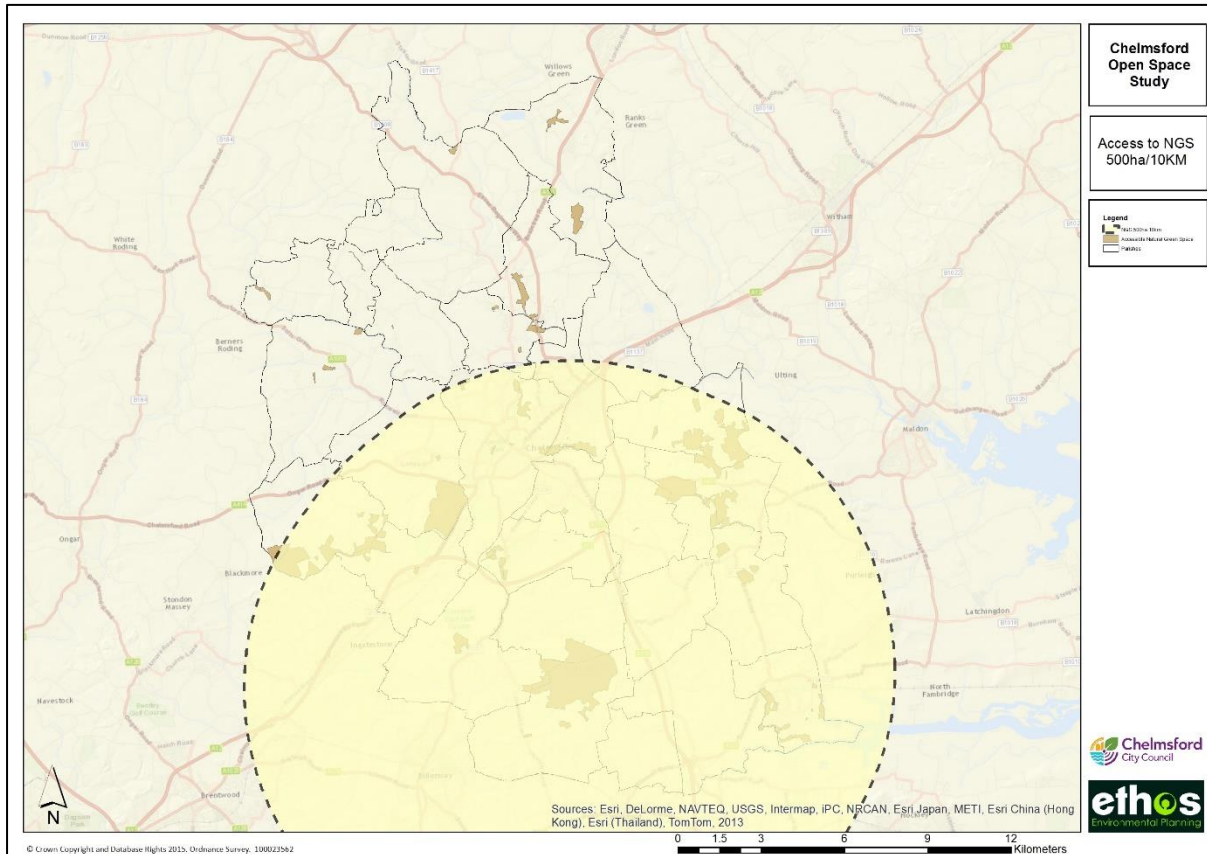
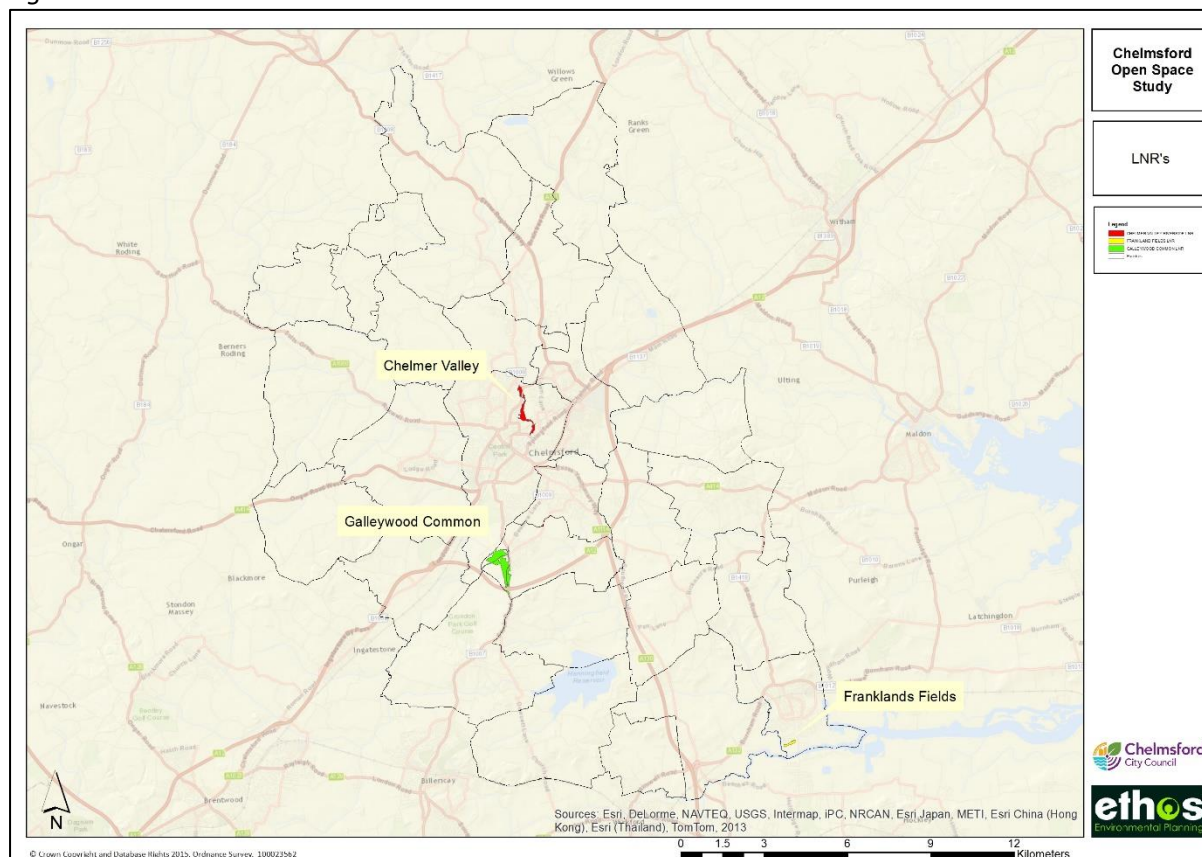


Figure 16 Access to 500 ha site within 10 km (see para 7.3.6 below)



7.3.6 It should be noted that Hanningfield Reservoir (in South Hanningfield – Rural South Study Area) is 475ha in size and for the purpose of this study, a 10km buffer has been shown for this site (accepting that it does fall just below the recommended 500 ha).

Figure 17 Local Nature Reserves



7.3.7 As there are so few Local Nature Reserves (only 3) in the study area, there are significant deficiencies in attaining the standard across the study area.

Table 22 Summary of access issues for natural green space

Standard	Key access Issues
Accessible Natural Greenspace Standard (ANGST):	
at least one accessible 20-hectare site within two kilometres of home	Standard met across approximately half of the study area with at least some gaps across all analysis areas. The largest gaps are in the Rural North, Rural West and Rural South, and a large gap in the eastern part of the Urban Areas.
one accessible 100-hectare site within five kilometres of home	Standard met across over half of the study area with gaps largely in the North (Rural North has no provision) and East of the area, and part of the West. Provision is met across the Chelmsford analysis area only.
one accessible 500-hectare site within ten kilometres of home	Provision met across Chelmsford, Rural South and South Woodham Ferrers. The Rural North has no provision, and there are gaps in the Rural West and Urban Areas.
minimum of one hectare of statutory LNR's per thousand population at least 2 hectares in size, no more than 300 metres (5 minutes' walk) from home	Very little provision within the study area, therefore significant gaps with little real chance of fulfilling this standard

Provision of Equestrian facilities and bridleways

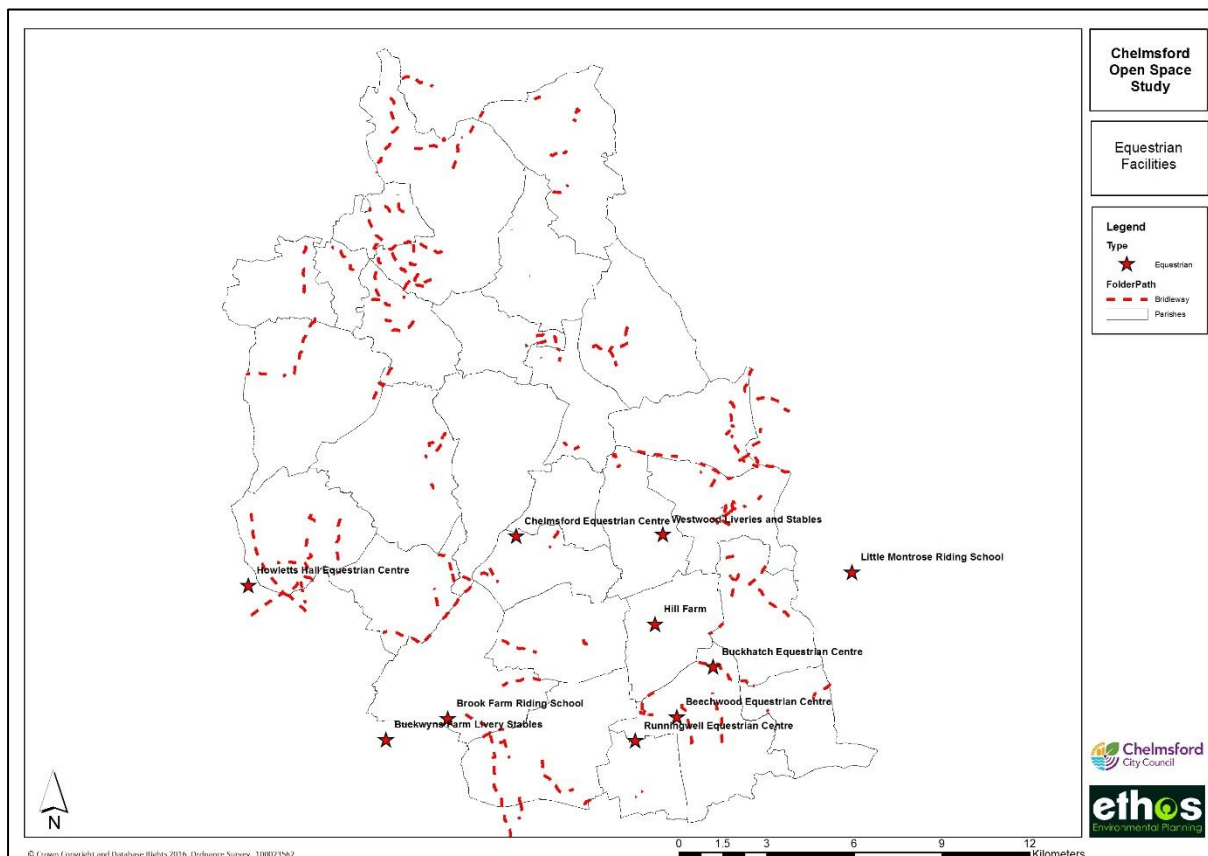
7.3.8 Figure 18 shows the provision of key equestrian facilities (riding schools and stables) alongside the bridleway network within the study area. The map does not include smaller stables or liveryies.

7.3.9 As can be seen, the bridleway network is limited and there are significant gaps in connectivity. Green spaces within the study area may provide permissive access for horse-riders (helping to improve provision and connectivity), but this information was not recorded as part of the site audits undertaken, due to the practicalities and time constraints of identifying this use.

7.3.10 A desk top study was undertaken to identify equestrian facilities within the City Council area. The study area is well catered for in the south, but there does not appear to be provision in the northern part of the study area.

7.3.11 Feedback from the Essex Bridleways Association highlights significant issues with the provision of facilities for horse riders (see section 4.7 of Community and Stakeholder Consultation Report).

Figure 18 Key equestrian facilities

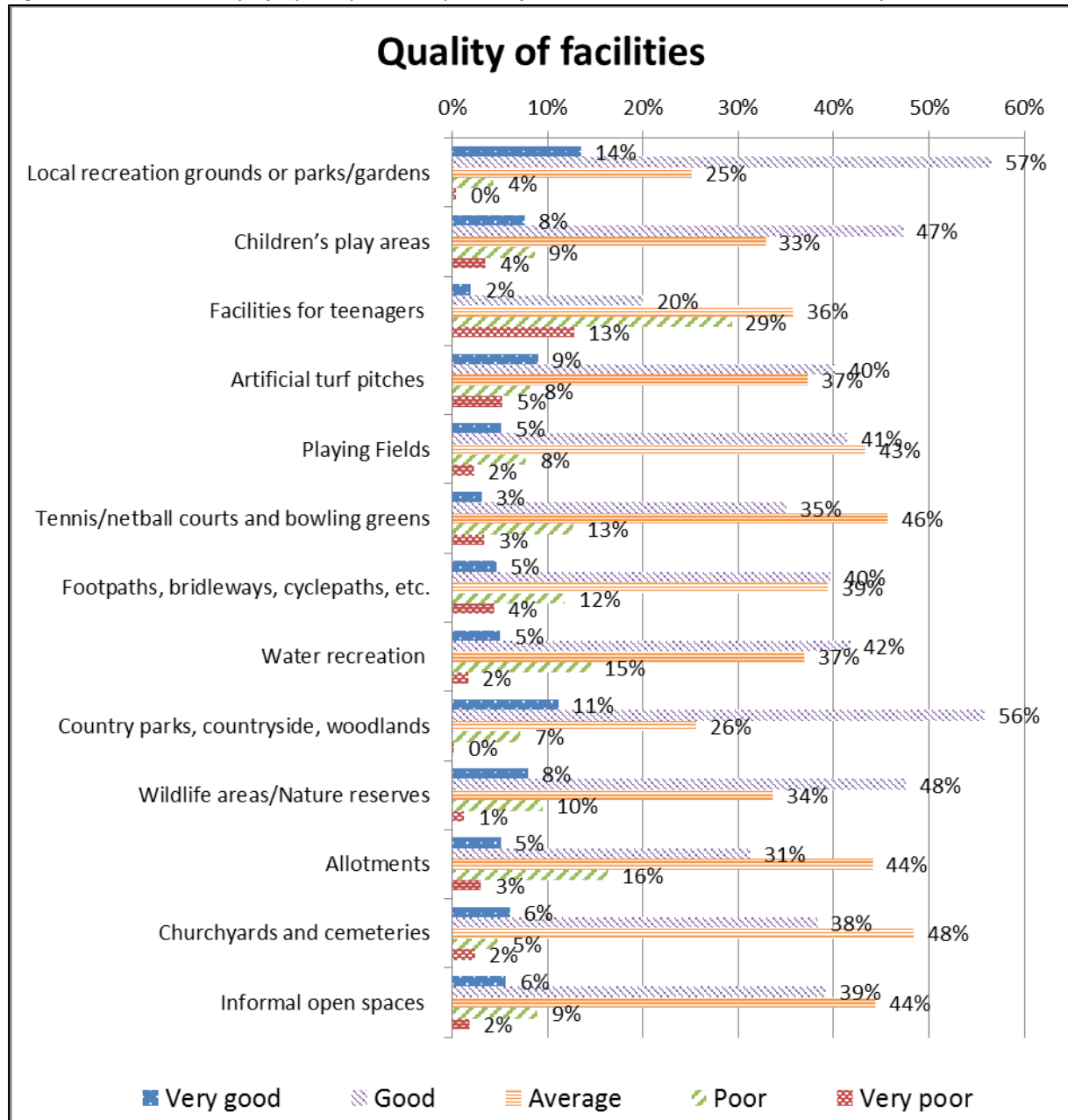


7.4 Application of quality standards

Quality of open space – consultation key findings

7.4.1 Respondents from the Leisure Plus Household Survey (within the Community and Stakeholder Consultation Report) were asked how they rated various types of facilities in the study area in terms of quality. The responses of those expressing an opinion on specific categories of facility are illustrated in Figure 19 below.

Figure 19 Quality of open space (responses from Leisure Plus Household Survey)



7.4.2 Figure 17 illustrates the following:

- Outdoor facilities/open spaces with high levels of satisfaction noted are parks/recreation grounds (over 71% rate quality as good or very good); and country parks/countryside/woodlands (67%);
- Other facilities where a majority of households rate quality as being good (or better) are children's play areas (55%) and wildlife areas/nature reserves (56%);
- Significant numbers of households (42%) highlighted the quality of outdoor facilities for teenagers as being either poor or very poor. 19% thought that the quality of allotments was poor or very poor, 17% thought that the quality of water recreation was poor or very poor and 16% highlighted the quality of Tennis, netball courts and bowling greens and footpaths, bridleways and cyclepaths as being either poor or very poor.

Quality of open space – audit findings

7.4.3 The quality audit was undertaken at 346 main sites which comprised a total of 686 assessments (e.g. play areas or pitches within a main site). The details on the sites audited are provided in a quality audit database which has been provided as an electronic document as part of this study. The key findings and sites with most potential for improvements are highlighted in the six green space area profiles (part 2 of this report).

8.0 STRATEGIC OPTIONS, POLICY & MANAGEMENT RECOMMENDATIONS

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

8.1 Strategic Options

Introduction

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

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

Delivering Strategic Options

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

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

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

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

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

Existing provision to be protected

8.1.7 The Council's open space Local Plan policies should seek to ensure that open space should be afforded protection unless material considerations demonstrate otherwise.

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

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

8.1.9 The area profiles (part 2) of this study provide more detailed results as to the above considerations. The following draws on this and makes some more general observations and recommendations.

Open Space Policy Recommendations (protecting open space):

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

Existing provision to be enhanced

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

8.1.11 This includes those spaces or facilities which:

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

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

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

Open Space Policy Recommendations (enhancing open space):

OS5	Future LDPD's and Neighbourhood Plans should consider the opportunities for creating and enhancing a network of both utility and recreation routes for use by foot and bike in both urban and rural areas. Creative application of the amenity green space/natural green space components of the proposed overall standard in respect of new development should be explored.
OS6	The study makes recommendations for improving the quality of open space across the study area. However, a long term strategy for achieving improvements is required which could be delivered through the new Local Plan, an updated Green Space Strategy or neighbourhood plans and be considered within the Infrastructure Delivery Plan.
OS7	Priorities for improvement include improving provision for teenagers.
OS8	Management plans should be developed for the main parks and recreation grounds (a number of City Council sites already have plans). Where sites fall outside of the City Council's ownership these priorities could be considered in neighbourhood plans and by the local community.

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

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

8.1.14 The information provided within the area profiles in this study will form a good basis to inform any decisions related to the provision or replacement of open space, sport and

recreation facilities. Some settlements may seek a consolidation of facilities on a single site, such as a new sports hub.

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

8.1.16 The new Local Plan, and any neighbourhood plans, should be guided by the standards and policies set out in this study and ensure that the significant investment anticipated for green spaces is prioritised with the help of stakeholders and communities. The standards set out in this study seek to determine a minimum level of quality and quantity of green space provision and the maximum distance people should have to travel to access different types of green space.

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

Open Space Policy Recommendations (relocating open space):

OS9	Ensure the information provided within the Open Space Study is provided to town/parish councils to inform their strategic planning of green space.
------------	--

Identification of areas for new provision

8.1.18 New provision will be required where there is a new development and a planned increase in population, and/or an existing deficiency in supply or access to facilities exists. The area profiles outline the existing situation with regards to supply and access to green infrastructure. The new Local Plan will form a good mechanism to determine exactly where new provision is required, however, this study can be used as the basis for decision making, as follows:

Quantity

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

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

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

Access

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

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

Delivering new provision

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

New development, CIL and developer contributions

8.1.24 Chelmsford City Council have adopted their charging schedule and policy for the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)¹². Many community needs and aspirations have a call on this levy. This open space study clearly identifies that there are needs for new and /or enhanced open space provision, particularly where new development is planned.

8.1.25 Outside of CIL, new development will also be required to provide on-site open space in line with the standards outlined in this study. Whilst not all developments will be of a size that will generate the requirement for on-site open space (see table 25), when considering future housing numbers for Chelmsford, there will be many that will. This study should be used to make local decisions about where and when new on-site provision will be required.

Capital and grant funding

8.1.26 Although the availability of capital and grant funding has diminished in recent years, nevertheless funding does become available for providing facilities for open space, sport and recreation. National and governing bodies for individual sports should be consulted where new infrastructure is required, such as changing rooms and sports pitches. Environmental grants and stewardship schemes are available for managing natural green space. As the new

¹² <http://www.chelmsford.gov.uk/cil#2>

Local Plan and any neighbourhood plans are developed and open space priorities are established within these, funding requirements will be identified and delivery through grant funding could be considered.

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

- OS10** New provision of open space will be required as part of new development in towns or parishes where there are existing deficiencies in quantity or access to open space and/or where the new development will result in deficiencies.
- Where on-site provision is required, it should be provided in line with the proposed open space standards.
- Where on-site provision is deemed impractical, or not required e.g. for small sites, consideration will be given to opportunities for off-site provision and/or improvements, including through S106 contributions.
- Improvements to existing open space will be considered first in the local area, then the parish area and finally the wider analysis area. Priority sites requiring improvements will be identified using the ranking scores from the quality audit (as per the example scenarios provided in Section 6.2 of the Area Profiles in Part 2 of this report), and also from site management plans and the councils own knowledge of their sites.
- OS11** The priorities for new provision are for teenage facilities.

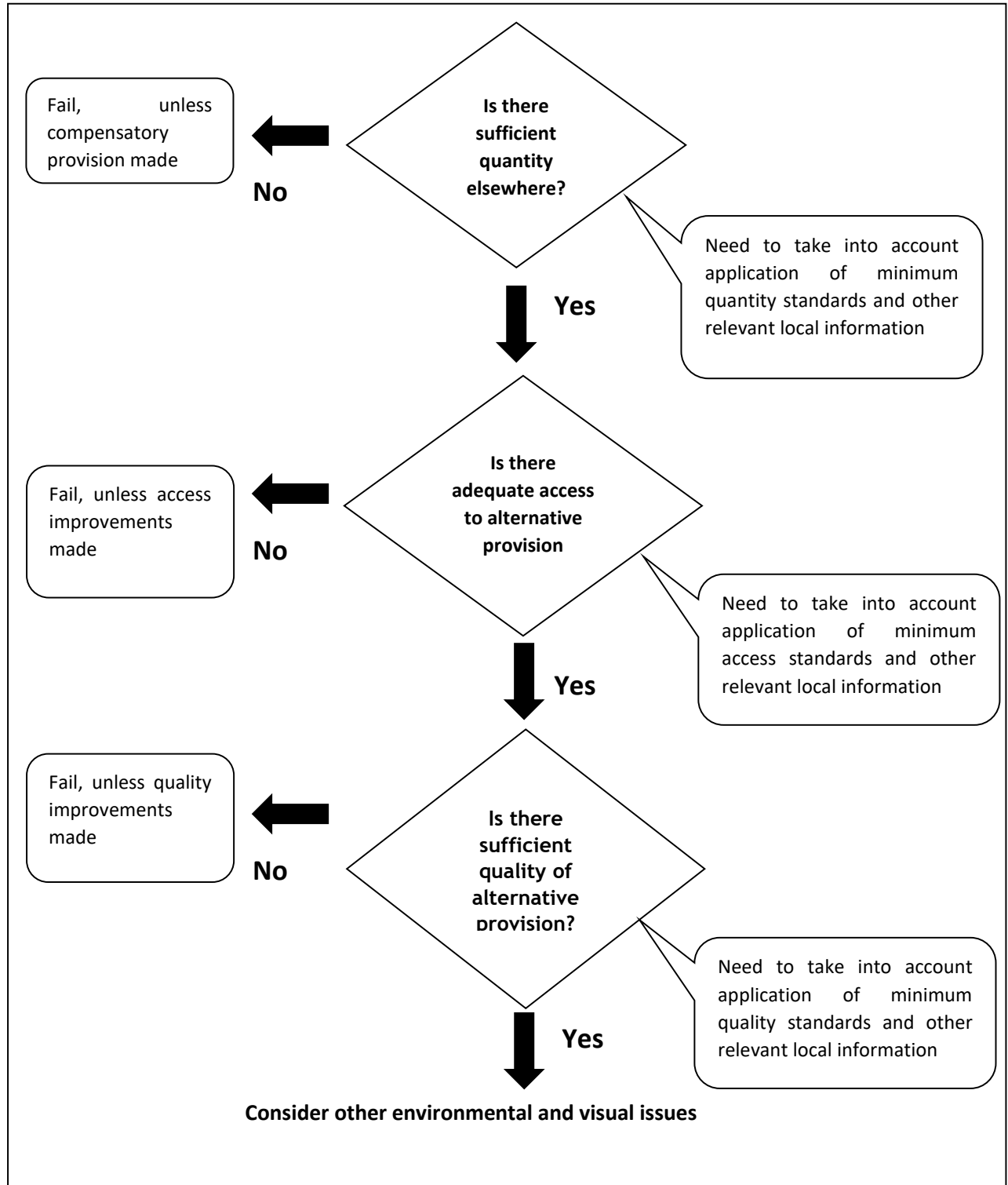
Facilities that are surplus to requirement

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

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

8.1.28 Figure 20 and paragraphs 8.1.29 to 8.1.32 below suggests an outline of the decision process that should be followed before the development of an open space can be seriously contemplated.

Figure 20 Outline decision making process in relation to sanctioning (re)development of open space



8.1.29 Q. Is there sufficient quantity?

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

8.1.30 Q. Is there adequate access to alternative provision?

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

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

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

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

8.2 Developer Contributions

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

Developer contributions and Community Infrastructure Levy

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

1) Capital cost of providing open space

8.2.3 In order to calculate developer contributions for facilities, a methodology has been adopted which calculates how much it would cost the Local Authority to provide them. These costs have been calculated using local information, and have also been benchmarked against other Local Authorities costs for providing facilities. A summary of the costs are outlined in table 23 below.

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

Table 23 Capital costs for providing open space

Typology	Standard (m ²) per person	Cost of provision	
		Cost / m ²	Contribution per person
Allotments	3	£30.00	£90.00
Parks and Recreation grounds	16.5	£72.00	£1,188.00
Play Space (Children)	0.5	£170.00	£85.00
Play Space (Youth)	0.5	£170.00	£85.00
Amenity/Natural green space	1	£15.00	£15.00
Total	21.5		£1,463

8.2.5 This shows that it costs £1,463 per person (in 2016) to provide new open space to meet the Chelmsford standard for open space. These calculations are to be used to calculate developer contributions for on-site provision and where feasible any off site projects.

2) Maintenance Contributions for on-site provision

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

8.2.7 If the developer does not wish to assume responsibility for maintaining the open space, the council may be willing to accept a commuted sum to cover maintenance costs and make arrangements for management of the open space through the council or a third party. The amount payable for the commuted sum will be calculated using the figures in table 24.

Table 24 Maintenance sums payable for open space

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

8.2.8 The figures in table 24 show how much it costs to maintain open space per metre squared. The figures have been calculated from average unit rates for maintenance of different types of open space, drawn from standard rates as of 2016 (Spons¹³).

3) Eligible types of development for on-site provision

8.2.9 Table 25 outlines the type of housing that will be considered eligible for making contributions towards open space to meet the needs of future occupants.

Table 25 Eligible types of residential development

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

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

¹³ Spons is an External Works and Landscape Price Book

4) *Thresholds for provision*

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

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

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

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

8.2.12 Table 26 provides a guide to assess which scales of housing generate a need for facilities in the categories listed to be provided on-site. For developments 20 – 49 dwellings the minimum size of amenity green space or parks and recreation grounds is 0.1Ha. For developments of over 50 dwellings the minimum will be 0.2Ha.

Table 26 Requirement for open space, sport and recreation facilities

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

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

9.0 CONCLUDING REMARKS

9.1 Further information is provided within each of the six area profiles (part 2 of this report).

9.2 It is anticipated that the information provided within this Open Space Study will inform the basis for business planning and site management plans.