

Introduction and background

Aims and scope of the assessment

- 1.1 In January 2004 Chelmsford Borough Council (the Council) appointed PMP to produce an Open Spaces, Sports and Recreation Facilities Assessment for the Borough. This document summarises the findings of this assessment in relation to open spaces including outdoor sports facilities. *'An Indoor Sports and Recreation Facilities Assessment'* (PMP, 2005) sets out the findings specifically relating to indoor facilities. *'A Playing Pitch Strategy for Chelmsford Borough'* (PMP, 2005) provides a specific assessment of pitches based on current and projected demand for formal playing pitch use.
- 1.2 This study aims to provide a clear picture of existing and future needs for open space provision in Chelmsford and assesses the current ability to meet those needs in terms of quality, quantity and accessibility. The study is undertaken in accordance with the requirements of the revised Planning Policy Guidance Note 17 (PPG17) *'Planning for Open Space Sport and Recreation'*, July 2002 and its Companion Guide *'Assessing Needs and Opportunities: A Companion Guide to PPG17'*, September 2002.
- 1.3 The aims of this assessment as set out by the Council are as follows:
 - to establish an effective strategy for the delivery of accessible high quality green spaces, sport and recreation facilities to meet the needs of local residents and visitors to the Borough
 - to inform and provide background for planning policies concerning open space, sport and recreation in emerging Local Development Documents (LDDs) for the period up to 2021
 - to meet the requirements of revised *'Planning Policy Guidance No. 17'* (PPG17, 2002) and the guidance contained within *'Assessing Needs and Opportunities: A Companion Guide to PPG17'* (2002)
 - to update, review and expand the existing work undertaken by the Council's Leisure and Town Planning Services in relation to Open Space, Playing Pitches and Built Facilities.
- 1.4 Revised PPG17 states that *'the government expects all local authorities to carry out assessments of needs and audits of open space and sports and recreational facilities'*. It explains that well designed and implemented planning policies for open space, sport and recreation are fundamental to delivering broader Government objectives, which include:
 - supporting an urban renaissance
 - supporting a rural renewal
 - promotion of social inclusion and community cohesion
 - health and well being
 - promoting more sustainable development.

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- 1.5 The major shift in policy in this area is the requirement for local authority decisions regarding open space to be informed by local needs assessments and an audit of existing provision. Such audits should incorporate qualitative, quantitative and accessibility considerations as well as the overall non-monetary value of the land including the level of use. National standards are no longer considered adequate to serve differing local needs, although they may be used as benchmarks.
- 1.6 The PPG17 companion guide sets out the recommended process for undertaking local assessments of needs and audits of provision. PMP has followed these recommendations throughout this study. Following this methodology enables a robust, defensible assessment to be produced.
- 1.7 This study has assessed eight typologies of open space as identified in PPG17. Both publicly and privately owned and managed sites are included in the assessment providing a more accurate picture of current provision within the Borough than just including Council owned sites.

PPG17 Five step process

- 1.8 The methodology that has been employed closely follows the Five Step Process set out within the PPG17 companion guide. This methodology is outlined in detail within Section Three. In summary it consists of:
- Step 1: Identifying Local Needs
 - Step 2: Auditing Local Provision
 - Step 3: Setting Provision Standards
 - Step 4: Applying Provision Standards
 - Step 5: Drafting Policies
 - Final Report and Recommendations.

The importance of open space

- 1.9 Open space and recreation provision has an important role to play in the quality of life of residents and visitors and also in its environmental and biodiversity function. Open spaces have a number of functions within the urban fabric of cities, towns and villages. For example, for the provision for play areas for children, to improve the visual amenity of residential areas for all, and as habitats for the promotion of biodiversity. Each type of open space can offer a range of benefits to people and wildlife, for example allotments for the growing of own produce, playing pitches for formal sports event and quiet areas for people to walk and relax.
- 1.10 There is a required need to provide a balance between the different types of open space because of the different functions they serve. In accordance with PPG17, planning for this balance of provision should be informed by public consultation to establish local needs and concerns.

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- 1.11 Changing social and economic circumstances have placed new demands on open spaces. They serve increasingly diverse communities and continue to face development pressure for housing and other higher value land uses. With the improving understanding of the value of open space new opportunities are emerging to further develop their role. For example with effective management and innovative approaches they can assist in promoting community cohesion, encouraging community development and can stimulate partnerships between the public and private sector.
- 1.12 Public open space issues cut across people's lives and can often be a source of local concern for a various reasons, for example:
- the presence of anti-social behaviour, litter and dog fouling, graffiti and poor quality play areas
 - the design, management and maintenance of open spaces directly influences perceptions of safety and actual public usage
 - poor quality publicly accessible open space can contribute to the physical and social decline of deprived localities.
- 1.13 Improving public open space contributes to addressing the shared priorities of national and local government – including urban renewal, crime reduction, promoting active lifestyle and health promotion, social inclusion and environmental protection.
- 1.14 The Government recognises through its publication of '*Our Towns and Cities: The Future Delivering an Urban Renaissance*' (2002) that there is overwhelming need to develop a vision for the future of parks and open spaces and that there is a need to improve information on quality and quantity of parks and open spaces and the way they are used and maintained.

Benefits of open space

- 1.15 Open spaces including parks, playgrounds, amenity green space, nature reserves and the countryside are diverse locations that provide opportunities for a range of formal and informal leisure, passive and active sport, recreation and play.
- 1.16 Parks and open spaces are generally more accessible to a wider range of people than sports and leisure facilities and are better able to realise the aims of social inclusion and equality of opportunities. The provision of attractive open spaces and recreation provision is also key in working towards a vision for an ideal community.
- 1.17 It is widely recognised that the provision of high quality 'public realm' facilities such as parks and open spaces can assist in the promotion of an area as an attractive place to live, and can result in a number of benefits. These are highlighted in Table 1.1 overleaf:

Table 1.1 – Benefits of open space

<i>Social</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • providing safe outdoor areas that are available to all ages to mix and socialise • social cohesion - potential to engender a sense of community ownership and pride • providing opportunities for community events, voluntary activities and charitable fund raising • providing opportunities to improve health and take part in a wide range of outdoor sports and activities.
<i>Recreational</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • providing easily accessible recreation areas as an alternative to other chargeable leisure pursuits • offers wide range of leisure opportunities from informal leisure and play to formal events, activities and games. • open spaces, particularly parks, are often the first areas where children come into contact with the natural world • play opportunities are a vital factor in the development of children.
<i>Environmental</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • reducing motor car dependence to access specific facilities • providing habitats for wildlife as an aid to local biodiversity • helping to stabilise urban temperatures and humidity • providing opportunities for the recycling of organic materials • providing opportunities to reduce transport use through the provision of local facilities.
<i>Educational</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • valuable educational role in promoting an understanding of nature and the opportunity to learn about the environment • open spaces can be used to demonstrate virtues of sustainable development and health awareness.
<i>Economic</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • adding value to surrounding property, both commercial and residential, thus increasing local tax revenues • contribution to urban regeneration and renewal projects • contributing to attracting visitors and tourism, including using the parks as venues for major events • encouraging employment and inward investment • complementing new development with a landscape that enhances its value.

Need for local assessments

1.18 A local assessment of open space needs will enable the Council to:

- plan positively, creatively and effectively in identifying priority areas for improvement and to target appropriate types of open space required
- ensure an adequate provision of high quality, accessible open space to meet the needs of community

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- ensure any accessible funding is invested in the right places where there is the most need
- conduct Section 106 negotiations with developers from a position of knowledge with evidence to support.

1.19 Where no assessment exists, developers are required to undertake their own independent assessment to demonstrate that open space is surplus to requirements. It is therefore desirable for the Council to have robust data to support its position when negotiating over proposed developments in order to be able to protect open space within the district if appropriate to do so.

Background information on the Borough

1.20 As Essex's county town, Chelmsford is steeped in heritage and history, and has a fine legacy of parks and open spaces. The town dates back many hundreds of years, although in more recent times its development has been in the form of outward expansion along the radial routes. In addition to this a large, new settlement has occurred in South Woodham Ferrers, in the south east of the Borough.

1.21 The current population of the borough is 157,072 (2001 Census) projected to increase to 162,494 in 2010 and to 176,458 in 2010 if additional housing allocations are included.

1.22 There are many open spaces and walkways along the lines of the rivers Chelmer and Can, which bisect Chelmsford. In addition, the town has been left with a legacy of open spaces such as Chelmer Park, Central Park, Tower Gardens and the landscaped grounds of Hylands House.

Report Structure

1.23 This report is structured in the following manner:

- **Strategic context** – Section Two provides a summary overview of the current national, regional and local policy developments in parks and open space use and management
- **Assessment methodology** – Section Three details the methodology employed to carry out the assessment
- Sections Four through to Eleven summarise issues related to quantity, quality and accessibility for each type of open space including minimum provision standards and accessibility standards. The following types of open space have been assessed:
 - parks and gardens
 - natural and semi-natural green space
 - green corridors
 - outdoor sports facilities
 - amenity green space
 - provision for children and young people

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- allotments
- cemeteries and churchyards.
- **Quality** – Section Twelve will summarise key findings in relation to quality of open space and propose quality standards for the future maintenance and management of open space in the Borough
- **Accessibility** – Section Thirteen will set out findings in relation to access to open space sites and minimum distance thresholds that people should be expected to travel to summarise the different types of open space
- **Resourcing open space** – Section Fourteen provides a summary of potential funding sources that can assist in managing open spaces
- **Summary and conclusion** – Section Fifteen will conclude the report and set out key recommendations for standards and policy
- **Appendices** – Appendix A to F contain examples of the survey questionnaires used, the definitions for the site ratings, a summary of the standard setting tables and the complete open spaces audit.

Summary

- 1.24 This study will provide an overall framework that will inform the Council's Local Development Framework to the year 2021 prioritising open space planning policies over the next 5-10 years.
- 1.25 It will assist in the preparation of a sports and recreation strategy for the Borough.

Strategic context

- 2.1 There is a range of national, regional and local strategic documents that are relevant to this assessment. The most important of these are summarised below.

National context

Planning Policy Guidance Note 17 - Planning for Open Space, Sport and Recreation, July 2002 and its Companion Guide (September 2002)

- 2.2 This study has been undertaken in accordance with the guidance provided in Planning Policy Guidance Note 17 (Planning for Open Space Sport and Recreation, July 2002) and its Companion Guide (September 2002). As outlined in Section One, PPG17 advocates planning policies for open space, including playing fields, to be based upon local standards derived from a robust assessment of local need.

Green Spaces, Better Places - The Final Report of the Urban Green Spaces Taskforce, DTLR (2002)

- 2.3 The report recognises that parks and green spaces are a popular and precious resource that can make a valuable contribution to the attractiveness of a neighbourhood, to the health and well being of people and expand educational opportunities of children and adults alike.

- 2.4 The main messages to emerge from Green Spaces, Better Places that are:

- urban parks and open spaces remain popular, despite a decline in quality as well as quantity
- open spaces make an important contribution to the quality of life in many areas and help to deliver wider social, economic and environmental benefits
- planners and planning mechanisms need to take better account of the need for parks and open spaces including related management and maintenance issues
- parks and open spaces should be central to any vision of sustainable modern towns and cities
- strong civic, local pride and responsibility are necessary to achieve the vision reinforced by a successful green spaces strategy
- there is a need for a more co-ordinated approach at the national level to guide local strategies.



Improving urban parks, play areas and green space, DTLR (May 2002)

- 2.5 In May 2002 the DTLR produced this linked research report to Green Spaces, Better Places which looked at patterns of use, barriers to open space and the wider role of open space in urban regeneration.
- 2.6 The vital importance of parks and other urban green spaces in enhancing the urban environment and the quality of city life has been recognised in both the Urban Taskforce report and the Urban White Paper.



Wider value of open space

- 2.7 There are clear links demonstrating how parks and other green spaces meet wider council policy objectives linked to other agendas, like education, diversity, health, safety, environment, jobs and regeneration can help raise the political profile and commitment of an authority to green space issues. In particular they:
- contribute significantly to social inclusion because they are free and accessible to all
 - can become a centre of community spirit
 - contribute to child development through scope for outdoor, energetic and imaginative play
 - offer numerous educational opportunities
 - provide a range of health, environmental and economic benefits.
- 2.8 The report also highlights major issues in the management, funding and integration of open spaces into the wider context of urban renewal and planning:
- **Community involvement** - community involvement in local parks can lead to increased use, enhancement of quality and richness of experience and, in particular, can ensure that the facilities are suited to local needs
 - **Resources** - the acknowledged decline in the quality of care of the urban green space resource in England can be linked to declining local authority green space budgets but in terms of different external sources for capital development, the Heritage Lottery Fund and Section 106 Agreements are seen as being of the most value
 - **Partnerships** - between a local authority and community groups, funding agencies and business can result in significant added value, both in terms of finances and quality of green space
 - **Urban renewal** - four levels of integration of urban green space into urban renewal can be identified, characterised by an increasing strategic synergy between environment, economy and community. These are:
 - attracting inward economic investment through the provision of attractive urban landscapes

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- unforeseen spin-offs from grassroots green space initiatives
- parks as flagships in neighbourhood renewal
- strategic, multi-agency area based regeneration, linking environment and economy.

2.9 Green spaces are predominantly owned, managed and maintained by local authorities. The Government believes that strong local leadership is essential for improving parks and green spaces. Improving the parity of parks and green spaces with other local authority services will require a shared vision, integrated approaches and strategic planning at the local level.

2.10 At a regional level the Regional Development Agencies support improvements to urban green spaces through their target to deliver urban renaissance and excellence in design.

Living Places: Cleaner, Safer, Greener ODPM (October 2002)

2.11 Over the past five years, action across the country has led to many new parks and green spaces. For example, there are now 245 new millennium greens and major new parks that have been created as part of regeneration programmes.

2.12 Many parks and green spaces have been given a new lease of life by networks of 'friends' and local groups and by local businesses, working together on projects to improve them. For example, more than 500 green spaces have been supported by the New Opportunities Fund's Green Spaces and Sustainable Communities Programme, and Groundwork, through the Barclays Site Savers scheme has transformed more than 600 derelict or underused sites into community spaces and play areas. The Heritage Lottery Funds Urban Parks Programme has provided new investment to more than 200 historic parks and gardens.



2.13 The Government agrees that parks and green spaces need more visible champions and clearer structures for co-ordinating policy and action better, and at all levels. These changes could significantly raise their profile and achieve better outcomes, which would also be promoted by the added focus that a national body could bring.

2.14 The Government also believes that strong local leadership is essential for improving parks and green spaces. There is a growing belief that because parks are not mandatory they are often at a disadvantage compared with other council services. This has led to concerns that parks services have been taken for granted, and have lost local support and priority, skills and investment. Improving the parity of parks and green spaces with other local authority services will require a shared vision, integrated approaches and strategic planning at the local level.

2.15 Green spaces are predominantly owned, managed and maintained by local authorities. However, local people, businesses and the voluntary sector are increasingly taking action to improve the quality of the spaces and places where they live. Effective partnership working and engagement of local people have been proven to achieve results that better meet users' needs, and increase the sense of local ownership. Partnership also makes more effective use of resources, facilitates the sharing of expertise and skills and can help to meet a range of community priorities.

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- 2.16 Total resources available to urban parks and green spaces have increased significantly over the past five years. Central Government revenue funding to local authorities for parks and green space services is provided as part of the 'environment protection and cultural services block' (EPCS). In addition to direct central funding, a range of new funding opportunities are complementing local expenditure.
- 2.17 Central government provides significant funding through regeneration and renewal programmes. At a regional level, the Regional Development Agencies support improvements to urban green spaces through their target to deliver urban renaissance and excellence in design. A big contribution is also being made to improve the quality of urban parks and green spaces by Lottery programmes, in particular the Heritage Lottery Fund and the New Opportunities Fund.
- 2.18 Twelve pilot areas each have a rural community warden who works alongside a rural police constable. The role of the warden is to support the local rural community with a conspicuous uniformed presence based in the locality. The partnership is promoting community solidarity and is preventing and reducing crime and fear of crime, vandalism and anti-social behaviour.

Sustainable Futures: Building for the Future – A Funding Opportunity

- 2.19 The Government's plans for building sustainable communities, launched through the 'Sustainable Futures: Building for the Future' document in early February 2003, included funding for parks and open spaces totalling £201 million.
- 2.20 This was a response to the identified need to create and maintain places in which people want to live with parks and open spaces being a key consideration as they form a focal point of community life.
- 2.21 The Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment (CABE) has set up CABE Space to promote the role of parks and open spaces in the UK. A number of reports have been commissioned, and the unit provides advice on strategic issues in relation to parks management, as well as improving the public profile of the service.
- 2.22 It is hoped that there will be funding for over 5,000 projects with a large proportion of the money being available for environmental regeneration schemes. In fact £89 million has been allocated for a 'liveability' fund supporting Local Authorities to improve public spaces across the country.
- 2.23 Further funding is in addition to other existing major funding opportunities such as NOF Green Spaces and Sustainable Communities Programme (£96 million committed by the end of 2002) and Heritage Lottery Fund Urban Parks Programme (£255 million committed by the end of 2002).
- 2.24 This local assessment of green spaces in Chelmsford will help to strategically identify priorities, in terms of areas and specific sites where funding may assist in enhancing existing green spaces.

CABE Space

2.25 CABE Space is publicly funded by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM). CABE Space aims:



“to bring excellence to the design, management and maintenance of parks and public space in towns and cities.”

2.26 Through their work, they encourage people to think holistically about green space, and what it means for the health and well being of communities, routes to school and work, and recreation through play and sport. Their ultimate goal is to ensure that people in England have easy access to well designed and well looked after public space. Lessons learnt from CABE Space’s case studies include:

- strategic vision is essential
- political commitment is essential
- think long-term
- start by making the case for high quality green spaces in-house (persuading other departments is key – high priority)
- a need to market parks and green spaces
- a need to manage resources more efficiently
- work with others - projects are partnerships
- keep good records: monitor investments and outcomes
- consult widely and get public support for your work.

Green Space Strategies – a good practice guide, CABE Space (May 2004)

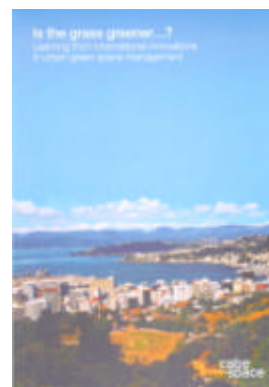
2.27 This guidance draws on the principles of PPG17 and aims to contribute to national objectives for better public spaces, focusing on three broad stages in producing a green space strategy. The document demonstrates the importance of green space strategies and the potential opportunity and benefits that it can provide, including:



- reinforcing local identity and enhancing the physical character of an area, therefore shaping existing and future development
- maintaining the visual amenity and increasing the attractiveness of a locality to create a sense of civic pride
- securing external funding and focusing capital and revenue expenditure cost-effectively
- improving physical and social inclusion including accessibility, particularly for young, disabled and older people
- protecting and enhancing levels of biodiversity and ecological habitats.

Is the grass greener...? Learning from international innovations in urban green space management, CABE Space (July 2004)

- 2.28 This is an international perspective using examples of good and bad practice that demonstrate the many issues common to English local authorities that international cities also face. It provides practical solutions that have helped to combat problems overseas.
- 2.29 The guide focuses in particular on aspects of management and maintenance practice, providing a series of challenging and inspiring solutions to common issues that are not dissimilar to current English practice.
- 2.30 The document describes the some of the problems faced in green space management that English towns and cities are often criticised for:
- being poorly maintained – uncoordinated development and maintenance activities
 - being insecure – the hostile nature of many green spaces
 - lacking a coherent approach to their management – conflicting interventions by a multitude of agencies, without clear overall responsibility
 - offering little to their users – lacking in facilities and amenities and being a haven for anti-social behaviour
 - being poorly designed – unwelcoming to people, created with poor quality materials.



Manifesto for better public spaces, CABE Space (2003)

- 2.31 There is huge national demand for better quality parks and public spaces. Surveys repeatedly show how much the public values them, while research reveals how closely the quality of public spaces is linked to levels of health, crime and quality of life. The CABE Space 'manifesto for better public spaces' explains the 10 things, which have been signed up by the Borough Council, that should be done to achieve improved quality:
- ensure that creating and caring for well-designed parks, streets and other public spaces is a national and local political priority
 - encourage people of all ages – including children, young people and retired people – to play an active role in deciding what our parks and public spaces should be like and how they should be looked after
 - ensure that everyone understands the importance of good design to the vitality of our cities, towns and suburbs and that designers, planners and managers all have the right skills to create high quality public spaces
 - ensure that the care of parks and public spaces is acknowledged to be an essential service



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- work to increase public debate about the issue of risk in outside spaces, and encourage people to make decisions that give more weight to the benefits of interesting spaces, rather than to the perceived risks
- work to ensure that national and local health policy recognises the role of high quality parks and public space in helping people to become physically active, to recover from illness, and to increase their general health and well-being
- work to ensure that good paths and seating, play opportunities, signs in local languages, cultural events and art are understood to be essential elements of great places – not optional extras that can be cut from the budget
- encourage people who are designing and managing parks and public spaces to protect and enhance biodiversity and to promote its enjoyment to local people
- seek to ensure that public spaces feel safe to use by encouraging councils to adopt a positive approach to crime prevention through investment in good design and management of the whole network of urban green spaces
- encourage people from all sectors of the community to give time to improving their local environment. If we work together we can transform our public spaces and help to improve everyone's quality of life.

The Value of Public Space, CABE Space (March 2004)

2.32 This report examines how high quality parks and public spaces can create economic, social and environmental value, as well as being beneficial to physical and mental health, children and young people and a variety of other external issues.

2.33 Specific examples are used to illustrate the benefits and highlight the issues arising on the value of public space:

- **The economic value of public spaces** - A high quality public environment is an essential part of any regeneration strategy and can impact positively on the local economy. For example increases in property prices
- **The impact on physical and mental health** - Research has shown that well maintained public spaces can help to improve physical and mental health encouraging more people to become active
- **Benefits to children and young people** - Good quality public spaces encourage children to play freely outdoors and experience the natural environment, providing children with opportunities for fun, exercise and learning
- **Reducing crime and fear of crime** - Better management of public spaces can help to reduce crime rates and help to allay fears of crime, especially in open spaces
- **Social dimension of public space** - Well-designed and maintained open spaces can help bring communities together, providing meeting places in the right context and fostering social ties



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- **Movement in and between spaces** - One of the fundamental functions of public space is to allow people to move around with the challenge of reconciling the needs of different modes of transport
- **Value from biodiversity and nature** - Public spaces and gardens helps to bring important environmental benefits to urban areas, as well as providing an opportunity for people to be close to nature.

A Guide to Producing Park and Green Space Management Plans, CABI Space (May 2004)

2.34 A primary intention of this guide is to encourage wider use of management plans by dispelling the myth that the creation of a site management plan is an exceptionally difficult task that can be undertaken only by an expert.

2.35 The guide presents ideas on benefits of management plans identifying steps to be taken to writing the plan. It also provides a list of subject areas that need to be addressed in any comprehensive management plan. The document has been split into two sections, providing a logical explanation of the management process:



- **Part 1: Planning the plan** - the who, what, when, where and how questions that may arise in the preparation of a park and green space management plan
- **Part 2: Content and structure of the plan** - what information needs to be contained in the final management plan and how should that information be presented?

English Nature

2.36 English Nature is the government agency concerned with wildlife and geology and is a key partner of the Countryside Agency, which aims to achieve improved understanding of the relationship between access and nature conservation. English Nature is responsible for selecting and designating SSSI's.

2.37 English Nature attempts to:

- facilitate and encourage access to National Nature Reserves
- support initiatives aimed at increasing the quantity and quality of open co habitats
- monitor the affects of access on wildlife sites across the country
- stress the value of local sites and recommend that local authorities develop partnerships for the provision of local sites and SSSI's.

2.38 Key position statements of English Nature include:

- access to the countryside and urban greenspace – there is a need for access close to where people live

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- respect for nature – access needs to be carefully arranged so that no problems for nature conservation are posed
 - access should be considered in light of policies of sustainable development and biodiversity
 - local sites are important for quality of life both in rural and urban areas.
- 2.39 The concept of standards for the provision of accessible natural greenspace in towns and cities arose from a body of work in the early 1990s that sought to recognise the importance of nature in the urban context. English Nature subsequently adopted the idea, publishing Research Report No 153 'Accessible natural green space in towns and cities – a review of appropriate size and distance criteria' in 1995.
- 2.40 In the context of a new interest in the value of green space, English Nature was concerned to find that its accessible natural green space standards seemed to be little used. In 2001 a project was therefore commenced to look again at the standards model in order to determine whether its validity could still be supported.
- 2.41 The review found that recent work broadly endorsed the scientific basis of the Research Report No 153, though many aspects of the work that green space plays in an urban context are thinly covered. However, the value of green space in supporting biodiversity and human recreation was found to be well supported and the structure of the standard itself withstood this scrutiny.
- 2.42 The key recommendations of the review include:
- that **English Nature** should provide additional support to the model by providing practical guidance, implementing an outreach strategy to raise the profile of the model
 - that **local authorities** should develop green space strategies as a means of ensuring balanced green space planning, and should set locally appropriated green space standards
 - that **central government** should work towards the development of a single framework for integrated green space planning.
- 2.43 The English Nature Accessible Natural Greenspace Standards (ANGSt) requires:
- that no person should live more than 300m from their nearest area of natural greenspace of at least 2ha in size
 - provision of at least 1ha of Local Nature Reserve per 1,000 population
 - that there should be at least one accessible 20ha site within 2km from home
 - that there should be one accessible 100ha site within 5km
 - that there should be one 500ha site within 20 km.
- 2.44 The standards were justified in the following ways:
- everyday contact with nature is important for well-being and quality of life

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- everyone should be able to enjoy this contact, in safety, without having to make any special effort or journey to do so
- natural green space in towns and cities can play an important role in helping safeguard our national treasure of wildlife and geological features
- accessible natural green spaces give everyone an excellent chance to learn about nature and help to protect it in practical ways
- adequate provision of vegetated areas helps to ensure that urban areas continue to function ecologically.

Forestry Commission

2.45 The Forestry Commission is the Government Department responsible for forestry throughout Britain. The mission of the department is to protect and expand Britain's forests and woodlands and increase their value to society and the environment with key aims including:

- developing opportunities for woodland recreation
- increase public understanding and community participation in forestry.

2.46 Forest Enterprise is an executive agency of the Forestry Commission responsible for the management of the forests, with one of its main aims being to increase opportunities for public recreation.

Planning for Open Space, Sport England (Sept 2002)

2.47 Sport England draws together the large body of research and good practice on the subject of open space and focuses on the revised PPG17 and its companion guide.



2.48 The main messages from Sport England within this document are:

- Sport England's policy on planning applications for development of playing fields (A Sporting Future for the Playing Fields of England) provides five exceptions to its normal stance of opposing any loss of all or part of such facilities and are reflected in PPG17 (paragraphs 10-15)
- Sport England must be consulted on development proposals affecting playing fields at any time in the previous 5 years or is identified as a playing field in a development plan
- it is highly likely that planning inspectors will no longer accept a Six Acre Standard approach in emerging development plans and therefore increasing the importance of setting local standards
- in undertaking a playing pitch assessment as part of an overall open space assessment, local authorities will need to consider the revised advice and methodology '*Towards a Level Playing Field: A manual for the production of Playing Pitch Strategies*'.

A Sporting Future for the Playing Fields of England/ Playing Fields for Sport Revisited, Sport England (2000)

2.49 These documents provides Sport England's planning policy statement on playing fields. It acknowledges that playing fields :

- are one of the most important resources for sport in England as they provide the space which is required for the playing of team sports on outdoor pitches
- as open spaces particularly in urban areas are becoming an increasingly scarce resource
- can provide an important landscape function, perform the function of a strategic gap or provide a resource for other community activities and informal recreation.



2.50 Sport England aims to ensure that there is no further reduction of supply of conveniently located, quality playing fields to satisfy the current and likely future demand.

Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA)

2.51 The introduction of Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA) was announced by the Government in 2001 in the Local Government White Paper '*Strong Local Leadership – Quality Public Services*'.

2.52 CPA is not a service inspection but a corporate assessment of a Council to deliver improvement using a universal cross-cutting theme, such as public open space.

2.53 The Audit Commission's approach to CPA for Councils combines the best of existing performance assessment regimes with new information gathered through two cross cutting inspections designed to reflect local peoples experience rather than processes and structures. These are:

- balancing housing markets
- public space – clean, green and safe.

2.54 Using public space, which includes green space as defined within this study, is a key assessment indicator. This demonstrates the importance of undertaking this study defining and what is existing, what are the public needs and what the key issues are.

2.55 CPA will assess what the council has, or has not, achieved, in terms of improvements in the area of public open space specifically against targets set by the Council. In order for the Council to set these targets, this study will assist in recommending the areas of priority and providing an audit of existing green spaces.

2.56 The key assessment indicators of public open space within CPA are:

- (i) Management of the Physical Environment
 - effectiveness of design and maintenance of open spaces
 - accessibility of open spaces
 - contribution of planning policy to the quality environment

- (ii) Keeping the Locality Clean
 - success in reducing vandalism, litter, dog fouling
 - effective partnership working with local providers
- (iii) Improve Community Safety
 - realistic setting of plans for the future
 - strengthening community cohesion
 - addressing anti-social behaviour
- (iv) Promoting an Active Life
 - effectiveness of partnerships to provide a range of recreational activities for young people
 - meeting needs of different groups in terms of pricing and accessibility
 - supporting activities within the local community
- (v) Assessing Partnerships
 - working with the County Council
 - working with the voluntary sector and private sector in providing open space and promoting its usage to encourage a healthy and active lifestyle.

Voluntary Quality of Life and Cross-Cutting Indicators (April 2001 – March 2002)

- 2.57 The Audit Commission consulted on a set of voluntary Quality of Life indicators for local authorities during autumn 2000. The exercise was prompted by the new powers given to local authorities in the Local Government Act 2000 to promote the social, economic and environmental well-being of their area.
- 2.58 All the proposed indicators are designed to paint a picture of the quality of life in the local area and to challenge all partners locally to address the issues within their community strategies.
- 2.59 Open spaces provide a major factor in the quality of people's lives and this was demonstrated with five of the 32 Quality of Life Factors having a direct link with the provision of open spaces. These factors were:
- area of parks and green spaces per 1,000 head of population (includes urban parks and open spaces plus other 'public open areas')
 - percentage of rivers and canals rated as good or fair quality
 - area of Local Nature Reserve per 1,000 population (ha) - Local Nature Reserves (LNRs) are for both people and wildlife and give people opportunities to study, learn and enjoy nature
 - the area of land designated as a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) - provide wonderful opportunities for people to enjoy wildlife and landscape
 - kilometres of dedicated cycle routes per 100km of principal and other local authority roads.

Claiming Your Share: A Guide to External Funding for Parks and Green Space Community Groups

- 2.60 This document provides guidance to a host of groups and organisations who wish to apply for funding to improve parks and open spaces. There is an acknowledgment that park budgets for local authorities have been reduced over the years and that community groups have the best chance of securing funding to improve green spaces.
- 2.61 The document highlights the difference between revenue and capital funding, the different types of funding available and provides guidance on how to make a funding application. A list of funding and grant-giving bodies is also provided and these are divided into a number of thematic categories according to the types of project they provide money for. These groups are:
- education
 - environment and Regeneration
 - heritage
 - horticulture
 - non-Specific
 - social Inclusion
 - sport and Recreation.

The Civic Trust

- 2.62 The Civic Trust aims to promote improvements in the quality of urban life. It is a charity devoted to *“enhancing the quality of life in Britain’s cities, towns and villages: the places where people live, work, shop and relax”*. It aims to promote ‘urban renaissance’ one of the major aims of PPG17 and open spaces will play a key part in this.
- 2.63 The Civic Trust responded to the new PPG17 and its approach with the following comments:
- concern that although the document is intended to cover open space, there is a strong emphasis on sport
 - sport is mentioned several times, as is Sport England, but there are no mentions of English Heritage or Heritage Lottery Fund
 - there is a strong emphasis on sports provision and equal emphasis is not given to cultural and social dimensions of open space and the concept of landscape
 - reference to the harm done to existing facilities over the past 20 years as a result of restrictions on local government finance and manpower that led to a decline in maintenance is needed
 - there is insufficient reference to urban ecology and the heritage aspects of landscape and these issues are not given the same consideration as sport
 - though section 68 refers to SSSIs, SPAs and SACs, the great majority of sites do not have this status but are essential to the survival of the overall ecosystem and the maintenance of biodiversity

- there should be discussion of how contaminated land may be brought back into recreational or amenity use, and of the educational value of open land managed for its wildlife or landscape interest.
- 2.64 The Civic Trust is in favour of encouraging local disadvantaged groups to engage in the running of their open spaces, recognising that this would require large numbers of outreach workers. The Trust supports the Green Flag scheme and illustrates the motivational effect that this is having on local authorities as they aim to improve their green spaces to enable them to obtain the award.
- 2.65 The Civic Trust, on behalf of a large steering group, carries out management of the Green Flag Awards. The Trust also has a dedicated regeneration unit, which focuses on pioneering, promoting and delivering regeneration initiatives.

Regional context

The Draft East of England Plan (RSS14)

- 2.66 The East of England Plan or 'RSS' sets out the regional strategy for planning and development in the East of England to the year 2021. It includes issues covering economic development, housing, the environment, transport, waste management, culture, sport and recreation, mineral extraction.

County context

Shaping the Future, Community Strategy for Essex (2003)

- 2.67 The community strategy was published in May 2003 and was created by using small group workshop consultation on the following nine themes:
- feeling safe
 - being healthy
 - creating opportunities
 - getting around
 - being part of a community
 - having a sense of place
 - being served well and fairly
 - conserving the environment
 - having fun.
- 2.68 The improved provision of basic services in both urban and rural areas was identified as a priority and a prerequisite for new developments. Particular services identified include health facilities, young persons facilities and sports facilities.

Essex and Southend-on-Sea Replacement Structure Plan Review (2003 – 2011)

2.69 Although Essex County Council has suspended work on the Structure Plan Review with a focus now on the preparation of the East of England Plan (RSS14), the report examined future land-use development and transport provision within Essex and Southend-On-Sea. It aimed to create the right planning strategy so that future growth can be managed in a sustainable way that benefits everyone whilst protecting the special qualities of towns, countryside and coast. Specific to Chelmsford are the following policies:

- retention of the Metropolitan Green Belt in the south and west of the Plan Area to prevent urban sprawl
- prevent neighbouring towns located within the Metropolitan Green Belt from merging into one another
- whilst the Metropolitan Green Belt (MGB) is likely to be maintained as a national and regional policy for controlling urban sprawl (in accordance with PPG2 and RPG), this should not necessarily prevent further urban growth taking place at selected strategic locations
- in Chelmsford, Harlow and Uttlesford Districts a shortfall in housing provision may remain requiring a review of greenfield sites.

Sporting Lives, Sporting Futures, Sporting Partnerships – A Physical Education and Sports Development Strategy for Essex

2.70 This document is a blueprint to help shape the future sporting provision in the county to ensure that resources are used effectively, and in a co-ordinated fashion. It was produced by a steering group comprised of both professionals and volunteers whom consulted with a wide range of organisations and institutions. Relevant points are as follows:

- need to provide a planned and co-ordinated approach to Physical Education and Sports provision and facility provision to avoid duplication
- create a better match between what the communities of Essex need and what is provided
- provide opportunities for all sections of the community to participate in Physical Education, Sport and Recreation at a level appropriate to their needs and aspirations.

Chelmsford Borough Local Plan (Adopted April 1997)

2.71 The Adopted Local Plan sets out detailed planned policies in order to control and inform future development. The adopted plan is now significantly out of date. A Deposit Draft Local Plan has since been produced however it has now been withdrawn therefore the adopted plan still holds the greatest weight in planning terms. There are many policies within the plan which relate to the protection of open spaces and sports facilities (refer to Local Plan for full detail of these policies). These include:

- Policy HO9: Housing Development
- Policy H10: House Conversions

- Policy REC6: Riverside Walks and Open Spaces
- Policy REC8: Access to Rivers
- Policy REC14: Access to the Countryside
- Policy REC15: Access for cyclists to the Countryside
- Policy REC18: Golf
- Policy REC19: Specialist Sports
- Policy REC22: Additional Open Space Provision
- Policy REC23: Open Space for Residential Developments
- Policy REC25: Provision of Allotments
- Policy REC26: Sports Facilities in Villages
- Policy RE16: Development in Urban Fringe
- Policy RE17: Development Affecting Woodlands
- Policy RE19: Development Affecting River Valleys
- Policy RE20: Registered Parks and Gardens
- Policy RE21: Ancient Woodlands
- Policy RE22: Protection of Important Wildlife Habitats
- Policy RE23: Protection of Essex Wildlife Trust Reserves

2.72 Policy REC22: Additional Open Space Provision summarises the existing provision standards for open space which are also set out in detail in Appendix Five of the adopted plan. These standards are set out in Table 2.1 overleaf and are referenced where relevant throughout this report.

Table 2.1 Current local plan open space provision standards

Local provision	Acres/1000 existing population
Equipped play & Kickabout areas	1.0
Informal play space	1.0
Local Parks	0.5
Informal recreation space	1.0
Planning amenity space	1.0
Strategic provision	Acres/1000 existing population
Sports pitches (exclusive of ancillary facilities)	2.2
Courts	0.08
Greens	0.05

2.73 A key outcome of this assessment is to up date these standards in line with the typologies contained with PPG17 and based on an up to date audit and current local needs assessment. This strategy will also inform relevant planning policies that will be contained within the emerging Local Development Framework.

Revised Deposit Draft Local Plan (2001-2011) (withdrawn)

2.74 The revised plan has since been withdrawn in its entirety. However, there are a number of key, policies that indicate the Council’s objectives and have specific relevance to this Strategy. These include:

Policy ST6 - Control of Development in the Metropolitan Green Belt

2.75 This policy seeks to preserve the openness of the Metropolitan Green Belt as defined on the Proposals Map. Planning permission for development will be refused unless it meets certain criteria. It states *“new building developments will be considered if the land is to be used for essential facilities for outdoor sport or recreation, for cemeteries, or for other uses of land which preserve the openness of the Green Belt and do not conflict with its purposes”*.

Policy COM11: Public Open Space for Residential Developments

2.76 This policy revision states that *“for all new residential development a minimum of 47 square metres per dwelling of accessible local open space and 25 metres per dwelling of strategic open space must be provided, unless a commuted sum is accepted. If the Council accepts commuted sums, the commuted sums will be used to provide additional open space or to improve existing open space.”* It goes on to state what these sums may be accepted for.

Policy COM16 – Existing Public Open Spaces, Outdoor sports Grounds, Allotments, Indoor Recreation and Leisure Facilities

2.77 This policy highlights the importance of these facilities and seeks to protect existing open spaces. It states “*the change of use, or redevelopment for other purposes, of existing public open space, outdoor sports grounds, school playing fields forming part of an educational establishment and allotments as identified on the Proposals Map will be refused unless*”:

- it can be demonstrated that alternative and improved provision will be created in location well related to the functional requirements of the relocated use and its users
- the proposal would not result in the loss of an area important for its amenity or contribution to the character of the area in general.

Policy IMP6 – Country Parks

- new developments must provide a minimum of 0.89 hectares of sports pitches per 1000 population. Where completely new facilities are to be provided provision will also be sought for support facilities
- whilst the Borough of Chelmsford currently has an adequate number of bowling greens further developments are proposed increasing pressure on these. Further need has been identified at South Woodham Ferrers
- major new development proposals will also generate the need for additional facilities and this standard applies to tennis and netball court provision.

Chelmsford Biodiversity Action Plan (2002/2007)

2.78 The Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) for the Borough is based on the Essex BAP which consists of broad brush targets for various species and habitats. The Chelmsford BAP distils these into specific priorities for the Borough. The BAP demonstrates the Borough’s commitment to improving the local environment and conserving natural resources. It also links with and builds on other local programmes set out in ‘Prosperity and Partnership’, the Council’s Community Plan and the Local Agenda 21 Strategy. The action plan contains key targets and actions for a range of habitats including urban areas; grassland; freshwater; heathland; trees, hedgerows and woodlands and also for rural areas and agriculture. Further reference is made to this plan within Section Five, Natural and semi-natural green space.

Chelmer Waterside Strategy (2002)

2.79 This strategy was developed to set out the strategic objectives and policies for the Waterside area in order to harness its potential. It was developed in conjunction with public consultation but it deals only with area-wide matters where a structured approach is essential to enable more detailed planning and infrastructure. The area contains large areas of green wedges that impact heavily upon the areas open spaces. Its policy objectives are:

- the most efficient use of brownfield land
- an accessible and sustainable quality mixed-use extension of the town centre
- maximising the potential for quality urban intensification

SECTION 2 – STRATEGIC CONTEXT

- use of green open spaces for the benefit of residents and the community.
- 2.80 Chelmer Waterside is within the Central Policy Area shown in the draft Chelmsford Borough Plan and is identified as providing sites for new retail frontages and urban intensification, with considerable capacity for new residential development integrated with mixed uses. The area provides an opportunity to accommodate major new leisure activities and public facilities integrated with job creating enterprises. Therefore, leisure, eating and drinking, hotel, retail, recreational, business and residential uses are sought to maximise the Waterside location.
- 2.81 The strategy notes that the rivers and canals in Chelmsford are a major sport and recreational resource, used by the Sea Cadets and Chelmsford Canoe Club. Existing access routes to the water will need to be relocated to facilitate the proposed developments.

Draft Core Strategy (2001 – 2021)

- 2.82 A draft version of the emerging Core Strategy is the first development plan document to be prepared by the Borough Council in accordance revised PPS12 (2004). This strategy establishes a framework for the regular review and updating of itself as well as its objectives and performance indicators to measure the success of the strategy against local, regional and national targets.
- 2.83 The draft Core Strategy encourages renaissance of urban areas so that more people continue to live close to their workplaces, and to leisure and community facilities. The design of these, or any other, developments will be of a high quality and include integrated open space.
- 2.84 It is envisaged that leisure and educational facilities will retain their existing prominence, and be expanded where necessary. The Metropolitan Green Belt, however, will continue to be protected.
- 2.85 The strategy makes particular reference to strategic gaps and green wedges. Planning development will be refused on either type of land unless certain conditions can be met.

Chelmsford Borough Transportation Strategy (2000)

- 2.86 This strategy is currently in a consultation stage of development and its policies support Green Transport Plans and other Travelwise initiatives. There are potential impacts upon Open Spaces because of proposed Park and Ride Schemes at Great Baddow, Springfield and Broomfield. In addition the creation/ expansion of civic squares has been proposed through the pedestrianisation of Tindal Square/ New Street and the West End.

Economic Development Strategy (2002 – 2012)

- 2.87 This strategy is based on research into the needs of the local economy and was produced after consultation with local economic stakeholders. It is designed to work in tandem with the Council's Community Plan and has four key elements:
- strategic vision
 - strategic aims
 - strategic themes

- delivering strategic priorities.

2.88 Specific aims that relate to Open Spaces and Sports facilities include:

- ensure a supply of land and premises which allows local businesses to flourish and new businesses to locate here
- Council can act as a catalyst for, and leader of, regeneration in areas such as Waterside and the West End.

Contaminated Land Strategy (2002)

2.89 This framework document was produced under the provisions of the Environmental Protection Act of 1990. Due to the increasing new housing pressures in Chelmsford, the strategies links with brownfield site redevelopment are of particular relevance, including:

- the identification and safe re-use of contaminated land therefore plays a key part in the future sustainable development of the Chelmsford Borough Council area
- the inspection of the District will identify areas of potentially contaminated land which may be developed, awaiting development, derelict, protected or green belt
- conserve and give access to open space
- enhance the built and landscape heritage.

Celebrate Chelmsford (2002 – 2007)

2.90 Celebrate Chelmsford was designed to be an aspirational document to be used to influence decision makers and to lobby for funding. It was written after extensive consultation via forums, postal surveys and discussion groups, and reviews of 111 other local, regional and national cultural strategies. The strategy has five main themes:

- communities first
- young people
- pride in Chelmsford
- economic development & renewal
- tackling local needs.

2.91 A flexible approach was taken towards the term 'culture', and areas such as sport, parks, countryside and open spaces were taken into account. The council will take the lead in promoting the cultural well-being of Chelmsford and will adopt Celebrate Chelmsford as part of the Council's policy framework. This will involve:

- working to enable the cultural life and cultural economy of the Borough to flourish

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- using cultural activity as a catalyst for economic renewal and work with key partners to maintain, improve and develop cultural facilities
 - working proactively to increase the resources available for culture.
- 2.92 There are two main economic development and renewal schemes that the strategy targets. The first is regeneration of Chelmsford's West End into a cultural quarter. The second is the development at Chelmer Waterside. Both will have ramifications for the provision of Open Space in Chelmsford.
- 2.93 The strategy has a substantial action plan, of which the following are relevant: (some of these actions have since been achieved).
- invest in cultural opportunities for young people
 - establish sport in the community schemes
 - develop a leisure card for the benefit of young people
 - create a cultural infrastructure of regional significance comprising facilities, organisations and people
 - develop Melbourne Park Athletics Centre as a regional centre for athletics (now open)
 - develop a support scheme for talented people in sport and the arts
 - create a cultural infrastructure of regional significance comprising facilities, organisations and people
 - achieve a new stadium for Chelmsford City FC in the Borough
 - ensure an effective cultural focus to the regeneration of the West End and Chelmer Waterside
 - achieve improvements at Chelmer Waterside to benefit water users, public access and interpretation of the local area
 - work with local councils and other organisations to identify and respond to the needs of South Woodham Ferrers
 - achieve the provision of a local swimming pool at the William de Ferrers Centre (due to open, Winter 2004)
 - create partnerships to identify appropriate resources and develop a programme of specific community based activities in sports and arts in South Woodham Ferrers
 - work with local councils and other organisations to meet identified cultural needs in specific localities
 - work with the local community to develop a programme of use for Melbourne Park Athletics Centre
 - identify and respond to the cultural needs of expanding communities

- target local parks, playing fields and other sport and community facilities at Beaulieu Park, Chancellor Park and Writtle Road.

Our Future – The borough of Chelmsford Community Plan (2003-2008)

- 2.94 Underpinning the Council's strategies is the Borough's Community Plan for the period 2003 – 2008 which is prepared by a partnership of the voluntary, public and private sectors. The plan aims to promote and improve the economic, social and environmental well-being of the borough and contribute to the achievement of sustainable development.

Assessment methodology

- 3.1 This study of open spaces and sport and recreation as previously outlined in Section One has been undertaken in accordance with PPG17 and its companion guide. This companion guide is a guidance document suggesting ways and means of undertaking the study. It emphasises the importance of undertaking a local needs assessment, as opposed to following national trends and guidelines.
- 3.2 The four guiding principles in undertaking a local assessment are:
- (i) local needs will vary even within Local Authority areas according to socio-demographic and cultural characteristics
 - (ii) the provision of good quality and effective open space relies on effective planning but also on creative design, landscape management and maintenance
 - (iii) delivering high quality and sustainable open spaces may depend much more on improving and enhancing existing open space rather than new provision
 - (iv) the value of open space depends primarily on meeting identified local needs and the wider benefits they generate for people, wildlife and the environment.
- 3.3 Although these principles apply to both urban and rural areas it must be recognised that rural areas cannot expect to have the same access and range of open spaces as urban areas although rural villages should expect to have some provision. Also, some spaces may be found exclusively in rural areas and some exclusively in urban areas and therefore separate rural and urban standards may be required.
- 3.4 PPG17 therefore recognises that individual approaches appropriate to each Local Authority will need to be adopted as each area has different structures and characteristics. The resulting conclusions and recommendations of this study are therefore representative of the particular local needs of Chelmsford.

Types of open space

- 3.5 The definition of open space within PPG17 is as follows:
- “all open space of public value, including not just land, but also areas of water such as rivers, canals, lakes and reservoirs which offer important opportunities for sport and recreation and can also act as a visual amenity.”*
- 3.6 PPG17 identifies nine typologies of open space. These categories include eight types of green open space and one category of urban open space. For the purposes of this study, the eight types of green space have been included. Full details of these typologies, their definitions and primary purpose are outlined in Table 3.1 overleaf.

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Table 3.1- Open space types and descriptions

Type	Definition	Primary Purpose/Examples
Parks and Gardens	Includes urban parks, formal gardens and country parks.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> informal recreation community events.
Natural and Semi-Natural Greenspaces	Includes publicly accessible woodlands, urban forestry, scrub, grasslands (e.g. downlands, commons, meadows), wetlands, open and running water and wastelands.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> wildlife conservation biodiversity environmental education and awareness.
Green Corridors	Includes towpaths along canals and riverbanks, cycleways, rights of way and disused railway lines.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> walking, cycling or horse riding leisure purposes or travel opportunities for wildlife migration.
Amenity Greenspace	Most commonly but not exclusively found in housing areas. Includes informal recreation green spaces and village greens.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> informal activities close to home or work enhancement of the appearance of residential or other areas.
Provision for Children and Young People	Areas designed primarily for play and social interaction involving children and young people.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> equipped play areas ball courts outdoor basketball hoop areas skateboard areas teenage shelters and 'hangouts'.
Outdoor Sports Facilities	Natural or artificial surfaces either publicly or privately owned used for sport and recreation. Includes school playing fields.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> outdoor sports pitches tennis and bowls golf courses athletics playing fields (including school playing fields) water sports.
Allotments	Opportunities for those people who wish to do so to grow their own produce as part of the long-term promotion of sustainability, health and social inclusion. May also include urban farms.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> growing vegetables and other root crops. <p>N.B. does not include private gardens</p>
Cemeteries & Churchyards	Cemeteries and churchyards including disused churchyards and other burial grounds.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> quiet contemplation burial of the dead wildlife conservation promotion of biodiversity.

Note: Civic Spaces e.g. civic and market squares and other hard surfaced areas have not been audited.

- 3.7 There are a number of types of land use that have not been included in this assessment as open space and recreation in accordance with PPG17, namely:
- grass verges on the side of roads
 - small insignificant areas of grassland or trees – for example on the corner of the junction of 2 roads
 - SLOAP (space left over after planning ie. in and around a block of flats)
 - farmland and farm tracks
 - private roads and domestic gardens.

- 3.8 As a result of the multifunctionality of open spaces there is a requirement to classify each open space by its 'primary purpose' as recommended in PPG17 so that it is counted only once in the audit. This should be taken into account when considering additional provision. For example - in areas of deficiency of amenity green space, playing pitches may exist as they also often provide a secondary function as amenity green space however their primary purpose remains as an outdoor sports facility.

The five step process - in detail

- 3.9 The PPG17 Companion Guide sets out a five step logical process for undertaking a local assessment of open space. Although presented as a linear process below, in reality, some of the stages are undertaken in parallel.

- 3.10 The following sets out the methodology we have employed under each step:

Step 1 - Identifying local needs

- 3.11 A large amount of research was carried out at the outset of the project including:
- gathering and review of relevant existing documentation and research already undertaken by the Council
 - desk-based research considering national, regional and local policies and strategies that will impact upon local needs for open space and sport and recreation provision.
- 3.12 In order to identify local needs, a thorough public consultation exercise was undertaken including:
- consultations with many organisations and individuals through various methods including one to one meetings, telephone calls, questionnaires, drop-in sessions and by email and post. Consultations were undertaken with the following:
 - consultation with Council officers from relevant internal departments to understand current issues, concerns and needs
 - external consultations with key stakeholders, governing bodies and agencies
 - questionnaire surveys of local sports clubs

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- consultations with Parish Councils representing the needs, attitudes and expectations of the local communities through two detailed questionnaires taking into account open spaces and sport and recreation facilities (See example of questionnaire in Appendix A)
- drop-in sessions located in four areas within urban Chelmsford to obtain views of local residents (See example of questionnaire in Appendix B)
- carrying out a targeted street survey of 500 residents and workers (See example of questionnaire in Appendix C)
- workshop session with Council officers to discuss and agree proposed quantity standards.

3.13 The Street Survey was targeted by area in order to gain a representative population sample from each analysis area. The proportion of surveys carried out in each area mirrored the overall share of population in that area. The survey of 500 people provides results accurate to around +/- 4% at the 95% confidence interval. In simple terms this means that if 50% of the respondents answered 'yes' to a question this would equate to between 46% / 54% of the whole Borough population answering 'yes' to the same question. The locations for the street surveys were:

- Chelmsford town sign
- High Chelmer shopping centre
- Chelmsford railway station
- Sainsburys on White Hart Lane
- South Woodham Ferrers, Market Square.

3.14 The drop-in sessions however involved approximately 100 respondents of a range of ages and backgrounds. These results are not statistically representative because of the limited sample size however they provided useful additional site-specific comments, trends and issues. They were held on weekdays during a regular, school-time working week. The sessions were well publicised in advance and were held at popular shopping venues in Urban wards where there are no parish councils: The locations were:

- Somerfield Superstore Car Park, Newland Springs Chelmsford (to consult with residents of St Andrews / Marconi / Patching Hall wards)
- Havengore Shopping Parade Car Park, Springfield (to consult with residents of Lawns / Trinity wards)
- Tesco Superstore Car Park, Princes Road Chelmsford (to consult with residents of Moulsham & Central / Moulsham Lodge / Goat Hall wards)
- Car Park of Church of the Holy Spirit, Forest Drive Chelmsford (to consult with residents of Waterhouse Farm ward).

Step 2 - Auditing local provision

3.15 A full audit of all the open spaces sites within the Borough to a minimum size of 0.05ha has been carried out. This took place through a combination of desk based research, site visits and assistance from local representatives. The following organisation helped to complete the audit process:

- **Parish Councils**
PPG17 states “consulting local communities in rural areas is potentially more onerous than in urban ones and by far the best way of doing it is usually through Parish Councils”. Parish Councils provided the main data and analysis in each rural parish through two detailed questionnaires and a mapping exercise. The questionnaire and guidance notes provided to each parish are provided in Appendix A.
- **Borough Council Planning, Leisure and Parks Officers**
The Council provided detailed copies of the Local Plan as well as GIS map bases and other relevant local policy documentation. Council planning officers carried out a thorough data verification exercise to ensure the accuracy of the open spaces audit. They checked site boundaries, open space types and added in additional sites if they were missing from the original map base.

3.16 A number of cross checking exercises were undertaken to ensure the audit was as comprehensive as possible. These included:

- follow up telephone calls to Parish Councils regarding any ambiguity in sites identified and/or where no open space was indicated
- cross-checking with Chelmsford Local Plan particularly where any ambiguity existed in identified open space sites
- site visits to every part of the Borough in order to check the parish audits and to apply a quality, usage and accessibility rating to each site
- ensuring consistency of categorisation of open space sites into the PPG17 typologies.

Analysis areas

3.17 For the purposes of structuring the audit and subsequent assessment, the analysis of the quantity and quality of provision has been undertaken by analysis area. These analysis areas are the same as those used within the Playing Pitch Strategy and are as follows:

- Urban Chelmsford
- South Woodham Ferrers
- Rural North
- Rural South.

3.18 Table 3.2 (overleaf) list the wards that fall within each analysis area and Figure 3.1 shows their geographical location. Generally there are one or more Parish Councils within each ward area. However note that in cases where there are several wards to one parish area these wards have been combined for the purposes of applying the minimum standard (refer to provision standards tables within each typology section). There are three combined wards. These are:

- Great Baddow East and West
- Chelmer Village & Beaulieu Park and Springfield North

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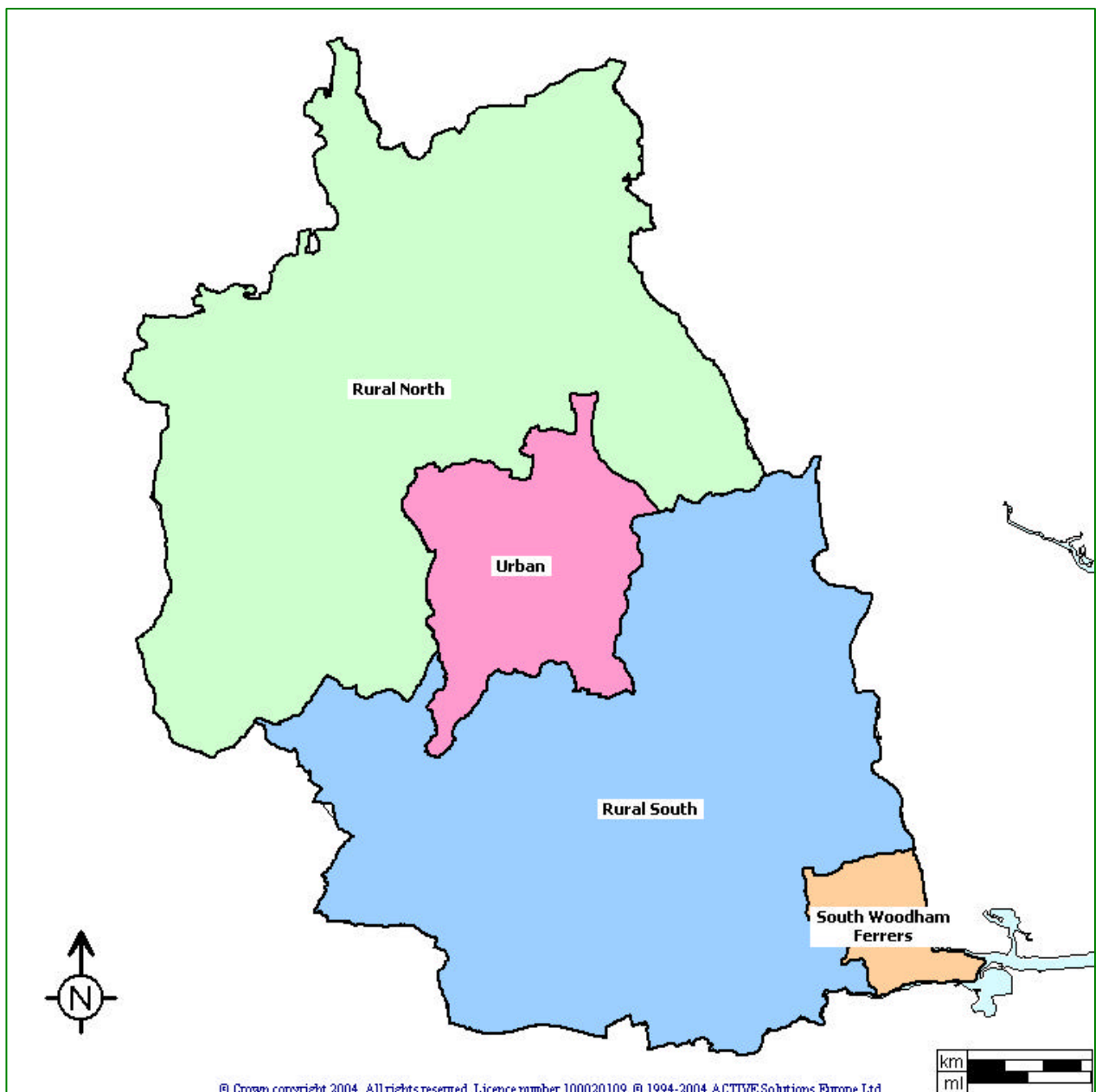
- South Woodham - Chetwood & Collingwood and South Woodham - Elmwood & Woodville.

3.19 In selecting the analysis areas, consideration was given to the physical boundaries that divide the Borough such as the rivers and main roads. Boundaries were selected to contain areas that were felt to be similar in socio-demography and landscape. In this case these physical boundaries largely mirrored the administrative boundaries in place. For the purposes of the open space audit, wards have been used for an initial assessment as they provide a useful unit. However, the overall assessment is based upon the wider geographic analysis areas which are outlined at para 3.16.

Table 3.2 Analysis areas by ward

Wards	Parishes
Urban Chelmsford	
Chelmer Village & Beaulieu Park	Springfield
Springfield North	
Great Baddow East	Great Baddow
Great Baddow West	
Moulsham & Central	
Marconi	
Goat Hall	
Moulsham Lodge	
Patching Hall	
St Andrews	
The Lawns	
Trinity	
Waterhouse Farm	
South Woodham Ferrers	
South Woodham – Chetwood and Collingwood	South Woodham Ferrers
South Woodham – Elmwood and Woodville	
Rural North	
Boreham & The Leighs	Boreham
	Great and Little Leighs
Broomfield & The Walthams	Broomfield
	Great Waltham
	Little Waltham
Chelmsford Rural West	Chignall
	Good Easter
	Highwood
	Mashbury
	Pleshey
Roxwell	
Writtle	Writtle
Rural South	
Little Baddow, Danbury, Sandon	Little Baddow
	Danbury
	Sandon
Bicknacre, East Hanningfield, West Hanningfield	Woodham Ferrers and Bicknacre
	East Hanningfield
	West Hanningfield
Galleywood	Galleywood
South Hanningfield, Stock and Margaretting	Margaretting
	South Hanningfield
	Stock
Rettendon and Runwell	Rettendon
	Runwell

Figure 3.1 – Analysis areas of Chelmsford



Digitisation and database development

3.20 Following the completion and verification of the audit by the Council, each open space site was then digitised using GIS software and its associated attributes and assessment ratings recorded in a linked Microsoft Access database. This database is a working tool which will enable the Council to update the audit over time and makes changes to individual site details to reflect changes on the ground. This allows a dynamic reporting and assessment mechanism and enables individual sites or specific geographical locations to be examined in detail where necessary.

Steps 3 and 4 - Setting and applying provision standards

3.21 Through analysing the data both in terms of quantitative information and the qualitative consultation responses in terms of quality, quantity, accessibility and level of use we are able to:

- determine provision standards
 - apply these standards to identify gaps in provision and therefore the areas of priority.
- 3.22 For the purposes of structuring the assessment, the Borough has been split into the four geographical analysis areas outlined above. These sub-areas have been devised where possible using clearly identifiable neighbourhoods and are separated from adjoining areas using ward boundaries.
- 3.23 The data collected also enables analysis of open space by catchment area. Public consultation established the distance that most people are willing to travel to each type of open space and standards have therefore been set. These standards can be applied, enabling the identification of gaps in provision and areas of acute priority.
- 3.24 Further detail regarding the setting and application of each type of provision standard is outlined below.

Setting quantity standards

- 3.25 PPG17 advocates that planning policies for open space, including playing fields, should be based upon local standards derived from a robust assessment of local need.
- 3.26 The quantity of provision is firstly measured by calculating the size in hectares of each individual site. This process is automated through mapping site boundaries within a GIS system. A summary of the quantity of each type of open space is set out in Sections Five to Eleven. As recommended by PPG17 the quantity of provision per 1000 population has been calculated in order for areas of differing population sizes to be compared.
- 3.27 A comparison can then be made between the local community's opinion on the existing quantity of provision in their area with the actual current level of provision which is now known. For example local people may feel there is too much of one type of space and not enough of another.
- 3.28 A workshop session was then carried out with Council officers to discuss the results of the audit and the consultation findings. Minimum provision standards were then derived which have been applied to individual wards so that it is possible to see which areas currently meet this minimum standard, which have less space than the standard and which have more. Proposed standards were also benchmarked against any existing national standards and against the standards of other local authorities. The summary of the quantitative data used to derive the standards is held within Appendix E.
- 3.29 All population figures used within the provision standards tables standards are taken from the 2001 Census.

The overall aim of the quantity assessment is to:

- identify which locations currently fall under the minimum standard for provision of each type of space
- identify areas which have significantly more space of each type than the minimum standard where it may be possible to investigate shifting the balance of open space from one type to another in order to address the identified deficiencies.

3.30 The minimum provision standards set for each type of open space in the Borough are held within each typology section of this report (Sections Four to Eleven) and summarised within Section Fifteen.

Quality

3.31 Each of the sites (where information was available) was rated according to its quality from 'very poor' to 'very good' and the rating stored within the audit database. The definitions used for this rating are held within Appendix D. The rating for each site is held within the audit in Appendix G.

3.32 The quality and value of an open space can actually be fundamentally different and sometimes be completely unrelated. An example of this could be:

- a high quality open space is provided but is completely inaccessible, its usage is therefore restricted and its value to the public limited; or
- a low quality open space may be used every day by the public or have some significant wider benefit such as biodiversity or educational use and therefore has a relatively high value to the public.

Therefore the needs assessment will analyse quality and value separately for each type of open space.

3.33 The overall aim of a quality assessment should be to establish a vision for the quality of spaces in the Borough to work towards and to identify current deficiencies in quality and key quality factors that need to be improved. This vision is set out within Section Twelve.

Accessibility

3.34 Each of the sites (where information was available) was rated according to its accessibility from 'very poor' to 'very good' and the rating stored within the audit database. The definitions used for this rating is held within Appendix D. The rating for each site is held within the audit in Appendix G.

3.35 Accessibility is a key factor in determining the public's use and experience of a space. Setting accessibility standards for open space should be derived from an analysis of the accessibility issues raised within the audit and in light of community responses. In undertaking various consultations we have been able to attain the aspirations of people in terms of travel time and also in terms of issues regarding access to sites. The outcome of this analysis is detailed in each section for each type of open space. We can use this analysis to determine suitable and appropriate accessibility standards.

3.36 The aims of the accessibility assessment was principally to identify:

- how accessible sites are?
 - how far are people willing to travel to reach open space?
 - areas of the Borough deficient in provision?
 - areas of the Borough suffering in accessibility and therefore of priority importance
 - key accessibility factors that need to be improved.
- 3.37 Distance thresholds (i.e. the maximum distance that typical users can reasonably be expected to travel to each type of provision using different modes of transport) are a useful planning tool especially when used in conjunction with GIS.
- 3.38 PPG17 encourages that any new open space sites or enhancement of existing sites should ensure accessibility by environmentally friendly forms of transport such as walking, cycling and by public transport. There is a real desire to move away from reliability on the car alone. Distance thresholds that are set should be realistic as well as encouraging a comprehensive provision of accessible open space across the Borough.
- 3.39 Within each Section, the median, mean and mode of responses from Parish Councils regarding the time they are willing to travel to reach open space are identified. These are defined below:
- mean: the sum of the total responses divided by the number of responses
 - median: the point above which there are exactly half the scores and below which there are the other half of scores
 - mode: the most frequently occurring score in a distribution.
- 3.40 In addition, each Section recommends distance thresholds, based on the outcomes of the local needs assessment, for each type of open space. The accessibility standards set for each type of open space in Chelmsford are summarised in Section Thirteen.

Level of usage and value

- 3.41 The value of an open space site is entirely different to quality and relates mainly to three key factors as described in PPG17 companion guide:
- **Context** – a site that is inaccessible is irrelevant to potential users and therefore is of little value irrespective of its quality. Also in areas where there are large amounts of high quality open space or more than is actually required, some of it may be of little value. In contrast to this, a site of little quality but in an area of low provision maybe of extremely high value to the public
 - **Level and type of use** – poorly used open space sites may be of little value while highly used sites may be of high value
 - **Wider benefits** – there are many wider benefits of open space sites that should be taken into account when analysing the results of particular sites e.g. visual impact, benefits for biodiversity, educational, cultural, economic

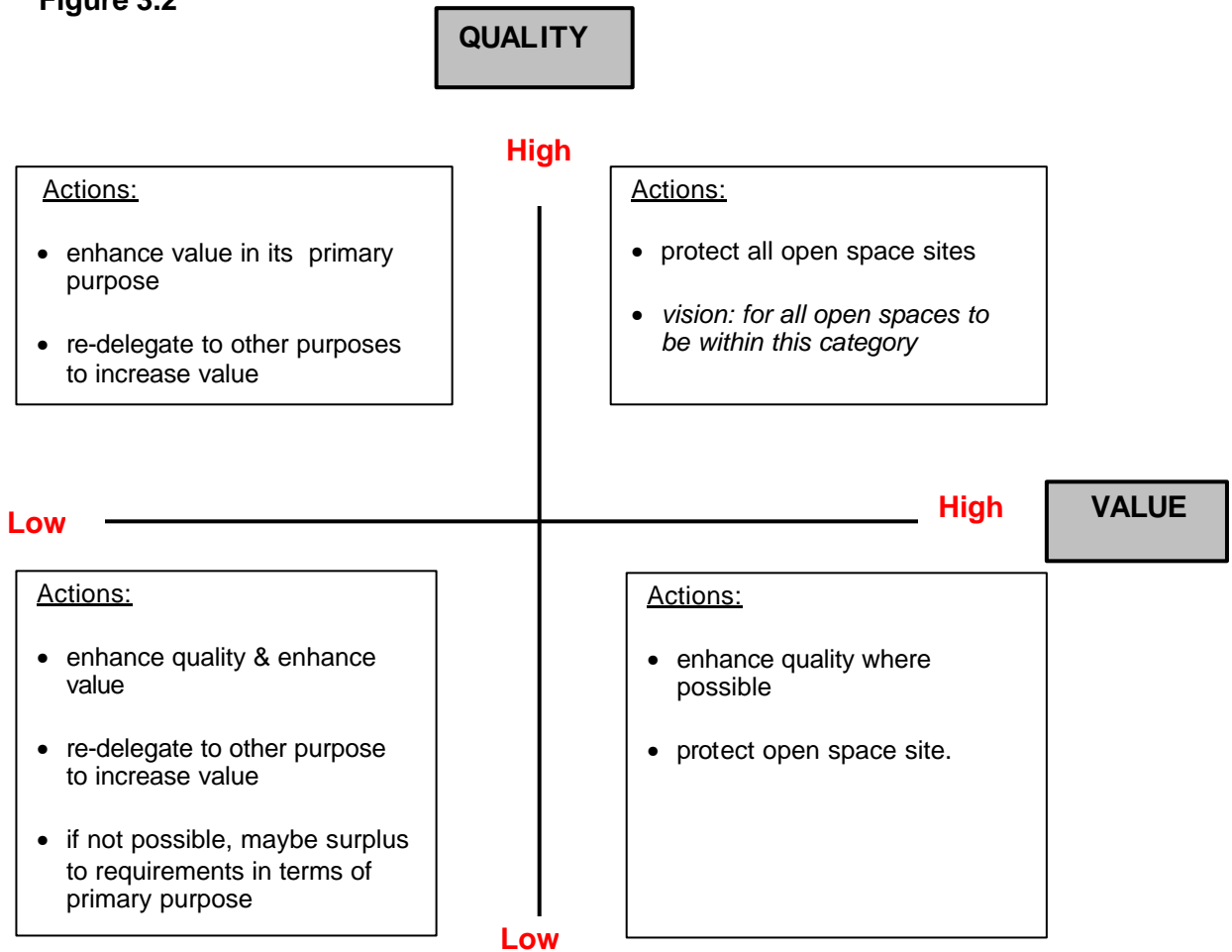
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etc. These benefits are difficult to assess in a systematic way and would require detailed site visits.

3.42 Evaluating value therefore involves attempting to assess these factors, in particular relating the context of the open space site (quality and accessibility) against the level of use of each site.

3.43 Figure 3.2 provides a simple means of determining the most appropriate policy approach to each existing open space site.

Figure 3.2



3.44 Quantity, quality and accessibility of sites will be evaluated within Sections Four to Eleven, for each specific type.

Step 5 – Drafting policies

3.45 Section Fifteen of this report summarises the proposed standards that have been derived following the assessment and working in collaboration with Council officers. It is then for the Council to take forward these recommendations and draft appropriate planning policies for inclusion within (or as supplementary guidance to) the emerging Local Development Framework.

Demographic analysis

3.46 In analysing the need and demand for open spaces it is important to consider the size and composition of the local population. An analysis of the demographic characteristics of the Borough is shown in Table 3.3 below:

Table 3.3 Demographic profile of Chelmsford Borough

Population	The resident population, according to the 2001 Census is 157,072 with a population density of 5 persons per hectare (243 rd out of 376 Local Authorities). The proportion of males to females is 49% to 51%.
Age structure	According to the 2001 Census, 20% of the resident population is under 16 years of age (as is the average for England and Wales), 60.7% is between 16 and 59 (compared to 59% in England and Wales) and 19.5% is aged 60 and over (compared to 21% in England and Wales). The average age of the population is 38.4, compared to an average for England and Wales of 39.
Ethnic background	The ethnic structure of the population is predominantly white – 97.6% compared to a national average (England) of 90.9%.
Economic activity	The proportion of residents in full time employment is 67.2% compared to 60.6% in England and Wales. 2.1% of the local population is unemployed, compared to the national figure of 3.4% 13.3% of the population is retired compared to 13.6% of the population of England and Wales.
Mobility	16.8% of households do not own a car, which is less than the national average of 26.8%. In terms of the proportion of households with one or more cars Chelmsford has above the national average.
Health	The percentage of people who stated they had a long-term illness, health problem or disability which limited daily activities or work was 13.6%, which is lower than the national average for England and Wales (18.2%)
Social class	Residents of Chelmsford are, on average, rated in a higher social class than national averages. 40.4% of persons are rated in “AB” class (30.7% nationally) and 43.9% are in “C1” and “C2” categories (28% nationally).

Sport and leisure potential profile

- 3.47 A sport and leisure potential profile for an area is calculated using data from Continental Research’s Million Plus Panel¹. The figures that are presented provide an indication of the propensity of residents within the Borough to take part in some of the main sports and leisure activities. Table 3.4 (below) provides examples for typical leisure activities.

Table 3.4 Leisure potential profile

Activity	Results as a % of the Borough population	Results as a % of GB population
Cycling	16.1%	14.6%
Health and fitness	20.8%	19.7%
Football	20.5%	19.7%
Golf	12.8%	12.0%
Rowing	0.4%	0.5%
Running/jogging	5.3%	4.9%
Rugby	6.7%	8.0%
Watersports	4.1%	3.0%

- 3.48 As Table 3.4 shows, there is an above average propensity to participate in the vast majority of leisure activities by residents of Chelmsford.

¹ The Million Plus Panel comprises a pool of over 3 million UK residents and holds over 3,000 lifestyle, demographic and purchasing details for each.

Parks and gardens

Definition

- 4.1 This type of open space includes urban parks, formal gardens and country parks that provide opportunities for various informal recreation and community events.

Strategic context

- 4.2 A national survey commissioned by Sport England, the Countryside Agency and English Heritage was undertaken during 2003, looking at the provision of parks within England. The aims of the survey were to establish:

- how many adults in England use parks
- what activities people take part in when visiting parks
- the reasons people visit particular parks
- the levels of satisfaction with the amenities on offer
- why non-users do not use parks.

- 4.3 The definition of a park used in this nationwide survey was very broad and included both formal provision such as town parks, country parks and recreation grounds and also less formal provision such as village greens and common land. Key findings were as follows:

- just under two thirds of adults in England had visited a public park during the previous 12 months
- there is a distinct bias in the use of parks by social groups, with almost three quarters of adults from the higher social group visiting a park compared with only half of those from the lower social group
- people from black and ethnic minority communities also have relatively low participation as well as those adults with a disability
- over 8 in 10 adults who had used a park in the previous 12 months did so at least once a month during the spring / summer with almost two thirds visiting a park at least once a week, and women tending to visit parks more often than men
- it is estimated that the 24.3 million adults who use parks make approximately 1.2 billion visits to parks during the spring and summer months and 600 million visits during the autumn and winter months – a total of 1.8 billion visits a year
- the most popular type of park visited was an urban / city park.

Consultation with Council officers

- 4.4 Officers from the Council's parks department were consulted to establish key issues and concerns as well as successes and best practice in managing the local parks and gardens.

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4.5 The following have been stated as notable recent achievements for the Council:

- ILAM Open Spaces Management Award 2004 for Echo Garden Project, Oaklands Park regarding best improvement to an existing, publicly accessible park
- Green Flag Management Awards 2005 for Oaklands Park and Boleyn Gardens (awarded by Civic Trust, and part of a national quality standard for parks and green spaces)
- Essex Playing Fields Awards - results not yet available for this year, but last year and in past Council have achieved significant success
- 2003 Best Value telephone survey - 83% (users at least once in past 12 months) very satisfied with parks, open spaces and children's play areas managed by Parks Service
- CIPFA family audit comparison, July 2004 - 82% satisfaction rate (all users & non-users) and 90% users of once or more a month.

4.6 There are several significant developments underway in the Borough, these are:

- Central Park - following redevelopment of the Anglia Polytechnic University (APU) site, the annexed part of the park (Green Triangle) will be reconfigured, with residential flats, underground car parking and a revised layout to open space and an "arts" square. A land bridge will link this site to the main Central Park, requiring the demolition of the old café building and relocation of existing Parkway access and skateboard ramp. The timescales are currently uncertain due to the need for a public inquiry, but possibly commencing 2005/06 although the main park may not be affected till 2007/08
- Hylands Park - restoration of the Repton landscape currently underway, with planned visitor facility, tea room, gift shop, a revamp of the Pleasure Gardens and significant tree planting. This is additional to the restoration of Hylands House itself
- from consultation feedback arising from development of the Parks Strategy, there is a need to consult with users about an apparent need for improved maintenance at Lionmede Park, Admirals Park and West Park. It is unclear whether there is a real maintenance problem, or simply a perception problem and a need to better inform users about what already takes place.

4.7 Consultation with parks officers revealed the following as key problem areas in terms of the management of parks and gardens within the Borough. It should be noted that these challenges are faced nationally and are considered less severe than experienced in many other locations:

- dealing with litter and broken glass, which takes up a lot of staff time
- dealing with vandalism to park buildings and furniture, and to soft landscape features
- anti-social behaviour issues in respect of noise, alcohol consumption, physical presence of groups of youths
- unauthorized use of motorcycles

- ball games nuisance (which also applies to green spaces other than parks and gardens e.g. amenity green space)
- pest control - e.g. rabbits and rats, due to various factors including milder winters, reduction in numbers of natural predators, restrictions on control methods, and easy foraging in parks for food (e.g. from bins)
- irresponsible dog owners, especially at sports pitch locations.

4.8 Key successes and challenges raised by the parks department in relation to managing this type of space include the following:

- the success of the Council's Parks and Open Spaces planning policies, which have been cited by the DTLR as an example of best practice in meeting green space requirements, in relation to maintaining them in the light of taking on new areas with ever increasing pressures on maintenance budgets
- the achievement of two new parks (at Beaulieu Park & Chancellor Park) through the planning process in the last 5 years
- maintaining high public satisfaction levels with increasing pressure to reduce expenditure
- promoting and encouraging community participation in management of green spaces, and fostering regular involvement through establishment of "Friends" groups
- improving and increasing marketing and awareness of parks and the activities/events that take place, by targeting specific audiences
- tackling the public perceptions and fears of crime in parks to promote wider access and usage
- enhancing the natural environment and promoting biodiversity where possible, and educating the public that biodiversity is not all about conservation and no change
- ensuring that parks remain high on the political and public agenda to avoid a return to the days of budget cuts and nil investment in them
- identifying suitable location(s) where "noisy" sports can be undertaken, which are not currently catered for e.g. model aircraft flying, trials motorcycle riding
- developing the Parks Strategy document in light of this assessment's research conclusions, specific parks policies and individual site management plans
- developing the craft skills base of Parks Service gardeners to raise the horticultural profile and maintenance standards generally, and in so doing recruit high calibre staff on an on-going basis
- landfill sites to be used as open space - potential use e.g. sports pitches needs to be related to a period of monitoring (because of potential settlement etc) in order to make best use of them in the long term.

Quantity

- 4.9 Chelmsford currently has 17 parks and gardens sites that have been included within the audit (See open spaces audit in Appendix F). These include both public and private sites whether accessible to the public or not. By far the largest park within the Borough is Hylands Park (209.41Ha's). The Hylands Estate contains the historic Hylands House which is surrounded by landscaped parklands much of which is Grade II listed by English Heritage. This estate offers a range of open space functions including recreational ancient woodland, grassland, lakes, ponds and gardens. Hylands House and Park offer a programme of events such as courses, talks and musical performances. The park is also the home of the V Festival and the award winning 'Chelmsford Spectacular' that takes place during the August Bank Holiday weekend.

Picture 4.1 Hylands Park



- 4.10 Hylands is not currently designated as a Country Park however because of its size and layout it serves many of the same functions. As stated within the Adopted Local Plan:
- “Hylands Park is of strategic importance and it is particularly well located to provide additional facilities for the urban population and to absorb some of the pressures currently being experienced at other Country Parks.” (paragraph 5.31)*
- 4.11 Other strategic parks that serve a large population in the Borough include Danbury Country Park (92.94 Ha's) and Marsh Farm Country Park (40.34 Ha's) at South Woodham Ferrers.
- 4.12 Within Urban Chelmsford other smaller well used local parks include Great Baddow Recreation Ground (4.6 Ha's), Baddow Hall Park (4.1 Ha's), Noakes Park (2.8 Ha's), Central Park (12.9 Ha's), Oaklands Park (4.03 Ha's).
- 4.13 Council officers consider the following locations in the Borough to be the focus for attention in terms of parks and gardens:
- South Woodham Ferrers in terms of achieving a better distribution/availability of sports pitches, which are concentrated to the east of the town. Providing more locations/facilities for young people to “hang out” and in so doing reduce the pressure on, and increase respect for Saltcoats Park and Compass gardens, which has been suffering from vandalism following youth dispersal from the town centre
 - Central Park has significant heritage value being over 100 years old. It has suffered from development of the Parkway inner ring road, and surrounding

development. Being a town centre location it has an important role as an accessible open space and as a cycle/pedestrian route, so investment in its infrastructure is essential

- Boleyn Gardens/Beaulieu Park Recreation Ground /Chancellor Park: for these new parks there is a need to develop communities in terms of building participation and involvement in management issues, and in promoting use of facilities. Boleyn Gardens (and Oakland's Park), being Green Flag Award winners also need on-going investment and development not only to retain their winner's status, but also to maintain standards.

Setting provision standards

- 4.14 The process for setting local quantitative standards is described within PPG 17 Companion Guide 'Assessing Needs and Opportunities' and this process has been followed in order to set a local standard for the Borough of Chelmsford. A diagrammatic format of this process is provided within Appendix E – 'Quantity Standards' along with a summary of all calculations.
- 4.15 In summary the quantity standards have been derived through firstly undertaking the Borough-wide site audit and then digitising the boundary of each site into a GIS. This provides a total amount of space in hectares for each typology of space within each of the wards in the Borough (See Table 4.1 overleaf). The next step is to then consider the consultation responses both from the Parish Councils, the general public and views of officers in relation to this current level of quantity. For example if the consultation showed that people feel there is a deficiency of a certain type of space (and officers agree) then the minimum standard should be set above the current level of provision. This higher level of provision thereby becomes the goal to work towards. Future population projections have also been taken into account.
- 4.16 It is important to note that when applying the minimum standard at the ward level there will be some wards that appear to have an oversupply and some that fall below the minimum level. This is because in reality a ward maybe adjacent to another that has a plentiful supply of green space and therefore its population falls within the catchment of this space so the fact it is below the minimum standard is not a problem. The priority areas are those which are both below the minimum standard and also fall outside the catchment of open space. See catchment mapping below.
- 4.17 There is currently no definitive national provision standard for parks and gardens. The Adopted Local Plan contains a provision standard of 0.5 acres/1000 expected population. This is converted within the Deposit Draft Local Plan (withdrawn) which provides the following standard:
- "Provision to be made at 0.2025 hectares per 1,000 population. Local Parks should be located so that each household is within 1km of the facility and the areas should be a minimum of 3.24 hectares."*
- 4.18 Note that this standard however is not based on the latest PPG17 typology and is wider in its application than the standards proposed below.
- 4.19 According to the local audit there are currently **490** hectares of parks and gardens space in total in the Borough. This represents provision equivalent to **3.12** hectares per 1000 population at present.

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- 4.20 The Borough-wide street survey (500 respondents) indicated the following local opinion about the quantity of this type of space overall in the Borough. There is currently:
- much too much (1%)
 - too much (5%)
 - about right (63%)
 - too little (20%)
 - much too little (9%).
- 4.21 This indicates that currently people are generally satisfied with the provision of this type of space. A small minority feel there is too much while a sizeable proportion (29%) feel there is not enough.
- 4.22 Within the Urban Chelmsford analysis area there is currently **48.00** hectares of parks and gardens equating to **0.53** per 1000 population at present.
- 4.23 Four drop-in consultation sessions were held to ask peoples' views about the quantity of this type of space specifically within this analysis area. A summary of these responses is as follows (Note the actual number of responses):
- too much (1 / 1.2%)
 - about right (46 / 68%)
 - too little (21 / 31%).
- 4.24 Within the South Woodham Ferrers analysis area there is currently **42.31** hectares of parks and gardens equating to **2.54** per 1000 population at present. Notably, the response from South Woodham Ferrers Town Council was that this is 'too much' for their needs.
- 4.25 Within the Rural North analysis area there is currently **296.11** hectares of parks and gardens equating to **14.17** per 1000 population at present. Four of the 12 parishes in this analysis area said that the quantity of space was 'about right' for their individual parishes while four said the question did not apply because they did not have any of this space. Three of the parishes did not complete the question.
- 4.26 Within the Rural South analysis area there is currently **103.58** hectares of parks and gardens equating to **3.54** per 1000 population at present. Five of the 12 parishes in this analysis area said that the quantity of space was 'about right' for their individual parishes while four said the question did not apply because they did not have any of this space. Three of the parishes did not complete the question.
- 4.27 For parishes that did not complete the question, consultation was undertaken with local persons to ascertain local provision. An on-street survey was undertaken at strategic locations as well as drop-in sessions using a Chelmsford Borough Council branded road show vehicle.
- 4.28 In discussion with the Council it was agreed that currently the rural areas are very well provided for in terms of parks and gardens while the urban area aspires to protect existing space and also to gain more of this type of space in to the future.

- 4.29 It is suggested that for the **Urban area** of Chelmsford (taking in Urban Chelmsford and South Woodham Ferrers analysis areas) the **minimum provision standard of 2.0 Ha per 1,000 population** is applied.

Applying provision standards

- 4.30 When applying the provision standard of 2.0 ha per 1000 population to the urban areas of Chelmsford currently, there is a total shortfall of provision equivalent to **123.55** hectares.
- 4.31 Table 4.1 below summarises the current level of provision within each ward and also shows how this compares with the minimum recommended standard. Note that where provision is currently below the minimum standard a minus figure is shown in red. The wards are listed by analysis area.
- 4.32 Figure 4.1 below illustrates thematically how the current level of provision compares with the minimum recommended standard for parks and gardens by analysis area across the Borough.

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Table 4.1 Applying the provision standard for parks and gardens

Ward Name	Total Population	Hectares	Hectares per 1000 pop	Local Minimum Standard	Above / Below standard per 1000/pop	Above / below standard (hectares)
Great Baddow East & Great Baddow West	13017	6.91	0.53	2.00	-1.47	-19.12
St Andrews	8644	5.19	0.60	2.00	-1.40	-12.10
Patching Hall	8776	0.00	0.00	2.00	-2.00	-17.55
Marconi	6306	0.85	0.13	2.00	-1.87	-11.76
The Lawns	5610	0.00	0.00	2.00	-2.00	-11.22
Chelmer Village and Beaulieu Park & Springfield North	17405	4.69	0.27	2.00	-1.73	-30.12
Trinity	5830	1.20	0.21	2.00	-1.79	-10.46
Waterhouse Farm	4985	17.24	3.46	2.00	1.46	7.27
Moulsham and Central	8457	11.92	1.41	2.00	-0.59	-4.99
Moulsham Lodge	5484	0.00	0.00	2.00	-2.00	-10.97
Goat Hall	5786	0.00	0.00	2.00	-2.00	-11.57
Total Urban Chelmsford	90,300	48.00	0.53	2.00	-1.47	-132.60
South Woodham - Chetwood and Collingwood & South Woodham - Elmwood and Woodville	16,629	42.31	2.54	2.00	0.54	9.05
Total South Woodham Ferrers	16,629	42.31	2.54	2.00	0.54	9.05
Total Urban area	106,929	90.31	0.84	2.00	-1.16	-123.55
Boreham and The Leighs	5,093	30.03	5.90			
Broomfield and The Walthams	7,477	34.38	4.60			
Chelmsford Rural West	2,695	22.29	8.27			
Writtle	5,632	209.41	37.18			
Total Rural North	20,897	296.11	14.17			
Little Baddow, Danbury and Sandon	8,091	92.93	11.49			
Bicknacre, East and West Hanningfield	5,039	0.00	0.00			
Galleywood	5,898	0.00	0.00			
South Hanningfield, Stock and Margaretting	5,179	0.00	0.00			
Rettendon and Runwell	5,039	10.65	2.11			
Total Rural South	29,246	103.58	3.54			
Total Rural area	50,143	399.69	7.97			
Borough wide total	157,072	490.00	3.12			

Figure 4.1 Current provision compared with recommended standard for parks and gardens



Quality

4.33 Overall the quality of parks and gardens in the Borough is very good according to our site rating system. Of the 17 sites in the audit, nine received a quality rating of 'very good' with a further three considered to be 'good'. None of the sites were rated as 'average', 'poor' or 'very poor' however six of the sites were left unrated due to lack of information. The sites that were considered to be of very good quality are as follows:

- Marsh Farm
- Hylands Park
- Noakes Park
- Baddow Hall Park
- Central Park (including Bell Meadow and Sky Blue Pasture)
- Oaklands Park
- Admirals Park & Tower Gardens
- Boleyn Gardens.

Accessibility

4.34 Seven of the nine sites listed above were rated as being 'very good' in terms of accessibility. Of the other two, Baddow Hall Park was considered 'good' while Hylands Park was considered to be 'average'. Six of the 15 sites rated under this category (three were not known) were considered to have a good level of access. These were:

- Hoppitt Meadow (Great Waltham)
- Boreham House (Boreham)
- Baddow Hall Park
- Lionmede Park
- Danbury Country Park
- Langleys Historic Parkland (Great Waltham).

4.35 According to Council officers the following areas are seen as priorities in terms of access to parks and gardens:

- The Old Moulsham area of Moulsham and Central ward on basis of low level of provision anyway
- Moulsham Lodge/Tile Kiln/Goat Hall – need for informal youth space/kickabout areas due to inadequate/inappropriate size and distribution of suitable spaces. Amenity green spaces are frequently used for ball games, to the annoyance of residents, even on the smallest of areas.

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- Hylands Park, only in terms of inaccessibility to these solely reliant on public transport. This position may however change following completion of the Estate restoration work.
- South Woodham Ferrers - (see 2.10 above) and Town Councils desire to see a separate pedestrian access to Saltcoats Park, to segregate pedestrians and vehicles.

Catchment

- 4.36 Parish Councils were asked to comment on what they considered was a reasonable time in minutes that people should be expected to travel to reach a park or garden by various alternative means of transport. The median, mean, mode, of those that responded to this question is summarised in Table 4.2 under the field heading 'Parish Council responses' below.
- 4.37 As part of the Street Survey people were asked how far (in minutes) they were prepared to travel in order to access this type of open space. PPG17 recommends that the 75% percentile of responses indicates the time/distance that the majority of people will be willing to travel and this should be used to help inform accessibility standards. The time that 75% said they were prepared to travel is shown in Table 4.2 below under the field heading 'Public consultation: Street Survey'
- 4.38 Similarly at the drop-in sessions people were asked the same question by mode of transport and the average response is also shown in Table 4.2.

Table 4.2 Time prepared to travel

Mode of travel	Parish Council responses					Public consultation	
	Median	Mean	Mode	Min.	Max.	Street Survey (75% percentile)	Drop In Sessions
Walk	15	21	10/15	10	60	Up to 29 minutes	12 mins (Mean response)
Car	5	7	5	5	20		15 mins (Mean response)

- 4.39 As the table shows people have varying views on what is an acceptable travel time to reach parks and gardens on foot or by car. Within the 75% percentile, 36% of respondents said they were prepared to travel between 5-14 minutes while 31% said they would travel 15-29 minutes.
- 4.40 On the whole, the consultation showed that people appreciate that formal parks and gardens cater for a larger geographical area than some of the other types of open space and as such are prepared to travel further to access them either driving, walking and also cycling.

SECTION 4 – PARKS AND GARDENS

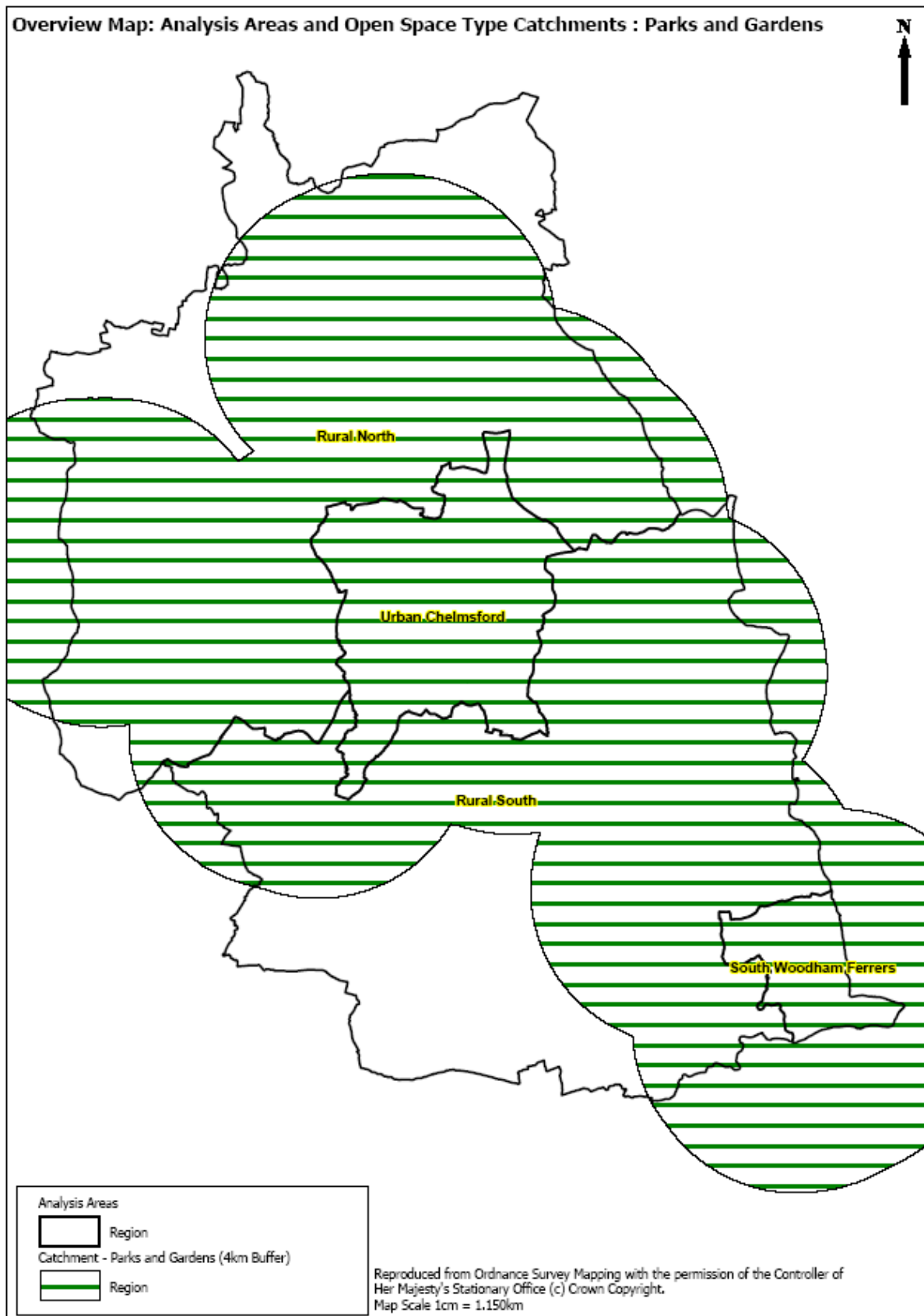
4.41 The recommended standard as agreed with officers is that everyone should be able to access a park or garden within a ten minute drivetime. Table 4.3 below puts an indicative equivalent distance against this drivetime. In reality this distance will vary depending on local driving conditions. See Appendix F for benchmarking of these standards against other local authorities.

4.42 Table 4.3 Recommended accessibility standard

Accessibility Standard – Parks and Gardens	
Recommended travel time	Indicative equivalent distance
10 minute drivetime	4 km

4.43 Figure 4.2 shows this travel time boundary applied to all the sites in the borough. Using this mapping (which is held within the Council's GIS system) it is possible to drill down to see which localities do not currently have ready access to this type of open space.

Figure 4.2 Accessibility catchments for parks and gardens



Assessment of value (usage v quality v accessibility)

- 4.44 In theory most sites that are well used by the public would normally be expected to have a high rating in terms of quality and accessibility. Most sites with a low level of use would have an average or poor quality and accessibility rating. This is because the factors are related and interlinked ie poor quality means less people want to use the space. However in reality there are of course deviations to this rule for various reasons.
- 4.45 The accessibility and quality of parks and gardens within Chelmsford Borough is good overall, and there are number of sites which have been rated as having high/significant levels of use – these are sites that are of high value and importance to the public and should therefore be a priority for protection. These include:
- Hylands Park
 - Marsh Farm
 - Noakes Park
 - Baddow Hall Park
 - Great Baddow Recreation Ground.
- 4.46 Other parks and gardens which have been rated as being used ‘often’ and therefore have significant public value should also be protected with some consideration how to maintain and improve levels of use of these sites:
- Boleyn Gardens (Springfield)
 - Hoppitt Meadow (Gt. Waltham)
 - Danbury Country Park (Danbury).
- 4.47 In terms of challenges for the future for this type of space, Council officers have raised the following points:
- the Council has undertaken a ROSPA health and safety audit and were awarded a Level 1 accreditation. The main challenges are to improve and further develop active monitoring and inspection regimes to ensure parks facilities are safe and secure facilities. This is particularly pertinent as parks are inevitably subject to compensatory litigation/claims, as are many other organizations
 - introduction of further quality assurance measures aimed at obtaining an ISO 9000 or 14000 accreditation. It is envisaged that this process will be the vehicle to ensure quality standards are maintained and continuously improved, with an emphasis on real ‘on the ground’ improvements for the public and users.
- 4.48 From consultation carried out specifically for developing the parks strategy, the challenges for the Council should be prioritised as:
- safety and security - which may be dealing with perceptions and fear of crime, or physical improvements

SECTION 4 – PARKS AND GARDENS

- improve maintenance of grounds
- measures to reduce vandalism
- provide better availability of food & drink purchases
- provide more organised events/activities
- provide clean toilets
- provide more dog bins/increase frequency of emptying
- provide better park staff presence
- provide more litter bins
- provide more play equipment.

4.49 It should however be noted that separate research undertaken for 'Best Value Service review' indicates that better promotion and marketing of parks and green spaces, and of the facilities available could significantly change and/or reduce the points listed above.

Summary

- | | |
|------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 4.50 | When applying the suggested provision standard of 2.0 ha per 1000 population to the urban area of Chelmsford there is currently an overall deficiency of 119.13 ha. The rural areas of Chelmsford are currently very well provided for in terms of parks and gardens provision. |
| 4.51 | From the consultation it appears that the overall quality, accessibility and usage of parks and gardens in the Borough is good to very good. |
| 4.52 | The recommended travel time for people to be able to access a park or garden is a 10 minute drivetime. |

Natural and semi-natural green space

Definition

- 5.1 This type of open space includes woodlands, urban forestry, scrub, grasslands (e.g. downlands, commons, meadows), wetlands, open and running water, nature reserves and wastelands with a primary purpose of wildlife conservation and bio-diversity.

Picture 5.1 Images of natural and semi-natural green space in Chelmsford



Strategic context

- 5.2 A Biodiversity Action Plan (2002/2007) has been produced for the Borough with the aim of ensuring:
- “the long term survival of the biodiversity within the Borough and to seek opportunities to increase the amount of suitable habitat by improving management of existing areas and seeking habitat creation where appropriate.”*
- 5.3 This objective is to be achieved in a number of ways for example through Council management of land, through the planning process and working with partners. The provision standards set out below should be used in order to achieve the aims of the biodiversity strategy.
- 5.4 It is important to acknowledge that there are number of partners involved in protecting and managing this type of space within the Borough. These agencies are working together to achieve the actions set out in the Action Plan. These are as follows:
- Chelmsford Borough Council
 - Essex County Council
 - Essex Wildlife Trust
 - Essex Biodiversity Partnership
 - English Nature

- DEFRA
- Essex Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group (FWAG)
- National Trust
- Writtle College
- Environment Agency
- RSPB
- Essex British Trust for Conservation Volunteers (BTCV).

Consultation

5.5 Discussions with Council officers have revealed the following as key challenges and issues in managing this type of open space in the Borough within the wider objective of promoting biodiversity in all suitable locations:

- since a wide range of individuals and organisations own these areas no organisation has direct influence over all of them
- landowners and managers can work independently of each other so standards of stewardship can vary widely
- danger of various landowners chasing the same limited resources (volunteers or grant funding)
- need to develop and maintain good communications between various landowners to identify good practice and provide help and advice to improve land management over the whole Borough
- need to promote real partnership working to create economy of scale and avoid duplicating effort
- all designated sites (SSSI's, County Wildlife Sites etc) should be the focus of attention
- the urban area of Chelmsford: as the scale of the built area increases it is important to consider access to semi-natural areas for people who live and work there.

5.6 Examples of good practice in the Council's management of these spaces include the following:

- the way in which the Council has taken a lead in organising biodiversity action planning in the borough – particularly:
 - the Chelmsford Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP), developed and implemented by the Council along with a range of partner organisations
 - the Chelmsford Biodiversity Forum set up to improve communications and promote partnership working between the key organisations involved with biodiversity in the Borough

- the Council staff-working group set up to improve biodiversity planning between Services
- new phase 1 survey and review of Wildlife Sites being undertaken this year by EECOS on behalf of the Council's Planning Services
- management of existing LNR at Galleywood Common
- development of a new LNR at Chelmer Valley Riverside Area, including a youth engagement project
- the way in which the Parks Services have embraced land management for nature conservation, including staff training and management planning on Council sites.

Quantity

- 5.7 219 natural and semi-natural green spaces that have been included in the audit, this includes those that are both publicly and privately owned and managed and also those that are currently inaccessible to the public (Refer to open spaces audit in Appendix G). In accordance with PPG17 even if sites are inaccessible to the public they often still serve a very important environmental function in acting as habitats for wildlife and as 'green lungs'. As such they should be included within the audit.
- 5.8 A significant number of these sites are currently protected under nature conservation designations such as Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINCs) The ten most sizeable sites within this category together with their designations are as follows:
- Galleywood Common (44.57 has): Local Nature Reserve (LNR)
 - Heath Road NSN, South Hanningfield (50.68 has)
 - Blakes Wood (54.70 has): Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)
 - Chatham Hall NSN (54.74 has): Site of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINCs)
 - Pheasant House Farm (79.29 has): Site of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINCs)
 - Danbury and Lingwood Common (82.21 has): Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)
 - Chalk Hill NSN, Highwood (82.85has)
 - Blackmore Road NSN, Highwood (109.25 has)
 - Woodham Fenn (200.92 has): Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)
 - Hanningfield Reservoir, South Hanningfield (449.56 ha's): Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI).

Picture 5.2 Galleywood Common



Setting provision standards

- 5.9 The process for setting local quantitative standards is described within PPG 17 Companion Guide 'Assessing Needs and Opportunities' and this process has been followed in order to set a local standard for the Borough of Chelmsford. A diagrammatic format of this process is provided within Appendix E – 'Quantity Standards' along with a summary of all calculations.
- 5.10 In summary the quantity standard have been derived through firstly undertaking the Borough-wide site audit and then digitising the boundary of each site into a GIS. This provides a total amount of space in hectares for each typology of space within each of the wards in the Borough (See Table 5.1 below). The next step is to then consider the consultation responses both from the Parish Councils, the general public and views of officers in relation to this current level of quantity. For example if the consultation showed that people feel there is a deficiency of a certain type of space (and officers agree) then the minimum standard should be set above the current level of provision. This higher level of provision thereby becomes the goal to work towards. Future population projections have also been taken into account.
- 5.11 It is important to note that when applying the minimum standard at the ward level there will be some wards that appear to have an oversupply and some that fall below the minimum level. This is because in reality a ward maybe adjacent to another that has a plentiful supply of green space and therefore its population falls within the catchment of this space so the fact it is below the minimum standard is not a problem. The priority areas are those which are both below the minimum standard and also fall outside the catchment of open space. See catchment mapping below.
- 5.12 A national standard for natural and semi-natural areas has been recommended by English Nature. They suggest that there should be 1 ha of Local Nature Reserves per 1,000 population. There is no national or local standard that covers the whole of this category of open space although English Nature does approve of other green space standards based on local assessments.

SECTION 5 – NATURAL AND SEMI-NATURAL GREEN SPACE

5.13 According to the local audit there are currently **2321.43** hectares of natural and semi-natural green space in total in the Borough. This represents provision equivalent to **14.78** hectares per 1000 population which is a considerably larger amount of provision than the English Nature standard above. The Borough as a whole therefore currently boasts a large overall supply of this type of space. However much of this space is currently privately owned and inaccessible to the public.

5.14 The Street Survey (500 respondents) indicated the following local opinion about the quantity of this type of space Borough-wide:

- much too much (1%)
- too much (5%)
- about right (55%)
- too little (26%)
- much too little (12%).

This indicates that currently the majority of people are generally satisfied with the provision of this type of space. A small minority feel there is too much while a sizeable proportion (38%) feel there is not enough. This highlights that although there is a lot of this space perhaps people feel they cannot easily access it.

5.15 Within the Urban Chelmsford analysis area there is currently **143.80** hectares of natural and semi-natural green space equating to **1.59** per 1000 population at present. Four drop-in consultation sessions were held to ask peoples views specifically about the quantity of this type of space within this analysis area. A summary of these responses is as follows, (note the actual number of respondents):

- too much (1 / 1.6%)
- about right (31 / 49%)
- too little (31 / 49%).

5.16 It is clear from this response that many people feel that although there is plenty of this type of space in the Borough they do not feel that have enough access to it in their local neighbourhood.

5.17 Within the South Woodham Ferrers analysis area there is currently **190.20** hectares of natural and semi-natural green space equating to **11.44** per 1000 population at present. South Woodham Ferrers Parish Council considers this to be 'about right'.

5.18 Within the Rural North analysis area there is currently **665.18** hectares of natural and semi-natural green space equating to **31.83** per 1000 population at present. Five of the 12 parishes in this analysis area said that the quantity of space was 'about right' for their individual parish while only one parish (Writtle) think they have a deficiency. The remaining six either said the question did not apply or did not complete the survey.

5.19 Within the Rural South analysis area there is currently **1322.25** hectares of natural and semi-natural green space equating to **45.21** per 1000 population at present. Five of the 12 parishes in this analysis area said that the quantity of space was 'about right'

for their individual parish while four said the question did not apply and the remaining three parishes did not complete the question.

- 5.20 For parishes that did not complete the question, consultation was undertaken with local persons to ascertain local provision. An on-street survey was undertaken at strategic locations as well as drop-in sessions using a Chelmsford Borough Council branded roadshow vehicle.
- 5.21 In discussion with the Council it was agreed that currently the rural analysis areas as well as South Woodham Ferrers analysis area are currently very well provided for in terms of natural and semi-natural green space and therefore a minimum standard was not thought necessary. However from the consultation responses it appeared there was a desire to be able to access more of this type of space in the urban areas. Where at all possible future provision of this type of space should be focussed in the urban areas.
- 5.22 It is suggested that for the **Urban area** of Chelmsford (taking in Urban Chelmsford analysis area) the **minimum provision standard of 2.0 ha per 1,000 population** is applied.

Applying provision standards

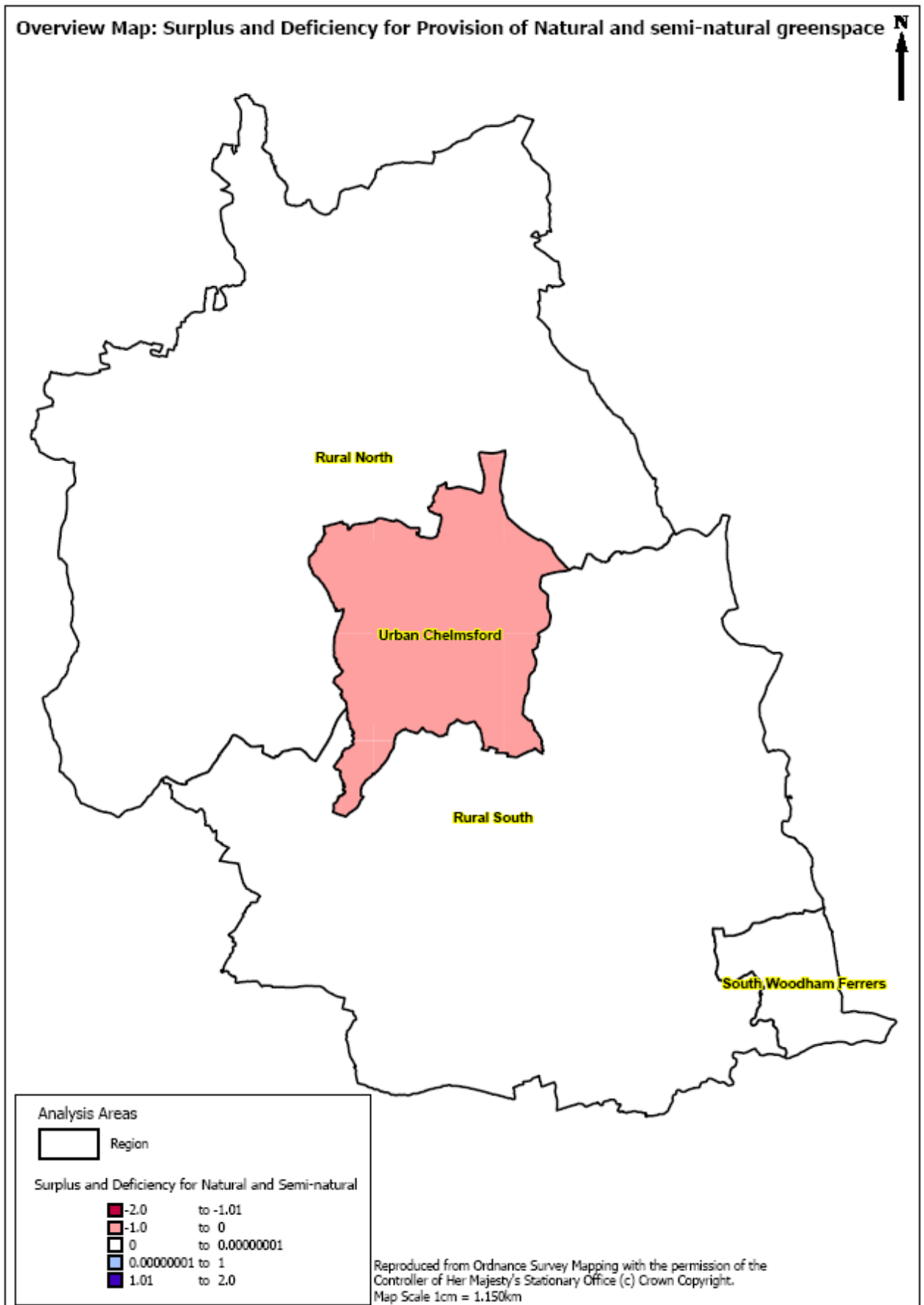
- 5.23 When applying the provision standard of 2.0 ha per 1000 population to the urban areas of Chelmsford currently, there is a total shortfall of provision equivalent to **36.80** hectares.
- 5.24 Table 5.1 overleaf summarises the current level of provision within each ward and also shows how this compares with the minimum recommended standard. Note that where provision is currently below the minimum standard a minus figure is shown in red. The wards are listed by analysis area.
- 5.25 Figure 5.1 overleaf illustrates thematically how the current level of provision compares with the minimum recommended standard for natural and semi-natural green space by analysis area across the Borough.

SECTION 5 – NATURAL AND SEMI-NATURAL GREEN SPACE

Table 5.1 Applying the provision standard for natural and semi-natural green space

Ward Name	Total Population	Hectares	Hectares per 1000 pop	Local Minimum Standard	Above / Below standard per 1000/pop	Above / below standard (hectares)
Great Baddow East & Great Baddow West	13017	35.64	2.74	2.00	0.74	9.61
St Andrews	8644	5.94	0.69	2.00	-1.31	-11.35
Patching Hall	8776	0.75	0.09	2.00	-1.91	-16.80
Marconi	6306	0.00	0.00	2.00	-2.00	-12.61
The Lawns	5610	2.43	0.43	2.00	-1.57	-8.79
Chelmer Village and Beaulieu Park & Springfield North	17405	83.25	4.78	2.00	2.78	48.44
Trinity	5830	1.86	0.32	2.00	-1.68	-9.80
Waterhouse Farm	4985	0.77	0.15	2.00	-1.85	-9.20
Moulsham and Central	8457	0.56	0.07	2.00	-1.93	-16.35
Moulsham Lodge	5484	0.00	0.00	2.00	-2.00	-10.97
Goat Hall	5786	12.60	2.18	2.00	0.18	1.03
Total Urban Chelmsford	90,300	143.80	1.59	2.00	-0.41	-36.80
South Woodham - Chetwood and Collingwood & South Woodham - Elmwood and Woodville	16,629	190.20	11.44			
Total South Woodham Ferrers	16,629	190.20	11.44			
Total Urban area	106,929	334.00	3.12			
Boreham and The Leighs	5,093	195.68	38.42			
Broomfield and The Walthams	7,477	156.67	20.95			
Chelmsford Rural West	2,695	271.14	100.61			
Writtle	5,632	41.69	7.40			
Total Rural North	20,897	665.18	31.83			
Little Baddow, Danbury and Sandon	8,091	400.51	49.50			
Bicknacre, East and West Hanningfield	5,039	143.19	28.42			
Galleywood	5,898	46.10	7.82			
South Hanningfield, Stock and Margaretting	5,179	658.04	127.06			
Rettendon and Runwell	5,039	74.41	14.77			
Total Rural South	29,246	1322.25	45.21			
Total Rural area	50,143	1987.43	39.64			
Borough wide total	157,072	2321.43	14.78			

Figure 5.1 Current provision compared with recommended standard for natural and semi-natural green space



Quality

- 5.26 Overall, across the Borough, the majority of sites that were rated were considered to be 'average' to 'very good'.
- 5.27 15 (14%) of the 105 sites that were rated were considered to be of 'very good' quality. 35 (33%) were rated as 'good'; 42 (40%) as 'average'; 12 (11%) as 'poor' and 2 (2%) as 'very poor'. 114 were unable to be rated through lack of access and information. The two sites that were considered to be of very poor quality:
- Chantry Field (Boreham)
 - Cuton Hall (private) (Springfield).

Accessibility

- 5.28 The majority of sites were considered to be 'average' to 'good' in terms of accessibility. However quite a number were rated as 'poor' and 'very poor'. However in many cases there will be sensible reasons for this. The location of natural and semi-natural sites such as woodlands and wetlands are often remote from local communities by their very nature. Careful consideration needs to be given to balancing public access and conservation of such sites.
- 5.29 In summary, 16 (14%) out of the 111 sites rated against this category were considered to be 'very good' in terms of accessibility; 32 (29%) were rated as 'good', 22 (20%) were rated as 'average'; 30 (27%) were rated as 'poor', 9 (8%) as 'very poor' and two as being inaccessible. For 108 out of the 219 the level of accessibility was unknown with many of these being private site, for example woodland areas within farm estates.

Catchment

- 5.30 Parish Councils were asked to comment on what they considered was a reasonable time in minutes that people should be expected to travel to reach a natural or semi-natural open space by various alternative means of transport. The median, mean, and mode of those that responded to this question is summarised in Table 5.2 below under the field heading 'Parish Council responses'.
- 5.31 As part of the Street Survey people were asked how far (in minutes) they were prepared to travel in order to access this type of open space. PPG17 recommends that the 75% percentile of responses indicates the time/distance that the majority of people will be willing to travel and this should be used to inform accessibility standards. The time that 75% said they were prepared to travel is shown in Table 5.2 overleaf under the field heading 'Public consultation: Street Survey'. Similarly at the drop-in sessions in the urban area people were asked the same question by mode of transport and the average response is shown in the table.
- 5.32 As Table 5.2 shows people have varying views on what is an acceptable travel time to reach natural and semi-natural spaces on foot and by car. From the consultation it seems that people accept that within the urban areas it is unlikely there will be large spaces of this type and that it is often necessary to drive further out to the rural areas to access such sites. The parish view (largely representing the rural areas) shown in the table above indicates that they would expect to be able to reach natural green spaces within a five minute drivetime whereas the wider public view and the views of residents of the urban areas is that they would be prepared to travel further than this by car.

Table 5.2 Time prepared to travel

Mode of travel	Parish Council responses					Public consultation	
	Median	Mean	Mode	Min.	Max.	Street Survey (75% percentile)	Drop In Sessions
Walk	20	21	20	5	60	Up to 29 minutes	15 mins (Mean response)
Car	5	9	5	5	30		20 mins (Mean response)

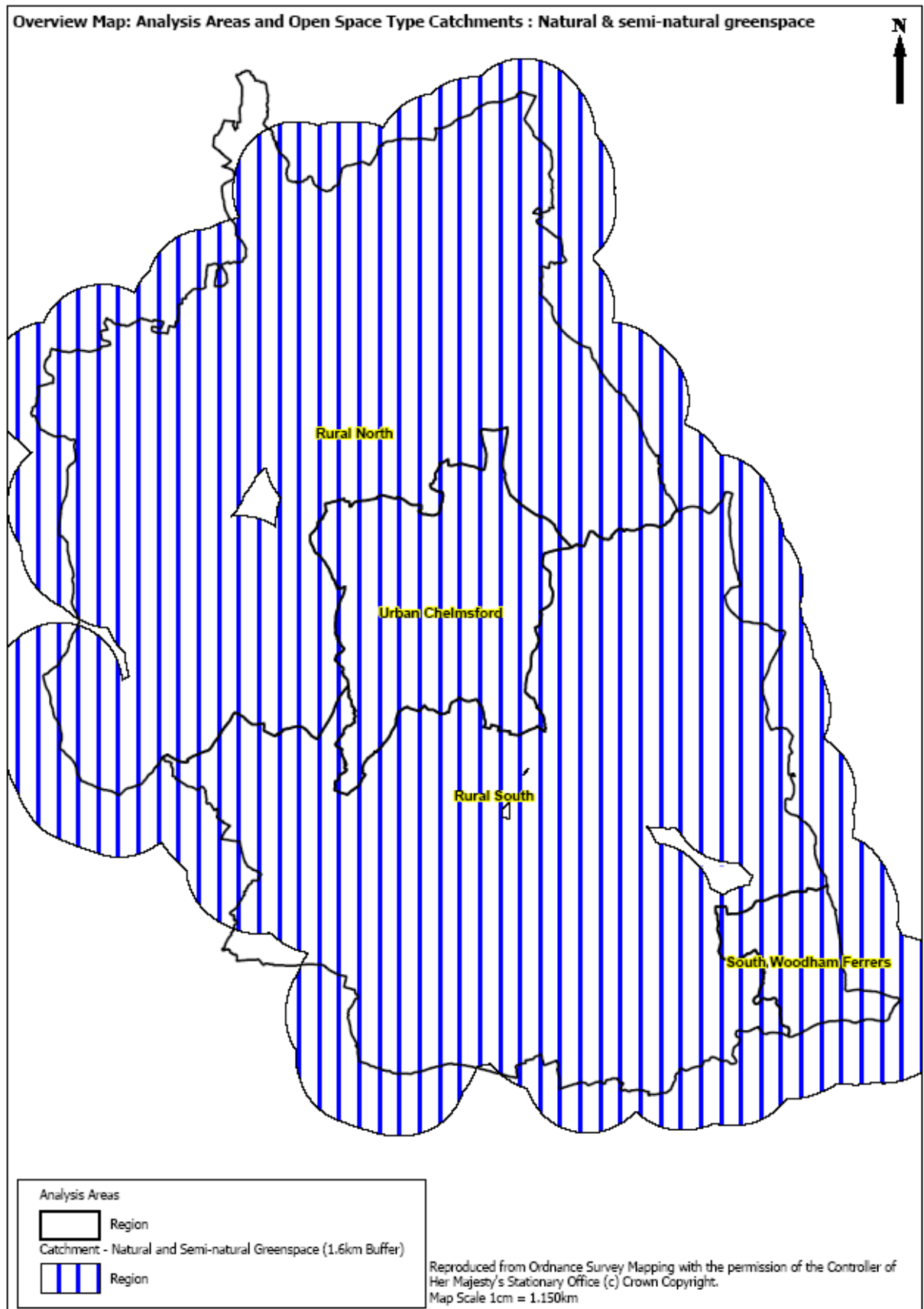
5.33 There was strong feeling from the consultations that this should be a type of space that residents should be able to access on foot, for example when taking the dog for a walk. Considering the consultation responses and as agreed by officers the recommended accessibility standard should be equivalent to a 20 minute walk Borough-wide. Table 5.3 below puts an indicative equivalent distance against this travel time. In reality this distance will vary depending on individuals and local conditions. See Appendix F for benchmarking of these standards against other local authorities.

Table 5.3 Recommended accessibility standard

Accessibility Standard – Natural and semi-natural greenspaces	
Recommended travel time	Indicative equivalent distance
20 minute walk	1.6 km

5.34 Figure 5.2 shows this travel time boundary applied to all the sites in the borough. Using this mapping (which is held within the Council’s GIS system) it is possible to drill down to see which localities do not currently have ready access to this type of open space.

Figure 5.2 Accessibility catchments for natural and semi-natural green space



5.35 English Nature have adopted threshold standards although these relate mainly to Local Nature Reserve (LNR's) suggesting:

- no person shall live more than 300m from their nearest area of natural green space of at least 2ha in size
- provision of at least 1ha of LNR per 1,000 population
- should be at least one accessible site within 2km from home
- should be one accessible 100ha site within 5km
- should be one accessible 500ha site within 10km.

5.36 It is acknowledged that these may not be achievable in the short term, particularly the larger site standards however they provide threshold aspirations for the longer term. Other open spaces also need to be taken into account as they provide multi-functional usage and therefore may negate the need for additional space of this type in a locality.

Assessment of value (usage v quality v accessibility)

5.37 Most sites that have a high level of use would normally have a 'good' or 'very good' quality and accessibility rating. Most sites with a low level of use would have an 'average' or 'poor' quality and accessibility rating. This is because the factors are related and interlinked.

5.38 There are seven sites within this type that have been rated as being of high quality, high accessibility and high usage – these sites are of high value and importance and it may be appropriate to prioritise these sites for protection. These sites together with owns them as follows:

- Gore Pond (Writtle Parish Council)
- Springfield Lyons (Essex County Council)
- Conservation Area by Great Leighs Church (Private)
- Church Broom Wood (Private)
- Little Waltham Meadows (Essex Wildlife Trust)
- Phyllis Currie Nature Reserve (Essex Wildlife Trust)
- Lyons Hall Wood (Private).

5.39 There are seven sites that have been rated as having no usage yet are 'average' in terms of quality. It is likely that this is because some of these sites are private that it is not possible for the public to have greater use of them. These are:

- Hyde Green NSN, Danbury (Unknown)
- The Street NSN, Pleshey (Unknown)
- New Lodge Farm, Little Baddow (Private)

SECTION 5 – NATURAL AND SEMI-NATURAL GREEN SPACE

- Woodlands 1, Little Baddow (Private)
- Woodlands 2, Little Baddow (Private)
- Watermeadows, Little Baddow (Private)
- Essex Regiment Way NSN, Little Waltham (Unknown).

5.40 There are five sites where the quality and accessibility have been rated as either 'poor' or 'very poor' however the level of public use is very high. These sites are obviously considered to be important to local people and attention should be paid to consider how to improve the quality and accessibility of these sites. These are:

- Sandford Road NSN, Springfield
- Balancing Pool, Great and Little Leighs
- Chelmer Village Way NSN, Springfield
- Land off Brookend Road South, Springfield
- Cuton Hall, Springfield Parish.

Summary

- | | |
|------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 5.41 | The audit has shown that the Borough overall is very well provided for in terms of natural and semi-natural spaces. It has a large overall quantity of this type of space and many sites are currently protected under nature conservation designations as set out in the Local Plan. |
| 5.42 | However the consultation responses have shown that people within the urban areas feel this type of space is lacking in their locality and would like to be able to access it on foot. Therefore a provision standard for the urban area of 2.0 has per 1000 population has been set. |
| 5.43 | Currently there is a shortfall of 36.80 ha of natural and semi-natural green space in the urban area compared to the minimum provision standard. |
| 5.44 | It is proposed that people should be able to access a natural or semi-natural green space within 20 minutes walk of their home throughout the Borough. |
| 5.45 | The quality of sites is a potential area for improvement in some areas and it may also be appropriate to investigate the protection of existing good quality sites. |
| 5.46 | Natural and semi-natural sites are rated as the least accessible open space sites within the Borough. This is partly due to the remote location of such sites. The importance of balancing accessibility and conservation of such sites should be recognised and carefully managed. |

Green corridors

Definition

- 6.1 This open space type includes towpaths along canals and riverbanks, cycleways, rights of way and disused railway lines with the primary purpose to provide opportunities for walking, cycling and horse riding whether for leisure purposes or travel and opportunities for wildlife migration.

Picture 6.1 River Chelmer green corridor



Strategic context

PPG17 – the role of green corridors

- 6.2 With regards to green corridors the emphasis of PPG17 appears to be on urban areas. It uses the typology definition taken from the Urban Green Spaces Taskforce Report that is referred to as an '*urban typology*'. Furthermore, elements of PPG17 are contradictory with the companion guide on this issue, where despite PPG17 suggesting that all corridors, including those in remote rural settlements should be included, the Companion Guide implies that unless a green corridor is used as a transport link between facilities i.e. home and school, town and sports facility etc, it should not be included within an audit.
- 6.3 This quality and accessibility analysis considers all types of green corridors identified by parish clerks and Council Officers, including public rights of way, disused railway lines, footpaths, towpaths and other specially designated areas.

Quantity

- 6.4 There are 20 sites within the Borough-wide audit that have been categorised as green corridors (See open spaces audit in Appendix G). These sites fall predominantly within the three green wedge areas that have been protected as such within the local plan. These wedges are:
- the Chelmer Valley to the north of the town centres and between Springfield, Broomfield and Little Waltham
 - the Chelmer Valley to the east of the town centre, and between Great Baddow and Chelmer Village; and

- the Can Valley to the west of the town centre and between West Chelmsford and Roxwell Road.

6.5 The Deposit Draft Local Plan (withdrawn) describes the importance of this type of space within Chelmsford as follows:

“ These green corridors contain areas of land in agricultural use and various formal and informal leisure and other recreational uses. They also contain footpaths and bridleways that facilitate public access from the urban area to the open countryside. As well as providing physical separation between the urban area of Chelmsford these areas also contain sites of nature conservation value. Green wedges are therefore as important resource and amenity for the residents of the urban area of Chelmsford.”

Setting provision standards

6.6 The process for setting local quantitative standards is described within PPG17 Companion Guide ‘Assessing Needs and Opportunities’ and this process has been followed in order to set a local standard for the Borough of Chelmsford. A diagrammatic format of this process is provided within Appendix E– ‘Quantity Standards’ along with a summary of all calculations.

6.7 In summary the quantity standards have been derived through firstly undertaking the Borough-wide site audit and then digitising the boundary of each site into a GIS. This provides a total amount of space in hectares for each typology of space within each of the wards in the Borough (See Table 6.1 below). The next step is to then consider the consultation responses both from the Parish Councils, the general public and views of officers in relation to this current level of quantity. For example if the consultation showed that people feel there is a deficiency of a certain type of space (and officers agree) then the minimum standard should be set above the current level of provision. This higher level of provision thereby becomes the goal to work towards. Future population projections have also been taken account of.

6.8 It is important to note that when applying the minimum standard at the ward level there will be some wards that appear to have an oversupply and some that fall below the minimum level. This is because in reality a ward maybe adjacent to another that has a plentiful supply of green space and therefore its population falls within the catchment of this space so the fact it is below the minimum standard is not a problem. The priority areas are those which are both below the minimum standard and also fall outside the catchment of open space. See catchment mapping below.

6.9 According to the local audit there are currently **37.95** hectares of green corridor space in total in the Borough. This represents provision equivalent to **0.24** hectares per 1000 population at present.

6.10 The Borough-wide street survey (500 respondents) indicated the following local opinion about the quantity of this type of space:

- much too much (1%)
- too much (5%)
- about right (59%)
- too little (24%)
- much too little (11%).

SECTION 6 – GREEN CORRIDORS

- 6.11 This indicates that currently people are generally satisfied with the provision of this type of space. A small minority feel there is too much while a sizeable proportion (35%) feel there is not enough.
- 6.12 Within the Urban Chelmsford analysis area there is currently **27.27** hectares of green corridors equating to **0.20** per 1000 population at present. Four drop-in consultation sessions were held to ask peoples views specifically about the quantity of this type of space within this analysis area. A summary of these responses is as follows (note the actual number of responses):
- too much (1 / 1.6%)
 - about right (30 / 68%)
 - too little (13 / 30%).
- 6.13 From the consultation many people felt that although there is plenty of this type of space exists in the Borough, they do not feel they have enough ready access to it in their local neighbourhood.
- 6.14 Within the Rural North analysis area there is currently **3.74** hectares of green corridors equating to **0.18** per 1000 population at present. Five of the 12 parishes in this analysis area said that the quantity of space was ‘about right’ for their individual parish, two said that there was a deficiency while one said the question did not apply and the remaining four parishes did not complete the question.
- 6.15 Within the Rural South analysis area there is currently **6.40** hectares of green corridors equating to **0.22** per 1000 population at present. Four of the 12 parishes in this analysis area said that the quantity of space was ‘about right’ for their individual parish, five said the question did not apply and the remaining three parishes did not complete the question.
- 6.16 In discussion with the Council it was agreed that it is important to protect the existing green corridor space Borough-wide and that this type of space should be extended to form ‘green fingers’ of open space that extend out of the town centre in a radial fashion. In order to achieve such a vision it is necessary to aspire to gain more of this space by setting the local standard slightly higher than the current level of provision.

6.17 It is suggested that for the **Borough** of Chelmsford (taking in all analysis areas) the **minimum provision standard of 0.2 ha per 1,000 population** is applied.

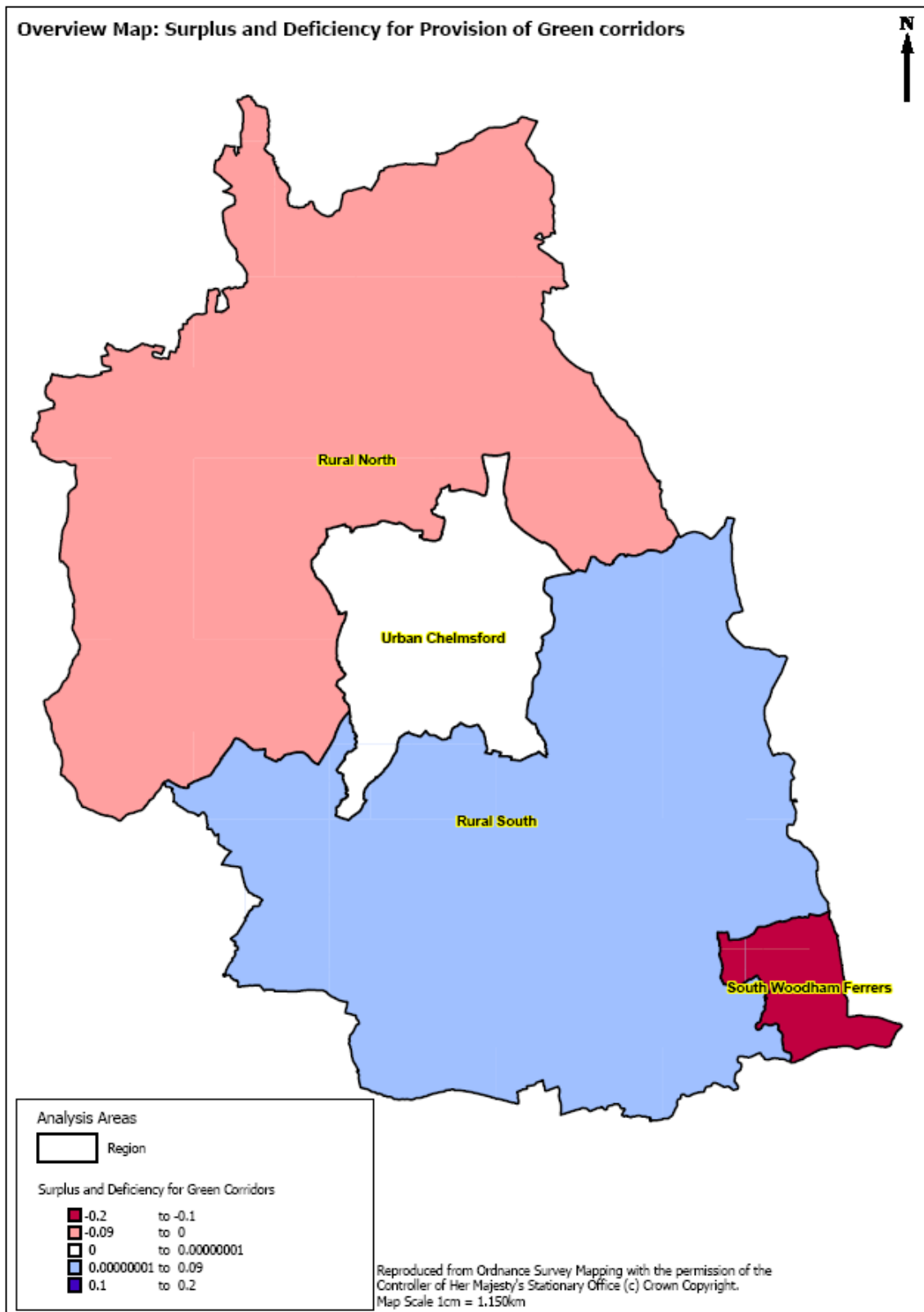
Applying provision standards

- 6.18 When applying the provision standard of 0.2 ha per 1000 population Borough-wide, there is currently **6.54** hectares above the minimum standard.
- 6.19 Table 6.1 below summarises the current level of provision within each ward and also shows how this compares with the minimum recommended standard. Note that where provision is currently below the minimum standard a minus figure is shown in red. The wards are listed by analysis area.
- 6.20 Figure 6.1 below illustrates the provision levels above and below the minimum recommended standard for green corridors by analysis area across the Borough.

Table 6.1 Applying the provision standard for green corridors

Ward Name	Total Population	Hectares	Hectares per 1000 pop	Local Minimum Standard	Above / Below standard per 1000/pop	Above / below standard (hectares)
Great Baddow East & Great Baddow West	13017	0.59	0.05	0.20	-0.15	-2.01
St Andrews	8644	0.00	0.00	0.20	-0.20	-1.73
Patching Hall	8776	0.76	0.09	0.20	-0.11	-1.00
Marconi	6306	0.35	0.06	0.20	-0.14	-0.91
The Lawns	5610	13.03	2.32	0.20	2.12	11.91
Chelmer Village and Beaulieu Park & Springfield North	17405	0.79	0.05	0.20	-0.15	-2.69
Trinity	5830	2.49	0.43	0.20	0.23	1.32
Waterhouse Farm	4985	0.00	0.00	0.20	-0.20	-1.00
Moulsham and Central	8457	9.13	1.08	0.20	0.88	7.44
Moulsham Lodge	5484	0.13	0.02	0.20	-0.18	-0.97
Goat Hall	5786	0.00	0.00	0.20	-0.20	-1.16
Total Urban Chelmsford	90,300	27.27	0.20	0.20	0.00	0.36
South Woodham - Chetwood and Collingwood & South Woodham - Elmwood and Woodville	16,629	0.54	0.03	0.20	-0.17	-2.79
Total South Woodham Ferrers	16,629	0.54	0.03	0.20	-0.17	-2.79
Total Urban area	106,929	27.81	0.26	0.20	0.06	6.42
Boreham and The Leighs	5,093	0.86	0.17	0.20	-0.03	-0.16
Broomfield and The Walthams	7,477	0.22	0.03	0.20	-0.17	-1.28
Chelmsford Rural West	2,695	2.66	0.99	0.20	0.79	2.12
Writtle	5,632	0.00	0.00	0.20	-0.20	-1.13
Total Rural North	20,897	3.74	0.18	0.20	-0.02	-0.44
Little Baddow, Danbury and Sandon	8,091	3.42	0.42	0.20	0.22	1.80
Bicknacre, East and West Hanningfield	5,039	0.00	0.00	0.20	-0.20	-1.01
Galleywood	5,898	0.00	0.00	0.20	-0.20	-1.18
South Hanningfield, Stock and Margaretting	5,179	2.98	0.58	0.20	0.38	1.94
Rettendon and Runwell	5,039	0.00	0.00	0.20	-0.20	-1.01
Total Rural South	29,246	6.40	0.22	0.20	0.02	0.55
Total Rural area	50,143	10.14	0.20	0.20	0.00	0.11
Borough wide total	157,072	37.95	0.24	0.20	0.04	6.54

Figure 6.1 Current provision compared with recommended standard for green corridors



Quality

6.21 The green corridor sites that have been given a rating are generally ‘average’ to ‘good’ in terms of quality. A couple of sites have been rated as ‘poor’ and these do not currently have high usage by the public, these are:

- Roxwell Road Green Corridor, Roxwell
- Access Strip to Horses' Field, Little Waltham.

6.22 The largest green corridor site by far Riverside Walk – Bunny Walk Springfield (17.7 has) which has been given a quality rating of ‘good’.

Accessibility

6.23 The accessibility of green corridors in the Borough is generally average to very good.

Catchment

6.24 Parish Councils were asked to comment on what they considered was a reasonable time in minutes that people should be expected to travel to reach a green corridor by various means of transport. The median, mean, mode, of responses to this question is summarised in Table 6.2 below.

6.25 As part of the Street Survey people were asked how far (in minutes) they were prepared to travel in order to access this type of open space. PPG17 recommends that the 75% percentile of responses indicates the time/distance that the majority of people will be willing to travel and this should be used to inform accessibility standards. The time that 75% said they were prepared to travel is shown in Table 6.2 below under the field heading ‘Public consultation: Street Survey’. Similarly at the drop-in sessions in the urban area people were asked the same question by mode of transport and the average response is shown in the table.

Table 6.2 Time prepared to travel

Mode of travel	Chelmsford Parish Council responses					Public consultation	
	Median	Mean	Mode	Min.	Max.	Street Survey	Drop In Sessions
Walk	20	20	20	5	60	Up to 29 minutes	11 mins (Mean response)
Car	5	7	5	5	10		16 mins (Mean response)

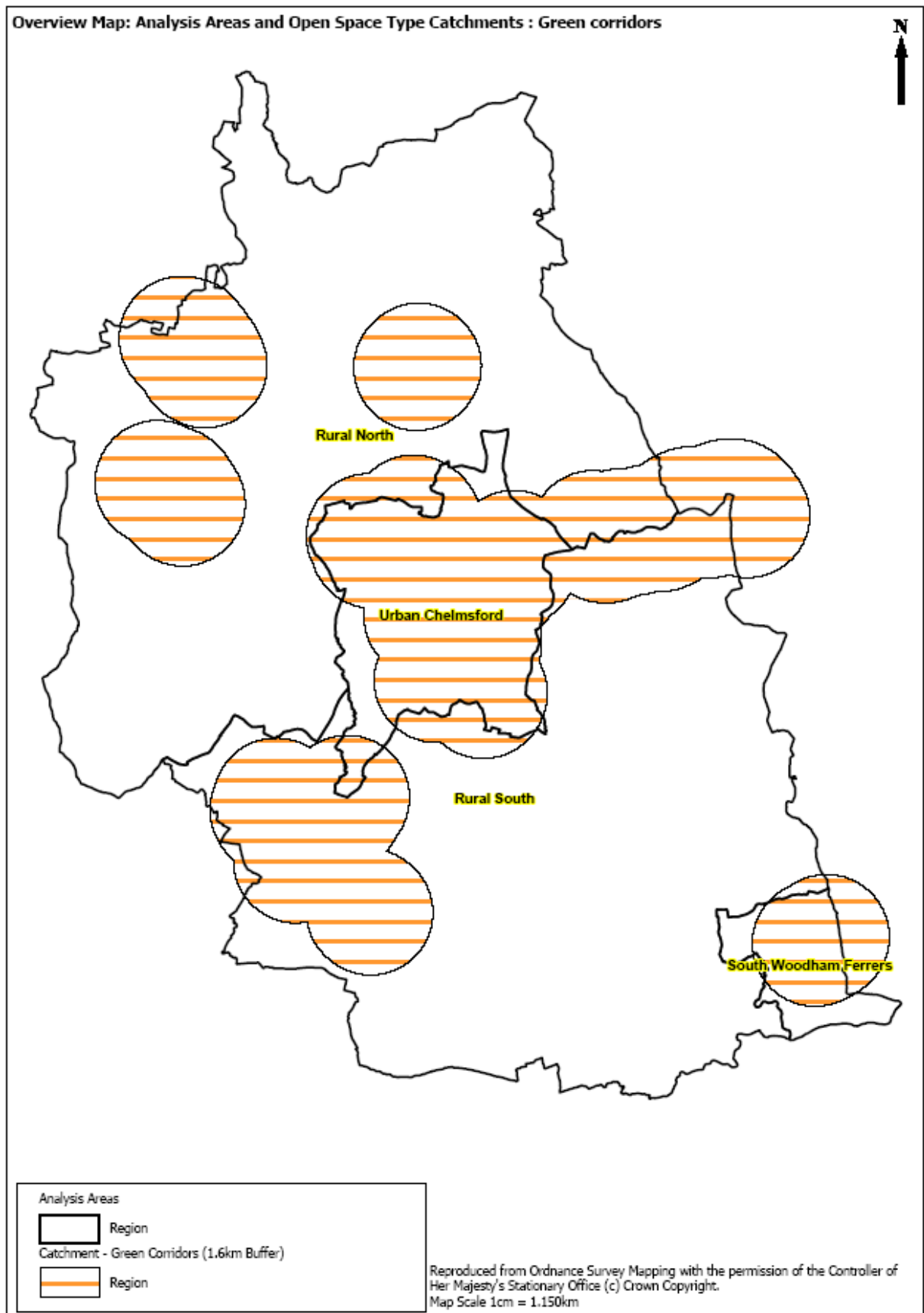
6.26 The majority of people indicated from the consultations that this was a type of open space they would like to be able to access on foot, particularly if it provided a ‘green’ walk through into the town from outlying residential areas. From Table 6.2 it seems that a 20 minute walk time is deemed suitable by the Parish Councils whereas those living in the urban areas would prefer a shorter walk time. 20 minutes is a realistic threshold given that green corridors tend to be located by in specific geographical locations and it would be not appropriate or possible to have a balanced spread of this type of space throughout the Borough. Table 6.3 below puts an indicative equivalent distance against this drivetime. In reality this distance will vary depending on local driving circumstances. See Appendix F for benchmarking of these standards against other local authorities.

Table 6.3 Recommended accessibility standard

Accessibility Standard – Green Corridors	
Recommended travel time	indicative equivalent distance
20 minute walk	1.6 km

6.27 Figure 6.2 shows this travel time boundary applied to all the sites in the borough. Using this mapping (which is held within the Council’s GIS system) it is possible to drill down to see which localities do not currently have ready access to this type of open space.

Figure 6.2 Accessibility catchments for green corridors



Assessment of value (usage v quality v accessibility)

- 6.28 Consultation with the public and with Council Officers has indicated that green corridors are highly valued by the residents of Chelmsford and there is an aspiration to protect these spaces and also to extend them where possible to improve the ‘green wedge’ vision.
- 6.29 With the presence of the River Can and the River Chelmer running through the Borough, green corridors alongside these waterways are an important form of open space provision and should be protected and maintained as such.

Summary

- 6.30 A minimum provision standard of 0.2ha has been set Borough-wide. There is currently 6.54 ha above the minimum standard of green corridors space at the present time.
- 6.31 Opportunities should be taken by the Council to protect and also to extend the green corridor network where appropriate and possible to do so.

Outdoor sports facilities

Definition

- 7.1 Outdoor Sports Facilities is a wide-ranging category of open space and includes natural or artificial surfaces either publicly or privately owned which are used for sport and recreation. Examples include playing pitches, athletics tracks, bowling greens and golf courses with the primary purpose of participation in outdoor sport. As part of the wider assessment a separate but interlinked strategy considering the demand solely for sports pitches within the Borough has also been prepared entitled 'A Playing Pitch Strategy for Chelmsford Borough' (PMP, 2005)

Picture 7.1 Chelmer Park



Quantity

- 7.2 140 sites that have been designated as outdoor sports facility space within the Borough-wide audit (see open spaces audit in Appendix G). These sites include both public and private facilities and also school playing fields. The most significant sites in the Borough in terms of size are Chelmer Park (18.6 has); Melbourne Park Athletics Centre (17.15 has); Saltcoats/Compass Gardens in South Woodham Ferrers (14.27 has) and also Runwell Hospital Sports Facilities (10.77 has).

Setting provision standards

- 7.3 The process for setting local quantitative standards is described within PPG17 Companion Guide 'Assessing Needs and Opportunities' and this process has been followed in order to set a local standard for the Borough of Chelmsford. A diagrammatic format of this process is provided within Appendix E – 'Quantity Standards' along with a summary of all calculations.
- 7.4 In summary the quantity standard have been derived through firstly undertaking the Borough-wide site audit and then digitising the boundary of each site into a GIS. This provides a total amount of space in hectares for each typology of space within each of the wards in the Borough (See Table 7.1 below). The next step is to then consider the consultation responses both from the Parish Councils, the general public and views of officers in relation to this current level of quantity. For example if the consultation showed that people feel there is a deficiency of a certain type of space (and officers agree) then the minimum standard should be set above the current level of provision.

SECTION 7 – OUTDOOR SPORTS FACILITIES

This higher level of provision thereby becomes the goal to work towards. Future population projections have also been taken account of.

- 7.5 It is important to note that when applying the minimum standard at the ward level there will be some wards that appear to have an oversupply and some that fall below the minimum level. This is because in reality a ward maybe adjacent to another that has a plentiful supply of green space and therefore its population falls within the catchment of this space so the fact it is below the minimum standard is not a problem. The priority areas are those which are both below the minimum standard and also fall outside the catchment of open space. See catchment mapping below.
- 7.6 As recommended by PPG17 the audit and analysis has included golf courses, school playing fields and private recreation grounds. Even though these may not be available for formal community use they may provide some recreational value.
- 7.7 Although golf courses have been included in the audit they have been excluded from the quantity calculations and standard setting because their large hectarage is not comparable with other types of outdoor sports facilities and therefore their inclusion would unrealistically distort the results.
- 7.8 A detailed playing pitch analysis has been carried in accordance with the latest Sport England Guidance (*'Towards a Level Playing Field'*) which provides a robust pitch standard based on actual current and projected demand for use of pitches. This analysis and pitch standard is contained within *'A Playing Pitch Strategy for Chelmsford Borough Council'* (PMP, 2004). Development that will have an impact upon an existing playing pitch should refer to the Playing Pitch Strategy standard to assess the potential impact. Sport England are also a statutory consultee in this capacity.
- 7.9 The National Playing Fields Association (NPFA) provides minimum standards for the provision of outdoor playing space. The standard recommends a minimum of 1.6 – 1.8 ha per 1000 population of outdoor sports facilities, covering playing pitches, bowling greens, tennis courts and athletics tracks. These are national standards and do not account for the local context, local demand or the demographic make-up of the local area. This is why PPG17 has been revised to encourage local authorities to use these standards as only a benchmark or starting point with which to amend according to their own context.
- 7.10 The adopted Chelmsford Local Plan currently has several separate standards for the different elements of outdoor sport. These are:
- *sports pitches: 0.89has (2.2 acres) per 1000 population*
 - *courts: 0.02 has (0.08 acres) per 1000 population*
 - *bowling greens: 0.034 has (0.05 acres) per 1000 population.*
- 7.11 According to the local audit there are currently **356.86** hectares of outdoor sports facility space in total in the Borough. This represents provision equivalent to **2.27** hectares per 1000 population at present. This is significantly higher than the NPFA's recommended minimum standard.
- 7.12 The Borough-wide street survey (500 respondents) indicated the following local opinion about the quantity of this type of space:
- much too much (1%)

SECTION 7 – OUTDOOR SPORTS FACILITIES

- too much (5%)
 - about right (60%)
 - too little (23%)
 - much too little (10%).
- 7.13 This indicates that currently people are generally satisfied with the provision of this type of space. A small minority feel there is too much while a sizeable proportion (33%) feel there is not enough.
- 7.14 Within the Urban Chelmsford analysis area there is currently **159.55** hectares of outdoor sports facility space equating to **1.77** per 1000 population at present. Four drop-in consultation sessions were held to ask peoples views specifically about the quantity of this type of space within this analysis area. A summary of these responses is as follows (note the actual number of respondents):
- too much (1 / 1.6%)
 - about right (24 / 39%)
 - too little (36 / 59%).
- 7.15 It is clear from this response that although many people are satisfied with the amount of outdoor sports facilities, the majority of people in the urban wards indicated they would like to see more of this type of space in their local area.
- 7.16 Within the South Woodham Ferrers analysis area there is currently **27.72** hectares of outdoor sports facility space equating to **1.67** per 1000 population at present. South Woodham Ferrers Town Council considers this to be not enough for their area.
- 7.17 Within the Rural North analysis area there is currently **76.62** hectares of outdoor sports facility space equating to **3.67** per 1000 population at present. Four of the 12 parishes in this analysis area said that the quantity of space was ‘about right’ for their individual parish, three said that there was a deficiency while two said the question did not apply and the remaining three parishes did not complete the question.
- 7.18 Within the Rural South analysis area there is currently **92.97** hectares of outdoor sports facility space equating to **3.18** per 1000 population at present. Five of the 12 parishes in this analysis area said that there was a deficiency in this type of space in their area, four said it was ‘about right’ and the remaining three parishes did not complete the question.
- 7.19 For parishes that did not complete the question, consultation was undertaken with local persons to ascertain local provision. An on-street survey was undertaken at strategic locations as well as drop-in sessions using a Chelmsford Borough Council branded road show vehicle.
- 7.20 In discussion with the Council it was agreed that because of the strategic significance of outdoor sports facilities and the fact that they serve a wide catchment area it was appropriate to apply a Borough wide standard.

- 7.21 It is suggested that for the **Borough** of Chelmsford (taking in all analysis areas) the **minimum provision standard of 1.25 ha per 1,000 population** is applied.

Applying provision standards

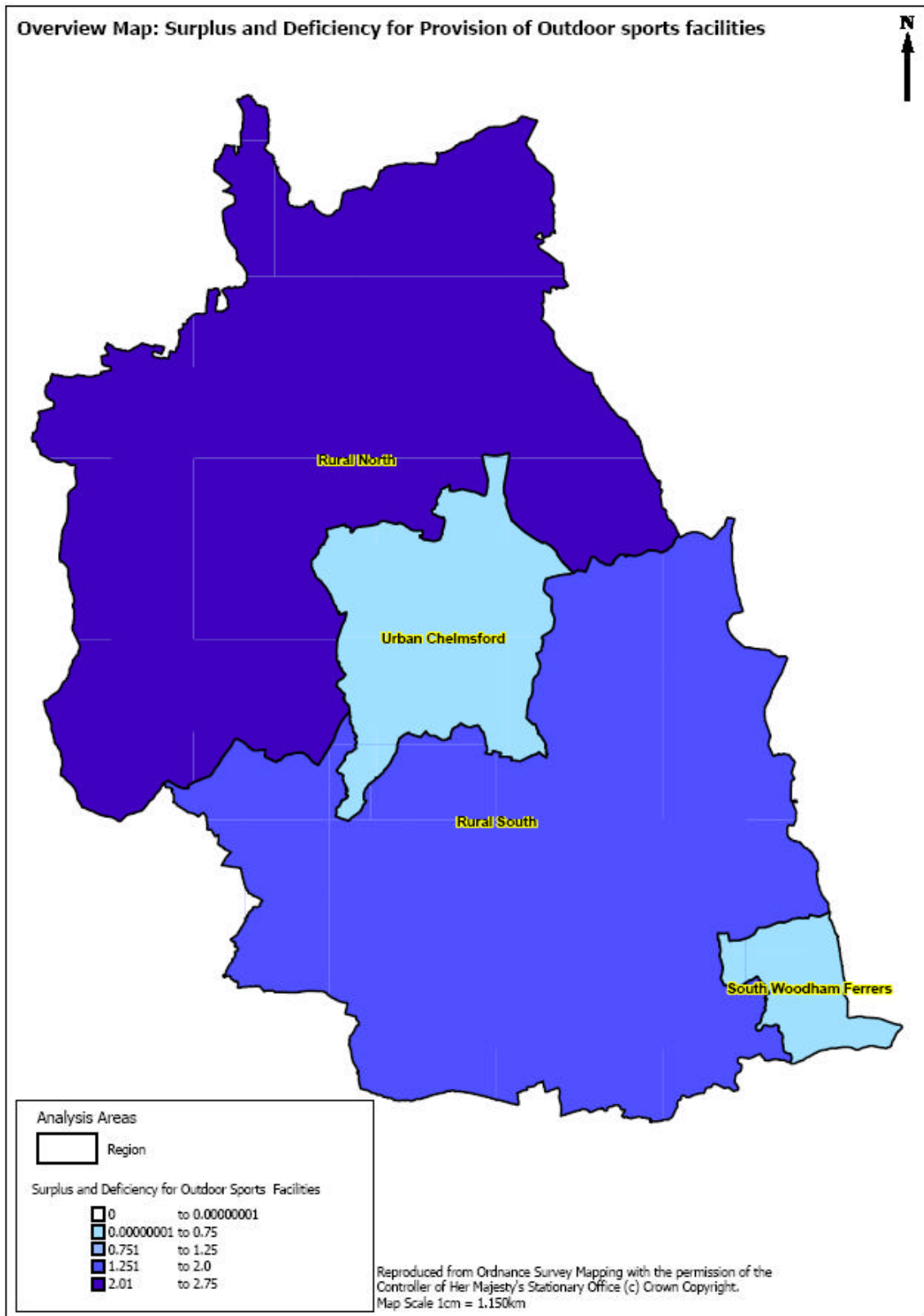
- 7.22 When applying the provision standard of 1.25 ha per 1000 population Borough-wide, there is currently **160.52** hectares over and above the minimum standard.
- 7.23 Table 7.1 overleaf summarises the current level of provision within each ward and also shows how this compares with the minimum recommended standard. Note that where provision is currently below the minimum standard a minus figure is shown in red. The wards are listed by analysis area.
- 7.24 Figure 7.1 overleaf illustrates the provision levels above and below the minimum recommended standard for outdoor sports facilities by analysis area across the Borough.

SECTION 7 – OUTDOOR SPORTS FACILITIES

Table 7.1 Applying the provision standard for outdoor sports facilities

Ward Name	Total Population	Hectares	Hectares per 1000 pop	Local Minimum Standard	Above / Below standard per 1000/pop	Above / below standard (hectares)
Great Baddow East & Great Baddow West	13017	24.34	1.87	1.25	0.62	8.07
St Andrews	8644	29.53	3.42	1.25	2.17	18.73
Patching Hall	8776	15.94	1.82	1.25	0.57	4.97
Marconi	6306	9.45	1.50	1.25	0.25	1.57
The Lawns	5610	22.66	4.04	1.25	2.79	15.65
Chelmer Village and Beaulieu Park & Springfield North	17405	19.26	1.11	1.25	-0.14	-2.50
Trinity	5830	9.92	1.70	1.25	0.45	2.63
Waterhouse Farm	4985	9.03	1.81	1.25	0.56	2.80
Moulsham and Central	8457	5.28	0.62	1.25	-0.63	-5.29
Moulsham Lodge	5484	9.06	1.65	1.25	0.40	2.21
Goat Hall	5786	5.08	0.88	1.25	-0.37	-2.15
Total Urban Chelmsford	90,300	159.55	1.77	1.25	0.52	46.68
South Woodham - Chetwood and Collingwood & South Woodham - Elmwood and Woodville	16,629	27.72	1.67	1.25	0.42	6.93
Total South Woodham Ferrers	16,629	27.72	1.67	1.25	0.42	6.93
Total Urban area	106,929	187.27	1.75	1.25	0.50	53.61
Boreham and The Leighs	5,093	6.75	1.33	1.25	0.08	0.38
Broomfield and The Walthams	7,477	33.71	4.51	1.25	3.26	24.36
Chelmsford Rural West	2,695	10.03	3.72	1.25	2.47	6.66
Writtle	5,632	26.13	4.64	1.25	3.39	19.09
Total Rural North	20,897	76.62	3.67	1.25	2.42	50.50
Little Baddow, Danbury and Sandon	8,091	20.43	2.53	1.25	1.28	10.32
Bicknacre, East and West Hanningfield	5,039	15.03	2.98	1.25	1.73	8.73
Galleywood	5,898	23.05	3.91	1.25	2.66	15.68
South Hanningfield, Stock and Margaretting	5,179	12.64	2.44	1.25	1.19	6.17
Rettendon and Runwell	5,039	21.82	4.33	1.25	3.08	15.52
Total Rural South	29,246	92.97	3.18	1.25	1.93	56.41
Total Rural area	50,143	169.59	3.38	1.25	2.13	106.91
Borough wide total	157,072	356.86	2.27	1.25	1.02	160.52

Figure 7.1 Current provision compared with recommended standard for outdoor sports facilities



Quality

- 7.25 Overall the quality of outdoor sports facilities within the Borough appears to be average to very good with only two sites being rated as 'poor' or 'very poor'.
- 7.26 Of the 66 sites that were given a quality rating, 18 (27%) were considered to be of very good quality. These notably include Melbourne Park Athletics Centre, Chelmer Park, Marconi Athletics and Social Club and Essex County Cricket Ground.
- 7.27 31 (47%) of the sites rated are considered to be of good quality. 15 (23%) were rated as 'average'. Great Waltham Recreation Ground (maintained by Great Waltham Parish Council) was the only site to be rated as 'poor' and Estric Field in Great Baddow the only to be rated as 'very poor'. 70 of the sites were not able to be rated due to lack of access and information for example private school playing fields.
- 7.28 Note that according to Council Officers Estric Field has not been in use for several years, has poor access and is not viable to maintain as a strategic pitch facility, accommodating just one soccer and possibly one cricket pitch. It is currently owned by a property developer.

Accessibility

- 7.29 Similarly, in terms of accessibility the majority of sites have been rated as either 'good' or 'very good' with very few being considered as 'poor' or 'very poor'.
- 7.30 Of the 72 sites that were given an accessibility rating, 24 (33%) were considered to have 'very good' access; 38 (53%) were rated as 'good'. Aside from school playing fields only one site was given a rating of 'very poor' in terms of access, Estric Field in Great Baddow. 64 sites were not rated.
- 7.31 The majority of sites that were given poor or very poor accessibility ratings tended to belong to educational establishments, indicating that these facilities are not available for use by the general public. Although school playing fields are often not accessible to the general public they are naturally a valuable source of green space to the young people of that school. They are also often the source of controversy in terms of determining proposals to build on schools playing fields and as such need to be part of this assessment in order to justify their protection (if deemed appropriate to do so).

Catchment

- 7.32 Parish Councils were asked to comment on what they considered was a reasonable time in minutes that people should be expected to travel to reach an outdoor sports facility by various means of transport. The median, mean, mode of those that responded to this question responses is summarised in Table 7.2 overleaf.
- 7.33 As part of the Street Survey people were asked how far (in minutes) they were prepared to travel in order to access this type of open space. PPG17 recommends that the 75% percentile of responses indicates the time/distance that the majority of people will be willing to travel and this should be used to inform accessibility standards. The time that 75% said they were prepared to travel is shown in Table 7.2 overleaf under the field heading 'Public consultation: Street Survey'. Similarly at the drop-in sessions in the urban area people were asked the same question by mode of transport and the average response is shown in the table.

Table 7.2 Time prepared to travel

Mode of travel	Chelmsford Parish Council responses					Public consultation	
	Median	Mean	Mode	Min.	Max.	Street Survey (75% percentile)	Drop In Sessions
Walk	15	18	20	5	45	Up to 29 minutes	14 mins (Mean response)
Car	5	8	5	5	20		17 mins (Mean response)

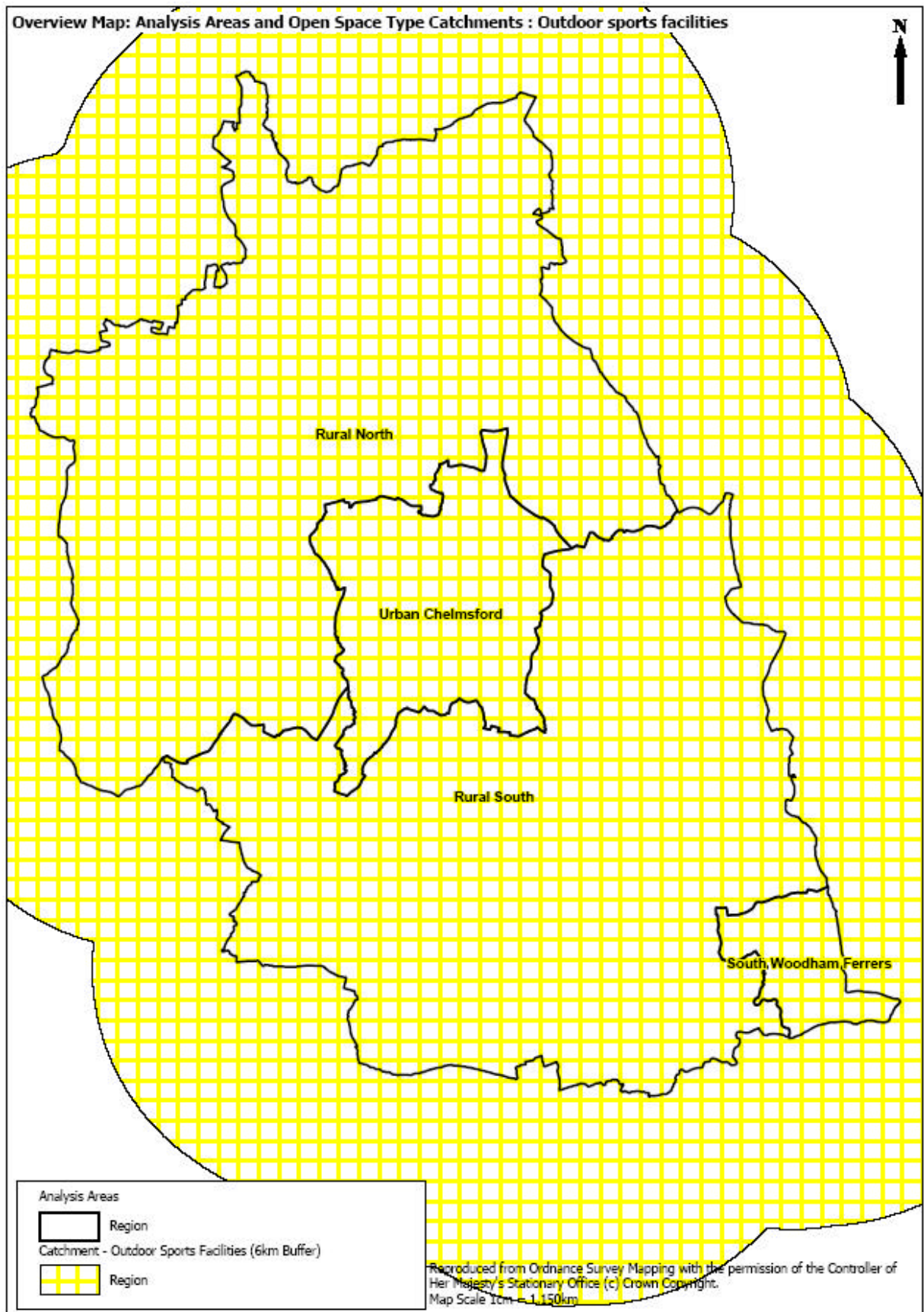
- 7.34 Consultation highlighted a number of different viewpoints regarding the time people are prepared to travel in order to reach outdoor sports facilities. It appears that the parish view (largely representing the rural areas of the Borough) was that outdoor sports facilities should be accessible within a five minute drivetime. However the view of the wider public and of the residents representing the urban areas indicated that people accept they may have to travel further to reach sports facilities particularly those such as Melbourne Park that have a Borough-wide catchment and serve a large population.
- 7.35 It is also recognised that people often drive to use outdoor sports facilities rather than walk or use public transport because they may have to take specialist equipment or kit with them.
- 7.36 Therefore the recommended accessibility standard is a 10-15 minute drivetime. Table 7.3 below puts an indicative equivalent distance against this drivetime. In reality this distance will vary depending on local driving conditions. See Appendix F for assumptions behind these drivetimes and also benchmarking of these standards against other local authorities.

Table 7.3 Recommended accessibility standard

Accessibility Standard – Outdoor sports facilities	
Recommended travel time	Indicative equivalent distance
10-15 minute drivetime	4-6km

- 7.37 Figure 7.2 shows this travel time boundary applied to all the sites in the borough. Using this mapping (which is held within the Council’s GIS system) it is possible to drill down to see which localities do not currently have ready access to this type of open space.

Figure 7.2 Accessibility catchments for outdoor sports facilities



Assessment of value (usage v quality v accessibility)

- 7.38 Most sites that have a high level of use would normally have a good or very good quality and accessibility rating. Most sites with a low level of use have an average or poor quality and accessibility rating as factors are related and interlinked.
- 7.39 The popularity and value of sports facilities within the Borough is clear – only four sites were rated as having a low level of usage or no usage. This indicates that outdoor sports facilities have a vital role to play, and as a priority, consideration should therefore be given to improving those sites which are of poorer quality or accessibility.
- 7.40 There is only one site which although having a high level of usage, has a poor quality level. This is Great Waltham Recreation Ground. Consideration should be given to investigating the poor quality of this site when it is obviously valued by local people.
- 7.41 Estric Field in Great Baddow stands out as being of poor quality, accessibility and usage and consideration should be given to permitting development on this site which would enable appropriate developer contributions to be gained that could be used to improve the quality of other local open spaces.

Summary

- 7.42 Chelmsford Borough is currently well provided for in terms of the space it has containing outdoor sports facilities. It also contains a number of high quality facilities both public and private including Melbourne Park Athletics Centre and Essex County Cricket Ground as well as a good supply of formal playing pitches.
- 7.43 A minimum provision standard has been applied Borough-wide reflecting the strategic significance of outdoor sports facilities. Currently the level of provision Borough-wide sits comfortably above the minimum standard by 160.52 hectares.
- 7.44 There is currently significantly more space per thousand population within the rural areas than urban. Therefore any provision for new outdoor sports facilities should be concentrated in the urban area.
- 7.45 Development of specific facilities should be demand led. A detailed, Borough-wide playing pitch strategy has been undertaken which has developed a robust local standard for formal playing pitch provision. For other types of facilities detailed local needs assessments should be carried out with reference to the priorities for development that will be stated within the forthcoming sports and recreation strategy.
- 7.46 Generally the quality, usage and accessibility of sites of this type is good throughout the Borough. The Council should work towards maintaining these standards into the future. Consideration should be given to the change of use of Estric Field.

Amenity green space

Definition

- 8.1 This type of open space is most commonly found in housing areas. It includes informal recreation spaces and green spaces in and around housing areas with its primary purpose to provide opportunities for informal activities close to home or work or enhancement of the appearance of residential or other areas. An example of amenity green space is shown in Picture 8.1 below.

Picture 8.1 Sandon Village Green



- 8.2 In rural areas examples of this type of open space consist of village greens and the grounds around village halls.

Specific strategic context

Doorstep Greens and Millennium Greens (Countryside Agency)

- 8.3 The Doorstep Greens programme is helping communities around England to create their own new amenity green space, or to transform existing open spaces to meet their needs. Many projects have been funded in urban and rural areas, particularly in disadvantaged areas, to create and manage 'multi-purpose' community greens and for the community to be involved in creating open space.
- 8.4 The aim of the Millennium Greens initiative is to provide new areas of public open space close to people's homes that could be enjoyed permanently by the local community. They were to be breathing spaces - places for relaxation, play and enjoyment of nature and pleasant surroundings. They could be small or large, and in urban or rural locations.

Quantity

- 8.5 There are 262 amenity green spaces that have been identified in the Borough and included within the audit (see open spaces audit in Appendix G). The minimum size limit for inclusion in the audit was 0.05 has. The majority of these spaces are less than one hectare in size and located within residential housing estates.

SECTION 8 – AMENITY GREEN SPACE

8.6 However the ten most sizeable of these sites in the Borough are as follows:

- Marston Beck AGS (2.58 has)
- Ferrers Road (2.76 has)
- Danbury Recreation Ground (2.92 has)
- Vineyards Green Area - Great Baddow (2.95 has)
- Chelmer Village Green AGS (3.37 has)
- Open Space at The Lintons (3.67 has).
- Creekview Road AGS (5.97has)
- John Shennan Playing Field (6.36 has)
- Chaucer Flood Meadow (8.71 has).

8.7 According to Council Officers there is a need to provide suitable ‘kickabout’ facilities for young people in Urban Chelmsford, notably in Moulsham Lodge/Goat Hall wards where there are on-going problems from ball game nuisance to local residents due to the inadequacy/size of the amenity green spaces currently available. (Note: such a facility is proposed as part of the Moulsham School Playing Fields redevelopment). A specific standard for this sub-category of space has been proposed in Section Nine (provision for young people and children).

8.8 There is a need for more specialist provision for young people particularly in the urban areas so that they do not have to rely on small amenity green spaces for playing ball games. The Old Moulsham area of the Moulsham and Central ward is a priority area in relation to this issue. According to Officers it is not possible to increase the open space provision in this established residential area other than by in-fill development:

“Given town centre property prices and the lack of suitable sites, it is more realistic to seek provision of hard surfaced kickabout areas when suitable opportunities arise, to achieve maximum usage potential and relieve pressure on Oakland’s Park. If these could be floodlit, so much the better but achieving it could be difficult in terms of obtaining planning permission against inevitable local opposition.”

Setting provision standards

8.9 The process for setting local quantitative standards is described within PPG17 Companion Guide ‘Assessing Needs and Opportunities’ and this process has been followed in order to set a local standard for the Borough of Chelmsford. A diagrammatic format of this process is provided within Appendix E – ‘Quantity Standards’ along with a summary of all calculations.

SECTION 8 – AMENITY GREEN SPACE

- 8.10 In summary the quantity standard have been derived through firstly undertaking the Borough-wide site audit and then digitising the boundary of each site into a GIS. This provides a total amount of space in hectares for each typology of space within each of the wards in the Borough (See Table 8.1 overleaf). The next step is to then consider the consultation responses both from the Parish Councils, the general public and views of officers in relation to this current level of quantity. For example if the consultation showed that people feel there is a deficiency of a certain type of space (and officers agree) then the minimum standard should be set above the current level of provision. This higher level of provision thereby becomes the goal to work towards. Future population projections have also been taken account of.
- 8.11 It is important to note that when applying the minimum standard at the ward level there will be some wards that appear to have an oversupply and some that fall below the minimum level. This is because in reality a ward maybe adjacent to another that has a plentiful supply of green space and therefore its population falls within the catchment of this space so the fact it is below the minimum standard is not a problem. The priority areas are those that are both below the minimum standard and also fall outside the catchment of open space. See catchment mapping below.
- 8.12 Open spaces such as playing pitches are classified under the category of outdoor sports facilities (see Section Seven) as their primary purpose, however in many instances, they do provide the function of amenity green space in more rural areas and urban areas where there is limited alternative amenity green space. Frequently, areas designated as official sports pitches are used for dog walking midweek, and are a vital piece of open land within the community. This should be taken into account if it is necessary to make a more detailed specific analysis of an area.
- 8.13 The only national standard for amenity green space provided is 0.5 ha per 1,000 population based on the current UK average of all applicable local authorities provision standards for amenity open space as defined in the *'Rethinking Open Space Report'* (2001).
- 8.14 The adopted Chelmsford Local Plan currently has standards for two separate categories of amenity green space. These are:

Informal recreation space

- defined as *'space that can be used by people for recreation activity including walking, sitting and informal games. Such space should be located so that no house is more than 250 metres away from it or a local park. The minimum size of each area should be 1,000 metres square.'*
- standard: 1 acre (0.40ha.) / 1000 expected population.

Planning amenity space

- defined as *'land required to improve the setting, layout and visual impact of a housing or other built development. While such land is unlikely to have formal recreation value (usually because of its size, layout or location) it is an important element in the creation of an attractive and pleasant living environment. There are no specific location or minimum size requirements.'*
- standard: 1 acre (0.40ha.) / 1000 expected population.

SECTION 8 – AMENITY GREEN SPACE

- 8.15 According to the local audit there are currently **127.80** hectares of amenity green space in total in the Borough. This represents provision equivalent to **0.81** hectares per 1000 population at present.
- 8.16 The Borough-wide Street Survey (500 respondents) indicated the following local opinion about the quantity of this type of space:
- much too much (1%)
 - too much (4%)
 - about right (56%)
 - too little (21%)
 - much too little (16%).
- 8.17 This indicates that the majority of people are satisfied with the level of provision of this type of space however a considerable proportion of people continue to feel they do not have enough. Significantly 16% felt strongly that there was much too little of this type of space in the Borough.
- 8.18 Within the Urban Chelmsford analysis area there is currently **62.82** hectares of amenity green space equating to **0.70** per 1000 population at present. Four drop-in consultation sessions were held to ask peoples views specifically about the quantity of this type of space within this analysis area. A summary of these responses is as follows (note the actual responses):
- too much (1 / 1.8%)
 - about right (31 / 55%)
 - too little (16 / 29%).
- 8.19 It is clear from this response that although the majority of people are satisfied with the amount of amenity green space in their local area, a larger proportion felt they would like to see more of this type of space in their local area.
- 8.20 Within the South Woodham Ferrers analysis area there is currently **16.66** hectares of amenity green space equating to **1.00** per 1000 population at present. South Woodham Ferrers Town Council considers this to be not enough for their area.
- 8.21 Within the Rural North analysis area there is currently **14.00** hectares of amenity green space equating to **0.67** per 1000 population at present. Three of the 12 parishes in this analysis area said that the quantity of space was 'about right' for their individual parishes, three said that there was a deficiency while two said the question did not apply and the remaining four parishes did not complete the question.
- 8.22 Within the Rural South analysis area there is currently **20.92** hectares of amenity green space equating to **0.72** per 1000 population at present. Six of the 12 parishes in this analysis area said that the quantity of this type of space in their area was 'about right' and the remaining three parishes did not complete the question.

SECTION 8 – AMENITY GREEN SPACE

- 8.23 For parishes that did not complete the question, consultation was undertaken with local persons to ascertain local provision. An on-street survey was undertaken at strategic locations as well as drop-in sessions using Chelmsford Borough Council's branded roadshow vehicle.
- 8.24 In discussion with the Council it was agreed that the need for amenity green space is not confined to housing areas, it may also be developed within village or urban centres, or to serve other purposes such as reducing noise or providing shelter from prevailing winds. This supports the fact that there are no significant differences in the level of provision and perceived local need for amenity green space between the rural and the more urban areas of the Borough hence the suggested standard should be applied to all analysis areas.
- 8.25 The standard of 0.81ha per 1000 population for amenity green space has been proposed however within this the sub-categories within the local plan should be retailed of:
- informal recreational space : 0.405 ha/1000
 - planning amenity space : 0.405 ha/1000.

8.26 It is suggested that for the **Borough** of Chelmsford (taking in all analysis areas) the **minimum provision standard of 0.81 ha per 1,000 population** is applied split into **Informal recreational green space at 0.405 ha per 1000** and **Planning amenity space at 0.405 ha per 1000**.

Applying provision standards

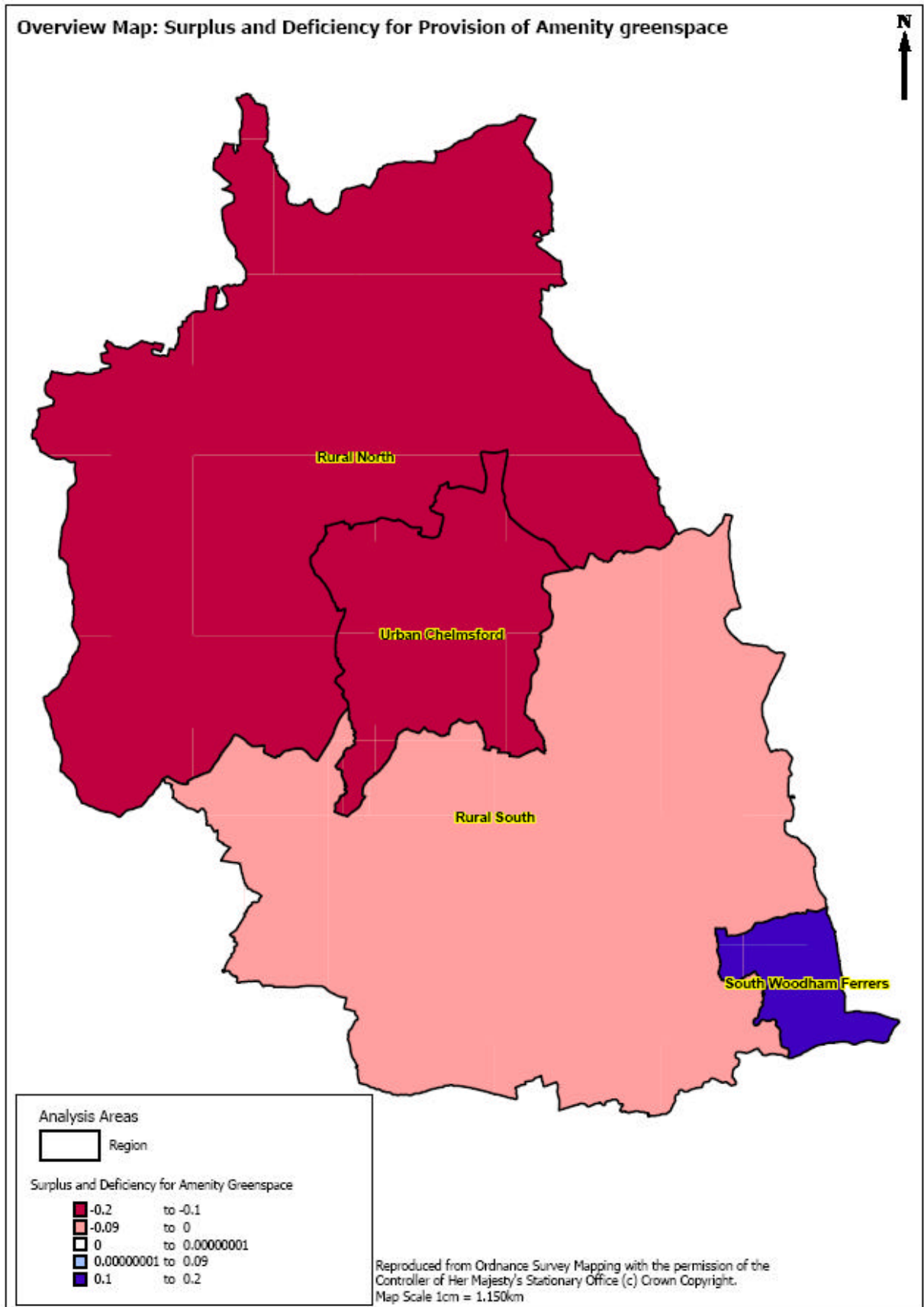
- 8.27 When applying the provision standard of 0.81 ha per 1000 population Borough-wide there is currently **-12.83** hectares below the minimum standard. In the urban analysis areas there is currently **7.13** hectares below the minimum standard and a slight deficiency in the rural analysis areas of **5.70** hectares.
- 8.28 Table 8.1 below summarises the current level of provision within each ward and also shows how this compares with the minimum recommended standard. Note that where provision is currently below the minimum standard a minus figure is shown in red. The wards are listed by analysis area.
- 8.29 Figure 8.1 below illustrates thematically how the current level of provision compares with the minimum recommended standard for amenity green space by analysis area across the Borough.

SECTION 8 – AMENITY GREEN SPACE

Table 8.1 Applying the provision standard for amenity green space

Ward Name	Total Population	Hectares	Hectares per 1000 pop	Local Minimum Standard	Above / Below standard per 1000/pop	Above / below standard (hectares)
Great Baddow East & Great Baddow West	13017	11.15	0.86	0.81	0.05	0.61
St Andrews	8644	4.11	0.48	0.81	-0.33	-2.89
Patching Hall	8776	7.26	0.83	0.81	0.02	0.15
Marconi	6306	2.53	0.40	0.81	-0.41	-2.58
The Lawns	5610	4.40	0.78	0.81	-0.03	-0.14
Chelmer Village and Beaulieu Park & Springfield North	17405	19.62	1.13	0.81	0.32	5.52
Trinity	5830	1.44	0.25	0.81	-0.56	-3.28
Waterhouse Farm	4985	1.93	0.39	0.81	-0.42	-2.11
Moulsham and Central	8457	1.26	0.15	0.81	-0.66	-5.59
Moulsham Lodge	5484	7.77	1.42	0.81	0.61	3.33
Goat Hall	5786	1.35	0.23	0.81	-0.58	-3.34
Total Urban Chelmsford	90300	62.82	0.70	0.81	-0.11	-10.32
South Woodham - Chetwood and Collingwood & South Woodham - Elmwood and Woodville	16629	16.66	1.00	0.81	0.19	3.19
Total South Woodham Ferrers	16629	16.66	1.00	0.81	0.19	3.19
Total Urban area	106929	79.48	0.74	0.81	-0.07	-7.13
Boreham and The Leighs	5093	3.20	0.63	0.81	-0.18	-0.93
Broomfield and The Walthams	7477	6.02	0.81	0.81	-0.00	-0.04
Chelmsford Rural West	2695	2.47	0.92	0.81	0.11	0.29
Writtle	5632	2.31	0.41	0.81	-0.40	-2.25
Total Rural North	20897	14.00	0.67	0.81	-0.14	-2.93
Little Baddow, Danbury and Sandon	8091	8.36	1.03	0.81	0.22	1.81
Bicknacre, East and West Hanningfield	5039	4.30	0.85	0.81	0.04	0.22
Galleywood	5898	3.36	0.57	0.81	-0.24	-1.42
South Hanningfield, Stock and Margaretting	5179	4.23	0.82	0.81	0.01	0.04
Rettendon and Runwell	5039	0.67	0.13	0.81	-0.68	-3.41
Total Rural South	29246	20.92	0.72	0.81	-0.09	-2.77
Total Rural area	50143	34.92	0.70	0.81	-0.11	-5.70
Borough wide total	157072	114.40	0.73	0.81	-0.08	-12.83

Figure 8.1 Current provision compared with recommended standard for amenity green space



Quality

- 8.30 Overall amenity green space is of average to very good quality across the Borough. 126 (82%) sites of the 154 sites rated were considered to be either 'average' or 'good' with 12 (8%) being rated as being of 'very good' quality. 15 (10%) of sites rated were considered poor and one site as very poor, Parish Garden in Boreham. 108 of the sites were not rated due to being included at a late stage.

Accessibility

- 8.31 Access to this type of space is average to very good. 140 (71%) of the 196 sites rated are considered to be average to good while 47(24%) have very good access. There are however nine sites which are rated as being poor in terms of public access. These are:

- Pleshey Road AGS, Great Waltham
- School Road AGS, Great Baddow
- Pawle Close, Great Baddow
- Rutland Road Recreation Area,
- Aldburgh Way AGS,
- Parish Garden, Boreham
- Howletts Corner AGS,
- Field Adjoining Red Lion P.H. Main Road, Margarettig
- Tabors Avenue Green Space, Great Baddow.

Catchment

- 8.32 Parish Councils were asked to comment on what they considered was a reasonable time in minutes that people should be expected to travel to reach an area of amenity green space by various alternative modes of transport. The median, mean, mode, of those that responded to this question responses is summarised in Table 8.2 overleaf.
- 8.33 As part of the Street Survey people were asked how far (in minutes) they were prepared to travel in order to access this type of open space. PPG17 recommends that the 75% percentile of responses indicates the time/distance that the majority of people will be willing to travel and this should be used to inform accessibility standards. The time that 75% said they were prepared to travel is shown in Table 8.2 overleaf under the field heading 'Public consultation: Street Survey'. Similarly at the drop-in sessions in the urban area people were asked the same question by mode of transport and the average response is shown in the table.

Table 8.2 Time prepared to travel

Mode of travel	Chelmsford Parish Council responses					Public consultation	
	Median	Mean	Mode	Min.	Max.	Street Survey (75% percentile)	Drop In Sessions
Walk	15	13	20	5	20	Up to 29 minutes	8 mins (Mean response)
Car	5	6	5	0	20		13 mins (Mean response)

8.34 The consultation responses indicated that most people would expect to travel on foot to this type of space given its generally neighbourhood level significance. In reality there will of course be exceptions to this. 75% percent of people said they would be prepared to travel up to 29 minutes. Within this percentile the largest category was 5-14 minutes with 54% of people selecting this time band.

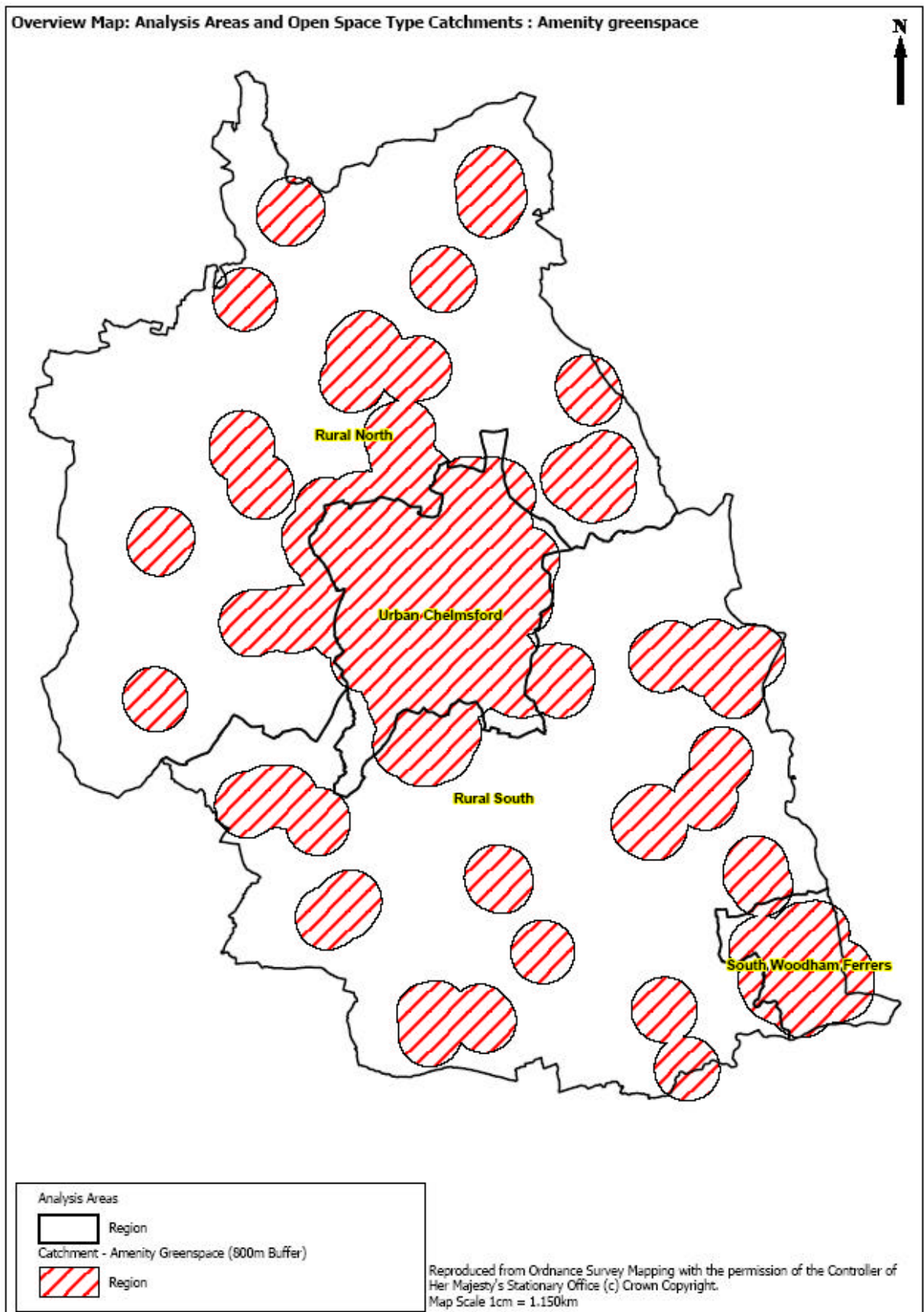
8.35 Weighing up the balance of the consultation it seems appropriate that a walking distance threshold of ten minutes is set. This sits in between the parish view and that of the wider public. Table 8.3 below puts an indicative equivalent distance against this drivetime. In reality this distance will vary depending on local driving conditions. See Appendix F for assumptions behind these drivetimes and also benchmarking of these standards against other local authorities.

Table 8.3 Recommended accessibility standard

Accessibility Standard – Amenity greenspace	
Recommended Travel Time	Indicative equivalent distance
10 minute walk	800m

8.36 Figure 8.2 shows this travel time boundary applied to all the sites in the borough. Using this mapping (which is held within the Council’s GIS system) it is possible to drill down to see which localities do not currently have ready access to this type of open space.

Figure 8.2 Accessibility catchments for amenity green space



Assessment of value (usage v quality v accessibility)

- 8.37 Of the 143 sites that were rated in terms of usage, only 25 (17%) of these were considered to have high/significant public usage, 70 (49%) were used often, and 12 (8.4%) were rated as having low/insignificant public use. There was only one site that was considered to have no use and that was Centenary Wood in Broomfield.
- 8.38 It seems that generally there is frequent use of these spaces around the Borough implying they remain a valued local resource for informal recreation for local people. There is also significant conflict around the use of these areas with young people wanting to use them for ball games and other activities that residents consider to be anti-social behaviour.
- 8.39 Given these problems there needs to be a clearer distinction made at the design phase between small spaces around housing that is laid out predominantly for visual amenity purposes where ball games should be deterred and larger areas of planning amenity space where children can play. See new definitions overleaf.

Summary

- 8.40 Currently the Borough is well provided for in terms of this type of space and on the whole these spaces are valued by local people and are of an average to good standard in terms of quality and accessibility.
- 8.41 The catchment area analysis indicates that such spaces should be seen as local neighbourhood facilities, and people should be able to access an amenity greenspace within a 10 minute walk, (or 800m) of their home.
- 8.42 When applying the proposed Borough-wide standard of 0.81 ha per 1000 population, there is currently a shortfall of 12.83 ha.
- 8.43 The Council should seek to apply the standard under two types of amenity space in order to reduce conflicts in the use of this space:

Informal recreation space

- defined as *'space that can be used by people for recreation activity including walking, sitting and informal games. Such space should be located so that no house is more than 250 metres away from it or a local park. The design of such spaces should be laid out to deter ball games. The minimum size of each area should be 1,000 metres square.'*
- Standard: 0.405 ha/1000 population

Planning amenity space

- defined as *'land required to improve the setting, layout and visual impact of a housing or other built development. While such land is unlikely to have formal recreation value (usually because of its size, layout or location) it is an important element in the creation of an attractive and pleasant living environment. Preference will be given to layouts that provide significant increase in the quantity of open space as opposed to the provision of small piecemeal sites.'*
 - Standard: 0.405 ha/1000 population.
- 8.44 The Council should seek to gain provision for this type of space as part of all new proposed housing developments in accordance with the standards either in the form of new space to meet the increased population or in quality improvement to existing sites in areas of need.

Provision for children and young people

Definition

- 9.1 This type of open space includes areas such as equipped play areas, ball courts, skateboard areas and teenage shelters with a primary purpose to provide opportunities for play and social interaction involving children and young people. An example of an area for children and young people is shown in Picture 9.1 below.

Picture 9.1 Home Mead Play Area



Quantity

- 9.2 There are 113 sites that have been included within the audit under the category of provision for young people and children (See open spaces audit in Appendix G). All play areas were audited specifically where equipment was provided. Frequently equipped play areas were found to be located amongst a larger area of amenity green space. In these cases the site of the play area was considered as a separate site while the surrounding green space has been audited as amenity green space. Therefore any calculations and standards within this local needs PPG17 study refer specifically to equipped play areas, ball courts and skateboard areas and are measured separately to amenity green space.
- 9.3 The size of these sites ranges from between 0.01 hectares to 1.26 hectares in area. The ten most sizeable sites within this category within the Borough are as follows:
- Children's playground, Church Avenue (0.36 has)
 - Admirals Park Play Area (0.38 has)
 - Highwood Playpark (0.46 has)
 - BMX Track Ferrers Road (0.58 has)
 - Avon Road Play Area (0.67 has)
 - Ford End School Field (0.74 has)

- Copperfield Road Play Area (0.75 has)
- Ramsden Heath Recreation Ground (0.87 has)
- South Hanningfield Tye (1.02 has)
- Chase Field (1.26 has).

Setting provision standards

- 9.4 The process for setting local quantitative standards is described within PPG17 Companion Guide ‘Assessing Needs and Opportunities’ and this process has been followed in order to set a local standard for the Borough of Chelmsford. A diagrammatic format of this process is provided within Appendix E – ‘Quantity Standards’ along with a summary of all calculations.
- 9.5 In summary the quantity standard have been derived through firstly undertaking the Borough-wide site audit and then digitising the boundary of each site into a GIS. This provides a total amount of space in hectares for each typology of space within each of the wards in the Borough (See Table 9.1 below). The next step is to then consider the consultation responses both from the Parish Councils, the general public and views of officers in relation to this current level of quantity. For example if the consultation showed that people feel there is a deficiency of a certain type of space (and officers agree) then the minimum standard should be set above the current level of provision. This higher level of provision thereby becomes the goal to work towards. Future population projections have also been taken account of.
- 9.6 It is important to note that when applying the minimum standard at the ward level there will be some wards that appear to have an oversupply and some that fall below the minimum level. This is because in reality a ward maybe adjacent to another that has a plentiful supply of green space and therefore its population falls within the catchment of this space so the fact it is below the minimum standard is not a problem. The priority areas are those which are both below the minimum standard and also fall outside the catchment of open space. See catchment mapping below.
- 9.7 There are national standards for children’s play space provided by the National Playing Fields Association (NPFA) which suggest 0.6-0.8 ha per 1,000 population should be provided. However, the Council’s open space working party review in the early 1990s identified these were unsatisfactory in meeting with the Borough’s open space needs hence the adopted Chelmsford Local Plan currently includes standards for five categories of children’s play areas (within public open space standards, Appendix Five) under this category of space. These sub-category definitions are proposed to be retained for the purposes of this study with updated standards where appropriate as set out below.
- 9.8 The Deposit Draft plan (2001-2011) which has subsequently been withdrawn also contains the same five categories and standards of the adopted plan (converted into hectares) but also includes a slightly refined definition for the category of ‘informal youth space’. This definition will also be retained.
- 9.9 According to the local audit there are currently **18.08** hectares of provision for young people and children in total in the Borough. This represents provision equivalent to **0.12** hectares per 1000 population at present.
- 9.10 The Borough-wide street survey indicated the following local opinion about the quantity of this type of space:

- much too much (1%)
 - too much (4%)
 - about right (56%)
 - too little (20%)
 - much too little (17%).
- 9.11 This indicates that the majority of people are satisfied with the level of provision of this type of space however a significant proportion of people continue to feel they do not have enough. Notably 17% felt strongly that there was much too little of this type of space in the Borough.
- 9.12 Within the Urban Chelmsford analysis area there is currently **8.05** hectares of provision for young people and children equating to **0.09** per 1000 population at present. Four drop-in consultation sessions were held to ask peoples views specifically about the quantity of this type of space within this analysis area. A summary of these responses is as follows (note the actual number of responses):
- too much (0 / 0%)
 - about right (24 / 36%)
 - too little (42 / 64%).
- 9.13 It is clear from this response that although the majority of people who took part in the drop-ins felt strongly that there was a deficit of this type of space locally. However a large proportion said they felt the current level was okay.
- 9.14 Within the South Woodham Ferrers analysis area there is currently **1.20** hectares of provision for young people and children equating to **0.07** per 1000 population at present. South Woodham Ferrers Town Council considers this to be 'about right'.
- 9.15 Within the Rural North analysis area there is currently **4.99** hectares of provision for young people and children equating to **0.24** per 1000 population at present. Five of the 12 parishes in this analysis area said that the quantity of space was currently not enough in their individual parish, four said they felt the level was 'about right' while one said the question did not apply and the remaining two parishes did not complete the question.
- 9.16 Within the Rural South analysis area there is currently **3.84** hectares of provision for young people and children equating to **0.13** per 1000 population at present. Five of the 12 parishes in this analysis area said that the quantity of space was currently not enough in their individual parish, three said they felt the level was 'about right' while one said the question did not apply and the remaining three parishes did not complete the question.
- 9.17 There are no significant differences in the level of provision and perceived local need for provision for children and young people between the rural and the more urban areas of the Borough, suggesting the same standard could be applied to the whole of the Borough.

SECTION 9 – PROVISION FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

9.18 In response to the consultations and in discussion with the Council it was felt that there was a need to provide considerably more of this type of space than is on offer at the present time. In reflection of this, the proposed standard of 0.81 hectares per thousand population is considerably higher than the current provision level and in line by the top end of provision advocated by the NPFA. It was also considered necessary to define the difference between areas specifically equipped for play and informal ball games and also areas for informal youth space.

9.19 It is suggested that for the **Borough of Chelmsford** (taking in all four analysis areas) the **minimum provision standard of 0.81 ha per 1,000 population** is applied. This is split between **equipped play areas & informal ball games areas at 0.405 ha per 1000** and **informal youth space at 0.405 ha per 1000**.

Applying provision standards

9.20 When applying the provision standard of 0.8 ha per 1000 population Borough-wide there is currently a deficit of **109.15** hectares of space below minimum standard. In the urban analysis areas this shortfall is currently **77.36** hectares below the minimum standard while there is a slight deficiency in the rural analysis areas this deficiency is slightly less at **31.79** hectares.

9.21 Table 9.1 overleaf summarises the impact of applying this standard to each of the wards in the Borough currently:

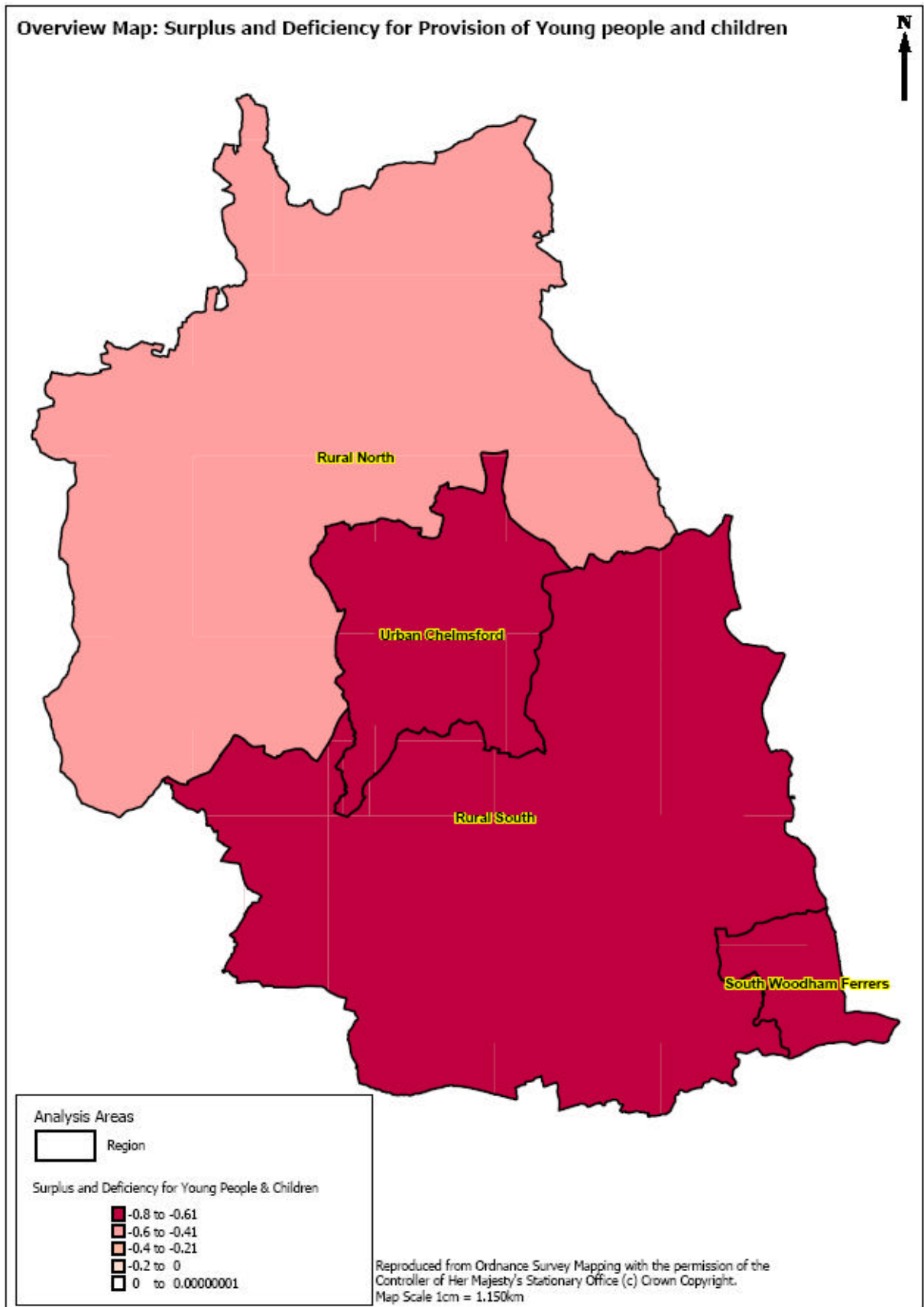
SECTION 9 – PROVISION FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

Table 9.1 Applying provision standard for provision for young people and children

Ward Name	Total Population	Hectares	Hectares per 1000 pop	Local Minimum Standard	Above / Below standard per 1000/pop	Above / below standard (hectares)
Great Baddow East & Great Baddow West	13017	0.06	0.00	0.81	-0.81	-10.48
St Andrews	8644	2.12	0.25	0.81	-0.56	-4.88
Patching Hall	8776	0.42	0.05	0.81	-0.76	-6.69
Marconi	6306	0.81	0.13	0.81	-0.68	-4.30
The Lawns	5610	0.44	0.08	0.81	-0.73	-4.10
Chelmer Village and Beaulieu Park & Springfield North	17405	1.97	0.11	0.81	-0.70	-12.13
Trinity	5830	0.35	0.06	0.81	-0.75	-4.37
Waterhouse Farm	4985	0.37	0.07	0.81	-0.74	-3.67
Moulsham and Central	8457	0.88	0.10	0.81	-0.71	-5.97
Moulsham Lodge	5484	0.63	0.11	0.81	-0.70	-3.81
Goat Hall	5786	0.00	0.00	0.81	-0.81	-4.69
Total Urban Chelmsford	90,300	8.05	0.09	0.81	-0.72	-65.09
South Woodham - Chetwood and Collingwood & South Woodham - Elmwood and Woodville	16,629	1.20	0.07	0.81	-0.74	-12.27
Total South Woodham Ferrers	16,629	1.20	0.07	0.81	-0.74	-12.27
Total Urban area	106,929	9.25	0.09	0.81	-0.72	-77.36
Boreham and The Leighs	5,093	2.03	0.40	0.81	-0.41	-2.10
Broomfield and The Walthams	7,477	1.86	0.25	0.81	-0.56	-4.20
Chelmsford Rural West	2,695	0.82	0.30	0.81	-0.51	-1.36
Writtle	5,632	0.28	0.05	0.81	-0.76	-4.28
Total Rural North	20,897	4.99	0.24	0.81	-0.57	-11.94
Little Baddow, Danbury and Sandon	8,091	0.76	0.09	0.81	-0.72	-5.79
Bicknacre, East and West Hanningfield	5,039	0.66	0.13	0.81	-0.68	-3.42
Galleywood	5,898	0.25	0.04	0.81	-0.77	-4.53
South Hanningfield, Stock and Margaretting	5,179	1.95	0.38	0.81	-0.43	-2.24
Rettendon and Runwell	5,039	0.22	0.04	0.81	-0.77	-3.86
Total Rural South	29,246	3.84	0.13	0.81	-0.68	-19.85
Total Rural area	50,143	8.83	0.18	0.81	-0.63	-31.79
Borough wide total	157,072	18.08	0.12	0.81	-0.69	-109.15

9.22 Table 9.1 below summarises the current level of provision within each ward and also shows how this compares with the minimum recommended standard. Note that where provision is currently below the minimum standard a minus figure is shown in red. The wards are listed by analysis area.

Figure 9.1 Surplus and Deficiency Map



Quality

9.23 Out of the 78 sites given a quality rating, 15 (19%) of these sites were considered to be of very good quality. These are:

- Beaulieu Park Toddlers' Play Area
- Barnaby Rudge Play Area
- Part of Copperfield Play Area
- Martingale Drive Play Area
- Oliver Way Play Area
- New Writtle Street Play Area
The Lintons Play Area
- Meadgate School Play Area - Great Baddow
- Recreation Ground Play Area, Boreham
- Eglinton Drive Play Area
- Toddlers Play Area, off St Michael's Drive
- Lichfield Close Play Area
- Wickham Crescent Play Area
- Coburgh Place Play Area
- Golden Jubilee Play Area, Vicarage Road
- Lucas Avenue Play Area
- Little Waltham Children's Playground
- Boleyn Gardens Play Area
- Springfield Park Play Area
- Chelmer Village Way Play Area.

9.24 The majority of the sites (61, 78 %) were considered to be average to good in terms of quality.

9.25 Two sites notably stand out as being rated of poor quality. These are:

- field and play area by shops, Long Brandocks
- Spring Close Play Area, Little Baddow.

9.26 According to the Council Play Officer, vandalism is not considered to be a major problem in the Borough. The biggest challenge however is providing suitable equipment for the youth age group which generally requires a fairly large site to allow for buffering of sound. Interestingly however, vandalism of play space came out strongly as a concern of local residents in the urban areas.

Accessibility

9.27 Of the 89 sites rated under this category, 12 (13%) sites were considered to be ‘very good’ in terms of access whilst the vast majority (75, 84%) were rated average to good. Two sites were considered to have poor access, these are:

- Rutland Road Play Area
- Avon Road Play Area.

9.28 According to Council’s Play Officer, the Moulsham and Tile Kiln areas have a shortfall of this type of space which has led to problems because the only available sites are small and the only areas available for playing ball games which are often seen as a nuisance by residents.

Catchment

9.29 Parish Councils were asked to comment on what they considered was a reasonable time in minutes that people should be expected to travel to reach a children’s play area by various alternative means of transport. The median, mean, mode, of those that responded to this question responses is summarised in Table 9.2 below.

9.30 As part of the Street Survey people were asked how far (in minutes) they were prepared to travel in order to access this type of open space. PPG17 recommends that the 75% percentile of responses indicates the time/distance that the majority of people will be willing to travel and this should be used to inform accessibility standards. The time that 75% said they were prepared to travel is shown in Table 9.2 below under the field heading ‘Public consultation: Street Survey’. Similarly at the drop-in sessions in the urban area people were asked the same question by mode of transport and the average response is shown in the table.

Table 9.2 Time prepared to travel

Mode of travel	Parish Council responses					Public consultation	
	Median	Mean	Mode	Min.	Max.	Street Survey (75% percentile)	Drop In Sessions
Walk	12.5	15	10	5	45	Up to 29 minutes	8 mins (Mean response)
Car	5	7	5	3	20		17 mins (Mean response)

9.31 Again, and similar to amenity greenspace, local needs and expectations suggest that play provision is a local amenity and should be located close to places of residence.

9.32 Most consultees expect to be able to walk to a play area, rather than drive, cycle or use public transport.

SECTION 9 – PROVISION FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

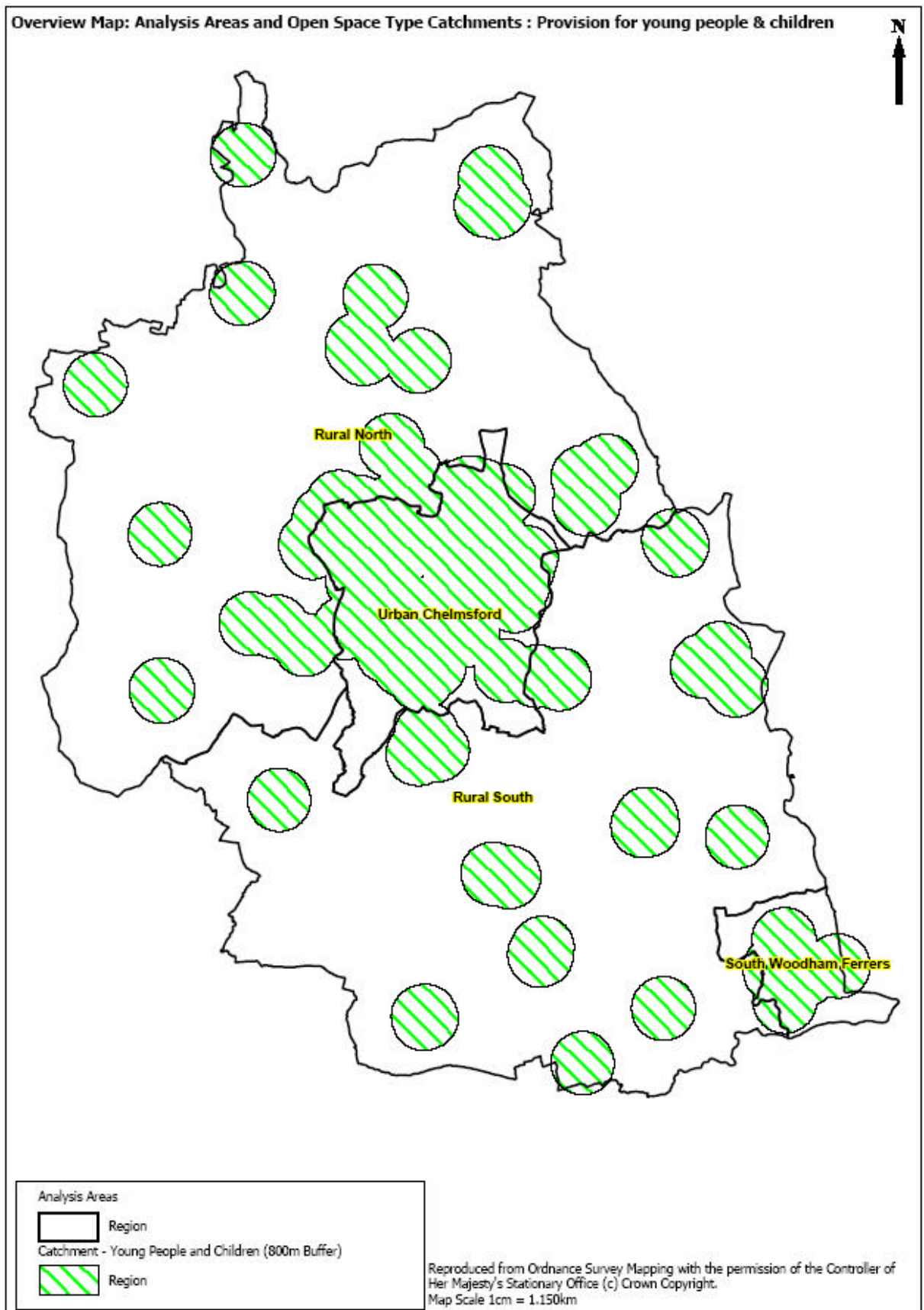
- 9.33 Consultation highlighted that residents expected to be able to walk to a play area within a short distance. There was a feeling that an adequately sized play area should be provided within this catchment but people are more prepared to travel to larger sites with more equipment. 75% percent of people said they would be prepared to travel up to 29minutes. Within this percentile however the largest category was 5-14 minutes with 54% of people selecting this time band.
- 9.34 It is recommended as shown in summary Table 9.3 below, that play areas should in general be located within 400 – 800 metres of their residents. Further specific locational requirements for each sub-category of space are set out in the summary below. Table 9.3 below puts an indicative equivalent distance against this drivetime. In reality this distance will vary depending on local driving conditions. See Appendix F for benchmarking of these standards against other local authorities.

Table 9.3 Recommended accessibility standard

Accessibility Standard – Provision for Children and Young People	
Recommended travel time	Indicative equivalent distance
5 – 10 minute walk	400 – 800m

- 9.35 Figure 9.2 shows this travel time boundary applied to all the sites in the borough. Using this mapping (which is held within the Council’s GIS system) it is possible to drill down to see which localities do not currently have ready access to this type of open space.

Figure 9.2 Accessibility catchments for provision for children and young people



Assessment of value (usage v quality v accessibility)

- 9.36 Most sites that have a high level of use usually have a 'good' or 'very good' quality and accessibility rating. The majority of sites with a low level of use have an average or poor quality and accessibility rating. This is because the factors are related and interlinked.

Summary

9.37 Children's play areas are a popular use of open space, and as highlighted previously, both the quality and accessibility of most sites within the Borough is considered to be good. However concerns were expressed in the urban areas about the vandalism of play equipment and anti-social behaviour by young people.

9.38 Consultation indicated that there was felt to be a deficiency of provision, particularly for teenagers. The application of a local standard of 0.81 ha per 1000 population has been suggested for this typology however this should be split into the following sub-categories as follows:

Equipped play areas & Informal ball games: 0.405 ha/1000:

Pre-school play area: defined as being *'for children up to the age of five years and should contain static play equipment. These areas should be located within 400 metres of each family dwelling and should be accessible without crossing major traffic flows or encountering similar obstructions. The minimum size of each area should be 600 metres square.'*

Infant play area: defined as being *'designed primarily for children aged five-eight years, although an area for an under five's should be included. The play areas should contain a variety of static and moving play equipment and seats accompanying adults. Such areas are to be located within 400 metres of each family dwelling and should be accessible without crossing major traffic flows or encountering similar obstructions. The minimum size of each area should be 600 metres square.'*

Junior play area: defined as *'being designed primarily for children aged nine-twelve years, although an area for five-eight year olds and under five's should be included. The play areas should contain a variety of static and moving play equipment and seats accompanying adults. Such areas are to be located within one kilometre of each family dwelling. The minimum size of each area should be 2,400 metres square.'*

Informal ball games space: defined as *'being designed for the playing of informal ball games by children of all ages. These should include a basketball station and/or hard surface space of 10x10 metres square. These areas are to be located within 400 metres of each family dwelling and should be accessible without crossing major traffic flows or encountering similar obstructions. The minimum size of each area should be one hectare.'*

Informal youth space: 0.405 ha/1000:

Defined as being *'intended to provide for the informal meeting and play of youth. They will initially be laid out to grass and contain a youth shelter. Careful consideration should be given to their location in terms of possible noise nuisance or intimidation. These should be a minimum of 1200 metres square in size and be within 1000 metres of any dwelling.'*

9.39 It is suggested that in general terms play areas are local neighbourhood facilities, and people should expect to be able to walk to some form of play area within five-ten minutes of their home.

Allotments and community gardens

Definition

- 10.1 This includes all forms of allotments with a primary purpose to provide opportunities for people to grow their own produce as part of the long-term promotion of sustainability, health and social inclusion. This type of open space may also include urban farms.

Picture 10.1 St Michael's Allotments



Specific strategic context and consultations

- 10.2 Like other open space types, allotments can provide a number of wider benefits to the community as well as the primary use of growing produce. These include:
- bringing together people of different cultural backgrounds
 - improving physical and mental health
 - providing a source of recreation
 - wider contribution to green and open space.
- 10.3 The Parks Services department of the Borough Council is actively involved in the promotion of allotments and in providing a personal service/public interface with the public to encourage the take up of allotments.
- 10.4 There are currently 28 allotment sites managed and maintained by the Council. Table 10.1 (provided by the Council) below shows the number of plots currently available at each of these sites and also which of these are being let and which are vacant. Overall 39% of the available plots are currently vacant (end of October 2004). However this compares positively to the 59% vacancy in June 2003 indicating the Council's work in allotment promotion is having the desired effect.

SECTION 10 – ALLOTMENTS AND COMMUNITY GARDENS

Table 10.1 Council managed allotment take-up (27/10/04)

Site	No. Full Plots	No. Half Plots	Total Plots	No. Let	No. Vacant	% let	% Vacant
111 Kings Road	3	2	5	5	0	100.00	0.00
143 Kings Road	6	0	6	4	2	66.67	33.33
43 Kings Road	8	0	8	3	5	37.50	62.50
67 Kings Road	10	2	12	2	10	16.67	83.33
Avon Road	118	20	138	35	103	25.36	74.64
Beeches	36	18	54	40	14	74.07	25.93
Chelmer	33	0	33	33	0	100.00	0.00
Cheviot Drive	3	0	3	3	0	100.00	0.00
Christy Ave	5	0	5	0	5	0.00	100.00
Essex Ave	2	0	2	2	0	100.00	0.00
Hill Road	42	0	42	16	26	38.10	61.90
Mascalls Way	7	0	7	7	0	100.00	0.00
Meadgate North	4	2	6	5	1	83.33	16.67
Meadgate South	6	0	6	6	0	100.00	0.00
Melbourne Park Post Develop't	115	16	131	66	65	50.38	49.62
Milburn Crest	3	0	3	0	3	0.00	100.00
Rutland Road	4	0	4	4	0	100.00	0.00
Sawkins Gardens	6	0	6	6	0	100.00	0.00
Somerset Place	5	2	7	7	0	100.00	0.00
South Primrose Hill	37	0	37	37	0	100.00	0.00
Springfield Hall	40	2	42	42	0	100.00	0.00
Swiss Ave Cockney C	7	0	7	0	7	0.00	100.00
The Avenues	71	27	98	88	10	89.80	10.20
Waterhouse Lane	129	4	133	87	46	65.41	34.59
Welland Ave	6	0	6	6	0	100.00	0.00
West Ave	19	0	19	0	19	0.00	100.00
Widford Chase	4	0	4	0	4	0.00	100.00
Woodhall	15	6	21	15	6	71.43	28.57
Totals for 28 sites	744	101	845	519	326	61.42	38.58

Quantity

10.5 There are 55 allotment sites in total that have been included within the audit (see open spaces audit in Appendix G). These include those owned and managed by the Borough Council as well as by the County Council, Parish Councils and privately. This equates to 50.23 hectares in total Borough-wide. These sites range from 0.02 ha to 4.52 ha in size. The ten most sizeable sites in the Borough are as follows:

- Maldon Road Allotments (1.85 ha)
- Hill Road South Allotment (2.07 ha)
- Oxney Allotments (2.21 ha)
- The Avenue's Allotment Site (2.44 ha)
- Stump Lane Allotment (2.52 ha)
- Chase Allotments (2.88 ha)
- Vicarage Lane Allotments (2.89 ha)
- Waterhouse Lane Allotments (3.17 ha)
- Avon Road Allotments (3.65 ha)

- Highfield Road Allotments (4.52 ha).

Setting provision standards

- 10.6 The process for setting local quantitative standards is described within PPG17 Companion Guide ‘Assessing Needs and Opportunities’ and this process has been followed in order to set a local standard for the Borough of Chelmsford. A diagrammatic format of this process is provided within Appendix E – ‘Quantity Standards’ along with a summary of all calculations.
- 10.7 In summary the quantity standard have been derived through firstly undertaking the Borough-wide site audit and then digitising the boundary of each site into a GIS. This provides a total amount of space in hectares for each typology of space within each of the wards in the Borough (See Table 10.1 below). The next step is to then consider the consultation responses both from the Parish Councils, the general public and views of officers in relation to this current level of quantity. For example if the consultation showed that people feel there is a deficiency of a certain type of space (and officers agree) then the minimum standard should be set above the current level of provision. This higher level of provision thereby becomes the goal to work towards. Future population projections have also been taken account of.
- 10.8 It is important to note that when applying the minimum standard at the ward level there will be some wards that appear to have an oversupply and some that fall below the minimum level. This is because in reality a ward maybe adjacent to another that has a plentiful supply of green space and therefore its population falls within the catchment of this space so the fact it is below the minimum standard is not a problem. The priority areas are those which are both below the minimum standard and also fall outside the catchment of open space. See catchment mapping below.
- 10.9 There are no definitive national standards for ‘allotments and community gardens’ and there are currently no local standards set by the Borough Council. The National Society of Allotment and Leisure Gardeners suggest 20 allotment plots per 2,200 people. However this standard does not take into account local demand or the socio-demographic profile of the local population.
- 10.10 According to the local audit there are currently **50.23** hectares of provision for allotments and community gardens in total in the Borough. This represents provision equivalent to **0.32** hectares per 1000 population at present.
- 10.11 The Borough-wide street survey indicated the following local opinion about the quantity of this type of space:
- much too much (1%)
 - too much (6%)
 - about right (65%)
 - too little (18%)
 - much too little (9%).

SECTION 10 – ALLOTMENTS AND COMMUNITY GARDENS

- 10.12 This indicates that the majority of people are satisfied with the level of provision of this type of space however a considerable proportion of people continue to feel they do not have enough. A minority (7%) felt that allotment space could be put to an alternative use. It is worth noting however that many people expressed that they had limited knowledge of this type of space particularly younger age groups
- 10.13 Within the Urban Chelmsford analysis area there is currently **27.90** hectares of provision for allotments and community gardens equating to **0.26** per 1000 population at present. Four drop-in consultation sessions were held to ask peoples views specifically about the quantity of this type of space within this analysis area. A summary of these responses is as follows:
- too much (1/ 3%)
 - about right (23 / 74%)
 - too little (7 / 23%).
- 10.14 It is clear from this response that although the majority of people who took part in the drop-ins felt strongly that the current provision of allotment space was okay. However several people felt there should be more and had experienced waiting lists to try to get a plot on the site the wanted.
- 10.15 Within the South Woodham Ferrers analysis area there is currently **0.57** hectares of provision for allotments and community gardens equating to **0.03** per 1000 population at present. South Woodham Ferrers Parish Council considers this to be not enough for their needs.
- 10.16 Within the Rural North analysis area there is currently **12.21** hectares of provision for allotments and community gardens equating to **0.58** per 1000 population at present. Five of the 12 parishes in this analysis area said that the quantity of space was ‘ about right’ in their individual parish, one said they felt the level was not enough while one said the question did not apply and the remaining four parishes did not complete the question.
- 10.17 Within the Rural South analysis area there is currently **10.12** hectares of provision for allotments and community gardens equating to **0.35** per 1000 population at present. One of the parishes (Danbury) felt there was currently too much of this type of space in their area. Six of the total 12 parishes in said that the quantity of space was currently ‘about right’ in their individual parish, while two said the question did not apply and the remaining three parishes did not complete the question.
- 10.18 There are no significant differences in the level of provision and perceived local need for allotments between the rural and the more urban areas of the Borough, hence the suggested standard should be applied to all analysis areas.
- 10.19 In discussion with the Council it was felt that existing allotment and community garden space should be protected where possible and that a marginal increase in the overall quantity was desired in the urban areas particularly given the forecast increase in population and ageing of the population.
- 10.20 It is suggested that for the **Borough of Chelmsford** (taking in all four analysis areas) the **minimum provision standard of 0.3 ha per 1,000 population** is applied.

Applying provision standards

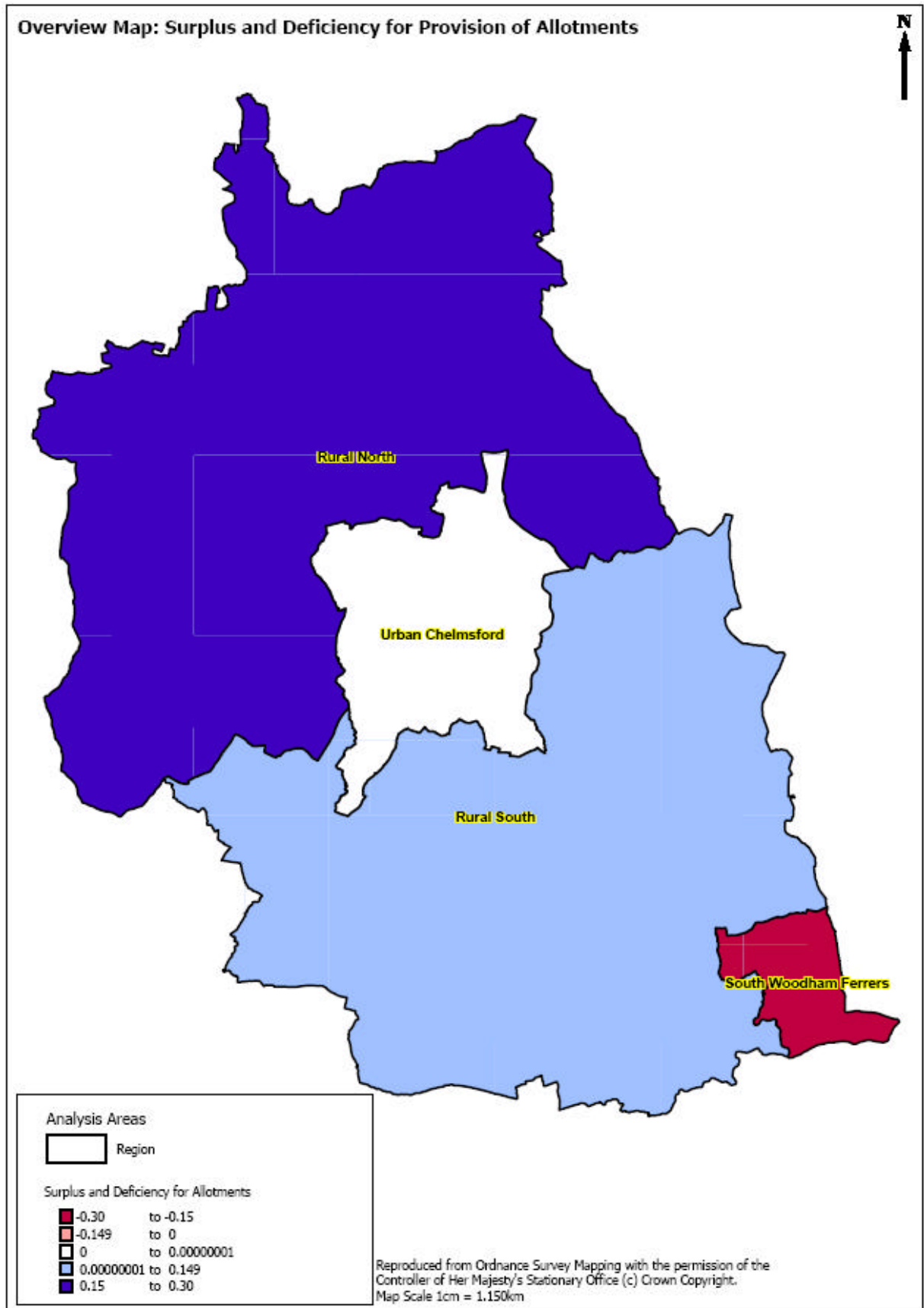
- 10.21 When applying the provision standard of 0.3 ha per 1000 population Borough-wide there is currently **3.11** hectares of space above the minimum standard. However, in the urban analysis areas however there is currently a shortfall of **4.18** hectares compared with the rural analysis areas where there are **7.29** hectares of space above the minimum standard.
- 10.22 Table 10.1 overleaf summarises the current level of provision within each ward and also shows how this compares with the minimum recommended standard. Note that where provision is currently below the minimum standard a minus figure is shown in red. The wards are listed by analysis area.
- 10.23 Figure 10.2 overleaf illustrates thematically how the current level of provision compares with the minimum recommended standard for allotments by analysis area across the Borough.

SECTION 10 – ALLOTMENTS AND COMMUNITY GARDENS

Table 10.2 Applying provision standard for allotments and community gardens

Ward Name	Total Population	Hectares	Hectares per 1000 pop	Local Minimum Standard	Above / Below standard per 1000/pop	Above / below standard (hectares)
Great Baddow East & Great Baddow West	13017	1.12	0.09	0.30	-0.21	-2.79
St Andrews	8644	8.17	0.95	0.30	0.65	5.58
Patching Hall	8776	2.93	0.33	0.30	0.03	0.30
Marconi	6306	1.26	0.20	0.30	-0.10	-0.63
The Lawns	5610	0.94	0.17	0.30	-0.13	-0.74
Chelmer Village and Beaulieu Park & Springfield North	17405	0.37	0.02	0.30	-0.28	-4.85
Trinity	5830	4.94	0.85	0.30	0.55	3.19
Waterhouse Farm	4985	4.62	0.93	0.30	0.63	3.12
Moulsham and Central	8457	1.56	0.18	0.30	-0.12	-0.98
Moulsham Lodge	5484	1.32	0.24	0.30	-0.06	-0.33
Goat Hall	5786	0.10	0.02	0.30	-0.28	-1.64
Total Urban Chelmsford	90,300	27.33	0.30	0.30	0.00	0.24
South Woodham - Chetwood and Collingwood & South Woodham - Elmwood and Woodville	16,629	0.57	0.03	0.30	-0.27	-4.42
Total South Woodham Ferrers	16,629	0.57	0.03	0.30	-0.27	-4.42
Total Urban area	106,929	27.90	0.26	0.30	-0.04	-4.18
Boreham and The Leighs	5,093	0.62	0.12	0.30	-0.18	-0.91
Broomfield and The Walthams	7,477	3.55	0.47	0.30	0.17	1.31
Chelmsford Rural West	2,695	2.64	0.98	0.30	0.68	1.83
Writtle	5,632	5.40	0.96	0.30	0.66	3.71
Total Rural North	20,897	12.21	0.58	0.30	0.28	5.94
Little Baddow, Danbury and Sandon	8,091	1.16	0.14	0.30	-0.16	-1.27
Bicknacre, East and West Hanningfield	5,039	0.14	0.03	0.30	-0.27	-1.37
Galleywood	5,898	4.15	0.70	0.30	0.40	2.38
South Hanningfield, Stock and Margaretting	5,179	3.10	0.60	0.30	0.30	1.55
Rettendon and Runwell	5,039	1.57	0.31	0.30	0.01	0.06
Total Rural South	29,246	10.12	0.35	0.30	0.05	1.35
Total Rural area	50,143	22.33	0.45	0.30	0.15	7.29
Borough wide total	157,072	50.23	0.32	0.30	0.02	3.11

Figure 10.1 Current provision compared with recommended standard for allotments



Quality

10.24 According to the Council Parks Services there have been a number of ongoing improvement to the quality of the Council maintained allotments including:

- clearing of vacant plots and improving the preparation for new tenants and encouraging prospective tenants
- new notice boards for some sites
- rolling program of rubbish clearance and boundary maintenance where budget allows
- providing qualified horticultural support to new plot holders
- involvement with third parties – health and education (GP's, Primary Care Trusts, Schools, etc)
- good/ improved communication from council to allotment holders.

10.25 Despite these positive improvements the Council also has a number of concerns in relation to quality linked to limited financial resources for publicity, maintenance and administration. This can lead to delays in agreements to new tenants and means that management is limited due to lack of appropriate dedicated software system. Other concerns raised include:

- old signage, some facilities lacking on sites (eg toilet facilities, water supply)
- poor benchmarking, internally and nationally.

10.26 Quality ratings were provided for 38 out of the 55 sites. Of these, 6 were rated as being of 'very good quality'. These were:

- White House Crescent (Great Baddow)
- Brookend Road Allotments (Springfield)
- Allotments (South Woodham Ferrers)
- Tower Field (Great Baddow)
- Allotment Gardens, Ramsden Heath (South Hanningfield)
- Vicarage Lane Allotments (Great Baddow).

10.27 The majority (27) were rated as being average to good while five of the sites were considered to be poor to very poor in quality. These were:

- Brookmead Allotments (Great Waltham)
- Kings Road Allotments (un-let)
- Green Lane (Roxwell)
- Springfield Glebe Allotments

- Christy Avenue Allotments (currently not used).

Accessibility

10.28 According to Council Officers there is currently good access to most of the allotment sites. Most have both vehicular and pedestrian access and in many sites car drivers can drive and park adjacent to their plot.

10.29 Of the 43 sites rated, the majority were rated as being 'very good', 'good' or 'average' in terms of accessibility. However the following sites were considered to be 'poor' or 'very poor' in this capacity:

- Scarles Croft Allotments (East Hanningfield)
- Kings Road Allotments
- Brookmead Allotments (Great Waltham)
- Kings Road Allotments 2 (un-let)
- Allotments, Waltham Road (Boreham)
- Hill Road South Allotment
- Christy Avenue Allotments (currently not used)
- Highwood Allotment (abandoned).

Catchment

10.30 Parish Councils were asked to comment on what they considered was a reasonable time in minutes that people should be expected to travel to reach an allotment site by various means of transport. The median, mean, mode, of those that responded to this question responses is summarised in Table 10.3 overleaf.

10.31 As part of the Street Survey people were asked how far (in minutes) they were prepared to travel in order to access this type of open space. PPG17 recommends that the 75% percentile of responses indicates the time/distance that the majority of people will be willing to travel and this should be used to inform accessibility standards. The time that 75% said they were prepared to travel is shown in Table 10.3 overleaf under the field heading 'Public consultation: Street Survey'.

Table 10.3 Time prepared to travel

Mode of travel	Chelmsford Parish Council responses					Public consultation	
	Median	Mean	Mode	Min.	Max.	Street Survey (75% percentile)	Drop In Sessions
Walk	15	17	10	5	45	up to 29 minutes	13 mins (Mean response)
Car	5	7	5	3	20		14 mins (Mean response)

10.32 Some people are likely to drive to allotments due to the need to transport equipment to and from the site however older people who may no longer drive also use allotment facilities and therefore may prefer to access on foot, by public transport or cycle. Within the 75% percentile, 70% of people actually stated they were prepared to travel between 15-29 minutes. It appears from the parish and drop-in consultation that people are willing to drive between five and 15 minutes to an allotment site.

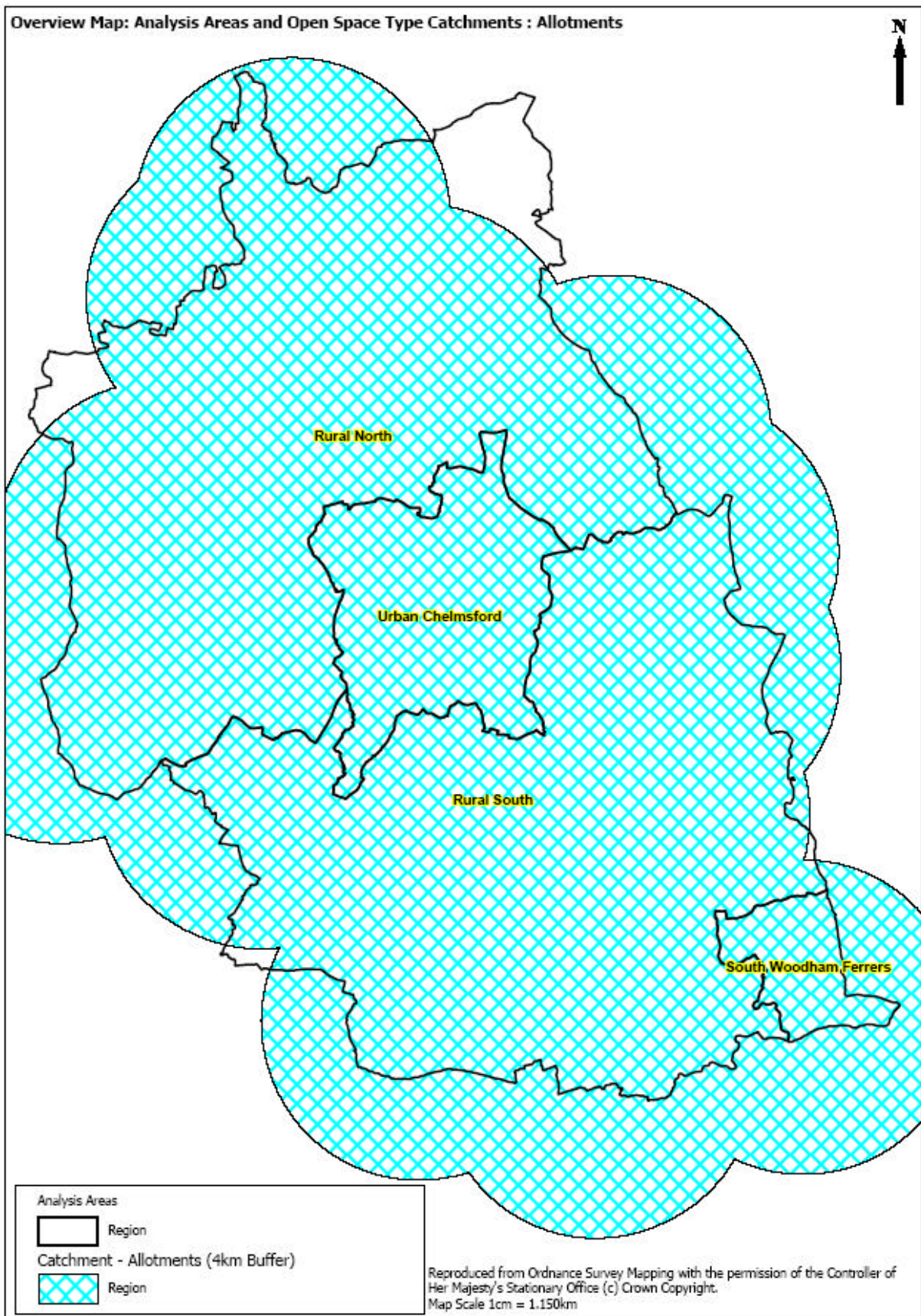
10.33 Table 10.4 below sets out the suggested accessibility standard for allotments and also puts an indicative equivalent distance against this drivetime. In reality this distance will vary depending on local driving conditions. See Appendix F for benchmarking of these standards against other local authorities.

Table 10.4 Recommended accessibility standard

Accessibility Standard – Allotments and Community Gardens	
Recommended travel time	Indicative equivalent distance
10 minute drivetime	2 – 4 km

10.34 Figure 10.2 shows this travel time boundary applied to all the sites in the borough. Using this mapping (which is held within the Council’s GIS system) it is possible to drill down to see which localities do not currently have ready access to this type of open space.

Figure 10.2 Accessibility catchments for allotments



Assessment of value (usage v quality v accessibility)

- 10.35 In terms of levels of use, according to Parks Services there has been increased take up of plots over the last 12 months due to dedicated publicity and the promotion of an Allotment Officer. The fact this take-up has increased significantly over a relatively short period of time shows that allotments remain of value to the local community and that there is still a significant demand for this type of space.
- 10.36 There has been work to improve the profile of allotment gardening in the Borough through:
- displays in public areas (library, shopping centres, and at Spectacular event at Hylands Park)
 - radio and press coverage
 - themed/targeted publicity to tie in with National Allotment Week, or new year's resolutions in January
 - leaflet drops to residential properties in site vicinity and new housing developments with limited or no garden
 - updated web site, publicity leaflet, email distribution list for allotment holders
 - re-introduction of allotment competition including best site 'Allotment Oscars' event in High Chelmer.

Summary

- 10.37 When applying the suggested provision standard of 0.3 ha per 1000 population Borough-wide, there is currently 3.11 ha over this minimum standard. However in the urban analysis areas there is a shortfall of 4.18ha. The rural areas of Chelmsford are currently very well provided for in terms of allotment space.
- 10.38 Concerns have been raised by the Council in relation to the quality of some sites. The Council should aim towards providing the following facilities at allotment sites:
- water supply
 - toilets
 - disabled provision/dedicated plots
 - parking provision or improvements
 - security measures
 - notice boards
 - improved boundaries at some sites.
- 10.39 In terms of management arrangements on Council maintained sites, the following actions should be supported and appropriately financed:
- Site huts and associations should be formed on all large sites
 - management/ownership to devolved to tenants where appropriate
 - new tenancy agreements and welcome packages should be provided to new tenants
 - clarification of access licence availability and monitoring
 - improved administration and dedicated software package to speed up response to new tenants and accuracy of information (for publicity and maintenance).

Cemeteries and churchyards

Definition

- 11.1 Churchyards are encompassed within the walled boundary of a church whilst cemeteries are burial grounds that fall outside the confines of a church. These include private burial grounds, local authority burial grounds and disused churchyards. The primary purpose of this type of open space is for burial of the dead and quiet contemplation but are also important for the promotion of wildlife conservation and biodiversity. Often these sites have significant historical and archaeological value also.

Picture 11.1 St Andrew's Churchyard



- 11.2 Cemeteries and churchyards can be a significant open space provider particularly in rural areas. In other areas they can represent a relatively minor resource in terms of the land, but are able to provide areas of nature conservation importance. Some churchyards retain areas of unimproved grasslands and other various habitats. They can make a significant contribution to the provision of urban green space sometimes providing a sanctuary for wildlife in urban areas devoid of green space.

Quantity

- 11.3 There are 41 sites of this type that have been included within the audit (See open space audit in Appendix F). These include sites that are owned and managed by the Borough Council, the Parish Councils and by individual churches and church organisations. In total this equates to 39.15 ha of space. The size of these sites varies considerably from the smallest being 0.1 hectare with the Borough's principal burial ground (Chelmsford Cemetery and Crematorium) by far the largest at 11ha. The ten most sizeable sites of this type of open space are as follows:
- Danbury Parish Church (St. John's) (1.0 ha)
 - Holy Trinity Church Trinity Road (Trinity) (1.0 ha)

SECTION 11 – CEMETERIES AND CHURCHYARDS

- St Mary with St Leonard Church (Broomfield) (1.1 ha)
 - Lawn Cemetery (Galleywood) (1.1 ha)
 - Churchyard (Writtle) (1.2 ha)
 - Our Lady of Mount Camel RC Church (Stock) (1.3 ha)
 - St. Michael's Churchyard (Galleywood) (1.6 ha)
 - Ford End Churchyard (Great Waltham) (1.8 ha)
 - Garden of Remembrance (South Woodham Ferrers) (2.2 ha)
 - Chelmsford Cemetery & Crematorium (Writtle Road) (11.0 ha).
- 11.4 The Council's Municipal Engineering Services department carries out the management of the Cemetery & Crematorium site at Writtle Road, and also other disused burial grounds within the Borough which are also classified as public open space. The main Crematorium and Cemetery site is laid out principally to cemetery but also consists of memorial gardens and landscaped areas. Maintenance is carried out by the engineering department for this main site whereas the Parks Service maintains the disused burial grounds.
- 11.5 According to the Council Management Team, the Chelmsford Cemetery & Crematorium provides for a specific service and the recent extension provides for sufficient further burial space for the foreseeable future.

Setting provision standards

- 11.6 There are no definitive national or local standards for cemeteries and churchyards at present.
- 11.7 PPG17 suggests that the development of quantity standards for churchyards is inappropriate. The annex of the PPG17 Companion Guide states that:
- “as churchyards can only exist where there is a church, the only form of provision standards which will be required is a qualitative one”.*
- 11.8 In addition, it is recognised that every cemetery has a finite capacity; hence demand for cemeteries is steady. It is therefore suggested that if the application of a quantitative standard is required, this should be calculated using a combination of population estimates and the average number of deaths resulting in a burial in the area.
- 11.9 According to the local audit there are currently **39.15** hectares of provision for cemeteries and churchyards in total in the Borough. This represents provision equivalent to **0.25** hectares per 1000 population at present.
- 11.10 The Borough-wide street survey indicated the following local opinion about the quantity of this type of space:
- much too much (3%)
 - too much (9%)

SECTION 11 – CEMETERIES AND CHURCHYARDS

- about right (62%)
- too little (15%)
- much too little (9%).

11.11 This indicates that there are varying opinions across the Borough as to the quantity of this type of space. The majority of people are satisfied with the level of provision of this type of space (62%) however a small proportion of people feel (12%) that there is currently too much while 24% felt there is not enough.

11.12 Several of the parishes said that they felt there was currently a deficiency of this type of space in their area. These were:

- Boreham
- Broomfield
- Writtle
- Runwell.

11.13 Table 11.1 overleaf summarises the current provision in term of hectares per thousand population of this type of space.

SECTION 11 – CEMETERIES AND CHURCHYARDS

Table 11.1 Current provision of cemeteries and churchyards

Ward Name	Total Population	Hectares	Hectares per 1000 pop
Great Baddow East & Great Baddow West	13017	0.99	0.08
St Andrews	8644	0.00	0.00
Patching Hall	8776	0.00	0.00
Marconi	6306	0.00	0.00
The Lawns	5610	0.55	0.10
Chelmer Village and Beaulieu Park & Springfield North	17405	0.00	0.00
Trinity	5830	1.03	0.18
Waterhouse Farm	4985	11.05	2.22
Moulsham and Central	8457	1.58	0.19
Moulsham Lodge	5484	0.00	0.00
Goat Hall	5786	0.00	0.00
Total Urban Chelmsford	90,300	15.20	0.17
South Woodham - Chetwood and Colingwood & South Woodham - Elmwood and Woodville	16,629	2.19	0.13
Total South Woodham Ferrers	16,629	2.19	0.13
Total Urban area	106,929	17.39	0.16
Boreham and The Leighs	5,093	1.55	0.30
Broomfield and The Walthams	7,477	3.80	0.51
Chelmsford Rural West	2,695	3.72	1.38
Writtle	5,632	1.17	0.21
Total Rural North	20,897	10.24	0.49
Little Baddow, Danbury and Sandon	8,091	2.52	0.31
Bicknacre, East and West Hanningfield	5,039	1.70	0.34
Galleywood	5,898	2.73	0.46
South Hanningfield, Stock and Margaretting	5,179	3.24	0.63
Rettendon and Runwell	5,039	1.33	0.26
Total Rural South	29,246	11.52	0.39
Total Rural area	50,143	21.76	0.43
Borough wide total	157,072	39.15	0.25

Quality

- 11.14 According to the Council management team, the grounds and facilities at the Cemetery and Crematorium are of good quality and there is work going on to implement further improvements, based partially on feedback from visitors.
- 11.15 33 out of the 34 sites rated in terms of quality as part of this assessment were considered to be very good to average. Only one site was considered to be of poor quality which was Christ Church Cemetery.

Accessibility

11.16 Similarly in terms of accessibility, the majority of sites were rated as being very good to average in terms of access for the public. The main cemetery specifically is open 365 days a year and according to the Council is well attended by visitors. Two sites were considered to be poor in terms of access (note that neither of these are maintained by the Council), these were:

- Christ Church Cemetery
- Churchyard (Boreham).

Assessment of value (usage v quality v accessibility)

- 11.17 Most sites that have a high level of use would normally have a good or very good quality and accessibility rating. Most sites with a low level of use¹ would have an average or poor quality and accessibility rating. This is because the factors are related and interlinked.
- 11.18 A couple of sites stand out as having a high usage rating however an average or poor rating in terms of quality and/or accessibility. These are Stock Parish Church (Stock) which has high usage rating but only an average quality rating and Churchyard (Boreham) which has a high usage and good quality rating but a poor access rating.

Summary

- 11.19 While it is inappropriate to set a quantity standard for cemeteries, there will be steady demand in the Borough for this type of space. Planning for future provision should be based on close examination of burial and cremation rates. According to the Council there is sufficient capacity at the present time to meet the needs of the population for the foreseeable future.
- 11.20 The quality of cemeteries and churchyards remains particularly important – many people use cemeteries and churchyards as amenity green space – for peace and contemplation. It appears that the quality of cemeteries and churchyards within Chelmsford is generally good. It should be a priority to maintain this standard going forward.

¹ Usage is determined by people visiting for various reasons such as for contemplation etc rather than number of burials

Quality

- 12.1 Previous research on open spaces undertaken by various organisations suggests that what concerns most users and deters non-users of parks and open spaces are resource related issues, with the general condition and quality of open spaces ranking very highly.
- 12.2 High quality open spaces are essential to improving the social, economic and cultural characteristics of priority areas. The visibility of open spaces and the importance accorded to them by local residents makes them essential to achieving other objectives. They are often the obvious key indicators of the state of the area in which they are located.
- 12.3 The condition of open spaces are a vital ingredient in the regeneration of priority and deprived areas, improving townscapes and creating a sense of place for the local community.
- 12.4 Quality of open space is vital in determining the value attached to an open space site, and the likely use of the site.
- 12.5 Local standards should include the setting of qualitative standards for open space, providing a vision and benchmark for the development of future and existing open spaces.

Local context

- 12.6 The 2004/2005 Best Value Performance Plan outlines a number of key priorities to maintain and enhance Chelmsford's position as the county town at the heart of Essex. Paramount to this is the vision of:
- “The Borough of Chelmsford will be at the leading edge for environmental excellence at the hearth 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.”*
- 12.7 The plan states there are seven priority areas key to delivering the vision, including:
- maintaining a safe community
 - improving our local environment
 - meeting local transport needs more effectively
 - providing the best opportunities for learning and personal development
 - promoting stable employment and improved prosperity
 - enhancing healthy living
 - promoting culture as the key to our future.
- 12.8 The importance placed on improving the quality of open spaces by the Council is evident in this plan through:
- the extension of parkland adjacent to Admirals Park
 - the priority of maximising the use of parks and open spaces

- attainment of “professionally maintained grounds” award by Essex Playing Fields Association
 - the goal of refurbishing ten playgrounds by March 2005
 - the plan of developing a five year parks strategy.
- 12.9 The Council have recently made some significant achievements in relation to the quality of the spaces it manages as outlined in Section Four, Parks and Gardens. These include:
- ILAM Open Spaces Management Award 2004 for Echo Garden Project, Oaklands Park
 - Green Flag Management Awards 2005 for Oaklands Park and Boleyn Gardens (awarded by Civic Trust, and part of a national quality standard for parks and green spaces)
 - Essex Playing Fields Awards - results not yet available for this year, but last year and in past Council have achieved significant success
- 12.10 The local consultation that has been carried out has indicated that the quality of open spaces is extremely important in determining the usage levels of open sites and the value placed upon specific sites.

Assessment by quality factors

- 12.11 Any assessment of ‘quality’ with regards to open space requires a scoring system against clear assessment factors. The overall aim should be to identify:
- areas of the district suffering in quality and therefore of priority importance
 - key quality factors that need to be improved.
- 12.12 As analysed within each open space type section, every open space site within the district, where possible, has been given an individual quality rating from ‘very poor’ to ‘very good’.
- 12.13 In addition, each Parish Council has been asked to assess the open spaces within their area against 19 specific key quality indicators. (See full Parish questionnaire within Appendix A). Within the urban wards residents were also asked to rank the open spaces within their local area by the same quality factors and raise any site specific concerns they may have at the four local area drop-in sessions (See drop-in survey in Appendix B).
- 12.14 It is important to note that these ratings are subjective however they are a useful indication of public opinion. The factors were grouped under the following headings:
- **Cleanliness and maintenance:**
 - vandalism and graffiti
 - litter problems
 - provision of bins for rubbish/litter

- dog fouling
- noise
- smells (unattractive)
- maintenance & management
- overall cleanliness & maintenance.
- **Security and safety**
 - lighting
 - equipment
 - boundaries
 - overall security and safety.
- **Vegetation**
 - planted areas
 - grass areas.
- **Ancillary accommodation**
 - toilets
 - parking (related to open spaces)
 - pathways (within the open space sites)
 - information & signage.
- **Overall quality rating of open spaces.**

12.15 The following is a summary of the key themes that emerged from the assessment (Borough-wide and by analysis-area).

Quality analysis – Borough wide

- 12.16 Overall out of the 457 quality ratings made by the Parish Councils across the 19 quality factors, 223 (49%) of these were ‘very good’ and ‘good’ ratings. A further 180 (39%) were ‘average’ ratings while the remaining 54 (12%) were ‘poor’ and ‘very poor’ ratings. This is therefore very positive in terms of the opinion of quality overall.
- 12.17 However in the urban drop-in sessions, of the 999 quality ratings given, 337 (34%) were ‘very good’ and ‘good’, 260 (26%) were ‘average while 24% were ‘poor’ and ‘very poor’. (Note: the remainder were rated as N/A).
- 12.18 This implies that overall the opinion of quality is average to very good across the factors however the residents of the urban areas have expressed greater concern over quality than the Parish Councils in the rural areas.

- 12.19 Several key factors emerged from the quality assessment of open spaces as being of particular concern across the Borough. Both Parish Councils and urban area residents expressed concern over the lack of public toilet facilities and the quality of those that are available. In addition issues related to dog fouling were also a cause for concern as well as the quality of information and signage related to open spaces.
- 12.20 In addition in the urban areas residents expressed concerns regarding litter problems, the provision of bins and parking in relation to open spaces.
- 12.21 In general terms however the maintenance and management of open spaces was considered to be good across the Borough. Similarly the quality of grassed and planted areas was also considered to be good.

Analysis area 1 – Urban Chelmsford

- 12.22 In the unparished urban wards the views of the general public were ascertained at local area drop-in sessions.
- 12.23 The factors that received the most amount of poor or very poor ratings (in descending order) for their local open spaces were as follows:
- litter problems/provision of bins for litter
 - vandalism/graffiti
 - dog fouling
 - toilets.
- 12.24 The factors that received the most ‘very good’ or ‘good’ ratings were as follows:
- grassed areas
 - planted areas
 - maintenance and management
 - smells.
- 12.25 Specific comments made by residents at the drop-in sessions in relation to quality include the following points:

Drop-in 1: St Andrews/ Marconi/Patching Hall

- need for more suitable areas that children and young people can play and congregate
- generally quite satisfied, good quality spaces in the area
- abandoned cars/cars for sale are being left in open spaces
- general concern over development on green spaces
- the urban areas are noisy and full of traffic, would like peaceful and quiet spaces.

Drop-in 2: Lawns/Trinity

- parks are very bland
- there is vandalism and graffiti at Springfield Hall Park at Arun Close
- open spaces by River Chelmer always looks like it's well maintained
- dog fouling in alleyways off Rushleyvale.

Drop-in 3: Moulsham & Central/ Moulsham Lodge/ Goat Hall

- Oaklands Park is fantastic, gives a community feel to the area and is used regularly by both residents and local schools use it a lot. Presence of park keepers make the park feel very safe. However there is some vandalism.
- Council do seem to be providing more open space as part of new development than in the past.
- impressive planted areas at Bell Meadow
- problem with anti-social behaviour at Chislett Row play area
- overall very good quality of spaces.

Drop-in 4: Waterhouse Farm

- walking routes could be better
- there are bins provided for dog mess in the parks however they are not emptied frequently enough
- presence of park keepers would help prevent problems of anti-social behaviour
- since the Biodiversity program has been introduced in Central Park, the grass has been left to grow wild therefore children can no longer use this space as amenity green space
- the river should be developed as a green corridor rather than being developed for housing
- concern about house building in the area - rather preserve green spaces
- concern about safety of children's play areas
- Marconi Ponds – concern that Council contractors cut back the vegetation on this site in an appropriate manner and with knowledge of which plants etc need retaining
- Writtle Road Recreation Ground has no lighting around the play area and poor toilets
- problems of teenagers hanging around, have to be moved from shops
- want a proper district park in town centre with pond

- Oaklands Park not good for parking as people park there to go into town
- Galleywood Common is good for parking.

Analysis area 2 – Rural North

12.26 The most poorly rated quality factors by the Parish Council were:

- information and signage
- toilets
- litter problems.

12.27 Generally the quality was rated as being good in this analysis area with the following factors given the greatest number of good and very good ratings:

- maintenance and management
- overall cleanliness and maintenance
- boundaries.

12.28 Other general issues and concerns raised by the Parish Councils in relation to quality include the following. (Note that these issues are not necessarily the Borough Council's responsibility):

- Parishioners would like to see more litter picking/ street cleaning undertaken by the Council. (Boreham)
- complaints regarding dog fouling and litter (Great and Little Leighs)
- problems of dog fouling on recreation areas, vandalism and graffiti on play equipment and vandalism of changing rooms (Great Waltham)
- residents would like a hard play area on Great Waltham recreation ground to reduce the problems of anti-social behaviour of youths using Great Waltham village hall car park
- lack of funding creates difficulty in responding to the wishes of residents (Great Waltham)
- general concern at travellers occupying open spaces (Highwood)
- use of bridleway by off-road motorbikes, noise and disturbance of wildlife (Mashbury)
- cycleway top priority, more sports pitches, skateboard park (refer to Writtle Village Design Statement).

Analysis area 3 – Rural South

12.29 This area gave the fewest 'poor'/'very poor' ratings for quality of all the analysis areas. Dog fouling and information and signage received the most poor and very poor ratings. Overall the parishes in this analysis area gave their areas 125 average to very good ratings out of a total of 169 ratings.

12.30 Other general issues and concerns raised by the Parish Councils in relation to quality include the following:

- on the Meadow Road Housing Estate (Rettendon) grassed area only:
 - litter, debris are only collected after complaint to Council
 - ball game problems given closeness to homes – the no ball games signs have not been reinstated despite frequent requests
 - general maintenance average to poor
- on Meadow Road only, there is a need to:
 - update play equipment
 - make the area more inviting
 - keep the area clean and tidy
- a travellers site in Meadow Lane (Runwell) along the northern boundary of Runwell Playing Fields is causing some significant concern in terms of litter being piled up against the security fence along this boundary. The children of the travellers often fire air guns and/or catapults at footballers using the end pitch. These actions have led to the cricket club moving to another venue. These actions have also led to hirers of the hard play surface moving to other venues. Many residents are scared to use the park for the same reason.
- lack of adequate children's play area (Stock)
- requests to improve dog fouling situation (Woodham Ferrers & Bicknacre).

Analysis area 4 – South Woodham Ferrers

12.31 South Woodham Ferrers Town Council gave an overall quality rating of 'good' for the open spaces in the area. The majority of the individual factors were rated as either being 'good' or 'average' with noise being the only factor to received a 'poor' rating.

12.32 Other general issues and concerns raised by the Parish Council in relation to quality include the following:

- William De Ferrers school (funded by Essex County Council) playing fields are always badly littered. Small play areas amongst houses are used by large groups of youths for ball games causing damage to houses and for drinking etc.

Determining quality standards

12.33 Quality standards for each type of open space should be derived from an analysis of the quality issues within the audit and in light of community views.

12.34 There are no universal set standards for open space types. However the Green Flag award scheme set up by the Civic Trust does provide some guidance under the following headings:

- welcoming place

- healthy, safe and secure place
- clean and well-maintained place
- sustainability
- conservation and heritage
- community involvement
- marketing.

12.35 This Green Flag scheme is the most advanced national model for assessing the qualities that attract people to parks and green spaces.

Aspiring to specific standards

12.36 The qualities identified in local standards should be recognised and accepted by the local community.

12.37 Quality standards should:

- enable good designs to create ‘places from spaces’ i.e. a well designed open space should encourage usage and will create a sense of well-being in the community
- enable the expectations of the local community to be met
- provide a measurable vision for those existing open spaces that are low quality which if achieved would give these poor spaces a new lease of life and enable them to serve the needs of the local community
- help to determine which existing open spaces require enhancement
- encompass management and maintenance issues.

12.38 PPG17 recommends that **quality standards should not be absolute measures but reasonable aspirations and benchmarks** upon which to measure the quality of any existing open space in order to determine the need for enhancement.

12.39 The Companion Guide, ‘Assessing Needs and Opportunities’ also states that any assessment of quality or nature of open spaces or sport and recreation facilities needs a clear set of benchmarks relating to stated standards and ideally some form of scoring system.

12.40 In developing this study we have developed a matrix which outlines our interpretation of ratings from ‘very good’ to ‘poor’, for each of the quality factors identified.

12.41 This matrix of standards covers the main categories of cleanliness and maintenance, security and safety, vegetation and ancillary accommodation. The matrix is provided in Appendix D.

12.42 This analysis and quality vision could be developed into an assessment mechanism against which to assess future open space sites within Chelmsford Borough Council.

A quality vision

- 12.43 In addition to commenting on current problems with open space in the parish, for example dog fouling and parking, Parish Councils were asked to identify what improvements they would like to see to open spaces within their parish. This begins to illustrate what factors are perceived to be important in a quality open space, and contributes towards the development of a vision for open spaces in the future within the Borough.
- 12.44 Those factors identified by Parish Clerks as potential improvements in the quality of their sites include:
- litter/debris being collected regularly rather than when a complaint is made
 - improved maintenance regime
 - lack of children’s play areas
 - easier access to allotments
 - skateboard parks for older children
 - greater provision of dog fouling bins.
- 12.45 These factors represent the start of a vision for an ideal open space within Chelmsford.
- 12.46 Parishes were asked to give examples of sites they considered to be good practice. These are summarised in Table 12.1 overleaf. Note that responsibility for these sites is not necessarily that of the Borough Council.

Table 12.1 Examples of good practice open space sites

Parish	Site	Reasons
Galleywood	Chelmer Park	Wide range of outdoor sports facilities.
Galleywood	Chelmer Park, Jubilee Park & Galleywood Common	All on bus routes.
Margaretting	Village Hall & Recreation Ground	Attractive environment for play and recreation on a relatively small site with benefit of careful maintenance.
Runwell	Runwell Playing Fields	Well maintained with regular reviews. Good access.
Boreham	Boreham Recreation Ground	Well maintained with good provision for youth
Little Waltham	Little Waltham Meadows	Car park, signage and generally managed well by Essex Wildlife Trust.
Pleshey	Churchyard & Cemetery	Well maintained by villagers.
Roxwell	Toddlers Area	Regular receipt of merit awards.
Writtle	The Green	Very attractive and well maintained.
South Woodham Ferrers	Village Hall Play Area	Inspected five days a week with remedial work always carried out.
South Woodham Ferrers	Garden of Remembrance	Daily inspections and access for disabled persons improved.

12.47 Those sites which were considered to be examples of bad practice are highlighted in Table 12.2 overleaf.

Table 12.2 Examples of poorer practice open space sites

Parish	Site	Reasons
Margaretting	Maldon Road Playing Field	Minimal maintenance of site and low levels of investment.
Rettendon	Meadow Road Space	Not large enough, poorly laid out and uninviting.
Great and Little Leighs	Multi use hard play area	Poor quality, needs upgrading.
Little Waltham	Malletts Mill Wood	Lack of public access.
Writtle	Long Brandocks play area	Poor grass cutting, litter clearance and equipment.

Street Survey Results

12.48 The Borough-wide Street Survey of 500 residents provide a further indication of local needs in relation to the quality of open spaces in the Borough. People were asked to rate which factors they considered important in thinking about their ideal open space. (See Street Survey questionnaire in Appendix C). The following factors were all considered to be ‘very important’ by the majority of respondents:

- nature conservation/ecology
- floral displays, quality of grass, shrubs etc
- conveniences including toilets, cafeteria, information boards etc
- activities including events, entertainments, music etc
- cleanliness including litter bins, graffiti removal etc
- security (e.g. wardens, CCTV)
- special features e.g. sculpture, picnic area, wildlife
- dog walking facilities
- dog free areas
- children's play areas and other facilities for young people.

Interviewees were asked what the three most important factors were that would make them feel safer in open spaces. The three most common responses were as follows:

- adequate lighting
- CCTV
- staff on site

- reputation of the area/space.
- 12.49 Non-users of open spaces were also interviewed and asked what were the three main reasons why they don't use spaces more often. The main reason given was 'lack of time' with 'poor quality' only stated as reason by 3% of people as their third reason.
- 12.50 People were asked a broad range of other questions in relation to the quality of open spaces as well as sports facilities in the Borough. (Note: the Council has been provided with a full report of the results for further analysis and reference.)
- 12.51 Taking into account comments received during consultation regarding aspirations for a quality open space, and data received from Parish Councils throughout the process, it is recommended that a quality standard for Chelmsford Borough would include:
- “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”.***
- 12.52 This could be used as a measurement to assess where open space sites are now and what improvements could be made in the future. It is also useful to make comparisons to other good quality sites in other Local Authorities.

Accessibility

- 13.1 Without accessibility for the public, the provision of good quality open space sites is of little benefit to the community. Limited accessibility greatly reduces the use of a site, and reduces the value of sites to the community. High quality sites are of little value to the community if accessibility is low.
- 13.2 Recent government research suggests that issues such as access for the disabled and elderly may contribute to the low levels of engagement of urban green spaces. With the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) 1995 coming into force in 2004 the accessibility of open spaces for the disabled will become particularly important over the next five years.

Local context

- 13.3 The Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) developed by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister includes a services domain – this takes into account the accessibility of services for local residents within each ward, and within the Borough as a whole.
- 13.4 A review of these figures indicates that the Borough of Chelmsford is a predominantly affluent area. There are no wards within the top 25% of deprived areas and only one within the top 35%. This is All Saints ward, which scores particularly poorly in terms of education, housing and child poverty.
- 13.5 The Council currently maintains 700km of Public rights of way and publicises circular walk (www.chelmsfordbcwalks.gov.uk) assisting people in accessing open space. This is a popular system which has a high cycling ethos as a cornerstone. The Council Rights of Way officer has suggested that the network should be split into three types of right of way:
- town paths
 - published and promoted walks including cycle ways
 - casual recreational paths.

Currently work to maintain these access routes is funded by Essex county highways but is currently only a third of what is actually needed on the ground.

- 13.6 Consultation has indicated that transport and access is perceived by many to be a key issue within the borough of Chelmsford. For example concerns related to cycle routes, parking, public transport, signage to open spaces access came out strongly from the public consultation.
- 13.7 The playing pitch strategy provided some conflicting results in regards to accessibility. In verbal consultation with members of the public a lack of parking was commented upon by a number of respondents. However on the vast majority of questionnaires returned from sports clubs, parking was described as adequate or more than adequate. Chelmsford Sport (Local Sports Council) has expressed concern over whether there is enough car parking at new sports pitches and facilities, which is often necessary is specialist equipment is being transported.
- 13.8 The Chelmsford Cultural Strategy, '*Celebrate Chelmsford*', has increased accessibility at its core. Its first objective is to "*improve access and participation in cultural activities particularly for the older person, people with disabilities, ethnic*

minorities, those who feel excluded for social or financial reasons or because of lack of transportation”.

- 13.9 Aspiring to improve accessibility to open spaces should therefore be of priority importance for the Borough.

Assessment by accessibility factors

- 13.10 The overall aim of the accessibility assessment has been to identify:

- how accessible sites are
- areas of the Borough suffering in terms of accessibility and therefore of priority importance
- key accessibility factors that need to be improved.

- 13.11 As analysed within each typology section, each open space site within the Borough has been given an accessibility rating where possible. More specifically though, each parish and ward area has been assessed against specific key accessibility factors. Parish councillors were asked to give overall accessibility ratings for all open spaces within their parish.

- 13.12 The following assessment is by analysis area, studying the key accessibility factors that are ‘good’ or ‘poor’, therefore identifying the key problems and issues with regards to accessibility in each area of the district.

Overall accessibility analysis – Borough-wide

- 13.13 Encouragingly, none of the Parishes rated “entrance to sites” or “opening times” as being ‘poor’ or ‘very poor’ in their areas. These received ‘good/ very good’ ratings by 60% and 65% of parishes respectively. Only two categories scored higher in this regard, “walking –distance from” and “cost to user”. However both of these categories had a single Parish who rated these aspects as ‘poor’ or ‘very poor’.

- 13.14 Parishes varied largely in their response to “public transport provision”. 39% rated this as being ‘good’ or ‘very good’ but 35% rated it as ‘poor’ or ‘very poor’.

- 13.15 Cycleway provision received the highest number of ‘poor’ and ‘very poor’ ratings at 61%. Despite this, 40% rated the “distance from cycleway” category as ‘good’ or ‘very good’ (compared to 30% ‘poor’ or ‘very poor’).

- 13.16 Only two other indicators received a greater number of ‘poor’ or ‘very poor’ ratings than ‘good’ or ‘very good’ ratings. These were “signage” and “information and/or promotion of sites”.

- 13.17 The Street survey analysis provided some valuable information in regards to accessibility to open spaces. Only 13% of respondents were ‘very unsatisfied’ or ‘unsatisfied’ with parking spaces at open space sites. Overall 77% of interviewees were ‘satisfied’ or ‘very satisfied’ with accessibility to open space areas.

- 13.18 The answers for the question “what are the three main reasons why you don’t use parks and open spaces” were encouraging. Not a single person listed the following as their first reason:

- close to busy road/ railway

- public transport costs
- inconvenient public transport times
- car access/ parking.

In addition, only 4% listed “public transport not available/ difficult route” as their main reason.

13.19 The following summarises key findings at the analysis area level:

Analysis area 1 – Urban Chelmsford

- entrances to sites in Urban Chelmsford were rated as ‘average’ by the majority of respondees, no-one rated them as ‘poor’ or ‘very poor’
- public transport provision and walking distance to open spaces scored the highest satisfaction rates
- cycle way provision was not rated as ‘good’ or ‘very good’ by anyone
- the overall accessibility rating was ‘average’.

Analysis area 2 – Rural North

- in contrast to Urban Chelmsford, the majority of respondees rated entrances to sites as ‘good’ or ‘very good’
- the majority responded unfavourably to public transport provision
- the same percentage, however, were happy with the walking distance to their nearest open space
- the overall accessibility rating was ‘good’ or ‘very good’.

Analysis area 3 – Rural South

- entrances to sites, opening times and costs to users were all rated particularly favourably in this area
- akin to the rural north, public transport provision was rated poorly in this analysis area
- the majority of respondees rated “signage” and “information and/ or promotion of the sites as ‘average’
- the overall accessibility rating was ‘good’.

Analysis area 4 – South Woodham Ferrers

- the signage category was rated as ‘poor’ (the only poor rating in the area)
- information and/ or promotion of sites was rated as ‘average’, the only average rating in this analysis area

SECTION 13 – ACCESSIBILITY

- all other categories were rated as ‘good’, including the overall accessibility rating.

An accessibility vision

- 13.20 In addition to commenting on issues and examples where the accessibility of sites is currently a problem within parishes, clerks were asked to identify what improvements they would like to see to open spaces within their locality. This begins to illustrate what features are perceived to lead to an accessible open space, and contributes towards the development of a vision for accessible open spaces in the future within the Borough of Chelmsford.
- 13.21 Those factors identified by Parish Clerks as potential improvements in the accessibility of their sites include:
- accessible entrances for wheelchair users
 - lack of public access to private open space areas
 - lack of public transport services
 - location of some open spaces too far away for people to make use of.
- 13.22 These factors represent the start of a vision for the ideal accessible open space within Chelmsford BC.
- 13.23 In addition, clerks were asked to indicate whether there were any open space sites which they would consider to be good or bad examples of accessibility within their parish. Those highlighted as good practice, and the reasons why are outlined in table 13.1 below:

Table 13.1 Examples of good practice sites

Parish	Site	Reasons
Margaretting	Village Hall	The question of accessibility has been addressed
Runwell	Runwell Playing Fields	Good access, plenty of parking and wheelchair access
Little Waltham	Little Waltham Meadows	Car park, sign and general management by the Essex Wildlife Trust
Pleshley	Golden Jubilee Play Area	Well equipped and maintained by Parish Council
Writtle	The green	Very attractive and well maintained
South Woodham Ferrers	Garden of Remembrance	Access for disabled improved

- 13.24 The main reason why sites were identified as examples of bad practice within the district was they are considered to be inaccessible for wheelchair users. Many parishes were conscious that their open space sites are not compliant with the Disability Discrimination Act.

Table 13.2 – Examples of poorer practice sites

Parish	Site	Reasons
Rettendon	Meadow Road Space	Poorly laid out.
Little Waltham	Malletts Mill Wood	Owner reluctant to allow public access

13.25 Taking into account comments received during consultation regarding aspirations for an accessible open space, and data received from Parish Councils throughout the process, it is recommended that future sites for the Borough of Chelmsford should

- continue to take into account the requirements of disabled users
- have good signage
- larger sites should be easily access through public transport, or a network of footpaths / cycleways.

13.26 These features could form the start of a measurement to assess where open space sites are now and what improvements could be made in the future. It is also useful to make comparisons to other good sites in other Local Authorities.

Determining accessibility standards

13.27 Accessibility standards for each type of open space should be derived from an analysis of the accessibility issues and assessment within the audit and in light of community views.

Distance thresholds and catchments

13.28 Distance thresholds (i.e. the maximum distance that typical users can reasonably be expected to travel to each type of provision using different modes of transport) are a very useful planning tool especially when used in association with a Geographical Information System (GIS).

13.29 PPG17 encourages that any new open space sites or enhancement of existing sites should ensure accessibility by environmentally friendly forms of transport such as walking, cycling and by public transport. There is a real desire to move away from reliability on the car.

13.30 It should be noted that there may be justifiable reasons to set higher or lower thresholds in different areas e.g. a higher threshold may be set if there is no realistic possibility of sufficient new provision to enable a lower threshold to be achievable. Therefore distance thresholds that are set should be realistic as well as encouraging a comprehensive provision of accessible open space across the district. There may also be a case for setting varying standards for urban and rural areas.

13.31 There are many varying factors that influence how far people are willing to travel to an open space type. An initial indication of how far people are willing to travel was investigated during consultation for this needs assessment, and has been discussed for each open space type in previous sections, and recommendations for an accessibility standard suggested.

Aspiring to specific standards

- 13.32 Attempts to set specific accessibility standards, identify effective catchments of sites and set distance thresholds for each type of open space in detail would require comprehensive on-site community consultation over a period of time during which the open spaces were used in order to get a random sample of typical users of sites across the district. eg during the summer.
- 13.33 In setting accessibility standards to aspire to, these standards should be recognised and accepted by the local community. Regular surveys of users can then be used to confirm whether the accessibility standards are being met. Similar to the quality standards described in Section 12, where possible, accessibility standards should:
- enable good designs to encourage usage by appropriate forms of transport
 - enable expectations of the local community to be met
 - provide a measurable vision for those open spaces that are rated as poor or very poor and if achieved, would give these poor spaces a new lease of life and enable them to serve the needs of the local community.
- 13.34 In developing this study a set of accessibility standards was used in order to rate the sites from 'Very Good to Very Poor' for all open space types. These should not be seen as absolute measures but reasonable aspirations and benchmarks upon which to measure the accessibility of any existing open space in order to determine the need for enhancement. These cover the main categories of entrance and signage, distance and catchments, cost, transport and access routes. This matrix is provided in Appendix D.
- 13.35 The primary method of setting accessibility standards is through the use of catchment areas, as discussed within each of the individual open space typology sections. This offers an opportunity to see which areas are deficient in accessible facilities for each open space type.
- 13.36 Suggested recommendations (outlined in each of the specific sections) based on the results of consultation and discussion with officers for this study are illustrated in Table 13.3 overleaf. These standards have also been benchmarked against other local accessibility standards shown in Appendix F. It is suggested that further detailed public consultation is undertaken prior to the formal adoption of accessibility standards for the district.
- 13.37 The development of standards will enable effective planning and comparisons with other areas in future years.

Table 13.3 Accessibility Catchment Summary

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

Resourcing open space

- 14.1 There are always improvements, enhancements and new provisions that could be made to improve the network of open space across the Borough. However many would require funding of some format.
- 14.2 Identified priorities can be resourced in a number of ways. Initially it may be necessary to allocate funding from within existing budgets for open spaces. This funding will be used to support other funding that is available from external sources, much of which will come from governmental organisations or quangos that require match-funding from local authorities.
- 14.3 Potential sources of income are outlined below:

Sale of Council land

- 14.4 Generating and reinvesting resources obtained from land which is surplus to requirements is a principle that has been successfully adopted in the London Borough of Bromley, and by Glasgow City Council (through its Parks and Opens Spaces Strategy).
- 14.5 This is, however, likely to be a long process, and ultimately may prove difficult to achieve.
- 14.6 If considered feasible at some future stage, reinvestment would:
- secure political credibility for the sale of land
 - provide sufficient funding to carry out significant rather than purely minor open space improvements. It should, however, be realised that the process may take two/three years to introduce, owing to planning, legal and other restrictions which could delay its introduction
 - also, this mechanism is likely to be create some public controversy and its potential success depends on how the process and sale of land is sold to the public in terms of benefits and outcomes.

Section 106 planning agreements

- 14.7 In particular, Section 106 agreements can be used to achieve environmental improvements. Once a Strategy framework has been established, the process of obtaining these improvements will be enhanced because they can be used to achieve specific purposes, e.g:
- by opening linear route ways to connect green spaces
 - providing walking and cycling routes
 - obtaining open space in areas of deficiency
 - funding open space improvements
 - there are maintenance considerations to be taken into account; ie significant costs may arise, particularly if new open space is acquired
 - it may therefore be necessary to obtain an endowment fund wherever possible to cover these ongoing costs

SECTION 14 – RESOURCING OPEN SPACE

- it should of course be noted that such Agreements have to meet the test of Circular 1/97, and “Developers should not be expected to pay for facilities which are needed solely in order to resolve existing deficiencies” The Government are considering new approaches to implementing planning obligations and has recently issued for consultation a new circular
- some councils have used part of the contributions towards revenue ‘Development Officer’ posts; e.g. in N Nottinghamshire.

Use of redundant buildings

- 14.8 Sympathetic use of redundant facilities for leisure and recreational purposes is also a possibility. This could include the establishment of small commercial sports facilities (e.g. tennis) in parks. Another example could be the use of a redundant sports pavilion as a children’s crèche or nursery.
- 14.9 However there appear to be few (if any) redundant buildings within the Borough at present. This is not an issue that has been raised through the consultation process.

Business funding/sponsorships

- 14.10 Examples from other boroughs including sponsorship of Cardiff City Council’s events and festivals programme, and the Body Shop Playground Project in Auchinlea Park, Glasgow.

Partnership arrangements with the voluntary sector

- 14.11 This could include the formation of further parks “Friends” groups. An example is that of Rossmere Park, Hartlepool, where the community was encouraged to take ownership. The park was promoted and became heavily-used, attracting investment from funding bodies. It is a good example of a sustainable project supported by the local community.

Lottery funding

- 14.12 This could include the Heritage Fund if works are carried out which are of outstanding interest and importance to the national heritage. Funding is provided for whole-park projects, the conservation of park features or park activities. Grants are available from £50,000 to £5 million for a period of up to five years. Projects must be designed to involve all stakeholders, must demonstrate sustainability, and must demonstrate the heritage value of the park in question.

Review of pricing

- 14.13 This needs to cover all charges where a significant income is obtained, including outdoor sports, allotments and burials. The review needs to consider:
- charges for similar provision in other local authorities
 - the quality of provision
 - whether the service can be improved to justify a price increase
 - the extent to which the market will bear any future increase
 - whether differential pricing can be used to encourage off-peak usage
 - concessions for minority groups, or those which the Council particularly wishes to encourage
 - pricing at a level which does not deny access

- lower and/or more favourable charges for Borough residents.

Living spaces

14.14 The “Living Spaces” grant scheme was launched in May 2003, and covers schemes with a value of £1,000 to £100,000. It may be suitable for small local parks, and is open to existing neighbourhood groups. The scheme supports:

- improving local parks
- creating or improving pocket parks or community gardens
- creating or improving play or seating areas
- cleaning up neglected residential land
- restoring village greens
- carrying out planting schemes on estates or verges
- creating or improving nature areas or city farms
- restoring local cemeteries
- restoring paths, gateways, ponds or boundaries.

The “People’s Places” Scheme

14.15 The “People’s Places” scheme runs until the year 2006, and is administered by the British Trust for Conservation Volunteers. It is provided for local community groups, and is for the transformation of derelict, underused or unsightly land or buildings. The scope of grant available is for schemes with a value of £3,000 to £10,000.

The Landfill Tax Credit Scheme

14.16 The Landfill Tax Credit Scheme was revised in April 2003, and allows registered landfill operators to contribute 6.5% of their annual landfill tax liability to environmental bodies approved by the organisation ENTRUST.

14.17 The scheme must be used for social, environmental and community based projects complying with specific “approved objects.” These objects are the provision and maintenance of public amenity, and restoration and repair of buildings open to the public with historical or architectural significance.

14.18 The project must be within 10 miles of a landfill/extraction operation. Note however that District Councils cannot apply.

Local Heritage Initiatives

14.19 Local Heritage Initiatives are to assist local communities in the preservation of their environment, landmarks and traditions including archaeological, natural, built and industrial heritage. A community group could investigate and celebrate a historic park, prepare a public exhibition in a park, and repair a feature. Up to 100% of project costs between values of £3,000 and £25,000 are payable.

14.20 Your Heritage Grants are available from the Heritage Lottery Fund, and are for projects of between £5,000 and £50,000 in value.

14.21 English Heritage supports the Heritage Grant Fund for historic parks and gardens where there is a significant risk of losing important landscape features.

Lottery Small Grants Scheme

- 14.22 The Lottery Small Grants Scheme offers Awards for All grants of between £500 and £5,000 for small projects which involve people in their community, and can include local environmental work and community park projects.

Barclays Sitesavers

- 14.23 Barclays Sitesavers is a grant mechanism for community projects which transform derelict land into community leisure and recreation facilities. Between £4,000 and £10,000 per project is available.

The Tree Council

- 14.24 The Tree Council supports the Community Trees Fund which funds up to 75% of all expenditure on tree planting schemes having a value of £100 to £700.

The Esmee Fairburn Foundation

- 14.25 The Esmee Fairburn Foundation aims to improve quality of life, particularly for people who face disadvantage. Eligible activities include the preservation and enhancement of open space, and good management of woodlands, gardens and allotments. The size of grant is not limited, with the average award for the year 2002 being £33,500.

Others

- 14.26 These could include other pro-active mechanisms such as:
- increased income from events and activities
 - improvements negotiated as “added value” from service providers.
- 14.27 The degree of funding will define the scope and timescale over which any developments could be implemented. It is therefore essential to carefully consider all possible sources of funding.
- 14.28 These should include Council capital and revenue funding, but should also include consideration of the release of existing funds; commercial opportunities such as the franchising of facilities such as catering outlets; the delegated management of facilities such as outdoor sports; commercial sponsorship (e.g. floral bedding); planning gain (e.g. through Section 106 agreements); volunteer support; reviews of fees and charges; and increased income from events and activities.
- 14.29 Further detailed information regarding grants can be found in Claiming Your Share: A Guide to External Funding for Parks and Green Space Community Groups, obtainable from <http://www.greenspace.org.uk>

Summary and conclusions

Introduction

- 15.1 The study has been undertaken in accordance with the requirements of the revised Planning Policy Guidance Note 17 (Planning for Open Space Sport and Recreation, July 2002) and its Companion Guide (September 2002).
- 15.2 The overall aim of the project was to:
- consider the local context of open space in Chelmsford
 - undertake an audit of open space in line with PPG17 typologies
 - undertake consultation to ascertain the demand for open space within the district
 - assess the extent to which demand is currently satisfied
 - set and apply local provision standards based on local needs and aspirations.
- 15.3 The study has provided:
- an overview of the open space resource within the Borough according to definitions provided within PPG17
 - a review of relevant plans and strategies and national developments
 - detailed consultations using various methods including parish council questionnaires, sports clubs questionnaires, neighbourhood drop-in sessions and consultation with internal and external agencies to establish key issues and needs
 - consideration of relevant and appropriate provision standards
 - provision of a site value 'assessment table' to help identify priorities and actions from simple quality, usage and accessibility assessments
 - a review of possible funding sources for improvements and future developments
 - a summary of key issues based on the main findings from the supply and demand analysis in terms of quantity, quality, accessibility and value.

Summary of Standards

- 15.4 The following Table 15.1 summarises the recommended standards for each type of open space in the Borough in terms of quantity of provision and accessibility requirements:

SECTION 15 – SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Table 15.1 Recommended quantity and accessibility standards

PPG17 Open Space typology	Quantity Standard	Accessibility Standard
	Hectares per 1000 population	Recommended travel time (estimated equivalent distance)
Parks and gardens	2.0 (Urban Chelmsford and South Woodham Ferrers)	10 minute drivetime (4km)
Natural and semi-natural green spaces	2.0 (Urban Chelmsford)	20 minute walk (1.6 km)
Green corridors	0.2 (Borough-wide)	20 minute walk (1.6 km)
Outdoor sports facilities	1.25 (Borough-wide)	10-15 minute drivetime (4-6km)
Amenity green space	0.81 (Borough-wide) split in to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Informal recreational green space: 0.405 • Planning amenity space: 0.405 	10 minute walk (800m) maximum 250m away from each dwelling
Provision for children and young people	0.81 (Borough-wide) split in to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Equipped play areas & informal ball games areas: 0.405 split into: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Pre-school play area - Infant play area: - Junior play area: - Informal ball games space: • Informal youth space: 0.405 ha 	5 - 10 minute walk (400m - 800m) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Within 400m of any dwelling - Within 400m of any dwelling - Within 1Km - Within 400m of any dwelling - Within 1000m of any dwelling
Allotments	0.3 (Borough-wide)	10 minute drivetime (2-4 km)
Cemeteries and churchyards	NA	NA

Quality Vision

- 15.5 In terms of quality, a number of concerns and issues have arisen around the current quality of sites and also the level of resourcing that is available to manage and maintain sites to a good or very good quality level. A local quality vision has been derived for open spaces based on consultation with both the public and with Parish Council and Borough Council Officers. This vision states that an ideally an open space should be:

“a clean, litter and dog foul free area that is well-lit and provides a level of varied vegetation and biodiversity, including well-kept grass and other natural features where appropriate. 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 wardens at appropriate sites.

Sites should aspire towards meeting the ‘good’ to ‘very good’ criteria stated in the Quality standard matrix (Refer to Appendix D).”

Open spaces database: a working tool

- 15.6 Now that a comprehensive audit has been carried out for the Borough and contained within an Access database held at the Council offices it is important that this is kept up to date both in terms of adding and removing new sites within the GIS layers and also in ensuring the attribute data associated with each site is correct and complete. This will enable the Council to monitor changes in the quantity and quality of open space over time.