

COPELAND BOROUGH PPG17 STUDY - IDENTIFICATION OF LOCAL NEED - COMMUNITY CONSULTATION

CONTENTS

1. Introduction	2
2. General Community Consultation	4
2.1 Household Survey	4
2.2 Survey of local Community Organisations	12
2.3 Review of Citizen Panel Survey – Parks and open spaces	15
2.4 Review of Lake District National Park PPG17 study	18
2.5 Stakeholder Interviews	22
2.6 Key Findings	
3. Children, Young People, and Schools	28
3.1 Review of Copeland Play Strategy Consultation	28
3.2 Community Organisations Survey – Play and Youth	32
3.3 Stakeholder Interviews	33
3.4 Schools and extended services	37
3.5 Key Findings	38
4. Town and Parish Councils	40
4.1 General Overview	40
4.2 Parish Specific Issues	42
4.3 Key Findings	48
5. Sports	49
5.1 General Household Survey – Sports and Leisure	49
5.2 Community Organisations Survey – Sports and Leisure	52
5.3 Pitch sports	53
5.4 Non-pitch sports	55
5.5 Sports Focus Groups	55
5.6 Stakeholder Interviews	60
5.7 Key Findings	61
6. Parks, natural green space and rights of way	62
6.1 Community Organisations Survey – Parks and green space	62
6.2 Place Survey	63
6.3 Review of the Cumbria Rights of Way Improvement Plan	64
6.4 Stakeholder Interviews	66
6.5 Key Findings	70
7. Concluding remarks	72
8. Appendices	73

1. Introduction

This report examines identified local need for various types of open space, sports and recreation opportunity. It has drawn upon a range of survey and analytical techniques. The following details the community consultation and research process that has been undertaken as part of the study. The extent of the research reflects the breadth and diversity of the study and a consequent need to engage with as wide a cross section of the community and stakeholders as possible.

A review of relevant existing local consultation and strategy documents has been carried out including parish plans and appropriate strategies at Borough and County-wide level including the Copeland Borough Play Strategy and the Cumbria Rights of Way Improvement Plan (ROWIP). Information from relevant nationally driven surveys relating to performance management such as the Place survey has also been taken into account.

Five original questionnaire surveys were undertaken:

- A General Household Survey
- A survey of Town and Parish Councils
- Local Groups and Organisations' questionnaire.
- Local Sports Clubs' Questionnaires (Pitch sports)
- Local Sports Clubs' Questionnaires (non-pitch sports)

In addition to the above an extensive programme of stakeholder interviews was undertaken and two focus groups on sports opportunities were held in the north and south of the Borough.

A general analysis of need for outdoor pitches has been conducted using a method endorsed by Sport England. This will be written up as a standalone document but a summary of the consultation completed for this is included within this document. In addition a consultation programme was undertaken in relation to indoor sports needs as part of the associated sports facility study. Once again a summary of the consultation completed for this will be found below.

The result of this consultation and other analyses will help amongst other things to inform the content of the recommended local standards. Crucially it has also helped the study to understand local people's appreciation of open space and recreation facilities, and the values attached by the community to the various forms of space. This appreciation should have implications for the way in which open spaces are treated and designated in the revised development plan.

At the end of each section there is a short summary of the key findings.

Use of Acronyms

We have tried to keep the use of acronyms in the report to a minimum and when we first use any such we provide the full title by way of explanation. Nevertheless we thought it may be useful to the reader to provide a list of some of the more common acronyms found in the report at the very beginning in the table below:

ACRONYM	FULL TITLE	ACRONYM	FULL TITLE
AGP	ARTIFICIAL GRASS PITCH	NPFA	NATIONAL PLAYING FIELDS ASSOCIATION
ANGST	ACCESSIBLE NATURAL GREEN SPACE	PPG17	PLANNING POLICY GUIDANCE NOTE 17 (SPORT AND RECREATION)
BME	BLACK AND MINORITY ETHNIC	RLFC	RUGBY LEAGUE FOOTBALL CLUB
CC	CRICKET CLUB	ROW	RIGHTS OF WAY
FC	FOOTBALL CLUB	ROWIP	RIGHTS OF WAY IMPROVEMENT PLAN
LAF	LOCAL ACCESS FORUM	RUFC	RUGBY UNION FOOTBALL CLUB
LDF	LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK	SDO	SPORTS DEVELOPMENT OFFICER
LDNP.	LAKE DISTRICT NATIONAL PARK	SPD.	SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING DOCUMENT
LNR	LOCAL NATURE RESERVE	STP	SYNTHETIC TURF PITCH
MUGA	MULTI USE GAMES AREA		

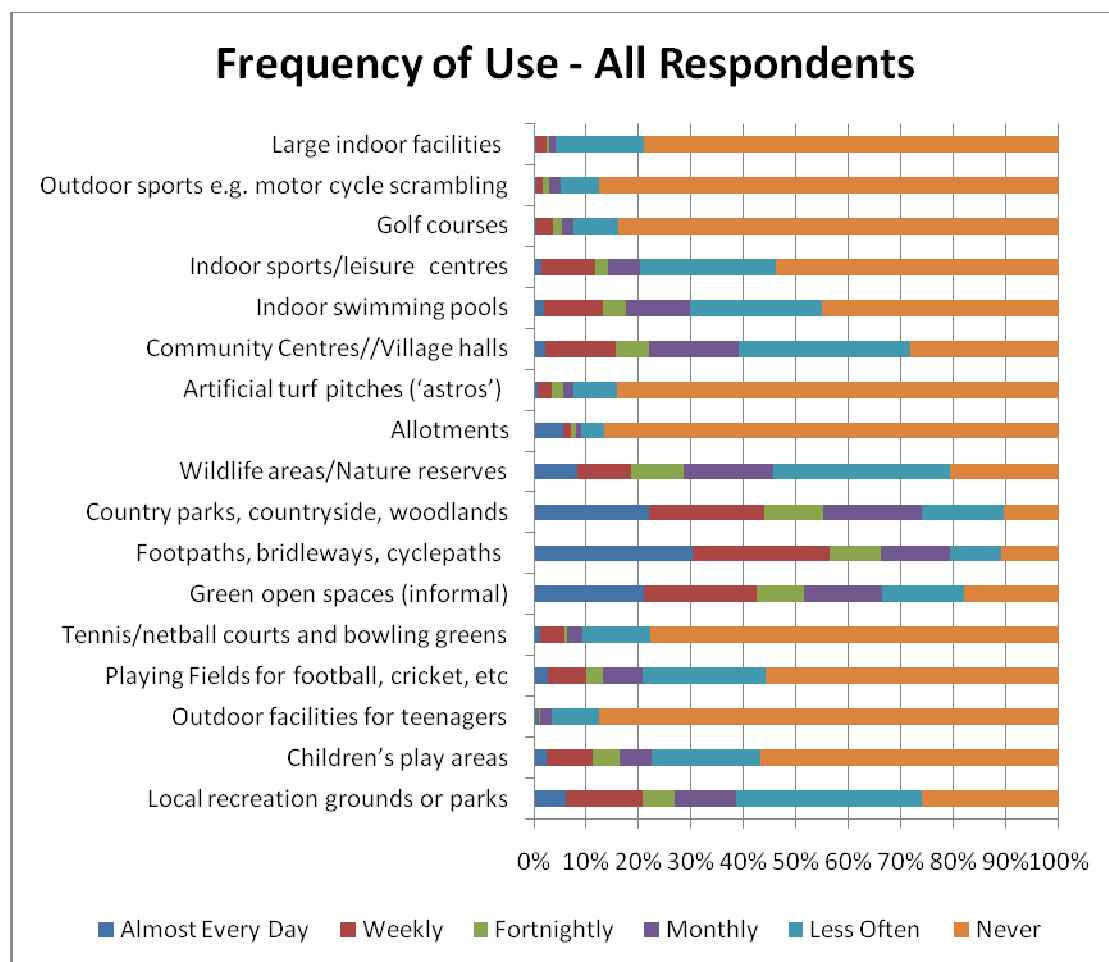
2. General Community Consultation

2.1 Household Survey

A questionnaire was sent out to Copeland residents of the Cumbria Citizen Panel supplemented by a random selection of households across the Borough. A total of 1750 surveys were distributed of which 382 completed surveys were received (22%)¹. The full questionnaire is included in Appendix 1 and the following provides some of the key findings.

Frequency, regularity and times of use – All residents

Respondents were asked to state how often they visited or used each of the following types of open space, sport and recreation facilities within Copeland Borough, and the results are shown on the chart below:



Open Space and Outdoor Facilities

As can be seen, it is the Borough's country parks, local countryside, woodlands and green open spaces that are most commonly used (at least monthly) by most adult residents (over 65%). Footpaths, bridleways, and cyclepaths are the spaces most likely to be used almost every day. It is therefore the informal recreation opportunities that figure most prominently in

¹ BROADLY SPEAKING THIS PROVIDES STATISTICALLY SIGNIFICANT FINDINGS AT A 95% CONFIDENCE LEVEL AND A CONFIDENCE INTERVAL OF ± 5 .

respondents' replies. In addition nearly 40% of respondents use local recreation grounds or parks at least once a month.

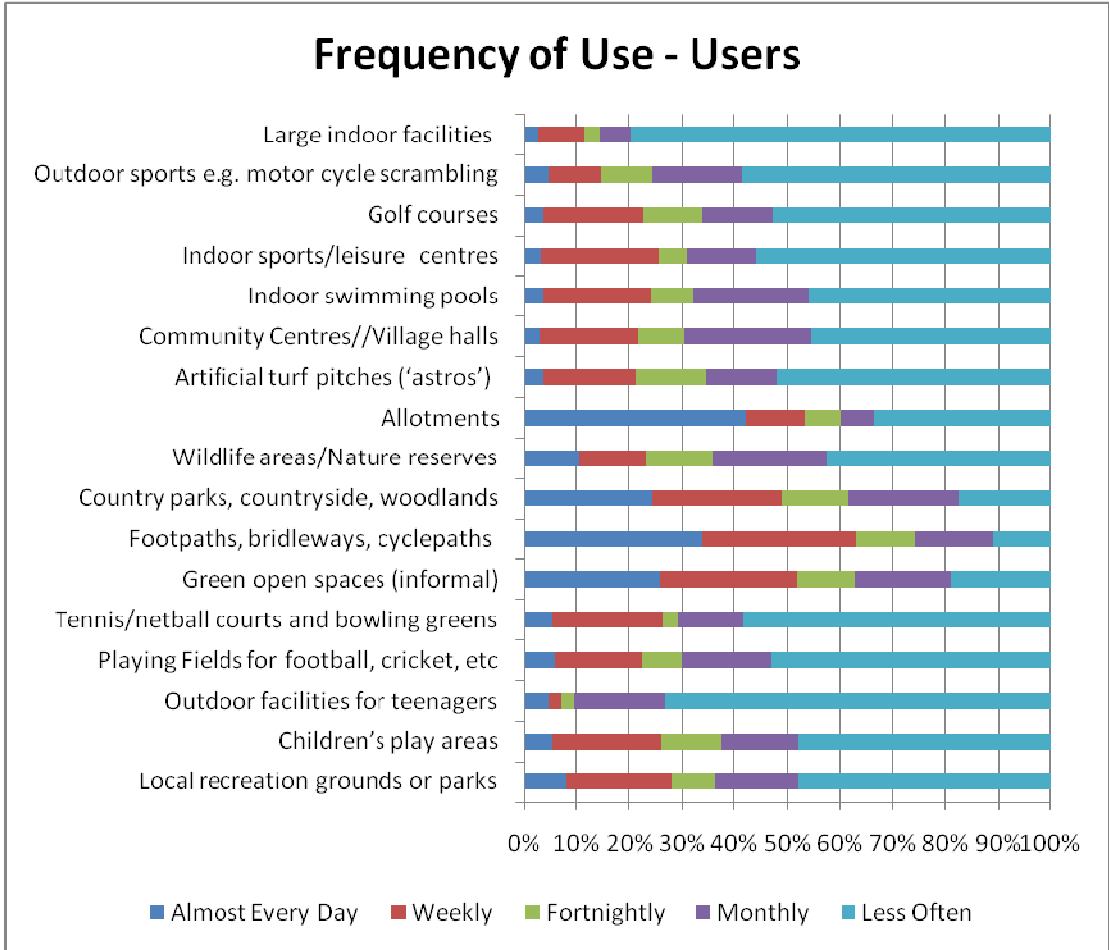
Playing fields and play areas are also fairly well used but with fewer people using them on a regular basis. This is not surprising given the more specific purposes of these facilities.

Indoor Swimming Pools, Sports and Recreation Facilities²

The Borough's village/community halls are used regularly by significant numbers with 22% of respondents using them at least fortnightly. The Borough's indoor swimming pools are also used frequently by many residents (18%) as are the sports/leisure centres (14%).

In very broad terms it can be seen that Informal open space use is very much more common and frequent than the use of formal sport or leisure facilities.

Frequency, regularity and times of use – Users



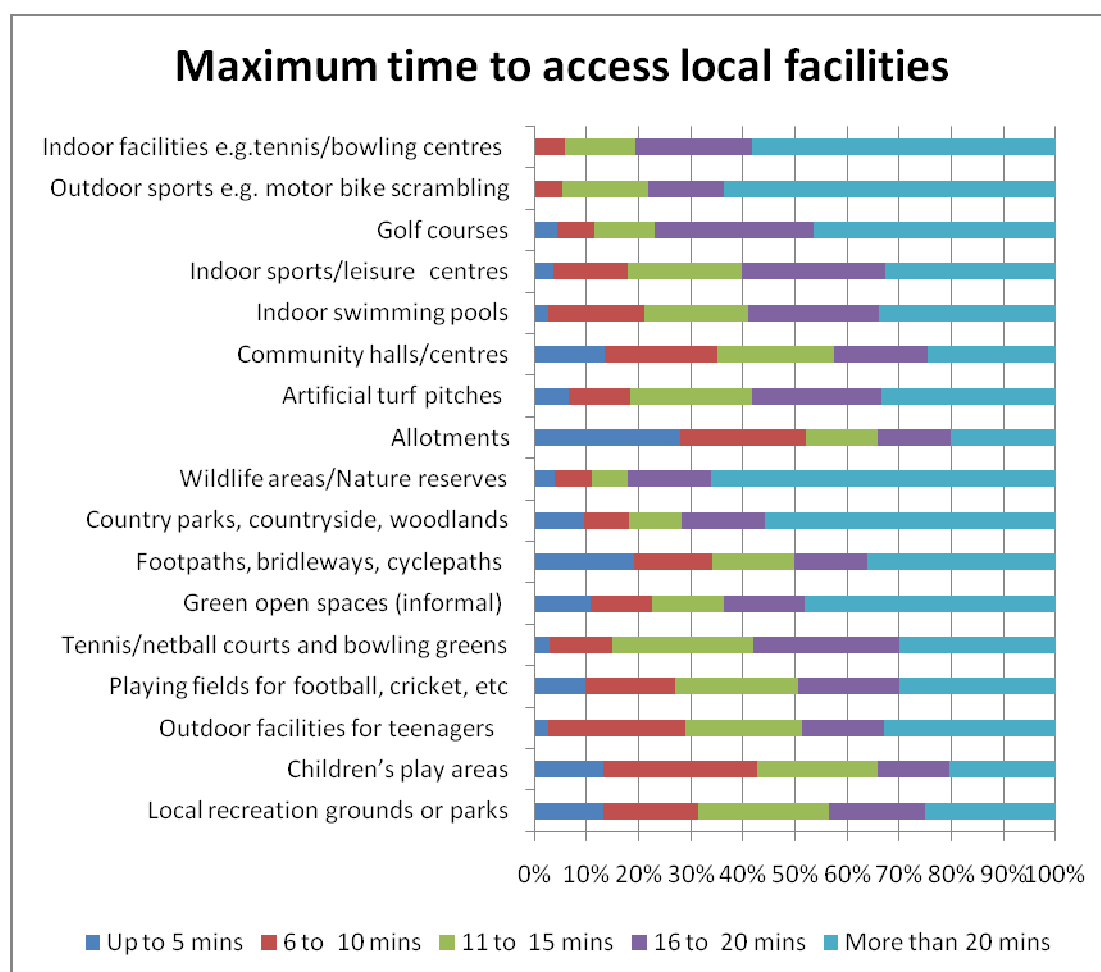
It is interesting to look at the frequency with which users of facilities visit them as this is not immediately obvious from looking at the overall figures. This shows, for example, that over 40% of allotment users visit almost every day; over 60% of footpath users make use of them at least once a week; and over 35% of users visit parks and play areas at least fortnightly.

² THE TABLE SIMPLIFIES THE CATEGORIES TO ENABLE CLEAR PRESENTATION. E.G. LARGE INDOOR FACILITIES IS SHORT HAND FOR SPECIALIST SPORTS FACILITIES SUCH AS INDOOR BOWLS AND TENNIS CENTRES. THIS IS CLEAR IN THE SURVEY ITSELF (SEE APPENDIX 1).

In terms of indoor facilities the most frequently visited by users (at least weekly) are leisure/sports centres (15%); swimming pools (14%) and golf courses (13%).

Geographical Access Issues

An important component of this study is to develop and recommend a series of local standards of provision for different types of open space, sport and recreation opportunity. The following therefore is an attempt to gauge people's willingness to travel to use different types of opportunity (which might be by car, foot, bike, public transport etc). These results will feed into the determination of the "access" element of local standards.



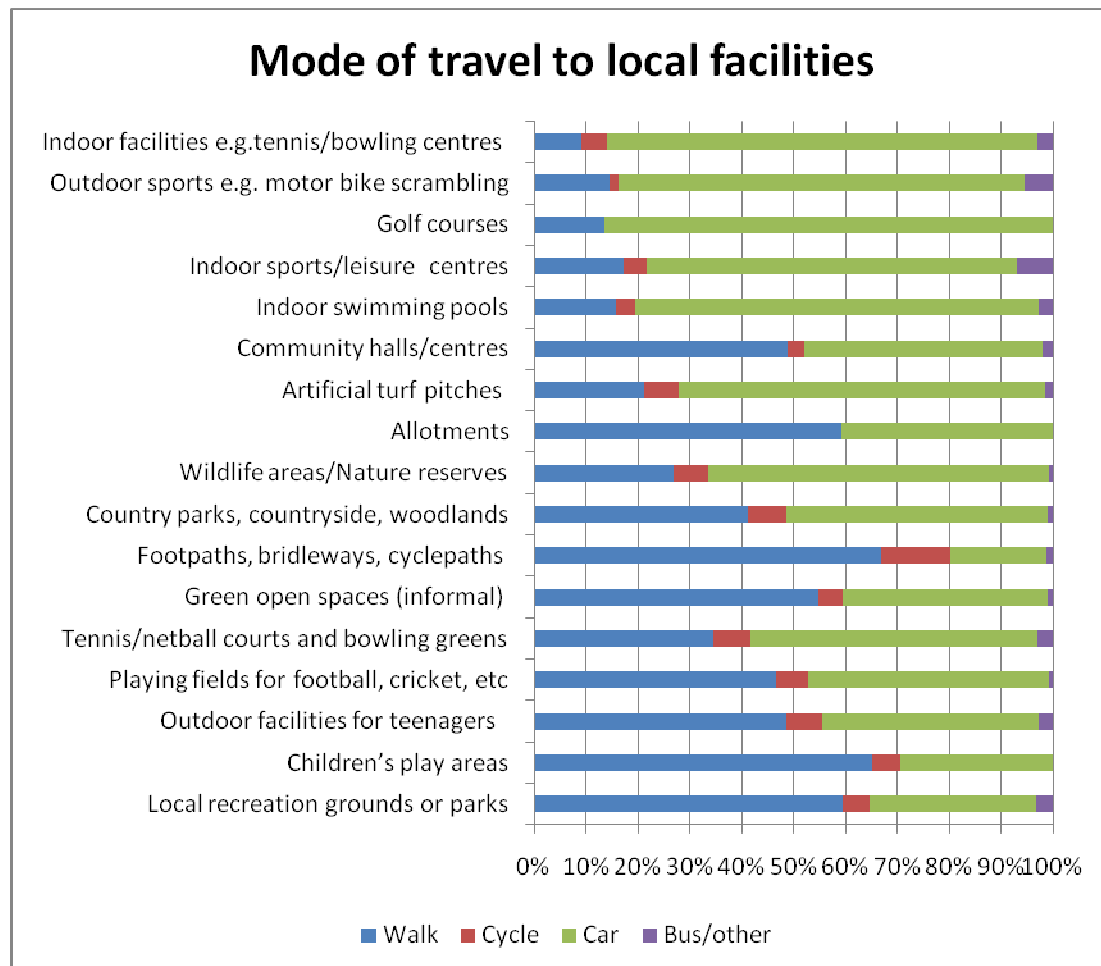
It can be seen that where people make use of the opportunities identified the majority of users are prepared to travel more than 20 minutes to use some facilities such as wildlife areas, country parks, areas for outdoor sports and specialist indoor facilities.

In contrast, for significant numbers of residents facilities need to be much more locally available before they will be used (for example, allotments, play areas, teenage facilities, rights of way and village/community halls). Around 30% would not wish to travel more than ten minutes to access such facilities.

More than 10% would not expect to travel more than 5 minutes to visit local allotments, parks, play areas, footpaths, and village/community halls. This general pattern observed in Copeland is very much in line with findings nationally.

It is therefore clear that there is great variance in respondents' apparent willingness to spend time travelling to different types of opportunity. A significant percentage of respondents would, for example, only be prepared to travel up to 5 minutes to a range of different opportunities (e.g allotments, children's play areas and parks).

An accompanying question asked what mode of transport respondents were likely to use to get to such opportunities (where they would use them).



Residents are more likely than not to drive to many facilities including specialist sports facilities, sports/leisure centres, swimming pools, and wildlife areas/nature reserves.

However, walking and cycling are the norm for facilities such as parks, play areas, teenage facilities, playing fields, allotments, informal green spaces, rights of way and community/village halls.

For a small but significant minority access by bus is important, particularly for sports/leisure centres but also for sports facilities (bowls, tennis, swimming pools) outdoor pursuits, parks and teenage facilities.

It is not of course surprising that in broad terms walking is the predominant mode of travel to facilities such as local parks, children's play areas, recreation grounds, and other informal recreation areas. In contrast, motorised transport is more common for larger facilities such as leisure centres, golf courses, areas for outdoor pursuits, and country parks which are often

some distance removed from many potential users. It is however of great importance when it comes to drawing up the access element of local standards in terms of whether access thresholds should be provided in terms of walking, cycling or drive times.

Importance of Footpath/cycle access

Residents were asked if they would cycle or walk further or more often if the quality of their journey by foot or bike to a nearby open space or facility was improved.

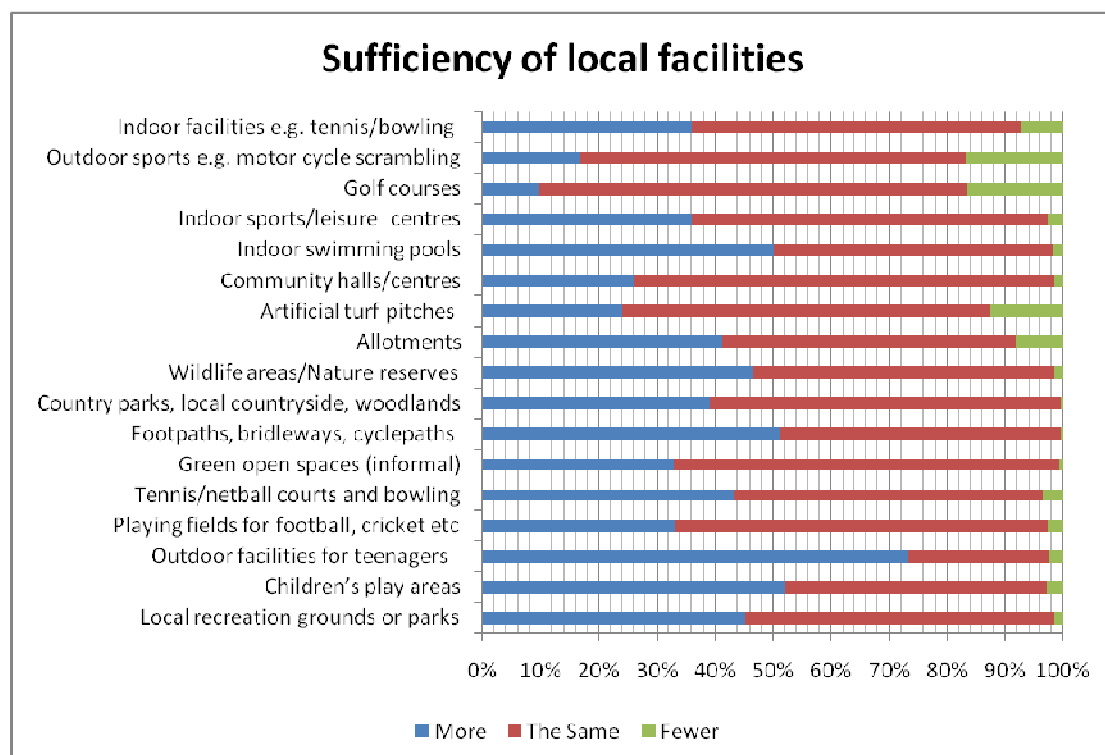
- 74% of residents confirmed that they would be prepared to walk/cycle further if the quality of the route was improved
- 74% also said that if the quality of the route was improved they would make the journey more often.

This is a significant finding in terms of illustrating the potential benefit of ensuring good foot and cycle path access to facilities.

The detailed findings from this section will be used drawing up the access elements of relevant standards for different kinds of open space elsewhere in the study.

Quantity of open space, sport and recreation facilities

Residents were asked if they needed more, the same or fewer of different types of open space and recreational facilities. Findings are illustrated in the chart below and will influence the “quantity” component of local standards.

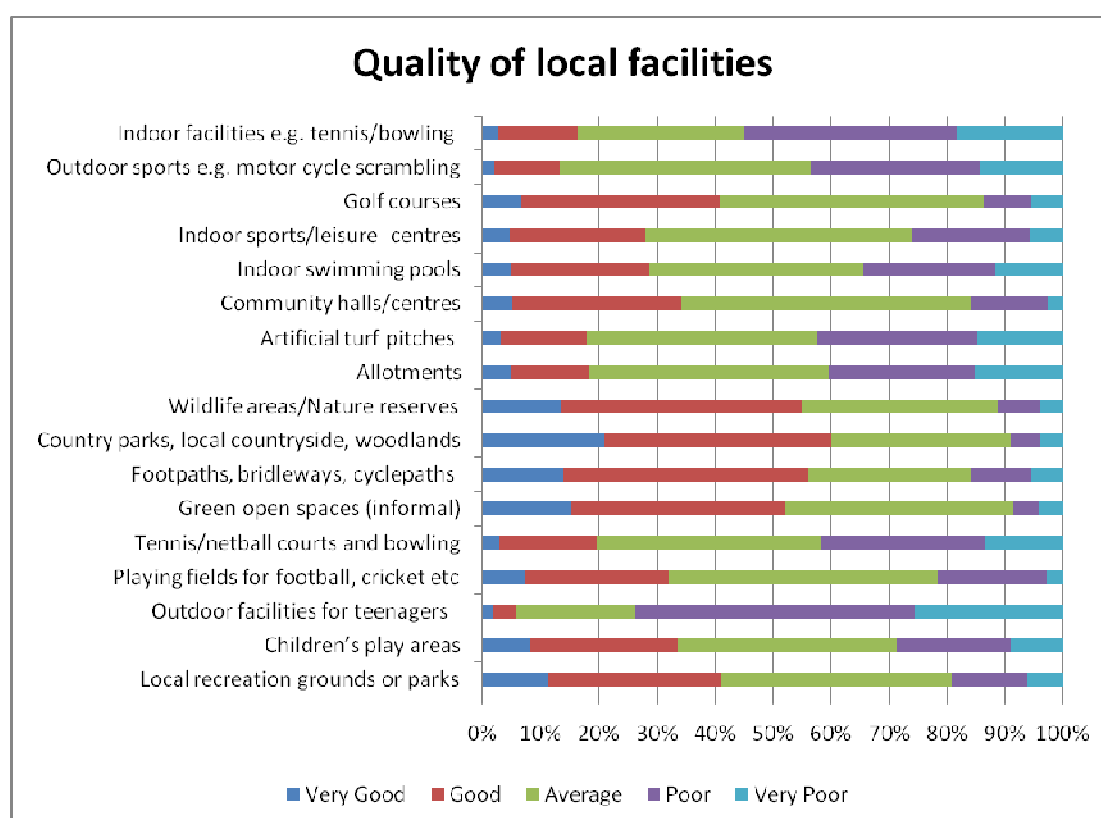


The majority of residents who expressed an opinion think there is a need for more outdoor facilities for teenagers (74%); at least 50% thought there were not enough play areas, footpaths/rights of way, and swimming pools.

More than 10% of respondents thought there were more than enough golf courses, areas for outdoor sports, and artificial turf pitches to meet local need.

Quality of open space, sport and recreation facilities

Respondents were asked how they rated the Borough's various types of facilities in terms of quality. The responses of those expressing an opinion on specific categories of facility are illustrated below:



Most facilities are rated average or better by the majority apart from outdoor facilities for teenagers which are rated as poor or very poor by over 70% of respondents and specialist indoor sports facilities (55%).

Over 40% highlighted outdoor tennis/bowls/netball courts as being of poor quality as well as the Borough's artificial turf pitches and "other" outdoor sports facilities e.g. motor cycling scrambling.

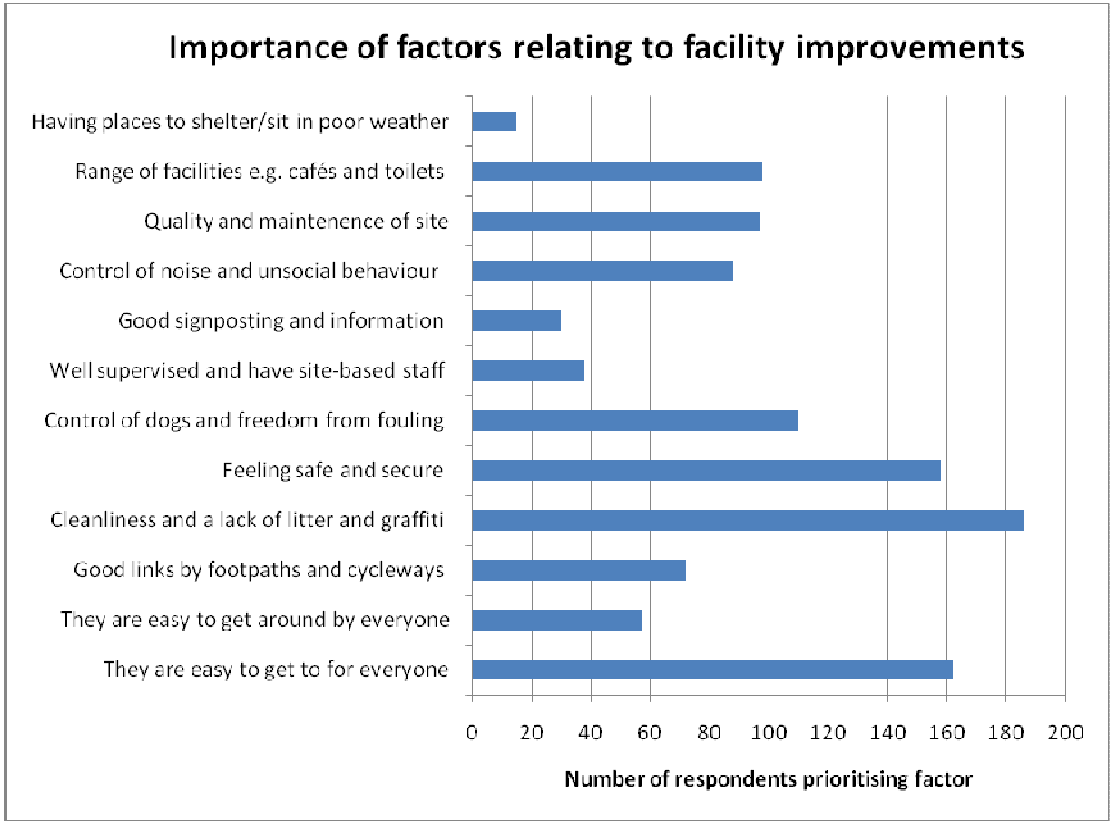
Facilities where the quality is rated high by the majority include country parks and the local countryside, wildlife areas/nature reserves, rights of way, and informal green spaces.

Over 40% say that quality is high in relation to local parks/recreation grounds and golf courses.

These findings will be useful in relation to the determination of the “quality” aspect of local standards.

Key Issues and priorities for improvement – parks and open spaces

In terms of potential improvements residents were asked what they thought were the most important issues in relation to areas of parks and open spaces.

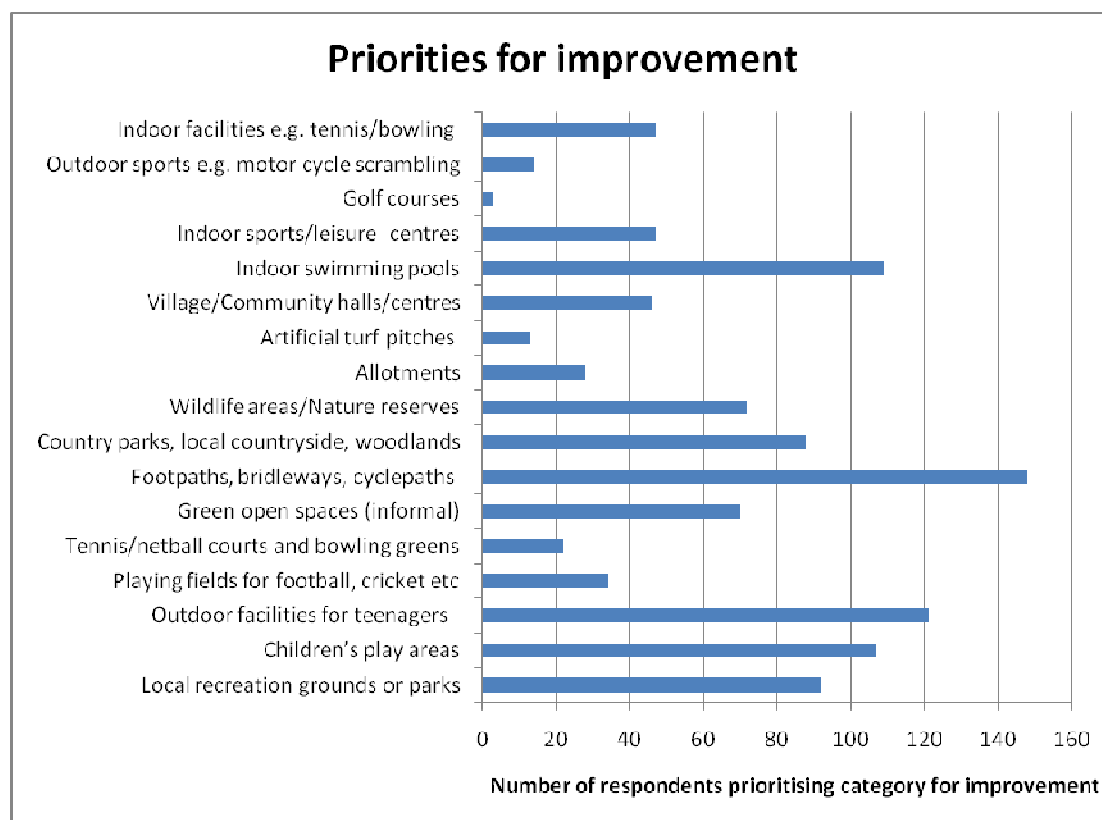


Cleanliness and a lack of litter and graffiti, being easy to get to by all members of the community, and ensuring sites feel safe and secure are judged to be the most important issues in relation to parks and open spaces.

Ensuring adequate control of dogs, maintaining quality through regular maintenance, and having an appropriate range of facilities on site e.g. cafes and toilets are also significant issues.

These tables are interesting in that they tend to confirm the findings of other elements of the consultation exercise including the parish council and community organisation surveys.

Residents were also asked what their priorities for improvement in provision were. Findings are illustrated on the table below:



The top priority for potential improvements for outdoor facilities was for better footpaths, bridleways and cyclepaths, followed by outdoor provision for teenagers and children's play areas

In relation to indoor facilities the top priority was for improvements to swimming pools.

Indoor Swimming Pools, Leisure and Sports Centres

We also obtained some specific feedback on levels of satisfaction from users of local indoor facilities as well as barriers to greater use. These findings can be found in Section 5 below (Sports and Leisure).

2.2 Survey of local Community Organisations

Surveys were sent to local community organisations followed up with reminders. Nine organisations responded as below:

- North Copeland Youth Partnership
- Copeland Disability Forum
- Exchange Corner NW
- Friends of Millom Ironworks
- The Phoenix Youth Project
- Greenbank Community Association
- Friends of Egremont Castle
- Smithfield & Longcroft T&R Association
- Distington Club for Young People

Overall Findings

Quantity

Two thirds of the groups said they made direct use of local areas of open space or leisure facilities in various ways. Just over half said that in overall terms they thought there **was** enough publically accessible open space in their own area.

Comments from those who thought that there were not enough open spaces highlighted the following:

- Need for free accessible space for leisure for young people
- Need for properly equipped informal play spaces for children centrally located
- Need parks or places for the youngsters to play football or other activities
- Need provision for all age groups e.g. Play areas, MUGAs, etc

Quality

The three most common factors believed to be important in relation to local open spaces were:

- Cleanliness and a lack of litter and graffiti (5)
- Regular maintenance of site to a high quality (5)
- Having places to shelter/sit in poor weather (4)

Other factors specifically highlighted as being important were:

- They should be fully accessible to all people with disabilities including suitable surfaces, accessible equipment for disabled children. We don't aim for more just that we can be equal to everyone. It is important to provide suitable toilet facilities
- Providing support and training for local volunteer groups

The groups' overall views on the quality of open spaces across Copeland as a whole are summarised in the table below. The green shading indicates where there is strong agreement that facilities are generally good, red shading indicating agreement that facilities are generally poor.

	Very Good	Good	Average	Poor	Very Poor
Local recreation grounds or parks		2	3	3	1
Children's play areas		1	3	4	1
Outdoor facilities for teenagers				7	2
Playing fields for football, cricket, rugby		2	6	1	
Tennis/netball courts & outdoor bowling		1	3	4	
Green open spaces (informal)	1	2	4	1	
Footpaths, bridleways, cyclepaths	1	5	2	1	
Local countryside, woodlands etc	1	4	2	1	1
Wildlife areas/Nature reserves	1	3	1		1
Allotments			3	1	
Artificial turf pitches			2	2	1
Community halls/centres	1	5	2		
Indoor swimming pools	1	2	3	1	1
Indoor sports/leisure centres	1	4	2	2	
Golf courses	1	2		1	
Outdoor sports eg motor cycle scrambling				3	4
Indoor tennis centres and bowling rinks			2		3

There is widespread agreement that in general outdoor teenage facilities, children's play areas and outdoor facilities for activities such as motorcycle scrambling are of poor quality. Facilities generally agreed to be good in terms of quality are the local countryside and woodlands, rights of way, village/community halls and indoor sports/leisure centres.

A series of open questions were included to elicit comments on a range of open space issues. The main comments for each of the issues are noted below:

Category and Comments	Group
Parks	
There are enough, but dog fouling should be addressed.	Copeland Disability Forum
Egremont Castle & Park is used primarily as an informal play space and adventure park by the local children, due to the lack of a suitable dedicated play space of their own. This situation leads to damage and excessive wear & tear on a national monument and landscaped park	Friends of Egremont Castle
The 2 parks in Distington are in a poor state, Hinnings Road is dreadful, equipment is in a poor state; Barfs Road equipment needs updating, ground is covered in bark but is not adequate for young children	Distington Club for Young People
Playing Fields, Tennis Courts, Bowling Greens	
Outdoor sports facilities with a 10 mile radius are good and easily accessible.	Exchange Corner NW

Category and Comments	Group
There appears to be a lack of tennis courts. I believe maintenance provision for the local bowling green has now ceased	Friends of Egremont Castle
Outdoor Facilities for Children and Young People	
Play areas should be within walking distance for young people to access. There should also be facilities for older children, e.g. Teen shelters, MUGAs and bike tracks.	North Copeland Youth Partnership
There are not enough areas for young people to enjoy adventurous play. The play area in Parton needs upgrading, community members and young people have been raising concerns about it for a number of years	
Outdoor facilities are essential for children and young people. In our area they range from good to very poor.	Exchange Corner NW
They need improving in Cleator Moor on Jacktrees Road, Frizington in New Town and in Moor Row.	The Phoenix Youth Project
There are no facilities in Egremont for adventurous play or for BMX style cycle tracks. BMX riders in Egremont use the castle moat and the adventurous climb the castle walls!!	Friends of Egremont Castle
I think the play area would be better placed on the Millenium Park, central to the estate. There's not a lot for older children in Distington except for the youth club	Distington Club for Young People
Countryside and Wildlife Areas	
Very good.	Friends of Millom Ironworks LNR
Need good links from the cycle path to the countryside	Distington Club for Young People
Rural Areas	
Yes, there are enough open spaces and play and recreation facilities in the smaller villages in our area. The balance seems very good.	Friends of Millom Ironworks LNR
Community centres and village halls are ideal places to hold keep fit classes, they are cheap and cheerful	Greenbank Community Asscn
Overall provision in smaller villages is lacking, Maybe sufficient facilities for older people	Friends of Egremont Castle
Open spaces could be utilised better, more equipment in the park. Ideas we have are to reinstate the park and create a MUGA (enclosed) for all sports.	Distington Club for Young People
Sports & Recreation in 'Sensitive Areas'	
Sports and recreation spaces should be appropriate to the individual sensitive areas. The areas should neither be on a residential doorstep nor in the middle of nowhere. It is my opinion that pocket parks/recreation grounds would be ideal.	Exchange Corner NW
We have lots of open space in Cumbria, it should be possible to accommodate motorcycle & quadbike activities in some agreed locations	Friends of Egremont Castle
If there is no call for facilities in quiet areas and it could damage wildlife, leave well alone.	Distington Club for Young People
Footpaths & Rights of Way	
We would like to see more accessible footpaths	Copeland Disability Forum
Footpaths and rights of way are generally well maintained in the local area especially around waterways and cyclepaths.	Exchange Corner NW
We have sufficient footpaths and provision is improving for cycleways. The best way to maintain most of the available footpaths is by greater use. The availability of GPS could encourage more use	Friends of Egremont Castle
Some parts of the cycle path are not well maintained and kept clean, but I do understand this can be difficult for the council with fly tipping, dog fouling, etc.	Distington Club for Young People

Category and Comments	Group
Indoor Provision	
Good facilities	Copeland Disability Forum
Local indoor sports provision is very good and easily accessible within our area. They have a variety of open times that they can be used. There are no new indoor facilities that I would like in the area.	Exchange Corner NW
Need to encourage wider use of facilities	Friends of Egremont Castle
Sports Centre and pool are good	Distington Club for Young People
The school facilities are the only ones available and you cannot get in unless you pay and are in a sports organisation	S'field and L'Croft T&R Association
Your Own Area	
Young people in Parton want a new play area and a muga. They get moved on by community members when playing football. They need a purpose built area to play football safely	North Copeland Youth Partnership
Our greatest concern is cleanliness of open spaces, especially dog fouling. It makes a disgusting mess of wheelchairs and I'm sure is a health hazard.	Copeland Disability Forum
There are not enough sports facilities which are free of charge or subsidised for children of school age or for low income families. The play park is in a bad state of repair and in need of redevelopment to draw not only children but the community into a wonderful space which is greatly under used.	Exchange Corner NW
There aren't enough facilities free of charge for young people	The Phoenix Youth Project
I am really disappointed with the decision to cancel CAL cards at the end of August, They enabled both young and old to take advantage of all sporting facilities	Greenbank Community Asscn
The Friends of Egremont Castle group and the wider community wish to see the castle and park secure, pristine and tranquil but this aim is in conflict with its use as an adventure playground. The Friends group realise children have no other comparable place to play and therefore struggle to resolve this conflict. Meanwhile Copeland BC sits by doing as little as possible	Friends of Egremont Castle
We are working alongside Home Group to improve the Millennium Park (situated on Barfs Road). The lack of money and participation can sometimes be a concern. The community want the improvements but won't get involved or help because of jobs, time issues, etc	Distington Club for Young People

2.3 Review of Citizen's Panel survey (parks and open spaces)

The Citizens panel for Cumbria, Community Voice, has been operating since 1999. It includes all of the six Cumbria District Councils, Cumbria County Council, Cumbria Constabulary and Cumbria NHS. The Panel membership was recently refreshed and now involves some 3000 residents of whom around 450 are from Copeland. The panel surveys and membership arrangements are now managed by Craigforth, a specialist social research company.

A number of consultation topics have been covered over the years but in November 2009 a survey covering Planning, Transport, Housing and the Environment (including parks and open spaces) was carried out. A response rate of 56% across Cumbria was achieved with 245 survey forms completed for the Copeland District.

Of particular interest are the questions covering parks and open spaces and the Copeland specific responses to those questions. The key findings from the Copeland Borough Council Summary Area Report Feb 2010 state that:

Copeland respondents were generally satisfied with the parks and open spaces in the local area, in particular with feeling safe and confident (75%) and the cleanliness (68%) of these areas.

Satisfaction with the overall quality of parks and open spaces was lower in Copeland than for Cumbria as a whole (+15%). The main areas of dissatisfaction were the availability of rubbish and dog waste bins and the behaviour of young people using the parks (38%, 37%, and 34% respectively).

The following tables provide information about ease of access to local parks, frequency and type of spaces visited, overall satisfaction with parks and open spaces and satisfaction with particular aspects. They show the results for Copeland compared to those for Cumbria as a whole or in comparison with the other districts. All of the following four tables have been taken from or adapted from information provided in the Community Voice, Planning, Transport, Housing and the environment survey 2009 and the Copeland specific extract.

Ease of accessing local park or open space

	%Copeland	% Cumbria
Very easy	49	58
Fairly easy	30	25
Neither/ Nor	6	4
Fairly difficult	8	7
Very difficult	6	6
BASE	1626	

Adapted from the Community Voice Planning Transport Housing and Environment Survey 2009 - Craigforth

The table shows that access to parks and open spaces is not considered to be relatively easy although the proportion considering it to be very or fairly easy is slightly less than the Cumbria average

Profile of use of parks and open space

	%Copeland	% Cumbria
Frequency of visits to parks/open spaces		
Most days	14	17
At least once a week	25	22
At least once a month	14	19
Every few months	18	17
Less than that	14	14
Never	15	11
BASE	1625	
Type of space visited		
Open countryside	48	50
Large public park	23	32
Children's playground	25	23
Village green or common land	19	18
Playing field or school field	13	13
Other	22	15
BASE	1575	

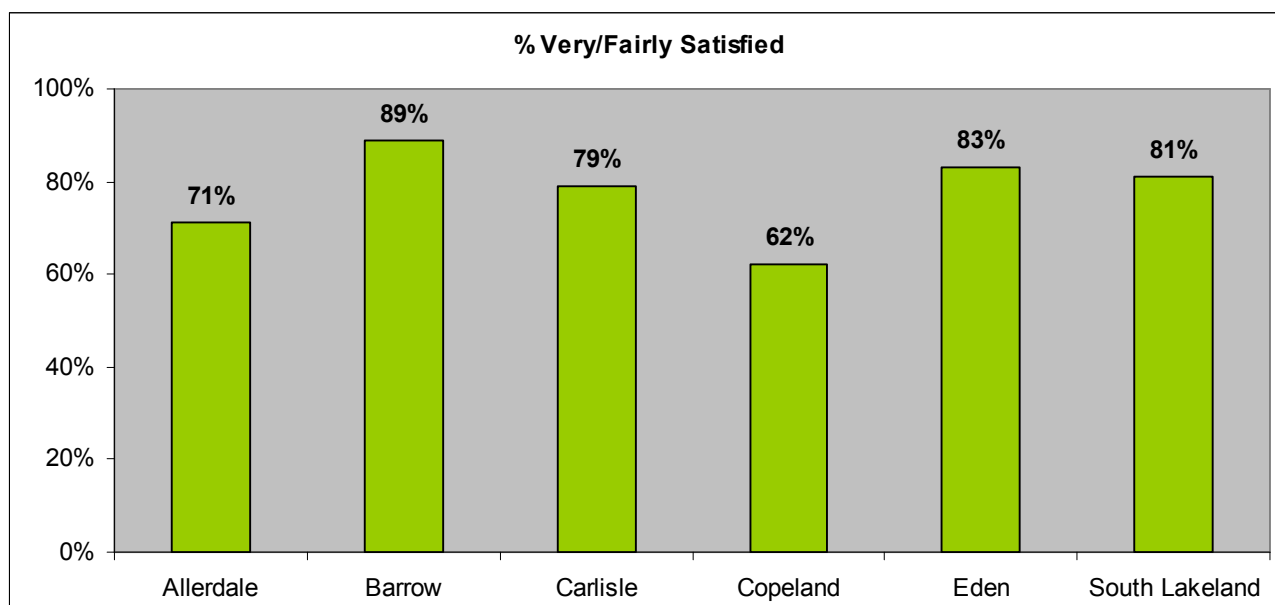
Reasons for visits		
Relaxation	56	51
Spend time with family/children	39	37
Exercise dog(s)	23	28
Participate in sport/exercise	23	23
Watch sports	7	7
Other	11	11
BASE	1537	

Adapted from the Community Voice Planning Transport Housing and Environment Survey 2009 -
Craigforth

From the table above it is clear that just over a third of residents use parks and open spaces at least weekly and that open countryside and large public parks are the main places visited for predominantly relaxation or spending time with the family.

The percentages are very close to the Cumbria averages with the exception of the type of places visited. Less people access large public parks than the Cumbria average but more visit 'other' spaces. This reflects the lack of larger public parks across the Copeland district area and the presence of alternative forms of open space ie beaches, coastal paths and disused railway lines.

Satisfaction with local parks and open spaces



Taken from the Community Voice Planning Transport Housing and Environment Survey 2009 – Craigforth

% Very/Fairly Satisfied with...						
	Allerdale	Barrow	Carlisle	Copeland	Eden	South Lakeland
Cleanliness	76%	83%	73%	69%	85%	77%
Children's play facilities	68%	72%	53%	51%	60%	56%
Lighting	33%	55%	36%	33%	40%	42%
Grass cutting	71%	76%	76%	69%	77%	74%
Plants and flowers	66%	80%	62%	50%	62%	63%
Seating	62%	70%	55%	51%	59%	56%
Rubbish bins	47%	67%	44%	43%	59%	53%
Dog waste bins	37%	48%	26%	31%	50%	36%
Safe and confident	70%	79%	64%	77%	87%	88%
Health and safety hazards	73%	79%	60%	60%	77%	73%
Signs and notices	56%	67%	55%	55%	70%	71%
Anti-social behaviour	44%	53%	52%	39%	66%	59%
Behaviour of young people	49%	49%	48%	32%	65%	56%
Behaviour of adults	73%	76%	76%	59%	80%	76%

Taken from the Community Voice Planning Transport Housing and Environment Survey 2009 - Craigforth

Satisfaction levels with parks and open spaces are considerably lower than the Cumbria average and in certain instances is significantly so, for example, in relation to the presence of plants and flowers and problems associated with anti social behaviour.

2.4 Lake District National Park PPG17

A PPG 17 Study was completed for the Lake District National Park in May 2009. To identify local need a consultation exercise was carried out using face to face and telephone interviews, focus group meetings with key officers, agencies and stakeholders and a Parish Council questionnaire survey.

District specific results were not analysed or presented separately but where particular needs were identified these have been set out in the Park study.

The key findings from the stakeholder consultation are included in the PPG 17 study within each of the individual typology sections and, where relevant, these have been included in this section of the report. The consultation is considered to be recent enough to still be relevant to help provide some context to the Copeland specific PPG 17 study.

The findings are interesting in the main as providing a perspective from the point of view of the smaller rural parishes. It needs to be noted that this is far from typical of the overall demographic profile of the Borough. While two thirds of the borough lies within the Lake District National Park, only around 4,000 people (less than 6%) live in this part of the borough (out of Copeland's total population of just over 70,300).

The issues that were covered in the Park study included the following:

- Views on the quality and quantity of open space
- Accessibility of open space and time travelled to get to it
- Future needs.

The study had to take account of the unique nature of the Lake District area and the fact that over 95% of the Park is open country. As residents have direct access to areas of open country that can support a unique range of leisure and sporting activities there is a different philosophy towards the concept of open space and the need for formal designated open spaces is less pressing.

The Inspector dealing with the National Park LDF recognised and accepted this difference and the fact that not every open space typology was present in the PPG 17 Study and that it shouldn't be expected to be. For the typologies that were covered the following relevant key issues were identified in the study taken from the consultation process:

Parks and Gardens

- Residents generally consider that the provision of parks and gardens is adequate or better both in terms of quality and quantity,
- 75% of parish council respondents indicate that residents would expect to walk to access parks and gardens with 25% saying that a 5-10 minute walk distance would be the most acceptable.

Natural and Semi Natural Greenspace

- Because of the rural nature of the area many parish councils felt it to be inappropriate to specify a distance that residents would be prepared to travel to access natural/semi natural greenspace provision,
- Some rural service areas eg Gosforth do not have a any provision falling within this classification and nor do a number of villages but residents feel that they have sufficient access to natural/semi natural open space,
- People are prepared to travel for longer to access destination type green space sites eg Grizedale Forest,
- There is a perception that the countryside is on the doorstep,
- Consultation identifies that woodlands are popular for young people for informal recreation as they offer creative/adventurous play opportunities,
- As well as providing important nature conservation and biodiversity value, many sites, classified as natural/semi-natural open spaces are well used for recreational purposes and are a valuable open space resource for communities across the LDNP.

Amenity Greenspace

- Gaps in provision in Gosforth, Bootle, Ennerdale Bridge and Waberthwaite were identified,
- Allowing community use of schools should be encouraged to meet the recreational needs of local residents,
- A significant proportion of the amenity greenspace in the Park consists of grass verges near housing areas or leading into settlements. Residents consider this to be particularly valuable for the visual amenity of residential area.

Provision for Children and Young People

- The majority of respondents who would visit play areas are prepared to travel for more than 10 minutes on foot,
- There is demand for greater provision of organised and after school activities and improved accessibility of such sessions for children living in more isolated settlements,

- Parish Councils provide the majority of equipped play provision within the Park but the range of providers leads to inconsistencies in quality,
- Residents place a high value on play facilities and recognise their value educationally and developmentally and in terms of health, active lifestyles, social inclusion and interaction,
- The play area at Gosforth is in need of enhancement and is the only equipped play area for the residents of Gosforth. Young people have also identified the need for a meeting space within the area.
- Funding has been secured to provide a MUGA at the Gosforth Playing Fields Site (may 2009) owned by the Parish Council,
- There are provision gaps at Eskdale Green, Waberthwaite and Silecroft,
- Older children and young people in Gosforth and Bootle consider that there is little currently available to meet their needs,
- There is considered to be a demand for a cycle track at the Gosforth site,
- Play facilities on school sites provide the main supply of equipped playgrounds,
- The cost and lack of public transport is seen as a significant barrier to young people accessing activities,
- The Millom Children's Centre has identified that young people would like to be able to access outdoor activities, such as those available in the Park, more easily.

Allotments

- There is no County or Borough Council provision in the area with facilities being provided by town or parish councils or private landowners.
- There is no strategic management for the provision across the area or within individual authorities,
- Residents would generally be willing to walk between 5-10 minute to access allotments,
- There appears to be little demand for additional provision,

Playing Pitches

- Four identified in the Copeland area of the Park, Gosforth Playing Fields, Eskdale Cricket Ground, Ravenglass playing field and Bootle Football Club.

Survey questionnaires were sent out to all clubs in the area and the points raised below follow from that consultation.

Football issues

- Pitch quality across the Park is considered to be adequate with the main problem being drainage, but changing facilities are rated as poor.
- Whilst senior team membership has been static over the last five years junior membership levels have increased,
- There is a perception that school sports facilities are not available for community use,
- Across the Park there is a latent demand for 0.5 senior and junior pitches.

Cricket

- There are sufficient pitches to meet demand

Rugby Union

- Clubs feel that not enough attention is given to traditional grassroots sports as part of school sports/PE activities,
- The Gosforth RUFC has excellent clubhouse facilities.

Rugby League

- Not a strong Rugby League Area but coaching for the sport is delivered in schools,
- Pupils from Gosforth Primary School are signposted to Egremont RLFC and those from Bootle Primary School to Millom RLFC.

Hockey

- No hockey clubs play in the Park area of Copeland.

Non Pitch Sports

Bowls

- There is only one bowling green in the Copeland area of the Park, at Bootle,
- Across the Park there are high levels of junior provision suggesting that any existing facilities should be retained,
- Clubs would welcome support funding to help maintain their greens.

Athletics

- No synthetic tracks in the LDNP area, and insufficient demand to justify provision of one,
- Residents accept that they will have to travel outside the area to access provision.

Golf

- Clubs have reported a decline in playing members over the last 3 years so there is little demand to provide further courses,
- There are two clubs in the Copeland area of the Park
- The quality of greens and clubhouse facilities is rated as good.

Netball

- No affiliated clubs across the Park area.

Tennis

- There is no apparent latent demand for additional provision arising from the consultation,
- The quality of existing courts is generally thought to be adequate but the one at Gosforth is considered to be poor. However there is no club use of the courts as residents tend to access facilities at the Seascale Tennis Club.

Summary of deficiencies identified in the Lake District National Park PPG17 Study consultation

- Residents consider that there is lack of play and informal recreation areas for playing ball games, particularly in the more rural settlements but there is little demand for greater provision to be made. Generally residents are content with the quantity of open space available particularly as they are surrounded by open countryside,

- From consultation with residents associations and community groups there is considered to be a lack of appropriate facilities for young people evidenced by the fact that youth congregation is also seen as a resultant issue,
- There is perceived to be a deficiency of provision for children and young people over the age of 7 across the whole Park area,
- There is a perceived lack of amenity green space for informal recreational opportunities,
- Gosforth playing fields are highlighted as a suitable location to provide a bike track, including cycle jumps,
- There is resident demand for the provision of a play area on Eskdale Green,
- There has been little expressed demand for the provision of additional allotments (in contrast to the Copeland area outside the national park where demand exceeds supply).

Other Issues

- There is general satisfaction with the amount and quality of open space available but specific concerns about aspects of quality ie anti social behaviour, the lack of rubbish and dog waste bins,
- Residents consider the provision high quality, clean streets and open spaces to be a priority.
- The remoteness of much of the rural area presents an increasing problem for maintaining viable communities with a full and varied range of services and activities.
- The communities' relationship to open space and their expectations re the availability of appropriate facilities is significantly different in the rural areas and needs to be fully reflected in any plans for future provision.
- The rural area supports a wide variety of non traditional open space activities.
- There is a strong tradition of sport across the area but steps need to be taken to improve access and choice for young people.
- Community consultation needs to be improved as does the engagement of young people in the 'planning' and management processes.
- The lack of opportunities for young people is a strong theme running through most consultations.

2.5 Stakeholder Interviews

We interviewed members of the Copeland Borough Council Locality Area and Community Development teams as these officers have direct contact with local community groups, many of which have an interest in open space and leisure issues.

Copeland Borough Community Development Team

We met with Rachel Graham who is the team's Community Fund Development Worker. She provides support and guidance to community groups, particularly in relation to the development of projects concerning open space and the environment. She has recently co-ordinated a comprehensive review of current/recent community-based open space projects across Copeland (29 in total) supported by housing associations, the community development team, parks, the locality team, and the County Council. See Appendix 2 for details. We asked her

views on provision in relation to quantity, quality, and access and also asked about any specific local projects she was aware of.

Quantity

The review has shown particularly strong demand across the Borough for more allotments, play areas, youth facilities and cycle/foot paths. In general it seems that there is insufficient supply of such to meet community needs in many parts of the Borough. A lack of dedicated mountain bike facilities and visitor centres was also highlighted.

Quality

Rachel mentioned the need for improvements to facilities relating to the coast – footpaths, toilets etc and noted the important work of the Beach Advisory Network in addressing these issues. Also many play and youth facilities were of poor quality and in need of refurbishment. Improvements to access routes and paths to local woodlands might encourage greater use by local residents and visitors. In general it seems that overall satisfaction levels for Copeland's open spaces (around 40%) are considerably less than other areas of Cumbria e.g. Carlisle City Council area (about 80%).

Access

Rachel highlighted the importance of continuing to improve physical access to open spaces wherever possible for disabled people. She also highlighted a need to encourage more local people to access the countryside and coast through education, signage, publicity, promotion, interpretation etc. These valuable natural assets do not seem to be frequently used by many in the towns.

The poor quality of many areas of open space e.g. play areas also tended to discourage greater use.

Another big issue, particularly for those in rural areas was the lack of public transport at convenient times to access facilities in nearby towns and "service centres".

Some Priorities

The review of open space projects provides most of the current priorities where there is active community demand.

Local groups securing more funds through the BIG Lottery Community Spaces fund (via Groundwork) would enable additional local projects to be realised. Rachel thought that supporting local organisations in this task should be a priority for the Community Development team.

Improved promotion of what is already available should also be a priority in terms of increasing use. Many people say they are not always aware of what is on offer.

Other Issues

Rachel thought that in broad terms there is great potential for improving access to and use of local woodlands – need for more interpretation and improvements in management for public use. This provided potential for developing partnership with the Woodland Trust.

In terms of raising the quality of open space facilities in partnership with local groups Rachel highlighted the importance of ensuring that local people involved were aware of good practice examples from elsewhere. Expectations were often quite low as to what can be achieved due to their experiences being based simply on what is already available locally.

Copeland Borough Locality Workers

We met with Simon Walker, Alan Hurton, and Trudy Harrison who are part of a team covering 6 Locality Areas within Copeland. Trudy is also a Parish Councillor and school governor. It is a relatively new service team and a key element of their work currently is to work with local town and parish councils, community organisations and other partners to develop locality area plans for each area. The team also aim to establish partnerships to support local community projects and regeneration initiatives and broadly speaking to provide a voice for local communities. Notes are again provided in relation to quantity, quality and accessibility.

Quantity

- Insufficient play areas and in particular youth facilities e.g. nothing at Silecroft. Need for more “all-weather” opportunities for young people
- Insufficient football and rugby pitches and associated facilities in some parts of the Borough.
- Aspiration for netball centre for the Borough – active netball development worker in post.
- Need for an extreme sports/mountain bike facility – plans in Egremont to this end.
- Good network of bridleways but need for improvements and specific facilities for horse riders to enable more use. Good footpath network but underused by local people.
- Possible need for scrambling/mini-moto facility for young people (Cleator Moor?). Query as to whether the facility at Rowra is still open.
- Cycle access from Whitehaven to St Bees is dangerous – need for cyclepath – how about a cyclepath parallel to the railway line route?
- Need for more family friendly cycle routes e.g. South of Sellafield and Gosforth to Seascale
- Most villages have a local village hall and/or can access local school hall for community use – but rural schools are under threat – their loss would reduce access to indoor halls for community use
- Some kind of heritage or visitor centre might be useful in the south of Copeland

Quality

- Swimming Pool in Egremont is in need of refurbishment.
- Many local play areas are of poor quality, particularly in West Copeland and coast. St Bees and Seascale play areas are examples!
- Routes to the coast poor for walking and cycling (families).

- Need for improvements at Indoor Bowls Club at Cleator Moor (North Country Leisure).
- Quality of village halls is very variable – with many of poor quality e.g. Silecroft. However some are great e.g. Drigg (recently refurbished)
- Facilities serving the coast are generally poor and accessible areas are poorly maintained e.g. quality of toilets, fly-tipping not cleared
- Some good quality youth provision e.g. Seascale BMX track and an excellent new youth club established recently – Phoenix youth.

Access

- Transport for those in rural areas makes access difficult for none/one car families and children/young people. Public transport issues – trains generally good limited e.g. no services Sunday between Barrow and Whitehaven.
- Trains should have more spaces for bicycles.
- To encourage greater access to ROW and countryside there is a need for more promotion and publicity of walks, access routes etc. More walks leaflets and work in schools. Also good if routes were better signed and more interpretation.
- Wild Ennerdale are active in relation to promoting access to Ennerdale (Gareth Browning and Rachel Oakley).
- Some facilities need better parking e.g. Egremont Castle as people visit from quite far afield.
- School grounds, play areas and pitches not widely available for community use
- Access to many facilities restricted if not a car user – particularly difficult for children and young people
- Developing safe routes to schools and to play and youth facilities are important

Some Priorities

Largely covered in the Open Space Community Projects Review document noted above but also:

- Egremont – Community Farm and Orchard – high priority
- Netball facility in Whitehaven
- More support for VCS organisations to take lead role on projects
- Less restrictive planning policies (LDNP). Current policy is restricting the development of local communities
- Development of Wellbank Swimming Pool site (Bootle) and improved cycle access

Other issues

Sustrans Route 72 - The County Council and Copeland Council have committed funding to the development of this route. Opportunities for route development are being explored, such as the Gosforth to Seascale project. Here an approach has been made to the main landowner, the British Nuclear Group, for assistance with funding.

The Seascale-Sellafield path is now a year old and Sustrans intend to carry out some further improvements this year. There has been good progress with the Maryport Connect 2 scheme, with a provisional steering group in place and works on connecting paths already underway. Sustrans has also been advising the Maryport Regeneration group on local signposting options.

2.6 General Community – Key Findings

Use of open space and sports/leisure facilities

- Local countryside, woodlands and green open spaces are the most commonly used open spaces by adult residents (over 65%). Footpaths, bridleways and cyclepaths are the spaces most likely to be used almost every day.
- Nearly 40% of residents use local recreation grounds or parks at least once a month. Over 35% of users visit parks and play areas at least fortnightly.
- The Borough's village/community halls are used regularly by significant numbers with 22% of respondents using them at least fortnightly. The Borough's indoor swimming pools are also used frequently by many residents (18%) as are the sports/leisure centres (14%).
- Use of Informal open space use is very much more common and frequent than that of formal sport or leisure facilities.

Quantity

- The majority of residents think there is a need for more outdoor facilities for teenagers (74%); at least 50% thought there were not enough play areas, footpaths/rights of way, and swimming pools.
- More than 10% of respondents thought there were more than enough golf courses, areas for outdoor sports, and artificial turf pitches to meet local need.
- The *quantity* of facilities otherwise was thought to be adequate by most residents

Quality

- Most facilities are rated average or better by the majority apart from outdoor facilities for teenagers which are rated as poor or very poor by over 70% of residents and specialist indoor sports facilities (55%).
- Over 40% highlighted outdoor tennis/bowls/netball courts as being of poor quality as well as the Borough's artificial turf pitches and "other" outdoor sports facilities e.g. motor cycling scrambling.
- Facilities where the quality is rated high by the majority include country parks and the local countryside, wildlife areas/nature reserves, rights of way, and informal green spaces.
- Over 40% say that quality is high in relation to local parks/recreation grounds and golf courses.
- Cleanliness and a lack of litter and graffiti; being easy to get to by all members of the community; and ensuring sites feel safe and secure are judged to be the most important issues in relation to parks and open spaces.
- Ensuring adequate control of dogs, maintaining quality through regular maintenance, and having an appropriate range of facilities on site e.g. cafes and toilets are also significant issues.

Access

- The majority of users are prepared to travel more than 20 minutes to use some facilities such as wildlife areas, country parks, areas for outdoor sports and specialist indoor facilities.
- For significant numbers of residents facilities need to be much more locally available before they will be used (for example, allotments, play areas, teenage facilities, rights of way and village/community halls). Around 30% would not wish to travel more than ten minutes to access such facilities.
- There is great variance in respondents' apparent willingness to spend time travelling to different types of opportunity. A significant percentage of respondents would, for example, only be prepared to travel up to 5 minutes to a range of different opportunities (e.g allotments, children's play areas and parks).
- Residents are more likely than not to drive to many facilities including specialist sports facilities, sports/leisure centres, swimming pools, and wildlife areas/nature reserves.
- Walking and cycling are the norm for facilities such as parks, play areas, teenage facilities, playing fields, allotments, informal green spaces, rights of way and community/village halls.
- More than 70% of residents confirmed that they would be prepared to walk/cycle further if the quality of the route was improved and that if so improved they would make the journey more often.
- For a small but significant minority access by bus is important, particularly for sports/leisure centres but also for sports facilities (bowls, tennis, swimming pools) outdoor pursuits, parks and teenage facilities.

Priorities and other issues

- The top priority for improvements to outdoor facilities was for better footpaths, bridleways and cyclepaths, followed by outdoor provision for teenagers and children's play areas
- In relation to indoor facilities the top priority was for improvements to swimming pools.
- The issues and concerns of the rural areas of the district are often quite different from those of the main towns and service centres. This will need to be addressed when considering the development of local standards.

3. Children and Young People

This section includes analysis of:

- The Copeland Borough Play Strategy consultation
- Community Organisations Survey
- Stakeholder interviews.
- The role of schools and extended services

3.1 Review of the *Copeland Borough Play Strategy*

The Borough Council produced a detailed play strategy in 2007 as a requirement of its bid to the BIG Lottery Children's Play Programme. The Borough's bid was successful leading to significant investment in play in Copeland. The strategy included an audit of play provision, a strategic "gap" analysis of provision, and an assessment of community need as regards play spaces/youth facilities (for age ranges up to 18 years old).

A summary of consultation undertaken and some of the key findings from the consultation and community engagement process undertaken for the strategy is provided below. The consultation is considered to be recent enough to provide robust evidence of community need, particularly when combined with updates from the extensive set of stakeholder interviews undertaken.

The Play Strategy consultation process utilised analysis of previous consultation exercises with Children and Young People through a desktop review in addition new surveys and research was undertaken which incorporated the following approaches:

- Surveys and questionnaires to young people (surveys forms distributed to a variety of Children and Young People across the borough)
- Face to face interactive approaches (Sure start engagement through play scheme, and Copeland play schemes)
- Focus Group engagement (Key youth groups engaged within local communities)
- Community led consultation (Engagement with parish councils, borough and County Council and through Regeneration Partnerships)

Youth Council survey

The Youth Council for the Borough was utilised to obtain their views on the key issues that they felt needed to direct future policy and the Schools were also invited to respond to the emerging play policies.

Nine schools were represented at the Strategy Youth Council meeting (7 Junior and 2 Secondary – 32 children were present) that reviewed the Play Policies and the results were that the main 4 priorities for consideration were in order of priority:

1. Provide more safe and secure places outside to hang out and meet friends e.g. Youth shelters
2. Provide Multi Use Games Areas (for informal play)
3. Provide more traditional play areas (swings, slides, climbing frames etc)
4. Provide more wheeled sports facilities – skateboarding, roller blading, BMX etc

This information helped guide the strategy development and subsequent Big Lottery application.

Community Youth Groups

Local Community Youth Groups were invited to respond to the emerging policy and to obtain views from children that access the current provision. The groups that chose to engage within this process were:

- Harbour Youth Project (Whitehaven)
- Phoenix Youth project (Cleator Moor)
- Egremont play group (Egremont)
- Distington Club for Young People
- Sure Start Programme

Summer Activity sessions

In addition to gathering children and young people's comments through community youth groups, Copeland Borough Council and Sure Start utilised their summer play events and activities to engage children. A total of 153 children were engaged through this process covering a range of children from the borough. Some findings were that:

- 49% of respondents would like to see additional or improved wheeled sports facilities and informal kick around areas whilst 44% expressed the view for additional new MUGA facilities specifically within areas experiencing teen and youth issues i.e. Cleator Moor, Hensingham and Rural areas.
- 37% of respondents felt that maintained and improved local play sites would meet current demands of junior and toddlers.
- 7% identify social issues such as Anti social behaviour and bullying as an issue.

Play services were identified as being used by the local communities although it was felt by a significant number of stakeholders and children that improvements to rural services were needed. Awareness of activities and services was raised as an issue by 20% of respondents who believed that they were unaware of what was happening within their areas.

To combat this, a number of stakeholders and groups requested information being available to advise on activities available. This would be beneficial to all children and young people.

Community led consultation

Consultation exercises that had been undertaken with local communities through regeneration partnerships were also reviewed. Individual projects identified through community and neighbourhoods were also considered.

Internal Consultation

Consultation with internal officers and members was undertaken through a variety of approaches. The planning and Regeneration department were engaged and the Leisure, Culture and Parks department through corporate team engagement in the Executive decision making process for the policy.

Various Departments were therefore actively engaged in developing the strategy and through consultation exercises undertaken to inform the action plan.

Parish Plans

The following plans were reviewed to identify issues concerning play:

- Distington Parish Plan 2005
- Haile and Wilton Parish Plan 2004
- Lamplugh Parish Plan 2002
- Weddicar Parish Plan 2005
- Arlecdon and Frizington Parish Plan 2005
- Howgate Ward Plan 2003
- Cleator Moor Parish Plan 2005
- Ennerdale and Kinniside Parish Plan 2004
- St Bees Parish Plan

The key issues identified are shown in the table below:

Parish	Action
Arlecdon and Frizington	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Raise awareness of existing youth activities • Support Home Housing and others in providing holiday activity schemes • Support volunteers starting new schemes. • Improve the Jubilee Field and other play facilities as necessary
Cleator Moor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Set up nightly youth clubs and a cyber cafe. • Install a Teenspace and sheltered seating • Look at the requirement for after-school clubs and holiday schemes • Install more sports facilities and a children's play area • Create a skateboard park
Distington	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Set up a youth council and continue to support Distington Club for Young People • Assess demand with CBC for new play areas and secure funding
Ennerdale and Kinniside	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to encourage provision for young people. • Support parishioners in providing sustainable local facilities • Continue to support the Bridge Park community recreation area
Howgate Ward	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with Mobex and Voices projects to engage young people on environmental schemes • Investigate the possibility of setting up a youth club in each parish • Set up less formal sports activities with the support of CBC • Renovate play area in Moresby
Lamplugh	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote existing facilities and support parishioners in developing future facilities • Create more play areas • Encourage young people to participate in environmental activities • Assess the need for improved sports facilities
St Bees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collate and publicise information on current youth activities • Plan to establish youth club and support providers • Extend range of play equipment at Main Beach
Waberthwaite	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support the development of facilities and activities for young people • Investigate feasibility of ideas in the parish survey • Link to existing providers for help
Weddicar	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Liaise with young people to explore their needs • Work with CBC and Keekle Mission to identify location for youth activities.

Mapping exercise

As part of the process to identify a detailed strategy a comprehensive desk top audit was undertaken within the borough to inform the level and quality of play provision. This information updated and complemented existing information identified within the earlier Copeland Children's outdoor play area and teen space provision strategy. The mapping analysed play provision in relation to travel distance as recommended by the NPFA guidance available at that time.

Key findings

The key findings from the consultation process with stakeholders and children and young people are as follows:

Play Facilities

- The audit and mapping exercise identified widespread provision of traditionally equipped play areas with the majority being located within the most populated areas.
- There is already a high provision of green and open spaces available within the borough to support informal play.
- Playing fields and recreational grounds owned and managed by the Council are fully accessible and freely available to all children and young people.
- Copeland has 3 sites with Heritage Green Flag and 4 sites with Green flag recognition (St Nicolas Gardens, Trinity Gardens, Egremont Castle, Distington Hall Crematorium and Walled Garden).
- A number of parish and community managed play equipped sites are located within the rural areas and are fully accessible to communities.
- Multi Use Games Areas are not provided sufficiently within the central area of the borough to support deprived and rural communities (gaps identified are in Gosforth/Seascale area, Cleator Moor to ensure strategic siting of facilities)
- There is an increasing demand for youth shelters throughout the borough but predominantly the demand seems greatest within the deprived communities with the highest children and young people population.
- Skate parks are located within Whitehaven and Egremont although additional challenging activities have been requested within both rural and urban areas.
- Copeland has a strong cycleway infrastructure which predominantly services the north of the borough; potential for further development has been raised for the south.
- Opportunities for new and enhanced play opportunities should be developed within deprived areas which exhibit high population in terms of children and young people (Hensingham has been identified as a key area for play provision).
- A more challenging environment in both play equipment and facilities has been identified specifically for the older teens (11-19).

Play Services

- A range of summer play schemes and activities are held each year and mostly located within the north and south of the borough. The most deprived communities have access to the summer activities although the rural communities have limited access. Additional outreach schemes should be considered to support rural communities.

- A Comprehensive programme of sport activities and events are undertaken during the summer holidays.
- Existing out of school and pre-school provision is well serviced within the borough.
- Extended schools programmes are in existence throughout the borough although opportunities for further development should be considered.

Other issues

- There is a lack of knowledge and awareness of the play activities/ services available
- Improved access arrangements for rural areas are needed
- Need for safe environments for play which restrict/remove potential for bullying

3.2 Community Organisations Survey

The Community Organisations survey provided groups' views on the general quality of play and youth facilities across that Borough as highlighted in the table below:

	Very Good	Good	Average	Poor	Very Poor
Children's play areas		1	3	4	1
Outdoor facilities for teenagers				7	2

It is clear that the majority of the groups think that looking at the Borough as a whole the quality of play and youth facilities is deemed poor by the majority; particularly so for teenage facilities.

Some of the specific comments from the survey were directly relevant to play facilities for children and young people as noted below:

Category and Comments	Group
Outdoor Facilities for Children and Young People	
Play areas should be within walking distance for young people to access. There should also be facilities for older children, e.g. Teen shelters, MUGAs and bike tracks.	North Copeland Youth Partnership
There are not enough areas for young people to enjoy adventurous play. The play area in Parton needs upgrading, community members and young people have been raising concerns about it for a number of years	
Outdoor facilities are essential for children and young people. In our area they range from good to very poor.	Exchange Corner NW
They need improving in Cleator Moor on Jacktrees Road, Frizington in New Town and in Moor Row.	The Phoenix Youth Project
There are no facilities in Egremont for adventurous play or for BMX style cycle tracks. BMX riders in Egremont use the castle moat and the adventurous climb the castle walls!!	Friends of Egremont Castle
I think the play area would be better placed on the Millenium Park, central to the estate. There's not a lot for older children in Distington except for the youth club	Distington Club for Young People
Your Own Area	
Young people in Parton want a new play area and a muga. They get moved on by community members when playing football. They need a purpose built area to play football safely	North Copeland Youth Partnership
The play park is in a bad state of repair and in need of redevelopment to draw not only children but the community into a wonderful space which is greatly under used.	Exchange Corner NW
There aren't enough facilities free of charge for young people	The Phoenix Youth Project

3.3 Stakeholder Interviews

Copeland Borough Youth Engagement Officer

We interviewed Emma Dickinson who is the Council's Youth Engagement Officer. Her work involves establishing local youth councils and a Borough-wide Council. Emma sits within Cultural Services but she has a corporate role. The primary aim of her post is to ensure the voice of young people is heard across all relevant council services (and through town and parish councils).

Quantity

There is a lack of provision of outdoor provision for teenagers and older children throughout the Borough. Most play provision is designed for younger children and there are few MUGAs and wheeled sports facilities.

There are a number of youth clubs/initiatives that meet in village/community halls across the borough and Harbour Youth have excellent indoor youth provision (including sports hall and climbing wall) in Whitehaven.

Quality

Broadly speaking the concern is the overall lack of facilities rather than poor quality provision but some older wheeled sports provision is a bit past its best.

Some examples of high quality youth provision are:

- Harbour Youth in Whitehaven (range of facilities in Whitehaven as above plus holiday programme including outdoor pursuits.
- Distington Youth Group – meet in community centre
- Seascale – Shackles Off Youth Group – recently secured 3 year funding package for services centred on a “youth cafe” concept.
- General high quality of youth workers

Access

- Cost is a barrier to accessing sports centres and pools for low income households
- Access for children and young people in the rural areas is further exacerbated by a general lack of transport, additional cost of transport, timetabling of public transport etc.
- Improvements to footpath and cycle access would help a lot in many areas
- Attitudes are a barrier to young people – people in positions of authority and influence can make it difficult for young people to make their voices heard

Some Priorities

- Parton – youth group active in working for a MUGA and youth shelter/bus stop. Currently meeting in the village hall. Have also identified overgrown paths and need for clean-up of local countryside areas e.g. “the Ghyll”.
- Phoenix youth at Cleator Moor – working for a MUGA and repairs to “hole” in playing field!
- BMX track at Bootle – active community group working on this
- Teen shelters/meeting places throughout the Borough

Other Issues

The primary need in Copeland is to address the overall lack of youth facilities across the Borough, rather than quality. Also young people need support in making the case for these. They also need to be involved at all stages when it comes to planning for such facilities and in the detail of delivery i.e. location, design etc.

Cumbria County Council – Play Officer

We met with Jane Smith the County Council's Strategic Play Officer. Jane has a strategic role for play County-wide. She convenes a County Play Partnership that has representatives from all the Districts. Jane is currently working with the partnership towards a County Play Strategy.

Quantity

Jane's view from the conclusions of the Copeland play strategy and her knowledge of community feedback is that broadly speaking there are too few play spaces in Copeland, particularly in the rural areas. Facilities for teenagers are also limited.

She was not sure about the amount of "playable space" within wider open space but emphasised their importance for play and that if children are to make use of such spaces it must be clear that they are welcome and that these areas are accepted as appropriate for play.

Quality

Jane was aware that many play spaces and teen facilities in Copeland were of poor quality and lacked design flair. Often they were not specifically designed for the site and local children had not been fully involved in the process. Many play areas did not supply sufficient opportunities for children to be challenged and to take risks (children learn and develop through challenging themselves and assessing risks for themselves in their play).

More recently, play areas provided through the BIG Lottery programme and Playbuilder were much better in these respects. She highlighted the recent play/teen facilities in Seascale as a good example in terms of quality. She highlighted the value of the Design guidance and approaches to risk management supported by Play England.

She suggested that Copeland should consider adopting Play England guidance *Design for Play* and *Managing Risk* as supplementary planning documents in relation to play spaces.

Access

- Roads and traffic are often significant barriers for independent access to play spaces for children. Safe routes to play initiatives should be developed for main play areas and access audits undertaken when new play spaces are being developed.
- Anti-social behaviour and bullying are also barriers to independent play so design and planning of play spaces should take these factors into account e.g. Secured by Design principles.
- Playable space should be identified in areas of wider open space and clear messages should be sent that play is welcomed in such spaces e.g. positive signing and avoidance of unnecessary No Ball Games signs.

- Though a small minority in Copeland, care should be taken to ensure access by BME families is considered when planning for play provision.

Some Priorities

- Consideration of providing staffed play services associated with play space developments.
- Consider mobile play services for the rural areas that suffer from “play deprivation” e.g. by support to the West Cumbria Playbus.
- Copeland should consider adopting supplementary planning documents as regards play e.g. Design Guide

Other Issues

Copeland should consider adopting Play England Quality Assessment Tools as regards ongoing assessment of play area quality

Cumbria County Council Children’s Services

We met with Rebecca Whent who is the Children’s Services Participation Officer for West Cumbria. She is involved with Children’s and Youth Engagement on a community by community basis.

Quantity

Smaller village and communities consider that there are not enough young people’s facilities, eg MUGA’S, of the right type and in the right location even though sufficient ‘open space’ areas might appear to be available.

Parks can be locked in the evenings and young people are looking for safe, lit and sheltered places for informal recreation.

Quality

Maintenance and refreshment of facilities is considered to be a particular issue. Equipment is often outdated and old and even where facilities have been provided as part of a consultation process in the past they have not been maintained and updated.

Too often consultation to find out what young people want has been unstructured ending up in wish lists rather than providing them with realistic choices for the money available.

The *Tellus4* website shows that for Cumbria Copeland young people’s satisfaction with facilities is very low ie around 30-35%

Access

Transport ie cost and availability is a considerable barrier to using built and other facilities, timetables don’t help either particular in the evenings.

It is also considered that activities are too expensive for young and/or disadvantaged people. One young mums club (14 to 25) said that drinking appears to be the only social activity available.

Parks being locked early evenings is said to be an issue.

The location of facilities is also a problem eg the Skatepark in Whitehaven. Young people said they wanted one; no one consulted re the location and it was put near the station in an out of the way place and badly lit etc. The area is now being misused and those who want to use it are now put off by the 'unsafe' nature of the location.

Some priorities

- The Cleator Moor Phoenix Project is looking at the design and regeneration of open space.
- The Parton Youth Club also had proposals for a MUGA but it ran into local objections but these might now be surmountable.
- Securing better children's and young people's engagement in the decision making process
- Rebecca is concerned about the nature and quality of any young people's engagement as it needs to be clearly focussed, truly engaging and relevant. Understandably, young people want to see results and don't want to be engaged in talking shops.
- The County Council's Neighbourhood Forums do have some money to control and play is an area that some are looking at. Getting young people meaningfully engaged in the forums has not been very successful generally. Even so, they seem to be important groups to engage in the process.

Play England

We held a meeting with Judith Anderson the regional manager for Play England in the North West³. She had a number of views on various aspects relating to PPG17 as noted below:

Quantity

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

A Door-step spaces close to home

B Local play spaces – larger areas within easy walking distance

C Neighbourhood spaces for play – larger spaces within walking distance

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

She was not specifically aware of any significant variation in the quantity of provision across the Borough but referred us to the current play strategy that had included a gap analysis.

Quality

Jude thought that in general many play spaces across Copeland were quite poor, with little challenge, and very "traditional" in nature. There is too much emphasis on equipment, wet-poor

³ SINCE THE MEETING PLAY ENGLAND HAVE RE-ORGANISED AND JUDE IS NOW A MEMBER OF PLAY ENGLAND'S SENIOR MANAGEMENT TEAM HOLDING A NATIONAL REMIT

type safer surfacing, and unnecessary fencing. Good examples did exist though, for example, at Seascale.

Play England would like the new Play England Design Guide *Design for Play* to be referenced and added as a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD). She also pointed out that Play England had developed a Quality Assessment Tool that can be used to judge the quality of individual play spaces. She recommended that Copeland consider adopting this as a means of assessing the quality of play spaces in the Borough.

Access

Access is the key element for Play England as referred to in the Quantity section – a range of doorstep, local, neighbourhood, and destination play spaces with appropriate catchments. Jude also pointed out the need for standards for smaller settlements and rural areas where the doorstep, local, neighbourhood, and destination hierarchy is unlikely to be appropriate.

Disability access is also an important issue for Play England and they would like Copeland to adopt the KIDS publication *Inclusion by Design* as an SPD.

Priorities

Jude referred to the recent guidance document produced by Play England *Better Places to Play through Planning*. The publication gives detailed guidance on setting local standards for access, quantity and quality of playable space. It also shows how provision for better play opportunities can be promoted in planning policies and processes; giving detail of how local development frameworks and planning control can be utilised in favour of child-friendly communities. She recommended that Copeland adopt this guidance generally in terms of play and spatial planning.

3.4 Schools and extended services

In predominantly rural areas with a small population base and a limited number of larger village/town service centres schools often represent the only publicly owned facilities available for recreation and sporting use.

As schools are the responsibility of the County Council the management and development of individual schools is obviously a separate function to the provision, management and development of borough wide sports and leisure facilities. At the individual school level heads and governors have the ability to choose the level of community use of the school that they feel to be appropriate.

From our consultation with a variety of organisations, including the School Sports Partnership, the Extended Schools Service, the South Copeland Sports Partnership, North Country Leisure, Copeland Borough Council Officers and the Parish Council survey the following issues have been identified in relation to schools:

- The provision of sufficient sports and leisure facilities across the borough only works because of the availability of facilities in schools,
- Community use of schools is not dealt with uniformly across the area and regular use of sports pitches, for example, is rare.

- That standard, management and development of provision, though, is inconsistent and doesn't necessarily address identified needs,
- Any strategy for the provision of sports and leisure and recreation in the borough should fully take into account what currently exists and what could be provided in schools,
- The addition of any new sports/leisure facilities in schools should be based on the strategic needs identified for the borough to prevent duplication and to try and maximise the benefits to the community,
- A more uniform, consistent and professional approach should be taken towards the management, programming and service delivery of community use in schools,
- There appears to be a growing recognition of the role that schools can and could provide in relation to community use but an inconsistent approach towards its delivery,
- Not all schools, though, are located sufficiently close to the communities they serve,
- Many of the primary schools have large sites which could be developed/adapted for more intensive use,
- Allowing community access to schools can create administrative and financial burdens to meet health and safety and insurance requirements and this issue should be dealt with at the authority level,
- The quality of the facilities available in schools ie sports halls, sports pitches, all weather surfaces and play areas varies considerably,
- There is potential to use many of the school sites more intensively for community use eg Millom School which could be developed as a Sports Hub for the wider community providing quality grass sports pitches, all weather training and sports pitches, swimming and indoor training/gym facilities,
- Taking a more comprehensive view of the use of school facilities could help to free up space and time in the leisure centres for more pay and play activities by transferring appropriate block booked activities, particularly 5 a side football and possibly badminton, to school sites,
- The use of sports pitches needs to be seen in the broader context of provision to improve availability and quality and to link with other facilities to create greater synergy of uses,
- A consistent management approach towards the programming and use of school swimming pools could help the Borough to deliver its activities more successfully as pool time at the Copeland Pool is fully committed.

3.5 Children, Young People, and Schools - Key Findings

Quantity

- In general children, young people and the wider community in Copeland think that overall there are **not** enough safe spaces for children and young people to play and hang out, particularly in the rural areas.
- There is a good quantity of unequipped green and open spaces available within the Borough to support informal play.
- Provision for teenagers is thought to be particularly poor. For many children and young people meeting places and various forms of "wheeled sports" facilities feature as preferences. Informal sports facilities and MUGAs are in demand. Such facilities are few and far between in Copeland

- Existing spaces are not being used to the full and efforts should be made to make more of (and improve) what already exists.
- There is potential for more community (extended) use of school facilities for play (after school, weekends and during holidays).

Quality

- Many current play and teen spaces are poorly designed.
- There is a need for play spaces to provide more challenging and “risky” play opportunities, particularly for older children.
- Bullying and “stranger danger” are frequently mentioned barriers to children making more use of play opportunities. Safety and security are key issues to be addressed in relation to the design of play/youth areas.

Access

- The need for improved transport to facilities for children and young people (particularly in the rural areas) and safe walking and cycling routes to play opportunities.
- It is important that younger children have access to some kind of play space within easy walking distance from home and that teenagers have access to spaces to hang out independently with friends.
- It appears that children and young people will walk and cycle further to access more interesting sites and these will therefore have a larger “catchment”. Young people will walk further than younger children to access such sites.
- Disability - Need for a mix of greater inclusivity re all play facilities and schemes; and special provision at the request/preference of the children/young people
- Play provision on schools sites is plentiful and often of good quality. However, there are many issues to resolve in terms of securing community access to these features.

Other Issues

- Children and teenagers play and hang out regularly “on the street”, near local shops, etc as well as on spaces planned for play and recreation. The PPG17 study should therefore highlight planning related issues aimed at making the wider residential environment more child-friendly.
- A key barrier to teenagers’ use of “public” open space is that they are often moved on by nearby residents and authorities such as the police. They need more tolerance and places recognised as “theirs”.
- Play England provide excellent guidance on play and spatial planning; play space design; a Quality Assessment Tool for play spaces; and managing risk in play. Some of these could be adopted as guidance and Supplementary Planning Documents.

4. Town and Parish Councils

Within the district there are 27 town and parish councils, 15 of which have prepared some form of town/parish plan covering a wide range of community based issues. We have assessed each of the plans and have included relevant information from them as part of this needs assessment. They are important as the shape and nature of the plans was driven by detailed community consultation and engagement.

In addition, as part of this study, a community open space survey was sent to each of the town and Parish councils and 17 responses (60%) have been received. The survey covered issues relating to the quantity, quality and accessibility of various types of open space and recreation facilities. There was also an opportunity for the council's to highlight any priorities they might have for new or improved provision.

General information from the survey has been extracted and any detailed comments have been identified separately and/or added to the information extracted from the Parish Plans.

In the future Parish and Town plans will be revisited and incorporated into action plans for the 5 new locality areas defined for the borough. The Cleator Moor Action plan already reflects the move towards a 'locality' focus.

4.1 General Overview

The following table covers issues of quantity and quality for a range of facilities. It shows that the areas of most common concern are that;

- There are insufficient play areas
- There are not enough areas for teenagers to use
- There is a shortage of footpaths/bridleways/cycleways
- There are not enough tennis/netball courts/MUGA's

Town/Parish Council	Not Enough Football Pitches	Not Enough Cricket Pitches	Not Enough Rugby Pitches	Poor Quality Playing Pitches	Not Enough Tennis/ Netball/ Mugas	Poor Quality Tennis/ Netball/ Mugas	Not Enough Bowling Greens/Short-Mat Bowls	Poor Quality/ Inadequate Changing Facilities	Not Enough Informal Open Space	Not Enough Children's Play Areas	Poor Quality Children's Play Areas	Not Enough Areas For Teenagers	Shortage Of Indoor Halls Suitable For Sport	Shortage Of Footpaths/ Bridleways/ Cycleways	Shortage of Wildlife Areas
Wasdale															
Waberthwaite & Corney	X	X	X	X	X	X		X		X				X	
Weddicar										X	X	X			
Whicham										X				X	
Haile and Wilton										X					
St Johns Beckermert															
Ennerdale & Kinniside	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X			X	X	X	
Millom Without	X	X					X		X	X				X	X
Muncaster															
Lamplugh	X	X	X		X		X	X		X	X	X		X	X
Bootle					X					X		X			
Gosforth														X	
St Bees												X			
Seascale					X			X							
Cleator Moor	X			X	X				X	X	X	X			
Egremont										X					
Millom					X							X			
TOTALS	5	4	3	3	7	2	3	4	3	9	3	7	1	7	2

Key factors re Open Space - in relation to open space the four most important factors are considered to be:

- The provision of high quality and well maintained facilities
- Ease of access for all members of the community
- Being safe and secure for users
- Opportunities for dog walking and freedom from fouling.

Of least importance were issues relating to noise, signposting and the provision of shelters.

4.2 Parish specific issues

A majority of the Parish Plans were carried out in 2002/3 as part of the Countryside Agency's 'Vital Villages' Project. The aim of the programme was to help small communities assess their needs and opportunities and to secure a voice for local people in planning for the future. Questionnaire surveys, audits of need and focus group meetings/exhibitions were key features of the plan making process and all aspects of community life were covered. As such they provide an invaluable insight into community needs and expectations but unfortunately the information, in most instances, is now a little dated. Some of the required actions identified may now have been implemented.

Howgate Ward Plan.

The Plan, incorporating the Lowca, Moresby and Parton Parishes was completed in 2003. It covers a population of around 3,500. A household survey was carried out in 2002 as part of the plan process which elicited a 57% response.

Key issues relating to open space, recreation, sport and leisure were that:

- The lack of transport after 6pm is a particular issue for the 14/17 age group
- A Sunday and early evening bus service would help people to access recreational facilities,
- Dog fouling considered to be a particular problem in areas used by children to play,
- There is considered to be a lack of suitable cycle tracks and comments that better use could be made of the disused railway line.
- There was concern in Lowca about the state of the old rugby club building and the poor condition of the BMX track,
- In relation to children's play the site at Lowca was thought to be in need of improvement particularly its surfacing, in Parton of the two sites the one near the school has been refurbished but the smaller site on the bowling field needs improvement whilst at Moresby there was concern that the play areas that were included in the plans for new development at Low Moresby and Rannergate haven't been provided. The two existing areas have limited facilities and were thought to be inadequate.
- The lack of facilities for young people was considered to be a key issue,
- The provision locally of gym facilities and keep fit classes was identified as a way to improve participation and involvement,
- Less than 10% of the villagers use the local sports facilities and there are no organised sports activities for women,
- Not all sports are catered for with football or rugby being the only choice.
- The main reasons given for lack of participation in sports/leisure activities were the lack of time, lack of facilities or health,
- Gangs of youths hanging around and vandalism were seen to be the most significant issue in relation to crime and safety with an improved police presence and more leisure facilities seen to be the main solutions to those problems.

No updated information is available for these parishes and they did not respond to the PPG17 Parish Council survey.

Distington

The Parish Development and Action Plan 2005-2010 was produced in 2005 with support from the Countryside Agency and Voluntary Action Cumbria. It covers a population of just over 2000 people. Consultation consisted of a questionnaire, a leaflet, open days and a young peoples initiative.

Key issues relating to open space, recreation, sport and leisure included:

- The need for more play equipment and a dedicated toddler park, and for improvements to the Community Centre playing field,
- A need for football and rugby provision for the 5-16 age range was identified,
- The first class rugby facilities in the village were mentioned in the context that no teams are playing there.
- Other sports facilities eg athletics, running track, swimming pool and volley ball were suggested,
- Most activities suggested were outdoor based eg cycling, walking and bowling,
- There appeared to be a demand for ten pin bowling, a gym and for exercise classes.
- The lack of activities for young people and the related issue of anti social behaviour were seen as significant issues in relation to crime prevention.
- Priorities for younger children included upgrading of the Millenium Park (greatest interest) the provision of a skate boarding and roller blading park, a swimming pool and more places to play football together with gym and indoor football facilities and more general places where older kids can congregate under cover.
- For teenagers priorities were similar to those for younger children but with the emphasis being on the freedom to be able to 'do their own thing'. An improvement in transport was also seen as critical for this age group.

The Parish did not respond to the PPG17 survey.

Cleator Moor

The Cleator Moor Area Locality Action Plan was updated in June 2010. The plan covers a population of just over 12,000 from the constituent parishes/town authorities Cleator Moor, Arlecdon and Frizington, Ennerdale and Kinniside, Lamplugh And Weddicar.

Between 2003 and 2005 each of them produced Parish or town plans which were drawn together in 2005 to produce a community strategy. A detailed mini master plan was produced for Cleator Moor in 2004. The current locality plan is an attempt to draw together all the component plans and strategies into a coherent, comprehensive regeneration action plan with the aim of

- Strengthening and redefining the key service centre,
- Broadening the economic base, reducing the dependence on the nuclear industry,
- Addressing rural isolation, social disadvantage and inequality.

The comprehensive plan acknowledges the need for:

- Some improvements to the provision of play areas,
- A bespoke young people's centre in the town,
- Improved outdoor facilities,
- Greenspace development including land for village greens and recreation,
- improved use of the Bowls club outside of the indoor season,

- local sports and outdoor activities to be available for locals and visitors through the development of initiatives on Ennerdale Recreation Field, Keekle Community Park and the Big Hill,

Specific Issues identified in the constituent plans

Arlecdon and Frizington Parish Plan 2005.

- The lack of youth facilities
- The need for more safe play areas particularly in Arlecdon and a youth club in Asby.

Cleator Moor – Parish Plan 2005

- The perceived lack of youth facilities with a number of suggested solutions including, youth clubs, more sports facilities, teen space, more play areas and a skate park.
- The shortage of volunteers to help run youth based activities.

Cleator Moor Community Consultation - 2010

Youth issues accounted for the largest number of individual comments with the main concerns being:

- More and better play facilities,
- Provision of more youth club opportunities,

Cleator Moor response to PPG 17 survey

- Desperate need to upgrade play area and equipment in Jacktrees Road,
- Need more football pitches and better quality changing facilities,
- Need for tennis/netball courts or MUGA ,
- Insufficient areas for teenagers,
- Survey responses have indicated a general need for more green space and play areas for young people.

Ennerdale and Kinniside Parish Plan 2003?

- Several deficiencies in relation to footpaths eg between Kinniside Common and Ennerdale Water,
- The lack of a sports field,
- The availability of accessible facilities for young people.

Ennerdale and Kinniside response to the PPG17 Survey

- Teenagers, the elderly and tourists are the groups whose recreation needs are not currently met,
- There are no suitable spaces for football, cricket or rugby.

Lamplugh Parish Plan 2002

- A recognition that, due to the low numbers of young people, most activities take place outside the parish,
- Concern about the lack of play facilities and the difficulty of accessing the existing Kirkland playground due to the dispersed nature of the settlement,
- Similarly concern about the lack of youth facilities eg youth club,
- The lack of suitable safe transport to access facilities outside the parish (without being reliant on a car) is seen as the major problem.

Lamplugh response to the PPG17 Survey

- The lack of local recreation provision for people of any age group,
- A need for a greater range of safe play equipment in the play area run and maintained by a local voluntary group,
- A lack of footpaths inhibits safe movement across the parish.

Weddicar Parish Plan 2005

- The lack of youth facilities
- Public transport
- Dog fouling
- Litter/poor environment.

Weddicar PPG17 Survey response

- No identified need for new or improved recreational opportunities,
- A need for new children's play and teenage facilities.

St Bees Parish Plan

Produced in 2006 the plan covers a population of just over 1700. A summary of their consultation key findings is detailed below:

- The need for footpath maintenance to the paths from Seamil Lane to the field and beach, on the golf course beach estate and headland path to Fleswick bay and the Dandy Walk.
- An expansion of the cycle network needed.
- A concern over dog fouling of the main beach, and throughout the village including play area,
- The provision of additional facilities or activities at the Adams Recreation Ground,
- Provide improved facilities for young people including better sporting opportunities,

St Bees PPG 17 Survey response,

- The community already use the excellent facilities at St Bees independent school but there is scope for further development,
- The recreation opportunities for older children are limited as the play areas are only provided with equipment for younger children,
- There are insufficient facilities/areas for teenagers.

Egremont – Mini Masterplan 2004,

The mini masterplan, produced in 2004, built on the Market Town Health Check carried out in 2002 and covers a population of nearly 8,000 people. Its main focus is to deliver the interventions needed to secure improvements to the town particularly in relation to its environment and economy.

Issues of relevance to this study include the fact that;

- The town does not have a central civic space
- The Castle area, a key open space resource, needs to be improved,
- There are few green links to the river corridor.
- There are a number of open space/ green space areas that are of landscape importance,

Egremont PPG17 Survey response

- Some community use of schools take place but some are reluctant to allow it further because of the threat of vandalism,
- Young people have limited opportunities in Bigrigg
- The play area in Bigrigg needs improvement,
- There is a need for new/improved play facilities in Moor Row and Bigrigg,
- Young people need to be engaged more in the provision of facilities on their behalf.

Haile and Wilton Parish Plan

The plan was produced, as part of the Vital Village initiative in 2004 and covers a population of around 300 people.

Key issues identified in the plan include:

- The shortage of play space
- The need for more indoor and outdoor sports facilities,

Haile and Wilton PPG17 Study response

- There is a small village hall which could be used for sports activities
- A play area is required as they don't currently have one.

Wasdale Parish Plan 2005

The Parish doesn't have a council but conducts its activities through a Parish Meeting. The unique landscape of Wasdale and the its significance for tourism meant that environmental issues featured strongly in the plan.

Particular issues raised include

- The need for better footpath maintenance and the provision of a footpath connecting nether Wasdale and Wasdale head.

Wasdale PPG 17 Survey response

- Nether Wasdale Old School community hall could be used more for indoor sport if there was enough interest,
- The needs of visiting fell walkers are currently not being met,
- There are still opportunities for improving greenspace at Wasdale Head,
- There is a desperate need for toilet and parking facilities at Wasdale Head,
- The Parish is embarking on ambitious plans to improve the Wasdale Head area and are looking to all organisations including Copeland Borough Council, for assistance.

Muncaster Parish Plan 2007

- Facilities for the under 18s were considered to be inadequate.

Muncaster PPG17 Survey response

- The playpark and sports field at Ravenglass will be refurbished,
- There are no organised leisure activities for young children and teenagers.

Bootle Parish - Community Action Plan 2009

The community consultation carried out as an integral part of preparing the Action Plan identified that:

- There was overwhelming support for more/better leisure facilities, especially a new swimming pool, and a small gym/badminton/squash court.

- The provision of some sort of park/play area/wooded area/pond was suggested as was the addition of a skate park and bike park.
- Existing schools provide essential community facilities,
- The Bootle Station Village Hall and Captain Shaw's should be used more for recreational activities *including a youth club and yoga and fitness classes.*

Bootle PPG 17 Survey response

- Footpath link required for Bootle Station to Bootle.

Waberthwaite and Corney Parish Plan 2004

The Plan, covering a population of 274 people, was drawn up through community consultation and includes the following issues relating to this study:

- There is need for more off road cycleways,
- There is dissatisfaction with the levels of leisure provision for school children, preschool children, mothers with young children and the disabled,
- The lack of provision for teenagers was a particular concern,
- There is scope to use facilities at the school for community purposes,

Waberthwaite PPG 17 Survey response,

- There is scope for using the school and village hall more for community recreation activities,
- A children's play area and teenage areas are needed.

Millom Market Town Health Check and Action Plan 2002

As part of the health check the plan, which covers a population of just over 10,000 people, a consultation exercise was carried out resulting in the following findings of relevance to this study:

- The town is well resourced for sporting activities including access to swimming pools ,
- The Millom School pool is in need of replacement,
- The area lacks a good quality public swimming pool,
- The area has a strong tradition of sporting engagement and supports a number of successful clubs.

Millom PPG17 Study response

- Activities for teenagers are needed,
- The Haverigg play area needs a MUGA, tennis courts and outdoor gym facilities,
- Cycleways need to be improved/developed in the area.

Other individual Parish Survey responses for the PPG17 Study

St Johns Beckermeth

- Schools are already used by the community,
- Activities for teenagers are needed.

Gosforth

- Improvements are being made to play facilities,
- A footpath/cycleway is needed between Gosforth and Seascale.

- Support from Copeland Borough Council is needed in terms of safety inspections for play equipment, grass cutting and equipment update,
- In common with most rural areas of the borough little use is made of council facilities as they are all provided in Whitehaven and transport links are difficult/costly.

Seascale

- A lot of areas are owned by the council which could be enhanced,
- The cricket club changing facilities need to be improved,
- Facilities at the Seascale recreation ground need to be improved,
- A MUGA is needed together with improvements to the play areas,
- A cycleway is needed between Gosforth and Seascale.

Whicham

- Not enough informal open space and a shortage of footpaths/cycleways.

Millom Without

- Insufficient football and cricket pitches.

4.3 Town and Parish Councils – Key Findings

Quantity

- There are considered to be insufficient play areas across the Borough.
- Right across the Borough there is a shortage of activities and facilities for young people
- Some areas have a shortage of footpaths/bridleways/cycleways
- In some areas there are not enough playing pitches, tennis/netball courts and MUGAs.

Quality

- In relation to open space the three most important factors are considered to be the provision of high quality and well maintained facilities; ease of access for all members of the community; and being safe and secure for users
- Dog fouling of open spaces and play areas is seen as a significant problem.

Access

- The remote rural nature of much of the area and related transport difficulties means that as much as possible needs to be provided locally or that opportunities are available to access facilities and activities more readily.

Other Issues

- In the many rural parishes the unique landscape quality of the area and the availability of open space 'on the doorstep' leads to a different approach towards the function of open space; as a result open space provision is generally considered to be adequate.
- Outside of Whitehaven little use is made of Borough Council facilities.
- In relation to sports, traditional sports predominate; there is a lack of facilities/activities available for women; and participation rates are low in the rural areas.

5. Sports and Leisure

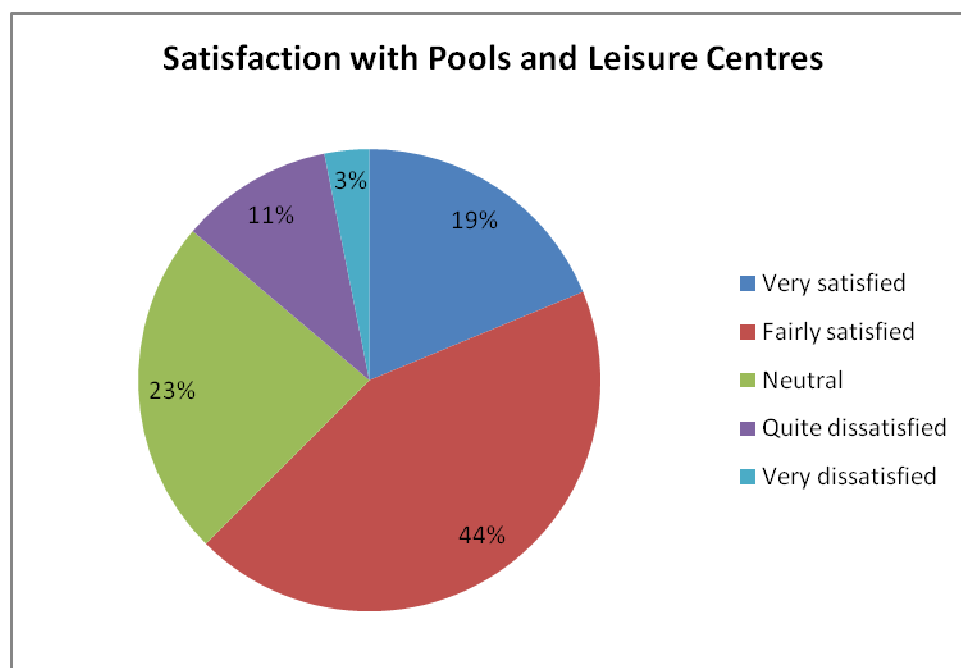
This section contains findings from 4 surveys (general household, community organisations, pitch and non-pitch sports clubs) and issues raised at the two Sport Clubs Focus Groups. The sports clubs surveys were aimed at gaining club specific information in relation to the playing pitch and sports facilities studies. It also includes information gained from the sports related stakeholder meetings. The section summarises some of the general themes and issues from this research.

5.1 General Household Survey

The household survey detailed in Section 2 also contained a number of specific questions related to indoor swimming pools and sports/leisure centres. The main findings are provided below:

Satisfaction with local indoor pools and leisure centres

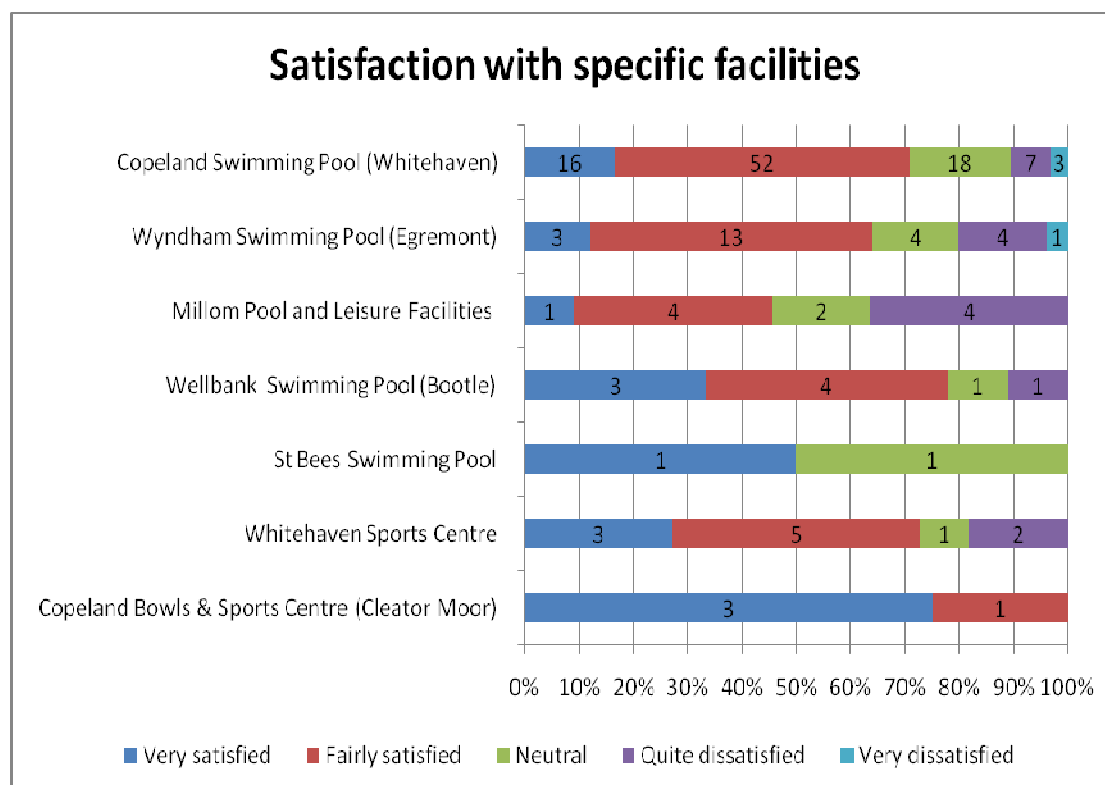
We asked how satisfied residents were with the local indoor pool or leisure facility they most often used. The overall findings are illustrated in the table below:



In general therefore 63% are at least fairly satisfied with the facility they most often use though only 19% say they are very satisfied. 14% say they are dissatisfied with their most used facility.

Specific Pools and Centres

The findings when broken down to the 7 main indoor sports/leisure facilities within Copeland are provided below. Some interesting individual comments relating to these centres can be found in later in the report.



When broken down to individual centres the numbers of responses range from 97 users of Copeland Pool to only 2 users of St Bees Pool, so in the main the findings should be taken simply as a useful “snapshot” of local opinion.

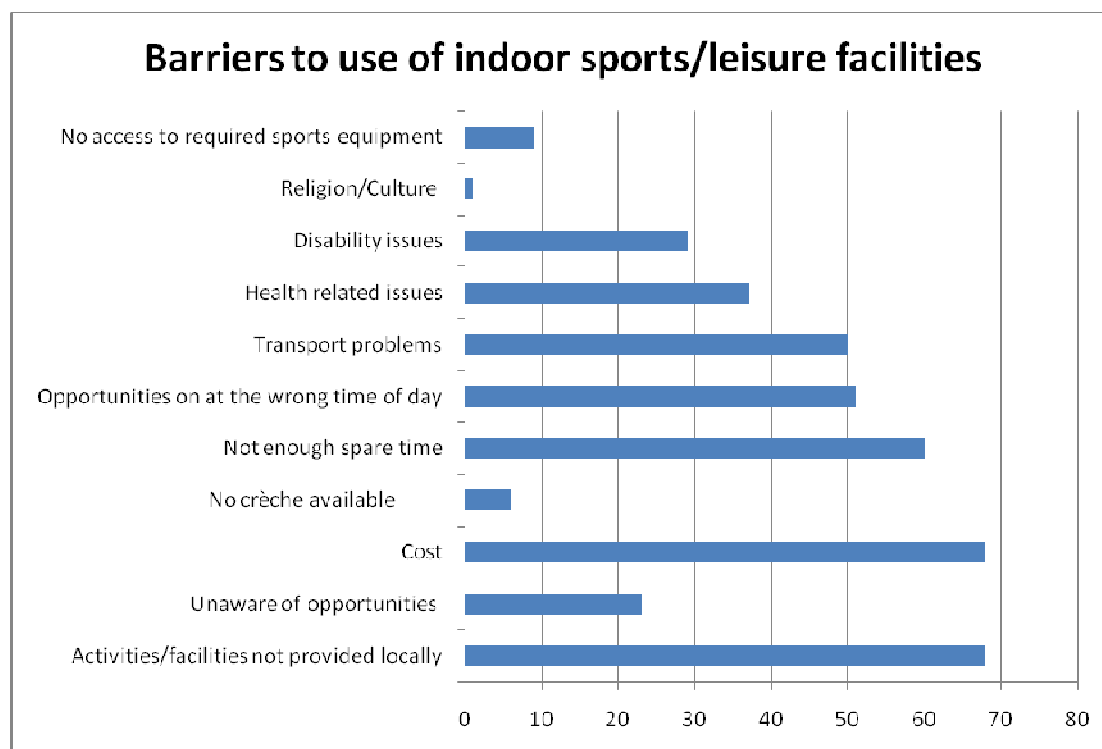
Broadly speaking residents are fairly satisfied with the quality of provision in relation to swimming pools, with the greatest satisfaction shown for Copeland Pool (over 70% are satisfied including 16% who are “very satisfied”) while Millom Pool is the least well regarded by respondents (less than half of users were satisfied with the quality of provision).

Users of Whitehaven Sports Centre and Copeland Bowls and Sports Centre (Cleator Moor) were generally satisfied with provision, though two of the 11 users of Whitehaven Sports Centre reported that they were dissatisfied with the quality of provision.

Only 4 out of a total of 158 users (2.5%) reported being “very dissatisfied” with any of the provision.

Barriers to use

We also asked for reasons why residents do not use the existing indoor leisure facilities and the reasons given are summarised in the chart below:



This showed that the main barriers preventing greater use of indoor facilities were lack of facilities in the local area and cost. Not having enough spare time to use facilities was another key factor⁴.

Other reasons stated by significant number were that opportunities were not being provided at the convenient times (programming issues) and problems with the availability of transport. Other specific reasons given by respondents are provided in Appendix 4.

⁴ SPECIFIC COMMENTS ON FACILITIES ARE PROVIDED IN APPENDIX 3

5.2 Community Organisation Survey

This survey provided views specifically related to sports and indoor leisure facilities as noted below.

In terms of the quality of various kinds of sports and indoor leisure facilities the general views expressed are summarised in the table below:

	Very Good	Good	Average	Poor	Very Poor
Playing fields for football, cricket, rugby		2	6	1	
Tennis/netball courts & outdoor bowling		1	3	4	
Artificial turf pitches			2	2	1
Community halls/centres	1	5	2		
Indoor swimming pools	1	2	3	1	1
Indoor sports/leisure centres	1	4	2	2	
Golf courses	1	2		1	
Outdoor sports eg motor cycle scrambling				3	4
Indoor tennis centres and bowling rinks			2		3

The majority of groups think that generally speaking the Borough's indoor sports/leisure centres and village/community halls are of good quality. The quality of golf courses is also thought to be high by those expressing an opinion. In contrast facilities for outdoor sports such as motor-cycle scrambling are deemed to be poor by the majority.

Playing fields for pitch sports are thought to be of average quality by the majority of groups, but tennis/netball, outdoor bowling facilities and artificial turf pitches are thought by many to be poor.

Specific comments from the organisations relating to sports and indoor leisure facilities are highlighted in the table below:

Category and Comments	Group
Playing Fields, Tennis Courts, Bowling Greens	
Outdoor sports facilities with a 10 mile radius are good and easily accessible.	Exchange Corner NW
There appears to be a lack of tennis courts. I believe maintenance provision for the local bowling green has now ceased	Friends of Egremont Castle
Sports Centre and pool are good	Distington Club for Young People
Sports & Recreation in 'Sensitive Areas'	
Sports and recreation spaces should be appropriate to the individual sensitive areas. The areas should neither be on a residential doorstep nor in the middle of nowhere. It is my opinion that pocket parks/recreation grounds would be ideal.	Exchange Corner NW
We have lots of open space in Cumbria, it should be possible to accommodate motorcycle & quadbike activities in some agreed locations	Friends of Egremont Castle

Category and Comments	Group
If there is no call for facilities in quiet areas and it could damage wildlife, leave well alone.	Distington Club for Young People
Indoor Provision	
Good facilities	Copeland Disability Forum
Local indoor sports provision is very good and easily accessible within our area. They have a variety of open times that they can be used. There are no new indoor facilities that I would like in the area.	Exchange Corner NW
Need to encourage wider use of facilities	Friends of Egremont Castle
The school facilities are the only ones available and you cannot get in unless you pay and are in a sports organisation	S'field and L'Croft T&R Association
Rural Areas	
Community centres and village halls are ideal places to hold keep fit classes, they are cheap and cheerful	Greenbank Community Asscn
Your Own Area	
There are not enough sports facilities which are free of charge or subsidised for children of school age or for low income families.	Exchange Corner NW
There aren't enough facilities free of charge for young people	The Phoenix Youth Project
I am really disappointed with the decision to cancel CAL cards at the end of August, They enabled both young and old to take advantage of all sporting facilities	Greenbank Community Asscn

5.3 Pitch Sports

General

This section summarises the main findings from the consultation undertaken for the Playing Pitch Study. This exercise together with the analysis of existing provision has informed the recommendations in the playing pitch study as well as the proposed standards of provision. The exercise has involved:

- Questionnaire surveys of appropriate sports clubs, governing bodies and leagues.
- Conversations with agencies, groups and organisations considered to be particularly important in informing this study.
- Consultation with and provision of information by council officers.
- A review of relevant information contained in other council documents.

The key issues and observations arising from the consultation exercise are summarised below:

Football - Key points:

- Lack of 3G STPs for football training and competition.
- General lack of (affordable) training opportunities.
- Concern with quality of ancillary facilities on some pitches. Drainage and waterlogged pitches is cited as a particular issue.
- A need for more small-sided grass pitches (both for mini soccer and 9 vs 9, the latter where a full size pitch is not required).
- General perception is that demand is increasing.

Cricket - Key points:

- Pitches and facilities of variable quality.
- Matches are widely spread and travel is a major expense.
- Provision of coaching is expensive.
- Clubs ideally need help with getting facilities and coaching up to an acceptable standard in some respects.
- Schools should be better involved in cricket- few schools currently play and encourage continued interest beyond school hours and years.
- Some decline in membership identified, but other information suggests that membership is holding up.

Rugby (League and Union) - Key points:

- Drainage issues and overuse of pitches.
- Lack of affordable training facilities.
- Overuse of some pitches for training and matches.

Hockey - Key points:

- Hockey in the Borough is in a very embryonic state, with a (junior) club (West Lakeland) at a formative stage, and playing in Cleator Moor.

A club questionnaire survey was conducted, partly to check that information about team and pitch numbers was accurate; but also to provide a richer qualitative contextual dimension to other information obtained.

Other findings:

- Information from respondent clubs suggest that membership is largely composed of players identified as 'white'. The exception to this is cricket where there is a small representation of players identified as being of asian extraction
- Based on club responses most seem to attract the majority of their players from within a mile of their home base. The main exceptions seem to be for some clubs based in rural areas which have wider catchments, which is logical.
- In terms of problems facing responding clubs' future development and growth, the most cited reason amongst football clubs was waterlogged pitches and some poor facilities. Amongst respondent cricket clubs it was variable quality of facilities, lack of adequate coaching networks and insufficient interest within schools. For rugby (both codes) the main issues were centred around overuse of pitches and lack of access to affordable training facilities
- Clubs were asked to identify the three 'Best' and 'Worst' pitches they had played on in the Borough. In terms of the 'Best' pitches the results were consistent with the findings of independent site audits. In terms of the 'Worst' pitches the results are more varied but tend to be public pitches. The pitches identified as being the 'Best' tend to be those managed by clubs.

5.4 Non – Pitch Sports

Ten questionnaires were returned from non pitch sports clubs covering bowls (flat and crown), netball, squash, badminton, martial arts, canoeing, badminton and orienteering.

Membership levels range from around 1,000 (golf –Silecroft) to between 20 and 30 (badminton, martial arts and squash)

A majority of the clubs have or have tried to have links with schools with varying degrees of success and would like to develop those links further. Most see that engagement with schools is fundamental to developing and growing their sport but some are concerned that the current school emphasis on traditional sports restricts the opportunity to improve the variety of sports available and widen participation.

Half of those clubs who responded have specific youth sections, four have the Clubmark and one is working towards it.

Seven clubs report an increasing membership base with three (martial arts, golf and flat green bowls) remaining static.

Barriers to further development are the availability of suitable facilities and the difficulty of securing qualified coaches and volunteers to assist,

North Country Leisure have also identified the problem of finding suitable coaches mainly due to the relatively high wages offered at Sellafeld making work there a more attractive proposition than training to be a coach or sports leader.

Clubs would appreciate consultation when changes to existing facilities or the provision of new facilities are being considered to ensure that their specific needs can be taken into account.

The main problems preventing further expansion of club activities are the lack of suitable volunteers, funding, the cost to members of travelling due to the mainly rural nature of the area and falling membership.

5.5 Focus Group meetings

Two focus group meetings were held for local sports clubs and users, one in Millom and one in Whitehaven, which were attended by 26 people. The notes from the two meetings are provided below:

Copeland South Focus Group (Millom)

Existing facilities (good points)

For a small town, Millom has a relatively good level of sports facility provision:

- Recreation Centre (4 court) plus small fitness suite,
- Pool (albeit not in good condition and not well used by the community),
- Devonshire Road outdoor pitches etc - rugby league (oldest amateur Rugby League club in the world), football and pigeon club,

- Small members gym/health and fitness facility at Rugby Club
- School pitches at the High School (including STP), with large area of grass (though possible flooding) and at Black Combe JS
- 2 private cricket clubs – Haverigg and Millom CC, with high quality well maintained pitches, clubs playing at relatively high level (N Lancs. and Cumbria League)
- Haverigg RUFC – 1 senior rugby, 1 junior rugby and 2 senior football pitches
- Haverigg Prison Officers Club – 1 sports field with changing, main building with squash court (now closed)
- Millom Park which has a MUGA, Tennis courts and Bowls green
- Golf courses in the wider area at Eskdale and Silecroft (latter is part of Cumbria Golf Partnership and working with Copeland SDOs)

There are also smaller facilities in outlying villages, including bowls and football in Bootle, small 'time share' pool at Wellbank (near Bootle), small pools at Underwood Hotel and Brockwood Hotel, Whicham Valley (private but with some public use). Also, Village halls in Thwaites, The Green, Bootle, Waberthwaite with some use by local groups for sport (e.g. wrestling, judo) and various church and other halls in the two main towns

Weaknesses and problems/ means of improving these

- Recreation centre is an important local resource, but requires voluntary effort and limited staff resources to keep it going. Plans are afoot to improve the 'offer' – e.g. upgrade the gym by moving upstairs to an existing balcony and rationalise the changing areas. This appears to conflict with the recent feasibility study for Millom Pool which requires a gym/health and fitness suite to make it viable and sustainable.
- Pool at the school is clearly not fit for purpose and wider public use. There was a feeling (particularly from those representing the views of younger people) that a new rectangular pool in Millom would not be attractive to young people, and that they would continue to visit facilities at Barrow Leisure Pool, which were more attractive - slide, inflatables, etc (there was no representation from the Millom Swimming Group despite the apparent interest in this issue in the town)
- Facilities in Millom are dispersed across a number of sites. In the absence of being able to relocate these, there is some merit in operating and managing jointly to offer economies of scale and cross subsidy of loss making and revenue generating uses. Great need for all organisations to work together in the common good.
- There seem to be enough pitches within the south of the borough but they are not up to a good standard with problems around drainage.
- Parks in Millom offer little sporting opportunities and casual usage is not encouraged – MUGA is substandard, and there are 'keep off the grass' signs deterring kickabouts.
- There was a feeling that although there are in some cases insufficient people available in the catchment to justify additional built facilities (e.g. pool), there is a strength of local effort and independence in the town that warrants a different approach to be taken to facility provision than normal. Millom is isolated and always will be and some special recognition should be made of this in an attempt to make local facility provision more responsive to local demand (albeit smaller in quantitative terms) than an equivalent urban model.

Copeland South – Summary of Main Issues:

- The town has a relatively good level of sports provision and is home to a number of successful clubs,
- The sports facilities are dispersed across a number of sites in the town with varying quality pitches and changing facilities,
- If they can't be grouped together, say at Millom school, there would be some advantage in operating and managing them jointly to secure economies of scale and raise standards,
- There is a need for all the sports related organisation to work together to maximise funding opportunities and raise standards,
- The swimming pool is in poor condition and isn't considered to be well used,
- Attempts have been made over a number of years to secure funding for a new pool,
- Any new pool should be more than a basic rectangular tank to attract young people to use it,
- Parks in Millom offer few sporting opportunities,
- The special situation of the town, its remoteness, its sporting heritage and the local commitment to sport should be given greater recognition when considering levels of provision,
- A realistic view of provision is needed together with a more comprehensive approach towards the management of publicly accessible facilities.

Copeland North Focus Group (Whitehaven)

Existing facilities (Good Points)

- Good points in general – main facilities in Whitehaven are centrally located, and there is generally good access
- Copeland swimming pool – perceived to have a capacity problem, and is very busy at peak times. Specific problem for existing canoe club – restricted to a small number of boats (25), lack of storage, would like to do canoe polo but currently constrained
- St Bees swimming pool - Lack of knowledge of this facility, need to advertise more but they have no money to do this – this will start when more people start to use it, people would use it as you have to travel around Copeland to use facilities anyway
- Sports halls – Whitehaven Sports Centre is considered to fulfil an important function, and the quality of the facility is OK, but there is a heavy reliance on 5 a side football in the programme. Some considered this could be relocated to outdoor facilities, but a feeling that there was little spare capacity elsewhere. Also some users (e.g. young people) particularly in winter require an indoor facility. Gym facilities and circuits are very good and well attended. Squash courts quality ok
- School sports halls available, but again used predominantly by football clubs for training etc. Exam use in December (and presumably May/June) precludes use then. Netball league now using West Lakes Academy as central venue. School halls not available in school holidays.
- STPs – Cleator Moor is considered fully booked for most potential users particularly football and rugby. Hockey club have some usage and would like to become better established. Whitehaven Amateurs STP not considered to represent a community facility, despite conditions of Sport England lottery grant – other clubs have to pay a

premium price to use (£90 per full pitch per hour). There is considered to be a shortfall of STPs

- Climbing wall at West Lakes Academy is under-valued and under used.
- Academy has some good facilities, but there is a lack of awareness of their existence – track is used by athletics clubs, people not aware of pitches/small 3G STP and health and fitness stations. There is also a Nordic walking track there. Lots of great spare land around it which could be use in development

Weaknesses and problems/ means of improving these

General

- Need for all leisure providers (CBC, NCL, schools, other providers) to talk to each other, and coordinate provision and programming. Also applies to the three pool managers – NCL/CBC, Egremont Trust, St Bees School, to ensure that there is a coordinated approach to swimming provision.
- Main centres in separate places – e.g. having a big family that needs dropped off in various places can be a hassle travelling across town
- Facilities need to think who/what are their main users and needs e.g. storage for equipment
- There are lots of indoor halls to use but always fully booked and floors not in good conditions (including school halls). Schools waiting lists are very long and can be on for ages. Indoor halls always team up with 5-side football, badminton due to lack of flood lit areas outside. Can only block book out indoor halls and astro pitches can't do casual usage
- Outdoor facilities seem always booked up and long term
- Need for more STP/AGPs for football training/competitions/etc and for hockey – i.e. need to consider surface. There is little development at present for hockey and a relatively new club with developmental potential. Existing STP at Cleator Moor – lines are 'dangerous'.

Specific

- Athletics track/stadium - No coordination with other sports in the district. Difficult to book facility – Don't know who to contact or the number is hard to get hold of to contact. Hard to ensure someone available to come down and open facility. Unusual sized astro pitch
- Copeland pool - changing is considered adequate, and there is considered not to be a need to improve these, though showers not good. Timetable not a good combination – especially for general swim (for casuals), too busy especially when free swim was on. Ladies only sessions are also very busy – not enough room to swim properly. Pool size not suitable for big canoe sessions and games
- Whitehaven Sports Centre - Squash courts need glass-backed courts. Some quality issues e.g. spinning room and sports hall floor. The environment can be negative – can be too loud at times, very noisy especially when coaching sessions are on and the music can be too loud. No air con when spinning classes are on. Storage for equipment lacking.

Possible future scenarios

Location options if facilities re-located:

- Hensingham – plenty of available land but public transport poor. Would allow synergies between existing pool, stadium, schools etc, better parking and would ease traffic flow into town. Hard to park at pool as no space when busy.
- Town centre location – poor existing parking (lots of parking fines given, nowhere for Whitehaven sports centre users to park free, Morrison's available but you can be fined). Traffic congestion, but better PT, other things to do for family while others use sports facilities. People who work in town centre can use sports centre after work,
- Pow Beck – plenty of land (?), would allow new facilities to be developed to modern and long-term spec, and area is accessible. However PT not good (would need to get the bus company on board to make accessible routes to this area of town)

Copeland North Focus Group – Summary of main issues

- The Copeland pool is perceived to have a capacity problem,
- There is an over reliance on 5 a side football in the Whitehaven Leisure Centre programme,
- The school sports hall is available but again is dominated by football and use is restricted around exam times,
- School halls are not available during holiday periods,
- The Cleator Moor STP is fully booked but there is unmet demand,
- The STP at Whitehaven Amateurs is not considered to be a community facility because of the pricing policy,
- There is a shortage of STP's,
- The West Lake Academy has some good facilities but there appears to be a lack of awareness of their existence,
- There is a need for all leisure providers to work together to coordinate provision and programming and to maximise current capacity,
- There is little development at present for Hockey but increasing interest in it,
- The Copeland netball league is successful and would like to develop further,
- The Lakeland Sprinters Cycling Club considers that they need a purpose built track, which could go with other facilities eg athletics.

Individual comments - Some individual comments from Clubs can be found in Appendix 5.

5.6 Stakeholder Meetings

Individual meetings were held with the following:

- Chris Davidson – Copeland Borough Council Cultural Services
- Eddie Edge – Cumbria Sport
- Kate Mahone – NHS Cumbria
- Steve Chambers – Copeland School Sports Partnership
- Tommy Thompson – Cumbria Sports Academy
- Bob Collins – Copeland Borough Council - Regeneration
- John Maud – North Country Leisure
- Simon Bremer – South Copeland Sports Partnership
- Paul Stewart/Roland Woodward - Millom Network Centre/Millom Pool
- Marion Giles and Julie Forrest – Millom Recreation Centre

Full notes from the meetings can be found in Appendix 6. Some important points raised are summarised below:

- There is no evidence that the lack of sports facilities in the area is constraining the development of sport,
- Accessibility to sports facilities is a common problem in rural areas, current activity rates in Cumbria are low and in Copeland even lower,
- Perceived that the residents of Copeland are not fully convinced of the merits of an active lifestyle,
- There would be some merit in moving all the Whitehaven facilities to one site,
- Sport/active lifestyle has an important role to play in relation to improving health but not enough is being done at present,
- There is no GP referral scheme at present,
- Outreach activities are important in rural areas to stimulate engagement,
- Whitehaven is considered to be good for quality open space but Cleator Moor is less well provided for,
- Investment decisions for existing sports and leisure facilities are being delayed by the uncertainty over the Pow Beck development. A clear decision is needed.
- There is a shortage of opportunities for women in sport,
- There is scope for additional small scale health and fitness facilities,
- Copeland has a strong culture of traditional sport which tends to dominate provision,
- The better use of school facilities and the provision of any new space being linked to existing facilities would help to improve accessibility and choice,
- Cleator Moor lacks an indoor sports space,
- There is considered to be an unmet demand for gym provision in the Whitehaven area and a shortage of space for gymnastics,
- User numbers at the Copeland Pool and the Whitehaven Leisure Centre are increasing,
- Further investment is needed into existing leisure facilities to keep them competitive,
- Sports and leisure provision is fragmented and there is a lack of consistency and duplication of effort in delivering services to the public,
- A comprehensive approach towards facility provision, management and programming is needed that encompasses schools,

- Provision at present is seen to be polarised with the northern part of the borough benefitting from a broader range of better quality facilities,
- The council needs to decide whether a dispersed approach to leisure provision or concentrating everything at a small number of sites would best serve the needs of the residents

5.7 Sports and Leisure - Key Findings

Quantity

- The lack of facilities in rural areas and problems of access.
- A perception that little is available outside Whitehaven/Cleator Moor/Egremont
- The scope for additional small scale health and fitness facilities.
- The shortage of coaches and volunteers; the lack of a GP referral scheme.

Quality

- Inconsistencies of quality of pitches and facilities and management arrangements across the borough.
- The need to refresh existing facilities to improve opportunities and programming.
- The concentration on traditional sports limiting choice in general and opportunities for women in particular.

Access

- A comprehensive approach to provision that fully embraces community use of schools and other facilities to improve programming, choice and the range of opportunities provided across the borough.
- The need for a clear policy re dispersal or concentration of facilities.
- A perception that the needs of residents in the southern part of the district are neglected and that clubs have to work hard to try and fill the gap.

Other Issues

- There is a strong sporting tradition in the Borough
- The lack of a clear policy towards the provision new facilities, particularly in relation to Pow Beck and the Athletics Stadium.
- The apparent fragmented approach towards the provision of facilities. The need for greater liaison and cooperation between all organisations involved in providing sporting opportunities and facilities to maximise funding opportunities, to raise standards of provision and choice.

6. Parks, Natural Green Space and Rights of Way

6.1 Survey of local Community Organisations

Views from the organisations relating to their overall opinion of the quality of facilities across the Borough are summarised in the following table:

	Very Good	Good	Average	Poor	Very Poor
Local recreation grounds or parks		2	3	3	1
Green open spaces (informal)	1	2	4	1	
Footpaths, bridleways, cyclepaths	1	5	2	1	
Local countryside, woodlands etc	1	4	2	1	1
Wildlife areas/Nature reserves	1	3	1		1
Allotments			3	1	

The majority of groups think that in general the quality of publically accessible woodlands and countryside is high as they do of rights of way in the Borough. Wildlife areas/nature reserves and informal green spaces are also thought to be of good quality by many.

In contrast, the majority of groups concur that in general that the quality of parks and recreation grounds across the Borough is no better than average. Many also think that the quality of existing allotments is only average.

Specific comments of relevance to parks, natural green space and rights of way included:

Category and Comments	Group
Parks	
There are enough, but dog fouling should be addressed.	Copeland Disability Forum
Egremont Castle & Park is used primarily as an informal play space and adventure park by the local children, due to the lack of a suitable dedicated play space of their own. This situation leads to damage and excessive wear & tear on a national monument and landscaped park	Friends of Egremont Castle
The 2 parks in Distington are in a poor state, Hinnings Road is dreadful, equipment is in a poor state; Barfs Road equipment needs updating, ground is covered in bark but is not adequate for young children	Distington Club for Young People
Countryside and Wildlife Areas	
Very good.	Friends of Millom Ironworks LNR
Need good links from the cycle path to the countryside	Distington Club for Young People
Footpaths & Rights of Way	
We would like to see more accessible footpaths	Copeland Disability Forum
Footpaths and rights of way are generally well maintained in the local area especially around waterways and cyclepaths.	Exchange Corner NW
We have sufficient footpaths and provision is improving for cycleways. The best way to maintain most of the available footpaths is by greater use. The availability of GPS could encourage more use	Friends of Egremont Castle

Some parts of the cycle path are not well maintained and kept clean, but I do understand this can be difficult for the council with fly tipping, dog fouling, etc.	Distington Club for Young People
Your Own Area	
Our greatest concern is cleanliness of open spaces, especially dog fouling. It makes a disgusting mess of wheelchairs and I'm sure is a health hazard.	Copeland Disability Forum
The Friends of Egremont Castle group and the wider community wish to see the castle and park secure, pristine and tranquil but this aim is in conflict with its use as an adventure playground. The Friends group realise children have no other comparable place to play and therefore struggle to resolve this conflict. Meanwhile Copeland BC sits by doing as little as possible	Friends of Egremont Castle
We are working alongside Home Group to improve the Millenium Park (situated on Barfs Road). The lack of money and participation can sometimes be a concern. The community want the improvements but won't get involved or help because of jobs, time issues, etc	Distington Club for Young People

6.2 Place Survey 2008

The government's 2008 Place Survey was undertaken in all of England's local authority areas and provided information on people's perceptions of their locality and the local services they receive. This included investigating resident's broad levels of satisfaction with local sports/leisure facilities and parks/open spaces. The results from Cumbria are shown in the table below:

	% very or fairly happy with:	
	Sports/Leisure Facilities	Parks/ Open Spaces
Allerdale	40.6	64.5
Barrow	57.9	72.9
Carlisle	42.2	71.6
Copeland	37.7	55.8
Eden	49.5	64.4
South Lakes	43.2	69.2
Cumbria	44.6	67.2
North West	46.4	65.2
England	46.2	68.5

This suggests that Copeland's residents are less satisfied with both their sports/leisure facilities and their parks/open spaces than any other district within Cumbria and also when compared to the North West region and England as a whole.

Oneplace – Audit Commission Review

An Organisational Assessment of Copeland Borough Council was carried out in December 2009 by the Audit Commission.

This identified that according to the 2008 Place Survey many people are not satisfied with the services provided by the council. However 76% of people in Copeland were satisfied with their area as a place to live. This is a similar figure to the rest of the region but lower than the 80% average for England and lower than the Cumbria average of 86%.

When the Council asked people in 2007 what their service priorities were the provision of high quality, clean streets and open spaces was highly placed.

The assessment noted that the Council has achieved high standards for the design and maintenance of its green spaces sufficient to secure 4 Green Flag Awards and 3 Green Heritage Awards in 2008. It recognised that the Council had had to work with the community and meet their needs to secure such awards.

However, more generally it was concluded that the council needed to address communication and community involvement issues as less than a quarter of people in Copeland thought that they could influence council decisions (the lowest proportion in Cumbria).

6.3 Review of the Cumbria Rights of Way Improvement Plan (2007-12)

The Rights of Way Improvement Plan (ROWIP) was produced by Cumbria County Council (the Highway Authority) and key partners. It shows how they plan to improve the network of paths, tracks and other means of public access across Cumbria to meet the needs of the county's residents and its many visitors both now and in the future. In short, it aimed to:

- improve the range and quality of access in key parts of Cumbria to address a shortfall in provision, and to meet higher standards and expectations
- modify some parts of the public rights of way network into a shape and form which fits more closely with modern needs, and links more effectively with other modes of transport
- make parts of the network much more attractive and 'user-friendly' for a wider range of current and potential users, including families and young people, people who don't currently take much exercise, minority groups and people with limited mobility.

The production of the ROWIP involved extensive community consultation in liaison with an ongoing Local Access Forum. This group represents a wide range of interests including users of rights of way and access land, including disabled people, as well as land managers. The process also involved direct consultation with the Borough and Parish Councils as well as interest groups such as The Ramblers and British Horse Society.

The consultation programme and other research showed that users' needs and preferences were very varied, covering:

- the provision and quality of what is needed on the ground, by way of improved surfaces,
- new paths, linked routes and signing
- the areas within Cumbria where some of these things are needed. In particular around towns and settlements
- the supporting information needed to inform users about access facilities such as maps,
- guides and web-based information
- guided and outreach activities which support and encourage wider participation.

General requirements common to many users were discovered to be:

- information on where to go, what to do, and what to expect
- better signing to help users find their way and give them greater confidence in exploring the countryside

- improvements to link-up fragmented parts of the network to make them more attractive
- improved public transport links for walkers and cyclists
- a greater variety of routes for walking, horse riding and cycling (sometimes circular).

It has also produced a 3 year prioritised action plan. The priorities in the Action Plan for 2010/11 (year 2) are listed below. These priorities are the top scoring projects that the County Council and the LAF put into an initial 3 year programme. The County Council have confirmed that the projects below are all planned to be delivered this year.

- St Bees Head Access Improvements
- Harrington
- Drigg bridleways
- Mirehouse West, Whitehaven
- Walkmill Community Woodland
- Longlands Lake
- Occupational Lonnin, Frizington
- Drigg Cross bridleway
- New Mill Bridleway, Ponsonby
- Dent Fell, Cleator Moor
- Woodhouse Footpaths, Whitehaven

We also spoke to David Robinson the Access and Recreation Developer for the Lake District National Park. David provided us with information on priorities for the ROWIP within the national park area of Copeland as outlined below:

Parish	Location	Type of improvement
Lamplugh	Link to Lamplugh Fell	Creation of new bridleway
Ennerdale and Kinniside	Ennerdale northern shore	Surfacing (inc bridges) bridleway (Miles without Stiles route)
Ennerdale and Kinniside	Ennerdale Bridge to Ennerdale Water	Upgrade to bridleway
Ennerdale and Kinniside	Bowness Knott to Char Dub	Surfacing (inc bridges) bridleway (Miles without Stiles route)
Eskdale	Dalegarth to Boot.	Short circular walk - creation of new footpath or cycleway (Miles without Stiles route)
Millom without	High Cross Hill north	Upgrade to bridleway
Millom without	Beckfoot to Bobbin Mill	Creation of new bridleway
Bootle	Eskmeals Viaduct	Creation of new cycle way - family-friendly cycle route (Strategic Cycle Network)
Muncaster	Ravenglass to Saltcoats	Improvements for disabled / less mobile people (Miles without Stiles route)
Bootle	Bootle to Station	Creation of new footpath
Millom without	Part of NCR 72 south of Silecroft	Upgrade to bridleway (Strategic Cycle Network)
Whicham	Annaside to Gutterby	Upgrade to bridleway (Strategic Cycle Network)
St Bridget Beckermest	Calder Bridge to Gosforth	Creation of new cycle way - family-friendly cycle route
Millom without	Hallthwaites off-road footpath	Creation of new footpath
Gosforth	Rowend Bridge to Bleng Bridge riverside link	Upgrade to bridleway
Gosforth	Gosforth to Boonwood	Upgrade to bridleway

6.4 Stakeholder Views

Copeland Council Parks and Open Spaces Section

We met with Ruth Walsh and Richard Mellor from the Parks and Open Spaces Section of the Borough Council. Ruth is the Parks Development Officer and Richard the Landscape Officer. The section has an interest in many key elements of the PPG17 assessment including parks, play areas and teen spaces, allotments, environment, landscape, and woodlands (involving community engagement and liaison relating to all these interests). Their main observations are noted below:

Quantity

Allotments – there are insufficient to meet local needs. The Council manage 143 plots in Whitehaven and Egremont. All sites have long waiting lists (in total there are 150 people on the waiting list). Midgey Ghyll site has an Allotment Association. There are also allotments managed by town and parish councils and these are also oversubscribed. It is important that the PPG17 assessment should supply a standard for allotments as there is a clear shortfall in supply to meet actual, never mind latent, demand.

Play Areas and teen spaces - across the Borough as a whole there are probably too few play areas and teen spaces, particularly in the rural areas. In some places however, there is a need to rationalise e.g. there are currently 2 poor play areas in Distington and a single higher quality play area in a more accessible location would probably better meet local needs.

Whitehaven benefits from public access to a number of good woodland areas, but they are underused given their potential – better access and interpretation would help. There are a growing number of tree wardens across the Borough.

Quality

Four of Copeland's parks and open spaces have Green Flag Awards (Trinity Gardens, St Nicholas' Gardens, Egremont Castle and Distington Crematorium). In addition, Trinity Gardens, St Nicholas' Gardens and Egremont Castle have been awarded Green Heritage Awards (given to parks and open spaces that are managed in a way that promotes and protects the heritage of the sites).

Play Areas and teen spaces - other than those recently re-furbished through external funding e.g. BIG Lottery, many of the play areas and teen spaces are "in decline" and in need of improvement. There is a lack of adequate funds for maintenance and play areas are suffering as a result. Eventually this means some play areas are lost e.g. there are likely to be 2 areas lost this year in Moresby and Distington.

The skate parks in Egremont and Whitehaven are both "tired" and ideally would be replaced (perhaps re-located).

Access

The woodland trust manage 3 sites in Whitehaven and there are partnership projects with the Council e.g. arts development. Better access, publicity, and interpretation would enable more people to visit these sites.

Poor quality, lack of maintenance and the visual appearance of some open spaces are probably the biggest barrier discouraging wider public use.

Some Priorities

- In general, access to, maintenance of and facilities for the public at the beaches and coast needs to be improved.
- At Trinity Gardens it would be good to see improvements e.g. re hard landscaping
- There is still scope for improvement at Castle Park in Egremont

Cumbria County Council – Rights of Way

We met with David Gibson the County Council's Rights of Way (ROW) Planning Officer. The Council are legally responsible for all the rights of way in Copeland but only specifically manage the ROW outside the National Park (the LDNP authority manage these). Relevant issues highlighted are provided below:

Quantity

There are 952 miles of rights of way in Copeland of which 650 miles are within the Lake District national park. In Cumbria only Carlisle has fewer rights of way, though broadly speaking Copeland has a similar mileage per square mile as most of Cumbria with similar numbers of links between town and country.

Quality

The quality of rights of way is very variable. The paths and cycleways forming part of regional and long distance routes is generally good as are the paths that have benefitted from funding as a result of planning gain related to development around the towns and ex-industrial area. In other areas funding is very limited and as a result the County are often only able to maintain the "legal minimum" i.e. ensuring ROW are not blocked (are passable) and that they are signed from all road crossings. Sometimes local funding from Borough and Parish councils has enabled improvements over and above this.

Access

The Council ensure that all ROW are signed from road crossings so that the public can easily identify them. David thought that traditionally ROW into the Countryside and to the Coast were under-used by local people and felt there was a need to promote them more widely to encourage access by a wider range of local users.

The Council were actively involved in promoting the value of walking and cycling and the use of ROW in relation to their benefits to health, and to encourage community involvement. They were also keen to encourage walking, cycling and horse riding for disabled and less fit members of the community. To aid this they are currently auditing the ROW network in terms of suitability for varying levels of fitness and ability. This is being fed into a web-based GIS system which will be available to the general public. Every ROW will be colour coded to reflect ease of use (factors would include, for example, stiles/kissing gates, gradient, surface quality, steps etc). This would enable users to devise their own routes at an appropriate level to their ability and fitness.

Priorities

The County Council's main priorities for ROW improvements and developments can be found in the ROW Improvement Plan (ROWIP)

Other Issues

The Council wish to have wider community involvement in relation to the ROWIP in the future and a pilot community-based approach has recently been completed in Allerdale. If this proves a success the intention is to roll out this approach across Cumbria as a whole.

Cumbria County Council – Environmental Planning

We met with Richard Newman who is the County Council's Environmental Planning Manager (Cumbria –wide). Richard's role carries a number of responsibilities relevant to the PPG17 study including Commons registration, village greens, heritage sites, biodiversity, woodlands, and specifically Millom Local Nature Reserve for which the County Council have management responsibility. Richard's comments are summarised below:

Quantity

- In terms of publically accessible countryside and environmental/nature areas Copeland is comparable to other areas of Cumbria – i.e. it is quite well off.
- The Coastal strip is also a valuable asset.

Quality

- Management of urban open space in general would benefit for a more varied regime better suited to biodiversity – too much close cropped grass, for example.
- Lillyhall is an example of a missed opportunity in relation to open space management for diversity
- Millom Ironworks LNR - The reserve forms part of the larger Duddon Estuary Site of Special Scientific Interest and is a real asset for Copeland
- The coastal strip is not well managed as regards public access and associated facilities – much more could be made of this valuable asset
- More could be made of Egremont Castle (Ancient Monument) as regards management and public access
- Whitehaven port and mine are very attractive and well maintained public open spaces
- Wooded areas – an asset around Whitehaven – are not as well managed as they could be – they seem to be underused re public access.

Access

- The publically accessible coast and natural countryside areas around the towns do not seem to be well used by many local people. This seems to be more a matter of cultural or attitudinal habit than physical barriers to access. Local promotion, publicity, information and education (e.g. guided walks from local schools) are needed to overcome this.
- Clear signing of routes from the urban areas to the countryside would help and more linking up of urban paths and countryside rights of way would be beneficial in promoting wider access.

- Good maintenance of key access routes from town to countryside would also be good.
- Identification and development of safe cycle routes from town into country might encourage greater access to the countryside.

Some Priorities

In terms of local projects, developments and management of Millom Ironworks LNR (involving the local community) is the main priority for Cumbria CC Environmental Planning

Natural England

Natural England have proposed standards for the provision of natural green space called the Accessible Natural Green Space ANGST standard. Some of their main interests in PPG17 studies are noted below:

Quantity

Natural England like to see the ANGST standard used as a starting point for natural green space standards but reviewed in the light of local circumstances e.g. to determine what Xh/a per 1000 is appropriate for Copeland (or sub areas).

Natural England suggests that the catchment/access element of standards is probably more important than quantity from their point of view. They recommended that studies should think about the specific demographics of the area and how this might affect standards. Could standards reflect this e.g. for play Xh/a per 1000 children rather than general population? They emphasise the importance of being clear about the evidence base upon which standards are being proposed (i.e. what is the justification for varying from the ANGST standard?).

Quality

Some key aspects of quality for Natural England are:

- “Natural-ness”
- Connectivity
- Accessibility (physical and psychological)
- Multi-functional e.g. one area of woodland can perform many functions
- Interpretation/signage etc. and appropriate “infrastructure” – benches, gates etc

In looking at local needs and implementation of standards Natural England suggest that it is important to note that the “shape” of the allocation for semi-natural green can just as easily be a long corridor than a “field” type shape.

Access

Key points from the Natural England perspective include:

- Geographical access should be in line with the catchment element of standards
- Practical easy access onto and routes to sites are important
- Important to have community engagement to encourage use of sites
- Consider psychological and cultural barriers to use of natural space/countryside e.g. BME/ need for education

- Ensure disability access wherever possible
- Importance of publicity and promotion so that people are aware of where sites are and how to get to them
- Importance of connectivity planning
- Permissive access from urban fringe are important
- Need to make links with the Rights Of Way Improvement Plan

6.5 Parks, Natural Green Space and Rights of Way - Key Findings

Use

- The countryside, woodlands and natural green open spaces are the most commonly used open spaces by local people. Footpaths, bridleways and cyclepaths are the spaces most likely to be used almost every day.
- Nearly 40% of residents use local recreation grounds or parks at least once a month. Over 35% of users visit parks and recreation grounds at least fortnightly.

Quantity

- The majority of residents think Copeland has enough publically accessible parks, countryside facilities and rights of way.
- Whitehaven benefits from public access to a number of good woodland areas.
- There are insufficient allotment plots to meet current demand
- The Coastal strip is a valuable asset to Copeland.

Quality

- Four of Copeland's parks and open spaces have Green Flag Awards (Trinity Gardens, St Nicholas' Gardens, Egremont Castle and Distington Crematorium). In addition, Trinity Gardens, St Nicholas' Gardens and Egremont Castle have been awarded Green Heritage Awards.
- Many other parks and recreation areas are of quite poor quality. The Place Survey shows that a significantly lower percentage of residents in Copeland are satisfied with parks and open spaces than any other district within Cumbria.
- Cleanliness and a lack of litter and graffiti; being easy to get to by all members of the community; and ensuring sites feel safe and secure are highlighted by residents and stakeholders as the most important issues in relation to the quality of parks and open spaces.
- Management of urban open space in general would benefit from a more varied cutting regime better suited to biodiversity – too much close cropped grass, for example.
- The quality of rights of way are very variable across the Borough.
- The paths and cycleways forming part of regional and long distance routes are generally good as are the paths that have benefitted from funding as a result of planning gain related to development around the towns and ex-industrial area.
- In other areas funding is very limited and as a result the County Council are often only able to maintain the "legal minimum" i.e. ensuring ROW are passable) and that they are signed from all road crossings.

Access

- There is a need to promote initiatives to encourage greater community access to and use of the coastal area in an appropriate way.
- The publically accessible woodlands around Whitehaven are underused given their potential – better access and interpretation might help.
- Identification and development of safe cycle routes from town into country might encourage greater access to the countryside.
- Poor quality, lack of maintenance and the visual appearance of some open spaces are probably the biggest barriers discouraging wider public use.
- The need for enabling easier physical access to parks and the countryside for disabled people has been highlighted by many stakeholders.

Priorities/Other Issues

- Natural England stress the need to take into account the ANGSt standard as a starting point for developing a standard for natural and semi-natural green space. Variation from this standard should be justified
- The Rights of Way Improvement Plan highlights many priorities for footpaths, cycle routes and bridleways.
- It is important to promote the value of walking and cycling and the use of open spaces and rights of way in relation to their benefits to health, and to encourage community involvement.

7. Concluding Remarks

The survey work, stakeholder consultation, and desk-based review of existing studies detailed above has highlighted a very wide range of issues of value both to the PPG17 study as well as the associated playing pitch and sports facility strategies. From our analysis we are confident that the report provides reliable evidence of community need and provides a robust assessment in relation to PPG17. When this research is combined with the findings from the facilities and access audit the overall study can be seen to provide a strong basis to analyse supply of facilities against demand/need in relation to the Borough PPG17 assessment and the derivation of appropriate local standards.

In terms of the PPG17 study, some overall points of interest include:

- The relative popularity (usage) of various forms of informal open space and rights of way in comparison with formal sports facilities though the latter tend to be used by a smaller percentage of the population on a regular basis.
- The remote rural nature of much of the area and related transport difficulties means that as much as possible needs to be provided locally or that opportunities are provided to access facilities and activities more readily.
- The importance of village and community halls for indoor recreation, particularly in the rural areas.
- In parts of the Borough there are insufficient allotment plots to meet current demand
- The importance placed by local people on measures to improve safety and security
- The need when planning for all types of recreation opportunity to take into account people's preparedness to travel, and requirement for different types of space. For children and young people this means easy access by foot/cycle.
- Problems faced in accessing facilities and opportunities for people with disabilities and limited mobility.
- There is a need to promote initiatives to encourage greater community access to and use of the coastal area in an appropriate way.
- The publically accessible woodlands around Whitehaven are underused given their potential – better access and interpretation might help.
- Poor quality, lack of maintenance and the visual appearance of some open spaces are possibly the biggest barriers discouraging wider public use.

Some other important factors that have been highlighted consistently through the consultation exercise include:

- The need for improved provision in terms of both quantity and quality for children and young people, in particular for the older age range.
- A degree of dissatisfaction in parts of the Borough with the quantity and quality of sports pitches and ancillary facilities (in particular for football).
- The potential for more and better cycling and footpath links across the Borough (a shortage of bridleways and cyclepaths).
- The need for accessibility in both physical and cost terms.
- The need for improved publicity and promotion of what is available.
- The need for more affordable access to indoor facilities for low-income households
- The potential for greater community use of school facilities.