

Copeland Borough Council



Copeland PPG17 Study & Leisure Strategy

PART 1a: OPEN SPACE ASSESSMENT

Final Report April 2011

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Acknowledgments

Many individuals, groups and organisations have provided information, views and support in preparing this study. Input from these stakeholders is fundamental to the report, and provides the basis for the evidence in supporting the standards, options and recommendations in relation to open space, sport and recreation facilities.

Base maps used in this report are copyright of Ordnance Survey.

Glossary of Terms

Term	What it means
ANGSt	Accessible Natural Greenspace Standard
ASBO	Anti Social Behaviour Order
DDA	Disability Discrimination Act
DPD	Development Plan Document
Extended Schools Initiative	A national government initiative encouraging the 'opening up' of schools to generate greater use beyond traditional hours and years
LAP	Local Area for Play
LDD	Local Development Document
LDF	Local Development Framework (a component of the revised statutory land use planning system)
LEAP	Local Equipped Area for Play
MUGA	Multi Use Games Area
NEAP	Neighbourhood Equipped Area for Play
NPFA	National Playing Fields Association
OS,S&R	Open Space, Sport and Recreation
QUANGO	Quasi Autonomous Non Governmental Organisation
Schools for the Future (BSF)	A national government redevelopment programme (based on the Private Finance Initiative) that has the aim of renewing aging school complexes throughout the country.
SPD	Supplementary Planning Document
STP	Synthetic Turf Pitch

1.0 INTRODUCTION

This report is part 1 of a wider PPG17 study of open space, sport and recreation facilities and Leisure Strategy for Copeland Borough. The study is split into 3 main parts:

- Part 1a)** An assessment of open space across the Borough;
- Part 1b)** Local analysis of open space by localities and wards;
- Part 2)** Playing Pitch Strategy
- Part 3)** Leisure Strategy

Whilst each of the reports can act as ‘standalone’ documents, they are all informed by each other, and are a result of a joined up approach to their development.

1.1 Scope of the study

The overall aim of this study is to undertake research, analyse and present conclusions meeting the requirements of ‘Planning Policy Guidance Note 17: Planning for Open Space, Sport and Recreation’. The study follows the 5 key stages of PPG17:

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

1.2 Format of Report

The report is presented in two parts, which are interlinked and should be read together. Part 1 of the report provides the main findings of the study in relation to open space, with part 2 providing supporting information to this at a local level in the form of area profiles.

A study of this size and nature inevitably produces vast amounts of information, it is the intention of all parts of the report to be clear and concise, therefore each part is supported by more in-depth appendices and supporting information as required.

Part 1a: Main Report

- Outline of the methodology used in the study (Section 2).
- Summary of key local policy of relevance to this assessment, and some of the implications (Section 3).
- Review of the results of relevant surveys and consultation into local needs (Section 4).
- Presentation of an overview of the different types of open space across the Borough (Section 5).
- Justification for the proposed ‘Copeland Standards’ for open space (Section 6).

- Application of the standards (Section 7).
- Strategic options and recommendations (Section 8).

Part 1b: Locality Profiles

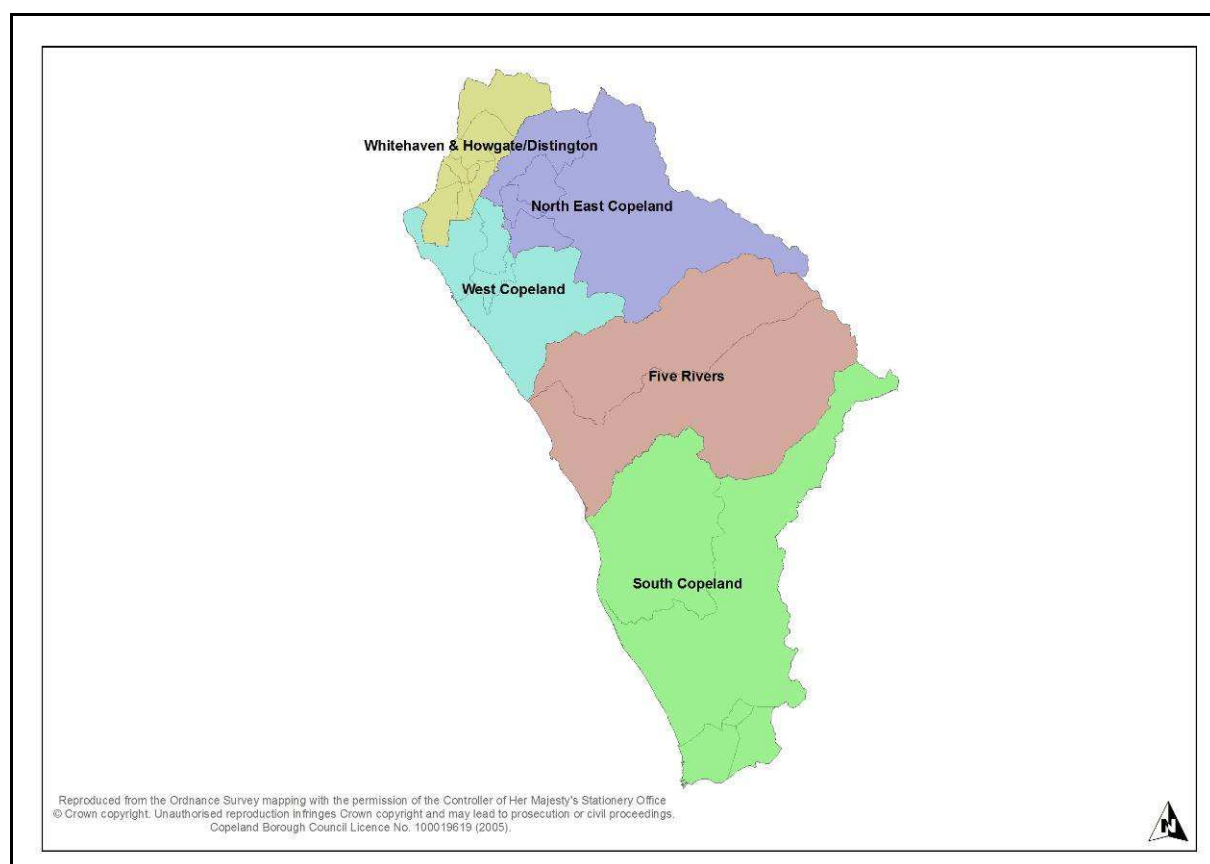
Many of the facilities that are covered by this report will serve *local needs* and therefore have *local catchments*. Play areas and nearby parks are obvious examples of such opportunities.

Copeland has been split into 5 localities (see map below) which are intended to be a key way of engaging with local people and other organisations and partnerships that operate in the area. This study includes 5 area profiles based on each of these localities which include the following:

- A description of the area;
- Any consultation information that is specific to that area;
- Maps showing the location of all the open space within each locality and each ward;
- Maps showing the application of the access and quantity standards for open space across the locality;
- Any specific issues related to the quality of open space in that area;
- Key strategic options for that area.

Note: The boundaries of the localities in this report do not exactly match Copeland Borough Council localities. This is because they have been drawn to align with ward boundaries for this study to enable us to make calculations using accurate population figures.

Locality Boundaries - Copeland



Copeland - an overview of the area

The borough of Copeland is in the western Lake District area of the County of Cumbria, the most north-western Borough in England. It is an area of wonderful physical beauty and diverse culture and character. The borough covers an area of 284 square miles, two thirds of which are in the Lake District National Park. The rural fringes and sections of coast, including the St. Bees Head Heritage Coast, are of exceptional landscape value.

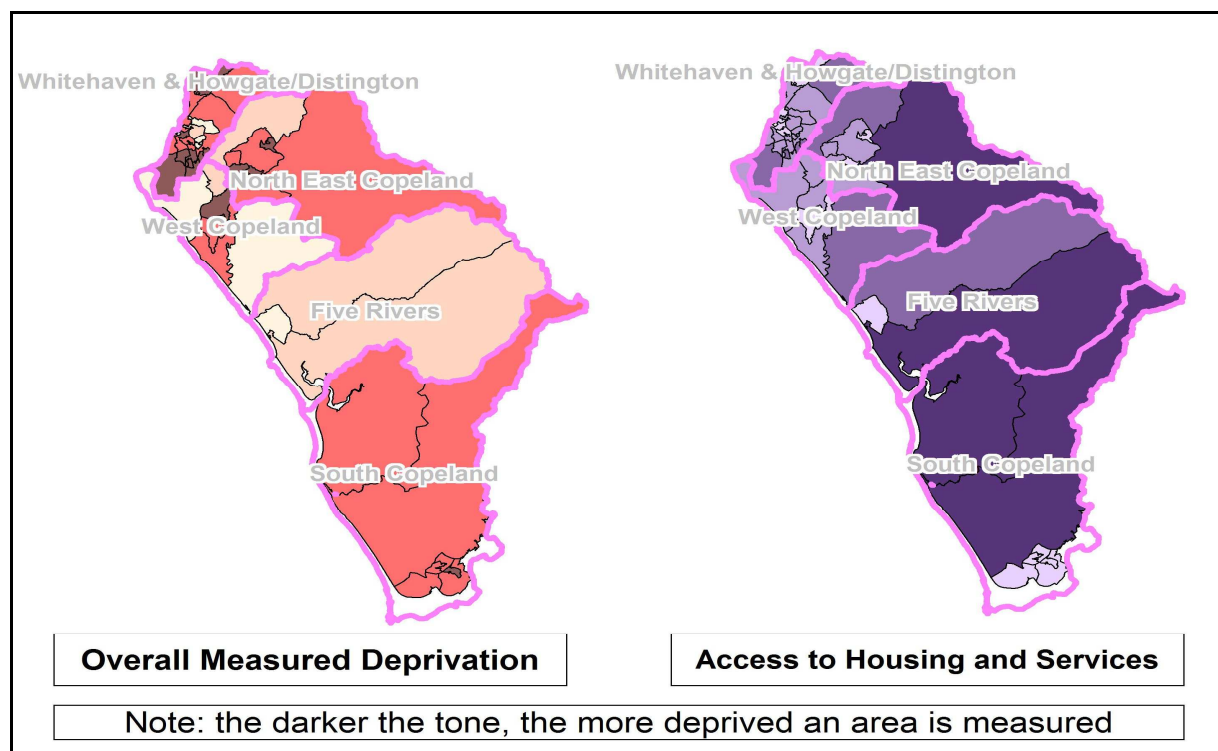
This document seeks to aid the continued maintenance and development of this environment by carefully identifying all greenspace provision within the Borough. This information will aid Copeland Borough Council when compiling strategic maintenance plans for the future development and control of greenspace in the Borough.

There are also many areas of wildlife and conservation significance within the Copeland Borough and accessibility from the urban areas is fairly easy affording opportunities for walking, cycling, horse riding, picnicking and quiet enjoyment. However, many leisure developments would be likely to destroy the very tranquillity which makes such areas attractive thus development in the best areas of countryside will be limited only to those facilities such as small car parks and public transport facilities, information panels, picnic areas and toilets which support low-key, informal recreation.

This outlines the importance of establishing a holistic overview of the current greenspace provision within the Copeland Borough. Whilst national and regional objectives must be met, it is fundamental to ensure that provision does not adversely affect the most vulnerable environments within the Borough, which must be preserved for future generations to enjoy.

The Borough covers an area of 737 km² with four principal settlements of population: Whitehaven, Egremont, Millom and Cleator Moor. Smaller settlements include:

- Arlecdon/Rowrah
- Beckermeth
- Cleator
- Distington
- Frizington
- Haverigg
- Kirkland/Ennerdale Bridge
- Lowca/Parton
- Moor Row
- Moresby Parks
- Seascale
- St Bees

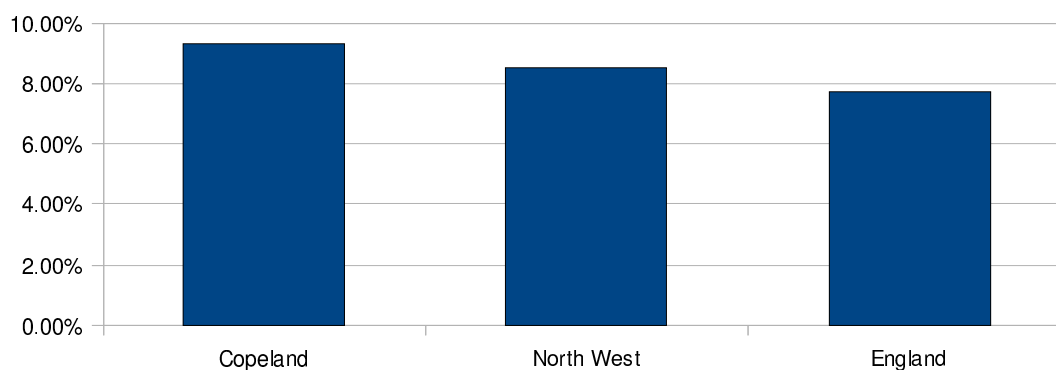


Most of the population is concentrated in the north-west and south parts of the Borough. The central part of the Borough is sparsely populated and very isolated. There is an overall population of 69,700 people (2009 mid year estimate) which equates to a population density of 94.57/ km².

In terms of official deprivation statistics the Borough is ranked 72nd out of 353 local authorities in England (with 1 being the most deprived)- this puts the Borough just outside the 20% most deprived of local authority areas, when measured in these terms. The Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) is made up from a basket of individual scores and indicators covering a variety of socio-economic factors. The maps below show that in terms of the overall measure it is primarily parts of the largest settlements in the north which are deprived. However, when looking only at the measure for 'Access to housing and Services' (a reasonable measure of 'isolation') it is the rural areas which score worst.

Many of the rural areas suffer from different problems arising from poor access to services and facilities generally taken for granted in the larger settlements.

The Borough has quite high unemployment levels, because of a structural decline in traditional local industries. The chart below expresses unemployment as a percentage of the economically active. As can be seen the unemployment rate in the Borough is significantly higher than the regional or national average.



Unemployment levels

Many of the parishes on the north-west coast are part of 'The Cumbrian Coast Line', a railway which links Carlisle in the north to Barrow-in-Furness in the south. The route has a large and memorable diversity of scenery, ranging from pastoral landscapes between Carlisle and Maryport to industry and energy, changing coastal scenes and wide river estuaries to the south of the line. Tourist attractions exist at Maryport, Carlisle, Whitehaven and Barrow.

Many areas served by the railway are recognised as pockets of social and economic deprivation. The energy industry, centred upon the nuclear facility at Sellafield, remains the prime economic driver for West Cumbria. Stations on the Cumbrian Coast railway are a mixture of remote rural stations and those serving the larger West Cumbrian populations. Villages and towns included in the study area which have stations on the line include: Parton, Whitehaven, St Bees, Seascale, Bootle and Millom.

Copeland's Vision

Copeland Borough Council's vision is to: "*lead the transformation of West Cumbria to a prosperous future*". Copeland is a council committed to developing a prosperous, safe and sustainable future for its inhabitants, listening to and working with local people, leading and shaping existing and developing communities and working in partnership to ensure quality and cost effective services.

Within its vision, Copeland has based its aims and objectives around 3 core themes, these include:

- **Leadership:** Shaping the agenda; providing clear direction; contributing to change; representing the interests of the community; ensuring a positive image of Copeland Borough Council within the community.
- **Transformation:** *Internal* - significant, step change; effective improvement; customer focussed; fit for purpose to manage change. *External* - significant transformational change; achieving a 'new' Copeland.
- **Prosperity:** Strong and varied economy; good quality of life; opportunity; inward migration and investment; achieving neighbourhood renewal.

These key themes are intended to inform and direct all the Borough Council's activities.

A Collaborative Approach:

The council is keen to promote the unique landscape of Copeland via marketing and education, not only for the benefit of the local residents of Copeland but also visitors to the area. The Open Spaces Department is constantly looking to improve links and partnerships between town & parish councils, schools, private businesses and community groups not only as an advisory capacity but also as a mechanism which implements new landscaping schemes.

The council wishes to help ensure that the time people spend in their parks is safe and enjoyable with the facilities being presented to as high a standard as possible. They aim to provide a full landscape management service that involves installation and maintenance of new play areas, fencing, pathways and hard and soft landscaping schemes.

By undertaking this research the council is increasing the ability of the various parishes within Copeland to take a collective approach to their greenspace management. In addition, the council is able to transfer resource where appropriate in order to ensure that supply and demand is effectively managed.

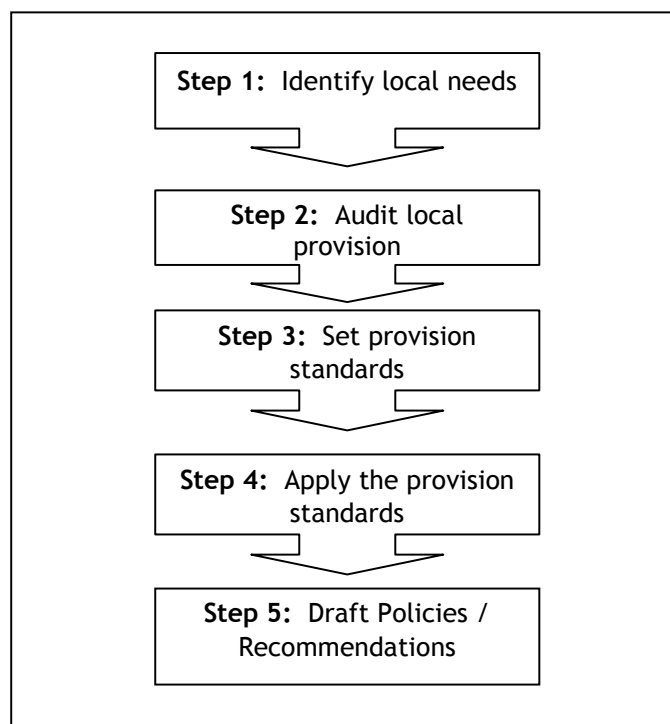
2.0 SUMMARY OF METHODOLOGY

2.1 General

The starting point for this study has been the government's Planning Policy Guidance Note 17 'Planning for Open Space, Sport and Recreation' (PPG17), and its Companion Guide "Assessing Needs and Opportunities". PPG17 places a requirement on local authorities to undertake assessments and audits of open space, sports and recreational facilities in order to:

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

The Companion Guide to PPG17 recommends an overall approach to this kind of study as summarised below.



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

2.2 Identifying Local Need (Step 1)

The extent of the local needs assessment undertaken reflects the breadth and diversity of the study and a consequent need to engage with as wide a cross section

of the community as possible. The needs assessment drew upon a range of survey and analytical techniques. It is based on three main approaches:

1. A review of existing information, relevant plans, strategies and policies;
2. Primary research through questionnaire surveys;
3. A programme of stakeholder meetings with key agencies and organisations.

The result of this consultation and other analyses will help amongst other things to inform the content of the recommended local standards as well as possible priorities and actions for inclusion in action plans and subsequent sports, green space and play strategies. 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.

The key findings of the Local Needs Assessment are provided in Section 4, and more detailed findings are provided in appendix 1.

2.3 Site Audits and Assessment (Step 2)

The audit of open space has included an assessment of 424 open spaces across the Borough. Section 5 includes information on how sites were selected for inclusion within the audit. All these open spaces have been 'mapped' using a Geographical Information System (GIS).

The method for assessing individual open spaces involved the following:

- 1) A site visit to each open space to determine its typology and to score 'quality' in relation to a wide range of criteria, based on the green flag assessment¹ including:
 - Access
 - Welcoming
 - Design
 - Management and maintenance
 - Community involvement
 - Healthy, Safe and Secure
 - Natural Features & Biodiversity
 - Value
- 2) Where present, specific assessments were made for Active Recreation Facilities and Play Facilities.
- 3) Each of the criteria were given a score from 0 - 5 (0 - N/A, 1 - very poor, 2 - poor, 3 - average, 4 - good, 5 - very good).

¹ The green flag award is the national standard for parks and green spaces in England and Wales (www.greenflagaward.org.uk)

- 4) A scoring of each site's 'potential' to improve with regard to the various criteria, resulting in a 'Gap' score (i.e. the difference between the overall 'Quality' and 'Potential' Scores.)

2.3.3 Analysis

Analysis of data collected has included the following:

- Mapping and analyses of provision using Geographic Information Systems (GIS).
- Examining and interpreting the findings of the site/facilities audit.
- Examining and interpreting the findings of consultation (including various questionnaire surveys, focus group/workshops etc).

The analysis forms the basis for the setting and application of standards of provision.

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

Central Government planning guidance states that local planning authorities should set justified local standards, with three components, embracing:

- Quantity.
- Quality.
- Accessibility.

This report sets, justifies and applies standards for a range of open space, sport and recreation facilities.

Section 6 sets out and justifies the recommended new local standards. The section explains existing local and national standards and relevant guidance, and explains whether or not this might be used as a basis for developing local standards.

The new local standards are applied to the existing audit information (**section 7**), with more detailed information with regards to open space provided within the Area Profiles (Part 1b).

Section 8 outlines strategic options and recommendations for open space in Copeland.

3.0 POLICY AND STAKEHOLDER CONTEXT

3.1 Introduction

This section is delivered in two parts, the first provides a review of relevant policies, and the second considers the role and input of ‘key stakeholders’.

- **Policy review.** The PPG17 companion guide identifies the importance of understanding the implications of existing strategies on the study. Specifically, before initiating local consultation, there should be a review of existing national, regional and local plans and strategies, and an assessment of the implementation and effectiveness of existing planning policies and provision standards.
- **Stakeholder analysis.** As part of this study, a wide ranging review of the various agencies, organisations and interests involved in Open Space, Sport and Recreation in Copeland has been undertaken. Their input and role in relation to open space, sport and recreation is outlined.

3.2 Policy Review

3.2.1 Corporate Plan 2007 - 2012

Within its corporate plan, Copeland Borough Council highlights three key aims to help move the borough forward. One of these aims is the need to ‘promote prosperity’ in the Borough. The council identify key components to increasing prosperity as; improving leisure and culture and promoting healthy living.

The analysis in this document goes some way to help meet these goals, by offering a comprehensive analysis of greenspace and sports facilities for the whole of Copeland. This detailed information will not only enable the council to strategically plan its investment into the continued maintenance and development of its parks, natural green spaces and leisure facilities. In addition, it will ensure that the provision of these facilities is spread evenly throughout the borough, by identifying areas which need increased sports leisure provision moving forward.

From 2010, Copeland Borough Council plan to increase tourism, culture and leisure spend through the borough and subsequently increase the number of jobs supported by the tourism, culture and leisure sector by 5% per annum. By identifying key areas for improvement in terms of their greenspace and leisure capacity the council can help to achieve these targets year on year.

By 2012, the council also aim to have a strategic framework established to encourage people to participate in active lifestyles. This includes increasing the number of ‘Parks Friends’ groups, improving on the number of health related cultural activities and increasing the use of council supported leisure facilities, especially by target groups such as the young, elderly, women and disadvantaged. This document forms an essential part of this framework, providing a sound baseline on which to develop robust policy and structured practical solutions.

3.2.2 Copeland Borough Council Health Strategy

The Health Act 1999 places a statutory duty on local authorities to work together with the NHS and other organisations working in-field to improve the health of communities. Through its own services which include leisure, parks, arts, sports and grant giving activities the council can directly influence people's health.

Locally, the people of Copeland are subject to health inequalities when compared with the national average across a wide range of indicators, therefore, the council's 'Health Strategy' is structured to reflect the national strategy, whilst focusing on local issues, using the governments six priorities as the starting point.

The council is directly or through work with partners ensuring that leisure activities are available to all sections of the community, supporting physical and mental health improvements. In addition, residents are being encouraged to become more physically active, particularly the young and those with weight related ill-health.

By undertaking the green space analysis for Copeland, the council are seeking to identify all potential areas for further maintenance development and in-line with national health guidelines, ensuring that there is a fair and accessible spread of leisure activities available to all of its residents moving forward.

3.2.3 Copeland Play Strategy

"We want children and young people in Copeland to be able to take part in and enjoy play in all its forms in their local communities. We will ensure that children and young people have access to a range of good quality facilities, opportunities and environments that stimulate free play."

The 'Play Strategy' for Copeland is in accordance with guidance notes produced by the 'Children's Play Guidance' - Planning for Play (guidance on the development and implementation of a local strategy). It supplements the existing Copeland Play Strategy 'Children's Outdoor Play Area & Teen Space Strategy for Copeland 2003-2008' by providing a review of current and future needs in light of changing national and international children and young people policies.

These policies include:

- The present policy of phasing out existing play areas as they become unsafe be extended and a long term programme devised to ensure that eventually all major areas with a concentrated population be served by a strategic play area, with particular emphasis on Wards identified as having the highest incidence of deprivation and in which a shortfall in play area provision can be demonstrated
- The phasing out of smaller play areas be continued as they become unsafe
- Major maintenance projects be funded as future capital projects or a nonrecurring revenue bid
- Open sites, where appropriate, in or near housing estates be designated as open play areas after consultation with the relevant parties

- Increased support for parish councils regarding equipment conditions and purchase.

The provision of open space and play areas is aimed at achieving the National Playing Fields Association standard of 2.4 ha per 1000 population. There has not been a comprehensive survey of all the facilities in the Borough since 1995 so this is an area which requires some attention to ensure the target is met in accordance with PPG17 as part of the Local Development Framework.

This document essentially meets this objective, and forms a fundamental component in helping to develop upon the policy goals outlined in the play strategy. By mapping existing provision and quality of play and sports facilities currently available, the successful identification of areas for improvement becomes easily achievable. In addition, establishing a holistic picture of play provision can help ensure successful future targeting of available funds.

3.2.4 Parks & Open Spaces

Copeland Borough Council's Parks Department was formed in 2001 as a result of the 'Best Value Performance Review'. The Parks Team is fully committed to the delivery of high quality parks provision, whilst providing an efficient and cost effective service that focuses on the needs of its customers. This commitment was recognised by the Association of Public Service Excellence (APSE) National Awards when the parks team was assessed as the overall winner of APSE Best Parks Service Team of 2008 and APSE Best and Most Improve Performer of 2008.

Through working in a partnership approach with internal and external departments and agencies, the Parks Team aim to ensure that the government agendas are delivered and achieved to the highest quality and standard. These aspirations are realised and measured through a number of strategic partnerships.

The range of services the Parks Department delivers, often in partnership with friends groups and educational organisations, includes:

- Public Parks & Nature Conservation Areas
- Bereavement Services including the Management of Distington Crematorium
- Cemeteries Closed Churchyards
- Children and Teen Play Facilities
- Fine Turf and Sports Areas
- Nursery Production - Seasonal and Sustainable Plants
- Seasonal Floral Provision
- Management of Estate and Housing Areas
- Arboriculture Services
- Woodlands
- Cumbria & Britain in Bloom Community Entries
- Green Recycling/Peat Free
- Learning through Landscapes - Schools

The Department has a pro-active marketing strategy, and through promoting community involvement, education, advice and various environmental

enhancement schemes, the Team's aim is to raise the importance of how green spaces significantly contribute to improve the quality of life and the environment. The information in this report will add significantly to the capacity of this highly recognised team in performing both their everyday maintenance jobs and for planning for future development in areas which require further enhancement.

In 2010, four of Copeland's parks and open spaces have again achieved prestigious Green Flag Awards. The Awards were given to parks and open spaces that are managed to the highest standards. Trinity Gardens, St Nicholas' Gardens, Egremont Castle and Distington Crematorium have all kept their Green Flags. In addition, Trinity Gardens, St Nicholas' Gardens and Egremont Castle have also been awarded Green Heritage Awards. These are given to parks and open spaces that are managed in a way that promotes and protects the heritage of the sites.

By undertaking this study, Copeland Borough Council are both supporting and building upon the recent successes of this dynamic team. By offering the most up to date information and the tools necessary to complete effective greenspace analysis of their Borough, the council are not only ensuring that they can meet the objectives outlined in their greenspace management strategies but are also placing themselves at the vanguard of proficient greenspace management as outlined as a key priority by national government.

3.2.5 Nature Conservation

There is strong national concern for wildlife and natural habitats. The first protection act was passed in the 1880s and the major part of statutory protection is currently embodied in the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). More recently an increasing awareness of global pressures had led governments to place greater emphasis on ways of conserving the earth's biological diversity. At the 1992 Rio Earth Summit the United Kingdom signed the Biodiversity Convention and subsequently the Government published the UK Biodiversity Action Plan in 1994 setting out a 10-20 year conservation strategy.

At a local level, Cumbria Biodiversity Partnership has produced The Cumbria Biodiversity Action Plan. This plan seeks to implement the UK Biodiversity Action Plan through identifying targets for habitats and species. Within the Copeland Local Plan policies ENV 1 to 6 are relevant to the greenspace management within the Borough as they relate to the wider protection of the landscape, bio-diversity and heritage value of the area.

3.2.6 Copeland Local Plan - Recreation and Leisure

The Council's existing standards for the provision of open space are those set by the National Playing Fields Association refer to the "Six Acre Standard" which recommends that a minimum of 2.4 hectares (6.0 acres) of open space per 1,000 population should be available. The NPFA guidance further recommends that this should be comprised of 1.6 - 1.8 hectares for youth and adult sport and 0.6 - 0.8 hectares of Children's Outdoor Play Space. Of this, 0.2 - 0.3 hectares should be equipped play space, and 0.4 - 0.5 for casual or informal play.

There are several policies within the Copeland Local Plan which hold particular relevance to the provision and development of greenspace in the Borough. These are highlighted below:

POLICY SVC 13: Protection of Open Space and Facilities

Development proposals which involve the loss of these sites or other community facilities such as parks, play areas, sports fields, school playing fields, allotments, sports halls and village halls will not be permitted unless a satisfactory replacement facility is provided for in terms of size, location, accessibility and suitability for the proposed use unless it can be demonstrated that there is no particular shortfall of provision in the local area. The Council will also seek appropriate means of enhancing the biodiversity interest of the sites protected by this policy.

POLICY SVC 14: Outdoor Recreation and Leisure Facilities

Proposals for new or expanded outdoor recreation and leisure facilities will be permitted subject to the requirements of other plan policies and provided that the development would not:

1. Be detrimental to the appearance of the local countryside or result in the loss of or harm to an area of landscape, wildlife or conservation importance
2. Adversely affect the living conditions of local residents or those likely for occupiers of land allocated for residential development in the plan.
3. Create unacceptable traffic conditions in the vicinity of the site.

POLICY SVC 15: Leisure and Sensitive Areas of Countryside

Proposals for small-scale leisure developments directly related to the quiet enjoyment of the countryside will be permitted within Areas of County Landscape Importance, the St. Bees Head Heritage Coast and Nature Reserves and adjoining SSSIs and other sites of conservation interest provided they are sensitively designed and sited and would cause no harm to the special character of the area.

3.3 Stakeholder Analysis

In terms of open space, sport and recreation 'stakeholders' can generally be broken down into 'Users', 'Providers', 'Funders', and 'Enablers' of open space, sport and recreation opportunities, where:

- 'Users' are the participants in open space, sport and recreation, (individuals or groups).
- 'Providers' can be agencies, organisations and (sometimes) individuals in the public, voluntary and private/commercial sectors largely responsible for establishing and maintaining open space, sport and recreation opportunities.
- 'Funders' are those that provide *financial* support to either create or maintain opportunities, including through grant aid.
- 'Enablers' help in creating and maintaining opportunities either through policy, general nurture and support including advice on technical issues and sources of funding etc.

Clearly, some of the stakeholders will fall into more than one category. For example, a club will be a 'User', but potentially also a 'Provider'. The Borough Council may well be a 'Provider' in terms of its own facilities, but also a 'Funder', and an 'Enabler'. Stakeholders can range from national/central government level, through regional and sub regional interests, down to local interests.

The Needs Assessment has engaged with a wide range of stakeholders as detailed in the Needs Assessment report (appendix 1).

4.0 ASSESSMENT OF LOCAL NEED (KEY FINDINGS)

4.1 General

This assessment of local needs 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.

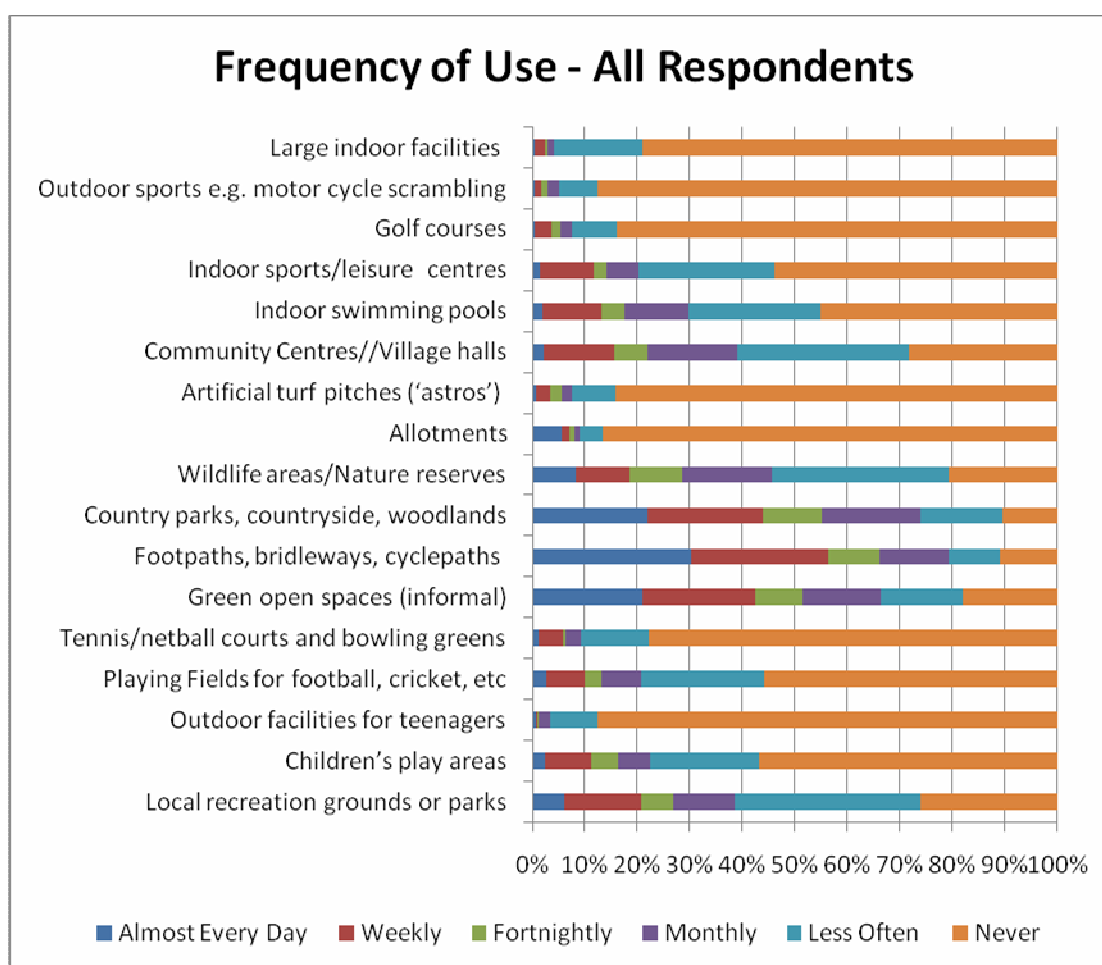
This section provides a summary of the key findings relevant to open space provision, full details of the consultation findings can be found at **Appendix 1**.

4.2 General community consultation

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%)². The full questionnaire is included in Appendix 1 and the following provides some of the key findings.

4.2.1 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:



4.2.2 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

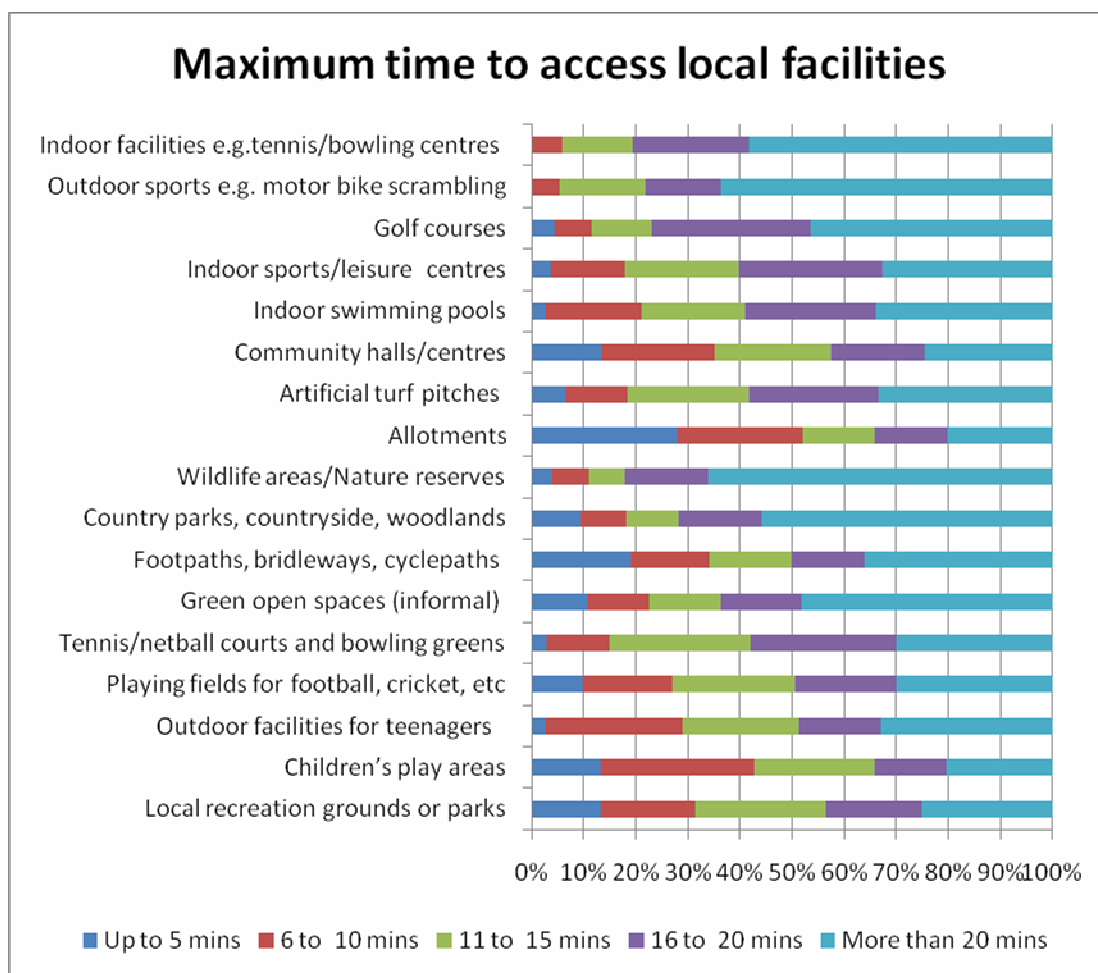
² Broadly speaking, this provides statistically significant findings at a 95% confidence level and a confidence interval of ± 5.

opportunities that figure most prominently in 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.

4.2.3 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.



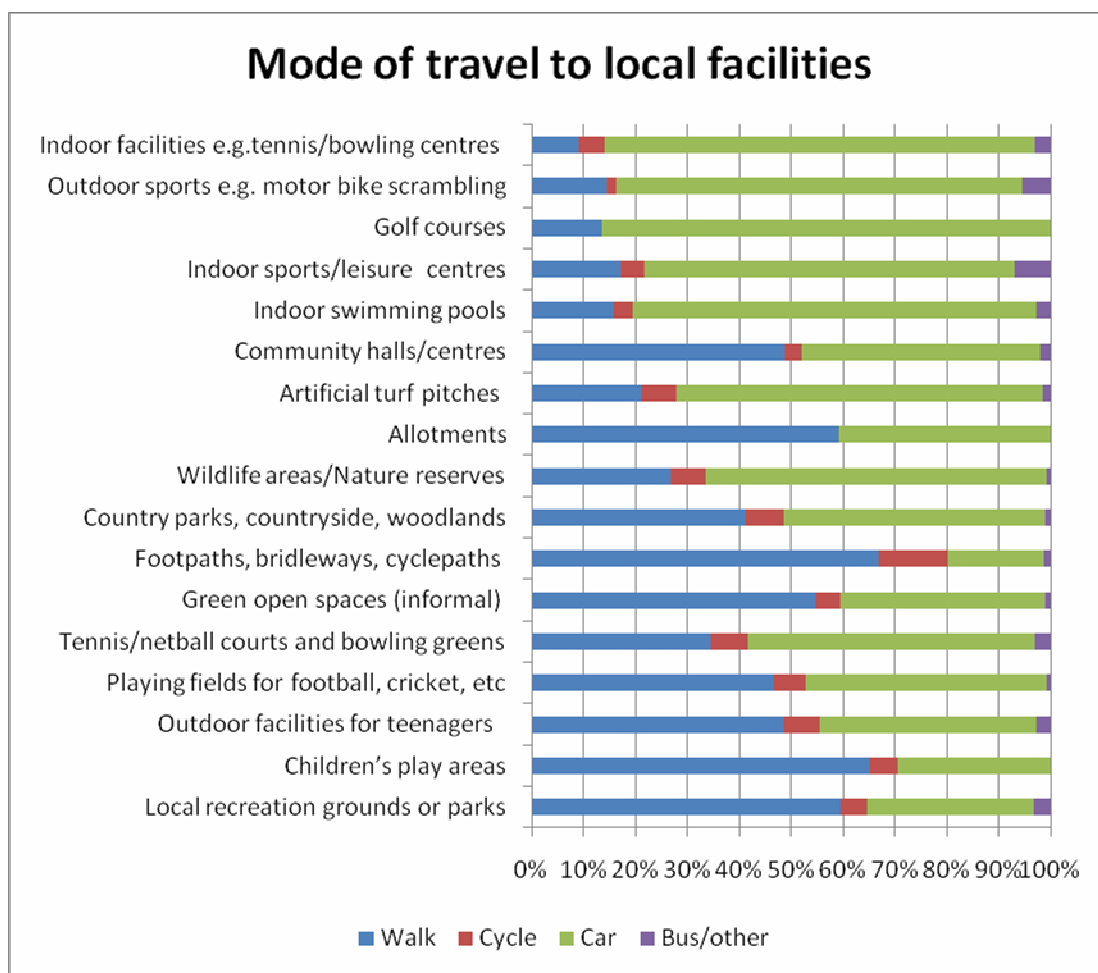
It can be seen that where people make use of the opportunities identified the majority of users are prepared to travel more than 20 minutes to use some facilities such as wildlife areas, country parks, areas for outdoor sports and specialist indoor facilities.

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.

4.2.4 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.

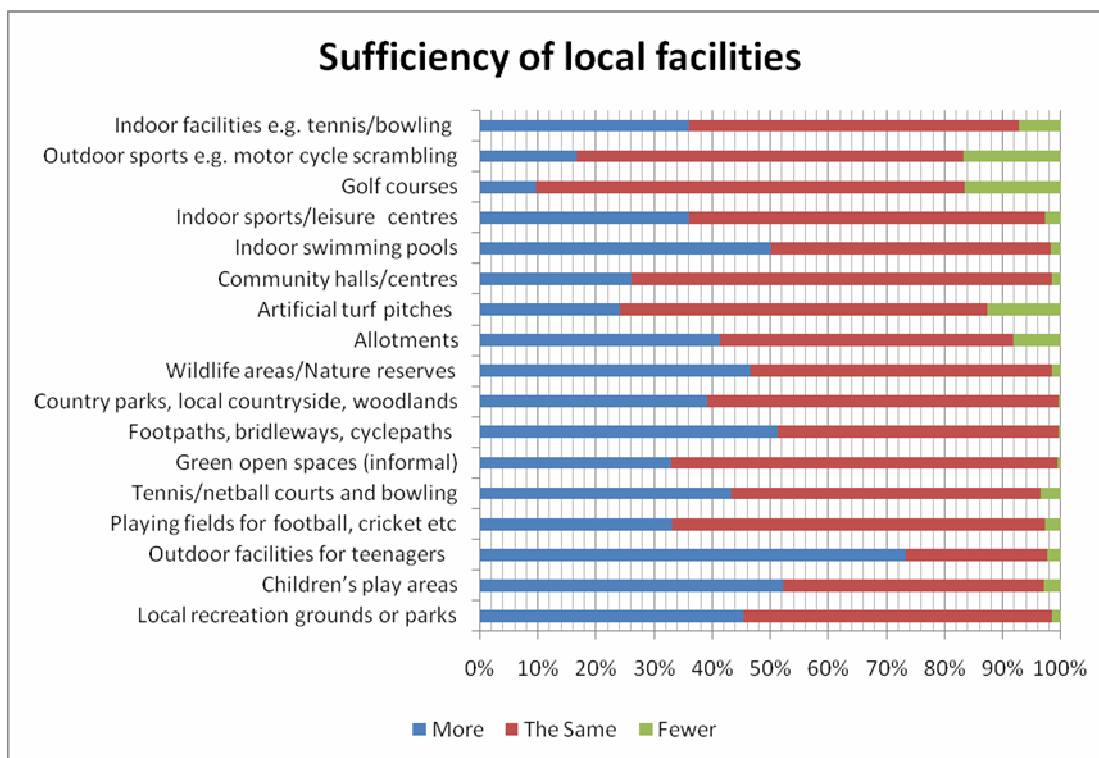
- 74% of residents confirmed that they would be prepared to walk/cycle further if the quality of the route was improved
- 74% also said that if the quality of the route was improved they would make the journey more often.

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.

4.2.5 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.

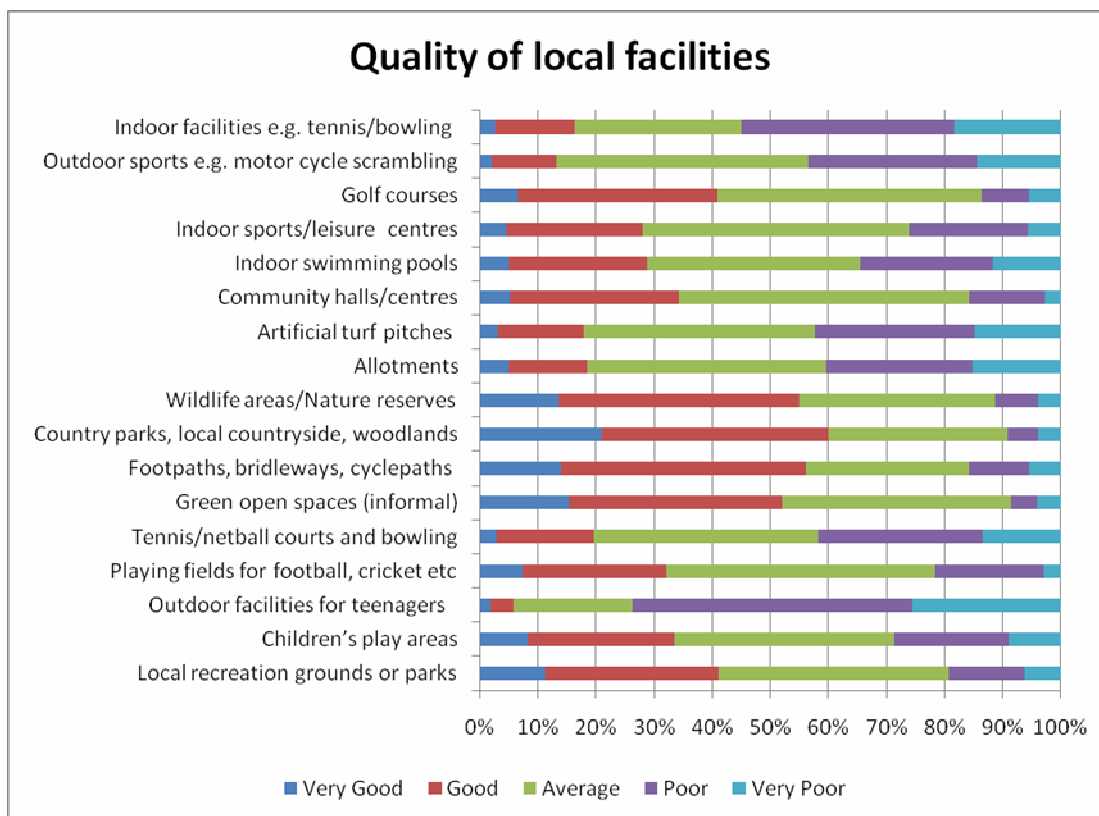


The majority of residents who expressed an opinion think there is a need for more outdoor facilities for teenagers (74%); at least 50% thought there were not enough play areas, footpaths/rights of way, and swimming pools.

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.

4.2.6 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 cycle scrambling.

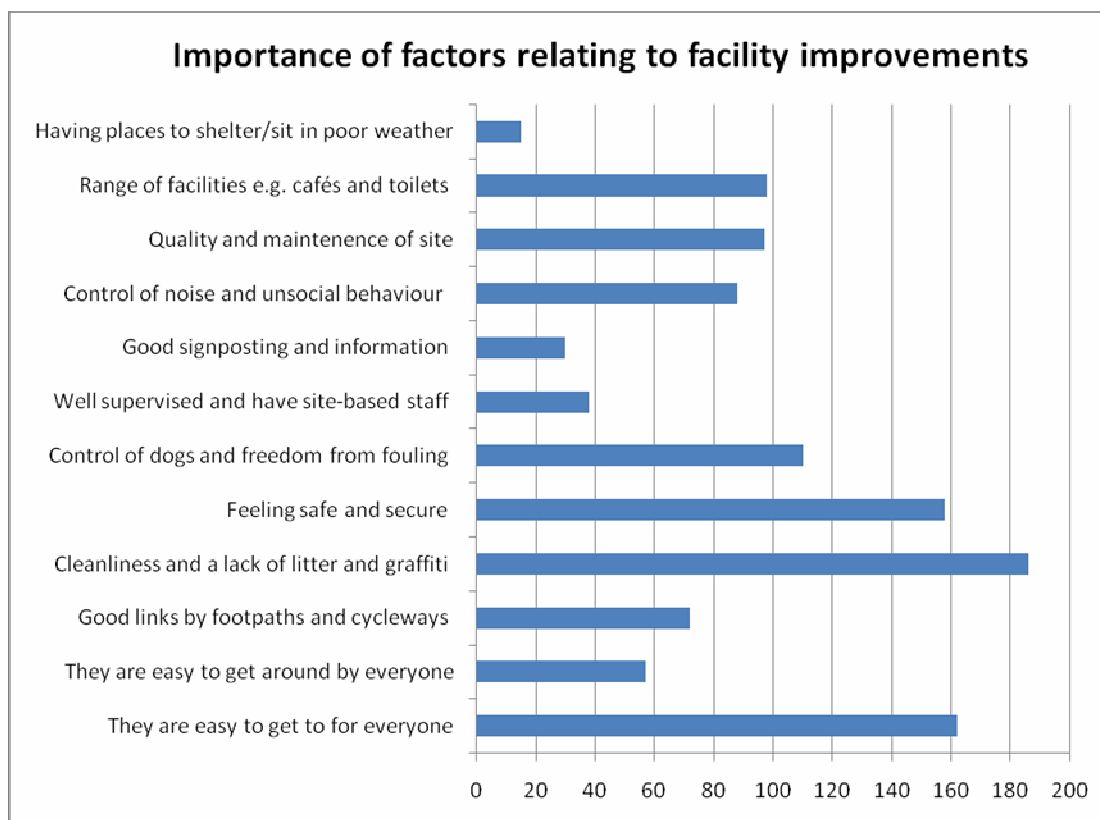
Facilities where the quality is rated high by the majority include country parks and the local countryside, wildlife areas/nature reserves, rights of way, and informal green spaces.

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.

4.2.7 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.

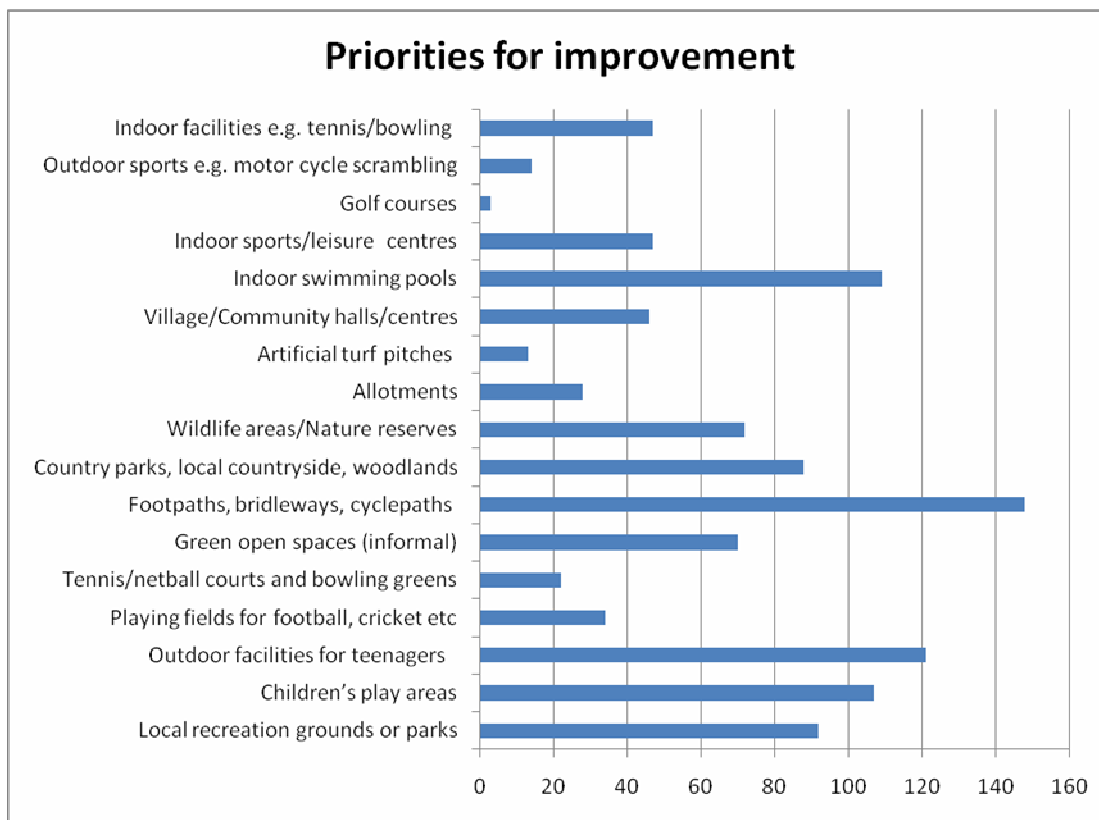


Cleanliness and a lack of litter and graffiti, being easy to get to by all members of the community, and ensuring sites feel safe and secure are judged to be the most important issues in relation to parks and open spaces.

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

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.

4.3 Children and Young People

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.

4.4 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 councils 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.

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.

4.5 Parks, Natural Green Space and Rights of Way

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 publicly 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 for a more varied 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 benefited 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 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 publicly 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 barrier 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 ANGSt³ 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.

³ Accessible Natural Greenspace Standard

5.0 AUDIT OF LOCAL PROVISION

This section considers the existing provision of open space in the Borough, it describes the types of facilities that have been included within the study.

5.1 A practical definition of open space

The existing or potential recreation utility of a site is a function of its size, location, shape, topography and internal site features.

Even very small sites are potentially large enough to accommodate meaningful recreation activity. For example, a site of 0.1 ha is still sufficiently large to accommodate an equipped play area, tennis court, or 'pocket park' to name but some possible uses.

The location of a space will have a profound impact on its recreation utility for reasons of safety, accessibility, security, and nuisance (for example.) An unenclosed space immediately adjacent to a very busy road might not be considered to have any practical recreation utility for safety reasons. Similarly, a space adjacent to open plan private gardens (as often occurs in many modern housing estates) might generate concerns from residents and effectively stop it being used actively for this purpose. However, if it were a large site, parts of it may be considered to be a safe distance from the road, or sufficiently remote not to cause actual or perceived nuisance to residents.

A site may in theory be open to use by the public, but in practice might be too heavily vegetated, or sloping, hilly, marshy etc to be used for any recreation purpose. A large site may be of such an awkward shape as to exclude any meaningful recreation use; and, apart from safety issues, much highway land cannot be considered to be open space for such reasons.

In short there can be no hard and fast rules for determining the recreation utility of a site for the community. This has meant that judgements have been made on a site by site basis as to what should be included and excluded for these purposes. In general this has been easy to achieve in a consistent way for the very large majority of sites.

5.2 Selection of sites

The sites included within the study have been agreed with the Project Steering Group using the following process:

- Copeland Borough Council provided several GIS layers of open space classified into various typologies, these were drawn from the local plan and from previous studies;
- This data was loaded into GIS and analysed for duplicates and anomalies;
- A draft site list was produced and then a desktop search using aerial photography was carried out to check these sites and search for additional sites; and,

- In total 418 sites were included on the original audit list. All of these sites were visited and classified into the agreed typology. The final number of sites included within the assessment is 424.

5.3 Typologies of open space

The typologies of open space have been developed using guidance within the PPG17 companion guide, but allowing for local variation. The PPG 17 guidance suggests a list of typologies for open spaces recommended by the Urban Greenspaces Task Force (UGSTF) or a variation of it. The recommended typologies, are shown below:

	PPG17 Typology	Primary purpose
Greenspaces	Parks and gardens	Accessible, high quality opportunities for informal recreation and community events
	Natural and semi-natural greenspaces, including urban woodland	Wildlife conservation, biodiversity and environmental education and awareness
	Green corridors	Walking, cycling or horse riding, whether for leisure purposes or travel, and opportunities for wildlife migration
	Outdoor sports facilities	Participation in outdoor sports, such as pitch sports, tennis, bowls, athletics or countryside and water sports
	Amenity greenspace	Opportunities for informal activities close to home or work or enhancement of the appearance of residential or other areas.
	Provision for children and young people	Areas designed primarily for play and social interaction involving children and young people, such as equipped play areas, ball courts, skateboard areas and teenage shelters
	Allotments, community gardens and urban farms	Opportunities for those people who wish to do so to grow their own produce as part of the long term promotion of sustainability, health and social inclusion
	Cemeteries, disused churchyards and other burial grounds	Quiet contemplation and burial of the dead, often linked to the promotion of wildlife conservation and biodiversity
Civic spaces	Civic and market squares and other hard surfaced areas designed for pedestrians	Providing a setting for civic buildings, public demonstrations and community events

The guide acknowledges that the above typologies should be used as guidance, and that local variations can be developed. For the study within Copeland, local variations have been developed, and standards proposed for the following types of open space, as summarised below:

Sites visited	Sites not visited
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parks and Gardens • Outdoor Sports Space • Outdoor Sports Space (Limited Access) • Play Space 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Large areas of heathlands and moor land • Coastal features with no access - e.g. rocky beaches and headlands;

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Amenity Greenspace • Semi-Natural Greenspace • Semi-Natural Greenspace (Limited Access) • Allotments • Education Space* • Golf Courses* • Churchyards and Cemeteries* 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Private Land with no use by the public;
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* Typologies where quantity or access standards have not been developed (see explanation below).

Parks and Gardens

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

- Play space of many kinds (including for sport and children’s play)
- Informal recreation and outdoor sport
- Providing attractive walks to work
- Offering landscape and amenity features
- Areas of formal planting
- Providing areas for ‘events’
- Providing habitats for wildlife



They are distinctive from other types of open space by the range of facilities they offer, typically set in a more formal landscape setting.

Outdoor Sport Space

These include seasonal and fixed sports spaces that are openly accessible to the public. Facilities are predominantly used for sport including cricket, football and rugby. Also includes fixed sports spaces such as tennis courts, artificial turf pitches (as well as larger MUGA’s), and bowling greens.



Very often these facilities are located within Parks or Recreation Grounds, and as such, many of the facilities, especially sports pitches are multi-functional. That is they can be used for sport one day, and for the rest of the week function as a space to walk and play.

Outdoor Sports Space (limited access)

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

Amenity Greenspace

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



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

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

Play Space

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



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

The study has recorded the following:

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

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

Semi-Natural Greenspace

For the purpose of this study Semi-Natural Green Space covers a variety of spaces including meadows, river floodplain, woodland and copse all of which share a trait of having natural characteristics and wildlife value, but which are also open to public use and enjoyment. Research elsewhere and (more importantly) the local consultation for this study have identified the value attached to such space for recreation and emotional well-being.



A sense of ‘closeness to nature’ with its attendant benefits for people is something that is all too easily lost in urban areas. Semi-Natural Green Spaces should be viewed as important a component of community infrastructure in planning for new development as other forms of open space or ‘built’ recreation facilities. Semi-Natural Green Spaces can make important contributions towards local Biodiversity Action Plan targets and can also raise awareness of biodiversity values and issues.

Some sites will have statutory rights or permissive codes allowing the public to wander in these sites. Others may have defined Rights of Way or permissive routes running through them. For the remainder of sites there may be some access on a managed basis.

Although many natural spaces may not be ‘accessible’ in the sense that they cannot be entered and used by the general community, they can be appreciated from a distance, and contribute to visual amenity. Other larger areas of Semi-Natural Greenspace with limited public access (e.g. RSPB reserves) have been mapped where known, although may not have been included within the quality assessment.

Allotments

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



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

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

(40 poles equal 1,210 square yards or 1,012 square metres. A Pole can also be known as a Rod or Perch.)

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

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

Churchyards & Cemeteries

The Borough has many churches and cemeteries and these provide significant aesthetic value and valuable space for informal recreation such as walking and relaxing. Many are also important in terms of biodiversity. Their importance for informal recreation, aesthetic value and contribution towards biodiversity must be acknowledged, and as such, investment in their upkeep, maintenance and quality is an important factor.



Churchyards and Cemeteries have been identified and mapped where known, however, no quantity or access standard for provision has been set. This reflects the priorities established through consultation, which identifies the need to provide and improve open spaces. Churchyards can provide important open space, however, there is little opportunity to have a strategic influence over them (the ultimate end goal in PPG17). There may therefore be the opportunity to 'enhance provision' (and this has been identified), however, there is little scope to provide 'new' or 'relocated provision'.

Education

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



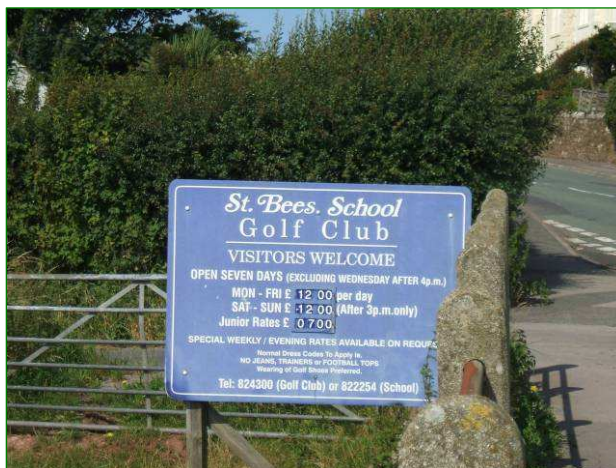
Sports clubs may have local informal arrangements with a school to use their pitches, and in some cases more formal 'dual-use' agreements may be in place. The latter becoming increasingly important with the Building Schools for the Future programme. School grounds can also contribute towards the green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

Quantity and access standards have not been proposed for education sites. This is because they are not openly accessible to the public and whilst important to the

local community, there is less opportunity for the Borough Council to influence their provision and management. However, their existence is still an important factor of local provision, and as such they will be subject to the same policy considerations as publicly accessible space (this is explored in section 8).

Golf Courses

The Borough has a number of golf courses, both public and private. Whilst many of these open spaces do not have general access to the public, some do have rights of way running across their land. They also provide an important part of the green infrastructure of the Borough and can have significant value for biodiversity.



Throughout the audit, golf courses were visited, but it was not always practical to gain access, and as such information was limited to confirming the typology, name and access rights.

Quantity and access standards have not been proposed for golf courses. This is because they are not openly accessible to the public and whilst important to the local community, there is less opportunity for the Borough Council to influence their provision and management. However, their existence is still an important factor of local provision, and as such they will be subject to the same policy procedures as publicly accessible space (this is explored in section 8).

Civic Space

These spaces are formal spaces which have a civic function, typically found in urban areas, including formal hardstanding areas outside of civic buildings, memorials and town squares. There are only four of these spaces included within the audit.



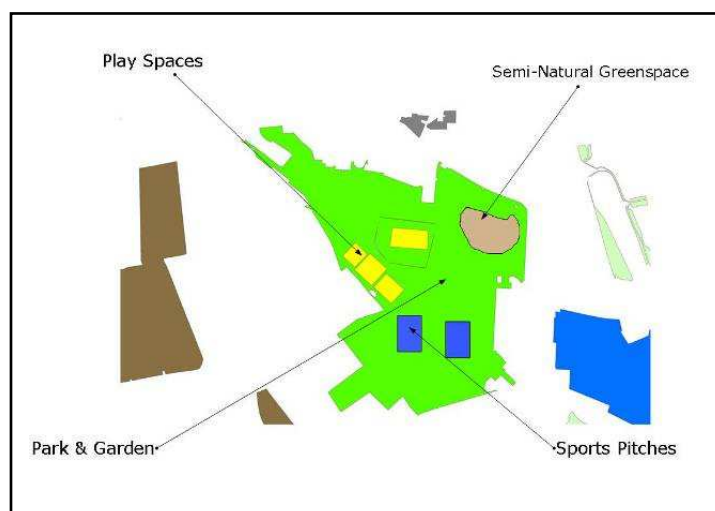
‘Other’

A total of 32 spaces that were visited have been classified as ‘other’. These spaces have been mapped previously and often identified in the local plan. The spaces vary from large back gardens, to abandoned open spaces and roadside buffers. None of the spaces have any existing value for recreation, however, they may have aesthetic or biodiversity value. All of the sites have the potential for alternative use, and may contribute towards meeting existing shortfalls in open space provision, or indeed be suitable for development. These open spaces are considered in further detail in section 8.6.



5.4 The multi-functional nature of open space

PPG17 seeks to classify open spaces into their primary functions and typologies, however, many of the open spaces described above tend to have more than one function. For example a site classified as a ‘Park and Garden’, may in fact include outdoor sports space, play space and semi-natural greenspace. If the site in question was just to be classified as Park & Garden, it would miss out important features and the quantity assessment would be misleading, as it should include the quantities of play space, sports space etc.



As such, throughout this study, sites have been mapped using a multi-functional approach as illustrated. For example, a site of 2ha in size may be actually made up of 0.5 ha of sports space, 0.2 ha of play space and 0.5 ha of semi-natural greenspace, leaving 0.8 ha of park and garden. This approach gives a more accurate assessment of both quantity and access.

5.5 Issues with auditing open space

In practice it can sometimes be difficult to differentiate between certain types of open space:

- Some of the larger local spaces (such as outdoor sports space) may clearly serve more than one of the above functions. For example, a large recreation ground may include children’s play facilities, sports pitches, natural areas and more. On the other hand, many large spaces may serve predominantly one function.
- It is often difficult to differentiate between various types of informal recreation space, as local people do not necessarily draw distinction between (for example) a ‘recreation ground’, a park, and a large area of amenity open space; all are capable of meeting local need for informal activity and enjoyment. This demonstrates the need for flexibility in the perception of and planning for open space, which should have implications for the development and application of new local standards for open space.
- Some of the (larger) identified sites have been broken down as appropriate to reflect the above diversity of use. Other sites have not been broken down and they are categorised according to their identified primary use.
- Much of the open space considered in this report is ‘free and open to use’. Access is not generally monitored for most sites considered and is often possible from a variety of points and directions. This makes it difficult to quantify with any precision the levels of use of different open spaces. However, as is seen in Section 4, local consultation has identified clearly the desire of residents to have access to such spaces for informal recreation opportunities.

This report and the underlying audit have attempted to address these issues by:

- Breaking large sites down so as to better reflect key elements/uses that would otherwise be overlooked. Equipped play provision (which is often located in larger areas of space) is an example of where this approach is necessary.
- The recommendation of standards and a revised development plan typologies relating to open space classification. This helps to reflect their distinctive recreation values, and the willingness of people to travel to use attractive major spaces.

5.6 Overall open space provision: some general facts and figures

The following table provides an overview of the open spaces that were included within the audit. Figures are given for the total number of sites, the total hectares and total hectares per 1,000 people.

Typology	No. Sites	Hectares	ha/1000*
Allotment	40	23.46	0.33
Amenity Greenspace	94	62.88	0.89
Beach	4	32.99	0.47
Churchyard & Cemetery	24	48.62	0.69
Civic Space	4	23.20	0.33
Education	34	69.09	0.98
Golf Course	3	136.68	1.94
Natural & Semi-Natural Greenspace	55	525.82	7.47
Natural & Semi-Natural Greenspace (LA)	16	28.24	0.40
Other	32	31.6	0.46
Outdoor Sport	25	51.42	0.73

Typology	No. Sites	Hectares	ha/1000*
Outdoor Sport (LA)	26	58.09	0.82
Park & Garden	9	14.89	0.21
Play Space	54	9.98	0.14

* Population from 2007 mid year estimates

Maps showing the existing provision of each typology are shown in the area profiles (part 2).

5.7 Access and Rights of Way (RoW)

5.7.1 General

The community consultation has revealed the importance attached to the Borough's natural recreation resources. Along with parks, it is the Borough's local countryside, woodlands and green open spaces that are most commonly used (at least monthly) by most adult residents (over 65%). Footpaths, bridleways, and cycle paths are the spaces most likely to be used almost every day. It is therefore the informal recreation opportunities that figure most prominently in respondents' replies.

Approximately two thirds of the Borough's administrative area is designated as part of the Lake District National Park. The Borough's 'share' does not suffer from the high degree of congestion suffered by much of the Park. This enables the retention of a tranquillity and peace, whilst at the same time catering for those wishing to take part in more active pursuits. Walking and climbing on the mountains and fells are obviously a very popular pastime, and there are many forest trails and walks.

The Park's recreation attractions are already well documented. The vast majority of the Borough's population however lives outside the Park boundaries and it is more important for this study to consider the existence of informal recreation opportunities closer to where most people live.

The north west portion of the Borough is not covered by the Park designation. However, it is this part of the Borough which has most of the coastline, which itself provides considerable recreation opportunities. The Cumbria Coastal Path follows this coastline.

5.7.2 Access to the Coast

This section outlines access issues related to parts of the Borough which have access to the coast (hence the North east area is not covered).

Whitehaven & Howgate/Distinguon Locality: to the north of the town the coast is stony with many rock pools and marine life diversity. Its relative isolation is accentuated by the barrier formed by the railway line, over and under which crossing points are limited. In Whitehaven itself the harbour area dominates, which has become a very popular yachting marina, and an increasing focus for tourism and day visits. It benefits from very recent investment and regeneration to exploit

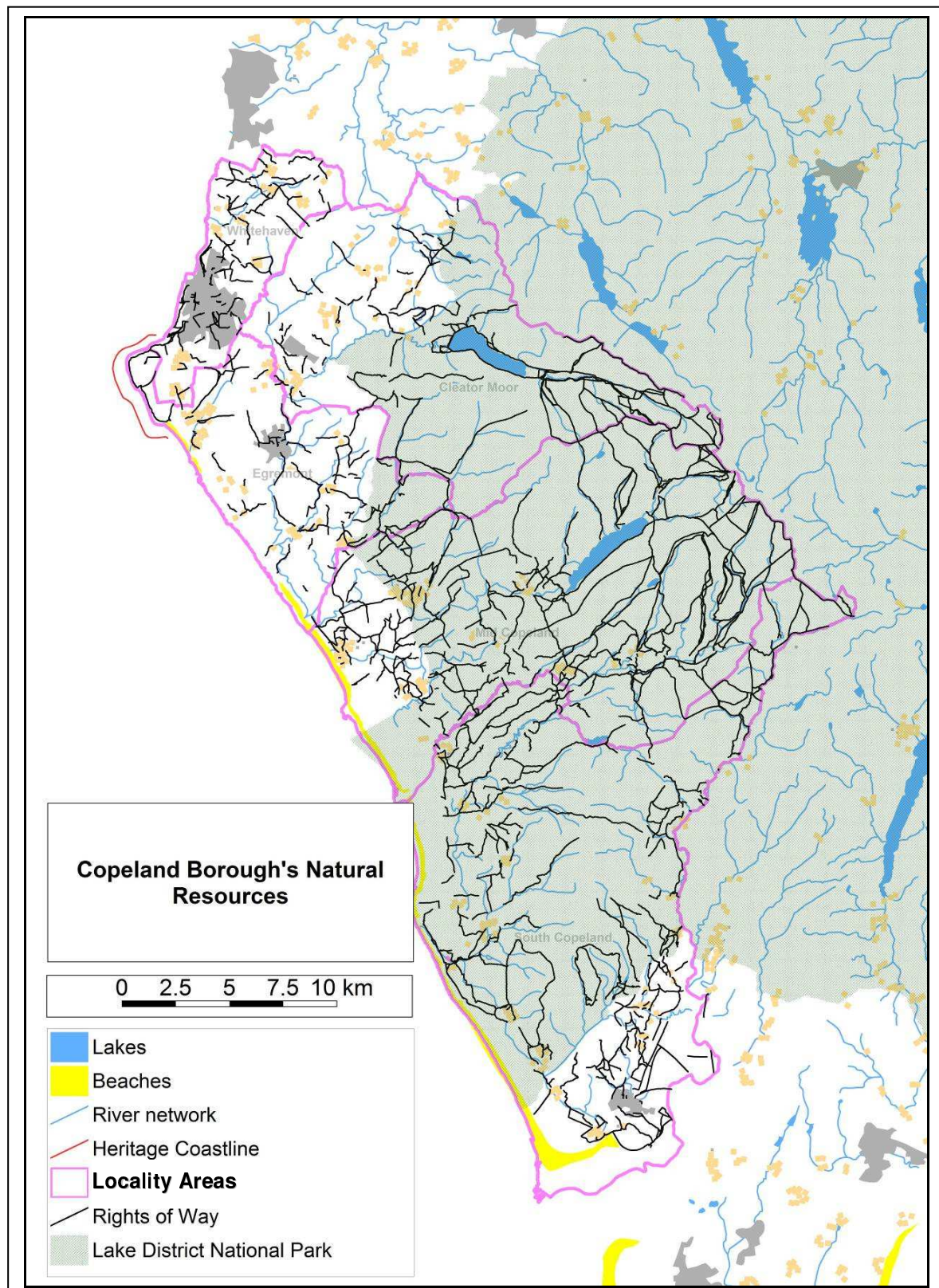
its potential as a visitor attraction. Interpretation initiatives - especially those linked with local mining heritage - offer relatively easy access to the higher coastal ground to the south of the harbour which, on clear days, provides lovely views over the Solway Firth and the Irish Sea to Scotland, the Isle of Man, and Northern Ireland. The cliffs rise to the south of the harbour and the coast becomes remote and isolated, with arable and pasture land between town and sea. This stretch of the coastline has national 'Heritage' status (see below). The rest of this locality area (Parton, Lowca and Distington do not have coastal areas, but do have rights of way which are an important part of the recreation network in these areas).

West Copeland and Five Rivers Localities: The Heritage Coast designation continues up to and around St. Bees. This is the only Heritage Coast between Anglesey and the Scottish border, indeed, it is the only sea cliff in all that area. The cliffs are dramatic, composed of striking red sandstone some 300 feet high, and again affording excellent views north to Scotland and across to the Isle of Man. There is a long stretch of sandy beach here, much of which has been declared a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), due in part to the variety of shellfish, crab, mussels, and 'coral' type structures. Both St. Bees and Seascale to the south have small but thriving 'seaside' environments. Just to the south of Seascale there is a National Nature Reserve designated for its status as lowland peat bog.

South Copeland Locality: Beyond Seascale the coast enters the National Park. There are still sandy stretches of beach, but the coast once again becomes quite remote until reaching Mite/Esk estuary at the attractive village of Ravenglass where the tidal flats are an important feeding ground for bird-life. At the extreme south of the Borough the coast reaches the Duddon Estuary at Haverigg and Millom which again has valuable inter tidal flats and extensive views over the estuary. The Millom Ironworks Local Nature Reserve forms part of the larger Duddon Estuary Site of Special Scientific Interest and is a real asset for Copeland, which may not be fully recognised.

The railway link between Whitehaven and Millom provides an easy way for people to access the full extent of the local coastal environment without having to walk or drive too far.

The following map shows some of the major natural features and access opportunities within the Borough which contribute to the recreational attractiveness of the Borough, both for visitors and local people.



5.7.3 RoW and strategic routes.

The map also shows the extent of the RoW network within the Borough. There are 952 miles of RoW in Copeland of which 650 miles are within the National Park. In Cumbria only Carlisle has fewer RoW, though broadly speaking Copeland has similar provision per square mile as most of Cumbria with similar numbers of links between town and country.

Other than the Cumbria Coastal Path (see earlier), there are two other strategic recreational routes running through the Borough- both part of the Sustrans National Cycle Network.

- Route 71 - the C2C (Coast to Coast). After sharing part of the Route 72 around Whitehaven the C2C runs through Cleator Moor and then out of the Borough, passing through the heart of the National Park and on to the Durham coastline.
- Route 72 - Hadrian Way. This runs from near Seascale up to and beyond Whitehaven and eventually through to Carlisle, and ultimately Newcastle.

5.7.4 Issues and Opportunities

The consultation has revealed that the quality of rights of way are very variable. The paths and cycleways forming part of regional and long distance routes are generally good as are the paths that have benefited from funding as a result of planning gain related to development around the towns and ex-industrial areas. 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.

RoW are signed from road crossings so that the public can easily identify them. The perception of local RoW officers is that traditionally RoW into the countryside and to the coast are under-used by local people and there may be benefit in promoting them more widely to encourage access by a wider range of local users. 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.
- The train service offers great potential to enable short day excursions.

The consultation highlighted that both the Borough and County Councils are 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.

Elsewhere in this report (especially in the Whitehaven & Howgate/Distington Locality profile) reference is made to the existence and opportunities to create networks formed by recreation corridors (which might also be used for utility travel). The Whitehaven area in particular already has corridors exploited by the local/national cycle path network. There are also links between low and high ground which offer significant recreational potential but which may be little known to many local people. This feeling is also supported by some comments arising out of the consultation.

5.7.5 The Cumbria Rights of Way Improvement Plan

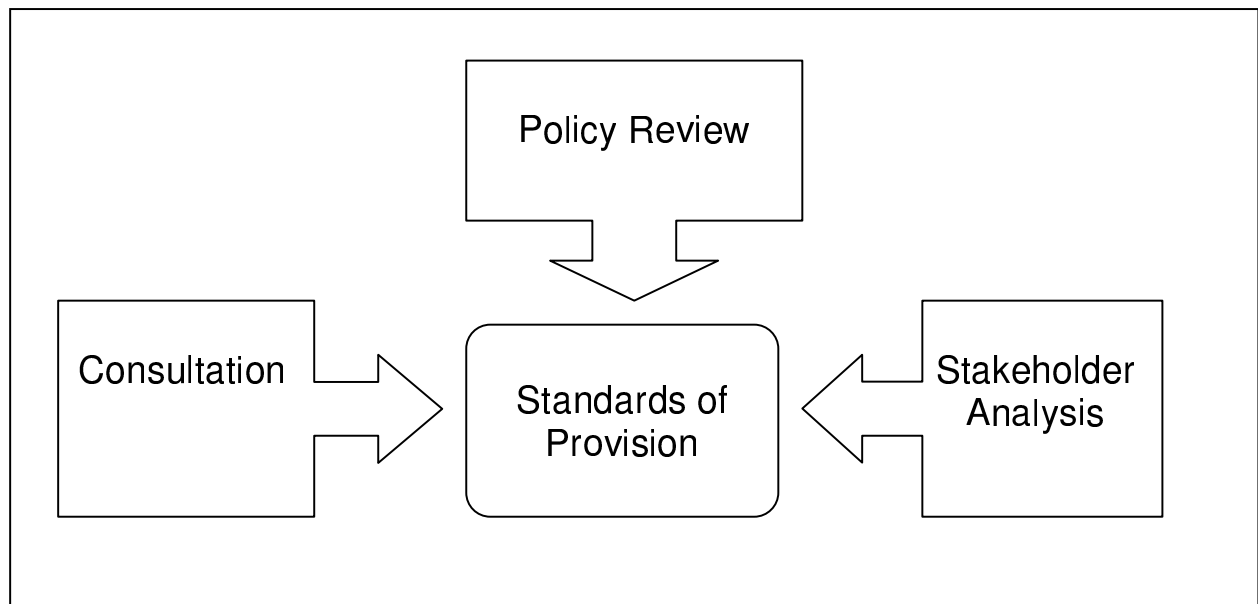
This statutory plan produced by the County Council in conjunction with the established Local Access Plan has been reviewed in the consultation report. It proposes the following specific actions within Copeland Borough. The County Council have confirmed that the projects below are all planned to be delivered this year.

- St Bees Head Access Improvements (West Copeland Locality)
- Harrington (Whitehaven & Howgate/Distington Locality)
- Drigg bridleways (Five Rivers Locality)
- Mirehouse West (Whitehaven & Howgate/Distington Locality)
- Walkmill Community Woodland (Whitehaven & Howgate/Distington Locality)
- Longlands Lake (North East Copeland Locality)
- Occupational Lonnin, Frizington (North East Copeland Locality)
- Drigg Cross bridleway (Five Rivers Locality)
- New Mill Bridleway, Ponsonby (Five Rivers Locality)
- Dent Fell, Cleator Moor (North East Copeland Locality)
- Woodhouse Footpaths, Whitehaven (Whitehaven & Howgate/Distington Locality)

5.8 Towards New Standards of Provision

This information, together with the findings from the policy and stakeholder review, and the information from the community consultation, are considered together to inform the development of standards for open space, sport and recreation provision, which is outlined in section 6. This is shown in figure 5.4 below:

Figure 5.4 The development of standards



6.0 COPELAND STANDARDS

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

6.1 The development of Standards

The standards for open space, sport and recreation facilities have been developed using guidance in the PPG17 companion guide. Standards have been developed for each typology of open space and built facility using the following components:

- **Quantity standards:** These are determined by the analysis of existing quantity provision in the light of community views as to its adequacy and levels of use. Furthermore, it is essential that the quantity standards proposed are achievable.
- **Quality standards:** The standards for each form of provision are derived from the quality audit, existing good practice and from the views of the community and those that use the spaces. Again, quality standards should be achievable and reflect the priorities that emerge through consultation. Standards are expressed in general terms from 'very poor' to 'very good', and these have been drawn from the quality audit.
- **Accessibility standards:** These reflect the needs of potential users. Spaces and facilities likely to be used on a frequent and regular basis need to be within easy walking distance and to have safe access. Other facilities which are used less frequently, for example large leisure facilities or country parks, where visits are longer but perhaps less frequent can be further away.

The standards that have been proposed are for minimum levels of provision. If an area enjoys levels of provision exceeding the minimum standards, it does not necessarily mean that there is surplus provision as all of it may be well used.

6.2 Summary of standards

This section summarises the proposed quantity, access and quality standards for open space and built facilities. Justification for these standards is outlined in the sections below.

Standards have been proposed for the following typologies:

Typology	Quantity Standard (ha/1000 people)	Access Standard	Quality Standard
Allotment	0.35	480m (10 minutes straight line walk time)	Aim to achieve an 'average' standard of quality across the typology
Amenity Greenspace	0.9	720 metres (15 minutes straight line walk time)	Aim to achieve a 'good' standard of quality across the typology.
Natural & Semi-Natural Greenspace	1.0	960 metres (20 minutes straight line walk time)	Aim to achieve an 'average' standard of quality across the typology
Outdoor Sport	1.1	480 metres (10 minutes straight line walk time)	Aim to achieve a 'good' standard of quality across the typology
Play Space	0.15	Junior Provision - 450m (just under 10 minutes straight line walk time) Youth Provision - 720 m (15 minutes straight line walk time)	Aim to achieve a 'very good' standard of quality across the typology
Park & Garden	0.20	720 metres (15 minutes straight line walk time)	Aim to achieve a 'very good' standard of quality across the typology

The following typologies have been included within the quality audit but do not have quantity or access standards, see section 6.10:

- Natural & Semi-Natural Greenspace (LA)
- Beach
- Churchyard & Cemetery
- Civic Space
- Education
- Golf Course

6.3 Justification of standards

The standards for open space and built facilities are justified in the following section and take into account the following:

- Existing national and local policies;
- General justification for a standard;
- Quantity standard: including the existing average ha/1000 people across the Borough; reference to consultation; and, proposed ha/1000 people;
- Accessibility standard;
- Quality standard;
- Other supporting information where appropriate.

6.4 Allotments

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

6.4.1 Existing National and Local Policies

There are no existing national or local standards relating specifically to the provision of allotments. Guidance has been provided through the Local Government Association, which does not recommend standards of provision, but rather covers ways in which allotments could be promoted and the issues needed to be considered prior to any disposal.

6.4.2 General justification for a local standard

Relatively few people within the community use allotments. However, it is an activity very much linked to stages in life (as is also the case with sport and children's play, for example). The local consultation did not suggest that allotments were used as regularly, or were as valued in comparison with, say, play space or informal spaces of various kinds. However, there is currently an interest in reducing food miles, organic growing, slow food, composting and recycling green waste. Other than their conventional function allotments can serve as venues for 'community gardens', meeting places, and showcases for recycling. The National Society for Allotment and Leisure Gardeners states that it is seeing an increase in enquiries from people interested in getting an allotment. The majority of allotments within the study area appear to be well used, and cultivated, and therefore standards for provision have been developed.

Furthermore, with the creation of higher density housing in the future occupants lacking private gardens may look increasingly to allotments to meet a desire to garden and grow their own food.

6.4.3 Quantity

The existing average level of provision of allotments across the Borough is 0.33 ha/1000 people. The consultation asked a number of specific questions in relation

to satisfaction with the quantities of open space, including allotments. The results identified the following:

- 45% of people stated that the level of provision of allotments should remain the same, whilst 40% stated that there should be more.
- Allotments are the least frequently visited type of open space by ‘all users’, however, those who do use them do so on a very regular basis.

These findings reflect the observations about allotment use outlined above, thus with no clear opinions from the community in relation to quantity, the standard proposed uses the existing level of provision as a basis, and to accommodate the identified future growth in potential demand.

A minimum level of provision of **0.35 ha per 1000 people** is proposed, both as a basis for a contribution from new housing, but also a minimum target for provision across the Borough.

6.4.4 Accessibility

The consultation asked people how far they were willing to travel to different types of open space, including allotments. Around 50% would like allotments to be within a 10 minute walk. Just under 60% of those people who use allotments walk there. A distance of **480 metres** (straightline) or around **10 minutes walk time** is therefore proposed.

6.4.5 Quality

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

The audits found a huge variation in the size, type and quality of allotments across the Borough, from almost abandoned sites to high quality, well used allotments and gardens. The facilities also have various ownership and management arrangements, and as such the ability to influence the quality of allotments is more difficult than other publicly managed open spaces. Therefore, it is reasonable to aspire to deliver an ‘average’ standard of quality across this typology. Where new provision is proposed - the aim should be to deliver good quality.

Proposed quality standard for Allotments: Average for existing sites, good for new sites.

6.5 Amenity Greenspace

Quantity Standard	Access Standard
0.9 ha/1000	720 metres (15 minutes straight line walk time)

6.5.1 Existing National and Local Policies

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

6.5.2 General justification for a local standard

The audit of provision as well as the consultation has identified the importance attached by local people to space close to home. The value of Amenity Open Space must be recognised especially within housing areas, where it can provide important local opportunities for play, exercise and visual amenity that are almost immediately accessible. On the other hand open space can be expensive to maintain and it is very important to strike the correct balance between having sufficient space to meet the needs of the community for accessible and attractive space, and having too much which would be impossible to manage properly and therefore a potential liability and source of nuisance. It is important that Amenity Open Space should be capable of use for at least some of the forms of public recreation activity. The practical definition of open space given in Section 1 of this report explains the key factors used in determining recreational use of space.

6.5.3 Quantity

The existing average level of provision of informal open space across the Borough is 0.89 ha per 1000 people. The consultation asked a number of specific questions in relation to satisfaction with the amount of open space. The results identified the following:

- About 65% of people stated that there is currently enough informal open space, indicating that the existing level of provision is 'about right'.

Therefore a level of provision of **0.9 ha per 1000 people** is proposed, both as a basis for a contribution from new housing, but also as a minimum target for provision across the Borough.

6.5.4 Accessibility

The consultation asked people how far they were willing to travel to different types of open space, including informal/amenity space. The consultation identified that about 35% of people were prepared to travel up to 15 minutes to informal open space, with a further 20% willing to travel up to 20 minutes.

A distance of **720 metres** (straightline), or about **15 minutes** walking time is therefore proposed for informal open space.

6.5.5 Quality

Information relating to the quality of informal open space was gathered from both the consultation and the quality audits. The following section outlines some general observations and recommendations.

Consultation

When asked to comment on the quality of informal open space, about 50% of people stated that the spaces were good or very good, with a further 40% believing they were 'average'.

Quality audits

The quality audits found that in general, amenity greenspace was average to good quality, with no real issues of poor quality apart from a few new amenity spaces in recent housing developments (likely not to have been adopted). There were also some good examples where environmental improvements have taken place adding planting and landscape structure, maintenance was generally good.

Proposed quality standard for Amenity Open Space: Good for existing space, with a need to ensure new sites are improved on both design and management and maintenance.

6.6 Natural & Semi-Natural Green Space

Quantity Standard	Access Standard
1.0 ha/1000	960 metres (20 minutes straight line walk time)

6.6.1 Existing National and Local Policies

English Nature has proposed national guidance on an Accessible Natural Green Space Standard (ANGSt)⁴ which suggests that at least 2 ha of accessible greenspace should be available per 1000 people. Other components of the standards are that:

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

There are no local standards relating specifically to the provision of Accessible Natural Green Space.

⁴

<http://www.naturalengland.org.uk/ourwork/enjoying/places/greenspace/greenspacestandards.aspx>

6.6.2 General justification for a local standard

The audit of provision as well as the consultation has identified the significance of and importance attached to natural green spaces (which might include riverside walks, countryside, woodlands and the coast) and it is therefore desirable for local standards of provision to include them.

In the absence of an existing local standard it would be appropriate to consider the English Nature ANGSt guidance as a starting point for the development of a local standard. However, it is probably unrealistic to aim for a general minimum level of provision of 2 hectares per 1000 within towns, in particular, as it would be largely impossible to find the additional land required to achieve such an objective.

The standards proposed are principally aimed at larger areas of semi-natural greenspace, and not small areas which have been created to increase the multi-functionality of a site, or improve biodiversity of road verges or amenity space.

6.6.3 Quantity

The existing average level of provision of accessible natural greenspace across the Borough is 7.47/1000 people, which is by far the largest type of provision within the Borough.

The consultation asked a number of specific questions in relation to satisfaction with the quantities of open space. The results identified the following:

- About 50% of people stated that there is enough wildlife areas/nature reserves, whilst around 55% felt there was enough country parks, local countryside and woodland.

Considering the large quantities of natural greenspace within the Borough, this is perhaps to be expected. There are some large areas of natural greenspace which account for the high average provision, therefore, some areas may appear to be over provided for whilst others lacking provision.

Therefore, it is not possible to achieve an 'average' across the Borough, as it is not feasible to remove large tracts of natural green space in areas which are 'over provided' and similarly it is not be feasible to create large tracts of natural greenspace in areas where there is 'under provision'.

The proposed quantity standard for natural greenspace, therefore has much more significance for new provision, and a minimum level of provision of **1.0 ha per 1000 people** is proposed both as a basis for a contribution from new housing, but also as a minimum target for provision across the Borough. This is considered to be realistic and capable of delivery, through developer contributions.

The space provided should be of an appropriate shape and character to allow for meaningful recreational use, and its possible integration with other types of open space opportunity. (See under 'Quality'). Wherever possible, local provision should be of at least 2 hectares in size.

In the longer term there might be value in developing a hierarchy of provision as suggested by the ANGSt guidance, offering a range of smaller and larger opportunities set within a geographical dimension. However, it is felt strongly that the focus should be initially on improving provision and accessibility within easy walking distance.

6.6.4 Accessibility

The consultation asked people how far they were willing to travel to different types of open space, including wildlife areas and country parks. The consultation identified that 65% of people were willing to travel more than 20 minutes to this type of space. In general, people were willing to travel further to semi-natural greenspace than to any other form of open space.

A distance of **960 metres** (straightline), or **20 minutes** walking time is therefore proposed for natural greenspace. Whilst this latter figure might be higher than proposed by English Nature/Natural England, it is justified by the local research.

There is also an opportunity to improve access to semi-natural greenspace through the creation of more green corridors, and by creating areas of biodiversity interest on existing sites.

6.6.5 Quality

Information relating to the quality of natural greenspace was drawn from the consultation and the quality audit, whilst specific recommendations are made on an area and site basis, the key issues and recommendations are summarised below:

Consultation

The consultation asked people to comment on the quality of Local Nature Reserves, Country Parks and Riverside/Country Walks, each of these received a response of about 60% of 'very good' or 'good', with less than 10% stating they were 'poor'.

Quality audit

It was found generally that the quality of sites included in the audit was average to good. Semi-natural greenspace generally costs less to maintain than other more formal open space, and can tend to become neglected over time. It is however, felt that it is acceptable to achieve an 'average' standard of quality for this typology.

Proposed quality standard for semi-natural greenspace: Average.

6.7 Outdoor Sports Space

Quantity Standard	Access Standard
1.1 ha/1000	480 metres (10 minutes straight line walk time)

6.7.1 Existing national and local policies

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

6.7.2 General justification for a local standard

The standards for Outdoor Sport Space have largely been informed by the research and analysis carried out as part of the Playing Pitch Strategy (Part 2 of the study). The supply and demand for pitches for different types of sport means that quantity and access standards are only part of the picture in determining provision.

The assessment of open space classified outdoor sports space into two categories:

- Outdoor sports space which is fully publicly accessible, typically owned by the council or parish councils;
- Outdoor sports space which has limited public access, and is in private ownership.

The study has mapped these spaces separately as 'outdoor sports space' and 'outdoor sports space (limited access)', as this can form an important part of future work in determining the need for sports facilities. For the purpose of the development of standards and the subsequent analysis of quantity and access, an overall standard has been proposed for 'Outdoor Sports Space'. This combines both public and private facilities which both play an important role in the provision of community facilities, particularly in Copeland.

Outdoor Sport Space includes provision for seasonal and fixed sports spaces that are openly accessible to the public. Facilities include sports pitches, such as cricket, football and rugby. It also includes fixed sports spaces such as tennis courts, artificial turf pitches and bowling greens. Very often these facilities are located within Parks or Recreation Grounds, and as such, many of the facilities, especially sports pitches are multi-functional. That is why they can be used for sport one day, and for the rest of the week function as a space to walk and play.

6.7.3 Quantity

The existing level of provision of outdoor sports space is 1.56ha per 1,000 people, of which 0.73 ha/1000 are publicly accessible, and 0.82 ha/1000 have limited access.

The playing pitch strategy identifies the need for a minimum of 1.1 ha/1000 people based on analysis of supply and demand for different types of sport. This standard should be made up of space which is in secured community use.

Therefore, the proposed quantity standard for outdoor sports space is **1.1 ha per 1000 people**.

6.7.4 Accessibility

The public consultation suggests a greater expectation for using a car to get to formal playing fields although the most popular trip mode is still suggested to be by foot. People who play formal team sports, such as football, cricket and rugby, particularly at senior level almost always use cars to access facilities. Further more, where they play is often determined by other factors such as league structures. The demand for fixed sport is for it to be closer to home, but again a willingness to travel further to good quality facilities has been identified.

A distance of **480 metres (straightline)**, or about **10 minutes walking time** is therefore proposed (so that local people can gain convenient access by foot). For larger facilities, e.g. 'hub sites' with provision for multiple sports, a greater distance is proposed, in line with Sport England guidance i.e. 20 minute drive time.

6.7.6 Quality

Consultation

When asked to comment on the quality of playing fields, just over 30% of people stated that they were good or very good, with over 40% saying they are poor or very poor. In terms of more formal provision such as tennis and bowling, just under 20% of people felt they were good or very good, and over 40% saying they are poor or very poor.

Quality audit

The quality audits identified that there is considerable variation in the standards of provision across the Borough with some sites having good well maintained facilities whilst others are in need of significant improvement. The Borough has a wide range of types of outdoor sports space ranging from a single football pitch with no facilities, to large sites with several pitches, changing rooms etc. The Borough has a significant number of privately managed facilities, which form an important part of provision.

There is clearly a view from the consultation that the quality of facilities needs to be improved, this is supported by the quality audits, whilst recognising that quality does vary.

Proposed quality standard for Outdoor Sports Space: Good

6.8 Parks & Gardens

Quantity Standard	Access Standard
0.2 ha/1000	720 metres (15 minutes straight line walk time)

6.8.1 Existing national and local policies

There are no existing national or local standards or related guidance relating specifically to parks and gardens, and there are no local plan policies guiding their planning and provision either. Local plan standards refer only to the provision for Outdoor Sport, which is not necessarily the same.

6.8.2 General justification for a local standard

The audit of provision and the consultation have identified the significance of and importance attached to local recreation grounds or parks. It is therefore highly appropriate for local standards of provision to reflect their existing and continued significance through making specific provision for those features.

It is worth noting that the public often perceive ‘Parks & Gardens’ and ‘Outdoor Sport Space’ as the same thing. In Copeland there are considerable numbers of ‘recreation grounds’ which people refer to as their local park or rec. As such, the application of the standard for Parks & Gardens needs to be considered alongside the standard for Outdoor Sport Space.

This may have important consequences in the application of the standards, for example an area may be well supplied with Outdoor Sport Space but have a shortfall of Park and Gardens. By looking at these standards separately, one may conclude that there should be additional provision of Parks and Garden. However, on further investigation, the existing Outdoor Sport Spaces may themselves have a multi-functional role, providing space for sport, play and informal recreation - much the same function as a Park and Garden. This is further explored in section 8, and the locality profiles (part 1b).

6.8.3 Quantity

The current average level of provision of Parks & Gardens across the Borough has been calculated as 0.21 hectares per 1000 people. The consultation asked a number of specific questions in relation to satisfaction with the quantities of open space. The results identified that in relation to local parks and recreation grounds:

- Over 55% of people identified a sufficient provision, with around 45% identifying the need for more.

Bearing in mind the comments above relating to peoples perception of parks and gardens, and the fact that more formal parks are less prevalent in rural areas, it is fair to aim for an achievable standard close to the existing provision levels. In reality, the more rural areas are more likely to have an under supply of formal parks, as provision tends to be concentrated in more urban areas.

To reflect this, a standard of **0.2ha per 1000 people** is proposed as a basis for a contribution from new housing and as a minimum target for provision across the main urban settlements. In applying this standard, it is imperative that provision for outdoor sport is considered at the same time, as these spaces may be fulfilling the roles of formal parks in more rural areas.

6.8.4 Accessibility

The community survey identified that around 60% of respondents would be prepared to travel around 15 minutes to reach a local park or recreation ground, and that nearly 60% of these trips would be on foot.

A distance of **720 metres (straightline)**, or about **15 minutes walking time** is proposed (so that local people can gain convenient access by foot).

It would also be reasonable to adopt a wider drivetime catchment for larger facilities (such as Country Parks) of 15 minutes. This would be consistent with local people's preparedness to travel further to larger facilities as expressed through the community survey. It is possible that vehicular trips may be shared purpose journeys, perhaps combining a visit to a high quality park with shopping and/or other commitments.

6.8.5 Quality

Information related to the quality of Parks & Gardens was gathered from the consultation and from the quality audit. The findings are outlined below:

Consultation

The consultation asked people their opinion on the quality of different types of open spaces, with regards to Parks and Gardens, around 40% stated they were very good or good, and a further 40% stated they were average, leaving around 20% believing them to be poor or very poor.

Quality audits

There are only a small number of parks and gardens in the Borough, with provision focused in the main urban settlements. Where they do exist, the quality was found to be good, with 4 sites recently achieving green flag awards, and a further 3 sites achieving green heritage awards.

Proposed quality standard for Parks & Gardens: Very Good

6.9 Play Space

Quantity Standard	Access Standard
0.15 ha/1000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Junior Provision - 450m (just under 10 minutes straightline walk time) • Youth Provision - 720 m (15 minutes straightline walk time)

6.9.1 Existing national and local policies

The NPFA guidance has been adopted by many local authorities over the years and its use continues to be widespread. The NPFA standards for equipped children's play provision have been criticised in recent years because they can result in a proliferation of play areas that can be difficult to maintain, as well as setting unrealistic aspirations in urban areas where insufficient land is available to provide facilities, especially higher density development on brownfield sites. An additional problem is that the current NPFA guidance does not specifically cover the needs of most teenagers within the standard Youth provision is a significant issue throughout the study area (confirmed by many of the comments and findings of the community consultation).

6.9.2 General justification for a local standard

In view of the 'unsuitability' of the NPFA standards and the results of the community consultation a new locally derived provision standard for Play Space is proposed.

The suggested new standard seeks to achieve a more balanced approach to the needs of children of all ages. It also seeks to be realistic in terms of acknowledging the cost of both providing and maintaining equipped playspace.

6.9.3 Quantity

The existing average level of provision of equipped play space across the Borough is 0.14 ha/1000 people. The consultation asked a number of specific questions in relation to satisfaction with the quantities of open space. The results of the community survey identified the following:

- *Children's play space.* This was very evenly split with about half of people identifying the need for more provision, and the rest stating that the level of provision should remain the same (only about 5% felt there should be less).
- *Young people's play space.* The results here were markedly different, with just over 70% identifying the need for more provision for young people.

A standard of **0.15 ha of play space per 1000 people is proposed** as a guide for provision as part of new development, and as a guide to a minimum target for provision across the Borough. The priority in achieving this standard is the provision of space for young people, where there is clearly a need to improve the quantity currently available.

6.9.4 Accessibility

The consultation asked people how far they were willing to travel to different types of open space, including play facilities. The consultation identified that just over 40% of people were willing to travel up to 10 minutes, and a further 25% up to 15 minutes.

There was a general trend suggesting that people are willing to travel slightly further to facilities for young people than for smaller children, with 50% willing to travel up to 15 minutes and more than 30% willing to travel more than 20 minutes.

The access standards proposed are:

- **450 metres** (straightline), or just under **10 minutes** (often accompanied) walking time for provision aimed at the pre teen age group and also - where possible - the younger teenage band.
- **720 metres** (straightline), or **15 minutes** walking time for older teenagers.

6.9.5 Quality

Information related to the quality of children and young people's play space was gathered from consultation and from the quality audit. The key issues are outlined below:

Consultation

For children's play space, just over 30% identified them as being good or very good, and 40% average. This differed significantly to people's views on youth facilities, with over 70% believing them to be poor or very poor.

Quality audit

The quality audit identified a vast range in the quality of play areas across the Borough, with some good examples having a range of facilities for all ages. However, these are in the minority and there is still a significant legacy of outdated equipment. There is a need to improve play across the Borough, and there should be an aspiration to deliver a 'very good' standard of quality for all play areas.

Proposed quality standard for Play Space: Very Good

6.10 Other standards for open space

Quantity and Access standards have not been developed for Education Sites, Churchyards and Cemeteries, Golf Courses, Beaches, Civic Space or Natural & Semi-Natural Greenspace (limited access). However, these sites are an important part of the green infrastructure of the Borough, and should be considered in future policies proposed by the Borough Council. The following issues should be considered:

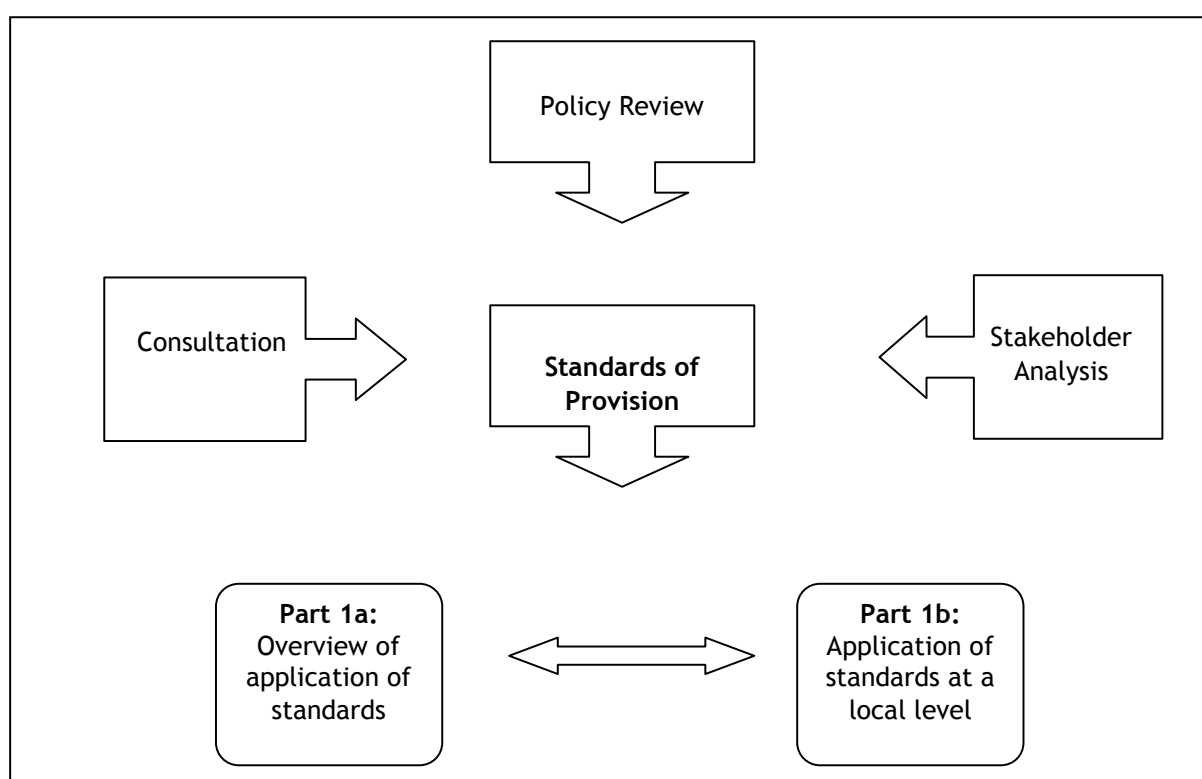
- **Education sites.** Again these sites may be important to the local community, and become increasingly more significant with the building schools for the future programme (see section 8). Improvements to these sites should aim to deliver 'good' standards of quality.
- **Churchyards and Cemeteries.** These sites can be important to informal recreation and biodiversity, and should therefore be afforded protection and allowance should be made for improving them through developer contributions where there is community or biodiversity benefit.
- **Golf Courses.** These sites may have no public access, or may have public footpaths through them. They can have value as landscape features and be valuable for biodiversity. They are also an important recreation facility, and sufficient provision is required to meet the needs of both local golfers and visitors to the area.
- **Coast and Beaches.** Certain parts of the coast and beaches can provide an important resource for recreation, tourism and biodiversity. However, the nature of these areas means it is not appropriate to set standards for their provision. Their protection and effective management is an important part of future provision.
- **Civic Space.** There are a small number of civic spaces in the Borough, restricted to the larger urban settlements. No standards have been proposed for this type of provision, however, they do form an important part of the urban landscape and can provide valuable space for events.
- **Natural & Semi-Natural Greenspace (Limited Access).** These spaces do not have public access, therefore do not provide the same opportunities for people to enjoy and experience natural areas and biodiversity. However, they can be extremely valuable for biodiversity and have landscape value.

7.0 APPLICATION OF STANDARDS

The standards for open space and built facilities are central to the future planning and provision of facilities. The PPG17 guidance identifies that the standards should be used to:

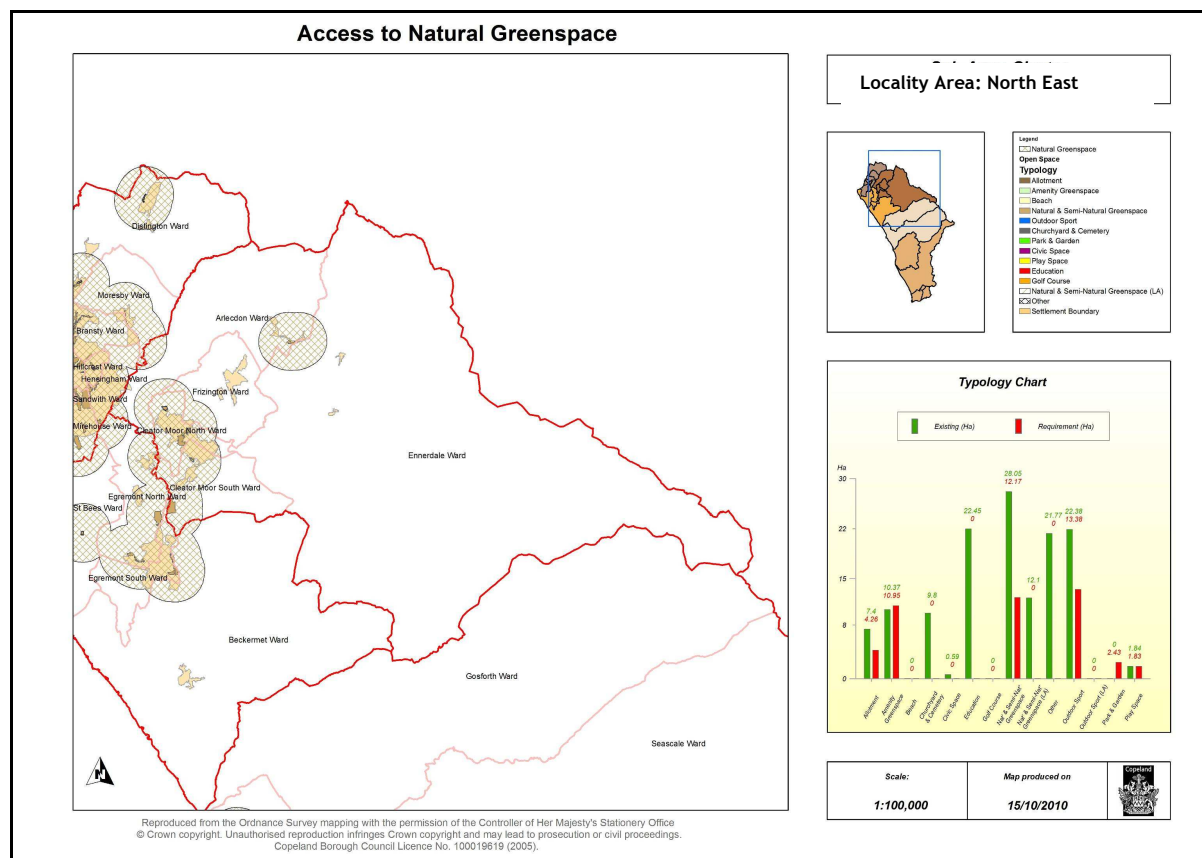
- Identify deficiencies in accessibility;
- Identify quality deficiencies;
- Identify areas of quantitative deficiency or surplus;

This section considers each of the above at a Borough wide level. More local analysis at locality level is provided within part 1b of the report (area profiles). The application and analysis of the standards is drawn from previous sections of the study, and parts 1a and 1b of the report are interlinked, as shown below:



7.1 Access to open space, sport and recreation facilities

For each of the typologies, access standards have been set (as outlined in section 6). These standards are based on straight line walk times. Part 1b of the report shows maps by locality with the access standards for each typology applied using catchment zones, which have been created using GIS analysis. An example map is shown below:



The access standards should be used as follows:

- To identify deficiencies / gaps in access to each of the typologies within local areas. This information can be used to determine priorities for new provision. It is likely that a Greenspace Strategy would determine how these deficiencies could be met.
- To inform development control planners where open space is required as part of new developments in order to achieve the Borough access standards. The access standards are an important factor in the decision making and planning process and examples of how they should be applied are explored in section 8.
- To consider how recreational routes, green corridors etc can contribute towards improving access to open space. Again this should be considered within a Greenspace Strategy and through the planning of new development.

7.2 Quality of open space, sport and recreation facilities

7.2.1 Quality audit of open space

The audit of open space included visits to 424 sites across the Borough. Each site has been assessed using a set of criteria (see section 2.3.1) and scored for existing quality and potential quality. Each site has been given a unique reference number

(linked to the GIS database), and the quality scores recorded on a quality database (on an excel spreadsheet).

In this section, the database has been used to draw out some general observations about the quality of each typology, and provide examples of good and bad provision. More detailed observations are made in the area profiles, however, it is important to note that the observations made in this section are as applicable across the Borough. The audit found as much variation in the quality of sites within a ward, as within a locality and across the Borough. With such a large number of sites included within the study, it is not feasible to analyse every site (this is covered in the quality database).

The quality database is designed to act as a tool for use by council officers in decision making on management and planning issues related to open space. Further information is provided on this in section 8. The following summarises the general findings of the quality audit, and identify issues and deficiencies in quality.

7.2.2 Allotments

Access to sites was inevitably difficult, and ‘best effort’ assessments were made to confirm the existence of an allotment and make some judgement of its quality. The following summarises the findings:

The audit found a large variation in the type and quality of allotments within the Borough, sites included the following:

- Small holdings with outbuildings,
- Garages/sheds and storage areas,
- Abandoned sites now left as long grass,
- Formal, well used allotment gardens used for growing fruit and vegetables,
- Community gardens with evidence of communal planting schemes,
- Gardens used by nearby houses with lawns, sheds and planting;

It is clear that the sites are under various ownership and management, and differ in use and quality. As such, it is difficult to determine how and where quality could be improved. The issues are complex and further work would be required to develop a coherent allotment strategy.

What is clear is that allotments are important to community life and they should be afforded protection unless it can be clearly demonstrated they are surplus to requirement. Furthermore, there are clearly sites that would benefit from investment in their basic infrastructure. Further recommendations are made in relation to this in section 8.

7.2.3 Amenity Greenspace

The following section makes some general observations and recommendations regarding amenity open space:

- The audit identified that these spaces were generally well maintained, and a number of sites have been improved with landscape features such as shrubs and tree planting;
- Amenity open spaces provide a significant opportunity to provide additional facilities. For example, many of the sites are large enough to accommodate facilities for children and young people, particularly in areas where there is a shortfall in provision.
- A number of new amenity spaces have been provided as part of new housing development - a number of these were found to be of poor design and quality - and this needs to be addressed in future housing schemes.
- Where sites have been identified as having the potential to improve, generally, this can be achieved relatively easily and at a reasonable cost (compared to play areas or sports grounds). Simple improvements such as enhanced planting and improved footpath surfacing can significantly improve the overall quality of a site and its appearance.
- Where sites do have facilities, such as play areas, these often require improved maintenance and better quality of provision (see under play).
- Within the Whitehaven & Howgate/Distinguon area there is a major opportunity to change the maintenance regime to provide for a varied level of cut on the larger sites. This would enhance visual variety whilst benefiting insects such as bees and butterflies.

7.2.4 Natural & Semi-natural greenspace

Some key issues and recommendations relating to natural & semi-natural greenspace are outlined below:

- The Borough is well provided for in terms of natural & semi-natural greenspace with a number of large areas of accessible spaces located throughout the Borough.
- In the urban settlements, in general, the quality of existing semi-natural greenspaces for biodiversity is good, with appropriate levels of access balanced with areas for biodiversity. Mostly this is achieved as a result of the large size of many of the areas which are large enough to provide for both recreation and biodiversity.
- Information provision and interpretation was generally found to be good with most sites being appropriately equipped.
- There is an opportunity to improve the management of other open spaces for biodiversity, in particular, amenity open spaces.

- The management of natural and semi-natural greenspace falls under the responsibility of a number of organisations including the council, wildlife trust and RSPB. Therefore communication between these organisations is important to maintain the biodiversity footprint and quality for the future.
- Within the Whitehaven & Howgate/Distinguon area much of the natural and semi-natural greenspace offers existing or potential green corridors. Some of these routes connect low to high ground with steps (perhaps a legacy of links from home to workplace). Others take the form of cyclepaths (notably as part of the National Cycle Network). There are major opportunities to enhance this network of corridors which would benefit connectivity by foot and bike, whilst also enhancing the local environment.

7.2.5 Outdoor Sports Space

- The Borough has a wide range of types of outdoor sports space ranging from a single football pitch with no facilities, to large sites with several pitches, changing rooms etc.
- The quality audits identified that there is considerable variation in the quality of provision across the Borough, with some sites having good well maintained facilities whilst others are in need of significant improvement.
- There are a significant number of facilities which are in private ownership or management - in fact more than in public ownership. Private facilities are an important part of the provision for outdoor sport in the Borough. Consideration needs to be given to how developer contributions and other funding can be made available to these clubs and facilities to ensure facilities are provided for the future (see section 8).
- Many of these spaces are 'multi-functional' and provide for a range of both formal and informal recreation. So whilst the site may be used for football at the weekends, the rest of the week it is used for informal recreation.
- Improvements to these sites also need to be co-ordinated through site management plans.

7.2.6 Play Space

The following issues have been drawn out of the audit:

- The quality of play areas varies vastly across the area, but overall quality is at best 'average'.
- Where new equipment has been provided, generally, it is of good quality.
- There is, however, a lack of 'imagination' with regards to the provision for play with almost all facilities consisting of traditional play equipment, much of it out of date.

- There is an opportunity to make use of the large natural greenspace resource to meet shortages in play provision, through the provision of natural play space.
- A significant number of play areas are provided within a larger open space, however, very few of these are 'integrated' within the site. That is their location has not been considered in relation to the whole site and its wider use. It is therefore recommended that any investment in play areas is co-ordinated with a wider 'master plan' for the whole of an open space. There is a need for new play areas to be designed as part of the landscape, incorporating natural play, landscape features and modern equipment.
- There is a lack of signage at many play areas, with no information on how to contact those responsible for management.
- There is a distinct lack of facilities for young people. Where there is provision, it often lacks thought with regard to its location and function. It is therefore recommended that provision for young people is increased, and that design and location is developed in consultation with users.

7.2.7 Parks & Gardens

- The borough only has a small number of formal parks and gardens, located in the main urban settlement areas. Where they are provided, they were found to be of good quality, with 4 parks achieving green flag awards and a further 3 sites achieving green heritage awards.
- Investment in Parks & Gardens needs to be co-ordinated through the development of site management plans. These should be subject to consultation with the local community and follow good practice guidance, such as that provided by CABE space.⁵
- The lack of parks and gardens in more rural areas is expected, as this type of provision tends to be located in areas with larger populations. Often this need is met in rural areas by local recreation grounds and other types of provision. Therefore, the application of the standards for parks and gardens needs to focus on the urban settlements.

7.3 Quantity of open space, sport and recreation facilities

For each of the typologies, quantity standards have been set (as outlined in section 6), these are expressed as hectares of open space per 1000 population (e.g. 0.5 ha/1000). For each of the typologies, the existing quantity of open space has been assessed using GIS analysis, and then provision is calculated against the proposed standards.

The analysis has been carried out using a bespoke GIS toolkit which allows existing quantity to be assessed against standards. The analysis can take place at any

⁵ <http://www.cabe.org.uk/publications/producing-parks-and-green-space-management-plans>

defined geographical area, and for this study, assessments have been made by Locality and Ward level (maps for this are provided in part 2 of the report).

The analysis shows if there is an existing 'sufficient supply' or 'under supply' against the open space standard, this is expressed in total hectares and hectares/1000 people (as +/- ha).

The toolkit allows scenarios to be modelled, and is an invaluable toolkit in decision making in development control. This is further explored in section 7.4.

Table 7.3 outlines the provision of each typology by Locality and ward, showing as 'sufficient supply' or 'under supply' compared to the Copeland Standard. The maps in part 1b of the report show the existing and required provision against the standard for each Locality (as shown below). This can also be assessed at a more local level by ward or settlement using the GIS toolkit.

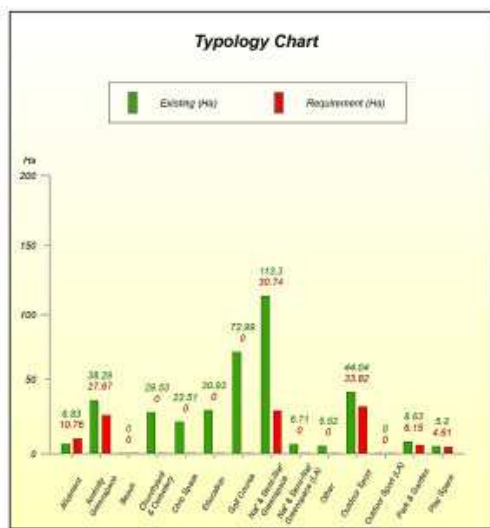
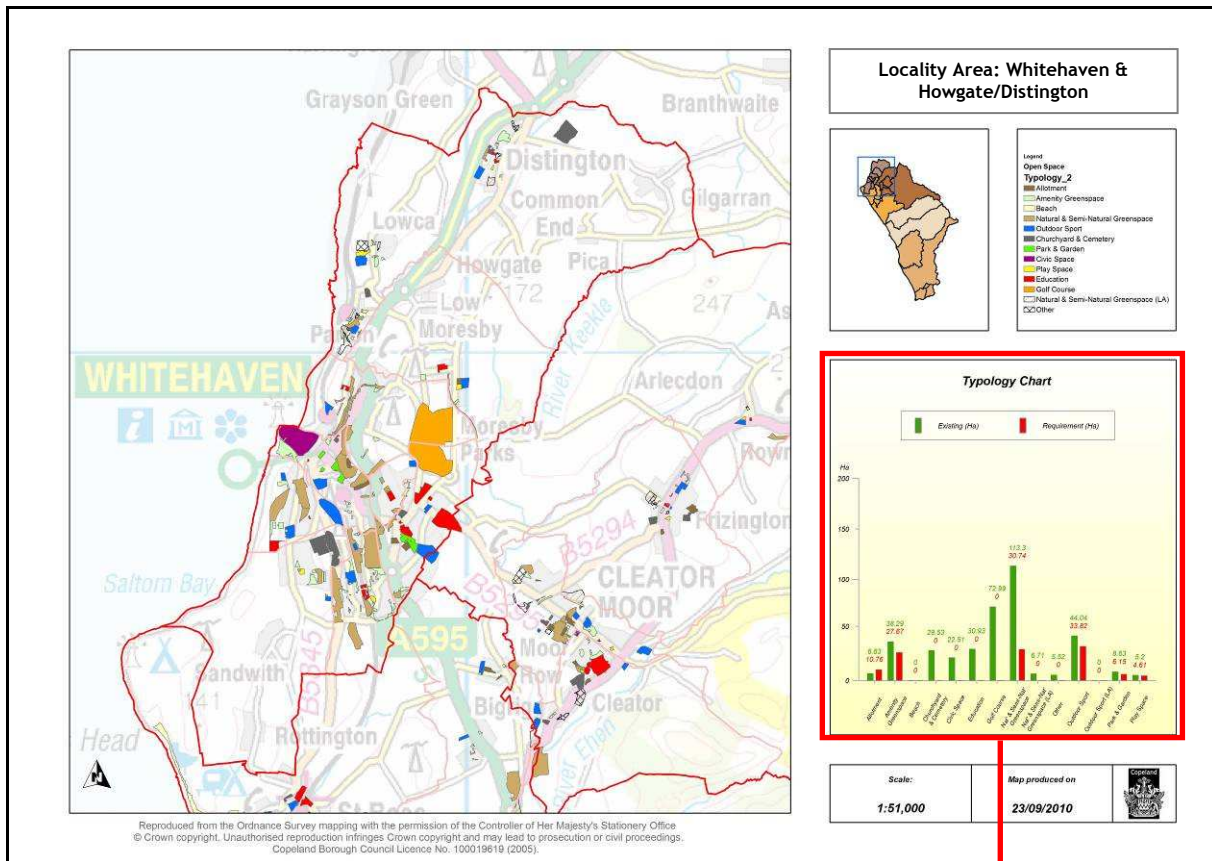


Table 7.3 Summary of quantity provision of open space

Locality/ Ward	Provision of open space (hectares)					
	Allotments	Amenity Greenspace	Natural & Semi-Natural Green Space	Outdoor Sport	Park & Garden	Play Space
South Copeland	-0.24	-4.5	222.83	9.61	1.82	-0.66
Bootle	-0.46	-1.18	-1.31	0.47	-0.26	-0.2
Haverigg	0.64	-1.37	206.32	5.25	-0.37	-0.02
Newtown	0.01	-3.01	224.41	2.62	2.7	-0.37
Holborn Hill	-0.89	-0.12	-2.53	-0.19	-0.51	-0.38
Millom (without)	-0.51	-1.32	-1.46	-1.61	-0.29	-0.11
Five Rivers	-1.51	-1.06	128.9	2.03	0.75	0.33
Gosforth	-0.52	-1.06	-1.49	2.19	1.31	-0.09
Seascale	-0.99	0.01	130.39	-0.16	-0.56	0.42
North East Copeland	3.14	-0.58	15.88	9.0	-2.43	0.01
Ennerdale	-0.37	-0.94	1.17	-1.15	-0.21	0.08
Cleator Moor South	0.15	0.75	11.58	1.52	-0.54	0.08
Cleator Moor North	2.45	1.91	7.29	1.24	-0.85	-0.27
Frizington	1.46	0.84	-2.61	-0.6	-0.52	0.05
Arlecdon	-0.54	-1.39	-0.68	7.98	-0.31	0.07
West Copeland	2.33	-2.48	21.04	14.32	-1.25	-0.45
Beckermest	-1.01	-2.24	-1.24	3.49	-0.58	0.05
Egremont South	3.17	1.73	13.71	1.62	0.46	-0.15
Egremont North	0.02	0.22	10.97	8.56	-0.85	-0.37
St Bees	0.14	0.06	-0.76	4.7	-0.28	0.03
Whitehaven & Howgate/ Distington	-3.93	10.62	82.56	10.22	2.48	0.59
Distington	-1.14	4.1	-0.6	2.74	-0.8	1.57
Moresby	0.4	0.01	0.96	0.84	-0.24	0.51
Bransty	-1.78	-2.84	11.42	-3.95	-1.02	-0.72
Harbour	1.78	4.83	28.75	-0.78	3.51	-0.51
Kells	-0.83	8.56	16.88	11.08	-0.47	-0.19
Hillcrest	-0.9	-1.11	4.81	-1.55	-0.51	-0.15
Sandwith	-0.89	1.37	11.57	-2	-0.51	0.43
Mirehouse	-1.6	4.98	41.25	-0.99	-0.92	0.15
Hensingham	1.09	-1.47	4.25	4.82	3.44	-0.51



Sufficient supply



Under Supply

7.3.1 Quantity of open space by typology

The following observations are made with regards to the quantity of open space across the Borough:

Allotments

There tends to be a sporadic supply of Allotments across the Borough, with some areas having significant under provision and others a significant over provision. The North East Copeland and West Copeland localities have sufficient provision overall, whilst the other three localities have under supply.

Residents within Cleator Moor have expressed the need for additional allotments, despite the analysis showing there to be sufficient provision against the standard. This demonstrates the need to use the standards as a guide for decision making, and the need for more detailed consultation on specific issues as appropriate.

Amenity Greenspace

Only the Whitehaven & Howgate/Distington locality has sufficient provision, in those localities where there is under supply, North East Copeland and West Copeland have a number of wards with sufficient provision. South Copeland and Mid Copland localities have the most wards with under provision.

Outdoor Sports Space

All of the localities have an overall sufficient supply of outdoor sports space, there are however, deficiencies within individual wards.

Natural & semi-natural greenspace

All localities have a sufficient supply of this typology, there are however, localised deficiencies within a number of wards within each locality.

Parks & Gardens

South Copeland, Five Rivers and Whitehaven & Howgate/Distington localities all have sufficient provision overall. All of the wards within the North East Copeland and West Copeland localities have an under supply.

Play Space

The North East Copeland and Whitehaven & Howgate/Distington localities have a sufficient supply overall, however, a number of wards within the Whitehaven & Howgate/Distington area have under provision. The other localities all have an under supply overall, with all wards within South Copeland having an under supply.

7.3.2 Quantity of open space by locality

Further information is provided in relation to provision within the localities in part 1b of the report. The following provides a brief summary of the main observations.

South Copeland

Overall, this locality has an under supply of allotments, amenity greenspace and play space, of these all wards have an under supply of amenity greenspace and play space. The locality is well provided for overall with natural greenspace, outdoor sports space and parks & gardens, however, there are localised deficiencies in some of the wards.

Five Rivers

Overall this locality has an under supply of allotments and amenity greenspace, but is well provided for with other typologies. As there are only two wards that make up this locality, supply will also need to be looked at on a more localised level within the wards of Gosforth and Seascale.

North East Copeland

This locality has an under supply of amenity greenspace and parks & gardens, with all wards having an under supply of parks and gardens. There is a sufficient supply of other typologies, with only 1 or 2 wards having under provision.

West Copeland

Overall there is an under supply of amenity greenspace, parks & gardens and play space, with all wards having under provision of parks & gardens. There is sufficient supply of other typologies, with all wards having sufficient provision for outdoor sports.

Whitehaven & Howgate/Distinguon

The only typology with an overall under supply is allotments. However, a number of wards within the locality have localised under provision, especially with parks and gardens, play space and outdoor sports space. Only 1 ward has an under supply of natural & semi-natural greenspace.

7.4 How to use the standards

The standards have been proposed to inform the future provision of open space across the Borough, and all three standards for quality, quantity and access should be used together as follows:

- To seek to achieve a balance of open space across the Borough which meets the minimum Borough standard for each typology. This study should form the basis for a Greenspace Strategy, which should identify the options for achieving the standard.

- Provide guidance to planners and developers as the minimum requirement for open space provision as part of new housing development.

The following are examples to demonstrate how the proposed standards could be applied in three different development scenarios. Built facilities issues have also been considered here, although further information on this is provided in part 3 of the report.

7.4.1 Scenario A

Application of a range of standards to a large development of 250 houses of mixed house types and densities.

It is determined that a proposed planning application for the above development, would lead to a projected net increase in population of 500 within the locality.

The Council confirms that the type of housing proposed requires open space provision/contributions.

Some local play provision and amenity space is initially proposed on site, with a financial commitment by the developer to new or improved outdoor sports provision off site. The new residents are likely to place significant additional demands on existing local provision within the area, justifying detailed consideration of a) what should be provided within the site; and b) how contributions should be provided to sites elsewhere within reasonable access of the development.

Amongst other things, the immediate area has the following:

- Existing education outdoor sports provision which currently has no formally established public use. Even without the additional demands placed upon existing provision by new development, there is already an identified shortage of outdoor public sports provision in the immediate area.
- Good access to Rights of Way in the immediate settlement, open countryside, accessible woodlands and a country park (the latter by car).
- There are no allotments or youth provision within easy reach.

The following amount of provision could be raised through developer contributions.

Provision	Standard	Amount generated (calculation)	Amount generated (sum)
Parks and Gardens	0.2 ha per 1000 persons	0.2 ha x 0.5	0.1 ha
Natural & Semi-Natural Green Space	1.0 ha per 1000 persons	1 ha x 0.5	0.5 ha

Provision	Standard	Amount generated (calculation)	Amount generated (sum)
Amenity Greenspace	0.9 ha per 1000 persons	0.9 ha x 0.5	0.45 ha
Play Space	0.15 ha per 1000 persons	0.15 ha x 0.5	0.075 ha
Allotments	0.35 ha per 1000 persons	0.35 ha x 0.5	0.175 ha
Outdoor Sport	1.1 ha per 1000 persons	1.1 x 0.5	0.55 ha

The above calculations confirm that the demands generated by the new residents would justify new provision either on or off site, and significant contributions which might go towards improving existing provision within easy reach.

Discussion with relevant parties suggests potentially the following programme of action:

Opportunity	Action
Parks and Gardens	The existing education playing fields are improved in respect of drainage in return for the school entering into a community use agreement. However, it is felt that the major new development will merit a new local park to serve as a community focal point. A contribution is also agreed towards improvements to nearby accessible woodland in this regard.
Amenity Greenspace	Beyond the informal space already proposed local consultation suggests a view that the contribution could go towards improved Rights of Way close to the site. A contribution is also agreed towards improving identified accessible woodlands.
Natural & Semi-Natural Green	
Play Space	Existing and planned provision for junior and pre-school children is generally of good quality. However, there is a clear need for new and better youth facilities which are planned and designed into revised layouts. Beyond this conventional provision, it is determined that contributions could be made towards natural play features on nearby recreation grounds.
Allotments	A small site is proposed near to the local school, which can then also be used by pupils.
Outdoor Sport	See comments above under 'Parks and Gardens'

7.5.2 Scenario B

Application of a range of standards to a medium size, high density development (60 houses) on a 'brownfield' site.

It is determined that a proposed planning application for the above development would lead to a projected net increase in the population of 120. No open space or recreation provision is currently proposed on site, other than incidental space. Off site contributions for outdoor sport will be sought.

The immediate area already has a very good range of provision, including a well equipped and large recreation ground (with both children and young people's space).

The following amount of provision could be raised through developer contributions.

Provision	Standard	Amount generated (calculation)	Amount generated (sum)
Parks and Gardens	0.2 ha per 1000 persons	0.2 ha x 0.12	0.024 ha
Natural & Semi-Natural Green Space	1.0 ha per 1000 persons	1 ha x 0.12	0.12 ha
Amenity Greenspace	0.9 ha per 1000 persons	0.9 ha x 0.12	0.108 ha
Play Space	0.15 ha per 1000 persons	0.15 ha x 0.12	0.018 ha
Allotments	0.35 ha per 1000 persons	0.35 ha x 0.12	0.042 ha
Outdoor Sport	1.1 ha per 1000 persons	1.1 ha x 0.12	0.132 ha

The general feeling is that although the new development would generate additional demands, these can largely be met by existing local provision. The main problem is that access to most of the existing outdoor local facilities from this site can be difficult by foot due to poor signage and inadequate road crossing points.

Discussion with relevant parties suggests potentially the following programme of action:

Opportunity	Action
Parks and Gardens	Because the existing local recreation ground is large and of high quality, the contributions generated by these three standards are used instead to improve access by foot and bike to this facility. A package of signing, and 'greening' of a local route is agreed, which includes identifying and marking road crossing points.
Natural & Semi-Natural Green Space	
Amenity Open Space	
Play Space	Contributions are made towards the maintenance and repair of children and young people's provision at the recreation ground. However, it is also agreed that the developer should provide a small toddler play and sitting area within the housing site, as a doorstep play opportunity for very young children.
Allotments	Contributions are used to purchase a 'compost toilet' at the local allotment.
Outdoor Sport	Improvements to the existing sports pavilion in the recreation ground are proposed

7.5.3 Scenario C

Application of a range of standards to a small development of family houses within a village (5 houses).

It is determined that a proposed planning application for the above development, would lead to a projected net increase in population of 22.5 people within a village. The Council confirms that the type of housing proposed requires provision/contributions. No provision for open space and/or recreation is currently proposed on site. Off site contributions for outdoor sport will be sought.

The village already has the following:

- A recreation ground (providing for sport and informal recreation) only 10 minutes walk from the development.
- No identified Informal or Natural Green Space within the limits of the village.
- A well maintained children's play ground, but nothing for older children.
- A well used football pitch (on the recreation ground).
- A local allotment site only 10 minutes walk from the development.

The following amount of provision could be raised through developer contributions.

Provision	Standard	Amount generated (calculation)	Amount generated (sum)
Parks and Gardens	0.2 ha per 1000 persons	0.2 ha x 0.0225	0.0045 ha
Natural & Semi-Natural Green Space	1.0 ha per 1000 persons	1.0 ha x 0.0225	0.0225 ha
Amenity Greenspace	0.9 ha per 1000 persons	0.9 ha x 0.0225	0.02025 ha
Play Space	0.15 ha per 1000 persons	0.15 ha x 0.0225	0.003375 ha
Allotments	0.35 ha per 1000 persons	0.35 ha x 0.0225	0.007875 ha
Outdoor Sport	1.1 ha per 1000 persons	1.1 x 0.0225	0.02475 ha

The above calculations confirm that the demands generated by the new residents would make it very difficult to justify new provision of any kind on site. However, given the costs involved in providing many of the opportunities covered by the standards, even small developments could generate significant contributions which might go towards improving existing provision within easy reach.

Therefore, contributions for off site provision would be sought to fulfil identified deficiencies in quality, quantity or access to facilities within the parish and Locality. Discussion with relevant parties suggests potentially the following programme of action:

Opportunity	Action
Parks and Gardens	Improvements to the recreation ground in agreement with the local parish council/playing field trust
Semi-Natural Green Space	Local consultation suggests a view that the contribution could go towards improved rights of way surrounding the village. Consideration also given to 'naturalising' under-utilised parts of the existing recreation ground.
Amenity Open Space	
Play Space	Local consultation suggests no desire to improve existing provision for younger children (which is already good), but to offer something for teenagers, such as a 'hangout' area on the recreation ground and a 'target' wall.

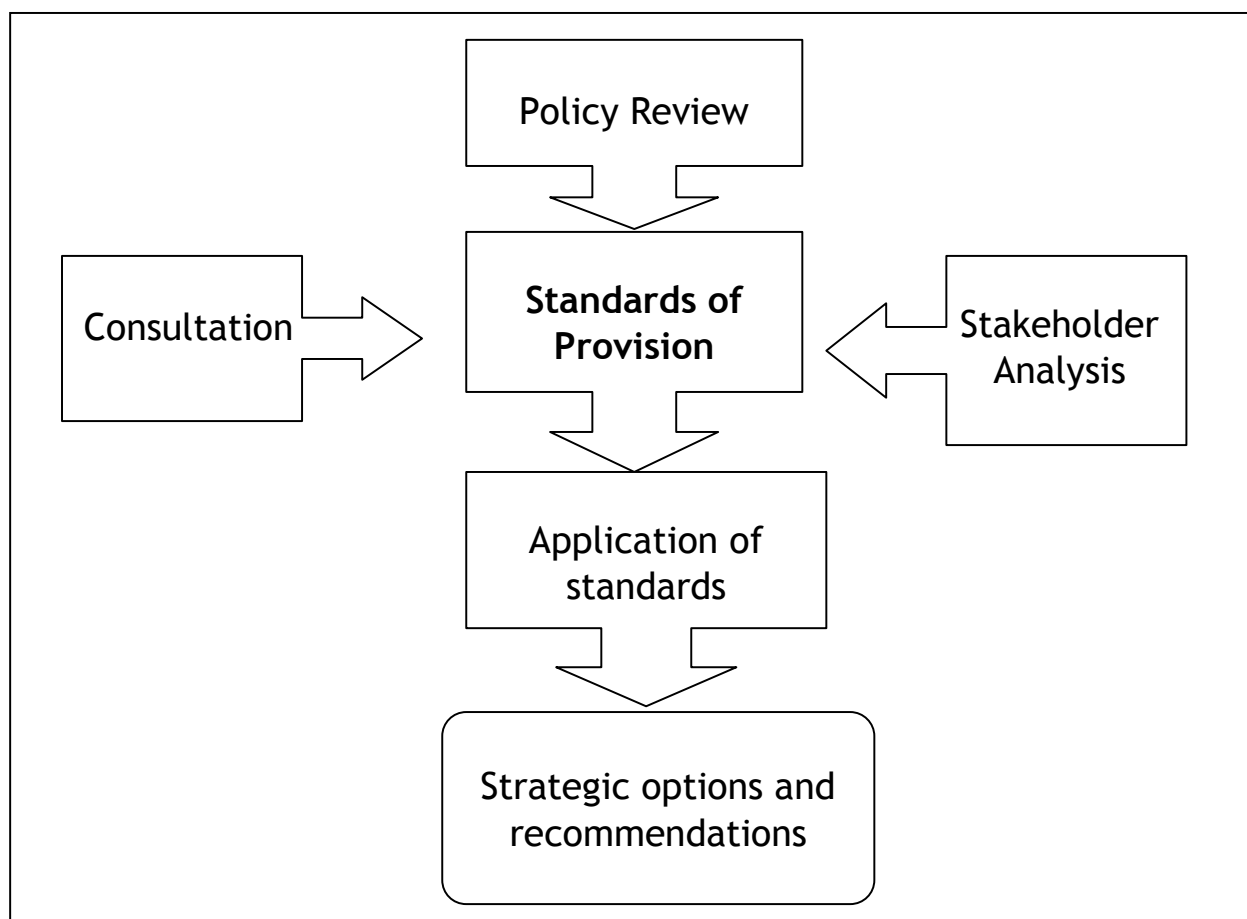
Opportunity	Action
Allotments	Improvements to the existing allotments (such as secure storage shed).
Village Hall	Contribution towards much needed roof repairs on the village hall.
Outdoor Sport	Drainage improvements to goalmouth areas

8.0 STRATEGIC OPTIONS

8.1 Developing strategic options

The PPG 17 guidance recommends the study should be brought together to identify and evaluate strategic options and draft policies. This information is gathered from all previous elements of the study as shown in figure 8.1 below:

Figure 8.1 Process for developing strategic options



Specifically, the guidance recommends that the strategic options should consider four basic components:

- Existing provision to be protected.
- Existing provision to be enhanced.
- Existing provision to be relocated in order to meet local needs more effectively or make better overall use of land.
- Proposals for new provision.

The guidance also identifies that consideration should be given to a fifth component - land or facilities which are surplus to requirements and therefore no longer needed.

8.2 Delivering strategic options

Since this study started, the change in government in 2010, has seen many new policies emerging relating to strategic planning, which will have an impact on how the recommendations in this study will be delivered. The abolition of regional spatial strategies, and the move towards localism, puts more focus on local authorities to work with local communities to make decisions and deliver services, rather than relying on national or regional guidance. This will clearly, impact how some of the recommendations in this study will be delivered.

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

One of the emerging priorities from localism is for there to be much more local decision making with regards to planning, and for local communities to develop neighbourhood plans. The provision of open space, sport and recreation facilities will need to be one of the key elements of these neighbourhood plans. The area profiles that support this study (part 1b), will form a good starting point for decision making, and should be used to feed into neighbourhood plans as they are developed.

The following sections, consider the key issues for open space in the Borough, and the recommendations that emerge need to be taken in context with the localism bill and consider how they can fit into neighbourhood planning. With this agenda still new, and further guidance still awaited, the following sections serve to highlight issues, but do not resolve how they may be delivered, which should be developed through the future of neighbourhood plans.

8.3 Existing provision to be protected

The starting point of any policy adopted by the Council should be that all open space should be afforded protection unless it can be proved it is not required. (Section 8.8 considers the decision making process in relation to sanctioning the re-development of open space).

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

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

The area profiles in part 1b of this study provide more detailed results at locality level and ward level as to the above considerations.

The following draws on this and makes some more general observations and recommendations.

- R1** Overall the Borough is well provided for in terms of open space, however, distribution across the Borough is sporadic and there are local deficiencies across all typologies. Therefore, decisions related to the protection of open space need to be considered at both ward and locality level, and in close consultation with the local community and through neighbourhood plans.
- R2** Sites which are critical to avoiding deficiencies in quality, quantity or access should be protected unless suitable alternative provision can be provided.
- R3** Sites which have nature conservation, historical or cultural value should be afforded protection, even if there is an identified surplus in quality, quantity or access in that local area.
- R4** There is an under supply of facilities for young people across the Borough. Loss of any existing provision should be avoided, unless alternative new provision can be provided.
- R5** The importance of privately managed spaces (e.g. sports grounds) as a community facility has been highlighted in this study. Therefore it is recommended they should be afforded protection. Loss of these spaces could be considered if:
- there is an identified overall surplus of open space and surplus of that typology in the local area and locality,
 - alternative provision can be made or an acceptable mitigation package developed,
 - the development results in an over riding community benefit,
 - Sport England are consulted and satisfied with the proposals,
 - The playing pitch strategy identifies a surplus of provision.
- R6** There is a significant supply of semi-natural greenspace across the Borough, it is unlikely any of this is 'surplus to requirement' as it is largely protected, however, it does offer opportunity to provide alternative provision, e.g. creation of natural play areas, BMX tracks and signed routeways where there is an existing under supply of these facilities. These opportunities would need to be considered on a site by site basis, due to the sensitivity of biodiversity on some sites.
- R7** Future LDD's and Neighbourhood Plans should consider the opportunities for creating both utility and recreation routes for use by foot and bike in both urban and rural areas. Creative application of the informal open space and the semi-natural green space components of the proposed overall standard in respect of new development should be explored.

8.4 Existing provision to be relocated

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

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

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

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

R8 Develop a pilot project within one of the localities (for example linked to a major growth area) to develop a neighbourhood plan which incorporates green space planning.

8.5 Existing provision to be enhanced

This includes those spaces or facilities which:

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

Those sites which require enhancement are identified within the quality audit database that was carried out as part of this study. Key findings in relation to each typology are outlined in section 7.2, with more local information provided in the area profiles. Some of the key observations related to site enhancement include:

- The importance of providing high quality provision of formal facilities such as Parks and Gardens, Sports Space and Play Space.

- The role of private sports spaces to some local communities and the need to provide opportunity for investment.
- The need to ensure high quality open spaces are designed and provided through new development where feasible.
- The role churchyards can play in providing opportunities for informal recreation and their importance to biodiversity, and the need to provide opportunity for investment.
- The importance of semi-natural greenspace within the Borough, and the need to maintain and enhance provision for biodiversity.
- It is recommended that any enhancement or new provision/creation is aligned with the aims and objectives of the BAP (Copeland Biodiversity Action Plan).

It is intended that the quality database is used as a management tool for identifying sites to be enhanced. Ideally, this information will feed into the development of neighbourhood plans, however, the development of these may take some time.

Therefore, the quality database should be used to inform current decision making. For example, if developer contributions become available in an area, the database can be used to identify those sites which have the most 'potential to improve'. It is important to note that the database is only a 'snapshot' of the quality of a site, and any planned improvements and local priorities will need to be subject to considerable local consultation.

R9	The study makes recommendations for improving the quality of open space across the Borough. However, a long term strategy for achieving improvements is required which should be delivered through a Greenspace Strategy and neighbourhood plans.
R10	Priorities for improvement include the enhancement of the existing provision for children and young people and the improvement of amenity open spaces.
R11	Management plans should be developed for Parks and Gardens and Outdoor Sports Space. These priorities should be identified through neighbourhood plans, and could be delivered by the local community.
R12	Developer contributions should be made accessible across all typologies (with the exception of private golf courses). See section 8.9 for further information.

8.6 'Other' open space

A total of 32 spaces that were visited as part of the audit, have been classified as 'other'. These spaces have been mapped previously by the council, and often identified in the local plan. The spaces vary from large back gardens, to abandoned

open spaces and roadside buffers. None of the spaces have any existing value for recreation, however, they may have aesthetic or biodiversity value. All of the sites have the potential for alternative use, and may contribute towards meeting existing shortfalls in open space provision, or indeed be suitable for development.

Further work is required to determine how each of these sites should be treated. The priority is to establish ownership of each site, and from there determine the future potential for that site. Some sites, such as back gardens, may simply be retained as gardens, and if appropriate protected from development due to their aesthetic value.

However, some sites may afford greater opportunities, particularly as providing additional open space, where required, or indeed to be disposed off and release capital for investment in some of the priorities outlined in this study.

The work required for this is outside of the scope of this study, however, the designation of these sites needs to be looked at in any revision of the local plan.

8.7 Proposals for new provision

New provision may be required where there is a new development and a planned increase in population, and/or an existing deficiency in supply or access to facilities exists.

The summary in section 7 of this report and the area profiles in part 1b of this study outline the existing situation with regards to supply and access to open space. As discussed, neighbourhood plans would form a good mechanism to determine exactly where new provision is required, however, this study can be used as the basis for decision making, as follows:

8.7.1 Quantity

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

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

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

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

8.7.2 Access

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

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

8.7.3 Delivering new provision

There are a number of opportunities for delivering new facilities through:

- New development and developer contributions.
- Capital and grant funding.

8.7.4 New development/Developer contributions

Planning Obligations are legal agreements negotiated under the provisions of Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990. These may be negotiated between the applicant and the planning authority, involve third parties or be offered unilaterally by the applicant.

Planning Obligations can be used to offset the impacts of new development where these cannot be satisfactorily addressed by conditions attached to the planning consent. Many local planning authorities and the Courts have taken a wide view of what topics may be included within Planning Obligations.

Government Planning Circular 05/2005 states that Planning Obligations should be:

- Necessary;
- Relevant to planning;
- Directly related to the proposed development;
- Fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind to the proposed development;
- and,
- Reasonable in all other respects.

The extent of capital potentially available from developer contributions depends upon the scale and location of the development (also depending upon the local plan and any planning guidance contained therein). For a sufficiently large housing development it is possible that the provision of major and local facilities could be justified. However, even small scale development could generate developer contributions towards new or improved provision.

Further information on this is outlined in section 8.9.

8.7.5 Capital and grant funding

This section provides some information about current grant funding available for open space.

Lottery Funding Programmes

1. Agency: Sports Lottery (Sport England)

Grant Scheme: Community Investment Fund

Decisions about Sport England funding grants over £10,000 are made locally by the nine regional sports boards. Eligible projects are assessed against the priorities laid out in each Borough's sports plan and the National Framework for Sport.

It is important that projects consider the priorities for the Borough before deciding whether to approach Sport England with a proposal.

Timescale Ongoing

2. Agency: Heritage Lottery Fund

Grant Scheme: Parks for People

To help with the restoration and regeneration of public parks and gardens Grants available between £250,000 and £5million. Project Planning Grants of up to £50,000 are also available.

You need to demonstrate that:

- the community values the park as part of their heritage;
- the parks meets local social, economic and environmental needs; and
- the park actively involves local people.

25% of project costs are needed from other sources, either as cash or non-cash contributions. At least 5% of this partnership funding must be cash from local resources.

Agency: BIG Lottery Fund

Grant Scheme: Awards for All

Minimum grant: £300 Maximum grant: £10,000

Awards for All can fund projects that enable people to take part in art, sport, heritage and community activities, as well as projects that promote education, the environment and health.

Timescale Any time - response within 8 weeks

3. Agency: BIG Lottery Fund

Grant Scheme: My Place

Minimum Grant £1m Maximum Grant: £5m

The Big Lottery Fund is delivering *My Place* on behalf of the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF). Funds are available to build new youth centres to provide “world class” youth services and activities based on a comprehensive needs assessment. Young people need to be actively involved in the project and partnership work across sectors is encouraged.

Timescale: Submissions by 30th September 2008

*4. Agency: BIG Lottery Fund
Grant Scheme Community Spaces*

Minimum Grant £10k Maximum Grant: £50k

Community Spaces is a £50 million open grants programme funded through the Big Lottery Fund’s Changing Spaces initiative and managed by Groundwork UK. The programme enables community groups to improve public spaces in their neighbourhood. It aims to respond directly to people’s aspirations to have better places on their doorsteps - more interesting places for children to play, safer places for people of all ages to sit, greener spaces where people and nature can grow and flourish.

Timescale: Ongoing - response to 1st stage application within 10 weeks

*5. Agency BIG Lottery Fund
Grant Scheme Reaching Communities*

Minimum grant: £10,000 Maximum grant: £500,000

Reaching Communities is a programme that aims to provide funding to help improve local communities and the lives of people most in need.

It will fund projects that respond to needs identified by communities, and actively involve them. It will fund projects that help those most in need including those people or groups who are hard to reach. It will give support to those projects it thinks best meet their communities’ needs.

It will fund projects for up to five years and it wants to bring about the following changes as a result of its funding through the programme:

- people having better chances in life
- strong communities, with more active citizens, working together to tackle their problems
- improved rural and urban environments, which communities are better able to access and enjoy
- healthier and more active people and communities.

Timescale Ongoing

Other national Funding Sources

1. Agency: Football Foundation Grant Scheme: Facility Grant

Grants up to £1m - fast-track system for grants up to £20k

The facilities scheme provides money to develop new or improve facilities for community benefit. These include changing rooms or clubhouses, grass or artificial pitches and multi-use games areas. It aims to support projects that:

- Improve facilities for football and other sport in local communities.
- Sustain or increase participation amongst children and adults, regardless of background age, or ability.
- Help children and adults to develop their physical, mental, social and moral capacities through regular participation in sport.

The types of facilities that are funded include:

- grass pitches drainage/improvements
- pavilions, clubhouses and changing rooms
- artificial turf pitches and multi-use games areas
- fixed floodlights for artificial pitches.

The FF also provide development (revenue) grants to deliver football development associated with the new facility e.g. coaching, football development officer etc.

Timescale Ongoing

2. Agency The Foundation for Sports and the Arts Grant Scheme Sports and Arts Programme

The FSA look to support a wide range of activities where there is clear beneficial impact across the community. Their priority is to encourage active participation by young people.

The FSA look for evidence of active fund raising, and the involvement and commitment of local people in trying to help themselves, where an award of up to £40,000 can make the difference between success and failure.

Football projects are not funded but the FSA say most “socially inclusive” sport is considered. Support for the arts covers the widest spectrum of activity.

Timescale No applications after March 2009

Sponsorship - Match Funding

The value of Local sponsorship can be increased through the following organisations:

1. Agency: Sportsmatch

To match fund sponsorship under £50,000

Sportsmatch is a government funded scheme set up to help fund grass roots and community sports in England. It does this by matching new sponsorship money with Sportsmatch funding, on a pound for pound basis. From May 2008 partnership funding from trusts and private individuals has become eligible for match funding.

Applications to Sportsmatch for funding can be made from any not-for-profit organisation capable of delivering community sport. It is directed at projects which aim to increase participation in sport at grass roots level, and/or improve basic skills.

Timescale Ongoing

2. Agency: National Sports Foundation

To match fund sponsorship over £50,000

The project must be able to provide £50,001 of new sponsorship money from a commercial or private investor. For each £1 that is secured from a commercial or private sponsor, the Foundation will match it £ for £ up to the maximum cost of your project (if the application is successful). For example, if you have £55,000 of privately invested funds, they will match those funds with another £55,000 of NSF funding giving you £110,000 towards your total project costs.

8.7.6 Summary recommendations for new provision

- | | |
|------------|---|
| R13 | New provision of open space may be required as part of new development in order to meet any deficiencies in provision in both quantity and access within the ward or locality within which the development takes place. Where on site provision is required, it should be provided in line with the proposed open space standards. Where on site provision is deemed impractical, or not required, off site contributions will be required to meet the quantity, access and quality standards where possible. |
| R14 | A developers contribution fund should be established to target funding across arrange of facilities (to be guided in the long term by a greenspace strategy and neighbourhood plans). |
| R15 | The priorities for new provision are for children and young people, particularly young people's space. |

8.8 Facilities that are surplus to requirement

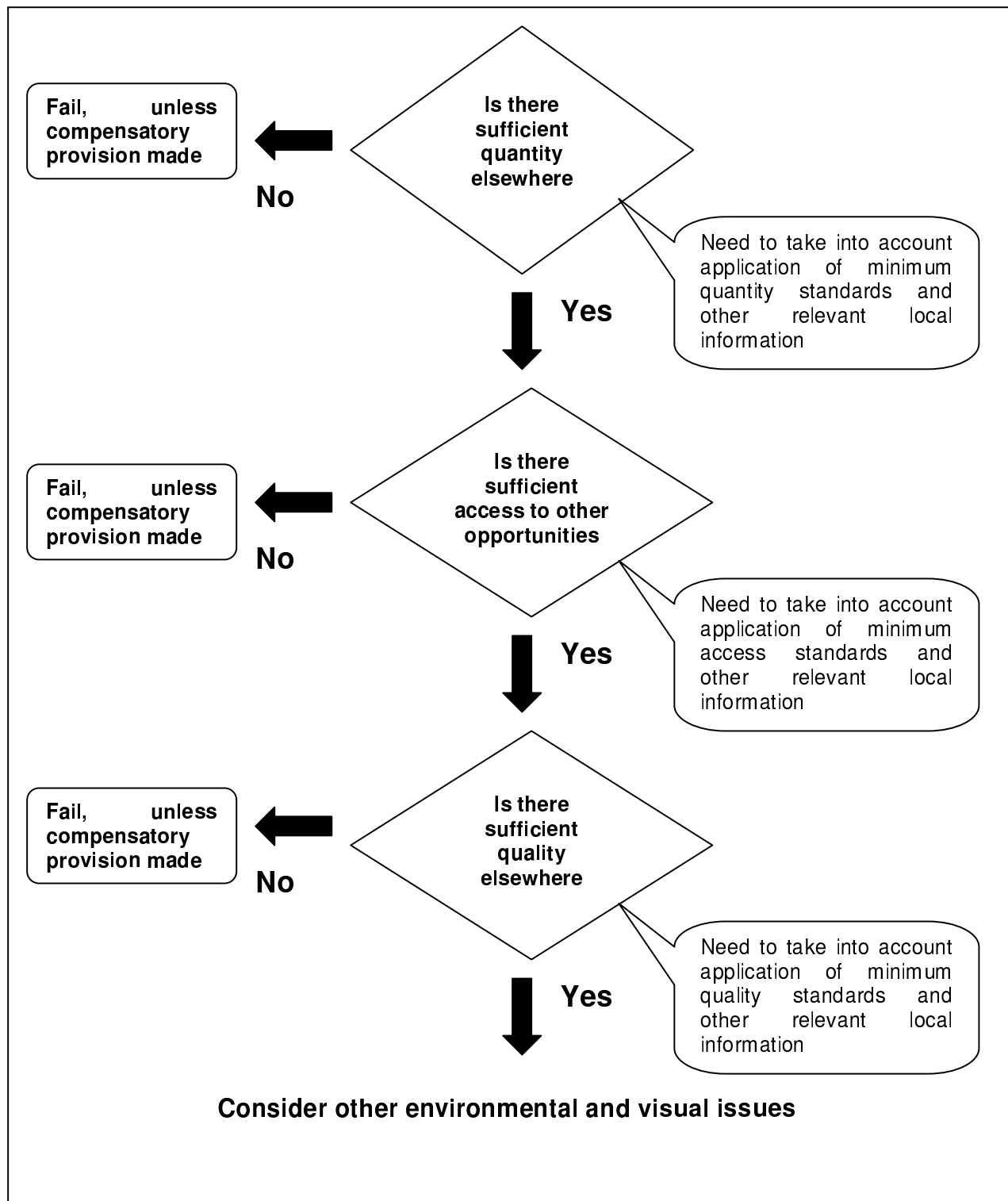
In addition to the strategic options outlined above, the PPG17 guidance also recommends that consideration should be given to facilities that are surplus to requirement. This section considers this for both open space and built facilities.

There are important issues to resolve in terms of getting the correct balance of open spaces across the Borough before any disposal can be contemplated. Whilst there is under provision relative to the minimum standards in some areas of the Borough, there are other areas where provision compares favourably with the standards. However, it is once again emphasised that the proposed standards are for *minimum* levels of provision. Factors to be taken into account before any decision to release open space for alternative uses can be taken include:

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

Figure 8.8.1 suggests an outline of the decision process that should be followed before the development of an open space can be seriously contemplated.

Figure 8.8.1: Outline decision making process in relation to sanctioning (re)development of open space



A hypothetical example of how this might be applied follows, and relates to an area of informal open space.

Q. Is there sufficient quantity?

A. If the minimum quantitative standard for informal open space is achieved in a defined geographical area, the relative provision of other forms of open space must then be considered. (Informal open space can in principle be converted into other forms of open space where the need arises). If a) provision meets the minimum quantitative standard; b) there is no significant local information suggesting a need to retain the site; and, c) there is not a perceived lack of other forms of open space. The next question can be addressed.

Q. Is there sufficient access to other opportunities?

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

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

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

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

8.9 Section 106 Obligations

This section considers the development of appropriate Section 106 obligations/charges and thresholds, both for residential (including consideration of the potential for a charge per dwelling and to take account of dwelling size) and commercial development. Essentially, the Borough Council will need to use this study to develop a tariff system and/or a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) for collecting developer contributions for open space, sport and recreation facilities. Although at this stage, it is understood that there is no commitment to produce an SPD from the Council.

8.9.1 The need for developer contributions

New development often creates a need for additional or improved open space without which there could be a detrimental effect on local amenity and the quality of the environment. Planning obligations are the mechanism by which measures are secured to enhance the quality of both the development and the wider environment. This SPD will help to ensure that development makes a positive contribution to sustainable development, providing benefits to the community as a whole.

A planning obligation is a legally binding agreement entered into between a Local Authority and a developer. It requires the developer to carry out certain works, or to provide, or contribute towards the provision of measures to mitigate the negative impacts of their development and to ensure that it makes a positive contribution to the communities within which it is situated.

Obligations will be negotiated with the aim of reducing the negative impacts of development on local communities, achieving sustainable development and enabling improvements to local open space, sport and recreation facilities. In this context, planning obligations should be seen not only as a means of mitigating the impact of a development, but also as a mechanism for achieving positive planning by ensuring that development complements and enhances the social, environmental and economic requirements of its neighbouring communities.

The provision of open space and facilities for sport and recreation helps underpin people's quality of life. Where new development occurs it is important that sufficient sport, recreation and open space provision is made to make proposals acceptable in land use planning terms.

8.9.2 The cost of providing facilities

In order to calculate developer contributions for facilities, a methodology has been adopted which calculates how much it would cost the Local Authority to provide them. These costs have been calculated using local information, and have also been benchmarked against other Local Authorities costs for providing facilities. A summary of the costs are outlined in table 1 below:

Contributions towards the provision or improvement of open space are calculated using the capital cost of provision. The same charges apply to both provision of new facilities and the upgrading/improvement of existing facilities. This is in line with Paragraph B9 of Circular 05/2005, according to which obligations “should be fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind to the proposed development”. Contribution per person is therefore taken to be a reasonable measure of that impact, irrespective of whether new provision or improvement of existing facilities is required.

Table1: Costs for providing open space

Typology	Standard (m ²)	Cost / m ²	Contribution per person - new
Outdoor Sports Space	11	£21.00	£231.00
Play Space	1.5	£170.00	£255.00
Parks & Gardens	2	£72.00	£144.00
Amenity Greenspace	9	£15.00	£135.00
Natural & Semi-Natural Green Space	10	£15.00	£150.00
Allotments	3.5	£30.00	£105.00
Total	37		£1,020.00

This shows that it costs £1,020 per person to provide new open space to meet the Copeland standard.

These calculations are to be used to calculate developer contributions, there are however a number of issues which will affect the total financial contribution actually required, these are:

- Whether open space is provided as part of the development. If this is the case a ‘credit’ will be applied to the value of that open space in line with the figures outlined above.
- The above figures assume that the developer will maintain any new ‘on site’ provision for a period of ten years. If the developer seeks earlier adoption of the space by the council, a financial contribution for maintenance will be required.

8.9.3 Maintenance Contributions

Where a commuted sum is required, it will be for a period of 10 years and calculated at 1% of the capital cost over ten years allowing some 2.5%, or as appropriate, for inflation.

For example if the development provides 0.05 hectares (500m²) of play space, the capital cost of providing this is £85,000 (500 m² x £170). A commuted sum of £850 per year is required, with inflation equates to £9,522 in total.

8.9.4 Thresholds for contributions

Contributions will be sought for all new development, i.e. there is no overall minimum threshold for numbers of new houses below which obligations will not be sought. In principle all new housing types (with only a few exceptions, e.g. sheltered accommodation, nursing homes and hostels) leading to a net increase in population within a locality will be required to provide new open space and recreation provision in accordance with District Council guidance; or else, offer developer contributions in lieu of provision.

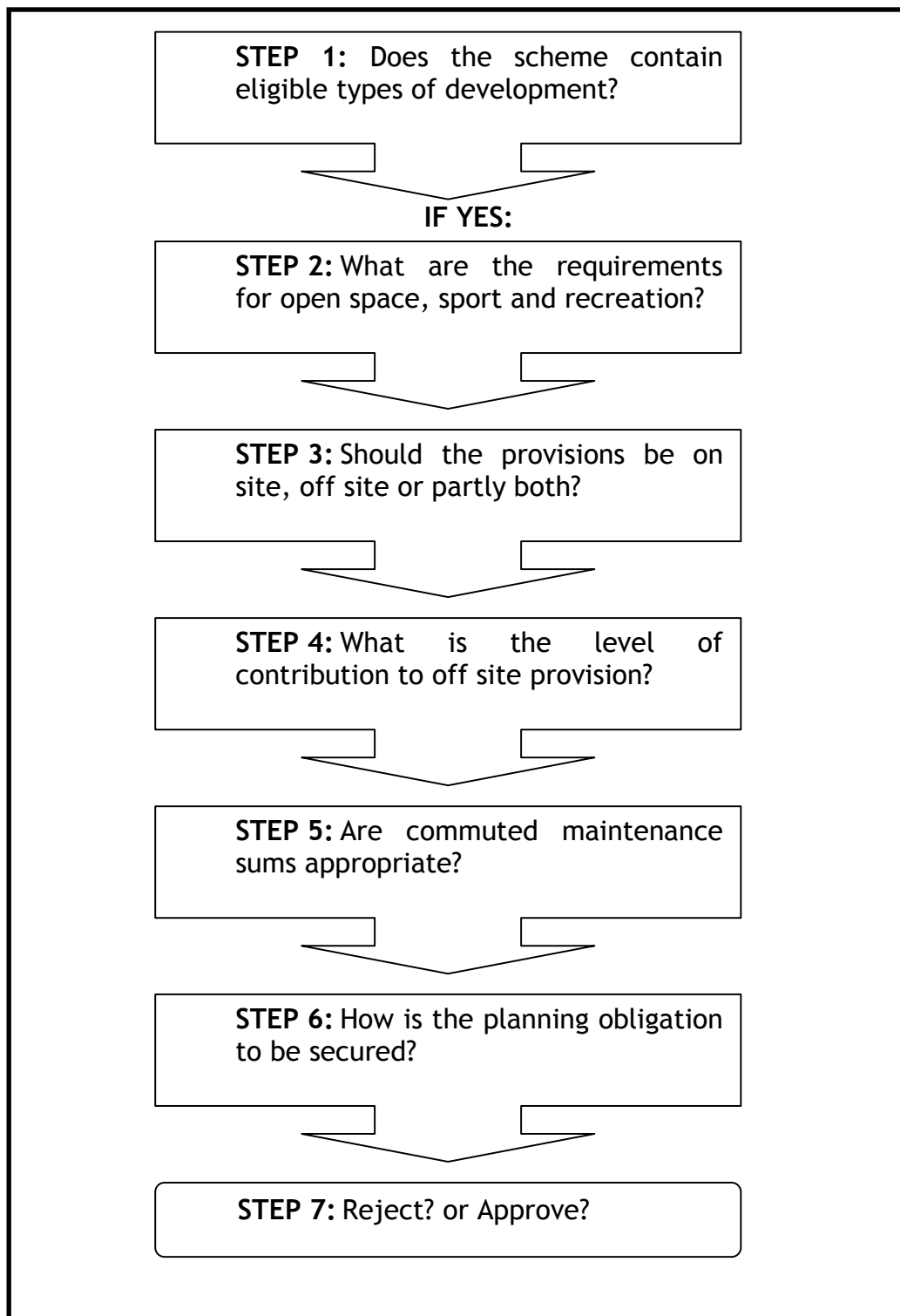
Table 2 below gives figures for the occupancy levels based on the maximum capacity of bed spaces by the size of dwelling. For example a two-bedroom dwelling is assumed to have occupancy of 3 persons, and a three bedroom dwelling 4 persons. For each dwelling, the costs outlined above have been applied.

Table 2: Contributions based on dwelling size

Dwelling Size	Household Size	Open space contribution
1 bed	2	£1,020
2 bed	3	£3,060
3 bed	4	£4,080
4+ beds	5	£5,100
Active elderly persons (1 bed)	1	£1,020
Active elderly persons (2 bed)	2	£2,040

8.9.6 Applying the policies

The process for considering planning obligations relating to new housing, is outlined in the following Flow Chart. This includes seven steps by which the scale of any contributions due will be calculated.



Step 1 - Does the scheme contain eligible types of development?

Those living in most types of residential development will generate additional demands for open space, sport and recreation. Table 3 below lists what are eligible types of residential development for the purposes of this SPD.

Affordable housing is likely to create demands for sport, recreation and open space and is therefore included. It would need to be demonstrated by the agent/applicant that the level of the contribution or requirement proposed in conjunction with affordable housing would make the scheme uneconomic for this provision to be waived. This viability test will be required for all such planning applications. The heading 'active elderly' includes provision specifically for the active elderly who have a level of on site services such as a warden, common room or launderette. Occupants of such accommodation may be as young as 55 years and may be able to participate in many activities. Contributions will not be sought from such developments for playing fields or local play

Table 3: eligible types of residential development

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

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

Step 2 - What are the requirements for Open Space, Sport and Recreation?

Having established the relevance of the development to the categories of open space, sport and recreation provision, then step 2 should be carried out. This involves establishing:

- The number of people estimated to be occupying the development on completion (using table 2); and
- Multiplying this by the level/area of sport, recreation and open space provision required per person (tables 1).

For example, for a development of 10 no. 3 bedroom houses:

- Number of people = 10 units x 4 people = 40;
- Amount of open space required is 37m² per person = 40 x 37 = 1480 m²

- This provision may be provided on site or off site depending on the considerations below.

Step 3 - Should provision be on-site, off-site or both?

The required open space, sport and recreation facilities can be provided by on-site provision, and/or by a financial contribution for the provision of new, or the upgrading of existing facilities. Where facilities are to be provided on-site, the Council will expect the developer to provide the land for the facility and either:

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

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

- The size of the proposed development;
- The existing provision of facilities within the ward and/or the locality;
- Existing access to facilities within the ward and/or locality.

Table 4 provides an indicative guide to assess which types of housing generate a need for facilities in the categories listed - developers will have the opportunity to determine precise arrangements within these overall guidelines.

Table 4: Requirement for open space, sport and recreation facilities

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

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

Step 4 - What is the level of contribution to off site provision?

Where financial contributions are sought for off-site facilities, these are based on the principle of securing or improving existing provision. Tables 1 and 2 provide costs for the provision of the full range of open space, sport and recreation facilities covered.

For example, for a development of 10 no. 3 bedroom houses:

- Number of people = 10 units x 4 people = 40
- Contribution per person = £1,020
- Total contribution = £40,800

Step 5- What Commuted Maintenance Sums are payable?

Where open space is to be provided on site, the Council would expect the developer to maintain the facility for a period of 12 months following practical completion.

Following this, the Council will adopt the land, providing it meets the expected standard. In line with Circular 05/05, a commuted sum will be payable where the facilities are predominantly for the benefit of the users of the associated development. Where an asset is intended for wider public use, the costs of subsequent maintenance and other recurrent expenditure will be met by the Council.

Where a commuted sum is required, it will be for a period of 10 years and calculated at 1% of the capital cost per year, over ten years allowing some 2.5%, or as appropriate, for inflation.

For example if the development provides 0.05 hectares (500m²) of play space, the capital cost of providing this is £85,000 (500 m² x £170). A commuted sum of £850 per year is required, for 10 years, with inflation, this equates to £9,522 in total.

Step 6 - How is the Planning Obligation / *Unilateral Agreement to be secured?*

The Council will confirm the level of contribution and any other arrangement in a unilateral or Section 106 agreement of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990. The Council will place standard terms of agreements on its web site, as well as examples of completed agreements.

Step 7 - Reject? Or Approve?

Reject: If by this time, a unilateral or section 106 agreement has not been completed, the Council will, after 21 days or when appropriate, refuse the planning application.

Approve: Provided a unilateral or section 106 agreement has been signed and all other material planning considerations are resolved, the planning application will be determined according to normal procedures.

8.9.7 Spending of contributions

Contributions made under the guidelines in the SPD will be placed in ring-fenced accounts managed by the Council. These have been specifically set up for the receipt and expenditure of community facilities and open space contributions for each category in the guidance note. The spending of developer contributions will be guided by the priorities outlined in the PPG17 study, the proposed greenspace strategy and area green space plans. Money could be spent on:

- Acquisition of land, facilities or equipment for open space, sport and recreation;
- Laying out of land for open space, sport and recreation;
- Where appropriate maintenance of land and facilities for open space, sport and recreation;
- Upgrading of land, facilities and equipment for open space, sport and recreation all within the reasonable catchment of the development in question. Where contributions are made towards the upgrading of facilities, monies will be spent on the first relevant priority scheme for improvement at the point where sufficient monies have been collected to defray the cost.

As detailed in the guiding strategies, spending of contributions will also be subject to local community consultation as required.

If funds remain unspent after 10 years following payment, the monies will be repaid to the applicant, on application to the Council, with any accrued interest.

8.10 Guidance and good practice

The following section provides guidance and outlines good practice in relation to the planning and provision of open space in relation to PPG17. The guidance has arisen out of the learning that has arisen from this study, and from various other PPG17 studies that the consultants have been involved with. This section is not a requirement of PPG17, but has been provided to add value to the study, and to begin to consider some of the options that a Greenspace Strategy will need to consider. The guidance is summarised by typology of open space.

8.10.1 Parks & Gardens

Developing a hierarchy of provision

Many local authorities are developing 'hierarchies of provision' for their open spaces, these vary from area to area, but there are some emerging models, such as through the Association of Public Sector Excellence (APSE), and the model being developed by the London Boroughs. It is therefore recommended that Copeland Borough Council considers the value of working with other local authorities towards a hierarchy embracing provision aimed at frequent local use, and also regular (but perhaps less frequent) strategic use which perhaps might be in the form of a Country Park resource hosting other opportunities.

Strategic level:

- Landscaping with a variety of natural and semi natural features, including natural habitats and planted beds.
- Space for outdoor pitch and other sports provision as appropriate (see separate standards).
- Space for children's and youth play facilities (see separate standards).
- Car parking.
- Footpaths. Cycleways.
- Buildings for secured storage and for catering outlets.
- Due regard to external links by foot and bicycle which may require improvements to the external environment (see below).
- Events venue.
- A notable and defining architectural feature.
- Seating. Litter and dog bins.
- Toilets.
- Refreshment venues.
- Picnic tables.
- Consideration of zoning between active and passive zones.
- The overall size of the park might be expected to be approaching or greater than **40 hectares**.
- Strategic provision might also take the form of a contribution towards a Country Park, or other existing publicly accessible forested/woodland area.

Local level:

- Landscaping with a variety of natural features, including natural habitats.
- Space for outdoor pitch and other sports provision as appropriate (see separate

standards).

- Space for children's and youth play facilities (see separate standards).
- Car parking.
- Footpaths. Cycleways.
- Buildings for secured storage and/or catering outlets (if appropriate).
- Due regard to external links by foot and bicycle which may require improvements to the external environment.
- Seating. Litter and dog bins.
- The overall size of the park might be expected to be at least 2 hectares.

Beyond this 2-tier hierarchy contributions from developers, arising from the application of this standard, should also be used to create small 'pocket parks' in certain circumstances.

Access to and links between open spaces

Although the study area's parks, sports and recreation grounds are appreciated and valued their use clearly depends on ease of access. There is little point in considering the provision of new facilities or the improvement of existing facilities without considering the means of access to them at the same time. Particularly access by foot and bike and by people with disabilities. This is critical for certain groups in the community, particularly children and teenagers. New standards for park, sports and recreation grounds should therefore also include guidance on the improvement of approach routes by foot and bike for which developer contributions should be sought. The Council will need to determine:

- The linear distance threshold upon which such contributions should be based.
- The nature of improvements sought to facilitate and improve upon ease and safety of access. These might include clearly defined cycle lanes, safe crossing points, provision for disabled access etc.

8.10.2 Children and Young People's provision

Good practice in play provision

In addition to the general recommendations outlined above and the more specific recommendations outlined earlier in this report, this section sets out some advice and recommendations related to good practice in play provision, which the Council will need to consider in planning and providing future provision.

Play and Open space

As well as providing spaces specifically designated as play areas the potential for "playable space" should be considered within the design of all public open space on the principle of establishing a broader "child-friendly" public realm.

Play Spaces

Space should comprise of a variety of equipped and unequipped play opportunities, and further guidance could be provided by the Council through a supplementary planning document or other guidance. Some key points include:

Range of play space

There should be an appropriate range of provision in all larger settlements, such as:

- A Door-step spaces close to home
- B Local play spaces - areas (larger than above) 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

In smaller settlements and rural areas variations to the above will need to be locally determined.

Design of Play Space

Good design is essential to the success of a play space and it is recommended that Play England's *Design for Play* guidance is used in this respect. In broad terms the guidance suggests that a successful play space is "a place in its own right, specially designed for its location". It notes that "designers should take a holistic perspective on designing for play" and that "play opportunities should be embedded in the site as a whole".

Design for Play provides 10 key design principles for successful play spaces.

Consultation

The standards outlined in this report should be applied flexibly and imaginatively, taking into account the views of local residents, potential users and various interests wherever possible. Meaningful consultation will therefore help to make new provision sensitive and appropriate to local circumstances.

Safety and Risk

There is growing concern about how safety is being addressed in children's play provision. Fear of litigation is leading many play providers to focus on minimising the risk of injury at the expense of other more fundamental objectives. The effect is to stop children from enjoying a healthy range of play opportunities, limiting their enjoyment and causing potentially damaging consequences for their development.

This approach ignores clear evidence that use of play provision is a comparatively low risk activity for children. Of the two million or so childhood accident cases treated by hospitals each year, fewer than two per cent involve playground equipment. Participation in sports like soccer, widely acknowledged as 'good' for a child's development, involve a greater risk of injury than visiting a playground. Fatalities on playgrounds are very rare - about one per three or four years on average nationally. This compares with, for instance, more than 100 child pedestrian fatalities a year and more than 500 child fatalities from accidents overall.

Risk/benefit assessment

Play providers are legally required to carry out a 'suitable and sufficient' risk assessment of their provision, and to act on their findings. An assessment is a practical assessment of the benefits and the risks of the activity with a focus on hazards with the potential to cause real harm. It is not about creating a risk-free environment but about ensuring that reasonable precautions are taken to avoid injury.

Equipment standards, such as EN 1176, and other guidance help in making decisions about what is reasonable. However, they are not compulsory and risk assessment allows for consideration of other factors. For example, risk assessment permits local circumstances to be taken into account, such as the age groups catered for, the type of demand, local environmental factors, health considerations and the use of non-standard or natural features.

Risk-benefit assessment is a method of risk assessment in which an evaluation of the potential benefits to children and others, for example play and social value, are considered alongside the potential risks associated with the provision. It allows providers to satisfy their legal obligations, while promoting a balanced approach that considers industry standards and other guidance in the light of local circumstances, and of children's need for more exciting and challenging play.

The approach is supported by the HSE and RoSPA.

Combined Provision

Given sufficient space and good design it is often appropriate to provide play opportunities for a wide age range at the same location separated only by a short distance. This might be most appropriate in the case of sites of a more strategic nature, such as in parks and leisure centre grounds in the towns and larger villages.

Locations

In addition to designated parks some ideal locations for provision could be at local shopping centres, near primary schools and on village greens:

- Facilitates 'stopping off' for parents / carers when accompanying older children to and from school, or whilst shopping.
- Facilities on known / familiar routes for children are a safety advantage.
- The more 'busy' the play area the more 'fun' and 'safe' it is.
- Informal surveillance (overlooking) normally more frequent.

Achieving the Standard in Small Settlements

The intention should be that these play standards are applied flexibly and with imagination. Many settlements will not be of the size to justify full provision in accordance with the above. However, even a relatively small developer contribution can be invested imaginatively in improving local play opportunities. For example:

- Individual contributions could be used to improve/upgrade the existing provision, which in a small village is likely to be within convenient distance of

the funding development.

- Individual contributions could be married to other council and partner funding to provide new or improved provision.
- Public consultation may show a desire and willingness to consider innovative community based solutions to provision. ‘Self help’ schemes perhaps involving young people in design and creation, can often prove much cheaper and reflective of true local needs than off-the-shelf installations.

A key issue is how to best provide for the needs of youth in rural locations where it will not generally be feasible to provide facilities on the scale that might be envisaged in the larger settlements. In many ways this is an intractable problem, but in others it may not be so difficult to resolve.

Fundamentally, all young people are asking for is somewhere to meet, play, and feel independent. Bespoke play equipment and sites may be one way of providing for these needs. But there may be other much cheaper solutions involving for example inexpensive but intelligent landscaping on the edges of village recreation grounds; encouraging young people to become involved in the design and development of home spun facilities, such as cut and fill BMX tracks; planting trees with low branches to encourage climbing etc, and the creation of dens. All these are ‘low tech’ solutions, but could be of immense local benefit to youngsters. A prerequisite to such initiative is perhaps a change of mindset (on the part of facility managers) in some circumstances and greater tolerance to such projects and activity.

8.10.3 Amenity Greenspace

Flexible Use of Amenity Greenspace

Depending on local circumstances it may be appropriate to use the provision sought under the Amenity Greenspace standard for additional or improved park space, natural space, recreation ground space as there is clearly some interchangeability of function.

Amenity Greenspace can provide an extremely valuable play resource to complement equipped provision. Attention in design of new spaces to planting, topography and safety/security will maximise its potential in this regard.

The shape and size of space provided should allow for meaningful and safe recreation. It will not be appropriate for highway verges and other small pieces of roadside space (for example) to be counted towards such provision. However, these smaller spaces can serve another important function in improving the visual environment.

Further guidance on the flexible use of space and contributions is provided at the end of this section.

8.10.4 Natural & Semi Natural Greenspace

Providing new natural & semi-natural greenspace

The focus of the quantity standard for natural greenspace is that of new provision, therefore, some guidance has been provided in determining the nature of this provision, which should be determined to reflect local circumstances.

It is recommended that any enhancement or new provision/creation is aligned with the aims and objectives of the BAP (Copeland Biodiversity Action Plan).

Provision might be expected to include (as appropriate) elements of woodland, wetland, heathland and meadow, and could also be made for informal public access through recreation corridors. (See below under 'Routeways and Corridors').

For larger areas, where car borne visits might be anticipated, some parking provision will be required. The larger the area the more valuable sites will tend to be in terms of their potential for enhancing local conservation interest and biodiversity. Therefore, the aim should be to create areas of Accessible Natural Green Space of at least 2 hectares that are well distributed throughout the urban areas.

Wherever possible these sites should be linked which will help to improve wildlife value. There should be parallel commitments to maintain natural green space through appropriate maintenance techniques reflecting the primary purpose of promoting natural habitats and biodiversity that can also be accessed and enjoyed by local people. Access by people should not be restricted to narrow corridors, but should allow freedom to wander where 'appropriate' (taking account of sensitive habitats/species on site).

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

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

The above should in any event be principles to be pursued and encouraged at all times.