

# Public Document Pack

Mid Devon District Council

## Managing the Environment Policy Development Group

Tuesday, 13 January 2015 at 2.00 pm  
Phoenix House, Phoenix Lane, Tiverton EX16 6PP

Next ordinary meeting  
Tuesday, 10 March 2015 at 2.00 pm

Those attending are advised that this meeting will be recorded

## Membership

Cllr M A Lucas  
Cllr D R Coren  
Cllr Mrs D L Brandon  
Cllr J M Downes  
Cllr J D Squire  
Cllr Mrs M E Squires  
Cllr Mrs N Woollatt

## A G E N D A

*Members are reminded of the need to make declarations of interest prior to any discussion which may take place*

- 1      **Apologies and substitute Members**  
To receive any apologies for absence and notices of appointment of substitute Members (if any).
- 2      **Public Question Time**  
To receive any questions relating to items on the Agenda from members of the public and replies thereto.  
Note: A maximum of 30 minutes is allowed for this item.
- 3      **Minutes of the Previous Meeting** *(Pages 5 - 12)*  
To approve as a correct record the minutes of the previous meeting (attached).
- 4      **Chairman's Announcements**  
To receive any announcements that the Chairman has to make.
- 5      **Open Space and Play Area Strategy** *(Pages 13 - 108)*  
The Head of Housing and Property Services will present a report regarding the revised Open Space and Play Area Strategy which has been amended to meet the National Planning Policy Framework.

- 6      **Fixed Penalty Notices**  
To receive an update from the Head of Finance regarding statistics for Fixed Penalty Notices.
- 7      **Budget Update** (*Pages 109 - 112*)  
To receive a report from the Head of Finance requesting that Members consider options available in order for the Council to move towards a balanced budget for 2015/16.
- 8      **Private Water Supplies**  
The Public Health Manager will update the Group on Private Water Supplies.
- 9      **Waste and Recycling Scheme**  
The Waste and Transport Manager will update Members on the proposed trial for the new waste and recycling scheme, new vehicles, missed collections and the new depot.
- 10     **Identification of Items for the Next Meeting**  
Members are asked to note that the following items are already identified in the work programme for the next meeting:

Chairman's Annual Report  
Waste/Planning re communal bin stores  
Contaminated Land Policy  
Play Area Update  
Public Conveniences Update

**Kevin Finan**  
Chief Executive  
Monday, 5 January 2015

Anyone wishing to film part or all of the proceedings may do so unless the press and public are excluded for that part of the meeting or there is good reason not to do so, as directed by the Chairman. Any filming must be done as unobtrusively as possible from a single fixed position without the use of any additional lighting; focusing only on those actively participating in the meeting and having regard also to the wishes of any member of the public present who may not wish to be filmed. As a matter of courtesy, anyone wishing to film proceedings is asked to advise the Chairman or the Member Services Officer in attendance so that all those present may be made aware that is happening.

Members of the public may also use other forms of social media to report on proceedings at this meeting.

Members of the public are welcome to attend the meeting and listen to discussion. Lift access to the Council Chamber on the first floor of the building is available from the main ground floor entrance. Toilet facilities, with wheelchair access, are also available. There is time set aside at the beginning of the meeting to allow the public to ask questions.

An induction loop operates to enhance sound for anyone wearing a hearing aid or using a transmitter. If you require any further information, or

If you would like a copy of the Agenda in another format (for example in large print) please contact Julia Stuckley on:

Tel: 01884 234209

Fax:

E-Mail: [jstuckey@middevon.gov.uk](mailto:jstuckey@middevon.gov.uk)

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## MID DEVON DISTRICT COUNCIL

### MINUTES of a MEETING of the MANAGING THE ENVIRONMENT POLICY DEVELOPMENT GROUP held on Tuesday 18 November 2014 at 2.00pm

#### Present

**Councillors:** M A Lucas (Chairman), Mrs D L Brandon, D R Coren, J M Downes, J D Squire, Mrs M E Squires and R Wright (substituting for Cllr Mrs N Woollatt)

#### Apology

**Councillor:** Mrs N Woollatt

#### Also Present

**Councillors:** C J Eginton, N V Davey, R F Radford, R L Stanley and K D Wilson

#### Present

**Officers:** A Jarrett (Head of Finance), P N Williams (Head of Environmental Services), N Sanderson (Head of Housing and Property Services), C Gillard (Accountant), L Wright (Accountant), S Noyce (Waste and Transport Manager), A Cook (Open Spaces Manager) C Yandle (Audit Team Leader) and J Stuckey (Member Services Officer)

#### Declarations of Interest:

Member	Minute No	Type of Interest
Mrs M E Squires	37	Personal

#### 31. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

There were no questions asked by members of the public present.

#### 32. MINUTES

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 2 September 2014 were approved as a correct record and **SIGNED** by the Chairman.

#### 33. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman informed the Group that the Head of Environmental Services, Mr P Williams, was leaving the Authority and that this would be his last attendance at a Council meeting.

The Chairman and other Members thanked Mr Williams for his work with the Group, for being welcoming and informative, for always having a smile and for being like a 'breath of fresh air' at briefings.

Mr Williams thanked the Group for their kind words.

34. **MEETING MANAGEMENT**

The Chairman indicated that he intended to change the ordering of items on the agenda to the following 7, 10, 8, 5, 6, and 9.

35. **PERFORMANCE AND RISK**

The group had before it and **NOTED** a report\* of the Head of Communities and Governance providing Members with an update on performance against the Corporate Plan and local service targets for the second quarter of 2014/15 as well as providing an update on the key business risks.

The Audit Team Leader explained that there were no risks being reported to the Group. This was because although there were risks, none were at a high enough level to meet the criteria for reporting.

The Officer informed the Group that performance in recycling had improved for quarter 2 but this was a seasonal increase due to levels of garden waste collected.

Note: \*Report previously circulated, copy attached to signed minutes

36. **WILDFLOWER MEADOWS**

The Group had before it a briefing paper \* from the Head of Housing and Property Services which provided an update on how wild flower trials had progressed and informing the Group on how wild flowers could be used within Mid Devon in the future.

The Open Spaces Manager updated the group regarding areas where wildflowers had been sown this year. The sites had been well received by the public, particularly the areas sown with poppies to commemorate the Great War.

The Officer informed the Group that further investigation of seed availability and suitability was being undertaken and that the use of wildflower mixtures would continue to be used where suitable and it was financially viable to do so.

Note: \*Paper previously circulated, copy attached to signed minutes.

37. **PROPOSED HIGHWAYS BUDGET REDUCTIONS (00hrs.30mins.27secs)**

The Chairman had requested that the Group make an official response to the Devon County Council (DCC) consultation \* on proposed highways budget reductions.

Discussion took place regarding:

- The fact that Town and Parish Councils were also making a response to the consultation;
- The problems for rural areas and villages if roads were not cleared following snow;

- The use of Town and Parish Council volunteers for snow clearing and flood work and the cost implications to them for things such as storage of equipment;
- Devon County Councils budget and the extent of the cuts;
- The extent of the road network in Devon;
- The implications for Mid Devon's budget if DCC cut their grass cutting costs.

It was **AGREED** that Members would forward their views on the consultation to the Chairman within the next two weeks so that they could be compiled to form a united response.

- Note:
- i) Councillor Mrs M E Squires declared an interest as she was a Devon County Councillor;
  - ii) \* Information previously circulated, copy attached to minutes.

### 38. **FINANCIAL MONITORING (00hrs.59mins.41secs)**

The Group had before it, and **NOTED**, a report\* of the Head of Finance detailing the financial monitoring for the six months to 30 September 2014 in respect of the services within this PDG's remit.

The Officer outlined the potential deficit of £172K and explained that the main areas contributing to this were car parking and waste.

Car parking charges for the overnight period had not generated as much income as had been anticipated but in the last month, following some enforcement, this had risen.

Waste had an overspend, some of which related to the move from Silverton Mill to Foundry Depot and some was from predicted budget savings that had not materialised following Route Optimisation.

Note: - Report previously circulated, copy attached to signed minutes.

### 39. **BUDGET 2015-16 (01hrs.13mins.24secs)**

The Committee had before it a report \* of the Head of Finance requesting that Members consider options available in order for the Council to set a balanced budget for 2015/16.

The Officer explained that since 2010/11 the Council had seen its Formula Grant reduced by circa £2.6m or 42% from £6.2m to the provisional figure of £3.6m announced for 2015/16. Going forward the current Government had maintained its pledge to continue the austerity programme, with most public sector commentators estimating further cuts of at least 10% per annum for the next 3 – 4 years. Once this was factored in to the Council's Medium Term Financial Plan it was predicted that there would be a funding deficit of circa £2.1m by 2018/19. This highlighted the need to take steps to plan for further reductions to ongoing expenditure levels.

The Head of Finance explained that at this stage the budget for 2015-16 was draft due to a number of unknowns. The Formula Grant would not be known until late in December, along with the referendum limit and the Council Tax Freeze Grant.

Senior Officers had looked at where savings could be made and these had been factored into the budget. He further explained that Leisure Services were not achieving predicted savings and that he had not yet estimated savings for the new Waste and Recycling scheme.

### Reconciliation of 2015/16 budget variances

Variations	Amount £000
Savings identified in savings exercise	(983)
Cost pressures identified in savings exercise	659
Formula grant cut	656
Leisure savings not realised	218
Waste and recycling currently at 14/15 budget and known service pressures	97
Pay and price inflation – incl. pensions & NI	160
Interest adjustment from HRA	41
Council Tax property growth + 1.5% and reduction in Council Tax reduction grant	(136)
Transfer from New Homes Bonus to fund 2 new officers	(99)
Other costs	37
<b>Draft budget gap for 2015/16</b>	<b>650</b>

### General Fund Summary

	2014/15 £'000	2015/16 £'000	2016/17 £'000	2017/18 £'000	2018/19£ '000
Total Gross Expenditure	36,710	37,012	37,623	38,037	38,520
Total Income	(27,618)	(28,130)	(28,591)	(28,307)	(28,551)
<b>Net Cost of Services</b>	<b>9,092</b>	<b>8,882</b>	<b>9,032</b>	<b>9,730</b>	<b>9,969</b>
Investment Interest/MRP	(44)	45	(12)	(43)	(75)
Cont. to/(from) Reserves		(99)	(99)		
Contribution to Capital	125	125	125	125	125
<b>Total Budget Requirement</b>	<b>9,173</b>	<b>8,953</b>	<b>9,046</b>	<b>9,812</b>	<b>10,019</b>
Funded by:					
Collection Fund Surplus	(75)	(50)	(50)	(50)	(50)
Formula Grant (1)	(4,181)	(3,525)	(3,128)	(2,816)	(2,534)
Council Tax	(4,917)	(5,114)	(5,168)	(5,253)	(5,339)
<b>Total Funding</b>	<b>(9,173)</b>	<b>(8,689)</b>	<b>(8,346)</b>	<b>(8,119)</b>	<b>(7,923)</b>
<b>Cumulative (Surplus)/Deficit</b>	<b>Nil</b>	<b>264</b>	<b>700</b>	<b>1,693</b>	<b>2,096</b>

Discussion took place regarding:

- The draft Capital programme was balanced, using the New Homes Bonus;
- Feedback from the public confirmed that the area's most important to them had not changed;
- Updated costs for waste and recycling would be brought to the January meeting of this Group;
- Issues regarding car parking;



- No cuts had been made to the Open Spaces and Grounds Maintenance budget;
- The need to maintain open spaces and play areas and the possibility of some being taken over by Town and Parish Councils or closed;
- The work carried out regarding public toilets had saved £50k;
- The need to purchase land to create a depot for the Waste, Recycling and Grounds Maintenance service;
- The possibility of sharing space within Phoenix House with other organisations;
- Expected savings on maintenance when new recycling vehicles arrived.

**RECOMMEND** to the Cabinet that:

- Consideration be given to the draft budget proposals for 2015/16 and planning for additional savings as identified in the Medium Term Financial Plan take place;
- Officers look at the current level of play area provision within the District and ascertain if surplus play areas could be omitted from any maintenance programme for 2015/16.

**RESOLVED** to:

Establish a Working Group of Members and Officers to look into the following issues and make recommendations to the PDG

- Condition survey and anticipated expenditure for next five years of all car parks
- Permit & Season ticket policy
- Occupancy Levels
- Benchmarking charges
- Consideration of charging for Amenity car parks
- Charging Policy
- Fees & Charges
- Review of overnight charging introduction

The membership of this Group to comprise of Cllrs J D Squire, Mrs D Brandon and B Wright with the Cabinet Member attending.

(Proposed by the Chairman)

Note: - Report previously circulated, copy attached to signed minutes.

40. **WASTE AND RECYCLING SERVICE (02hrs.00mins.29secs)**

The Group had before it a report \* from the Head of Finance which asked them to consider changes to the proposed Waste and Recycling Scheme due for implementation in October 2015.

At a meeting of this Group on 23rd April 2014, a list of recommendations had been made to the Cabinet regarding the future waste collection scheme. Following this a joint Officer and Member Project Board had been established to consider details of the scheme. During the September Project Board meeting some issues were identified regarding the proposed scheme which resulted in some new recommendations being made, these were outlined in the report.

Discussion took place regarding:

- Anticipated savings had not yet been identified but would be brought to the next meeting of this Group;
- All previous recommendations, other than the collection of food waste on a weekly basis and the retention of the black sack waste collection, remained unchanged;
- Education/enforcement would be used regarding recycling;
- The food waste would be collected on the recycling vehicle one week and on a split body dustcart (along with garden waste) the following week;
- Garden waste customers could share bins with their neighbours;
- Savings made by Devon County Council regarding treatment costs would be shared;
- A trial would be held in February but the area had not yet been confirmed, Ward Members would be informed;
- There would be a questionnaire following the trial, which would include questions regarding charging for garden waste;
- Neighbouring Authorities were also making similar changes to their collection schemes.

**RECOMMENDED** to the Cabinet that:

The following two changes be made to the previous recommendations:

- Collect food waste in a new kerbside caddy weekly
- Continue to collect residual waste in sacks

Previously agreed and not affected by changes:

- Adopt the same scheme for all households in District
- Collect household residual waste and recycling fortnightly
- Collect mixed plastics, excluding film, as kerbside recycling
- Collect card as kerbside recycling

- Retain the discretionary garden waste (which now excludes card and food) as a fortnightly, chargeable service (at a rate to cover cost of the service)
- Retain existing paid for bulky waste collection service
- Retain the contracted out clinical waste collection service
- Retain assisted collections and update eligibility for the service every two years
- Provide free and limitless boxes for recycling, including one additional per property of a different colour to permit greater separation

(Proposed by Councillor Mrs M E Squires and seconded by Councillor Mrs D Brandon)

Note: \*Report previously circulated, copy attached to minutes.

#### 41. **ITEMS FOR THE NEXT MEETING**

##### **Items for the next meeting 13 January 2015**

Fixed Penalty Notices  
 Financial Monitoring  
 Car parking Charges  
 Private Water Supplies  
 Budget update

(The meeting ended at 16.30)

**CHAIRMAN**

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## MANAGING THE ENVIRONMENT POLICY AND DEVELOPMENT GROUP

AGENDA ITEM: [Date]:

### An introduction to the revised Open Spaces and Play Area Strategy

**Portfolio Holder** Cllr Neal Davey  
**Responsible Officer** Head of Housing and Property Services

**Reason for Report:** To make members aware of the recently reviewed Open Spaces and Play Area Strategy.

To allow members to comment on the strategy before it forms part of the Council's local Plan

**RECOMMENDATION:** That the Managing the Environment PDG recommends the Open Spaces and Play Area policy to Cabinet.

**Relationship to Corporate Plan:** Mid Devon has to produce an Open Spaces and play area Strategy as part of its Local Plan.  
A well-managed council requires an Open Spaces and Play Area Policy.

**Financial Implications:** The current annual budget of open space and play area provision is £617,220. In order to reduce this budget, consultation is currently taking place with town and parish councils regarding them accepting responsibility for some or all of Mid Devon's play areas.

**Legal Implications:** None

**Risk Assessment:** There is a risk in cases of over provision that play areas will be closed.

#### 1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 The Council through its Planning Department has to produce an Open Spaces and Play Area Strategy as part of its Local Plan; this strategy covers the period up to 2033, consistent with the Local Plan review (2013-2033).
- 1.2 The Strategy encompasses all open space and play area provision throughout Mid Devon. It has to be evidence based and be able to stand up to scrutiny when challenged.
- 1.3 Ethos Environmental Planning a company specialising in this field was awarded the contract to produce the plan in conjunction with officers from Planning and Environmental Services.

- 1.4 As this PDG makes recommendation regarding how the council's play area stock is managed, it is important that members are aware of the revised standards set for the provision of open spaces.

## 2.0 Scope of Strategy and Objectives

- 2.1 The strategy provides an audit of all open space in the district and recommendations for how the Council should prioritise investment and plan for new development, based on a robust assessment of need.
- 2.2 The study assessed the amount, quality and fitness for purpose of open space, including the following:
- Playing pitches – grass and artificial
  - Public open spaces
  - Public Parks
  - Play areas
  - Street sport areas
- 2.3 The objectives of the strategy are:
- To set locally derived open space and recreation provision standards.
  - To identify deficiencies or surpluses in provision.
  - To provide a robust and comprehensive evidence base to underpin the development of detailed planning policies in the emerging local plan.
  - To provide information to justify the collection of developer contributions.
  - To provide information to help inform the spending of Community Infrastructure Levy and Section 106 receipts.
  - To advise on a suitable programme for transfer of play area maintenance responsibility to parish/town councils, community groups and residents.

## 3.0 Key Stages of the study

- 3.1 There were five key stages identified to provide an overall approach for the study:
- Step 1: Identify local needs.
  - Step 2: Audit local provision.
  - Step 3: Set provision standards.
  - Step 4: Apply provision standards.
  - Step 5: Draft Policies/Recommendations.

## 4.0 Recommendations

- 4.1 Recommendations regarding quantity and quality of open spaces have been made in 8.1.3 and 8.1.4 of the policy.

- 4.2 Where over provision is identified, 8.1.7 of the policy sets out how best to dispose of these sites and to ensure that there is a balance of open spaces throughout the district.

**Contact for more Information: Nick Sanderson 01884 234960  
Adrian Cook 01884 234339**

**Circulation of the Report: Cllr Neal Davey and Management Team**

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# Open Space & Play Area Strategy

Part 1 of 2



**2014 – 2033**  
**(Final)**

## Open Space and Play Area Strategy for Mid Devon (2013 – 2033)

		Page(s)
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<b>3.0</b>	<b>Strategic Context</b>	<b>13 - 22</b>
<b>4.0</b>	<b>Local Needs Assessment</b>	<b>23 - 30</b>
<b>5.0</b>	<b>Audit of existing open space assets</b>	<b>31 - 46</b>
<b>6.0</b>	<b>Setting local standards</b>	<b>47 - 57</b>
<b>7.0</b>	<b>Applying local standards</b>	<b>58 - 76</b>
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## Glossary of Terms

<b>Term</b>	<b>Meaning</b>
<b>AGP</b>	Artificial Grass Pitch
<b>CIL</b>	Community Infrastructure Levy
<b>DPD</b>	Development Plan Document
<b>FIT</b>	Fields In Trust (originally known as the 'National Playing Fields Association')
<b>GIA</b>	Green Infrastructure Assessment
<b>GIS</b>	Green Infrastructure Strategy
<b>GIS</b>	Geographic Information Systems
<b>LAP</b>	Local Area for Play
<b>LDD</b>	Local Development Document
<b>LDF</b>	Local Development Framework (a component of the revised statutory land use planning system)
<b>LEAP</b>	Local Equipped Area for Play
<b>LSP</b>	Local Strategic Partnership
<b>MUGA</b>	Multi Use Games Area
<b>NEAP</b>	Neighbourhood Equipped Play Area
<b>NEWP</b>	Natural Environment White Paper
<b>NGB</b>	National Governing Body
<b>NPPF</b>	National Planning Policy Framework
<b>OSPA</b>	Open Space and Play Area Strategy
<b>PPG17</b>	Planning Policy Guidance Note 17
<b>SPD</b>	Supplementary Planning Document
<b>SSSI</b>	Site of Special Scientific Interest
<b>STP</b>	Synthetic Turf Pitch
<b>PPS</b>	Planning Policy Statement

## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Overview

This report is an open space and play area strategy for Mid Devon. The study has been undertaken by Ethos Environmental Planning and covers the period up to 2033, consistent with the Local Plan review (2013-2033).

The study has been carried out in line with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). Since the adoption of the NPPF, there have been major changes to national planning policy. Open space assessment has primarily been affected by the omission of Planning Policy Guidance Note 17 (PPG 17) from the new national policy framework. However, there is still a clear reference made in the new guidance to the principles and ideology established within PPG17 and as such the underlying principles of this study have been informed by the former guidance provided in 'Planning Policy Guidance Note 17: Planning for Open Space, Sport and Recreation', and its Companion Guide 'Assessing Needs and Opportunities'.

The study has been written to meet the requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework, National Planning Practice Guidance and the methodology set out in the former PPG17 Companion Guide.

### 1.2 Scope of Study and Objectives

#### 1.2.1 Overall Purpose of the Study

The Open Space and Play Area Strategy should provide an audit of all open space in the district and recommendations for how the Council should prioritise investment and plan for new development, based on a robust assessment of need.

#### 1.2.2 Scope of Study and Objectives

The study must assess the amount, quality and fitness for purpose of open space, including the following:

- a) Playing pitches – grass and artificial
- b) Public open space
- c) Public parks
- d) Play areas
- e) Streetsport areas

The study objectives are:

- To use the audit and assessment to set locally derived open space and recreation provision standards for quantity, quality and accessibility including recommended thresholds above which developers should be required to provide onsite open space.
- To identify deficiencies or surpluses in provision and options for addressing these.

- To provide a robust and comprehensive evidence base to underpin the development of detailed planning policies in the emerging Local Plan.
- To provide information to justify the collection of developer contributions towards open space.
- To provide information to help inform the spending of Community Infrastructure Levy and Section 106 receipts.
- To advise on a suitable programme for transfer of play area maintenance responsibility to parish/town councils, community groups and residents.
- To provide recommendations on different models of open space management and provision to enable flexible use and low cost maintenance wherever possible, while ensuring that open spaces are retained for community use in perpetuity.
- To provide recommendations for Council strategy on the future prioritisation of spending according to need, value for money and the degree of public benefit.

### **1.3 Key Stages**

The study follows 5 key stages as summarised below:

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

### **1.4 The Study Area**

#### **1.4.1 Overview**

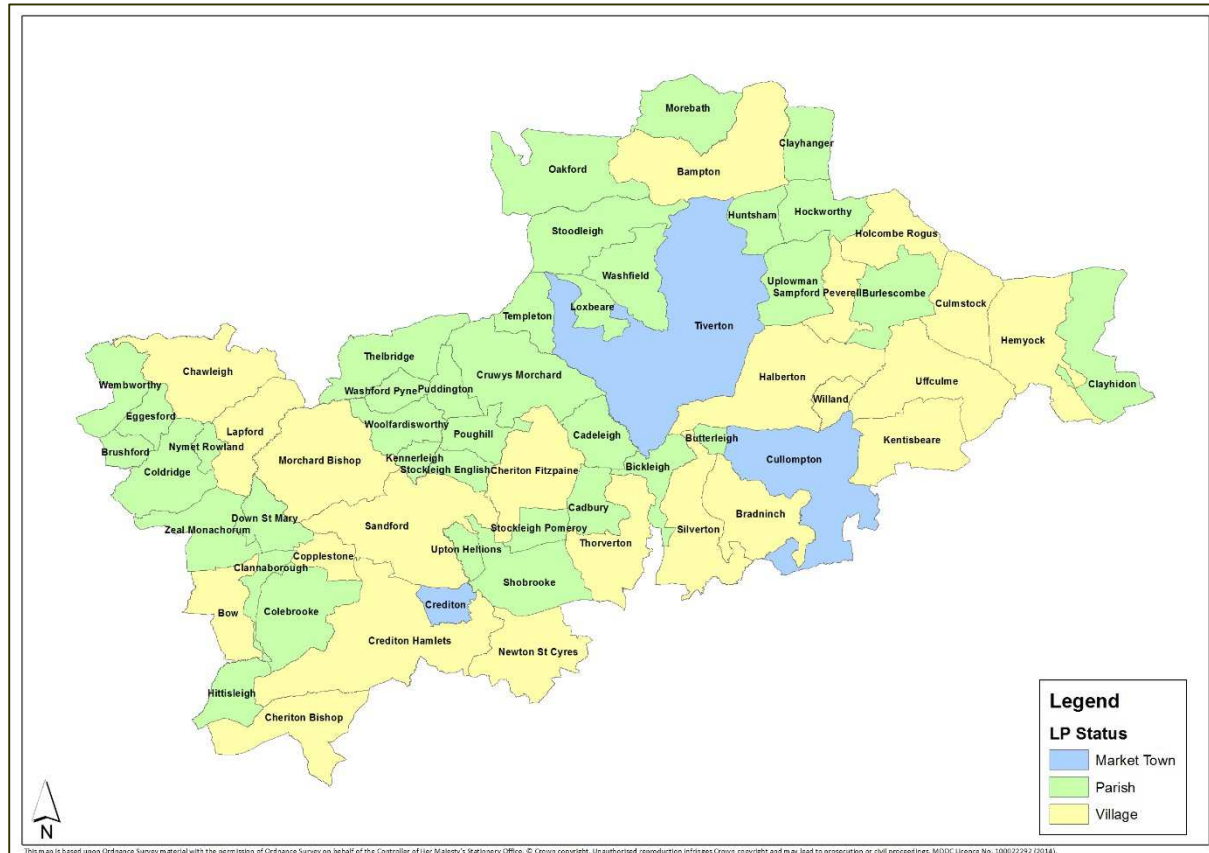
The extent of the study area is the boundaries of Mid Devon District Council as shown in figure 1 below. Mid Devon is a rural district lying in the heart of Devon, equidistant between the Somerset and Devon coasts with a population of 78,600 (mid-term population estimates, 2013). The Mid Devon district covers 913 square kilometres. Its landscape is characterised by green rounded hills of pasture and woodland cut through by steep sided river valleys with a maze of high hedged lanes giving rise to occasional panoramic views. The red, fertile soils of much of the area provide a distinctive backdrop. The majority of Mid Devon's settlements are nestled within the folds of this landscape, with many small historic settlements containing thatched cottages and ancient churches. The mild, damp climate is typical of an inland area within the south west.

#### **1.4.2 Defining the study area**

There are 61 town and parish councils in Mid Devon, and 3 market towns which play a significant role in serving the surrounding rural areas, where over half the population lives in scattered villages. These towns are Tiverton, Cullompton and Crediton. The Local Plan for Mid Devon identifies towns and villages suitable for development, defining settlement limits

accordingly. Figure 1 identifies the parishes that have a defined town or village with a settlement limit, while the remainder are simply coloured green for 'Parish'.

Figure 1: The Study Area – Local Plan definitions of areas



### 1.4.3 Main and Rural Parishes

For the purpose of this study, and the development of standards for open space, the parishes have been defined as 'main parishes' and 'rural parishes' as follows (see figure 2).

#### **Main parishes:**

- Strategic Centres (Tiverton, Crediton, Cullompton);
- Villages (Bampton, Bow, Bradninch, Chawleigh, Cheriton Bishop, Cheriton Fitzpaine, Coplestone, Culmstock, Halberton, Hemyock, Holcombe Rogus, Kentisbeare, Lapford, Morchard Bishop, Newton St Cyres, Sampford Peverell, Sandford, Silverton, Thorverton, Uffculme, Willand and Crediton Hamlets (Yeoford));

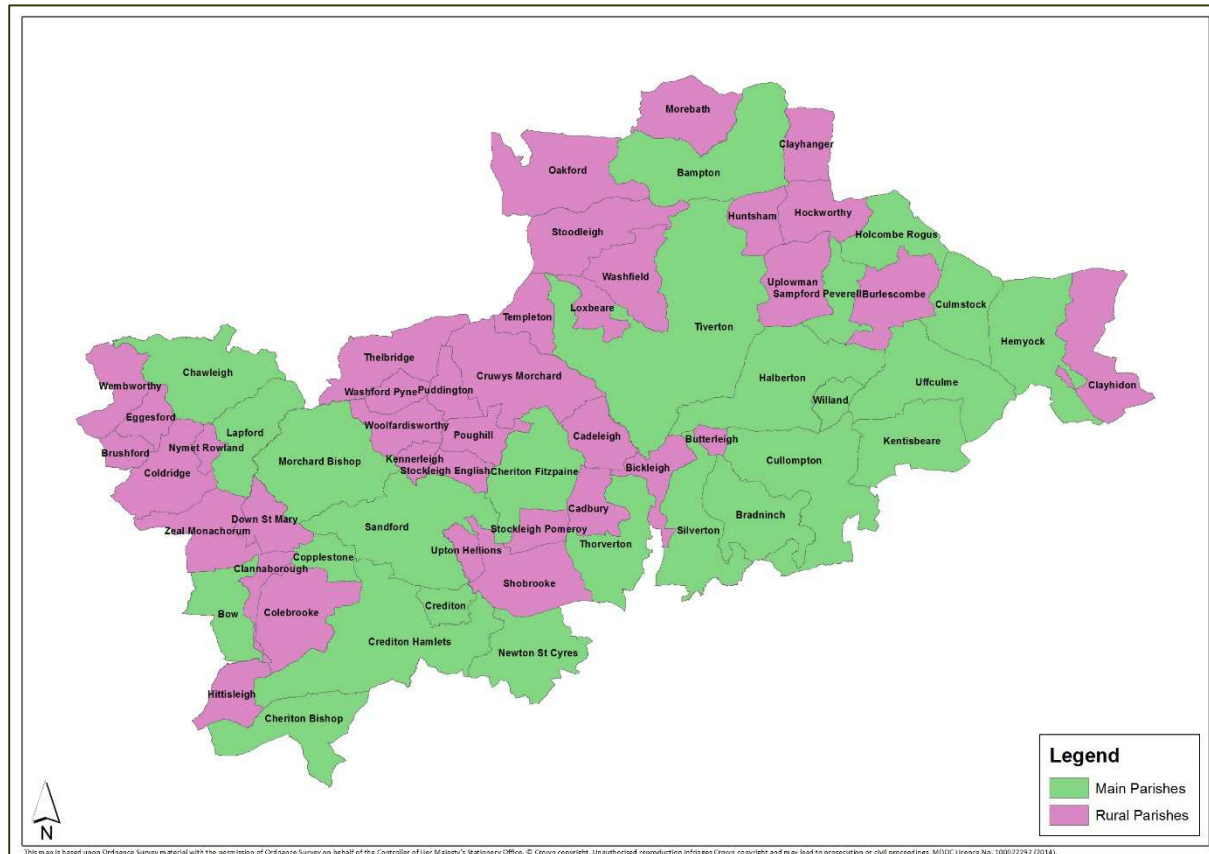
#### **Rural Parishes:**

Bickleigh, Brushford, Burllescombe, Butterleigh, Cadbury, Cadeleigh, Clannaborough, Clayhanger, Clayhidon, Coldridge, Colebrooke, Cruwys Morchard, Down St Mary, Eggesford, Hittisleigh, Hockworthy, Huntsham, Kennerleigh, Loxbeare, Morebath, Nymet Rowland, Oakford, Poughill, Puddington, Shobrooke, Stockleigh English, Stockleigh Pomeroy,

Stoodleigh, Templeton, Thelbridge, Uplowman, Washfield, Washford Pyne, Wembworthy, Woolfardisworthy, Zeal Monachorum.

It should be noted that the parishes of Brushford, Clannaborough, Nymet Rowland, Stockleigh English, Upton Hellions and Washford Pyne do not appear on the 2011 census listing indicating that the populations are below 100 people.

Figure 2: Main parishes and rural parishes used for developing standards

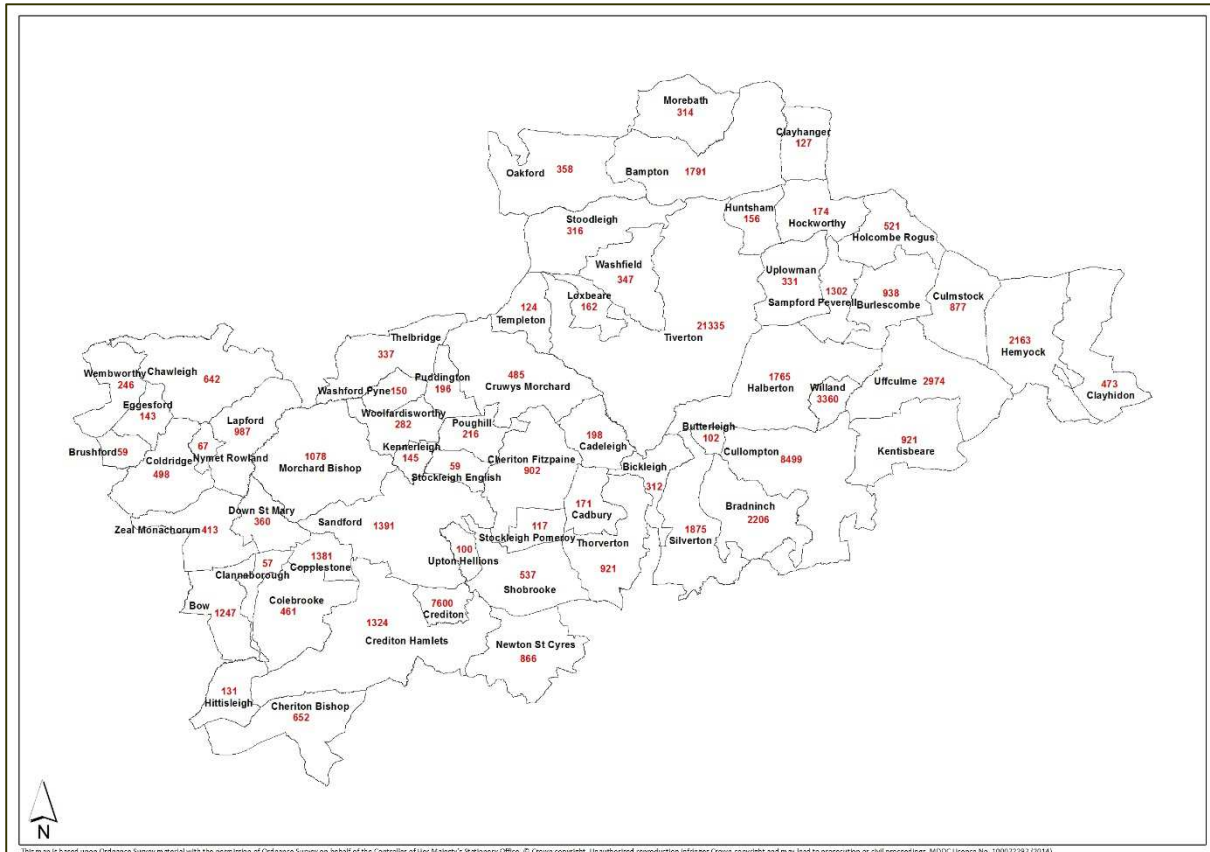


#### 1.4.4 Population

The population of the defined study areas as described above is shown on figure 3. The study has drawn on census data from 2011 using; (LC1105EW - Population Density, Office for National Statistics). The population of Mid Devon has grown at a rate of 20% in the last twenty years, and is expected to increase by a further 20% between 2008 and 2033<sup>1</sup>. The population rate has increased faster on average over the past 20 years than England, the South West and Devon. Much of the increase is due to inward migration from other parts of the UK. Individuals of retirement age constitute the largest increase of new residents in the area. In contrast, there are a significant number of young people moving out of the area due to a lack of educational and employment opportunities.

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.naturaldevon.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/01/Final-DLNP-prospectus-jan2014.pdf>

Figure 3: Parish populations used in the study (2011 census data)



## 1.5 Structure of the report

The report is presented in two key parts.

Part 1, the **Main Report** follows the five key stages as outlined in section 1.3. Part 2 includes a number of **Area Profiles** that have been developed for the main parishes. The area profiles are provided as separate reports so that they can be used by parishes to inform their neighbourhood plans as and when required. It is intended that the area profiles would be used and read alongside the main report



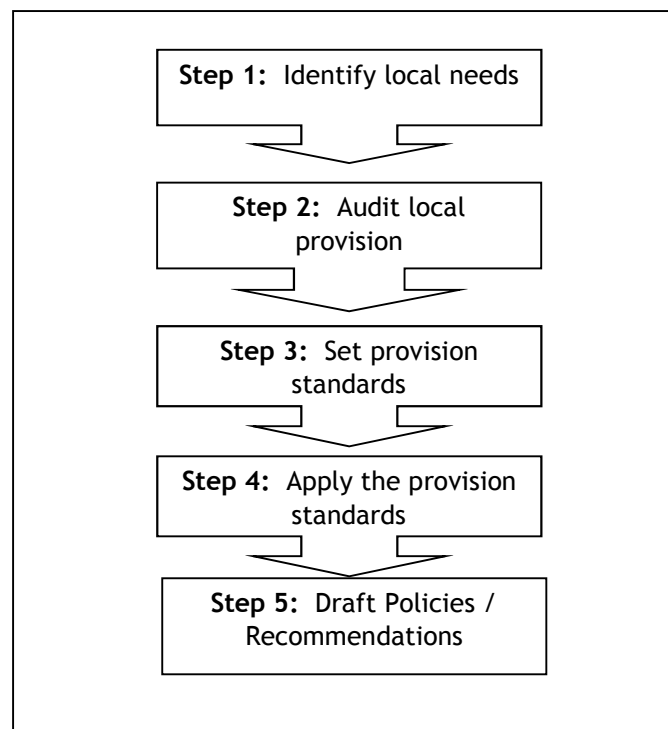
## 2.0 METHODOLOGY

### 2.1 General

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

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

The Companion Guide to PPG17 recommended 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. Where appropriate, these methods and techniques have been employed within this study and are explained at the relevant point in the report. In addition, they are summarised in the paragraphs below;

## **2.2 Identifying Local Need (Step 1)**

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

## **2.3 Audit of Existing Open Space Assets (Step 2)**

### **2.3.1 Defining the scope of the audit**

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

- analysis of existing GIS data held by Mid Devon District Council;
- desktop mapping of open space from aerial photography;
- review of the annual condition survey of play areas;
- questionnaires to town and parish councils;
- liaison with council officers and ward members;
- survey of the Mid Devon Citizens' Panel;
- discussions with local user groups and clubs.

Due to the limitation of resources available for this study, site visits were not undertaken. However, information gathering was undertaken through consultation including the citizens' panel. In addition, Parish Council surveys which included quality questions were distributed. Information was also drawn from the District Council's own databases, drawing on play inspections and local knowledge of officers. These sources of information were drawn together to inform priorities for improvement and investment, which are summarised in this report and highlighted further in the area profiles (part 2).

### **2.3.2 Approach to mapping**

As part of the audit process, sites were mapped into their different functions using a multi-functional approach to mapping. The advantage of the multi-functional approach is that it gives a much more accurate picture of the provision of open space. This is more advantageous than the primary typology approach which tends to result in an over assessment of provision, but which can significantly impact decisions on quantity standards. The differences in approach are demonstrated in figures 4 and 5 below:

Figure 4: Primary approach to open space mapping

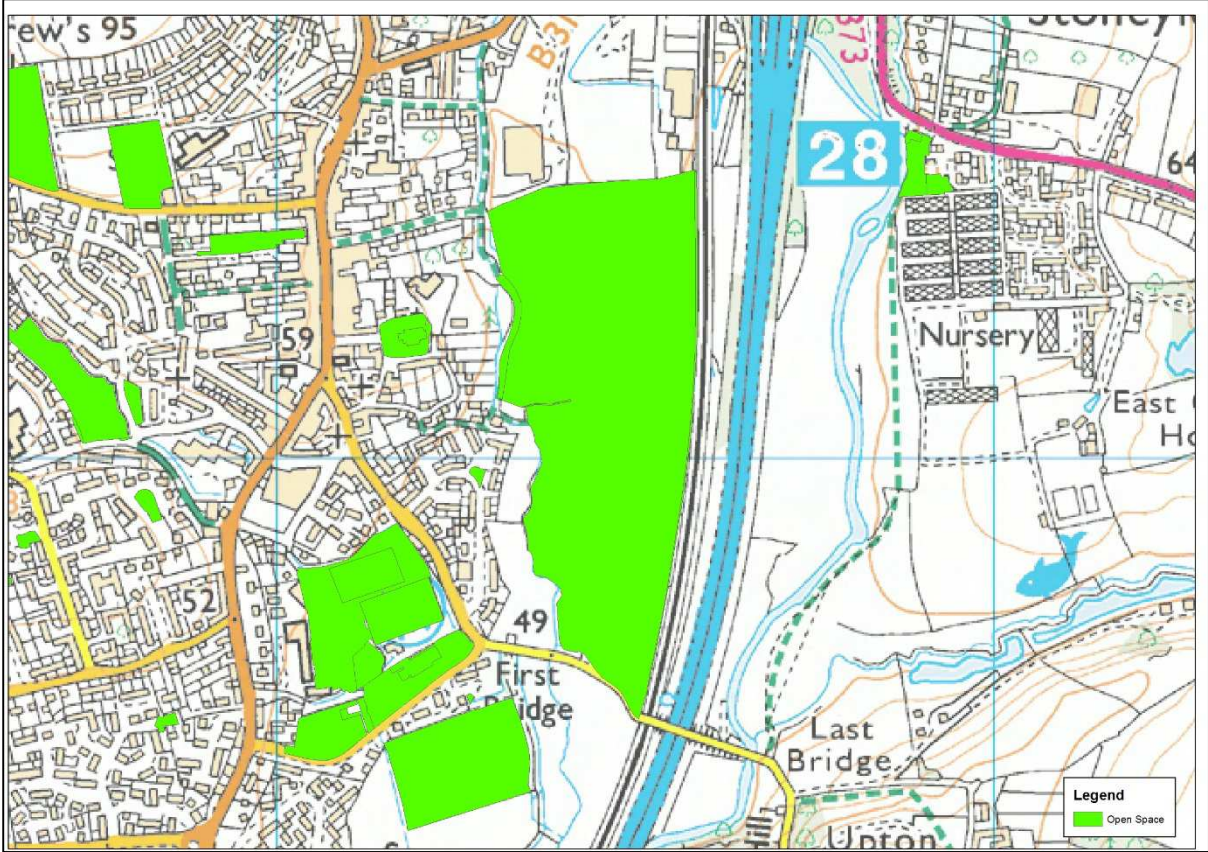
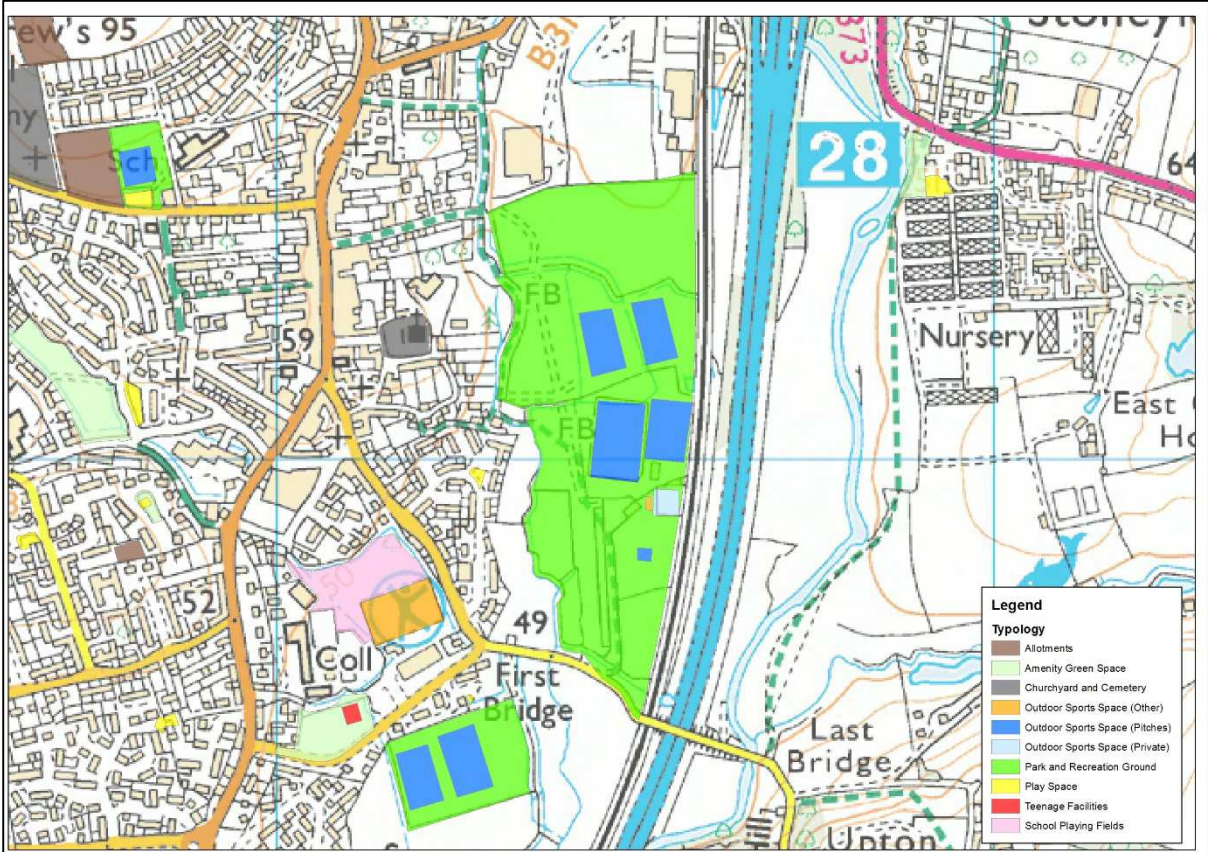


Figure 5: Multi-functional mapping of open space



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

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

- quantity;
- accessibility;
- quality.

### **Quantity**

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

### **Access**

Evidence from previous studies, the needs assessment and consideration of national benchmarks are used to develop access standards for open space. Typically standards are expressed as straight line walk times. A series of maps assessing access for different typologies are presented in the report.

### **Quality**

Quality standards have been developed drawing on previous studies, national benchmarks and good practice, evidence from the needs assessment and the review of existing quality data. As previously mentioned in Section 2.3.1, site visits were not undertaken, and quality information was gathered via consultation with local users and information from council officers. The quality standards also include recommended policies to guide the provision of new open space through development in the future.

## 2.5 Drafting Policy Recommendations (Step 5)

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

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

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

- To provide a robust and comprehensive evidence base to underpin the development of detailed planning policies in the emerging Local Plan.
- To provide information to justify the collection of developer contributions towards open space.
- To provide information to help inform the spending of Community Infrastructure Levy receipts.
- To advise on a suitable programme for transfer of play area maintenance responsibility to parish/town councils, community groups and residents.
- To provide recommendations on different models of open space management and provision to enable flexible use and low cost maintenance wherever possible, while ensuring that open spaces are retained for community use in perpetuity.
- To provide recommendations for Council strategy on the future prioritisation of spending according to need, value for money and the degree of public benefit.

## **3.0 STRATEGIC CONTEXT**

This section sets out a brief review of the most relevant national, regional and local policies related to the study, which have been considered in developing the methodology and findings of the study. Policies and strategies are subject to regular change, therefore the summary provided in this section was correct at the time of writing. Mid Devon District Council reserves the right to change and update this section as policies change.

### **3.1 Introduction**

We are mindful that during the transition period to incorporate the new NPPF into local policy, there will be some disparity between the old policy and the new. Therefore, within the strategy document, we will look to map any changes within the new policy framework and use examples to demonstrate the implications of any relevant policy amendments. The policy overview will include analysis of the Council's existing policy and the forthcoming Local Plan to ensure clarity and consistency with the new national policy as outlined in the strategy brief.

We will also review other strategies of relevance at national, regional and local levels and assess their implications for the provision of open space, sport and recreation opportunities. In addition, we will explain the important relationship between the proposed study and other relevant Council strategies and initiatives.

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

### **3.2 National Strategic Context**

#### **3.2.1 National Planning Policy Framework**

On 27th March 2012, the National Planning Policy Framework was published and replaced Planning Policy Statements (PPS) and Planning Policy Guidance (PPG) notes. Further general guidance was also provided within the NPPG on open space, sport and recreation facilities (2014). Therefore, this policy and guidance supersedes the former PPG17 – Planning for Open Space, Sport and Recreation and Companion Guide (2nd July 2002).

The NPPF sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how they should be applied. The NPPF must be adhered to in the preparation of local and neighbourhood plans, and is a material consideration in planning decisions.

The NPPF contains the following references that relate to green infrastructure and open spaces:

**Achieving Sustainable Development - Core Planning Principles: Para 17:** Within the overarching roles that the planning system ought to play, a set of core land-use planning principles should underpin both plan-making and decision-taking, these 12 principles include:

- promote mixed use developments, and encourage multiple benefits from the use of land in urban and rural areas, recognising that some open land can perform many functions (such as for wildlife, recreation, flood risk mitigation, carbon storage, or food production);
- actively manage patterns of growth to make the fullest possible use of public transport, walking and cycling, and focus significant development in locations which are or can be made sustainable; and
- take account of and support local strategies to improve health, social and cultural well-being for all, and deliver sufficient community and cultural facilities and services to meet local needs.

**Para 58 -** *Local and neighbourhood plans should develop robust and comprehensive policies that set out the quality of development that will be expected for the area. Such policies should be based on stated objectives for the future of the area and an understanding and evaluation of its defining characteristics. Planning policies and decisions should aim to ensure that developments:*

- optimise the potential of the site to accommodate development, create and sustain an appropriate mix of uses (including incorporation of green and other public space as part of developments) and support local facilities and transport networks.
- create safe and accessible environments where crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine quality of life or community cohesion; and
- are visually attractive as a result of good architecture and appropriate landscaping.

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

**Para 75 -** *Planning policies should protect and enhance public rights of way and access. Local authorities should seek opportunities to provide better facilities for users, for example by adding links to existing rights of way networks including National Trails.*

**Para 99 -** *Local Plans should take account of climate change over the longer term, including factors such as flood risk, coastal change, water supply and changes to biodiversity and landscape. New development should be planned to avoid increased vulnerability to the range of impacts arising from climate change. When new development is brought forward in areas which are vulnerable, care should be taken to ensure that risks can be managed*

*through suitable adaptation measures, including through the planning of green infrastructure.*

**Para 109** - *The planning system should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by:*

- recognising the wider benefits of ecosystem services;
- minimising impacts on biodiversity and providing net gains in biodiversity where possible, contributing to the Government's commitment to halt the overall decline in biodiversity, including by establishing coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures.

**Para 114** - *Local planning authorities should:*

- set out a strategic approach in their Local Plans, planning positively for the creation, protection, enhancement and management of networks of biodiversity and green infrastructure; and
- maintain the character of the undeveloped coast, protecting and enhancing its distinctive landscapes, particularly in areas defined as Heritage Coast, and improve public access to and enjoyment of the coast.

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

The white paper<sup>2</sup> recognised that a healthy natural environment is the foundation of sustained economic growth, prospering communities and personal wellbeing. It sets out how the value of nature can be mainstreamed across our society by facilitating local action; strengthening the connections between people and nature; creating a green economy and showing leadership in the EU and internationally. It sets out 92 specific commitments for action. The white paper recognises the benefits of green infrastructure and encourages local action, including:

- the establishment of a green infrastructure partnership and support for the development of Local Nature Partnerships;
- the creation of Nature Improvement Areas aimed at reversing the decline and fragmentation of wildlife habitats;
- the establishment of a new Green Areas Designation to protect local green spaces;
- recognising the value of ecosystem services at a landscape scale.

### **3.2.3 Sport England Strategy 2012-17 (creating a sporting habit for life)**

The 2012-17 Youth and Community Strategy for Sport England was launched in January 2012<sup>3</sup>. It describes how Sport England will invest over £1 billion of National Lottery and Exchequer funding over five years into four main areas of work;

- National Governing Body (NGB) 2013-17 funding;
- facilities;

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.official-documents.gov.uk/document/cm80/8082/8082.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.sportengland.org/media/130949/DCMS-Creating-a-sporting-habit-for-life-1-.pdf>



- local investment; and
- the 'School Games'.

The overall ambition is to increase the number of people who play sports regularly and reduce the number of young people who stop playing when they finish school. Funding for governing bodies will be tied to their own specific participation targets. Goals for 2012-17 include:

- all of the 4,000 secondary schools in England will be offered a community sport club on its site with a direct link to one or more NGBs, depending on the local clubs in its area;
- county sports partnerships will be given new resources to create effective links locally between schools and sport in the community;
- all secondary schools who wish to do so will be helped to open up, or keep open, their sports facilities for local community use and at least a third of these will receive additional funding to make this happen;
- at least 150 further education colleges will benefit from full-time sports professional who will act as a 'College Sport Maker';
- three quarters of university students aged 18-24 will get the chance to take up a new sport or continue playing a sport they played at school or college;
- 1000 of the most disadvantaged local communities will get a 'Door Step Club';
- a minimum of 30 sports will have enhanced 'England Talent Pathways' to ensure young people and others fulfil their potential;
- 2000 young people on the margins of society will be encouraged by the Dame Kelly Holmes Legacy Trust into sport, gaining new life skills at the same time; and
- building on the early success of 'Places People Play', a further £100m will be invested in facilities for the most popular sports, for example new artificial pitches and upgrading local swimming pools.

### 3.2.5 Conclusion

To reflect and meet the obligations of the National Policy Context for open space provision, the use of this document and the strategic framework it provides will enable a consistent policy approach for open space planning and investment to be applied in Mid Devon, ensuring that opportunities are not missed. In addition, as a strategic open space framework, this document can, by setting out local open space intentions, provide a single point of reference to evidence conformity with existing and emerging national policies.

## 3.3 Local and Regional Context

### 3.3.1 Mid Devon Open Space and Play Area Strategy 2006 (OSPA)

In 2006 Mid Devon commissioned an Open Space and Play Area Strategy (OSPA<sup>4</sup>) for the district. The key findings from the study were as follows:

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<sup>4</sup> <http://www.middevon.gov.uk/index.aspx?articleid=5133>

- there was a large variation in the quality of open space across the district, most significant in equipped play areas and sports facilities;
- an estimated 30% of open spaces were in need of significant investment, including the development of improvement plans by site, and some large scale re-development;
- an estimated 40% of open spaces were in need of low key improvements, such as improved pathways, play areas, entrances etc. The development of simple management plans for these sites would help deliver a co-ordinated approach to improvement;
- the remaining 30% of sites were felt to be in good condition, with very little need for improvement;
- in relation to the Mid Devon standards, on average, there was an under supply of amenity open space, outdoor sports space and children's play areas;
- however, in areas where sufficient supply was found, alternatives for the sites could include a change of use (e.g. converting from amenity open space to children's play) or the disposal of land for development;
- education land offers a significant potential to meet the shortfall of open space across the district, particularly in parishes where there is a shortfall in facilities for outdoor sport;
- access is generally good with amenity open space showing the poorest scores in relation to local standards.

The OSPA (2006) recommended standards for open space and play provision as follows:

- Children's play areas: 10sqm per dwelling
- Informal open space: 10sqm per dwelling
- Sports provision: 40sqm per dwelling

In addition to the 2006 OSPA a number of other studies were prepared to investigate specific aspects of open space in Mid Devon. A Play Strategy was formulated in 2007, a Playing Field Strategy (PFS) in 2010 and a Green Infrastructure Assessment (GIA) in 2013. The results of each are outlined below. There has been some divergence in strategy resulting from the new studies. All of the key points raised in each strategy have been considered in the updated OSPA and used to inform the study and its development.

### 3.3.2 Mid Devon Play Area Strategy (2007-2010)

The Mid Devon Play Strategy<sup>5</sup> was produced in parallel with the OSPA (2006) and complements it through identifying the wider play issues relating to open space provision. All partners involved in the Play Strategy share a common vision of play, and endorse the following values:

- all children and young people have a right and need to play;

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.middevon.gov.uk/index.aspx?articleid=6995>

- all children and young people, regardless of ability, background or family circumstances, have a right to safe and stimulating play opportunities;
- children and young people should be offered a variety of play experiences and play environments in recognition of their need for different kinds of play;
- children and young people have a right to be involved in decisions affecting their play;
- children and young people need to encounter and learn to manage risk in their play;
- parents and other carers should respect and value their children's play and try to maximise their opportunities for safe and stimulating play within and outside the home;
- parents/carers and children benefit from and are strengthened by playing together;
- positive action will be taken to remove barriers to play so that all children and young people will have easy access to the widest possible range of play experiences and play environments both inside and outside;
- we will have the best opportunities of developing quality play opportunities through a commitment to partnership working.

The Play Strategy takes into account a multitude of factors affecting play from access and provision to suitability and potential for intimidation. The Mid Devon Play Strategy identified a number of recurring themes, three of which came across consistently:

- improving opportunities for teenagers;
- improving the quality of play;
- supporting parents in play.

In addition to these, involving children and young people in decisions about play and play facilities was identified as a clear cross-cutting theme. These factors will be taken into account when auditing the play provision in Mid Devon for the current OSPA. It is important to note that the Council is responsible for over 100 play areas in the district, and funding is an ongoing issue in Mid Devon.

### **3.3.3 Mid Devon Playing Field Strategy 2010 (PFS)**

The Mid Devon Playing Field Strategy (PFS<sup>6</sup>) was originally commissioned alongside strategies for North Devon, South Hams and Torridge by Devon County Council, as a 'readiness to deliver requirement' by Sport England of the Building Schools for the Future (BSF) programme within the county. The study area was chosen because these authorities contained the five schools in Phase 1 of the Devon County Council BSF programme which included Tiverton High School in Mid Devon. The BSF programme in its then format was withdrawn in early July 2010 by the incoming coalition government, and planning at Tiverton High School stopped.

The study identified 85 playing pitches in total; 38 senior football, 14 junior football, 20 cricket and 13 rugby. Sport England promotes the classification of playing pitches (along with other facilities) according to ownership and whether they are; able to be used by the

<sup>6</sup> <http://www.middevon.gov.uk/index.aspx?articleid=8695>

community under 'secure' arrangements (A1, A2, A3). 72 of the pitches in Mid Devon (85%) were in secured community use at the time of the study and an additional 6 were used by the community without formal agreements. Only 7 pitches were used solely by schools without any community use. However the study shows that the number of pitches recorded in secure community use as a ratio of the local active population is slightly below the regional average. In addition, the pattern of ownership was below the national average with only 31% of pitches being owned directly by the local authority.

There was also a problem with services and accessibility identified in Mid Devon. This indicated issues for access to outdoor sports facilities especially for the young and those on low incomes. These are two sectors of the active population who would benefit from inclusion in team sports.

The strategy estimated that another 18.5 hectares of land in pitch use is required to meet demand up to 2026. The study suggests that this shortfall could be met by bringing some non-secure community use pitches into community use. However, it was assumed that most pitches which could be subject to secure community use were already under such arrangements and therefore the additional pitches required will need to come predominantly from new provision.

### **3.3.4 Green Infrastructure Assessment 2013 (GIA)**

Mid Devon District Council prepared and consulted upon a draft Green Infrastructure Plan in 2011. This was prepared as a draft Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) by Mid Devon District Council. The Green Infrastructure Assessment (GIA<sup>7</sup>) was completed in 2013 and forms part of the evidence base for the Local Plan, having taken account of comments from residents and other stakeholders.

The GIA considered the relative land areas of various types of green infrastructure and rated catchment areas according to the overall amount of GI and other factors such as social deprivation, previous public open space investment and the accessibility of open space. The GIA found that overall GI deficiency is most apparent in an area to the west of the district comprising Copplestone, Bow, Colebrooke and Crediton Hamlets. The GIA recommends that this area receive future enhancement. The Council no longer proposes to adopt a Green Infrastructure Strategy as SPD but will use the GIA alongside this OSPA to inform the policies of the Local Plan 2013-2033.

Strategic objectives in planning for green infrastructure include:

1. Promote Sustainable Growth and Economic Development
2. Encourage Health and Wellbeing
3. Adapt to and Mitigate Climate Change
4. Improve Biodiversity

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<sup>7</sup> <http://www.middevon.gov.uk/gia>

### 3.3.5 Mid Devon Local Plan

The Mid Devon Local Plan<sup>8</sup> was adopted, in three stages, between 2007 and 2013. The Mid Devon Local Plan is made up of the Core Strategy 2006-2026 (adopted 2007), Allocation and Infrastructure Development Plan Document (adopted 2010) and Development Management policies (adopted 2013). The Core Strategy contains the overall spatial strategy and policies for the area. It does not include site specific proposals (such as housing sites), but identifies the general locations of development.

The Local Plan Review commenced in 2013, and aims to produce an up-to-date Local Plan which is due to be adopted in 2015. The options consultation document published in January 2014 includes draft Policies S2, S6 and S10 which make reference to the provision of open space in the district, and adopted Policy DM26 on the protection of open space and recreational facilities. Recognising that this OSPA had not yet been completed, draft Policy S6 proposed standards based on the Fields in Trust 'six acre standard' as follows:

#### Policy S6

New housing developments will provide the following levels of onsite public open space:

- a) On sites of 25 dwellings or more, 20 square metres of children's play space per dwelling and 10 square metres of informal open space per dwelling; and
- b) On sites of 500 dwellings or more, in addition to criterion a), 40 square metres of sports provision per dwelling.

On sites smaller than those set out above the Council will secure public open space through the use of Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) funding except where the developer offers facilities whose value exceeds the total CIL payment for the development.

Section 106 planning obligations may prove a preferable source of funding for open space, rather than CIL. The Council will publish a final policy on this, as well as more detailed standards derived from this OSPA, in the 'submission' Local Plan.

### 3.3.6 Mid Devon Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA)

A new Strategic Housing Market Assessment is currently being prepared for the Exeter Housing Market Area. This will dictate the targets for housing in the final revised Local Plan. Within the Local Plan options consultation document (January 2014) it is estimated that there is a requirement for a further 8,400 new dwellings and 154,000 square metres of commercial floor space to meet demand up to the end of the plan period in 2033. The previous strategy concentrated on town-focused growth and development. There are two strategic options currently being considered through the Local Plan Review:

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<sup>8</sup> <http://www.middevon.gov.uk/index.aspx?articleid=2605>

1. continue a development focus in the 3 main towns in Mid Devon (Tiverton, Cullompton and Crediton) with the largest allocation of housing and new development in Tiverton in the form an urban extension under Policy TIV1 and a further extension to the east of the town at Hartnoll Farm.
2. Direct long-term growth to a new community of which there are two options for location. There is an opportunity for a new community east of Junction 27 of the M5 motorway, linking to Willand, or east of Junction 28 at Cullompton.

There are however some factors which could impinge on the progression of option 1. The towns of Crediton and Tiverton are somewhat constrained by their surrounding geography, and new sites related to the main town are hard to find.

There are also 22 rural settlements which will be designated as villages suitable for limited development in the Local Plan review under Policy S14. These are as follows:

Bampton, Bow, Bradninch, Chawleigh, Cheriton Bishop, Cheriton Fitzpaine, Coplestone, Culmstock, Halberton, Hemyock, Holcombe Rogus, Kentisbeare, Lapford, Morchard Bishop, Newton St Cyres, Sampford Peverell, Sandford, Silverton, Thorverton, Uffculme, Willand and Yeoford.

Development in these areas will be limited to proposals within the defined settlement limits and to allocations for:

1. small scale housing, employment, tourism and leisure;
2. services and facilities serving the locality; and
3. other limited development which enhances community vitality or meets a local social or economic need.

These settlements have been categorised as appropriate for low level development based on their physical characteristics and the availability of three important services/facilities:

1. education services
2. convenience stores
3. transport links.

The 'Local Plan Review Scoping Report' (July 2013) consultation document included an option of relaxing the controls over rural development and allowing settlements designated as villages to expand. Based on the feedback, this was the most popular option, together with the option to retain the current strategy to direct development towards the largest settlements.

Sites for affordable housing may also come forward on 'exceptional sites' that are not designated villages in Policy S14 referred to above. This will be subject to local need as demonstrated through a local housing needs survey or other appropriate means.

The amount of development land required outside of the three market towns of Tiverton, Crediton and Cullompton is dependent upon the outcome of draft Policy S3 (options

consultation January 2014) and whether the focus on new development moving forward is town centred or new community driven. However, 69 potential sites have been identified through the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) which are considered achievable in principle for rural areas in Mid Devon.

### **3.3.7 Prospectus for Natural Devon 2014-19**

The Local Nature Partnership, Natural Devon, has recently published a prospectus which offers a strategic vision for the area relating to the natural environment. Natural Devon is an umbrella body which brings together everyone with an interest in securing the benefits of the natural environment. The Partnership covers the geographical area of Devon including Torbay, but not including Plymouth which has a separate Local Nature Partnership.

In Devon, many of the socio-economic challenges are being recognised at the strategic level by partnerships such as the Heart of the South West Local Enterprise Partnership, and Devon and Torbay Health and Wellbeing Boards. Natural Devon will work alongside these partnerships, and others, to ensure that the value of nature is understood and integrated into decision making, helping to form a bond between the communities, economies and environment of the local area. The intention is to improve the natural environment through a collective vision concerning seven inter-connecting themes:

#### *1. Farming with nature*

Vision: Devon's prosperous and productive farming economy meets our production needs, supports communities and protects and enhances the environment.

#### *2. Naturally healthy*

Vision: Everyone in Devon has the opportunity and the confidence to be 'naturally active' in order to improve their health and wellbeing.

#### *3. Wood for good*

Vision: Devon's woodlands and hedges are sustainably managed and rich in wildlife through being re-connected to the local economy and local communities.

#### *4. Green connections*

Vision: High quality Green Infrastructure is integrated into and connects all housing and commercial developments helping Devon to be known as a great place to live, work and do business.

#### *5. Resilient wetlands*

Vision: Devon's wetlands and watercourses provide resilience to flooding and drought, healthy fisheries and wildlife habitats, fantastic recreational opportunities and a clean water supply.

#### *6. Outdoor learning*

Vision: People of all ages regularly interact with Devon's natural environment as an integral part of lifelong learning.

#### *7. Sustainable seas*

Vision: Devon's world-class coast and marine environment is wisely used and provides a sustainable living for local fishing communities, a home for an impressive variety of wildlife, and an attraction to millions of visitors and residents.

A detailed time-plan to facilitate these visions is currently under production.





## 4.0 LOCAL NEEDS ASSESSMENT

### 4.1 Introduction and methodology

The full report of the community and stakeholders consultation undertaken for the *Mid Devon Open Space and Play Area Strategy* can be found in Appendix One of the study. This section provides a short summary of the process and its findings.

The consultation and stakeholder engagement process examined local need for a wide range of different kinds of recreational open space. It drew upon a range of survey and analytical techniques including a review of consultation findings from earlier play, sports, leisure and open space studies. The extent of the research reflected 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.

Questionnaire surveys were undertaken as below:

- A residents survey through the Mid Devon Citizens' Panel
- A survey of town and parish councils
- Local groups and organisations survey
- Survey of sports national governing bodies, league secretaries and local clubs.

In addition a series of one to one local stakeholder interviews was undertaken and views secured from key strategic stakeholders.

The findings from the consultation and stakeholder research process have been taken into account in the drawing up of recommended local standards. The work also provided a wider understanding of local people's and strategic stakeholders' views on open space, sport and recreation provision and the wider green infrastructure, and the values attached to the various forms of open spaces and facilities. This has implications for the way in which open spaces, play areas, outdoor sports facilities and the wider green infrastructure are treated and designated in the Mid Devon Local Plan.

### 4.2 Summary of findings

#### 4.2.1 Community survey and general community consultation - key findings

##### *Use of open space, play areas and green infrastructure*

- It is Mid Devon's footpaths, bridleways and cyclepaths, countryside, country parks and woodlands that are most commonly used by households at least monthly (over 75%). Over 50% of households also use parks, recreation grounds and informal open spaces e.g. grassed areas for dog-walking, picnics at this level of frequency.
- Footpaths, bridleways etc. are also by far the most frequently used facility with 27% of households reporting using them almost every day. Other spaces used on an

almost daily basis by at least 15% of households are local parks/recreation grounds; countryside, country parks and woodlands; and informal open spaces.

- Areas for water recreation and wildlife areas/nature reserves are also fairly frequently used with at least 47% of households using them on a regular basis (at least monthly).
- Play areas, grass playing fields and churchyards/cemeteries are also fairly frequently used but with fewer households (at least 33%) using them on a regular basis (at least monthly). This is not surprising given the more specific purposes of these facilities.
- The national 2008 Place Survey indicated that 74% of Mid Devon's residents were very or fairly happy with the overall provision of parks and open spaces. Satisfaction levels in Mid Devon were higher than for Devon, the South West and England as whole.

### *Quantity*

- By far the most commonly identified shortfall was for provision of teenage facilities where over 70% thought there was insufficient currently.
- Otherwise, a majority of households reported that there were currently enough of all of the various kinds of open space and recreational facilities.
- 43% or more of households thought there was a need for more footpaths, bridleways, cyclepaths; wildlife areas/nature reserves; allotments; and informal open spaces e.g. grassed areas for dog-walking, picnics etc.
- In addition, a significant minority (around 30%) also thought there were insufficient recreation grounds/parks; play areas; country parks; and public gathering places e.g. village greens, open air venues.

### *Quality*

- All facilities are rated average or better by a majority of households other than facilities for teenagers.
- Just over 65% of households highlighted the quality of outdoor facilities for teenagers as being either poor or very poor.
- Over 25% thought that the quality of allotments and astro-turf pitches was poor or very poor. Other facilities rated as poor or very poor by significant numbers of households were informal open spaces (20%); wildlife areas/nature reserves (17%); and public gathering places e.g. village greens, open air venues (16%).
- The high quality of parks and recreation grounds stands out notably; being viewed by around 60% of respondents as very good or good.
- Other kinds of open spaces where quality is widely thought to be good/very good are country parks, countryside and woodlands (55%); grass playing pitches (47%); water recreation areas (46%); footpaths, bridleways and cyclepaths (43%); and play areas (42%).

### *Access*

- 50% or more of users are prepared to travel more than 20 minutes to use some facilities such as areas for water recreation; countryside, country parks and woodlands; and wildlife areas/nature reserves.
- In contrast, for significant numbers of residents, facilities need to be much more locally accessible before they will be used (for example, allotments, play areas, astro-turf pitches and churchyards/cemeteries).
- Residents are more likely than not to drive to many kinds of open space including areas for water recreation, country parks, countryside, wildlife areas/nature reserves; artificial turf pitches and tennis courts/bowling greens.
- However, walking and cycling are the norm for facilities such as parks/recreation grounds; play areas and outdoor teenage facilities; allotments; playing fields; foot/cyclepaths and bridleways.
- For a small but significant minority access by bus is important, particularly for allotments; artificial turf pitches; and facilities for teenagers.
- 62% of residents confirmed that they would be prepared to walk/cycle further if the quality of the route was improved; and that if the quality of the route was improved they would make the journey more often.

#### *Priorities and other issues*

- The category highlighted by the largest proportion of households as a high priority for potential improvement/new provision was for improvements to the footpath, bridleway and cyclepath network; followed by facilities for teenagers; then wildlife areas/nature reserves.
- Other notable high priorities for improvement highlighted by significant numbers were informal open space e.g. grassed areas for dog-walking, informal games, picnics etc; play areas and country parks, countryside and woodlands.
- For some categories the most common kind of priority suggested is for more open space and facilities; notably outdoor facilities for teenagers and allotments.
- However, for most categories improvements to the quality of existing facilities is suggested as the more common kind of improvement needed.
- Improved access is particularly significant for some categories e.g. churchyards and cemeteries; areas for water recreation; country parks, countryside and woodlands; and wildlife areas/nature reserves.
- Often the choice between additional facilities or quality improvements to current facilities is fairly evenly split e.g. wildlife areas/nature reserves; informal open space; and footpaths, bridleways and cyclepaths; and artificial turf pitches.
- The issues and concerns of the rural areas of Mid Devon 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.
- Provision of and access to open space, sport and recreation opportunities is regarded by the Devon Director of Public Health as an extremely important factor in terms of maintaining health and wellbeing for local residents.
- Some sectors of the community face particular barriers to access such as disabled people; children and young people; households in the more isolated rural areas and those in the more deprived urban wards of the study area.



## 4.2.2 Town and Parish Councils - key findings

### *General Overview*

- The individual towns and parishes are very different in relation to size, demographics, geography, needs and demand/aspirations. It is important that the study and local standards take this variation into account.
- Over 67% of the town and parish councils who responded were directly responsible for the management of various local spaces and facilities.
- Over two thirds of the local councils reported that there was a need for additional or improved open space, play and recreation facilities within their town or parish.
- The sector of the community most commonly identified as being poorly served in relation to their needs were young people/teenagers.
- The factors most commonly deemed to be important as regards open spaces are that: they should be safe and secure for those using them; be easy to get to for all members of the community; and they should be clean and free from litter and graffiti.
- It is also thought important that: equipment and grounds should be of high quality and well maintained; be easy to get around by all members of the community; and there be adequate opportunities for dog walking and freedom from dog fouling.
- Many Councils highlight that there should also be good footpath and cycleway links to and between open spaces and recreational facilities.
- Of the parishes expressing an opinion 35% thought that there was scope for greater community use of outdoor sport and recreation spaces at local schools.
- The rural nature of much of the study area and related transport difficulties means that as much as possible needs to be provided locally or that opportunities are made available to access city and town facilities and activities more readily.

### *Common areas of concern*

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

- There are not enough areas for teenagers e.g. skateparks, shelters, MUGAs etc.
- The quality of children's play areas is very variable - many are in need of improvement
- There is a need for more and better access to footpaths, bridleways and cyclepaths.
- The poor quality of playing pitches.

### *Management Arrangements*

- In general the majority of parish councils were undecided on whether they would consider taking more responsibility for managing some or all of the open spaces and play areas currently managed and/or owned by the District Council.
- Of those who had taken an (in principle) view on taking on more local management responsibility the majority indicated that they were **not** prepared to do so.

- In general the majority of town/parish councils were undecided on whether they would be prepared to use some of the parish CIL funds to contribute to the maintenance of District Council owned/maintained open spaces and play areas.
- Of those who had taken an (in principle) view on the use of CIL funds for the maintenance of District Council owned/maintained open spaces and play areas, the majority indicated that they were **not** prepared to do so.
- 50% of town/parish councils who had taken a view on this issue indicated that they would be interested in contracting the District Council to undertake some open spaces related work.
- Just over a third of town/parish councils were still undecided on whether they would be interested in contracting the District Council to undertake any open spaces work.

#### 4.2.3 Parks, Green Spaces, Countryside and Rights of Way - Key Findings

Mid Devon District Council completed a comprehensive Green Infrastructure Assessment in 2013. Much of this is of direct relevance to the Open Spaces and Play Area Study and its findings provided a valuable resource for this study.

Mid Devon's footpaths, bridleways and cyclepaths, countryside, country parks and woodlands are the most common kinds of open space provision used by households. Other spaces used on a regular basis by many are local parks/recreation grounds and informal open spaces. Areas for water recreation and wildlife areas/nature reserves are also fairly frequently visited by many households.

##### *Quantity*

- A majority of citizens panel households reported that there were currently enough parks, green spaces, countryside facilities and rights of way in Mid Devon.
- The Mid Devon Open Spaces and Cemeteries Manager notes that MDDC and its partners should not be providing more facilities if they cannot be maintained and that is important to make provision for on-going maintenance.
- 43% or more of households thought there was a need for more footpaths, bridleways, cyclepaths; wildlife areas/nature reserves; allotments; and informal open spaces e.g. grassed areas for dog-walking, picnics etc.
- A number of stakeholders highlighted a particular shortfall and poor linkages in Mid Devon's bridleways network.
- A number of town and parish councils highlight a shortfall in allotment space.

##### *Quality*

- The Mid Devon Open Spaces and Cemeteries Manager indicated that their priorities for open space improvements as a result of development would be to improve existing facilities rather than the provision of new ones.
- In the Citizens' Panel survey, all open spaces categories are rated average or better by a majority of households other than facilities for teenagers.

- The general view from households is that improving the quality of existing open spaces and facilities is more of a priority than providing more (the notable exception being teenagers' facilities).
- In the Citizens' Panel survey the high quality of parks and recreation grounds stands out, being viewed by around 60% of respondents as very good or good.

#### *Access*

- The majority of Citizen Panel household users are prepared to travel more than 20 minutes to use some facilities such as areas for water recreation; countryside, country parks and woodlands; and wildlife areas/nature reserves.
- Over 66% of users would expect allotments to be within a 10 minute travel time, of which 26% would not wish to travel more than 5 minutes.
- 62% of Citizen Panel households said that they would walk or travel by bike more often to facilities if the quality of foot / cycle paths were improved. The same proportion said that they would use open space facilities more often if access by foot or cycle were improved.

#### *Other points and observations*

- The Devon County Council Rights of Way Improvement Plan highlights many priorities for footpaths, cycle routes and bridleways.
- The Devon Countryside Access Forum provide various recommendations such as the need to protect the rights of way network from development proposals; to identify strategic walking and cycling routes within settlements and ensure these link to surrounding rural areas and the rights of way network; ensure new development proposals include safe and high quality provision for cycling and walking routes.
- Natural England stress the need to take into account the ANGSt standard as a starting point for developing a standard for natural and semi-natural green space. Variation from this standard should be justified. The Woodland Trust also have a standard for woodlands endorsed by Natural England.
- 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.

#### **4.2.4 Children, Young People and Colleges/Schools - key findings**

##### *Quantity*

- By far the most commonly identified shortfall in the Citizen Panel survey was for provision of teenage facilities where over 70% thought there was insufficient currently.
- In addition, a significant minority (around 30%) also thought there were insufficient play areas.
- The provision of play and youth facilities in the parishes is very varied and many parishes report a shortage of such facilities (particularly for youth) and/or a need for improvements and refurbishments.

### *Quality*

- 42% of Citizen Panel households rated the quality of play areas overall in Mid Devon as good or very good and around 8% rated them as generally being poor.
- Just over 65% of households highlighted the quality of outdoor facilities for teenagers as being either poor or very poor.
- A number of parishes highlight the need to improve the quality of local play and youth facilities.
- The most popular things for younger children to do outdoors are playing on play equipment, ball games, wheeled sports (cycling, skateboarding, etc.) and making dens, while for older children and young people 'hanging out' is the primary activity (Mid Devon Play Strategy).
- The MDDC Open Spaces and Cemeteries Manager highlighted the need for play spaces to provide more challenging and adventurous play opportunities, particularly for older children.

### *Access*

- Over 56% of Citizen Panel household users would expect play areas and youth facilities to be within a 10 minute travel time, of which 24% would not wish to travel more than 5 minutes.
- 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.
- 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.
- There is need to ensure that the design of play and youth facilities is inclusive as regards use by disabled children and young people.

### *Colleges and Schools*

- Local secondary schools and colleges are key providers in relation to publicly accessible sports and leisure opportunities.
- There is potential for greater community use of these facilities. The extent of such use is extremely varied between different schools. Much community use is fairly ad hoc and changeable from year to year
- The cost of accessing community use of schools is also very varied and some are expensive.
- Most of the schools in Mid Devon have enough facilities to meet their needs though some of the smaller primary schools have limited facilities and many would benefit from improvement.



- The quality of sports facilities at all the secondary schools is generally quite good, with no obvious priority needs for improvement/refurbishment.

#### *Other issues and observations*

- While both youth facilities and play areas feature high in households list of priorities for improvement, it is clear that while the priority need for youth facilities is to provide more of such facilities, the priority for play areas is for improvements to the quality of what currently exists.
- 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 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 by the Council.
- There is some potential for more community (extended) use of school facilities for play (after school, weekends and during holidays).

#### **4.2.5 Neighbouring Local Authorities**

We reviewed feedback from neighbouring Local Authorities in relation to their green infrastructure and open space strategies. It was noted that the variety of documents and strategies in place (and their relevance to current planning policy) is considerable, embracing green infrastructure studies, open space strategies, green space strategies and sport and recreation strategies. The approach adopted by each authority is very much locally derived.

Whilst there has been some work done on a strategic level, as cited in the prospectus produced by the Local Nature Partnership, Natural Devon earlier in 2014 (see Section 3.3.7), it was observed that currently no strategies look in any depth at cross boundary issues. In addition, there is no identification of networks of green infrastructure or open space which cross district boundaries (with the exception of the Exmoor National Park).

The review concluded that there is scope for districts to work together to make the most of scarce accessible natural green space resources and to develop some common themes and agendas. It was highlighted that The Devon Green Infrastructure Strategy may provide a framework in which to do this and we suggested that much could be learnt in regard to best practice by a better sharing of information between authorities and ensuring that district strategies afford more importance to considering developments and proposals in neighbouring authorities.



## 5.0 AUDIT OF EXISTING OPEN SPACE ASSETS

### 5.1 General approach

Due to the varied geography of the study area, a bespoke approach to auditing and analysing open space has been developed. The first distinction is made between the parishes containing the main towns and villages and the more rural parishes (see section 1.4.3), and the differences in the nature of provision in these areas.

Secondly, the approach to auditing and analysing the natural resource is undertaken separately from the more formal facilities. To distinguish between this natural resource and more formal facilities, a second level of classification is made between ‘formal provision’ and ‘natural provision’.

### 5.2 Main Parishes (formal provision)

This section sets out the proposed typologies which will have standards developed or have been included within the quantitative or access analysis. The following is proposed:

Typologies with standards	Typologies mapped but no standards <sup>9</sup>
Formal provision: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Allotments</li> <li>• Amenity Green Space</li> <li>• Park and Recreation Grounds:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Outdoor sports space (Pitches)</li> <li>- Outdoor Sports Space (Other)</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Outdoor Sports Space (Private)</li> <li>• Children’s Play Areas</li> <li>• Teenage Facilities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• School Playing Fields</li> <li>• School Playing Fields MUGAs</li> <li>• Churchyard and Cemetery</li> </ul>

<sup>9</sup> An explanation for not developing standards for these typologies is outlined in the following sections

### 5.2.1 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”***

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

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

### 5.2.2 Amenity Green Space



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.

### 5.2.3 Parks and Recreation Grounds



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

- **Park and Recreation Ground.** This comprises the general open space surrounding play areas, sports facilities etc used for general recreation.
- **Outdoor Sports Space (Pitches).** This comprises publicly accessible sports pitches (including football and rugby).
- **Outdoor Sports Space (Other).** This comprises all other non-pitch based provision including publicly accessible tennis courts and bowling greens.

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

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

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

#### 5.2.4 Children's Play Areas and Teenage Facilities



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

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.

However, there are a number of recognised types of play area including Local Areas for Play (LAPs), Local Equipped Areas for Play (LEAPs), Neighbourhood Equipped Areas for Play (NEAPs), School Playgrounds, informal ball courts, and 'hang out' areas.

The study has recorded the following:

- Play Space
- Teenage Facilities

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

### ***Play space***

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

### ***Teenage Facilities***

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

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

#### **5.2.5 Outdoor Sport (Private)**

Outdoor sports space with limited public access (e.g. private sports grounds), have also been recorded and mapped where known. Private sport space makes up an important part of outdoor sports provision across the District, 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 space.

#### **5.2.6 Churchyards**

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



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

### 5.2.7 School Playing Fields (including MUGAs)

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 and Multi Use Games Areas (MUGAs). 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. 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 District Council to influence their provision and management. However, their existence is still an important factor of local provision, and as such they should be subject to the same policy considerations as publicly accessible space.

## 5.3 Rural Parishes (formal provision)

Typologies with standards	Typologies mapped but no standards
Formal provision: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Allotments</li> <li>• Recreation Space</li> <li>• Recreation Space (Limited Access)</li> <li>• Play Space</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• School Playing Fields</li> <li>• School Playing Fields MUGAs</li> <li>• Churchyard and Cemetery</li> </ul>

For the rural parishes, a different approach has been adopted, as these areas do not have the range of types of open space found in the main parishes, as follows:

- Allotments are analysed in the same way as urban areas;
- Spaces for formal recreation which cover amenity green space and parks and recreation grounds have been grouped as 'Recreation Space';
- Similarly private sports grounds and spaces with limited access are mapped as 'Private Recreation Grounds';
- Play space groups together children and youth space due to the limited provision of youth space in rural areas.

## 5.4 Natural Green Space



For the purpose of this study, natural and semi-natural green space covers a variety of partly or wholly accessible spaces including meadows, woodland and copses 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 (Natural England) and the local consultation for this study have identified the value attached to such space for recreation and emotional well-being. A sense of 'closeness to nature' with its attendant benefits for people is something that is all too easily lost in urban areas. Natural Green spaces can make important contributions towards local Biodiversity Action Plan targets and can also raise awareness of biodiversity values and issues.

Some sites will have statutory rights or permissive codes allowing the public to wander in these sites. Others may have defined Rights of Way or permissive routes running through them. For the remainder of sites there may be some access on a managed basis. Many natural spaces may not be 'accessible' in the sense that they cannot be entered and used by the general community, but they can be appreciated from a distance, and contribute to visual amenity. Although such spaces are not covered by this study, their value is recognised. Although such spaces are not the subject of standards developed by this study, their value is recognised.

## 5.5 Existing provision of open space (formal provision)

### 5.5.1 Existing provision in main parishes

The GIS mapping of open space has been used to assess the existing quantity of open space by parish. A summary of existing provision is shown in tables 1 and 2.

*Table 1: Existing provision of open space (hectares) in main parishes*

PARISH	Allotments	Amenity Green Space	Park and Recreation Ground (combined)	Park and Recreation Ground	Outdoor Sports Space (Pitches)	Outdoor Sports Space (Other)	Outdoor Sports Space (Private)	Childrens Play Area	Teenage Facility	School Playing Fields	School Playing Fields MUGA	Churchyard and Cemetery
Bampton	0.24	1.64	2.84	2.21	0.63	0	0	0.21	0.07	0.18	0.06	0
Bow	0	0	0.95	0.46	0.49	0	0	0.22	0	0.44	0.06	0
Bradninch	0.98	0.95	3.87	0.23	0	0.12	3.52	0.12	0.02	0.38	0	1.06
Chawleigh	0	0	0.53	0.14	0.29	0.1	0	0.04	0	0	0	0
Cheriton Bishop	0	1.16	0	0	0	0	0	0.11	0	0.19	0.03	0.38
Cheriton Fitzpaine	0.71	0	1.47	0.45	0	0	1.02	0.1	0	0.74	0	0.21
Copplestone	0.34	0.21	1.25	1.03	0.22	0	0	0.15	0.02	0.49	0	0.12
Crediton	2.82	3.54	13.07	6.39	1.99	0.6	4.09	0.85	0.04	10.97	0.03	1.54
Crediton Hamlets	0	0	1.11	0.72	0.39	0	0	0.04	0	0.11	0	0
Culmpton	1.29	1.91	25.23	13.99	0.22	0.65	10.37	1.41	0.54	3.45	0	2.4
Culmstock	0	1.45	0	0	0	0	0	0.03	0.01	0.73	0.02	0.34
Halberton	0	0.6	0	0	0	0	0	0.04	0.01	0	0	0.55
Hemyock	0	0.81	5.16	3.28	1.58	0.17	0.13	0.12	0.1	0.25	0	0.61
Holcombe Rogus	0	0.31	0	0	0	0	0	0.04	0	0	0	0
Kentisbeare	0.03	0	1.98	0.6	0	0	1.38	0.11	0.02	0.33	0.06	0.4
Lapford	0	0	1.39	0.38	0.04	0	0.97	0.03	0	0.56	0	0.2
Morchard Bishop	0.58	0	2.42	1.25	0.81	0.06	0.3	0.19	0	0.6	0.03	0.67
Newton St Cyres	0.91	0	2.29	0.67	0	0.12	1.5	0.1	0	0.25	0	0
Sampford Peverell	0	0	2.73	1.98	0.61	0.14	0	0.06	0.02	0.11	0	0
Sandford	0.64	0	3.04	0.71	0.37	0.07	1.89	0.14	0	0	0	0.45
Silverton	1.1	0	1.51	0.96	0.45	0.1	0	0.1	0	0.42	0.06	0.61
Thorverton	0.41	2.51	2.47	0.38	0.56	0	1.53	0.08	0	0.18	0	0.38
Tiverton	3.62	17.16	24.21	12.72	2.4	1.53	7.56	1.79	0.54	32.1	0.39	5.3
Uffculme	1.17	1.45	3.23	1.99	1.12	0	0.12	0.37	0.22	4.48	0.16	0.21
Willand	1.15	1.19	3.46	1.79	0.35	0.26	1.06	0.3	0.09	0.38	0	0.48
<b>Total</b>	<b>15.99</b>	<b>34.89</b>	<b>104.21</b>	<b>52.33</b>	<b>12.52</b>	<b>3.92</b>	<b>35.44</b>	<b>6.75</b>	<b>1.7</b>	<b>57.34</b>	<b>0.9</b>	<b>15.91</b>

Table 2: Existing provision of open space (ha/1000 population) in main parishes

PARISH	Allotments	Amenity Green Space	Park and Recreation Ground (combined)	Park and Recreation Ground	Outdoor Sports Space (Pitches)	Outdoor Sports Space (Other)	Outdoor Sports Space (Private)	Childrens Play Area	Teenage Facility	School Playing Fields	School Playing Fields MUGA	Churchyard and Cemetery
Bampton	0.13	0.92	1.58	1.23	0.35	0	0	0.12	0.04	0.1	0.03	0
Bow	0	0	0.76	0.37	0.39	0	0	0.18	0	0.35	0.05	0
Bradninch	0.44	0.43	1.75	0.1	0	0.05	1.6	0.05	0.01	0.17	0	0.48
Chawleigh	0	0	0.83	0.22	0.45	0.16	0	0.06	0	0	0	0
Cheriton Bishop	0	1.78	0	0	0	0	0	0.17	0	0.29	0.05	0.58
Cheriton Fitzpaine	0.79	0	1.63	0.5	0	0	1.13	0.11	0	0.82	0	0.23
Copplestone	0.25	0.15	0.91	0.75	0.16	0	0	0.11	0.01	0.35	0	0.09
Crediton	0.37	0.47	1.72	0.84	0.26	0.08	0.54	0.11	0.01	1.44	0	0.2
Crediton Hamlets (Yeoford)	0	0	0.83	0.54	0.29	0	0	0.03	0	0.08	0	0
Cullompton	0.15	0.22	2.98	1.65	0.03	0.08	1.22	0.17	0.06	0.41	0	0.28
Culmstock	0	1.65	0	0	0	0	0	0.03	0.01	0.83	0.02	0.39
Halberton	0	0.34	0	0	0	0	0	0.02	0.01	0	0	0.31
Hemyock	0	0.37	2.39	1.52	0.73	0.08	0.06	0.06	0.05	0.12	0	0.28
Holcombe Rogus	0	0.6	0	0	0	0	0	0.08	0	0	0	0
Kentisbeare	0.03	0	2.15	0.65	0	0	1.5	0.12	0.02	0.36	0.07	0.43
Lapford	0	0	1.41	0.39	0.04	0	0.98	0.03	0	0.57	0	0.2
Morchard Bishop	0.54	0	2.25	1.16	0.75	0.06	0.28	0.18	0	0.56	0.03	0.62
Newton St Cyres	1.05	0	2.64	0.77	0	0.14	1.73	0.12	0	0.29	0	0
Sampford Peverell	0	0	2.1	1.52	0.47	0.11	0	0.05	0.02	0.08	0	0
Sandford	0.46	0	2.19	0.51	0.27	0.05	1.36	0.1	0	0	0	0.32
Silverton	0.59	0	0.8	0.51	0.24	0.05	0	0.05	0	0.22	0.03	0.33
Thorverton	0.45	2.73	2.68	0.41	0.61	0	1.66	0.09	0	0.2	0	0.41
Tiverton	0.17	0.8	1.13	0.6	0.11	0.07	0.35	0.08	0.03	1.5	0.02	0.25
Uffculme	0.39	0.49	1.09	0.67	0.38	0	0.04	0.12	0.07	1.51	0.05	0.07
Willand	0.34	0.35	1.03	0.53	0.1	0.08	0.32	0.09	0.03	0.11	0	0.14
<b>Average</b>	<b>0.23</b>	<b>0.51</b>	<b>1.52</b>	<b>0.76</b>	<b>0.18</b>	<b>0.06</b>	<b>0.52</b>	<b>0.10</b>	<b>0.02</b>	<b>0.84</b>	<b>0.01</b>	<b>0.23</b>

Provision assessed using 2012 population estimates (see figure 3)

### 5.5.2 Existing provision in rural parishes

Tables 3 and 4 show the existing provision of open space in rural parishes where existing open space exists (those parishes with no open space provision are not shown).

*Table 3 Existing provision of open space (hectares) in rural parishes*

PARISH	Allotments	Recreation Space	Play Space	School Playing Fields	School Playing Fields MUGA	Churchyard and Cemetery
Bickleigh	0	0.42	0	0	0.13	0
Burlescombe	0	0.72	0.12	0	0	0.36
Colebrooke	0	0.45	0	0	0	0.25
Down St Mary	0	0.31	0	0	0	0.42
Morebath	0	1.05	0.05	0	0	0.34
Oakford	0	0.51	0.04	0	0	0.3
Poughill	0	0	0.21	0	0	0
Puddington	0	0.16	0.01	0	0	0
Shobrooke	0.26	1.92	0.07	0	0	0
Stockleigh Pomeroy	0	0	0	0	0	0.18
Stoodleigh	0	1.01	0.01	0	0	0.31
Uplowman	0	1.89	0	0.1	0.04	0.25
Wembworthy	0	0.19	0	0	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>0.26</b>	<b>8.63</b>	<b>0.51</b>	<b>0.1</b>	<b>0.17</b>	<b>2.41</b>

**Table 4** Existing provision of open space (ha/1000 population) in rural parishes

PARISH	Allotments	Recreation Space	Play Space	School Playing Fields	School Playing Fields MUGA	Churchyard and Cemetery
Bickleigh	0	1.35	0	0	0.42	0
Burlescombe	0	0.77	0.13	0	0	0.38
Colebrooke	0	0.98	0	0	0	0.54
Down St Mary	0	0.86	0	0	0	1.17
Morebath	0	3.34	0.16	0	0	1.08
Oakford	0	1.42	0.11	0	0	0.84
Poughill	0	0	0.97	0	0	0
Puddington	0	0.82	0.05	0	0	0
Shobrooke	0.48	3.58	0.13	0	0	0
Stockleigh						
Pomeroy	0	0	0	0	0	1.54
Stoodleigh	0	3.2	0.03	0	0	0.98
Uplowman	0	5.71	0	0.3	0.12	0.76
Wembworthy	0	0.77	0	0	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>0.06</b>	<b>1.84</b>	<b>0.11</b>	<b>0.02</b>	<b>0.04</b>	<b>0.51</b>

Provision assessed using 2012 population estimates (see figure 3)

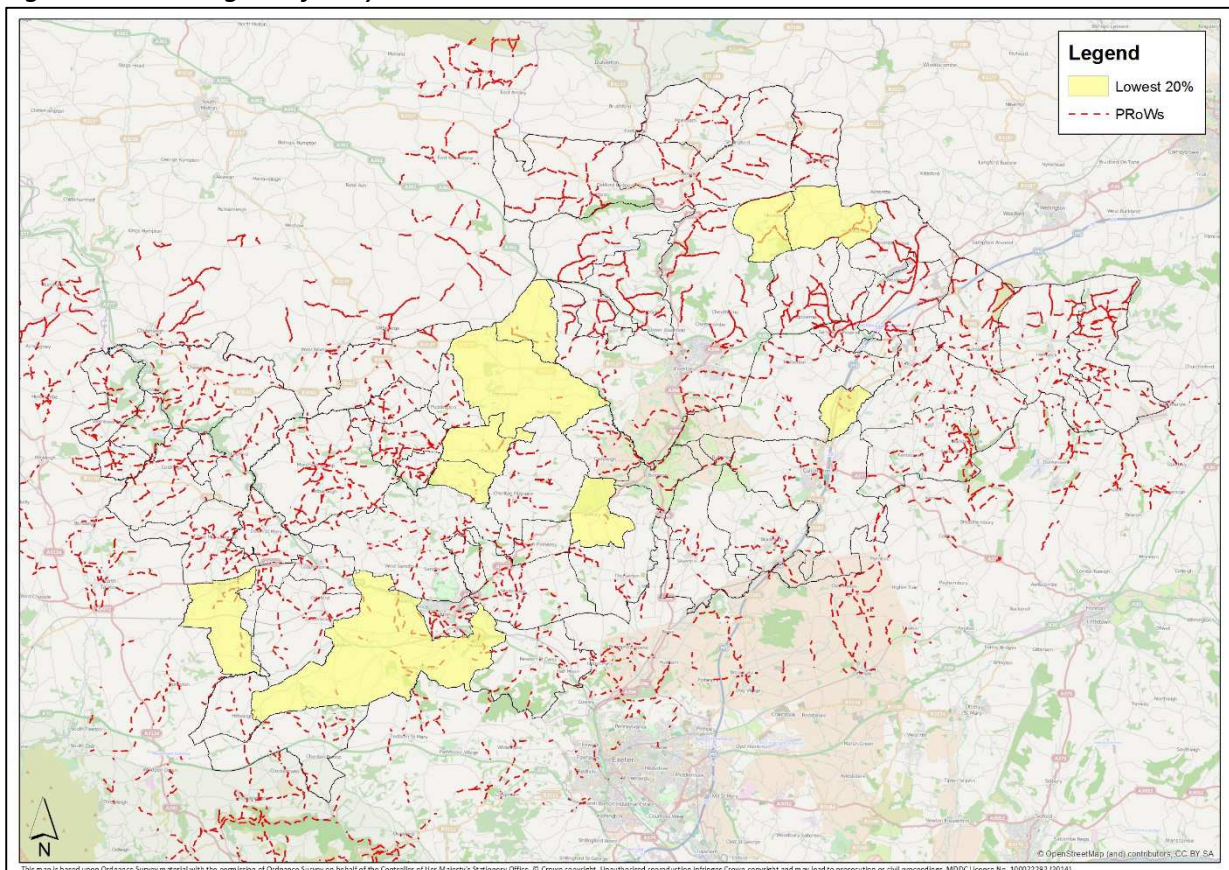
## 5.6 Existing provision of natural green space

Devon County Council has undertaken considerable amounts of work on their draft 'Devon Green Infrastructure Strategy'. Of particular value to this study is the mapping and analysis report, October 2013 (appendix 1). This includes the following assessments:

### 5.6.1 Public Rights of Way

The density of rights of way per square kilometre have been mapped across Devon. This has then been applied to parishes to identify which parishes had a high density of public rights of way, and which had a low density. The results are shown in figure 6. This has then been used to extract 20% of parishes that have the lowest density of public rights of way. The strategy also provides guidance to local communities on how they can improve their local rights of way<sup>10</sup>.

Figure 6 Public Rights of Way in Mid Devon

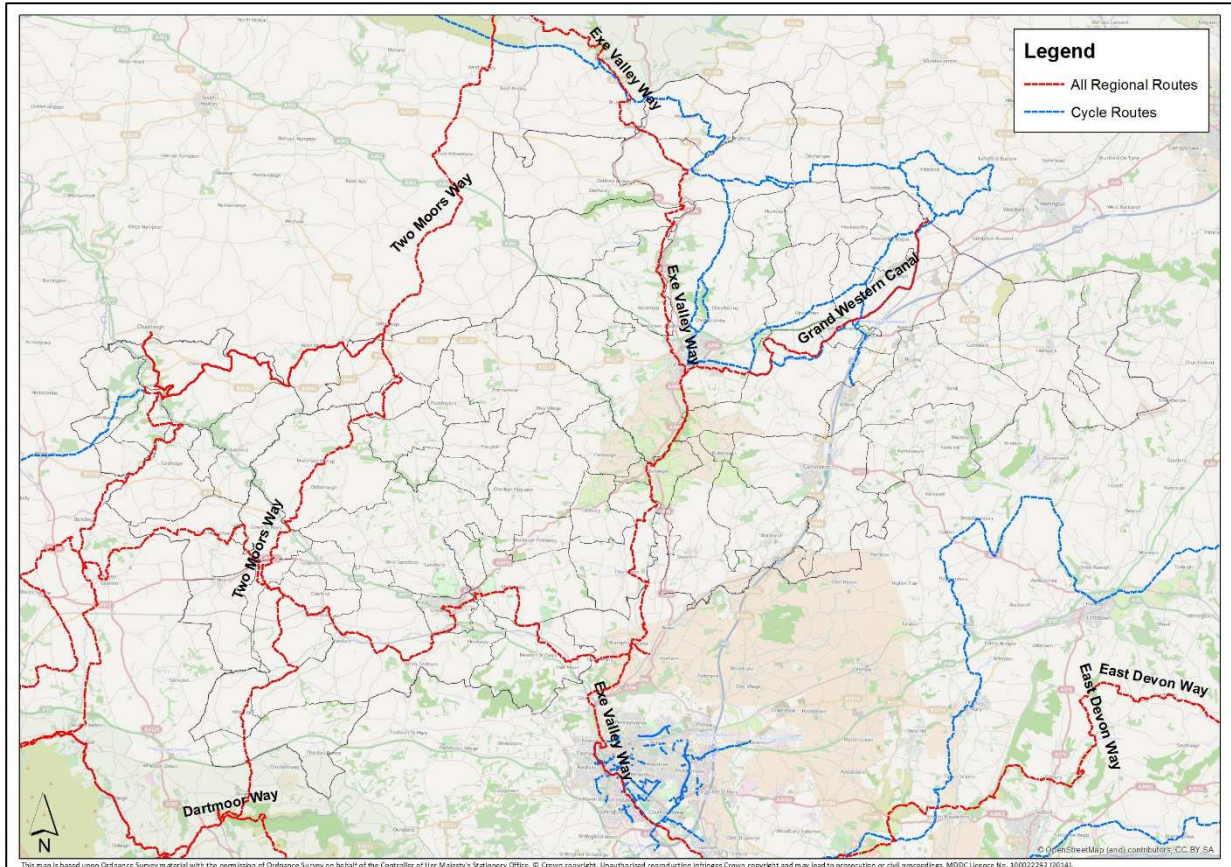


<sup>10</sup> <http://www.devon.gov.uk/communitypaths.pdf>

### 5.6.2 Strategic routes and cycleways

Figure 7 shows the strategic routes and cycleways within the study area.

Figure 7 Strategic routes and cycleways



### 5.6.3 Areas of Accessible Natural Green space (ANG)

The mapping has drawn on data provided by Devon County Council as a merged layer. The following is included:

- Beaches - This shows the publicly accessible beaches around Devon. This information was only available for the area of Devon, including the Unitary Authorities of Plymouth and Torbay.
- Village Greens - Shows the boundaries of registered village greens. These are only available within the County of Devon including Torbay and Plymouth.
- Nature Reserves - Including nationally and locally designated nature reserves. Information provided by Natural England.
- RSPB Reserves - Sites owned by the RSPB (Royal Society for the Protection of Birds) which are generally accessible to the public, although in some cases this access may be restricted to marked paths only. This information has been provided by the RSPB.
- Devon Wildlife Trust Reserves - Wildlife reserves owned by the Devon Wildlife Trust. This information has been provided by the Devon Biodiversity Records Centre (DBRC).

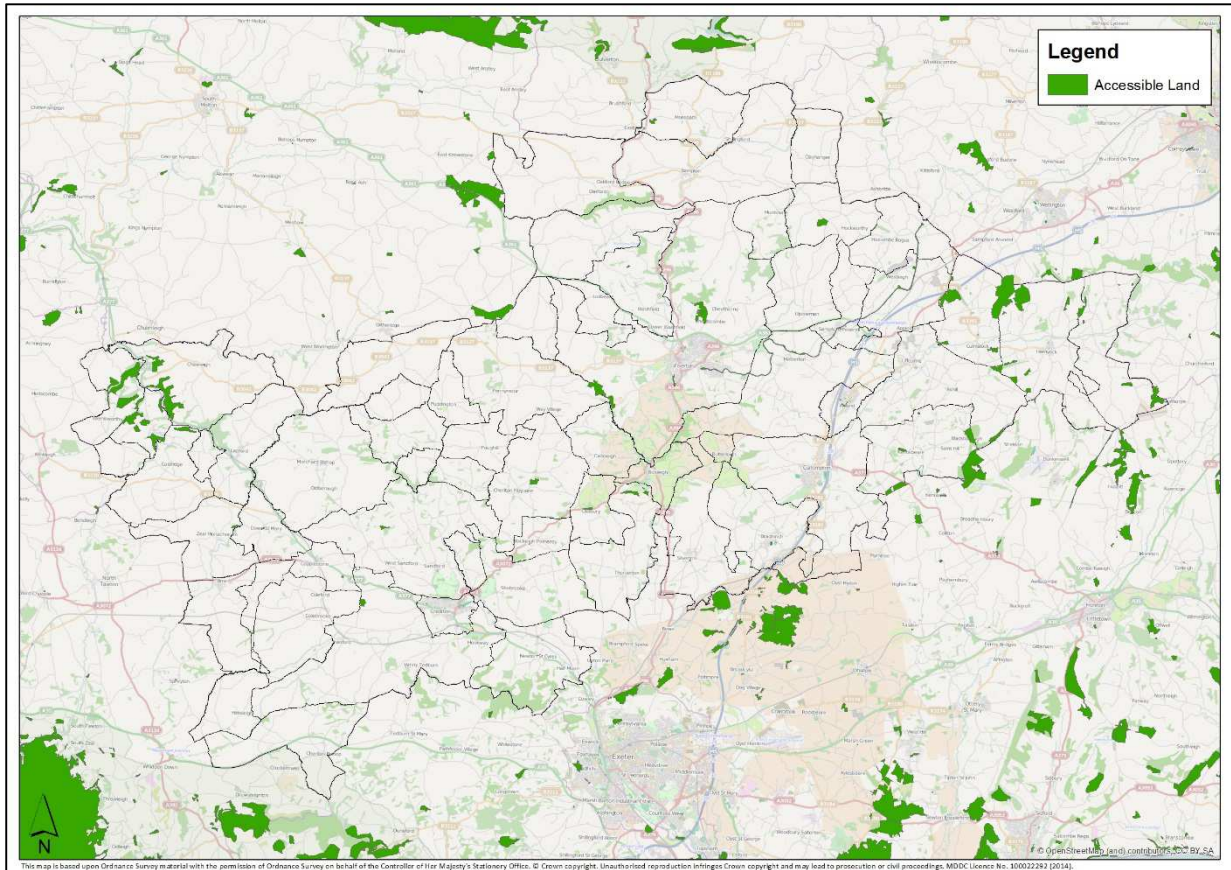


- National Trust Accessible Land - Sites owned by the National Trust that are considered by them to be either “Always Open” or of “Limited Access”, therefore showing sites that are generally accessible to the public, although perhaps not at all times. This information has been provided by the National Trust.
- Accessible Woodland - The Woodland Trust’s ‘Space for People’ analysis of woodland where there is permissive access to woodland has been used in this analysis. The layer includes community woodlands. This information has been provided by the Woodland Trust.
- CROW Act Open Countryside - Open country is defined in the Countryside and Rights of Way (CROW) Act 2000 as mountain, moor, heath and down land which is accessible to the general public (subject to the disclaimers above). This information has been provided by Natural England.
- CROW Act Registered Common Land - This dataset contains parcels of land designated as Registered Common Land under the CROW Act. This information has been provided by Natural England.
- CROW Act Section 15 Land - Section 15 of the CROW Act identifies land which is publicly accessible, and was so before the Act came into being. This information has been provided by Natural England.
- CROW Act Section 16 Land - Section 16 of the CROW Act allows landowners and long leaseholders to voluntarily dedicate land for public access. This can give a legal public right of access to land that would not otherwise be covered by the CROW Act. Some areas of land have been identified under Section 16 within Devon. This information has been provided by Natural England.
- Country Parks – These are sites that were established as a result of the 1968 Countryside Act, they are recognised by Natural England as significant places that contribute to England’s accessible natural green space with many located near towns and cities and may be subject to opening times. This information has been provided by Natural England.

The mapping provided by Devon County Council is considered to be appropriate for analysis of provision within Mid Devon. By using this data, it also ensures this is consistency between the County GI Strategy and the Mid Devon Strategy. It also means that data can be updated as and when the County data is updated. However, the data provided does have some limitations as the County were unable to provide the data as individual typologies (due to licensing restrictions), therefore the data is merged.

Figure 8 shows the provision of this accessible natural green space as a merged layer.

Figure 8 Provision of Accessible Natural Green space (Study Area)



## 6.0 SETTING LOCAL STANDARDS

### 6.1 The development of Standards

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

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

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

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

## 6.2 Recommended standards (formal provision)

### 6.2.1 Allotments (main and rural parishes)

#### *Summary of quantity and access standard*

Quantity Standard	Access Standard
0.25 ha/1000 population	300m (6-7 minutes, straight line walk time) in urban areas 600m (12-13 minutes) in rural areas

#### *Existing national or local standards*

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

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

#### *Quantity standard for allotments*

##### **Quantity:**

- Existing average level of provision in urban areas is 0.23 ha/1000, however this varies significantly from 0.0 ha/1000 to 1.05 ha/1000. None of the rural parishes have provision.
- The household survey identified 44% of people felt there should be more, and around 50% of people felt there were enough;
- Other consultation identified several areas where there are long waiting lists and an unmet demand for allotments;
- Considering the identified demand for allotments, and the propensity for new housing to have high density levels, and hence smaller gardens, there should be an increased provision for allotments against the average level of provision;
- A minimum standard of 0.25 ha/1000 is proposed for analysing existing provision and for new provision.

### ***Access standard for allotments***

- 66% of people want allotments close to home (up to 10 mins).
- 66% of people walk to their allotments;
- Proposed standard of 300 metres (6-7 minutes' walk time) in urban areas.

### ***Quality standards for allotments***

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

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

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

## 6.2.2 Amenity Green Space (main parishes)

### *Summary of quantity and access standard*

Quantity Standard	Access Standard
1.0 ha/1000 population from sites > 0.2ha, can comprise amenity and natural green space	300 metres or 6-7 minutes' walk time

### *Existing national or local standards*

There is no national guidance suggesting a standard for the provision of Amenity green space. The Fields in Trust (FIT) '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 population of informal space for play.

### *Quantity standard for Amenity green space*

- Existing average level of provision in urban areas is 0.51 ha/1000 population;
- No specific questions asked in relation to amenity green space, however, 46% of people identified they were satisfied with current levels of provision of 'other open space', and 51% of people felt there was enough;
- Provision varies greatly with some areas having no provision or falling well below the average, and others far exceeding it;
- There is no strong need or justification for significantly increasing current levels of provision, however, for new provision it is recommended that amenity space could comprise both amenity and natural green space, to allow for this, a standard of 1.0 ha/1000 is proposed;
- The minimum size of a space that will be considered acceptable and count towards open space provision is recommended to be 0.2 ha in size (about the size of a mini football pitch). This will avoid a proliferation of small amenity spaces which have no real recreation function. Any spaces below this size will be acceptable in terms of their visual amenity, but would not count towards the required level of provision.

### *Access standard for amenity green space*

- Consultation identified people want spaces close to home, and that these are accessed by foot;
- Proposed standard in urban areas of 300 metres (6-7 minutes).

### *Quality standards for amenity green space*

The audit of provision as well as the consultation has identified the importance attached by local people to open space close to home. The value of 'amenity green space' must be recognised especially within housing areas, where it can provide important local opportunities for play, exercise and visual amenity that are almost immediately accessible. On the other hand open space can be expensive to maintain and it is very important to

strike the correct balance between having sufficient space to meet the needs of the community for accessible and attractive space, and having too much which would be impossible to manage properly and therefore a potential liability and source of nuisance. It is important that amenity green space should be capable of use for at least some forms of public recreation activity.

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

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

### 6.2.3 Parks and Recreation Grounds (main parishes)

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

#### ***Existing national and local policies***

Fields in Trust (FIT), previously known as the 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.

#### ***Quantity of parks, sport and recreation grounds***

- Existing average level of provision in urban areas is 1.0 ha/1000 population (including pitches and other sports space), with an additional 0.52 ha/1000 population of private sports space available;
- This combined level of provision (1.52 ha/1000) falls just below the FIT standards (which proposes 1.6 ha/1000 population);
- The household survey identified the following in relation to this typology:
  - 34% of people felt there should be more local recreation grounds or parks, however, 65% felt there was enough;
  - Similarly, 74% of people felt there are enough playing fields;
  - In terms of more formal provision such as bowls and tennis, 74% of people felt there is enough;

- A number of facilities have limited access (e.g. private sports grounds), nevertheless they are important community facilities, and as such it is recommended that the standard includes these sites and affords them suitable protection/due consideration in the planning process;
- A standard of 1.5 ha/1000 population is proposed for both public and private space. There is no justification for increasing current average levels of provision, and it is felt that this standard is appropriate for assessing current levels of provision and as a requirement through new development.

#### ***Access standard for parks, sport and recreation grounds***

- 74% of people are willing to travel up to 15 minutes to local recreation grounds and parks;
- For playing fields and tennis, bowls etc., a similar figure is found;
- Over 70% of people walk to these facilities;
- A standard of 600 metres (12-13 minutes' walk time) is recommended.

#### ***Quality standards for parks and recreation grounds***

Satisfaction levels with the quality of facilities such as recreation grounds were high, with 60% of people assessing them as good or very good. For grass playing fields, this was slightly lower with 48% identifying them as good/very good and 40% as average. Similar figures were returned for facilities such as bowling greens and tennis courts.

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

#### **6.2.4 Recreation Space (Rural Parishes)**

<b>Quantity Standard</b>	<b>Access Standard</b>
1.2 ha/1000 population	600 metres (12-13 minutes' straight line walk time)

#### ***Quantity***

- The current average level of provision is 1.84 ha/1000 population in parishes with existing provision. Provision varies greatly from 0 to 5.71 ha/1000;
- The findings outlined above show people are generally happy with current levels of provision;



- A minimum standard of 1.2 ha/1000 is proposed for new provision, which is lower than the average level of provision, but is considered to be deliverable and achievable. For comparison, this amount of space is equivalent to approximately 2 full size adult football pitches. It is expected for a parish of approximately 1000 people (approximately 400 dwellings), that a recreation ground with for example a football pitch, play space and additional informal space would adequately meet the need of the local population. It is also considered that a space of this size would be 'manageable' by the parish.

### **Access**

- The same standard proposed for urban areas i.e. 600 metres (12-13 minutes' walk time). The dispersed nature of rural areas will make it unachievable anywhere outside the main villages.

## **6.2.5 Children's Play Areas and Teenage Facilities (Main and Rural Parishes)**

*Table 5 Summary of quantity and access standards*

<b>Typology</b>	<b>Quantity Standard</b>	<b>Access Standard</b>
Children's Play Areas (Main Parishes)	0.06 ha/1000 population	• Junior Provision – 300m (6-7 minutes' straight line walk time)
Teenage Facilities (Main parishes)	0.02 ha/1000 population	• Youth Provision – 600m (12-13 minutes' straight line walk time)
Play Space (Rural Parishes)	0.05	• 600m (12-13 minutes straight line walk time)

### **Existing National and Local Policies**

The FIT guidance recommends provision of 0.8 hectares per 1000 people for children's play of which around 0.3 hectares should be equipped provision. These standards have been criticised in recent years because they are often seen as undeliverable, and can result in a proliferation of play areas that can be difficult to maintain, as well as setting unrealistic aspirations in urban areas where insufficient land is available to provide facilities, especially higher density development on brownfield sites. An additional problem is that the current FIT guidance does not specifically cover the needs of most teenagers within the 'Standard Youth Provision'.

### **Quantity standards for play**

- In urban areas, current level of provision of children's play areas is 0.10 ha/1000 population, for teenage facilities this is 0.02 ha/1000 population;
- In rural areas the combined provision of play space (children's play areas and teenage facilities combined) is 0.11 ha/1000 population;
- 63% of people felt there are sufficient children's play areas, where as 72% of people felt there was a need for more facilities for teenagers;

- The District Council currently have major concerns with regards to managing and maintaining the existing stock of play areas, and it is considered that maintaining this level of provision in the future is unsustainable. Therefore, a lower standard for new provision is proposed at 0.06 ha/1000, which although lower than current average levels of provision is considered to be sustainable;
- The standard for new provision would allow for approximately eight different items of play equipment and associated space in-between for a development of 400 dwellings, which is considered sufficient and manageable for the future;
- In addition to this, a standard of 0.02 ha/1000 is proposed for teenage facilities, which would allow for a full size MUGA for a development of approximately 400 dwellings, again this is considered adequate and manageable in the future;
- In rural areas, a combined level of provision of 0.05 ha/1000 population is proposed which is lower than the existing average level of provision, but again is considered to be manageable in the future considering existing pressures on both District and Parish Councils to manage existing facilities.

### ***Access standards for play***

- For children's play areas around 59% of people want facilities within 10 minutes. For teenage facilities this figure was 56%, with a slight increase in the number of people willing to travel up to 15 minutes;
- Nearly 70% of people for both children's and teenage facilities walk;

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

- Children's play areas – 300m for urban areas (6-7 minutes' straight line walk time) and 600 metres for rural areas (12-13 minutes' walk time)
- Teenage Facilities – 600m (12-13 minutes' straight line walk time) for both urban and rural areas.

### ***Quality standards for play***

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

**A** Door-step spaces close to home

**B** Local play spaces – larger areas within easy walking distance

**C** Neighbourhood spaces for play – larger spaces within walking distance

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

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

Disability access is also an important issue for Play England and they would like local authorities to adopt the KIDS<sup>11</sup> publication; *'Inclusion by Design'* as an SPD. Their most recent guidance document, *'Better Places to Play through Planning'* gives detailed guidance on setting local standards for access, quantity and quality of playable space and is considered as a background context for the standards suggested in this study.

### 6.2.6 Summary: main parishes

Table 6: Main parishes standards for formal provision

Typology	Quantity standards (ha/1000 population)	Access standard
Allotments	0.25	300 metres or 6-7 minutes' walk time
Amenity green space	1.0	300 metres or 6-7 minutes' walk time
Parks and Recreation Grounds	1.50 to include both public and private grounds (excluding education sites)	600 metres or 12-13 minutes' walk time
Children's Play Areas	0.06	300 metres or 6-7 minutes' walk time
Teenage Facilities	0.02	600 metres or 12-13 minutes' walk time

### 6.2.7 Summary: rural parishes

Table 7: Rural parishes standards of formal provision

Typology	Quantity standards (ha/1000 population)	Access standard
Allotments	0.25 (for new provision)	600 metres or 12 - 13 minutes' walk time
Recreation Space	1.20 to include both public and private grounds (excluding education sites)	600 metres or 12-13 minutes' walk time
Play Space (Children and Teenage)	0.05	600 metres or 12-13 minutes' walk time

For the rural parishes, it is particularly important to apply these standards to the main settlement areas only, as many of the rural parishes have large areas of land where there is no residential occupancy.

## 6.3 Recommended Standards (natural provision)

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

The standards for natural green space have drawn on the analysis that has been undertaken as part of the draft Devon GI Strategy, which themselves have drawn on national standards recommended by Natural England and the Woodland Trust, which are summarised below.

### 6.3.1 Natural England Accessible Natural Green space Standards (ANGSt)

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

### 6.3.2 Woodland Trust Access Standards

The Woodland Trust also produced access standards:

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

### 6.3.3 Local standards

For this purpose of this study, it is recommended that the analysis should include both the Natural England ANGSt and the Woodland Trust standards to identify current levels of provision and gaps. It is also recommended that local standards are adopted for providing new levels of provision through development. This is summarised below:

*Table 8: Summary of natural provision standards*

Typology	Quantity standards (ha/1000 population)		Access standard
	For assessing current and future provision	Requirement from new development	
Natural Green Space	ANGSt and Woodland Trust	1.00 to include natural and amenity green space	ANGSt and Woodland Trust

### 6.3.4 Quality of natural and semi-natural green space

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

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

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

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

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

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

The above should in any event be principles to be pursued and encouraged at all times, and incorporated into Local Plan policy.

## 7.0 APPLYING LOCAL STANDARDS

### 7.1 Introduction

This part of the report uses the recommended standards to analyse provision across the study area. This section provides an overview of provision across all parishes, with further detail being provided for the main parishes in the area profiles in part 2 of the report. This section includes:

#### ***Quantity analysis***

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

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

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

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

#### ***Access analysis***

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

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

#### ***Quality analysis***

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

## 7.2 Application of quantity standards

### 7.2.1 Main parishes

Table 9 shows the existing provision of open space in hectares for each typology for each of the urban settlement areas. The figures for 'Park, Sport & Recreation Grounds' include a combination of the following four typologies:

- Park and Recreation Ground;
- Outdoor Sports Space (Pitches);
- Outdoor Sports Space (Other);
- Outdoor Sport (Private).

Table 10 shows the required level of provision (in hectares), against the recommended standards. Within this table, the figures for 'park, sport and recreation ground' include both public and private facilities as outlined above.

Table 11 shows the supply of open space against the recommended standards. This is expressed in hectares and shows where there supply is sufficient or deficient.

A more detailed breakdown of quantity provision is shown for each of the main parishes in the area profiles in part 2 of the report.

Table 9: Existing provision of open space (hectares) in main parishes

PARISH	Allotments	Amenity Green Space	Park and Recreation Ground (combined)	Park and Recreation Ground	Outdoor Sports Space (Pitches)	Outdoor Sports Space (Other)	Outdoor Sports Space (Private)	Childrens Play Area	Teenage Facility	School Playing Fields	School Playing Fields MUGA	Churchyard and Cemetery
Bampton	0.24	1.64	2.84	2.21	0.63	0	0	0.21	0.07	0.18	0.06	0
Bow	0	0	0.95	0.46	0.49	0	0	0.22	0	0.44	0.06	0
Bradninch	0.98	0.95	3.87	0.23	0	0.12	3.52	0.12	0.02	0.38	0	1.06
Chawleigh	0	0	0.53	0.14	0.29	0.1	0	0.04	0	0	0	0
Cheriton Bishop	0	1.16	0	0	0	0	0	0.11	0	0.19	0.03	0.38
Cheriton Fitzpaine	0.71	0	1.47	0.45	0	0	1.02	0.1	0	0.74	0	0.21
Copplestone	0.34	0.21	1.25	1.03	0.22	0	0	0.15	0.02	0.49	0	0.12
Crediton	2.82	3.54	13.07	6.39	1.99	0.6	4.09	0.85	0.04	10.97	0.03	1.54
Crediton Hamlets	0	0	1.11	0.72	0.39	0	0	0.04	0	0.11	0	0
Cullompton	1.29	1.91	25.23	13.99	0.22	0.65	10.37	1.41	0.54	3.45	0	2.4
Culmstock	0	1.45	0	0	0	0	0	0.03	0.01	0.73	0.02	0.34
Halberton	0	0.6	0	0	0	0	0	0.04	0.01	0	0	0.55
Hemyock	0	0.81	5.16	3.28	1.58	0.17	0.13	0.12	0.1	0.25	0	0.61
Holcombe Rogus	0	0.31	0	0	0	0	0	0.04	0	0	0	0
Kentisbeare	0.03	0	1.98	0.6	0	0	1.38	0.11	0.02	0.33	0.06	0.4
Lapford	0	0	1.39	0.38	0.04	0	0.97	0.03	0	0.56	0	0.2
Morchard Bishop	0.58	0	2.42	1.25	0.81	0.06	0.3	0.19	0	0.6	0.03	0.67
Newton St Cyres	0.91	0	2.29	0.67	0	0.12	1.5	0.1	0	0.25	0	0
Sampford Peverell	0	0	2.73	1.98	0.61	0.14	0	0.06	0.02	0.11	0	0
Sandford	0.64	0	3.04	0.71	0.37	0.07	1.89	0.14	0	0	0	0.45
Silverton	1.1	0	1.51	0.96	0.45	0.1	0	0.1	0	0.42	0.06	0.61
Thorverton	0.41	2.51	2.47	0.38	0.56	0	1.53	0.08	0	0.18	0	0.38
Tiverton	3.62	17.16	24.21	12.72	2.4	1.53	7.56	1.79	0.54	32.1	0.39	5.3
Uffculme	1.17	1.45	3.23	1.99	1.12	0	0.12	0.37	0.22	4.48	0.16	0.21
Willand	1.15	1.19	3.46	1.79	0.35	0.26	1.06	0.3	0.09	0.38	0	0.48
<b>Total</b>	<b>15.99</b>	<b>34.89</b>	<b>104.21</b>	<b>52.33</b>	<b>12.52</b>	<b>3.92</b>	<b>35.44</b>	<b>6.75</b>	<b>1.7</b>	<b>57.34</b>	<b>0.9</b>	<b>15.91</b>



Table 10: Required provision of open space in main parishes (hectares)

PARISH	Allotments	Amenity Green Space	Park and Recreation Ground (combined)	Play Space	Teenage Facilities
Bampton	0.45	1.79	2.69	0.11	0.04
Bow	0.31	1.25	1.87	0.07	0.02
Bradninch	0.55	2.21	3.31	0.13	0.04
Chawleigh	0.16	0.64	0.96	0.04	0.01
Cheriton Bishop	0.16	0.65	0.98	0.04	0.01
Cheriton Fitzpaine	0.23	0.9	1.35	0.05	0.02
Copplestone	0.35	1.38	2.07	0.08	0.03
Crediton	1.9	7.6	11.4	0.46	0.15
Crediton Hamlets (Yeoford)	0.33	1.32	1.99	0.08	0.03
Cullompton	2.12	8.5	12.75	0.51	0.17
Culmstock	0.22	0.88	1.32	0.05	0.02
Halberton	0.44	1.76	2.65	0.11	0.04
Hemyock	0.54	2.16	3.24	0.13	0.04
Holcombe Rogus	0.13	0.52	0.78	0.03	0.01
Kentisbeare	0.23	0.92	1.38	0.06	0.02
Lapford	0.25	0.99	1.48	0.06	0.02
Morchard Bishop	0.27	1.08	1.62	0.06	0.02
Newton St Cyres	0.22	0.87	1.3	0.05	0.02
Sampford Peverell	0.33	1.3	1.95	0.08	0.03
Sandford	0.35	1.39	2.09	0.08	0.03
Silverton	0.47	1.88	2.81	0.11	0.04
Thorverton	0.23	0.92	1.38	0.06	0.02
Tiverton	5.33	21.34	32	1.28	0.43
Uffculme	0.74	2.97	4.46	0.18	0.06
Willand	0.84	3.36	5.04	0.2	0.07

Table 11: Supply of open space in main parishes against the Mid Devon Standard (Ha/1000 population)

PARISH	Allotments	Amenity Green Space	Park and Recreation Ground (combined)	Childrens Play Area	Teenage Facility
Bampton	-0.21	-0.15	0.15	0.10	0.03
Bow	-0.31	-1.25	-0.92	0.15	-0.02
Bradninch	0.43	-1.26	0.56	-0.01	-0.02
Chawleigh	-0.16	-0.64	-0.43	0.00	-0.01
Cheriton Bishop	-0.16	0.51	-0.98	0.07	-0.01
Cheriton Fitzpaine	0.48	-0.90	0.12	0.05	-0.02
Copplestone	-0.01	-1.17	-0.82	0.07	-0.01
Crediton	0.92	-4.06	1.67	0.39	-0.11
Crediton Hamlets (Yeoford)	-0.33	-1.32	-0.88	-0.04	-0.03
Cullompton	-0.83	-6.59	12.48	0.90	0.37
Culmstock	-0.22	0.57	-1.32	-0.02	-0.01
Halberton	-0.44	-1.16	-2.65	-0.07	-0.03
Hemyock	-0.54	-1.35	1.92	-0.01	0.06
Holcombe Rogus	-0.13	-0.21	-0.78	0.01	-0.01
Kentisbeare	-0.20	-0.92	0.60	0.05	0.00
Lapford	-0.25	-0.99	-0.09	-0.03	-0.02
Morchard Bishop	0.31	-1.08	0.80	0.13	-0.02
Newton St Cyres	0.69	-0.87	0.99	0.05	-0.02
Sampford Peverell	-0.33	-1.30	0.78	-0.02	-0.01
Sandford	0.29	-1.39	0.95	0.06	-0.03
Silverton	0.63	-1.88	-1.30	-0.01	-0.04
Thorverton	0.18	1.59	1.09	0.02	-0.02
Tiverton	-1.71	-4.18	-7.79	0.51	0.11
Uffculme	0.43	-1.52	-1.23	0.19	0.16
Willand	0.31	-2.17	-1.58	0.10	0.02

## 7.2.2 Rural Parishes

Table 12: Existing provision of open space in rural parishes (hectares)

PARISH	Allotments	Recreation Space	Play Space	School Playing Fields	School Playing Fields MUGA	Churchyard and Cemetery
Bickleigh	0	0.42	0	0	0.13	0
Burlescombe	0	0.72	0.12	0	0	0.36
Colebrooke	0	0.45	0	0	0	0.25
Down St Mary	0	0.31	0	0	0	0.42
Morebath	0	1.05	0.05	0	0	0.34
Oakford	0	0.51	0.04	0	0	0.3
Poughill	0	0	0.21	0	0	0
Puddington	0	0.16	0.01	0	0	0
Shobrooke	0.26	1.92	0.07	0	0	0
Stockleigh Pomeroy	0	0	0	0	0	0.18
Stoodleigh	0	1.01	0.01	0	0	0.31
Uplowman	0	1.89	0	0.1	0.04	0.25
Wembworthy	0	0.19	0	0	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>0.26</b>	<b>8.63</b>	<b>0.51</b>	<b>0.1</b>	<b>0.17</b>	<b>2.41</b>

Table 13: Required provision of open space in rural parishes (hectares)

PARISH	Allotments	Recreation Space	Play Space
Bickleigh	0.08	0.37	0.02
Brushford	0.01	0.07	0
Burlescombe	0.23	1.13	0.05
Butterleigh	0.03	0.12	0.01
Cadbury	0.04	0.21	0.01
Cadeleigh	0.05	0.24	0.01
Clannaborough	0.01	0.07	0
Clayhanger	0.03	0.15	0.01
Clayhidon	0.12	0.57	0.02
Coldridge	0.12	0.6	0.02
Colebrooke	0.12	0.55	0.02
Cruwys Morchard	0.12	0.58	0.02
Down St Mary	0.09	0.43	0.02
Eggesford	0.04	0.17	0.01
Hittisleigh	0.03	0.16	0.01
Hockworthy	0.04	0.21	0.01
Huntsham	0.04	0.19	0.01
Kennerleigh	0.04	0.17	0.01
Loxbeare	0.04	0.19	0.01
Morebath	0.08	0.38	0.02
Nymet Rowland	0.02	0.08	0
Oakford	0.09	0.43	0.02
Poughill	0.05	0.26	0.01
Puddington	0.05	0.24	0.01
Shobrooke	0.13	0.64	0.03
Stockleigh English	0.01	0.07	0
Stockleigh Pomeroy	0.03	0.14	0.01
Stoodleigh	0.08	0.38	0.02
Templeton	0.03	0.15	0.01
Thelbridge	0.08	0.4	0.02
Uplowman	0.08	0.4	0.02
UptonHellions	0.02	0.12	0
Washfield	0.09	0.42	0.02
WashfordPyne	0.04	0.18	0.01
Wembworthy	0.06	0.3	0.01
Woolfardisworthy	0.07	0.34	0.01
Zeal Monachorum	0.1	0.5	0.02

*Table 14: Supply of open space in rural parishes against the Mid Devon Standard (Ha/1000 population)*

PARISH	Play Space	Allotments	Recreation Space
Bickleigh	-0.02	-0.08	0.04
Brushford	0.00	-0.01	-0.07
Burlescombe	0.07	-0.23	-0.28
Butterleigh	-0.01	-0.03	-0.12
Cadbury	-0.01	-0.04	-0.21
Cadeleigh	-0.01	-0.05	-0.24
Clannaborough	0.00	-0.01	-0.07
Clayhanger	-0.01	-0.03	-0.15
Clayhidon	-0.02	-0.12	-0.57
Coldridge	-0.02	-0.12	-0.60
Colebrooke	0.00	-0.12	-0.10
Cruwys Morchard	-0.02	-0.12	-0.58
Down St Mary	-0.02	-0.09	-0.16
Eggesford	-0.01	-0.04	-0.17
Hittisleigh	-0.01	-0.03	-0.16
Hockworthy	-0.01	-0.04	-0.21
Huntsham	-0.01	-0.04	-0.19
Kennerleigh	-0.01	-0.04	-0.17
Loxbeare	-0.01	-0.04	-0.19
Morebath	0.03	-0.08	0.67
Nymet Rowland	0.00	-0.02	-0.08
Oakford	-0.02	-0.09	0.12
Poughill	0.00	-0.05	-0.07
Puddington	0.00	-0.05	-0.05
Shobrooke	-0.03	-0.13	1.25
Stockleigh English	0.00	-0.01	-0.07
Stockleigh Pomeroy	-0.01	-0.03	-0.14
Stoodleigh	-0.01	-0.08	0.76
Templeton	-0.01	-0.03	-0.15
Thelbridge	-0.02	-0.08	-0.40
Uplowman	-0.02	-0.08	1.00
UptonHellions	0.00	-0.02	-0.12
Washfield	-0.02	-0.09	-0.42
WashfordPyne	-0.01	-0.04	-0.18
Wembworthy	0.00	-0.06	-0.12
Woolfardisworthy	-0.01	-0.07	-0.34
Zeal Monachorum	-0.02	-0.10	2.69

## 7.3 Application of access standards

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

### 7.3.1 Access to allotments

Figure 9 Access to allotments across the whole study area

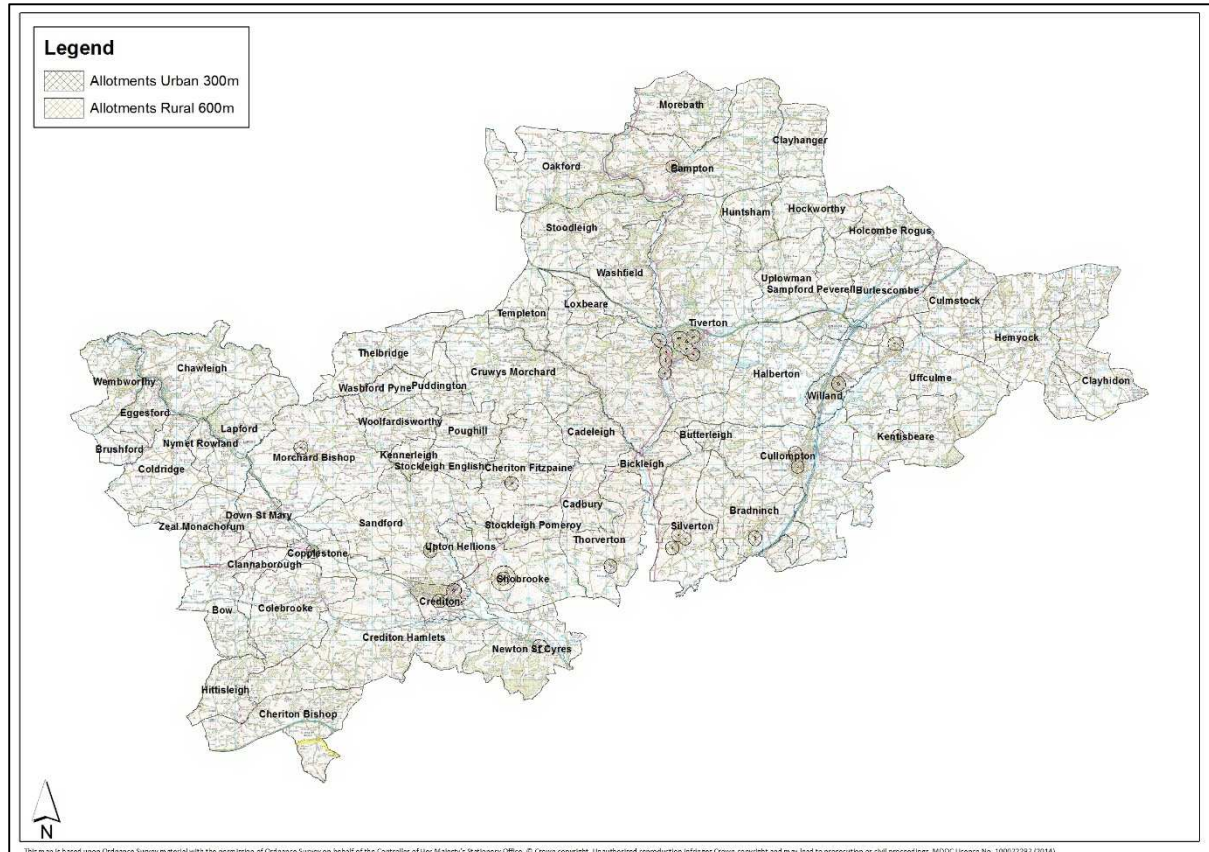


Figure 10 Access to amenity green space in main parishes

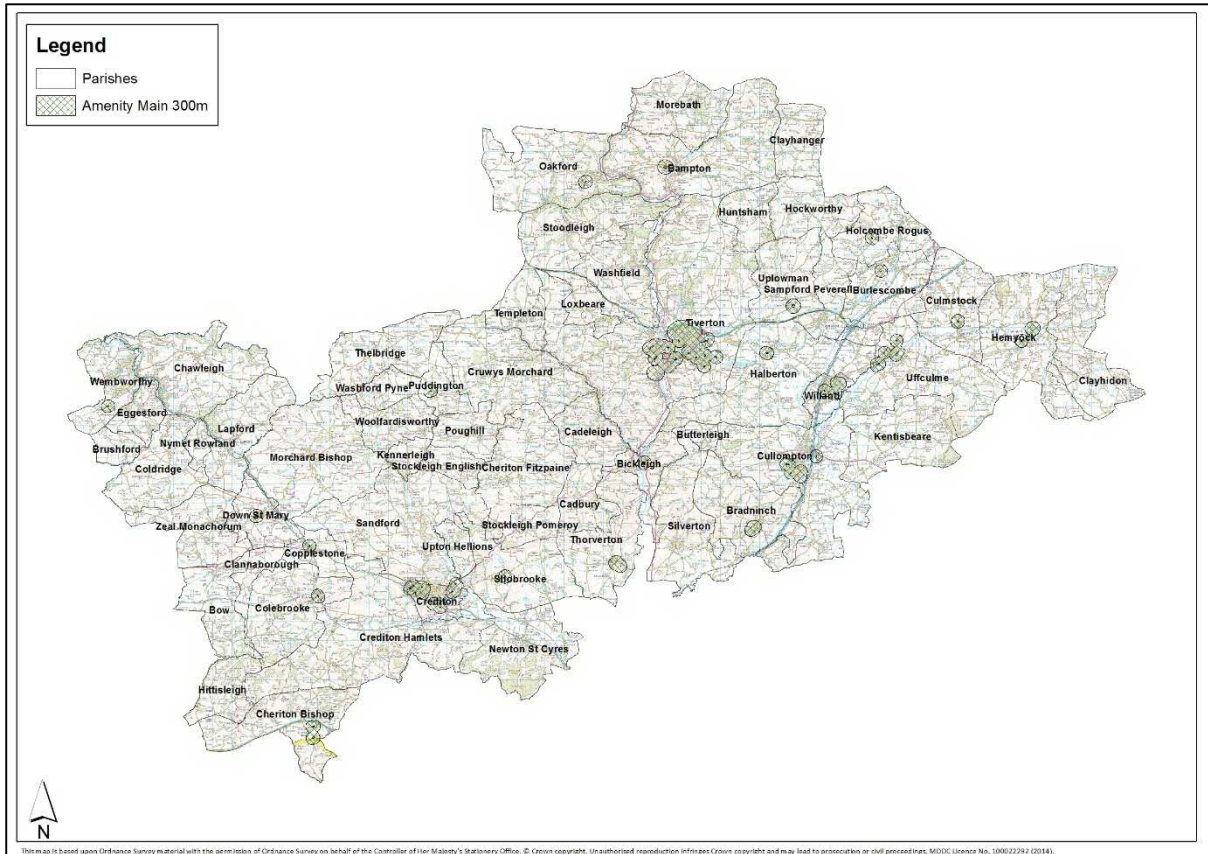


Figure 11 Access to parks and recreation grounds in main parishes

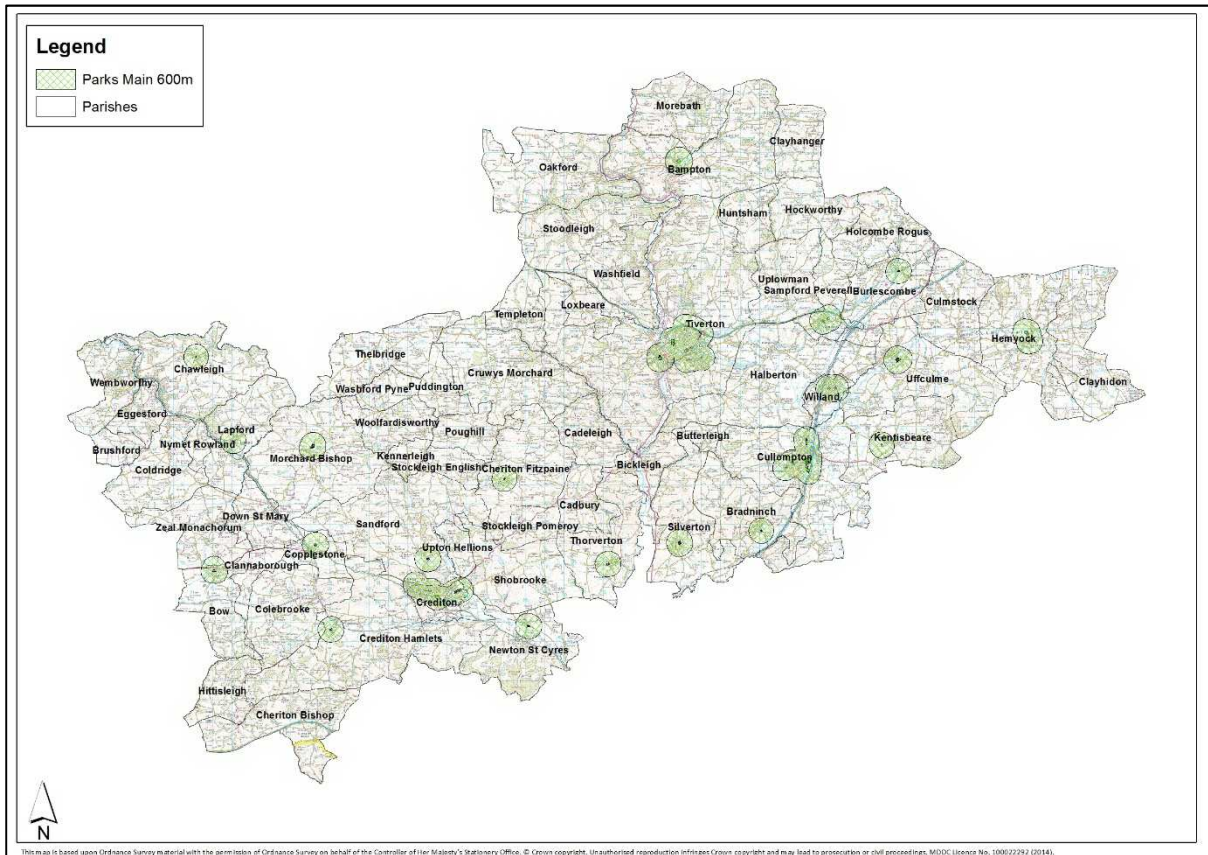


Figure 12 Access to recreation space in rural parishes (highlighted)

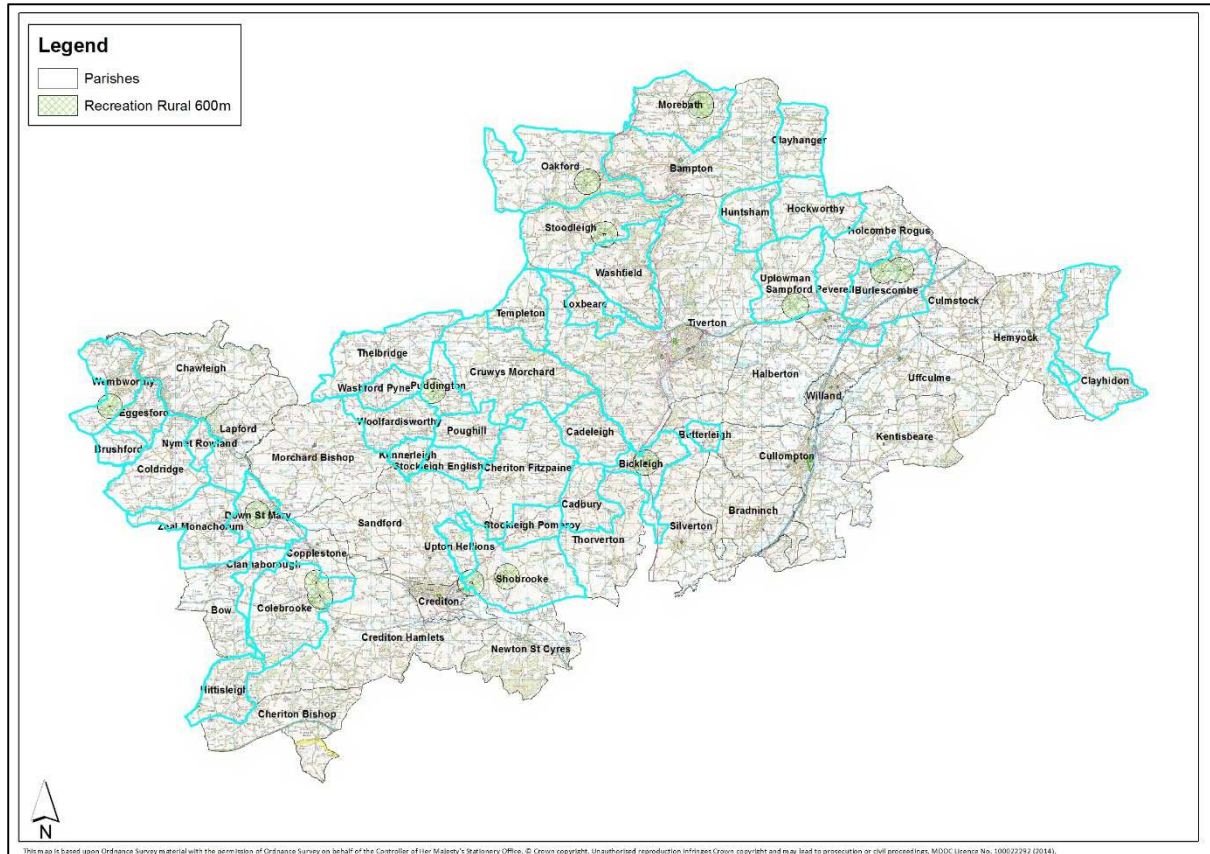


Figure 13 Access to children's play areas in main parishes

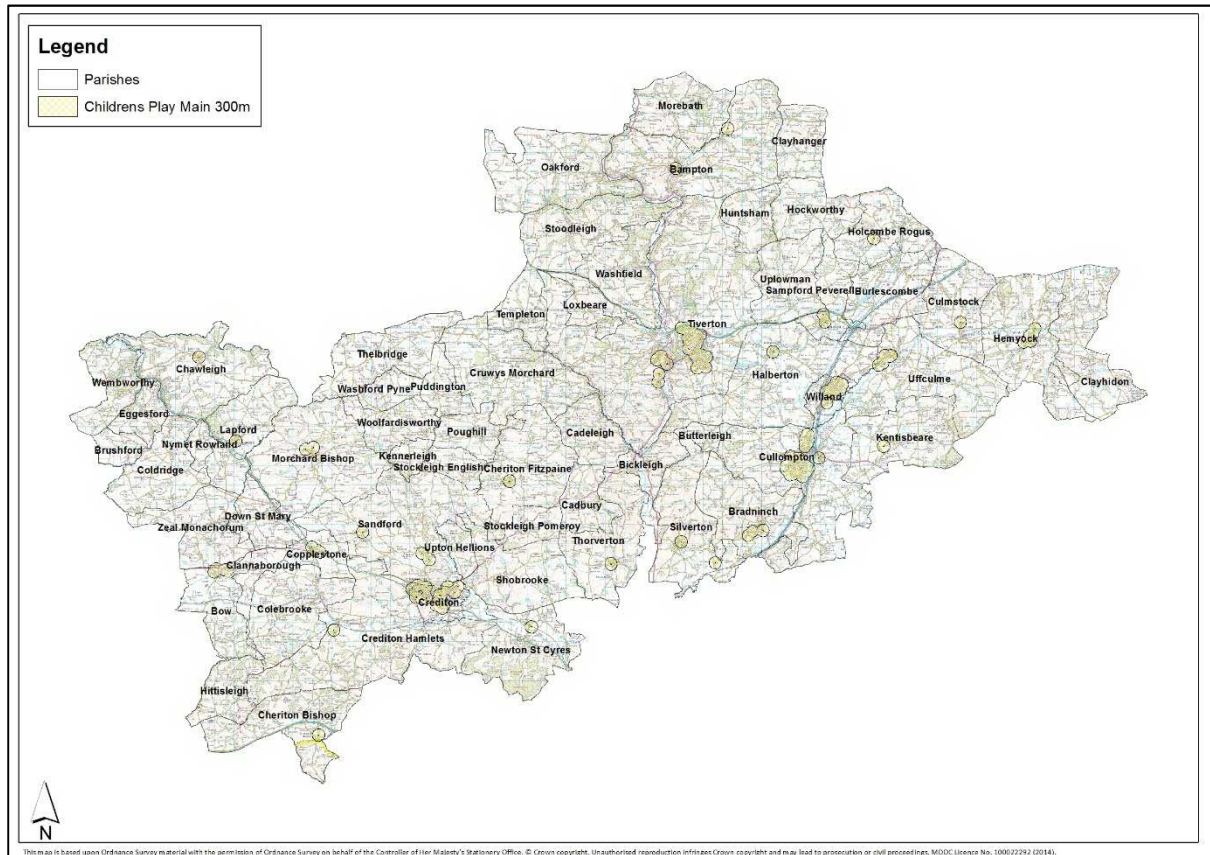




Figure 14 Access to teenage facilities in main parishes

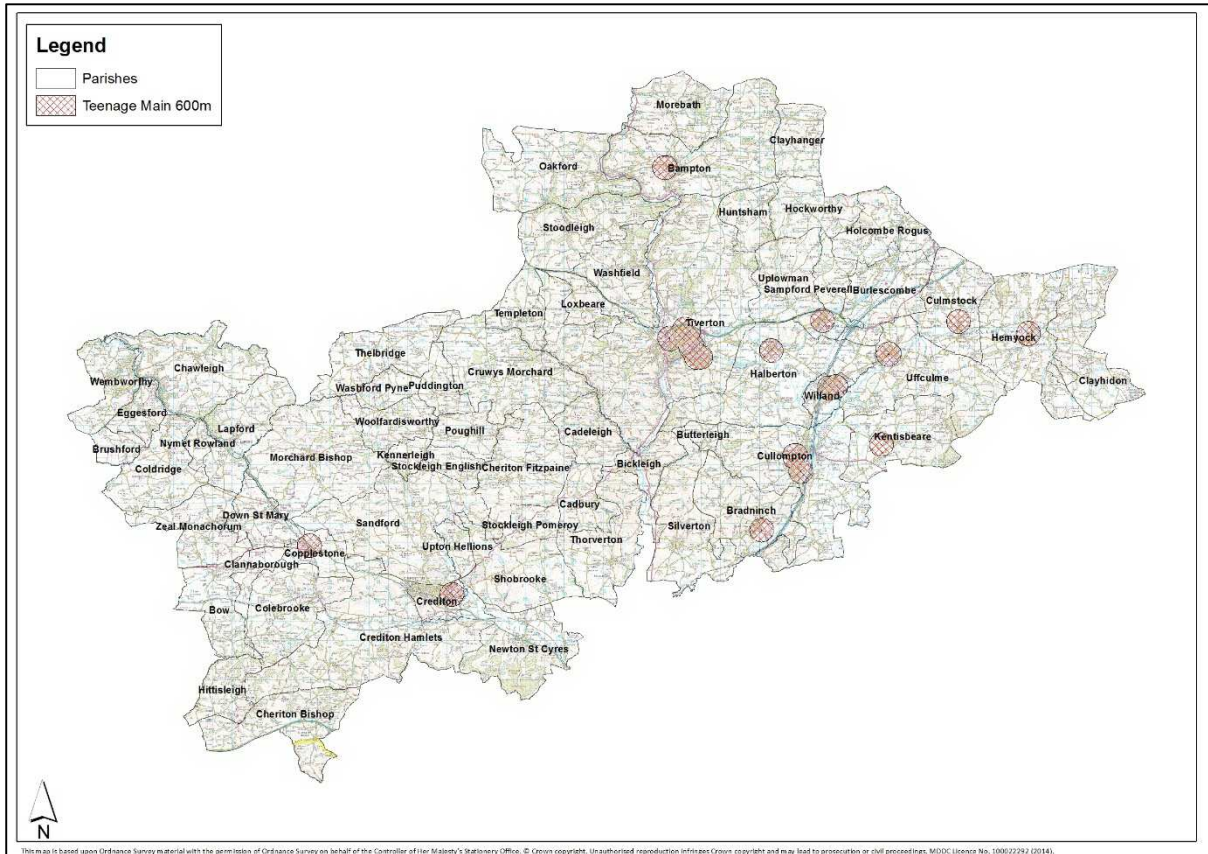
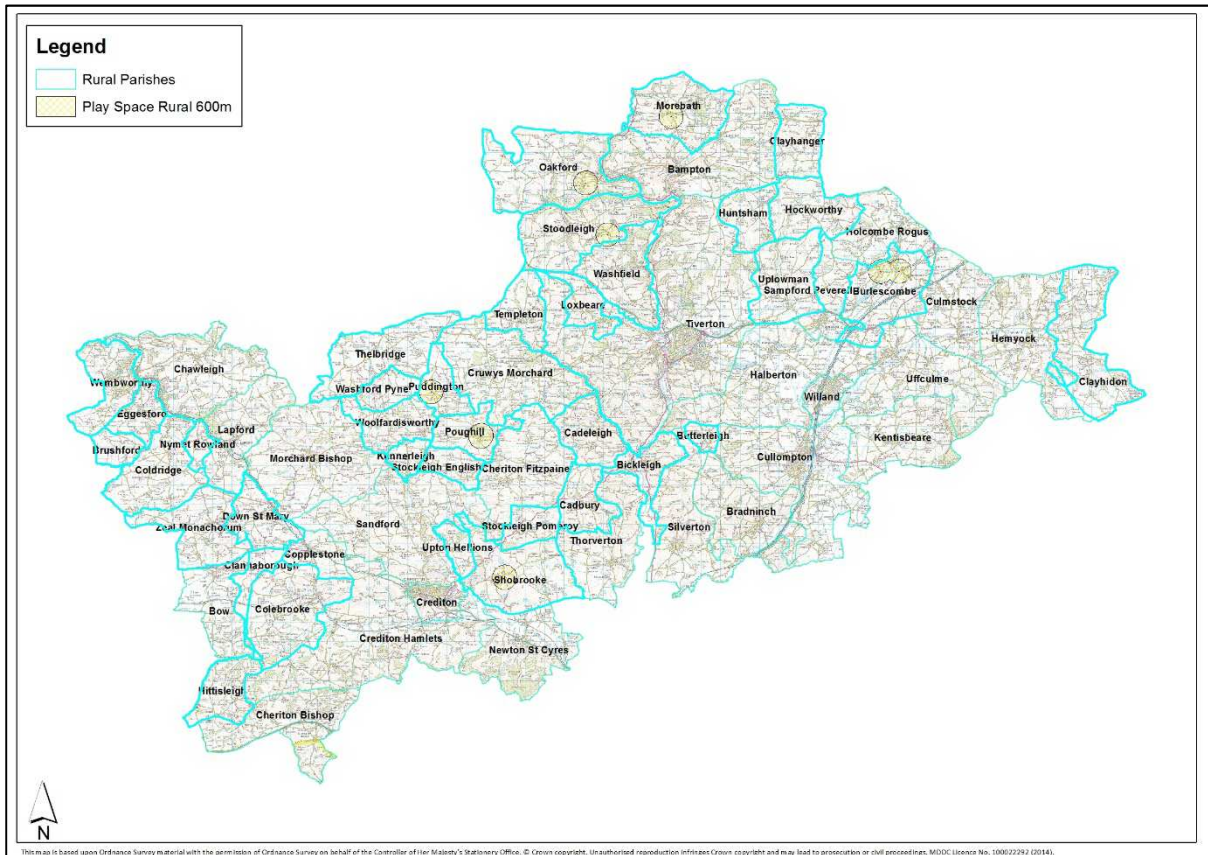


Figure 15 Access to play facilities (children's and teenage) in main parishes (highlighted)



## 7.4 Application of standards (natural provision)

This section looks at the application of standards for natural green space, and also considers the provision of rights of way and recreation routes.

### 7.4.1 Accessible Natural Green space Standards (ANGST)

The ANGST are:

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

Figure 16 Deficiencies in access to 20 ha site within 2km

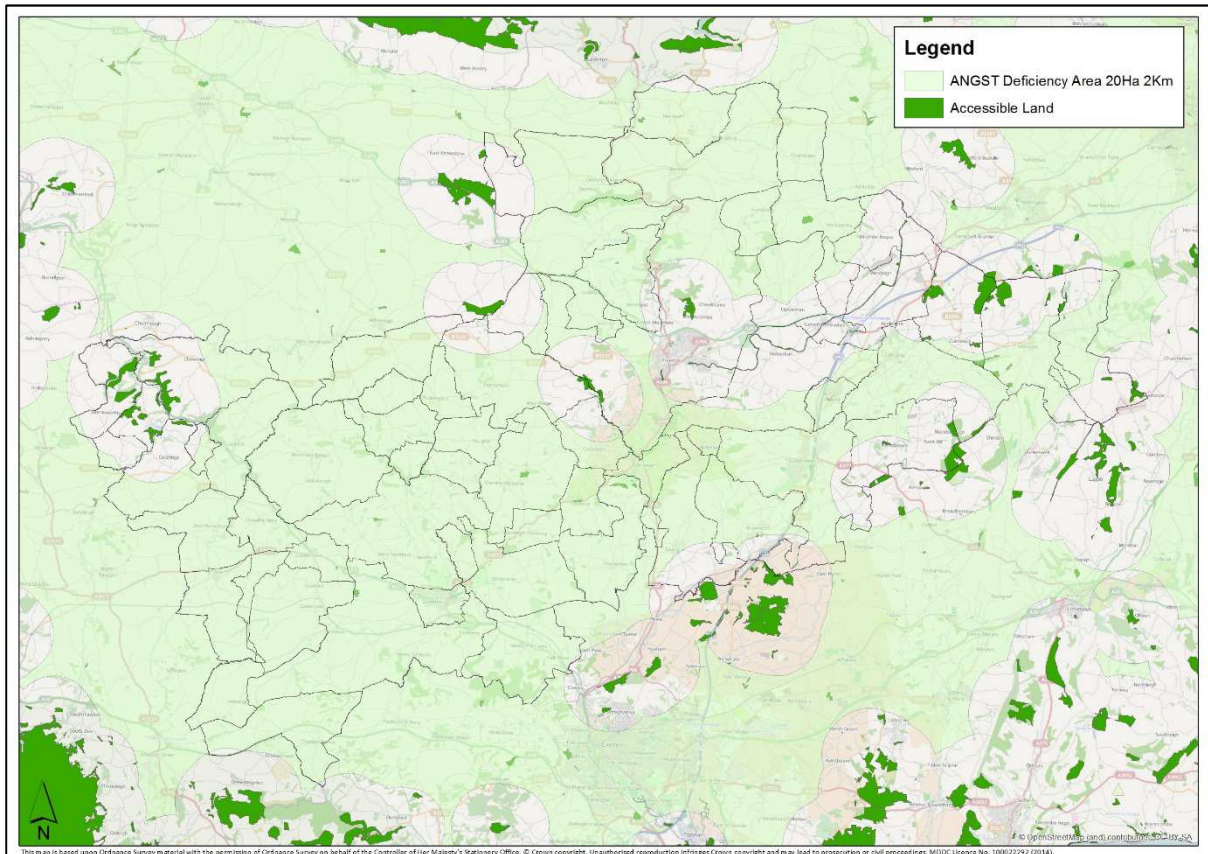


Figure 17 Deficiencies in access to 100 ha site within 5 km

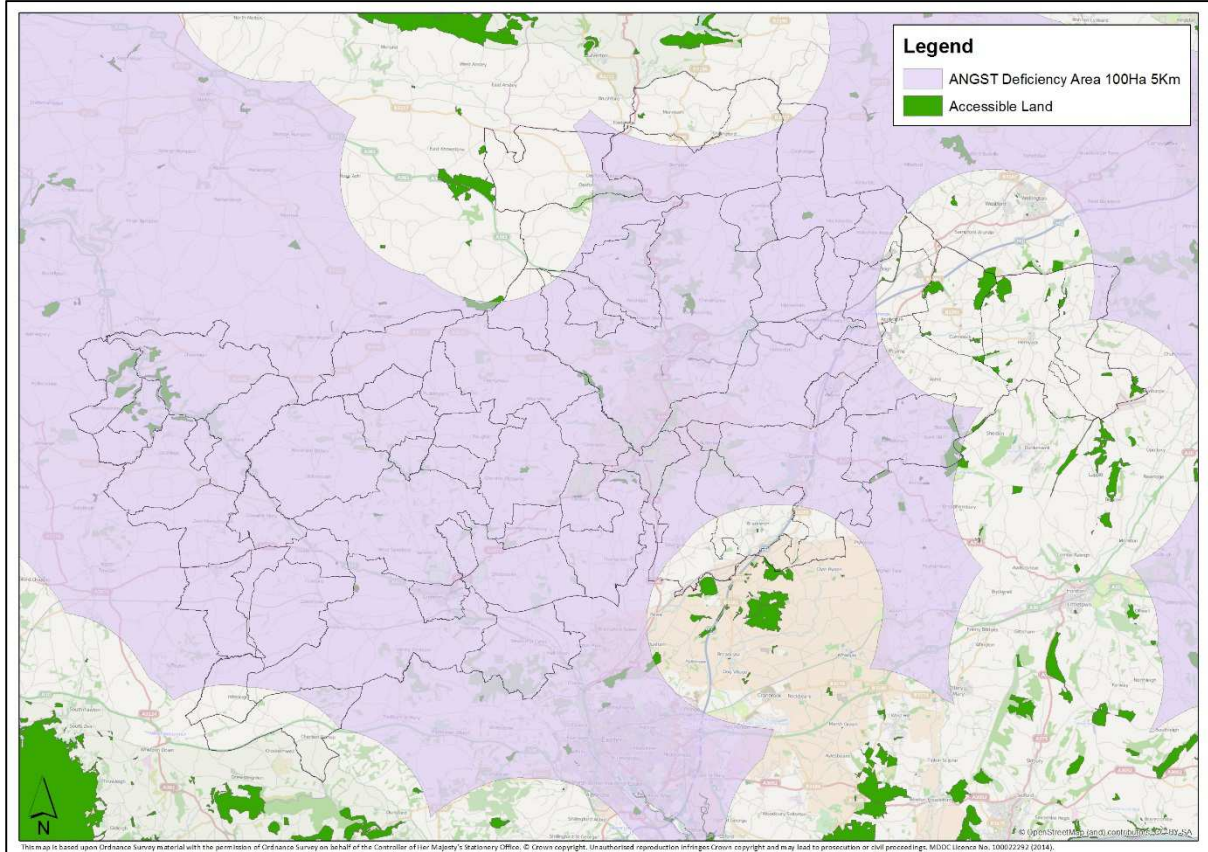


Figure 18 Deficiencies in access to 500 ha site within 10 km

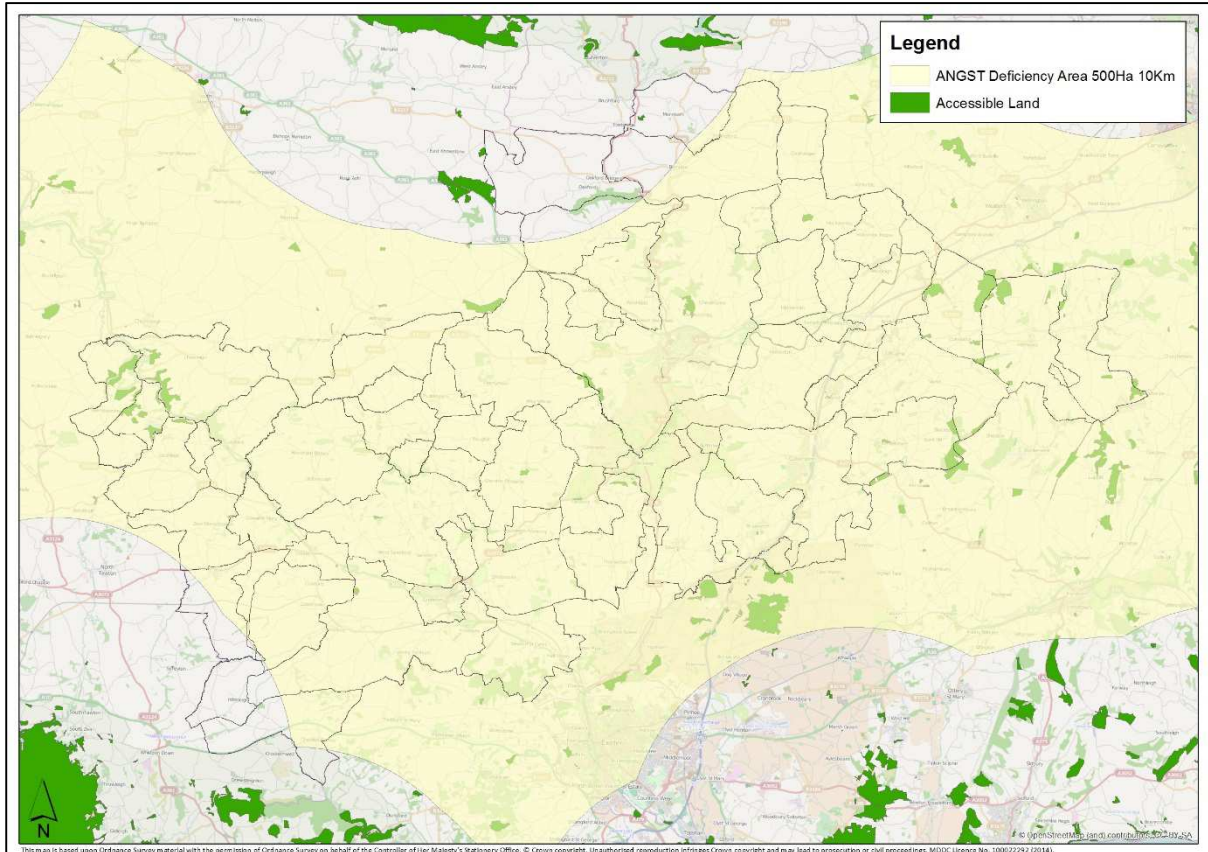
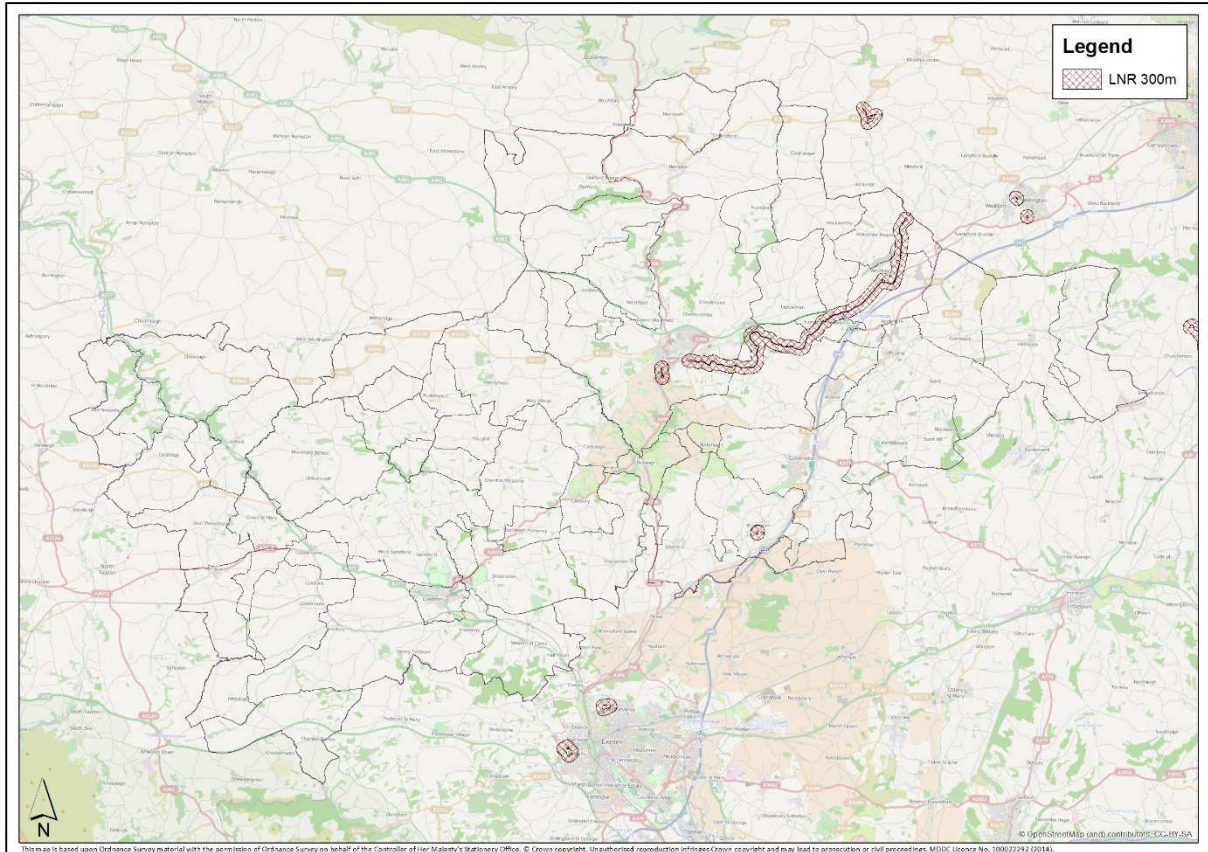


Figure 19 Access to Local Nature Reserves



As there are so few Local nature Reserves in the study area, figure 19 shows the location of each LNR with a buffer of 300 metres. As the map illustrates, there are significant deficiencies in attaining this standard across the study area.

## 7.4.2 Woodland Trust Access Standards

The woodland trust access standards are:

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

Figure 20 Access to woodland 2ha in size at 500 metres

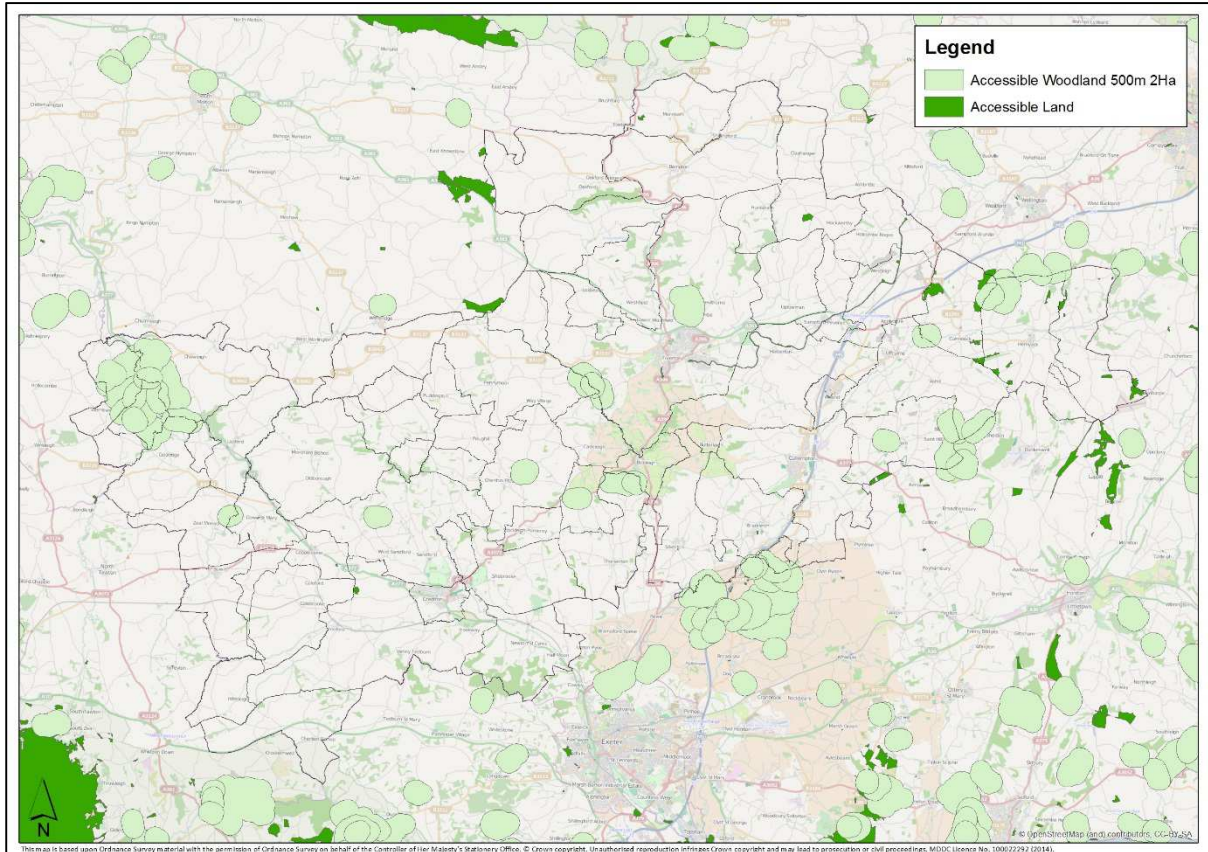


Figure 21 Access to woodland 20ha in size at 4km

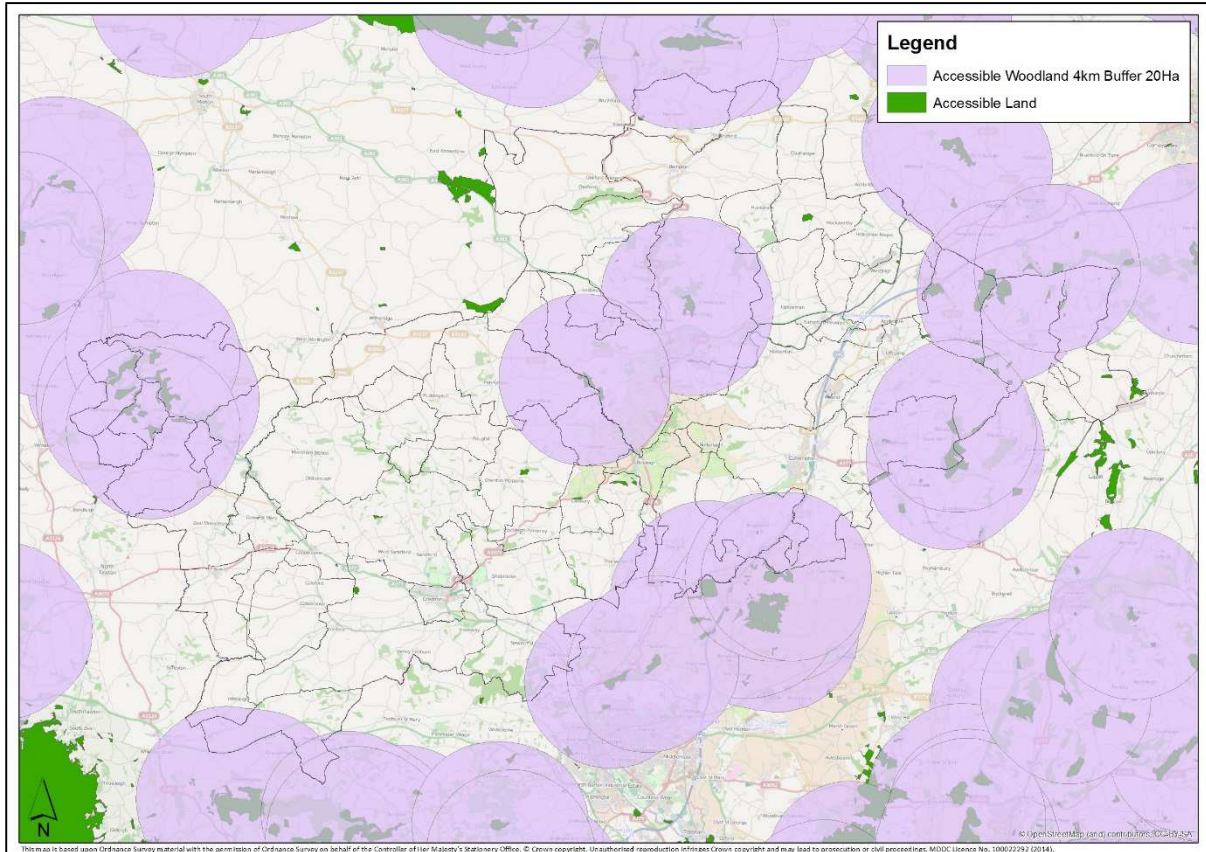


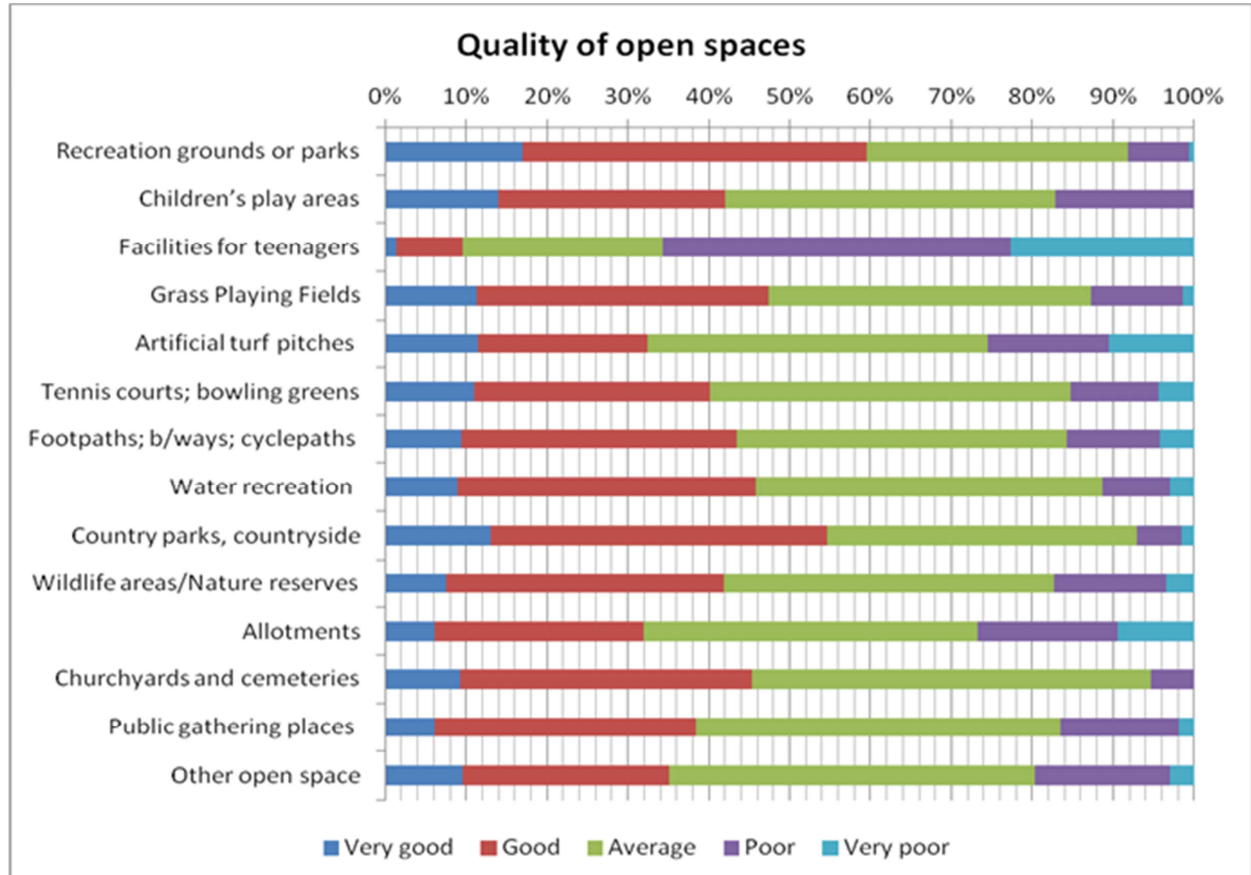
Table 15 Summary of access issues for natural green space

Standard	Key access Issues
<b>ANGST:</b>	
at least one accessible 20 hectare site within two kilometre of home	Significant gaps across most areas with the exception of Tiverton and east towards Cullompton
one accessible 100 hectare site within five kilometres of home	Gaps across whole area except the far northern and southern fringes of the study area
one accessible 500 hectare site within ten kilometres of home	Gaps across whole area except the far northern and western fringes of the study area
minimum of one hectare of statutory LNR's per thousand population at least 2 hectares in size, no more than 300 metres (5 minutes' walk) from home	Very little provision within the study area, therefore significant gaps with little real chance of fulfilling this standard
<b>Woodland Trust:</b>	
that no person should live more than 500m from at least one area of accessible woodland of no less than 2ha in size	Very patchy provision across the study area
that there should also be at least one area of accessible woodland of no less than 20ha within 4km (8km round-trip) of people's homes	Very patchy provision across the study area

## 7.5 Application of quality standards

### 7.5.1 Quality of open space, sport and recreation facilities – consultation key findings

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



- All facilities are rated average or better by a majority of households other than facilities for teenagers.
- Just over 65% of households highlighted the quality of outdoor facilities for teenagers as being either poor or very poor.
- Over 25% thought that the quality of allotments and astro-turf pitches was poor or very poor. Other facilities rated as poor or very poor by significant numbers of households were informal open spaces (20%); wildlife areas/nature reserves (17%); and public gathering places e.g. village greens, open air venues (16%).
- The high quality of parks and recreation grounds stands out notably; being viewed by around 60% of respondents as very good or good.
- Other kinds of open spaces where quality is widely thought to be good/very good are country parks, countryside and woodlands (55%); grass playing pitches (47%); water

recreation areas (46%); footpaths, bridleways and cyclepaths (43%); and play areas (42%).

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

### **7.5.2 Quality of open space - audit**

The quality of open space was considered through consultation and information provided by MDDC Officers. Each of the area profiles (part II) provide information on priorities for improving open space.



## 8.0 STRATEGIC OPTIONS, POLICY & MANAGEMENT RECOMMENDATIONS

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

### 8.1 Strategic Options

#### 8.1.1 Introduction

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

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

#### 8.1.2 Delivering Strategic Options

Since the change in government in 2010, and the subsequent adoption of the National Planning Policy Framework, the planning environment is still in a state of change and flux.

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 Local Authority will have an important role in delivering open space, sport and recreation facilities, their role may move from that of 'deliverer' to 'facilitator'. The aim will be to work with community organisations to make local decisions about how facilities and services will be provided. Organisations such as neighbourhood fora, 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 involvement in planning, and for local communities to develop neighbourhood plans. Although it is up to local communities to define their own priorities within neighbourhood plans, the information provided within the area profiles in this study will form a good basis to inform any decisions related to the provision of open space, sport and recreation facilities.

The following sections consider the key issues for open space in the study area, and the recommendations that emerge need to be taken in context with the Localism Act and consider how they can fit into local decision making. With this agenda still relatively new,

the following sections serve to highlight issues, but do not necessarily resolve how they may be delivered.

### 8.1.3 Existing provision to be protected

The existing provision should be preserved wherever possible as long as it is needed and is sustainable.

Where existing provision is satisfying demand or anticipated/future demand, a key principle of the strategy, is to preserve that provision and more importantly where: -

- It is important in avoiding deficiencies in accessibility, quality or quantity;
- It is of particular nature conservation, historical or cultural value.

However, if such a facility is very old it may be more appropriate in the longer term to provide alternative more efficient facilities that better meets the long term needs of the community.

The area profiles in section 8 of this study provide more detailed results at neighbourhood level as to the above considerations. The following draws on this and makes some more general observations and recommendations.

#### **Open Space Recommendations (Quantity):**

- OS1** The distribution of open space varies across the study area, however, there are identified shortages of at least 1 typology of open space in most areas. It is therefore recommended that priority is placed on protecting those open spaces where there is an existing shortfall of supply as highlighted in the area profiles.
- OS2** Sites which are critical to avoiding deficiencies, or making existing deficiencies worse, in quality, quantity or access should be protected unless suitable alternative provision can be provided.
- OS3** Sites which have significant nature conservation, historical or cultural value should be afforded protection, even if there is an identified surplus in quality, quantity or access in that local area.
- OS4** Considering there is under supply of at least one typology in most area, loss of any existing provision should be avoided, unless alternative new provision can be provided.
- OS5** 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 should only be considered if:
- there is an identified overall surplus of open space and surplus of that typology in the local area and locality,

- adequate alternative provision can be made or an acceptable mitigation package developed,
- the development results in an overriding community benefit, or
- Sport England are consulted and satisfied with the proposals.

**OS6** The importance of access to the countryside through footpaths, bridle paths and cycle ways has been highlighted in this study, therefore protecting and enhancing these facilities through policy is recommended.

#### 8.1.4 Existing provision to be enhanced

In areas where there is a quantitative deficiency of provision but no accessibility issues then increasing the capacity of existing provision may be considered. Alternatively, in areas where facilities or spaces have identified quality deficiencies, qualitative enhancements will be required. This study has identified the need to undertake quality assessments of open spaces in order to prioritise sites for improvement.

#### *Open Space Recommendations (Quality):*

**OS7** Future Local Plans and Neighbourhood Plans should consider the opportunities for creating and enhancing a network of both utility and recreation routes for use by foot and bike in both urban and rural areas. Creative application of the amenity green space/natural green space components of the proposed overall standard in respect of new development should be explored.

**OS8** Quality assessments of open space are required to prioritise sites for improvement. Further to this, a long term strategy for achieving improvements is required which could be delivered through a Green space Strategy, neighbourhood plans and be considered within the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL).

**OS9** Priorities for improvement (drawn from consultation) include the enhancement of the existing provision for teenagers and the improvement of sports pitches.

**OS10** Management plans should be developed for the main parks, sport and recreation grounds. These priorities could be considered in neighbourhood plans and by the local community.

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

In some areas it may be possible to make better use of land by relocating an open space or sport and recreation facility, especially if this will enhance its quality or accessibility for existing users, or use land which is not suitable for another purpose. This needs to be

determined at a local level, considering the quality, quantity and access to facilities at neighbourhood level and in some cases at a District wide level.

The information provided within the neighbourhood profiles in this study will form a good basis to inform any decisions related to the provision or replacement of open space, sport and recreation facilities. Some settlements may seek a consolidation of facilities on a single site, such as a new sports hub.

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

Each plan should apply the standards and recommendations 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.

#### ***Open Space Recommendations (Opportunities):***

**OS11** Develop a pilot project within one of the towns to develop a neighbourhood plan which incorporates green space planning.

#### **8.1.6 Identification of areas 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 neighbourhood profiles outline the existing situation with regards to supply and access to green infrastructure. 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:

##### ***Quantity***

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

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

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

### **Access**

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

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

### **Delivering new provision**

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

#### *New development, CIL and developer contributions*

Mid Devon District Council are in the process of developing their priorities, charging schedule and policy for the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL). Many community needs and aspirations which will have a call on this levy, though open space may continue to be funded by Section 106 agreements where appropriate. This open space study clearly identifies that there are needs for new and /or enhanced open space provision, particularly where new development is planned.

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

#### *Capital and grant funding*

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

grants and stewardship schemes are available for managing natural green space. As neighbourhood plans are developed and open space priorities are established within these, funding requirements will be identified and delivery through grant funding can be considered.

#### **Open Space Recommendations (Funding):**

**OS12** New provision of open space may be required as part of new development in towns or parishes where there are existing deficiencies in quantity or access to open space and/or where the new development will result in deficiencies.

Where on site provision is required, it should be provided in line with the proposed open space standards. Where on site provision is deemed impractical, or not required, off site contributions will be required to meet the quantity, access and quality standards where possible.

**OS13** The priorities for new provision are for teenage facilities.

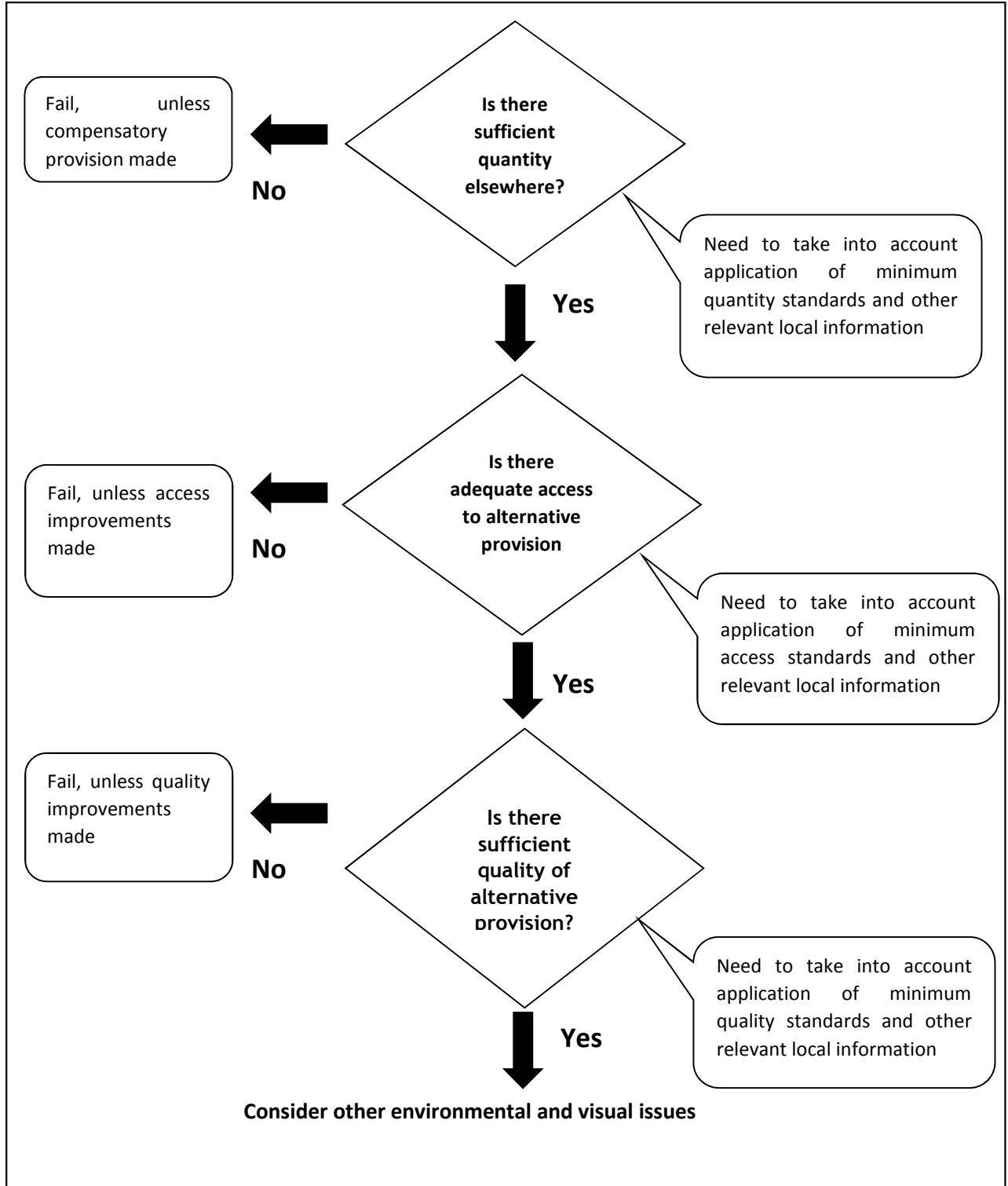
#### **8.1.7 Facilities that are surplus to requirement**

In addition to the strategic options outlined above, consideration should also be given to facilities that are surplus to requirement. There are important issues to resolve in terms of getting the correct balance of green infrastructure across the study area before any disposal can be contemplated. Whilst there is under provision relative to the minimum standards in several neighbourhoods, 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 22 suggests an outline of the decision process that should be followed before the development of an open space can be seriously contemplated.

Figure 22: Outline decision making process in relation to sanctioning (re)development of open space



**Q. Is there sufficient quantity?**

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

**Q. Is there adequate access to alternative provision?**

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

**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 should 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.



## 8.2 Policy and Management Recommendations

This section provides policy and management recommendations, addressing a number of specific requirements of the study brief:

- To provide information to help inform the spending on Community Infrastructure Levy and Section 106 receipts;
- To provide information to justify the collection of developer contributions towards open space;
- To advise on a suitable programme for transfer of play area maintenance responsibility to parish/town councils, community groups and residents;
- To provide recommendations on different models of open space management and provision to enable flexible use and low cost maintenance wherever possible, while ensuring that open spaces are retained for community use in perpetuity;
- To provide recommendations for Council strategy on the future prioritisation of spending according to need, value for money and the degree of public benefit.

### 8.2.1 Developer contributions and Community Infrastructure Levy

This section sets out higher level strategic recommendations and recommends an approach to developer contributions in accordance with the CIL regulations. The areas of the brief covered in this section are:

- *To provide information to help inform the spending of Community Infrastructure Levy receipts;*
- *To provide information to justify the collection of developer contributions towards open space;*

#### 1) **Capital cost of providing open space**

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 16 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, which more often than not includes new provision. This is in line with Regulation 122(2) of the Community Infrastructure Levy Regulations 2010 (as amended), which states that planning obligations must be “fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind to the 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. The calculated costs have drawn on the standards of provision for urban areas, as this is where the majority of proposed growth is planned.

Table 16 Costs for providing open space

Typology	Standard (m <sup>2</sup> ) per person	Cost of provision	
		Cost / m <sup>2</sup>	Contribution per person
Allotments	2.5	£30.00	£75.00
Children's Play Areas	0.6	£170.00	£102.00
Teenage Facilities	0.2	£170.00	£34.00
Parks and Recreation grounds	15.0	£72.00	£1080.00
Amenity/Natural green space	10.0	£15.00	£150.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>28.3</b>		<b>£1,441</b>

This shows that it costs £1,441 per person to provide new open space to meet the Mid Devon standard for open space. These calculations may be used to calculate developer contributions required through CIL or Section 106, whichever is deemed appropriate through the preparation of the Local Plan and CIL charging schedule.

If the open space study identifies the need for a development to provide open space on site, CIL will not be applicable, but the development will be required to provide open space in line with the recommended Standards.

## 2) Maintenance Contributions

If a development is required to provide open space on site, the developer would be expected to maintain the open space in perpetuity. Developers must be put in place appropriate management arrangements to ensure this.

If the developer does not wish to assume responsibility for maintaining the open space, the council may be willing to accept a commuted sum and make arrangements for management of the open space through the council or a third party. The amount payable for the commuted sum should be calculated using the figures in table 17, which shows expected contributions per annum. The current policy requires a commuted sum for a period of 20 years, and the calculation of the fee payable would also need to take into account inflation.

Table 17 Commuted sums payable for open space per annum

Typology	Cost/m <sup>2</sup>
Children's Play Areas	£5.50
Teenage Facilities	£5.50
Park and Recreation Grounds	£1.38
Amenity and Natural Green Space	£0.93
Allotments	£0.19

The figures in table 17 show how much it costs to maintain open space per metre squared. The figures have been calculated from average unit rates for maintenance of different types of open space provided by MDDC.

### 3) Eligible types of development

Table 18 outlines the type of housing that should be considered eligible for making contributions towards open space to meet the needs of future occupants.

Table 18 Eligible types of residential development

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

[\* Should recognise that affordable housing generates a need for new green infrastructure, but it is a policy decision as to whether GI contributions should be provided]

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

### 4) Thresholds for provision

The required open space, sport and recreation facilities can be provided by on-site provision, or through CIL. Where facilities are to be provided on-site, the Council should 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 scale of the proposed development and site area;
- The suitability of a site reflecting, for example, its topography or flood risk;
- The existing provision of facilities within the neighbourhood and/or the sub area;
- Other sites in the neighbourhood where additional provision is proposed;
- Existing access to facilities within the neighbourhood and/or sub area.

Table 19 provides an indicative guide to assess which scales of housing generate a need for facilities in the categories listed to be provided onsite. It will provide a starting point for negotiation with flexibility subject to opportunities available. Strategic sites identified for development in the Local Plan should specify exact requirements for onsite provision.

*Table 19 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
Children's Play Areas	X	X	✓	✓	✓
Teenage Facilities	X	X	X	✓	✓
Amenity/Natural Green Space	X	X	✓	✓	✓
Allotments	X	X	X	✓	✓
Park and Recreation Ground	X	X	X	✓	✓

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

### 8.2.2 Open space management options

This part of the report considers key management issues and options that have emerged from the study, in particular drawing on the findings of consultation with local groups and town and parish councils. Specifically, it addresses the following key areas of the study brief:

- *To advise on a suitable programme for transfer of play area maintenance responsibility to parish/town councils, community groups and residents;*
- *To provide recommendations on different models of open space management and provision to enable flexible use and low cost maintenance wherever possible, while ensuring that open spaces are retained for community use in perpetuity;*
- *To provide recommendations for Council strategy on the future prioritisation of spending according to need, value for money and the degree of public benefit.*

In addition to the information provided in this part of the report, a number of more detailed recommendations are made in the area profiles in part 2 of the study report.

## Cabinet & Policy Development Groups 8 January 2015

### Budget 2015/16 - Update

**Portfolio Holder** Cllr Peter Hare-Scott  
**Responsible Officer** Head of Finance

**Reason for Report:** To consider options available in order for the Council to move towards a balanced budget for 2015/16.

**RECOMMENDATION:** To consider and agree the updated budget proposals for 2015/16 included in Appendix 1.

**Relationship to Corporate Plan:** To deliver our Corporate Plan's priorities within existing financial resources.

**Financial Implications:** Now the Council has received notification of its Formula Grant Settlement it is imperative that it matches current and ongoing expenditure plans to estimated sources of income/funding.

**Legal Implications:** It is a statutory requirement for the Local Authority to set a balanced budget.

**Risk Assessment:** Service Managers and Finance staff have assessed volatility in income and large contractor budgets, taking account of current and estimated future demand patterns. This position has been revised based on an additional 2 months of financial monitoring information. In addition prudent levels of reserves will also continue to be maintained.

#### 1.0 Introduction

1.1 On the 18 December 2014 the Council received formal confirmation of its Formula Grant Settlement (but no provisional notification for 2016/17 – which clearly doesn't assist any future financial planning) and details relating to a Council Tax Freeze Grant and the Referendum Limit.

#### 2.0 2015/16 general Fund Budget - Revised Position

2.1 Since the first round of PDGs and Cabinet meetings the Finance team and service managers have been revisiting a range of budgets to strive to deliver more savings or increased income levels.

2.2 This process (excluding the Formula Grant Settlement) has improved the General Fund budget by circa £468k (see Appendix 1) and now only leaves a budget gap of £99k. This reflects a lot of hard work and constructive negotiation over the past 2 months.

### **3.0 Conclusion**

3.1 The Council still has approximately 1 month until the Cabinet will meet on the 5 February 2015 to formally recommend the overall budget and level of Council Tax for 2015/16 and officers will continue to work towards delivering a balanced budget position.

3.2 As the Head of Finance has discussed on a number of occasions over the past few years, the Council's financial future is only going to become increasingly challenging, not helped by receiving no indicative grant figures for 2016/17 and it therefore remains apparent that difficult decisions will have to be made in the future where we attempt to balance the needs of our residents with the available funding at our disposal. This will be a very challenge for our new Council in May 2015 – but at least the Council is in a strong/healthy financial position at the current stage and has demonstrated a solid track record of delivering significant savings over the last 4-5 years and still delivers a wide range of high performing services.

**Contact for more information:** Andrew Jarrett – Head of Finance  
**Background Papers:** Draft 2015/16 Budget Papers  
Grant Settlement Email 18/12/14

**File Reference:**

**Circulation of the Report:** Management Team, Members & Relevant Service Managers

**15/16 Budget Changes (since PDG's)**

		£
	Budget gap estimated at November/December PDGs and Cabinet	650,178
Cost Centre	Description	
Housing Benefit	HB Admin Grant - Circa £10k reduction - awaiting confirmation	10,000 Revised figure from DWP
Corporate Fees/Charges	Sector fees overbudgeted in first draft	-9,050
Collection Fund	Projected C/Fund surplus (at 05/12/14) lower than budgeted	6,670
Community Development - Grants	Reduction in group 1 and 2 grants as agreed	-6,475
Community Development - Grants	Reduction in seed fund to offset savings not achieve on grants	-13,825
Car parks	Updated with current income levels	-10,000
RCCO reduce - as NHB funding capital shortfall		-125,000
Waste/recycling - new scheme savings	Agreed to set a global figure of £200k	-200,000 1/2 year savings + set up costs
Revised Formula Grant		-83,000
Rev'd leisure income/costs		-25,000
E/Health Riams Webbase Software	Web base software for Health	2,000
Feed in tariff (Leisure sites)		-30,000
Dev Control Fees	Note - JC recommended £40k further increase	-70,000
Pollution Licenses Income	Budget set too high in 14/15	2,500 £13.5 - Reduced to £11k
	<b>Total changes to be agreed</b>	<b>-551,180</b>
	<b>New budget gap after the above changes/revisions</b>	<b>98,998</b>

**Notes**

Formula grant agreed on 18/12/14 - confirming a grant cut of £574k - which was £83k better than the provisional sum announced 12 months earlier  
 Council tax freeze grant offered for 2015/16 @ 1% - so circa = £50k. Note - if Ctax freeze grant accepted budget gap increases by £25k  
 Referendum limit agreed at 2% for 2015/16  
 Nothing included at the moment for: shared ICT work, Mkt Walk or Fore St properties

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