

South Gloucestershire Council

Open Space Audit, 2010

CONTENTS

	<u>Page</u>
Executive Summary	
1. SECTION 1: Introduction and Background	1
2. SECTION 2: Methodology – Undertaking the PPG17 audit	5
Definitions of open space, sport and recreation	6
Analysis Areas	8
PPG17 – Five Step Process	9
Quantity	15
Quality	16
Accessibility	17
3. SECTION 3: Consultation	21
4. SECTION 4: Strategic Context – Plans, Policies and Strategies	25
 PROVISION STANDARDS	
5. SECTION 5: Parks and Gardens	38
6. SECTION 6: Natural and Semi-Natural Greenspace	48
7. SECTION 7: Outdoor Sports Facilities	60
8. SECTION 8: Amenity Green Space and Green Corridors	72
9. SECTION 9: Provision for Children and Young People	85
10. SECTION 10: Allotments	97
11. SECTION 11: Cemeteries and Churchyards	104
 OUTCOMES	
12. SECTION 12: Overall Supply	109
13. SECTION 13: Conclusions - Recommended Standards	111
 APPENDIX	
Appendix 1: Green Flag Award Criteria	115
Appendix 2: Local Context	116

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

South Gloucestershire's Open Space Audit has been prepared to provide:

- A clear understanding of the quantity, quality and accessibility of the open spaces, sport and recreational facilities across South Gloucestershire.
- The information required to enable the Council to develop planning policies based on comprehensive evidence prepared in consultation with the communities of South Gloucestershire. The audit has informed the development of the emerging Core Strategy and other Council strategies in relation to meeting local need and the provision of open space, sport and recreation facilities.
- Information to enable transparent and clear planning decisions and robust evidence for planning appeals.
- A context for future open space, sport and recreation related programs, proposals and strategies.

The Open Space Audit provides a comprehensive assessment of the quantity, quality and accessibility of open space, outdoor sport and recreation facilities across South Gloucestershire in accordance with Planning Policy Guidance Note 17 (PPG17) 'Planning for Open Space, Sport and Recreational Facilities' (2002) and the supporting Companion Guide 'Assessing Local Needs and Opportunities'. The Audit reflects upon best practices examples set out in other open space assessments, advice published by Commission for Architecture and Built Environment (CABE), Fields In Trust and material relating to the Green Flag quality award scheme.

The Open Space Audit has sought to:

- identify local needs and record opinion on the current provision,
- audit and digitally map provision, and
- set local provision standards for the quantity, quality, and accessibility of open space, sport and recreation facilities

In keeping with PPG17 guidance the Open Space Audit has been formulated around the open space provision that is publically accessible. The analysis of provision has been undertaken at a South Gloucestershire wide level and also across five analysis or spatial areas:

- East Fringe of the Bristol Urban Area
- North Fringe of the Bristol Urban Area
- Yate/Chipping Sodbury
- Thornbury
- Rural & Other (including Severnside)

The Audit has established locally relevant standards by using:

- An analysis of existing national, local standards and practices
- The results of a comprehensive consultation process with stakeholders and local householders
- Benchmarking of comparable standards used by other authorities.
- The results of the mapping and audit of existing provision.

Standards are set for the following range of open spaces, sport and recreation facilities:

Category of Open Space	Quantity Standard - Minimum figures	Quality Standard – Overall score	Accessibility Standard
Informal recreational open space	1.4 ha/1000 population	Overall 75%	12.5 minutes walk / 600 metres
Natural and Semi-Natural green space	1.5ha/1000 population	Overall 50%	15 minutes walk / 720 metres
Outdoor Sports facilities	1.6ha/1000 population	Facility specific standards to be reflected in the Playing Pitch and Built Facilities Strategies. Overall 75%, on applicable sites.	20 minutes walk / 1000 metres – Playing Pitches 22 minutes drive time – Synthetic Pitches, Athletics Tracks and Golf Courses
Provision for Children and Young People	0.25ha/1000 population equipped playspace (This provision may be located within the informal recreation open space)	Overall 75%	10 minutes walk / 450 metres – Children’s play space. 15 minutes walk / 720 metres – Young peoples provision
Allotments	0.2ha/1000 population	Overall 60%	15 minutes walk / 720 metres
Cemeteries and Churchyards	N/A	Overall 50%	N/A

SECTION 1

1. Introduction and Background

- 1.1 The provision of open spaces and recreation facilities is instrumental in shaping community life and building social capital. People will remain behind closed doors if safe, clean, attractive and accessible open spaces are not provided¹. A network of well-designed and cared-for open spaces adds to the character of places where people want to live, work and visit, improving people's quality and enjoyment of life. Open spaces also provide the vital green infrastructure that assist with adapting to climate change whilst providing wildlife habitats, sporting and play facilities or beautiful parks. It is for these reasons that the provision of open spaces is central to South Gloucestershire's commitment to the development of sustainable communities.
- 1.2 The overall approach for how Local Planning Authorities consider and review open space, sport and recreation facilities is set out in Planning Policy Guidance Note 17: Planning Open Space, Sport and Recreation (PPG17) and its companion guide (Assessing Needs and Opportunities: Planning Policy Guidance 17 Companion Guide). This audit of open space, outdoor sport and recreation facilities has been undertaken in accordance with PPG17.
- 1.3 Planning Policy Statement 12: Local Spatial Planning (PPS12) states that local planning authority's planning policies, set out in Core Strategies, should be supported by evidence of what green infrastructure² is needed to enable the amount of development proposed for the area, taking account of its type and distribution.
- 1.4 Planning Policy Statement 3: Housing (PPS3) seeks to achieve high quality design and states that design quality can be assessed by considering the extent to which a proposed development; provides, or enables good access to, community and green and open amenity and recreational space (including play space) as well as private outdoor space such as residential gardens, patios and balconies.
- 1.5 South Gloucestershire Council have progressed this audit of open space, sport and recreation and the related green infrastructure work in order to:
- Record and audit accessible provision of open space, outdoor sport and recreation facilities, with regard to its quantity, quality and accessibility.
 - Deliver a coherent package of Green Infrastructure through new development.
 - Improve guidance for developers and streamline discussions.
 - Secure Section 106 contributions for open space, sports and recreation facilities, both for provision and its management and maintenance.
 - Provide one central data source, a Microsoft Access database with linked spatial data (contained on the Council's Geographical Information System) containing quantity, quality and accessibility information about accessible spaces and facilities. This data source can be linked to other

¹ CABE, Community green: using local spaces to tackle inequality and improve health (2010)

² PPS12 states: 'Green Infrastructure' is a network of multi-functional green space, both new and existing, both urban and rural, which supports the natural and ecological processes and is integral to the health and quality of life of sustainable communities.

datasets and information sources, e.g. resource management/maintenance, biodiversity, designated sites and landscape character.

- Develop local provision standards – reflecting local need and locally derived requirements.
- Assist with the development of Local Development Framework policies to enable the improvement and new provision of open space, sport and recreation facilities.
- Provide a context for future open space, sport and recreation related programs, proposals and strategies.

1.6 **Requirements of Planning Policy Guidance Note (PPG) 17: Planning for Open Space, Sport and Recreation**

PPG17 advises Local Authorities to undertake robust assessments of the existing and future needs of their communities for open space, sport and recreational facilities. The assessments should cover the differing and distinctive needs of the population.

- 1.7 The undertaking of this auditing for South Gloucestershire is based on guidance outlined in PPG17 and its companion guide (Steps 1 – 3). Details of the full methodology used in this audit are contained within Section 2. The auditing process was timetabled to coincide with the development of the Core Strategy and forms part of the evidence base.
- 1.8 This audit provides the justification for the local standards relating to quantity, quality and accessibility of open space, outdoor sport, recreation and play facilities. This audit is a significant step forward for South Gloucestershire in identifying local provision standards and promoting open space, sport and recreation planning.
- 1.9 The preparation and adoption of the local provision standards relevant across South Gloucestershire enables the identification of geographical priorities and site-specific issues. The emerging findings from this audit have been used to inform Local Development Framework policy development, in particular the policies contained within the Core Strategy.
- 1.10 The findings of this Open Space Audit will be, and indeed have already been, used to inform a number of important documents:
- Core Strategy
 - Local Development Framework – Development Plan Documents and Supplementary Planning Documents
 - Built Facilities and Playing Pitch Strategies
 - Play Policy and Strategy update
 - Green Infrastructure Strategy and Supplementary Planning Document
 - Open space delivery plans
 - Design guidance

1.11 **Value of open space**

Suitable provision of open space, sport and recreation facilities is essential for sustainable communities. Accessible open space, sport and recreational

facilities are all highly valued assets to South Gloucestershire's communities. PPG17 states that well designed and implemented planning policies for open space, sport and recreation are fundamental to delivering broader Government objectives, which include:

- supporting an urban renaissance
- support a rural renewal
- promotion of social inclusion and community cohesion
- health and well being
- promoting more sustainable development

1.12 In addition to these objectives the open spaces, sport and recreation provision in South Gloucestershire has an important role to play in the following:

- providing space for nature and allowing access to it, and
- creating opportunities for climate change adaptation and mitigation.

1.13 It is important that residents of South Gloucestershire have access to a broad range of open spaces. It is also important that the functionality of open spaces is recognised and that local communities' aspirations are met. It is therefore important to gain an appreciation of local expectations to ensure provision of open spaces, sport and recreation facilities meets the needs put on them.

1.14 South Gloucestershire's Sustainable Community Strategy (SCS), highlights the following points, which are relevant to the importance of the provision of open space, sport and recreation facilities:

- Investing in children and young people, so they have the best possible start in life.
- Being healthier, so people lead healthier lives and all communities share the benefits.
- Managing future development, planning for community facilities which meet the communities' needs and aspirations.
- Promoting safer and strong communities, people are encouraged to participate in the life of their communities.
- Valuing the environment, so people respect the natural world and are encouraged to take action to protect, enhance and enjoy their environment, and live low carbon, sustainable and healthy lifestyles.
- Maintaining economic prosperity, so the local economy is sustainable and balanced, and prosperity is shared by all.

1.15 Ensuring the communities across South Gloucestershire have access to the appropriate provision of open space, sport and recreation facilities is critical in addressing the objectives of the South Gloucestershire Sustainable Community Strategy.

1.16 **Local Context**

Appendix 2 provides a detailed description of the current and future population profile of South Gloucestershire. Critically the future provision of open space, sport and recreation facilities has to address the challenges that South Gloucestershire faces, in particular the potential overall increase in

population, areas of deprivation and an aging population. Different areas of South Gloucestershire will experience these challenges to a greater or lesser extent, which in itself will be potentially challenging.

1.17 **Structure of the report**

This report is split into 13 sections. Section 2 sets out the methodology for undertaking the audit; section 3 details the comprehensive programme of consultation that the Council has undertaken to support this study. Section 4 sets out the strategic context to provide the background and the context for the audit.

1.18 Sections 5-11 of this report relate to each of the types of open space used within this study, each section sets out recommended local standards for quantity, quality and accessibility.

1.19 Sections 12-13 provide overall supply, conclusions and detail the next steps.

1.20 This report is supported by two separate documents:

- Open Space Audit – Assessment Manual, provides details of the site assessment criteria and survey guidelines.
- Open Space Audit – Consultation Report, provides details of the consultations undertaken to support this audit and the responses received.

These can be found on the Council's website: www.southglos.gov.uk

SECTION 2

2. **Methodology – Undertaking the PPG17 study**

- 2.1 This section sets out how the Council has undertaken this study in a way that is consistent with national guidelines set out in PPG17 and its companion guide, and how this in turn accords with CABE's open space strategies best practice guidance publication (2009). Following the structured process set out in the companion guide to PPG17 has ensured that a coherent and comprehensive methodology has been adhered to.
- 2.2 The Council has prepared an evidence base that complies with the national guidance for undertaking an assessment of open space, sport and recreation facilities. This report sets out the Council's evidence of local need and existing provision of open space, outdoor sport and recreation facilities based upon the approach detailed in PPG17 and the companion guide.
- 2.3 PPG17 states that local authorities should undertake robust assessments of the existing and future needs of their communities for open space, sport and recreation facilities. Further to this it states that local authorities should undertake an assessment of both the quantity and quality of open space, sport and recreational facilities, taking note of the use of, and access to existing facilities and opportunities for new open space and facilities.
- 2.4 Local authorities should use the information gained from the assessments and audits to identify needs and quantitative and qualitative deficits and surpluses of open space, sport and recreational facilities.
- 2.5 The assessments of needs and opportunities should be used to set locally derived standards for the provision of open space, sports and recreational facilities. National standards are deemed inappropriate as they do not take account of the demographics of an area, the specific needs of residents and the extent of built development. The move to locally set standards was supported by the majority of respondents to the Council's Core Strategy Issues and Options consultation (see the Consultation Report).
- 2.6 The key emphasis of PPG17 is the importance of undertaking a local needs assessment, as opposed to following national trends and guidelines.
- 2.7 PPG17 recognises that each local authority will need to take a slightly different individual approach in order to recognise the local characteristics that each authority area has. The process that PPG17 sets out has, therefore been followed but adapted to ensure that the needs of South Gloucestershire's residents are addressed. The recommendations resulting from this study are representative of the local needs within South Gloucestershire.

2.8 Definitions of open space, sport and recreation

The Town and Country Planning Act (1990) defines open space as:
“Any land laid out as public garden, or used for the purposes of public recreation, or land which is a disused burial ground.”

PPG17 sets out a definition of Open Space as being:
“All open space of public value, including not just land, but also areas of water, canals, lakes and reservoirs which offer important opportunities for sport and recreation and can also act as visual amenity.”

- 2.9 PPG17 states that local authorities, when preparing assessments of needs and auditing existing open space, sport and recreation facilities should use the ten typologies set out in the document, or variations of them.
- 2.10 Table 1 sets out the types of open space, sport and recreation facilities that are set out in PPG17. For the purposes of this audit sites which offer legitimate public use have been surveyed as part of this audit. This approach has been taken to ensure that the standards arising from the audit reflect those sites that are accessible with regards to the objectives of PPG17.
- 2.11 Areas of accessible countryside and non-publicly accessible sites do not form part of this study. However, it is important to consider how these other green infrastructure assets provide alternative provision and complement the publically accessible sites, for example a private woodland offering visual enjoyment and wildlife habitats.
- 2.12 It should also be noted that other forms of site assessments have taken place separate from this study, for example Phase 1 habitat assessments, and these can also be used to influence future management.

Table 1:

Type	Descriptions and sub-types	Primary purpose
Parks and Gardens	Including urban parks, country parks and formal gardens. Parks often contain a range of facilities and open space types.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Informal recreation - Community events May also contain elements for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Formal sport participation - Children's play
Natural and Semi-natural green spaces	Including publicly accessible woodlands, urban forestry, scrub, grassland (e.g. downlands, commons and meadows) wetlands, open and running water, wasteland and derelict open land and rock areas (e.g. cliffs, quarries and pits)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Wildlife conservation - Access to nature - Biodiversity - Environmental education - Informal recreation
Green Corridors	Including linear features such as canal tow paths	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Walking, cycling or horse riding routes

Section 2: Methodology – Undertaken the PPG17 Audit

	and river banks, rights of way, cyclepaths, and disused railway lines.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Used for access or informal recreation - Wildlife routes
Outdoor Sport Facilities, and	<p>Natural or artificial surfaces either publicly or privately owned (with facilities open to the public via membership) used for sport and recreation. Includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Tennis courts and bowling greens - Athletics tracks - Outdoor sports pitches - Golf Courses - Playing fields (including school playing fields) - Full sized MUGAs (Multi Use Games Areas) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Formal sport participation
Changing Rooms/Pavilions	Facilities supporting the use of outdoor sports facilities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Changing rooms and toilets to support the use of sport facilities - Social interaction
Amenity green space	Including informal recreational green spaces, in and around housing, includes informal recreational spaces and village greens.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Informal recreation - Children's unequipped play areas - Visual enhancement of built areas
Provision for Children	Provision for children, designed for play and social interaction. Including LEAPs (Local Equipped Area for Play) and NEAPs (Neighbourhood Area for Play).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Children's play
Provision for young people	<p>Areas and equipment designed for use by young people e.g.</p> <p>Small sized MUGAs / Hardcourt areas BMX tracks Skate parks/ramps Teenage shelters Basketball hoops</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Activities and meeting/hang out places for teenagers/young people
Allotments (and community gardens)	Allotments and community gardens.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Provide opportunities for people to grow their own produce/flowers.

		- Potential benefits for wildlife
Cemeteries and Churchyards	Cemeteries and churchyards	- Burial of the Dead - Quiet contemplation
Civic spaces	Including civic and market squares, and other hard surface areas designed for pedestrians	- Community events - Markets
Blue Infrastructure	Rivers, streams, ponds, lakes.	- Wildlife / biodiversity - Recreational use
Indoor sport and recreation facilities.	Including swimming pools, sports halls, indoor bowls, indoor tennis, and health gyms. Community buildings.	- Formal sport and recreation participation

2.13 This audit has incorporated and recorded those open spaces, sport and recreational facilities listed in Table 1 that are relevant to this South Gloucestershire specific study. Therefore, not all the spaces and facilities listed in Table 1 are addressed within the scope of this audit report, further details explaining the reason for this approach are set out within this section.

2.14 Analysis Areas

Analysis of the open space and facilities across South Gloucestershire has been undertaken by representing the District as five spatial areas, these follow the structure of the emerging Core Strategy.

2.15 The use of five analysis areas allows a greater understanding of an area's specific provision, including an understanding of distribution of spaces, facilities and an appreciation of sub-district area specific perceptions and issues. Table 2 sets out these analysis areas and the wards that are contained within each.

2.16 The analysis areas provide a useful approach to highlight the context for provision levels, which takes account of the concerns that PPG17's companion guide sets out regarding the use of ward area analysis solely:

“Ward boundaries are essentially arbitrary and very few local communities identify with them – indeed, most people have no idea where they are. In addition, a ward can appear to be poorly provided but have very good provision just outside its boundary.”

Table 2:

Area name	Ward included	Population (2007 mid year estimates)
East Fringe of the Bristol Urban Area	Downend Emersons Green Hanham Kings Chase Longwell Green Oldland Common Rodway	87,026

	Staple Hill Woodstock	
North Fringe of the Bristol Urban Area	Bradley Stoke Central and Stoke Lodge Bradley Stoke North Bradley Stoke South Filton Frenchay and Stoke Park Patchway Stoke Gifford	56,481
Yate/Chipping Sodbury	Chipping Sodbury Dodington Yate Central Yate North	34,552
Thornbury	Thornbury North Thornbury South and Alveston	15,436
Rural & Other (including Severnside)	Almondsbury Bitton Boyd Valley Charfield Cotswold Edge Frampton Cotterell Ladden Brook Parkwall Pilning and Severn Beach Severn Siston Westerleigh Winterbourne	63,021
Total		256,516

2.17 PPG17 – Five Step Process

The methodology employed by South Gloucestershire relates to PPG17's companion's 5 step process.

2.18 The Companion guide to PPG17 sets out a five step process for undertaking a local assessment of open space, sport and recreation facilities. In undertaking the audit step 1 has continued throughout the steps 2 and 3 reflecting the preparation of the Core Strategy and the supporting evidence base. The five steps are as follows:

- Step 1. Identifying Local Needs
- Step 2. Auditing Local Provision
- Step 3. Setting Provision Standards
- Step 4. Applying Provision Standards
- Step 5. Drafting Policies

2.19 Our Approach

The following steps indicate how the Council has ensured this audit has been undertaken in accordance with the recommended approach detailed in PPG17 and its companion guide. In essence these steps have been undertaken in a parallel process.

2.20 **Step 1. Identifying Local Needs**

In respect of identifying local needs PPG17 outlines three tasks within this stage:

- Identify the implications of existing national, regional and local policies and strategies for open space, sport and recreation
- Review existing provision standards and determine their effectiveness
- Consult local communities on attitudes to existing provision

2.21 Existing policies and strategies relating to open space, sport and recreation provision and other associated objectives have been identified and reviewed within section 4. Existing provision standards, national guidelines and standards, and local comparable provision standards have been considered when determining the recommended provision standards for each typology, in sections 5 to 11.

2.22 PPG17 places an emphasis on local needs, rather than reliance upon national standards. The assessment of needs should therefore influence the qualitative vision and quantitative and accessibility standards that take account of the aspirations that local communities have with regard to the type and amount of open space and facilities in their locality.

2.23 PPG17 and its companion guide suggest that developing an understanding of local needs should be the first stage of the open space, sport and recreation audit. In order to achieve this successfully, the Council first sought to establish the existing level of provision and gain an understanding of the quality of this provision. The Council continues to monitor its services in particular as a provider of open spaces, sport and recreation facilities. It has also undertaken a series of consultation exercises to robustly understand people's perception of existing provision and understand their needs and requirements. The main consultation methods have been:

- Surveys
- Consultation events
- Workshops
- Targeted events with children and young people

2.24 A detailed record of this comprehensive programme of consultation has been produced to support this audit and other plans and strategies, a summary is provided in section 3. The outcomes from these consultations have been considered within sections 5-11 when developing the local standards, the main consultation points have been summarised within these sections.

2.25 The Council have an internal project board and working group (the Green Spaces Working Group) that have been actively involved with influencing the direction of this open space, sport and recreation audit. Council members have been consulted throughout the consultation stages. A cross party group of members have reviewed the emerging outcomes of this audit.

2.26 **Step 2. Auditing Local Provision**

PPG17 states that audits of provision should encompass all existing open space, sport and recreation facilities. PPG17 highlights that some spaces

should be excluded from the scope of audit, this audit excludes the following spaces:

- SLOAP (space left over after planning i.e. in and around blocks of flats) and some road side verges
- Private roads and private gardens
- Farmland and farm tracks
- Areas of small amenity green space not suitable for recreational purposes due to their size and configuration
- Sites which are not legitimately publicly accessible

2.27 A comprehensive audit of local provision is supported by sites being visited to assess their quality and value. The sites included in this audit have been recorded from a range of sources including:

- Historic records
- Aerial photography
- Digital records (based on the Council's Geographical Information System (GIS))
- Existing plans and designations (detailed in the Adopted Local Plan)
- Site visits
- Local/Officer knowledge, and internally verified.
- External verification during Winter 2009, involving town and parish councils and also South Gloucestershire Councillors in the unparished areas.

2.28 Site information has been stored on a database, which contains geographical information linked to the Councils Geographical Information System (GIS). The open space, sport and recreation database of sites, hereby referred to as the "database", has evolved to store information about individual sites, including a unique reference code for each site and details about its size, location and type of use. The database also allows other information relating to quality, value and other site specific information to be stored and interrogated.

2.29 The site information has been referenced against its ward location, allowing quantitative reviews of provision to be undertaken and initial views to be reached on the extent of provision within any given area.

2.30 Audits undertaken in accordance with PPG17 are advised to consider both quantitative and the qualitative elements of open space, sport and recreation facilities. Audits of quality are particularly important as they will allow identification of sites which have the potential for increased use through better design, management and maintenance.

2.31 Sites of public value, regardless of the extent of public access, have been identified through the audit process and have been mapped and stored in the open space, sport and recreation database. However, only these sites which offer legitimate public access been visited and assessed. Only the accessible sites have been used as a basis for analysing the provision levels and establishing the recommended local standards.

2.32 It is important to note that scores relating to specific sites are relevant on the day the site was visited and the database should continually be maintained to ensure information is as up to date as possible.

- 2.33 As stated above, in order to reflect the nature of South Gloucestershire five spatial analysis areas have been established to provide the context for analysing the provision levels in the urban and rural areas. It is important not to ignore the relationship that urban areas have with their rural hinterland and vice versa.
- 2.34 Open spaces can be multi functional and have elements of a number of typologies contained within them. In order to ensure that the audit does not double count spaces under two typologies the most dominant typology has been used to categorise the space. PPG17 supports this approach, referring to it as identifying a site's 'primary purpose'.
- 2.35 Where large sites contain distinct and different types of open space, the site has been subdivided and the different spaces recorded separately. A typical example of this approach is seen when a children's play space is located within an amenity area or park, each one of these types of space has been recorded and surveyed separately in order to reflect their primary purpose.
- 2.36 The following publicly accessible open spaces, sport and recreation facilities are included within the scope of the site audit (survey) process:

Table 3:

Typology	Comment
Parks and Gardens	Public parks and gardens assessed.
Natural/Semi-Natural green space	Open Access land have also been included within this category.
Outdoor Sports facilities and associated pavilion/changing rooms.	All sites both public and private, where access is possible
Amenity green space (including areas surrounding green corridors)	Sites >0.2ha in size have initially been assessed.
Provision for children	
Provision for young people	
Allotments	
Cemeteries & Churchyards	

- 2.37 The following types of open space are not being assessed (surveyed) within this study:

Table 4:

Typology	Comment
Green Corridors	Surveying these linear features is not feasible within the scope of this audit. South Gloucestershire Council Public Rights of Way Team have completed a full network survey of rights of way, the results of which are being used to inform future actions relating to the Rights of Way Improvement Plan (ROWIP).
Accessible countryside in urban areas	Given the nature of the relationship between urban areas and the surrounding rural hinterland in South Gloucestershire, it is not considered appropriate to specifically

	assess these areas. The relationship different urban areas have with neighbouring rural areas has been set out in the relevant sections of this audit.
Blue Infrastructure, e.g. streams and ponds	Whilst these spaces have been recorded in the open spaces, sport and recreation database, it is not appropriate to assess them separately from their adjoining open spaces, and therefore these areas of water will be reflected in the quality survey of their adjoining open spaces. Surveys are non-technical and do not review items such as water purity.
Civic Space, e.g. hard surfaced formal spaces	Only a very limited number of sites of civic space have been recorded, it is therefore felt that assessment of these sites would not add value to this audit.
Indoor sports facilities	South Gloucestershire Council's Sport and Physical Activity team are preparing a separate Built Facilities Strategy, with the objective of ensuring access to high quality facilities.

- 2.38 A set of typology specific criterion was prepared in order to have a consistent approach to site assessments, these are detailed in the 'Open Space Audit – Manual', available from the Council's website (www.southglos.gov.uk). These criteria are centred around the following categories:
- Quality, based upon main attributes (including aspects of accessibility)
 - Value, encompassing use, context and wider benefits (covering human benefits, wildlife, biodiversity and wider environmental benefits, such as climate change).
 - Other, including an inventory of other site assets, which are outside the primary purpose of the site.
 - Actions/Opportunities, detailing potential future actions that would improve the site.
- 2.39 The database has been developed so that the overall quality scores can be interrogated, but it also allows specific elements of the survey information to be interrogated. Different types of open spaces, sport and recreation facilities clearly require different qualitative assessment criteria. These criteria have been developed with the involvement of the Council's Green Spaces Working Group and through consideration of a range of nationally recognised approaches and best practice examples, which have been adapted to reflect South Gloucestershire's needs.
- 2.40 Each qualitative criteria has been scored on a 5 point scale (0 to 4), with the highest score of 4 being 'very good' and lowest 0 being 'very poor'. The Council has developed scoring guidelines for each typology based upon the Green Flag Award Criteria, (see Appendix 1). In cases where the criteria were considered 'not applicable' to a particular site, then those criteria were discounted when calculating the total percentage scores. Where sites do not contain an element that the assessor adjudges to be significant to that type and site, then a score of 0 or very poor is assigned to that element. The judgement as to whether an element is missing and is required, is the

decision of the assessor. A simple weighting of particular criteria has also been used to ensure that primary purpose is reflected in the overall score, these weightings were derived from reviewing the feedback from consultations undertaken prior to the commencement of the site visits.

- 2.41 PPG17's companion guide suggests that the value of an open space, sport or recreation facility relates to its context, the level and type of use, and the wider benefits the facility provides. The PPG17 companion guide advocates a classification approach to the assessment of value, attributing either a 'high' or 'low' value to each facility. South Gloucestershire's approach has been to look at 'Value' on three levels, adding a 'medium' value to assessments. The judgement of value is undertaken at the time of the site visit. This can be combined with the quality review to identify areas in need of protection and areas in need of improvement.
- 2.42 A site proforma has been developed and is being used to record the site assessment and other relevant information, such as the potential to include other typologies within the site. Information recorded will be accurate at the time of the site survey.
- 2.43 As highlighted, above, a set of guidelines have been produced which set out the range of criteria that each different type of open space is being assessed against. Each type of open space requires a slightly different approach to assessing quality and value. For example the value assessment of natural and semi-natural greenspaces reflects the wildlife interest, and the value scores for equipped play areas reflect the primary use of play.
- 2.44 Assessment criteria were trialled and reviewed to ensure the correct information is being gathered, to ensure that their use is reasonable, and to ensure that assessments are undertaken consistently.
- 2.45 Outdoor sport facilities have been assessed using an adapted version of the Sport England recommended criteria; these assessments have been undertaken for quality and are non-technical visual assessments. No value judgements on the actual facilities have been undertaken; however the overall playing fields that facilities are located within have been assessed alongside other open space typologies.
- 2.46 Children and young people's provision has been assessed using criteria derived from guidance contained within the Fields In Trust document, Planning and Design for Outdoor Sport and Play (2008). An overall play value score has been derived from the consideration of the play experience offered by the design and equipment available.
- 2.47 During site visits, the mapping of each site has and will continue to be checked and any necessary updates to the database undertaken. Storing sites in a Geographical Information System (GIS) enables queries to be undertaken to assess provision levels within a given area, by open space typology, and then cross-referenced against the quality and value of sites. This creates a very powerful analysis tool.
- 2.48 **Step 3. Setting Provision Standards**

PPG17 states that planning policies for open space, sport and recreation facilities should be based upon local standards derived from a robust

assessment of local need, rather than reliance upon national standards as these can not account for local circumstances.

2.49 PPG17 recommends that Local Authorities should rely upon local information regarding needs and opportunities (gathered in step 1), to inform the creation of locally derived standards for the provision of open space, sport and recreation facilities. PPG17 goes on to recommend that local standards should be set out for the following:

- Quantitative provision
- Quality standards of provision
- Accessibility standards

2.50 The methodology South Gloucestershire Council has used to determine these standards is set out below:

2.51 **Quantity**

This audit enables an understanding of the quantity of provision for each typology across all areas of South Gloucestershire. The information collected enables the calculation of the provision of each typology per 1,000 population. The quantity provision figures have been used to calculate current provision levels across South Gloucestershire and the five analysis areas, based upon ward population data (2007-mid year estimates).

2.52 The current provision levels have been assessed along with the results of the consultation programme. This has enabled the current provision level to be compared with the perceived community need in order to recommend a suitable local standard for the quantity of provision of each open space typology.

2.53 In order to ensure that local quantity standards are appropriate for each typology the following information has been investigated:

- Analysis of existing national standards.
- Analysis of existing local standards and practices.
- Assessment of current provision per 1000 population (across the five analysis areas, and overall level).
- Benchmarking – comparing the standards implemented by other local authorities.
- Consideration of consultation comments.
- Recommendation for the quantity standard and a justification for the standard.

2.54 The overall aims of the assessment of quantity are to:

- provide an understanding of the adequacy of the current level of provision for each open space typology across the district.
- identify those areas of the district where provision levels are deficient in respect of each open space typology.
- set out a guide to developers as to the amount of open space expected to be provided in connections with new development.
- guide future delivery / priorities.

2.55 Quality

PPG17 states that quality and value of open space are fundamentally different and can be completely unrelated. For example, a high quality facility or open space may be inaccessible, resulting in low levels of usage and, therefore, its value to the public is limited. Similarly, a low quality open space that is used intensively every day, or that has some other significant wider benefit (for example for wildlife use) would still be of high value to the public.

2.56 A total percentage score for quality is calculated for each site visited. The recommended quality standards reflects the issues highlighted through the consultation and the site assessment scores, for example if sites generally achieve high quality scores and consultation indicates the importance of quality, the standard should seek to maintain the current quality score.

2.57 In order to ensure that local quality standards are appropriate for each typology the following information has been investigated:

- Analysis of existing national standards
- Analysis of existing local standards
- Benchmarking – comparing the standards implemented by other local authorities.
- Consideration of consultation findings
- Recommendation for the quality standard and a justification for the standard

2.58 The overall aims of the assessment of quality are to:

- identify sites and specific types of open spaces that have quality deficiencies and, thus, priorities and opportunities for improvements.
- provide a position to gauge the relationship between the quality rating of a site and the value of that site by considering the use, context and wider benefits that the site offers.

2.59 A site's score is translated into an overall site percentage and used in the following quality rating:

0% - 24%	25% - 49%	50 % - 59%	60% - 74%	> 75%
Very Poor	Poor	Average	Good	Very Good

2.60 The scores achieved by individual outdoor sport facilities through the non technical visual assessments should be assessed in accordance with Sport England's 'Towards A Level Playing Field' quality rating. This will be explored in more detail in the Playing Pitch Strategy.

2.61 Quality – Importance of Value

The PPG17 companion guide states that the quality and value need to be considered and have set out the following matrix:

Table 5:

<p>High quality/low value</p> <p>Wherever possible, the preferred policy approach to a space or facility in this category should be to enhance its value in terms of its present primary purpose. If this is not possible, the next best policy approach is to consider whether it might be of high value if converted to some other primary purpose. Only if this is also impossible will it be acceptable to consider a change of use.</p>	<p>High quality/high value</p> <p>Ideally all spaces and facilities should come into this category and the planning system should then seek to protect them.</p>
<p>Low quality/low value</p> <p>Wherever possible, the policy approach to these spaces or facilities should be to enhance their quality <i>provided</i> it is possible to enhance their value. If it is not possible, for whatever reason, the space or facility may be ‘surplus to requirements’ in terms of its present primary purpose.</p>	<p>Low quality/high value</p> <p>The policy approach to these spaces or facilities should always be to enhance their quality and therefore the planning system should seek to protect them.</p>

2.62 South Gloucestershire’s approach to considering value; has been to record the wider benefits each site offers, the level of use and the context (taking into consideration the location and quality of other sites of the same type). These value criteria have been scored using a three point scale: high, medium, and low. By combining the value scores from these different criteria an overall value score for a site has been derived. The objective of this process is to identify where a site fits within the above matrix (Table 5) so the appropriate policy approach can be taken for that particular site.

2.63 The approach of highlighting value and quality has been supplemented by the assessor recording (during their site visit) whether they consider there is potential to encourage greater use through introducing new typologies to a site/facility. For example, an amenity space may have the potential to accommodate allotments, or to accommodate new play provision. This provides a context for considering the future of a site, which can be used to guide enhancement and management improvements.

2.64 Site value scores do not form part of this report; the judgements taken as part of the site visits needs to be supplemented by more detailed local consultation when future delivery plans are progressed in specific locations. However, the value scores do provide a base position to aid the progression of area specific delivery plans and guide decision on specific sites in relation to the policy options set out in the quality/value matrix (above).

2.65 Accessibility

PPG17 states that accessibility is key consideration for open space sites. Open spaces, sport and recreation facilities may exist, but if they are not accessible they may not help to satisfy demand and alleviate any shortfall in certain types of provision. Sites may be inaccessible due to physical barriers,

such as roads and railway lines, or be gated and locked preventing public access, or only be accessible to certain members of the community. When considering the provision of open space, sport and recreation facilities within any area is it important to identify these barriers as they may give rise to a shortage of provision or require specific action to overcome them to ensure users can gain safe access.

- 2.66 The accessibility of some types of open space, sport and recreation facilities is very important to the use of a site, however it needs to be recognised that for some areas, such as those that are of value to biodiversity/wildlife, increased human accessibility may not be appropriate as it could impact on the primary purpose, quality and value of the site.
- 2.67 The overall aims of the assessment of accessibility are to:
- Identify how far people are willing to travel to reach each type of open space, sport and recreation facility
 - Identify areas of the district that are deficient in provision, through the application of accessibility standards.
- 2.68 Other aspects of accessibility are being assessed together with the quality assessment, such as signage, footpaths, and routes to the site. These criteria will be incorporated into the overall quality score.
- 2.69 As with quantity standards, accessibility standards should be derived from an understanding of community views, particularly with regards to the maximum distance that members of the public are willing to travel. Responses from the household surveys have been analysed by considering the distances all respondents gave, those from the urban analysis areas (East Fringe of the Bristol Urban Area, North Fringe of the Bristol Urban Area, Yate/Chipping Sodbury and Thornbury) and those from rural and other analysis area. This has provided a comparison of accessibility from the rural and urban areas of South Gloucestershire.
- 2.70 After establishing distance thresholds, (the maximum distance that a typical user can reasonably be expected to travel to each type of provision using different modes of transport) they can be used in association with the Geographical Information System (GIS) to identify areas where there are issues with regard to the accessibility of provision.
- 2.71 PPG17 states the importance of standards being set locally, as national policy cannot cater for local circumstances. The level of access to a range of provision in remote rural areas is likely to be significantly lower than the levels found in the district's urban areas.
- 2.72 PPG17 encourages the use of sustainable methods of transportation (such as walking, cycling and public transport) to travel to facilities/provision; this especially applies to new provision. Ensuring that open space, sport and recreation facilities are close to the people that need them is a core principle of sustainable development.
- 2.73 As outlined above, accessibility is a key component of particular site and will impact on the perceived quantity of provision within any given area.

- 2.74 PPG17 advocates the use of ‘affective catchments’, this is the distance travelled by 75-80% of perspective users, this has been captured through the consultation programme.
- 2.75 Accessibility standards have been set in the form of straight line distances in metres and walk time where walking is the most popular mode of travel, and a drive time and distance where driving is considered to be the most reasonable mode of transport. Using catchment buffers from a site will allow the identification of issues relating to deficiencies of provision for the different types of open spaces, sport and recreation facilities.
- 2.76 The Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) states that ‘reasonable adjustments’ should be made so that disabled people are able to use and access sites/services. Ongoing site visits and assessments will continue to be used to assess whether adjustments are necessary, or if they have already been made at each site.
- 2.77 In order to ensure that local accessibility standards are appropriate for each typology the following information has been investigated:
- Analysis of existing national standards
 - Analysis of existing local standards
 - Benchmarking – comparing the standards implemented by other local authorities.
 - Consideration of consultation findings
 - Recommendation for the accessibility standard and a justification for the standard
- 2.78 Details of the recommended standards for each typology are set out in sections 5 to 11.
- 2.79 **Step 4. Applying Provision Standards**
- As set out in step 3 the developed local provision standards can be applied to each typology and site stored within the database. This allows for the identification of sites and geographical areas where deficits currently exist and, therefore, highlight priority areas for investment, enhancement and protection. Further details on applying the standards are set out in step 3 above.
- 2.80 This report sets out the application of the standards where relevant. The Council will prepare a Supplementary Planning Document that will set out in detail how the standards should be used in connection with the consideration of future planning applications.
- 2.81 **Step. 5 Drafting Policies**
- Applying the provision standards enables the identification of deficiencies in terms of quantity, quality and accessibility.
- 2.82 Based upon an analysis of the application of standards, the site assessments and consultation responses, key outcomes can be reflected in strategic policy options. These strategic policy options are being set out in the Green Infrastructure Strategy, delivery plans (site and area specific), the Core Strategy and other Council Strategies and policy documents. The PPG17

Companion guide recommends that future policy options are likely to have four basic components:

- Existing provision to be protected
- Existing provision to be enhanced
- Existing provision to be relocated in order to meet local needs more effectively or make better overall use of land
- Proposals for new provision – on and off-site and related commuted maintenance sums.

2.83 The emerging outcomes from this study have been used to inform the development of policies within the Local Development Framework.

SECTION 3

3. Consultation

3.1 This section sets out summaries of the consultation that has been undertaken to ensure the recommended standards are robustly justified and reflect the needs of South Gloucestershire's residents. A comprehensive programme of consultation was planned and followed to ensure a wide range of views and opinions were sought on open space, sport and recreation facilities.

3.2 Research Methodology & Response

To gather a robust evidence base the Council undertook and commissioned a comprehensive engagement and research programme which has been brought together into a separate detailed report, available from the Council's website (www.southglos.gov.uk). Set out in this section is a summary of the engagement and research programme.

3.3 The focus of this work was to gain a thorough understanding of local people, service users and key stakeholders current views on the quantity, quality and accessibility of a range of open space, sport and recreational facilities and their needs for the future.

3.4 All survey work took place between November 2009 and March 2010 and this built upon earlier work undertaken through Viewpoint – South Gloucestershire Council's citizen panel (2007) and the development of the Council's Core Strategy Issues & Options (2008).

3.5 Household Survey

Paper surveys were sent out to 200 randomly selected households in each of our 35 wards – 7000 surveys in total, to enable us to get an even distribution of responses across South Gloucestershire.

3.6 Responses were reviewed after 1 month and a further top up mailing of 2000 surveys was undertaken to ensure a balanced response from across the district.

3.7 In total 979 responses were received with an overall response rate of 11%.

3.8 Children & Young People Survey

A survey was distributed to all youth centres in South Gloucestershire in both hard copy form and on the website, supported by a youth worker briefing pack and free swim vouchers.

3.9 The children's participation worker visited 6 primary schools throughout the area and worked with whole classes and school councils to gather the views of 377 children aged 6 to 11.

3.10 Views were also recorded at the "Use your voice" event, a one day workshop of young people from across the district including school councils, youth forums, young carers, children in care and children with disabilities.

3.11 In total 218 surveys were returned, 377 children took part in activities through schools and 45 young people took part in the “Use Your Voice” event.

3.12 Parish & Town Council Survey & Site verification

All 46 Town & Parish Councils in South Gloucestershire, were sent a pack of information including a survey seeking their views and maps of their area asking them to verify the location of all publically accessible open space, sport and recreational facilities.

3.13 In total, 28 responses were received to the site verification and 36 responses to the survey, giving an overall responses rate of 61%

3.14 Sports Club Survey

312 surveys were distributed to a mailing list of local sports clubs, representing a wide range of sports and activities undertaken by local people. Clubs were asked about their membership levels, the facilities they use, key issues and plans for the future.

3.15 In total 43 club surveys were returned, giving an overall response rate of 14%.

3.16 School Survey

Surveys were distributed to all 113 schools in South Gloucestershire, seeking information on their current facilities, the level of community use and their plans for the future.

3.17 In total 72 responses were received, giving an overall response rate of 64%

3.18 Allotment Holder Survey

Surveys were distributed to all 289 South Gloucestershire Council allotment holders seeking their views on the current provision and information about how they use the facilities.

3.19 In total 147 responses were received, giving an overall response rate of 51%

3.20 StreetCare Survey

During January 2010, 2000 randomly selected users of the Council’s StreetCare service were sent a copy of a survey seeking their views on the importance of different aspects of the service and current satisfaction with the level of service received. This survey is undertaken biannually allowing the results to be compared and tracked.

3.21 In total 672 responses were received, giving an overall response rate of 33%

3.22 Stakeholder Workshop

A workshop event was held at Thornbury Leisure Centre to consider open spaces, sport and recreation facilities. The event was an evening workshop, with invitations sent to South Gloucestershire Councillors, all town and parish councils, secondary school head teachers, local friends groups, environmental groups, local safer stronger groups, hub clubs, leisure providers and sports associations.

3.23 The evening provided people with an opportunity to express their views on the quantity, quality and accessibility of open space, sport and recreation facilities in their area. The district was split into five areas, with a table focusing on the North Fringe of the Bristol Urban Area, the East Fringe of the Bristol Urban Area, Yate/Chipping Sodbury, Thornbury and rural areas, participants were grouped to focus on their area. The aim of the workshop was to provide an understanding as to why the Council has been undertaking consultation on open space, sport and recreation, what the current provision is like, what are the issues, what are the priorities for the future and how can joint working create better outcomes.

3.24 **Green Infrastructure Event**

The event was held at Turnberrie's Community Centre, Thornbury, to consider Green Infrastructure in South Gloucestershire. The aim of the event was to provide information on the emerging policy position on strategic green infrastructure in the Core Strategy and to provide the opportunity for discussing and commenting on the policy proposals relating to GI Objectives. Attendees were also invited to submit comments on the draft Open Space Standards Policy; which was based upon the emerging results of this open space audit.

3.25 The event also provided information on existing strategic green infrastructure assets and projects and gave the opportunity to start to identify green infrastructure opportunities, why they are important and how they can be delivered.

3.26 **Member Consultation**

South Gloucestershire Councillors have been involved throughout the consultation process. They have been kept informed of the scope of the project, notified when Town and Parish Council have been contacted and invited to the events that were held. The Executive Member for Planning Transport and Strategic Environment has been updated on the project and consultation process, as have the Planning Advisory Group (PAG). A cross party sub-group of the Planning Advisory Group (PAG) also met separately to review the scope of the project and reflect upon and shape the actions and recommended standards.

3.27 **Viewpoint**

Viewpoint is South Gloucestershire Council's statistically representative panel of 1600 residents that is used for a variety of survey purposes. In 2007, 4 specific questions were asked relating to open space, sport and recreational provision.

3.28 **Core Strategy Issues and Options**

During 2008, South Gloucestershire Council undertook consultation to develop its Core Strategy through an issues and options stage. Questions were asked about the Council's approach to planning for formal sport and recreation needs and for informal open space provision. Specific questions were asked about the quantity and quality of green spaces throughout the area. This was supported by a series of stakeholder workshops attended by

Section 3: Consultation

members of the public, Councillors, Parish & Town Councils, developers, landowners, environmental and community groups.

- 3.29 The development of the Core Strategy policies was informed by the results of this engagement programme.

SECTION 4

4. Strategic Context – Plans, Policies and Strategies

This strategic context reviews the national, regional and local policies and strategies relevant to open space, sport and recreation facilities in South Gloucestershire. It has been prepared to understand the breadth of the guidance and information available, to join together the different spatial scales that plans, policies and strategies are focused upon, and to provide an understanding of the existing context and effectiveness of plans, policies and strategies.

4.1 National Context

Planning Policy Statements and Guidance Notes:

4.2 Planning Policy Statement 1 (PPS1): Delivering Sustainable Development

PPS1 sets out the Government's overarching planning policies for the delivery of sustainable development through the planning system. Planning authorities are advised to enhance the environment as part of development proposals and development plans should take into account the need to improve the built and natural environment in and around urban area and rural settlements, including the provision of good quality open space.

4.3 Planning Policy Statement 9 (PPS9): Biodiversity and Geological Conservation

PPS9 sets out the Government's planning policies on the protection of biodiversity and geological conservation through the planning system. It highlights that Local Planning Authorities should maximise opportunities for building-in biodiversity and geological features in and around development proposals so it is valued by people.

4.4 Planning Policy Guidance Note 2 (PPG2): Green belts

PPG2 explains the purposes and history of Green Belts. It details the land-use objectives concerning Green Belts and the presumption against inappropriate development. It highlights the positive role they have to play in respect of the following objectives:

- to improve opportunities for access to the open countryside for the urban population;
- to provide opportunities for outdoor sport and outdoor recreation near urban areas;
- to retain attractive landscapes, and enhance landscape, near to where people live;
- to improve damaged and derelict land around towns;
- to secure nature conservation interest; and
- to retain land in agricultural, forestry and related uses.

4.5 Planning Policy Guidance Note 17 (PPG17): Planning for Open Space, Sport and Recreation

PPG17 sets out the Government's planning policies on the provision of open space, sport and recreation facilities. It is supported by a companion guide, together these form the basis of the methodology followed by this open space audit. PPG17 identifies the importance of establishing high quality and well managed open spaces, sports and recreational facilities in both the urban and rural setting. It recognises that well planned and maintained open space and recreational facilities can bring together members of communities and provide opportunities for social interaction. PPG17 states that the Government considers that standards are best set locally.

National Guidelines

4.6 Fields In Trust

Fields In Trust (FIT) were previously known as the National Playing Fields Association (NPFA), they have since 1925 promoted the provision of outdoor recreational facilities. Since the 1930s they have recommended 'The Six Acre Standard', this equates to around 2.4 hectares per 1,000 population. The Trusts latest publication in 2008 recognises the governments call for the local determination and adoption of standards relating to quantity, quality and accessibility of opens space, sport and recreation. Their approach has therefore been adjusted to detail benchmarks of provisions.

4.7 'Nature Nearby' Accessible Natural Greenspace Guidance

Is Natural England's guidance on access to natural greenspace, they believe that everyone should have access to good quality natural greenspace near to where they live. They consider that this provides a broad range of benefits to people and the quality of their lives, covering all the ecosystem services that we depend on. The guidance sets out Natural England's expected standards for publicly accessible natural greenspace including accessibility, quantity, service and quality recommended standards.

4.8 Natural England's Green Infrastructure Guidance

This guidance provides a comprehensive overview of the concept of green infrastructure and seeks to increase awareness of the importance of green infrastructure and the benefits the provision of green infrastructure has in and around urban areas, in particular in the face of climate change. This guidance seeks to draw out the distinctions between open space planning reflected through PPG17 compliment audits and the broad scope of green infrastructure planning.

4.9 The Play Strategy (DCMS)

This strategy highlighted the Government's ambition to make this the best country in the world for children to grow up. The Government's vision for play includes:

- In every residential area there are a variety of supervised and unsupervised places for play, free of charge;

- Local neighbourhoods are, and feel like, safe, interesting places to play;
- Routes to children's play space are safe and accessible for all children and young people;
- Park and open spaces are attractive and welcoming to children and young people, and are well maintained and well used;
- Children and young people have a clear stake in public space and their play is accepted by their neighbours;
- Children and young people play in a way that respects other people and property;
- Children and young people and their families take an active role in the development of local play spaces; and
- Play spaces are attractive, welcoming, engaging and accessible for all local children and young people, including disabled children, and children from minority groups in the community.

4.10 This national Play Strategy is supported by a number of documents that have been prepared by the Play England part of the National Children's Bureau which independently advises Government on play and childhood. These include Design for Play: A guide to creating successful play spaces (DCSF, DCMS, Play England – 2008), Planning for housing: including space for play and informal recreation (Play Sector Briefing – 2007), and Better Places to Play Through Planning (Play England – 2009). These each provide details of the importance of play opportunities and recommend approaches to ensure high quality opportunities are delivered.

4.11 **Local Context**

Local Policy

4.12 South Gloucestershire Local Plan

The Local Plan contains a range of policies and proposals aimed at protecting and enhancing environmental quality, increasing the provision of new open space, sport and recreation and ensuring provision meets the needs arising from new development.

4.13 A brief summary of the policies that relate to open space, sport and recreation include:

- Policy D1, requires all development to meet good quality design standards. Proposals are required to demonstrate that existing features of landscape, nature conservation, heritage or amenity value, including rights of way, are safeguarded and enhanced through incorporation into the development.
- Policy L1, attributes and features of the landscape which make a significant contribution to the character or distinctiveness will be conserved. The amenity of the landscape must be conserved and where possible enhanced.
- Policy L4, development should not conflict with the Community Forest objectives and not prejudice projects. Where appropriate contributions will be sought towards implementation of Community Forest objectives.

- Policy L5, seek to protect open areas that make a contribution to the quality, character, amenity and distinctiveness of a locality. Measures to enhance and manage these open areas will be sought through the applications process.
- Policies L7 and L8, seek to protect designated sites (such as Sites of Nature Conservation Interest) from inappropriate development.
- Policy L9, seeks to prevent harm to protected species from the effects of development.
- Policy L10, resists development that would impact on the character and appearance of historic parks, gardens and battlefields.
- Policy L17 and L18, seeks to protect the quality of the water environment and requires developments to incorporate sustainable drainage systems (SuDs) wherever practical.
- Policy GB1, allows for development that conforms with the purpose of the Green Belt designation, including essential facilities for outdoor sport and recreation.
- Policy LC1, allocates sites for community facilities.
- Policy LC3, sets out the criteria for the development, expansion or improvement of indoor and outdoor sports and leisure facilities, within the existing urban area.
- Policy LC5, sets out the criteria for the development, expansion or improvement of outdoor sports and recreation outside the existing urban area.
- Policy LC7, allocates sites for formal and informal open space provision and enhancement.
- Policy LC8, sets out the open space and children's play space requirements resulting from new residential development. More details are given below.
- Policy LC9, protect open space and playing fields from inappropriate development.
- Policy LC11, seeks to safeguard the provision of required allotment sites.
- Policy LC12, safeguards existing and proposed recreational walking, cycling and horse riding routes. Adjacent developments should provide access to these routes and contributions will be sought towards their enhancement.
- Policy S4, sets out the criteria for the development of burial facilities and crematoria.

4.14 Local Plan Policy LC8

Local Plan Policy LC8 for open space and children's play in conjunction with new residential development outlines the need for local provision of formal open space and children's playspace and informal open space if current provision is inadequate to meet the projected needs arising from the future occupiers of proposals for new residential development. It identifies that formal open space and children's playspace should be to a standard of 2.4ha per 1000 population, in addition there is a need for informal open space provision.

4.15 South Gloucestershire Council Design Checklist Supplementary Planning Document

This checklist provides additional planning guidance on design matters covered by the South Gloucestershire Local Plan, its aim is to help achieve

good quality, sustainable design. It asks 56 key questions grouped under 12 topics which developers are asked to consider. One of the topics is 'Open Space in New Development'; four key questions are asked relating to this topic, these can be summarised as:

- Has provision of green infrastructure been informed by an appropriate analysis?
- Does the development provide enough open space and of the right quality? and
- Does the development provide safe connected routes?

4.16 This SPD states that as a rule of thumb, private/shared open spaces should be immediately accessible, local play space (LEAP) within 240 metres, neighbourhood parks (NEAP) within 600 metres, and district/town open spaces (formal squares, playing fields etc) should be within 800 metres of dwellings.

4.17 South Gloucestershire Developers Guide

The developers guide acts as guide to developers regarding the Council's requirements for the provision of, or contribution towards services, amenities and infrastructure generated by significant development proposals. It expands on the requirements for public open space set out in Local Plan Policy LC8. It states the anticipated design requirements, including a 'play landscape' that draws on the local social and natural characteristics of the sites and includes non-prescriptive play materials and features.

4.18 South Gloucestershire Landscape Character Assessment Supplementary Planning Document

The landscape character assessment has been produced to support the Local Plan policies relating to landscape conservation and enhancement; it was also intended to provide information to help in the implementation of a range of criteria-based environmental policies. The assessment divided South Gloucestershire into 8 landscape character types and 21 landscape character areas, it provides a description of the physical features and attributes which make these areas distinct. It also contains an assessment of the present condition of the landscape, recent and potential future changes including land use/management and built development and the sensitivity of the landscape to future change.

4.19 South Gloucestershire Development in the Green Belt Supplement Planning Document

This supplementary document provides more information on implementing the Local Plan policy on the Green Belt. It states that the use of land in the Green Belt can provide opportunities for outdoor recreation and outdoor sporting activities near urban areas. It also stated that new buildings should be limited to facilities that are the minimum essential for the operation of the associated activity, for example small changing rooms.

4.20 South Gloucestershire Biodiversity and the Planning Process Supplementary Planning Guidance

This supplementary guidance provides details to developers on the expectations for respecting existing biodiversity and how wildlife should also benefit from development. It provides a series of measures that may result from development, such as new planting, protection of valued assets and creation of opportunities.

4.21 South Gloucestershire Planning and the Forest of Avon Supplement Planning Guidance

This SPG advises how new development can contribute to the aims of the Forest of Avon Plan, in particular how tree planting can conserve and enhance local landscape character. It goes on to highlight the importance of creating a network of connected routes with the appropriate quality standards (such as furniture, kissing gate, and interpretation boards) and how this contributes to people's quality of life.

4.22 South Gloucestershire Sustainable Drainage System Supplement Planning Guidance

This guides the provision of sustainable drainage systems; it recognises that the introduction of water features into new development can improve the quality of the built environment and quality of life.

4.23 South Gloucestershire Trees on Development Sites Supplement Planning Guidance

This guidance highlights that tree should be regarded as an asset, not a constraint during the planning and design of any new development. It sets out a series of planning and design considerations.

4.24 South Gloucestershire Local Development Framework, the Core Strategy

The Core Strategy policy development has taken account of the emerging findings of this audit and the supporting consultation responses, it includes a number of policies relating to green infrastructure, open space, sport and recreation provision. A brief summary of the policies that relate to open space, sport and recreation include:

- Policy CS1, requires all development to meet good quality design standards and site planning principles. Proposals are required to demonstrate how they have respected and enhanced character, distinctiveness and amenity of both the site and its context. The policy requires the enhancement or delivery of new public realm. It seeks to ensure that existing features of landscape, nature conservation, heritage or amenity value and public rights of way, are safeguarded and enhanced through incorporation into the development. Soft landscape proposals form an integral part of the design for the site and seek to make a net contribution to tree cover in the locality (particularly in urban areas), and prioritise biodiversity objectives and local food cultivation where possible.

- Policy CS2: states South Gloucestershire's objectives for green infrastructure, seeking to ensure that existing and new Green Infrastructure (including, but not restricted to, assets such as open spaces, recreation areas, parks, water courses and open access land) are planned delivered and managed as an integral part of creating sustainable communities and enhancing quality of life. It seeks to ensure the potential of green infrastructure to mitigate and adapt to climate change is realised and that high quality multi-functional and connected open spaces are delivered.
- Policy CS8: recognises that the natural and historic environment is a finite and irreplaceable resource. In order to protect and manage the environment in a sustainable way, new developments, will be expected to preserve, respect and where appropriate enhance sites, heritage assets and landscape of archaeological, historical, ecological, arboricultural and geological importance. It seeks to safeguard allotments sites and protect the quality and quantity of the water environment and its margins.
- Policy CS23: the policy for community infrastructure and cultural activity identifies the need to extend or enhance community buildings and encourage participation in cultural activity. This policy is also relevant to any facility that provides a valued service, focus or sense of place for a community. This policy covers the need for adequate public and private sports and recreation facilities.
- Policy CS24: the policy for open space standards states that Green Infrastructure assets are integral to sustainable communities. Where existing Green Infrastructure provision, including informal recreational open space, outdoor sports facilities, playspace, allotments, and natural/semi-natural spaces are inadequate in terms of providing for the quantity, quality and accessibility to meet the projected needs arising from the future occupiers of new development, those occupiers' needs must be met by the new development on-site, together with provision for subsequent management and maintenance.
- This policy will replace the current Local Plan Policy LC8, and has been informed by this audit in particular in the increased range of open space typologies that are required. These better reflect PPG17 typologies, but reflect the findings of this audit. Additionally the policy goes onto state that, provision for green infrastructure, outdoor space, sport and recreation facilities will be sought according to the following principles:
 1. New developments must comply with all the appropriate local standards of provision in terms of quantity, quality and accessibility;
 2. Provision must be delivered on-site, unless it is demonstrated that partial or full off-site provision or enhancement creates a more acceptable proposal; and
 3. The functionality and usability of spaces and facilities must be suitable for their intended purposes.
- This policy also seeks contributes to green infrastructure schemes to be identified in the Green Infrastructure Strategy. It seeks provision of green infrastructure from new employment areas, and sets out the Council's commitment to ensure that environments for play are required to be delivered as an integral part of site design.

- Part two of the Core Strategy is focused on 6 spatial areas, these are geographically specific and each contains an area vision, set of strategic objectives, partnership priorities focusing on delivery and where appropriate strategic site policies. This part of the Core Strategy identifies the main community objectives for the delivery, protection and enhancement of green infrastructure, open spaces, sport and recreation facilities.

Strategy Documents

4.25 South Gloucestershire Sustainable Community Strategy (SCS)

The South Gloucestershire Sustainable Community Strategy sets out the Council's vision for South Gloucestershire in 2026. The vision is for everyone who lives and works in South Gloucestershire to fulfil their potential, enjoy an excellent quality of life and support others in their communities whilst protecting the environment. The Council is addressing the issues local communities feel are important to their social, economic and environment well-being to ensure that communities are healthy, socially just, productive and living within their limits. Details of how this audit links with the SCS are contained in Section 1.

4.26 The SCS has two specific reference to open spaces:

- To ensure that new communities have access to a full range of community facilities and formal and informal open spaces.
- One of the main things that people value about living in South Gloucestershire is access to the countryside and open spaces.

4.27 South Gloucestershire Council Plan 2008-2011

The Council Plan shares a joint vision with the SCS. The Plan sets out the Council's seven corporate aims for meeting our area's vision:

- Investing in Children and Young People
- Improving Health, Modernising Community Care and Health Services
- Managing Future Development
- Promoting Safer and Stronger Communities
- Valuing the Environment
- Maintaining Economic Prosperity
- Ensuring we are 'Fit for our Future' – our Internal Improvement Programme

4.28 The Council Plan highlights the challenge of responding to future development, by ensuring that the things residents most value are maintained in particular its heritage, access to green spaces and the special relationship between town and country. It goes to be state that new developments will conserve and, where appropriate, enhance South Gloucestershire's biodiversity, its green infrastructure and the area's natural and built environment. It sets out a priority of delivering a strategy for maintaining and improving our public open spaces.

4.29 South Gloucestershire Play Policy and Strategy 2006

The South Gloucestershire Play Policy and Strategy sets out the Council's commitment to ensuring that quality environments for play, 'hanging-out' and informal recreation are available to all its children and young people.

- Areas of common public realm should be places where generations, individuals, groups and communities can share.
- Parents and carers should expect that local open spaces should be available for children and young people to enjoy play, free from unacceptable levels of risk.
- Open spaces should be varied and interesting environments.
- Parks and open spaces should be reviewed to show the extent to which they contribute to local place opportunities or could do so in the future.
- Changes to open spaces should be made where necessary to ensure that they become accessible to children and young people and enrich their opportunities for play.

4.30 The Council is planning to refresh the Play Policy and Strategy, the consultation undertaken for this audit can be used to inform this update.

4.31 Cleaner South Gloucestershire Delivery Plan

In 2011 South Gloucestershire will launch the Cleaner South Gloucestershire Delivery Plan, replacing the Cleaner South Gloucestershire Strategy (2006-2010). Its role is to set out arrangements to ensure we meet the targets to maintain and improve local environmental quality made in the Community Strategy, Council Plan, and Safer and Stronger Community Strategy. The plan examines the challenges faced and sets out the Council's priorities for improving the cleanliness of the district.

4.32 South Gloucestershire is a safe place to live, but litter, abandoned vehicles and graffiti all detract from feelings of well being. The importance of the local environment is demonstrated in recent research carried out by *Keep Britain Tidy* when residents listed the appearance of their area as their third greatest concern after the economic downturn and violent crime. Street Care receives around 5,000 calls or logs a year relating to Street Cleansing issues.

4.33 South Gloucestershire Sports and Physical Activity Plan

The South Gloucestershire Sports and Physical Activity Plan reflects the work of a number of agencies and organisations which are committed to increasing participation in sport and physical activity across South Gloucestershire. The aim of this plan is co-ordinate work across the authority in order to reach the government target for physical activity of increasing numbers of active people by 1% year on year to ensure healthier communities.

4.34 South Gloucestershire Cultural Strategy

The South Gloucestershire Cultural Strategy's aim is to show the value, develop a sense of place and raise awareness of culture within South Gloucestershire.

Specific to open space:

- South Gloucestershire Council will ensure that cultural provision is built into the infrastructure through supporting the development of community buildings or facilities such as public open spaces.
- Play Rangers visit parks and open spaces to increase and encourage children's playful use of the spaces.
- Open spaces can be used for a range of educational, recreational and leisure activities which help connect people with and understand their environment and heritage.
- As part of developing opportunities for participation in cultural activities open spaces and sport facilities should be able to meet the cultural needs of the area in design, quality, ownership and management.
- South Gloucestershire Council has responsibility in encouraging and developing the cultural environment through the provision of parks and open spaces.

4.35 South Gloucestershire Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP)

The South Gloucestershire Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) has been drawn up collaboratively with a range of partners, including nature conservation organisations, parish councils, local wildlife groups and members of the public. Its main aim is to contribute towards safeguarding and benefiting the species and habitats making up the plan to provide an identity and focus for nature conservation work through South Gloucestershire.

4.36 Avon Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP)

The Avon Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) is the over-arching conservation strategy for the Avon area. The BAP gives an overview of nature conservation objectives in Avon as a whole and provides a ten year strategic framework for management and enhancement of biodiversity, in-line with the UK's biodiversity process. The main aims of the BAP are to provide a context and overview to nature conservation priorities in Avon, highlighting the specific habitats and species that are of particular value.

4.37 Recreational activities are a significant way in which many people can interact with wildlife in its natural environment. Enjoyment and appreciation of open spaces is essential for promoting an understanding of the natural world, fostering a sense of ownership of the environment around us and reducing any unintended loss or damage to biodiversity.

4.38 South Gloucestershire Council Environment Statement

The Environmental Policy sets out South Gloucestershire Council's Environmental Vision, Values and Objectives. It demonstrates the Council's commitment to managing the environmental impacts of its operations and improving its environmental performance, and summarises the arrangements for delivery. Priorities:

- To cut emissions of greenhouse gases and manage the impacts of climate change.
- To cut consumption of resources, prevent pollution and waste, and live within environmental limits.

- To conserve and enhance the natural, historic and built environment and promote local access and employment by all.
- To strengthen local supply chains and promote the use of local goods and services.

4.39 South Gloucestershire Council Climate Change Strategy (Mitigation Strategy)

This strategy recognises the opportunities and challenges facing the region. It outlines two major challenges; firstly, the need to mitigate in order to reduce emissions so that more dangerous changes can be avoided in the future. Secondly, the need for adaptation measures to help prepare for unavoidable impacts that are already stored up in climate change. The strategy reviews the activities that are required to tackle these challenges and sets out key actions for the future.

4.40 Joint Rights of Way Improvement Plan (ROWIP) 2007-2011

The ROWIP was jointly produced by three authorities Bath & North East Somerset, Bristol City Council and South Gloucestershire Council. The plan acts as a guide to the three unitary authorities in developing and improving the Public Rights of Way Network. The existing 1400 mile network services a combined population of almost 800,000. The vision of the ROWIP is to increase the use of rights of way by developing a network of safe and attractive routes which:

- Improves opportunities for sustainable access to essential services and facilities; and
- Meets the present and future recreational needs of all members of the community, including those with visual impairment or mobility difficulties.

4.41 The Joint Local Access Forum (JLAF) is a statutory body established to provide advice on the 'improvement of public access to land for the purposes of open-air recreation and enjoyment. The JLAF played an important part in guiding the preparation of the ROWIP.

4.42 Joint Local Transport Plan

This plan was jointly produced by the four councils of Bath & North East Somerset, Bristol City, North Somerset and South Gloucestershire. It sets out the transport plans for the next 5 year (2006-2011) and a vision for the next 20-30 years. The plan is supplemented by a number of supporting statements, these include:

- Quality of Life, which sets a vision of a safe and healthy local environment with well-designed public and green place and clean streets. It recognises the importance of quality public spaces in promoting sustainable travel mode and how the quality of public spaces can also link with health issues, for example access to playgrounds and recreational areas.
- Walking, this sets a vision for walking to be become the first choice for local journeys. It seeks to deliver high quality routes that are accessible, direct and convenient. It also seeks to deliver a network of greenways linking together open space and development areas. (This forms the Council's Walking Strategy)

- Cycling, this sets a vision for safe and attractive road environment across the network for cycling supplemented by off-road routes, to contribute to establishing a vibrant cycling culture throughout the area.

4.43 The current Joint Local Transport Plan is due to be replaced in 2011. The new Joint Local Transport Plan (JLTP3) covers the period from 2011 to 2026. The plan seeks to enhance the public realm, minimise the impact of transport on the natural and historic environment, reduce the number of people exposed to high levels of transport noise and enhance our streetscape, public spaces and urban environment. Promoting better access to leisure activities and the countryside.

4.44 Cycling City

In June 2008 South Gloucestershire and Bristol City were chosen as England's first official Cycling City, with the aim of promoting cycling as a safe, healthy and practical alternative to the private car for commuting, home-to-school and leisure journeys. A series of new linkages and improvements (for example signage and storage) are being progressed. These significant improvements are due to be completed in 2010/11.

4.45 **Conclusion**

This strategic context review, coupled with additional national and regional guidance (such as material produced by CABI, Natural England, Sport England, The Forestry Commission and Play England) has highlighted the importance of the provision of open spaces, sport and recreation facilities in achieving both government and local objectives.

4.46 Specific points can be drawn from the review that are important to the development of this open space audit, these relate to quantity, quality (including design considerations) and accessibility of provision. In summary:

- The need to ensure adequate provision levels for existing and new communities to meet their needs and achieve participation targets (such as the increase in active people).
- The requirement to consider the linkages between provision and how open space has a range of roles.
- The importance South Gloucestershire Council and the communities of South Gloucestershire place on open spaces, sport and recreation facilities and planning for their future provision.
- The need to take a joined up approach to the planning for open space, recreation facilities and provision for play, which recognises Green Infrastructure (GI) as an over-arching concept.

Provision Standards – Sections 5 to 11

Sections 5 to 11 set out the justification for the locally specific provision standards. These are focused on quantity, quality and accessibility. As highlighted in Section 2 the standards have been developed through a comprehensive investigation, by:

- Analysing national standards;
- Analysing existing local standards and practices;
- Assessing the current provision;
- Benchmarking the standards other authorities use; and
- Consideration of the finding of the consultation programme.

Each section is typically set out with the following structure:

- Typology introduction
- Quantity of existing provision and summary of consultation responses relating to quantity and usage
- Quantity standard and its application
- Quality of existing provision and summary of consultation responses relating to quality
- Quality standard and its application
- Accessibility of existing provision and summary of consultation responses relating to accessibility
- Accessibility standard and its application
- Section conclusion

SECTION 5:

5. Parks and Gardens

- 5.1 This type of open space includes urban parks, Historic Parks or public Gardens, within the urban area. It includes formal public gardens and country parks, although there is just one Country Park in South Gloucestershire which is run as a commercial tourist attraction and therefore outside the remit of this audit. Parks tend to offer a range of facilities, however in general they are primarily used informally for recreation. Open space sites that offer informal use have mostly been captured within the amenity green space typology. Parks are distinct from amenity green spaces, whilst their use is focused on informal enjoyment they can include areas for active recreation, play space, semi-natural areas, water and formal planting within a defined site that is often fenced (e.g. Kingswood Park, Kingsgate Park and Page Park).
- 5.2 There are only a small number of sites that have been classified as either a park or public garden; only 11 sites in total have been included in this typology. Classification of parks, amenity space and playing fields can be difficult as South Gloucestershire residents use the term 'park' to encompass all these types of space.
- 5.3 Larger facilities tend to attract users from a wider catchment than smaller parks and they tend to have a higher profile. The consultation highlighted that there are a number of parks in South Gloucestershire, such as Kingsgate Park, Page Park, Mundy Playing Field (not classified as a Park) that are regarded in this way. The consultation also highlighted that people also regarded parks in adjoining authorities in this way such as Victoria Park in Bath and North East Somerset. The consultation response comments highlight that these spaces are highly valued and people are prepared to travel significant distances to reach them. These are often termed a destination sites.
- 5.4 The majority of parks and gardens are focused in the **East and North Fringes of the Bristol Urban Area** and in **Yate/Chipping Sodbury. Thornbury** and the **rural and other areas** have much lower levels of park/garden provision and the spatial distribution of parks across South Gloucestershire is restricted (sites are not evenly spread across the authority area). Thornbury does not have a formal park however there are various amenity spaces, and the Mundy Playing Fields which offers informal provision and a community focal point.
- 5.5 Formal parks can offer a range of experiences, for example two parks that have been identified through the consultation process as being successful sites and demonstrate the contrast of uses found in a park. Kingsgate Park in Yate, is set in the historic grounds of Stanshawes Court, it offers a venue for community events, a substantial play area, natural/semi natural environment, ponds and parkland areas. Page Park in Staple Hill, is a Victorian park and the largest in South Gloucestershire, it celebrated its centenary in 2010. The park contains sports facilities, a bandstand, play space, and amenity green space with formal tree planting.

5.6 Quantity of Provision – Parks and Gardens

The current provision of parks and gardens across South Gloucestershire is summarised in the table below.

Analysis Area	Total provision (Hectares or Ha)	Current provision (Ha per 1,000 population)
East Fringe of the Bristol Urban Area	12.03	0.14
North Fringe of the Bristol Urban Area	9.44	0.17
Yate/Chipping Sodbury	11.23	0.32
Thornbury	0	0
Rural & Other (including Severnside)	3.02	0.05
Overall	35.72	0.14

5.7 Consultation Responses – Quantity

The key issues identified through the consultation process relating to the quantity of parks and gardens are:

Household Survey:

Analysis Area	More than enough (%)	About right (%)	Nearly enough (%)	Not enough (%)	No opinion (%)
East Fringe of the Bristol Urban Area	0	57.4	17.3	19.8	2.0
North Fringe of the Bristol Urban Area	4.0	49.7	14.8	25.5	1.3
Yate/Chipping Sodbury	1.0	57.3	12.5	21.9	0
Thornbury	0	62.0	12.0	18.0	4.0
Rural & Other (including Severnside)	4.9	44.3	12.9	28.2	4.5
Overall	2.8	48.9	13.5	24.1	3.1

- Overall nearly half of respondents (49%) felt that the quantity of parks and gardens across South Gloucestershire was about right. However, nearly a quarter (24%) considered that there was not enough provision.
- Nearly two thirds (62%) of respondents from the Thornbury area felt that the provision of parks and gardens was about right, compared to less than half (44%) in the rural areas.

- Over a quarter of respondents in the north fringe area (25%) and the rural and other area (28%) considered that there was not enough provision of parks and gardens.

Usage:

- Overall, nearly half (48%) of respondents use parks and gardens on either a weekly or monthly basis.
- Overall, nearly 10% of respondents use them on a daily basis, whilst nearly a third (31%) either don't use parks or do so rarely.
- Respondents from the east fringe area were more likely to use parks and gardens more frequently than respondents from other areas, with 20% using them daily and a further 27% using them weekly.
- A third of respondents (32%) from the Yate & Chipping Sodbury area use parks and gardens on a weekly basis, however of a third (31%) either don't use parks or do so rarely.
- Respondents from the north fringe area use parks and gardens the least, with over a third (38%) stating that they either don't use parks or do so rarely.

5.8 Quantity Standard – Parks and Gardens

<p>National Standards</p>	<p>English Nature Accessible Greenspace Standards (ANGSt) recommends that everyone, wherever they live, should have an accessible natural greenspace:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - of at least 2 hectares in size, no more than 300 metres (5 minutes walk) from home; - at least one accessible 20ha site within 2km from home; - There should be at least one 100ha site within 5km; - There should be at least one 500ha site within 10km. - A minimum of 1 hectare of statutory Local Nature Reserves per 1,000 population. <p>Woodland Trust:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - no person should live more than 500m from at least one area of accessible woodland of less than 2Ha in size - there should also be at least one area of accessible woodland of no less than 20ha with 4Km of people's home. <p>Fields In Trust (FIT, previously known as National Playing Fields Associations, NPFA) does not provide a standard for parks or gardens.</p>
<p>Existing Local Standards</p>	<p>South Gloucestershire Local Plan:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - No specific standards relating to parks or gardens - Policy LC8 requires the provision of open space.
<p>Current district wide provision (ha per 1,000 population)</p>	<p>0.14 ha per 1,000 population</p> <p>Based on parks and gardens, excluding those historic</p>

	<p>parks and the country park which have restricted access e.g. through an entrance fee or not being open to the public.</p>
<p>Benchmarking (against standards set by other authorities)</p>	<p>It is very difficult to benchmark the provision standard as each authority's approach to classification of spaces that qualify as a park is different.</p> <p>Bath and North East Somerset = Formal green spaces (parks, gardens, recreation grounds and open spaces) 1.5ha/1,000 population</p> <p>Bristol City Council's Green Space Strategy = Formal green space 0.2ha/1,000 population</p> <p>Swindon: General Recreational Areas (including parks, amenity space and accessible wildlife areas) = 1ha/1,000 population.</p>
<p>Consultation</p>	<p>See paragraph 5.7 and the Consultation Report.</p>
<p>Recommended standard</p>	<p>No separate standard for Parks and Gardens, however a minimum standard of 0.14ha per 1,000 population should be incorporated within the provision standard for Amenity Green Space and Green Corridors, see Section 8.</p>
<p>Justification for standard</p>	<p>Formal parks and public gardens are generally developed on an opportunistic basis, the companion guide to PPG17 states that policies should be supply or opportunity-led.</p> <p>Amenity areas are considered in other typologies, however; through the consultation process it became clear that residents term some areas that have been classified as amenity space or playing fields as a park. This highlights the difficulty in defining a park as opposed to areas of informal recreation which may include areas classified as Amenity Green Space, this difficulty is in part because their primary purposes are the same.</p> <p>In light of this, no separate provision standard is recommended for Parks and public Gardens, rather the provision for these areas should be considered along with other informal recreational open spaces, which include amenity green spaces and area along green corridors, see section 8.</p> <p>It is recommended that the provision standard, to be considered along with the other informal recreational open spaces, be set at the current district wide supply. This is in order to reflect the wider value of Parks and public Gardens have and the fact that the consultation responses highlighted a high degree of satisfaction with the current provision.</p>

5.9 Applying the quantity standard

The current district wide supply of parks and public gardens is the same as the recommended provision standard of 0.14 hectares per 1,000 population, recognising the value that formal parks and gardens offer both for informal use and community events, and the high level of use parks and public gardens across the district have.

5.10 The quantity provision standards recommend that parks and gardens are considered along with amenity space and green corridors, under the term informal recreational open space, in recognition of these spaces shared primary purpose. However opportunities, as highlighted in the PPG17 companion guide, to provide new or improved parks and gardens should be explored where possible and particularly in the new neighbourhoods planned in the emerging Core Strategy.

5.11 The consultation has shown, particularly in respect to the sites people visit outside of the district; that formal parks have the ability to attract significant visitors and act as focal point of communities. The design of future open spaces should consider how the success of formal parks and gardens can be replicated.

5.12 Quality of Provision – Parks and Gardens

The quality of parks and public gardens is assessed through undertaking site visits and collecting other useful data. The assessment criteria are detailed in the Open Space Audit – Manual document, available for the Council's website www.southglos.gov.uk. Reassessments will continue to be undertaken to ensure the database is kept up to date. It should be noted that site assessments are conducted as a snapshot in time and therefore scores represent the condition of the site on that specific day.

5.13 The Green Flag Award is a national standard for parks and greenspace. There are no Parks or Gardens in South Gloucestershire that have been awarded a Green Flag Award, the Council is considering putting Page Park forward for the Green Flag Award.

5.14 The individual criteria scores recorded are translated into an overall site percentage score; however individual assessment criteria for specific sites may need particular attention regardless of the overall site score. For instance the use of a site may be restricted by just one assessment criteria, and therefore hidden if only the overall site score is relied upon when considering quality and the future design, management and maintenance of sites. The most relevant individual assessment criteria specific to this typology should be drawn from the recommendations set out below. The overall scores do however represent a comprehensive picture of the current quality of sites across South Gloucestershire.

5.15 Consultation Responses – Quality

The main points identified through the consultation process relating to the quality of provision of parks and gardens are:

Household Survey:

- Overall, the majority of respondents (64%) rated the quality of parks and gardens as either good or average.
- Overall, 10% of respondents rated parks and gardens as very good and 9% rated them as either poor or very poor.
- 8% of respondents considered that there were no parks and gardens in their local area.
- Respondents from the Yate & Chipping Sodbury area rated parks and gardens highest with nearly 60% rating them as either good or very good. This compares with the rural and other areas where only 42% rated them as good or very good.
- Respondents who stated that parks and gardens were the site they used most often, rated the quality higher, with 68% rating them as good or very good compared to 45% overall.

Safety:

- Respondents who stated that parks and gardens were the site they used most often, rated them overall as quite safe places to use with 72% rating them as either very safe or quite safe.
- Respondents from the Thornbury area felt the most safe compared to those from the North Fringe area who felt less safe.

Current features:

- Respondents who stated that parks and gardens were the site they used most often, rated general maintenance & management, entrances and planted and grassed areas the highest rating, them between good and average.
- Respondents rated toilets, cycle stands and changing facilities lowest, rating them between average and poor.

Important or Desired Features:

- When asked to rate the top 5 most important or desired features, respondents who stated that parks and gardens were the site they used most often, listed clean & litter free, well kept grass and flowers, trees and shrubs most often.
- Welcoming staff, seclusion and on site security were listed least often.

Significant Problems:

- When asked whether any issues were a significant problem, respondents who stated that parks and gardens were the site they used most often listed dog fouling, vandalism & graffiti and litter problems most often.
- Poor maintenance, safety & age of equipment and lack of car parking were listed as problems less often.

5.16 Quality standard – Parks and Gardens

National Standards	The Green Flag Award criteria for quality (see Appendix 1)												
Existing Local Standards	South Gloucestershire Local Plan: - No specific standards relating to parks or gardens												
Benchmarking (against standards set by other authorities)	It is very difficult to benchmark the quality standards, as each authority has used different assessment criteria. Authorities also have different approaches to setting out quality standards with some setting scoring threshold (sometimes linked with Green Flag Assessment criteria), some listing essential and desirable elements and others setting out a quality vision.												
Consultation	See paragraph 5.15 and the Consultation Report.												
Recommended standard	<p>Using the assessment criteria used for this audit, an overall site standard of 75% is recommended. In addition the most important individual assessment elements should score at least 'good' (3) or better, these include:</p> <table border="0"> <tr> <td><u>Desirable features:</u></td> <td><u>Important issues to be addressed:</u></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Litter bins</td> <td>Dog Fouling</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Dog bins</td> <td>Vandalism</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Grass Areas</td> <td>Litter</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Planted Areas</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Vegetation</td> <td></td> </tr> </table> <p>Vision: A landscaped area laid out and managed to high standards, which is well maintained, safe to visit and provides pleasant areas to walk, sit, and relax while enjoying floral and landscape features, shrubs, trees and other natural characteristics. The area should be tidy, free from vandalism, litter and dog fouling. Appropriate facilities for the size of the site, such as paths, water features, bandstands, recreation facilities, play spaces, seats, bins, toilets, lighting etc should be in a good state of repair.</p>	<u>Desirable features:</u>	<u>Important issues to be addressed:</u>	Litter bins	Dog Fouling	Dog bins	Vandalism	Grass Areas	Litter	Planted Areas		Vegetation	
<u>Desirable features:</u>	<u>Important issues to be addressed:</u>												
Litter bins	Dog Fouling												
Dog bins	Vandalism												
Grass Areas	Litter												
Planted Areas													
Vegetation													
Justification for standard	<p>The assessment used in this audit reflect the Green Flag Assessment criteria, therefore an appropriate quality score will provide the basis to achieve an Award.</p> <p>The overall standard allows a picture of the quality of provision to be established across the District. By setting out the importance of individual assessment elements it allows a more targeted approach to enhancing the overall provision. For example a site may score very well overall, but be blighted by a poor score in just one of the desired features or issues, which would limit the use people make of the site. It is therefore important that whilst all sites achieve the overall score that the highlighted desired features and issues on all sites also achieve the recommended score.</p>												

	The relationship between quality and usage was highlighted in the consultation responses, this is reflected in the high overall quality standard recommended.
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5.17 **Accessibility of Provision – Parks and Gardens**

The accessibility standard is set in the form of distance threshold and has been derived from the findings of the local consultations.

5.18 Individual assessment elements that contribute to the accessibility of sites, such as site information, signage, linkages, disabled access, condition of paths and cycle stands, have all been incorporated into the quality assessment.

5.19 **Consultation Responses – Accessibility**

The key issues identified through the consultation process relating to the accessibility of provision of parks and gardens are:

Household Survey:

- Just over half of respondents (54%) walk to parks and gardens, whilst 29% travel by car.
- For those that walk, 28% travel for between 1 and 5 minutes, while a further 35% travel for between 5 and 10 minutes.
- For those respondents that travel by car, 52% travel for between 10 and 30 minutes, suggesting that they travel further than their immediate area to access parks and gardens.
- Over half (52%) of respondents travelling by bus journeyed for between 10 and 20 minutes.

- The results indicate that the effective catchment, defined as the distance travelled by around 75% of users is:
Urban Areas: 14.5 minutes
Other (rural) Areas: 18 minutes
Overall: 16 minutes

- Respondents who stated that parks and gardens were the site they used most often, travelled for less time than the overall respondents. This was particularly clear when looking at those that travel by car where 72% who rated parks and gardens as a site they used most often travelled for less than 10 minutes compared to 33% overall.

5.20 **Accessibility Standard – Parks and Gardens**

<p>National Standards</p>	<p>There are no national standards for parks and gardens.</p> <p>English Nature Accessible Greenspace Standards (ANGSt) recommends that everyone, wherever they live, should have an accessible natural greenspace:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Of at least 2 hectares in size, no more than 300 metres (5 minutes walk) from home; - at least one accessible 20ha site within 2km from home; - There should be at least one 100ha site within 5km; - There should be at least one 500ha site within 10km. - A minimum of 1 hectare of statutory Local Nature Reserves per 1,000 population. <p>Woodland Trust:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - no person should live more than 500m from at least one area of accessible woodland of less than 2Ha in size - there should also be at least one area of accessible woodland of no less than 20ha with 4Km of people's home.
<p>Existing Local Standards</p>	<p>South Gloucestershire Local Plan:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - No specific standards relating to parks or gardens. <p>South Gloucestershire Design Checklist Supplementary Planning Document:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - As a rule of thumb, private/shared open spaces should be immediately accessible, local play spaces (LEAP) within 240 metres, neighbourhood parks (NEAP) within 600 metres, and district/town open spaces (formal squares, playing fields etc) should be within 800 metres of dwellings.
<p>Benchmarking (against standards set by other authorities)</p>	<p>It is very difficult to benchmark the provision standard as each authority's approach to classification of spaces that qualify as a park is different.</p>
<p>Consultation</p>	<p>See paragraph 5.19 and the Consultation Report.</p>
<p>Recommended standard</p>	<p>No standard is recommended.</p>
<p>Justification for standard</p>	<p>Given that there are significant differences in peoples understanding of what spaces should be classified as a park, it is not recommended to have a separate accessibility standards based on the consultation responses.</p> <p>An accessibility standard for Informal recreational open space has been out in Section 8.</p>

	<p>The use of a hierarchy of provision should be given consideration in the future, particularly in light of the consultation responses demonstrating that users will travel further to reach destination parks (i.e. those sites that have a range of facilities and experiences for the user), such as Victoria Park in Bath.</p>
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5.21 Parks and Gardens Conclusions

Due to the value the public place on parks and public gardens, and their wide range of uses it is important that existing sites are protected. This is particularly important because there are relatively few sites. Due to the nature of the primary purpose of the parks and public gardens, their provision should be considered along with other informal recreation open spaces, such as amenity green space, this is addressed in Section 8. Formal parks and public gardens are generally developed on an opportunistic basis, as highlighted in the PPG17 companion guide. Therefore opportunities to provide new or improved parks and gardens should be explored where possible; there may be opportunities in the new neighbourhoods planned in the emerging Core Strategy.

Vision for Parks and Gardens:

A landscaped area laid out and managed to high standards, which is well maintained, safe to visit and provides pleasant areas to walk, sit, and relax while enjoying floral and landscape features, shrubs, trees and other natural characteristics. The area should be tidy, free from vandalism, litter and dog fouling. Appropriate facilities for the size of the site, such as paths, water features, bandstands, recreation facilities, play spaces, seats, bins, toilets, lighting etc should be in a good state of repair.

Standards for Park and Gardens

Quantity

No separate standard for Parks and Gardens, however a minimum standard of 0.14ha per 1,000 population should be incorporated with Amenity Green Space and Green Corridors, see Section 8.

Quality

To aim to achieve an overall site standard of 75%.

In addition the most important individual assessment elements should score at least 'good' (3) or better, these include:

Desirable features:

Litter bins
Dog bins
Grass Areas
Planted Areas
Vegetation

Important issues to be addressed:

Dog Fouling
Vandalism
Litter

Accessibility

No standard is recommended, see Section 8.

SECTION 6:

6. Natural/Semi-Natural green space

- 6.1 These types of open spaces include sites which fall under the description Natural England uses for accessible natural greenspace, “land, water and geological features which have been naturally colonised by plants and animals and which are accessible on foot to large numbers of residents” (A Space for Nature, English Nature, 1996). These sites include urban woodlands, scrub, grassland, commons and local nature reserves with the primary purpose of wildlife and biodiversity conservation, and sites that offer unrestrictive access to the general public (generally designated under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 (CROW), and classified as open access land).
- 6.2 Natural and semi-natural sites play an important role for wildlife conservation and biodiversity; however these spaces are also important due to their recreational and play opportunities. In this respect, these spaces offer a similar function to amenity green space; however it is important to seek the appropriate balance between recreational uses and the wildlife and biodiversity interest and potential of these spaces.
- 6.3 In line with the PPG17 classification typologies this assessment considers those natural and semi-natural spaces that are accessible. The database records accessible sites in the urban and rural areas. The urban accessible sites are significantly supported by accessible rural sites which help to alleviate deficits. Rural sites are greater in size and number. Different urban areas benefit from easier access to these rural sites and the wider countryside.
- 6.4 The residents of the **North Fringe of the Bristol Urban Area** only have limited access points to the wider countryside as the motorway network acts as a barrier. Meaning that accessibility to the countryside and rural natural and semi-natural sites is restricted, this in turn increases the importance of existing urban natural and semi-natural sites, such as the Three Brooks Nature Reserve, the 40 Acre site and Stoke Park in this area. The communities of the North Fringe of Bristol benefit from the River Frome Valley and its walkway and the linkages offered by the Community Forest Path. The restrictions of the motorway network set the context and challenge of planning for the new neighbourhoods, in order to ensure that future residents have access to natural and semi-natural provision.
- 6.5 The majority of the residents of the **East Fringe of the Bristol Urban Area** have restricted access to the countryside and other rural natural and semi-natural sites due to the ring road (A4174) and the distance some of the population live from the urban edge. However there are key features such as the commons and other semi-natural areas that do link into the existing urban areas, such as Rodway Common, Siston Common and also Warmley Forest Park. There are opportunities to link these areas up and extend their connectivity to other community resources, such as Overscourt Community Woodland both for residents and for wildlife/biodiversity corridors. The communities of the East Fringe do benefit from green corridors and a network of long distance footpaths, such as the Avon Valley and the Bristol and Bath Railway Path, these do provide effective links out of the urban area.

- 6.6 Residents of **Yate/Chipping Sodbury** have access to a number of commons, Ridge Woods and Wapley Bushes local nature reserves (LNR) which are located outside of the settlement boundary but offer opportunities to access natural/semi-natural sites. In order to establish a realistic quantity standard Sodbury Common has been excluded when reviewing district wide provision levels, as it would significantly skew the provision level if included. Sodbury Common has still been recorded on the database and will be included in local provision levels when applying the development plan policies. This is a commonly applied approach, allowing the formulation of the quantity standard which is realistic whilst ensuring future requests for new provision are reasonable.
- 6.7 **Thornbury** residents benefit from good access to rural areas, such as the community woodland to the south of the town and the semi-natural areas and countryside close to the High Street. The stream side walk offers Thornbury residents access to a semi-natural environment within the town. Further to these assets Thornbury benefits from a good footpath network with no significant barriers to access the surrounding countryside.
- 6.8 The **rural and other areas**, which include smaller predominantly rural settlements have access to countryside and designated natural/semi-natural spaces, such as the commons, open access land and the semi-natural areas within the Cotswold AONB. Access to these areas is aided by the significant public rights of way network that South Gloucestershire benefits from. Opportunities are being taken to improve accessibility through the Right of Way Improvement Plan, create new circular routes to link open access sites, and establish new local nature reserves within the Severnside area.
- 6.9 The local natural and semi-natural sites found within the existing urban areas (whether designated or not), and indeed those in urban fringe areas are often, as a result of increasing pressures, small, isolated and fragmented. As such the protection, improved connectivity and management of local urban natural and semi-natural sites is important in conserving natural resources and is recognised within the emerging Core Strategy policies.
- 6.10 **Natural England's Accessible Natural Greenspace Standard and Designated Sites**
- Natural England's Accessible Natural Greenspace Standard (ANGSt) provides a set of benchmarks for ensuring access to places near to where people live. These standards recommend that people living in towns and cities should have:
- an accessible natural greenspace of at least 2 hectares in size, no more than 300 metres (5 minutes walk) from home
 - at least one accessible 20 hectare site within two kilometres of home
 - one accessible 100 hectare site within five kilometres of home
 - one accessible 500 hectare site within ten kilometres of home
 - one hectare of statutory Local Nature Reserves per thousand population
- 6.11 Natural England acknowledges that in some areas, these standards will be hard to achieve in the short term, but that they should be long-term aim for all local authorities. Within the rural areas there are sites of substantial size, and they offer the only real opportunities to comply with some of England Nature's

Accessible Greenspace Standards (ANGSt) due to their size. These rural sites are regarded as significant Green Infrastructure assets, and contribute greatly to the overall network of green infrastructure. Many of the sites are afforded protection through their statutory and local designations; however it is important that their protection and enhancement is continued, due to the multi-functional³ benefits they offer.

6.12 Formally designated natural and semi-natural sites include Special Protection Areas (SPAs), Special Areas of Conservation (SAC), Sites of Scientific Interest (SSSIs), and local sites Regionally Important Geological Sites (RIGS) and Sites of Nature Conservation Interest (SNCIs) not all of which are accessible. Those sites which are not accessible are not considered within ANGSt and have not been included within quantity analysis in this audit.

6.13 Quantity of Provision – Natural and Semi-Natural green space

The current provision of natural and semi-natural green spaces across South Gloucestershire is summarised in the table below.

Analysis Area	Total provision (Hectares or Ha)	Current provision (ha per 1,000 population)
East Fringe of the Bristol Urban Area	113.95	1.31
North Fringe of the Bristol Urban Area	125.14	2.22
Yate/Chipping Sodbury	189.48	5.48 (2.35 excluding Sodbury Common)
Thornbury	7.47	0.48
Rural & Other (including Severnside)	1025.34	16.27
Overall	1461.38	5.70
	Urban Analysis Areas (excluding Sodbury Common) = 327.77	1.69

6.14 Some of the natural and semi-natural green spaces are specifically designated as Local Natural Reserves. These are places with wildlife or geological features that are of special interest locally, they offer people the opportunity to learn about nature or just simply enjoy it. South Gloucestershire has 9 designated Local Nature Reserves (LNRs) and one due for formal designation. The designated sites cover nearly 109 hectares, together with the site awaiting designation there is a total of 116 hectares of space that is considered as Local Nature Reserve. The total provision of Local Nature Reserves (LNRs) equates to 0.45ha per 1,000 population. Natural England's accessible natural greenspace standard recommends 1ha per 1,000 population, to meet this standard an additional 140 hectares would need to be designated in South Gloucestershire. As noted in paragraph 6.11 Natural

³ Multi-functional benefits is term often referred when considering assets that form part of the Green Infrastructure network, the benefits include but are not restricted to: biodiversity, climate change, recreation, play and access, landscape and heritage.

England recognises that these standards will be hard to achieve in the short term.

6.15 Consultation Responses – Quantity

The key issues identified through the consultation process relating to the quantity of natural and semi-natural areas are:

Household Survey:

Analysis Area	More than enough (%)	About right (%)	Nearly enough (%)	Not enough (%)	No opinion (%)
East Fringe of the Bristol Urban Area	2.5	53.5	14.9	24.8	1.5
North Fringe of the Bristol Urban Area	7.4	57.0	16.8	13.4	1.3
Yate/Chipping Sodbury	1.0	67.7	10.4	16.7	0
Thornbury	2.0	56.0	14.0	22.0	0
Rural & Other (including Severnside)	13.9	45.3	15.2	20.1	1.6
Overall	7.5	49.5	14.7	19.9	1.9

- Overall half of respondents considered that the amount of natural areas was about right.
- Nearly 68% of respondents from the Yate & Chipping Sodbury area considered that the amount of natural areas was about right compared to only 53% in the East Fringe area.
- Nearly 14% of respondents in the rural and other areas considered that there was more than enough natural areas.
- A quarter of respondents from the east fringe area considered that there was not enough natural areas.

Usage:

- Overall 45% of respondents use natural areas at least weekly, however 23% either use them rarely or not at all.
- Respondents from the East Fringe, Yate & Chipping Sodbury and rural areas were the most likely to use natural areas at least weekly.

6.16 Quantity Standard – Natural and Semi-Natural green space

National Standards	<p>Natural England's Accessible Natural Greenspace Standard (ANGSt):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Provision of a Local Nature Reserve (LNR) at a minimum of 1ha per 1,000 population - an accessible natural greenspace of at least 2 hectares in size, no more than 300 metres (5 minutes walk) from home - at least one accessible 20 hectare site within two
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	<p>kilometres of home</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - one accessible 100 hectare site within five kilometres of home - one accessible 500 hectare site within ten kilometres of home <p>Woodland Trust:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - no person should live more than 500m from at least one area of accessible woodland of less than 2Ha in size - there should also be at least one area of accessible woodland of no less than 20ha with 4Km of people's home.
Existing Local Standards	No existing local standard
Current district wide provision (ha per 1,000 population)	<p>1.69 ha per 1,000 population (based upon sites located within the urban analysis areas (East Fringe of the Bristol Urban Area, North Fringe of the Bristol Urban Area, Yate/Chipping Sodbury and Thornbury) and excluding Sodbury Common).</p> <p>Overall provision 5.71 ha per 1,000 population.</p>
Benchmarking (against standards set by other authorities)	<p>Bristol City Council's Green Space Strategy = 0.9ha per 1,000 population (natural areas)</p> <p>Bath and North East Somerset Green Space Strategy = 1.5ha per 1,000 population (natural areas)</p>
Consultation	See paragraph 6.15 and the Consultation Report
Recommended standard	1.5ha per 1,000 population
Justification for standard	<p>The value placed on natural and semi-natural green space is clear, both in terms of the role it has for wildlife and biodiversity but also as a recreational, play and educational resource.</p> <p>Nearly 50% of the respondents felt that the provision of natural and semi-natural green space was about right. There is strong correlation between the amount of the provision and residents feeling about whether there was enough provision or not. The recommended standard is therefore closely aligned with the existing provision level for the majority of South Gloucestershire residents (i.e. those living within the urban analysis areas).</p> <p>The standard should be considered a minimum.</p>

6.17 Applying the quantity standard

The current supply across the authority of natural and semi-natural green spaces is significantly above the recommended provision standard. However, the level of provision is not evenly distributed across the analysis areas. The

recommended standard is therefore based closely on the current level of provision across the urban analysis areas (East Fringe of the Bristol Urban Area, North Fringe of the Bristol Urban Area, Yate/Chipping Sodbury and Thornbury). The recommended provision standard is 1.5 hectare per 1,000 population, recognising the value that natural and semi-natural green space have for recreational uses and wildlife conservation.

- 6.18 Many natural/semi-natural sites are protected by planning policies and other legislation, therefore in some areas much higher levels of provision will exist in comparison to the standards. The use of the recommended standard does not overrule the protection afforded to these sites, or indeed other policy objectives.
- 6.19 The objective in the rural and other analysis areas, where the overall provision level is significantly above the recommended standards, will be to retain the existing sites. Enhancement of existing sites should be considered to improve quality, biodiversity and access through the countryside through actions led by the Rights of Way Improvement Plan (ROWIP), through Higher Level Stewardship and any other suitable mechanism.
- 6.20 The provision standard recognises that existing sites need to be protected and that emphasis is placed on appropriately improving the quality of existing sites, both for access and conservation. This needs to be reflected when detailing the approach to requiring new provision as a result of development. Whilst a development site may be physically large enough to accommodate a new area of semi-natural green space, in the interest of making the most efficient use of land there may be circumstances when off-site provision or enhancement will be sought, where this would create a more acceptable proposal. A site may already contain a natural and semi-natural green space which would benefit from enlargement; or an area of a site (due to layout/topography) may lend itself to the use of semi-natural green space. However, when on-site provision of natural and semi-natural green space would not function or be useable for the intended purpose, off-site provision will be sought, or a financial contribution would be required towards the provision of a new, or enhanced natural and semi-natural green space off-site (in accordance with the policies of the Development Plan).

6.21 **Quality of Provision - Natural and Semi-Natural green space**

The quality of sites is assessed through sites visits and the use of natural and semi-natural specific assessment criteria, these assign half the overall quality score to the biodiversity interests of the site and the other half of the overall score to the human attributes that the site has. This is in order to recognise the value that these sites have for wildlife/biodiversity, and their primary purpose. Reassessments will continue to be undertaken to ensure the database is kept up to date. It should be noted that site assessments are conducted as a snapshot in time and therefore scores represent the condition of the site on that specific day.

- 6.22 Wick Golden Valley Local Nature Reserve, has received a Green Flag Award in 2009/10 and again in 2010/11. Volunteers from Willsbridge Valley Local Nature Reserve received a Green Flag Community Award (former the Green Pennant Award) in 2010/11 for their work at Willsbridge Mill.

6.23 The individual criteria scores recorded are translated into an overall site percentage score; however individual assessment criteria for specific sites may need particular attention regardless of the overall site score. For instance the use of a site may be restricted by just one assessment criteria, and therefore hidden if only the overall site score is relied upon when considering quality and the future design, management and maintenance of sites. The most relevant individual assessment criteria specific to this typology should be drawn from the recommendations set out below. The overall scores do however represent a comprehensive picture of the current quality of sites across South Gloucestershire.

6.24 **Consultation Responses – Quality**

The main points identified through the consultation process relating to the quality of semi-natural and natural areas are:

Household Survey:

- Overall 58% of respondents rated natural areas as either good or very good. Only 8% rated them as either poor or very poor.
- Respondents in the Yate & Chipping Sodbury area rated natural areas highest compared to the Thornbury area which rated them the lower than other areas.
- Respondents who stated that natural areas were the places they used most often, rated these areas higher when compared to all respondents.

Safety:

- Respondents who stated that natural areas were the places they used most often, rated them as quite safe places to use or visit. Over three quarters of respondents rated natural areas as very safe or quite safe.
- Respondents from the Thornbury area felt the most safe using natural areas compared to those from the Yate & Chipping Sodbury area who rated natural areas less safe.

Current features:

- Respondents who stated that natural areas were the places they used most often, rated entrances, planted & grassed areas and general maintenance & management the highest of the current features and facilities available in natural areas.
- Lighting, toilets, seats & benches and cycle stands were rated as average or less by respondents who stated that natural areas were the places they used most often.

Important or Desired Features:

- When asked to rate the top 5 most important or desired features, respondents who stated that natural areas were the places they used most often, listed clean, litter free, natural & wildlife features and footpaths most often.

Significant Problems:

- When asked to identify whether any issues were a significant problem, respondents who stated that natural areas were sites they used most often listed dog fouling and litters problems most often.

6.25 Quality Standard - Natural and Semi-Natural green space

National Standards	The Green Flag Award criteria for quality (see Appendix 1)
Existing Local Standards	<p>There are no specific quality standards.</p> <p>The Council's vision statement for biodiversity:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To conserve, enhance and create a living landscape that encourages and supports existing biodiversity - To reverse the decline of species and remove threats to them - To provide opportunities for wildlife to establish and prosper - To increase people's understanding of, appreciation of, and sense of responsibility for nature. <p>South Gloucestershire Council have created Local Nature Reserves to give people the opportunity to get closer to nature and learn about wildlife.</p> <p>The Council's adopted Supplementary Planning Guidance, 'Biodiversity and the planning process' (Nov 2005), sets out the requirements to undertake ecological surveys earlier in the planning process on sites known to have, or potentially having, value for wildlife. Developments should firstly avoid impinging on any sites of interest for wildlife. It goes on to state that the Council will expect that existing features of nature conservation value will be incorporated into the proposals for new development. The SPG sets out a series of measures that encourage the ability of existing wildlife to grow and thrive.</p> <p>South Gloucestershire Biodiversity Action Plan sets out a number of species and habitat targets and actions.</p>
Benchmarking (against standards set by other authorities)	It is very difficult to benchmark the quality standards, as each authority takes a different approach to standards. South Gloucestershire Council wishes to consider both qualities for humans and wildlife, and recognises that there are sites where a careful consideration of uses is required in order to maintain a correct balance between conservation and public access. Therefore the assessment criteria and scoring system for natural and semi-natural sites will be unique.
Consultation	See paragraphs 6.24 and the Consultation Report.

<p>Recommended standard</p>	<p>Based on the assessment criteria used for this audit, an overall site standard of 50% is recommended. Care should be taken to ensure the application of the standard does not undermine the nature conservation interest on some sites.</p> <p>The most important individual assessment elements should score good (3) or better, these include:</p> <table border="0"> <tr> <td style="vertical-align: top;"> <p><u>Desirable features:</u> Experience of Nature, Footpaths, Information boards/Signage, Management plan in place, with a monitoring process also in place.</p> </td> <td style="vertical-align: top;"> <p><u>Important issues to be addressed:</u> Dog Fouling, Litter, Public access having a detrimental impact on the habitat resource.</p> </td> </tr> </table> <p>Vision: A well managed, accessible natural/semi-natural environment designated and protected for wildlife and managed to encourage nature conservation and enhancement of the environment. The areas should be free from litter and dog fouling, and include information boards, paths, appropriate provision of bins and car parking.</p>	<p><u>Desirable features:</u> Experience of Nature, Footpaths, Information boards/Signage, Management plan in place, with a monitoring process also in place.</p>	<p><u>Important issues to be addressed:</u> Dog Fouling, Litter, Public access having a detrimental impact on the habitat resource.</p>
<p><u>Desirable features:</u> Experience of Nature, Footpaths, Information boards/Signage, Management plan in place, with a monitoring process also in place.</p>	<p><u>Important issues to be addressed:</u> Dog Fouling, Litter, Public access having a detrimental impact on the habitat resource.</p>		
<p>Justification for standard</p>	<p>The assessment used in this audit reflects the Green Flag Assessment criteria, therefore an appropriate quality score will provide the basis for achieve an Award.</p> <p>As highlighted within the biodiversity action plan, the Council wants not only to protect sites but also to enhance people's opportunities to experience nature and to enhance the wildlife value of the sites. These standards and the site scores recorded reflect some of the opportunities that exist to improve sites in this way.</p>		

6.26 Accessibility of Provision - Natural and Semi-Natural green space

The accessibility standard is set in the form of distance threshold and has been derived from the findings of the local consultations.

6.27 Individual assessment elements that contribute to the accessibility of sites, such as site information, signage, linkages, disabled access, condition of paths and cycle stands, have all been incorporated into the quality assessment.

6.28 Consultation Responses – Accessibility

The key issues identified through the consultation process relating to the accessibility of provision of natural areas are:

Household Survey:

- Overall, 65% of respondents walk to natural areas and nearly a quarter (23%) travel by car.
- Of those that walk, 69% walk for less than 10 minutes.
- 62% of those that travel by car to natural areas, drive for between 5 and 20 minutes.
- The results indicate that the effective catchment, defined as the distance travelled by around 75% of users is:
 Urban Areas: 15.5 minutes
 Other (rural) Areas: 13.5 minutes
 Overall: 15 minutes
- Respondents who stated that natural areas were the places they used most often, spend less time travelling to these areas when compared to all respondents.

6.29 Accessibility Standard - Natural and Semi-Natural green space

<p>National Standards</p>	<p>English Nature Accessible Greenspace Standards (ANGSt) recommends that everyone, wherever they live, should have an accessible natural greenspace:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - of at least 2 hectares in size, no more than 300 metres (5 minutes walk) from home; - at least one accessible 20ha site within 2km from home; - There should be at least one 100ha site within 5km; - There should be at least one 500ha site within 10km. - A minimum of 1 hectare of statutory Local Nature Reserves per 1,000 population. <p>Woodland Trust:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - no person should live more than 500m from at least one area of accessible woodland of less than 2Ha in size - there should also be at least one area of accessible woodland of no less than 20ha with 4Km of people's home.
<p>Existing Local Standards</p>	<p>No existing standards</p>
<p>Benchmarking (against standards set by other authorities)</p>	<p>Bristol City Council's Green Space Strategy = 700m/18minutes walk</p>

	Swindon = Major open spaces, 2-20ha=2Km, and sites greater than 20ha=5km
Consultation	See paragraph 6.28 and the Consultation Report
Recommended standard	15 minutes (720 metres) walk time
Justification for standard	Using the findings from the household survey and by comparing the standards used by other authorities, the recommended standard is considered realistic. 15 minutes walking time at the average speed of 3mph, actually equates to 1200 metres. National guidelines reduce the actual distances travelled into straight line distances to allow analysis to be undertaken using GIS mapping system, this is a 40% reduction. This is to allow for the fact that routes to sites will not be straight, and the actual route taken will be more complex. The 40% reduction is based on the Fields In Trust (formally NPFA) research. Therefore using this approach the 720m recommended standard equates to the straight line distance. (This approach has been used for all typologies in this audit).

6.30 **Natural and semi-natural green space conclusions:**

There is a wide disparity in the spatial distribution of natural and semi-natural green space across South Gloucestershire, with the greatest number and largest sites found in the rural areas. Opportunities to improve access to these rural sites should where appropriate be explored. Maintaining and where appropriate enhancing the current provision of sites within the urban area is important. The wide benefits that natural and semi-natural green spaces have for humans and wildlife should be recognised when considering the future of sites.

Vision for Natural and Semi-Natural green space:

A well managed, accessible natural/semi-natural environment designated and protected for wildlife and managed to encourage nature conservation and enhancement of the environment. The areas should be free from litter and dog fouling, and include information boards, paths, appropriate provision of bins and car parking.

Standards for Natural and Semi-Natural green space

Quantity

1.5ha per 1,000 population

Quality

To aim to achieve an overall site standard of 50%.

In addition the most important individual assessment elements should score at least 'good' (3) or better, these include:

Desirable features:

Experience of Nature.
Footpaths.
Information boards/Signage.
Management plan in place, with a monitoring process also in place.

Important issues to be addressed:

Dog Fouling.
Litter.
Public access having a detrimental impact on the habitat resource.

Accessibility

15 minutes (720 metres) walk time.

SECTION 7:

7. Outdoor Sports Facilities

- 7.1 Outdoor sports facilities is a broad category with a wide range of different open spaces and facilities, such as formal pitches, tennis courts, bowling greens, athletics tracks, and golf courses the common feature being that the primary purpose of all these spaces is to enable the participation in outdoor physical activity. This category includes natural and artificial surfaces, which are publicly or privately owned and can be accessed at no cost, via membership fees or through hiring the facilities.
- 7.2 PPG17 states that provision for outdoor sport facilities is normally demand-led and therefore it is possible to establish a population based quantity standard. Participation is not however solely dependant on the number of facilities available but on the activity offered, the quality of the facility and its accessibility. Quantity issues, therefore, need to be considered alongside locally derived quality and accessibility standards.
- 7.3 It must be noted that many outdoor sport facilities often have secondary purposes for example informal recreation (dog walking, kite flying) and as an amenity resource, utilised for other community events.
- 7.4 South Gloucestershire's Physical Activity and Sports Plan has a target to increase the number of people taking part in sport and active recreation by 1% year on year. The appropriate level of provision of formal and informal facilities for sport is instrumental in ensuring participation rates can be increased. The second Active People survey highlights that participation (at least three times a week) in sport and active recreation across South Gloucestershire's residents is 22.1% compared to a national average of 21.32%.
- 7.5 **Golf Courses**
The quantity analysis and provision standards exclude golf courses and driving ranges; due to their size inclusion would skew results and result in unachievable standards. South Gloucestershire has eleven and half 18 hole golf courses and a golf academy is under construction (including a 9 hole course). These are spatially well distributed across the district, making journey times for users good (i.e. within national standards).
- 7.6 **Athletics Tracks**
There are two synthetic and one cinder athletics tracks in South Gloucestershire. These provide accessible provision at a greater provision level than UK Athletics recommends. UK Athletics recommends one 6-lane track per 250,000 people (*Athletics Facilities Strategy for the UK (2007)*); it is acknowledged that they do in part serve the population of adjoining authorities.
- 7.7 The Council is producing a built facilities strategy that will provide more details on built sport facilities. The built facilities strategy will also consider the usage residents of neighbouring authorities make of facilities within South Gloucestershire, to ensure that provision levels and demand is understood.

7.8 Quantity of Provision – Outdoor Sports Facilities

The current provision of outdoor sports facilities across South Gloucestershire is summarised in the table below.

Analysis Area	Total accessible provision (Excl. school sites & golf courses)	Current provision (ha per 1,000 population)	Total provision (incl. school sites, excl. golf courses)	Current provision incl. school provision (ha per 1,000 population)
East Fringe of the Bristol Urban Area	81.84	0.94	81.84+43.84= 125.68	1.44
North Fringe of the Bristol Urban Area	84.71	1.50	84.71+49.72= 134.43	2.38
Yate/Chipping Sodbury	19.94	0.58	19.94+36.17= 56.11	1.62
Thornbury	11.00	0.71	11.00+21.41= 32.41	2.1
Rural & Other (including Severnside)	108.54	1.72	108.54+50.21= 159.75	2.53
Overall	306.03	1.19	508.38	1.98

7.9 The provision standards include overall site area, not just the actual marked playing pitch area. Synthetic pitch areas have been recorded as being twice their actual area to recognise the increased use they can accommodate versus grass pitches. Known private sites or school sites where there is no community access have been excluded from the provision levels, where the status is unknown public access has been assumed. The entire school playing field area has been recorded on the database; more detailed analysis may be needed to establish the exact space for outdoor sport, as there may be circumstances where schools are utilising outdoor space for other uses, such as outdoor class rooms, wildlife areas and gardens or where community access arrangements have changed.

7.10 The distribution of outdoor sports facilities is a complex. This is in part due to historic provision, the opportunistic nature of provision, the land values affecting delivery of sites, a variety of past provision standards and the success of their application. The majority of provision is focused in the **East and North Fringes of the Bristol Urban Area** and in the **Rural & Other** analysis areas. Provision in both **Yate/Chipping Sodbury** and **Thornbury** analysis areas are significantly bolstered by provision located within school sites.

7.11 Consultation Responses – Quantity

The key issues identified through the consultation process relating to the quantity of playing fields are:

Household Survey:

Analysis Area	More than enough (%)	About right (%)	Nearly enough (%)	Not enough (%)	No opinion (%)
East Fringe of the Bristol Urban Area	4.0	49.0	20.8	13.4	7.9
North Fringe of the Bristol Urban Area	3.4	53.7	18.1	12.8	8.1
Yate/Chipping Sodbury	1.0	56.3	20.8	11.5	4.2
Thornbury	4.0	64.0	16.0	10.0	4.0
Rural & Other (including Severnside)	5.5	42.1	23.0	20.1	5.8
Overall	4.0	46.7	19.5	15.6	6.9

- Nearly half of respondents (46.7%) thought the quantity of playing fields was about right.
- This rose to 64% of respondents from the Thornbury area, compared to 42.1% in rural and other areas, where a fifth of respondents stated that there were not enough playing fields.

Usage:

- Overall, over a third of respondents (35%) don't use playing fields.
- Over a quarter of respondents from the rural and other area use them at least weekly, compared to only 16% of respondents from the Thornbury area.
- Overall, 75% of respondents that stated that they use outdoor sport facilities as the space/facility they use the most often use them at least weekly. This rises to over 80% in the Yate & Chipping Sodbury area and rural and other area.

Town & Parish Council Survey:

- Over a third of Parish Councils thought that there were not enough playing fields.

Stakeholder Workshop:

- Opportunities to increase participation through increased use of educational facilities were identified at the stakeholder workshop.

7.12 Recommendations

National Standards	Fields In Trust (FIT, formally National Playing Fields Association, NPFA) – Outdoor Sport 1.60 ha per 1,000 population, including pitches, bowling greens, and tennis courts. 1.2 ha of the 1.6 ha should be used for playing pitches.
Existing Local Standards	South Gloucestershire Local Plan policy LC8: Formal Sports and Children’s Play areas, minimum standard of 2.4ha per 1000 population. Broken down to: Category 1 – Youth and Adult Use: 1.6 – 1.8 ha for Pitches Courts & Greens. A minimum of 1.2ha should be used for sports pitches. Category 2 – Children’s Use: 0.2 – 0.3ha for Equipped Playspace Category 3 – Children’s Use: 0.4 - 0.5ha for Unequipped Playspace
Current district wide provision (ha per 1,000 population)	1.19 ha per 1,000 population, unrestricted access. 1.98 ha per 1,000 population including school playing fields.
Benchmarking (against standards set by other authorities)	Swindon: 1.6ha per 1,000 population of which 1.2ha is for playing pitches. Taunton Deane: (proposed) 2.00 ha per 1,000 population.
Consultation	See paragraph 7.11 and the consultation report. The consultation responses indicate that additional provision is desired in areas across the district. South Gloucestershire Council controls pitches in the East Fringe of the Bristol Urban Area, records show unmet demands for pitches from 4 teams for 2009/10 season and a further 6 teams for the 2010/11 season. Officers noted that there is a specific shortage of adult pitches, whereas there is some surplus capacity on junior pitches. Teams using the Ridings, Chipping Sodbury are seeking to expand the number of pitches. Club Thornbury is seeking to secure land for additional pitches. Enhanced provision was requested through use of floodlighting and synthetic (all weather) surfaces. There has been some evidence that teams which have used school pitches are seeking alternative sites as increasing costs have become an obstacle. Only a small number of clubs responded to the consultation survey for this audit. Whilst only a few highlighted shortage of provision as an issue, it should be noted the response was very low and cannot be used with any statistical validity. Other consultation responses, extensive officer knowledge and their

	relationships with clubs demonstrate a shortage of provision.
Recommended standard	1.6ha per 1,000 population.
Justification for standard	<p>There exists significant unmet demand for outdoor sport facilities across the district, for a variety of reasons.</p> <p>The Council's existing Local Plan policy has been successfully used as the basis for seeking appropriate provision from new development. It is also important that the new standard reflects the government's objective to increase physical activity by 1% year on year.</p> <p>In recognition of the current level of provision the minimum standard is set at a level consistent with the Fields In Trust (NPFA) guidelines/benchmark.</p> <p>The Council is producing a built facilities strategy and playing pitch strategy. This local needs assessment and audit will be used to inform these emerging strategies. These strategies may lead to the refinement of the approach to provision.</p>

7.13 Applying the quantity standard

The current supply of outdoor sport facilities amounts to 1.19 ha per 1,000 population of unrestricted access which is significantly below the recommended provision standard of 1.60 hectares per 1,000 population. Within the analysis areas there is a significant degree of variation in provision levels, only the 'Rural & Other' analysis area exceeds the recommended provision level, but it must be noted that there are large differences in where these facilities are located across this analysis area.

- 7.14 In order to meet the provision standards greater continuity between school sites should be sought in terms of community use and cost of access. Seeking ways to harmonise the cost for the use of school sites, public and private sector provision should also be considered.
- 7.15 Demand has continued to be high for outdoor sports facilities this is reflected in the higher than average level of participation. With the Council's aim to continue to increase participation in outdoor sport, the delivery of future provision is very important, particularly in connection with new residential development.
- 7.16 This PPG17 audit considers the provision of all the different types of outdoor sport facilities under one typology and does not break it down into more detailed assessments for each sport. The Council is preparing a built facilities strategy and playing pitch strategy that will assist in providing additional evidence regarding more specific requirements for each sport/type of provision.

7.17 Quality of Provision – Outdoor Sports Facilities

The current quality of individual pitches, courts, greens and athletics tracks has been recorded onto the database. These non technical visual assessments have been undertaken in accordance with Sport England's guidelines. Pitch quality assessments (PQA) form an important element of 'Towards A Level Playing Field - A Guide To The Production Of Playing Pitch Strategies'. These non technical assessments provide a quality score which is applicable to an individual pitch, and will be reflected upon in the Built Facilities and Playing Pitch Strategies.

7.18 Overall site assessments have been undertaken for those sites that provide a range of uses, such as a range of sports, play areas and recreational spaces. These sites perform a similar function to amenity areas and their overall assessments use the same criteria. . It should be noted that site assessments are conducted as a snapshot in time and therefore scores represent the condition of the site on that specific day.

7.19 Consultation Responses – Quality

The main points identified through the consultation process relating to the quality of the provision of playing fields and outdoor sports facilities are:

Household Survey:

- Overall 67% of respondents that listed outdoor sports facilities as the facility they use most often rated them as either good or very good.
- This rises to 86% in the Thornbury area and 95% in the Yate & Chipping Sodbury area.

Safety:

- Overall 74% of the respondents that listed outdoor sports facilities as the facility they use most often rated them as either quite safe or very safe. This rises to 86% in Thornbury and 95% in the Yate & Chipping Sodbury area. This compares to only 67% in the east fringe area.
- Less than 3% of respondents rated outdoor sports facilities as either unsafe or very unsafe

Current features:

- When asked to rate the current features of outdoor sports facilities; general maintenance & management, planted & grassed areas, boundaries and entrances were rated the highest. Cycle stands, seats and benches were rated the lowest.

Important or Desired Features:

- When asked to rate the top 5 most important or desired features of outdoor sports facilities, respondents listed the following most often; clean & litter free (60%), well kept grass (51%), parking facilities (39%), toilets and level surface/good drainage (30%).

Significant Problems:

- The biggest issues for respondents that listed outdoor sports facilities as the place they used most often were vandalism & graffiti, litter problems and dog fouling.

Club Survey:

- Highlighted the need for appropriate changing facilities for teams and referees.
- Some clubs identified problems with litter/dog fouling, changing facilities and showers.
- Most pitch based clubs commented that the playing pitches were mainly acceptable or good.

7.20 Quality Standard – Outdoor Sports Facilities

National Standards	<p>There are no overall specific standards for outdoor sports facilities.</p> <p>The Green Flag Award criteria for quality (see Appendix 1) provides an appropriate set of overall assessment criteria.</p> <p>Sport England has produced a series of design guides relating to individual sport facilities.</p> <p>The Fields In Trust recommends undertaking full technical assessments using their publication ‘The Design and Maintenance of Outdoor Sports Facilities’.</p>
Existing Local Standards	<p>South Gloucestershire Local Plan states: “The design and construction of each facility must be carefully planned according to the specific demands & priorities it is intended to address. Where required for competition use, facilities must be constructed to the standards adopted by the Governing Body of the sport.” (paragraph 10.71).</p>
Benchmarking (against standards set by other authorities)	<p>It is very difficult to benchmark the quality standards, as each authority has used different assessment criteria. Authorities also have different approaches to setting out quality standards with some setting scoring threshold (sometimes linked with Green Flag Assessment criteria), some listing essential and desirable elements and others setting out a quality vision.</p>
Consultation	<p>See paragraph 7.19 and the Consultation Report</p>
Recommended standard	<p>No standard is recommended. It is not appropriate to simply have a single standard for quality. The overall site area quality score should be 75% or above (in line with other informal recreational space). However overall site scores need to be considered along with the non technical individual pitch/court/green/track assessments undertaken for the playing pitches strategy, which</p>

	<p>reflect the primary purpose of this typology, i.e. for sport, and where required any future full technical assessments.</p> <p>Vision: A wide range of well-located and accessible sporting facilities, which are of a high quality, well drained and include changing rooms, toilets, adequate parking and signage, which are well maintained and free from dog fouling and litter. Facilities will include floodlighting and all weather surfaces where appropriate.</p>
<p>Justification for standard</p>	<p>It is not sensible to set an overarching standard that covers the wide ranging requirements that different outdoor sports have.</p> <p>However, the overall site area assessments undertaken allows the wider uses that some playing fields have to be taken into account, such as dog walking and play areas, not just simply for active sports. These overall scores therefore provide a useful comparison with other types of open space, in particular amenity green space and should therefore not score less than 75%. The results of the household survey support this approach, in particular the importance of desired features.</p> <p>Whilst individual qualitative criteria standards have not been set for outdoor sports facilities, comparisons can be drawn with the standards set for amenity green space (see section 8); again this approach is supported by the results of the household survey.</p> <p>Individual sport facility's non-technical assessment scores will be considered as part of the Playing Pitch Strategy / Built Facilities Strategy.</p>

7.21 Applying the quality standard

Many outdoor sports facilities have secondary purposes that are of important value to users. The application of the overall quality standard does not address the specific design requirements of the various sports and recreational pursuits that will take place on the facilities. The Council will refer to the relevant best practice best guides prepared by national advisory bodies/groups, sports governing bodies and extensive officer knowledge to ensure that facilities are appropriately designed and usable for their intended sport/recreational activity.

7.22 Accessibility of Provision – Outdoor Sports Facilities

The accessibility standard is set in the form of a distance threshold and has been derived from the findings of the local consultations.

7.23 Individual assessment element that contributes to the accessibility of sites, such as linkages, signage and cycle stands, have all been incorporated into the overall site quality assessment and/or the pitch quality assessment. Issues of community access to facilities, for example achieving secure use of educational sites and other private sites will be considered in more detail within the playing pitch and built facilities strategies.

7.24 **Consultation Reponses – Accessibility**

The key issues identified through the consultation process relating to the accessibility of playing fields / outdoor sports facilities are:

Club Survey:

- Clubs identified that members were travelling a significant distance (Greater than 10 miles) to play pitch sports. Distance travelled reflected the league/standard that was being played by the team, generally the higher the league the further members travel.
- High cost of hiring facilities was stated as a possible reason for discouraging more participation.

Household Survey:

- Nearly half of respondents (47%) walk to playing fields, whilst a further 14% go by car.
- Of those that walk, 73% travel for up to 10 minutes to reach playing fields.
- Of those that travel by car, 69% travel for between 5 and 20 minutes.
- The household survey results indicate that the effective catchment, defined as the distance travelled by around 75% of users is:

Type of Space/Facility	Urban Analysis Areas	Rural & Other Areas	Overall
Playing Pitches	11.5 minutes	10 minutes	11 minutes
Grass Pitches	10.5 minutes	14.5 minutes	12 minutes
Tennis Courts	15.5 minutes	20.5 minutes	18 minutes
Bowling Greens	23.5 minutes	25 minutes	25 minutes
Pitches, Courts and Greens Overall	14 minutes	16 minutes	15 minutes
Mode:	Nearly 70% Walk / 28% Car	Nearly 50% Walk / 50% Car	Over 58 % Walk / 40% Car

Type of Space/Facility	Urban Analysis Area	Rural & Other Areas	Overall
Synthetic pitches	18 minutes	20.5 minutes	19 minutes
Athletics Tracks	25 minutes	24 minutes	25.5 minutes
Golf Courses	20.5 minutes	22.5 minutes	21.5 minutes
Synthetic pitches, Athletics Tracks and Golf Course Overall	20.5 minutes	22 minutes	22 minutes
Mode:	Around 45% Walk / 50% Car	Nearly 11% Walk / 85% Car	Over 22% Walk / nearly 73% Car

7.25 **Accessibility Standard – Outdoor Sports Facilities**

<p>National Standards</p>	<p>Fields In Trust standards:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Playing Pitches should be available within 1.2 Kilometres of all dwellings in major residential areas. - Athletics, one synthetic track with floodlighting per 250,000 people living within 30 minutes drive time (45 minutes in rural areas) of the proposed location. - Tennis, community tennis courts within 20 minutes travel time (walking in urban areas, by car in rural areas). - Bowls, one green within 20 minutes travel time (walking in urban areas, by car in rural areas). <p>UK Athletics (Athletics Facilities Strategy for the UK, 2006), one 6-lane 400m synthetic athletics track within 20 minutes drive time (20 minutes walk in urban areas).</p> <p>Comprehensive Performance Assessment highlighted “% of the population within 20 minutes if a range of 3 different facility types” as one of their performance indicators.</p>
<p>Existing Local Standards</p>	<p>South Gloucestershire Local Plan:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - No specific standards relating to outdoor sports facilities, provision levels are assessed using a 1.2Km radial search from the edge of the site (reflecting PPG13 guidance that walking trips under 2Km offer the greatest potential to replace short car trips. This distance is reduced by 40% to account for the actual walking distance rather than straight line distance, in accordance with the Fields In Trust approach). <p>South Gloucestershire Design Checklist Supplementary Planning Document:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - As a rule of thumb, private/shared open spaces should be immediately accessible, local play spaces (LEAP) within 240 metres, neighbourhood parks (NEAP) within 600 metres, and district/town open spaces (formal squares, playing fields etc) should be within 800 metres of dwellings. <p>South Gloucestershire has developed the following community sports associations: North Fringe: Patchway East Fringe: Pomphrey Hill, Banjo Island Yate/Chipping Sodbury: The Stub Ridings Thornbury: Club Thornbury</p> <p>These are located across the authority and serve their respective communities (and analysis areas).</p>
<p>Benchmarking (against standards set by other authorities)</p>	<p>Swindon: 600m for junior pitches (15 minutes walking time). 20 minutes drive time for adult sports facilities.</p>

	Bristol City Council, Parks and Green Space Strategy: No single distance is given for active sports because participants in competitive sport will travel significant distances for games and location can be dependant on fixtures with teams organising transport to get there.
Consultation	See paragraph 7.24 and the Consultation Report
Recommended standard	Playing Pitches = 20 minutes (1000 metres) walk time Synthetic Pitches, Athletics Tracks and Golf Courses = 22 minutes drive time
Justification for standard	<p>It is notable from other audits and strategies that access standards can be very difficult to set for a number of reasons. The standards set out reflect the difficulties experienced through the practical application of access standards by South Gloucestershire officers, by only setting standards for pitches, athletics tracks and golf courses.</p> <p>It was highlighted through the consultation that people do travel distances much greater than the standards set out, depending upon club links, type of facility and availability of facilities. However the standards reflect national guidelines, the existing proximity of facilities (stated in the household survey) and the experience of Council officers and are considered to be realistic.</p> <p>20 minutes walking time at the average speed of 3mph, actually equates to 1,600 metres. National guidelines reduce the actual distances travelled into straight line distances to allow analysis to be undertaken using GIS mapping system, this is a 40% reduction. This is to allow for the fact that routes to sites will not be straight, and the actual route taken will be more complex. The 40% reduction is based on the Fields In Trust (FIT, Formally NPFA) research. Therefore using this approach the 1,000 metres recommended standard equates to the straight line distance.</p>

7.26 Outdoor Sports Facilities conclusions:

It is important that existing provision is protected and where possible community use promoted. If a facility is lost to development and not found to be surplus to requirements, a replacement of equivalent quality and accessibility must be provided.

Vision Outdoor Sports Facilities:

A wide range of well-located and accessible sporting facilities, which are of a high quality, well drained and include changing rooms, toilets, adequate parking and signage, which are well maintained and free from dog fouling and litter. Facilities will include floodlighting and all weather surfaces where appropriate.

Standards for Outdoor Sport Facilities

Quantity

1.6ha per 1,000 population

Quality

To aim to achieve an overall site standard of 75%.

In addition the most important individual assessment elements should score at least 'good' (3) or better, in line with informal recreational open spaces, these include:

Desirable features:

Litter bins
Dog bins
Grass areas
Vegetation
Footpaths
Lighting

Important issues to be addressed:

Dog Fouling
Vandalism
Litter

Accessibility

Playing Pitches = 20 minutes (1000 metres) walk time

Synthetic Pitches, Athletics Tracks and Golf Courses = 22 minutes drive time

SECTION 8:

8. Amenity Green Space and Green Corridors

- 8.1 This type of open space includes informal recreation space and linking corridors, referred to as Green Corridors. These areas provide opportunities for informal recreation, as well as enhancing the visual appearance of areas.
- 8.2 Green corridors include paths along canals and riverbanks, cycleways, rights of way and disused railway lines. They can provide opportunities for walking, cycling and horse riding. They are linear features, however the land surrounding them can also provide for informal use, it is these areas that have been recorded on the database and reflected in the provision standards.
- 8.3 As highlighted in the Parks and Gardens section of this report, the informal recreational use that is made of parks, gardens, amenity space and green corridors form a common primary purpose. This commonality however creates difficulties in classifying these typologies. It is therefore considered appropriate to set out one provision standard that encompass these three types of space, based upon their primary purpose of informal recreational use. Details of the quantity, quality, accessibility and consultation responses relating to Parks and Gardens can be found in Section 5.
- 8.4 The distribution of informal recreational space is fairly evenly spread across South Gloucestershire. The only analysis area which has notably less provision (per capita) is the **East Fringe of the Bristol Urban Area**, although the difference is not great.
- 8.5 The Council has produced a Rights of Way Improvement Plan (ROWIP, 2007), in partnership with Bristol City Council and Bath North East Somerset Council. This makes an assessment of the extent to which local rights of way meet the current and likely future needs of the public, the opportunities provided by local rights of way for exercise and other forms of open-air recreation and the enjoyment of their area, and the accessibility of local rights of way to blind or partially sighted persons and residents with mobility issues.
- 8.6 The Rights of Way Improvement Plans, indicates that South Gloucestershire currently has 1112 km of public footpaths, 120 km of public bridleways, and 25 km of restricted byways, giving a average density of 23.5 (m/ha), this is slightly less than BANES (23.9) but significantly more that Bristol (14.3). Rights of Way have not been specifically assessed by this audit, please see Section 2 for more details.
- 8.7 **Quantity of Provision – Amenity green space, green corridors, parks and gardens**

The current provision of amenity green space, green corridors, parks and gardens across South Gloucestershire is summarised in the table below.

Section 8: Amenity Green Space and Green Corridors – Informal Recreational Open Space

Analysis Area	Total provision of Amenity Green Space (448 sites) hectares or ha	Total provision Amenity Green Space and Green Corridors (17 sites) hectares or ha	Total provision Amenity Green Space, Green Corridors and Parks & Gardens (11 sites) hectares or ha	Current provision Informal recreational open space (Amenity space, Green Corridors and Parks & Gardens) (ha per 1,000 population)
East Fringe of the Bristol Urban Area	74.30	85.92	97.95	1.13
North Fringe of the Bristol Urban Area	73.11	73.11	82.55	1.46
Yate/Chipping Sodbury	40.56	40.56	51.79	1.50
Thornbury	13.54	22.43	22.43	1.45
Rural & Other (including Severnside)	64.31	92.03	95.05	1.51
Overall	265.82	314.05	349.77	1.36

8.8 Consultation Responses – Quantity

The key issues identified through the consultation process relating to the quantity of provision of amenity spaces and public rights of way are:

Household Survey:

Amenity Areas:

Analysis Area	More than enough (%)	About right (%)	Nearly enough (%)	Not enough (%)	No opinion (%)
East Fringe of the Bristol Urban Area	1.5	30.7	12.4	15.3	23.3
North Fringe of the Bristol Urban Area	1.3	32.9	11.4	8.7	28.9
Yate/Chipping Sodbury	1.0	36.5	14.6	8.3	20.8
Thornbury	0	34.0	12.0	4.0	28.0
Rural & Other (including Severnside)	1.3	28.5	15.5	12.0	22.3
Overall	1.4	28.9	12.5	11.1	23.0

Section 8: Amenity Green Space and Green Corridors – Informal Recreational Open Space

Public Rights of Way:

Analysis Area	More than enough (%)	About right (%)	Nearly enough (%)	Not enough (%)	No opinion (%)
East Fringe of the Bristol Urban Area	3.5	54.0	12.9	8.4	15.8
North Fringe of the Bristol Urban Area	4.0	54.4	16.8	7.4	12.8
Yate/Chipping Sodbury	4.2	44.8	14.6	14.6	14.6
Thornbury	4.0	64.0	16.0	10.0	6.0
Rural & Other (including Severnside)	9.7	47.2	18.1	11.7	8.1
Overall	6.1	48.1	15.9	10.5	11.2

- Overall, 29% of respondents stated that the amount of amenity areas in South Gloucestershire was about right.
- This rose to 37% in the Yate & Chipping Sodbury area. Over 15% of respondents in the East Fringe area considered there was not enough amenity areas
- Overall, nearly half of respondents (48%) considered the quantity of public rights of way about right. This rose to 64% in the Thornbury area compared to only 45% in the Yate & Chipping Sodbury area.

Usage:

- Overall 30% of respondents use amenity areas at least monthly. Over 20% do not use amenity areas.
- Respondents from the Yate & Chipping Sodbury area were the most frequent users of amenity areas with 38% using them at least monthly compared to 28% of respondents from the North Fringe area.
- Overall, 43% of respondents use Public Rights of Way at least weekly. This rises to 54% of respondents from the East Fringe and Thornbury areas compared to 40% in the Yate & Chipping Sodbury area.

8.9 Quantity Standard – Informal Recreational Open Space (incorporating amenity green space, green corridors, parks and gardens)

National Standards	No national standards exist specifically for amenity green space or green corridors.
Existing Local Standards	No local standard. Unequipped children's playspace is required through policy LC8, 0.4 - 0.5ha per 1,000 population. Informal open space is required at a level compatible with both the design and the assessed informal recreational needs of future occupiers.
Current district wide	1.09 ha per 1,000 population = Amenity green space

Section 8: Amenity Green Space and Green Corridors – Informal Recreational Open Space

<p>provision (per 1,000 population)</p>	<p>1.22 ha per 1,000 population = Amenity green space and green corridors.</p> <p>1.36 ha per 1,000 population = Amenity green space, green corridors, and parks and gardens.</p>
<p>Benchmarking (against standards set by other authorities)</p>	<p>Swindon: General Recreational Areas (including parks, amenity space, accessible wildlife areas) 1ha per 1,000 population</p> <p>Bristol City Council’s Green Space Strategy = 0.8 ha informal green space plus 0.2 ha formal green space = 1 ha per 1,000 population.</p> <p>Bath and North East Somerset: Formal (including parks, garden, amenity green spaces and recreation grounds) = 1.5 ha per 1,000 population.</p>
<p>Consultation</p>	<p>See paragraph 8.8 and the Consultation Report</p>
<p>Recommended standard</p>	<p>1.4ha per 1,000 population for informal recreational open space, of which 0.25 ha can be used to locate ‘Children and Young People’s’ provision on.</p>
<p>Justification for standard</p>	<p>A number of classified amenity areas are locally considered by residents as parks. Amenity green spaces combine with footpaths and cycleways to act as green corridors through existing settlements. It is sometimes difficult to distinguish between parks, green corridors and amenity spaces. Therefore, the recommended standard collates these spaces together into one standard.</p> <p>It is appropriate for these areas to accommodate provision for children and young people within them. The two typologies complement one another, informal recreational open space acts as a buffer around play space to overcome potential issues with adjoining uses, provides connections to the play space and provides informal play opportunities.</p> <p>In applying the standard and seeking new provision the Council’s Play Policy and Strategy must be reflected upon. It is important that informal recreational areas provide opportunities for informal play, as set out in the emerging Core Strategy policies. These play opportunities should be extended to other areas of the public realm, including streets.</p> <p>Informal recreational open spaces provide opportunities for doorstep or local areas of play (LAPs, as defined by FIT). These play opportunities will be delivered as part of the design of these spaces, they however will not be recorded as equipped play spaces and as such will not count towards achieving the equipped play space standards, set out in section 9.</p>

Opportunities for informal play can incorporate natural play elements or low impact equipment within the overall design of informal recreational open space, these should be conducive to their surroundings (habitat and topography) i.e. an embankment slide, a sculpted fallen tree and pieces of public art that also have a play function. These areas of activity should, where possible and appropriate, be scattered through the informal open space, creating a journey of play, with consideration of buffer zones from residential areas and the public highway where necessary. These features will encourage children and young people to explore playful and imaginative activities, and interaction with their environment.

Green Corridors

Annex A of PPG17 – Open Space Typologies states: *“the need for Green Corridors arises from the need to promote environmentally sustainable forms of transport such as walking and cycling within urban areas. This means that there is no sensible way of stating a provision standard, just as there is no way of having a standard for the provision of land in an area which it will be desirable to allocate for roads”.*

PPG17 goes on to state: *“Instead planning authorities should promote the use of green corridors to link housing areas to the Sustrans national cycle network, town and city centres, places of employment and community facilities such as schools, shops, community centres and sports facilities. In this sense green corridors are demand-led. However, planning authorities should also take opportunities to use established linear routes, such as disused railway lines, roads or canal and river banks, as green corridors, and supplement them by proposals to ‘plug in’ access to them from as wide an area as possible”.*

The audit undertaken has recorded a number of sites that do perform as green corridors in accordance with PPG17. It is considered reasonable to record them together with amenity green space, as in some locations the subtle difference between these typologies would not be noticed by residents. Informal recreational open spaces have the potential to provide a network of corridors that link destinations together and other open spaces and green corridors.

8.10 **Applying the quantity standard**

The current supply of amenity green space and green corridor areas across the district provides the basis for the provision, with the addition of parks and gardens the provision standard equates to 1.40 ha per 1,000 population, slightly higher than the overall provision level of 1.36 ha per 1,000 population. This is in recognition of the difference in provision levels between the urban analysis areas and the rural/other area.

8.11 There is currently a shortfall against the provision standard in only one of the analysis areas, the East Fringe. However, the East Fringe of the Bristol Urban Area analysis area benefits from significant amounts of nearby accessible semi-natural and natural space and accessible countryside, which assist in providing accessible space for informal use. This use of natural / semi-natural areas was reflected in the consultation responses. However opportunities to enhance the provision of amenity green space within the urban area should be explored.

8.12 Except from the East Fringe all the other analysis areas have current provision levels which are above the provision standards. This does not however mean that provision is surplus to the needs of the local community. These areas are highly valued assets by the local residents they serve and add to the strong identity of these areas and South Gloucestershire as a whole. The presumption in these areas will be to safeguard these sites and to seek provision resulting from the needs of future occupiers of new development in accordance with the recommended standard. If there are sites which, following further community consultation, are identified as surplus to the need for informal recreation, then other types of open space should be considered in advance of considering a change of use, considerations should be focussed on particular types of open space where there is existing under-provision that needs to be addressed within that area.

8.13 **Quality of Provision – Informal Recreational Open Space**

The quality of amenity green spaces, green corridors, parks and gardens is assessed through undertaking site visits and collecting other useful site specific data. The Council has prioritised surveying sites geographically and through applying a site size thresholds to amenity green spaces, firstly surveying sites of 0.2 hectares or greater. The database represents a significant resource for informing future development plans.

8.14 There are no amenity green spaces, green corridors or parks and gardens in South Gloucestershire that have been awarded a Green Flag Award.

8.15 **Consultation Responses – Quality**

The key issues identified through the consultation process relating to the quality of provision of informal recreational open spaces (incorporating amenity green space and public rights of way, for responses relating to parks and gardens to see section 5) are:

Household Survey:

- Overall, 38% of respondents rated Public Rights of Way as either good or very good. This rose to 54% of respondents from the Thornbury area.
- Overall, less than 10% of respondents rated Public Rights of Way as either poor or very poor.
- Overall 22% of respondents rated amenity areas as either good or very good. This rose to 33% in the Yate and Chipping Sodbury area compared to 19% in rural and other areas.
- 69% of the respondents who stated that Public Rights of Way were the facilities/spaces they used most often, rated them as either good or very good.
- 58% of the respondents who stated that amenity area were the facilities/spaces they used most often, rated them as either good or very good.

Safety:

- Overall 78% of respondent who stated that Public Rights of Way were the places they used most often rated play areas as quite safe or very safe.
- Overall 58% of respondent who stated that amenity green space were the places they used most often rated play areas as quite safe or very safe.

Current features:

- Respondents who stated that Public Rights of Way were the places they used most often, rated entrances, planted and grass areas, and general maintenance & management the highest. Lighting, toilets, seat & benches and cycle stands were rated negatively.
- Respondents who stated that amenity green spaces were the places they used most often, rated boundaries and general maintenance & management the highest. Seat & benches and cycle stands were rated negatively.

Important or Desired Features:

- When asked to rate the top 5 most important or desired features, respondents who stated that Public Rights of Way were the places they used most often, listed clean & litter free, footpaths and nature & wildlife features most often.
- When asked to rate the top 5 most important or desired features, respondents who stated that amenity green space were the places they used most often, listed clean & litter free, flowers, trees & shrubs, footpaths and bin dogs most often

Significant Problems:

Section 8: Amenity Green Space and Green Corridors – Informal Recreational Open Space

- Dog fouling and litter problems were seen as the most significant issues for Public Rights of Way users.
- Users of amenity green spaces listed vandalism & graffiti, litter problems and dog fouling as the most significant problems.

8.16 Quality Standard – Informal Recreational Open Space

National Standards	The Green Flag Award criteria for quality (see Appendix 1). Fields In Trust provide criteria for Local Areas for Play, and other environments (e.g. landscaped areas of play) for play.		
Existing Local Standards	There are no specific quality standards for amenity areas, green corridors, parks and gardens.		
Benchmarking (against standards set by other authorities)	It is very difficult to benchmark the quality standards, as each authority has used different assessment criteria, different approaches to quality standards with some setting scoring thresholds (sometimes linked with the Green Flag Assessment Criteria), some listing essential and desirable elements and others setting out a quality vision.		
Consultation	See paragraph 8.15 and the Consultation Report		
Recommended standard	Using the assessment criteria used for this audit, an overall site standard of 75% is recommended. In addition the most important individual assessment criteria should score good (3) or better, these include: <table data-bbox="619 1218 1310 1554"> <tr> <td data-bbox="619 1218 890 1554"><u>Desirable features:</u> Litter bins Dog Bins Grass areas Vegetation Footpaths Seats & Benches Planted Area (Parks specifically) Lighting</td> <td data-bbox="1011 1218 1310 1384"><u>Important issues to be addressed:</u> Dog Fouling Vandalism Litter</td> </tr> </table>	<u>Desirable features:</u> Litter bins Dog Bins Grass areas Vegetation Footpaths Seats & Benches Planted Area (Parks specifically) Lighting	<u>Important issues to be addressed:</u> Dog Fouling Vandalism Litter
<u>Desirable features:</u> Litter bins Dog Bins Grass areas Vegetation Footpaths Seats & Benches Planted Area (Parks specifically) Lighting	<u>Important issues to be addressed:</u> Dog Fouling Vandalism Litter		

	<p>Vision: Areas to be designed to incorporate grassed and landscaped areas with diversity of topography and materials for informal recreation/play, but also to incorporate areas for equipped play space, biodiversity conservation and enhancement. These areas will provide access routes for both people and wildlife, and provide key recreational and active journeys through play opportunities. Management and maintenance must be appropriate to the varied roles that these spaces provide. These roles include providing habitats, reducing noise and air pollution, providing shelter from prevailing winds, creating a sense of place and sociability, and contributing to climate change adaptation and mitigation. Areas should be free from litter and dog fouling, and have sufficient bins, social seating and appropriate lighting to encourage use.</p>
<p>Justification for standard</p>	<p>The assessment criteria used in this audit reflect the Green Flag Assessment criteria, therefore an appropriate quality score will provide the basis for achieving an Award.</p> <p>The overall standard allows a picture of the quality of provision to be established across the District. By setting out the importance of individual assessment elements it allows a more targeted approach to enhancing overall provision. For example a site may score above the standard overall but its use could be blighted by a poor score in just one the desired features or issues to be addressed. It is therefore important that whilst all sites achieve the overall score standard that the highlighted desired features and issues on all sites achieve the recommended standard.</p>

8.17 Accessibility of Provision

The accessibility standard is set in the form of a distance threshold and has been derived from the findings of the local consultations.

8.18 Individual assessment elements that contribute to the accessibility of sites, such as site information, signage, linkages, disabled access, condition of paths and cycle stands, have all been incorporated into the quality assessment and standard.

8.19 Consultation Reponses – Accessibility

The key issues identified through the consultation process relating to the accessibility of amenity and green corridor area are:

- Overall 70% of respondents walk to amenity areas, of these 67% travel for up to 10 minutes. 26% of respondents travel by car to amenity areas with 53% travelling for between 5 and 20 minutes.

- The results indicate that the effective catchment, defined as the distance travelled by around 75% of users of amenity areas, public rights of way, and parks and gardens is:
 Urban Areas: 13 minutes
 Rural and Other Areas: 13.5 minutes
 Overall: 13 minutes

 Parks and Gardens:
 Urban Areas: 14.5 minutes
 Rural and Other Areas: 18 minutes
 Overall: 16 minutes

 Amenity Areas:
 Urban Areas: 14.5 minutes
 Rural and Other Areas: 13 minutes
 Overall: 13.5 minutes
- When asked what prevented people from visiting public open spaces at all or more often, respondents to the household survey listed the lack of facilities as being the biggest barrier, this was followed by safety concerns, too far away and the quality of facilities.

8.20 Accessibility standard – Informal Recreational Open Space

National Standards	<p>There are no national standards for amenity green space.</p> <p>English Nature Accessible Greenspace Standards (ANGSt) recommends that everyone, wherever they live, should have an accessible natural greenspace:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - of at least 2 hectares in size, no more than 300 metres (5 minutes walk) from home; - at least one accessible 20ha site within 2km from home; - There should be at least one 100ha site within 5km; - There should be at least one 500ha site within 10km. - A minimum of 1 hectare of statutory Local Nature Reserves per 1,000 population. <p>Woodland Trust:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - no person should live more than 500m from at least one area of accessible woodland of less than 2Ha in size - there should also be at least one area of accessible woodland of no less than 20ha with 4Km of people's home. <p>FIT does not provide any access standard for amenity areas, green corridors of parks and gardens, however it</p>
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Section 8: Amenity Green Space and Green Corridors – Informal Recreational Open Space

	<p>states that: Local Areas for Play (LAP) or door-step spaces for play and informal recreation = 60 metres Local equipped, or local landscaped, areas for play (LEAPs) = 240 metres Neighbourhood equipped areas for play (NEAPs) = 600 metres</p>
Existing Local Standards	<p>South Gloucestershire Local Plan: - No specific standards relating to access to amenity areas, green corridors of parks and gardens. South Gloucestershire Design Checklist Supplementary Planning Document: - As a rule of thumb, private/shared open spaces should be immediately accessible, local play spaces (LEAP) within 240 metres, neighbourhood parks (NEAP) within 600 metres, and district/town open spaces (formal squares, playing fields etc) should be within 800 metres of dwellings.</p>
Benchmarking (against standards set by other authorities)	<p>Bristol City Council's Parks and Green Space Strategy: Distance to the nearest green space = 400 metres/9 minutes walk Formal green space = 600 metres / 15 minutes Informal green space = 550 metres / 13 minutes</p> <p>Swindon: Local open spaces = 500 metres</p>
Consultation	See paragraph 8.19 and the consultation report
Recommended standard	12.5 minutes (600 metres) walk time
Justification for standard	<p>Using the findings from the household survey and by comparing the standards used by other authorities, the recommended standard is considered to be realistic.</p> <p>In most situations provision will be accessed much closer to people's homes. New development should provide opportunities to access informal recreational space close to people's homes in order to reflect national guidelines on accessing green space and play opportunities, therefore the recommended standard should be used as a maximum distance.</p> <p>The routes to access provision must be free from physical barriers, such as roads which are dangerous to cross, railway lines and river. If provision is not accessible then it must be disregarding from contributing towards achieving the necessary standard(s). Overcoming access barriers may be a way of achieving a standard, provided that the newly accessed site(s) have the ability to accommodate the increased use.</p> <p>These informal recreational open spaces can be used</p>

	<p>to locate equipped play areas within them, and the surrounding amenity green space can be used as buffers. As highlighted above these spaces also provide opportunities for unequipped play.</p> <p>12.5 minutes walking time at the average speed of 3mph, actually equates to 1,000 metres. National guidelines reduce the actual distances travelled into straight line distances to allow analysis to be undertaken using GIS mapping system, this is a 40% reduction. This is to allow for the fact that routes to sites will not be straight, and the actual route taken will be more complex. The 40% reduction is based on the Fields In Trust (FIT, Formally NPFA) research. Therefore using this approach the 600 metres recommended standard equates to the straight line distance.</p>
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8.21 Informal Recreational Open Space Conclusions:

Parks, public gardens, amenity green space and green corridors share a common primary purpose that of informal recreation. Because of this commonality it has been decided to group these spaces together under the title of informal recreational open space. Informal recreational open space has an important role in providing space for informal recreation to be undertaken and provide space that helps to define developments, an area and creates green links. Many of these spaces already do, or have the potential to, perform a number of roles.

Vision Informal Recreational Open Space:

Areas to be designed to incorporate grassed and landscaped areas with diversity of topography and materials for informal recreation/play, but also to incorporate areas for equipped play space, biodiversity conservation and enhancement. These areas will provide access routes for both people and wildlife, and provide key recreational and active journeys through play opportunities. Management and maintenance must be appropriate to the varied roles that these spaces provide. These roles include providing habitats, reducing noise and air pollution, providing shelter from prevailing winds, creating a sense of place and sociability, and contributing to climate change adaptation and mitigation. Areas should be free from litter and dog fouling, and have sufficient bins, social seating and appropriate lighting to encourage use.

Standards for Informal Recreational Open Space

Quantity

1.4ha per 1,000 population for informal recreational open space, of which 0.25 ha can be used to locate equipped play provision on.

Quality

To aim to achieve an overall site standard of 75%.

In addition the most important individual assessment elements should score at least 'good' (3) or better, in line with informal recreational open spaces, these include:

Section 8: Amenity Green Space and Green Corridors – Informal Recreational Open Space

Desirable features:

Litter bins

Dog bins

Grass areas

Vegetation

Footpaths

Lighting

Planted Area (Parks specifically)

Accessibility

12.5 minutes (600 metres) walk time

Important issues to be addressed:

Dog Fouling

Vandalism

Litter

SECTION 9:

9. Provision for Children and Young People

- 9.1 This type of open space includes areas of equipped play space, small ball courts, skate parks, BMX tracks and teenage shelters, with the primary purpose of providing opportunities for play and social interaction for children and young people. One of the benefits of these spaces is that they also provide meeting places for adults, when accompanying a child, enhancing social cohesion and the fostering of sustainable communities.
- 9.2 Fields In Trust categorises play facilities into three types:
- Local Areas for Play (LAPs)
 - Local Equipped Areas for Play (LEAPs)
 - Neighbourhood Areas for Play (NEAPs)
- 9.3 This audit records all equipped play spaces. The focus of this typology is on equipped provision and therefore focuses on LEAPs and NEAPs categories. As highlighted in section 8, doorstep areas of play or local areas for play (LAPs) and opportunities for unequipped play need to be realised within the informal recreational open space typology.
- 9.4 PPG17 notes that using these sub-types of provision for children and young people often ignores the needs of older children. Adequate provision for children does not therefore negate the need for provision for young people and vice versa.
- 9.5 For the purposes of this audit, the Council has not divided the provision of equipped playspace for children and facilities for young people.
- 9.6 Provision for children and young people is broadly the same across South Gloucestershire. With grant money, lottery funding and through the work of friends groups there have been new and updated provision made available across the area in recent years.
- 9.7 **Quantity of Provision – Equipped Play Space**

The current provision of equipped play space across South Gloucestershire is summarised in the table below.

Analysis Area	Total provision – play space (Hectares or Ha) (177 sites)	Current provision (ha per 1,000 population)
East Fringe of the Bristol Urban Area	4.70	0.054
North Fringe of the Bristol Urban Area	2.77	0.049
Yate/Chipping Sodbury	2.44	0.07
Thornbury	1.00	0.065
Rural & Other (incl. Severnside)	4.11	0.065
Overall	15.02	0.059

9.8 Consultation Responses – Quantity

The key issues identified through the consultation process relating to the quantity of provision of children and young peoples play and social space are:

Household Survey:

Play areas for children:

Analysis Area	More than enough (%)	About right (%)	Nearly enough (%)	Not enough (%)	No opinion (%)
East Fringe of the Bristol Urban Area	3.5	41.6	18.8	23.8	7.4
North Fringe of the Bristol Urban Area	5.4	35.6	16.1	29.5	1.3
Yate/Chipping Sodbury	6.3	55.2	12.5	15.6	7.3
Thornbury	6.0	50.0	18.0	16.0	8.0
Rural & Other (including Severnside)	3.2	35.3	23.0	27.5	7.1
Overall	4.1	38.1	18.7	23.9	7.8

- Overall 38% of respondents considered that the quantity of play areas for children was about right, however, nearly a quarter (24%) felt that there were not enough.
- Respondents from the north fringe and rural & other areas had the highest numbers who considered that there was not enough children’s play areas. This compares with respondents from Thornbury, Yate and Chipping Sodbury where over half felt children’s play provision was about right.

Usage:

- Overall, 17% of respondents use children’s play areas at least weekly, however 58% either don’t use them or use them rarely.
- 23% of respondents from Yate & Chipping Sodbury use children’s play areas at least weekly compared to only 8% in the Thornbury area.
- Respondents who stated that children’s play areas were the places they used most often, used them more frequently than all respondents, with 66% using them at least weekly.
- Respondents from the east fringe and rural areas used children’s play areas more frequently than the other areas with those in the north fringe using them the less often.

Household Survey:

Facilities for young people:

Analysis Area	More than enough (%)	About right (%)	Nearly enough (%)	Not enough (%)	No opinion (%)
East Fringe of the Bristol Urban Area	2.0	13.9	14.9	48.5	16.3
North Fringe of the Bristol Urban Area	2.0	14.8	25.5	36.9	7.4
Yate/Chipping Sodbury	3.1	14.6	18.8	49.0	8.3
Thornbury	0	30.0	18.0	34.0	12.0
Rural & Other (including Severnside)	1.0	11.7	15.2	57.0	11.0
Overall	1.8	14.7	16.3	46.4	12.7

- Nearly half of respondents (46%) felt that there were not enough facilities for young people.
- 30% of respondents from the Thornbury area considered the number of facilities for young people was about right compared to only 11% in rural and other areas.

Usage:

- Overall, over half (57%) of respondents did not use facilities for young people.
- Respondents from the rural and other area were the most frequent users of facilities for young people with 13% using them at least weekly.

Children and Young People's Survey:

- When asked how often they use a range of public open space and sports facilities, young people most frequently play in the street (24%), play in their garden (23%) and the park (19%) on a daily basis. Young people most often visited indoor sports hall (37%), the sports field (36%) and the park (35%) on a weekly basis. Nearly half of young people that responded to the survey (46%) stated that they had never used a BMX skate park or ramps.

9.9 Quantity Standard – Provision for Children and Young People

National Standards	<p>Fields in Trust (formally National Playing Fields Association, NPFA) – Designated Children's Equipped playspace 0.25 ha per 1,000 population.</p> <p>This standard, or benchmark, is recognised by Play England (details within 'Better Places to Play Through Planning', 2009).</p>
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Section 9: Provision for Children and Young People

Existing Local Standards	<p>South Gloucestershire Local Plan policy LC8: Formal Sports and Children’s Play areas, minimum standard of 2.4ha per 1000 population.</p> <p>Broken down as:</p> <p>Category 1 – Youth and Adult Use: 1.6 – 1.8 ha for Pitches Courts & Greens. A minimum of 1.2ha should be used for sports pitches.</p> <p>Category 2 – Children’s Use: 0.2 – 0.3ha for Equipped Playspace</p> <p>Category 3 – Children’s Use: 0.4 - 0.5ha for Unequipped Playspace</p>
Current district wide provision (per 1,000 population)	0.059 ha per 1,000 population of equipped playspace.
Benchmarking (against standards set by other authorities)	<p>Swindon 0.3ha/1,000 population</p> <p>Bristol City Council 0.03ha/1,000 population</p>
Consultation	<p>See paragraph 9.8 and the Consultation Report.</p> <p>The consultations have demonstrated the concern that there is not enough provision for children and young people.</p>
Recommended standard	0.25ha per 1,000 population, for equipped play space for children and young people.
Justification for standard	<p>The recommended standard is higher than the current provision level in all analysis areas however it is lower than a local comparison and reflects the significant response from the local consultation that additional provision is needed. The standard is in line with the Council’s current policy requirements which are successfully applied.</p> <p>This provision can be located within the informal recreational open space.</p> <p>The standard for equipped play space is supplemented by the emerging Core Strategy policy requirements to have other open space (in particular informal recreational open space) as playable environments. The requirement for playable environments to be established in informal recreational open spaces addresses the need set out in the FIT standards for Local Areas of Play and unequipped play. Having a greater quantity standard for the provision of informal recreational open space than the FIT standards detail for unequipped play space does recognise that not all areas will be acceptable play environments in accordance with good practice, such as areas located next to highways.</p> <p>The standard must be considered along with the Council’s Play Policy and Strategy. The Council accepts that some play equipment can also be used by adults and young people, such as outdoor gym equipment and trim trails.</p>

Applying the quantity standard

- 9.10 The current supply of equipped play space is below the recommended standard across the district. Therefore, where opportunities arise to address these current shortfalls they should be fully explored.
- 9.11 The provision standard should be carefully applied as it is desirable to ensure a wide range of provision is secured for different age groups, so whilst current levels of provision may appear appropriate from a quantitative viewpoint, the usability of the site(s) may be inadequate.
- 9.12 The government has recognised the need to enhance existing provision setting up the playbuilder project. This has started a programme of enhancement of 24 sites across South Gloucestershire. The database and quality information collected was utilised in order to prioritise the selection of sites for the playbuilder project.
- 9.13 The Council would anticipate that in most circumstances full sized Multi-Use Games Areas (MUGAs) (of 685 m² or greater in size) and full sized basketball courts would contribute to the provision of outdoor sports facilities, and therefore their contribution would not be discounted from the play space provision requirement. They would contribute to the provision of outdoor sports facilities; smaller facilities however would be included within the scope of play space provision.
- 9.14 Over recent years there have been significant improvements to facilities within school grounds. Where these are accessible for general public use, they should be calculated within any assessment of provision.

9.15 Quality of Provision– Provision for Children and Young People

The quality of provision for children and young people is assessed through undertaking site visits. To ensure the database is up to date sites will continue to be assessed in the future. This is particularly important for equipped play space due to the deterioration of play equipment and the current programme of improvements. The general site assessments are supported by a detailed play value assessment. It should be noted that site assessments are conducted as a snapshot in time and therefore scores represent the condition of the site on that specific day.

- 9.16 No equipped play spaces in South Gloucestershire have been awarded any awards, however examples such as Kingsgate Park, Yate, Jubilee Gardens, Bradley Stoke are recent examples of good practice of the types of play environments that the Council wishes to see delivered. The approach taken in developing these sites, through community consultation process, is being replicated at the play builder sites.
- 9.17 **Consultation Responses – Quality**
The key issues identified through the consultation process relating to the quality of provision of play spaces are:

Children's play areas:

Household Survey:

- Overall, 35% of respondents rated children's play areas as either good or very good.
- 55% of respondents from Yate & Chipping Sodbury rated children's play areas as good or very good compared to only 31% in rural and other areas.
- 20% of respondents in the east fringe, north fringe and rural and other areas rated children's play areas as either poor or very poor.
- Respondents who stated that children's play areas were the facilities they used most often, rated these areas higher when compared to all respondents, with 62% rating them as either good or very good.
- Respondents from Yate & Chipping Sodbury were the most satisfied with 78% rating them as either good or very good when compared to 53% from the north fringe area.

Safety:

- Overall 69% of respondent who stated that children's play space were the places they used most often rated play areas as quite safe or very safe. Respondents from the east fringe felt the most safe compared to the north fringe who felt less safe.

Current features:

- Respondents who stated that children's play areas were the places they used most often, rated entrances, boundaries and planted and grass areas the highest.
- Lighting, toilets, cycle stands and changing facilities were rated as less than average.

Important or Desired Features:

- When asked to rate the top 5 most important or desired features, respondents who stated that children's play areas were the places they used most often, listed clean, litter free, well kept grass and well maintained equipment most often.
- Welcoming staff, seclusion, onsite security and information boards and signage were listed the least often.

Significant Problems

- When asked whether any issues were a significant problem, respondents who stated that children's play areas were sites they used most often listed vandalism & graffiti, dog fouling and litter problems as the areas of most concern.
- Lack of car parking, poor maintenance and safety and age of equipment were of least concern.

Facilities for young people:

Household Survey:

- Overall the quality of facilities for young people was rated between average and poor. Respondents in the Thornbury area rated them the highest compared to those in rural and other areas which rated them lower.
- Over half (62%) of respondents that stated that facilities for young people were the sites they used most often, rated them as either good or very good

Safety:

- Overall, 70% of respondents that stated that facilities for young people were the sites they used most often, rated them as either very safe or quite safe places to visit.

Current Features:

- Respondents who stated they used facilities for young people most often rated play equipment, entrances and general maintenance and management highest, rating them between good and average.
- They rated cycle stands and toilets between average and poor.

Important or Desired Features:

- When asked to rate their five most important or desired features, respondents that stated they use facilities for young people most often listed clean, litter free, well kept grass and parking facilities most often.
- Secluded, well laid out and information boards and signage were listed least often.

Significant Problems:

- Respondents who stated that they use facilities for young people most often considered litter problems, dog fouling and vandalism and graffiti as the most significant problems.
- They were less concerned about the safety and age of equipment, poor maintenance and lack of car parking.

Children and Young People's Survey:

- Over 60% of respondents rated play areas as ok or better. 50% considered BMX/Skate ramps to be ok or better. Over 80% of respondents thought the park was either ok or better, and nearly 85% thought the common or woods were either ok or better.

Town and Parish Council Survey:

- Some parishes wanted to see improved children's play facilities and some considered that provision in their area was either lacking, inadequate or outdated.

- The quality of facilities for young people was rated the lowest of all types, with 50% of respondents rating them as either poor or very poor.

9.18 Quality Standard – Provision for Children and Young People

National Standards	<p>Fields In Trust provide criteria for Local Areas for Play (LAPs), Locally Equipped Areas for Play (LEAPs) and Neighbourhood Areas for Play (NEAPs) and other environments (e.g. landscaped areas of play) for play.</p> <p>The Green Flag Award criteria for quality (see Appendix 1).</p>
Existing Local Standards	<p>South Gloucestershire Development Guide states:</p> <p>The Council's Play Policy 2006 aims to ensure all South Gloucestershire's children and young people have easy access to a range of quality play opportunities. In new developments the Council expects designs will follow a 'play landscape' approach that draws on the local, social and natural characteristics of the sites and includes non-prescriptive play materials and features. The design of each play area will be integral to the look and feel of its wider environment and will reflect local nature, identity, cultures and histories. The general design principle will be one of the creation of multiple places to play linked to each other and the wider public realm by a network of playful journeys. Detailed advice is available in Design for Play (Play England DCSF, DCMS ISBN: 978-1-84775-225-3). Any play equipment that is intended for adoption by the Council must be of appropriate British Standard (BS EN 1176 for play equipment and BS EN 1777 for safety surfacing).</p>
Benchmarking (against standards set by other authorities)	<p>It is difficult to benchmark quality standards, as each authority uses different assessment criteria.</p>
Consultation	<p>The consultation responses indicate that there is a variance across South Gloucestershire in the quality of existing provision. However, generally feedback has indicated that people consider quality to be ok or better.</p> <p>See paragraph 9.17 and the consultation report for more details.</p>
Recommended standard	<p>Using the assessment criteria used for this audit, an overall site standard of 75% is recommended.</p> <p>The most important individual assessment elements should score good (3) or better, these include:</p>

Section 9: Provision for Children and Young People

	<p><u>Desirable features:</u> Well maintained equipment Litter bins Parking</p> <p><u>Important issues to be addressed:</u> Dog fouling Litter Vandalism</p> <p>Vision: Exciting, stimulating, well equipped and positioned areas that provide a wide range of high quality facilities including play equipment, playable landscaping, informal play areas (kickabout areas, other ball games, skateboarding etc.) and hang out areas (shelters etc.) as appropriate, which cater for the needs of children and young people of all ages and abilities. Facilities need to be attractive, well maintained, safe, secure, free from dog fouling and abusive graffiti, and have good access.</p>
<p>Justification for standard</p>	<p>The assessment criteria used in this audit reflect the Green Flag Award criteria. The suggested individual assessment elements reflect the consultation responses.</p> <p>The quality assessment will need to be considered alongside the play value that the sites offers, particularly when considering options for upgrading/enhancing equipped play spaces within an area.</p> <p>The Council's published Play Policy and Strategy provides details on achieving successful play environments. This is currently being refreshed and should be referred to when considering the enhancement of existing sites or the provision of new ones to ensure the outcomes achieve the Play Policy's aspirations.</p>

9.19 Accessibility of Provision – Provision for Children and Young People

The accessibility standard is set in the form of a distance threshold and has been derived from the findings of the local consultations.

9.20 Individual assessment elements that contribute to the accessibility of play space, such as site notice boards, gateways/entrance points, access paths and cycle stands.

9.21 Consultation Responses – Accessibility

The key issues identified through the consultation process relating to the accessibility for provision for children and young people are:

Household Survey:

- Overall, 44% of respondents travel for less than 10 minutes to reach children’s play areas, of these 47% walk and 12% travel by car.
- Of those that walk, three quarters (76%) walk for less than 10 minutes.
- Of those that travel by car, 68% travel for between 5 and 20 minutes.

- Of respondents that state that they use children’s play areas most often 72% walk and 26% travel by car.
- Of those that walk, 87% travel for less than 10 minutes, whilst 78% of those that travel; by car, travel for between 5 and 20 minutes.

- 21% of respondents walk to facilities for young people and another 14% travel by car.
- Of those that walk, 60% travels for up to 10mins, whilst 65% of those that travel by car travel for between 5 and 20 minutes.

- The results indicate that the effective catchment, defined as the distance travelled by around 75% of users is:

Children Play Space:

Urban Areas: 9.5 minutes
 Other (rural) Areas: 10 minutes
 Overall: 10 minutes

Provision for young people:

Urban Areas: 16.5 minutes
 Other (rural) Areas: 16 minutes
 Overall: 16 minutes

Children and Young People Survey:

- 41% of young people travel for up to 5 minutes to reach public open space and sports facilities that they use most often. Only 12% of respondents travel for over 20 minutes.
- 62% of young people walk to the public open spaces and sports facilities that they use most often. 29% travel by car.
- Of those that walk to the site or facility they use most often, 76% travel for less than 10 minutes. Of those that travel by car to the site or facility they use most often, 83% travel for up to 20 minutes with a third travelling for less than 5 minutes.

9.22 Accessibility Standard – Provision for Children and Young People

National Standards	FIT and Play England standards: Local Areas for Play (LAP) or door-step spaces for play and informal recreation = 60 metres Local equipped, or local landscaped, areas for play (LEAPs) = 240 metres Neighbourhood equipped areas for play (NEAPs) = 600 metres
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Section 9: Provision for Children and Young People

<p>Existing Local Standards</p>	<p>South Gloucestershire Local Plan: - No specific access standard</p> <p>South Gloucestershire Design Checklist Supplementary Planning Document: - As a rule of thumb, private/shared open spaces should be immediately accessible, local play spaces (LEAP) within 240 metres, neighbourhood parks (NEAP) within 600 metres, and district/town open spaces (formal squares, playing fields etc) should be within 800 metres of dwellings.</p>
<p>Benchmarking (against standards set by other authorities)</p>	<p>Bristol City Council Parks and Green Space Strategy: Children's play space = 450 metres / 10 minutes walk. Wheels Parks = 2km</p> <p>Swindon: Intermediate Play Areas = 250 metres (approx. 5 minutes walking time)</p>
<p>Consultation</p>	<p>See the paragraph 9.21 and the consultation report.</p>
<p>Recommended standard</p>	<p>Children's play space (such as LEAPs and NEAPs) = 10 minutes (480 metres) walk time.</p> <p>Provision for young people (Including, but not limited to: Small ball courts, shelters, skate parks and BMX tracks) = 15 minutes (720 metres) walk time.</p>
<p>Justification for standard</p>	<p>Two standards are recommended for this typology, recognising the different age groups that provision is targeted towards. Provision for young people will attract age groups that have the confidence to travel longer distances independently.</p> <p>The standards set reflect the consultation responses and is comparable with Bristol's standard.</p> <p>The standards are broadly comparable to the FIT recommendations. It has been highlighted in other open space audits that a larger accessibility catchment provides greater flexibility in terms of striking a balance between qualitative and quantitative improvements in provision. Where a smaller catchment could place a greater requirement on new provision, local consultation and experience has indicated the importance of high quality sites and not just new facilities.</p> <p>10 and 15 minutes walking times at the average speed of 3mph, actually equates to 800 and 1200 metres respectively. National guidelines reduce the actual distances travelled into straight line distances to allow analysis to be undertaken using GIS mapping system, this is a 40% reduction. This is to allow for the fact that routes to sites will not be straight, and the actual route taken will be more complex. The 40% reduction is based on the Fields In Trust (FIT, Formally NPFA)</p>

	research. Therefore using this approach the 480 and 720 metres recommended standards equate to a straight line distance.
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9.23 Provision for children and young people Conclusions:

Due to the current level of provision, existing facilities should be protected and where appropriate enhanced. Opportunities for new provision should be realised; this could include the dual use of facilities on school sites (e.g. the West Yate Kickabout, which is located in the grounds of Tyndale Primary School).

Vision Provision for children and young people:

Exciting, stimulating, well equipped and positioned areas that provide a wide range of high quality facilities including play equipment, playable landscaping, informal play areas (kickabout areas, other ball games, skateboarding etc.) and hang out areas (shelters etc.) as appropriate, which cater for the needs of children and young people of all ages and abilities. Facilities need to be attractive, well maintained, safe, secure, free from dog fouling and abusive graffiti, and have good access.

Standards for Provision for children and young people

Quantity

0.25ha per 1,000 population, for equipped play space for children and young people.

Quality

To aim to achieve an overall site standard of 75%.

In addition the most important individual assessment elements should score at least 'good' (3) or better, these include:

Desirable features:

Well maintained equipment
Litter bins
Parking

Important issues to be addressed:

Dog fouling
Litter
Vandalism

Accessibility

Children's play space (such as LEAPs and NEAPs) = 10 minutes (480 metres) walk time.

Provision for young people (Including, but not limited to: Small ball courts, shelters, skate parks and BMX tracks) = 15 minutes (720 metres) walk time.

SECTION 10:

10. Allotments

- 10.1 This type of open space includes allotments with the primary purpose of providing opportunities for people to grow their own produce (fruit, vegetables and flowers).
- 10.2 Allotments can provide a number of wider sustainable community benefits, as well as their primary use of growing produce. These include:
- Creating opportunities for people to participate in recreation.
 - Providing opportunity for social inclusion and cohesion.
 - Improving physical and mental health.
 - Reducing food miles and encouraging recycling.
 - Contributing to the green space network.
- 10.3 Interest in allotments has increased remarkably right across the country in recent years. The provision of allotments is a statutory function for local authorities under a number of legislative acts including the 1950 Allotment Act.
- 10.4 The Council is in the process of preparing an Allotment Strategy. Surveys have been undertaken with all allotment owners and the holders of South Gloucestershire Council owned allotments.
- 10.5 The current provision of allotments is not evenly distributed across South Gloucestershire. The **Yate/Chipping Sodbury** and **Thornbury** analysis areas have up to a third less provision per capita than some of the other analysis areas. However unmet demand is apparent across all analysis areas (see paragraph 10.7)

10.6 Quantity of Provision

The current provision of allotments across South Gloucestershire is summarised in the table below.

Analysis Area	Total provision (Hectares or ha) (45 sites)	Current provision (ha per 1,000 population)
East Fringe of the Bristol Urban Area	13.94	0.16
North Fringe of the Bristol Urban Area	5.57	0.1
Yate/Chipping Sodbury	1.68	0.05
Thornbury	1.29	0.08
Rural & Other (including Severnside)	10.91	0.17
Overall	33.39	0.13

10.7 Consultation Responses – Quantity

The key issues identified through the consultation process relating to the quantity of provision of allotments are:

Household Survey:

Analysis Area	More than enough (%)	About right (%)	Nearly enough (%)	Not enough (%)	No opinion (%)
East Fringe of the Bristol Urban Area	1.0	21.8	13.9	34.7	22.3
North Fringe of the Bristol Urban Area	1.3	13.4	10.7	43.0	28.2
Yate/Chipping Sodbury	0	14.6	12.5	38.5	28.1
Thornbury	0	16.0	24.0	38.0	20.0
Rural & Other (including Severnside)	2.3	17.5	9.4	40.1	24.9
Overall	1.5	16.8	11.8	38.4	23.0

- The household survey highlighted that over a third of respondents consider that there was not enough provision, while nearly 17% of respondents thought the quantity was about right.
- A fifth of the respondents from the East Fringe considered the quantity of allotments was about right compared to 43% from the North Fringe area who stated that there was not enough provision

Usage:

- Nearly three quarters of respondents (73%) don't use allotment facilities. This rises to 80% in the Yate & Chipping Sodbury area. The Thornbury area had the lowest level of people that don't use allotments at 68%.
- Overall, only 5% of respondents used allotments at least monthly.

Allotment Holders Survey:

- 95% of South Gloucestershire Council allotment holders visit the site at least weekly with over half visiting a couple of times a week.

10.8 Waiting Lists

The table below indicates the number of people on waiting lists in 2009; this information was collected as part of the Allotment Survey. A number of sites have now closed their waiting lists due to their size. Waiting lists are for sites in operation and therefore they do not necessarily provide a complete picture of demand across the analysis areas. Usage of allotments will be curtailed by the limitation of supply, which could explain the limited number of users identified in the responses received from the household survey. However, what is clear is the strong demand for allotments.

Analysis Area	Total
East Fringe of the Bristol Urban Area	210
North Fringe of the Bristol Urban Area	57
Yate/Chipping Sodbury	15
Thornbury	24
Rural & Other (including Severnside)	121
Overall	427

10.9 To meet this demand, on the basis of full plot sized allotments, nearly 11 hectares of land would need to be turned over to allotments. This would represent an increase of nearly 30% on the existing provision.

10.10 Quantity Standard - Allotments

National Standards	National Society of Allotment and Leisure Gardeners recommend 20 allotment plots per 1,000 households. Equating for South Gloucestershire's household size, 20 allotment plots per 2,450 people (currently 2.45 people per house). With an average allotment plot of 250m ² this equates to 0.2ha per 1,000 population. 1969 Thorpe Report suggested 0.2ha per 1,000 population.
Existing Local Standards	No specific quantity standard exists; Policy LC8 states that informal open space may also provide a resource to meet justified demands for additional allotment provision.
Current district wide provision (per 1,000 population)	0.13ha per 1,000 population
Benchmarking (against standards set by other authorities)	Bristol City Council = 0.175ha/1,000 population (7 plots/1,000 population) Bath and North East Somerset = 0.3ha/1,000 population Swindon = 0.3ha/1,000 population
Consultation	See paragraphs 10.6 & 10.7, and the Consultation Report
Recommended standard	0.2ha per 1000 population
Justification for standard	The recommended standard is higher than the current level of supply. This is in recognition of the existing high level of interest in allotments, represented in waiting list numbers and the feedback from the consultations. Waiting lists are extensive, however they don't necessary provide an accurate picture of unmet

	<p>demand, as people may be put off from adding their name to a waiting list due its size and some waiting lists are closed because they are so large. The standard is set below that used by some other local authorities, and is considered realistic.</p> <p>The standard should be reviewed at regular intervals to ensure that provision levels correlate within changing level of demand.</p>
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10.11 Applying the quantity standard

The current supply of allotment plots is less than the recommended standard; this reflects the large numbers on waiting lists as there is increased demand for allotments.

10.12 Additional provision has been created through the sub division of plots, most sites offer half plot sizes (250sqm full / 125sqm half plot), where appropriate this should be encouraged in order to reduce the number of people on waiting lists.

10.13 It is more suitable to apply the quantity standard across the analysis area or even the district rather than more locally based analysis (e.g. at a ward level). This is because demand and current supply will vary greatly due to nature of sites (e.g. large sites can skew provision figures and capacity is finite).

10.14 Quality of Provision – Allotments

The quality of allotments is assessed through undertaking a site visit and using an allotment specific set of assessment criteria. Reassessments will continue to be undertaken to ensure the database is kept up to date. It should be noted that site assessments are conducted as a snapshot in time and therefore scores represent the condition of the site on that specific day.

10.15 Consultation Reponses – Quality

The key issues identified through the consultation process relating to the quality of provision of allotments are:

Allotment Holders Survey:

- Respondents considered site security and the provision of water the most important facilities and car parking the least important.
- Other important issues stated included:
 - Management – improved monitoring of the usage of plots so that they are better used
 - Maintenance – improved grass cutting and maintenance of site boundaries
 - Waste – Provision of waste facilities
 - Composting – more information on the subsidised compost bin scheme and the provision of free compost

- Respondents were most satisfied with plot size and site security and least satisfied with access to free compost and woodchip and grass cutting.
- Other satisfaction issues stated included:
 - Awareness and availability of free compost.
 - Poor maintenance of existing plots
 - Access to water
 - Grass maintenance
 - Site boundaries and access onto and around sites

10.16 Recommendations - Quality

National Standards	There are no specific standards; however elements of the green Flag Award criteria are relevant.		
Existing Local Standards	There are no local standards.		
Benchmarking (against standards set by other authorities)	It is very difficult to benchmark quality scores for allotments, as every authority has used slightly different criteria and methods for assessing quality.		
Consultation	See paragraph 10.15 and the Consultation Report		
Recommended standard	<p>Using the assessment criteria used for the allotment specific audit, an overall standard of 60% is recommended. In addition the most important individual assessment elements should score good (3) or better, these include:</p> <table style="width: 100%; border: none;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50%; vertical-align: top;"> <p><u>Desirable features:</u></p> <p>Water Supply Security Haulage ways</p> </td> <td style="width: 50%; vertical-align: top;"> <p><u>Important issues to be addressed:</u></p> <p>Level of cultivation Boundaries</p> </td> </tr> </table> <p>Vision: Secure sites for the production of home-grown fruit, vegetables, and flowers with adequate provision of water and electricity and accessibility to people of all physical abilities. Ideally sites should include toilet facilities, and have good access points, storage facilities and rubbish bins.</p>	<p><u>Desirable features:</u></p> <p>Water Supply Security Haulage ways</p>	<p><u>Important issues to be addressed:</u></p> <p>Level of cultivation Boundaries</p>
<p><u>Desirable features:</u></p> <p>Water Supply Security Haulage ways</p>	<p><u>Important issues to be addressed:</u></p> <p>Level of cultivation Boundaries</p>		
Justification for standard	<p>Due to the level of unmet demand it is important that those sites with uncultivated plots are fully used.</p> <p>It is important that sites have an adequate water supply to ensure they are useable. However visual appearance, secure and safety are also important considerations and they reflect the consultation responses.</p>		

10.17 Accessibility of Provision - Allotments

The accessibility standard is set in the form of a distance threshold and has been derived from the findings of the local consultations.

10.18 Individual assessment elements that contribute to the accessibility of sites, such as site information, linkages, disabled access, condition or haulage ways and parking have all been incorporated into the quality assessment.

10.19 Consultation Reponses – Accessibility

The key issues identified through the consultation process relating to the accessibility of allotments are:

Household Survey:

- 56% of allotment users walk to allotments, with 53% travelling for up to 10 minutes.
- 37% of allotment users travel by car, with 53% travelling for between 5 and 20 minutes.
- The results indicate that the effective catchment, defined as the distance travelled by around 75% of users is:
 Urban Areas: 20.5 minutes
 Rural and Other Areas: 17.5 minutes
 Overall: 19 minutes

Allotment Holders Survey:

- 51% of allotment holders walk to the site, whilst 43% go in a car
- 85% of our allotment holders take less than 10 minutes to get to the site.

10.20 Accessibility Standard - Allotments

National Standards	No national standards
Existing Local Standards	No exiting standards
Benchmarking (against standards set by other authorities)	Swindon = 600 metres (approx 15 minutes walking time)
Consultation	See paragraph 10.19 and the Consultation Report
Recommended standard	15 minutes (720 metre) walk time
Justification for standard	<p>The household survey results indicate that on average people would travel for 19 minutes to reach an allotment. The allotment holder survey, where results are concentrated from the East Fringe Analysis area, has shown that 85% of users take less than 10 minutes to reach their allotment.</p> <p>It is considered that a 15 minute walking standard represents a realistic standard.</p>

	<p>15 minutes walking time at the average speed of 3mph, actually equates to 1,200 metres. National guidelines reduce the actual distances travelled into straight line distances to allow analysis to be undertaken using GIS mapping system, this is a 40% reduction. This is to allow for the fact that routes to sites will not be straight, and the actual route taken will be more complex. The 40% reduction is based on the Fields In Trust (FIT, Formally NPFA) research. Therefore using this approach the 720 metres recommended standard equates to the straight line distance.</p>
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10.21 Allotments Conclusions:

Additional provision has been created through the sub division of plots, most sites now offer half plot sizes (250sqm full / 125sqm half plot). Where appropriate this should continue to be encouraged in order to reduce the number of people on waiting lists. Due to the level of unmet demand it is important that those sites with uncultivated plots are fully used.

Vision Allotments:

Secure sites for the production of home-grown fruit, vegetables, and flowers with adequate provision of water and electricity and accessibility to people of all physical abilities. Ideally sites should include toilet facilities, and have good access points, storage facilities and rubbish bins.

Standards for Allotments

Quantity

0.2ha per 1000 population

Quality

To aim to achieve an overall site standard of 60%.

In addition the most important individual assessment elements should score at least 'good' (3) or better, these include:

Desirable features:

Water Supply
Security
Haulage ways

Important issues to be addressed:

Level of cultivation
Boundaries

Accessibility

15 minutes (720 metre) walk time.

SECTION 11:**11. Cemeteries & Churchyards**

11.1 This open space type encompasses both churchyards and cemeteries. Although the primary purpose of this type of open space is for burial of the dead and quiet contemplation, these sites frequently also have considerable value in terms of wildlife conservation and biodiversity.

11.2 Quantity of Provision

The current provision of cemeteries and churchyards across South Gloucestershire is summarised in the table below.

Analysis Area	Total provision	Current provision (ha per 1,000 population)
East Fringe of the Bristol Urban Area	8.37	0.1
North Fringe of the Bristol Urban Area	2.69	0.05
Yate/Chipping Sodbury	1.33	0.04
Thornbury	2.96	0.08
Rural & Other (including Severnside)	14.33	0.2
Overall	29.68	0.12

11.3 Consultation Responses – Quantity

The key issues identified through the consultation process relating to the quantity of provision of cemeteries and churchyards are:

Household Survey:

Analysis Area	More than enough (%)	About right (%)	Nearly enough (%)	Not enough (%)	No opinion (%)
East Fringe of the Bristol Urban Area	3.0	49.0	12.9	10.4	19.8
North Fringe of the Bristol Urban Area	0.7	30.2	12.1	24.8	28.2
Yate/Chipping Sodbury	4.2	42.7	12.5	9.4	24.0
Thornbury	2.0	58.0	12.0	10.0	14.0
Rural & Other (including Severnside)	4.5	50.5	12.6	9.7	17.5
Overall	3.1	43.7	12.6	12.4	19.9

- Overall, 43% of respondents considered that the quantity of cemeteries and churchyards was about right. This rises to 58% in the Thornbury area. A quarter of respondents in the North Fringe area considered that there was not enough provision.

Usage:

- Overall, 20% of respondents use cemeteries and churchyards at least monthly.
- 40% of respondents don't use them, rising to 57% in the North Fringe area.

11.4 Quantity Standard – Cemeteries and Churchyards

National Standards	No national standards
Existing Local Standards	No local standards
Current district wide provision (per 1,000 population)	0.107ha/1,000 population
Benchmarking (against standards set by other authorities)	N/A
Consultation	See paragraph 11.3 and the Consultation Report
Recommended standard	No standard recommended
Justification for standard	<p>No quantity standard has been recommended for cemeteries and churchyards. PPG17 Annex states: <i>“many historic churchyards provide important places for quiet contemplation, especially in busy urban areas, and often support biodiversity and interesting geological features. As such many can also be viewed as amenity greenspaces. Unfortunately, many are also run-down and therefore it may be desirable to enhance them. As churchyards can only exist where there is a church, the only form of provision standard which is required is a qualitative one.”</i></p> <p>For cemeteries, PPG17 Annex states: <i>“every individual cemetery has a finite capacity and therefore there is steady need for more of them. Indeed, many areas face a shortage of ground for burials. The need for graves, for all religious faiths, can be calculated from population estimates, coupled with details of the average proportion of deaths which result in a burial, and converted in a quantitative population-based provision standard.”</i> This does not therefore relate to a quantitative hectare per 1,000 population requirement.</p>

11.5 Applying the quantity standard

As noted above it is not possible to have a provision standard based on an amount per 1,000 population. The Council is responsible for 4 cemeteries and

have reviewed burial rates and remaining capacity. Two sites have limited additional capacity perhaps for about one year each (this based on the current burial rate, however, the actual burials may take place over a much longer period of time as family plots are filled); however the two other sites have in excess of 25 years and 40 years remaining capacity. Future additional capacity in the short to medium is therefore not required, however where appropriate expansion of churchyards should be considered, where there is a demonstrable need for increased capacity.

11.6 Quality of Provision

The quality of cemeteries and churchyards is assessed through undertaking a site visit and using an specific set of assessment criteria. Reassessments will continue to be undertaken to ensure the database is kept up to date. It should be noted that site assessments are conducted as a snapshot in time and therefore scores represent the condition of the site on that specific day.

11.7 Consultation Responses – Quality

The main points identified through the consultation process relating to the quality of cemeteries and churchyards area:

Household Survey:

- Overall, 36% of respondents rated the quality of cemeteries and church yards as either good or very good. This rises to 68% in the Thornbury area. Only a quarter of respondents in the North Fringe area rated them as either good or very good and a third stated that they had no facility in their local area.

Important or Desired Features:

- When asked to rate the top 5 important or desired features respondents identified litter free environments and well kept grass were the most important features.

11.8 Quality Standard – Cemeteries and Churchyards

National Standards	The Green Flag Award criteria for quality (see Appendix 1)
Existing Local Standards	There are no local standards.
Benchmarking (against standards set by other authorities)	No local examples of quality exist within green space strategies.
Consultation	See paragraph 11.7 and the Consultation Report
Recommended standard	Using the assessment criteria used for this audit, an overall site standard of 60% is recommended. In addition the most important individual assessment elements should score good (3) or better, these include: Desirable features / Issues to be addressed: Litter / litter bins

	<p>Grass Areas Seating Condition of headstones</p> <p>Vision: Provision should be safe and accessible, well landscaped and laid out providing pleasant areas to walk, sit, contemplate and reflect. Areas should include information boards, seats, bins and toilets as appropriate, and should be free for litter and hazards. Areas should be valued for their ecological role.</p>
<p>Justification for standard</p>	<p>The assessment used in this audit reflect the Green Flag Assessment criteria, therefore by stating an overall score and addressing the key desirable features and important issues to be addressed, this ensure the appropriate quality is achieved.</p>

11.9 Accessibility of Provision – Cemeteries and Churchyards

There is no national accessibility standard for cemeteries and churchyards are linked with there associated church. Therefore there is no appropriate standard for cemeteries and churchyards, although the needs of the elderly and accessibility from public transport should be taken into account when planning new sites. It is also important that consideration is given to the distance that the resident population will have to travel to pay their respects.

11.10 Cemeteries and Churchyards Conclusions:

There was a strong sense of lack of provision from the consultation responses, however evidence prepared by the Council indicates that supply is sufficient for some time. This sense of a lack of supply may in part be explained by the distribution of sites with outstanding capacity.

Vision Cemeteries and Churchyards:

Provision should be safe and accessible, well landscaped and laid out providing pleasant areas to walk, sit, contemplate and reflect. Areas should include information boards, seats, bins and toilets as appropriate, and should be free for litter and hazards. Areas should also be valued for their ecological role.

Standards for Cemeteries and Churchyards

Quantity

No standard

Quality

To aim to achieve an overall site standard of 60%.

In addition the most important individual assessment elements should score at least 'good' (3) or better, these include:

Section 11: Cemeteries & Churchyards

<p><u>Desirable features / issues to be addressed:</u></p>
<p>Litter / litter bins</p>
<p>Grass Areas</p>
<p>Seating</p>
<p>Condition of headstones</p>
<p>Accessibility</p>
<p>No standard.</p>

SECTION 12:

12. Open Space, Sport and Recreation Facilities – Overall Supply

- 12.1 The typologies used in this audit have been based on the definitions identified in PPG17. These have been adapted to reflect the finding this audit.
- 12.2 The following table draws together the results of the audit, highlighting the current quantity provision levels for each typology within each analysis area and the overall South Gloucestershire provision level. It sets out the total provision and the provision level per 1,000 population.

Section 12: Overall Supply

	Population (ONS 2007 Mid-Year Estimates)	Natural & Semi-Natural green space	Informal Recreational Open Space (Including Parks & Gardens, Amenity green space and Green Corridors)	Provision for Children and young people	Allotments	Cemeteries and churchyards	Outdoor Sports Facilities	
							Excluding School sites	Including School sites
Total Provision – Existing space (ha)								
East Fringe of the Bristol Urban Area		113.95	97.95	4.70	13.94	8.37	81.94	125.68
North Fringe of the Bristol Urban Area		125.14	82.55	2.77	5.57	2.69	84.71	134.43
Yate/Chipping Sodbury		189.48	51.79	2.44	1.68	1.33	19.94	56.11
Thornbury		7.47	22.43	1.00	1.29	2.96	11.00	32.41
Rural & Other		1025.34	95.05	4.11	10.91	14.33	108.54	159.75
OVERALL		1461.38 327.77*	349.77	15.02	33.39	29.68	306.03	508.38
Existing space (ha per 1000 population)								
East Fringe of the Bristol Urban Area	87,026	1.31	1.13	0.054	0.16	0.1	0.94	1.44
North Fringe of the Bristol Urban Area	56,481	2.22	1.46	0.049	0.1	0.05	1.5	2.38
Yate/Chipping Sodbury	34,552	2.35 ¹	1.50	0.07	0.05	0.04	0.58	1.62
Thornbury	15,436	0.48	1.45	0.065	0.08	0.08	0.71	2.10
Rural & Other	63,021	16.27	1.57	0.065	0.17	0.2	1.72	2.53
OVERALL	256,516	5.70 1.69*	1.36	0.059	0.13	0.12	1.19	1.98
Recommended Standard		1.5	1.4	0.25	0.2	N/A	1.6	N/A

- *For Urban Analysis Areas (East and North Fringes of the Bristol Urban Area, Yate/Chipping Sodbury and Thornbury)

- ¹Excluding Sodbury Common.

SECTION 13:

13. Conclusion

13.1 Sections 5-11 set out the detailed position regarding the quantitative, qualitative and accessible standards; these should be used when applying the South Gloucestershire Local Development Framework policies. Please view individual sections of the report for more detail on the quality standards:

Category of Open Space	Definition	Quantity Standard - Minimum figures	Quality Standard – Overall score	Accessibility Standard
Informal recreational open space	Include parks, amenity green space and green corridors – these provide for informal recreation and access.	1.4 ha/1000 population	Overall 75%	12.5 minutes walk / 600 metres
Natural and Semi-Natural green space	Areas of green space where the primary purpose is one of wildlife and biodiversity conservation and value.	1.5ha/1000 population	Overall 50%	15 minutes walk / 720 metres
Outdoor Sports facilities	Includes all outdoor spots facilities whether naturally or artificially surfaced, e.g. playing pitches, bowling greens and tennis courts. Including full sized Multi Use Games Areas (MUGAs).	1.6ha/1000 population	Facility specific standards to be reflected in the Playing Pitch and Built Facilities Strategies. Overall 75%, on applicable sites.	20 minutes walk / 1000 metres – Playing Pitches 22 minutes drive time – Synthetic Pitches, Athletics Tracks and Golf Courses

Section 13: Conclusion

Provision for Children and Young People	All equipped children's play areas, including provision for young people (skate parks, shelters etc.)	0.25ha/1000 population equipped playspace	Overall 75%	10 minutes walk / 450 metres – Children's play space. 15 minutes walk / 720 metres – Young peoples provision
Allotments	An area of allotment plots used for the purpose of producing, fruit, vegetable or flowers for personal use.	0.2ha/1000 population	Overall 60%	15 minutes walk / 720 metres
Cemeteries and Churchyards	For the burial of the dead / closed churchyards	N/A	Overall 50%	N/A
TOTAL		4.7ha/1000 population total. On the basis that provision for children and young people can be located within the informal recreational open space.		

- 13.2 These standards and the results from this audit will be used to inform the Green Infrastructure Strategy document, which the Council intends to adopt as Supplementary Planning Document. The Green Infrastructure Strategy will be supported by a delivery plan that will address the issues identified in this audit.
- 13.3 This audit has demonstrated the importance of three considerations: quantity, quality and accessibility. The locally specific standards and issues highlighted as a result of this comprehensive audit should form the basis for supporting the Local Development Framework, planning policies and delivery plans. These are supported by the visions for each of the typologies:

Vision for Parks and Gardens:

A landscaped area laid out and managed to high standards, which is well maintained, safe to visit and provides pleasant areas to walk, sit, and relax while enjoying floral and landscape features, shrubs, trees and other natural characteristics. The area should be tidy, free from vandalism, litter and dog fouling. Appropriate facilities for the size of the site, such as paths, water features, bandstands, recreation facilities, play spaces, seats, bins, toilets, lighting etc should be in a good state of repair.

Vision for Natural and Semi-Natural green space:

A well managed, accessible natural/semi-natural environment designated and protected for wildlife and managed to encourage nature conservation and enhancement of the environment. The areas should be free from litter and dog fouling, and include information boards, paths, appropriate provision of bins and car parking.

Vision Outdoor Sports Facilities:

A wide range of well-located and accessible sporting facilities, which are of a high quality, well drained and include changing rooms, toilets, adequate parking and signage, which are well maintained and free from dog fouling and litter. Facilities will include floodlighting and all weather surfaces where appropriate.

Vision Informal Recreational Open Space:

Areas to be designed to incorporate grassed and landscaped areas with diversity of topography and materials for informal recreation/play, but also to incorporate areas for equipped play space, biodiversity conservation and enhancement. These areas will provide access routes for both people and wildlife, and provide key recreational and active journeys through play opportunities. Management and maintenance must be appropriate to the varied roles that these spaces provide. These roles include providing habitats, reducing noise and air pollution, providing shelter from prevailing winds, creating a sense of place and sociability, and contributing to climate change adaptation and mitigation. Areas should be free from litter and dog fouling, and have sufficient bins, social seating and appropriate lighting to encourage use.

Vision Provision for children and young people:

Exciting, stimulating, well equipped and positioned areas that provide a wide range of high quality facilities including play equipment, playable landscaping, informal play areas (kickabout areas, other ball games, skateboarding etc.) and hang out areas (shelters etc.) as appropriate, which cater for the needs of children and young people of all ages and abilities. Facilities need to be attractive, well maintained, safe, secure, free from dog fouling and abusive graffiti, and have good access.

Vision Allotments:

Secure sites for the production of home-grown fruit, vegetables, and flowers with adequate provision of water and electricity and accessibility to people of all physical abilities. Ideally sites should include toilet facilities, and have good access points, storage facilities and rubbish bins.

Vision Cemeteries and Churchyards:

Provision should be safe and accessible, well landscaped and laid out providing pleasant areas to walk, sit, contemplate and reflect. Areas should include information boards, seats, bins and toilets as appropriate, and should be free for litter and hazards. Areas should also be valued for their ecological role.

13.4 The results of the this audit should be used to support other Council plans, policies and strategies including:

- The Built Facilities and Playing Pitch Strategies, and
- The Play Policy and Strategy refresh.

Appendix 1:

Green Flag Award Criteria

The Green Flag Award is open to any green space that is freely accessible to the public, including town parks, country parks, nature reserves, woodlands, formal gardens, cemeteries and crematoria, water parks, open spaces, millennium greens, sites of special scientific interest, woodlands and allotments.

There are eight key criteria by which applications for the award are judged:

- A welcoming place
- A healthy, safe and secure place
- A clean and well maintained place
- Sustainability
- Conservation and heritage
- Marketing
- Management

Appendix 2: Local Context

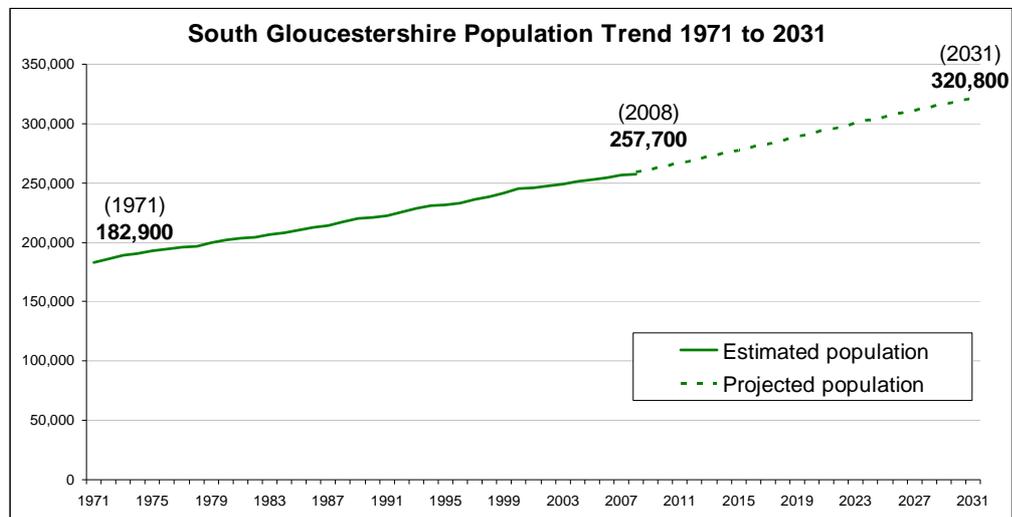
A2.1 Local Context

The district of South Gloucestershire covers 49,700 hectares with a population of 257,700. It is an area of diversity and contrast with a variety of communities, characterised by the special relationship between town and country. Attractive and historic landscapes link unspoilt market towns, villages and established rural and urban communities with major new residential areas, industrial and commercial developments. The area stretches from the Severn Estuary in the west to the Cotswolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) in the east. Its southern boundary borders Bristol, abuts the River Avon and extends towards Bath.

A2.2 Demographic structure – Population

With a population of 257,700, South Gloucestershire is the local authority (excluding county councils) with the second largest population in the South West (Bristol City Council is the largest).

A2.3 The District has experienced rapid population growth in recent decades - between 1971 and 2001 the population increased by over a third (from 182,900 to 245,641). More recent estimates suggest that since 2001 the population has increased by 4.8% - which equates to an additional 11,700 residents.



Source: Mid-year Population Estimates, (ONS) and 2006-2031 based long term Sub national Population Projections for England (ONS 2008)

A2.4 **Age structure**

The population profile of the District is broadly similar to the national average:

- 19.1% of the population are below the age of 16 (the national average is 18.8%)
- 19.1% of the population are of pensionable age (the national average is 19.2%)

A2.5 Within the District, the highest concentrations of older people are in older suburban areas, whilst areas of new development such as Bradley Stoke show high proportions of young adults and children. (Source: ONS Mid-2007 Population Estimates for Wards)

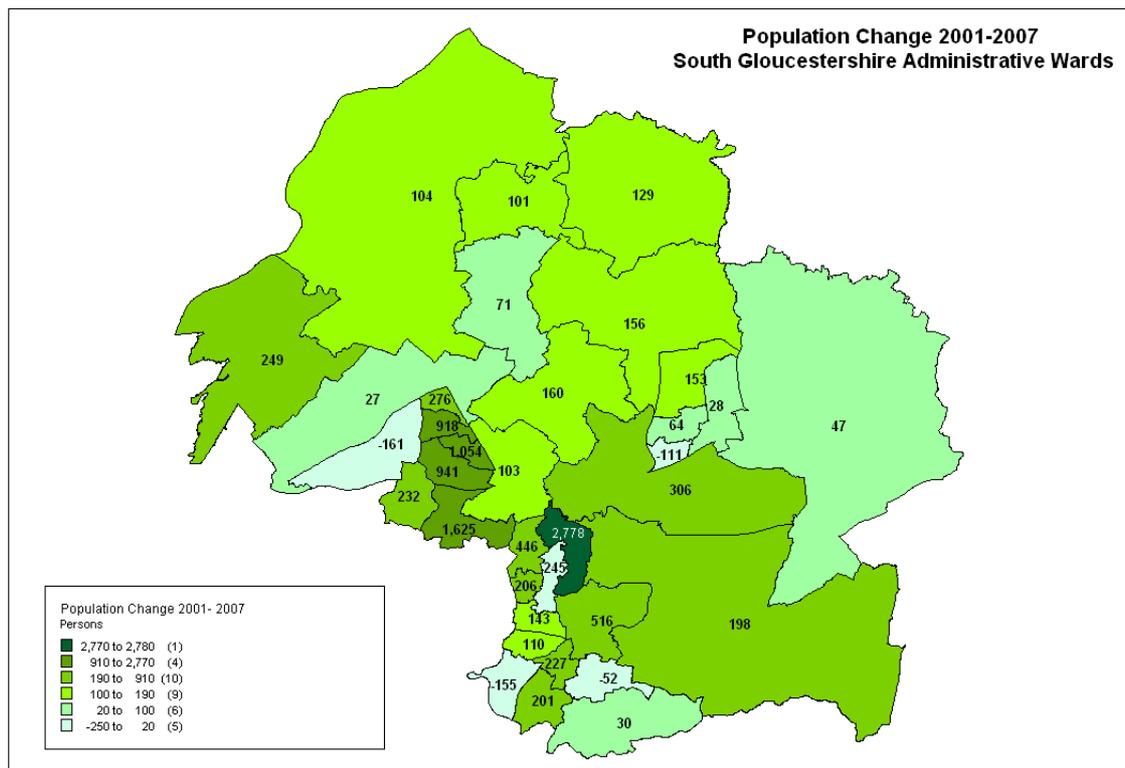
A2.6 **Population projections**

The District is expected to undergo significant population growth in the future. According to the 2006 (trend) based ONS projections, the population is projected to increase by 66,400 residents to 320,800 in 2031 - an increase of 26.1%.

A2.7 It is projected that, in 2031 the age profile of South Gloucestershire will be significantly older. ONS statistics suggest that, compared to 2006 baseline figures:

- There will be almost three times as many residents over the age of 85
- The proportion of the population over the age of 65 will increase from 15.4% to 21.4%
- The proportion of the population under the age of 15 will decrease (from 18.3% in 2006 to 17.3% in 2031).

(Source: ONS Population Projections 2006-2031, ONS)



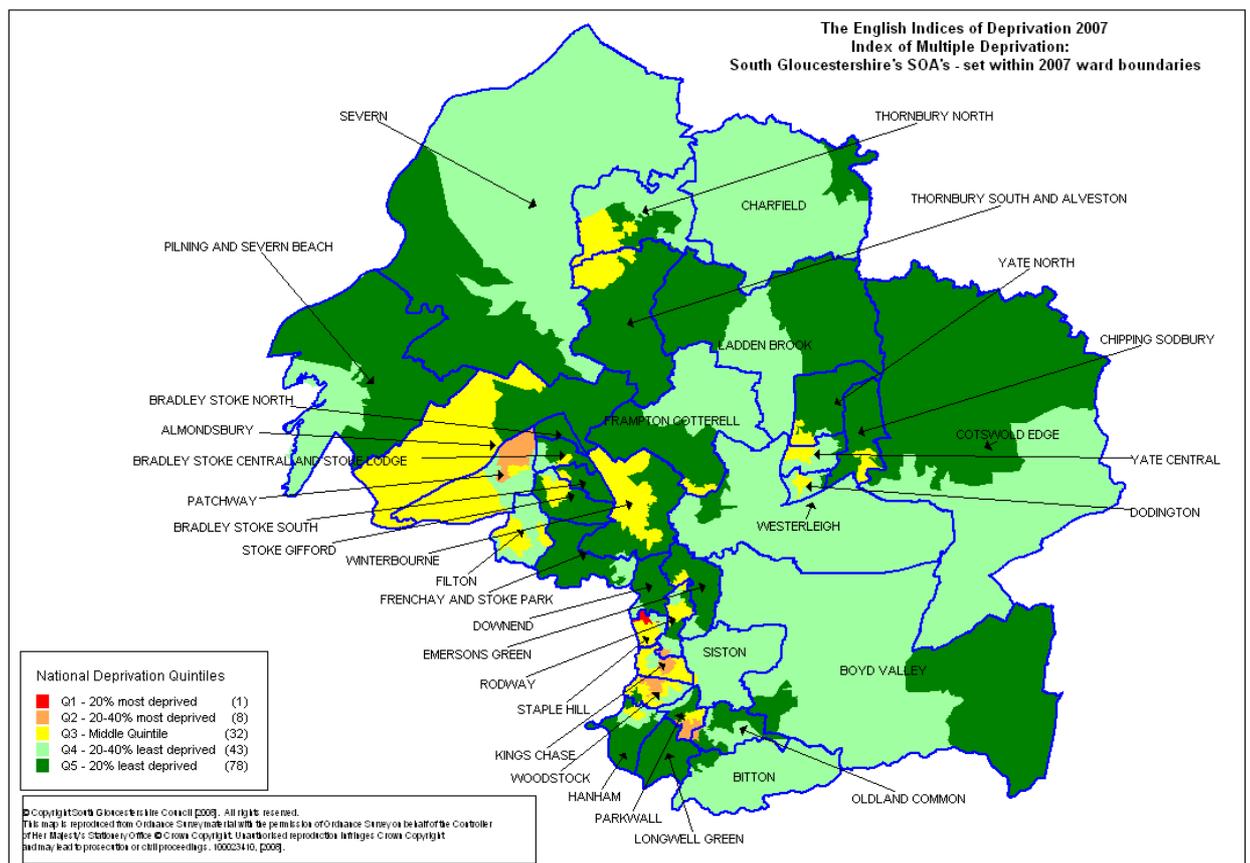
(Source: ONS Mid-2007 Population Estimates for Wards & Census 2001)

A2.8 Deprivation

The English Indices of Deprivation 2007 (ID 2007) is the Government's official measure of deprivation at small area level (LSOA)*. According to this study:

- South Gloucestershire is the 46th least deprived Local Authority in England (ranked 308th out of 354 authorities).
- Compared to other areas in England, there is little deprivation in the District (only one LSOA falls within the 20% most deprived areas in England), however there are sub-ward pockets of relative deprivation which tend to be areas with high concentrations of social housing (particularly ex-local authority housing estates).
- In South Gloucestershire, only 1,117 residents live within an LSOA which is within the most deprived 20% of LSOA's in England, compared to 51,392 residents in Bristol.
- South Gloucestershire's most deprived areas are generally located within the urban wards of Staple Hill, Patchway, and Kings Chase.

A2.9 In South Gloucestershire as a whole, 18,528 residents are 'income deprived' (about 7.3% of the total population), and 8,322 are 'employment deprived' (about 5.5% of the working aged population)**.



Source: CLG English Indices of Deprivation 2007© Crown Copyright)

*Lower Super Output Areas (LSOAs) are a statistical geography designed by the Office of National Statistics (ONS). They are smaller than electoral Wards so enable a detailed geographical analysis of trends. There are 32,482 LSOAs in England and 162 LSOAs in South Gloucestershire. LSOAs have an average resident population of 1,500 people and contain about 600 households

** These measures relate to the 'Income Deprivation' and 'Employment Deprivation' Domains, which are comprised of a range of indicators which measure counts for people or families in receipt of means tested benefits.

A2.10 Resident satisfaction

According to the national 'Place Survey' (a national survey undertaken by all local authorities), in autumn 2008, 83% of South Gloucestershire's residents were satisfied with their local area as a place to live, including 26% who were very satisfied. These results show a slight improvement on the findings from the 2008 survey - where 81% said they were satisfied. Source: South Gloucestershire Council, Place Survey 2008, 2009.