

BRENTWOOD BOROUGH COUNCIL

SURVEY AND ASSESSMENT OF NEEDS AND AUDIT OF OPEN SPACE, SPORT AND RECREATION FACILITIES IN BRENTWOOD BOROUGH



**A
REPORT
BY
PMP**

AUGUST 2007

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SECTION 1

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

Introduction and background

The study

- 1.1 In June 2005 Brentwood Borough Council (the Council) appointed PMP to undertake a Survey and Assessment of Needs and Audit of Open Space, Sport and Recreation Facilities in Brentwood Borough in accordance with PPG17.
- 1.2 The main focus of the study was to:
 - inform the preparation of, and support the policies in the Local Development Framework (LDF)
 - assess the provision of open space, sport and recreation facilities within the Borough
 - set local standards for provision of open space, sport and recreation facilities
 - provide guidance for the assessment of developer contributions to the provision of open space, sport and recreation facilities.
- 1.3 The study is undertaken in accordance with the requirements of the latest Planning Policy Guidance Note 17 (PPG17) (Planning for Open Space Sport and Recreation, July 2002) and its Companion Guide (Assessing Needs and Opportunities: A Companion Guide to PPG17, September 2002). By following these recommendations, this study has the potential to make a real difference to the quantity, quality and accessibility of open spaces in the Borough of Brentwood.
- 1.4 The study encompasses all typologies set out in PPG17 both publicly and privately owned, but quantity standards have only been set for the following typologies:
 - parks and gardens
 - natural and semi-natural greenspaces
 - outdoor sports facilities
 - amenity greenspace
 - provision for children and young people
 - allotments and community gardens.

Need for local assessments

- 1.5 This assessment of open space, sport and recreation and local needs will enable the Council to:
 - plan positively, creatively and effectively in identifying priority areas for improvement and to identify the types of open space required
 - ensure an adequate provision of high quality, accessible open space to meet the needs of the local community
 - ensure any funding is invested where there is the greatest need

SECTION 1 - INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

- lead negotiations on legal agreements with developers from a position of knowledge with supportive evidence.
- 1.6 Where no assessment exists, developers can undertake their own independent assessment to demonstrate that open space is surplus to requirements. It is therefore desirable for the Council to have robust data to support its policies and negotiations with developers in order to protect open space within the Borough where appropriate to do so.

The importance of open space

- 1.7 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
 - supporting a rural renewal
 - promotion of social inclusion and community cohesion
 - health and well being
 - promoting more sustainable development.
- 1.8 Open space and recreation provision in the Borough therefore has an important role to play in supporting the implementation of these objectives and enhancing the quality of life of residents and visitors.

Function of open space

- 1.9 Open spaces can provide a number of functions within the urban fabric of cities, towns and villages. These include, for example, the provision for play and informal recreation, a landscaping buffer within and between the built environment and a habitat for the promotion of biodiversity. Each type of open space has various benefits. For example, allotments for the growing of one's own produce, play areas for children's play and playing pitches for formal sports events. Open space can additionally perform a secondary function. For example, outdoor sports facilities have an amenity value in addition to providing for sport and recreation.
- 1.10 There is a need to provide a balance between different types of open space in order to meet local needs. For example, not all areas will show a demand for open space in the form of playing pitches or allotments. Some areas will have specific local demand for green corridors such as nature walks or bridleways.
- 1.11 Changing social and economic circumstances, changing work and leisure practices, more sophisticated consumer tastes and higher public expectations have placed new demands on open spaces. They have to serve more diverse communities and face competition from other land users such as housing. Open spaces can promote community cohesion, encourage community development and stimulate partnerships between the public and private sector.

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- 1.12 Parks and open spaces are more accessible to a wider range of people than some sport and leisure facilities and are better able to realise the aims of social inclusion and equality of opportunity. The provision of open spaces and recreation is central to a sustainable and thriving community.
- 1.13 It is widely recognised that the provision of high quality public realm can help promote an area as an attractive place to live, and can result in a number of wider benefits. These are set out in Appendix A.

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

- 1.14 PPG17 states *“the government expects all local authorities to carry out assessments of needs and audits of open space and sports and recreational facilities”*.
- 1.15 The major change in PPG17 from the 1991 version is the requirement for local authority decisions regarding open space to be **informed by local needs assessments and an audit of existing provision**. Such audits should incorporate qualitative, quantitative and accessibility considerations as well as the overall non-monetary value of the land including the level of use. National standards are no longer considered to meet local needs, although they may be used as benchmarks.
- 1.16 Other changes in this planning policy document are:
- the definition of open space as all open space of public value
 - a greater emphasis is placed on qualitative considerations – this is particularly important as it will allow local authorities to identify potential for increased use through better design, management and/or maintenance of open space
 - it advocates the setting of local standards appropriate to the local area rather than assessment by national standards. The Government believes that national standards are inappropriate, as they do not take into account the demographics of an area, the specific needs of residents and the extent of built development
 - it provides further guidance on the constituent elements of open space typologies
 - it acknowledges the multiple functions that open spaces can perform.
- 1.17 The policy guidance sets out priorities for local authorities in terms of:
- assessing needs and opportunities – undertaking audits of open space, sport and recreational facilities
 - setting local standards
 - maintaining an adequate supply of open space
 - planning for new open space.

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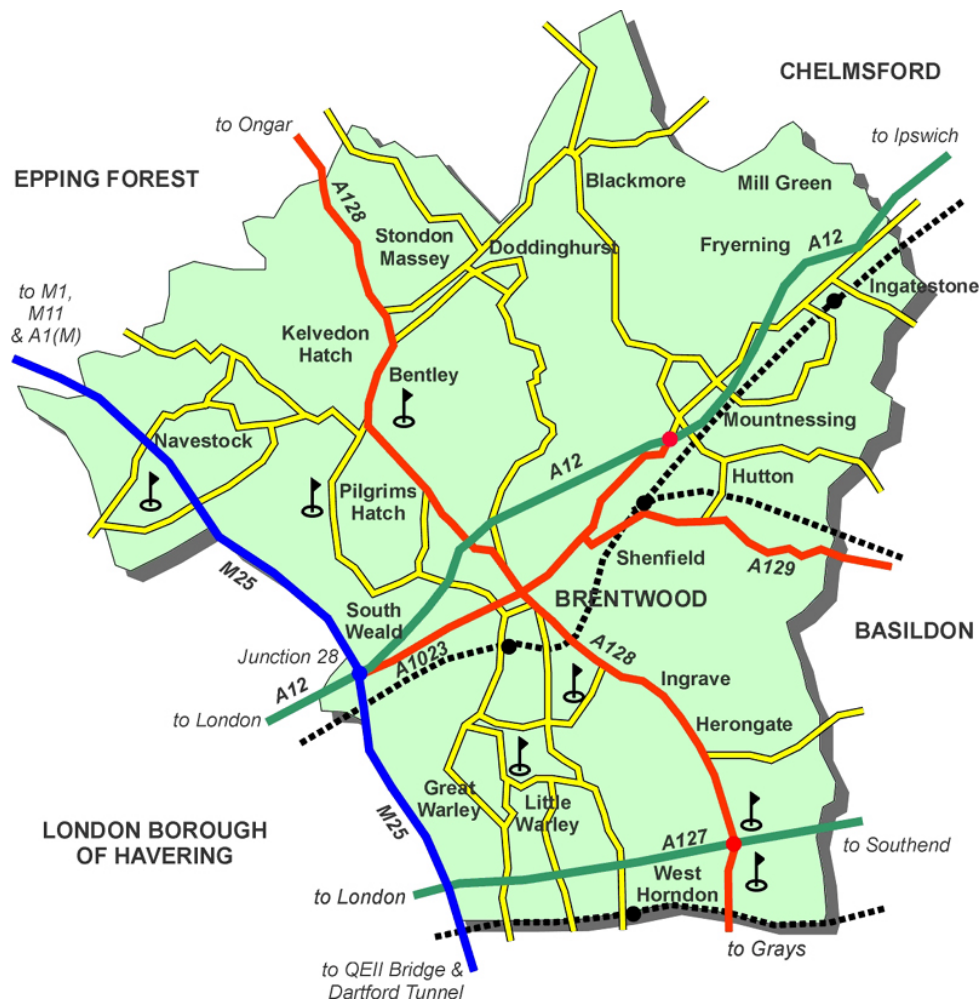
1.18 The Companion Guide sets out the process for undertaking local assessments of needs and audits of existing provision. It also:

- indicates how councils can establish the needs of local communities and apply provision standards
- promotes a consistent approach across different types of open space.

Local features and demographics

1.19 The Borough of Brentwood is located within Essex, in the East of England Region and has strong links with the Greater London area despite the severance effect of the M25. Figure 1.1 shows the position of Brentwood in conjunction with its surrounding local authorities of London Borough of Havering, Epping Forest, Chelmsford and Basildon.

Figure 1.1 The Borough of Brentwood



1.20 The mid 2003 population estimates indicate a population of 69,500 residing in the Borough with a 49%:51% split between males and females.

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- 1.21 Population density for the Borough is approximately 448 people per square kilometre. This compares to an average of 284 for the region and 380 for England. Despite the urban nature of the Borough that this number reflects, the town of Brentwood is surrounded by substantial country parks and set wholly within the Metropolitan Green Belt (MGB).
- 1.22 The age structure of the Borough indicates that the average age of residents is higher than the national average (c. 41 years compared to c. 39 years). The Borough has a slightly below average number of persons in the 0-19 age group and over 3% less persons in the 20-44 age group.

Aims and objectives for the study

- 1.23 The Council's main objectives for this study are to:
- inform the local development plan
 - set local standards for provision
 - provide guidance on the assessment of developer contributions
 - support policies for the new Local Development Framework
 - consider the longer term needs for the Borough.

Summary

- 1.24 This study:
- provides an evaluation and summary of the local needs assessment, which has assisted in identifying areas of high and low priority throughout the Borough
 - provides an analysis of existing provision for each type of open space
 - presents a set of quantity, quality and accessibility standards for appropriate typologies
 - enables the Council to ensure the most effective and efficient use of open spaces within the Borough and plan and respond appropriately to development pressures
 - provides the necessary information to be used in developing a strategy for the future management and development of open space.
- 1.25 It should be noted that the recommendations in this report are the views of the consultants that have undertaken the work in conjunction with the Council, and are put forward for the Council to consider further and do not commit the Council to a programme of action or priorities.

SECTION 2

UNDERTAKING THE STUDY

Undertaking the study

Introduction

- 2.1 The Companion Guide to PPG17 emphasises the importance of undertaking a local needs assessment. The four guiding principles in undertaking a local assessment are:
- (i) local needs will vary within local authority areas according to socio-demographic and cultural characteristics
 - (ii) the provision of good quality and effective open space relies on effective planning but also on creative design, landscape management and maintenance
 - (iii) delivering high quality and sustainable open spaces may depend much more on improving and enhancing existing open space than new provision
 - (iv) the value of open space depends primarily on meeting local needs and on the wider benefits it generates for people, wildlife and the environment.
- 2.2 PPG17 recognises that individual approaches appropriate to each local authority will need to be adapted as each area has different characteristics. The conclusions and recommendations of this study are therefore representative of the needs of the Borough of Brentwood.

Types of open space

- 2.3 The overall definition of open space within the Government planning guidance is:
“all open space of public value, including not just land, but also areas of water such as rivers, canals, lakes and reservoirs, which offer important opportunities for sport and recreation and can also act as a visual amenity”.
- 2.4 This study covers nine typologies of open space plus indoor sport and recreation provision.
- 2.5 The study includes open spaces, sport and recreation facilities provided and managed by other organisations, showing a more accurate picture of current provision within the Borough. Full details of these typologies, their definitions and primary purposes are outlined in Appendix B.

SECTION 2 – UNDERTAKING THE STUDY

PPG17 – 5-step process

- 2.6 The PPG17 Companion Guide sets out a 5-step process for undertaking a local assessment of open space, sport and recreation facilities.
- 2.7 The 5-step process is 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 – recommendations and strategic priorities.

Our process

- 2.8 The following steps indicate how the study has been undertaken in accordance with PPG17. Although presented as a linear process above, in reality, Steps 1 and 2 were undertaken in parallel.

Step 1 - Identifying local needs

- 2.9 In order to identify the local need, a series of consultations were carried out. These included:
- 5,000 household questionnaires sent to random households throughout the Borough, exploring user and non-user attitudes to the range of open spaces, sport and recreation facilities available near to consultees' homes and their views on quantity, quality and accessibility. A copy of the questionnaire can be found in Appendix C.
 - 'drop in' neighbourhood sessions across the Borough (at Shenfield, Ingatestone and Brentwood) to elicit the views of a wide range of the local population
 - press releases, a dedicated email address and text messaging service were set up to allow the general public to provide comments on open space, sport and recreation facilities
 - a survey was distributed to all identified sports clubs in the Borough to ascertain their views on outdoor and indoor sport and recreation facilities in the area. A copy of the questionnaire can be found in Appendix C.
 - all primary and secondary schools in the Borough were contacted and offered the opportunity for pupils to complete an internet survey regarding open space, sport and recreation. The intention of the Internet survey was to engage young people in the study and ascertain their views. A copy of the questionnaire can be found in Appendix C.
 - one-to-one consultations with Council officers. The aim of these sessions was to establish how open space, sport and recreation provision affects each department and key issues for each.

SECTION 2 – UNDERTAKING THE STUDY

Step 2 - Auditing local provision

- 2.10 The Council had some existing information regarding open space sites across the Borough, which was provided to assist with the project.
- 2.11 Over 390 sites were visited and assessed for quantity, quality, accessibility and value using a standard matrix and definitions. This can be found in Appendix D.
- 2.12 As part of the site assessment, a cross-checking exercise was undertaken to ensure the audit was as comprehensive as possible. This included ensuring consistency of categorisation of open space sites into the PPG17 typologies used for this study.
- 2.13 Each open space site was then digitised as a polygon using GIS software, and its associated ratings and characteristics were recorded on an Access database. Indoor sport and recreation facilities were recorded as point data rather than as polygons.
- 2.14 This report is supplemented by the Access database, which will enable further updates of open spaces information and varying forms of analysis to be undertaken. This allows a dynamic reporting and assessment mechanism and enables individual sites or specific geographical locations to be examined in detail where necessary.

Steps 3 and 4 - Setting and applying provision standards

- 2.15 Within the analysis of the data collected and site ratings in terms of quality, quantity, accessibility and value we are able to:
 - determine a set of provision standards for urban parks and gardens, country parks, natural and semi-natural greenspace, amenity greenspace, provision for children and young people, outdoor sports and allotments
 - apply quantity standards to identify surpluses and deficiencies in the Borough for different typologies
 - identify gaps in provision for all typologies by using agreed distances from each site.
- 2.16 Setting robust local standards based on assessment of need and audits of existing facilities will form the basis for addressing quantitative and qualitative needs through the planning process.
- 2.17 Further detail regarding the process for setting and application of each type of provision standard is outlined in Appendix E.

Step 5 – Drafting policies - recommendations and strategic priorities

- 2.18 The study identifies sites for protection and enhancement, areas for new provision and opportunities for relocating provision.
- 2.19 The study provides a planning overview, which reviews the relevant planning policies and provides recommendations and guidelines on the drafting of policies for the LDF.

SECTION 3

STRATEGIC CONTEXT

Strategic context

Introduction

- 3.1 There are a large number of national documents and agencies that provide the strategic context to open spaces, sport and recreation facilities across the country and as such influence the provision of facilities in the Borough and the findings of this report. This strategic review sets the local needs assessment in the wider context.
- 3.2 Appendix F sets out the national strategic context, including 'Planning Policy Guidance Note 3 (Housing), *Living Spaces: Cleaner, Safer Greener*', which was produced by the Office of the Deputy Minister in 2002 and led to the creation of the Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment (CABE) Space, a national Government agency which has the overall aim "*to bring excellence to the design, management and maintenance of parks and public space in towns and cities*".
- 3.3 The rest of this section sets out the strategic context on a regional and local basis and consists of the following documents:
- Draft Regional Spatial Strategy (East of England Plan)
 - Shaping the Future, Community Strategy for Essex (2003)
 - Essex and Southend-on-Sea Replacement Structure Plan Review
 - Essex and Southend-on-Sea Replacement Structure Plan
 - Sporting Lives, Sporting Futures, Sports Partnerships – A Physical Education and Sports Development Strategy for Essex
 - Brentwood Borough Council Corporate Performance Plan 2005/06
 - Brentwood Borough Council Corporate Strategic Plan 2005/10
 - Brentwood Community Strategy 2004/09
 - Brentwood Borough Council Adopted Replacement Local Plan 2005
 - Brentwood Borough Council Parks and Countryside Service Plan 2005/06
 - Brentwood Borough Council Play Areas Strategy 2002.

Regional/county context

The Draft Regional Spatial Strategy (East of England Plan)

- 3.4 The East of England Plan or 'RSS' sets out the regional strategy for planning and development in the East of England to the year 2021. It includes issues covering economic development, housing, the environment, transport, waste management, culture, sport and recreation and mineral extraction.
- 3.5 The spatial planning vision for the East of England is to sustain and improve the quality of life for all people who live in, work in, or visit the region, by developing a more sustainable, prosperous and outward-looking region, while respecting its diversity and enhancing its assets.

Shaping the Future, Community Strategy for Essex (2003)

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

Essex and Southend-on-Sea Replacement Structure Plan (1996-2011)

- 3.8 The main aims of the Plan, of relevance to the context of this study are to:
- ensure that any new Greenfield development only takes place after all other urban alternatives have been considered first through a sequential approach
 - maintain a diverse and attractive countryside and undeveloped coastline where inappropriate development is prevented, whilst at the same time maintaining the vitality of rural communities by providing development to meet their identified local needs and to support rural diversification, in ways that are both environmentally and economically sustainable

SECTION 3 – STRATEGIC CONTEXT

- protect, maintain and enhance the area's biodiversity, nature conservation, landscape, natural resources, and built and historic environment, with specific priority being given to protecting and enhancing those areas and resources which have intrinsic environmental quality or value.
- 3.9 The vision, aims and core strategy for the Southend and South Essex area (including Brentwood) recognises that the sub-region provides a major strategic opportunity to contribute to the overall improvement of the economy. The economic regeneration is a key objective of the Plan to meet national, regional and sub-regional needs. The Plan recognises that this sub-region has great potential to attract new inward investment due to transport options to mainland Europe, as well as potential for large-scale economic development, diverse labour supply and range of community facilities.
- 3.10 The towns of Brentwood, Billericay, Wickford and Rochford district have important employment centres but development capacity, need and potential are more constrained.
- 3.11 The sub-region is heavily urbanised and close to London, and as such, strong emphasis will continue to be given to safeguarding the stated purposes of the Metropolitan Green Belt and protecting the area's natural and built environment. The sub-region also has a substantial employment deficit and suffers the worst transport and movement problems within the Plan area.
- 3.12 Further long term housing provision in the sub-region up to 2011 will be strongly restrained. Parts of the sub-region have high locally generated housing requirements, and it is not feasible to accommodate these entirely within the sub-region.

Essex and Southend-on-Sea Replacement Structure Plan Review

- 3.13 Although Essex County Council has suspended work on the Structure Plan Review with a focus now on the preparation of the East of England Plan (RSS14), the report examined future land-use development and transport provision within Essex and Southend-On-Sea. It aimed to create the right planning strategy so that future growth can be managed in a sustainable way that benefits everyone whilst protecting the special qualities of towns, countryside and coast. Specific to Brentwood are the following policies:
- retention of the Metropolitan Green Belt (MGB) in the south and west of the Plan Area to prevent urban sprawl
 - prevent neighbouring towns located within the MGB from merging into one another
 - whilst the MGB is likely to be maintained as a national and regional policy for controlling urban sprawl (in accordance with PPG2 and RPG), this should not necessarily prevent further urban growth taking place at selected strategic locations.

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

- 3.14 This document is a blueprint to help shape the future sporting provision in the county to ensure that resources are used effectively and in a co-ordinated fashion. It was produced by a steering group comprised of both professionals and volunteers, who consulted with a wide range of organisations and institutions. Relevant points are as follows:
- create a better match between what the communities of Essex need and what is provided
 - provide opportunities for all sections of the community to participate in physical education, sport and recreation at a level appropriate to their needs and aspirations.

Local context

Brentwood Community Strategy, Local Strategic Partnership 2004-2009

- 3.15 The Community Strategy for Brentwood was developed through input from the public, private, community and voluntary sectors with the Borough Council having a steering role.
- 3.16 The Strategy provides a profile to the Borough, including local demographics and geographical factors, such as Brentwood's proximity to London and the relatively small proportion of the Borough that is built up. It states that the Borough has been ranked in a national quality of life survey as one of the best places to live in the country. The survey was conducted by Experian and used the indicators of health, education and crime, all of which are further addressed in the community strategy.
- 3.17 The Strategy has four key components:
- a long-term vision for the area, focusing on the outcomes to be achieved
 - an action plan identifying shorter term priorities that will contribute to the achievement of long-term outcomes
 - a shared commitment of all the partners to implement the action plan
 - arrangements for monitoring and review – not only within the partnership, but involving public information and feedback.
- 3.18 In addition, there are ten strategic objectives that underpin the strategy. Of particular note are the leisure/culture, sustainable development/local environment and community safety themes in which the following detailed objectives are set out:
- encouraging local people to pursue appropriate leisure activities in order to improve their personal well-being and quality of life, with consequent benefits for community well-being
 - encouraging and promoting the provision of sport and leisure facilities/activities that are accessible to everyone

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- developing a wide and varied range of leisure activities and facilities in order to provide the community with the opportunity to enjoy and benefit from their leisure time
- implementing the local cultural strategy based on the needs and aspirations of the local community, which addresses the full range of cultural needs and promotes fair access for all
- preserving and improving the environment and visual amenity of the Borough through the appropriate maintenance of parks, trees, verges and open spaces
- keeping the Borough safe and making it a better place in which to live, work and relax by reducing crime and disorder problems.

Corporate Performance Plan, Brentwood Borough Council 2005/06

3.19 This Plan is closely allied to the Brentwood Community Strategy and many of its recommendations and performance indicators are similar. Four key priority issues have been identified by the Plan:

- the environment
- young people
- community safety and anti-social behaviour
- town centre regeneration.

3.20 In 2003/04 the Council gave an enhanced profile to environmental issues, which were reflected in the priorities for 2004/05. In particular, improvements to public open space and local play areas were identified as well as the provision of facilities for young people. These themes were carried through into 2005/06, with the undertaking of an assessment of open space, sport and recreation in the Borough being a specific priority.

3.21 The Corporate Performance Plan sets out a number of key indicators by which to measure and compare performance from one year to the next. The following indicators relate to this study:

- total number of swims and visits per 1,000 population to the Brentwood Centre and Shenfield Sports Centre
- the number of playgrounds reaching national standards for local equipped play areas for quality and safety
- percentage of residents by targeted group satisfied with the Council's activities in the following areas:
 - sports/leisure
 - parks/open spaces
- number of rounds of golf played
- assessment of open space, sport and recreation undertaken

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- the number of open space, footpath and bridleway improvements implemented as a percentage of those due.

Corporate Strategic Plan, Brentwood Borough Council 2005-2010

- 3.22 The Strategic Plan replaced the Community Plan entitled “Facing the Future”. The Plan’s initial focus is on the quality of life in Brentwood and the Borough’s 3,000 acres of woodland, country parks and farmland are highlighted – as well as its proximity to London. This is further strengthened by the fact that only 20% of the Borough is currently defined as being “built up”.
- 3.23 Extensive public consultation was undertaken by MORI to ascertain improvement and importance issues for quality of life. Key themes to emerge were that “open spaces” was seen as being the fourth highest aspect but was not seen as needing major improvements. “Access to nature” was the ninth most important (out of 20) but needed the second lowest improvement. Finally, “sports/leisure facilities” rated sixteenth for importance, but again major improvements were not seen as necessary (in context with other services).
- 3.24 The Council’s strategic objectives are listed as:
- housing and decent homes
 - healthy living
 - clean, green and sustainable environment
 - community safety
 - enterprise.
- 3.25 Within the second and third strategic objectives there are a number of key actions with action objectives of relevance. These include:
- implement the Play Areas Strategy
 - undertake a detailed assessment of options for the improvement and enhancement of the Hartswood Golf Course
 - protect and defend the green belt boundaries in the Borough
 - maintain Council owned and managed land so that it enhances the visual amenity of the Borough
 - enhance the local countryside through improvement schemes, tree planting and conservation measures.

Adopted Replacement Local Plan, Brentwood Borough Council 2005

- 3.26 This Plan was adopted in 2005 and covers the period 1996-2011, in conjunction with the Essex and Southend on Sea Replacement Structure Plan. The Plan also conforms to the Essex Local Transport Plan.

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- 3.27 The overarching aim of the Plan integrates the Planning Service's adopted mission statement with the Council's corporate objectives and the need for sustainable development. The aim is *"to protect, conserve and enhance the character and appearance of the Borough's natural and built environment whilst promoting the economic, social and cultural well-being of the Borough and seeking to make provision for the development of other needs of the Borough within the context of strategic planning guidelines and the principles of sustainable development"*.
- 3.28 The Replacement Plan will seek to implement an overall strategy for future development of the Borough based on planning for sustainable development and taking into account the Community Plan core values and strategic objectives.
- 3.29 The strategic aims of the Plan are to:
- direct development towards locations that provide the greatest opportunities for the use of transport modes other than the private motor car
 - make best use of previously developed land within urban areas
 - seek to improve the quality of public transport and facilities for pedestrians and cyclists
 - improve the relationship between where people live and their place of work or their proximity to community facilities and shopping
 - enhance the economic prosperity of the area
 - direct shopping development towards the town centre and other shopping areas
 - extend equality of opportunity and social integration
 - protect the character and openness of the Borough's countryside, together with existing urban open spaces
 - enhance the character and quality of the built environment
 - help to create sustainable rural communities
 - protect the environment and the amenities of those living, working and visiting the area from the potential negative impacts of development
 - enhance the quality of life, increase community safety and reduce the fear of crime.
- 3.30 As with all Local Plans, the concept of sustainability has been endorsed. In particular, for this study this relates to increasing accessibility to open space, offer facilities and to the conservation and protection of natural resources and built heritage. In addition, the need to enhance the quality of the urban and rural environment is recognised.
- 3.31 In order to achieve this, the Plan requires any development proposals to take account of the particular character, appearance, biodiversity, history and archaeology of the area.

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- 3.32 As with most areas, housing is a dominant issue. The Council undertook an Urban Capacity Study to assess the potential for further housing development within existing urban areas. This study concluded that there is likely to be sufficient housing supply by 2011 to meet the housing provision figure of 1450 without the need to consider the release of greenfield sites either within the Green Belt or within existing urban areas.
- 3.33 The Plan's overall aim in respect of the "green belt and countryside" section is "*to maintain the extent, character and openness of the Borough's countryside*". Some of the supporting objectives are also relevant to this study, which are to:
- conserve and enhance the character, appearance and ecological value of the countryside
 - maximise public access to and enjoyment of the countryside for passive and active recreation, compatible with the conservation of its character, appearance and ecological value.
- 3.34 The Plan also identifies the importance of a number of significant green wedges, which dissect the built up area and contribute to the structure of the urban area. These are corridors of open land linking the heart of the Brentwood urban area to strategic areas of public open space, major formal and informal recreation facilities and to the surrounding countryside. The green wedges contain a number of sites of ecological value and act as wildlife corridors.
- 3.35 The section of the Plan most relevant to this study is that dealing with "sports, leisure, tourism and community services". The overall aim is "*to develop social, cultural, educational, health and recreational facilities in the Borough*". The key supporting objectives for this section are to:
- maintain and improve the range, quantity and quality of social, cultural, educational, health and recreational facilities
 - increase the Borough's attraction to visitors whilst conserving and enhancing the Borough's natural and built heritage
 - protect and enhance public and private open space and other land of recreational, conservation, wildlife, historical or amenity value
 - encourage the joint use of educational buildings and sports facilities
 - ensure that the accessibility needs of persons experiencing mobility difficulties are met whether living, working, shopping or undertaking leisure or social activities in the Borough.
- 3.36 Areas deficient in open space are considered by the Plan. Reference is made to English Nature's standards for the provision of accessible natural greenspace. Using their guidelines there is a good level of provision of larger sites close to the urban centre, but the clearest area of deficit is a shortfall in Local Nature Reserves (LNRs) with approximately an additional 100 hectares being needed for the Borough. For formal open space, National Playing Fields Association (NPFA) guidelines are used and an under provision is shown in all three sub-categories in the Borough.

SECTION 3 – STRATEGIC CONTEXT

3.37 Within the “conservation and protection of the environment” section of the plan, the overall aim is *“to maintain the quality of the Borough’s natural and built environment”*. Policies in the Plan seek to protect national and local designations and promote appropriate management of woodland and other natural features.

3.38 There are a number of specific policies within the various sections of the Plan referred to which relate to open space and sports facilities. These include:

H3	Community uses in residential development
GB22	Outdoor sports facilities
GB23	Ancillary buildings
GB24	Golf courses
GB27	Access to the countryside
LT1	Strategic public open spaces
LT2	Development of existing urban open spaces
LT3	Areas deficient in open space
LT4	Provision of open space in new development
LT5	Displacement of open land uses
LT7	Provision of small scale, local recreation, leisure, cultural and entertainment facilities
LT13	Footpaths and cycleways in new development
LT14	Recreational routes
C1	Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)
C2	Local Nature Reserves (LNR)
C3	County wildlife sites, LNRs and other habitats and natural features of local value
C4	Management of woodlands
C5	Retention and provision of landscaping and natural features in development
C9	Historic parks and gardens
TC17	Open space/amenity areas
TC18	New cultural, entertainment and leisure uses

3.39 These policies are considered further in Section 14.

Brentwood Borough Council Play Areas Strategy 2002

3.40 The Overview and Scrutiny Committee was asked to conduct a review of play facilities for young people and provide a strategy for the future provision of the service.

SECTION 3 – STRATEGIC CONTEXT

3.41 Play areas were split into categories of:

- large sites
- housing sites
- other sites
- parish councils
- multi-use games areas.

3.42 The key recommendations from this study are as follows:

- the final strategy for the provision of facilities be developed in accordance with the report
- the funding implications be noted
- the ways of funding identified in the report be investigated
- the final strategy report be submitted to the Policy Board and the Cultural Panel
- the provision of facilities for older children be identified as a priority.

Parks and Countryside Service Plan 2005/06

3.43 The Parks and Countryside Plan seeks to provide high quality outdoor leisure and recreation spaces for as wide a range as possible of the Borough's residents and visitors. This involves an ongoing programme to provide additional facilities and improve the existing ones as resources permit.

3.44 The Service Plan forms an integral part of the Council's overall Corporate Strategic Plan by identifying specific objectives and targets proposed for the Parks and Countryside service within the Borough. It also plays a key role in monitoring performance of the services provided.

3.45 The Service Plan concentrates on the following key areas and objectives:

- **Allotments:** to ensure adequate availability of allotment plots and associated facilities throughout the Borough and to achieve an 80% cultivation rate of allotment plots
- **Brentwood Golf Centre:** to achieve the target of 40,000 rounds of golf per annum and make improvements to the state of the course through work on tees and trolley paths
- **Cemeteries and Churchyards:** to ensure well maintained, pleasant burial grounds
- **Children's Play Areas:** to provide an appropriate number of well maintained play areas and to implement 100% of the refurbishment or provisional works as prescribed in the Play Areas Strategy

SECTION 3 – STRATEGIC CONTEXT

- **Public Open Spaces:** to provide attractive, well maintained parks and open spaces offering varied and widely accessible leisure opportunities. This is to include various refurbishment and renewal projects at King George's Playing Fields and the Merrymeade House and Doddinghurst Road sites
- **Sports Facilities and Pitches:** to provide and maintain an adequate number of safe sports facilities and pitches capable of sustaining sport played to a competitive standard and to make facilities and pitches available to local clubs, organisations and individuals in accordance with Council policy on charging and conditions of hire. Specific targets include 85% pitch utilisation and to renovate or improve drainage facilities on one pitch per annum
- **Commons:** to maintain and protect the common land within the Council's ownership through effective and appropriate management
- **New Recreational Sites:** to develop new open space areas to provide attractive, safe sites for informal public recreation and to enhance their value to wildlife
- **Woodlands:** to manage Council-owned woodlands to ensure their long-term survival and to enhance their recreation, wildlife and amenity value where appropriate
- **Public Rights of Way:** to manage the 150 miles of the Public Rights of Way network in the Borough to allow open access to residents and visitors. This will include practical volunteer projects involving members of the local community in this objective.

Summary of strategic documents

- 3.46 In summary, this review of strategic documents highlights the importance of maintaining and improving open space sites within the Borough. The key theme emerging from the regional and local documents being the need to protect, enhance and conserve the existing sites, including the Green Belt land. Specific improvements to sites include the upgrading of children's play areas, as well as continued and improved management of open spaces to ensure public satisfaction and safety.
- 3.47 Key priority issues extracted from the strategic documents that are relevant to this study include:
- young people
 - community safety and anti-social behaviour
 - town centre regeneration
 - maintain Council owned and managed land to enhance the Borough's visual amenity
 - local improvement schemes including tree planting and conservation measures
 - carry out refurbishment projects at key public open space sites.
- 3.48 This study will contribute to achieving the wider aims of a number of local, regional and national agencies.

SECTION 4
INVOLVING COMMUNITIES

Involving communities

Introduction

- 4.1 As outlined in Section 2, a series of consultations were carried out, as part of the Step 1 identifying local needs, to establish the views on open space, sport and recreation provision among users and non-users in Brentwood.
- 4.2 The key consultations included:
- household survey
 - schools internet survey
 - sports club survey
 - drop-in sessions
 - consultation meetings with Council officers
 - consultations with external agencies.
- 4.3 A review of survey respondent profiles and a summary of key findings in relation to quantity, quality, accessibility and usage are provided below.

Household survey

- 4.4 The household survey was designed to glean opinions from users and non-users of open space within the Borough. In order to achieve this, surveys were sent to 5,000 random addresses within the Borough.
- 4.5 854 surveys were returned, yielding a response rate of 17%, which is slightly higher than the average expected postal response rate of 16%.
- 4.6 The ethnicity and age profile of respondents is detailed in Table 4.1 and 4.2 respectively. 95% of respondents were white British, which reflects the demographic profile of the Borough. The majority of respondents were between the ages of 40 and 59 years. 53% respondents were female and 47% male.

Table 4.1 Ethnic origin profile of respondents

Ethnic origin	No. of responses	%
White British	811	95
White Other	16	2
White Irish	9	1
Other	9	1
Black African	1	0
Black Other	1	0
Asian British	2	0
Asian Pakistani	1	0
Asian Other	2	0

SECTION 4 – INVOLVING COMMUNITIES

Ethnic origin	No. of responses	%
Mixed Black and White and Asian	1	0
Mixed Other	1	0
Total	854	100

Table 4.2 Age profile of respondents

Age range	No. of responses	%
Under 16	12	1
16-24	27	3
25-39	171	21
40-59	305	37
60-75	215	26
75+	100	12
Total	830	100

*24 respondents did not provide details on age

School Internet survey

- 4.7 All schools in the Borough were sent an information pack detailing the purpose of the Internet survey and providing the opportunity to participate. The survey is designed specifically for children and young people, and can be completed during lesson times, or as homework. This has previously proved to be an effective method to target a 'hard to reach' group. The opinions of children and young people are important to ensure that provision meets their requirements.
- 4.8 There was an unusually low response to this survey, with only 33 children from four schools taking part. The schools that participated in the survey were:
- Warley Primary School
 - Larchwood Primary School
 - Endeavour School
 - St Martins School.
- 4.9 55% respondents were female, and 45% male. The ages of respondents is shown in Table 4.3 overleaf, with the majority of respondents being either 8 or 9 years old.

SECTION 4 – INVOLVING COMMUNITIES

Table 4.3 Age range of respondents

Age	No. of responses	%
8	10	32
9	18	58
14	1	3
15	2	6

Sports club survey

- 4.10 Surveys were sent to all sports clubs in the Borough. There was a relatively low response rate, however it was possible to draw out some key information on the level of indoor and outdoor sports provision in the Borough.
- 4.11 The 10 sports clubs that responded were:
- Brentwood and District Table Tennis League
 - Brentwood Town YFC
 - South East Essex Keep Fit Association
 - Hutton FC
 - Brentwood Town Ladies FC
 - Health Trax Walking for Health
 - Doddinghurst Olympic FC
 - Brentwood Squash Club
 - Blackmore Sports and Social Club
 - Shenfield Cricket Club.

Drop-in sessions

- 4.12 Residents and stakeholders were invited to visit 'one stop shops' across the Borough and informally discuss their views on open space, sport and recreation. The sessions are useful in providing the opportunity for a wide range of members of the community to offer their opinions on open space provision. Typology specific feedback from the sessions is highlighted where relevant in later sections of the report.

Consultation sessions with Council officers

- 4.13 Internal consultation sessions are important to glean key strategic local information to support the study and to inform policy recommendations. Consultations were held with:
- Dave Bigden – Countryside Manager
 - Kevin Gilderson – Outdoor Recreation Manager

SECTION 4 – INVOLVING COMMUNITIES

- Lorraine Jones – Admin Supervisor – Parks and Countryside.

4.14 Regular conversations were also held with Geoff Boyton, Principle Planner.

Consultation with external agencies

4.15 Questionnaires were sent to key external agencies to provide input into sensitive and specific issues that would strengthen policy recommendations. Agencies consulted with included:

- Forestry Commission
- British Waterways
- English Nature
- Thames Chase
- Brentwood Ramblers Association
- Essex County Council
- Weald Country Park
- Brentwood Leisure Trust.

Consultation analysis

4.16 The various methods of consultation have provided us with key data that will inform the setting of standards in the latter stages of the report. This section details findings from each consultation exercise, with further results discussed in the individual typology sections.

Importance

4.17 Table 4.4 below shows the importance of different types of open space according to respondents to the household survey. Parks and gardens, and natural open spaces were considered to be the most important open spaces in the Borough. Apart from cemeteries and churchyards and allotments, all open space types were considered to be very important to them by more than 80% respondents. The least valued typology was allotments, with 32% respondents feeling that allotments were not important to them, and 21% holding no opinion over the importance of allotments.

SECTION 4 – INVOLVING COMMUNITIES

Table 4.4 Importance of open spaces in the Borough

Typologies	Important	Not important	No opinion
Natural open spaces	98%	1%	0%
Parks and gardens	96%	3%	1%
Green corridors	88%	6%	6%
Amenity greenspace	87%	7%	6%
Children and young people	86%	8%	6%
Outdoor sports facilities	82%	10%	7%
Cemeteries and churchyards	67%	15%	18%
Allotments	47%	32%	21%

- 4.18 39 respondents aged under the age of 24 completed the household survey. Of these 39, 97% indicated that play spaces for young people and parks and gardens were important and 89% also considered natural greenspaces to be important.

Quantity

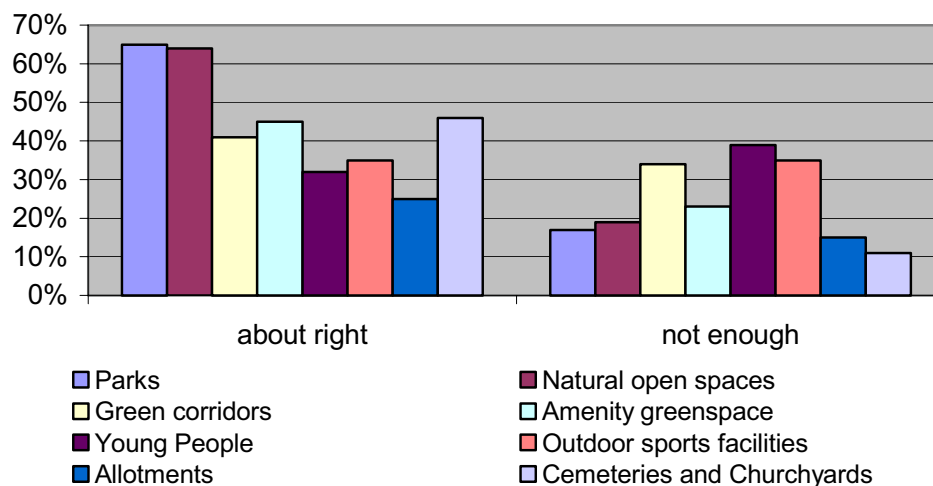
- 4.19 Table 4.5 below indicates whether respondents consider the quantity of open spaces in the Borough to be adequate. Overall, it was considered that the amount of open spaces was 'about right'. The only type of open space that differed was allotments, where 45% respondents held no opinion over the provision.

Table 4.5 Quantity of open spaces in the Borough

Typologies	More than enough	About right	Nearly enough	Not enough	No Opinion
Parks and gardens	3%	65%	13%	17%	1%
Natural open spaces	4%	64%	13%	19%	0%
Green corridors	3%	41%	17%	34%	6%
Amenity greenspace	3%	45%	19%	23%	10%
Children and young people	4%	32%	17%	39%	8%
Outdoor sports facilities	3%	35%	17%	35%	11%
Allotments	5%	25%	11%	15%	45%
Cemeteries and churchyards	3%	46%	12%	11%	27%

- 4.20 As illustrated in Table 4.5, a minimal percentage of the respondents felt that there was 'more than enough' of any of the open space typologies (ie between 3% and 5%). The majority felt the amount of parks/public gardens (65%), natural/semi natural (64%); cemeteries and churchyards (46%) and amenity greenspace (45%) was 'about right'.

Figure 4.1 Provision of open space in Brentwood



- 4.21 Figure 4.1 above shows that opinion was split over the provision of outdoor sports facilities, with 35% believing there was 'not enough', and 35% believing provision was 'about right'. A similar situation is apparent for open space provision for young people with 33% indicating provision is 'about right' and 39% 'not enough'.
- 4.22 79% of respondents to the household survey who were aged under 24 indicated that there were not enough play spaces for young people. The drop in session feedback supported this, where consultation reiterated that there was not enough playgrounds for children aged seven to 12, or teenagers.
- 4.23 The household survey also asked specific questions in relation to indoor sports facilities. Table 4.6 below highlights the views on quantity of provision of indoor sports facilities in the Borough.

Table 4.6 Quantity of provision of indoor sports facilities in the Borough

Facilities	More than enough	About right	Nearly enough	Not enough	Don't know
Swimming pool	6%	42%	9%	28%	15%
Sports hall	5%	49%	11%	12%	23%
Health and fitness	12%	47%	9%	10%	22%
Indoor bowls	2%	20%	5%	10%	63%
Indoor tennis	2%	17%	6%	17%	58%
Studios for dance and exercise	4%	30%	8%	10%	48%
Village/community/school hall	3%	45%	9%	10%	33%

SECTION 4 – INVOLVING COMMUNITIES

- 4.24 The majority of respondents, who felt they could provide an opinion, indicated that there is 'more than enough' or an 'about right' quantity of provision for all indoor sports facility types. Swimming pool provision is the one facility where over 25% of respondents indicated that provision is 'not enough'.

Quantity summary

- overall current provision of open space is 'about right', with the majority of survey respondents satisfied with the level of provision across most typologies. The exceptions being the perceived inadequate level of open space provision for children and young people and outdoor sports facilities
- in terms of indoor sports facilities, feedback suggests that current level of provision for all indoor sports facility types is 'about right', although a significant percentage of respondents to the household survey indicated a need for additional swimming pool provision.

Quality

- 4.25 Table 4.7 below highlights the quality issues at open spaces within the Borough experienced by respondents, indicating whether they are considered to be a 'significant' or 'minor' problem.

Table 4.7 Quality issues in the Borough identified by respondents

Quality factor	Significant Problem	Minor Problem	No Problem
Litter problems	30%	37%	33%
Dog fouling	24%	40%	36%
Vandalism	19%	32%	48%
Graffiti	18%	25%	57%
Anti-social behaviour	17%	23%	61%
Standard of maintenance	11%	18%	71%
Too busy/crowded	10%	19%	71%
Noise	5%	14%	81%
Smells	2%	7%	91%

- 4.26 The most 'significant' problem was litter according to 30% respondents, followed by dog fouling. Dog fouling, litter and vandalism were also highlighted as 'minor' problems by over 30% of respondents.
- 4.27 Young people responding to the school survey, as factors that they liked least about the open space they use most often, also highlighted dog fouling and litter. Although, 58% of responses from the schools' Internet survey suggested that most open spaces are litter free and safe and that 68% of school survey respondents believe the overall quality of open space to be good or very good.

SECTION 4 – INVOLVING COMMUNITIES

- 4.28 Table 4.8 below shows the levels of satisfaction experienced by household survey respondents in relation to facilities at open spaces. A high proportion of residents were 'satisfied' or 'very satisfied' with pathways (85% of respondents), planted and grass areas (83%), maintenance and management (77%) and boundaries (76%).

Table 4.8 Levels of satisfaction experienced at open spaces

	Very satisfied	Satisfied	Unsatisfied	Very unsatisfied	Not applicable
Planted and grassed areas	23%	60%	6%	2%	9%
Maintenance and management	17%	60%	12%	4%	7%
Pathways	15%	70%	7%	2%	5%
Boundaries (eg railings, hedges etc)	13%	63%	8%	3%	13%
Information and signage	11%	59%	13%	2%	15%
Play equipment	10%	32%	7%	3%	48%
Seats / benches	9%	48%	29%	5%	9%
Parking	8%	41%	19%	11%	21%
Provision of bins for litter	7%	48%	28%	8%	9%
Toilets	5%	29%	28%	10%	28%
Lighting	4%	35%	11%	4%	46%

- 4.29 As evident from Table 4.8, the greatest degree of dissatisfaction centred on the quality of toilet provision. Other areas of concern included a lack of provision of bins for litter (36% of respondents) and provision of seats/benches (34% of respondents). Feedback from young people via the school survey suggested highlighted poor quality ancillary facilities in the parks, in particular in relation to the toilet facilities.
- 4.30 Table 4.9 below shows that overall, household survey respondents were satisfied with quality factors at indoor sports facilities. Respondents were most satisfied with health and safety (86%) and car parking (83%). Respondents were least satisfied with the quality of changing facility provision (20%).

SECTION 4 – INVOLVING COMMUNITIES

Table 4.9 Quality issues at indoor sports facilities

	Very satisfied	Satisfied	Unsatisfied	Very unsatisfied	N/A
Range of facilities	17%	63%	9%	2%	9%
Health and safety	16%	70%	6%	1%	7%
Quality of facilities	15%	63%	12%	2%	8%
Staffing and supervision	15%	63%	8%	2%	13%
Car parking	15%	68%	7%	1%	8%
Overall	15%	69%	9%	1%	6%
Cleanliness	13%	61%	17%	3%	6%
Maintenance	13%	64%	14%	2%	6%
Appearance	13%	66%	13%	2%	6%
Programme of activities	13%	59%	10%	2%	16%
Customer care	12%	63%	7%	3%	15%
Changing facilities	10%	50%	20%	4%	16%
Security	10%	67%	12%	2%	9%

Quality summary

- litter and dog-fouling were the most significant quality problems encountered at open space sites across the Borough
- a high proportion of Borough residents are satisfied with the quality of provision at open spaces, such as pathways, planted/grass areas and maintenance and management
- an overall level of satisfaction of the quality of indoor sports facilities was highlighted, particularly in relation to health and safety and parking.

Accessibility

- 4.31 Table 4.10 indicates the levels of satisfaction experienced by household survey respondents in relation to the accessibility factors. Respondents were very satisfied or satisfied with the visibility of site entrance (87%), opening times (80%) and signage (77%).

SECTION 4 – INVOLVING COMMUNITIES

Table 4.10 Satisfaction levels of accessibility at open spaces

	Very satisfied	Satisfied	Unsatisfied	Very unsatisfied	N/A
Visibility of site entrance	30%	57%	6%	2%	4%
Accessibility by walking	30%	38%	13%	7%	12%
Opening Times	24%	56%	4%	1%	15%
Signage	18%	59%	12%	2%	9%
Accessibility with pushchairs or wheelchairs	15%	28%	12%	8%	37%
Accessibility by cycleways	9%	26%	15%	12%	37%
Accessibility by public transport	6%	13%	17%	18%	47%

- 4.32 In terms of ease of travel, only 35% of household respondents were either satisfied or very satisfied with how easy it is to get to their chosen open space by cycle paths. This reflects feedback at the drop-in sessions, where residents stated that would like more cycle routes and cycle lanes. In addition, 35% residents felt that the ease of getting to the open space by public transport was unsatisfactory or very unsatisfactory.
- 4.33 These levels of satisfaction were reflected in the household survey responses to the mode of transport used to get to open spaces. 52% of respondents indicated they travel by car to the open space they use most frequently, whilst 42% would walk. Public transport was not a well used form of transport, and it was noted during internal consultations that the number of bus routes has decreased. In the schools internet survey 29% of respondents stated that they normally travel to the open space they visit most often on foot, whilst 35% travel by car.
- 4.34 Table 4.11 below shows the levels of satisfaction regarding accessibility at indoor sports facilities. Respondents were satisfied with opening times (79%), ease of booking (74%) and pricing (67%). Respondents were least satisfied with the ease of getting there by walking (21%).

Table 4.11 Satisfaction levels of accessibility at indoor sports facilities

	Very satisfied	Satisfied	Unsatisfied	Very unsatisfied	N/A
Opening times	20%	59%	10%	1%	9%
Ease of booking	16%	56%	6%	1%	20%
Easy to get there by walking	11%	33%	21%	12%	23%
Easy to get there with push/wheel chairs	9%	27%	13%	8%	44%
Pricing	8%	59%	18%	4%	11%
Easy to get there by public transport	5%	23%	18%	15%	39%
Easy to get there by cycleways	4%	23%	19%	12%	41%

SECTION 4 – INVOLVING COMMUNITIES

Accessibility summary

- respondents were satisfied with overall accessibility to open spaces and indoor sports facilities, namely with the visibility of the site entrance, opening times and signage
- accessibility by public transport was highlighted by respondents as being a factor unsatisfactory
- respondents indicated a high level of satisfaction with accessibility at indoor sports facilities, particularly with regards to opening times, ease of booking and pricing

Usage

- 4.35 Table 4.12 below shows the levels of usage across all types of open space. Findings from the household survey indicate that usage of open space sites is high. For example, only 3% of respondents never use parks and gardens. 22% of respondents use green corridors on a daily basis while 16% of respondents use natural and semi-natural open space daily.

Table 4.12 Levels of usage at open spaces in the Borough

Typologies	Daily	Weekly	Monthly	Occasionally	Don't use
Green corridors	22%	29%	15%	25%	9%
Natural open spaces	16%	38%	27%	16%	3%
Parks and gardens	15%	37%	25%	20%	3%
Amenity greenspace	15%	16%	10%	36%	23%
Young people	6%	19%	13%	25%	37%
Outdoor sports facilities	3%	17%	8%	37%	35%
Allotments	2%	2%	1%	7%	88%
Cemeteries and churchyards	1%	10%	14%	38%	37%

- 4.36 Weekly usage of open space was greatest for natural and semi-natural open space (38%), followed by parks and gardens (37%). 88% of respondents do not use allotments, although internal consultation indicated a demand for allotment provision, as two sites currently have waiting lists.
- 4.37 According to household survey respondents, the most popular reasons for using open space was 'to walk' (77% of respondents), 'to take exercise' (72%) and 'for fresh air' (69%). Whereas the main reasons for people not visiting open spaces included 'lack of interest' (30%), 'lack of time' (26%) and car access/parking (19%).

SECTION 4 – INVOLVING COMMUNITIES

- 4.38 Respondents to the school survey were asked which open space types they have visited in the last year. Table 4.13 below shows the open spaces visited by children and young people in the last year, the most popular being parks, footpaths/cycleways and woodland.

Table 4.13 Open spaces visited by children and young people

Open space visited	No. of responses	%
Parks	30	97
Footpaths, cycleways	27	87
Woodland, meadows, grassland	23	74
Grassy areas within a housing development, village green	17	55
Play areas or youth shelters	17	55
Outdoor sports facilities eg. sports pitches, basketball courts, tennis courts	16	52
Cemeteries and churchyards	15	48
Allotments	5	16

- 4.39 Respondents to the household survey were also questioned about their usage of indoor sports facilities. Table 4.14 indicates the frequency of use of indoor sports facilities. 10% of respondents use health and fitness more than once a week, 11% use swimming pools once a week. More than 90% respondents do not use squash courts, indoor bowls or indoor tennis.

Table 4.14 Usage of indoor sports facilities

Typologies	More than once a week	Once a week	Once every 2 weeks	Once a month	Less than once a month	Not at all
Health and fitness	10%	6%	2%	3%	11%	68%
Village/community/school hall	7%	10%	3%	7%	21%	52%
Swimming pool	6%	11%	4%	8%	19%	52%
Sports hall	3%	7%	1%	4%	17%	68%
Indoor bowls	2%	1%	1%	0%	3%	93%
Studios for dance and exercise classes	2%	6%	1%	1%	6%	84%
Squash courts	1%	1%	1%	1%	5%	91%
Indoor tennis	0%	1%	0%	0%	3%	95%

- 4.40 The household survey questioned why people do not use indoor sports facilities in the Borough. The primary reasons given were lack of time, too expensive and lack of interest, full results are provided in Table 4.15 overleaf.

Table 4.15 Reasons for not using indoor sport facilities

Reason	No. of responses	%
Lack of time	248	19%
Too expensive	162	13%
Lack of interest	153	12%
Too far from home	100	8%
No public transport	76	6%
Don't know what is available	71	6%
Inconvenient public transport times	66	5%
Poor quality facilities	60	5%
Unsuitable opening hours	54	4%
Facility not provided in Brentwood	51	4%
Poor standard of cleanliness	44	3%
Use facilities outside borough	43	3%
Public transport costs	41	3%
Unsuitable facilities	39	3%
Car access/poor parking	22	2%
Difficult to book facilities	20	2%
Feel unsafe	17	1%
Not allowed	6	0%

Usage summary

- there is a high level of use of open spaces, with over 50% of respondents using parks and gardens, natural and semi-natural open space and green corridors on at least a weekly basis
- in terms of indoor sports facilities, a significant percentage of respondents do not use these facilities at all, the main reason being 'lack of time'. Indoor sports facilities that are used most frequently are swimming pools and health and fitness.

Management and maintenance

- 4.41 30% of respondents to the household survey were satisfied or very satisfied with the maintenance and management of the facilities and open space they visited most frequently.
- 4.42 Internal consultation indicated that there was an existing gap between management and maintenance and that an improved synergy would improve this issue. A requirement for overall improvement at sites was recognised, but is reportedly currently limited by resources.

SECTION 4 – INVOLVING COMMUNITIES

Opportunities for improvement

- 4.43 Consultation highlighted the need for a greater variety of specific facilities for young people, focussing in particular on the 7-16 age group, as there are perceived to be limited dedicated facilities for teenagers in the Borough.
- 4.44 An improvement to cycle routes which link key urban and residential areas to open spaces will increase usage levels and potentially help to reduce the need for an improvement in the public transport service.
- 4.45 Dog fouling and litter in open spaces in the Borough has been highlighted as a quality issue at sites, albeit not a significant problem. In addition, maintenance has been flagged as an issue that needs to be addressed, and these issues should be tackled as part of the maintenance structure improvements. There are few concerns with regard to graffiti and vandalism, which are often the main problems reported through public consultation.
- 4.46 Notwithstanding residents overall degree of satisfaction, internal officers suggested that signage needs to be provided at all open spaces and must show uniformity across the Borough.
- 4.47 Public consultation and discussions with internal officers also commented on the opportunity and need for wardens at open spaces to provide site security, maintenance and in some cases, events and activities.

Summary

- 4.48 The local need assessment and series of consultation, has identified a number of key quantity, quality, accessibility and usage issues across the Borough. The quality of the sites is important to all that use them and the overall perception is that existing quality of open space sites and indoor sports facilities in the Borough is good. Examples of good practice open spaces sites that were flagged at the drop in sessions and within the household survey are highlighted within individual typology sections ie (Sections 5 to 12).
- 4.49 Both the household survey and drop in sessions concluded that there were some quantitative undersupplies within the Borough, specifically in relation to children's play facilities. There is also split opinion in the Borough with regards to appropriate provision of outdoor sports facilities.
- 4.50 The provision of the main sports facilities including swimming pools, sports halls and health and fitness is considered to be 'about right' by the majority of respondents. Quantitative issues for each open space typology are further discussed in the relevant sections.

SECTION 5

PARKS AND GARDENS

Parks and gardens

Definition

- 5.1 This type of open space includes urban parks, formal gardens and country parks that provide opportunities for various informal recreation and community events, within settlement boundaries.
- 5.2 This typology also has many wider benefits as supported by the site assessments. Parks provide a sense of place for the local community, help to address any social inclusion issues within wider society and also provide some form of structural and landscaping benefits to the surrounding local area. They also frequently offer ecological benefits, particularly in more urban areas.
- 5.3 The country parks play a different role in the provision of parks and gardens than those based in the urban areas. In recognition of this, this Section is split between urban and country parks and gardens where relevant. It is recognised that it may be more difficult for the Council to implement changes in the country parks since Essex County Council are responsible for their management.

Figure 5.1 Thorndon Country Park



Strategic context and consultation

Strategic context

- 5.4 A national survey commissioned by Sport England, the Countryside Agency and English Heritage was undertaken during 2003, studying the provision of parks within England. The aims of the survey were to establish:
 - how many adults in England use parks?
 - what activities people take part in when visiting parks?
 - the reasons why people visit particular parks
 - the levels of satisfaction with the amenities on offer
 - why non-users do not use parks?

SECTION 5 – PARKS AND GARDENS

- 5.5 The definition of a park used in the survey was very broad and included both formal provision such as town parks, country parks, recreation grounds and also less formal provision such as village greens and common land.
- 5.6 The findings of the study were:
- just under two thirds of adults in England had visited a public park during the previous 12 months
 - there is a distinct bias in the use of parks by social groups, with almost three quarters of adults from the higher social group visiting a park compared with only half of those from the lower social group
 - people from black and ethnic minority communities also have relatively low participation as well as those adults with a disability
 - over 8 in 10 adults who had used a park in the previous 12 months did so at least once a month during the spring and summer with almost two thirds visiting a park at least once a week, and women tended to visit parks more often than men
 - it is estimated that the 24.3 million adults who use parks make approximately 1.2 billion visits to parks during the spring and summer months and 0.6 billion visits during the autumn and winter months – a total of 1.8 billion visits a year
 - the most popular type of park visited was an urban or city park.
- 5.7 The key indicators the Council uses to rate performance demonstrates the importance placed by the Council upon parks and gardens. The Council measures the net expenditure per hectare on parks/open spaces, satisfaction levels for parks/open spaces and areas of parks/open spaces per 1,000 population. For all three indicators the Council is either meeting or exceeding its target.
- 5.8 The Council's Local Plan aims to conserve and protect the environment as well as protecting and enhancing public and private open space. The Council's influence over the Country Parks in the Borough is tempered by their control by Essex County Council. This is a similar situation to other local authority areas in Essex.

Consultation

- 5.9 The various methods of consultation have been reviewed and specific findings relating to parks and gardens are highlighted here. Some key points:
- 96% of respondents to the household survey considered parks and gardens to be the most important type of open space in the Borough
 - 65% of respondents suggested that the amount of parks and gardens in the Borough is 'about right'. This was supported during the drop-in sessions, where members of the public stated that there was a good quantity of parks.
 - the majority of respondents (37%) use parks and gardens on a weekly basis
 - respondents to the household survey who use parks and gardens most frequently suggested that they were satisfied with management and maintenance, boundaries, pathways and planted and grassed areas.

SECTION 5 – PARKS AND GARDENS

- 5.10 Table 5.1 below shows the levels of satisfaction at parks and gardens by respondents who use the typology most frequently.

Table 5.1 Levels of satisfaction of frequent users of parks and gardens

	Very satisfied	Satisfied	Unsatisfied	Very unsatisfied	N/A
Planted and grassed areas	24%	64%	7%	1%	3%
Maintenance and management	18%	63%	10%	4%	5%
Pathways	18%	70%	7%	2%	3%
Boundaries (eg railings, hedges etc)	13%	68%	7%	2%	10%
Play equipment	11%	36%	8%	3%	41%
Information and signage	11%	66%	11%	2%	9%
Parking	10%	45%	21%	11%	14%
Seats / benches	10%	49%	34%	4%	3%
Provision of bins for litter	9%	55%	27%	5%	3%
Lighting	6%	40%	13%	4%	38%
Toilets	5%	32%	36%	11%	15%

- 5.11 The key emerging theme regarding country parks in particular was the cost of parking at Thorndon and Weald Country Park. Users feel the prices are too high and do not consider short visit users.
- 5.12 Table 5.2 highlights the problems encountered at parks and gardens according to respondents who use the typology most frequently. Litter problems and dog fouling are the main issues with standard of maintenance, noise and smells not recognised as problems.

Table 5.2 Problems encountered at parks and gardens

	Significant problem	Minor Problem	No Problem
Litter Problems	31%	34%	35%
Dog fouling	27%	41%	32%
Graffiti	21%	26%	53%
Vandalism	20%	33%	47%
Anti-social behaviour	20%	25%	55%
Too busy/Crowded	15%	24%	61%
Standard of maintenance	12%	17%	71%
Noise	6%	12%	82%
Smells	3%	7%	90%

SECTION 5 – PARKS AND GARDENS

- 5.13 Results from the household survey indicated that free car parking was the main aspiration for users who frequent parks and gardens most often when asked what 'other' features would be desired.
- 5.14 Access to parks was an issue in some areas, in terms of safety of crossing major roads, poor public transport links and lack of footpaths and cycle routes to major open spaces.

Current position

- 5.15 There are 11 parks in the Borough and four country parks. The country parks are key sites within the Borough and are highly regarded by local residents and visitors from further afield:
- Weald Country Park is listed as the venue for mountain biking in the 2012 London Olympic Games
 - Thorndon Country Park is an important site that hosts an ancient deer park area which has been designated as a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)
 - Warley Country Park boasts habitats that include regenerating and mature woodland, hedgerows, grassland and streams
 - Hutton Country Park covers 36 hectares; it is managed predominantly for nature conservation and has been designated a Local Nature Reserve. It is a renowned haven for wildlife and is remarkable as an area of unimproved grassland surrounded by vast intensive arable land and urban expansion.
- 5.16 The urban parks and gardens in the Borough are:
- | | |
|---------------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| • Bishops Hall Park | • St Faiths |
| • Merrymeade House & Gardens | • Doddinghurst Park |
| • Bishops Hill Adult Education Centre | • Copperfield Gardens Open Space |
| • Mill Lane Open Space | • King George's Playing Fields |
| • Ingatestone Hall | • Blackmore Millennium Park. |
| • Merrymeade Park | |

Setting provision standards

- 5.17 In setting local standards for parks and gardens there is a need to take into account any national or local standards, current provision, other local authority standards for appropriate comparison, site assessments and consultation on local needs. Full justifications for the local standards are provided within Appendices G, H and I.

SECTION 5 – PARKS AND GARDENS

Quantity Standard

- 5.18 The 15 parks and garden sites within the Borough of Brentwood provide a total 530.59 hectares. Of this, 478.81 hectares is comprised of the four country parks and gardens. The existing provision of parks and gardens in Brentwood is currently 7.62ha per 1,000 population. This is further broken down into a figure of 0.74ha per 1,000 population for urban parks and gardens and 6.88ha per 1,000 population for country parks and gardens.
- 5.19 It is evident from consultation that the current provision of parks in the Borough is good and that these sites are of a particularly high quality, attracting a large number of users. A specific question (Question 2) within the household survey (Appendix C) asked residents if they thought the provision of parks and gardens in Brentwood was more than enough, about right, nearly enough or not enough. On analysis of this and interpretation of other consultation, it is recommended that the **local quantity standard for parks and gardens is set at the current provision levels for both country and urban parks and gardens.**
- 5.20 The full context and justification for this standard is outlined in Appendix G.

<p>LOCAL QUANTITY STANDARD</p> <p><i>“Country Parks 6.88ha per 1,000 population”</i></p> <p><i>“Urban Parks and Gardens 0.74ha per 1,000 population”</i></p>

Quality Standard

- 5.21 As previously mentioned the Green Flag Award is the national accreditation for the quality of parks and open spaces. Some of the criteria used to measure the quality of parks includes a welcoming place, safe and secure, clean and well-maintained, community involvement and marketing and management.
- 5.22 The highest scoring site for the quality assessment was Ingatestone Hall (Site ID 331), with 96%. This is a formal garden site within the grounds of a private manor house. The lowest scoring site for quality was Merrymeades Park (Site ID 449), and St Faiths (Site ID 450), both with a score of 60%. Both Weald and Warley Country Parks scored 80% but Thorndon scored a little lower at 74%. The average score for the country parks was 78%, higher than the 70% average for urban parks and gardens.
- 5.23 The Parks and Countryside Service Plan 2005/06 has an element of a quality standard within it. For public open spaces the service plan aims to *“provide attractive, well maintained parks and open spaces offering varied and widely accessible leisure opportunities”*.

SECTION 5 – PARKS AND GARDENS

- 5.24 User aspirations from the household survey for parks and gardens in Brentwood were clean and litter free, toilets, flowers, trees and shrubs, well kept grass and natural features (wildlife). These key quality factors alongside other consultation feedback have been the basis of the quality standard recommendation for parks and gardens. The full justification for the proposed standard can be found in Appendix H.

LOCAL QUALITY STANDARD

“A welcoming, well maintained site that is clean and where dog fouling and litter is kept to a minimum. Sites should have varied and well kept vegetation and natural features, as well as ancillary accommodation (including benches, litter bins and toilets), where appropriate.”

Accessibility Standard

- 5.25 The accessibility of sites is paramount in maximising usage as well as providing an opportunity for all people to use the site. The local standard provides a realistic travel time/distance threshold, based on local needs that can assist in highlighting areas of deficiency, as well as ensuring that any new provision is placed in priority areas that are outside the recommended local accessibility catchment.
- 5.26 For parks and gardens walking was the most preferred method of transport identified by both users and potential users, with the calculated travel time being 15 minutes, applied to the whole of the Borough. Further justification on how this standard was determined can be found in Appendix I.
- 5.27 When examining the country parks, their role as a destination venue was taken into consideration. A far greater percentage of persons drive to these locations and this was particularly prevalent in the feedback received regarding the introduction of car parking charges. On this basis a drivetime figure is used and the agreed level is 10 minutes. It is expected that users will be encouraged to use alternative means of transportation; however despite this, a drivetime is deemed realistic and more appropriate for the country parks given their strategic importance.

LOCAL ACCESSIBILITY STANDARD

Urban Parks and Gardens - 15 minute walk time (720 metres)

Country Parks – 10 minute drivetime (4km)

Applying provision standards – identifying geographical areas

- 5.28 The accessibility catchment for country parks covers a 10 minute drivetime from the boundaries of the country parks. The accessibility catchment for the urban parks is a 15 minute walk (720m).
- 5.29 Figure 5.2 overleaf clearly shows the location of the country parks and the areas outside the catchment area. Figure 5.3 will help to determine whether the deficient areas have access to other (urban) parks.
- 5.30 It can be seen from Figure 5.2 that the country parks in Brentwood are based in the west, east and south of the Borough. With the exception of Tipps Cross ward in the north of the Borough, all residential areas are within the recommended accessible drive time catchment of one of the four country parks within the Borough. Based on this, there is no recommendation for additional country park provision within the Borough.

SECTION 5 – PARKS AND GARDENS

Figure 5.2 *Spatial distribution of country parks*

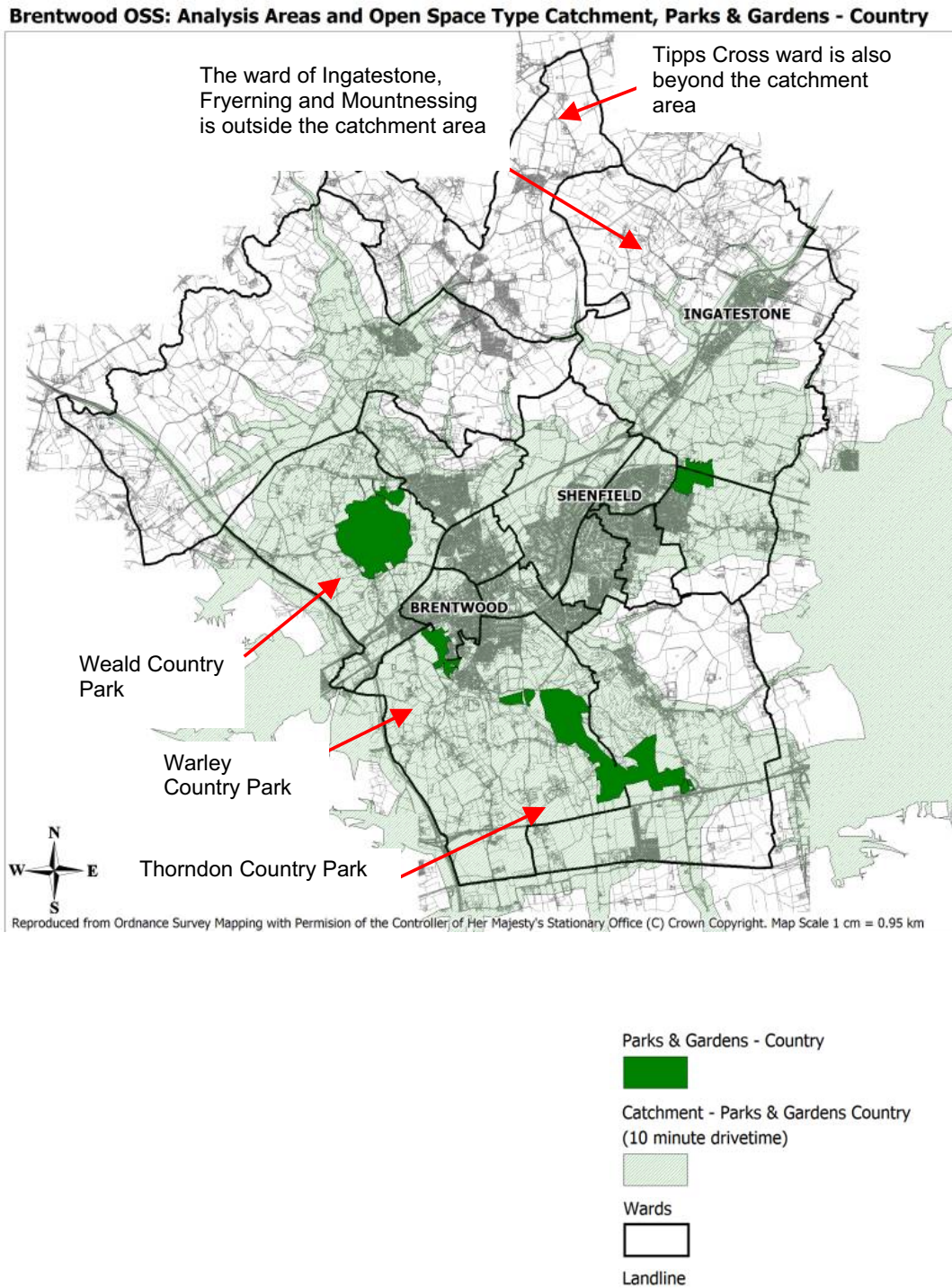
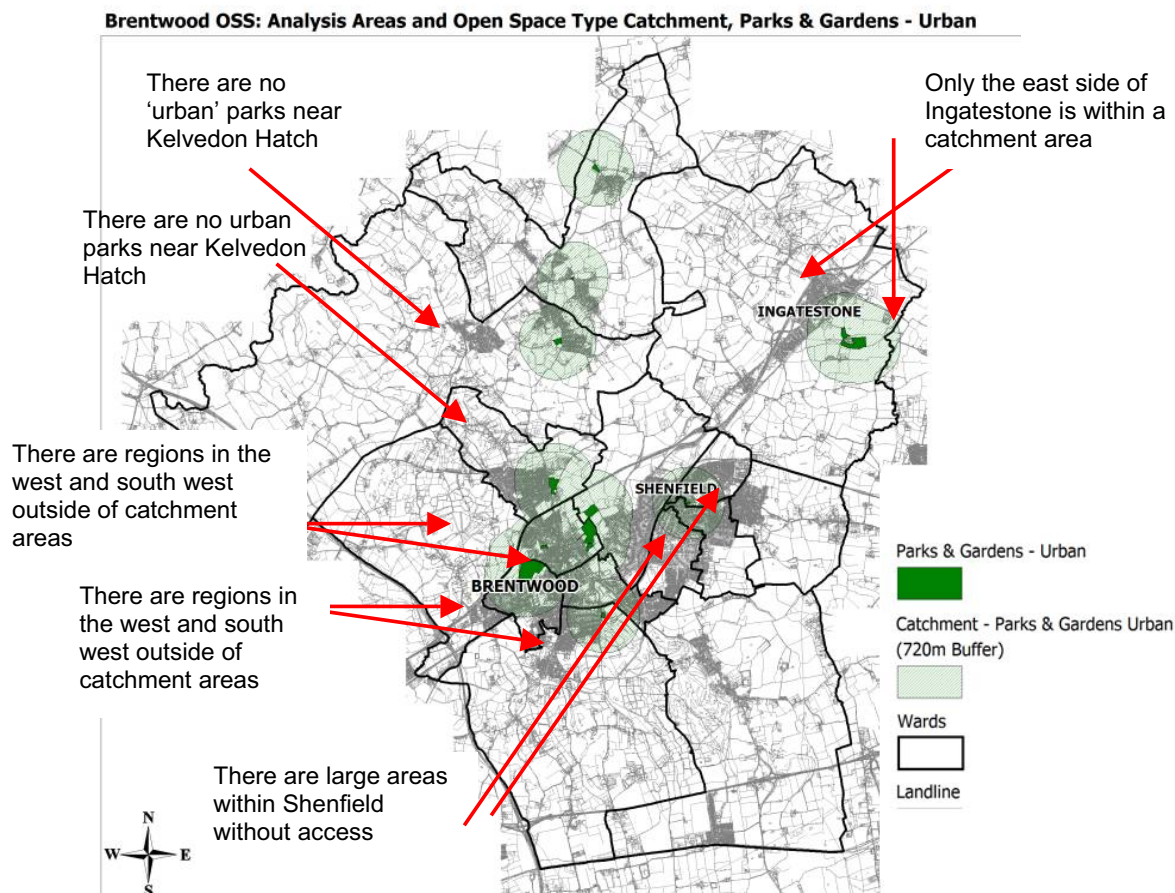


Figure 5.3 Spatial distribution of urban parks and gardens



- 5.31 Figure 5.3, illustrates the spatial distribution of urban parks and gardens in Brentwood and does not take in to consideration other typologies of open space. Alternative provision to parks and gardens through other open space typologies, in areas where provision is outside an accessible catchment, are considered in more detailed below.

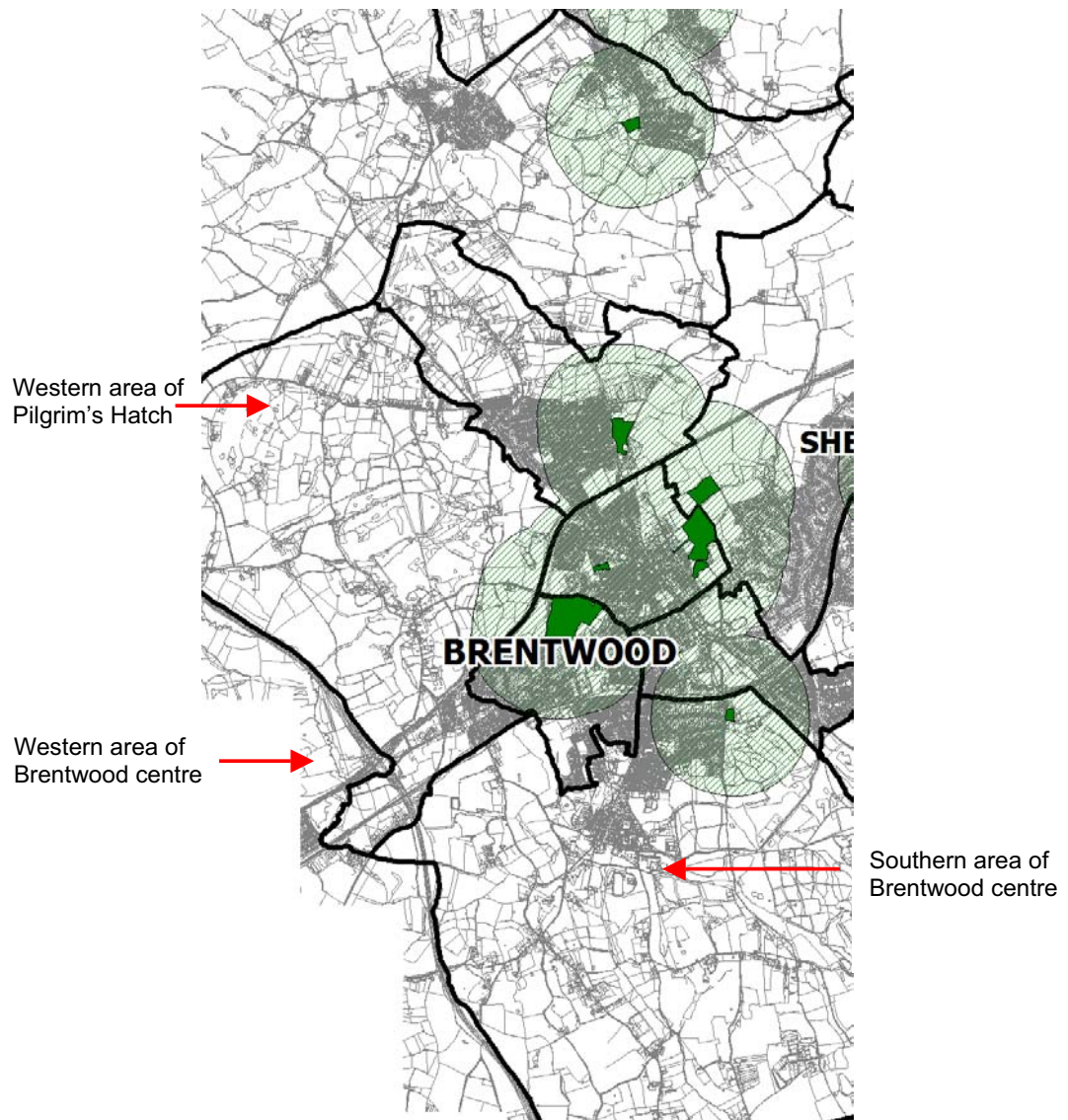
Focus on Brentwood urban area

- 5.32 Figure 5.4, overleaf focuses upon the urban centre of Brentwood. It can be seen that there are significant areas without access to an urban park and garden. In the northwest the western area of Pilgrim's Hatch is outside of the catchment area of an urban park and garden site. However, the majority of residents are able to drive to Weald Country Park within 10 minutes so this is not a priority area for new open space.

SECTION 5 – PARKS AND GARDENS

- 5.33 The western and southern ends of Brentwood centre, typically the Brook Street and Warley areas, are also outside of a park and garden catchment area. However, these areas are again within the drivetime catchment area of a country park – either Weald or Thorndon. Therefore it is not recommended that new park provision is a priority in this area.

Figure 5.4 *Spatial distribution of urban parks and gardens for central Brentwood*



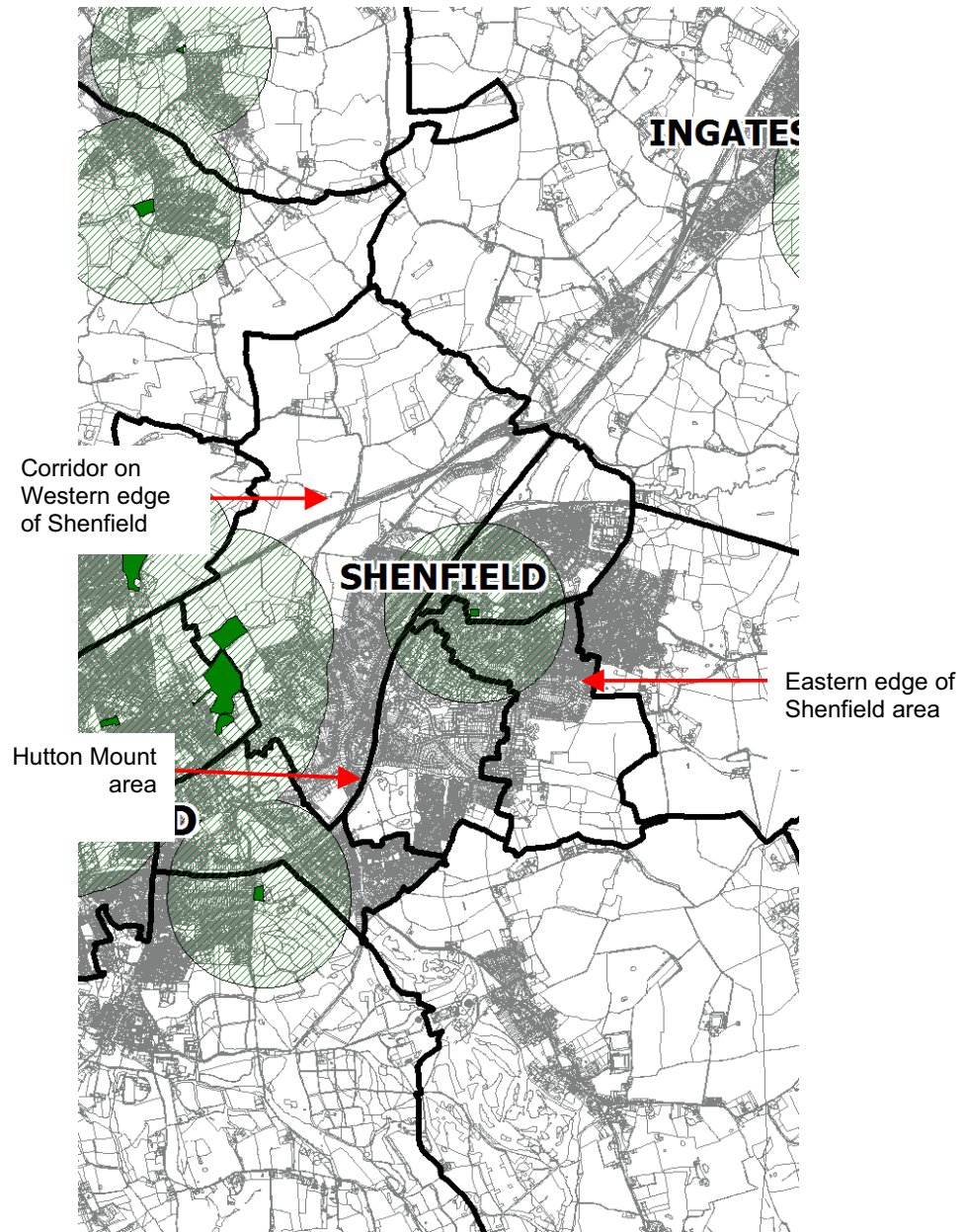
SECTION 5 – PARKS AND GARDENS

Focus on Shenfield urban area

- 5.34 Figure 5.5, overleaf, focuses upon the Shenfield urban area of Brentwood. There is a key corridor running along the eastern edge of this urban area where residents cannot walk to either an urban park and garden or country park. It should however be noted that sporting facilities could be developed to have a greater secondary function as a park by the inclusion of benches and planted areas. In addition, it is recommended that this area becomes a priority for new provision for an urban park or garden.
- 5.35 A new park or garden at the northern end of the corridor would still leave significant areas of the west of Shenfield outside of an accessible catchment, so new provision here too should be a priority. However the presence of Shenfield Common and Thrift Wood means that this area should be a lesser priority than the northern end. Due to amount of development in this area there are few opportunities for new park or garden provision and the redesignation of sports provision may, again, have to be considered.
- 5.36 The Hutton Mount area on the west of Shenfield is the final major area in Shenfield without easy walking distance access to either an urban park and garden or country park. There are other open spaces, for example, Thrift Wood, which help to negate this lack of provision but it is felt that it should be a long-term goal of the Council to provide new provision. The area to the south of St Martin's Comprehensive School would be a good site from an accessibility viewpoint as it would provide the greatest gain for residents in enabling them to have access to a park or garden within the recommended 10 minute walk.

P&G 1	The provision of a new park or garden site in the north west of Shenfield should be a priority for the Council
P&G 2	The provision of a new park or garden in the south of Shenfield and the Hutton Mount area should be a long-term goal for the Council.

Figure 5.5 *Spatial distribution for urban parks and gardens in Shenfield*

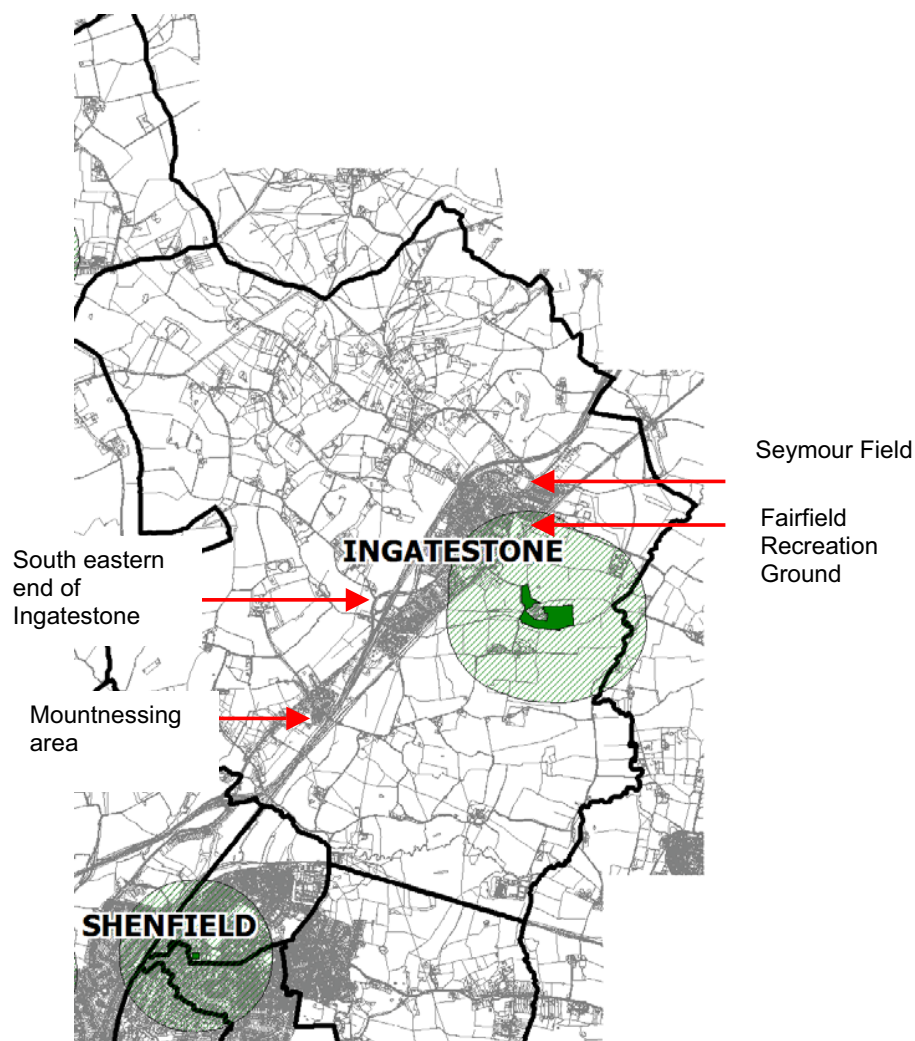


SECTION 5 – PARKS AND GARDENS

Focus on Ingatestone urban area

- 5.37 It is recognised that the Ingatestone area is far less urbanised than the other two focus areas and the surrounding countryside has a greater role in residents perception of open space. Figure 5.5, overleaf, shows that there is a lack of parks and gardens in this area. However, there are substantial areas of publicly accessible greenspace at Fairfield, which has a similar function to a park and garden. The vast majority of residents are able to access this site within a 10 minute walktime. In addition, there is Fairfield Recreation Ground and Seymour Field, both classified as outdoor sports facilities (based on their primary purpose) that provide open green space to Ingatestone residents.
- 5.38 Because of the amenity green space provided in and around Ingatestone, new urban park and garden provision should not be a short-term priority for the Council. Should the area undergo any future urban extensions the Council should ensure that a park or garden area is provided at the same time. Ideally any new provision would be provided in the southeastern end of Ingatestone so that Heybridge and Mountnessing residents are also able to access the facility.

Figure 5.6 *Spatial distribution of urban parks and gardens in Ingatestone*



SECTION 5 – PARKS AND GARDENS

Value Assessment

- 5.39 Most sites that have a high level of use would normally have a good or very good quality and accessibility rating. Most sites with a low level of use would have an average or poor quality and accessibility rating. This is because the factors are related and interlinked.
- 5.40 There are 15 parks and gardens sites in the Borough. Six of these sites are considered to have high and significant usage, four of which also scored above average for quality and accessibility. These sites are of high value to the local community and should set the standard for all other sites of this typology:
- Warley Country Park (Site ID 15)
 - Bishops Hall Park (Site ID 37)
 - Weald Country Park (Site ID 53)
 - Thorndon Country Park (Site ID 153).
- 5.41 The two other sites that were considered to be of high usage, but scored low in the quality and accessibility scores were Hutton Country Park (Site ID 448) and Merrymeades Park (Site ID 449). These sites should be prioritised for improvements to the signage, litter bin provision and where appropriate, the maintenance of the grass areas, in order to raise the quality and access scores and ensure that user satisfaction is enhanced and sustained.
- 5.42 It is realised that any accessibility and qualitative improvements to the country parks will be more difficult for the Council to control as they are not responsible for two of them. The Council should seek to work with Essex County Council where appropriate to best influence the role of the parks for their residents.
- 5.43 Mill Lane Park (Site ID 174) scored low for usage, quality and accessibility. This site should be protected and prioritised for major improvements, to increase usage levels, as there is limited provision of this open space type in this area.

P&G 3	The Council should prioritise accessibility and quality improvements to Hutton Country Park, Mill Lane Park and Merrymeades Park.
P&G 4	The Council should try and work with Essex County Council where necessary to bring improvements to the Country Parks for Brentwood residents.

Summary and recommendations

- 5.44 The assessment of parks and gardens has shown that there are few areas of the Borough outside of an accessible catchment area of a country park. However there are areas of Ingatestone and the Shenfield that are not within accessible catchment areas of an urban park and garden. It is not recommended that a new urban park or garden be provided without a significant increase in the size of Ingatestone as the amenity green space at Fairfield provides an important secondary role as a park for local residents.

SECTION 5 – PARKS AND GARDENS

- 5.45 The Brentwood area does have areas without access to an urban park and garden and whilst new provision would be ideal, it is realised that for the majority of local residents, country parks are within walking distance and therefore any new provision should not be a priority. There are significant areas of Shenfield without such provision however, and this is where the Council's priorities should lie in terms of new provision. It is realised there are large development pressures on green space in Shenfield and that it will be difficult to allocate new land that does not have a large financial implication for the Council.
- 5.46 Overall, the quality and accessibility for parks and gardens is high. Where a site has fallen below the average score, minor improvements such as signage or increasing litter bin provision would raise the standard in line with the remaining parks in the Borough.

Summary of recommendations for parks and gardens in Brentwood

P&G 1	The provision of a new park or garden site in the north west of Shenfield should be a priority for the Council
P&G 2	The provision of a new park or garden in the south of Shenfield and the Hutton Mount area should be a long-term goal for the Council.
P&G 3	The Council should prioritise accessibility and qualitative improvements to Hutton Country Park, Mill Lane Park and Merrymeades Park.
P&G 4	The Council should try and work with Essex County Council where necessary to bring improvements to the Country Parks for Brentwood residents.

SECTION 6

NATURAL AND SEMI-NATURAL

Natural and semi-natural open space

Definition

- 6.1 This type of open space includes woodlands, urban forestry, scrubland, grasslands (eg downlands, commons, meadows), wetlands, nature reserves and wastelands with a primary purpose of enhancing wildlife conservation and biodiversity within the settlement boundaries.

Figure 6.1 – Shenfield Common (Site ID 80)



Strategic context and consultation

Strategic context

- 6.2 The aims and objectives of the Local Plan's Green Belt and countryside policies are to *"maintain the extent, character and open-ness of the Borough's countryside"*.
- 6.3 According to the Local Plan there are a number of specific natural areas in Brentwood. Policy LT1, C2, C3, C4, C6 and C16 are specific policies within the Local Plan that detail protection over development on these sites, including:
- three Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) (Curtis Mill Green, Thorndon Park and The Coppice, and Kelvedon Hatch)
 - one statutory Local Nature Reserve (LNR) (Hutton Country Park), and Warley Place which is managed by Essex Wildlife Trust as a Local Nature Reserve (LNR)
 - Thames Chase Community Forest and Red House Lake are both highlighted within the Local Plan as sites for protection
 - County Wildlife Sites and the management of woodlands.
- 6.4 The importance and significance of natural, semi-natural and nature conservation areas are highlighted throughout the Green Belt and the Countryside, Sport & Leisure, Tourism and Community Services, and Conservation and Protection of the Environment Policies and Proposals in the Local Plan. It is also touched upon in the Community Strategy, where a key action for the Council is, *"preserving and improving the environment and visual amenity of the Borough through the appropriate maintenance of parks, trees, verges and open spaces"*.

SECTION 6 – NATURAL AND SEMI-NATURAL

- 6.5 The Council works in partnership with English Nature in managing the Borough's SSSIs to ensure that they are maintained in a favourable condition. Curtis Mill Green and part of Little Warley Common are both designated as SSSIs in the Brentwood Borough.
- 6.6 LNRs are areas of local importance that may contain species or features that are locally rare or declining. These areas are protected and managed to provide accessible natural green space and opportunities for the public to learn about and study nature. Hutton Country Park is currently Brentwood's only LNR, (although based on PPG17 definitions, for the purposes of this study Hutton Country Park has been classified as a country park rather than a natural or semi-natural site).
- 6.7 The Council's Parks and Countryside Service Plan 2005/06, includes objectives that are specific to this typology. For example:
- to maintain and protect the common land within the Council's ownership through effective and appropriate management
 - to manage the Council owned woodlands to ensure their long term survival and to enhance their recreation, wildlife and amenity value where appropriate.

Consultation

- 6.8 Consultation specific to natural and semi-natural sites highlights some meaningful statistics and provides a justification for setting local standards against local needs:
- 98% of people responding to the household survey felt that natural and semi-natural open spaces were important in the Borough, however only 28% of people use them as the most frequently visited type of open space
 - provision was considered 'more than enough/about right' by 68% of respondents from the household survey, whilst 32% said otherwise (nearly enough/not enough)
 - the majority of people (54%) replied stating that they used natural and semi-natural open spaces once a week or more while only a small percentage (3%) stated that they do not use them at all
 - 52% of people using natural areas most frequently drive and 43% walk, with the majority (66%) travelling 10 minutes or less
 - key quality aspirations for natural and semi-natural sites include:
 - clean and litter free
 - natural features
 - flowers, trees and shrubs
 - pond, lake, water features
 - and a nature conservation area.

SECTION 6 – NATURAL AND SEMI-NATURAL

Current position

- 6.9 Excluding the more urban areas of Shenfield, Ingatestone and Brentwood, the geography of Brentwood lends itself to this type of open space. 80% of the Borough lies within the Metropolitan Green Belt (MGB). In addition to natural space within settlements, there are vast areas of nearby countryside in the rural surrounds. Areas of outlying countryside are classified as accessible open space, however these areas are not considered within the audit, but are recognised as a type of provision within this typology, particularly in the more rural settlements.
- 6.10 The current level of provision, 5.61 ha per 1,000 population is relatively high compared to other local authorities and significantly higher than the English Nature standards of 2.0 ha per 1,000 population. There are a number of sites outside of settlement boundaries that have LNR and SSSI status. These provide a natural and semi natural function to residents within easy access of these sites. The commons also play an important function in terms of providing open space within the Borough.
- 6.11 Within the context of natural and semi-natural sites, green corridors or wildlife corridors provide an important function in linking together areas of open space, often associated with woodland sites. Further information on green corridors is provided within Section 12.

Setting provision standards

- 6.12 In setting local standards for natural and semi-natural open space there is a need to take into account any national or local standards, current provision, other Local Authority standards for appropriate comparison, site assessments and consultation on local needs. Full justifications for the local standards are provided within Appendix G, H and I. The recommended local standards have been summarised below in context with the natural and semi-natural sites in Brentwood.

Quantity standard

- 6.13 Existing provision of natural and semi-natural sites in Brentwood is currently 5.61ha per 1,000 population.
- 6.14 It is evident from consultation that the current provision of natural and semi-natural areas is about right and these areas are well valued and used. A specific question (number 2) within the household survey (Appendix C) asked residents if they thought the provision of natural and semi-natural sites in Brentwood was more than enough, about right, nearly enough or not enough. Following the analysis on this basis and other interpretation of consultation, it is recommended that the **local quantity standards for natural and semi-natural open space is set at 5.61ha per 1,000 population.**
- 6.15 The full context and justification for this standard is outlined in Appendix G.

LOCAL QUANTITY STANDARD

5.61 ha per 1,000 population

SECTION 6 – NATURAL AND SEMI-NATURAL

Quality standard

- 6.16 There are no definitive national or local quality standards although the Countryside Agency state that such land should be managed to conserve or enhance its rich landscape, biodiversity, heritage and local customs.
- 6.17 The Council's Community Strategy 2004/09 states the aim of "preserving and improving the environment and visual amenity of the Borough through the appropriate maintenance of parks, trees, verges and open space". In addition, the Council's Parks and Countryside Service Plan 2005/06 includes key objectives regarding providing attractive and well-maintained open space areas, and the management of Council-owned woodlands to "ensure their long-term survival and to enhance their recreation, wildlife and amenity value where appropriate".
- 6.18 The overall quality of natural and semi-natural green space sites is considered to be average. The highest quality site was Roundwood Grove Lake (Site ID 483) with 84%, followed by Hampden Wood (Site ID 79), Warley Place Nature Reserve (Site ID 427) and Costead Manor Road Nature Reserve (Site ID 47), all with 76%. The lowest quality scoring sites were Tallon Road Tree Screen (Site ID 462), Pastoral Way NSN (Site ID 498) and Cherry Avenue NSN (Site ID 520) with 20%. Each of these poor scoring sites had low/insignificant usage and limited access.
- 6.19 User aspirations from the household survey for natural and semi-natural sites in Brentwood were:
- clean/litter free
 - natural features (eg wildlife)
 - flowers/trees and shrubs
 - pond/lake/water features
 - and a nature conservation area.
- 6.20 Due to the abundance of this type of green space, it is of paramount importance that all such green space is governed by a local quality standard. The recommended local quality standard provides the vision for any new provision and also a benchmark for existing natural and semi natural greenspace to achieve in terms of enhancement.
- 6.21 These key quality factors alongside other consultations have been the basis of the quality recommendation for natural and semi-natural provision in the Borough, and the full justification can be found in Appendix H.

LOCAL QUALITY STANDARD

"A spacious, safe and clean site with varied vegetation and natural features that encourage wildlife conservation and biodiversity and enhances the natural and built landscape. Sites should provide bins for litter and dog fouling where appropriate. Public access should be facilitated where appropriate whilst maintenance should continue to enhance the nature conservation value of the site".

SECTION 6 – NATURAL AND SEMI-NATURAL

Accessibility standard

- 6.22 English Nature recommends accessibility standards for various size sites of accessible natural greenspace, and the Woodland Trust recommends standards for the provision of woodland areas within different catchments for different size sites. This is outlined in Appendix I. There are no existing local standards.
- 6.23 In terms of site access, of the sites that were assessed, there is a large range of scores from 20% to 80%. The lowest scoring sites were Marconi Gardens NSN (Site ID 351) and Tallon Road Tree Screen (Site ID 462), with a site access score of 20%. The highest rated site for access was Headley Common (Site ID 705) with 80%.
- 6.24 From the household survey, of those respondents who used natural and semi-natural greenspaces most frequently, the highest levels of satisfaction were with the visibility of the site entrance, accessibility by walking and opening times. Levels of dissatisfaction were relatively low, but of these accessibility by public transport and accessibility for pushchairs and access by cycleway were the highest.
- 6.25 The accessibility of sites is paramount in maximising overall usage as well as providing an opportunity for all people to use the site. The local standard provides a realistic travel time/distance threshold, based on local needs that can assist in highlighting areas of deficiency, as well as ensuring that any new provision is placed in priority areas that are outside the recommended local accessibility catchment.
- 6.26 Driving was the preferred method of transport (52%) by those that use this type of open space most frequently, although a significant percentage (43%) of natural and semi-natural open space users also walk to sites. Overall, walking was the most preferred method of transport by both users and potential users, with the calculated travel time being 15 minutes, applied to the whole of the Borough. The full explanation of this 75% threshold level calculation can be found in Appendix I.
- 6.27 A straight-line distance of 720m has been used rather than the pedestrian distance of 1200m. This is based on PMP's average walking distances and uses a factoring reduction of 40% to account for the fact that people do not walk in a straight line to access their open space facilities. This 40% factoring is based on the National Playing Fields Association Six Acre Standard (See Table 3, page 25 of NPFA Six Acre Standard), which has been worked out from a trial of 4-14 year olds and the distance they travelled. It is recognised that this typology is not a specific facility for children however the factoring is applied to ensure consistency with other typologies and so that they are accessible to all.

LOCAL ACCESSIBILITY STANDARD

15 minute walk (720m)

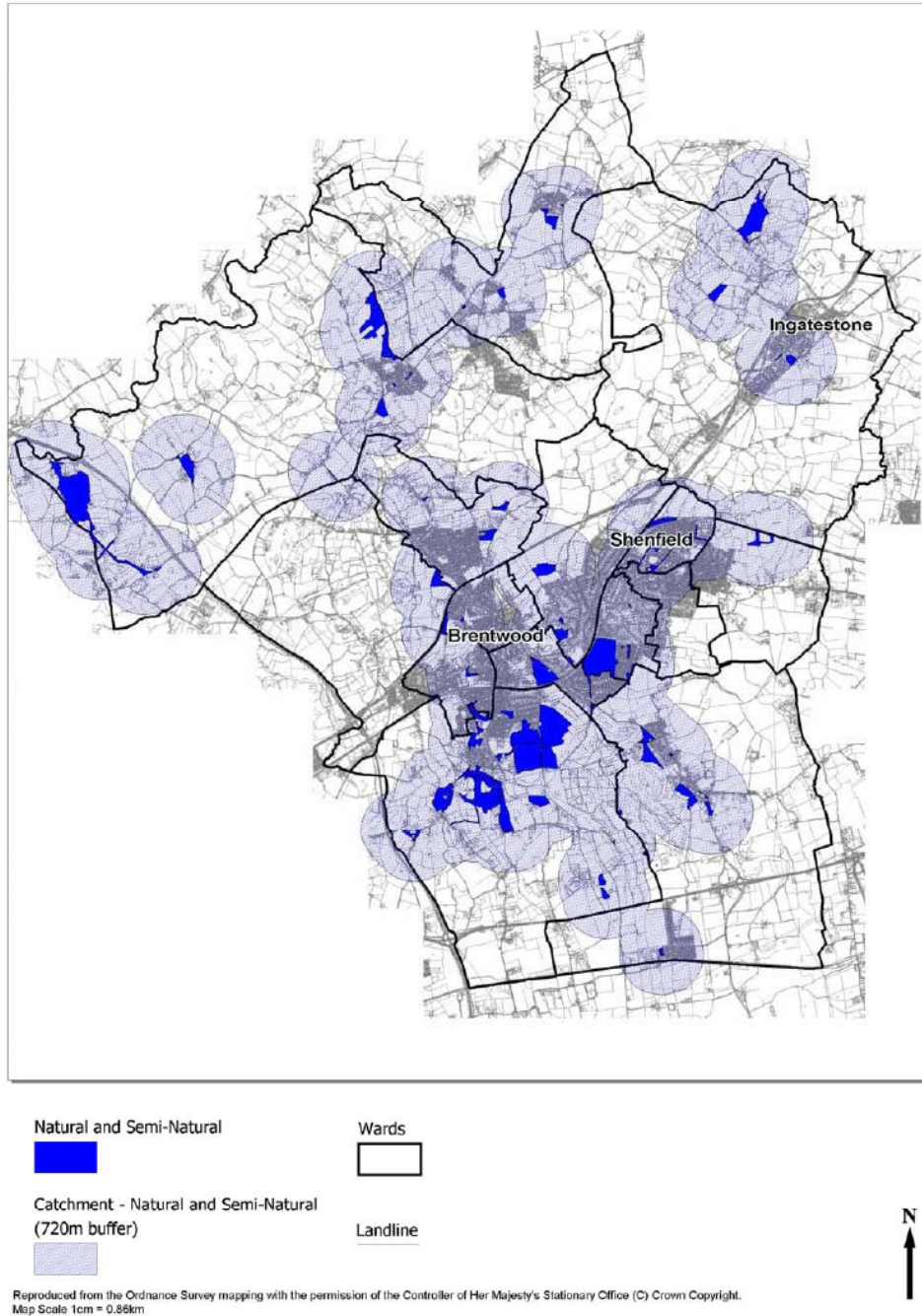
Applying provision standards – identifying geographical areas

- 6.28 In order to identify geographical areas of importance and those areas with required local needs we apply both the provision of natural and semi-natural sites in Brentwood together with the local standard for accessibility. The quantity standards enable the identification of areas that do not meet the minimum provision standards, while the accessibility standards will help determine where those deficiencies are of high importance. This is extremely important in the urban areas, however it is less meaningful in the rural areas. Applying the standards together is a much more meaningful method of analysis than applying the standards separately and therefore helps with the prioritisation of sites.
- 6.29 The current provision of natural and semi-natural open space in Brentwood is currently 5.61 ha per 1,000 population.
- 6.30 Projecting this forward to 2021, the level of existing provision across the study area increases slightly to 5.62 ha per 1,000 population. This is due to a projected small decrease in population. Appendix G shows the full calculations for the quantitative supply of open spaces in the Borough.
- 6.31 Figure 6.2 overleaf represents the spatial distribution of natural and semi-natural open space, which indicates a high level of provision that is well spread across the Borough.

SECTION 6 – NATURAL AND SEMI-NATURAL

Figure 6.2 – Spatial distribution of natural and semi-natural sites in Brentwood

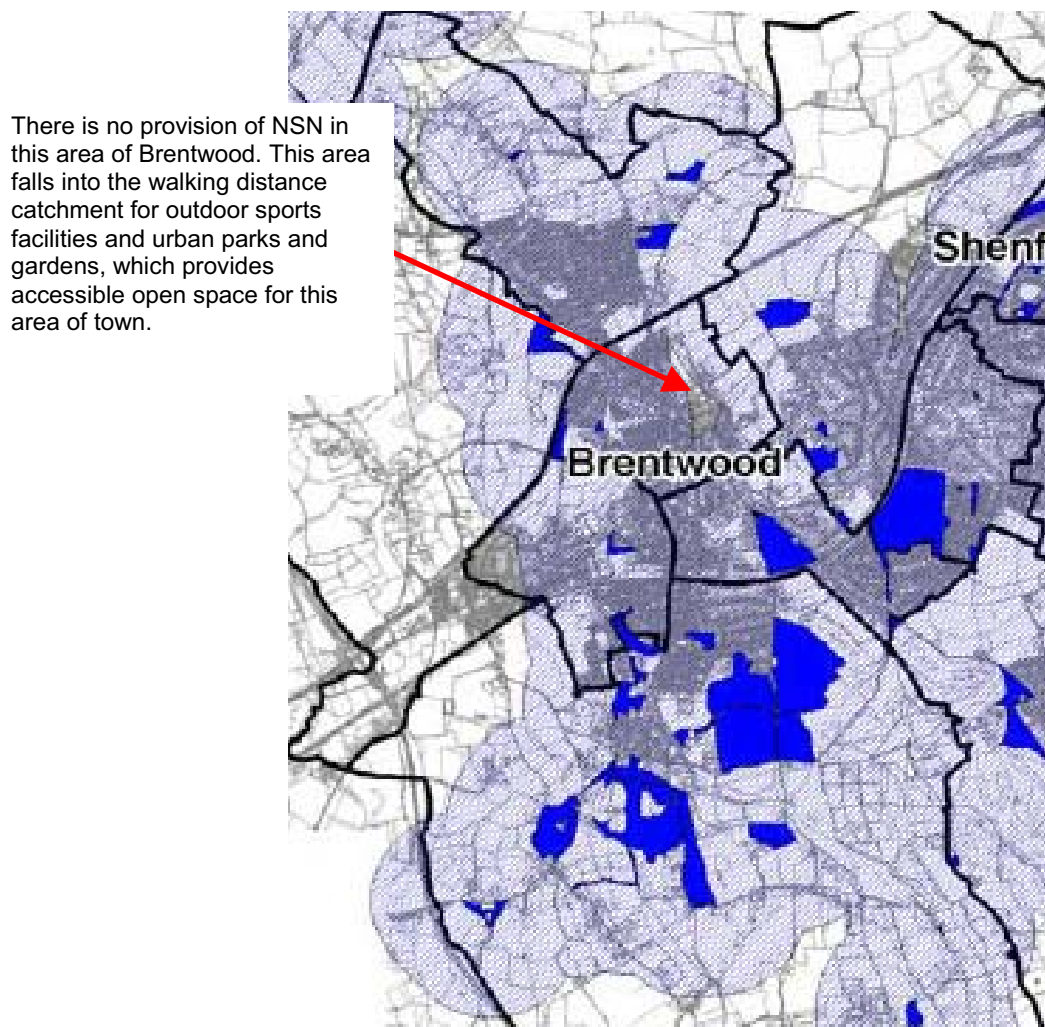
Overview Map: Wards and Open Space Type Catchments, Natural and Semi-Natural



SECTION 6 – NATURAL AND SEMI-NATURAL

- 6.32 Open accessible countryside is not included in the audit of open space for Brentwood and therefore is not illustrated on the maps, however it is widely assumed that people living within rural settlements have easy access to natural areas within the open countryside.
- 6.33 As evident from Figure 6.3, there are only a few residential areas within the Borough that are outside of an accessible catchment of a natural and semi-natural greenspace site. This includes the northeast of Ingatestone, parts of Hutton Mount, the west of Brentwood and Doddinghurst. Where there are deficiencies in natural greenspaces, consideration should be given to the value and the provision of other types of green space (or those which have additional value as a secondary purpose. For instance, amenity greenspace sites or park and gardens sites, which are identified within the specific typology sections in this report).

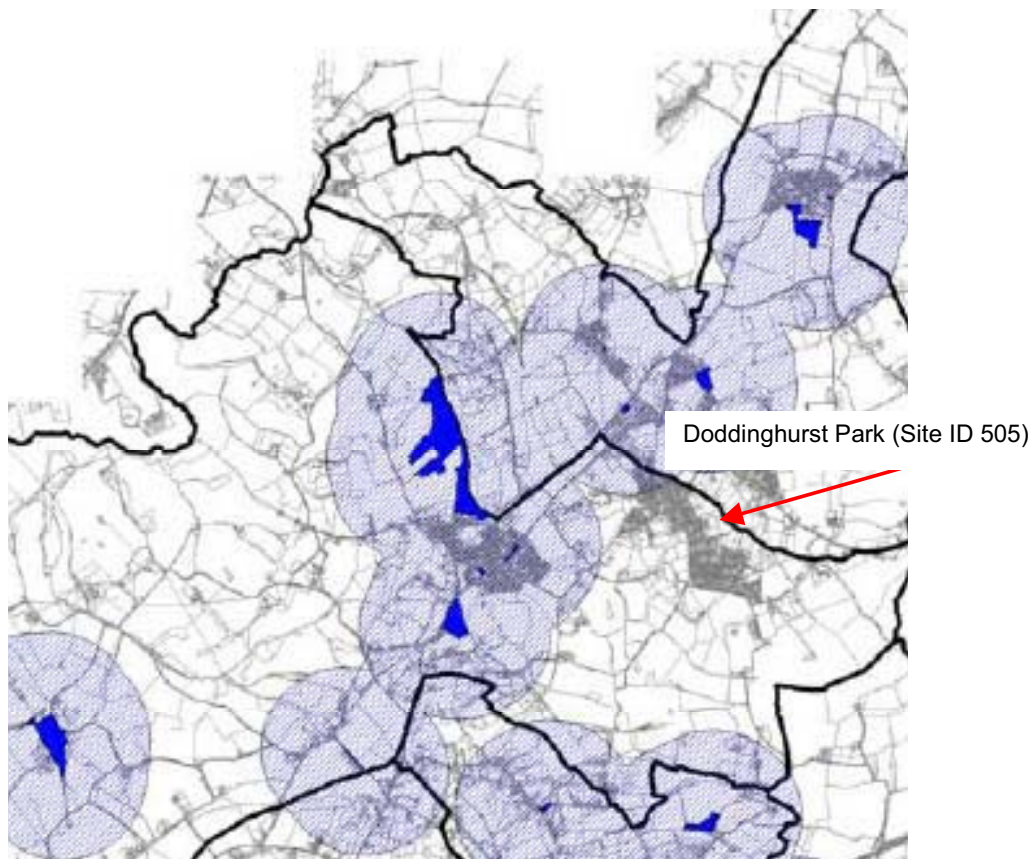
Figure 6.3 Spatial distribution of natural and semi-natural sites in central Brentwood



SECTION 6 – NATURAL AND SEMI-NATURAL

- 6.34 As illustrated in Figure 6.4 below, the majority of Doddingtonhurst is outside of an accessible catchment area for natural and semi-natural greenspace. However Doddingtonhurst is within the recommended accessible catchment area for country parks and gardens based on its proximity to Weald Country Park (Site ID 53). In addition, as highlighted above, Doddingtonhurst Park (Site ID 505) is located within Doddingtonhurst and therefore provides an important open space function.

Figure 6.4 Spatial distribution of natural and semi-natural sites in Doddingtonhurst



- 6.35 In addition to the natural greenspaces there are significant areas of established Green Belt. These lie outside and between the urban settlements of the Borough. These areas provide the residents of Brentwood with visual, recreational and landscape benefits. One of the principal functions of the Green Belt is to act as a natural barrier to urban sprawl in the east of London. Many of the natural greenspace sites are themselves located within the Green Belt.
- 6.36 In general, from an accessibility catchment perspective, the local authority area is well provided for in terms of natural and semi-natural greenspace. It is therefore important that existing levels of provision are protected. Where deficiencies are identified, other forms of open space can fulfil this function.
- 6.37 Issues surround the quality of existing sites, and therefore priorities should lie with the enhancement of sites rather than the provision of more. Further detail is provided below.

SECTION 6 – NATURAL AND SEMI-NATURAL

Value Assessment

- 6.38 Most sites that have a high level of use would normally have a good or very good quality and accessibility rating. Most sites with a low level of use would have an average or poor quality and accessibility rating. This is because the factors are related and interlinked.
- 6.39 There is a total of 76 natural and semi-natural sites in the Borough. Of these sites, based on the site assessment scoring, only three are considered to have high quality, accessibility and usage. These are:
- Roundwood Grove Lake (Site ID 483)
 - Warley Place Nature Reserve (Site ID 427)
 - Thrift Wood Scout Camp (Site ID 99).
- 6.40 These sites set the standard for this typology across the Borough and, as with other highly valued and quality natural and semi-natural sites, must be protected from any development as they are of high value to the Borough's residents and include a diverse and important variety of wildlife.

NSN 1	Protect and enhance all sites of high value to the community. Accessibility to these sites should be enhanced and their primary function further promoted to improve the potential for increased use. There are a significant number of such sites in the Borough, including Roundwood Grove Lake, Warley Place Nature Reserve and Thrift Wood Scout Camp.
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- 6.41 The lowest scoring sites in the Borough in terms of quality, accessibility and usage are of low value to residents, and priorities should be made to improve these sites:
- Wattons Green (Site ID 315)
 - First Avenue open space (Site ID 643)
 - Tallon Road Tree Screen (Site ID 462)
 - Arnolds Wood (Site ID 220)
 - The Quorn NSN (Site ID 201)
 - La Plata Wood (Site ID 491)
 - Blackmore Road Lakes (Site ID 645)
 - Poles Wood (Site ID 261)
 - Childerditch Hall Drive NSN B (two ponds) (Site ID 425).
- 6.42 It is recognised that the Council does not own all of the sites listed above, however in addition in improving Council owned sites, the Council should seek to influence other land owners within the Borough to improve the standard of provision.

SECTION 6 – NATURAL AND SEMI-NATURAL

NSN 2	Consideration should be given to improving sites that scored low in terms of quality, accessibility and usage. As a priority, the Council should seek to protect and enhance public access to highly used Council owned sites that are low in quality, and low in accessibility and seek to influence other land owners within the Borough to do likewise.
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Summary and recommendations

- 6.43 Consultations suggest that there is a good level of provision of natural and semi-natural green space. There were more respondents to the household survey who felt that the existing level of provision was about right or more than enough compared to those who felt that there is nearly enough/not enough.
- 6.44 In addition, consultation indicated that natural and semi-natural sites are important sites that are well used. Two sites within the Borough - Little Warley Common (Site ID 132) and Curtis Mill Green (Site ID 319) are SSSI sites and there is also a LNR in the Borough - Hutton Country Park (Site ID 448).
- 6.45 In general, the Borough is well provided for in terms of both quantity and accessibility of natural and semi-natural greenspace. Where deficiencies are identified, other forms of open space can fulfil this function.
- 6.46 The quantity standard has been purposefully developed to ensure the existing provision of natural open space throughout Brentwood is protected and hence there is a high value placed on all natural and semi-natural greenspace.
- 6.47 Issues surround the quality and accessibility of existing sites and therefore priorities should lie with the enhancement of sites rather than the provision of more natural and semi-natural greenspace.

Summary of recommendations for natural and semi-natural in Brentwood

NSN 1	Protect and enhance all sites of high value to the community. Accessibility to these sites should be enhanced and their primary function further promoted to improve the potential for increased use. There are a significant number of such sites in the Borough, including Roundwood Grove Lake, Warley Place Nature Reserve and Thrift Wood Scout Camp.
NSN 2	Consideration should be given to improving sites that scored low in terms of quality, accessibility and usage. As a priority, the Council should seek to protect and enhance public access to highly used Council owned sites that are low in quality, and low in accessibility and seek to influence other land owners within the Borough to do likewise.

SECTION 7

AMENITY GREENSPACE

Amenity Greenspace

Definition

- 7.1 This type of open space is most commonly found in housing areas. It includes informal recreation spaces and greenspaces in and around housing, with a primary purpose of providing opportunities for informal activities close to home or work or enhancing the appearance of residential or other areas.

Figure 7.1 Kelvedon Hatch War Memorial



Strategic context and consultation

Strategic context

- 7.2 Much of the focus on the protection of greenspace in Brentwood has been directed upon large open space areas such as playing fields and the Metropolitan Green Belt. However amenity green space can often be as valuable in the greening of an area and can suffer from similar development pressures where the site is of a significant size.
- 7.3 The Council's Corporate Performance Plan identifies the improvement of open spaces as a key performance indicator and they are currently exceeding their customer satisfaction targets. Amenity green spaces relate directly to the third strategic objective of the Corporate Strategic Plan: *"clean, green and sustainable environment"*. This is similar to the aim in the community strategy of *"preserving and improving the environment and visual amenity of the Borough through the appropriate maintenance of parks, trees, verges and open spaces"*.
- 7.4 The Local Plan aims to enhance the quality of the urban and rural environment and this can relate directly to the quality of amenity green spaces. As no Green Belt land is being released for new housing it is important that wherever possible, amenity green spaces are not targeted for development.

SECTION 7 – AMENITY GREENSPACE

Consultation

- 7.5 Results from all respondents to the household survey indicated that:
- 87% of respondents to the household survey indicated that amenity greenspace was important
 - 45 % of respondents consider the amount of amenity greenspace to be 'about right', whilst 42% believe there is 'nearly enough' or 'not enough'
 - the frequency of use was varied, with 36% using amenity greenspace 'occasionally' and 23% stating they do not use it at all.
- 7.6 Respondents to the household survey were asked which type of open space they use most frequently. Results were analysed to find out specific opinions relating to each type of open space. The following results are from frequent users of amenity greenspace:
- the most significant problems encountered by people who use amenity greenspace most frequently were litter problems (43%), dog fouling (31%) and vandalism (22%); this was supported through internal consultation with officers who indicated that the quality of sites in the area requires improvement, but at present there is a lack of resources
 - frequent users of amenity greenspace were satisfied with the quality of boundaries (55%), planted and grassed areas (48%) and maintenance and management (43%).
 - the key aspirations for amenity greenspace identified through the household survey were:
 - clean and litter free
 - well kept grass
 - litter bins
 - flowers, trees and shrubs
 - toilets.

SECTION 7 – AMENITY GREENSPACE

- 7.7 Table 7.1 shows the levels of satisfaction experienced by frequent users of amenity greenspace. Frequent users were most satisfied with maintenance and management, boundaries and planted and grassed areas. Frequent users were least satisfied with seats and benches and provision of bins for litter.

Table 7.1 Levels of satisfaction of amenity greenspace

	Very satisfied	Satisfied	Unsatisfied	Very unsatisfied
Play equipment	5%	29%	10%	5%
Maintenance and management	19%	43%	14%	10%
Lighting	0%	45%	10%	15%
Boundaries (eg railings, hedges etc)	10%	55%	15%	0%
Toilets	0%	11%	26%	5%
Parking	0%	20%	15%	10%
Provision of bins for litter	0%	39%	30%	17%
Seats / benches	5%	29%	33%	14%
Pathways	5%	48%	29%	0%
Information and signage	5%	26%	32%	5%
Planted and grassed areas	19%	48%	10%	14%

Current position

- 7.8 Amenity greenspace sites are located across the Borough, within small and large settlements alike, although the sizes of amenity green space range significantly. Amenity greenspaces are particularly common within the east of Shenfield and north and south of urban Brentwood. The majority of the quantitative supply is within these areas and this helps to break up the landscape and urban texture. The smallest amount of provision is in the rural areas although there are still substantial pockets in some rural areas such as southern Doddinghurst.
- 7.9 This typology does provide an informal recreation value and often serves as a meeting place and focal point for the rural areas. However, it is also important to recognise the secondary functions of amenity greenspace, specifically the visual benefits this type of open space provides.

Setting provision standards

- 7.10 In setting local standards for amenity greenspaces there is a need to take into account any national or local standards, current provision, other Local Authority standards for appropriate comparison, site assessments and consultation on local needs. Full justifications for the local standards are provided within Appendix G, H and I. The recommended local standards have been summarised below in context with the amenity greenspace sites in the Borough.

SECTION 7 – AMENITY GREENSPACE

Quantity Standard

- 7.11 There is currently 31.05 hectares of amenity greenspace in the Borough spread over 129 sites. This equates to an existing provision level of 0.45ha per 1,000 population.
- 7.12 64% of people responded in the household survey that they thought the level of existing amenity greenspace is “about right” or “nearly enough”. 23% of respondents believed there not to be enough provision. Consultation with Council officers highlighted that amenity greenspace in some areas are under pressure or have been developed for parking and other developments. Based on this need as a minimum to protect existing levels of provision, during the standard setting exercise with Council officers it was agreed that the recommended local quantity standard should be set slightly higher than the existing level of provision. It is therefore recommended that the local quantity standard for **amenity greenspaces be set at 0.48ha per 1,000 population.**
- 7.13 The full context and justification for this standard is outlined in Appendix G.

LOCAL QUANTITY STANDARD

0.48ha per 1,000 population

Quality Standard

- 7.14 There are currently no national quality standards for this type of open space, however the Parks and Countryside Service Plan aims to “provide attractive, well maintained parks and open spaces offering varied and widely accessible leisure opportunities”.
- 7.15 User aspirations from the household survey for amenity greenspaces in Brentwood were:
- clean and litter free
 - well kept grass
 - litter bins
 - toilets
 - and planted areas.
- 7.16 These key quality factors alongside other consultation findings have been the basis of the recommendation for amenity greenspaces. Further justification is outlined in Appendix I.

LOCAL QUALITY STANDARD

“A clean, litter free and well-maintained green space site with varied vegetation, which visually enhances the local environment and is both easily accessible and large enough to accommodate informal play. Sites should also have suitable ancillary accommodation, such as seating and litter bins, where appropriate.”

SECTION 7 – AMENITY GREENSPACE

Accessibility Standard

- 7.17 The accessibility of sites is paramount in maximising usage as well as providing an opportunity for all people to use the site. The local standard provides a realistic traveltime/distance threshold, based on local needs that can assist in highlighting areas of deficiency, as well as ensuring that any new provision is placed in priority areas that are outside the recommended local accessibility catchment.
- 7.18 Walking was the most preferred method of transport and realistic type of travel opted by users and potential users, with the calculated travel time being 5 minutes, applied to the whole of the Borough. Further justification can be found in Appendix I.

LOCAL ACCESSIBILITY STANDARD

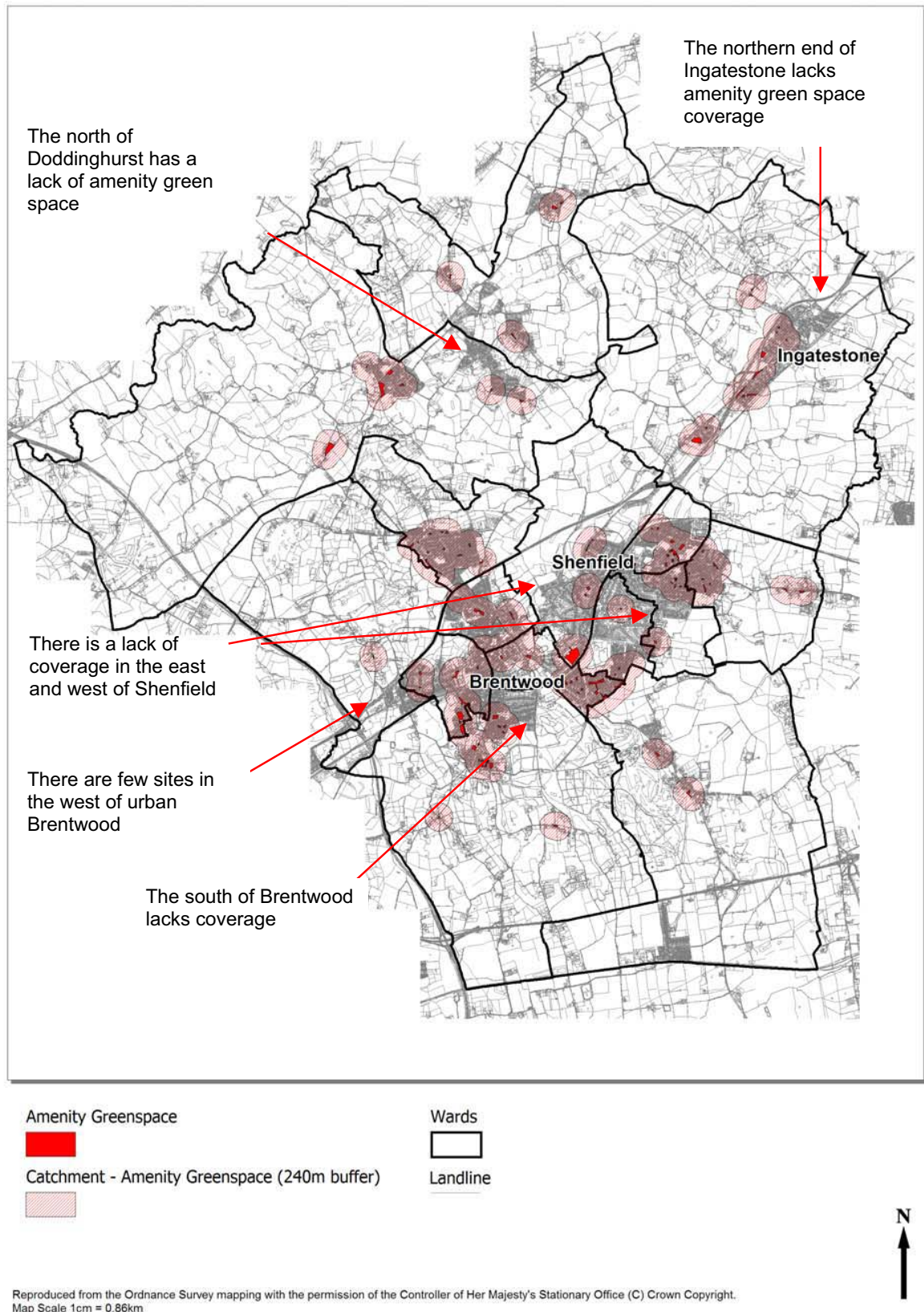
5 minute walk time - (240 metres)

- 7.20 A straight-line distance of 240m has been used rather than the pedestrian distance of 400m. This is based on PMP's average walking distances and uses a factoring reduction of 40% to account for the fact that people do not walk in a straight line to access their open space facilities. This 40% factoring is based on the National Playing Fields Association Six Acre Standard (See Table 3, page 25 of NPFA Six Acre Standard), which has been worked out from a trial of 4-14 year olds and the distance they travelled. It is recognised that this typology is not a specific facility for children however the factoring is applied to ensure consistency with other typologies and so that they are accessible to all.

Applying provision standards – identifying geographical areas

- 7.21 In order to identify geographical areas of importance and those areas with required local needs we apply both the quantitative provision of amenity greenspace in the Borough together with the local standard for accessibility. This will highlight the areas without access to an amenity greenspace within the recommended five minute walktime and determine priority areas for new provision.
- 7.22 Figure 7.2 overleaf represents the spatial distribution of amenity greenspace across the Borough.
- 7.23 Although there are many areas of the Borough that are well served by amenity green space, there are still some areas without significant coverage such as the northern end of Ingatestone, and western edge of Shenfield, further detail is provided below.
- 7.24 From a rural perspective, it can be seen from Figure 7.2 that the vast majority of areas have access to amenity green space within the recommended five minute accessibility catchment area. The only area outside of an accessible catchment area is north Doddinghurst. This area is well served by both the urban and country park and garden typology however, and should not be a priority for new provision (further details are provided in Section 5).

Figure 7.2 Spatial distribution of amenity green space in Brentwood

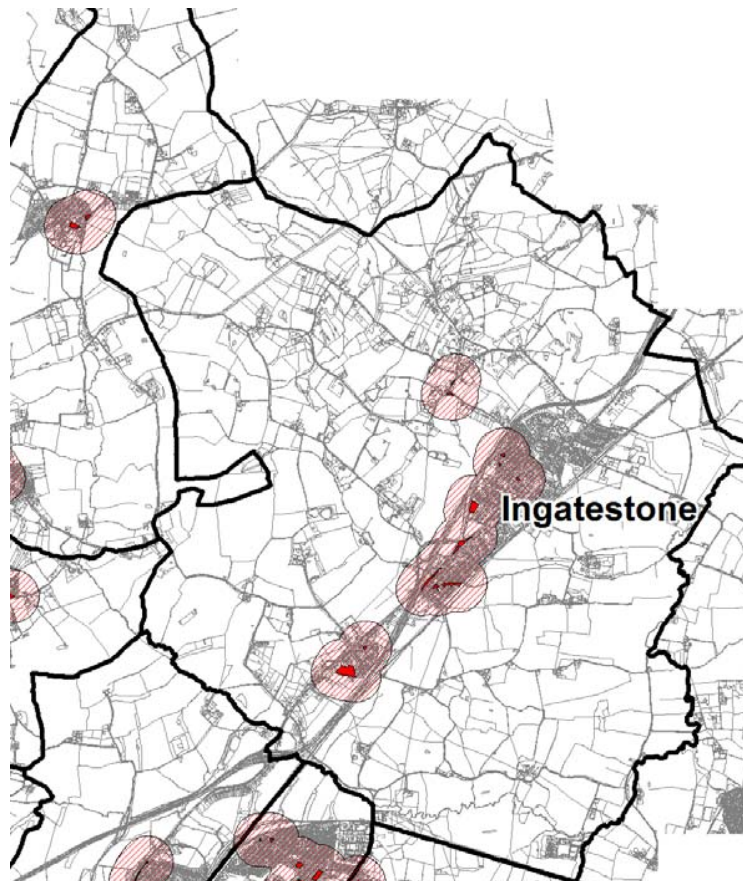


SECTION 7 – AMENITY GREENSPACE

Focus upon Ingatestone urban area

- 7.25 Focusing upon open space in the Ingatestone area again shows a lack of open space in the north of the town, as illustrated in Figure 7.3 below.

Figure 7.3 *Spatial distribution of amenity green space in Ingatestone*



- 7.26 The area in the north without coverage is only partially covered by parks and gardens provision, however there is an sports pitch site behind Ingatestone church which has a strong secondary function as both a park and garden and amenity green space. Transposing a five minute walktime around this site would still leave large areas of the resident population without coverage, therefore this should be a priority area for the Council in terms of new amenity greenspace provision.

Focus upon Brentwood Central area

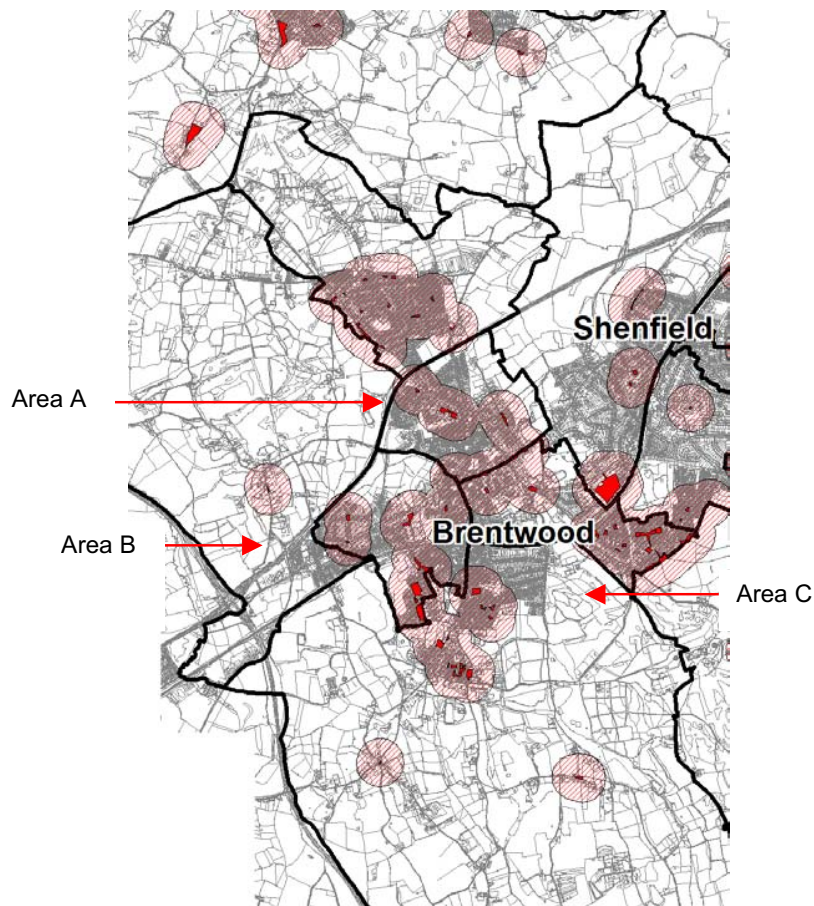
- 7.27 The main urban area of Brentwood is well covered for amenity greenspace despite the extent of its urbanisation in some areas. However, it can be seen in Figure 7.4 overleaf that there are some residential areas outside of an accessible catchment.

SECTION 7 – AMENITY GREENSPACE

- 7.28 Areas “A” and “B” should both be a priority areas for new amenity green space provision. This is because the areas are also outside of the catchment area for urban parks and gardens. It is within the catchment area for country parks and gardens but the country park is too far away to be able to replicate the easily accessible nature of amenity green space.
- 7.29 Area C is deficient in amenity green space but there is an urban park and garden along the western edge of the area and this site replicates many of the features provided by amenity greenspace. Whilst it should be a long term aim of the Council to provide new AGS in the area it should not be a priority area.

AGS1	Highwood and western area of Brentwood to be prioritised for new AGS provision.
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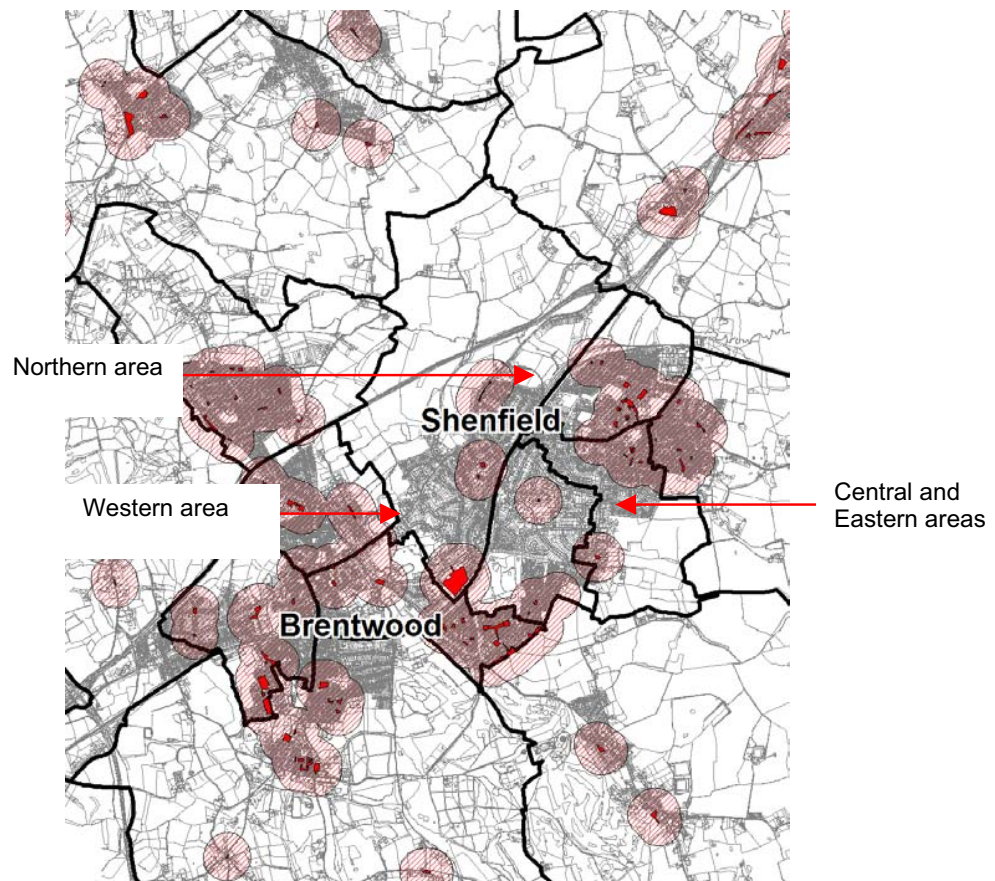
Figure 7.4 *Spatial distribution of amenity greenspace in central Brentwood*



Focus upon Shenfield urban area

- 7.30 Of the three urban areas, it is the Shenfield area that is most poorly served in terms of accessibility to amenity greenspaces. Only the southern and northeast areas are well served by this typology and this is demonstrated in Figure 7.5 overleaf.

Figure 7.5 *Spatial distribution of amenity greenspace in Shenfield*



- 7.32 The lack of amenity greenspace can be acutely felt in many areas of Shenfield but of all the areas identified it is the western and eastern areas that should be prioritised. These areas already suffer from a lack of parks and gardens in the area and have already been identified as priority areas for new open space provision. The possibility of new park provision would soften the lack of amenity green space but it should still be a priority of the Council to provide new spaces in these areas. It is recognised that the urban nature of the area severely curtails the possibility of new amenity green space being provided. This is why park sites on the periphery of the areas are recommended.

SECTION 7 – AMENITY GREENSPACE

- 7.33 Any possibilities of new amenity greenspace in the central and northern parts of Shenfield should be explored but it is felt that priority should be given to new provision in the east and west of the town, rather than the central and northern parts of Shenfield as there is a park site that provides easily accessible green space to some residents in these areas. In addition, Hutton Mount is an affluent part of the Borough, with the majority of houses having large gardens – this reduces the immediate need for amenity greenspace provision.

AGS2	New AGS provision should be prioritised in the east and west of Shenfield but this should not be prioritised over new park provision.
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Value Assessment

- 7.34 Sites that generally have a high quality score and high accessibility score frequently have a high level of usage, as there is a direct correlation between these factors.
- 7.35 Amenity greenspace sites offer a recreational value, aesthetic value and natural buffer between roads and houses.
- 7.36 The average quality score for amenity greenspace was relatively poor. 56% of sites scored above the average quality score of 54.1%. 44% of sites scored above the average accessibility score of 54.6%. These scores are generated through the site assessment process.
- 7.37 The average scores for accessibility and quality overall are relatively low and it is recommended that amenity greenspace sites should be prioritised for improvements. This is in line with the Corporate Strategic Plan that outlines the objective of maintaining Council owned and managed land so that it enhances the visual amenity of the Borough.
- 7.38 Of the 131 amenity greenspace sites in the Borough, two sites scored high for quality and accessibility and were considered to be of high or significant usage, they are:
- Shenfield Road Alm Houses (Site ID 481)
 - Thomas A Becket Chapel Ruins (Site ID 530)
 - Herongate Common (Site ID 720).

AGS3	Shenfield Road Alm Houses, The Thomas A Becket Chapel Ruins and Herongate Common should set the benchmark for all amenity greenspace sites in the Borough.
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- 7.39 49 sites scored below the average score for quality and accessibility and were considered to have low or insignificant usage.

SECTION 7 – AMENITY GREENSPACE

AGS4	Additional resources should be made available to improve quality of AGS sites identified with low scores. Involving the community in looking after sites is often a good solution to maintaining sites, for example setting up a Friends Group to gain funding to develop key sites.
AGS5	The Council should consider the re-designation of some AGS sites, particularly where there may be a deficiency in play-spaces or urban parks and gardens.

Summary and recommendations

- 7.40 A truly varied picture in terms of amenity greenspace is seen across the Borough. In the Pilgrims Hatch area there are a large number of amenity greenspace sites which overlap each other in terms of catchment areas. In such areas the re-designation of sites (as per recommendation AGS5) should be considered to ensure a better balance of greenspace.
- 7.41 The other extreme is shown in Shenfield where there are just three sites which cater for a very large residential area, leaving hundreds of households without provision. Sites in this area should be protected against development and new provision should be prioritised.
- 7.42 Unfortunately the level of urbanisation in central Brentwood and Shenfield means new provision is unlikely without medium to large scale redevelopments. This will place additional strains on the urban parks and gardens and it therefore reinforces the recommendation of providing new parks and gardens where an area is deficient in both.

Summary of recommendations for amenity greenspace in Brentwood

AGS1	Highwood and western area of Brentwood to be prioritised for new AGS provision.
AGS2	New AGS provision should be prioritised in the east and west of Shenfield but this should not be prioritised over new park provision
AGS3	Shenfield Road Alm Houses, The Thomas A Becket Chapel Ruins and Herongate Common should set the benchmark for all amenity greenspace sites in the Borough.
AGS4	Additional resources should be made available to improve quality of AGS sites identified with low scores. Involving the community in looking after sites is often a good solution to maintaining sites, for example setting up a Friends Group to gain funding to develop key sites.
AGS5	The Council should consider the re-designation of some AGS sites, particularly where there may be a deficiency in play-spaces or urban parks and gardens.

SECTION 8

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

Provision for children and young people

Definition

- 8.1 This type of open space includes areas such as equipped play areas, ball courts, skateboard areas and teenage shelters with the primary purpose of providing opportunities for play and social interaction involving both children and young people.

Figure 8.1 – King George's Play Area (Site ID 525)



Strategic context and consultation

Strategic context

- 8.2 Brentwood Borough Council has a corporate commitment to provide a range of services for children and young people, as detailed within the Corporate Performance Plan for the Council 2004/05 and the Corporate Strategic Plan 2005-2010. 'Young people' are one of four key priorities for the Council.
- 8.3 The Corporate Strategic Plan 2005-2010 includes the implementation of a Play Areas Strategy for the Borough as a key action. The Strategy is now in place. The document consisted of a review of play facilities for young people and provides a strategy for the future provision of the service. A summary of the document is provided in Section 3. The following options are considered:
- retaining existing sites, which are in good condition and which provide good play and opportunities
 - looking at all other sites and determining the future of these
 - when providing new sites concentrate more on a small number of larger sites offering more extensive facilities
 - providing multi-purpose hard court areas for older children instead of more traditional play equipment.
- 8.4 The Strategy categorises sites as large sites, housing sites, other sites, Parish Council sites and multi-purpose area sites and makes recommendations as to retention, refurbishment and potential decommissioning. Associated budget figures are provided in relation to the recommendations. Further detail is provided where relevant within this section.

SECTION 8 – PROVISION FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

- 8.5 In addition, the Parks and Countryside Service Plan 2005/06, includes an objective to *“provide an appropriate number of well maintained play areas and implement 100% of the refurbishment or provisional works as prescribed in the Play Areas Strategy”*.

Current Position

- 8.6 There are currently 26 play areas within Brentwood, 18 of which are owned and maintained by the Council. Ownership of the remaining sites is primarily by Parish Councils.
- 8.7 Consultation revealed a general perception that play areas are of high quality and are well maintained, but that there is still a need for more, specifically dedicated provision for young people and teenagers, such as skate parks. In terms of quality, site assessments support the perception of high quality provision with 12 of the 26 sites given a quality score of above 70% and only four sites scoring below 50%.
- 8.8 From the usage assessment undertaken for each play area, the majority of sites are used often or very frequently. At only two sites - North Road Play Space (Site ID 460) and Hutton Recreation Ground (Site ID 515) – was usage rated as low. Low usage at Hutton Recreation Ground may in part be related to the low quality score of 34%.

Consultation

- 8.9 Results from all respondents to the household survey indicated that:
- 86% of people responding to the household survey felt that areas for children and young people were important
 - only 25% respondents use these types of spaces on a frequent basis ie at least once a week, however they are still perceived as important by the majority of respondents
 - 56% considered the level of provision for this type of open space as poor and either ‘not enough’ or ‘nearly enough’
 - 79% respondents to the household survey aged under 24 years stated there were ‘not enough’ play spaces for young people.
- 8.10 Consultation specific to children and young people’s play space highlights some meaningful statistics and provides a justification for setting local standards against local needs:
- 53% of respondents to the schools Internet survey concluded that their main reason for using their chosen open space was to use the playground/play equipment
 - feedback via the drop in sessions supported the results from the household survey regarding current levels of provision with the recurring theme that provision for children and young people is inadequate, in particular there are not enough playgrounds for children aged seven to 12 years old as well as needing more dedicated provision for teenagers
 - key aspirations from the household survey for play areas and spaces for children and young people are varied play equipment, clean/litter free, toilets, well kept grass and providing specific facilities for young people

SECTION 8 – PROVISION FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

- as detailed above, there were limited negative comments regarding quality although feedback from the drop-in sessions suggested that the quality of play areas needs to be improved in urban areas.

8.11 Table 8.1 shows the levels of satisfaction experienced by frequent users of play space for children and young people. Frequent users were most satisfied with boundaries, pathways and planted and grassed areas. Frequent users were less satisfied with seats and benches and the provision of toilets.

Table 8.1 Levels of satisfaction at play space for children and young people

	Very satisfied	Satisfied	Unsatisfied	Very unsatisfied	N/A
Play equipment	21%	68%	9%	2%	0%
Maintenance and management	17%	53%	25%	3%	2%
Lighting	7%	33%	18%	2%	41%
Boundaries (eg railings, hedges etc)	13%	73%	8%	5%	2%
Toilets	0%	12%	35%	17%	35%
Parking	5%	46%	17%	16%	16%
Provision of bins for litter	5%	66%	22%	6%	2%
Seats / benches	9%	53%	35%	3%	0%
Pathways	13%	81%	3%	2%	2%
Information and signage	8%	59%	14%	2%	17%
Planted and grassed areas	16%	73%	5%	3%	3%

Setting provision standards

- 8.12 In setting local standards for the provision for children and young people there is a need to take into account any national or local standards, current provision, other Local Authority standards for appropriate comparison, site assessments and consultation on local needs. Full indication of consultation and justifications for the recommended local standards are provided within Appendix G, H and I.
- 8.13 The recommended local standards have been summarised below in context with the children and young people sites in Brentwood.

Quantity Standard

- 8.14 There is 8.28 hectares of 'playing space' for children and young people across the Borough. This equates to a level of existing provision of 0.08 ha per 1,000 population.
- 8.15 A specific question within the household survey (Appendix C) asked residents if they thought the provision of children's and young people's play space in Brentwood was more than enough, about right, nearly enough or not enough. As detailed in paragraph 8.9, 56% of respondents considered the level of play provision to be poor or not enough, this was supported by wider consultation, via drop in sessions and the schools survey. In contrast 36% of respondents believe provision to be adequate.

SECTION 8 – PROVISION FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

8.16 It should be noted that whilst there appears to be a strong local message that existing provision is inadequate, this response is reflected in public opinion across other authority areas and therefore is not solely a local Brentwood issue. There is already continuing improvement and commitment to the play areas in Brentwood, as detailed within the Play Areas Strategy for the Borough. For example, the following recommendations have been made within the Strategy:

- refurbishment or upgrading the following sites to NEAP:
 - Bishops Hall Park
 - King George's Playing Fields
 - Hutton Recreation Ground.
- new LEAP sites to be provided at:
 - Copperfield Gardens (using Section 106 monies)
 - Newham Estate.

8.17 It is considered appropriate to set the local standard above the level of existing provision at 0.13 ha per 1,000 population. The rationale is that whilst there is a Play Areas Strategy in place, the Council should still seek to improve and maintain the levels of current play provision in the Borough to ensure provision is spread across Brentwood; that existing provision is protected and that future provision is made within new developments. Applying the recommended local standard of 0.13 ha per 1,000 population highlights a need for 3.80 additional hectares of provision across the Borough.

8.18 The full context and justification for this standard is outlined in Appendix G.

LOCAL QUANTITY STANDARD

0.13 ha per 1,000 population

Quality Standard

8.19 LAPs, LEAPs and NEAPs are the national standards for this typology and indicate some quality aspirations in terms of needing seating for adults, varied range of equipment and teenager meeting places.

8.20 Consultations highlighted that graffiti and litter are problems at play area sites. Overall the average quality score from site assessments of children's play areas was 64%.

8.21 The highest rated site was Kelvedon Hatch Playground (Site ID 7) with 90%, followed by Doddinghurst Infant School (Site ID 506) and King George's Play Area (Site ID 525) with 86%. The lowest rated site was Hutton Recreation Ground Play Area (site ID 515) with 34%. Colet Road Playground (Site ID 519) and Mountney Close Play Area (site ID 546) also both scored poorly with 44%.

SECTION 8 – PROVISION FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

- 8.22 From the household questionnaire, the highest rated aspirations for play space for children and young people are:
- varied play equipment
 - clean and litter free
 - toilets
 - well kept grass
 - and facilities for young people.
- 8.23 These key quality factors alongside other consultations have been the basis of the quality recommendation for children and young people's play space. This is expanded upon in Appendix H.
- 8.24 The recommended local quality standard provides the vision for any new provision and also a benchmark for existing parks to achieve in terms of enhancement.

LOCAL QUANTITY STANDARD

“Facilities for children and young people should be well maintained, clean and with limited litter and graffiti. The site should be easily accessible. Where possible, there should be a variety of play equipment to suit all ages and appropriate provision of seating and litter bins for the size of the site”.

Accessibility Standard

- 8.25 The accessibility assessment that is undertaken as part of the study includes general site access (entrance to the site, roads, paths and cycleway access), transport (accessibility by foot, cycleways and public transport) and information and signage.
- 8.26 The average score for site access was 65% indicating the play areas within the Borough have relatively good access. On the whole, the majority of sites scored average to good for site access. The highest scoring sites were West Horndon Park Play Area (Site ID 728) with 83%, followed by King George's Play Area (Site ID 525) and Coronation Playing Fields Play Area (Site ID 342) which both scored 80%. The lowest scoring site was Hutton Recreation Ground Play Area (Site ID 515) with 34% and Mill Lane Play Area (Site ID 508) with 40%.
- 8.27 Consultation has identified that a high proportion of people are satisfied with site access to play areas by walking. In addition, there were high levels of satisfaction with the visibility of the site entrance and opening times. Levels of dissatisfaction were highest for access by public transport and cycleways.
- 8.28 The accessibility of sites is paramount in maximising usage as well as providing an opportunity for all people to use the site. The local standard provides a realistic traveltime/distance threshold, based on local needs that can assist in highlighting areas of deficiency, as well as ensuring that any new provision is placed in priority areas that are outside the recommended local accessibility catchment.

SECTION 8 – PROVISION FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

- 8.29 Walking was the most preferred method of transport identified by users and potential users for both children and young people's play space, with the majority prepared to walk up to 10 minutes to a site. A walk time of 10 minutes has therefore been recommended. The full justification of these recommendations can be found in Appendix I.
- 8.30 A straight-line distance of 480m has been used rather than the pedestrian distance of 800m for children's play space. This is based on PMP's average walking distances and uses a factoring reduction of 40% to account for the fact that people do not walk in a straight line to access their open space facilities. This 40% factoring is based on the National Playing Fields Association Six Acre Standard (See Table 3, page 25 of NPFA Six Acre Standard), which has been worked out from a trial of 4-14 year olds and the distance they travelled.

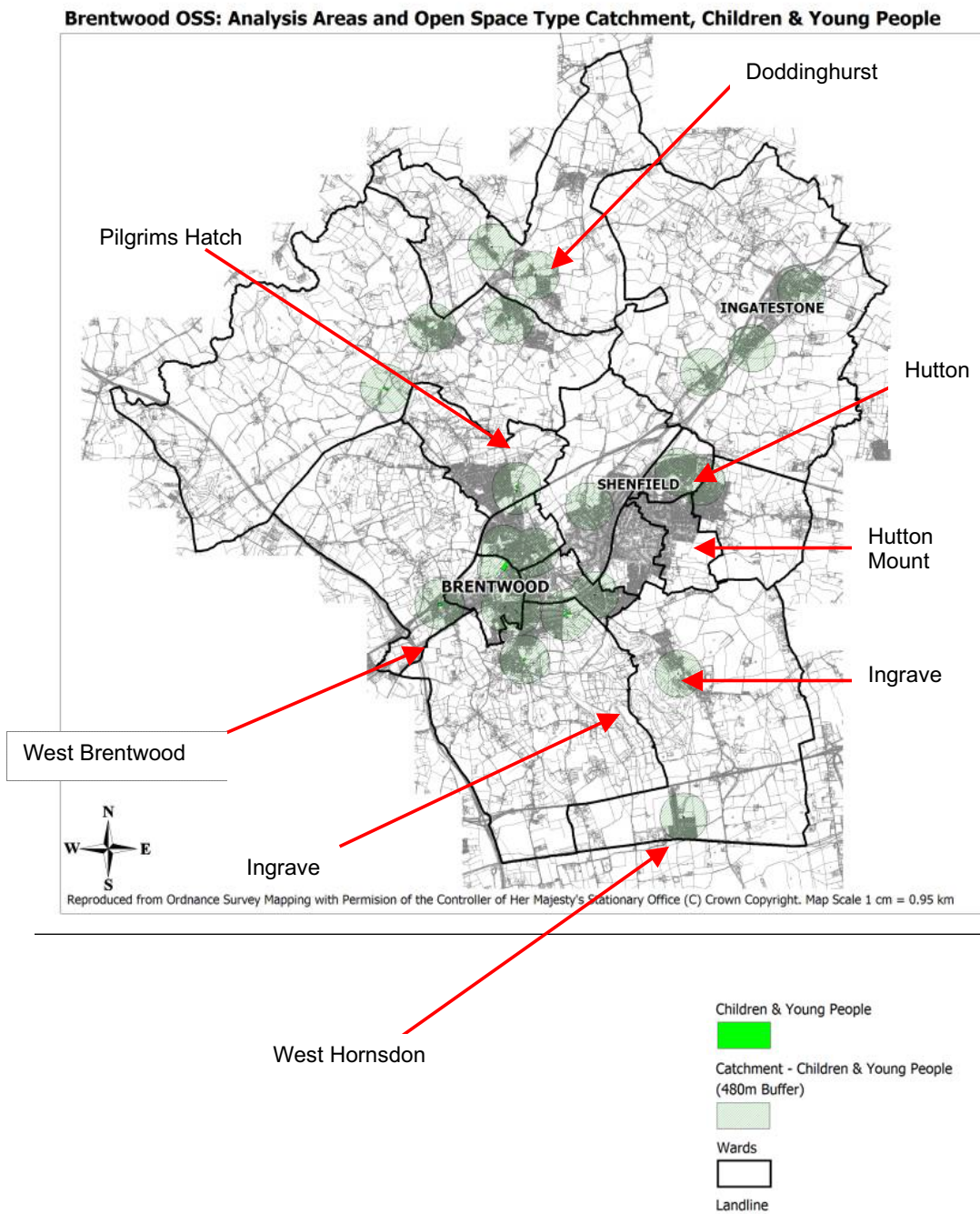
LOCAL ACCESSIBILITY STANDARD

10 minute walk time (480m)

Applying provision standards – identifying geographical areas

- 8.31 In order to identify geographical areas of importance and those areas with required local needs we apply both the quantity standard for children's play areas in Brentwood together with the local standard for accessibility. The quantity standards enable the identification of areas that do not meet the minimum provision standards, while the accessibility standards will help determine where those deficiencies are of high importance. Applying the standards together is a much more meaningful method of analysis than applying the standards separately and therefore helps with the prioritisation of sites.
- 8.32 The current provision of children's play space in Brentwood is 0.08 ha per 1,000 population - lower than the recommended local standard of 0.13 ha per 1,000 population for this typology.
- 8.33 By applying the accessibility standard, drawn at 10 minutes walk/0.48km, there are some residential areas outside the recommended catchment area. This supports consultation which highlighted deficiencies of provision for young people and children within the Borough.

Figure 8.2 - Spatial distribution of children's space across Brentwood



SECTION 8 – PROVISION FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

- 8.34 Figure 8.3 represents a spread of play space across the Borough. However there are residential areas within the Borough that are outside of an accessible catchment area for children's play. It is therefore important that all existing play provision within the Borough is protected and that the residential areas that are outside of an accessible catchment of an existing children's play site are considered as areas of high priorities for new provision. As illustrated in Figure 8.2 these areas include the residential areas of Ingrave, Ingatestone, Pilgrims Hatch, Doddinghurst, Brentwood, Shenfield and Hutton Mount. In addition, where there are such deficiencies, opportunities for recreational open space, such as outdoor sports facilities and amenity greenspaces need to be maximised. Further detail is provided below:

CYP 1	Protect the existing level of provision of children and young people's open space and seek new provision (both children's play and youth provision, for example, skate park, MUGAs) as appropriate though new residential developments.
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Figure 8.3 Deficiencies of children's play provision in the Shenfield/Brentwood area



- 8.35 There are significant amounts of residential areas within the Shenfield/Brentwood locality that are outside of an accessible catchment area from a play area site. These areas are indicated in Figure 8.3 above. This includes Hutton Mount, which is one of the more affluent parts of the Borough with the majority of housing including large private gardens and therefore with limited amenity greenspace and community play provision. As such there are limited opportunities to acquire new land or for re-designation of existing sites to address this situation.

SECTION 8 – PROVISION FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

8.36 Figure 8.3 also highlights that there is limited provision in the Pilgrim's Hatch area. The Play Areas Strategy includes the recommendation to provide a new LEAP at Copperfield Gardens. This would help to address the deficiency of children's play in the area. In addition to Copperfield Gardens, there is a significant level of amenity greenspace provision within Pilgrims Hatch and it is important to recognise the important secondary function that this type of open space provides, particularly in terms of opportunities for informal recreation and play.

8.37 The Play Areas Strategy also includes a recommendation to provide a new LEAP at Newham Estate (within the Three Arches Estate in Brentwood South). This would address the current deficiency within this area.

CYP 2	Implement recommendations from the Play Areas Strategy for the Borough, specifically in terms of new LEAP provision at Copperfield Gardens and Newham Estate.
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8.38 In terms of the central areas of Brentwood and Shenfield that are outside of accessible catchment areas for children's play as referred to above, consideration should be given to the value and provision of other types of open space that may provide play as a secondary purpose, such as amenity greenspace and outdoor sport facility sites. As detailed in Figure 7.2 in Section 7 and Figure 8.2, the Borough is well provided for in relation to these types of open space and there are only limited areas that are not provided for. Sites such as Courage Playing Fields (Site ID 115) in Shenfield and Hutton Sports Ground (Site ID 156) in Hutton help to address existing deficiencies in children's play in these areas.

8.39 However, despite alternative open space sites that provide a secondary informal play purpose, consideration should still be given to the provision of a new children's play area in Shenfield.

CYP 3	Consideration given to the provision of a new children's play space in central Shenfield to address the existing quantitative and accessibility deficiencies in these areas.
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Figure 8.4 Deficiencies of children’s play provision in Doddinghurst



8.40 Figure 8.4 illustrates a gap in provision of children’s play in terms of areas outside of an accessible catchment area. However, Doddinghurst is well provided for in terms of amenity greenspace and as shown above, Pear Tree Green (Site ID 186) is located where there is currently no children’s play site. The site assessment revealed that this site scored poorly in terms of quality (48%) and has only low/insignificant usage. It would therefore be worth investigating the feasibility of re-designating this site from amenity greenspace to children’s play.

8.41 As detailed above, the important areas for new provision are:

- Pilgrims Hatch
- Doddinghurst
- Hutton Mount
- Shenfield.

SECTION 8 – PROVISION FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

Value Assessment

8.42 Sites that generally have a high quality score and high accessibility score, frequently have a high level of usage as there is a direct correlation between these factors.

8.43 Overall, the scores for quality and accessibility were relatively high, with seven sites achieving above the average score for quality and accessibility and with high and significant usage levels. These sites set the benchmark for all other sites in the Borough. They are of high value and must be protected:

- River Road Play Area (Site ID 457)
- King George's Paddling Pools (Site ID 526)
- West Horndon Park Play Area (Site ID 728)
- Courage Playing Fields Play Area (Site ID 119)
- Coronation Playing Fields Play Area (Site ID 342)
- Navestock Village Hall Play Area (Site ID 652)
- Maple Close Play Area (Site ID 681).

CYP 4	Protect high usage sites as these are important local facilities. Quality and accessibility should be enhanced as appropriate as a matter of priority to ensure that these sites deliver maximum value to the community and that high levels of usage are maintained.
CYP 5	Sites ranked high on all counts should be recognised as examples of best practice. These sites set the benchmark for the Borough's play provision.

8.44 Hutton Recreation Ground Playground (Site ID 515) was the only site to score below the average for quality and accessibility and be considered to have low and insignificant usage. This site must be prioritised for improvements, as it is likely that there is little usage as a result of the condition of the site. If improvements are made, the value of this site will increase. Specific improvements would include maintaining the boundary fence, and providing seating and signage.

CYP 6	Sites with low accessibility and quality should have aspects improved to optimise usage.
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Summary and recommendations

8.45 There are a total of 26 play area sites distributed across the Borough. Overall the quality of play spaces for children and young people is good and the accessibility to these sites is also good. However the consultation revealed that there is a perceived shortfall in the quantity of play space, particularly facilities for teenagers.

SECTION 8 – PROVISION FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

- 8.46 The distribution of play areas is fairly even across the Borough, however there are still several areas of deficiency in terms of residential areas being outside of an accessible catchment area from a play site. These areas include Hutton Mount, Shenfield, Brentwood, Pilgrims Hatch and Doddinghurst. It is important to note that there is alternative open space provision within these areas, notably amenity greenspace sites, which have a key secondary function for informal recreation and play. The Play Areas Strategy also includes specific recommendations for Brentwood to address current deficiencies in Pilgrims Hatch and Brentwood through the provision of LEAPs at the Newham Estate and Copperfield Gardens respectively.
- 8.47 The local quantity standard set for children and young people's provision is 0.13 ha per 1,000 population. This is above the existing level of provision of 0.08 ha per 1,000 population and reinforces the Council's commitment through the Play Areas Strategy to improve and maintain the levels of current play provision in the Borough to ensure provision is spread across Brentwood; that existing provision is protected and that future provision is made within new developments.

Summary of recommendations for children and young people play provision in Brentwood

CYP 1	Protect the existing level of provision of children and young people's open space and seek new provision (both children's play and youth provision, for example, skate park, MUGAs) as appropriate though new residential developments.
CYP 2	Implement recommendations from the Play Areas Strategy for the Borough, specifically in terms of new LEAP provision at Copperfield Gardens and Newham Estate.
CYP 3	Consideration given to the provision of a new children's play spaces in central Shenfield to address the existing quantitative and accessibility deficiencies in these areas.
CYP 4	Protect high usage sites as these are important local facilities. Quality and accessibility should be enhanced as appropriate as a matter of priority to ensure that these sites deliver maximum value to the community and that high levels of usage are maintained.
CYP 5	Sites ranked high on all counts should be recognised as examples of best practice. These sites set the benchmark for the Borough's play provision.
CYP 6	Sites with low accessibility and quality should have aspects improved to optimise usage.

SECTION 9
SPORTS FACILITIES

Sports Facilities

Definition

- 9.1 The assessment of sports facilities covers both outdoor (as per the PPG17 typology) and indoor sports facilities.
- 9.2 *Outdoor sports facilities* is a wide-ranging category of open space and includes natural and artificial surfaces, publicly and privately owned, which are used for sport and recreation. Examples include playing pitches, athletics tracks, bowling greens and tennis courts. The primary purpose is participation in outdoor sports.
- 9.3 *Indoor sports facilities* include sports halls, swimming pools and indoor bowls centres. An assessment of indoor facilities is slightly different to other PPG 17 typologies in that specific demand modelling can be undertaken in line with Sport England parameters.
- 9.4 Brentwood has a good range of indoor and outdoor sports facilities for the size of the Borough and its population.

Figure 9.1 The Brentwood Centre



Strategic context

- 9.5 There is a strategic direction for sports at both a regional and local level in Brentwood. Essex County Council have published a number of documents that aim to shape the future of sports provision in the County. From a facility viewpoint the hope is to have a planned and co-ordinated approach in order to avoid duplication. At the same time the goal is to provide opportunities for all members of the community to participate in physical education, sport and recreation at an appropriate level.

SECTION 9 – SPORTS FACILITIES

- 9.6 The Brentwood Community Strategy has three key objectives that under the Leisure and Culture section seek to improve the availability of high quality and accessible leisure and recreation opportunities, these are:
- encouraging local people to pursue appropriate leisure activities in order to improve their personal well-being and quality of life, with consequent benefits for community well-being
 - encouraging and promoting the provision of sport and leisure facilities/activities that are accessible to everyone
 - developing a wide and varied range of leisure activities and facilities in order to provide the community with the opportunity to enjoy and benefit from their leisure time.
- 9.7 The Brentwood Replacement Local Plan has policies dealing with sports facilities in both the Green Belt chapter and the Sport and Leisure chapter. Outdoor sports facilities and ancillary buildings are allowed within the Green Belt, but subject to more specific criteria. Proposals for new golf courses are judged more critically due to the existing high level of provision. The Brentwood Centre is identified as the main centre for sports facilities in the Borough.
- 9.8 The Plan encourages the future joint use of educational buildings and sports facilities. A previous study of outdoor sports facilities in relation to National Playing Fields Association (NPFA) Standards shows there to be a deficiency in provision for three sub-categories.
- 9.9 The Parks and Countryside Service Plan 2005/06 has the following specific aims for sports facilities and pitches:
- "to provide and maintain an adequate number of safe sports facilities and pitches capable of sustaining sport played to a competitive standard and to make facilities and pitches available to local clubs, organisations and individuals in accordance with Council policy on charging and conditions of hire. Specific targets include 85% pitch utilisation and to renovate or improve drainage facilities on one pitch per annum.*
- 9.10 The Council already use key indicators to ascertain the number of sports pitches available to the public and the percentage of these booked. The Council are currently exceeding this target but customer satisfaction for sports and leisure is below target.
- Consultation**
- 9.11 Responses from the household survey indicated that 82% consider outdoor sports facilities to be important.
- 9.12 52% respondents suggested that there are 'nearly enough' or 'not enough' outdoor sports facilities in the Borough.
- 9.13 37% respondents use outdoor sports facilities 'occasionally', and 35% do not use them at all.

SECTION 9 – SPORTS FACILITIES

- 9.14 Table 9.1 shows the levels of satisfaction experienced by frequent users of outdoor sports facilities. Frequent users were most satisfied with maintenance and management, information and signage and pathways. Frequent users were less satisfied with provision of bins for litter and seats and benches.

Table 9.1 Levels of satisfaction of outdoor sports facilities

	Very satisfied	Satisfied	Unsatisfied	Very unsatisfied	N/A
Play equipment	6%	42%	8%	3%	42%
Maintenance and management	8%	71%	11%	5%	5%
Lighting	3%	42%	21%	3%	30%
Boundaries (eg railings, hedges etc)	11%	53%	19%	6%	11%
Toilets	5%	23%	30%	20%	23%
Parking	8%	53%	23%	8%	10%
Provision of bins for litter	3%	37%	37%	13%	11%
Seats / benches	3%	43%	35%	11%	8%
Pathways	6%	58%	11%	3%	22%
Information and signage	3%	57%	11%	0%	30%
Planted and grassed areas	21%	55%	11%	3%	11%

- 9.15 Internal consultation identified issues concerning the lack of rugby pitches and tennis courts and the need for more football pitches on a Sunday morning. It was suggested that an all-weather pitch could potentially solve the football and tennis issues but this would serve as a poor tennis surface. A lack of pitches was specifically mentioned around the Hutton area.

Indoor sports facilities

- 9.16 We have undertaken a full audit of indoor sports facilities in the Borough, this can be found in Appendix J.
- 9.17 The Borough boundary has been used as the study area but we have also considered a three-kilometre buffer around the Borough to take into account facilities on the periphery and cross-boundary movements. We have assumed that the number of people travelling out of the Borough will roughly equal those travelling in. This buffer is used solely as a basis for analysis; it does not follow that people will not travel from further than three kilometres away. In addition it is recognised that the M25, which travels along the western edge of the Borough prevents most cross-border movement with the London Borough of Havering.
- 9.18 For the purposes of this study, indoor sports and recreation provision includes the following:
- sports halls
 - swimming pools
 - indoor bowls
 - indoor tennis.

SECTION 9 – SPORTS FACILITIES

9.19 The audit has included the following information:

- type, size and number of facilities at each site
- ownership
- ancillary facilities
- accessibility.

9.20 All information has been stored in an Access 2000 database.

9.21 The main public leisure centre in Brentwood is the Brentwood Centre. This has an eight lane 25-metre swimming pool, 12 badminton courts and a comprehensive health and fitness suite.

Consultation

9.22 The household survey questioned residents about their usage of indoor facilities, as well as accessibility, quality and quantity factors and issues.

9.23 Respondents suggested that the quantity of indoor sports facilities overall was 'about right'. Many respondents did not hold an opinion on indoor bowls (63%) or indoor tennis (58%).

9.24 There was a high proportion of respondents (over 50%) who do not use any indoor sports facilities. Swimming pools and village, school and community halls are the most well used facilities.

9.25 Reasons given for non-usage of indoor sports facilities included:

- lack of time (19%)
- too expensive (13%)
- lack of interest (12%).

9.26 Table 9.2 below indicates the indoor sports facilities used most frequently. The most frequently used indoor sports facility is swimming pools (47%).

Table 9.2 Most frequently used indoor sports facilities

Facilities	Number of responses	%
Swimming pool	271	47%
Sports hall	39	7%
Squash courts	92	16%
Health and fitness	26	5%
Indoor bowls	7	1%
Indoor tennis	3	1%
Village hall	77	13%
School hall	20	3%
Community centre	41	7%

SECTION 9 – SPORTS FACILITIES

- 9.27 The most popular form of transport used for travelling to indoor sports facilities was by car. People who travelled to village halls were just as likely to walk as to travel by car.
- 9.28 Respondents to the sports club survey suggested that the overall provision of leisure facilities in the Borough was 'good' (45%).
- 9.29 Young people who completed the school internet survey indicated that the indoor sport facility they visit most often was swimming pools (77%). Dragon's Health Club was popular amongst young people who commented that '*it is very clean*', '*not often crowded*', and '*good for children*'. The Brentwood Centre is also popular, with young people commenting on the '*big swimming pool and diving boards*' and the '*large sports hall*'.

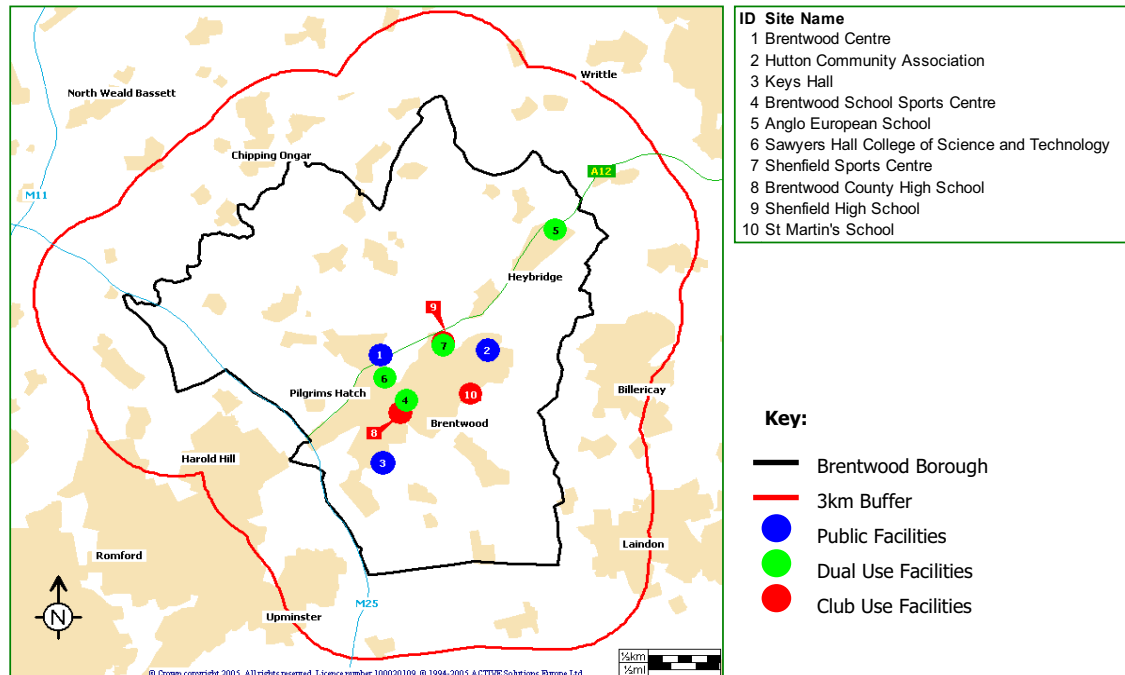
Demand modelling

- 9.30 Demand modelling for sports halls and swimming pools was carried out using PMP's *Mapping the Future* (MtF), which is based on Sport England's Facility Planning Model but allows parameters to be tweaked to reflect local circumstances. MtF models indicate the level of surplus or undersupply of facilities. The full set of parameters and assumptions relating to the models are set out in detail in Appendix K. Modelling for indoor bowls was undertaken using Sport England's facility calculator.
- 9.31 For the purposes of this report, the terms private, public, club and dual use are defined as follows:
- Public – public leisure centres with unrestricted public access
 - Private – venues where there is no pay and play access for the general public and membership is required.
 - Dual use – leisure facilities that only allow public access during out of school hours and holidays
 - Club use – facilities that can only be hired out as a whole, to clubs and associations, usually on a block booking system. Such facilities do not provide staff or any other support and are therefore not included in the model.

Sports halls

- 9.32 The first part of this section provides an analysis of badminton court provision in the Borough. Figure 9.2, overleaf, shows the geographical location of sports hall facilities in the Borough.

Figure 9.2 Sports hall provision in the Borough of Brentwood



- 9.33 There are ten sports hall sites in the Borough. Of these, three are public, four are dual-use, and three are for club use. There are no further facilities outside the Borough (within the three kilometre buffer). The majority of sports hall sites in the Borough are publicly accessible (i.e. either public or dual use access).
- 9.34 For the purpose of demand modelling, accessibility for public use and size of facility are taken into consideration when assessing the level of current supply. For example, within the model, the capacity of dual-use sites is reduced by 25% to reflect the balance of school access and public access.
- 9.35 When applying the demand model, there is a demand equivalent to 19 badminton courts in the Borough, which indicates an oversupply in the Borough equivalent to just over four badminton courts.
- 9.36 Looking forward to 2021 and assuming no new facilities are provided, the oversupply would be still be four badminton courts in 2021 due to the small predicted population change. Assuming that Game Plan targets are reached (1% increase in participation year on year), there would be an oversupply of less than one badminton court in 2021.

Table 9.3 Demand modelling for badminton courts

Year	Demand	Oversupply
2005	19 Badminton Courts	4.25 Badminton Courts
2021	19 Badminton Courts	4.25 Badminton Courts
2021 (Game Plan adjusted)	23 Badminton Courts	0.25 Badminton Courts

SECTION 9 – SPORTS FACILITIES

- 9.37 From an accessibility viewpoint it can be seen that there is a good spread of publicly accessible facilities throughout the Borough. In the main urban areas of Brentwood and Shenfield there are a range of public and private facilities available. In Ingatestone there is only one facility available to the public outside of school hours however the size of the population in this area makes a full-time publicly accessible facility unrealistic.

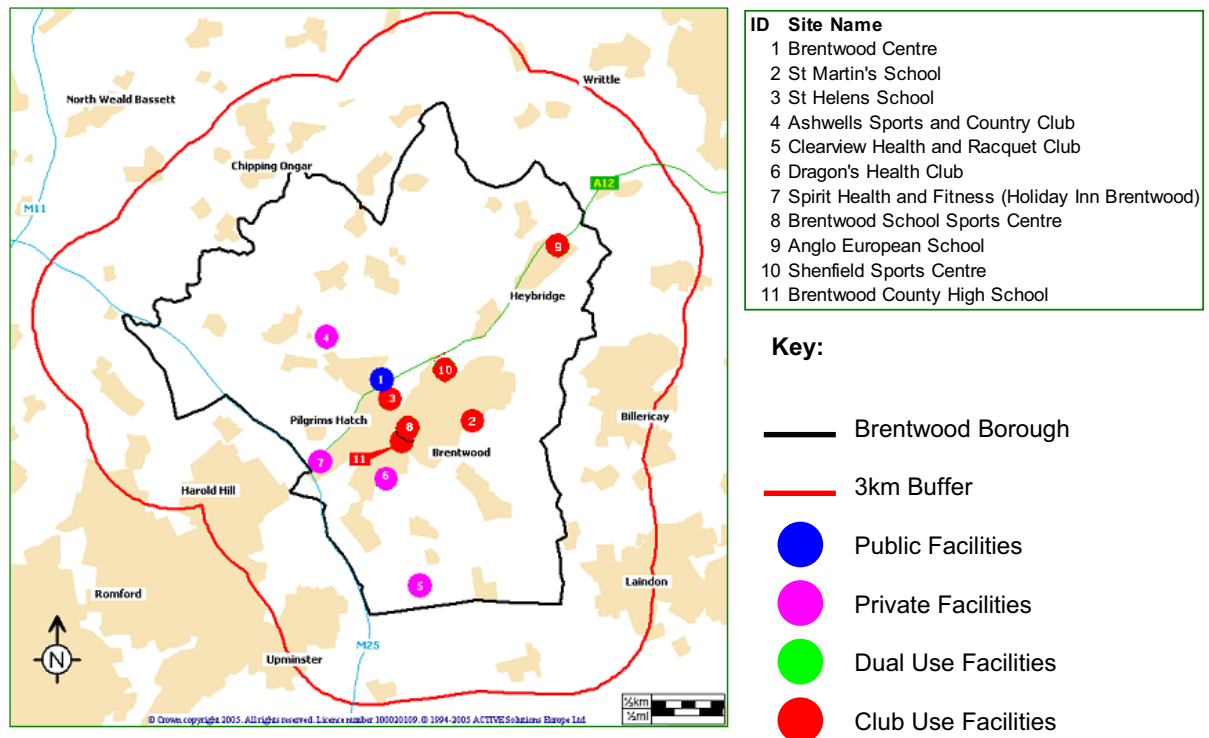
Swimming pools

- 9.38 There are eleven swimming pools in the Borough, but only the Brentwood Centre is available to the public. The main pool at the centre is 25m by 12.5m equating to 312.5m² of swimming water. Figure 9.3, overleaf, shows the distribution of swimming pools throughout the Borough.
- 9.39 The potential demand for swimming can be determined by applying sports participation rates (by age and gender) to the population profile within the Borough. The propensity to participate in swimming in the Borough is higher than the national average, with 31% of the population expressing an interest in swimming, compared to 23% nationally.
- 9.40 The 'at one time capacity' (the capacity in any peak session) can then be used to establish the level of supply needed to cater for the demand. This is based on Sport England parameters including peak hours, proportion of visits during peak times, average visit duration and pool area. This approach ensures that supply is sufficient to cater for the maximum demand at any point in time.
- 9.41 This demand model shows there is a current level of demand equivalent to 669m² of water space equating to an undersupply of 356.5m² in the Borough. Taking into account population projections, the undersupply is predicted to increase to 368.5m² by 2021. Adjusting demand to take into account 'Game Plan' participation increases, the oversupply for 2021 is predicted to be 507.5m².

Table 9.4 Demand modelling for swimming water

Year	Demand	Undersupply
2005	669m ²	356.5m ²
2021	681m ²	368.5m ²
2021 (Game Plan adjusted)	820m ²	507.5m ²

Figure 9.3 Swimming pool provision in the Borough of Brentwood



- 9.42 With only one public swimming pool in the Borough there are accessibility concerns for residents living in the Shenfield and Ingatestone areas. Coupled with the undersupply of swimming water throughout the Borough it is recommended that new public provision be sought. A decrease in the undersupply of swimming water can be achieved through the use of swimming pools at school sites. The most obvious candidate is the Shenfield Sports Centre as there is already public usage of other sports facilities at this site.

ISF1	Council to investigate the possibility of making the swimming pool at Shenfield Sports Centre available to the public.
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Indoor bowls and indoor tennis

- 9.43 There is just one facility providing indoor bowls in the area, shown in Figure 9.4 overleaf. The Stonyhill Bowls Club is located in the south of the Borough at the South Essex Golf and Country club. The site has seven rinks.
- 9.44 The Sport England calculator calculates demand to be equivalent to 4.61 rinks, therefore there is a current oversupply of 2.39 rinks. By 2021 the oversupply is predicted to decrease to 2.32 rinks.

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Table 9.5 Demand modelling for indoor bowls

Year	Demand	Oversupply
2005	4.61 rinks	2.39 rinks
2021	4.68 rinks	2.32 rinks

- 9.45 It is clear that there is currently a substantial oversupply of indoor bowls in the area, however the current site is very poorly located to serve the majority of the population. The site is located in a rural area and not served well by public transport forcing the majority of users to drive. The Council should, therefore focus their indoor bowls efforts on improving access to this site.
- 9.46 Figure 9.4, overleaf, shows that there is only one indoor tennis centre in the Borough. This is the Clearview Club based in the far south. There are six permanent indoor courts at this facility and the courts are only available to members of the club. The location of the club coupled with the fact the courts are not available on a “pay and play” basis means that the accessibility to the courts is limited.
- 9.47 There is currently no modelling available to ascertain the ideal number of indoor tennis courts for an area but it is possible to compare the Borough against other nearby authorities. Table 9.6, below, shows this comparison in terms of the number of courts per 1,000 population

Table 9.6 Indoor tennis courts comparison

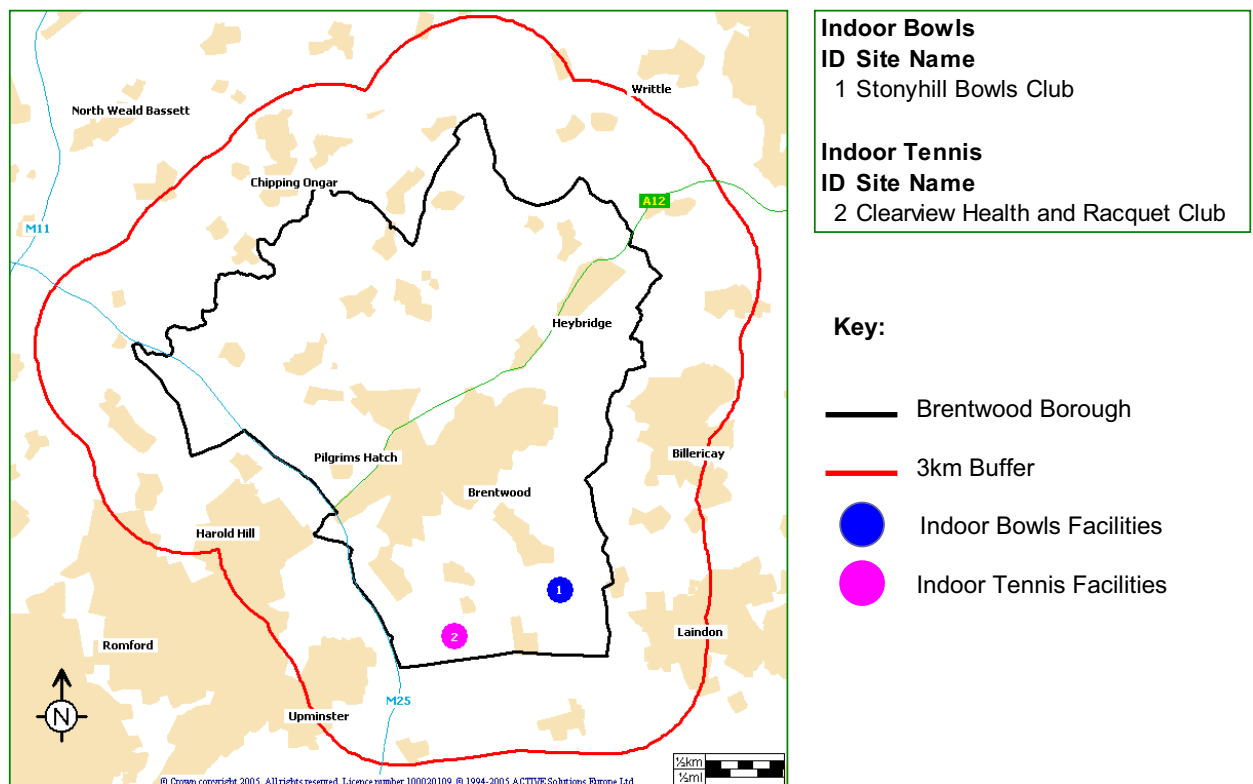
Local authority	Number of public courts	Number of private courts	Population (2001 census)	Courts per 1,000 population
Castle Point	3	0	86,608	0.035
Southend On Sea	4	5	160,257	0.025
Basildon	6	0	165,668	0.036
Rochford	0	0	78,489	n/a
Havering	0	7	224,248	0.031
Epping Forest	0	11	120,896	0.091
Brentwood	0	6	68,456	0.088

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- 9.48 Examination of Table 9.6 shows that the Borough has a high number of indoor tennis courts compared to other nearby local authorities. Only Epping Forest has a higher number of courts per 1,000 population. Despite this, the table also shows the lack of publicly available tennis courts in the Borough. It should, therefore, be a long-term aim for the Council to provide indoor tennis facilities within the Borough.

ISF2	Long-term aim for the Council to provide indoor tennis facilities.
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Figure 9.4 Indoor bowls and indoor tennis provision in Brentwood Borough



Quality Standards

- 9.49 This section reviews quality with regards to indoor sports facilities. Sport England Technical Design Guidance Notes and Quest Best Practice Standards are the two key areas which can be used to benchmark the quality of Brentwood's facilities against other areas. The key objectives from these should be:
- to provide clear guidance relating to facility specifications, ensuring suitability of design for the targeted range of sports and standards of play as well as individual requirements for specialist sports and uses
 - to ensure high standards of management and customer service are attained, which meet or exceed customer expectation and lead to a quality leisure experience for all users of facilities.

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9.50 The recommended quality standard is therefore split into two components:

- QS1 – design and technical
- QS2 – management and operational.

9.51 QS1 is set out below and a brief explanation follows.

QS1: Quality Standard (Design and Technical)

ISF3	QS1: All new build and refurbishment schemes to be designed in accordance with Sport England Guidance Notes, which provide detailed technical advice and standards for the design and development of sports facilities.
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9.52 Sport England Design Guidance Notes are available to download from the Sport England website.

http://www.sportengland.org/index/get_resources/resource_downloads/design_guidelines.htm

9.53 The space requirement for most sports depends on the standard of play – generally the higher the standard, the larger the area required. Although the playing area is usually of the same dimensions, there is a need to build in provision for increased safety margins, increased clearance height, spectator seating, etc. Similarly, design specification varies according to level of competition with respect to, for example, flooring type and lighting lux levels.

9.54 Sport England Design Guidance Notes are based on eight standards of play. Consideration should be given to the desired specification of the facility and the likely level of competition it will be required to host at the outset.

QS2: Quality Standard (Facility Operation and Management)

9.55 Quest is the UK Quality Scheme for Sport and Leisure, which defines industry standards and good practice and encourages their application and development in a customer-focused management framework. Quest is recommended by the British Quality Foundation for Self Assessment in Sport and Leisure Operations.

9.56 Quest facility management is aimed at sports and leisure facilities, in the commercial, voluntary and public sectors. The facility management manager's guidance pack provides the industry standards against which managers can assess their own operation, and provides best practice information and examples to aid continuous improvement.

9.57 Quest sets out industry best practice principles in relation to:

- facilities operation
- customer relations
- staffing and service
- service development and review.

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9.58 These principles form the basis of the QS2 below:

QS2: Quality Standard (Facility Operation and Management)

ISF4	QS2: All leisure providers to follow industry best practice principles in relation to a) Facilities Operation, b) Customer Relations, c) Staffing and d) Service Development and Review. The detail of the internal systems, policies and practices underpinning implementation of these principles will correlate directly to the scale of facility, varying according to the position of the facility within the levels of the established hierarchy.
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9.59 The Quest scores at the Brentwood Centre show the centre is successfully creating a culture of continuous improvement. The scores are:

- October 1998 – 62%
- January 2001 – 65%
- February 2003 – 66%
- February 2005 – 70%.

9.60 The aim for the Brentwood Centre is to continue this successful cycle and for other centres (eg the Shenfield Sports Centre) to also be Quest accredited.

ISF5	Aim for the Brentwood Centre to continue its improvements and for the Shenfield Sports Centre to also gain Quest accreditation
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Local standards

9.61 From the demand modelling undertaken, a figure per 1,000 population can be created for most indoor sports types. The current, and future recommended standards are shown in Table 9.7 below.

Table 9.7 Local standards

Facility type	Provision level recommended	Local Standard
Sports hall	23.25 badminton courts	0.339 courts per 1,000 population
Swimming pool	612.5m ² of swimming water	8.947m ² of swimming water per 1,000 population
Indoor bowls	7 rinks	0.102 rinks per 1,000 population
Indoor tennis	10 courts	0.146 courts per 1,000 population

9.62 The figures in Table 9.7 above are based on the following:

- the current level of badminton court provision being maintained
- a second swimming pool being provided in the long term, the new pool ideally being a 25m, 6 lane pool
- the current level of indoor bowls provision being maintained
- a new four court, indoor tennis facility being provided in the long term.

Outdoor sports facilities

- 9.63 Outdoor sports facilities is a wide-ranging category of open spaces and includes both natural and artificial surfaces for sport and recreation, which are either publicly or privately owned. Examples include playing pitches, athletics tracks, bowling greens and golf courses with the primary purpose of participation in outdoor sports.

Figure 9.5 Brentwood Cricket Club



Current position

- 9.64 There are a good range of sporting facilities within the Borough, including grass pitches, synthetic pitches, bowling greens, tennis courts and golf courses. There has been a large number of golf courses built in the last two decades whilst housing developments have placed extra pressures on playing pitch sites.

Setting provision standards

- 9.65 In setting local standards for outdoor facilities there is a need to take into account any national or local standards, current provision, other local authority standards for comparison, site assessments and consultation on local needs. Full justifications for the local standards are provided within Appendices G, H and I.
- 9.66 A quantity standard for this typology is set for **broad planning need only**, as applying a quantity standard for surplus and deficiencies of outdoor sports facilities would be meaningless when considering the wide range and size of outdoor sports facilities from golf courses to bowling greens.

Quantity standard

- 9.67 The existing provision of outdoor sports facilities in Brentwood is currently 815.79 ha which equates to a provision level of 11.72ha per 1,000 population. A large proportion of this figure relates to golf courses in the Borough. Excluding golf sites reduces the total hectareage to 221.43 ha and reduces the provision level to 3.18 ha per 1,000 population.
- 9.68 From the household survey, the number of persons believing the amount of sports facilities were “about right” was the same as those believing there was “not enough” (35%). Further consultation received related to a lack of football pitches and tennis courts in the Borough. From the sports club survey the main facility aspirations were for grass pitches, synthetic turf pitches, tennis courts and multi-use games areas.

SECTION 9 – SPORTS FACILITIES

- 9.69 Without a specific playing pitch strategy being undertaken it is impossible to quantify the comments made about the lack of sport specific pitches in the area. Therefore the local standard has been set out at the current provision level of 3.185ha per 1,000 population (excluding golf courses). Any future specific work in terms of playing pitches should ascertain a local standard purely for playing pitches.

LOCAL QUANTITY STANDARD

3.18ha per 1,000 population

Quality Standard

- 9.70 The National Playing Fields Association recommends guidance on outdoor sports facilities, where quality of provision includes gradients, orientation, ancillary accommodation, planting and community safety.
- 9.71 User aspirations from the household survey for outdoor sports facilities in Brentwood are:
- clean and litter free
 - well kept grass
 - toilets
 - seating
 - and on site security.
- 9.72 Adequate lighting, car parking, staff on site and provision of CCTV were highest rated safety factors. These key quality factors alongside other consultations have been the basis of the quality standard recommendation for outdoor sports facilities. Further evidence for this recommendation can be found in Appendix H.
- 9.73 Consultation failed to produce any regular themes in terms of the quality of outdoor sports facilities. Some comments were made regarding boggy pitches and other comments were made regarding the amount of dog mess on fields but the concerns were not substantial.
- 9.74 The average quality score for outdoor sports facilities, ascertained from the site visits, was 73% - this is a relatively high figure. The highest rated facility was the Old County Ground (Site ID 107) with 96%. This was followed by the majority of the golf courses which all scored over 90%. The three lowest scoring sites were:
- Hutton Recreation Ground (Site ID 139) – 34%
 - Hutton Poplars (Site ID 156) – 34%
 - St Charles Youth Treatment Centre (Site ID 39) – 32%.
- 9.75 Appendices G, H and I provide further explanation on the suggested approach to future benchmarking of sites.

LOCAL QUALITY STANDARD

“All outdoor sports facilities should be well kept, where dog fouling, vandalism and litter are kept to a minimum, with level and well drained good quality surfaces. Where appropriate, sites should provide ancillary accommodation including seating, changing facilities, toilets and car parking. The site should have an effective maintenance and management programme to ensure community safety and effective usage.”

SECTION 9 – SPORTS FACILITIES

Accessibility Standard

- 9.76 There are no definitive national or local accessibility standards for outdoor sports facilities. However, a 20 minute drivetime has been used in the past as a guide to reach any kind of sporting facility.
- 9.77 Overall, the average accessibility score was 69%, suggesting that there are a number of good, accessible sports facilities. Again the numerous golf sites in the Borough scored highly, as did the Old County Ground (Site ID 107). Doddinghurst Village Hall Playing Fields (Site ID 194) also scored highly.
- 9.78 There were three sites with access scores under 40%:
- Hutton Poplars (Site ID 156) – 37%
 - Tower Hill Play Space (Site ID 488) – 37%
 - Anglo European School Playing Fields (Site ID 188) – 27%.
- 9.79 There was general satisfaction with access to sports pitches through the household survey for accessibility by foot and signage. However 30% of respondents were unsatisfied/very unsatisfied with cycleways access and there were a large number of other comments made through the household survey to reinforce this.
- 9.80 84% of respondents to the household survey indicated that they visit this type of open space by car. The 75% percentile used to calculate the travel time indicated a journey of 15 minutes was felt to be reasonable. This is in line with other local authorities PMP have benchmarked against.

**LOCAL
ACCESSIBILITY
STANDARD**

**15 minute drive
(6km)**

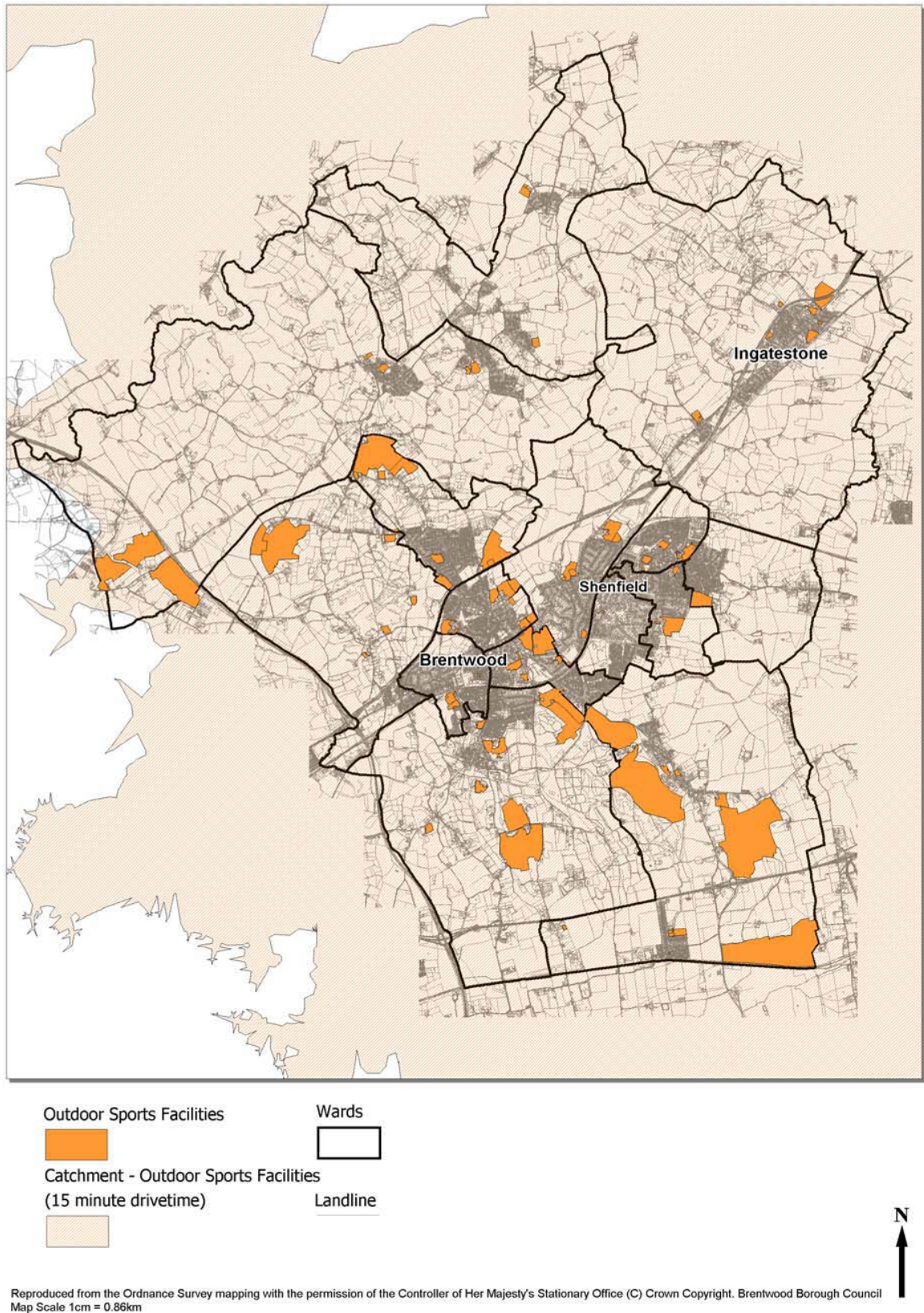
Design guidelines

- 9.81 There are a number of published documents highlighted in Appendix E of PPG17: A Companion Guide which can assist the design of sport facilities, along with the design advice offered by individual NGBs.

Applying provision standards – identifying geographical areas

- 9.82 In order to identify geographical areas of importance and those areas with unmet local needs, we apply both the quantity and accessibility standards together. The quantity standards identify surpluses or deficiencies and the accessibility standards help to determine where those deficiencies are important.
- 9.83 For sports facilities it is more important to apply the accessibility catchments, as the quantitative standards are set mainly for planning purposes for the new provision of sports pitches within housing development.
- 9.84 Figure 9.6 overleaf provides an overview of outdoor sports provision across the Borough, with all residential areas within a 15-minute drive time of an outdoor sports facility site. However, this includes school sports pitches, which are not, in the main publicly accessible.

Figure 9.6 Spatial distribution of outdoor sports facilities in Brentwood



SECTION 9 – SPORTS FACILITIES

- 9.85 Figure 9.6 is an overview of the Borough and provides a clear picture of the geographical spread of outdoor sports facilities across Brentwood. The map shows a good spatial distribution of outdoor sports facilities and no deficiencies within the populated areas.
- 9.86 The recommended local accessibility standard that has been applied is a 15-minute drivetime, providing a good quantitative base of facilities, for the majority of people within a realistic catchment for all ages and abilities.
- 9.87 The accessibility catchments should be treated with caution as facilities are not broken down by specific sports and are treated as 'general' outdoor sports facilities. In order to ascertain the level of playing pitches needed it is recommended that a playing pitch strategy be undertaken. This will analyse the individual pitch sport demand that is not covered by this study.
- 9.88 It is of note that the numerous golf sites around the outskirts of the urban areas heavily affect the accessibility catchment areas. Despite this the majority of the rural areas, such as Kelvedon Hatch and Doddington, have outdoors sports facilities. The rural areas without provision, such as Stondon Massey, are within easy reach of rural areas that do.

OSF1	Council to undertake a playing pitch strategy in order to ascertain the level of playing pitches and STPs required.
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Value assessment

- 9.89 Most sites that have a high level of use would normally have a good or very good quality and accessibility rating. Most sites with a low level of use would have an average or poor quality and accessibility rating. This is because the factors are related and interlinked.
- 9.90 The overall average of scores for quality and accessibility was high (72% and 68% respectively), with 26 sites scoring above average for quality and accessibility and having a usage score of high and significant.
- 9.91 The highest scoring sites were:
- Brentwood Arena (Site ID 72)
 - Old County Ground (Site ID 107).
- 9.92 These sites are of high value to users and should be maintained and protected. They should also set the benchmark for all other sites in the Borough.
- 9.93 The golf courses also scored highly, as would be expected. Priors Golf Course (Site ID 313) scored the lowest of all golf courses for accessibility.
- 9.94 Only one site was considered to have low and insignificant usage. Hutton Poplars (Site ID 133) also scored below average for quality and accessibility. For the value of this site to be increased, specific improvements to boundary, seating and signage provision should be prioritised.

OSF2	Prioritise Hutton Poplars (Site ID 133) for improvement works.
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SECTION 9 – SPORTS FACILITIES

Summary and conclusions

- 9.95 From an indoor perspective, the Brentwood Centre provides a focus point for a large range of facilities in the Borough. The centre has scored highly through the Quest accreditation scheme and shows that it is continuously improving. There are still some inadequacies for indoor sport facilities in the Borough however. All publicly available swimming water is based at the Brentwood Centre which makes accessibility difficult for some residents in the Borough. This could be solved through the opening up of the pool at the Shenfield Sports Centre.
- 9.96 Accessibility issues are also the main problem with indoor bowls for the Borough. In terms of quantity the Centre provides more than enough rinks but its location is problematic and anyway of increasing access to it should be investigated.
- 9.97 The Borough is lacking in publicly available indoor tennis courts and it should be a long-term aim for the Council to provide such a facility.

Summary of recommendations for indoor sports facilities in Brentwood

ISF1	Council to investigate the possibility of making the swimming pool at Shenfield Sports Centre available to the public.
ISF2	Long-term aim for the Council to provide indoor tennis facilities.
ISF3	QS1: All new build and refurbishment schemes to be designed in accordance with Sport England Guidance Notes, which provide detailed technical advice and standards for the design and development of sports facilities.
ISF4	QS2: All leisure providers to follow industry best practice principles in relation to a) Facilities Operation, b) Customer Relations, c) Staffing and d) Service Development and Review. The detail of the internal systems, policies and practices underpinning implementation of these principles will correlate directly to the scale of facility, varying according to the position of the facility within the levels of the established hierarchy.
ISF5	Aim for the Brentwood Centre to continue its improvements and for the Shenfield Sports Centre to also gain Quest accreditation

- 9.98 From an outdoor perspective virtually all residents are able to access sports facilities within a 15 minute drivetime. Therefore new facilities from an accessibility viewpoint are not necessary. From a quantity viewpoint, it is recommended that the current level of provision, 3.15 hectares per 1,000 population, be kept as this will help protect existing facilities and can be used for broad planning purposes for any new developments.
- 9.99 Despite this level of quantity provision, there remain some queries in terms of the level of provision of playing pitches in the Borough – specifically football pitches. It is recommended that a playing pitch strategy is undertaken in the medium term to ensure that pitch provision is adequate in all areas of the Borough.
- 9.100 From a quality aspect, the Borough has a number of high quality facilities but there a number of sites that fall short of the quality standard set. It is recommended that as part of the annual Countryside and Parks Service Plan the Council prioritise a number of outdoor sports sites which are to be improved, such as the Hutton Poplars site.

SECTION 9 – SPORTS FACILITIES

Summary of recommendations for outdoor sports facilities in Brentwood

OSF 1	Council to undertake a playing pitch strategy in order to ascertain the level of playing pitches and Synthetic Turf Pitches (STPs) required.
OSF 2	Prioritise Hutton Poplars (Site ID 133) for improvement works.

SECTION 10

ALLOTMENTS AND COMMUNITY GARDENS

Allotments and community gardens

Definition

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

Strategic context

- 10.2 Like other open space types, allotments can provide a number of wider benefits to the community as well as the primary use of growing produce. These include:
- bringing together people of different cultural backgrounds
 - improving physical and mental health
 - providing a source of recreation
 - wider contribution to green and open space.
- 10.3 Brentwood Borough Council's Parks and Countryside Service Plan 2005/6 includes the need to ensure adequate availability of allotment plots and associated facilities throughout the Borough and to achieve an 80% cultivation rate of allotment plots.

Consultation

- 10.4 Results from the household survey indicated that only 47% respondents consider allotments to be important, whilst 21% held no opinion.
- 10.5 25% respondents consider the provision of allotments to be 'about right', whilst 45% held no opinion.
- 10.6 Respondents to the household survey were asked which type of open space they use most frequently. Results were analysed to find out specific opinions relating to each type of open space. The following results are from frequent users of allotments:
- only 15 respondents to the household survey use allotments most frequently (2%)
 - the most significant quality problems highlighted by these frequent users were standard of maintenance, litter problems and vandalism.

SECTION 10 – ALLOTMENTS AND COMMUNITY GARDENS

- 10.7 Table 10.1 shows the quality factors that frequent users were satisfied with were parking, pathways and boundaries.

Table 10.1 Levels of satisfaction with allotments

	Very satisfied	Satisfied	Unsatisfied	Very unsatisfied	N/A
Play equipment	0%	27%	0%	0%	73%
Maintenance and management	9%	36%	18%	9%	27%
Lighting	0%	20%	0%	0%	80%
Boundaries (eg railings, hedges etc)	8%	33%	33%	8%	17%
Toilets	0%	0%	18%	18%	64%
Parking	8%	50%	17%	0%	25%
Provision of bins for litter	0%	0%	10%	0%	90%
Seats / benches	0%	10%	0%	0%	90%
Pathways	10%	60%	0%	0%	30%
Information and signage	10%	20%	10%	0%	60%
Planted and grassed areas	10%	30%	10%	0%	50%

- 10.8 Key aspirations for allotments identified by the most frequent users were:

- clean and litter free
- well-kept grass
- easy to get to the site
- nature features
- nature conservation area.

- 10.9 Frequent users of allotments were satisfied with the visibility of the site entrance, and were very satisfied with the accessibility by walking.

- 10.10 Consultation with the managers of the allotment sites revealed that there are waiting lists at some sites and demand for plots continues to rise. It has been necessary to clear parts of some of the allotment sites to make way for new plots. The existing situation is therefore that supply is not meeting the current demand in the Borough.

Current situation

- 10.11 There are 15 allotment sites in the Borough. The sites run by Brentwood Horticultural Society are:

- Ongar Road (Site ID 686)
- Park Road (Site ID 477)
- Honeypot Lane (Site ID 486)
- River Road (Site ID 458)
- Crescent Road (Site ID 451)

SECTION 10 – ALLOTMENTS AND COMMUNITY GARDENS

- Hartswood Allotments (Site ID 81)
- Bishops Hall Allotments (Site ID 473)
- Middle Road (Site ID 711).

10.12 Three allotment sites are run by Hutton Horticultural Society:

- Fielding Way (Site ID 218)
- Birkbeck Road (Site ID 219)
- Wash Road Allotments (Site ID 221).

10.13 The remaining four sites are managed by the relevant parish councils. These are:

- Stock Lane Allotments (Site ID 286)
- Roman Road Allotments (Site ID 327)
- Salmonds Grove Allotments (Site ID 716)
- Rectory Lane Allotments (Site ID 721)

ALLOT1	The present situation suggests that supply is not meeting the current demand in the Borough. There are some areas of deficiency, notably Doddinghurst, where it would be recommended a new site is allocated.
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Setting provision standards

10.14 In setting local standards for allotments there is a need to take into account any national or local standards, current provision, other Local Authority standards for appropriate comparison, site assessments and consultation on local needs. Full justifications for the local standards are provided within Appendices G, H and I. The recommended local standards have been summarised below in context with the allotment sites in Brentwood.

Quantity standard

10.15 The National Society of Allotment and Leisure Gardeners suggest a standard of 20 allotments per 1,000 households (ie 20 allotments per 2,200 people based on 2 people per house) or 1 allotment per 200 people. This equates to 0.125ha per 1,000 population based on an average plot size of 250m².

10.16 The total existing provision of allotments in the Borough is 12.36ha.

10.17 Allotment sites are very much a demand-led typology and need to be quantified in the context of existing provision, waiting lists and local demand. Consultation from the household survey suggests that the majority of people have no opinion regarding the provision of this typology, although they still rated the importance of them as high.

SECTION 10 – ALLOTMENTS AND COMMUNITY GARDENS

- 10.18 Question two within the household survey asked residents if they thought the provision of allotments in Brentwood was more than enough, about right, nearly enough or not enough. 25% respondents believe that the current provision is 'about right', 11% believe that provision is 'nearly enough', 15% believe that provision is 'not enough' whilst 45% held no opinion. On this basis and analysis of consultation, it is recommended that the **local quantity standards for allotments is set at 0.18ha per 1,000 population**. Further consultation into the demand for allotments should be provided to assist in the application of this standard, whilst all provision should be kept at the minimum of the current level of provision, supported in the recommended local standard.
- 10.19 The full context and justification for this standard is outlined in Appendix G.

LOCAL QUANTITY STANDARD
0.18ha per 1,000 population

Quality standard

- 10.20 There are no existing national or local standards for the quality of allotments.
- 10.21 User aspirations from the household survey for allotments in Brentwood were:
- clean and litter free
 - well-kept grass
 - easy to get to the site
 - natural features
 - and nature conservation area.
- 10.22 The average quality score for allotment sites, based on scoring during site assessments was 54.3%.
- 10.23 The full context and justification for this standard is outlined in Appendix H.

LOCAL QUALITY STANDARD
"A clean and well-kept site, with minimal litter and that encourages sustainable development, healthy living and biodiversity. The site should have appropriate ancillary facilities to meet local needs and be easily accessible"

Accessibility standard

- 10.24 The accessibility of sites is paramount in maximising usage as well as providing an opportunity for all people to use the site. The local standard provides a realistic travel time/distance threshold, based on local needs that can assist in highlighting areas of deficiency, as well as ensuring that any new provision is placed in priority areas that are outside the recommended local accessibility catchment.
- 10.25 The most preferred method of transport by users and potential users was walking, with the calculated travel time being 15 minutes, applied to the whole of the Borough. The full justification can be found in Appendix I.

LOCAL ACCESSIBILITY STANDARD
15 minute walk time - (1.2km)

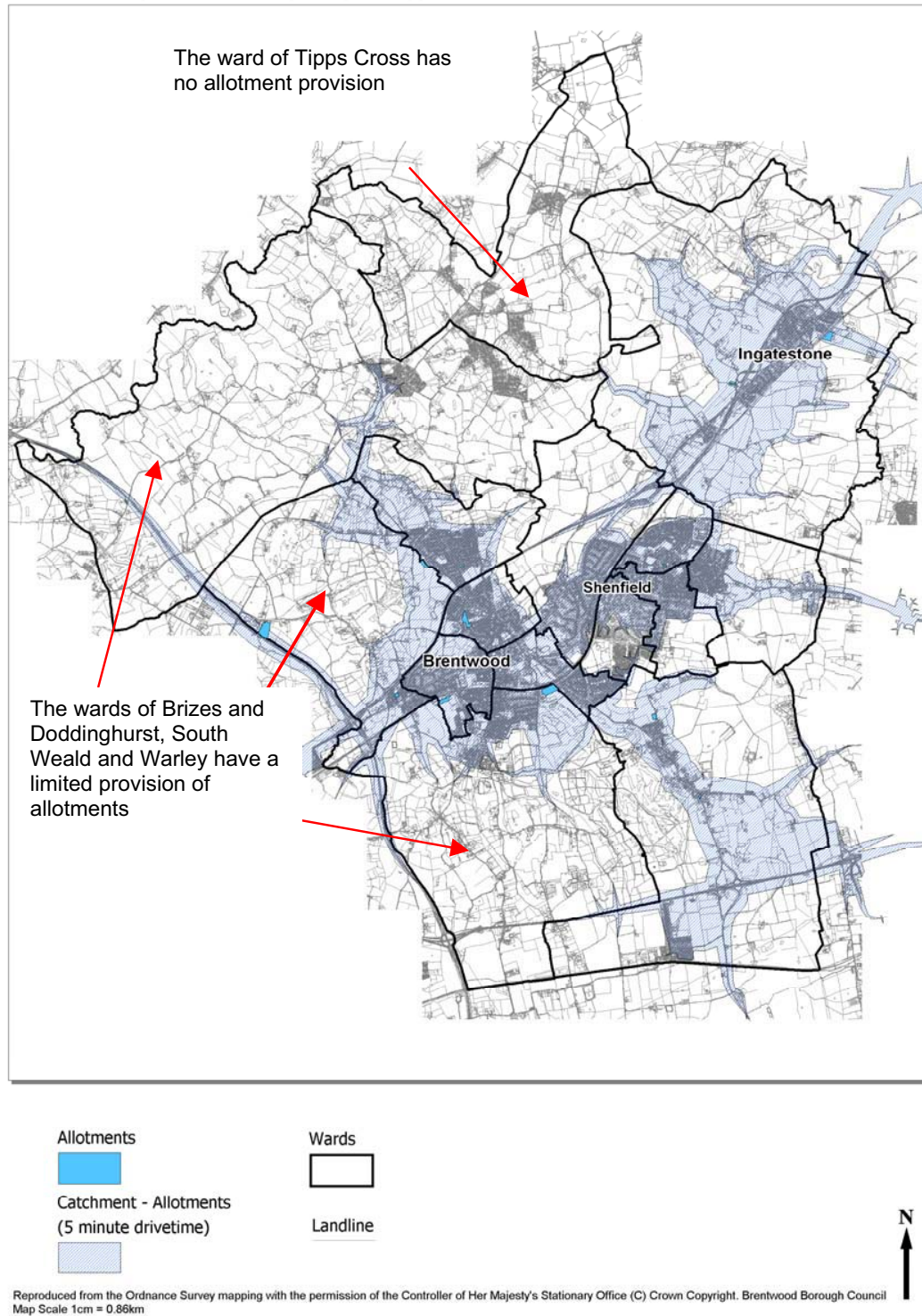
Applying provision standards – identifying geographical areas

- 10.26 In order to identify geographical areas of importance and those areas with required local needs we apply both the quantitative provision of allotments in Brentwood together with the local standard for accessibility. The quantity standards enable the identification of areas that do not meet the minimum provision standards, while the accessibility standards will help determine where those deficiencies are of high importance. Applying the standards together is a much more meaningful method of analysis than applying the standards separately and therefore helps with the prioritisation of sites.
- 10.27 The current supply of allotments in Brentwood matches the recommended local standard of 0.18ha per 1,000 population for this typology.
- 10.28 Projecting this forward to 2021, the level of existing provision across the Borough remains at 0.18ha per 1,000 population. This increase in population will not increase the number of areas that have a shortfall of allotments, however any further increase in population, and an increase in demand will represent a shortfall of allotments Borough-wide. Appendix G shows the full calculations for the quantitative supply of open spaces in the Borough.

SECTION 10 – ALLOTMENTS AND COMMUNITY GARDENS

Figure 10.1 Spatial distribution of allotment sites across the Borough

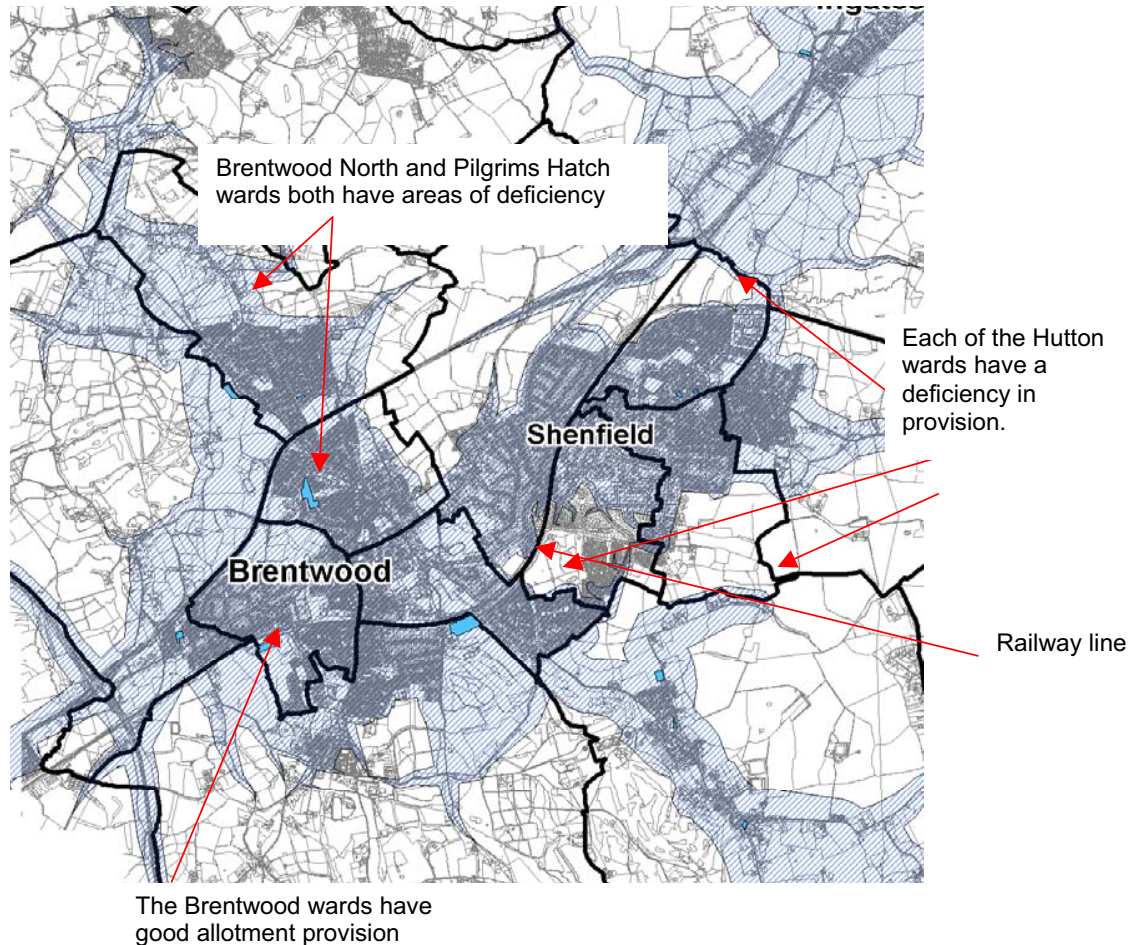
Overview Map: Wards and Open Space Type Catchments, Allotments



SECTION 10 – ALLOTMENTS AND COMMUNITY GARDENS

- 10.29 The rural areas of the Borough identified in Figure 10.1 have less demand for allotments, due to the reduced number of inhabitants and the majority of the land being agricultural.
- 10.30 Figure 10.2 highlights the key areas of deficiency within the more urban areas of the Borough.

Fig. 10.2 Spatial distribution of allotments and community gardens within the urban areas in Brentwood



- 10.31 Allotments are a demand led facility, and it should be noted that although areas of deficiency have been identified, this does not necessarily imply that there is a demand for more allotments. It is also worth noting that the railway line runs along the ward boundary south of Shenfield (as marked in Figure 10.2), which will impact on the drivetimes in that area.

SECTION 10 – ALLOTMENTS AND COMMUNITY GARDENS

Value assessment

- 10.32 Assessing quality and value is fundamental to effective planning. This can be done by simply comparing quality, accessibility and usage of sites. Most sites that have a high level of usage would normally have good or very good quality and accessibility ratings. Most sites with a low level of use would have average or poor quality and accessibility ratings. This is because the factors are related and interlinked. However there are variations from this, which suggests that these sites would need some further analysis.
- 10.33 The quality scores and accessibility scores range from good to very poor for both aspects.
- 10.34 Of the 15 allotment sites, four were considered to have high and significant usage. This indicates that they are operating at (or almost at) capacity and are therefore valued amenities to the local community. Two of these sites also had high quality and accessibility, indicating that these are highly valued sites that should be protected. These sites should set the benchmark for all other sites in the Borough. The sites are:
- Salmonds Grove Allotments (Site ID 716)
 - Ongar Road Allotments (Site ID 686).

ALLOT 2	The Council should protect Ongar Road Allotments as a high quality Council owned allotment site.
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- 10.35 The two sites with high and significant usage, and high quality, but with lower scores for accessibility are:
- Middle Road Allotments (Site ID 711)
 - Rectory Lane Allotments (Site ID 721).
- 10.36 These sites are of high value to the local community and should be prioritised for improvements to accessibility factors to ensure that the sites are accessible to all. Accessibility factors also consider entrance to site, signage, public transport, pedestrian and cycle access.
- 10.37 The site with the highest quality score is Bishops Hall Allotments (Site 473) which scored 76%.
- 10.38 Five sites scored high for quality and accessibility and are considered to have a usage rating of 'often'. These sites are of high value to the community but more could be done to increase usage. Before improvements are carried out, further analysis of the sites should take place in terms of demand levels and number of plots available and whether waiting lists are in place. These sites are:
- Bishops Hall Allotments (Site ID 473)
 - Hartswood Allotments (Site ID 81)
 - Crescent Road Allotments (Site ID 541)

SECTION 10 – ALLOTMENTS AND COMMUNITY GARDENS

- Stock Lane Allotments (Site ID 286)
 - River Road Allotments (Site ID 458).
- 10.39 Sites with low quality and low accessibility, but with a usage rating of 'often' should be prioritised for improvements to specific factors to quality and accessibility that will consequently improve the usage level. These sites are:
- Birkbeck Road Allotments (Site ID 219)
 - Honeypot Lane Allotments (Site ID 486)
 - Fielding Way Allotments (Site ID 218).

ALLOT 3	The Council should prioritise improvements to Birkbeck Road, Honeypot Lane and Fielding Way Allotments
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- 10.40 Roman Road Allotments (Site ID 327) scored low for quality, accessibility and usage. This site is therefore of low value to the local community. Should there be no further demand for an allotment site in this area of the Borough, and as the area is saturated with this typology of open space, it could be feasible to suggest that this site be re-designated.

Summary and recommendations

- 10.41 The Brentwood Community Strategy 2004-2009 includes a strategic objective for leisure and culture, which can be met by people making use of allotments in the Borough. The key objective is *"encouraging local people to pursue appropriate leisure activities in order to improve their personal well-being and quality of life, with consequent benefits for community well-being"*.
- 10.42 Allotments can play a part in achieving this, and should be implemented through 'providing the community with the opportunity to enjoy and benefit from their leisure time'.

Summary of recommendations for allotments in Brentwood

ALLOT 1	The present situation suggests that supply is not meeting the current demand in the Borough. There are some areas of deficiency, notably Doddinghurst, where it would be recommended a new site be allocated.
ALLOT 2	The Council should protect Ongar Road Allotments as a high quality Council owned allotment site.
ALLOT 3	The Council should prioritise improvements to Birkbeck Road, Honeypot Lane and Fielding Way Allotments.

SECTION 11

CEMETERIES AND CHURCHYARDS

Cemeteries and churchyards

Definition

- 11.1 Churchyards are encompassed within the walled boundary of a church and cemeteries are burial grounds outside the confines of a church. These include private burial grounds, local authority burial grounds and disused churchyards. The primary purpose of this type of open space is for burial of the dead and quiet contemplation, but also for the promotion of wildlife conservation and biodiversity.

Strategic context

- 11.2 Cemeteries and churchyards can be a significant open space provider in some areas, particularly in rural areas. In other areas they can represent a relatively minor resource in terms of the land, but are able to provide areas of nature conservation importance.
- 11.3 Some churchyards retain areas of unimproved grasslands and other various habitats. They can make a significant contribution to the provision of urban green space sometimes providing a sanctuary for wildlife in the urban settlements and often providing some historic value to the more rural landscapes.
- 11.4 Cemeteries and churchyards need to be considered as an important asset, including the value to the families of the deceased, peaceful areas for contemplation, a 'piece of history' and a sanctuary for wildlife.
- 11.5 The Council's Parks and Countryside Service Plan 2005/06, includes the objective to *"ensure that cemeteries and churchyards are well maintained, pleasant burial grounds"*.

Consultation

- 11.6 67% of respondents to the household survey indicated that churches and cemeteries were 'very important'. 38% of respondents suggested that they use this type of open space 'occasionally'.
- 11.7 Respondents to the household survey were asked which type of open space they use most frequently. Results were analysed to find out specific opinions relating to each type of open space. From 854 responses, only nine people indicated that they used cemeteries and churchyards most frequently, these specific results should therefore be carefully considered, as they are not representative. The following results are from frequent users of cemeteries and churchyards:
- three respondents considered vandalism to be a significant problem
 - litter was reported to be a significant problem by two respondents.

SECTION 11 – CEMETERIES AND CHURCHYARDS

- 11.8 Table 11.1 indicates the quality issues experienced at cemeteries and churchyards by those who use them most frequently. Frequent users are most satisfied with maintenance and management, boundaries and pathways, and less satisfied with parking.

Table 11.1 Levels of satisfaction of cemeteries and churchyards

	Very satisfied	Satisfied	Unsatisfied	Very unsatisfied	N/A
Play equipment	17%	0%	0%	0%	83%
Maintenance and management	25%	38%	13%	13%	13%
Lighting	0%	17%	0%	0%	83%
Boundaries (eg railings, hedges etc)	14%	57%	0%	0%	29%
Toilets	17%	17%	0%	0%	67%
Parking	29%	29%	29%	0%	14%
Provision of bins for litter	14%	43%	14%	14%	14%
Seats / benches	14%	43%	14%	0%	29%
Pathways	29%	43%	0%	0%	29%
Information and signage	0%	43%	0%	14%	43%
Planted and grassed areas	29%	29%	14%	14%	14%

Setting provision standards

Quantity standard

- 11.9 No Quantity Standards are to be set for Cemeteries and Churchyards. PPG17 Annex states *"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 will be required is a qualitative one."*

**RECOMMENDED
LOCAL STANDARD**

**No Local Standard to be
set**

- 11.10 For Cemeteries, PPG17 Annex states *"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 into a quantitative population-based provision standard."* This does not relate to a quantitative hectare per 1,000 population requirement.

Quality Standard

- 11.11 There are no national or existing standards for the quality aspect of churchyards and cemeteries.

SECTION 11 – CEMETERIES AND CHURCHYARDS

11.12 User aspirations from the household survey for cemeteries and churchyards in Brentwood were:

- well kept grass
- clean and litter free
- flower, trees and shrubs
- level surface (drainage)
- and provision of seating.

11.13 These key quality factors alongside other consultations have been the basis of the recommendation for churchyards and cemeteries.

11.14 The average quality percentage, derived from site assessments, for churches and cemeteries was 65.8%.

LOCAL QUALITY STANDARD

“A well maintained site with minimal litter and vandalism, provision of seating areas and varied vegetation that will encourage biodiversity in urban areas”

Accessibility standard

11.15 With regards to accessibility there are no definitive national or local standards for cemeteries and churchyards.

11.16 The average accessibility score, derived from site assessments for churches and cemeteries was 65%.

RECOMMENDED LOCAL STANDARD

No Local Standard to be set

11.17 There is no realistic requirement to set catchments for such typologies as they cannot easily be influenced through planning policy and implementation.

Applying provision standards – identifying geographical areas

11.18 Given that it is not appropriate to set any local quantity or accessibility standards it is also not appropriate to state areas of deficiency or need.

11.19 Cemeteries and churchyards although needed for the burial of the dead provide an open space to be used on an opportunity led basis, ie where there are churchyards and cemeteries there are opportunities for wildlife and use of the open space by the public for walking and relaxing.

11.20 It is however important to consider the quality of the provision of cemeteries and churchyards and the value of the current provision, striving to achieve the quality vision set for all churchyards and cemetery sites.

SECTION 11 – CEMETERIES AND CHURCHYARDS

Value Assessment

- 11.21 The wider benefits of churchyards are key and it is wrong to place a value on churchyards and cemeteries focusing solely on quality, accessibility and usage. In addition to offering a functional value, many cemeteries and churchyards have wider benefits including heritage, cultural and landscape values.
- 11.22 In some instances, particularly in the rural settlements, a churchyard is one of the only types of formal open space provision and becomes a focal point of the village.
- 11.23 There are 40 churches and cemeteries in Brentwood. Eleven of these sites score highly for quality and accessibility, with a usage scoring of 'often'. The highest scoring site for all factors is St Thomas of Canterbury Church (Site ID 90).
- 11.24 Two sites were considered to have high or significant usage, high quality and low accessibility. These sites are of high value to their local community, and should be prioritised for improvements to accessibility factors to ensure no members of the community are restricted by accessibility issues. These sites are:
- All Saints Church of England, Doddinghurst (Site ID 106)
 - St Nicholas' Church, Ingrave (Site ID 2).
- 11.25 Nine sites scored low or insignificant for usage, and the reasons for this should be further investigated. Three of these sites were also rated a low quality and accessibility score and should be prioritised for improvements in order to increase the usage levels, these sites are:
- Hatch Road Church (Site ID 669)
 - The Gospel Hall (Site ID 204)
 - St Helen's Roman Catholic Cathedral (Site ID 89).
- 11.26 Lorne Road Cemetery (Site ID 75) was considered to have 'no usage' and scored very low marks for quality and accessibility. This is now a closed site and no longer used for burials. It is managed as a conservation site.

Summary

- 11.27 Whilst required for the burial of the dead, cemeteries and churchyards are a significant open space provider in the Borough and should be considered an important asset particularly in the more rural areas.

Summary of recommendations for cemeteries and churchyards in Brentwood

CC1	Sites scoring below the average quality score should be improved. Where there are additional problems with access, these should also be prioritised for improvement.
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SECTION 12

GREEN CORRIDORS AND CIVIC SPACES

Green corridors

Definition

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

PPG17 – the role of green corridors

- 12.2 With regards to green corridors the emphasis of PPG17 is on urban areas. It uses the typology from the Urban Green Spaces Taskforce Report that is an 'urban typology'.
- 12.3 Furthermore, elements of PPG17 are contradictory to the Companion Guide on this issue, where despite PPG17 suggesting that all corridors, including those in remote rural settlements should be included, the Companion Guide suggests that unless a green corridor is used as a transport link between facilities i.e. home and school, town and sports facility etc, it should not be included within an audit.
- 12.4 Although the role that all green corridors play in the provision of open space and recreation within the Borough is recognised, the focus is on important urban corridors and public rights of way.

Strategic context

- 12.5 The Greengrid Strategy has been written by the Thames Gateway South Essex partnership, and is concerned with developing a network of open spaces and green links through Thames Gateway South Essex. The key aims of the strategy are to:
- provide a holistic and long term vision for the sustainable future development and management of the South Essex area
 - define an environmental infrastructure that promotes the establishment and management of appropriate character settings
 - provide the context for development over the long term.
- 12.6 The Greengrid Strategy is important for Brentwood as it identifies Weald Country Park and Thorndon Country Park as sites within the network. Thames Chase is a Community Forest, and a partner in the Greengrid Partnership. The long term aim of the project is to 'renew and regenerate the landscape at the edge of East London and South Essex by creating Thames Chase, the community forest: a varied wooded landscape for local people to influence, create, use, enjoy and cherish.' The work of the Thames Chase partnership covers six key areas:
- creating new woodlands
 - managing existing woodlands
 - creating and improving access

SECTION 12 – GREEN CORRIDORS AND CIVIC SPACES

- involving local people
 - conserving and enhancing the natural environment
 - working in partnership and attracting funding.
- 12.7 As a partner within the Greengrid Partnership these key areas will be targeted for improvements. There are over 56 miles of paths on the publicly accessible sites. Thames Chase is seeking to connect existing and new sites with 'greenways', namely off-road routes for pedestrians, cyclists, horse riders and those with disabilities.
- 12.8 The Brentwood Parks and Countryside Service Plan 2005/6 includes the objective to manage the network of 150 miles of Public Rights of Way in the Borough to allow open access to residents and visitors. This will include practical volunteer projects involving members of the local community in this objective.
- 12.9 The Brentwood Community Strategy 2004-2009 also commits to encouraging *'the use and development of transport facilities which have less reliance on cars and less impact on the environment'*. In relation to green corridors this is to be achieved by *'encouraging more travel by cycling and walking through Green Travel Plans'*.
- 12.10 The Brentwood Replacement Local Plan (Adopted August 2005) commits to promoting the widespread use of Travel Plans, which include Green Travel Plans. These plans will inform organisations how it is proposed to reduce car usage, increase the use of public transport, cycling and walking.
- 12.11 Cycling is addressed as a separate transport issue within the Local Plan. It is stated that encouragement and support for greater use of cycling as a mode of transport is an important element of a more sustainable transport strategy. Brentwood is recognised as currently having low cycle usage, and few cycle routes. A commitment to investigating opportunities for developing more safe cycle routes will be pursued and proposals for new cycle routes are set out in policy and identified on the proposal map.
- 12.12 The Local Plan also describes the development of new routes, in particular bridleways, in conjunction with Essex County Council and the Thames Chase Project Team linking Warley to Tyler's Common and Cranham. These 'Greenways' will primarily be recreational routes.
- 12.13 The Local Plan considers walking and pedestrian facilities and recognises that the promotion of walking as a means of transport will increase social equality, improve health and reduce pollution.

Consultation

- 12.14 51% of respondents to the household survey indicated there are 'nearly enough' or 'not enough' green corridors in the Borough. Members of the public also supported this opinion at the drop-in sessions, specifically in relation to the provision of cycle paths.
- 12.15 88% of respondents to the household survey suggested that green corridors were important. Green corridors were used by most respondents (22%) on a daily basis, and 29% use them on a weekly basis.

SECTION 12 – GREEN CORRIDORS AND CIVIC SPACES

12.16 Respondents to the household survey were asked which type of open space they use most frequently. Results were analysed to find out specific opinions relating to each type of open space. The following results are from frequent users of green corridors:

- litter and dog-fouling were considered to be the most significant problems
- key aspirations identified were clean and litter free, clear footpaths, nature features, nature conservation area and well-kept grass
- overall, respondents were satisfied with accessibility; there was less satisfaction with accessibility by public transport and cycleways.

12.17 Table 12.1 indicates the levels of satisfaction experienced by frequent users of green corridors. Users were most satisfied with boundaries and pathways, and less satisfied with toilet provision and bins for litter.

Table 12.1 Satisfaction levels of green corridors

	<i>Very satisfied</i>	<i>Satisfied</i>	<i>Unsatisfied</i>	<i>Very unsatisfied</i>
Play equipment	19%	59%	19%	4%
Maintenance and management	11%	69%	20%	0%
Lighting	13%	63%	15%	10%
Boundaries (eg railings, hedges etc)	11%	83%	6%	0%
Toilets	6%	43%	37%	14%
Parking	10%	40%	30%	20%
Provision of bins for litter	10%	47%	33%	10%
Seats / benches	11%	59%	27%	4%
Pathways	14%	70%	16%	0%
Information and signage	12%	61%	25%	2%
Planted and grassed areas	22%	72%	5%	0%

Current position

12.18 Brentwood currently has no recognised formal green corridors. However, there are 150+ miles of Public Rights of Way (PROW) within the Borough. There are three main waterways in Brentwood that have been included in the audit, these are:

- River Roding (Site ID 251)
- River Wid (Site ID 252/253).

Setting provision standards

- 12.19 In setting local standards for green corridors there is a need to take into account any national or local standards, current provision, other Local Authority standards for appropriate comparison, site assessments and consultation on local needs. Full indication of consultation and justifications for the recommended local standards are provided within Appendix G, H and I. The recommended local standards have been summarised below in context with the green corridor sites in Brentwood.

Quantity standard

- 12.20 The Annex A of PPG17 – Open Space Typology 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 proportion of land in an area which it will be desirable to allocate for roads”.*

**RECOMMENDED
LOCAL STANDARD**

No Local Standard Set

- 12.21 It is therefore recommended that no provision standard should be set. PPG17 continues to state that:

“Instead planning policies 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”.

Quality standard

- 12.22 The Countryside Agency has issued guidance on what the user should expect to find in terms of quality on green corridor sites, including, a path provided by the protection and reinforcement of existing vegetation; ground not soft enough to allow a horse or cycle to sink into it and a path on unvegetated natural surfaces. There are currently no local standards for this typology.
- 12.23 Aspirations for green corridors were derived from results from the household survey and should be viewed in the context of public footpaths and bridleways from a public point of view, as well as the more strategic level of the Borough’s rivers. User aspirations for green corridors in Brentwood are to be:
- clean and litter free
 - clear footpaths
 - natural features
 - nature conservation area
 - and well kept grass.

SECTION 12 – GREEN CORRIDORS AND CIVIC SPACES

- 12.24 Provision of toilets and bins for litter were also mentioned as potential improvements to these sites. These key quality factors alongside other consultations have been the basis of the recommendation for green corridors.

LOCAL QUALITY STANDARD

“Clean, well maintained, safe routes with clear, level and well drained paths, which are enclosed and reinforced by natural vegetation and well signposted. Green corridors should provide links which effectively connect major open spaces and provide both a natural wildlife habitat and ancillary accommodation such as seating and toilets where appropriate.”

- 12.25 Green corridor sites in Brentwood have not been assessed through the site assessments due to their linear nature. Therefore there is no set recommended minimum quality benchmark. In applying this standard, an assessment of these sites would provide a realistic base in improving green corridor sites in Brentwood.

Accessibility standard

- 12.26 There is no realistic requirement to set catchments for such an open space typology as they cannot be easily influenced through planning policy and implementation and are very much opportunity-led rather than demand-led.

LOCAL ACCESSIBILITY STANDARD

No Local Standard Set

Links with Health Agenda

- 12.27 Green corridors represent an important chance to link open spaces within the urban area and to promote transport by cycle and walking. These opportunities for informal recreation will help towards keeping the public active and improving health within the local area. The latest government plan published by the Department for Transport entitled *“Walking and Cycling: an action plan”* states:

“Walking and cycling are good for our health, good for getting us around, good for our public spaces and good for our society. For all these reasons we need to persuade more people to choose to walk and cycle more often”

- 12.28 It is therefore important to address any qualitative deficiencies of existing green corridors and to capitalise on any opportunities to increase and enhance the existing network.

Applying provision standards

- 12.29 Given that it is not appropriate to set any local quantity or accessibility standards, it is also not appropriate to state areas of deficiency or need. However, there are certain areas within Brentwood that have been identified through analysis of other typologies that could potentially benefit from the provision of green corridors, or improved quality and accessibility of green corridors to aid increased level of usage to other types.
- 12.30 This is particularly relevant to the accessibility issues raised in reaching Weald and Thorndon Country Park. Improved green networks from urban centres to the key open space sites would be welcomed by the local community and will aid reaching wider agenda targets such as improved healthy living.

SECTION 12 – GREEN CORRIDORS AND CIVIC SPACES

Summary and recommendations

- 12.31 The rural nature of the majority of the Borough demands strategic green linkages. There are opportunities to develop pathways along the routes of the rivers, as well as developing existing PROW to key cycle routes.
- 12.32 The Borough has a wealth of footpaths and this existing network should be developed to enhance the accessibility of the countryside to the residential areas. This will encourage more residents to utilise the green networks and could impact on the amount of road traffic, whilst also increasing the healthy living opportunities for residents.

Summary of recommendations for green corridors in Brentwood

GC1	Improve green network, with linkages to key open spaces, in particular the Country Parks.
GC2	Promote healthy living through opting to use footpaths and cycle routes.

Civic spaces

Definition

- 12.33 Civic spaces include civic and market squares and other hard surfaced community areas designed for pedestrians with the primary purpose of providing a setting for civic buildings, public demonstrations and community events.

Strategic context and consultation

- 12.34 Civic spaces can be important open space in some areas particularly in urban areas and town centres.
- 12.35 As PPG17 states *“the purpose of civic spaces, mainly in town and city centres, is to provide a setting for civic buildings, and opportunities for open air markets, demonstrations and civic events. They are normally provided on an opportunistic and urban design led basis. Accordingly it is for planning authorities to promote urban design frameworks for their town and city centre area”*.
- 12.36 Civic spaces need to be considered as an important open space asset for the residents in towns and settlements across Brentwood, as it is the only open space type that is not considered greenspace.
- 12.37 There are three sites in the Borough that are considered within the civic space typology for PPG17. These are:
- St Thomas A Beckett Chapel Ruins (Site ID 530)
 - Shenfield War Memorial (Site ID 38)
 - Kings Road/ High Street Civic Space (Site ID 334).

SECTION 12 – GREEN CORRIDORS AND CIVIC SPACES

- 12.38 These sites scored highly for quality and accessibility with Shenfield War Memorial being used 'often' and the other two sites having a usage level of high or significant. The quality and accessibility standards for all sites should set the benchmark for any new civic space provision.

Summary and recommendations

- 12.39 The quality of the civic spaces in Brentwood is high and should set the standard for new sites. Civic spaces play an important role in towns and within communities, providing a centrepiece for the town. These civic spaces can also provide a venue for community activities and events.

Summary of recommendations for civic spaces in Brentwood

CIV 1	Provision of civic spaces should be considered as part of urban development. Any new sites should, as a minimum, meet the standards of the existing civic spaces.
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SECTION 13

RESOURCING OPEN SPACE

Resourcing open space

Introduction

- 13.1 CABE Space champion well designed buildings and public space and are seen as the leading authority of green space issues in the United Kingdom. They make the point within their 'manifesto' (see Appendix F) that:
- a strategic vision is essential
 - political commitment is essential
 - and to start by making the case for high quality green spaces in-house (persuading other departments is key – high priority).
- 13.2 This will be essential to gain any financial support (both internally and externally) for improvements to existing provision or new provision.

Sustainability of funding

- 13.3 There is a high risk of services becoming dependent upon external funds which cannot be guaranteed in the future. Although this increased dependence helps to increase opportunities, there are serious concerns in the event of funding applications being unsuccessful. This would mean a reduction in opportunities for local people, having raised their expectations.
- 13.4 There is a significant risk that, without a clear strategy based upon thorough assessments, short-term budget reductions could damage the Council's ability to deliver long-term improvement.

Decisions for Brentwood Borough:

- should the general standard of maintenance be reduced across all types of open space or should there be wider differential maintenance regimes between the different categories of open space? What is the ideal balance?
 - can the Council sell open space to increase maintenance budgets whilst still meeting any recommended standards?
 - if almost all the parks and open spaces budget is tied up with maintaining existing provision, what is the scope to respond to changing needs?
- 13.5 There are always improvements, enhancements and new provision that could be made to improve the network of open space. However many would require funding of some form.
- 13.6 Identified priorities can be resourced in a number of ways. Initially it may be necessary to allocate funding from within existing budgets. This funding will be used to support other funding which is available from external sources, much of which will come from governmental organisations or quangos, which require match-funding from local authorities.

SECTION 13 – RESOURCING OPEN SPACE

13.7 Potential sources of income are outlined below.

1. Section 106 planning agreements

13.8 In particular, Section 106 agreements can be used to achieve environmental improvements. Once a strategy framework has been established, the process of obtaining these improvements will be enhanced because they can be used to achieve specific purposes, for instance:

- by opening linear route ways to connect green spaces
- providing walking and cycling routes
- obtaining open space in areas of deficiency
- funding open space improvements

13.9 There are maintenance considerations to be taken into account; ie significant costs may arise, particularly if new open space is acquired. It may, therefore, be necessary to obtain funding in the form of a commuted sum wherever possible to cover these ongoing costs.

13.10 It should of course be noted that such agreements have to meet the test of Circular 05/2005 'Planning Obligations', and that developers should not be required to pay for facilities which are needed solely in order to resolve existing deficiencies. Some councils have used part of the contributions towards revenue 'Development Officer' posts; eg in North Nottinghamshire.

2. Sale of Council land

13.11 Generating and reinvesting resources obtained from land which is surplus to requirements is a principle that has been successfully adopted in the London Borough of Bromley, and by Glasgow City Council (through its Parks and Open Spaces Strategy).

13.12 This is, however, likely to be a long process, and ultimately may prove difficult to achieve. If considered feasible at some future stage, reinvestment would:

- secure political credibility for the sale of land
- provide sufficient funding to carry out significant rather than purely minor open space improvements. It should, however, be realised that the process may take two/three years to introduce, owing to planning, legal and other restrictions which could delay its introduction

13.13 Also, this mechanism is likely to create public controversy and its success depends on how the process and sale of land is conveyed to the public in terms of benefits and outcomes.

3. Employment related planning agreements

13.14 A number of local authorities now seek contributions in relation to employment uses. Provision may be made for the likely need for recreational and leisure facilities, including open space, in association with new commercial developments. Where a site cannot physically, or appropriately, accommodate the required open space, the balance may be sought through financial contributions towards the future provision of new, or the enhancement of existing, off-site facilities.

13.15 A summary of key principles in seeking such contributions include the following:

- obligations can relate to office, shop, retail and retail warehouse uses
- local authorities normally employ thresholds, a common one being 1000 square metres of gross floor space
- assumed or actual occupancy is taken from local survey figures
- authorities may request full contributions (e.g. Windsor and Maidenhead) or reduced contributions based on percentage of staff from outside the area (e.g. South Northamptonshire) or the percentage of the day assumed to be spent in the area (e.g. London Borough of Camden)
- other uses for which contributions may be sought include hotels, hostels and halls of residence (e.g. London Borough of Camden), holiday parks, static caravan sites and dwellings subject to holiday let conditions (e.g. North Devon).

4. Use of redundant buildings

13.16 Sympathetic use of redundant facilities for leisure and recreational purposes is also a possibility. This could include the establishment of small commercial sports facilities (eg tennis) in parks. Another example could be the use of a redundant sports pavilion as a children's crèche or nursery.

5. Business funding/sponsorships

13.17 Examples from other local authorities include sponsorship of Cardiff City Council's events and festivals programme, and the Body Shop Playground Project in Auchinlea Park, Glasgow.

6. Partnership arrangements with the voluntary sector

13.18 This could include the formation of further parks "Friends" groups. An example is that of Rossmere Park, Hartlepool, where the community was encouraged to take ownership. The park was promoted and became heavily-used, attracting investment from funding bodies.

7. Lottery funding

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

8. Review of pricing

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

9. Living spaces

- 13.21 The “Living Spaces” grant scheme was launched in May 2003, and covers schemes with a value of £1,000 to £100,000. It may be suitable for small local parks, and is open to existing neighbourhood groups. The scheme supports:
- improving local parks
 - creating or improving pocket parks or community gardens
 - creating or improving play or seating areas
 - cleaning up neglected residential land
 - restoring village greens
 - carrying out planting schemes on estates or verges
 - creating or improving nature areas or city farms
 - restoring local cemeteries
 - restoring paths, gateways, ponds or boundaries.

SECTION 13 – RESOURCING OPEN SPACE

- 13.22 It must be noted that the scheme will be accepting no new applications with immediate effect. The decision has been made to ensure that the scheme can support as many existing applications as possible within the limits of the funding still available. Further information can be found at <http://www.living-spaces.org.uk/index.html>

10. The Landfill Tax Credit Scheme

- 13.23 The Landfill Tax Credit Scheme was revised in April 2003, and allows registered landfill operators to contribute 6.5% of their annual landfill tax liability to environmental bodies approved by the organisation ENTRUST.
- 13.24 The scheme must be used for social, environmental and community based projects complying with specific “approved objects.” These objects are the provision and maintenance of public amenity, and restoration and repair of buildings open to the public with historical or architectural significance.
- 13.25 The project must be within 10 miles of a landfill/extraction operation.

11. Local Heritage Initiatives

- 13.26 Local Heritage Initiatives are to assist local communities in the preservation of their environment, landmarks and traditions including archaeological, natural, built and industrial heritage. A community group could investigate and celebrate a historic park, prepare a public exhibition in a park, and repair a feature. Up to 100% of project costs between values of £3,000 and £25,000 are payable.
- 13.27 “Your Heritage” Grants are available from the Heritage Lottery Fund, and are for projects of between £5,000 and £50,000 in value.
- 13.28 English Heritage supports the Heritage Grant Fund for historic parks and gardens where there is a significant risk of losing important landscape features.

12. Lottery Small Grants Scheme

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

13. Barclays Sitesavers

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

14. The Tree Council

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

15. The Esmee Fairburn Foundation

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

16. Others

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

Capital funding for sports facilities

- 13.37 Areas for improvement identified in the site visits may require either capital or revenue expenditure (or both). There are several potential sources of financial aid. These include:
- Football Foundation
 - Sport England Community Investment Fund
 - Rugby Football Foundation

Football Foundation

- 13.38 The Foundation is dedicated to revitalising the grass roots of the game, constructing modern football infrastructure creating facilities that are fit for the game in the 21st century. The maximum grant for a capital project is £1 million. Grants of this size will only be awarded in exceptional circumstances. The percentage level of support is variable, but in exceptional circumstances could reach 90%. (See <http://www.footballfoundation.org.uk/> for more information).

Sport England Community Investment Fund

13.39 The Sport England Community Investment Fund is used for funding applications over £5000. Projects that are eligible for funding are assessed against the priorities of the national framework for sport. However, decisions regarding funds are actually made by the nine regional sports boards and applications must also fit in with the regional sports plan.

13.40 The East Sport England region only has limited funds for the current year. Therefore large applications are unlikely to succeed. The criteria by which any applications will be judged include:

- directly increase participation in priority groups
- secured or have strong indication of securing significant levels of partnership funding
- come from areas of social deprivation and that particularly benefit isolated rural communities
- develop more than one sport or activity.

13.41 (See <http://www.sportengland.org/> for more information).

Rugby Football Foundation

13.42 In January 2003, the Rugby Football Union (RFU) announced the commencement of this fund. Community rugby clubs can apply for grants and/or interest-free loans to fund capital facility projects which contribute to the recruitment and retention of players. This funding is available to clubs participating at Level 5 or below.

13.43 There are two different elements to the fund:

- ground Match Grant Scheme: this provides easy-to-access grant funding for capital playing projects which contribute to the recruitment and retention of players. A list of projects that qualify for a grant will be sent to clubs on request as part of the application pack. All projects that qualify for a grant also qualify for the loan (see below). At present, clubs can apply for between £1,500 and £5,000, which they must equally match (ie 50:50). Clubs may only apply for one grant per project.
- interest-free loan schemes: The interest-free loan scheme provides loans to clubs to help finance capital projects which contribute to the recruitment and retention of players. The key features of the scheme are:
 - loans will be interest-free (though if a club defaults on a capital payment, the whole loan will be subject to interest until the outstanding amounts are paid)
 - the maximum loan available is £100,000
 - the maximum loan period will be 15 years, including an initial two-year capital holiday

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- security will be required for the loan scheme in the form of either a charge over property or personal guarantees.

13.44 It should be noted that clubs may apply for both a grant and a loan for the same project (providing that the appropriate conditions are met). A club could, therefore, apply for a maximum grant of £5,000 (providing it matches it with £5,000 of other funding) and a maximum loan of £100,000. Grants and loans will be awarded by the Trustees of the Rugby Football Foundation.

13.45 Information packs are available from the Secretary of the Rugby Football Foundation, Graham Hancock. He can be contacted on 020 8831 6538 or by e-mail (grahamhancock@rfu.com) or at the Rugby Football Foundation, Rugby House, Rugby Road, Twickenham, Middlesex, TW1 1DS.

SECTION 14

PLANNING IMPLEMENTATION

Planning implementation

Introduction - key planning policy framework

- 14.1 The Companion Guide to PPG17 sets out five steps which should be followed when undertaking open space, sport and recreation assessments and audits. Step 5 provides guidance on drafting planning policies. When considering planning policies, the Companion Guide suggests that four strategic options should be identified:
1. existing provision to be protected
 2. existing provision to be enhanced
 3. areas in which new provision is required
 4. opportunities for new, enhanced or relocated provision.
- 14.2 The Companion Guide suggests that policy should:
- protect or enhance existing open spaces or sport and recreational facilities of value (or potential value) to the local community
 - re-locate poorly located but necessary open spaces or sport and recreation facilities
 - address circumstances in which the planning authority may allow the redevelopment of an existing open space or sport and recreation facility
 - require new provision to fill identified gaps in existing provision
 - address additional on-site or off-site provision as a consequence of new developments, together with how the authority will assess any related commuted maintenance or establishment sums.
- 14.3 The Government's Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act commenced on 28 September 2004. The Act sets out to reform the planning system and includes the introduction of overarching Local Development Frameworks (LDFs) which will consist of a portfolio of Local Development Documents (LDDs). There will be three types of LDDs, namely, Development Plan Documents (DPDs) to replace local plans and unitary development plans, Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) to replace Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPGs) and Statements of Community Involvement (SCIs).
- 14.4 Local authorities are required to have adopted LDFs in place three years after commencement of the Act and LDFs will replace existing local plans.
- 14.5 A strategic open space policy should be contained within the Core Strategy/ Development Control Policies DPD. More detailed policies addressing open space and the links with new development may, if appropriate, be contained within the Site Specific Allocations DPD.
- 14.6 Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) provide more detailed policy guidance and ensure a clear framework for developers. SPDs allow for regular updates and amendments. Formulae and worked examples should be provided within SPDs to show the scale of both on and off-site financial contributions.

14.7 Analysis of existing guidance on open space leads to the conclusion that:

- all new housing developments (even single dwelling developments) should contribute towards open space provision
- local standards should be set for different open space typologies
- consideration should be given to providing formulae and worked examples within a SPD to show the scale of off-site financial contributions
- if financial contributions are insufficient to provide new recreation space, special area-based open space funds should be considered to contribute towards Borough-wide projects. These funds should be used to enhance existing provision or provide new provision in areas of need as and when required. A list of projects and estimated costs contained within the SPD, which can be regularly updated, should be considered. These should be related to priorities contained in this strategy.

14.8 At the national level, government planning policy makes clear that local authority standards covering the provision of all forms of open space, sport and recreation facility should, as a minimum, be able to satisfy or to help answer:

- how much is needed?
- what quality should it be?
- how easy should provision be to reach and use for those for whom it is designed?

14.9 It is also important for adopted standards to embrace:

- ‘Best Value’ criteria including the requirement to consult with local communities
- the legal responsibilities placed on outdoor playing space providers for the safety of those using their playing spaces
- specific mandatory standards
- relevant local and national policies, strategies and advice
- robustness in terms of standing up to/scrutiny interrogation at a planning inquiry.

Review of Local Plan policies

14.10 A review of current relevant Local Plan policies is set out on the following pages. General comments are:

Table 14.1 – Brentwood Borough Council Adopted Replacement Local Plan 2005 – existing policy assessment

Relevant policies	Key policy issue	Recommendation
GB2	<p>When considering proposals for development in the Green Belt, the local planning authority will need to be satisfied that they do not conflict with the purposes of including land in the Green Belt and do not harm the openness of the Green Belt.</p>	<p>Retain policy.</p> <p>Key recommendations from this study include protecting and enhancing natural and semi-natural sites within the Green Belt.</p> <p>Investigate opportunities and improve public access to these sites, where appropriate.</p>
GB22	<p>Proposals for the use of land for outdoor participatory sport and recreation, will only be allowed in the Green Belt where all the following criteria are met:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) the proposal would not have an unacceptable detrimental impact on other persons enjoyment of the countryside ii) it would not result in the permanent loss of the best or most versatile agricultural land in accordance with policy IR5 iii) it would not have an unacceptable detrimental impact on a site of special scientific interest, a county wildlife site or an area of special landscape iv) it would not require unacceptably prominent ancillary facilities eg fences, floodlighting, car parking etc. <p>Applications will be considered against the criteria set out in Policy GB2.</p>	<p>Retain policy.</p> <p>As above, key recommendations from this study include protecting and enhancing natural and semi-natural sites within the Green Belt.</p> <p>It has been recommended that a playing pitch strategy is undertaken to determine specific demand for individual outdoor pitch sports.</p>

SECTION 14 – PLANNING IMPLEMENTATION

Relevant policies	Key policy issue	Recommendation
H3	In addition to the requirements of Policy CP4 (provision of infrastructure and community facilities), where appropriate, the council will seek to incorporate through negotiation new community facilities within new residential development, where a local need has been identified.	Retain policy. PPG17 highlights the need for localised community provision and this study supports this, specifically with regards to children's play and amenity space.
GB23	Proposals for small scale buildings and facilities required for outdoor participatory sport and recreation will only be allowed where there is a justifiable need for such buildings and facilities. Any social facilities incidental to the primary use of the site will be restricted in size and will be solely for use of persons participating in the recreational activity on the site and, shall be permanently retained as such. Where any proposal is acceptable in principle the application will be judged against the requirements set out in GB2 (development criteria).	Retain policy. Ancillary accommodation supporting outdoor sports facility sites is important in supporting and encouraging usage of these sites. This policy also links to GB2.
GB24	Changes of use to golf courses will only be allowed where existing buildings are available within the site for conversion for clubhouse and other directly related purposes or where any new buildings would replace existing structures and where the criteria in policies GB23 and GB24 are met. Footpaths and bridleways, where appropriate, shall be provided as part of the golf course layout. The layout should have due regard to the existing public rights of way network and accommodate existing routes.	Retain policy. The study identified that the borough is well provided for in terms of golf courses. Key recommendations from this study include the need to enhance accessibility to open space sites in the borough, specifically through green corridor routes.

SECTION 14 – PLANNING IMPLEMENTATION

Relevant policies	Key policy issue	Recommendation
GB27	<p>The Council will safeguard the existence and amenity of rights of way including footpaths, bridleways, byways and minor rural roads and will, through its countryside management service and encouragement of local land owners, seek to improve access to the countryside through establishment and maintenance of footpaths and bridleways and through voluntary agreements to manage Green Belt land on or near the rural-urban fringe.</p> <p>See also policies T17, LT15 and LT16</p>	<p>Retain policy.</p> <p>Key recommendations from this study include improving the green network, within the Borough. Specifically linkages between key open spaces, such as the Country Parks.</p>
LT1	<p>Areas of strategic public open space at the former Warley and St Faiths Hospital sites, Merrymeade Park and Hutton Country Park shall be managed and improved to provide for greater public access and further opportunities for informal recreation.</p>	<p>Retain policy.</p> <p>Key recommendations from the study, include the need to prioritise accessibility and qualitative improvements to Hutton Country Park and Merrymeades Park.</p>
LT2	<p>Within the built-up areas of the Brentwood borough, permission will not be granted for the development of land allocated on the proposals map as protected urban open space or other previously undeveloped land.</p>	<p>Retain policy.</p> <p>Key recommendations from this study centre on the need to protect existing open space provision, specifically amenity greenspace within residential areas where existing provision is below the recommended minimum level of provision.</p>
LT3	<p>In areas deficient in open space facilities the Council will seek to achieve additional provision through, inter alia, acquisition of land, joint use of existing facilities and dedication of existing private open space for public use by negotiation with landowners.</p>	<p>Retain policy.</p> <p>Key recommendations from the study include the need to address residential areas of the borough that lie outside of an accessible catchment area of the an open space site. This specifically includes the feasibility of providing new amenity greenspace and children's play provision.</p>

SECTION 14 – PLANNING IMPLEMENTATION

Relevant policies	Key policy issue	Recommendation
LT4	<p>Residential development or redevelopment, shall make provision for public open space that is made necessary and is fair and reasonably related to the proposed development. Such provision should be made on site unless the payment of a commuted sum for provision to be made in a more appropriate location is considered acceptable (as set out in Appendix 5 of the Local Plan).</p> <p>The proportion of the site area to be set aside for public open space will be assessed with regard to the guidelines set out in Appendix 5, to identified local needs and the suitability of the site in terms of size, location and character and the form of the proposed development.</p> <p>All open space should be laid out and equipped, as appropriate at the developer's expense and, where principally of benefit to the development itself, dedicated to the Council with a financial contribution to ongoing maintenance.</p>	<p>Retain policy.</p> <p>Key recommendations from the study include seeking new provision as appropriate through new residential developments. Guidance is provided within this study as to how developer contributions may be calculated.</p>
LT5	<p>Displacement of open land uses from within built-up areas into the green belt to provide for further building will not be permitted.</p>	<p>Retain policy.</p> <p>Key recommendations from this study centre on the need to protect existing open space provision in the Borough.</p>
LT7	<p>Provision of additional small scale, local cultural, entertainment and/or leisure facilities outside the town centre inset area will be allowed subject to the development being easily accessible by foot, cycle and public transport.</p>	<p>Retain policy.</p> <p>Key recommendations from the study reference the need to improve accessibility to all open space, sport and recreation facilities within the Borough.</p>

SECTION 14 – PLANNING IMPLEMENTATION

Relevant policies	Key policy issue	Recommendation
LT13	Where appropriate footpaths and cycleways should be provided in any new development to link into the existing right of way network and to afford safe, appropriately lit and convenient pedestrian/cyclist access to nearby facilities. Any footpaths so provided should be fully accessible to the disabled.	As per GB27, retain policy. Key recommendations from this study include improving the green network, within the Borough. Specifically linkages between key open spaces, such as the Country Parks.
LT14	The Council will develop a network of recreational routes throughout the Borough, which will afford safe, and accessible links for those on foot, cycle and horse.	As per GB28 and LT13, retain policy. Key recommendations from this study, include improving the green network within the Borough, including the quality and safety of green corridor routes.
C1	Development which would have an unacceptable detrimental impact, directly or indirectly, on a site of special scientific interest will not be permitted unless the reasons for the development clearly outweigh the value of the site itself and the national policy to safeguard the intrinsic nature conservation value of the national network of such sites, and there are no reasonable alternative means of meeting the development need.	As per GB2, retain policy. Key recommendations from this study include protecting and enhancing natural and semi-natural sites within the Green Belt.
C2	Where appropriate, areas of local conservation value, which would benefit from positive management, will be designated as local nature reserves.	As per GB2 and C1, retain policy. Key recommendations from this study include protecting and enhancing natural and semi-natural sites.

SECTION 14 – PLANNING IMPLEMENTATION

Relevant policies	Key policy issue	Recommendation
C3	Development, including changes of use, that would have an unacceptable detrimental impact, directly or indirectly, upon a county wildlife site, local nature reserves or any other site or natural feature of conservation interest (and their inter-relationship with each other) will not be permitted unless it can be clearly demonstrated that there are reasons for the proposal which outweigh the need to safeguard the substantive nature conservation value of the site or feature.	As per GB2, C1 and C2, retain policy. Key recommendations from this study include protecting and enhancing natural and semi-natural sites within the Green Belt.
C6	Existing woodlands should be retained with management appropriate to age, use, location and scientific interest. In any management scheme it is essential that the visual diversity, historical and ecological values of the woodland are safeguarded, and, where possible, enhanced.	As per GB2, C1 and C3, retain policy. Key recommendations from this study include protecting and enhancing natural and semi-natural sites within the Green Belt.
C5	In proposals for development, existing trees, hedges, woods, ponds, watercourses and other natural features should be retained, with new landscape works required to enhance any new development	As per GB2, C1, C3 and C5 retain policy. Key recommendations from this study include protecting and enhancing natural and semi-natural sites within the Green Belt.
C9	The Council will seek to conserve, enhance and manage ancient landscapes and designated parks and gardens of special historic interest. Development which would damage the character or appearance of an ancient landscape, or of a park or garden of special historic interest or its setting will not be permitted.	As per GB2, retain policy. Key recommendations from this study include protecting and enhancing natural and semi-natural sites within the Green Belt.

SECTION 14 – PLANNING IMPLEMENTATION

Relevant policies	Key policy issue	Recommendation
TC17	Existing open space/amenity areas within the town centre shall be retained as such and, where appropriate, new development proposals should provide additional public open space.	Retain policy. Key recommendations from this study include protecting and enhancing amenity greenspace provision within the borough and new provision of amenity greenspace in areas that have been identified as having below the recommended minimum level of provision.
TC18	The provision of cultural, entertainment and leisure uses will be encouraged within the town centre as part of mixed-use development schemes and through changes of use above ground floor level.	As per TC17, retain policy.

Developer contributions/Section 106s

- 14.11 It is a long-standing and accepted principle that new residential developments should include the provision of appropriate areas of public open space. It is now formally accepted that all such development should actually contribute to the provision of open space, including playing pitches, which are required to meet the needs generated by the development and prevent deficiencies and shortfalls being increased.
- 14.12 It is important that the Council continues to build on experience in this area and must continue to have firm pitch protection policies within adopted planning policy. This is essential in order to derive robust Section 106 agreements (Town and Country Planning Act (1990)) to ensure that playing pitches are provided by developers as a basic element of community provision for new residential areas and that appropriate provision is made for future maintenance. Most playing pitch provision would be off-site (ideally provision should be forthcoming from the developers of every new house) and should be vested in an appropriate authority to secure it as public open space. Consideration should also be given to using agreements to secure public access to educational sites. It should be noted that undertaking a playing pitch strategy for the borough, would provide a more robust assessment of outdoor pitch sport provision.
- 14.13 All local authorities that are involved in the housing development process are advised to refer to the Good Practice Guide: Providing for sport and recreation through new housing development (Sport England 2001, www.sportengland.org/new_housing.pdf). This guide for planners, sports development and leisure officers, developers and others involved in the housing development process gives advice on how sport and recreation provision can successfully be achieved in conjunction with new housing. Emphasis is given to:
- pursuing a strategic approach at local authority level
 - the need to link the corporate strategy and Best Value work of authorities with the process of negotiating new and refurbished sports facilities
 - joint working between sport and leisure professionals and land use planners within authorities
 - the provision of sound justification for what is sought from developers and other applicants for planning permission.
- 14.14 Further guidance on the use of planning agreements to secure sport and recreation provision in new developments can be found in the Sport England publication 'Planning obligations for sport and recreation: a guide for negotiation and action'.

Open space guidance

- 14.15 Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) has previously been used to show how policies will be put into practice, give greater detail on policies and proposals than would be appropriate in the Local Plan, and anticipate guidance, which may be included in a future review of the Local Plan.
- 14.16 Although there have been no statutory procedures for the preparation and adoption of SPG, this will change with the introduction of the new planning legislation and Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs).

- 14.17 The combined purpose of any SPD and standards in this context is to provide residential developers with an explicit and comprehensive rationale for the assessment of costs and financial contributions. The basic principle is that developers should not be asked to make up for current deficiencies in provision in the area, but new housing should not exacerbate existing problems.

Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD)

- 14.18 As discussed, strategic policies should be set out in the core strategy DPD, and standards should be explained in detail in an accompanying SPD which should be:
- **comprehensive, but also flexible and simple to understand.** If it is to be effective, guidance should be clear and unambiguous and provide practical solutions to meet most circumstances. Equally, it should cater for circumstances where alternative solutions are desirable or necessary as a result of testing local opinion; or else when unforeseen opportunities arise.
 - **clear about costs, including those for planning and design, installation, and longer-term maintenance.** Developers should be clear about what is expected of them. The Council and other agencies should be clear on how they can apply the guidance. Local people should understand at what level to set their expectations. Providing unambiguous guidance on cost will allow developers to make sufficient financial provision at an early stage, and means that through quick payment of the appropriate contribution they need not become entangled in detailed issues of consultation and design.
 - **applicable to all sizes of housing development.** Although only larger housing developments are likely to justify new facilities in their own right, most new housing will increase demand for open space and recreation opportunities and therefore all housing developments should contribute financially to such provision from the single infill plot, to large estates. Exceptions will be few and far between.
 - **sensitive to the needs of different age groups.** Guidance should as far as possible be sensitive to local demographic diversity.
 - **sensitive to safety and nuisance concerns.** Some facilities such as playgrounds can be 'noisy neighbours' and guidance should take into account potential concern of local residents. It should also reflect the need to ensure reasonable security and safety for users and protection from misuse and vandalism.
- 14.19 As stated above, not all housing development will justify additional recreation facilities in their own right. However, all new residents will place additional demands on facilities, and the collective impact in this respect of major housing allocations could be very significant. However, the Council may need to determine whether or not certain types of dwelling should be exempt from contributions towards particular forms of provision.
- 14.20 On the one hand it might be argued (for example) that housing development designed for elderly people should be exempt from contributions for children's and youth provision. On the other hand, good quality children's provision might help to reduce the potential of nuisance caused by children playing or congregating in inappropriate venues, such as near to elderly accommodation. Further guidance to developers in this regard should be provided in SPD by the Council. The following might be used as a basis for developing SPD.

14.21 This study sets out three types of standard:

Standard	Structure	This study
Quantity standard	Per 1000 population	✓
Quality standard	Quality vision	✓
Accessibility standard	Catchment areas	✓

14.22 In determining the required contribution for developers, the three standards should be applied in conjunction with a Geographic Information System in order to ascertain the most appropriate input from developers in terms of use of the money.

14.23 The accessibility and quantity standards should be used to determine the priority provision for each area.

A seven-step approach to developing SPD

14.24 The following seven-step approach to developing SPD is based on a process advocated by Sport England, but has been modified to better meet local circumstances.

1. identify the timeframe for the SPD
2. establish the number of dwellings to be committed during the SPD timeframe
3. agree upon what type of dwellings should contribute to given facilities
4. agree upon a breakdown of the figure obtained under Step 2 into the various dwelling types identified under Step 3
5. agree upon an overall percentage of householders within the new dwellings that are incomers to the Council area
6. establish relevant costs of facility development, and make necessary adjustments
7. divide costs into dwellings.

14.25 This seven-step approach is explained in more detail below.

1. Identify the timeframe for the SPD

14.26 This will be the timeframe of the Local Plan/LDF.

2. Establish the number of dwellings to be committed during the SPD timeframe

14.27 This involves estimating the projected dwelling increases in the Council area for the selected time period (see above). The Council's own monitoring should be able to reveal how much of the LDF requirement for housing within the above timeframe will have been built before the start of the timeframe, as well as that which has not yet been built but which has the benefit of planning consent. The residue figure should be required to contribute in principle, and might for example be comprised from:

- allocations not yet implemented
- projected infill sites.

3. Agree upon what type of dwelling should make a contribution to given facilities

14.28 This involves making decisions on the categories of new dwellings from which contributions will be required. Conceivably contributions may be influenced by various permutations of dwelling and facility type. For example, retirement dwellings may be asked to contribute to community provision, such as a community hall, but not to children's play facilities.

14.29 It is recommended that specific requirements are illustrated in the form of a matrix, with relevant boxes being ticked or crossed depending on whether the Council determines contributions should be sought.

14.30 The Council should decide the appropriate mix and match of contributions. An example matrix is set out below.

	Major built indoor facilities	Formal Park Provision	Equipped children's play	Youth provision	Amenity open space
Houses					
Flats					
Bedsits					
Hostels					
Sheltered accommodation					
Very sheltered accommodation					
Rest/nursing/similar institutional					
Student accommodation					

4. Agree upon a breakdown on the figure obtained under Step 2 into the various dwelling types identified under Step 3

14.31 Although the Council will not yet know the precise characteristics of the 'residual' houses from which developer contributions will potentially be available, from past development records and other information (such as from the Census), it should be possible to estimate the likely contribution by dwellings of different sizes (numbers of bedrooms) and sectors.

5. Agree upon an overall percentage of householders within the new dwellings that are ‘incomers’ to the Council area

- 14.32 The Council will not know the percentage of incoming householders that will be new to the Council area. The likely proportion might be assessed from a sample survey of households in recent new housing.

6. Establish relevant costs of facility development, and make necessary adjustments

- 14.33 This involves establishing the relevant elements of costs relating to the provision. It is important to include all cost items including land costs, groundwork, and site clearance costs, architects fees, planning permission fees, building and equipment costs.
- 14.34 It may be necessary to make adjustments to the costings to accommodate any regional variations in buildings costs (if national price guides have been used). This is a fairly straightforward process. A Local Cost Index, published by the Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors (RICS) can be used. It is also important to allow for inflation indexing of contributions across the LDF period, and to make this explicit within the SPD. Relevant indices include those provided by the RICS and the Retail Prices Index. But whichever index is used should be specified and applied on an annual basis with a specified date each year when the revised contribution comes into effect.

7. Divide costs into dwellings

- 14.35 This is the final stage and involves dividing the costs by the relevant number of dwellings, to arrive at an appropriate contribution. The table of contributions may be expressed per person in new dwellings or per dwelling (according to the size and estimated number of occupants).
- 14.36 In practice there may be flexibility to allow for reductions in contributions on ‘difficult’ sites where there are high development costs (such as on contaminated land). The extent of any changes from the contribution norm should be the subject of discussion.

Worked example

- 14.37 The following is only a hypothetical scenario, but which can be suitably modified to take into account local requirements. This example is based on children’s play space and uses hypothetical standards and costings.

1. Identify the timeframe for the SPD.

- 14.38 It is assumed that the Local Plan/LDF framework covers a period from 2004 to 2014. In this period there is a requirement to accommodate 2000 new dwellings.

2. Establish the number of dwellings to be committed during the SPD timeframe.

- 14.39 In practice a significant proportion of the above dwellings to be committed within the SPD timeframe will have already been already built, be under construction, or have planning consent and it would wrong to charge for (revised) developer contributions on these commitments. Therefore, if it is assumed that 500 houses have already been committed, this leaves 1500 within the Local Plan/LDF period to contribute towards new provision.

3. Agree upon what type of dwelling should make a contribution to given facilities.

14.40 In this example, the Council has chosen to exclude contributions from certain types of dwelling in the following way.

	Major built facilities	Youth and adult outdoor play	Equipped children's play	Youth provision	Amenity open space
Houses	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Flats	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Bedsits	✓	✓	x	x	✓
Hostels	✓	✓	x	x	✓
Sheltered accommodation	✓	✓	x	x	✓
Very sheltered accommodation	X	x	x	x	x
Rest/nursing/similar institutional	X	x	x	x	x
Student accommodation	✓	✓	x	x	✓

4. Agree upon a breakdown of the figure obtained under Step 2 into the various dwelling types identified under Step 3.

14.41 For the purpose of this example it is assumed that the total of 1500 dwellings can be broken down as follows:

- 1200 houses (500 x 2-bed, 500 x 3-bed, 200 x 4+-bed)
- 200 flats (100 x 1-bed, 100 x 2-bed)
- 100 sheltered/very sheltered/institutional/student.

14.42 In this case it is only houses and flats that accommodate towards children's and young peoples provision (i.e. 1400 out of the 1500 dwellings.)

5. Agree upon overall percentage of householders within the new dwellings that are incomers to the Council area.

- 14.43 For the purposes of this hypothetical example, it is assumed there is an estimated overall average of 75% of these households that are incomers (i.e. $1400/100 = 14 \times 75 = 1050$ dwellings/households). To determine a percentage discount that reflects the local situation, primary research such as a sample survey of households in recent new housing, should be undertaken. In practice it would be impossible for the Council to establish precisely which houses are occupied by incomers. This overall percentage must therefore be applied instead to the estimated numbers of occupants of the different dwelling types:

500 x 2-bed houses	= 1000 people @ 75%	= 750 people (27.7%)
500 x 3-bed houses	= 1500 people @ 75%	= 1125 people (41.6%)
200 x 4+-bed houses	= 800 people @ 75%	= 600 people (22.2%)
100 x 1-bed flats	= 100 people @ 75%	= 75 people (2.77%)
100 x 2-bed flats	= 200 people @ 75%	= 150 people (5.55%)
	3600 people	2700 people

- 14.44 The above approach obviously assumes one bedroom per person. It may be that the Council would wish to factor in an allowance to reflect local circumstances.

6. Establish relevant costs of facility development, and make necessary adjustments.

- 14.45 This example is based on an assumed standard for children's and young peoples play space of 0.17 ha per 1,000 population.
- 14.46 It is assumed that the overall average cost for one equipped play space (a NEAP site) is £100,000 (this figure is used for example purposes only but is based on budget figures detailed in the Council's Play Areas Strategy).
- 14.47 If it is assumed that the overall standard for children's and young persons playspace is 0.17 ha per 1,000 people the overall demand generated by the above population is $2,700 \times 0.17 = 0.459$ ha equipped play space.
- 14.48 The overall average cost of this provision is therefore estimated to be $0.459/0.17 = 2.7 \times £100,000 = £270,000$.

7. Divide costs into dwellings.

- 14.49 Based on the above percentages of total population generated by different types of houses, the above cost can be apportioned as follows:
- 2-bed houses £74,790 (27.7%)
 - 3-bed houses £112,320 (41.6%)
 - 4+ bed houses £59,940 (22.2%)
 - 1-bed flats £ 7,479 (2.77%)

- 2-bed flats £14,985 (5.55%)

14.50 From this a cost per qualifying dwelling can be calculated:

- 2-bed houses £74,790 (27.7%)/500 dwellings = £149.58
- 3-bed houses £112,320 (41.6%)/500 dwellings = £224.64
- 4+ bed houses £59,940 (22.2%)/200 dwellings = £299.70
- 1-bed flats £ 7,479 (2.77%)/100 dwellings = £ 74.79
- 2-bed flats £14,985 (5.55%)/100 dwellings = £149.85

14.51 These figures can then be applied to each new dwelling. Where a housing development or site is too small in scale to justify on site provision then new provision (or improvements to existing where this is an accepted alternative) should generally be made in accordance with the local accessibility standard.

Commuted maintenance policy

14.52 Capital expenditure will be required in order to ensure the open spaces are maintained and continue to meet the needs of the public and occupiers of new development. Where appropriate, new developments should therefore make contributions towards the capital expenditure required to provide/enhance areas of open space and for its on going maintenance.

14.53 The likely occasions when commuted maintenance sums should be provided and key points and themes are summarised below. These should be considered and fed into the preparation of maintenance policy and the proposed SPD:

1. Facilities for open space that are to be provided by the developer but are not being offered for adoption by the Council:
 - if developers do not offer areas for adoption, the Council will need to be satisfied that alternative arrangements have been made for their long-term maintenance.
2. Facilities for open space that are to be provided by the developer and will be adopted by the Council;
 - the Council should normally adopt and maintain properly laid out open space within residential areas subject to the payment, by the developer, of a commuted sum to cover the cost of future maintenance
 - it is anticipated that the developer will be required to maintain the open space for 12 months, or other reasonable period for 'establishment'
 - a commuted sum payment is payable on transfer of the land covering cost of maintenance for a defined period

- the commuted maintenance sum should be calculated using current maintenance prices to manage open space, multiplied to allow for inflation of prices and the interest received on the diminishing average annual balance of the sum.
3. Facilities for open space that are provided through a commuted payment:
- if open space facilities are provided through a commuted payment the Council will need to be satisfied that provision is also secured for maintenance.

Summary

14.54 The Companion Guide to PPG17 suggests that policy should:

- protect or enhance existing open spaces or sport and recreational facilities of value (or potential value) to the local community
- re-locate poorly located but necessary open spaces or sport and recreation facilities
- address circumstances in which the planning authority may allow the redevelopment of an existing open space or sport and recreation facility
- require new provision to fill identified gaps in existing provision, and
- address additional on-site or off-site provision as a consequence of new developments, together with how the authority will assess any related commuted maintenance or establishment sums.

14.55 It is suggested that strategic level policy should be contained within the core strategy DPD, with, as appropriate, more detail contained in the Site Specific Allocations DPD. Detailed SPD should be developed outlining required contributions for on and off site provision.

14.56 Analysis of required provision should be derived from the application of quantitative, qualitative and accessibility local standards for the Borough for each type of open space.

SECTION 15

SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Overall summary and recommendations

Introduction

- 15.1 The study has been undertaken in accordance with the requirements of the latest Planning Policy Guidance Note 17 (Planning for Open Space, Sport and Recreation, July 2002) and its Companion Guide “Assessing Needs and Opportunities” (September 2002).
- 15.2 The overall aim of the project was to:
- inform the preparation of the Local Development Framework
 - assess the provision of open space, sport and recreation facilities within the Borough
 - set local standards for provision of open space, sport and recreation facilities
 - provide guidance for the assessment of developer contributions to the provision of open space, sport and recreation facilities.
- 15.3 The study has provided:
- an overview of the open space and recreation resource within the Borough according to definitions provided within PPG17
 - a review of relevant plans and strategies and national developments
 - detailed consultations using various methods including household surveys, consultation with internal and external agencies to establish key issues and needs
 - consideration of relevant and appropriate provision standards
 - identifying geographical areas and specific sites of priority
 - a review of possible funding sources for improvements and future developments
 - a summary of key issues based on the main findings from the supply and demand analysis in terms of quantity, quality, accessibility and value.
- 15.4 The following table summarises the key findings of the study, under the headings of each typology.

Table 15.1 Recommendations

P&G 1	The provision of a new park or garden site in the north west of Shenfield should be a priority for the Council.
P&G 2	The provision of a new park or garden in the south of Shenfield and the Hutton Mount area should be a long-term goal for the Council.

SECTION 15 – OVERALL SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

P&G 3	The Council should prioritise accessibility and qualitative improvements to Hutton Country Park, Mill Lane Park and Merrymeades Park.
P&G 4	The Council should try and work with Essex County Council where necessary to bring improvements to the Country Parks for Brentwood residents.
NSN 1	Protect and enhance all sites of high value to the community. Accessibility to these sites should be enhanced and their primary function further promoted to improve the potential for increased use. There are a significant number of such sites in the Borough, including Roundwood Grove Lake, Warley Place Nature Reserve and Thrift Wood Scout Camp.
NSN 2	Consideration should be given to improving sites that scored low in terms of quality, accessibility and usage. As a priority, the Council should seek to protect and enhance public access to highly used Council owned sites that are low in quality, and low in accessibility and seek to influence other land owners within the Borough to do likewise.
AGS 1	Highwood and western area of Brentwood to be prioritised for new AGS provision.
AGS 2	New AGS provision should be prioritised in the east and west of Shenfield but this should not be prioritised over new park provision
AGS 3	Shenfield Road Alm Houses, Thomas A Becket Chapel Ruins and Herongate Common should set the benchmark for all amenity greenspace sites in the Borough.
AGS 4	Additional resources should be made available to improve quality of AGS sites identified with low scores. Involving the community in looking after sites is often a good solution to maintaining sites, for example setting up a Friends Group to gain funding to develop key sites.
AGS 5	The Council should consider the re-designation of some AGS sites, particularly where there may be a deficiency in play-spaces or urban parks and gardens.
CYP 1	Protect the existing level of provision of children and young people's open space and seek new provision (both children's play and youth provision, for example, skate park, MUGAs) as appropriate though new residential developments.
CYP 2	Implement recommendations from the Play Areas Strategy for the Borough, specifically in terms of new LEAP provision at Copperfield Gardens and Newham Estate.
CYP 3	Consideration given to the provision of a new children's play facilities in central Shenfield and to the west of Brentwood town centre to address the existing quantitative and accessibility deficiencies in these areas.

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CYP 4	Protect high usage sites as these are important local facilities. Quality and accessibility should be enhanced as appropriate as a matter of priority to ensure that these sites deliver maximum value to the community and that high levels of usage are maintained.
CYP 5	Sites ranked high on all counts should be recognised as examples of best practice. These sites set the benchmark for the Borough's play provision.
CYP 6	Sites with low accessibility and quality should have aspects improved to optimise usage.
ISF 1	Council to investigate the possibility of making the swimming pool at Shenfield Sports Centre available to the public.
ISF 2	Long-term aim for the Council to provide indoor tennis facilities.
ISF 3	QS1: All new build and refurbishment schemes to be designed in accordance with Sport England Guidance Notes, which provide detailed technical advice and standards for the design and development of sports facilities.
ISF 4	QS2: All leisure providers to follow industry best practice principles in relation to a) Facilities Operation, b) Customer Relations, c) Staffing and d) Service Development and Review. The detail of the internal systems, policies and practices underpinning implementation of these principles will correlate directly to the scale of facility, varying according to the position of the facility within the levels of the established hierarchy.
ISF 5	Aim for the Brentwood Centre to continue its improvements and for the Shenfield Sports Centre to also gain Quest accreditation
OSF 1	Council to undertake a playing pitch strategy in order to ascertain the level of playing pitches and Synthetic Turf Pitches required.
OSF 2	Prioritise Hutton Poplars (Site ID 133) for improvement works.
ALLOT 1	The present situation suggests that supply is not meeting the current demand in the Borough. There are some areas of deficiency, notably Doddinghurst, where it would be recommended a new site is allocated.
ALLOT 2	The Council should protect Ongar Road Allotments as a high quality Council owned allotment site.
ALLOT 3	The Council should prioritise improvements to Birkbeck Road, Honeypot Lane and Fielding Way Allotments.
C&C 1	Sites scoring below the average quality score should be improved. Where there are additional problems with access, these should also be prioritised for improvement.
GC 1	Improve green network, with linkages to key open spaces, in particular the Country Parks

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GC 2	Promote healthy living through opting to use footpaths and cycle routes.
CIV 1	Provision of civic spaces should be considered as part of urban development. Any new sites should, as a minimum, meet the standards of the existing civic spaces.

Overview

- 15.5 It is apparent that when viewing the individual typologies there are gaps in provision for most open space types. It is important to take a more strategic overall view to identify the geographic areas in the Borough that are most in need of additional open space provision. This section briefly reviews three main urban areas in the Borough - Brentwood, Shenfield/Hutton and Ingatestone.

Brentwood urban area

- 15.6 It is recognised that the possibilities of creating new open space in central Brentwood are severely limited by the level of urbanisation. If any large scale redevelopment is proposed then it is essential that appropriate open space is provided. Therefore it is the areas outside of the town centre that are focused upon.
- 15.7 The area that has been identified of highest priority is the Brook Street area of western Brentwood. The only open space provision available within a short walking distance is for children and young people. Rather than the Council providing new provision of different open space typologies it may wish to consider providing a pocket park in the short term. This would incorporate aspects of amenity green space, natural and semi-natural greenspace and parks and gardens open space typologies. In addition the ethos behind the pocket park is for local residents to take responsibility for the site – thereby decreasing maintenance costs for the Council.

Shenfield/Hutton urban area

- 15.8 It is the central area of Shenfield that is most poorly catered for in terms of open space for the whole Borough. There is a deficiency in the area of urban parks and gardens, children's play areas and amenity green space (ie the majority of Shenfield is outside of an accessible catchment area of these typologies). The level of urbanisation will make it difficult to achieve new green areas within the centre of the town, whilst new play areas will prove unpopular with some local residents. However, it is recommended that the Council aims to provide at least two new green space sites.
- 15.9 Two sites are required because of the severance effect of the railway line running through Shenfield. The first site would ideally be located in the north of the area, near the Old County Ground. It would ideally be an urban park site and would include play facilities for both younger and older children. The second site would be in the south of the area and again should include facilities for both older and younger children.

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Ingatestone urban area

- 15.10 The priority for new provision should be at the northern end of Ingatestone. This area has a number of outdoor sports facility sites but lacks alternative open space provision, such as parks and gardens, natural/semi natural and amenity green space. As per western Brentwood, the possibility of a pocket park should be considered as it can perform a variety of functions and ensures that the maintenance obligations for the Council are limited.