

SEVENOAKS DISTRICT COUNCIL

**OPEN SPACE, SPORT
AND RECREATION STUDY**



A

REPORT

BY

PMP

JANUARY 2009

CONTENTS

	Page
Executive summary	i
Section 1 Introduction and background	1
Section 2 Undertaking the study	6
Section 3 Strategic context	11
Section 4 Consultations	18
Section 5 Parks and gardens	28
Section 6 Natural and semi-natural	41
Section 7 Amenity green space	53
Section 8 Provision for children and young people	64
Section 9 Outdoor sports facilities	76
Section 10 Allotments and community gardens	87
Section 11 Cemeteries and churchyards	101
Section 12 Green corridors	104
Section 13 Resourcing open space	108
Section 14 Planning overview	113

APPENDICES

Appendix A	Benefits of open space
Appendix B	Open space typology
Appendix C	Sports club survey
Appendix D	Site assessment matrix
Appendix E	Step 3 & 4 – setting and applying standards
Appendix F	Open space publications
Appendix G	Licensed riding establishments
Appendix H & I	Quality standards

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Sevenoaks District Council - Open Space, Sport and Recreation Study

Executive summary

Background to the study

- 1.1 Sevenoaks District Council (the Council) appointed PMP to undertake a local open space, sport and recreation study across Sevenoaks District (the District) in March 2005. The study includes an audit of all open space in the District and provides priorities for future open space, recreation and sport provision and a direction for the allocation of future resources.
- 1.2 The aims of the study are to:
 - provide a comprehensive audit of existing provision of different types of open spaces, sporting and recreational facilities in terms of quantity, quality, accessibility, and wider value to the community
 - identify local needs and recommend standards of provision for all types of open space, sporting and recreational facilities (including indoor and outdoor facilities – both public and private) in accordance with Planning Policy Guidance Note 17, Planning for Open Space Sport and Recreation (PPG17, 2002)
 - identify any deficiencies or surpluses in provision together with strategic options/policies for addressing any shortfalls in provision (either current or future).
- 1.3 The main drivers for the study are to:
 - provide a complete and updated audit of all open spaces in line with PPG17 typologies, including indoor sports
 - assess all green spaces, scoring quality, access and wider benefits to sites
 - provide an assessment of existing open space, sport and recreational needs of people living, working and visiting the defined areas through a series of consultations
 - consider existing national standards and recommend local provision standards (quantity, quality and accessibility) for each type of open space where appropriate, in accordance with local needs
 - provide a final report that details all the analysis and findings and includes proactive strategies for the development and enhancement of new facilities.
- 1.4 The study is undertaken in accordance with the requirements of PPG17 and its Companion Guide (September 2002).

Undertaking the study

- 1.5 The Companion Guide to PPG17 emphasises the importance of undertaking a local needs assessment, as opposed to following national trends and guidelines. The four guiding principles in undertaking a local assessment are:
- local needs will vary even within local authority areas according to socio-demographic and cultural characteristics
 - the provision of good quality and effective open space relies on effective planning but also on creative design, landscape management and maintenance
 - delivering high quality and sustainable open spaces may depend more on improving and enhancing existing open space rather than new provision
 - the value of open space depends primarily on meeting identified local needs and the wider benefits that open spaces generate for people, wildlife and the environment.
- 1.6 PPG17 recognises that individual approaches appropriate to each local authority will need to be adopted as each area has different structures and characteristics. The resulting conclusions and recommendations of this study are therefore representative of the local needs of Sevenoaks District.

Types of open space

- 1.7 The definition of open space within PPG17 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.”*
- 1.8 PPG17 identifies 10 open space typologies. These categories include nine types of green open space and one category of urban open space. This study includes the assessment of the following typologies:
- amenity greenspace
 - parks and gardens
 - natural and semi natural green space
 - provision for children and young people
 - outdoor sports facilities
 - allotments and community gardens
 - green corridors
 - churchyards and cemeteries.

- 1.9 A supply and demand assessment for indoor sports facilities has also been undertaken.
- 1.10 The study takes into account open spaces provided, owned and managed by all organisations, providing a detailed picture of current provision within the District. Full details of typologies, their definitions and primary purposes are outlined in the appendices to the full report.

PPG17 – five step process

- 1.11 The PPG17 Companion Guide sets out a five step process for undertaking a local assessment of open space. This process was used in this study to meet the requirements of the Council to plan, monitor and set targets for its existing and future provision of open space within the District. Although presented as a linear process, many stages were undertaken in parallel.
- 1.12 The five 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.

Step 1 – identifying local needs

- 1.13 A series of consultations have been undertaken amongst both users and non-users of open space across the District to establish local needs. Consultations were also carried out with many organisations and individuals. Various methods were used, including:
- **a household survey** – questionnaires were distributed to 5,000 randomly selected households across the District
 - **sports club surveys** – to all identified sports clubs in the District
 - **young people’s internet survey** – a letter and information pack was sent out to all the primary and secondary schools in the District for completion by pupils
 - **drop-in sessions** – held at three different locations across the District: Swanley, Sevenoaks town and Westerham
 - **internal consultations** – with Council Officers from a range of departments including Planning and Community Development
 - **consultation** with Members, parish and town councils and external agencies.

Step 2 – auditing existing provision

- 1.14 The use of 'analysis areas' allows examination of data at a detailed local level, especially where some areas are sparsely populated and rural in nature. Table 1.1 below provides details on the analysis areas used in this study and the wards within each analysis area.

Table 1.1 Analysis area breakdown

Analysis Area 1 (Swanley)	Population
Hextable	4398
Swanley Christchurch and Swanley Village	5766
Swanley St. Mary's	4535
Swanley White Oak	6287
TOTAL	20986

Analysis Area 2 (North Sevenoaks)

Ash	6594
Crockenhill and Well Hill	1860
Eynsford	1744
Farningham, Horton Kirby and South Darenth	4231
Halstead, Knockholt and Badger's Mount	3259
Hartley and Hodsoil Street	5871
Otford and Shoreham	4381
Kemsing	4014
Seal and Weald	4073
Fawkham and West Kingsdown	5782
TOTAL	41809

Analysis Area 3 (Central Sevenoaks)

Dunton Green and Riverhead	4349
Sevenoaks Eastern	3734
Sevenoaks Kippington	4532
Sevenoaks Northern	4148
Sevenoaks Town and St. John's	5745
TOTAL	22508

Analysis Area 4 (Southern Sevenoaks)

Brasted, Chevening and Sundridge	5920
Cowden and Hever	1901
Edenbridge North and East	3948
Edenbridge South and West	3860
Leigh and Chiddingstone Causeway	2040
Penshurst, Fordcombe and Chiddingstone	2255
Westerham and Crockham Hill	4078
TOTAL	24002

District total **109305**

- 1.15 The outcomes of steps 3, 4 and 5 are explained for each type of open space in the remaining sections of this Executive Summary.

Assessment of parks and gardens

Audit results

- 1.16 There are 18 parks and gardens in the District. They vary greatly in size and in function, from Watercress Close Park (Site ID 224), a 0.02ha formal urban garden, to Knole Park (Site ID 235) which provides 267ha of country park public space. The parks are managed by different groups including the District Council, parish councils and the National Trust.
- 1.17 The total area of parks and gardens in the District is 546ha. This equates to a current provision level of 5.15ha per 1,000 population.

Recommended local quantity standard

- 1.18 There are no definitive national or local quantity standards for parks and gardens.
- 1.19 The recommended local quantity standards are:
- Central Sevenoaks – no standard set
 - Swanley – 1.00 ha per 1,000 population
 - North Sevenoaks – no standard set
 - South Sevenoaks – no standard set

Local quality standard

- 1.20 "Parks and gardens should be well maintained, providing varied vegetation, flowers and trees. Appropriate ancillary accommodation (including seating, toilets and litter/dog bins) should be provided with clear signage to and within the site. Sites should be safe and secure and where appropriate have a ranger / warden presence to further improve security."

Recommended accessibility standard

- 1.21 Residential areas should be no more than a 15 minute walk (1.2km) from a park or garden.

Summary of recommendations for parks and gardens in Sevenoaks District

- 1.22 The priorities for parks and gardens in each of the analysis areas are different and this is reflected through the different quantity standards set. In Central Sevenoaks provision is based around the Knole Park site and this site caters well for Central Sevenoaks and beyond. In Swanley, however, there are significant areas without provision and a new site is needed to help reduce the gaps in accessibility. In the rural areas it is not feasible to have universal coverage for this typology, instead a priority for new provision has been set for the Northern analysis area whilst qualitative and accessibility improvements are sought for the South.
- 1.23 Overall, parks and gardens within the District are of a good quality. However, the Council should seek ways to improve accessibility to them, especially where there are boundaries such as roads or railways.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.24 The Council should aspire to attaining Green Flag status at its parks, especially in light of the good quality scores achieved through this study.

P&G 1	Investigate the possibility of increasing access to, and/or the provision of, parks and gardens for residents to the south of the railway line in Swanley.
P&G 2	Long term planning to be undertaken for new park or garden site in the West Kingsdown area.

Assessment of natural and semi-natural green space

Audit results

- 1.25 There is a total of 170 natural and semi-natural sites in the District, accounting for 2350ha of open space. The Swanley analysis area contains the fewest sites (9) whilst the Northern Sevenoaks analysis area contains the most (81).
- 1.26 Existing provision of natural and semi-natural sites in Sevenoaks District is currently 21.5ha per 1,000 population. The average site size is 13.8ha although it varies widely between analysis areas. Swanley has the smallest average site size of 1.08ha and North Sevenoaks the largest at 15.25ha..

Quantity standard

- 1.27 Due to the diverse nature of the District's landscape, which has produced the variation in provision of natural and semi-natural open space, it is inappropriate to set a District-wide quantity standard for this typology. The Council should retain the current provision of natural and semi-natural open space, reflecting its role in maintaining biodiversity as well as the needs of the District's residents.

Recommended local quality standard

- 1.28 *"A spacious site with natural features that encourages wildlife conservation, biodiversity and environmental awareness. Opportunities to link natural sites together with green corridors should be maximised and clear pathways should be provided. Litter and dog bins should be provided where this is suitable and compatible with the character of the site. Management of local sites should continue to involve the community if at all possible. There should be a clear focus on balancing recreational and wildlife needs, whilst ensuring public access where appropriate."*

Recommended accessibility standard

- 1.29 Residential areas should be no more than a 15 minute walk (1.2km) from natural and semi-natural green space.

Summary of recommendations for natural and semi natural green space in Sevenoaks District

- 1.30 The lack of a quantity standard has been implemented to ensure the existing provision of natural green space in both urban and rural Sevenoaks
- 1.31 Because there are no major quantitative or accessibility concerns for this typology, it is recommended that the Council focus upon site access and quality issues.

NSN 1	The Council should focus upon accessibility and quality improvements to existing sites rather than new provision.
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Assessment of amenity green space

Audit results

- 1.32 There are 223 amenity green spaces, encompassing an area of 81ha. The current District-wide provision level is 0.74ha per 1,000 population.

Quantity standard

- 1.33 The average size of an amenity green space in the District is 0.36ha. The Central Sevenoaks analysis area has the fewest sites (38) and the smallest average site size (0.40ha) whilst North Sevenoaks had the largest number of sites (89). Table 7.1, below provides full details by analysis area.
- 1.34 Given the environmental constraints of the district such as conservation areas, the provision of amenity greenspace will be design-led rather than formulaic therefore no quantity standard has been set. This is in accordance with the Companion Guide to PPG17 (Para 6.26): *“Attractive, well designed and well maintained greenspaces and civic spaces of all types.... are key elements of good urban design and fundamentally important to delivering places in which people will want to live. While it would be wrong to impose standard approaches, carefully developed urban and landscape design guidelines can help to ensure that developers take full account of the need for ‘place making’ and do not simply seek to comply with accessibility, quality and quantity standards at the lowest possible cost.”*

Recommended local quality standard

- 1.35 *“Amenity green spaces should have varied equipment and ancillary facilities suitable for the size and location of the site. A variety of flowers, trees and shrubs should be provided to enhance the overall appearance of the local environment. Larger sites should be suitable for informal play opportunities and should be encouraged to become a community focus. Smaller sites should, as a minimum, provide an important visual amenity function. Safety and security should be considered wherever possible, including the provision of appropriate lighting.”*

Recommended local accessibility standard

- 1.36 Residential areas should be no more than a 10 minute walk (800m) from amenity green space.

Summary of recommendations for amenity green spaces in Sevenoaks District

- 1.37 The overall quality of amenity green space across the District is moderate with an average quality score of 62%. It is recognised that there are issues in improving sites in parished areas where the District Council is not in control of maintenance. However the District Council should work in partnership with town and parish councils to ensure effective maintenance takes place.
- 1.38 Community ‘ownership’ of amenity green spaces should be increased to enable local residents to have better links with their local environment. This could also assist town and parish councils with their maintenance obligations. The Council could consider the introduction of ‘pocket parks’ which are specifically designed to encourage community involvement and reduce the maintenance burden for local authorities. More information can be found at www.pocketparks.com.

AGS1

The Council should consider quality and access improvements to the lowest scoring value sites. The Council should reassess this situation through development opportunities and consider the replacement of these sites where possible and appropriate if scores do not improve.

Assessment of provision for children and young people

Audit results

- 1.39 There are 75 children and young people's facilities within Sevenoaks District. The total area is 5.18ha, which equates to an average site size of 0.07ha. The largest number of sites is located in the North Sevenoaks analysis area. The Swanley and Central Sevenoaks areas have fewest sites whilst North Sevenoaks has the smallest sites, on average.

Recommended local quantity standard

- 1.40 Setting the standard involved careful consideration of the NPFA's Six Acre Standard. It was agreed that reaching the Six Acre Standard within the 20 year period of this study would be unrealistic. As a result of this, and consideration of other information, the recommended standard is 0.1 hectares per 1,000 population.

Recommended local quality standard

- 1.41 *"A site providing a range of well-maintained equipment and an enriched play environment in a safe, secure and convenient location. It should be an accessible space whilst safeguarding the residential amenity of neighbouring land users. The site should have clear boundaries, be within a reasonable distance of residents, be clean, litter and dog free and provide varied equipment where appropriate (eg benches and litter-bins)."*

Recommended local accessibility standard

- 1.42 Residential areas should be no more than a 10 minute walk time (800m) from facilities for children and young people.

Summary of recommendations for children and young people's facilities in Sevenoaks District

- 1.43 The majority of provision for children and young people is of high quality and is easily accessible, and is therefore enjoyed by the residents of Sevenoaks District. It should be a priority of the District Council, working in partnership with parish and town councils where appropriate, to improve the quality of all sites falling below a quality score of 50% and in the longer term to aim for all sites to reach the current minimum average of 66%.
- 1.44 It may be possible to locate play areas within amenity green spaces and parks and gardens where there are currently no such facilities. This would help towards achieving the local standard for this typology but would decrease the other typologies' areas.
- 1.45 The specifics of new play area provision will depend on local needs ie teenage or young children provision. The use of natural features rather than traditional equipped play facilities should also be considered as a proactive measure to combat the existing vandalism and mis-use problems.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

CYP 1	New play areas to follow the guidance in the Council's Play Strategy and offer a varied and an enriched play environment.
CYP 2	The Council should prioritise new play areas in western Swanley.
CYP 3	The Council should prioritise new sites for children's play areas in central, western and southern areas of Central Sevenoaks.
CYP 4	The Council should prioritise new sites for children's play areas in West Kingsdown, Kemsing, Eynsford and Well Hill.
CYP 5	The Council should prioritise new provision in Marlpit Hill and Leigh.

Assessment of outdoor sports facilities

Quantity standard

- 1.46 A quantity standard for this typology is set for broad planning need only. It covers too broad a range of facilities to accurately determine shortfalls or surpluses of facilities.

Recommended local quantity standards

- Urban – 5.2ha/1,000 population (or 2.6ha/1000 excluding golf courses)
- Rural – 15.4ha/1,000 population (or 3.7ha/1000 excluding golf courses)

Recommended local quality standard

- 1.47 *“A well-planned sports facility with level, well-drained and good quality surfaces. Good quality ancillary accommodation should be provided suitable to the size and location of the site. This could include changing facilities, toilets, car parking, litter and dog-fouling bins. Facilities for young people should be provided where appropriate”.*

Recommended accessibility standard

- 1.48 Residential areas should be no more than a 15 minute walk (1.2km) from outdoor sports facilities.

Summary of recommendations for outdoor sports facilities in Sevenoaks District

- 1.49 The vast majority of Sevenoaks District residents are within the recommended catchment area of an outdoor sports facility. However, as many of the outdoor sports facilities are school sites, access can be difficult. Many school sites do not allow community access at all, despite being the only facility in some towns or villages. It should be a priority for the Council to try and open up formal access to such sites where no other facilities exist and to protect such facilities from development.
- 1.50 From a sport specific point of view, there have been many comments regarding pitch provision including the quantity and quality of pitches and changing facilities. In order to further address these concerns the Council should undertake a playing pitch strategy.

OSF 1	The Council to consider undertaking a playing pitch strategy and sports facility strategy in partnership with external partners.
OSF 2	The Council to consider future outdoor sports provision in West Kingsdown and Well Hill – subject to more detailed reviews of demand.
OSF 3	The Council to consider future outdoor sports provision within the Marlpit Hill area.

Assessment of allotments and community gardens

Audit results

- 1.51 There are 33 sites in the District with a total area of 41.4ha. This equates to an average site size of 1.25ha and a current provision level of 0.38ha per 1,000 population.

Recommended local quantity standard

- Central Sevenoaks – 0.31ha per 1,000 population
- Swanley – 0.10ha per 1,000 population
- North Sevenoaks – 0.52ha per 1,000 population
- South Sevenoaks – 0.48ha per 1,000 population

Recommended local quality standard

- 1.52 *“A well-maintained site that is easy to get to and easy to get around. Sites should have appropriate boundaries and ideally be situated in areas with good soil quality”.*

Recommended accessibility standard

- 1.53 Residential areas should be no more than a 10 minute walk (0.8km) from allotments and community gardens.

Summary of recommendations for allotments and community gardens

- 1.54 Allotments can provide a number of wider benefits to the community in addition to the primary use of growing produce. These include improving physical and mental health and contributing to the greenspace environment and bio-diversity.
- 1.55 When applying accessibility standards, gaps are seen in all areas of the District. However, as allotments are demand led it is recommended that quantity issues be tackled before accessibility.
- 1.56 It is recognised that the Parish Councils are key providers of allotments in many of the areas of under provision. The Council should look to work with such bodies in order to promote the usage of allotments in order to help facilitate their increased usage.

Summary of recommendations for allotments in Sevenoaks District

ALLOT 1	The Council should consider a new allotment site for Hextable and look for opportunities to locate potential sites in the centre of Swanley. However, it is recognised that new provision in central Swanley is problematic due to the development pressures on land there.
ALLOT 2	The Council to consider new allotment site(s) along the south, east and west edges of the built up area of Central Sevenoaks, over the period to 2026.
ALLOT 3	The Council to prioritise new allotment provision in the New Ash Green area.
ALLOT 4	Subject to adequate demand levels, the Council should seek new sites in West Kingsdown, Kemsing, Halstead/Knockholt Pound and South Darenth areas.
ALLOT 5	The Council to provide new allotment sites in the Edenbridge/Marlpit Hill areas through a combination of re-provision and new provision.
ALLOT 6	The Council to prioritise new provision in the Sundridge/Brasted area.

Cemeteries and Churchyards

Quantity standards

- 1.57 No quantity standards have been set for cemeteries and churchyards. The annex to PPG17 states "as churchyards can only exist where there is a church, the only form of provision standard which will be required is a qualitative one."
- 1.58 For cemeteries, the annex to PPG17 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.

Recommended local quality standard

- 1.59 "*Sites should provide an area for quiet contemplation and an opportunity to enhance biodiversity. Sites should have clear pathways, seating and litter bins where suitable, with varied vegetation and landscaping appropriate to the character of the area. The site should have a well-defined boundary and management of the site should be encouraged through the involvement of the community where possible*".

Recommended local accessibility standard

- 1.60 In line with PPG17 guidance, no local standard has been set.

Summary of recommendations for cemeteries and churchyards in Sevenoaks District

CC 1	Adopt the quality standard for all sites in the district.
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Green corridors

Audit results

1.61 There are two main green corridors in Sevenoaks that have been included in the audit. These are:

- Hextable Green Corridor (Site ID 28)
- Glendale Green Corridor (Site ID 157).

Local quantity standard

1.62 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”.*

1.63 It is therefore recommended that no quantity standard should be set.

Recommended local quality standard

1.64 *“Green corridors should have clear pathways, linking major open spaces together and providing ancillary facilities such as bins and seating in appropriate places with signage to aid usage. Green corridors should also encourage biodiversity and wildlife habitats, enabling the movement of both wildlife and people between open spaces.”*

Local accessibility standard

1.65 No local standard has been set.

Summary and recommendations

1.66 As green corridors are primarily opportunity-led it is difficult to target potential new areas for provision. However, the Council should ensure that new developments include green corridors to facilitate walking and to cut reliance on car travel.

1.67 Consultation showed that the major issues for users of green corridors were rubbish and dog fouling. Whilst it might be uneconomic for the Council to introduce additional litter patrols, it should aim to provide additional litter and dog fouling bins to help people take responsibility for their own mess.

1.68 A longer term aspiration should be for the Council to increase the safety and security of green corridors. This reflects concerns about anti-social behaviour, vandalism and graffiti.

Summary of recommendations for green corridors in Sevenoaks District

GC1	Ensure all new major developments contain green corridors to reduce dependence on cars for short journeys.
GC2	The Council should provide additional litter and dog fouling bins at green corridors within their control where this is appropriate and necessary.
GC3	The Council should investigate how to increase the security and safety of green corridors.

Assessment of indoor sports facilities

- 1.69 The audit of indoor sports facility provision highlighted a current undersupply of sports halls but an oversupply of synthetic turf pitches (STPs) and swimming pools.
- 1.70 Although there is currently an undersupply of sports halls, there is not a pressing need for new sports hall provision. This is because there are large rural areas of the District where formal sports hall provision would be inappropriate. In these areas there are many community halls that provide a sporting function to local persons. In addition, there are still a number of schools with sports halls that are not used by the public that could be opened prior to any new provision.
- 1.71 Due to the oversupply of swimming water in the area it is not recommended that any new provision be considered unless a clear business case can be proven for such a facility.
- 1.72 According to the modelling results, it should be possible to accommodate all existing and future for STPs on existing facilities. However, some sport clubs considered there was a need for additional provision. There is also a national trend towards increasing use of STPs for football, with the latest 'third generation' surface. We recommend that usage levels at the existing facilities are reviewed as part of a District-wide playing pitch strategy .
- 1.73 However, it may be necessary to review usage levels at the existing facilities by undertaking a playing pitch strategy for the District.
- 1.74 As there is only one venue for indoor tennis courts in the District, it should be a long-term priority for the Council to increase the number of facilities available. Because of planning permission restrictions, it is not possible to increase public use of the Sennocke Centre. The main alternative solution is to encourage private sector provision
- 1.75 Due to the decline in squash provision, re-allocation of squash courts where they are under-utilised is recommended and this has already occurred at some leisure centres in the district. It is recognised, however, that squash is thriving at the Wildernesse Sports Centre and its growth, where possible, should be encouraged.
- 1.76 From an accessibility viewpoint it is recognised that there are rural areas, particularly in the south of the District, without major sporting facilities nearby. However there are major facilities within the urban areas of Royal Tunbridge Wells and Tonbridge.
- 1.77 As it is recognised that there are no major deficiencies of sports facilities in the area (with the exception of indoor tennis), it is recommended that any future monies are directed towards sports development schemes rather than new provision. This would build upon the successful work already being undertaken by Sencio Leisure.

ISF01	Seek to secure indoor tennis through private sector provision.
ISF02	In areas where squash participation has declined, alternative uses for the courts should be encouraged.
ISF03	Consider future Section 106 monies being directed towards sports development schemes rather than new facilities.

Resourcing open space improvements

- 1.78 Many local authority budgets for the enhancement and maintenance of open spaces have reduced over recent years. So it is essential to obtain financial support (both internal and external) for improvements to existing open spaces or for new provision. External support includes support from parish councils which frequently manage open spaces in their areas; it also includes external funding.
- 1.79 There are a number of different opportunities and mechanisms for the resourcing of open space. These include:
- planning gain and Section 106 agreements
 - business funding and sponsorships
 - partnerships with the voluntary sector
 - lottery funding programmes
 - landfill tax credit scheme
 - sport-specific funding
 - other small grants programmes
 - reviews of fees and charges
 - use of redundant buildings.
- 1.80 The full report examines how each of these can be applied to Sevenoaks District.

SECTION 1

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

Introduction and background

The study

- 1.1 Sevenoaks District Council (the Council) appointed PMP to undertake a local open space, sport and recreation study across the District of Sevenoaks (the District) in March 2005. The study includes an audit of all open space in the District and provides a clear vision, priorities for future open space, recreation and sport provision and a direction for the allocation of future resources.
- 1.2 The aims of the study are to:
- provide a comprehensive audit of existing provision of different types of green spaces, sporting and recreational facilities in terms of quantity, quality, accessibility, and wider value to the community
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- 1.3 The main drivers for the study are to:
- provide a complete and updated audit of all open spaces in line with PPG17 typologies, including indoor sports
 - assess all green spaces, rating quality, access and wider benefits to sites
 - provide an assessment of existing open space, sport and recreational needs of people living, working and visiting the defined areas through a series of consultations
 - consider existing national standards and recommend local provision standards (quantity, quality and accessibility) for each type of open space where appropriate, in accordance with local needs
 - provide a final report that details all the analysis and findings and includes proactive strategies for the development and enhancement of new facilities.
- 1.4 The study is undertaken in accordance with the requirements of PPG17 (Planning for Open Space Sport and Recreation, July 2002) and its Companion Guide (September 2002).

Why open space?

- 1.5 PPG17 states that well-designed and implemented planning policies for open space, sport and recreation are fundamental to delivering broader Government objectives, including:
- supporting an urban renaissance
 - supporting a rural renewal
 - the promotion of social inclusion and community cohesion
 - advocating health and well being
 - promoting more sustainable development.
- 1.6 Open space and recreation provision in Sevenoaks District has an important role to play in supporting the implementation of these objectives.

Picture 1.1 Knole Park



Function and benefits of open space

- 1.7 Open spaces can provide a number of functions within the urban fabric of towns and villages. 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.
- 1.8 Each type of open space has various benefits. For example, allotments for the growing of produce, play areas for children's play and playing pitches for formal sports. Open space can also perform a secondary function. For example, outdoor sports facilities have an amenity value in addition to facilitating sport and recreation.
- 1.9 There is a need to provide a balance between different types of open space in order to meet local needs. Not all residents' needs in particular areas will show a demand for open space in the form of playing pitches or allotments, for example. Some areas will have specific local demand for 'green corridors' such as nature walks or bridleways.

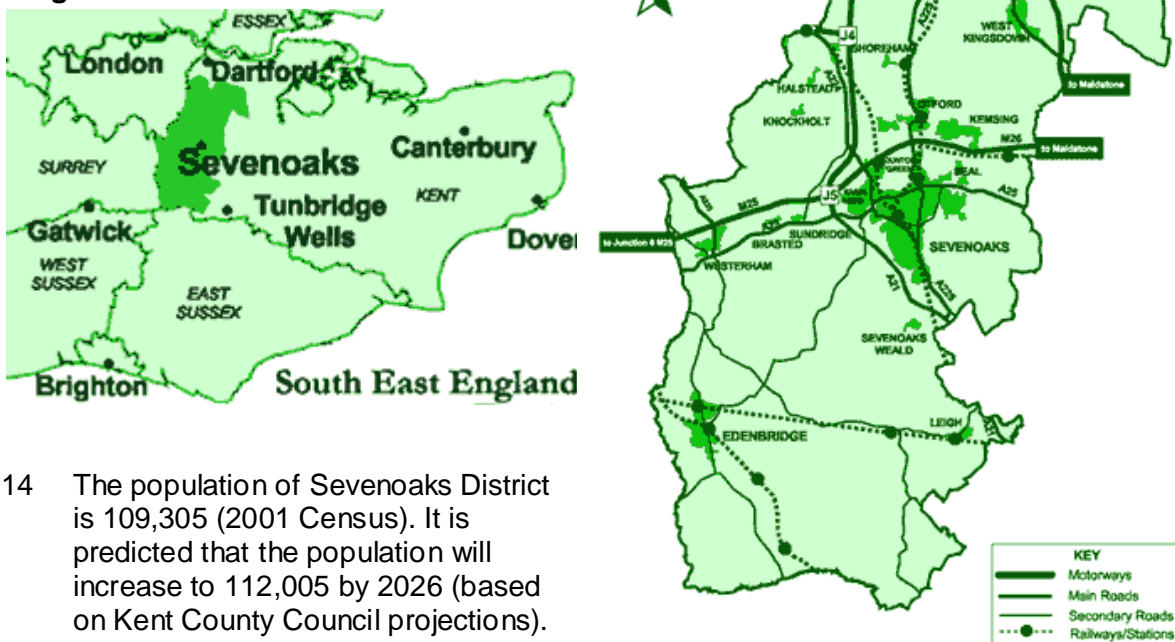
SECTION 1 – INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

- 1.10 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 pressure from users and developers. Open spaces can promote community cohesion, encourage community development and stimulate partnerships between the public and private sectors.
- 1.11 Parks and open spaces are accessible to a wider range of people than some sport and leisure facilities. They are also better able to realise the aims of social inclusion and equality of opportunity, predominantly due to low or no cost to the user. The provision of open space is considered to be important for a sustainable and thriving community.
- 1.12 It is recognised that the provision of high quality public realm such as parks and open spaces can assist in the promotion of an area as an attractive place to live. It can also result in a number of wider benefits. These are described in Appendix A.

Sevenoaks District

- 1.13 Sevenoaks District is in west Kent, bordering Greater London, Surrey and Sussex. It covers an area of 142 square miles. The main towns are Sevenoaks, Edenbridge, Westerham and Swanley.

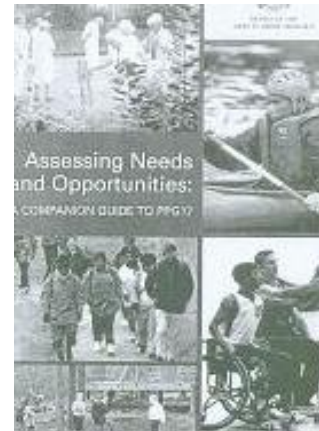
Figure 1.1 Sevenoaks District



- 1.14 The population of Sevenoaks District is 109,305 (2001 Census). It is predicted that the population will increase to 112,005 by 2026 (based on Kent County Council projections).
- 1.15 93% of the District falls within the Green Belt and over 60% is covered by the High Weald and Kent Downs Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty. There are also 61 Sites of Special Scientific Interest, 17 Historical parks and gardens, 17 sites of Nature Conservation Interest and significant areas of ancient woodland.

National Policy Context: Planning Policy Guidance Note 17 (PPG17): Planning for Open Space, Sport and Recreation & Assessing Needs and Opportunities - PPG17 Companion Guide

- 1.16 PPG17 states that local authorities should undertake robust assessments of the existing and future needs of their communities for open space, sports and recreational facilities (paragraph 1).
- 1.17 The document also states that local authorities should undertake audits of existing open space, sports and recreational facilities, the use made of existing facilities, access in terms of location and costs, and opportunities for new open space and facilities (paragraph 2).
- 1.18 PPG17 states that “The Government expects all local authorities to carry out assessments of needs and audits of open space and recreational facilities” (paragraph 5) and that “local authorities should use the information gained from their assessments of needs and opportunities to set locally derived standards for the provision of open space, sports and recreational facilities in their areas” (paragraph 7).
- 1.19 Significant changes in this planning policy document from the 1991 version are:
- the definition of open space should be taken to mean all open space of public value
 - a greater emphasis is placed on qualitative considerations – this is particularly important as it allows 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. However, they can be useful as benchmarks
 - it provides further guidance on the constituent elements of open space typologies
 - it clearly acknowledges the multiple functions that open spaces can perform.
- 1.20 PPG17 sets out priorities for local authorities in terms of:
- assessing needs and opportunities and undertaking audits of open space, sport and recreational facilities
 - setting local standards
 - maintaining an adequate supply of open space
 - planning for new open space.



SECTION 1 – INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

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

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

1.22 PMP and the Council have followed the recommendations of PPG17 throughout the study. In following these recommendations, this study has the potential to make a significant difference to the quantity, quality and accessibility of open spaces in Sevenoaks District.

Need for local assessments

1.23 This assessment of open space and local needs will enable the Council to:

- plan positively, creatively and effectively through identifying priority areas for improvement and to target appropriate types of open space
- ensure an adequate provision of high quality, accessible open space to meet the needs of the local community
- ensure any accessible funding is invested in the right places where there is the most need
- conduct Section 106 negotiations with developers from a position of knowledge with evidence to support.

1.24 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 protect open space within the District.

Structure of this report

1.25 The report is split into 14 sections. Section 2 sets out the methodology for undertaking the study. Section 3 sets out the strategic context to provide the background and context to the study. Section 4 provides a brief summary of the consultation undertaken, while some of the key themes are drawn out within each typology section.

1.26 Sections 5-12 relate to each of the typologies identified within the scope of the report. Each typology chapter sets out the strategic context of that particular typology, the recommended quantity, quality and accessibility standards and the applications of these standards through the geographical areas and value assessments. These are not applicable to all typologies.

1.27 Section 13 provides a summary of potential resources to help to implement the findings of the study. Section 14 sets out the planning context to the study, highlighting how the application of the PPG17 study can assist with planning applications and the provision of open space in new housing developments.

1.28 There are also a number of appendices that support the report and these are referenced throughout. An assessment of indoor sport is included as an appendix.

SECTION 2
UNDERTAKING THE STUDY

Undertaking the study

Introduction

- 2.1 This study has been undertaken in accordance with PPG17 and its Companion Guide. This Companion Guide provides guidance on undertaking such a study. It emphasises the importance of undertaking a local needs assessment, as opposed to following national trends and guidelines. The four guiding principles in undertaking a local assessment are:
- (i) local needs will vary even 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 and also on creative design, landscape management and maintenance
 - (iii) delivering high quality and sustainable open spaces may depend more on improving and enhancing existing open space than new provision
 - (iv) the value of open space depends primarily on meeting identified local needs and the wider benefits that open spaces generate for people, wildlife and the environment.
- 2.2 PPG17 recognises that individual approaches appropriate to each local authority will need to be adopted as each area has different structures and characteristics. The resulting conclusions and recommendations of this study are therefore representative of the local needs of Sevenoaks District.

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 PPG17 identifies 10 open space typologies. These categories include nine types of general open space and one category of urban open space. This study includes the assessment of the following typologies:
- amenity greenspace
 - parks and gardens
 - natural and semi natural open space
 - provision for children and young people
 - outdoor sports facilities
 - allotments and community gardens
 - green corridors
 - churchyards and cemeteries.

SECTION 2 – UNDERTAKING THE STUDY

- 2.5 A supply and demand assessment for indoor sports facilities was also completed.
- 2.6 The study takes into account open spaces provided, owned and managed by a range of organisations and not just the Council, providing a more accurate picture of current provision within the District. Full details of these typologies, their definitions and primary purpose are outlined in Appendix B.

PPG17 – five step process

- 2.7 The PPG17 Companion Guide sets out a five step process for undertaking a local assessment of open space. This process was used in undertaking this study to meet the requirements of the Council to plan, monitor and set targets for its existing and future provision of open space within the District. Although presented as a linear process, many stages were undertaken in parallel.
- 2.8 The five 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

- 2.9 The following steps indicate how the study has been undertaken in accordance with PPG17.

Step 1 - Identifying local needs

- 2.10 In order to identify local needs, a series of consultations were carried out. These included:
- 5,000 household questionnaires disseminated across Sevenoaks District (to both users and non users of open space) using analysis areas based geographical and demographic boundaries (a description of the analysis areas can be found on page nine)
 - sports club surveys to all identified clubs
 - young people's internet survey – sent out to all the schools in the District
 - 'drop in' neighbourhood sessions at three locations for local residents and groups
 - press releases, a specific email address and text messaging service to allow the public to provide comments on open space
 - consultations with Council officers
 - consultation with Members, parish and town councils and external agencies.

- 2.11 Specific details on the process adopted for Step 1, along with copies of relevant questionnaires, can be found in Appendix C.

Step 2 - Auditing local provision

- 2.12 The Council had already compiled some data in GIS format on the open spaces in the District.
- 2.13 PMP also conducted a thorough audit through desk research and site assessments. This included categorising open space sites into the PPG17 typologies used for this study.
- 2.14 A total of 748 sites were identified through the audit within settlement boundaries. Where accessible, these sites were assessed on quantity, quality and accessibility. Value characteristics using a standard matrix and definitions can be found in Appendix D.
- 2.15 Each open space site was then digitised using GIS software and its associated ratings and characteristics were recorded on an Access database.
- 2.16 The Access database will enable updates of open space data and varying forms of analysis to be undertaken. This creates 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

- 2.17 From the analysis of the data collected and site ratings in terms of quality, quantity, accessibility and value of the sites, we are able to:
- determine provision standards for each type of open space
 - apply these standards for each type of open space
 - identify gaps in provision across the different types of open space and therefore the areas of priority.
- 2.18 The analysis has therefore been undertaken by type of open space, looking at different areas within the local authority (referred to as analysis areas in this report). These geographical areas were discussed with and agreed by Council officers.
- 2.19 The use of analysis areas allows examination of data at a detailed local level, especially where some areas are sparsely populated and rural in nature. Table 2.1 overleaf provides details on the analysis areas used in this study and the wards within each analysis area.

Table 2.1 Analysis area breakdown

Analysis Area 1 (Swanley)	Population
Hextable	4398
Swanley Christchurch and Swanley Village	5766
Swanley St. Mary's	4535
Swanley White Oak	6287
TOTAL	20986

Analysis Area 2 (North Sevenoaks)	
Ash	6594
Crockenhill and Well Hill	1860
Eynsford	1744
Farningham, Horton Kirby and South Darent	4231
Halstead, Knockholt and Badger's Mount	3259
Hartley and Hodsoll Street	5871
Otford and Shoreham	4381
Kemsing	4014
Seal and Weald	4073
Fawkham and West Kingsdown	5782
TOTAL	41809

Analysis Area 3 (Central Sevenoaks)	
Dunton Green and Riverhead	4349
Sevenoaks Eastern	3734
Sevenoaks Kippington	4532
Sevenoaks Northern	4148
Sevenoaks Town and St. John's	5745
TOTAL	22508

Analysis Area 4 (Southern Sevenoaks)	
Brasted, Chevening and Sundridge	5920
Cowden and Hever	1901
Edenbridge North and East	3948
Edenbridge South and West	3860
Leigh and Chiddingstone Causeway	2040
Penshurst, Fordcombe and Chiddingstone	2255
Westerham and Crockham Hill	4078
TOTAL	24002

District total **109305**

- 2.20 Setting robust local standards based on assessments of need and audits of existing facilities will form the basis for addressing quantitative and qualitative needs through the planning process.
- 2.21 Further detail regarding the process for the setting and application of each type of provision standard is outlined in Appendix E.

Step 5 – Drafting policies - recommendations and strategic priorities

- 2.22 Applying the standards leads on to strategic priorities and recommendations, which are set out by typology within the report.
- 2.23 The report also provides guidance for the application of Section 106 agreements and using best practice formulae and costings based on the approach taken by other authorities.

SECTION 3
STRATEGIC CONTEXT

Strategic Context

Introduction

- 3.1 This strategic review sets the study in context. It reviews regional and local strategic documents which may have an influence upon the provision of open space, sport and recreation in Sevenoaks District.

Regional context

Regional Planning Guidance for the South East (RPG9)

- 3.2 The Regional Planning Guidance for the South East was published in March 2001. It covers the period to 2016. The primary purpose of the Guidance is to provide a regional framework for the preparation of local authority development plans. The other purpose of the Guidance is to provide the spatial framework for other strategies and programmes including the preparation of local transport plans by local authorities.
- 3.3 There are a significant number of policies that relate to open space, sport and recreation provision in the South East. These include:
- Environmental Strategy policies:
 - E1 - protection of sites designated at international or national level either for their intrinsic nature conservation value or their landscape quality
 - E2 - the region's biodiversity should be maintained and enhanced
 - E5 - woodland habitats in the region should be protected
 - E6 - opportunities should be provided for leisure and recreation in the countryside in ways that retain and enhance its character.
 - policies within the section on Tourism and Related Sport and Recreation; TSR2, Rural Tourism and Recreation and TSR3, Regionally Significant Sports Facilities - opportunities should be sought to protect, upgrade existing, and develop new, regionally significant sports facilities.
- 3.4 There is therefore a high level of protection and promotion of the enhancement of existing environmental assets and recreational resources within RPG9.

The South East Plan/Regional Spatial Strategy (South East of England Regional Assembly)

- 3.5 The South East Plan (the Regional Spatial Strategy for the South East) was drafted by the South East of England Regional Assembly as part of its role as Regional Planning Body. The Plan has recently undergone examination and the Examination in Public Report of the Panel was published in August 2007.
- 3.6 This Plan sets out a vision for the region from 2006 to 2026, focusing on housing, transport, economy and the environment and will replace the existing RPG9 and the Kent and Medway Structure Plan.
- 3.7 Of specific importance for this study are the policies for Tourism, Sport and Recreation and Social, Cultural and Health Dimensions. Policy TSR3 – Regionally

Significant Sports Facilities, identifies that opportunities should be sought to protect, upgrade and develop new regionally significant sports facilities, particularly in the Thames Gateway. Policy S7 – Cultural and Sporting Activities, states that local authorities should encourage increased and sustainable participation in sport, recreation and cultural activities through Local Development Documents.

Mission: Possible - The South East Plan for Sport 2004-2008 (South East Regional Sports Board)

- 3.8 This first Regional Plan for Sport in the South East signposts priorities against the seven outcomes of the National Framework. The Plan aims to ensure that all sports facilities, including those in schools, are used to their full capacity by the whole community.
- 3.9 The vision for sport in the South East encompasses the following:
- making the South East an active and successful sporting region
 - driving up participation levels in the South East by at least 1% year on year
 - increasing club membership
 - establishing a network of multi-sport community clubs
 - encouraging economic and environmental sustainability
 - putting sport and recreation at the heart of the planning process in the region
 - linking whole sport plans to local delivery
 - ensuring that all organisations involved in sport and active recreation work in genuine partnership.
- 3.10 The Regional Sports Board and Sport England South East are committed to:
- working in partnership to ensure that facility strategies of national governing bodies, local authorities, local education authorities, the Ministry of Defence and others deliver a consistent strategic framework for facility provision
 - providing technical, managerial and sports development advice to facilities for sport and active recreation in the region, wherever the limited resource available can have the greatest effect on increasing participation
 - gathering and disseminating evidence of best practice in facility design, construction, management and operation, including outreach
 - encouraging closer partnership working between planning and sport in the Region
 - encouraging others to ensure that the provision of facilities for sport and active recreation is considered at an early stage in all development projects

- proactively engage with planning bodies to ensure the promotion of sport and active recreation as part of regional, county, unitary and district planning policies and Local Development Frameworks
- offering advice and technical assistance to both developers and local authorities wherever development offers a major opportunity to obtain good quality and appropriate facilities.

County documents

Mapping out the Future: Kent and Medway Structure Plan (Adopted 2006)

- 3.11 One of the key factors influencing the Kent and Medway Structure Plan is the increasing importance people place on the natural environment, together with greater recognition of its fragility. The Structure Plan attempts to achieve a balance between improved economic opportunity, social progress and protection of the environment, backed by the premise that quality should be the defining principle.
- 3.12 In order to achieve this, the Structure Plan is based upon a clear set of principles which include:
- protecting the countryside and minimising greenfield development
 - supporting the regeneration and renaissance of the larger urban areas
 - encouraging safe and convenient ways of living, requiring well planned services, improvements to the built environment and effective crime reduction and community safety initiatives
 - giving guidance for local development plans
 - safeguarding natural resources such as minerals and water.
- 3.13 The Structure Plan needs to respond to the changing statutory framework and the issues that challenge the quality of the environment. Possible principles for future planning policy include:
- the need to maintain or enhance countryside character both generally and in designated areas
 - Special Landscape Areas previously designated by the Structure Plan should be retained alongside policies on countryside character
 - to safeguard areas of nature conservation importance, both direct and indirect impacts of development should be taken into account and effective mitigation and compensation provided where the case for development is overriding
 - a stronger policy is needed for the protection and enhancement of important habitats and species particularly where identified as priorities in Biodiversity Action Plans
 - a new policy providing for open space and landscape management at the fringe of where large new developments are proposed.

Kent Environment Strategy (March 2003)

3.14 The key goal of the Kent Environment Strategy is to meet present needs for clean air, water, open space, education and health and balance environmental, social and economic needs, without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs ie:

- protecting and enhancing natural habitats, wildlife and landscape
- minimising waste and pollution
- promoting sustainable development solutions.

3.15 Key challenges which the strategy outlines include:

- climate change
- changing rural economy
- global markets
- transport and traffic
- development pressures
- environmental pollution.

Community Strategies and Kent's Natural Environment (October 2003)

3.16 The aim of this document is to emphasise the importance of the natural environment and its fundamental protection and educational role. It is also meant to act as a guide and information source for everybody working to develop and inform Community Strategies.

3.17 It emphasises the importance of the natural environment in Kent in terms of:

- the water, air and local climate on which we depend
- the natural and agricultural landscapes which surround and inspire us
- the soils and rocks beneath our feet
- the variety and abundance of plant life and animal life (biodiversity) which is found in our countryside and towns.

Local documents

Sevenoaks District Local Plan, 2000

3.18 This Local Plan was formally adopted in March 2000 and was due to run until 2006. The Council has since saved a number of Local Plan policies which will remain in force until replaced by policies contained within Local Development Documents or Supplementary Planning Documents. The Local Plan is divided into thirteen key areas and three of these will have strong influence upon this strategy. They are:

- the environment
- tourism, sport and recreation
- the green belt.

3.19 A number of policies have been adopted in these two sections. The most relevant of these are set out in Table 3.1 below. It should be noted that policies EN2, EN10, GB2, SR1, SR4, SR5 and SR7 have not been saved.

Table 3.1 Local Plan policies

EN2	The Local Planning Authority will require landscaping proposals to be considered as an integral part of the development of a site.
EN3	Where appropriate the Local Planning Authority will require the provision of open space for visual and functional purposes in new development. The developer may be required to enter into a legal agreement regarding the maintenance of the open space for the benefit of the occupants of the development.
EN9	The Local Planning Authority will safeguard important areas of green space within built confines.
EN10	The Local Planning Authority will protect and enhance important areas of urban fringe. Where appropriate, the Authority will seek to enter into legal agreements with landowners to secure appropriate land use, management and access arrangements for the benefit of the community.
EN26	The proposals map identifies a number of historic parks and gardens and the Local Planning Authority will protect these sites and their settings from intrusive development.
GB2	Within the Green Belt there is a general presumption against inappropriate development. The construction of new buildings is inappropriate unless it meets a specific exception.
SR1	The Local Planning Authority will not permit proposals which would result in the loss of recreational open space, including school playing fields or other amenity land, unless alternative provision of comparable size, suitability and accessibility is made within the locality. The displacement of recreational land to an adjoining Green Belt area in order to facilitate the redevelopment of an urban open space will not be permitted.

SR4	Proposals which would result in the loss of allotment land where there is any sustained evidence of unmet demand will not be permitted unless suitable alternative provision of comparable size and land quality is made within the locality. The use of redundant allotment land for other open recreational purposes will be permitted.
SR5	Proposals for the development or expansion of leisure and recreational facilities for use by the public will be permitted subject to Green Belt, transportation, nature conservation and environmental considerations.
SR7	Subject to Green Belt, environmental and transport considerations, the Local Planning Authority may permit the change of use of existing rural buildings for indoor recreational purposes.

Community Plan, Sevenoaks District Council, 2004

- 3.20 The first Community Plan, called "Making it Happen - together", was published in April 2004 and set out a 10 year vision for the District. The Plan is reviewed every three years to ensure that actions are updated and the plan remains relevant to the changing needs of the District. The Council adopted the revised Sustainable Community Action Plan 2007 - 2010 on 10th April 2007. The plan was produced by the Sevenoaks District Community Planning Partnership and sets out the priorities for many local services, both public and voluntary, across the District for the next three years.
- 3.21 The revised Action Plan reflects the priorities identified by local people and sets out the actions that will be taken to improve residents' quality of life and the District's long-term sustainable development. Reflecting the vision outlined in "Making it Happen - together", it has three key underlying themes - for Sevenoaks District to be recognised as a place with:
- safe and caring communities
 - a green and healthy environment
 - a dynamic and sustainable economy.
- 3.22 It is the green and healthy environment section that has most relevance to this study. One of the key priorities, for example, aims to protect open space and promote the use of leisure facilities and open spaces. In addition, specific actions relate to the development of the local community and voluntary sports sector and to encourage the use of sport and leisure facilities via the creation of a Community Sport network

Sevenoaks District Community Safety Partnership Strategy and Action Plan, 2005-2008

- 3.23 The Community Safety Partnership Strategy and Action Plan sets out how the Safe Communities theme in the District's Community Plan will be progressed. The Strategy and Action Plan is based on a crime and disorder audit of the District carried out in 2004.
- 3.24 The key findings of this audit that are of relevance to this strategy are:
- Sevenoaks remains a low-crime district
 - Sevenoaks Town and Swanley show the highest levels of crime in the District with New Ash Green and Edenbridge recording relatively low levels of crime
 - people in Sevenoaks Town would like more facilities for young people, particularly skateboarding
 - the need to keep public space in good order, make repairs and remove graffiti quickly was also highlighted by people in Sevenoaks Town
 - Edenbridge wish to retain the Edenbridge Community Warden to help deal with graffiti and fly-tipping
 - a lack of activities for young people and lack of transport was highlighted as a problem for rural areas.

SECTION 4
CONSULTATIONS

Consultation

Introduction

- 4.1 A series of consultations have been undertaken amongst both users and non-users of open space across the District to establish their views on provision.
- 4.2 Consultations were carried out with many organisations and individuals using various methods, including:
- **a household survey** – surveys were distributed to 5,000 randomly selected households across Sevenoaks District
 - **sports club surveys** – to all identified sports clubs in the District
 - **young people’s internet survey** – a letter and information pack was sent out to all the primary and secondary schools in the District for completion by pupils
 - **drop-in sessions** – held at three different locations across the District: Swanley, Sevenoaks and Westerham
 - **internal consultations** – with Council Officers from a range of departments including Planning and Community Development and Sencio
 - **workshops and formal consultation** – with the District’s town and parish councils and Members to ascertain their views on open space and outdoor facilities.
- 4.3 The information gained from these consultations has been used to inform the study and to help understand:
- the needs and requirements of local residents
 - the attitudes and expectations for open space
 - good and bad points about the existing provision
 - existing open space, sport and recreation provision at a strategic level
 - the key issues/problems facing different Council departments and agencies.
- 4.4 The information collected through the consultation is invaluable to this report and forms the basis of the recommended local standards.
- 4.5 Below is a summary of how the consultations have been used to inform the study and where the information and statistics can be found relevant to quality, quantity and accessibility.

Household survey

- 4.6 The household survey is one of the most important features of the consultation, allowing a number of randomly selected households to comment on quantity, quality and accessibility of open space, sport and recreation facilities, as well as providing the opportunity to comment on site-specific issues.
- 4.7 The household survey was sent to households in each of the four analysis areas. The analysis areas are described in more detail in Section 2.
- 4.8 721 postal surveys were returned, providing a statistically sound sample that can be used to extrapolate the views of the broader population within the District.
- 4.9 Specific questions in the household questionnaire directly input into the standard setting process. For example, respondents were asked whether they consider there to be enough of each type of open space. They were also asked to explain their answer. This provides a sound, opinion-based statistical basis for the quantity standards. It can be further analysed to assess, for example, whether a perceived lack of open space is really a need for better quality facilities or a need for additional facilities.
- 4.10 Detailed analysis of the household survey can be found in the specific typology sections (Sections 5-12). The justification of standards can be found in Appendices G, H and I.

Sports club survey

- 4.11 The sports club survey forms part of the information collected to inform standards and recommendations for indoor and outdoor sports facilities.
- 4.12 Surveys were sent by PMP to all sports clubs across the District, from which 66 surveys were successfully completed and returned. The results account for the following types of sports clubs:
- cricket
 - martial arts
 - walking
 - rugby
 - badminton
 - football
 - netball
 - athletics
 - bowls
 - cycling
 - swimming
 - tennis
- 4.13 The following sections outline the key points which have arisen from this programme of consultation, split broadly into the three key themes of quantity, quality and accessibility:

Quantity

Outdoor sports

- there was a good response from 'traditional' outdoor sports clubs, with cricket, football and rugby clubs responding.
- 57% of outdoor sports clubs believe that the current provision of facilities do not meet their current requirements.
- 43% of these clubs would like to see more Synthetic Turf Pitches in the District.

- 27% of outdoor sports clubs rated the overall provision of leisure facilities as average, with a further 20% rating it as good. However, another 20% rated the provision as poor, and only 10% believed provision was very good. A further 7% rated facilities as very poor.

Indoor sports

- there was a good response from indoor sports clubs as well, including Martial arts, swimming, indoor bowls and badminton clubs.
- 44% of indoor sports clubs believe that the overall provision of leisure facilities in Sevenoaks is good, and a further 6% rated it as very good. 25% of clubs said the overall provision was average, and only 6% stated it was very poor.
- 69% of indoor sports clubs believe that the existing leisure facilities meet their current needs, as opposed to 11% who stated they did not.
- when asked what type of leisure facilities they would like to see more of, indoor sports clubs indicated youth facilities (31%), Multi-use games areas (19%) and Health and Fitness gyms (19%) as their main priorities.

Quality

4.14 Clubs were asked to rate their current facilities against several quality criteria. Details for outdoor and indoor sports clubs are outlined below.

Outdoor sports

- a third of outdoor sports clubs believe that the range of their current facilities is either good or very good. 23% believe it to be average, while 30% said it was either poor or very poor.
- with regards to changing facilities, a large number of clubs rated theirs as either poor or very poor (40%) while 33% believed them to be either good or very good.
- when rating the appearance of the facilities, results were varied, with 30% rating it as average.
- overall, 30% believed their facilities to be average, 20% good, another 20% very good, 10% poor and a further 10% very poor. 10% did not respond.

Indoor sports

- 37% of indoor sports clubs stated that the range of their facilities was very good, with a further 12.5% rating it as good. Another 12.5% however stated their facilities had a very poor range.
- the majority of clubs rated their changing facilities as either good or very good (56%), while 18% said those were either poor or very poor.
- 62% of clubs were satisfied with the appearance of their facilities as well as the helpfulness of the staff.
- overall, 31% believed their facilities to be very good, 25% good, another 25% average, 6% very poor. 13% did not respond.

Accessibility

Outdoor sports

- the majority of outdoor sports clubs believe that the location of their facilities is either good or very good (56%). 23% said it was average, and only 10% rated it as poor or very poor.
- accessibility by public transport was rated poorly by outdoor sports clubs, with half of the respondents saying that it was either poor or very poor. Only 7% rated it as very good.
- car parking on the other hand was rated favourably, with over half of the respondents rating it either good or very good (53%)

Indoor sports

- the majority of indoor sports clubs believe that the location of their facilities is very good (56%). However 12.5% said it was very poor.
- as for outdoor sports clubs, accessibility by public transport rated poorly, with 36% saying it is poor or very poor. A further 31% rated it as average, with 25% rating it as good.
- again, car parking rated favourably with 56% saying it is either good or very good.

- 4.15 A meeting was also held with the Sevenoaks Sports Council to ascertain their issues and aspirations for the District and to also discuss the issues identified in PMP's indoor sports facility demand assessment. The main points raised at the meeting were:

Swimming

- 4.16 General contentment with the level and quality of swimming facilities in the District. However, comments were made about the possibility of a swimming pool in New Ash Green and the cost of school swimming.

Cricket

- 4.17 Some sites identified as needing improved changing facilities. Concern over the future of the indoor cricket facility in central Sevenoaks. Aspiration for this to be replaced.

Hockey

- 4.18 There is an aspiration for an additional floodlit STP in the Swanley area. This would also increase evening training opportunities for football teams in this area. There are also concerns regarding the maintenance of existing STPs.

Bowls

- 4.19 There is no desire at present for increased indoor or outdoor bowls facilities in the District as Sevenoaks District Indoor Bowls Club is currently struggling for members.

Tennis

- 4.20 There is a strong desire for indoor tennis facilities in the area. The only facilities in the District are at Sevenoaks School and they are not generally available to the public. There are concerns regarding the surface quality and lack of floodlighting at outdoor facilities.

Squash

- 4.21 There was a general agreement that squash participation has declined in many areas and that it was appropriate for squash courts to be converted to other uses in such cases.

Athletics

- 4.22 It was felt there is a lack of publicly accessible quality indoor and outdoor athletics facilities.

Netball

- 4.23 It was felt the lack of quality indoor or outdoor netball facilities should be addressed.

Football

- 4.24 It was felt that there is enough football pitches in the area, especially now mini-soccer has been introduced. However the quality of pitches at rural sites is problematic at times and parish councils should be made aware of Football Foundation funding to help address the quality problems.

Rugby

- 4.25 There is currently no rugby club in Swanley. More pitches are needed in the general Sevenoaks Town area. It was an aspiration of many to remove rugby from the Hollybush site.

Young people's internet survey

- 4.26 The internet survey gives young people the opportunity to comment on open space and sports facilities within the District through their IT or Geography lessons at school. The aim is to collect the views of young people throughout the District, as the household survey generally is slightly biased towards older residents.

- 4.27 A guidance pack and letter were sent to all the secondary and primary schools in the District, enabling children to complete the questionnaires over the internet.

- 4.28 53 responses were received from pupils attending the following schools:

- Crockham Hill C of E Primary School
- Riverhead Infants School
- Anthony Roper Primary School
- St John's C of E Primary School.

Respondee profile

- 4.29 52% respondents were aged 11, whilst the remainder were younger. The gender split was 46% male and 54% female.

Open spaces used

- 4.30 Respondees were asked which types of open space they had used in the last year. The most popular open space type was parks (used by 81% of children), followed by footpaths/cycleways (used by 71%) in the last year. Only 4% of children had not used any open spaces in the last year. Full results are shown in Table 4.2 below.

Table 4.2 Open space use of respondents

Open space type	PPG17 typology equivalent	% of children using in the last year
Parks	Parks and gardens	81
Woodland, meadows, grassland	Natural and semi natural	65
Grassy area within a housing development, village greens	Amenity green space	50
Play areas	Provision for children and young people	54
Footpaths, cycleways	Green corridors	71
Outdoor sport facilities	Outdoor sport facilities	54
Allotments	Allotments	40
Churchyards and cemeteries	Churchyards and cemeteries	56
None		4

4.31 For the very few children who had reported not visiting any open space sites in the past year, the reasons cited included lack of interest and feeling unsafe.

Site usage

4.32 Children were asked which site they used most regularly and how frequently they used it. The sites were varied. Children were also asked how often they used this site. Nearly half of respondents (41%) indicated that they used their particular site weekly. 27% indicated that they used the site occasionally and 29% that they used the site daily.

4.33 The most popular transport methods for accessing open spaces were walking (51%) and cycling (23%). 21% travel by car and 4% caught the train.

4.34 Almost half of the respondents (46%) were able to get to their most used open space in less than five minutes. The breakdown for transport times to most used open spaces is shown in Table 4.3 below.

Table 4.3 Travel time of respondents to open spaces

Travel time to open space	% of children travelling this amount of time
Less than 5 minutes	46
5 –10 minutes	35
10 – 15 minutes	8
15 – 20 minutes	6
20 – 30 minutes	2
Over 30 minutes	2

4.35 Also examined were the reasons why children choose to use open spaces. The most popular reason was to get some exercise (45%). Other popular reasons were to meet friends (40%) and to have a kickabout (40%). Table 4.4 below shows the breakdown of reasons given for using open spaces:

Table 4.4 Reason for open space usage

Reason for using open space	% of children stating this reason
To get some exercise	45
For a kickabout/informal play	40
To meet friends	40
To use playground/play equipment	36
To get some fresh air	30
To go for a walk	28
To play on the sports pitches	26
To picnic/eat	17
To sit and relax	17
To take the dog for a walk	15
To read	6
To look at scenery	6

SECTION 4 – CONSULTATION

- 4.36 Children were asked to comment specifically on what it is that they like most about the open space that they had chosen. The most popular themes were:
- they can run around and get some exercise
 - like to play with friends
 - it is quiet
 - the space
 - the deer at Knole Park and the rivers.
- 4.37 Children were asked what they like least about the open space in question. The most popular theme for this response was litter, vandalism and anti-social behaviour. Emphasising this point, when asked specifically if they thought that open spaces in the District were well maintained, 32% replied “yes” and 60% replied, “some are but others are not.” The remaining 8% thought that they were not well maintained.
- 4.38 Children were asked what they felt about the overall quantity and quality of open space in the District. These scores indicated that children felt that there was a good amount of open space:
- 70% of children felt that there was a good or very good amount of open space
 - 33% of children rated the quality of open space as fair, whilst 48% rated quality as good or very good
 - only 5% felt it was poor, whilst 15% ‘didn’t know’.
- 4.39 Children were also asked if they felt safe using open spaces in the District. 85% replied that they did feel safe while the remaining 15% did not feel safe. The main reason for those not feeling safe is fear of strangers and bullies.
- 4.40 The detailed results and analysis from this consultation can be found in the specific typology sections (Sections 5-13), particularly in Section 7: Provision for Children and Young People, as well as the justification of standards in the appendices (Appendices G, H and I).

Drop-in sessions

- 4.41 The drop-in sessions provide the chance for any member of the public within Sevenoaks District to comment informally on open space within their local area. The sessions were advertised in the local press and held across three different locations, providing an opportunity for everyone to comment.
- 4.42 A number of people attended the drop-ins and provided comments on quality, accessibility, site specific issues and general examples of good and bad practice within the District. These comments have been fed into the individual typology sections (5-14) and used to inform the recommended local standards (Appendices G, H and, I).

SECTION 4 – CONSULTATION

4.43 Three drop-in sessions were held on 5 and 6 December 2006. The locations were:

- ASDA, Swanley
- Sevenoaks Town centre
- Westerham Village Green.

4.44 These locations were chosen in consultation with Council officers to ensure a high footfall and to ensure that views were heard from residents based in different areas of the District.

4.45 These sessions tended to generate site-specific comments. Examples of comments received include:

- Sevenoaks Common is poorly used and needs a focal point
- a skateboard park is required in the centre of Sevenoaks
- dog fouling is a problem at numerous sites
- allotments need to be protected
- amenity spaces are well maintained
- litter in parks is a problem
- Swanley Park does not have enough facilities for children.

Internal consultation

4.46 The internal consultation is another important feature of the study. It provides an overview of Council plans, roles of officers and expectations from their perspectives. Individuals from various Council departments were consulted.

4.47 Face-to-face interviews were used to inform the setting of local standards for the various types of open space in the District.

4.48 This also feeds into the separate sections of the report (Sections 5-12) and setting of local standards (Appendices G, H and I).

4.49 The most significant points to come out of the internal consultation were:

- the possible effects of London hosting the 2012 Olympic Games
- the continued efforts to introduce schemes and facilities for young people
- gardening for wildlife schemes to encourage biodiversity
- the problems of identifying new sites for open spaces or other facilities
- open spaces being used inappropriately
- relationships with Parish Councils
- need for more skate parks, particularly in northern parishes

SECTION 4 – CONSULTATION

- lack of outdoor sports facilities in the north
- village hall improvement programme underway
- recognition of pockets of deprivation.

External consultation

- 4.50 A list of external agencies and neighbouring local authorities was provided by the Council. A questionnaire was issued asking consultees to provide information on ownership and management, quality, quantity and accessibility of open spaces as well as general comments relating to open space in the District.
- 4.51 Key external consultees that did not respond to the questionnaire were consulted via telephone.
- 4.52 This information has been fed through into the individual sections (5-14) and provides a broad overview of strategic issues relating to open space.

Member and Town and Parish Council Consultation

- 4.53 Consultation was undertaken with all of the District's Town and Parish Councils. This initially comprised a series of workshops held in October 2007 where a need for further consultation was highlighted. Consequently, following the workshops, consultation packs were sent to each Parish Council and also District Councillors which contained:
- a series of maps showing the open spaces identified in each respective area and a corresponding list of sites for checking
 - a copy of draft report
 - a consultation response document containing a series of questions relating to the report's quality, quantity and accessibility standards and the recommendations.
- 4.54 The intention of this exercise was to determine whether the recommendations and standards contained within the report were an accurate reflection of need/demand in each area and whether they were achievable over the next 20 years. The results of the exercise directly fed into the individual typology sections.

Summary

- 4.55 A variety of consultation methods have been employed within Sevenoaks District to inform the assessment of local needs. Copies of the surveys and further details regarding the consultation are provided in Appendix C.
- 4.56 The findings of the consultation feed directly into the standard-setting process, which can be found within the explanation for each of the quantity, quality and accessibility standards within Sections 5 -13 and Appendices G, H and I. In addition, the consultation provides the context to each of the open space types identifying key issues and areas for improvement.

SECTION 5
PARKS AND GARDENS

Parks and gardens

Definition

- 5.1 This type of open space includes urban parks, formal gardens and country parks. These provide opportunities for informal recreation and community events. This typology also has many wider benefits including a sense of place for the local community, ecological and education benefits, help with social inclusion and provide structural and landscaping benefits.



Source: <http://www.swanleypark.co.uk/>

Strategic context and consultation

- 5.2 English Heritage completed a survey during 2003 looking at 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 people visit particular parks
 - the levels of satisfaction with the amenities on offer
 - why non-users do not use parks.
- 5.3 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.
- 5.4 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. Almost three quarters of adults from higher social groups visited parks regularly compared with only half of those from lower social groups
 - people from black and ethnic minority communities and disabled adults also had relatively low levels of usage of parks

SECTION 5 – PARKS AND GARDENS

- 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. Almost two thirds visited a park at least once a week. 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 during the spring and summer months and 600 million 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.

Local consultation

- 5.5 Parks and gardens were considered by respondents to the household survey to be the second most important type of open space. 95% of respondents believed them to be important. The largest proportion of respondents visited parks on a weekly basis (36%) with a further 24% visiting on a monthly basis.
- 5.6 Of respondents who use a park or garden as their primary open space, the majority walk between five and ten minutes to reach it. The most significant problems were dog fouling and litter. The consultation showed that the majority of respondents are content with the current quantity and quality of parks and gardens in the District.

Current situation

- 5.7 There are 18 parks and gardens in the District. They vary greatly in size and in function, from Watercress Close Park (Site ID 224), a 0.02ha urban formal garden, to Knole Park (Site ID 235) which provides 267ha of country park public space. The parks are also managed by different groups, including the District Council, parish councils, and the National Trust.
- 5.8 The 18 sites are distributed fairly evenly across urban and rural areas of the District. The northern rural analysis area has just the one site whilst there are three in the southern rural area. The average site size for the District is 31.3ha, however the average site size in the Swanley area is only 4ha. Table 5.1 below provides a breakdown of the sites by analysis area.
- 5.9 Knole Park is a distinctive venue for parks in Sevenoaks District. Its size and facilities make it a destination venue for all Sevenoaks District residents and other visitors too. Its location on the edge of Sevenoaks Town Centre gives it both an urban and country park role. Lullingstone Park is another large strategic site which is, in many ways, similar to Knole Park. However, for the purposes of this study it has been classified as Natural and Semi-Natural so is not considered in this section.

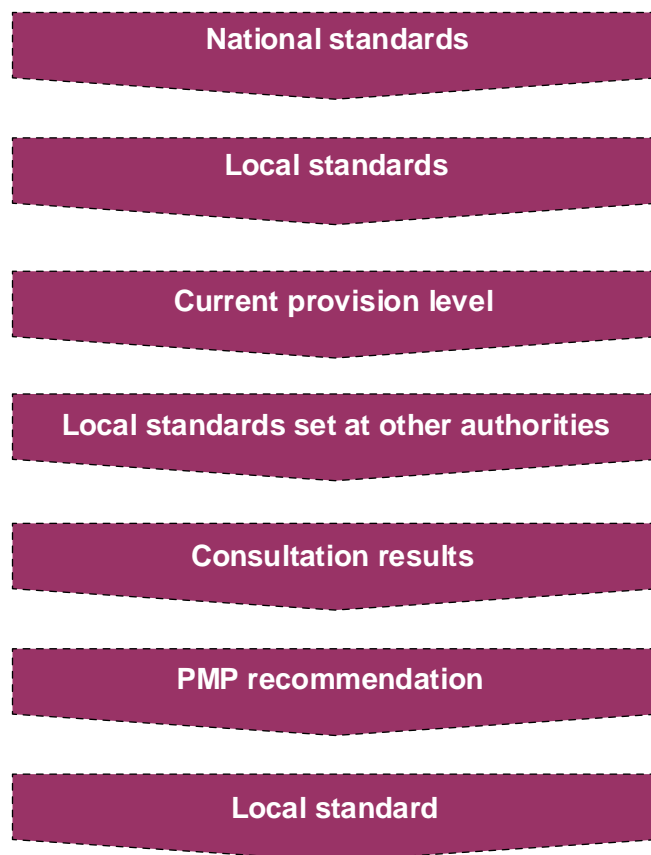
Table 5.1 Analysis area breakdown

Analysis area	Number of sites	Total hectares	Average site size
Swanley	5	19.94	4.00
North Sevenoaks	2	28.38	14.2
Central Sevenoaks	5	270.84	54.2
South Sevenoaks	6	242.84	40.5

Setting provision standards

- 5.10 In setting local standards for parks and gardens there is a need to take into account any existing national or local standards, current provision, other local authority standards for comparison, findings from the site assessments and consultation on local needs.
- 5.11 In order to set the standards for quality, quantity and accessibility a workshop session was undertaken with Council officers to discuss all the available data in terms of the audit, consultation and other relevant material. The process for each standard is demonstrated in Figure 5.1 below.

Figure 5.1 Setting standards process diagram



Quantity

5.12 Unlike quality and accessibility standards, PMP were able to instantly apply the quantity standards (Step 4) as part of the workshop session through an interactive calculator. This allowed the effect of an increased/decreased level of provision to be calculated. This was calculated in three different ways:

- District wide
- for each analysis area
- urban v rural areas.

5.13 An example of the calculator is shown in Figure 5.2 below. As can be seen, the effect of increasing/decreasing provision levels is calculated in terms of actual hectares needed.

Figure 5.2 Interactive calculator example

Setting Quantity Standards Calculator			Population: 2001 Audit: 2008		
Analysis area name		Swanley			
Area population	urban	20,986			
Typology	Total provision	Existing Provision (per 1,000 population)	Recommended Local Standard (per 1,000 population)	Increase / Decrease (ha per 1,000 population)	ACTUAL Increase / Decrease (hectares)
Parks & Gardens	19.94	0.95	1.00	-0.05	-1.05

5.14 The general view from respondents to the household survey was that current provision was 'just right' or 'too much' (59%). A similar response was gained from respondents who use this open space most regularly with 60% judging current provision levels to be 'just right' or 'too much'.

5.15 Because of the variations between the analysis areas, different quantity standards have been set for each analysis area.

5.16 Because of the unusual nature of Knole Park, as a large country park on the edge of the urban settlement, there is no requirement for new park provision in the Central Sevenoaks area. This is reaffirmed by the public consultation via the drop in sessions and household survey. Any new housing provision in this area should contribute towards qualitative and accessibility improvements at Knole Park. In the unlikely event of a major housing development this policy would need to be appraised in relation to the proximity of the development and Knole Park.

LOCAL QUANTITY STANDARD
Central Sevenoaks – no standard set
Swanley – 1.00 ha per 1000 population
North Sevenoaks – no standard set
South Sevenoaks – no standard set

- 5.17 Although Swanley Park plays an important role in serving both local residents as well as those in surrounding northern parishes, in comparison with the Central Sevenoaks area, the Swanley area is served poorly by its quantifiable area of parks and gardens. This was recognised in the household survey with an increased number of respondents stating that levels were “nearly enough” or “not enough” compared to the average District levels. Analysis of Map 5.1 shows that one new park or garden is prioritised. Applying the quantity standard of 1.00ha/1000 population indicates that a park of approximately 1 ha is needed.
- 5.18 Table 5.2 below provides a hierarchy of open space based on the London Plan. This shows that a small local could be provided if a one hectare of land were made available.

Table 5.2 Parks and garden hierarchy

Open space categorisation	Size guideline (hectares)
Regional	Over 400
Metropolitan	60 – 400
District	20 – 60
Local parks	2 – 20
Small local parks	0.4 – 2
Pocket parks	Less than 0.4

- 5.19 No standards have been set for the two rural areas. This recognises that most of the development in this area will be small scale therefore qualitative and accessibility improvements will be sought. The public consultation via the household survey showed that residents are largely content with quantity levels in these areas and the lack of standard is in line with standards set by PMP in other rural areas. Should any large-scales developments occur it is expected that new parks and/or gardens provision will be made.

Quality

- 5.20 Quality standards are an aspirational vision which reflect the wishes of the community. The vision can be applied to existing open spaces and provides a benchmark when designing and creating new areas of open space. Similar to the quantity standard, the quality standard was set during a workshop with Council officers. In this session typical quality standards were viewed as well as national standards and the results from the consultation.

LOCAL QUALITY STANDARD

" Parks and gardens should be well maintained, providing varied vegetation, flowers and trees. Appropriate ancillary accommodation (which may include seating, toilets and litter/dog bins) should be provided with clear signage to and within the site. Sites should be safe and secure and where appropriate may have a ranger / warden presence to further improve security."

SECTION 5 – PARKS AND GARDENS

- 5.21 The site assessment matrices completed for each open space site across Sevenoaks District provide a score for quality and site access. In addition, they provide an assessment of wider benefits such as educational or heritage benefits.
- 5.22 The quality site assessments are divided into sub categories and an expected score is assigned against each (1 low to 5 high, shown in brackets):
- cleanliness and maintenance (5)
 - safety and security (4)
 - vegetation (4)
 - ancillary accommodation (4).
- 5.23 These scores are then weighted to reflect the perceived importance of each factor. Factors that are given higher weightings (eg cleanliness and maintenance, 5) are perceived to be the most important and to have the largest impact on the quality of the site. Factors with higher weightings will therefore influence the total score more than factors with lower weightings.
- 5.24 Scores for each factor, taking into account the weighting, can then be translated into a percentage or quality index. Where the site assessor considered a particular factor to be “not applicable”, the percentage does not take account of this factor and the overall score is therefore not affected.
- 5.25 The overall quality of parks and gardens across the District is considered to be good, with the average quality score being 66%.
- 5.26 The majority of parks were rated as good in providing wider benefits including residential amenities (such as structural and landscaping), amenity benefits (such as a sense of place) and social inclusion and health benefits.
- 5.27 From the consultation and household questionnaires, the highest-rated quality factors for parks and gardens were clean/litter free, flowers, trees and shrubs, well kept grass, toilets and seating. All of these features have been factored into the quality standard above and it is recommended that developer contributions should be directed towards such improvements and features in all analysis areas except Swanley. However, the quality standard does acknowledge that the provision of such facilities may not be appropriate or realistic in some areas of the District due to either their rural nature and/or issues surrounding maintenance costs.

Accessibility

- 5.28 There are also no definitive national or local accessibility standards for parks and gardens. Of those respondents who stated that their most frequently used open spaces are parks and gardens, levels of satisfaction with accessibility are relatively high. The highest level of dissatisfaction was with accessibility by public transport (24%) and accessibility by cycleways (23%).
- 5.29 Based on the household survey, the most popular mode of transport to parks and gardens is on foot. The 75% level was 15 minutes, approximately 1.2km along roads and footpaths. This equates to a 720m straight line distance. The view was similar in both and urban and rural areas of the District. Therefore an accessibility standard of a 15-minute walktime has been

**RECOMMENDED
ACCESSIBILITY
STANDARD**
*15 minute walk
(1.2km)*

SECTION 5 – PARKS AND GARDENS

set for all areas of the District although it should be recognised that in some rural areas a 15 minute walk time is not always a realistic aspiration.

Applying provision standards – identifying geographical areas and quantity deficiencies

- 5.30 In order to identify important geographical areas and those areas with unmet needs, we apply both the quantity and accessibility standards together. The quantity standards enable the identification of areas that do not meet the minimum provision standards while the accessibility standards help to determine where those deficiencies are important.
- 5.31 Table 5.3 applies the local standard to each analysis area. It shows that there is a deficiency in the Swanley analysis area.

Table 5.3 Current local standard application

Analysis area	Current population	Actual provision	Current provision level - ha per 1,000 population	Local standard - ha per 1,000 population	Current surplus/ (deficiency) - ha per 1,000 pop	Actual surplus/ deficiency (ha)
Swanley	20,986	19.94	0.95	1.00	-0.05	-1.05
Central Sevenoaks	22,508			n/a	n/a	n/a
Total urban	43,494	19.94		n/a	n/a	n/a
North Sevenoaks	41,809			n/a	n/a	n/a
South Sevenoaks	24,002			n/a	n/a	n/a
Total rural	65,811			n/a	n/a	n/a

- 5.32 Table 5.4 below also examines this situation for 2026. This assumes an increase in population but no increase in open space. Ward based population figures were not available so a blanket increase of 2.47% (the same as the overall predicted population increase) has been applied to all wards in order to reach the predicted future population of 112,000.

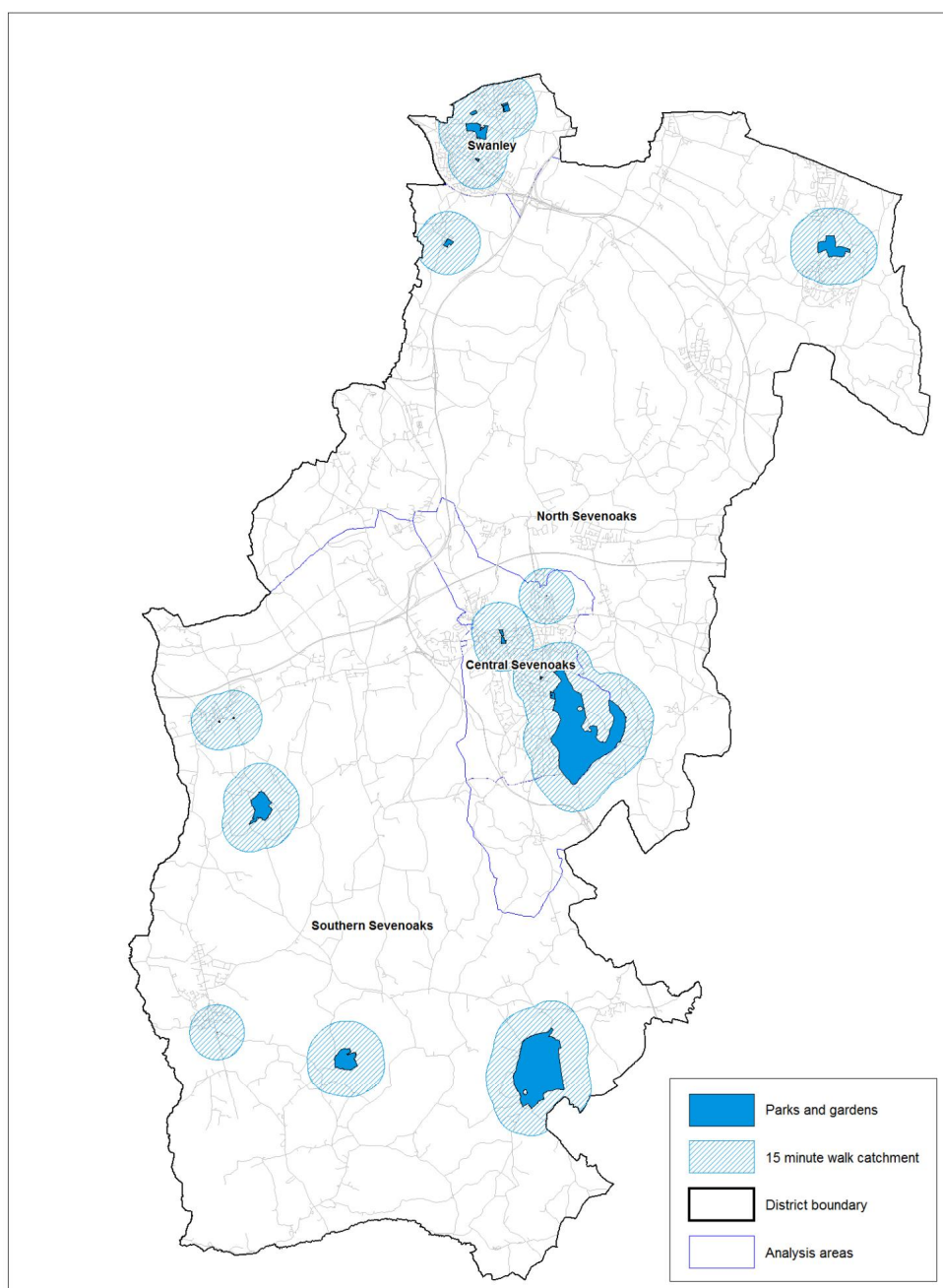
Table 5.4 Future local standard application (2026)

Analysis area	Future population	Actual provision	Future provision level - ha per 1,000 population	Local standard - ha per 1,000 population	Future surplus/ (deficiency) - ha per 1,000 pop	Actual surplus/ deficiency (ha)
Swanley	21,421	19.94	0.93	1.00	-0.07	-1.48
Central Sevenoaks	23,063			n/a	n/a	n/a
Total urban	44,484	19.94		n/a	n/a	n/a
North Sevenoaks	42,840			n/a	n/a	n/a
South Sevenoaks	24,594			n/a	n/a	n/a
Total rural	67,434			n/a	n/a	n/a

SECTION 5 – PARKS AND GARDENS

5.33 As the projected population increase to 2026 is negligible, the changes from current to future provision levels are small. However the table does reinforce the importance of protecting the current parks and gardens in Swanley and the need to plan for additional facilities. The results in Table 5.4 reinforce the findings from the public consultation that quantity satisfaction levels in the Swanley area are lower than other parts of the District.

Map 5.1 Application of the accessibility standard for parks and gardens

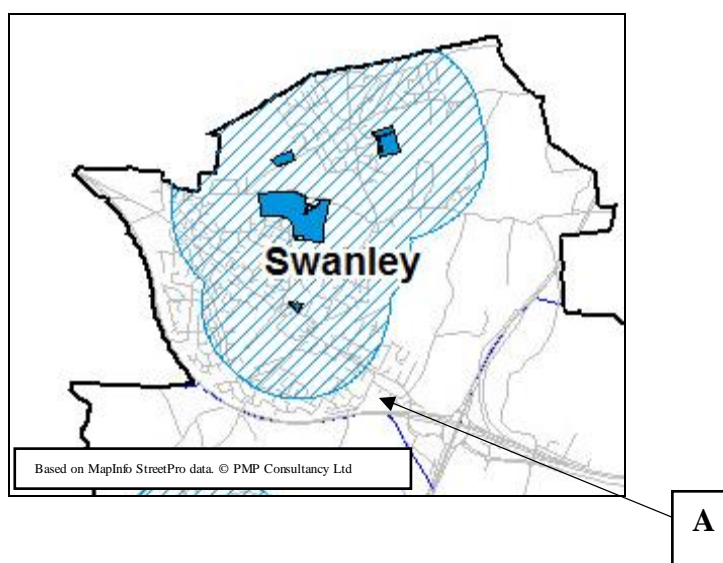


Parks and gardens

Based on MapInfo Streetpro data. Crown Copyright. PMP Ltd.

strategy finance delivery **pmp**

Map 5.2 Focus on Swanley

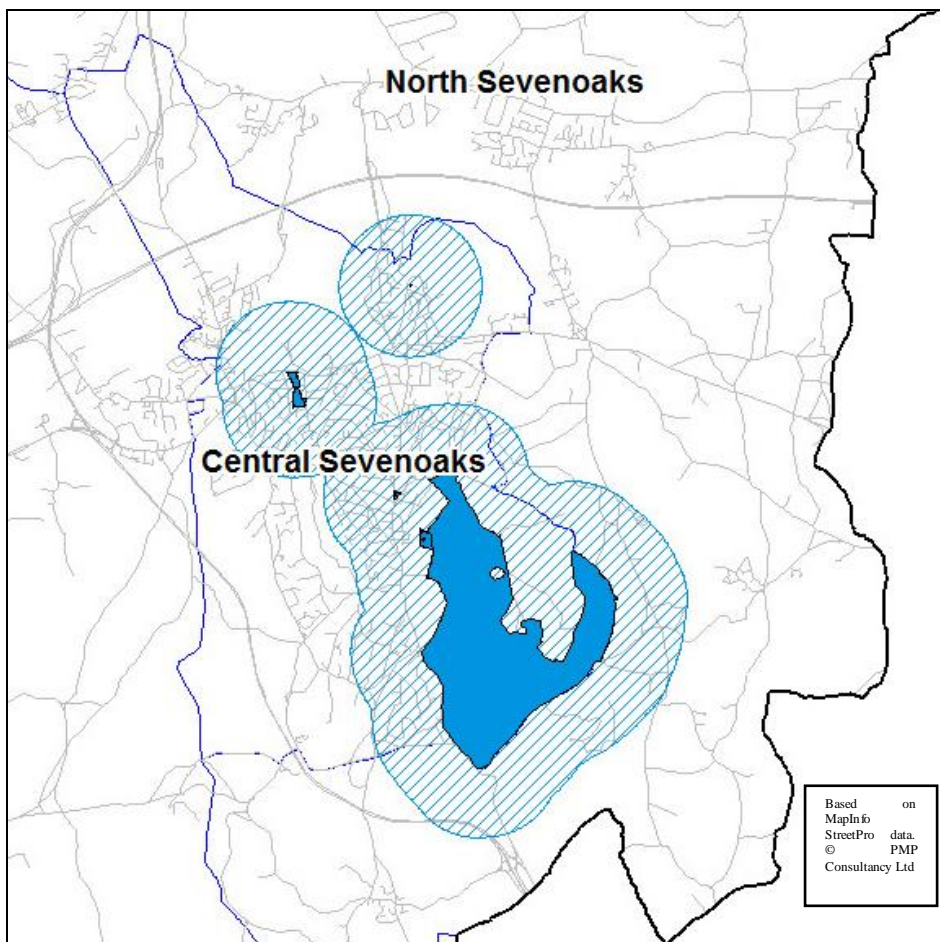


- 5.34 Looking initially at the Swanley area, it shows that the majority of the built up areas are covered by the catchment area of the major parks. However the southern parts of Swanley (labelled “A”) are largely cut off from the nearest park by the railway line through the area. During consultation with parish and town councils, Swanley Town Council also highlighted a need to increase provision in the area south east of the Swanley to Farningham railway line and north of London Road.
- 5.35 In order to meet these deficiencies it is recommended that the Council works to improve access and/or increase provision for residents to the south of the railway line. This would help reduce the quantity and accessibility deficiencies in this analysis area.

P&G 1

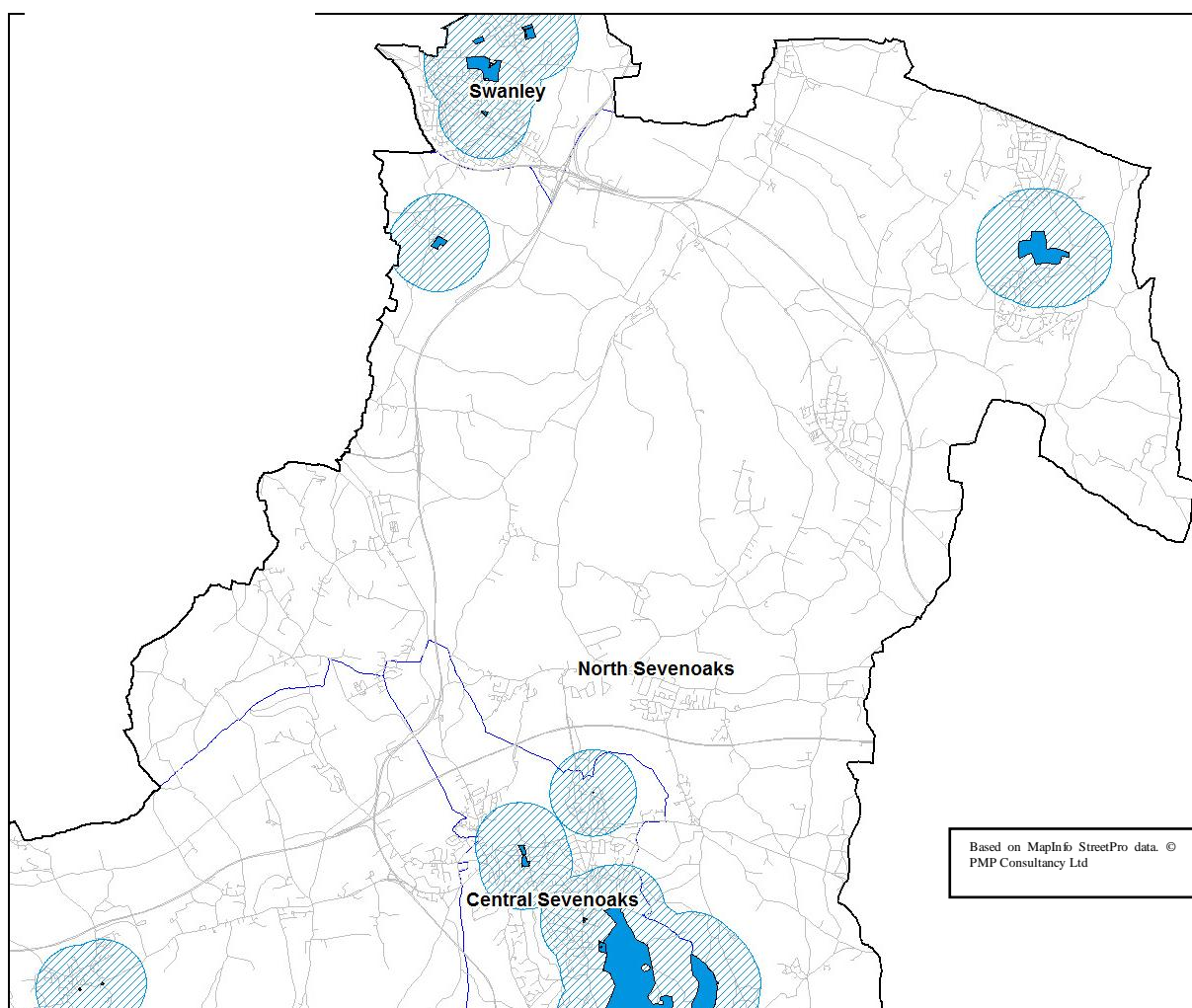
Investigate the possibility of increasing access to, and/or the provision of, parks and gardens for residents to the south of the railway line in Swanley.

Map 5.3 Focus upon Central Sevenoaks area



- 5.36 Map 5.3 above shows that, due to Knole Park, parks and garden provision in the Central Sevenoaks analysis area is focused upon the east of the area. The accessibility for residents from the west to the east is problematic due the railway and A roads which run through the centre of the area.
- 5.37 From an accessibility viewpoint it would be beneficial for there to be a park and garden site on the western side of Central Sevenoaks. However it is realised there is currently not the demand from a quantitative viewpoint. Therefore this should only be a long-term aspiration. In the short-term the Council should concentrate upon improving accessibility to existing parks and gardens.

Map 5.4 Focus upon Northern Sevenoaks area

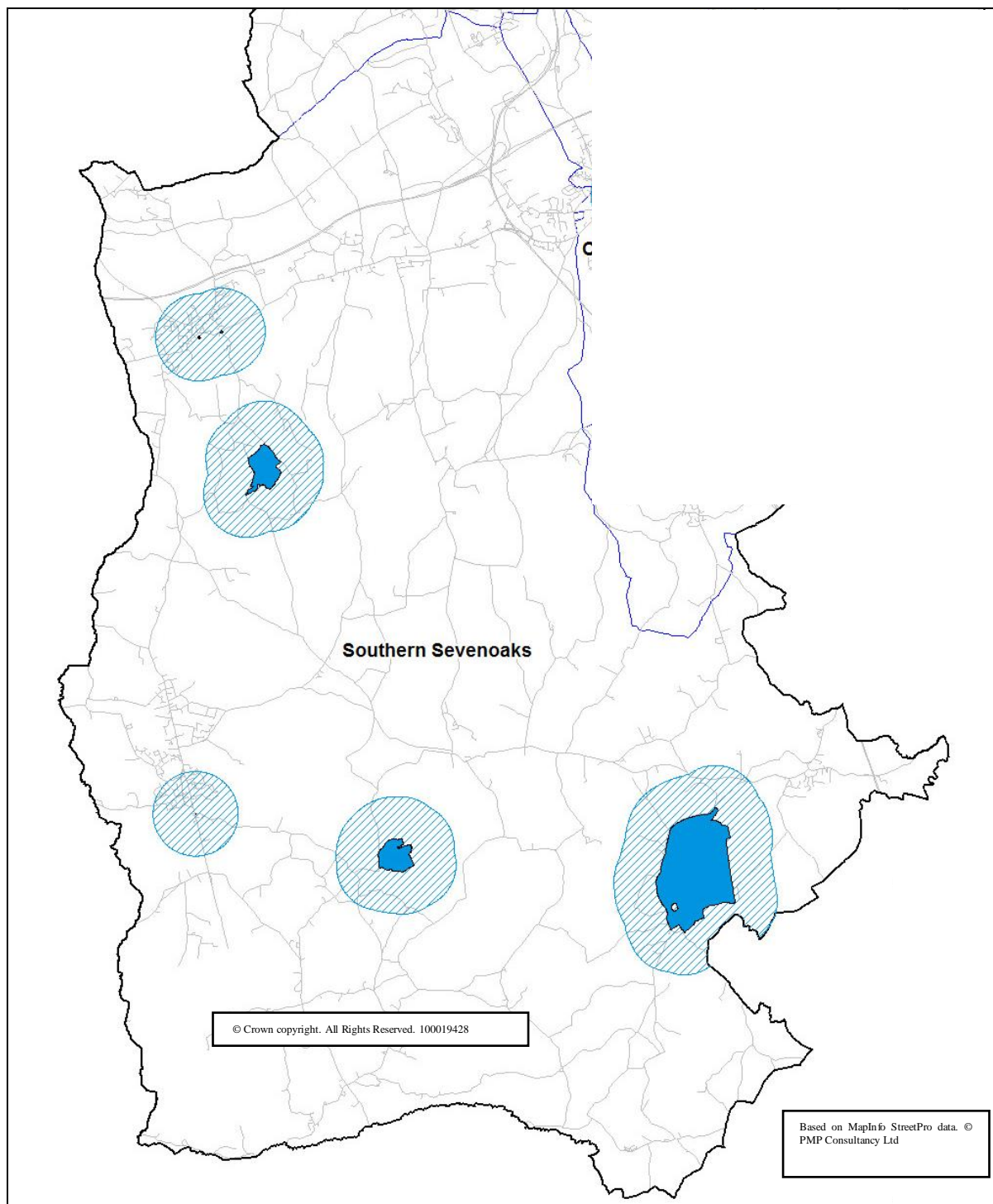


5.38 The North Sevenoaks analysis area has only two park or garden sites. This leaves a large number of major settlements, such as West Kingsdown, New Ash Green and Hartley, without access, although they do have access to Lullingstone Park, a large natural/semi natural green space. With such a large number of settlements without formal park or garden provision, new provision will need to be prioritised. It is recommended that the West Kingsdown area be prioritised as all the other areas have significant natural or semi natural areas which can be used for many similar forms of recreation.

P&G 2

Long term planning to be undertaken for new park or garden site in the West Kingsdown area.

Map 5.5 Focus upon Southern Sevenoaks area



5.39 In light of the public consultation results and as housing development in the area is likely to be of a small scale, no areas have been prioritised for new provision. Instead qualitative and accessibility improvements and sought instead. Should a major housing development occur then new provision of this typology would be expected however.

Value assessment – identifying specific sites

- 5.40 When undertaking value assessments it is expected that most sites with 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.
- 5.41 All parks and gardens in the District are considered to have high/significant levels of usage. Sites that achieved high scores for quality and accessibility are of high value to the local community and should be protected. These sites should set a benchmark for all other parks and gardens:
- Knole Park (Site ID 235)
 - New Barn Park (Site ID 85)
 - Bradbourne Lakes Park (Site ID 298)
 - Hever Castle (Site ID 474)
 - Hextable Park.
- 5.42 Only one site - the Knole Environmental Park (Site ID 333) - scored low for both quality and accessibility. The usage is considered to be high and therefore the quality and accessibility should be prioritised for improvement in order to sustain the usage levels and raise the value of the site to the local community.

Summary and recommendations

- 5.43 The priorities for parks and gardens in each of the analysis areas are different and this is reflected through the different quantity standards set. In Central Sevenoaks provision is based around the Knole Park site and this site caters well for Central Sevenoaks and beyond. In Swanley, however, there are significant areas without provision and a new site is needed to help reduce the gaps in accessibility. In the rural areas it is not feasible to have universal coverage for this typology, instead a priority for new provision has been set for the Northern analysis area whilst qualitative and accessibility improvements are sought for the South.
- 5.44 Overall, parks and gardens within the District are of a good quality. However, the Council should seek ways to improve accessibility to them, especially where there are boundaries such as roads or railways.
- 5.45 The Council should aspire to attaining Green Flag status at its parks, especially in light of the good quality scores achieved through this study.

P&G 1	Investigate the possibility of increasing access to, and/or the provision of, parks and gardens for residents to the south of the railway line in Swanley.
P&G 2	Long term planning to be undertaken for new park or garden site in the West Kingsdown area.

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 wildlife conservation and bio-diversity within the settlement boundaries.

Picture 6.1 High Weald



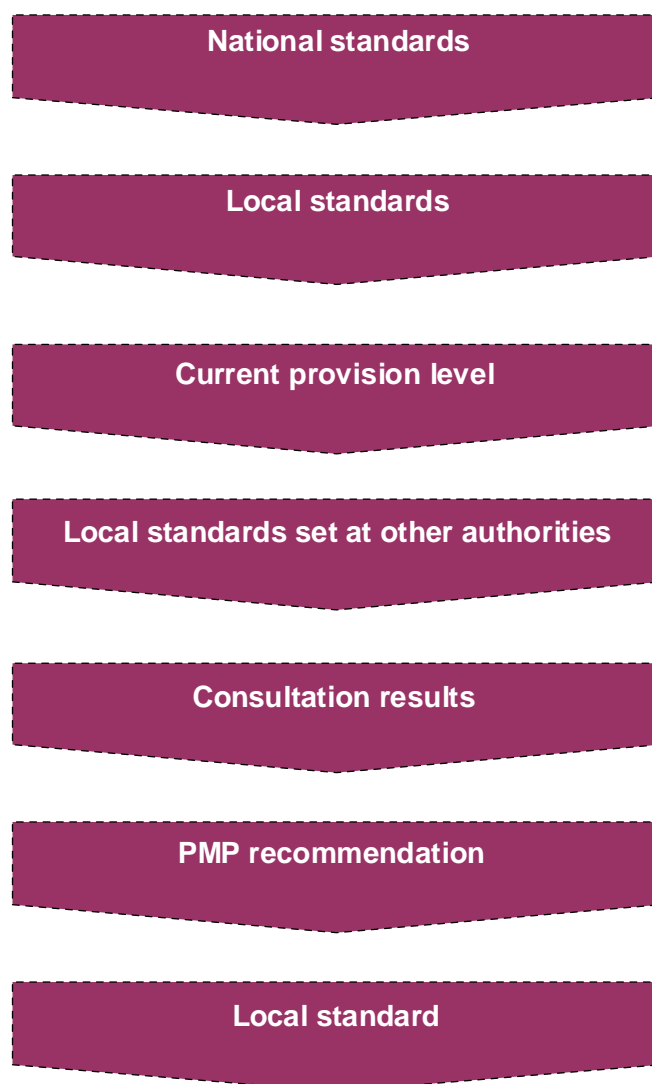
Strategic context and consultation

- 6.2 The rural areas of Sevenoaks District contain a large number of public and private woodlands. These sites tend to be heavily protected by their location in the green belt.
- 6.3 The Local Plan recognises that the geology of the District has helped it possess Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty. Policies are in place to protect the landscape value of these areas which include the Kent Downs and High Weald.
- 6.4 There are also specific policies to protect and enhance areas in the urban fringe and access arrangements for the community are desired where appropriate. Outside of the urban fringe, policy EN11 protects wildlife habitats that are of a scenic, historic or wildlife importance or are of an unspoilt quality. This policy has not been saved as part of the Local Development Framework process.
- 6.5 Other policies that are relevant to this typology are Local Nature Reserves and Sites of Nature Conservation Interest (as identified by the Kent Trust for Nature Conservation).
- 6.6 Due to the large number of policies in place in Sevenoaks District and at the National level which protect natural and semi-natural sites, this study has focused predominantly on all sites in urban areas and on the urban fringe (both public and private) but only strategic sites in the rural areas.
- 6.7 Consultation showed that Sevenoaks District residents view natural semi-natural open spaces as the most important typology of open space. The largest group of respondents (37%) visit such sites on a weekly basis, but 24% visit on a daily basis.
- 6.8 Of respondents who visit this type of open space most regularly, the majority walk to their preferred site. It takes 72% of respondents less than 10 minutes to reach the site. Litter and dog fouling are seen as the significant problems.

Setting provision standards

- 6.9 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.
- 6.10 In order to set the standards for quality, quantity and accessibility a workshop session was undertaken with Council officers to discuss all the available data in terms of the audit, consultation and other relevant material. The process for each standard is demonstrated in Figure 6.1 below.

Figure 6.1 Setting standards process diagram



Current situation

- 6.11 There is a total of 170 natural and semi-natural sites in the District, accounting for 2343 ha of open space. The Swanley analysis area contains the fewest sites (9) whilst the Northern Sevenoaks analysis area contains the most (81).
- 6.12 Existing provision of natural and semi-natural sites in Sevenoaks District is currently 21.4ha per 1,000 population. The average site size is 13.8ha although it varies widely between analysis areas. Swanley has the smallest average site size of 1.08ha and North Sevenoaks the largest at 15.2ha. Table 6.1 below provides a breakdown of the sites by analysis area.

Table 6.1 Analysis area breakdown

Analysis area	Number of sites	Total hectares	Average site size (ha)
Swanley	9	9.74	1.08
North Sevenoaks	81	1235.27	15.20
Central Sevenoaks	26	292.7	11.26
South Sevenoaks	54	809.29	14.99

- 6.13 The variation in provision of natural and semi-natural open space between North Sevenoaks, Swanley, Central and South Sevenoaks, as highlighted in Table 6.1, reflects the way these areas have developed historically and their distinctive character. The Sevenoaks District Countryside Assessment (October 2004) identifies a large area of North Sevenoaks and Swanley as “Fringe Landscapes” and “Mixed Settled Downs”. The level of provision of natural and semi-natural open space in these landscape areas has been affected by recreation uses, insensitive agricultural land management and suburban land-uses and boundaries.
- 6.14 The South Sevenoaks analysis area is dominated by “Low” and “High Weald” landscape types. Such areas are more extensively wooded, a result of ancient woodlands and parklands. Much of Central Sevenoaks, particularly the area adjacent to Sevenoaks town, is characterised as “Greensand Parks and Farmlands” and “Charts”. These areas are defined by historic parkland, large country manor houses and densely wooded areas that have acted to preserve the landscape character and maintain the provision of natural and semi-natural open space.
- 6.15 There are two main standards that relate to the provision of natural and semi natural green space. These are the Woodland Trust’s standard for woodland areas and English Nature which has developed a standard for accessible natural greenspace (ANGSt).
- 6.16 The Woodland Trust standard is:
- no person should live more than 500m from at least one area of accessible woodland of no less than 2ha in size
 - there should be also be at least one area of accessible woodland of no less than 20ha within 4km (8km round-trip) of people’s homes.

- 6.17 The English Nature Accessible Natural Greenspace standard is:
- that no person should live more than 300m from their nearest area of natural greenspace of at least 2ha in size
 - provision of at least 1ha of Local Nature Reserve per 1,000 population
 - that there should be at least one accessible 20ha site within 2km from home
 - that there should be one accessible 100ha site within 5km
 - that there should be one 500ha site within 20 km.
- 6.18 Overall opinion suggests that the current provision levels are about right or more than enough, with a total of 62% of respondents suggesting so. This is compared to only 21% of people who felt there was not enough of this type of open space. A similar response was received for users who use this open space most regularly with 60% believing provision levels to be just right or too much. There were no noticeable distinctions between the different analysis areas despite the noticeable difference in quantifiable areas of this typology between the areas.

Quantity standard

- 6.19 Due to the diverse nature of the District's landscape, which has produced the variation in provision of natural and semi-natural open space, **it is inappropriate to set a District-wide quantity standard for this typology**. The Council should retain the current provision of natural and semi-natural open space, reflecting its role in maintaining biodiversity as well as the needs of the District's residents as expressed in the consultation in paragraph 6.17.
- 6.20 Overall opinion from the household survey suggests that current provision levels are about right. Qualitative and accessibility improvements will be sought instead of new provision. The lack of a quantity standard does not imply an over provision of this typology.

Quality standard

- 6.21 There are no definitive national or local quality standards although the Countryside Agency state that land should be managed to conserve or enhance its rich landscape, bio-diversity, heritage and local customs.
- 6.22 Natural and semi-natural areas were the most popular type of open space amongst residents, alongside parks and gardens. 35% of all respondents stated they used natural and semi-natural areas most frequently of all open spaces. Of this 35% of respondents, the highest rated quality aspirations were: clean and litter free, nature features, clear footpaths and a nature conservation area. Litter and dog fouling were considered the most significant quality issues at natural and semi-natural sites.
- 6.23 The commons were identified during the drop-in sessions as being important sites. The main concerns were around the need for protection from development. Sevenoaks Common was highlighted as requiring a specific purpose (ie a reason for visiting it) and providing a focal point for the District.
- 6.24 Internal consultations revealed that sites in the rural areas are easily accessible with the majority of sites being within half a mile of bus routes. Sites are also considered to be very well maintained and of excellent quality. Shoreham Woods is designated

as an excellent site and should set the standard for other natural and semi-natural sites in the District.

- 6.25 The Sevenoaks District Countryside Assessment highlights that the quality of the landscape in the North Sevenoaks and Swanley analysis areas has suffered. For example, land in “Fringe Landscapes” has historically been used for market gardening, arable and horticulture and subject to increased pressure from recreation uses which has resulted in the loss of visual diversity. Similarly, areas characterised as “Mixed Settled Downs”, including West Kingsdown and Hartley, are subject to pressures from recreational and residential land uses. In the South Sevenoaks analysis area, the Assessment suggests that the presence of small hamlets, ancient woodland and parklands has served to maintain the historic landscape. Central Sevenoaks is also characterised by historic parkland, large country manor houses and densely wooded areas that have helped retain the quality of natural and semi-natural open spaces.

RECOMMENDED LOCAL QUALITY STANDARD

“A spacious site with natural features that encourages wildlife conservation, biodiversity and environmental awareness. Opportunities to link natural sites together with green corridors should be maximised and clear pathways should be provided. Litter and dog bins should be provided where this is suitable and compatible with the character of the site. Management of local sites should continue to involve the community if at all possible. There should be a clear focus on balancing recreational and wildlife needs, whilst ensuring public access where appropriate.”

- 6.26 The average quality score for natural and semi-natural greenspace was 55%.
- 6.27 The quality standard for natural and semi-natural greenspace needs to take into account the aspirations of the public and also the Countryside Agency’s quality standard of well-managed conservation land encompassing bio-diversity and environmental education.
- 6.28 The 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. Appendix I provides further explanation on the suggested approach to the future benchmarking of sites.

Accessibility standard

- 6.29 English Nature recommends accessibility standards for various sizes of accessible natural greenspace. The Woodland Trust recommends standards for the provision of woodland areas within different catchments for different size sites. This has been outlined previously. There are no existing local standards.
- 6.30 From the household survey, of those respondents who used natural and semi-natural greenspaces most frequently, the highest levels of satisfaction related to the accessibility of sites by walking and visibility of the site entrance. Levels of dissatisfaction were highest for accessibility by public transport and accessibility for wheelchair or pushchair access.
- 6.31 Site access scores for this typology were relatively high compared to other local authorities, with an average score of 64.1%. Only two sites scored under 50%, these were:

- Hever Road Fishing Pond, South Sevenoaks (Site ID 488)
- Markbeech Hall, South Sevenoaks (Site ID 443).

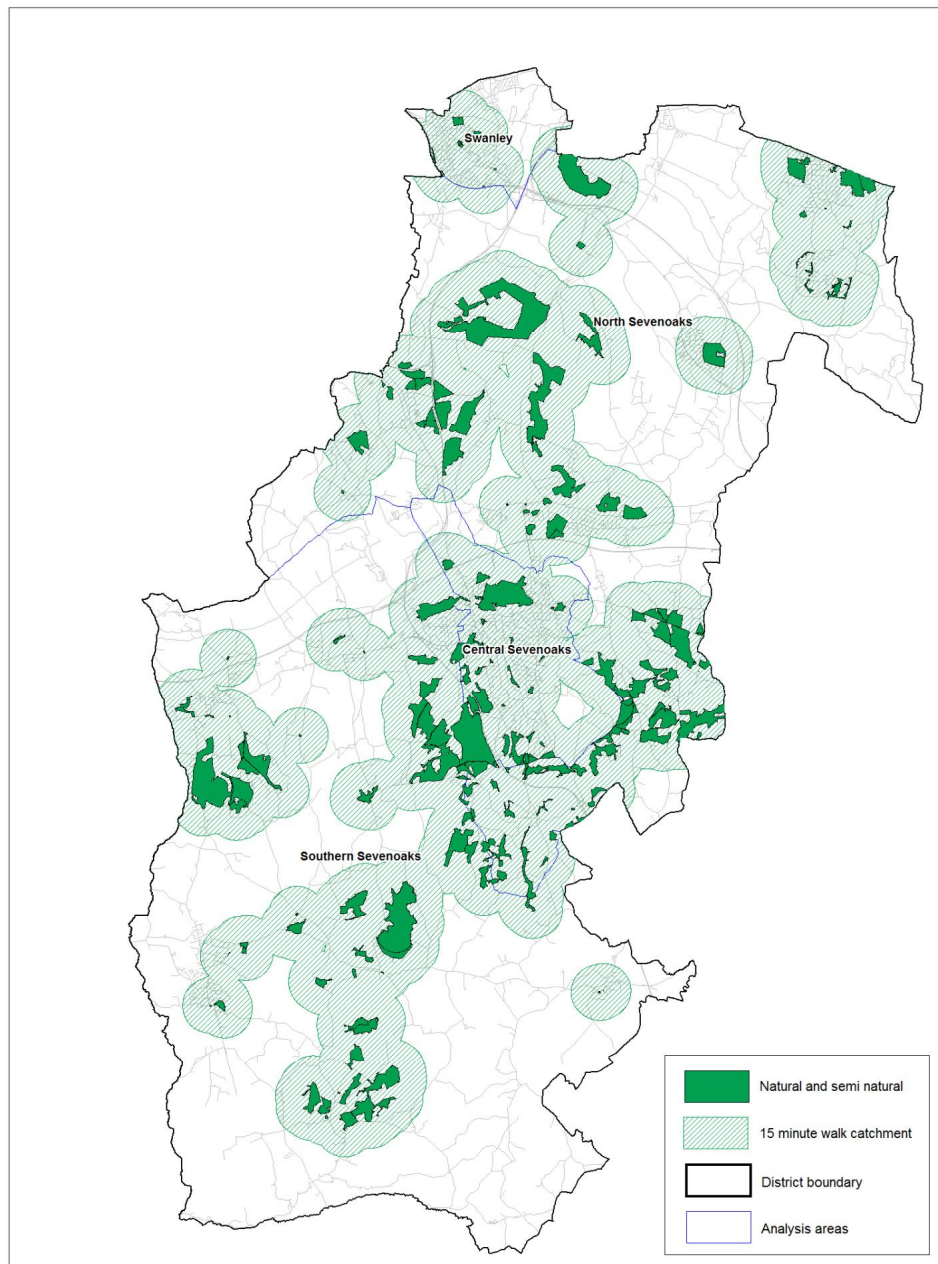
6.32 Walking was the preferred method of transport (68%) by residents that use this type of open space most frequently and also by all respondents of the household survey (69%). There were no significant differences between the different analysis areas in terms of mode of transport. The calculated travel time is 15 minutes, based on the 75th percentile of respondents to the household survey. This distance along roads and footpaths equates to a 720m straight line distance. However, it is recognised that a 15 minute walk time is not feasible in all parts of the District although this standard will help to seek opportunities for new provision.

**RECOMMENDED
ACCESSIBILITY
STANDARD**
*15 minute walk
(1.2km)*

Applying provision standards – identifying geographical areas

6.33 In order to identify important geographical areas and those areas with local need we consider the current level of provision and accessibility standard together. The accessibility standards will help determine where those deficiencies are important. This is important in the urban areas but it is sometimes less meaningful in rural areas due to the large tracts of accessible countryside that can surround settlements. An overview for the whole district is shown in Map 6.1 overleaf.

Map 6.1 Application of the AGS accessibility standard to Sevenoaks District

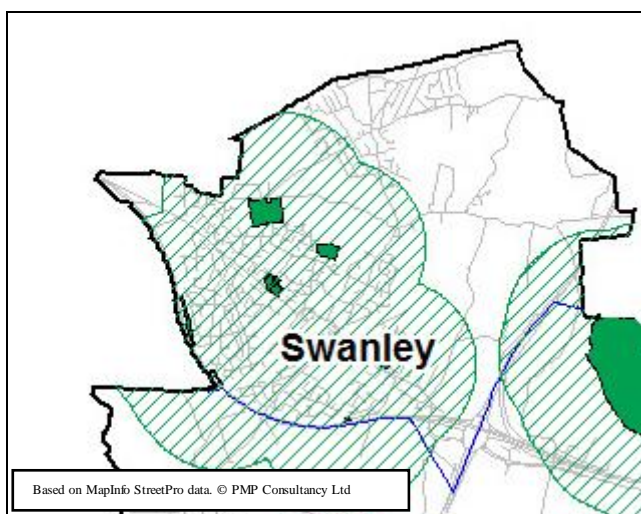


Natural and semi natural

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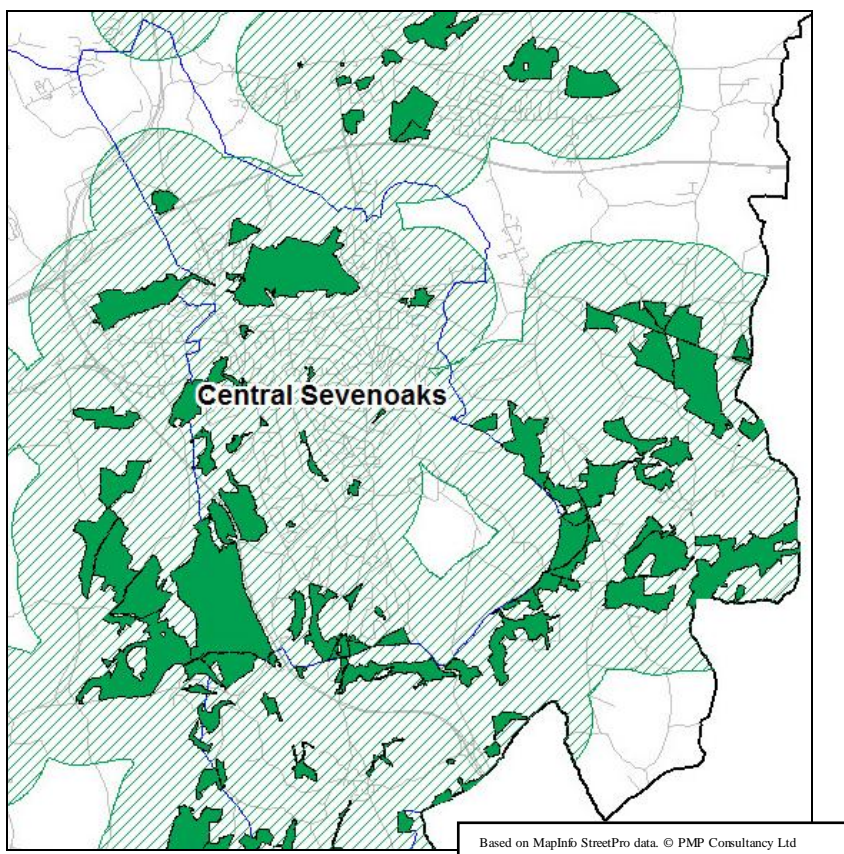


Map 6.2 – Focus upon Swanley area



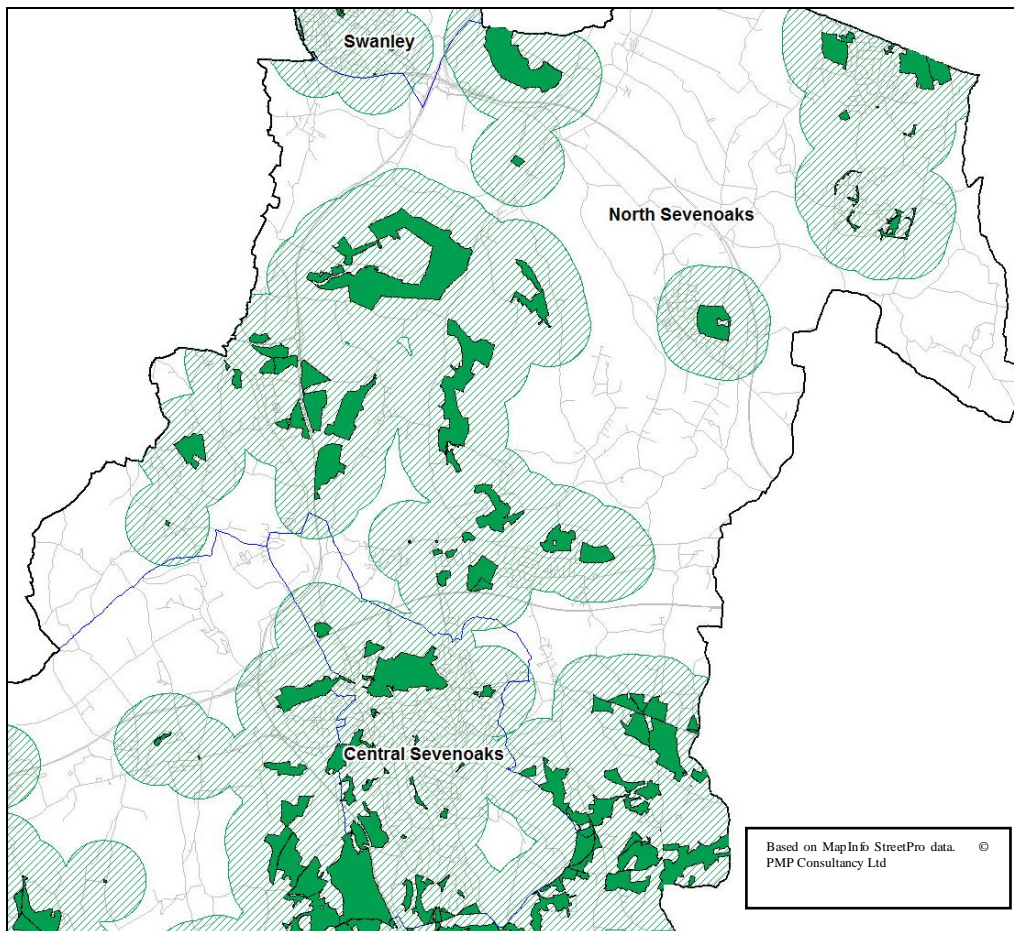
6.34 Map 6.2 shows that despite the quantitative deficiencies in Swanley, residents in this area have good accessibility to natural or semi-natural sites. The main focus for future provision should be in Hextable.

Map 6.3 Focus upon Central Sevenoaks area



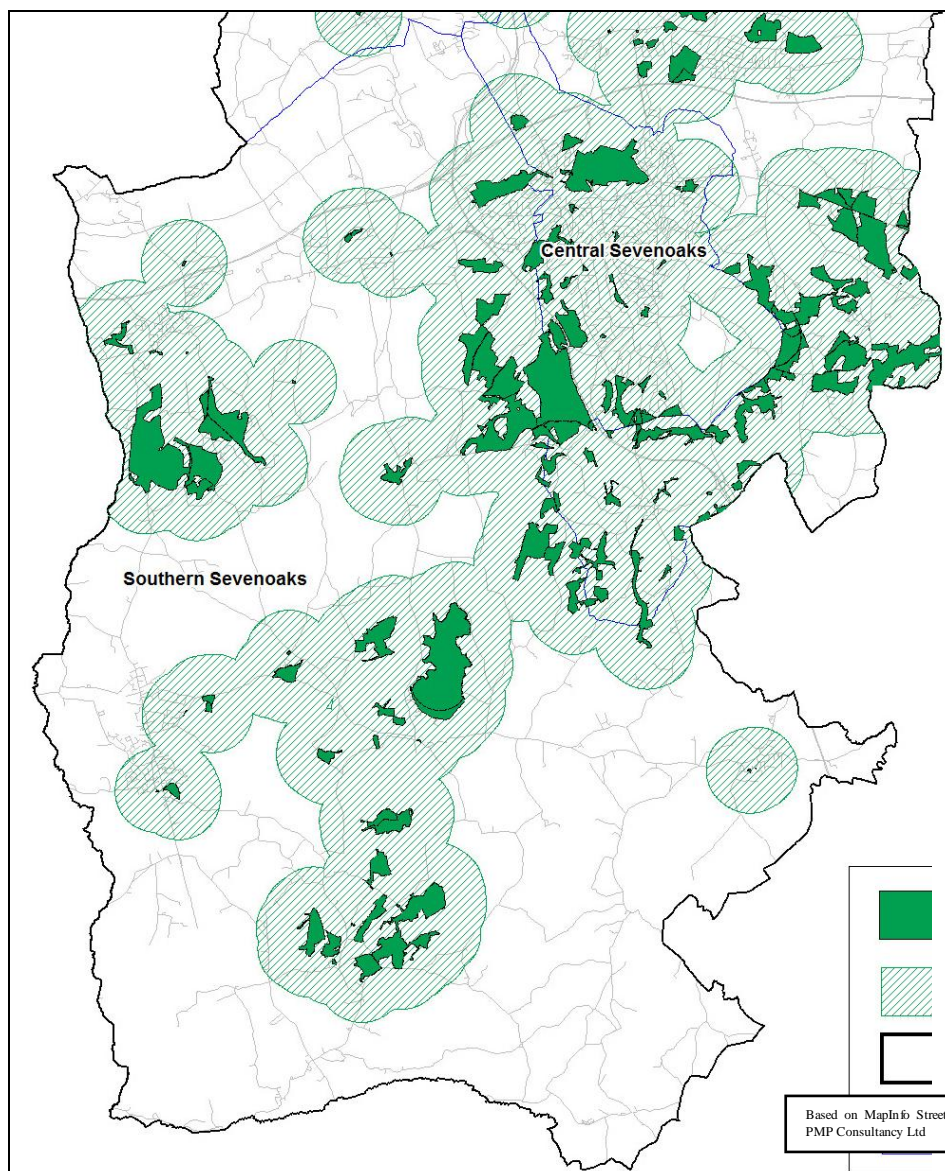
6.35 Map 6.3 shows that the Central Sevenoaks analysis area has almost complete accessibility coverage for natural and semi-natural.

Map 6.4 Focus upon Northern Sevenoaks area



6.36 Map 6.4 shows that there is generally a good coverage of natural and semi natural sites in the Northern Sevenoaks area.

Map 6.5 Focus upon Southern Sevenoaks area



- 6.37 Accessibility coverage in Southern Sevenoaks is good with only the major settlements of Marpit Hill and part of Edenbridge lacking access within the accessibility standard set. Because of the other open spaces available to residents in this analysis area, it is not recommended that any areas be prioritised for new provision. Instead, qualitative and accessibility improvements should be sought.
- 6.38 Open accessible countryside is not included in the audit of open space for Sevenoaks and therefore is not illustrated on the maps. However it is assumed that people living within rural settlements have easy access to natural areas within the open countryside.

Value assessment – identifying specific sites

- 6.39 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.
- 6.40 There is a total of 116 natural and semi-natural sites in the District. Of these sites, the following are considered to have high quality and accessibility. These are:
- Judd’s Piece (Site ID 324)
 - Chalk Pit NSN (Site ID 699)
 - Pound Lane NSN (Site ID 665)
 - Church Street NSN (Site ID 536)
 - The Close NSN (Site ID 496)
 - Well Close Pond (Site ID 391)
 - Four Elms Road Pond (Site ID 507)
 - Hilda Way Avenue Woodlands (Site ID 75 and 76)
 - Maple Close NSN Area (Site ID 87)
- 6.41 These sites set the standard for this typology across the District. They must be protected from any development as they are of high value to residents and include a diverse and important variety of wildlife.
- 6.42 Seven sites had low scores for quality and accessibility:
- Bouchier Close Hill (Site ID 335)
 - Markbeech Hall NSN (Site ID 443)
 - Farm Avenue (Site ID 43)
 - Ellis Close (Site ID 133)
 - Ladenhatch Lane (Site ID 67)
 - Glendale Pond (Site ID 156).
- 6.43 These sites should be prioritised for improvements to bring the standard up to the average. Natural and semi-natural green spaces are important for wildlife and the environment as well as for local residents, and must be protected and improved where possible.

NSN 1

The Council should focus upon accessibility and quality improvements to existing sites rather than new provision.

Summary and recommendations

- 6.44 The diverse nature of the District's landscape, a consequence of geology, topography, settlement patterns and historic evolution, has produced the variation in provision of natural and semi-natural open space. The distinctive landscape character within each part of the District should be retained and for this reason it is inappropriate to set a District-wide standard for this typology. However, it is recommended that the current provision of natural and semi-natural open space be maintained and that the Council concentrate on the management of existing spaces by improving quality and accessibility throughout the District, but particularly within the North Sevenoaks District area, rather than new provision unless suitable sites become available.

NSN 1

The Council should focus upon accessibility and quality improvements to existing sites rather than new provision.

SECTION 7
AMENITY GREENSPACE

Amenity green space

Definition

- 7.1 This type of open space is most commonly found in housing areas. It includes informal recreation spaces and green spaces in and around housing. The primary purpose is to provide opportunities for informal activities close to home or work or to enhance the appearance of residential or other areas.

Picture 7.1 Westerham Village Green



Strategic context and consultation

- 7.2 Much of the focus on the protection of green space in Sevenoaks District has concentrated on large open space areas such as playing fields and the Metropolitan Green Belt. However, amenity green space can often be valuable in the ‘greening’ of an area but can suffer from development pressures. This is particularly true in urban areas.
- 7.3 The pressure for increased housing in Sevenoaks District makes amenity green spaces particularly vulnerable to development so the protection of sites is particularly important for this typology.
- 7.4 The Local Plan identifies a number of new potential open spaces which could be amenity green spaces, particularly in the Swanley area. Policy EN9 has relevance here “The Local Planning Authority will safeguard important areas of greenspace within built confines”. An objective of the Plan is: “*to protect the character and environment of the District’s towns and villages against intensive infilling and redevelopment which would adversely affect residential amenities.*” It is unclear as to whether an amenity green space would fall under this remit.
- 7.5 According to the household survey, amenity green spaces were viewed by local residents as the fourth most important type of open space, with 88% considering them to be important. However, usage of these sites is more informal with 35% visiting them infrequently and 16% never visiting them.
- 7.6 Only 19 respondents stated that amenity green spaces were their most used open space type. Of these 19, 84% walk to such spaces and 68% took under 5 minutes to reach them. The most significant quality issues were vandalism/graffiti and litter.

Setting provision standards

- 7.7 In setting local standards for amenity green spaces 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 the context of amenity green space sites in Sevenoaks District.
- 7.8 In order to set the standards for quality, quantity and accessibility a workshop session was undertaken with Council officers to discuss all the available data in terms of the audit, consultation and other relevant material. The process for each standard is demonstrated in Figure 7.1 below.

Figure 7.1 Setting standards process diagram



Current position

7.9 There are 223 amenity green spaces, encompassing an area of 81 ha. The current District-wide provision level is 0.74 ha per 1,000 population.

Quantity standard

7.10 The average size of an amenity green space in the District is 0.36ha. The Central Sevenoaks analysis area has the fewest sites (38) and the smallest average site size (0.40ha) whilst North Sevenoaks had the largest number of sites (89). Table 7.1, below provides full details by analysis area.

Table 7.1 Analysis area breakdown

Analysis area	Number of sites	Total hectares	Average site size (ha)
Swanley	38	15.04	0.40
North Sevenoaks	89	31.07	0.35
Central Sevenoaks	31	11.76	0.38
South Sevenoaks	65	22.82	0.35

7.11 The only national standard for amenity green space provided is by the *Rethinking Open Space report* – an average of all local authority standards – which is 2 ha per 1,000 population.

7.12 Other national standards make reference to amenity green space, including the National Playing Fields Association’s (NPFA) Six Acre Standard. This recommends 2 acres (0.8 ha) per 1,000 population for ‘playing spaces’. Some local authorities in the past have added an extra 1 acre (0.41ha) per 1,000 population intended for residential areas.

7.13 There is a split in public opinion regarding the amount of amenity green space. 45% of respondents to the household survey believe provision levels to be about right. However, a further 45% state that levels are nearly enough or not enough. There were no great differences between analysis areas in terms of the perceived quantity of amenity green space.

RECOMMENDED LOCAL QUANTITY STANDARD
No standard set but larger developments would be expected to provide amenity green space on a design led basis

SECTION 7 – AMENITY GREEN SPACE

7.14 Given the environmental constraints of the district such as conservation areas, the provision of amenity greenspace will be design-led rather than formulaic therefore **no quantity standard has been set**. This is in accordance with the companion guide to PPG17 (Para 6.26): *“Attractive, well designed and well maintained greenspaces and civic spaces of all types.... are key elements of good urban design and fundamentally important to delivering places in which people will want to live. While it would be wrong to impose standard approaches, carefully developed urban and landscape design guidelines can help to ensure that developers take full account of the need for4 ‘place making’ and do not simply seek to comply with accessibility, quality and quantity standards at the lowest possible cost.”*

Quality standard

7.15 There are currently no local quality standards for this type of open space. However Green Flag criteria indicates that sites should be ‘a welcoming place, healthy, safe and secure, clean and well-maintained and well managed’.

7.16 From the household survey, user aspirations for amenity green spaces were: clean and litter free, well-kept grass, flowers, trees and shrubs and provision of varied equipment. Town and parish councils stressed that a flexible, less prescriptive set of aspirations should be adopted reflecting the size and location of amenity green spaces. For example, the use of lighting which may be inappropriate in rural areas. These quality factors (together with other consultation findings) have formed the basis of the quality standard for amenity green spaces. Further justification is set out in Appendix I.

7.17 The average quality score for amenity green space sites is 55%. A high proportion of sites scored high for quality and accessibility. Usage levels for amenity green space are difficult to measure as they provide a visual as well as a physical function. For the purposes of this study, all amenity green spaces have been considered as having low levels of usage.

7.18 The following sites scored 74% for quality:

- Lilac Gardens (Site ID 41)
- Markbeech Hall (Site ID 444)
- Skeynes Road AGS A (Site ID 541).

7.19 Sites scoring low for quality and accessibility. These should be reviewed more closely in terms of prioritising improvements for these sites. Sites should be brought up to the quality standard and should achieve a minimum score of 55%. Examples include:

- Battle of Solefields site (Site ID 310)
- The Crescent AGS (Site ID 553)
- Clover Walk AGS (Site ID 974).

7.20 The lowest scoring site was Dawson Drive AGS (Site ID 25). This site must be improved to increase the benefits to the local residents.

RECOMMENDED LOCAL QUALITY STANDARD

“Amenity green spaces should have varied equipment and ancillary facilities suitable for the size and location of the site. A variety of flowers, trees and shrubs should be provided to enhance the overall appearance of the local environment. Larger sites should be suitable for informal play opportunities and should be encouraged to become a community focus. Smaller sites should, as a minimum, provide an important visual amenity function. Safety and security should be considered wherever possible, including the provision of appropriate lighting.”

Accessibility standard

7.21 With regards to accessibility there are no definitive national or local standards.

7.22 Site access for amenity green space across the District is considered to be good, with an average score of 68%. Although the majority of sites had good access, there were two sites with access scores under 40%. These are:

- Dawson Drive, Swanley (Site ID 25)
- Uckfield Lane, Parsons Croft, South Sevenoaks (Site ID 473).

RECOMMENDED LOCAL ACCESSIBILITY STANDARD

*10 minute walk
(800m)*

7.23 The 75% threshold for amenity green space was a 10 minute walktime. This equates to a 800m distance along roads and footpaths, or a 480m straight line distance. By their nature, amenity green spaces tend to be easily accessible on foot and 93% of respondees to the household survey stated this to be their desired mode of transport.

Applying provision standards – identifying geographical areas

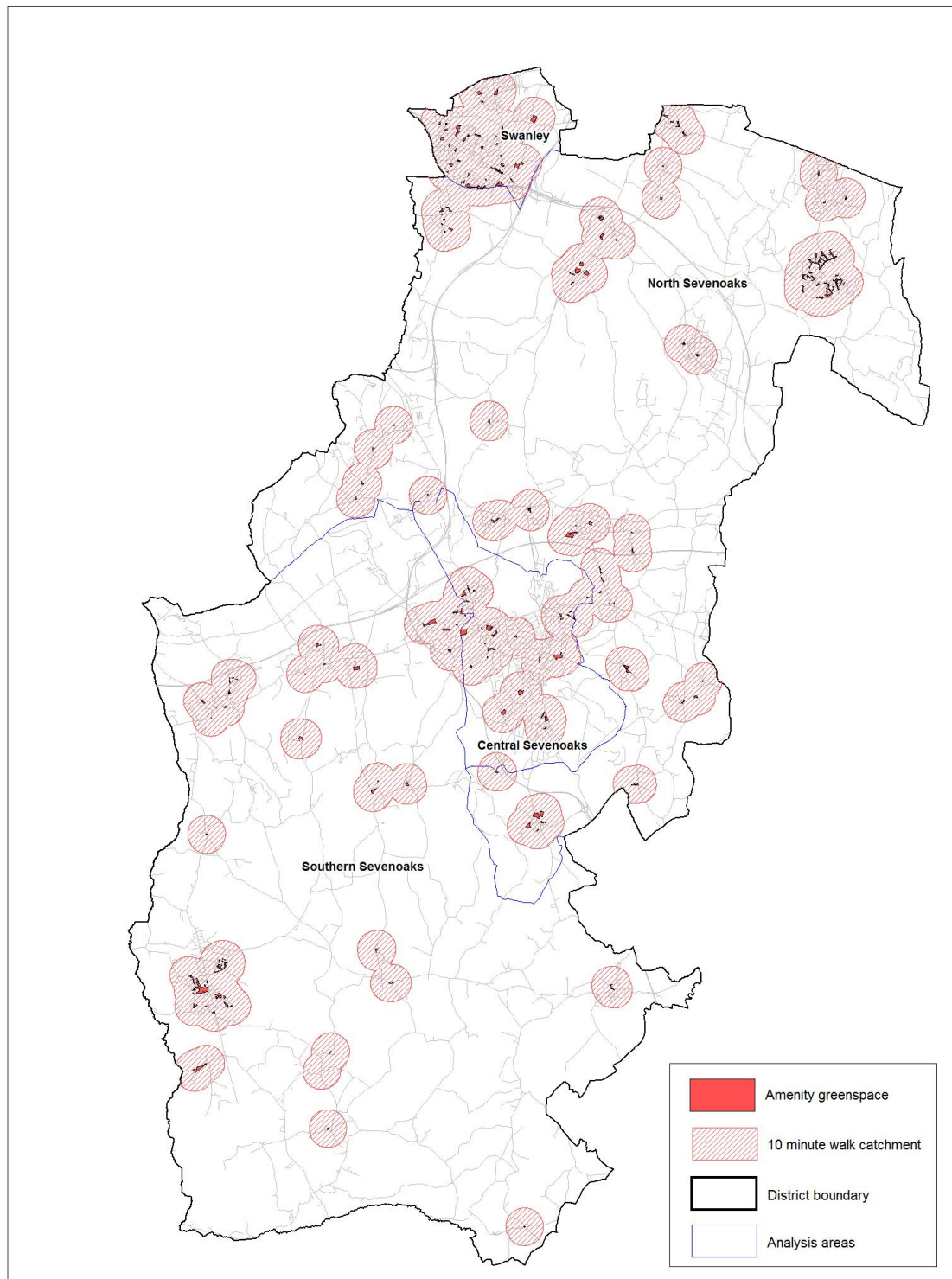
7.24 In order to identify important geographical areas and those areas with local needs, we apply the current provision levels and accessibility standards together.

7.25 Despite no quantity standards being set, it is still possible to compare the different levels of provision in the various analysis areas. Table 7.2 shows that the lowest provision levels are in Swanley and Central Sevenoaks.

Table 7.2 Current provision levels

Analysis area	Current provision level - ha per 1,000 pop
Swanley	0.72
Central Sevenoaks	0.52
North Sevenoaks	0.74
South Sevenoaks	0.95

Map 7.1 Application of the AGS accessibility standard to Sevenoaks district

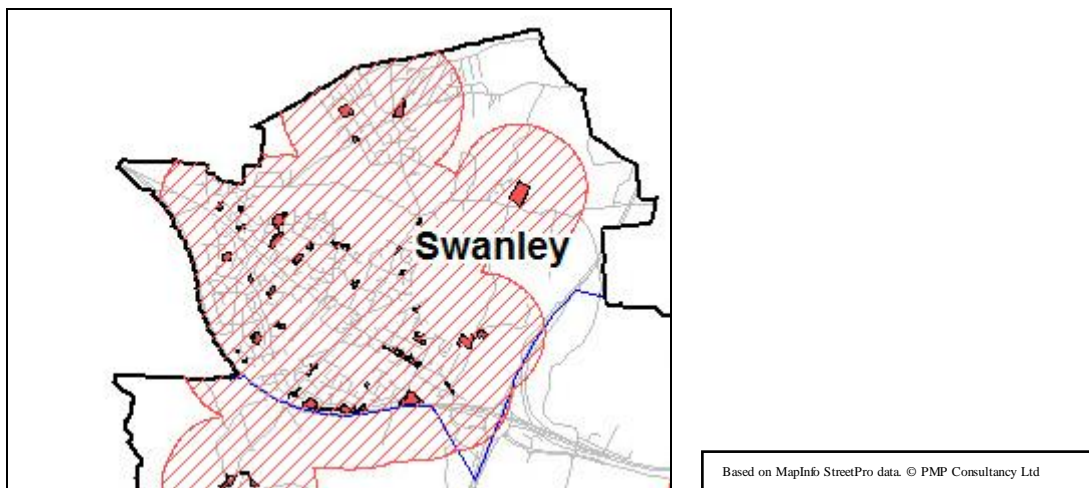


Amenity greenspace

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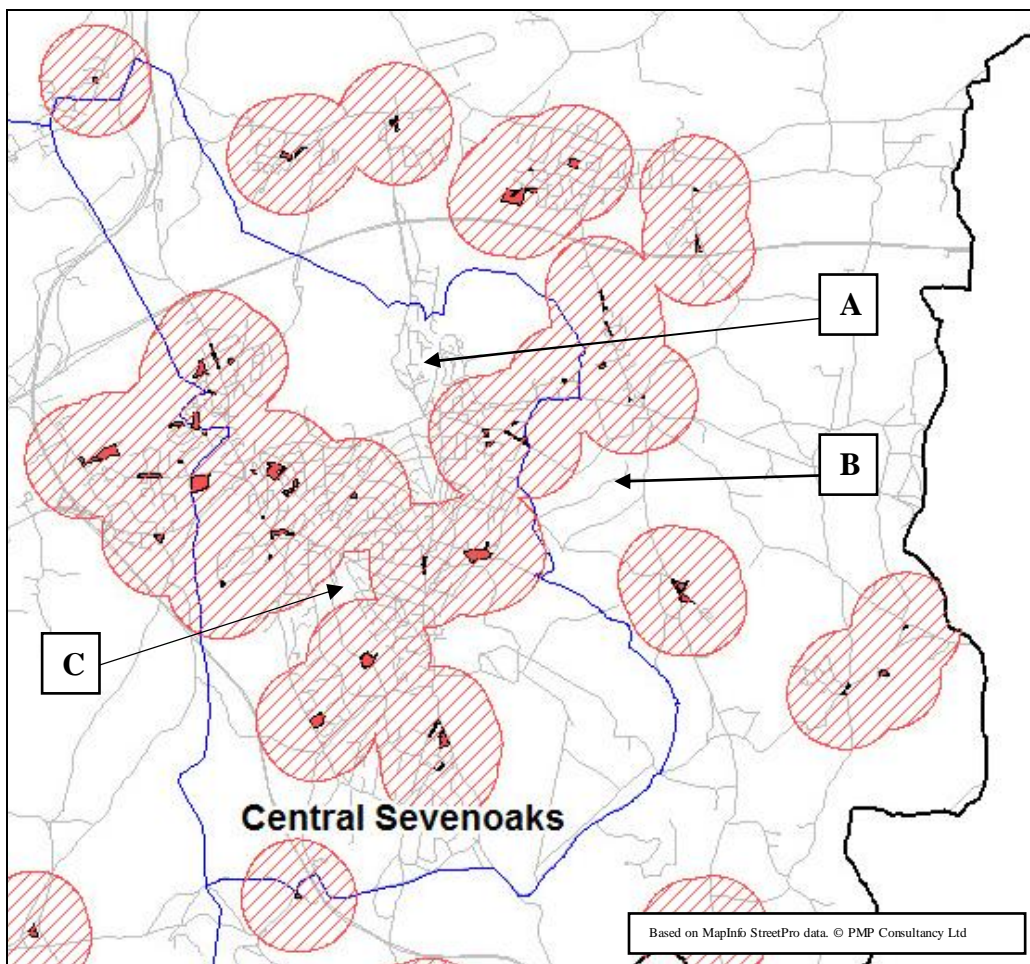
strategy finance delivery **pmp**

Map 7.2 Focus upon Swanley area



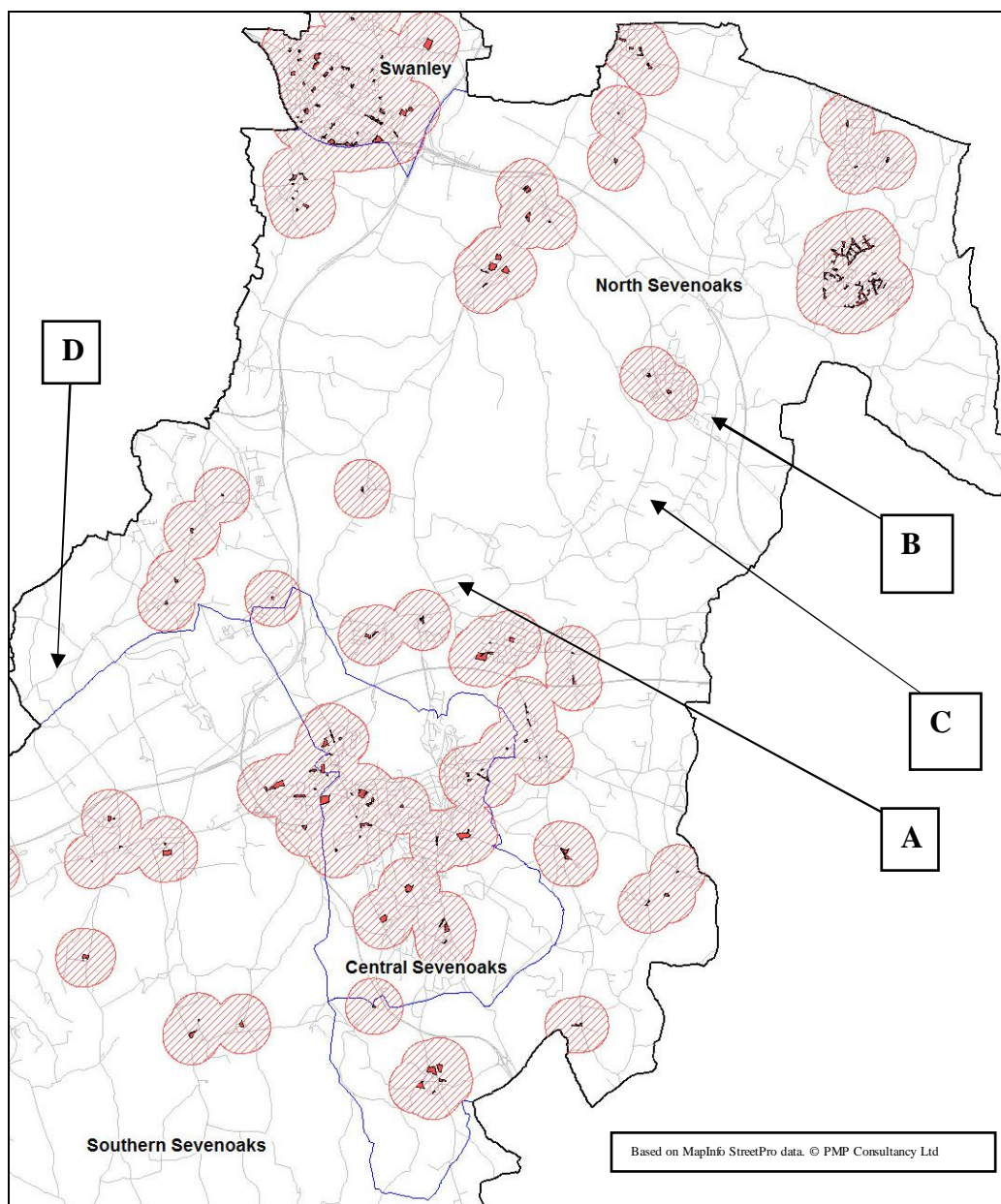
7.26 Map 7.2 below shows the spatial distribution of amenity green space in the Swanley area. It shows that there is an almost universal coverage of amenity green space in this area.

Map 7.3 Focus upon Central Sevenoaks area



7.27 In the Central Sevenoaks area there are three main areas without access to amenity green spaces (A, B and C on Map 7.3). Each area is also outside of the catchment areas of parks and gardens hence they are priorities for new provision. The only available open spaces are on the periphery of both areas which is not ideal from an accessibility point of view. Therefore it is unlikely that these gaps in provision will be removed without new developments.

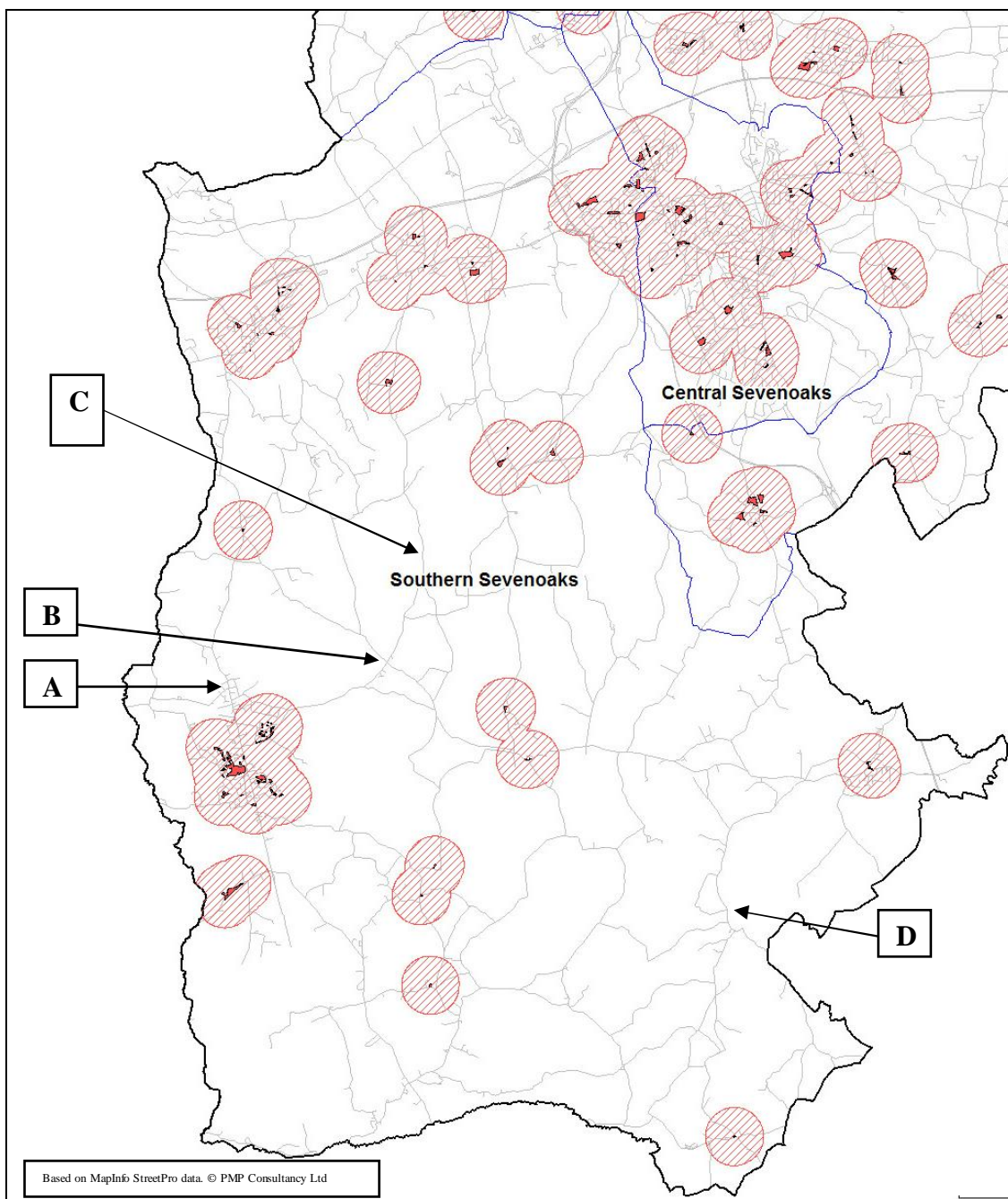
Map 7.4 Focus upon North Sevenoaks Area



7.28 Map 7.4 shows that there is a good coverage of amenity green spaces in the North Sevenoaks area. All the major settlements are covered with the exception of the Otford (labelled 'A') and lower Crowhurst area (labelled 'B'). There are some smaller towns and villages in the rural areas without provision, however. The most notable are the cluster around Knatt's Valley in the east (labelled 'C') and Sunridge Hill in the west (labelled 'D').

7.29 Where a park and garden is close to residential properties it often allows for the same functions as an amenity green space. However, none of the areas in question have such a facility nearby. However area 'A' (Otford) does have good access to a natural/semi-natural site, therefore it is recommended that new provision be targeted at Sunridge Hill, Lower Crowhurst and the cluster of villages in the Knatt's Valley area.

Map 7.5 Focus upon South Sevenoaks area



SECTION 7 – AMENITY GREEN SPACE

- 7.30 The coverage of amenity green space in the South Sevenoaks area is good. The only major settlement without provision is Marlpiit Hill (labelled 'A').
- 7.31 There are three villages without access to amenity green space. These are Four Elms (labelled 'B'), Toy's Hill ('C') and Penshurst ('D'). It is in these areas where new provision should be targeted. However it is recognised that it will be difficult to increase provision levels without significant developments in these areas.

Value assessment

- 7.32 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.
- 7.33 Amenity green space sites offer a recreational value, aesthetic value and natural buffer between roads and houses.
- 7.34 The average quality score for amenity green space was moderate at 62%. 64 sites scored above the average quality score and 51 below. These scores were generated through the site assessment process.
- 7.35 When assessing quality, accessibility and usage together a value assessment can be made. This provides an indication of which sites are of the highest value in the District. The highest scoring sites are listed below. However none are from the Central Sevenoaks area, suggesting that qualitative and/or accessibility improvements need to be made in this analysis area. Sites scoring highly are:
- Lilac Gardens, Swanley – Site ID 41
 - Southdene AGS, North Sevenoaks – Site ID 662
 - Southdowns Church, North Sevenoaks – Site ID 745
 - Poundside Recreation Ground, North Sevenoaks – Site ID 667
 - Telston Park – site ID 688.
- 7.36 The Council should consider improvements or possible redesignation of sites that score poorly for both quality and accessibility improvements. Examples include:
- Dawson Drive AGS, Swanley – Site ID 25
 - Armstrong Close AGS, North Sevenoaks – Site ID 177.

Summary and recommendations

- 7.37 The overall quality of amenity green space across the District is moderate with an average quality score of 62%. It is recognised that there are issues in improving sites in parished areas where the District Council is not in control of maintenance. However the District Council should work in partnership with town and parish councils where possible.
- 7.38 Community 'ownership' of amenity green spaces should be increased to enable local residents to have better links with their local environment. This could also assist town and parish councils with their maintenance obligations. The Council could consider the introduction of 'pocket parks' which are specifically designed to encourage community involvement and reduce the maintenance burden for local authorities. More information can be found at www.pocketparks.com.

AGS1

The Council should consider quality and access improvements to the lowest scoring value sites. The Council should reassess this situation through development opportunities and consider the replacement of these sites where possible and appropriate if scores do not improve.

SECTION 8
PROVISION FOR 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. They have the primary purpose of providing opportunities for play and social interaction involving both children and young people.

Picture 8.1 Brasted Recreation Ground Play Area



Strategic context and consultation

- 8.2 The Local Plan states that in new *“residential schemes play space and equipment will usually be required”*. However no standards are mentioned in regards to the quantity, quality or accessibility of the equipment. The Sustainable Community Action Plan (2007-2010) has identified a specific action to make sure the District offers a range of social opportunities and recreational activities for groups of young people.
- 8.3 The Sevenoaks District Play Strategy (2007-2010) was adopted by the Council in February 2007. It was developed by a multi agency partnership following consultations with children, young people, parents, schools, town and parish Council’s and the voluntary sector. The strategy includes the following Play Policy statements:
- improving opportunities for play and formal recreation
 - promoting equality and social inclusion
 - promoting health and physical activity.
- 8.4 Consultation from the household survey showed that play areas for children and young people are considered as only the fifth most important open space type. However, 87% of respondents rated them as important. 5% of respondents specifically visit open spaces in order to use children’s play facilities.

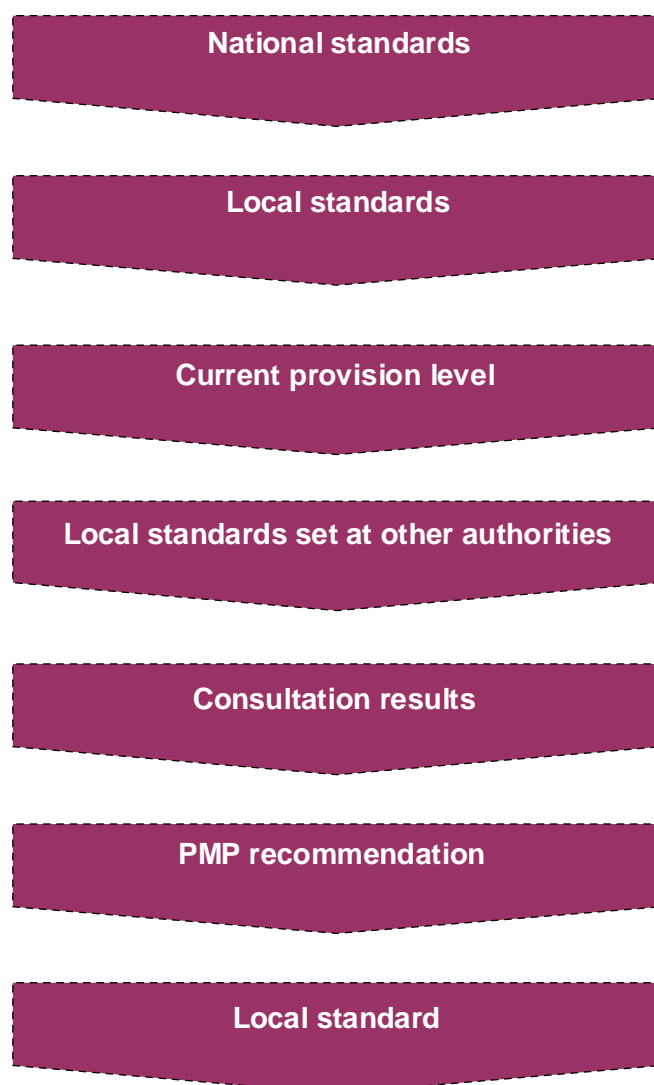
8.5 The schools' survey revealed that the majority of respondents visit parks rather than a specific play area or youth shelter. Sites are normally visited on a weekly basis, on foot and within five minutes.

Setting provision standards

8.6 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.

8.7 In order to set the standards for quality, quantity and accessibility a workshop session was undertaken with Council officers to discuss all the available data in terms of the audit, consultation and other relevant material. The process for each standard is demonstrated in Figure 8.1 below.

Figure 8.1 Setting standards process diagram



Quantity standard

8.8 Unlike quality and accessibility standards, PMP was able to instantly apply the quantity standards (Step 4) as part of the workshop session through an interactive calculator. This allowed the effect of an increased/decreased level of provision to be calculated. This was calculated in three different ways:

- District wide
- for each analysis area
- urban v rural areas.

8.9 An example of the calculator is shown in Figure 8.2 below. As can be seen, the effect of increasing/decreasing provision levels is calculated.

Figure 8.2 Interactive calculator example

Setting Quantity Standards Calculator			Population: 2001 Audit: 2008		
Analysis area name		Swanley			
Area population	urban	20,986			
Typology	Total provision	Existing Provision (per 1,000 population)	Recommended Local Standard (per 1,000 population)	Increase / Decrease (ha per 1,000 population)	ACTUAL Increase / Decrease (hectares)
Children & Young People	0.86	0.04	0.10	-0.06	-1.24

8.10 There are 75 children and young people’s facilities within Sevenoaks District. The total area is 5.18 ha, which equates to an average site size of 0.07ha. Table 8.1 below provides a breakdown of all sites within the District. It shows that the largest number of sites is located in the North Sevenoaks analysis area. The Swanley and Central Sevenoaks areas have the fewest sites whilst North Sevenoaks has the smallest sites, on average.

Table 8.1 Analysis area breakdown

Analysis area	Number of sites	Total hectares	Average site size (ha)
Swanley	11	0.86	0.08
North Sevenoaks	29	1.45	0.05
Central Sevenoaks	11	1.36	0.12
South Sevenoaks	24	1.47	0.06

8.11 The main national standard for the provision for children and young people’ facilities comes from the NPFA Six Acre Standard. This stipulates 2.4 ha of outdoor playing space per 1000 population, consisting of 0.8 ha per 1000 population for children’s playing space, including casual or informal playing space within housing areas.

**RECOMMENDED LOCAL
QUANTITY STANDARD**
*0.1 hectares per 1,000
population*

- 8.12 Consultation via the household survey showed that only 28% of respondents felt that the current level of play facilities was about right or too much. 18% felt that current provision levels were nearly enough and 48% not enough.
- 8.13 The current level of provision is comparatively low in relation to other similar local authorities PMP has surveyed. This suggests that there should be an increase in the current provision level. This is reinforced by the results from the household survey.
- 8.14 Setting the standard involved careful consideration of the NPFA's Six Acre Standard. It was agreed that reaching the Six Acre Standard within the 20 year period of this study would be unrealistic. As a result of this, and consideration of other information, the recommended standard is 0.1 hectares per 1,000 population. As per the Council's policies for accessibility, a single standard is proposed for the entire District.

Quality Standard

- 8.15 NPFA guidance on Local Areas for Play (LAPs), Local Equipped Areas for Play (LEAPs) and Neighbourhood Equipped Areas for Play (NEAPs) sets out quality aspirations. These include providing seating for adults, a varied range of equipment and teenagers' meeting places.
- 8.16 Consultations highlighted that graffiti and litter are minor problems at play areas. Overall the average quality score from site assessments was 66%.
- 8.17 The recommended local quality standard sets out the vision for new provision and a benchmark for existing play facilities to achieve in terms of enhancement.
- 8.18 From the household survey and other consultations, the highest rated quality aspirations for facilities for children and young people were to be clean and litter free, and to have varied play equipment, toilets and seating provision. However, consultation with town and parish councils highlighted the difficulty and costs associated with the provision and maintenance of play area equipment and ancillary facilities, particularly toilets.

RECOMMENDED LOCAL QUALITY STANDARD

"A site providing a range of well-maintained equipment and an enriched play environment in a safe, secure and convenient location. It should be an accessible space whilst safeguarding the residential amenity of neighbouring land users. The site should have clear boundaries, be within a reasonable distance of residents, be clean, litter and dog free and provide varied equipment where appropriate (eg benches and litter-bins)."

- 8.19 The suggested quality standard for provision for children and young people should reflect the NPFA's standards for LAPs, LEAPs and NEAPs and include elements of the public's aspirations.
- 8.20 Appendix I interprets this quality standard into measurable scores that can be used to guide the quality of new and existing children's and young people's facilities and, if required, provide an additional level of detail about the individual sites.

Accessibility standard

- 8.21 There are national accessibility standards for LAPs, LEAPs and NEAPs:
- LAPs: aged 4-6 years; 1 minute walk or within 100 metres
 - LEAPs: aged a minimum of 5 years; or within 5 minutes walking time along pedestrian routes
 - NEAPs: aged a minimum of 8 years; and should be located within 15 minutes walking time along pedestrian routes.
- 8.22 The average score for site access was 72% indicating that play areas within the District have good accessibility. Only one site scored under 50% - this was:
- Crockham Hill Playing Field play area – South Sevenoaks (Site ID 597).
- 8.23 The biggest issues in terms of site access were the level and quality of signage.
- 8.24 From the schools survey, the majority of children walked to their nearest play area. This result was confirmed by the household survey where 86% of respondents stated that they walked to such facilities. The 75th percentile defined a 10 minute catchment area which is in line with standards set at other local authorities. This equates to 800m along roads or footpaths, or a 480m straight line distance.

RECOMMENDED LOCAL ACCESSIBILITY STANDARD
10 minute walk time (800m)

Applying provision standards – identifying geographical areas

- 8.25 In order to identify important geographical areas and areas with local needs we apply the quantity and accessibility standards together. The quantity standards enable the identification of areas that do not meet the minimum provision standards, while the accessibility standards help determine where those deficiencies are important.
- 8.26 The aspiration of equality and increased provision levels within the District mean that all four analysis areas currently have a deficiency of provision for children and young people. Table 8.2 below applies the local standard to analysis areas. It shows that there are large deficiencies in the Swanley and South Sevenoaks areas.

Table 8.2 Local standard application

Analysis area	Current population	Actual provision	Current provision level - ha per 1000 population	Local standard	Surplus/ deficiency - ha per 1000 pop	Actual surplus/ deficiency (ha)
Swanley	20,986	0.86	0.04	0.10	-0.06	-1.24
Central Sevenoaks	22,508	1.36	0.06	0.10	-0.04	-0.89
Total urban	43,494	2.22	0.05	0.10	-0.05	-2.13
North Sevenoaks	41,809	1.45	0.03	0.10	-0.07	-2.73
South Sevenoaks	24,002	1.47	0.06	0.10	-0.04	-0.93
Total rural	65,811	2.92	0.04	0.10	-0.06	-3.66

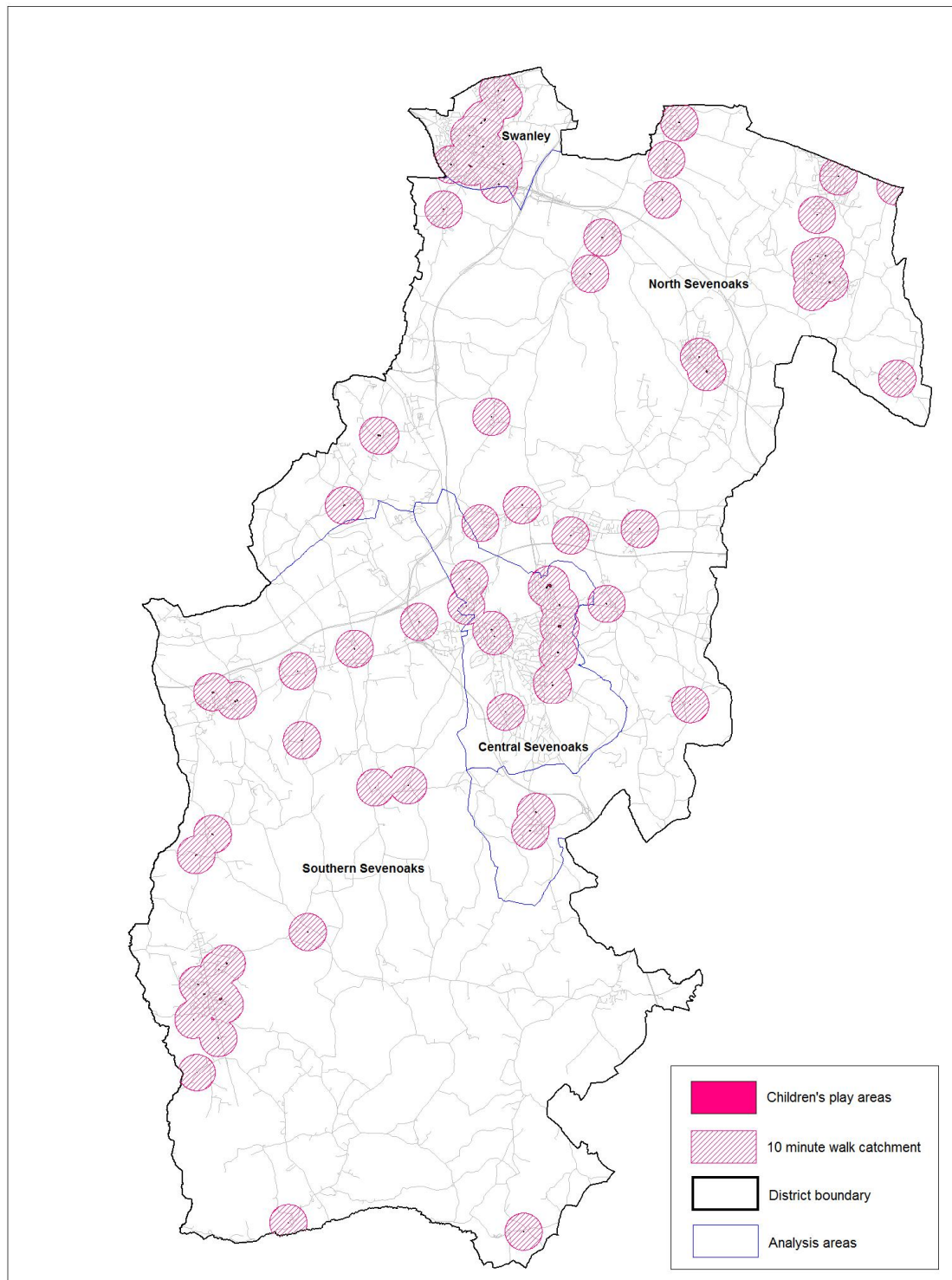
8.27 Table 8.3 projects this forward to 2026, assuming a small increase in population and no increase in open space provision.

Table 8.3 Future local standard application

Analysis area	Future population figure	Actual provision	Future provision level - ha per 1,000 population	Local standard	Future surplus/ (deficiency) - ha per 1,000 pop	Actual surplus/ deficiency (ha)
Swanley	21,421	0.86	0.04	0.10	-0.06	-1.28
Central Sevenoaks	23,063	1.36	0.06	0.10	-0.04	-0.95
Total urban	44,484	2.22	0.05	0.10	-0.05	-2.23
North Sevenoaks	42,840	1.45	0.03	0.10	-0.07	-2.83
South Sevenoaks	24,594	1.47	0.06	0.10	-0.04	-0.99
Total rural	67,434	2.92	0.04	0.10	-0.06	-3.82

8.28 Due to the small increase in population, there is little difference between the current and future deficiencies.

Map 8.1 Application of the CYP accessibility standard to Sevenoaks district

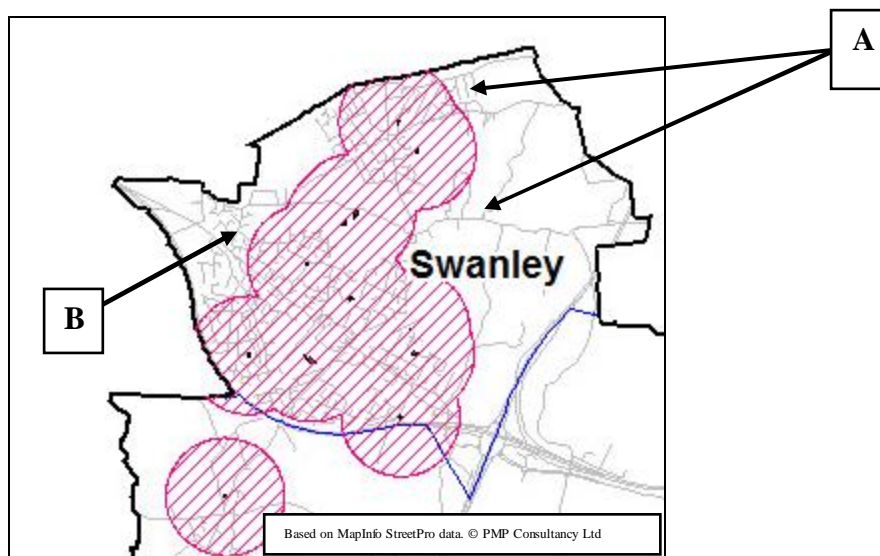


Children's play areas

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strategy finance delivery 

Map 8.2 Focus upon Swanley area

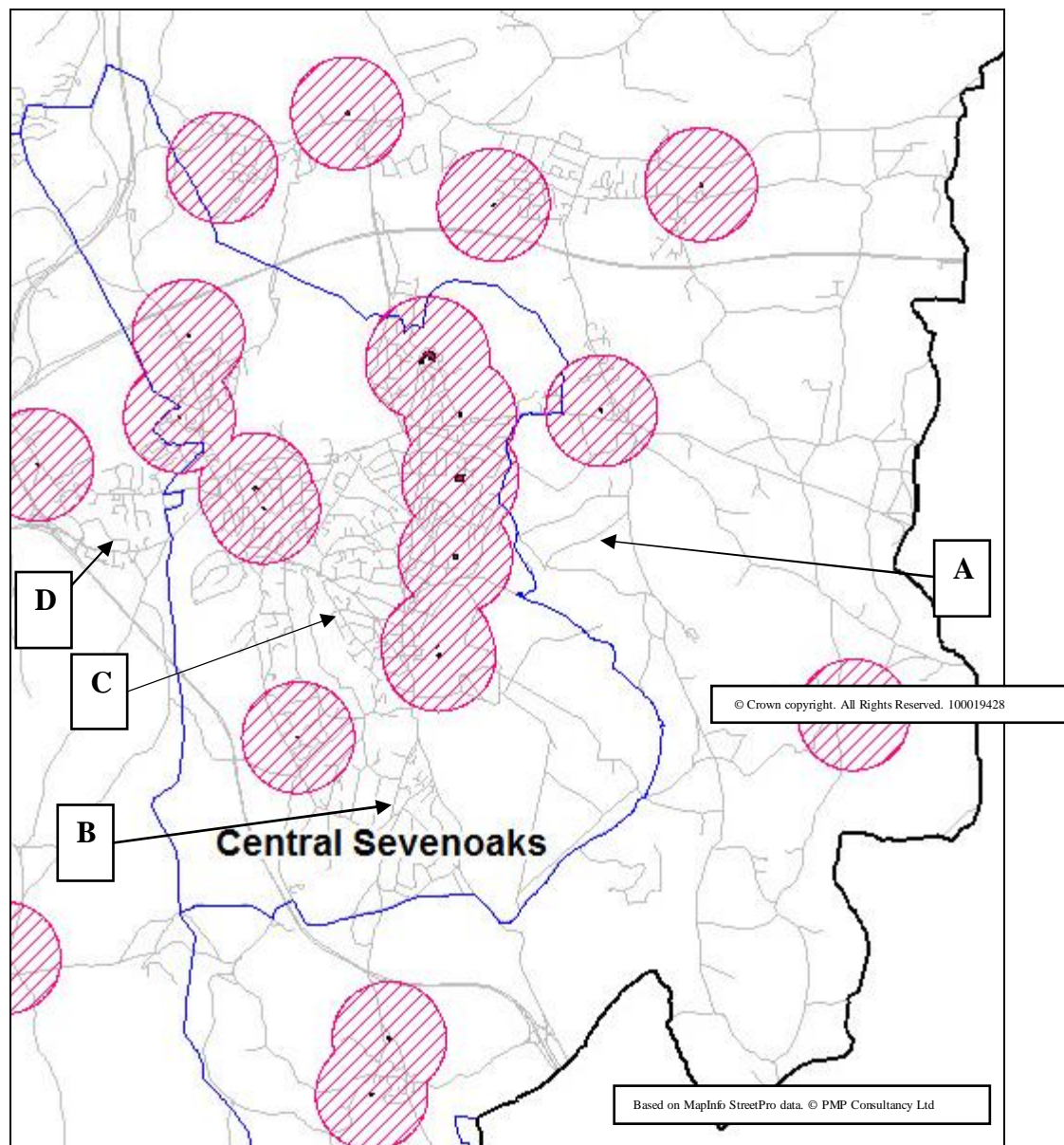


8.29 Map 8.2 shows that coverage in the central areas of Swanley is good but is lacking at the edges of the urban developments. East Hextable and Swanley Village (labelled 'A') are again lacking provision.

8.30 New provision is also required at sites to the west of the main Swanley urban area (labeled 'B'). The Council should seek to place new facilities on existing sites where possible (such as amenity green spaces) in order to meet accessibility objectives. It is important that new sites follow the guidance in the Council's Play Strategy so that they are varied and offer an enriched play environment.

CYP 1	New play areas to follow the guidance in the Council's Play Strategy and offer a varied and an enriched play environment.
CYP 2	The Council should prioritise new play areas in western Swanley.

Map 8.3 Focus upon Central Sevenoaks area

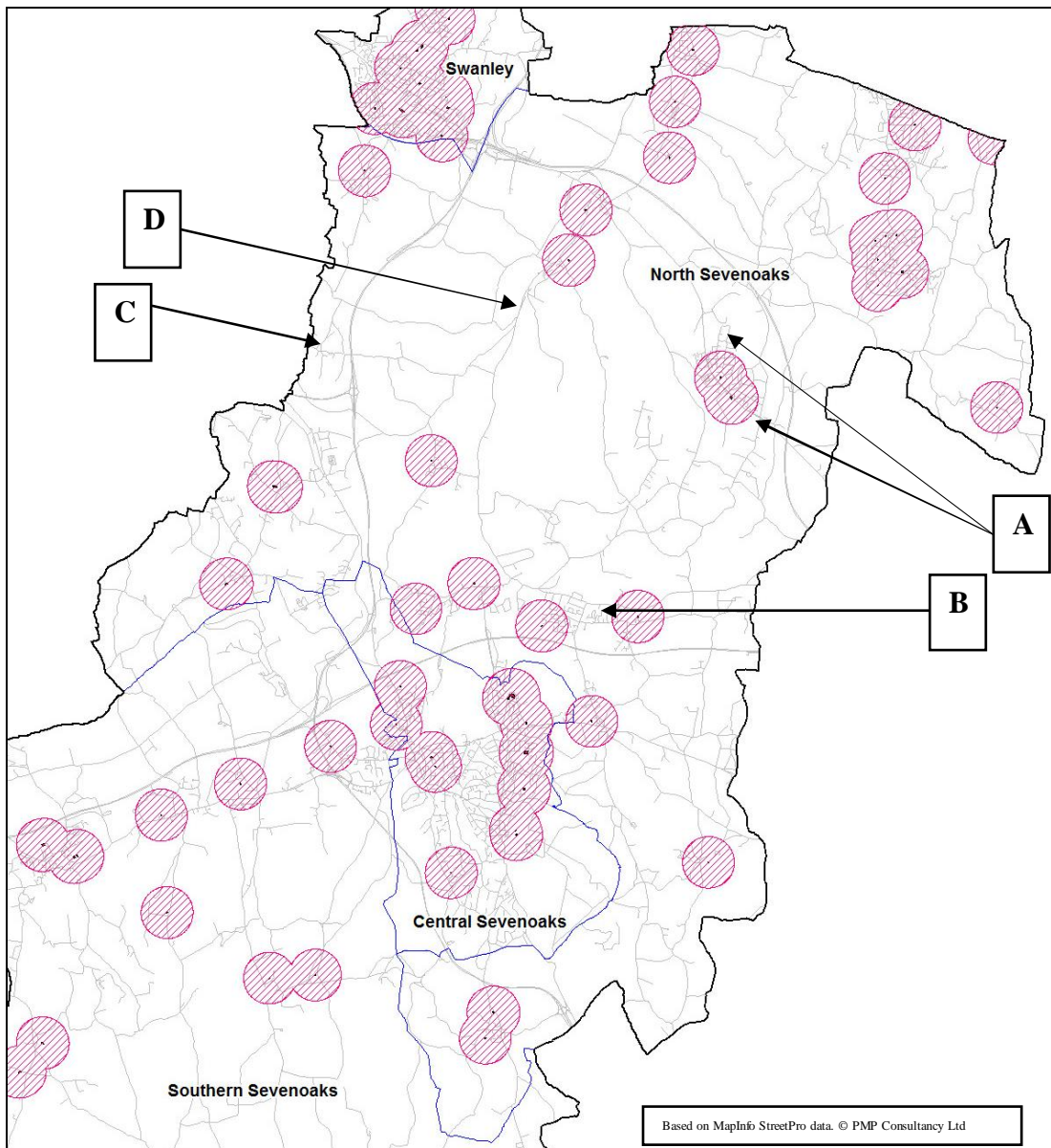


8.31 Map 8.3 shows there are large swathes of Central Sevenoaks without access to a play area. In the east (labelled 'A') the Wildernesse area lacks provision, however due to the lack of people residing in this area (compared to the eastern side of Central Sevenoaks) it is recommended this area is a low priority.

8.32 In the west, areas B, C and D indicate broad areas without good access to play facilities. The Council should prioritise these areas for new provision and ensure any new developments contain new provision to ensure existing deficiencies are not made worse.

CYP 3	The Council should prioritise new sites for children’s play areas in central, western and southern areas of Central Sevenoaks.
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Map 8.4 Focus upon North Sevenoaks area

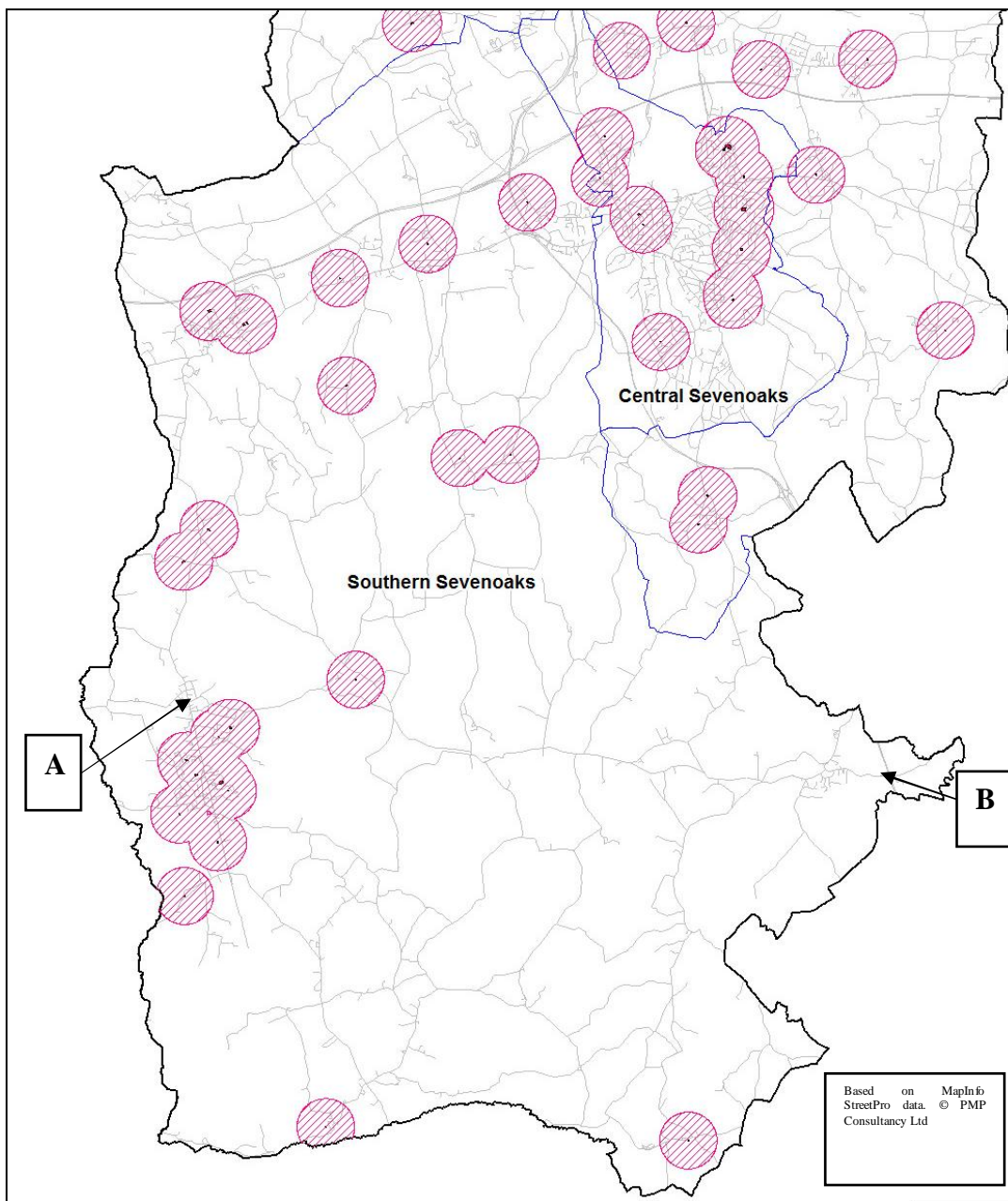


- 8.33 Map 8.4 shows the distribution of play areas in the Northern Sevenoaks area. The major towns and villages in the east of this area tend to have coverage but those in the centre, south and east are lacking facilities. In the West Kingsdown area (labelled 'A') provision is centered on the centre of the built-up area so children living to the north and south are lacking such facilities. Indeed, the parish council highlighted a need for facilities for the 8-12 year group. In contrast, the Kemsing area (labelled 'B') has dispersed provision which is not accessible by all its residents.
- 8.34 The other areas with partial provision or no provision are Well Hill (labelled 'C') and Eynsford (labelled 'D'). Each of these should be priorities for new provision. Horton Kirby South Darent Parish Council have stated that South Darent is currently low on play amenities and that the Parish Council is working to address this.

CYP 4

The Council should prioritise new sites for children’s play areas in West Kingsdown, Kemsing, Eynsford and Well Hill.

Map 8.5 Focus upon South Sevenoaks area



8.35 The coverage of sites for children and young people in the Southern Sevenoaks area is generally good but there are two main areas Marlpit Hill (labelled ‘A’) and Leigh (labelled ‘B’).

CYP 5

The Council should prioritise new provision in Marlpit Hill and Leigh.

Value assessment

- 8.36 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.
- 8.37 43 of the sites scored high for quality and accessibility. The highest scoring site with 80% was Common Field Recreation Ground Play Area (Site ID 717). This site sets the benchmark for all other play areas in the District. The lowest scoring site was Greatness Play Area (Site ID 220) with only 46%. This site scored high for accessibility and usage so is of value to the community. It should be protected and prioritised for quality improvements.
- 8.38 All play areas are of high value as they all have high usage levels. In site-specific cases, sites should be reviewed in terms of improving accessibility and quality to maintain the value of the site. All play areas must be protected and enhanced where required.

Summary and recommendations

- 8.39 The majority of provision for children and young people is of high quality and is easily accessible, and is therefore enjoyed by the residents of Sevenoaks District. It should be a priority of the Council, working in partnership with parish and town councils where appropriate, to improve the quality of all sites falling below a quality score of 50% and in the longer term to aim for all sites to reach the current minimum average of 66%.
- 8.40 It may be possible to locate play areas within amenity green spaces and parks and gardens where there are currently no such facilities. This would help towards achieving the local standard for this typology but would decrease the other typologies' areas.
- 8.41 The specifics of new play area provision will depend on local needs ie teenage or young children provision. The use of natural features rather than traditional equipped play facilities should also be considered as a proactive measure to combat the existing vandalism and miss-use problems.

CYP 1	New play areas to follow the guidance in the Council's Play Strategy and offer a varied and an enriched play environment.
CYP 2	The Council should prioritise new play areas in western Swanley.
CYP 3	The Council should prioritise new sites for children's play areas in central, western and southern areas of Central Sevenoaks.
CYP 4	The Council should prioritise new sites for children's play areas in West Kingsdown, Kemsing, Eynsford and Well Hill.
CYP 5	The Council should prioritise new provision in Marlpit Hill and Leigh.

SECTION 9
OUTDOOR SPORTS FACILITIES

Outdoor 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 either publicly or 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* includes 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. This study is contained within a separate report: *An indoor sports and recreation facilities assessment for Sevenoaks District Council*.

Picture 9.1 **Sevenoaks Lawn Tennis Club**



Strategic context and consultation

- 9.4 Many of the policies in the Local Plan affect outdoor sports provision, either directly or indirectly. Policies regarding the green belt allow pitch sports to be accommodated but they may prevent the construction of ancillary facilities which are necessary to complement pitches or other outdoor sports facilities.
- 9.5 The Local Plan seeks to both protect and enhance existing facilities where appropriate, whilst encouraging various bodies to increase the range, number and standard of formal recreation facilities. Policy SR1 in particular covers the issues surrounding the loss of school playing fields and other similar facilities whilst Policy SR10 specifically deals with the issue of golf courses and driving ranges. It should be noted that many of the SR policies have not been saved as they repeat national guidance documents.
- 9.6 The consultation results from the sports club survey and Sports Council meeting are covered in detail in section four. It is important to note the general themes of:
- facilities do not currently meet requirements.
 - a desire to see more synthetic turf pitches in the District.

SECTION 9 – OUTDOOR SPORTS FACILITIES

- about half of clubs thought provision was average or good but 20% rated the provision as poor
 - mixed views on changing facilities
 - the majority of clubs believe that the location of their facilities is either good or very good (56%)
 - accessibility by public transport was rated poorly by clubs
 - car parking on the other hand was rated favourably, with over half of the respondents rating it either good or very good
 - the poor quality of public tennis courts and the lack of floodlighting
 - lack of publicly accessible athletics and netball facilities.
- 9.7 The household survey showed that although 81% of respondents rated outdoor sports facilities as important, it was the third least important typology of open space. The largest proportion of residents visit a site infrequently (34%) and 31% never visit such a site. Only 4% of respondents specifically visit an open space site in order to play sport.
- 9.8 Consultation with town and parish and parish councils also highlighted a need for more junior football pitches. Hextable Parish Council commented that despite having two large football grounds, each with two full sized pitches, there is still an unsatisfied demand for football pitches in the Hextable area. Hextable Secondary School has extensive football/rugby grounds that could help satisfy demand.
- 9.9 Consultation with the Kent County Council (KCC) was undertaken as part of this study as it owns a substantial number of pitches at educational sites. There are currently a number of schemes where school closures are proposed or have occurred which introduces the possibility of the development of sports pitches. Such developments are generally needed in order to generate a capital receipt, which can be invested in new and improved facilities.
- 9.10 It is important that the District Council recognises the needs of residents when pitches are threatened by school closures. If development on school playing fields is inevitable, the preferred outcome is the creation of publicly accessible open space as a result of that development.
- 9.11 It is important to note that an open space, sport and recreation study will not resolve all the issues highlighted through the consultation. The Council should prepare a playing pitch strategy to understand the details of the playing pitch situation in the District. In addition the Council, in conjunction with external partners should consider producing a sports facility strategy to supplement the work undertaken by the Kent Sports Development Unit. This work should take into consideration the specific demand for individual sports facility types, at a greater level of detail than can be considered within this study.

OSF 1

The Council to consider undertaking a playing pitch strategy and sports facility strategy in partnership with external partners.

Setting provision standards

- 9.12 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.
- 9.13 In order to set the standards for quality, quantity and accessibility a workshop session was undertaken with Council officers to discuss all the available data in terms of the audit, consultation and other relevant material. The process for each standard is demonstrated in Figure 9.1 below.

Figure 9.1 Setting standards process diagram



- 9.14 A quantity standard for this typology is set for **broad planning need only**. It covers too broad a range of facilities to accurately determine shortfalls or surpluses of facilities.

Quantity standard

9.15 Unlike quality and accessibility standards, PMP was able to instantly apply the quantity standards (Step 4) as part of the workshop session through an interactive calculator. This allowed the effect of an increased/decreased level of provision to be calculated. This was calculated in three different ways:

- District wide
- for each analysis area
- urban v rural areas.

9.16 An example of the calculator is shown in Figure 9.2 below.

Figure 9.2 Interactive calculator example

Setting Quantity Standards Calculator				Population: 2001 Audit: 2008	
Analysis area name		Swanley			
Area population	urban	20,986			
Typology	Total provision	Existing Provision (per 1,000 population)	Recommended Local Standard (per 1,000 population)	Increase / Decrease (ha per 1,000 population)	ACTUAL Increase / Decrease (hectares)
Outdoor Sports Facilities	34.92	1.66	5.20	-3.54	-74.21

9.17 Without a specific playing pitch strategy, it is impossible to quantify the comments made about the lack of sport specific pitches in the area. There is currently a large variance between the quantity of facilities in the rural areas compared to the urban areas. This can be partially explained by the number of golf courses in the rural areas. Table 9.1 below provides a breakdown of the number of sites per analysis area. An average site size is not given due to the wide variance of sizes between different sports facilities.

Table 9.1 Analysis area breakdown

Analysis area	Number of sites	Total hectares
Swanley	20	34.92
North Sevenoaks	71	849.59
Central Sevenoaks	35	190.78
South Sevenoaks	42	299.2

- 9.18 Because of the differences between the rural and urban areas, a different standard has been set for each of these areas. Consultation from the household survey showed that 54% of residents believed current provision levels to be “not enough” or “nearly enough” so a slight increase in current provision levels is proposed. The standard has been set at a level slightly higher than the average urban and average rural provision levels. The local standard for the urban area is set at 5.2ha per 1,000 population and, for the rural areas, at 17.4ha per 1,000 population. These standards include golf courses which means that they have been set at a reasonably high level. Standards excluding golf courses have been set at 2.6ha per 1000 (urban) and 3.7ha per 1000 (rural).

RECOMMENDED LOCAL QUANTITY STANDARD

Including golf courses:

Urban – 5.2ha per 1,000 population

Rural – 17.4ha per 1,000 population

Excluding golf courses:

Urban – 2.6ha per 1,000 population

Rural – 3.7ha per 1,000 population

Quality standard

- 9.19 The National Playing Fields Association (NPFA) provides guidance on quality for outdoor sports facilities, covering gradients, orientation, ancillary accommodation, planting and community safety.
- 9.20 Outdoor sports facilities are the most frequently used type of open space for only 4% of respondents to the household survey. These respondents indicated the following quality aspirations: clean and litter free, facilities for young people, toilet provision and well-kept grass. Minor problems experienced at this type of open space were litter, vandalism and dog fouling.
- 9.21 The New Beacon School sports facilities (Site ID 379, 380, 381) and Swanley Bowls Club (Site ID 164) were the highest scoring sites. Both scored 84% based on site assessments.
- 9.22 Appendices G, H and I provide further explanation on the suggested approach to future benchmarking of sites.

RECOMMENDED LOCAL QUALITY STANDARD

‘A well-planned sports facility with level, well-drained and good quality surfaces. Good quality ancillary accommodation should be provided suitable to the size and location of the site. This could include changing facilities, toilets, car parking, litter and dog-fouling bins. Facilities for young people should be provided where appropriate’.

Accessibility

- 9.23 Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA) sets out a performance indicator for sports facilities, namely the percentage of the population that are within 20 minutes travel time* of a range of different sports facilities, one of which has achieved a quality assured standard. The travel time is a walk time in urban areas and a drivetime in rural areas.
- 9.24 The average accessibility score for outdoor sports facilities was 65%. This suggests that there are a number of good, accessible sports facilities. However, this is relatively low compared to other typologies in this study. Four sites scored over 80%:
- Hollybush Lane Recreation Ground, Central Sevenoaks (Site ID 331)
 - King George's Fields, South Sevenoaks (Site ID 574)
 - Sundridge Recreation Ground, South Sevenoaks (Site ID 609)
 - London Road Sports Ground, North Sevenoaks (Site ID 757).
- 9.25 Three sites scored less than 40% highlighting variance in access across the District:
- Horton Kirby Cricket Ground, North Sevenoaks (Site ID 748)
 - Ash Cricket Ground, North Sevenoaks (Site ID 994)
 - Lower Road Recreation Ground, Swanley (Site ID 39).
- 9.26 The main accessibility problems for this typology were accessibility by public transport (20% very unsatisfied) and accessibility by cycleways (27% very unsatisfied). Respondents were most satisfied with accessibility by walking (25% very satisfied) and the visibility of site entrances (26% very satisfied).
- 9.27 The favoured mode of transport to get to outdoor sports facility sites for all analysis areas except for the Central Sevenoaks area was on foot. In Central Sevenoaks, driving was the dominant mode. The accessibility standard for the District has been set at a 15 minute walktime, based on the 75th percentile response. A different standard has not been set for the Central Sevenoaks due to the desire to have equality of accessibility throughout the District. In addition a standard based on a drivetime would have been in contrast to the Council's transport policies. A 15 minute walktime equates to 1.2km along roads and footpaths, or a 720m straight line distance.

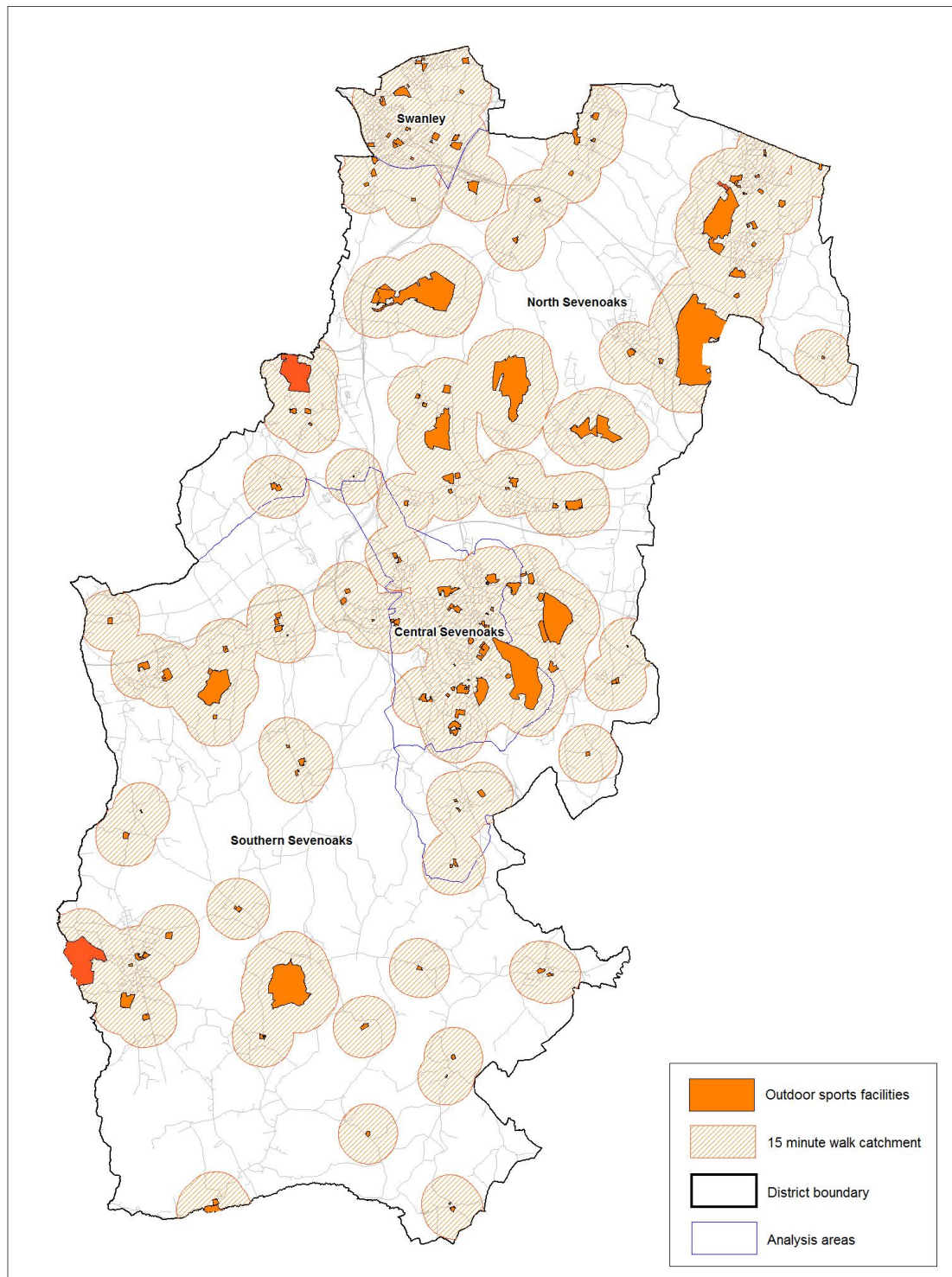
**RECOMMENDED
ACCESSIBILITY
STANDARD**

**15 minute walk
(1.2km)**

Applying provision standards – identifying geographical areas

- 9.28 For sports facilities it is more important to apply the accessibility catchments, as the quantitative standards are set mainly for planning purposes. Therefore, unlike other typologies, a table contrasting the application of the quantity standard for the different analysis areas is not provided.

Map 9.1 Application of the OSF accessibility standard to Sevenoaks District

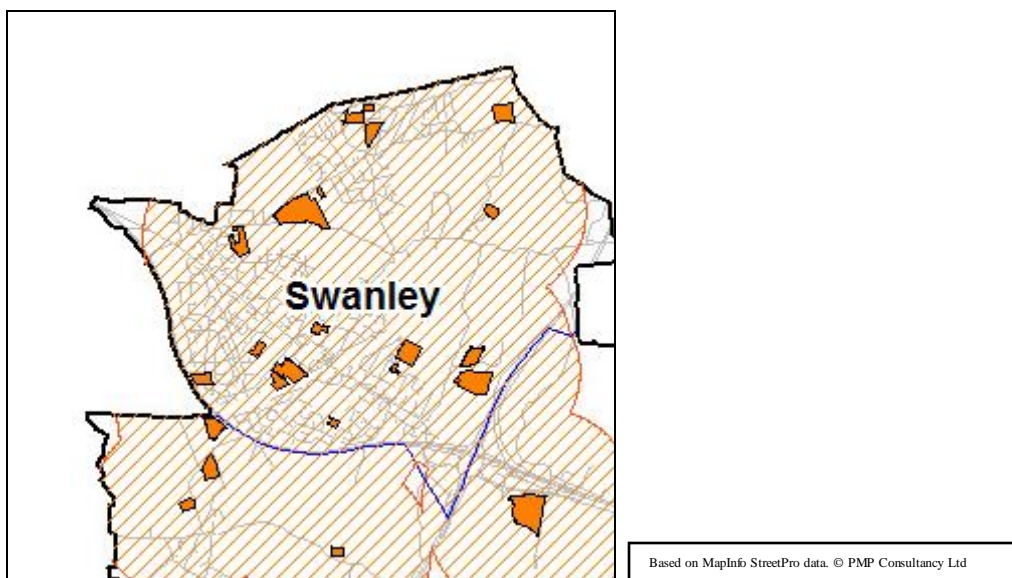


Outdoor sports facilities

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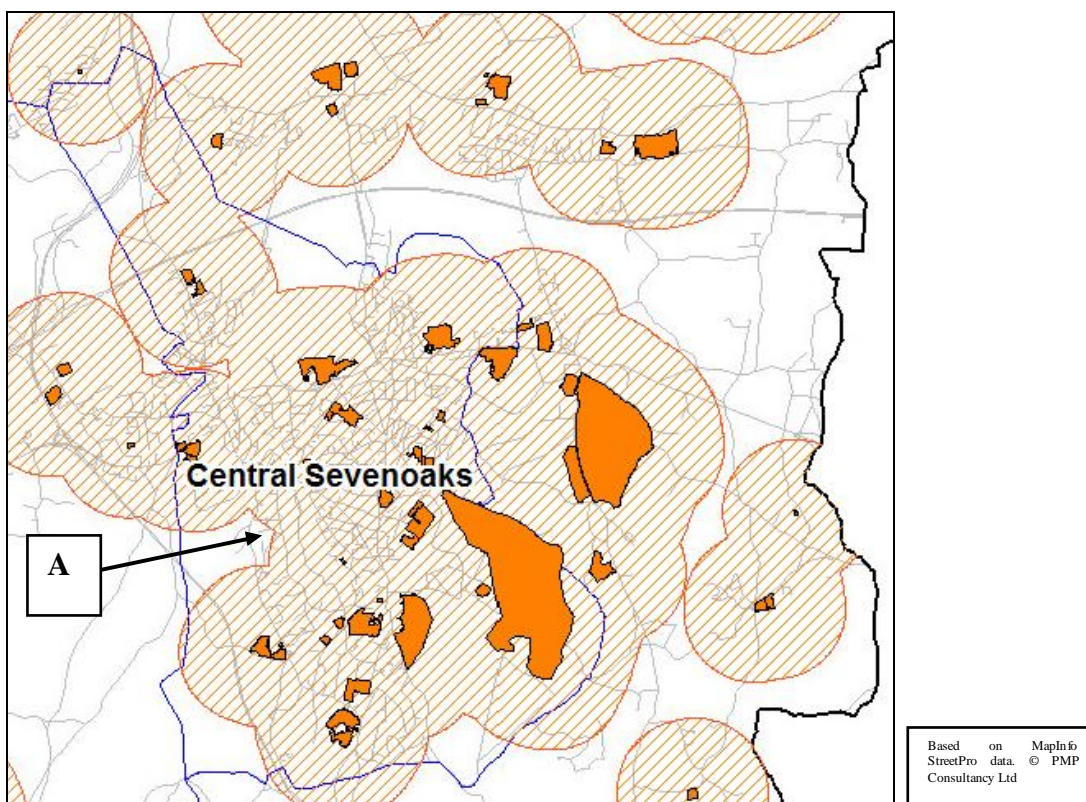
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Map 9.2 Focus on Swanley area



9.29 Map 9.1 shows outdoor sports facility provision in the Swanley analysis area. It is shown that the accessibility in this area is very good. However, Swanley Town Council has stated that, due to the closure of Birchwood School (adjacent to Swanley Park), there is an under provision for junior and youth football. They have stated that there is a need to support the provision of football pitches in the Birchwood area of Swanley (Site 66). This assertion should be tested through a full playing pitch strategy for the district

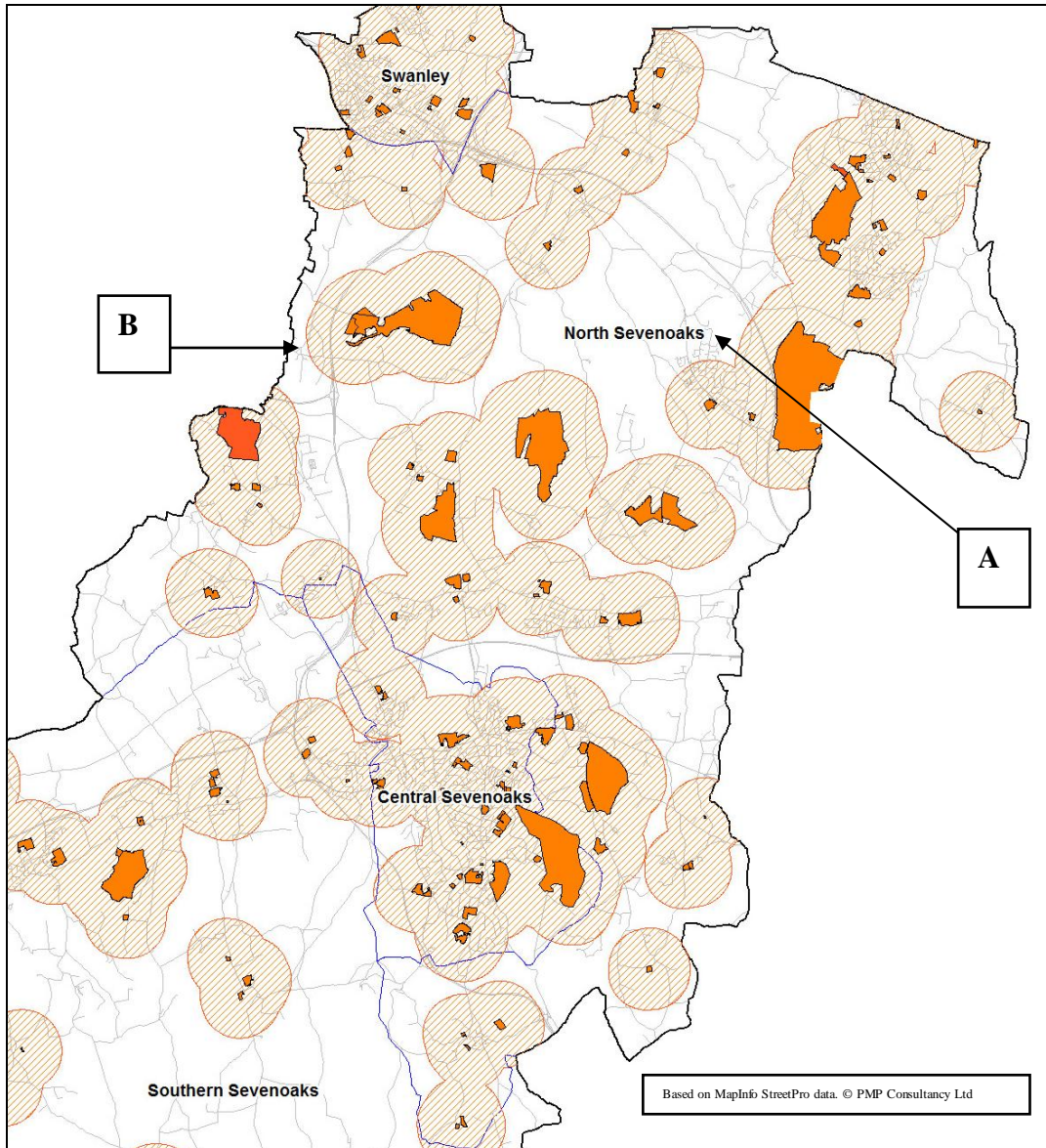
Map 9.3 Focus on Central Sevenoaks area



SECTION 9 – OUTDOOR SPORTS FACILITIES

- 9.30 Map 9.3 shows there is good accessibility to the outdoor sports facility sites in the Central Sevenoaks area. There only one minor gap in provision (labelled “A”) however, it is not considered that there is sufficient demand to require new facilities in this area.

Map 9.4 Focus on North Sevenoaks area



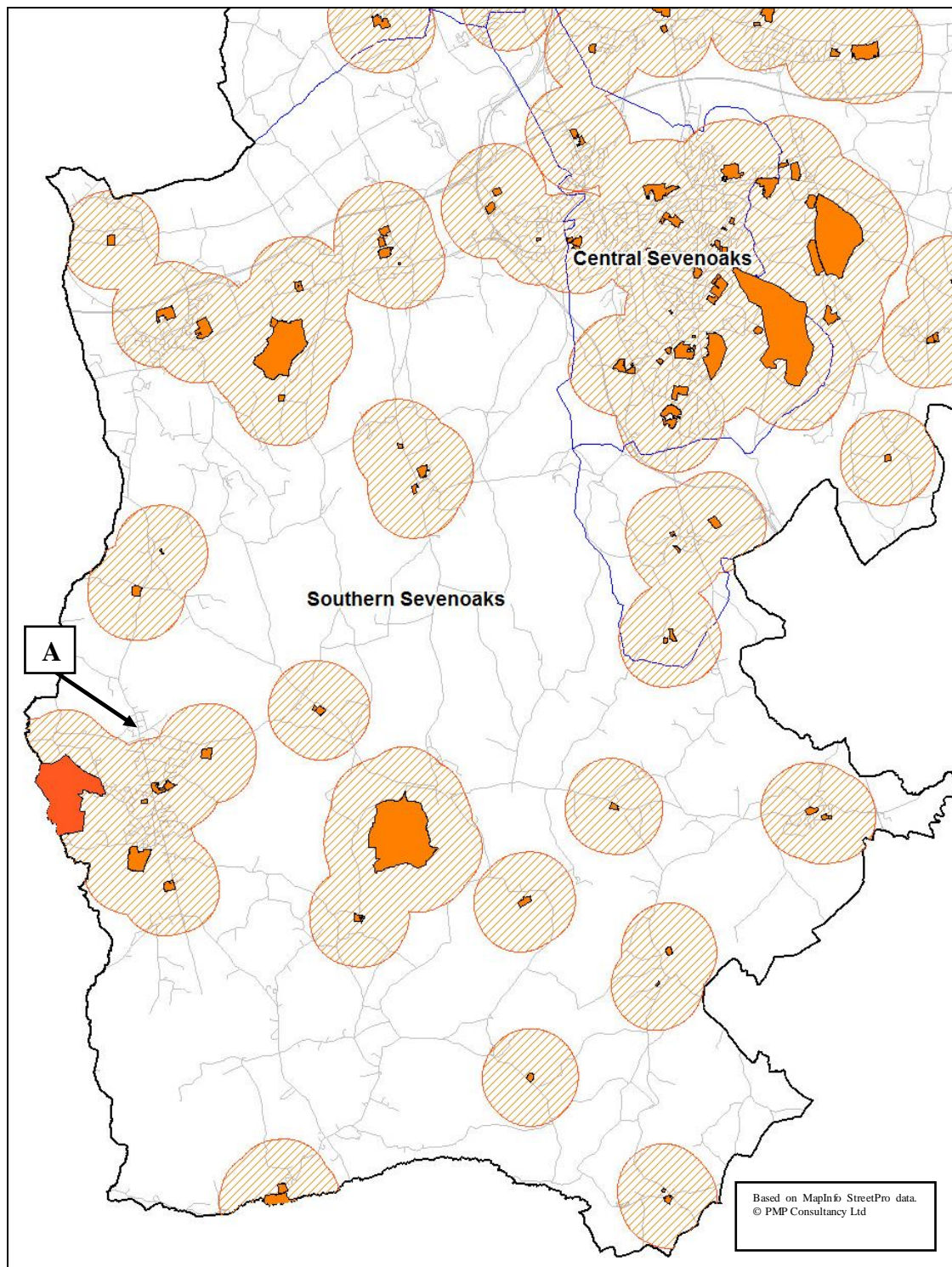
- 9.31 Map 9.4 shows the Northern Sevenoaks analysis area. As with the two analysis areas already reviewed, the accessibility coverage is good. However, a number of town and parish councils in this area – Shoreham, Hartley, Ash, Otford, Knockholt and Horton Kirby South Darenth – have suggested that current provision is not adequate. These views need to be tested further via full playing pitch strategy.
- 9.32 The map reveals two areas that lack coverage. The first (labelled “A”) is the West Kingsdown area, however West Kingsdown Parish Council has stated that it considers provision to be adequate and that any under provision could be addressed by making better use of school grounds.
- 9.33 The other is Well Hill (“B”). The Council should undertake a more detailed review of demand in this area.

SECTION 9 – OUTDOOR SPORTS FACILITIES

OSF 2

The Council to consider future outdoor sports provision in West Kingsdown and Well Hill – subject to more detailed reviews of demand.

Map 9.5 Focus on South Sevenoaks area



9.34 Map 9.5 shows that there is a good level of accessibility from residential areas in the South Sevenoaks analysis area for outdoor sports facilities. There is currently only

SECTION 9 – OUTDOOR SPORTS FACILITIES

one small area without access, which is the Marlpit Hill area (labelled 'A'). Any new facility in this area should be subject to proven outdoor sports facility demand.

- 9.35 Chevening Parish Council has stated that more junior pitches for weekend use are required. Westerham Town Council have stated that Westerham Football Club is currently investigating additional sites or a synthetic turf pitch. These views should be tested via a playing pitch strategy.

OSF 3	The Council to consider future outdoor sports provision within the Marlpit Hill area.
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Value assessment

- 9.36 Most sites that have a high level of use would normally have a good or very good quality and accessibility rating. Conversely 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.
- 9.37 The overall average of scores for quality and accessibility was high (70% and 65% respectively), with 105 sites scoring above average for quality and accessibility and having a usage score of high and significant.
- 9.38 The highest scoring sites were school sites, Sundridge Recreation Ground (Site ID 609), Hever Parish Cricket Field (Site ID 508) and Blossoms Park (Site ID 529). These sites set the benchmark for other outdoor sports facilities in the District. All sites have high usage levels. Those with high quality or accessibility scores are of high value and must be protected from development and enhanced where appropriate.
- 9.39 One of the lowest value sites in the District was Weald Cricket Club (Site ID 242) which scored 60% for quality and 47% for accessibility. This site should be prioritised for improvements to quality and accessibility to meet the needs of the users and maintain levels of satisfaction.

Summary and conclusions

- 9.40 The vast majority of Sevenoaks District residents are within the recommended catchment area of an outdoor sports facility. However, as many of the outdoor sports facilities are school sites, access can be difficult. Many school sites do not allow community access at all, despite being the only outdoor sports facility in some towns or villages. It should be a priority for the Council to try and open up formal access to such sites where no other facilities exist and to protect such facilities from development.
- 9.41 From a sport specific point of view, there have been many comments regarding pitch provision including the quantity and quality of pitches and changing facilities. In order to further address these concerns the Council should undertake a playing pitch strategy.

OSF 1	The Council to consider undertaking a playing pitch strategy and sports facility strategy in partnership with external partners.
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OSF 2	The Council to consider future outdoor sports provision in West Kingsdown and Well Hill – subject to more detailed reviews of demand.
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SECTION 9 – OUTDOOR SPORTS FACILITIES

OSF 3

The Council to consider future outdoor sports provision within the Marlpit Hill area.

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.

Picture 10.1 **Otford allotments**



Strategic context and consultation

- 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 There is one specific policy in the Local Plan (SR4) relating to allotments. This policy protects allotments from development unless there is suitable alternative provision of comparable size and land quality. The use of redundant allotments for other open space purposes is also permitted. This policy has not been saved as part of the process towards a Local Development Framework.
- 10.4 Results from the household survey indicated that allotments are viewed as the least important type of open space with only 47% of respondents considering allotments to be important, whilst 19% held no opinion.
- 10.5 Only 11 respondents to the household survey use allotments most frequently. The most significant quality problems highlighted by these users were regarding noise and smell whilst some town and parish councils highlighted vandalism as a quality issue.
- 10.6 Quality factors that frequent users were satisfied with were the provision of parking, pathways and boundaries. Key aspirations for allotments identified by the most frequent users were:

- toilets
- litter bins
- ease to get to and around site
- flowers, flower beds and shrubs.

10.7 However, results from the consultation undertaken with town and parish councils suggests that the provision of ancillary facilities such as toilets and litter bins is an unrealistic aspiration due to cost and maintenance issues.

10.8 Accessibility features that frequent users of allotments were satisfied with were signage, opening times and accessibility with pushchairs/wheelchairs.

10.9 It is recognised there are many providers of allotments in Sevenoaks District and that it can be difficult for the District Council to influence sites outside of their control.

Setting provision standards

10.10 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.

10.11 In order to set the standards for quality, quantity and accessibility a workshop session was undertaken with Council officers to discuss all the available data in terms of the audit, consultation and other relevant material. The process for each standard is demonstrated in Figure 5.1 below.

Figure 5.1 Setting standards process diagram



Current position and quantity

10.12 Unlike quality and accessibility standards, PMP was able to instantly apply the quantity standards (Step 4) as part of the workshop session through an interactive calculator. This allowed the effect of an increased/decreased level of provision to be calculated. This was calculated in three different ways:

- District wide
- for each analysis area
- urban v rural areas.

10.13 An example of the calculator is shown in Figure 10.2 below.

Figure 10.2 Interactive calculator example

Setting Quantity Standards Calculator				Population: 2001 Audit: 2008	
Analysis area name		Swanley			
Area population	urban	20,986			
Typology	Total provision	Existing Provision (per 1,000 population)	Recommended Local Standard (per 1,000 population)	Increase / Decrease (ha per 1,000 population)	ACTUAL Increase / Decrease (hectares)
Allotments	1.40	0.07	0.10	-0.03	-0.70

10.14 There are 33 sites in the District with a total area of 41.4ha. This equates to an average site size of 1.25ha and a current provision level of 0.38ha per 1,000 population.

10.15 Table 10.1 below, provides a breakdown of sites per analysis area. It shows that the rural areas have a larger number of sites than the urban areas although the North Sevenoaks area has the largest average site size.

Table 10.1 Analysis area breakdown

Analysis area	Number of sites	Total hectares	Average site size (ha)
Swanley	3	1.40	0.47
North Sevenoaks	15	21.51	1.43
Central Sevenoaks	5	6.92	1.38
South Sevenoaks	10	11.39	1.14

10.16 The National Society of Allotment and Leisure Gardeners suggest a national standard of 20 allotments per 1,000 households (ie 20 allotments per 2,000 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 250 metres squared.

10.17 The household survey results indicate a significant number of district residents who had no view of the provision of allotments suggesting the demand is not high for additional provision. However, consultation with providers of allotments in urban areas indicates that demand, in some areas, is outstripping supply.

10.18 The local standard for Central Sevenoaks has been set at the current provision level of 0.31ha per 1,000 population. This reflects the pressures that many of the sites are under from both redevelopment and new potential new users. Much consideration was given to setting the same standard in the Swanley analysis area in order to have parity between the two urban areas. Ultimately it was decided to set the standard at 0.1ha. This is above the current provision level but far below that of the Central Sevenoaks analysis area however it was felt to be unrealistic aspiration to set the same standard for both.

RECOMMENDED LOCAL QUANTITY STANDARD

Swanley – 0.10ha per 1,000 population

North Sevenoaks – 0.51ha per 1,000 population

Central Sevenoaks – 0.31ha ha per 1,000 population

South Sevenoaks – 0.47ha per 1,000 population

10.19 In the rural areas, the standards have been set at the current levels of provision. Typically the pressures on allotment sites in the rural areas were not as acute as those in the urban areas.

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 Sevenoaks District were clean and litter free, well-kept grass, easy to get to the site, nature features and nature conservation area. The average quality score for existing allotment sites in the District, based on scoring during site assessments, was 61%.

10.22 The full context and justification for this standard is outlined in Appendix H.

RECOMMENDED LOCAL QUALITY STANDARD

‘A well-maintained site that is easy to get to and easy to get around. Sites should have appropriate boundaries and ideally be situated in areas with good soil quality.’

Accessibility standard

- 10.23 With regards to accessibility there are no definitive national or local standards for this type of open space.
- 10.24 Overall the average site access score for existing allotment provision was 62.7%, which is higher than many of the other local authorities PMP have audited. Two sites scored 80% both of which were located in the North Sevenoaks analysis area: Shoreham Allotments (Site ID 670) and Woodland Avenue Allotments (Site ID 769).
- 10.25 A total of three sites scored less than 50%. These were:
- The Warren Allotments, South Sevenoaks (Site ID 406)
 - St Pauls Allotments, Swanley (Site ID 127)
 - Hawthorn Lane Allotments, Central Sevenoaks (Site ID 294).
- 10.26 Only a limited number of respondents to the household survey stated that the type of open space they use most frequently is allotments. For those that did noise and smells were seen as significant problems and vandalism the dominant minor issue.
- 10.27 The general perception from the household survey (75% level) is that a walk time of up to 10 minutes is reasonable.
- 10.28 Considering the above it is recommended that the local accessibility standard is a 10 minute walk time. However, given the minimal response through the household survey of allotment users and the dispersed rural nature of some areas of the District, this standard should be treated with caution even though it is comparable to other local authority areas.

**RECOMMENDED
ACCESSIBILITY
STANDARD**

**10 min walk
(0.8km)**

Applying provision standards – identifying geographical areas

- 10.29 In order to identify geographical areas of importance and those areas with required local needs, we apply both the quantitative provision of allotments in Sevenoaks District 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.
- 10.30 The aspiration of equality between the two urban and rural analysis areas automatically means that a single urban and rural analysis area will have an undersupply of this typology. Table 10.2, examines the application of the local standard to the analysis area level.

Table 10.2 Local standard application

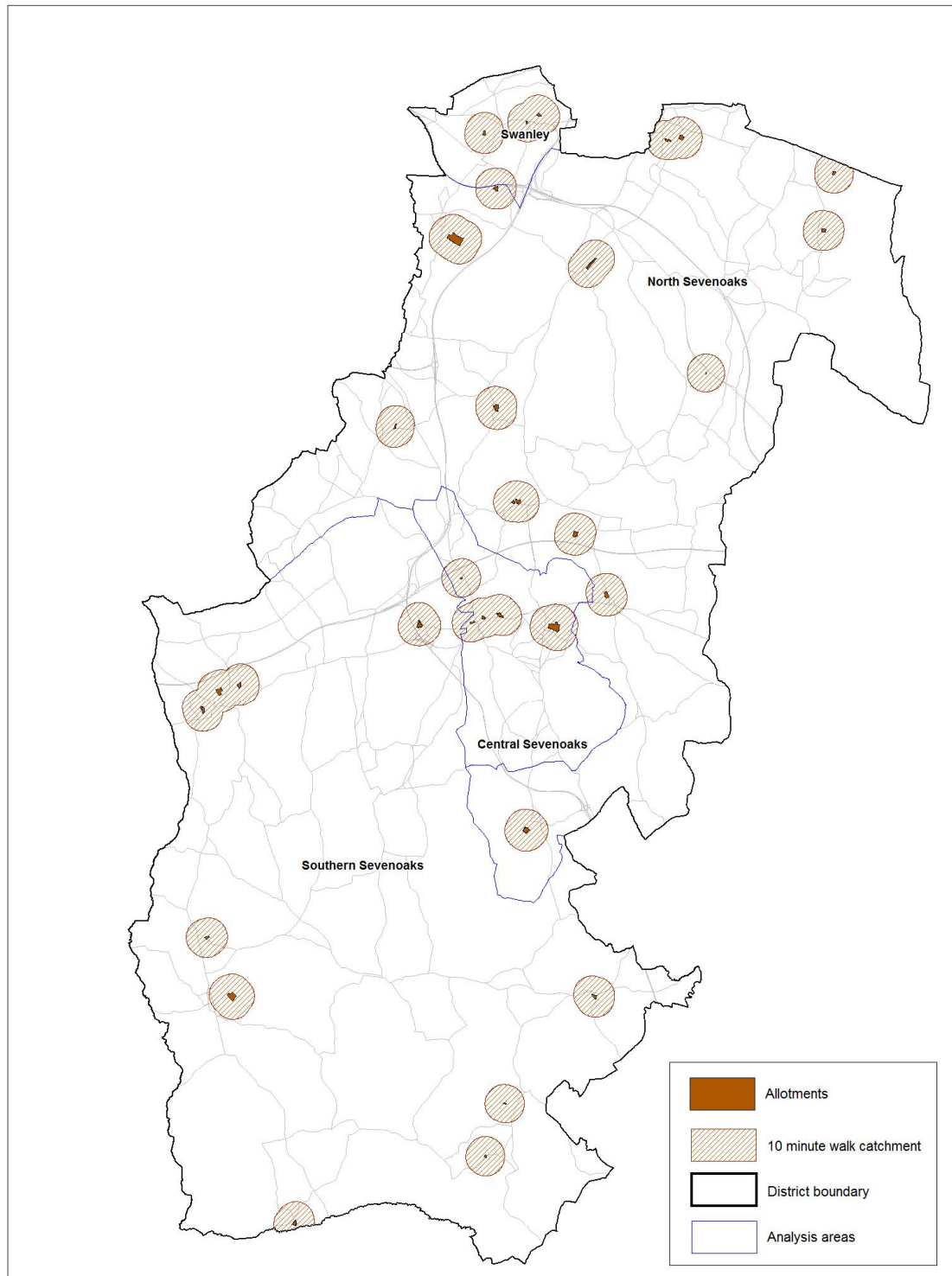
Analysis area	Current population	Actual provision	Current provision level - ha per 1000 population	Local standard	Surplus/ deficiency - ha per 1000 pop	Actual surplus/ deficiency (ha)
Swanley	20,986	1.40	0.07	0.10	-0.03	-0.7
Central Sevenoaks	22,508	6.92	0.31	0.31	-0.00	-0.0
Total urban	43,494	8.32	0.19	n/a		
North Sevenoaks	41,809	21.51	0.51	0.51	0.00	0.2
South Sevenoaks	24,002	11.39	0.47	0.47	0.00	0.1
Total rural	65,811	32.90	0.50	n/a		

10.31 Table 10.3 projects this forward to 2026, assuming a small increase in population and no increase in open space provision. The deficiencies in allotment provision will only be slightly higher than the present level due to the small population change however this does highlight the need to protect existing sites from development.

Table 10.3 Future local standard application

Analysis area	Future population figure	Actual provision	Future provision level - ha per 1,000 population	Local standard	Future surplus/ (deficiency) - ha per 1,000 pop	Actual surplus/ deficiency (ha)
Swanley	21,421	1.40	0.07	0.10	-0.03	-0.7
Central Sevenoaks	23,063	6.92	0.30	0.31	-0.01	-0.2
Total urban	44,484	8.32	0.19	n/a		
North Sevenoaks	42,840	21.51	0.50	0.51	-0.01	-0.3
South Sevenoaks	24,594	11.39	0.46	0.47	-0.01	-0.2
Total rural	67,434	32.90	0.49	n/a		

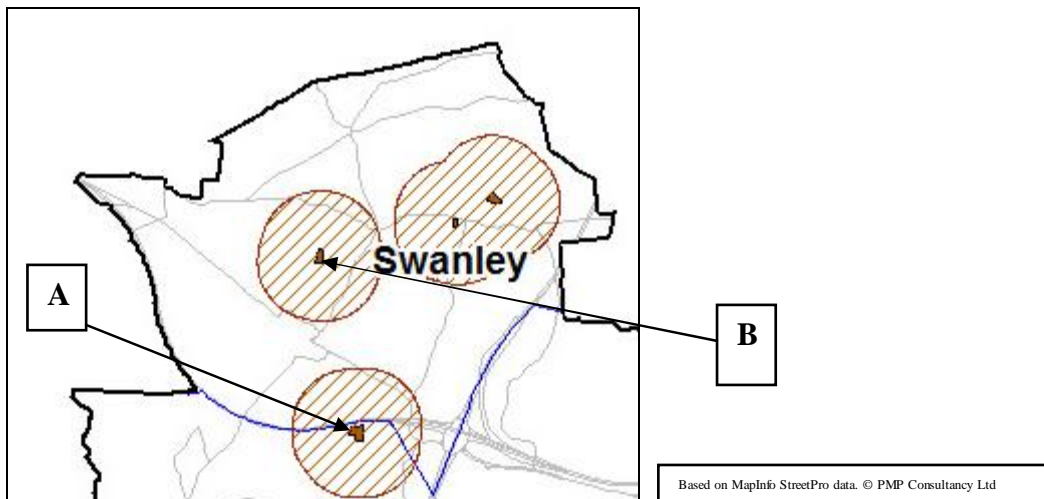
Map 10.1 Application of the allotment accessibility standard to Sevenoaks District



Allotments

Based on MapInfo Streetpro data. Crown Copyright. PMP Ltd.

Map 10.2 Focus on Swanley area

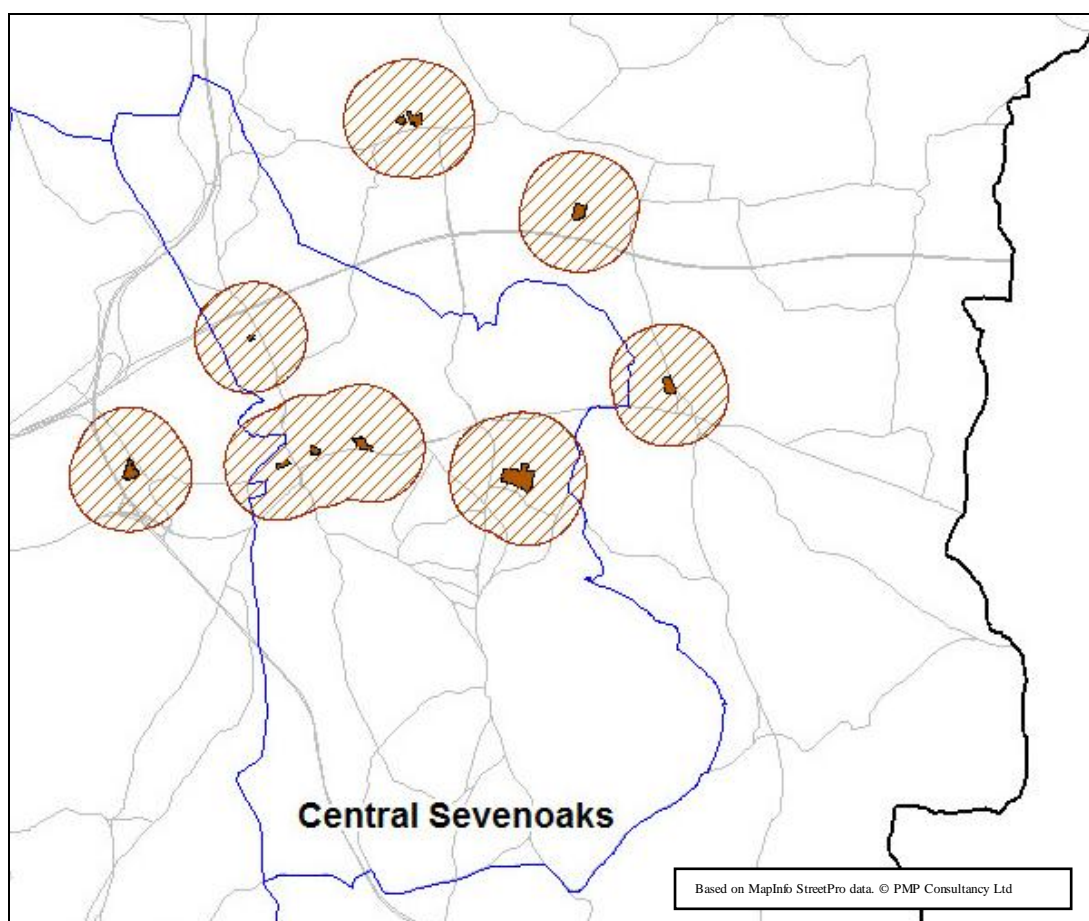


10.32 Map 10.2 below focuses upon allotment provision in the Swanley area. In contrast to previous typologies, Swanley Village is well served by allotments however the accessibility to the main urban Swanley settlement is poor. The main allotments for Swanley are located to the south of the urban mass (labelled “A”) and accessibility is limited by the ‘A’ roads through the area.

10.33 The other main site is located between Swanley and Hextable (labelled “B”). This site is within walking distance of the White Oak ward (a large area) which it serves very well with parking close by with toilets in the main park. The allotment has a waiting list of 10 residents. In the short term the Council should seek to provide a new allotment site for Hextable and look for opportunities to locate potential sites in the centre of Swanley. It is recognised that new provision in central Swanley is problematic due to the development pressures on land there.

ALLOT 1	The Council should consider a new allotment site for Hextable and look for opportunities to locate potential sites in the centre of Swanley. However, it is recognised that new provision in central Swanley is problematic due to the development pressures on land there.
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Map 10.3 Focus on Central Sevenoaks

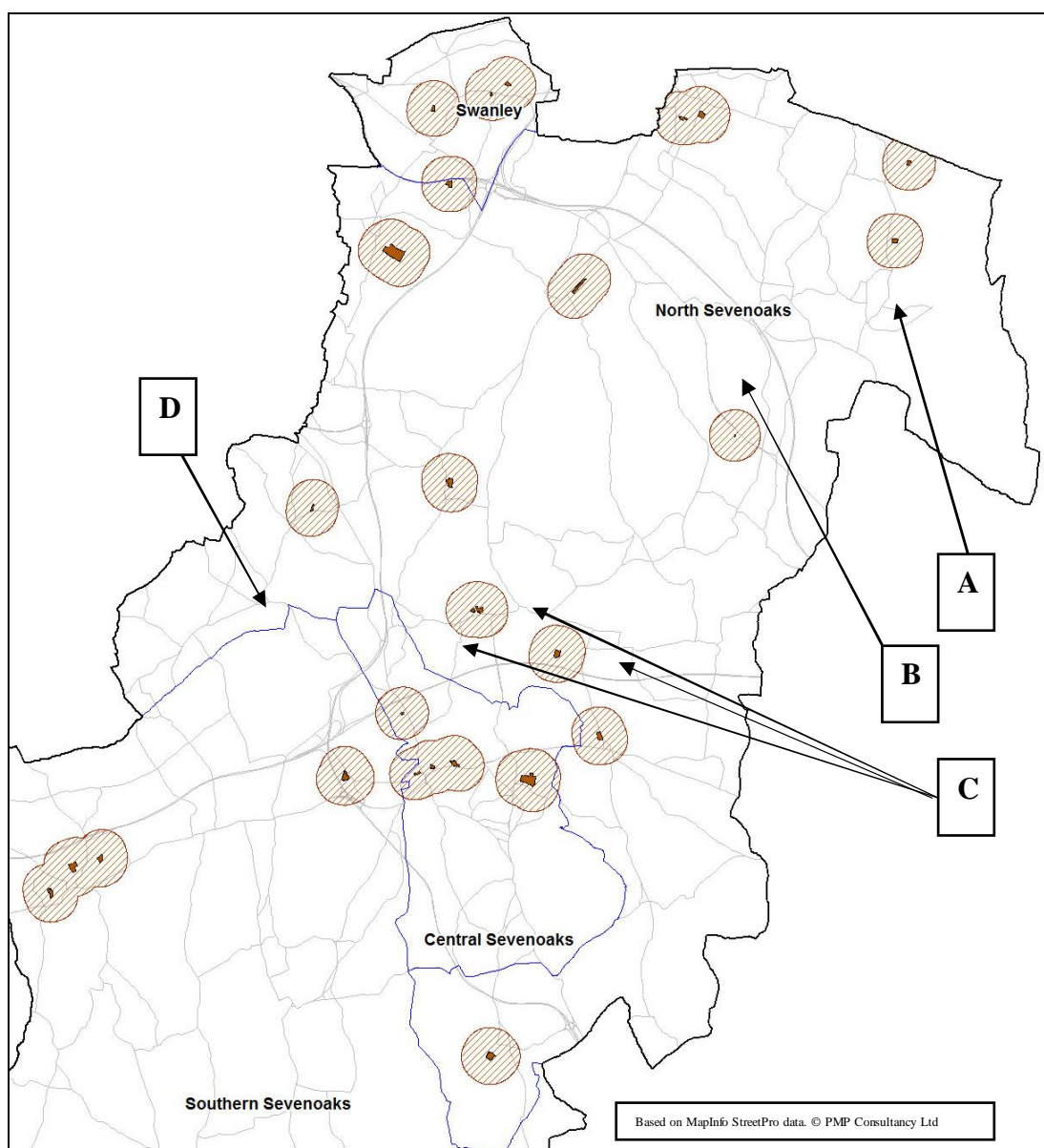


10.34 Map 10.3 shows that access for allotments in the Central Sevenoaks area is limited to the northern parts of the town. While additional allotment provision is not justified by applying the quantity standards to the current population, by 2026 there will be a shortfall of 0.2 hectares. It is therefore recommended that, as the population increases, new site(s) are provided on the south, east and west edges of the built up areas. This will improve the accessibility for residents in these areas.

ALLOT 2

The Council to consider new allotment site(s) along the south, east and west edges of the built up area of Central Sevenoaks, over the period to 2026.

Map 10.4 Focus on North Sevenoaks area



10.35 Map 10.4 shows there are a large number of urban areas in Northern Sevenoaks without access to allotments within the specific accessibility catchment area. New Ash Green (labelled “A”), for example, currently has no local allotment provision although there is provision for New Ash Green residents in Hartley. The Council should therefore consider new allotment provision in closer proximity to the settlement of New Ash Green. Other areas tend to have a single site that provides limited access for the majority of residents. Examples of this are West Kingsdown (“B”), Kemsing and Otford (“C”) and the Halstead/Knockholt Pound area (“D”) although there is currently no demand in Hartley and Otford. In addition, the allotments in South Darenth have a substantial waiting list. Subject to demand, the Council should look to provide additional allotment sites in these areas in order to provide increased accessibility coverage.

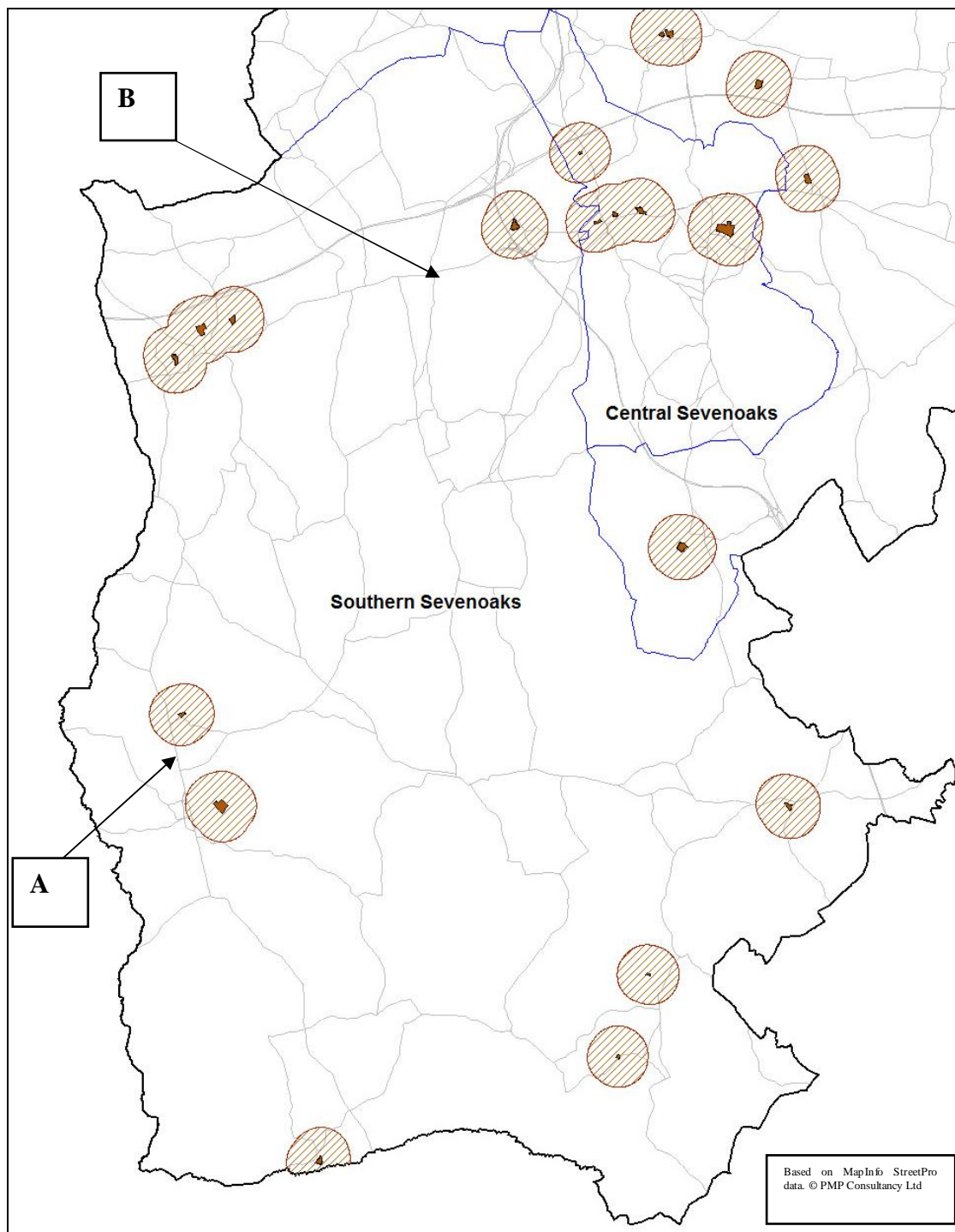
ALLOT 3	The Council to prioritise new allotment provision in the New Ash Green area.
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SECTION 10 – ALLOTMENTS AND COMMUNITY GARDENS

ALLOT 4

Subject to adequate demand levels, the Council should seek new sites in West Kingsdown, Kemsing, Halstead/Knockholt Pound and South Darenth areas.

Map 10.5 Focus on South Sevenoaks area



10.36 Map 10.5 shows that access to allotments in the urban areas of South Sevenoaks area is generally good. The larger settlements of Edenbridge and Marlpit Hill ('A')

both have allotments sites that suffer from restricted accessibility due to the railway lines that run through the towns. Leigh Parish Council has stated that its allotment is almost fully used and it has seen a significant increase in use over the last 10 years. It has suggested that further provision will be necessary in the near future. We suggest that the District and Parish Council monitor the situation and seek additional provision if demand is sustained.

10.37 The other main area without access is the Sundridge/Brasted area of the District (labelled 'B'). This area should be a priority for new provision. We are aware that Brasted used to have allotments on the land adjoining the west side of the recreation ground although the plots are disused and overgrown. This re-opening this site could provide a solution in this case.

ALLOT 5	The Council to provide new allotment sites in Edenbridge/Marlpit Hill areas through a combination of re-provision and new provision.
ALLOT 6	The Council to prioritise new provision in the Sundridge/Brasted area.

Value assessment

10.38 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 need further analysis.

10.39 The quality scores and accessibility scores range from good to very poor for both aspects.

10.40 All allotment sites 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. 10 of these sites also had high quality and accessibility scores, indicating that these are highly valued sites that should be protected. These sites should set the benchmark for all other sites in the District. The sites are:

- Riverhead Allotments (Site ID 286)
- Shoreham Allotments (Site ID 670)
- Otford Allotments B (Site ID 679)
- Seal Allotments (Site ID 720)
- Victoria Drive Allotments (Site ID 744)
- London Road Allotments (Site ID 759)
- Woodland Avenue Allotments (Site ID 769)
- Cowden Allotment Gardens (Site ID 430)
- Chervening Allotments (Site ID 615)

- Forge Croft Allotments (Site ID 938).

10.41 Sites which scored low for quality and accessibility and should therefore be prioritised for improvements include:

- Hawthorn Lane Allotment (Site ID 294)
- Quakers Hall Allotments (Site ID 569)
- Woodmount Allotments (Site ID 645)
- Beldham Hall Allotments (Site ID 657)
- The Warren Allotments (Site ID 406)
- Farleycroft Allotments (Site ID 578)
- Swan Lane Allotments (Site ID 965).

Summary and recommendations

10.42 Allotments can provide a number of wider benefits to the community in addition to the primary use of growing produce. These include improving physical and mental health and contributing to the greenspace environment and bio-diversity.

10.43 When applying accessibility standards, gaps are seen in all areas of the District. However, as allotments are demand led it is recommended that quantity issues be tackled before accessibility.

10.44 It is recognised that the Parish Councils are key providers of allotments in many of the areas of under provision. The Council should look to work with such bodies in order to promote the usage of allotments in order to help facilitate their increased usage.

Summary of recommendations for allotments in Sevenoaks District

ALLOT 1	The Council should consider a new allotment site for Hextable and look for opportunities to locate potential sites in the centre of Swanley. However, it is recognised that new provision in central Swanley is problematic due to the development pressures on land there.
ALLOT 2	The Council to consider new allotment site(s) along the south, east and west edges of the built up area of Central Sevenoaks, over the period to 2026.
ALLOT 3	The Council to prioritise new allotment provision in the New Ash Green area.
ALLOT 4	Subject to adequate demand levels, the Council should seek new sites in West Kingsdown, Kemsing, Halstead/Knockholt Pound and South Darenth areas.
ALLOT 5	The Council to provide new allotment sites in the Edenbridge/Marlpit Hill areas through a combination of re-provision and new provision.
ALLOT 6	The Council to prioritise new provision in the Sundridge/Brasted area.

SECTION 11
CEMETRIES AND CHURCHYARDS

Cemeteries and churchyards

Definitions

- 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. A secondary purpose is the promotion of wildlife conservation and biodiversity.

Picture 11.1 **St Nicholas Church, Sevenoaks.**



Strategic context and consultation

- 11.2 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 urban settlements and often providing historic context to rural landscapes.
- 11.3 The Local Plan offers protection indirectly to cemeteries and churchyards through the protection of the church building itself. Policies EN19 and EN20 protect listed buildings and those of a local architectural or historic interest.
- 11.4 Many cemeteries and churchyards, particularly in rural areas, will also be protected through policy EN21 when they fall within a conservation area. Policy PS11 controls the development of new burial grounds and places of worship. It should be noted these policies have not been saved as part of the development towards a Local Development Framework.
- 11.5 Consultation showed that Cemeteries and Churchyards are viewed as important by 70% of respondents, although this score is one of the lowest of all types of open space. Only eight respondents selected this typology as the open space they used most regularly. Of those eight respondents, five drove to sites and three walked.
- 11.6 The three most significant issues were: vandalism and graffiti, fear of crime and anti social behaviour. Litter problems and dog fouling were seen as minor issues. In terms of sites' access, respondents were most dissatisfied with access by public transport followed by accessibility for pushchairs and wheelchairs.

Setting provision standards

Quantity standard

11.7 No quantity standards have been set for Cemeteries and Churchyards. PPG17 Annex states *"as churchyards can only exist where there is a church, the only form of provision standard which will be required is a qualitative one."*

11.8 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.

RECOMMENDED LOCAL QUANTITY STANDARD
No local standard to be set

Quality standard

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

11.10 Respondents from the household survey wanted cemeteries and churchyards to be clean and litter free with well-kept grass, a level surface and good drainage, clear footpaths and a variety of flowers, trees and shrubs. These key quality factors alongside other consultations have been the basis of the quality standard for cemeteries and churchyards.

11.11 The average quality percentage, derived from site assessments for cemeteries and churches was 61%.

RECOMMENDED LOCAL QUALITY STANDARD

"Sites should provide an area for quiet contemplation and an opportunity to enhance biodiversity. Sites should have clear pathways, seating and litter bins where suitable, with varied vegetation and landscaping appropriate to the character of the area. The site should have a well-defined boundary and management of the site should be encouraged through the involvement of the community where possible".

Accessibility

11.12 There are no definitive national or local standards for cemeteries and churchyards with regards to accessibility.

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

11.14 There is no realistic requirement to set catchments for cemeteries and churchyards as they cannot easily be influenced through planning policy and implementation.

RECOMMENDED LOCAL ACCESSIBILITY STANDARD

No Local Standard to be set

Applying provision standards – identifying geographical areas

- 11.15 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.
- 11.16 Cemeteries and churchyards, although needed for the burial of the dead provide an open space to be used on an opportunity-led basis. In other words, where there are cemeteries and churchyards, there are opportunities for wildlife and use of the open space by the public for walking and relaxing.
- 11.17 It is however important to consider the quality of cemeteries and churchyards and the value of the current provision. They should strive to achieve the quality vision set for all churchyards and cemeteries.

Value assessment

- 11.18 It would be wrong to place a value on cemeteries and churchyards focusing solely on quality, accessibility and usage. The wider benefits are also important. In addition to offering a functional value, many cemeteries and churchyards also offer heritage, cultural and landscape benefits.
- 11.19 In some instances, particularly in rural settlements, a churchyard may be the only formal open space provision and hence is a focal point of the village.
- 11.20 There are 53 churches and cemeteries in Sevenoaks District. 14 of these sites score highly for quality and accessibility, with a 'low' usage score. The highest scoring sites for all factors were St Peter's & St Paul's Church Cemetery (Site ID 545) and St Paul's Church (Site ID 510).

Summary of recommendations for cemeteries and churchyards in Sevenoaks District

CC 1	Adopt the quality standard for all sites in the district.
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SECTION 12
GREEN CORRIDORS

Green corridors

Definition

- 12.1 Green corridors includes towpaths along canals and riverbanks, cycleways, rights of way and disused railway lines. Their primary purpose is to provide opportunities for walking, cycling and horse riding (for leisure purposes and travel) and opportunities for wildlife migration. Walking and horse riding are important recreational activities in the District and information on routes can be found on Kent County Council's Public Rights of Way map.

PPG17 – the role of green corridors

- 12.2 PPG17 suggests that all corridors, including those in remote rural settlements, should be considered. However, the Companion Guide suggests that unless a green corridor is used as a transport link between facilities (ie home and school, town and sports facility etc) it should not be included within an audit.
- 12.3 Although we recognise the role that all green corridors play in the provision of open space and recreation within the District, the focus of this study is on urban corridors and public rights of way, in line with the Companion Guide.

Strategic context and consultation

- 12.4 The Local Plan does not make specific reference to green corridors, although it does have policies to protect green wedges which stop settlements from merging into one another.
- 12.5 The household survey results showed a split of opinion with regards quantity. 47% of respondents believe that there are "nearly enough" or "not enough" green corridors but 48% believe that there are "more than enough" or the level of provision is "about right".
- 12.6 Respondents consider green corridors to be the third most important typology of open space, behind parks and gardens and natural and semi natural. 89% of respondents consider them to be important. 31% of respondents visit them on a weekly basis and 69 people stated they use them as their primary open space.
- 12.7 The most significant quality issues in green corridors were dog fouling and litter problems. Anti-social behaviour, vandalism and graffiti were seen as more minor problems. In terms of site access, the largest levels of dissatisfaction concerned signage and accessibility with pushchairs or wheelchairs. Levels of satisfaction were highest regarding their accessibility on foot and the visibility of sites entrances.

Current position

- 12.8 There are two main green corridors in Sevenoaks District that have been included in the audit. These are:
- Hextable Green Corridor (Site ID 28)
 - Glendale Green Corridor (Site ID 157).

Setting provision standards

- 12.9 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.

Quantity standard

- 12.10 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 QUANTITY
STANDARD**
No Local Standard Set

- 12.11 It is therefore recommended that no quantity standard should be set. PPG17 goes on 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 demanded. 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

- 12.12 The Countryside Agency has issued guidance on what the user should expect to find on green corridor sites. This includes 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.
- 12.13 Views on qualities for green corridors were obtained from the household survey. Identified qualities were for green corridors to be clean and litter free with clear footpaths, well-kept grass and nature features. Provision of bins and seating were also mentioned as potential improvements although it is important that any such facilities are only located where they do not detract from the character of the surrounding area. Town and parish councils emphasised that green corridors should seek opportunities to provide for cycling and horse riding. These key quality factors alongside other consultations have been the basis of the recommendation for green corridors.

RECOMMENDED LOCAL QUALITY STANDARD
“Green corridors should have clear pathways, linking major open spaces together and providing ancillary facilities such as bins and seating in appropriate places with signage to aid usage. Green corridors should also encourage biodiversity and wildlife habitats, enabling the movement of both wildlife and people between open spaces.”

Accessibility standard

- 12.14 There is no rationale for setting catchment areas for green corridors as their function is to join places rather than to provide a destination in their own right.

LOCAL ACCESSIBILITY STANDARD

No local standard set

Links with the health agenda

- 12.15 Green corridors represent an opportunity to link open spaces within urban areas and to promote transport by cycle and on foot. This will help keep the public active and hence potentially improve health within the local area.
- 12.16 The latest Government plan published by the Department for Transport and 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.”*
- 12.17 It is therefore important to address any quality problems in existing green corridors and to capitalise on opportunities to increase and enhance the existing network.

Applying provision standards

- 12.18 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. However, the aim should be to provide an integrated network of high quality green corridors linking open spaces together and provide opportunities for informal recreation and alternative means of transport.
- 12.19 For the two sites identified by this study there were common issues that the Council should look to overcome. Both sites needed their wheelchair access improving and also had some rubbish and safety issues. In addition signage needed improving as did grass coverage.

Summary and recommendations

- 12.20 As green corridors are primarily opportunity-led it is difficult to target potential new areas for provision. However, the Council should ensure that new developments include green corridors to facilitate walking and to cut reliance on car travel.
- 12.21 Consultation showed that the major issues for users of green corridors were rubbish and dog fouling. Whilst it might be uneconomic for the Council to introduce additional litter patrols, it should aim to provide additional litter and dog fouling bins to help people take responsibility for their own mess where this is compatible with the character of the local area.
- 12.22 A longer term aspiration should be for the Council to increase the safety and security of green corridors. This reflects concerns about anti-social behaviour, vandalism and graffiti.

Summary of recommendations for green corridors in Sevenoaks District

GC1	Ensure all new major developments contain green corridors to reduce dependence on cars for short journeys.
GC2	The Council should provide additional litter and dog fouling bins at green corridors within their control where this is appropriate and necessary.
GC3	The Council should investigate how to increase the security and safety of green corridors.

SECTION 13
RESOURCING OPEN SPACE

Resourcing open space

Introduction

- 13.1 Many local authority budgets for the enhancement and maintenance of open spaces have reduced over recent years. So it is essential to obtain financial support (both internal and external) for improvements to existing open spaces or for new provision. External support includes support from parish councils which frequently manage open spaces in their areas; it also includes external funding.
- 13.2 This section of the report examines different opportunities and mechanisms for the resourcing of open space. These include:
- planning gain and Section 106 agreements
 - business funding and sponsorships
 - partnerships with the voluntary sector
 - lottery funding programmes
 - landfill tax credit scheme
 - sport-specific funding
 - other small grants programmes
 - reviews of fees and charges
 - use of redundant buildings.

Planning gain and Section 106 agreements

- 13.3 Once an open space strategy has been established, it can be used as a framework for negotiating Section 106 contributions from developers. These can then be used to deliver new or improved open space. They will, of course, be limited to areas where development proposals are put forward. Furthermore, Section 106 Agreements have to meet the test of Circular 05/2005 and *“planning obligations should not be used solely to resolve existing deficiencies.”*
- 13.4 In addition to capital contributions, Section 106 agreements can be used for revenue costs. For example, the costs of Development Officer posts or the maintenance costs of new open space via a commuted sum.
- 13.5 It is recommended that the Council maximises revenue funding for open space from developer contributions. Further detail is provided in Section 14.

Business funding and sponsorships

- 13.6 It is possible to use business sponsorship to fund improvements to open space. For examples, Cardiff City Council’s events and festivals programme is sponsored, and the Playground Project in Auchinlea Park, Glasgow, is sponsored by the Body Shop.

Partnership arrangements with the voluntary sector

- 13.7 The voluntary sector can be engaged through the formation of parks ‘friends’ groups. For example, in Rossmere Park, Hartlepool, the community was encouraged to take ownership of the park. The park was promoted and became heavily used, attracting investment from funding bodies which may not have been accessible to the local authority.

Lottery funding

Heritage Lottery Fund

- 13.8 The Heritage Lottery Fund provides grants for works to parks 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 from £50,000 to £5 million are available for a period of up to five years. Projects must involve all stakeholders and must demonstrate sustainability and the heritage value of the park.

The Big Lottery Fund

- 13.9 The Big Lottery Fund has several different potential funding sources for open space, sport, play and recreation facilities. These include:
- **Changing Spaces** – from 2006 to 2009, £234 million is available to help communities in England improve the environment. The programme has three priorities, including community spaces and access to the natural environment
 - **Young People’s Fund** - this aims to support projects that will improve local communities and offer more opportunities to young people. Grants are available for
 - individuals, to help them make a difference in their community
 - voluntary groups and community organisations, to run local projects with and for young people.

- 13.10 More information can be found at: www.biglotteryfund.org.uk

Lottery Small Grants Scheme

- 13.11 The Lottery Small Grants Scheme offers Awards for All grants of between £500 and £10,000 for small projects, which involve people in their community. These can include local environmental work and community park projects.

The Landfill Tax Credit Scheme

- 13.12 The Landfill Tax Credit Scheme allows registered landfill operators to contribute 6.5% of their annual landfill tax liability to environmental bodies approved by the organisation ENTRUST. 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.
- 13.13 The project must be within 10 miles of a landfill or extraction operation.

Sport-specific funding

Football Foundation

- 13.14 The Football Foundation is dedicated to revitalising the grass roots of football, constructing modern infrastructure and 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

- 13.15 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 funding criteria.
- 13.16 Sport England’s mission is to increase participation in sport and active recreation by 1% every year to 2020. It is committed to investing in a coherent system for community sport and promoting a consistent framework for how sport is organised at a local level. County Sports Partnerships (CSPs) have responsibility for achieving increases in participation within their area and it is therefore important that discussions about each project are held with the relevant CSP.
- 13.17 Priority will be given to those projects that deal with inequalities in sport and significantly narrow the participation gap for priority groups. (Note: the target is to close the participation gap between these groups and the regional average by 25% between 2005 and 2008).

- 13.18 The regional priority groups are:

- people over 45
- black and minority ethnic groups
- people with disabilities
- women and girls
- socio-economic groups with top 20% most deprived communities.

SECTION 13 – RESOURCING OPEN SPACE

13.19 Applications will be considered in rounds with a maximum of £400,000 being allocated to each round. Decisions on all applications will be made within eight weeks.

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

Rugby Football Union

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

13.21 There are two different elements to the fund:

- **Ground Match Grant Scheme:** this provides easy-to-access grant funding for capital 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 that 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
 - security will be required for the loan scheme in the form of either a charge over property or personal guarantees.

13.22 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.

13.23 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.

Small grant programmes

Barclays Sitesavers

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

The Tree Council

- 13.25 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.

The Esmee Fairburn Foundation

- 13.26 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. In 2006 they expected to make grants of £26 million across the UK.

Review of pricing

- 13.27 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 minority 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 Sevenoaks District residents.

- 13.28 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 www.greenspace.org.uk

Use of redundant buildings

- 13.29 Redundant sport and leisure buildings should be re-used, wherever possible, for alternative sport and leisure use. For example, a redundant sports pavilion could be used as a children's crèche or nursery.

SECTION 14
PLANNING OVERVIEW

Planning overview

Policy Assessment and guidance for the implementation of Section 106 contributions

Introduction

14.1 The purpose of this section is to provide a planning overview for the Council, in particular:

- providing guidance on the impact of the PPG17 study on the emerging LDF
- providing guidance for the application of Section 106 contributions.

Background

14.2 Section 38 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 states that for the purposes of any area in England other than Greater London, the development plan is:

- the Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) for the region in which it is situated, and
- the Development Plan Documents (DPDs) which have been adopted or approved in relation to that area.

14.3 Whilst not part of the statutory development plan, local planning authorities can also produce Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) that expand upon the policies and proposals in the development plan. Alongside the DPDs these form the Local Development Frameworks (LDFs) that the new legislation demands. This open space assessment forms part of the evidence base to ensure that the policies and proposals in the LDF are sound.

14.4 Sevenoaks Local Plan (2000-2006) was adopted in March 2000 and due to run until 2006. Those policies which have been saved beyond this period will remain in force until replaced by those contained within Local Development Documents or Supplementary Planning Documents.

Planning contributions

Strategic context

- 14.5 Planning obligations are typically agreements negotiated between local authorities and developers in the context of granting planning consent. They provide a means to ensure that a proposed development contributes to the creation of sustainable communities, particularly by securing contributions towards the provision of necessary infrastructure and facilities required by local and national planning policies.
- 14.6 The framework for the current system of planning obligations in England is set out in Section 106 (S106) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended by the 1991 Act). Under the new planning system, provisions have been made in the 2004 Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act to make legislative changes to the developer contributions system. However, in the interim period the Government has decided to provide further advice on working within the current system by publishing a Planning Obligations Circular 05/2005 whilst it considers further reforms. Further “good practice” guidance on the implementation of developer contributions has recently been published.
- 14.7 Section 106 provides that anyone with an interest in land may enter into a planning obligation enforceable by the local planning authority. Such an obligation may be created by agreement or by the person with the interest making an undertaking. Such obligations may restrict development or use of the land; require operations or activities to be carried out in, on, under or over the land; require the land to be used in any specified way; or require payments to be made to the authority either in a single sum or periodically.

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

- 14.8 PPG17 emphasises the importance of undertaking robust assessments of the existing and future needs of local communities for open space, sport and recreational facilities.
- 14.9 Local authorities should use the information gained from their assessments of needs and opportunities to set locally derived standards for the provision of open space, sports and recreational facilities.
- 14.10 With regards the use of planning obligations, paragraph 33 of PPG17 states; “Planning obligations should be used as a means to remedy local deficiencies in the quantity or quality of open space, sports and recreation provision. Local Authorities will be justified in seeking planning obligations where the quantity or quality of provision is inadequate or under threat, or where new development increases local needs. It is essential that local authorities have undertaken detailed assessments of needs and audits of existing facilities, and set appropriate local standards in order to justify planning obligations.”

Assessing needs and opportunities: A Companion Guide to PPG17

- 14.11 Whilst the advice within the Companion Guide was written at a time when the guidance on developer contributions was contained within Circular 1/97, its recommendations on the implementation of developer contributions are still highly relevant.

- 14.12 Diagram 1 of the Companion Guide outlines a recommended approach of how to deal with the redevelopment of an existing open space or sports/recreation facility, using developer contributions and planning conditions.
- 14.13 Crucially paragraph 9.1 states that provided authorities have undertaken assessments of need and audits of existing facilities compliant with PPG17, locally determined provision standards will meet the tests of reasonableness set out in paragraph 7 of DoE Circular 1/97, Planning Obligations. Whilst Circular 05/2005 has superseded this circular, the reference to “reasonableness” remains.
- 14.14 The Companion Guide states that additional provision will be needed when the total amount of provision within the appropriate distance threshold of the site is or will be below the amount required in the area following the development. The decision as to whether on-site provision or a contribution to off-site provision will be more appropriate depends primarily on whether the total quantity of each form of new provision required as a result of the proposed development is above the minimum acceptable size in the adopted provision standards. If it is, then new provision should normally be on-site. If not, the developer should normally be required to contribute to off-site provision.
- 14.15 Before seeking contributions to off-site provision, authorities should be satisfied that they will be able to use them within the distance threshold of the proposed development site. If they do not use them within an agreed time frame, developers are able to submit an S106 application for their return. This underlines the importance of ensuring planning obligations are implemented or enforced in an efficient and transparent way, in order to ensure that contributions are spent on their intended purposes and that the associated development contributes to the sustainability of the areas. This will require monitoring by the local planning authority.
- 14.16 Whilst the Council will be justified in seeking contributions for the full range of open space sport and recreation facilities for which they have adopted provision standards, in practice they will have to be realistic and in many instances prioritise within the findings of the local needs and audit assessment. This will vary dependent on the location of the planning application.

Circular 05/2005: Planning Obligations

- 14.17 This Circular replaces the Department of the Environment Circular 1/97, with the changes only concerning the negotiation of planning obligations. This Circular will apply in the interim period before further reforms are brought forward.
- 14.18 Planning obligations are intended to make acceptable development that would otherwise be unacceptable in planning terms. They may be used to:
- prescribe the nature of a development (eg proportion of affordable housing)
 - compensate for loss or damage created by a development (eg loss of open space)
 - mitigate a development’s impact (eg through increased public transport provision).

14.19 Planning obligations should only be sought where they meet all of the following tests, namely that they are:

- relevant to planning
- necessary to make the proposed development acceptable in planning terms
- directly related to the proposed development
- fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind to the proposed development; and
- reasonable in all other aspects.

Planning Obligations: Practice Guidance (July 2006)

14.20 The Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) Practice Guidance aims to provide local planning authorities and developers with practical tools and methods to help the development, negotiation and implementation of planning obligations. It is accompanied by a model Section 106 agreement prepared by the Law Society. The guidance relates directly to sections of Circular 05/05 Planning Obligations. It covers the following issues:

- types of contribution, including maintenance payments and pooled contributions
- policies in Regional Spatial Strategies, Local Development Frameworks, and the roles of Supplementary Planning Documents
- improving processes of negotiation, by the use of applicant/stakeholder guides and setting local authority service standards
- developing formulae and standard charges, and the need to assess the impact and costs of proposals in order to inform such charging
- the Law Society model agreement, which is intended to form a template from which authorities can select relevant sections
- the use of third parties to validate and mediate agreements
- the role of community involvement, and responsibilities of authorities under the Freedom of Information Act 2000
- unilateral undertakings
- improvements to ways of managing and implementing planning obligations, including the use of performance bonds.

Plan Led System

14.21 Planning obligations can be in kind or in the form of financial contributions. Policies on the types of payment, including pooling and maintenance payments should be set out in Local Development Frameworks. Developers should be able to predict as accurately as possible the likely contributions they will be asked to pay.

- 14.22 Development Plan Documents should include general policies about the principles and use of planning obligations, for example, matters to be covered by planning obligations and factors to take into account when considering the scale and form of contributions.
- 14.23 More detailed policies applying the principles set out in the Development Plan Document, for example specific localities and likely quantum of contributions, ought to then be included in Supplementary Planning Documents. Depending on the scope of the SPD, the Council may wish to also consider the development of codes of practice in negotiating planning obligations, so as to make clear the level of service a developer can expect.

Maintenance

- 14.24 Where contributions are secured through planning obligations that are predominantly for the benefit of users of the associated development, it may be appropriate for the development to make provision for subsequent maintenance. Such provision (for example, children's play areas to serve a new housing development) may be required in perpetuity.
- 14.25 However, when an asset is intended for wider public use, the costs of subsequent maintenance should normally be borne by the authority. Where contributions to the initial support are necessary, maintenance sums should be time limited and should not be required in perpetuity. Examples where this might apply include, for example, outdoor sports facilities, which will serve a wider area.

Pooled contributions

- 14.26 Where the combined impact of a number of developments creates the need for infrastructure, it may be reasonable for the associated developer contributions to be pooled. In addition, where the individual development will have some impact but is not sufficient to justify the need for a discrete piece of infrastructure, local planning authorities may seek contributions to specific future provision. This can be determined through the application of the quantity standards and the agreed accessibility thresholds developed in the study (see para 14.47). However, a degree of certainty is needed that cumulatively sufficient developments will come forward in that locality within an agreed time frame or else the contributions will need to be returned to the developer. This should be closely linked to emerging Local Development Framework work on-site-specific allocations and knowledge of areas of significant development.
- 14.27 Alternatively, in cases where an item of infrastructure necessitated by the cumulative impact of a series of developments is provided by a local authority before all the developments have come forward, the later developers may still be required to contribute the relevant proportion of costs. Therefore it is recommended that the Council develops a strategy for the provision of new open space, sport and recreation as required, ensuring contributions are maximised in areas which are known to have a quantitative shortfall and where housing growth is expected.

Formulae and standard charges

14.28 Local authorities are encouraged to employ formulae and standard charges where appropriate as part of their framework for negotiating and securing planning obligations. The benefits to the system are that it:

- speeds up the negotiation process
- ensures predictability
- promotes transparency
- assists in accountability.

14.29 Standard charges and formulae applied to each development should reflect the actual impacts of the development or a proportionate contribution.

Revisions to the Developer Contributions system

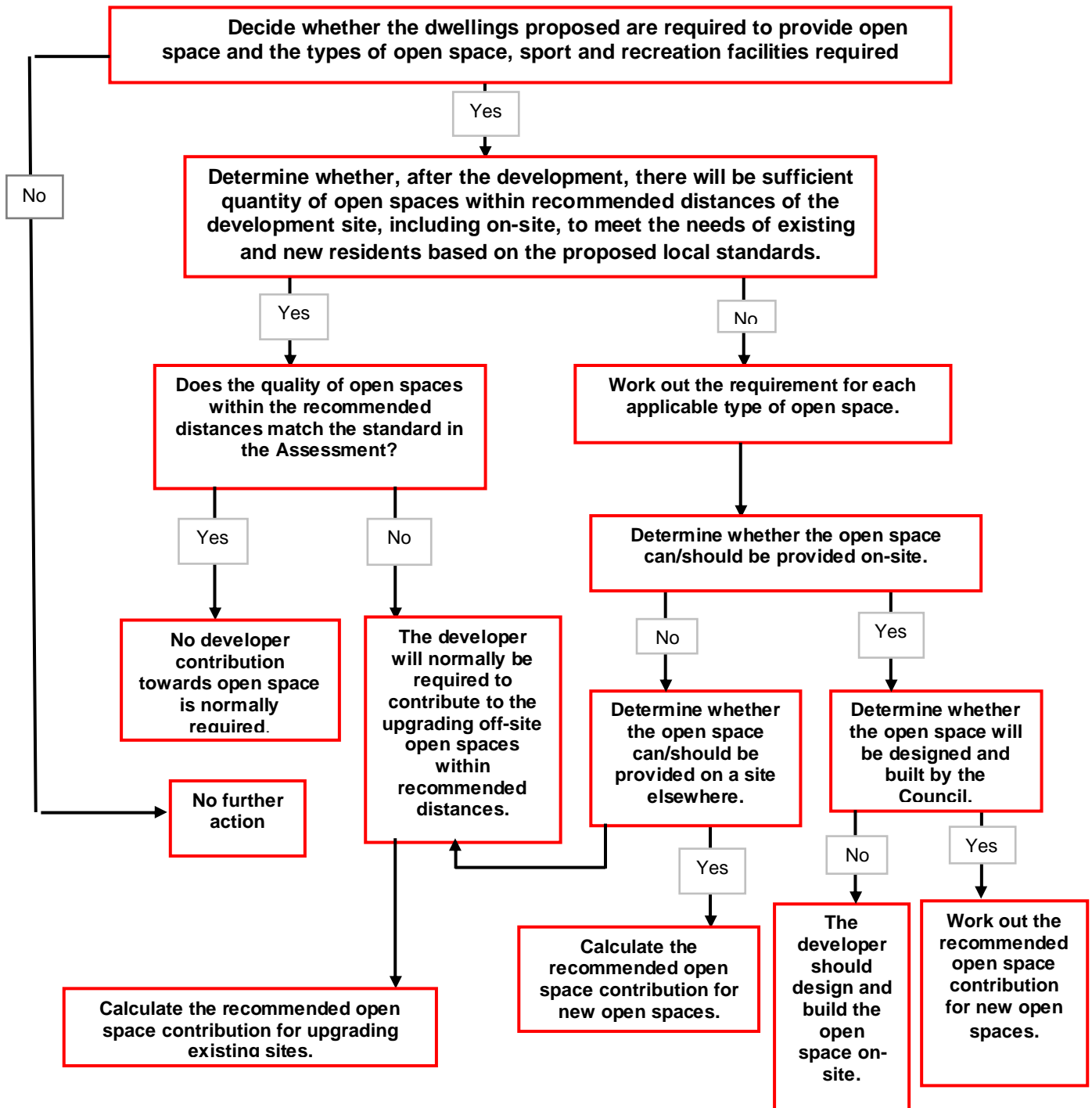
14.30 Government policy on developer contributions has been under review in recent years, seeking to speed up the process, increase transparency and reduce uncertainty. The Government has been examining the possibility of augmenting site-specific agreements with tariffs where developers can opt to pay a prescribed contribution (optional planning charge) set out in a plan as an alternative to negotiation obligations.

14.31 Planning obligations have become a prominent feature of land use policy because they enable local authorities to agree significant benefits from developers that go beyond compensating third parties for the negative externalities and have become something of an informal tax on land betterment. In a review of housing supply for the Government, economist Kate Barker recommended that as a solution, planning obligations should be scaled back and restricted to dealing with the mitigation of development impact and to agree affordable housing contributions. A tax – planning gain supplement – would be used to extract some of the windfall gain and the majority of the money returned to local authorities to finance strategic infrastructure requirements. The Government has accepted Barker’s recommendations and consulted on the proposed planning gain supplement (PGS), indicating that it might well come into force in the near future. The consultation documents reveal that open space would continue to be considered under planning obligations but leisure facilities would come under the scope of the PGS.

Policy assessment and guidance for the implementation of Section 106 contributions

14.32 The flow diagram overleaf in Figure 14.1 is based on the review of guidance and provides a step-by-step process for determining developer contributions. This is intended as a guide for the Council to develop the process for determining developer contributions and forms the structure of the rest of this section.

Figure 14.1 - Proposed Process for Determining Open Space Requirements (adapted from Swindon Borough Adopted SPG: 2004)



Determine whether the dwellings proposed are required to provide open space

14.33 The first key stage detailed within the flow diagram is to determine whether the dwellings proposed are required to provide open space and what types of open space, sport and recreation facilities will require developer contributions. Table 14.1 below provides a summary of the approach taken by other authorities

Table 14.1 Summary of approaches taken by other authorities

Number and type of dwellings	
Tynedale Council	Applied to all new dwellings. Requirements for outdoor sports are only applied to three dwelling developments and above.
Mid Devon Borough Council	All new developments to contribute to the provision of open space including single dwellings, tied accommodation, elderly persons units, conversions, flats, maisonettes and permanent mobile homes. Exceptions to this are replacement dwellings, extensions, wardened accommodation, nursing homes or similar institutional developments and temporary mobile homes. Affordable housing schemes can be unviable if required to contribute to open space provision but still incur a demand. The onus is on the developer to demonstrate that open space contributions would make the scheme unviable.
	Most types of residential development are considered to generate demand for all categories of open space. This includes market housing, new build dwellings, affordable housing, permanent permissions for mobile homes. It excludes one for one replacement dwellings, extensions and annexes. Only specific types of open space are required for elderly accommodation (active/less active/least active) and a case by case basis is applied to specialist accommodations eg hostels and conversions or sub-division of dwellings.
	Applied to 10 dwellings or more. Most types of residential development will generate additional demand on open space. The SPG includes a table to assess whether open space is required for each type of dwelling. Open market housing/flats and affordable housing are required to contribute to all types of open space. Housing for active elderly excludes a requirement for playing fields, local play areas and neighbourhood play areas. Excludes extensions, replacement dwellings, nursing homes and substitute house types.
Leicester City Council	Applies to all new residential development including flats, maisonettes, student accommodation.
Cambridge City Council	Open space required for developments of 10 or more dwellings and open space requirement is applied to all new build self-contained residential units and conversions or change of use.
Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council	Requires provision of some form of open space for all residential dwellings. Non-residential development may have an impact on existing open space and a financial contribution may be sought for facilities such as footpath lighting.

SECTION 14 – PLANNING OVERVIEW

- 14.34 In general the approach taken to affordable housing is to include a statement within the guidance stating that affordable housing schemes will require the same level of provision as open market housing but where it can be demonstrated that this would lead to the scheme being unviable, the level of provision required can be reduced.
- 14.35 The existing approach taken by the Council is that residential play space and equipment will usually be required in new developments. However due to the lack of play areas in the District it would appear that the policy is not always applied.
- 14.36 Based on the review of existing guidance, it is recommended that the following approach be taken:
- to base the nature and scale of obligations sought from development on the size of development and the impact on open space, sport and recreation provision ensuring that all developments (1 dwelling +) could make a proportionate contribution if an area has a quantity deficiency within the relevant accessibility catchment. This may be particularly important in rural areas where the size of developments will be relatively small to mitigate against the cumulative impact. Many smaller villages have very limited open space facilities but have a steady increase of small site housing completions which should contribute to open space provision rather than worsen deficiencies
 - the Council requires developers to provide and/or contribute towards all typologies of open space, sport and recreation facilities set out in the PPG17 audit which have their own local standards. This will require new development plan policies
 - devising a matrix approach to clearly state the types of housing mix that will be required to contribute to open space. This can be broken down to indicate the types of open space different housing types will be required to contribute to. This builds in the flexibility that is currently left to negotiation, but ensures a clear implementation of the policy. An example from the Sport England/Milton Keynes Council/English Partnerships, Joint Pilot Project, Draft SPG on Open Space, Sport and Recreation, March 2004 is shown overleaf in Table 14.2
 - including a statement to clearly set out the approach to affordable housing.

Table 14.2 Example implementation

Category	Open Market Housing/ Flats	Affordable Housing	Housing for the Active Elderly	Industrial development of a strategic scale
Playing fields	✓	✓	X	X
Local Play Areas	✓	✓	X	X
Neighbourhood Play Areas	✓	✓	X	X
Community centres/Meeting halls	✓	✓	✓	X
Local parks	✓	✓	✓	✓
District parks	✓	✓	✓	X
Swimming pools	✓	✓	✓	X
Sports halls	✓	✓	✓	X
Allotments	✓	✓	✓	X
Amenity greenspace	✓	✓	✓	✓

14.37 The fact that industrial development of a strategic scale is included is in line with paragraph 20 of PPG17, which states that in identifying where to locate new areas of open space, sport and recreational facilities, local authorities should “look to provide areas of open space in commercial and industrial areas”. As such, this inclusion is supported although it may be difficult to administer the times when open space provision is appropriate.

PLAN 1	Ensure developer contributions can be required from all development where necessary in local policies (ie one dwelling and above).
PLAN 2	Devise a matrix approach to clearly state the types of housing that will be required to contribute to open space.
PLAN 3	Include a statement to clearly set out the approach to affordable housing.
PLAN 4	Apply the policy to commercial development.
PLAN 5	Require developer contributions for all types of open space, sport and recreation facilities covered in the PPG17 audit (with local standards).

Determine whether, after the development, there will be sufficient quantity of open spaces within recommended distances of the development site, including on-site, to meet the needs of existing and new residents based on the proposed local standards. Does the quality of open spaces within the recommended distances match the standard in the assessment?

14.38 The next main step determines whether there is an existing open space need that, if there is no quantitative deficiency identified, leads to the next step of identifying a qualitative deficiency. Table 14.3 provides a summary of the approach taken by other authorities.

Table 14.3 Summary of approaches

Open space need?	
Tynedale Council	An assessment of open space, sport and recreation has been completed and identifies where there are deficiencies in existing provision. The authority area is divided into 21 sub areas and the strategy concludes that there are deficiencies in each of these sub areas. The implication is that there would be always be a requirement for open space contribution.
Leicester City Council	Whether an open space contribution should be sought depends on the level of existing provision, determined by the existing amount of open space, quality, scale and nature of housing development.
Stockport Metropolitan Borough Council	Whether an open space contribution should be sought depends on whether existing provision exceeds the minimum requirement and can meet increased demand.
Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council	Whether an open space contribution should be sought depends on whether an over-supply of public open space is in easy walking distance (400m) of a proposed development.
Fareham BC	Normally only seek to secure provision of open space where it can be demonstrated that the proposed development will exacerbate or create a deficit in provision based on the Open Space Survey and catchments of: children’s equipped and informal play space is on a ward basis and outdoor sports facilities and recreation facilities is based on catchments of the 4 main built up areas. The only exception is sites accommodating over 200 dwellings where the site will be expected to include play spaces regardless of ward totals.

- 14.39 Despite the majority of authorities taking the approach of identifying whether there is an open space need in the area, it is considered that this moves away from the concept of ensuring the requirement on developers is fair and consistent. By applying the quantity standard based on the increased level of demand this ensures the developer is paying directly for the associated impact of the development rather than it being dependent on what open space happens to be around the development. In addition, by applying the open space study it is likely that if there is no quantitative or accessibility deficiency there is likely to be a qualitative deficiency that needs to be addressed.
- 14.40 To identify the level of quantitative, qualitative and accessibility deficiency within the area of the development, the PPG17 study should be applied for each of the types of open space. In simple terms, this is as follows (a worked example is shown later in this section):
- estimate the number of residents living in the proposed development (being explicit about assumed occupation rates)
 - calculate the existing amount of open space within the agreed accessibility threshold of the new development. For example, there may be an existing quantitative undersupply of parks and gardens, provision for young people and children and allotments in the area of the development site
 - estimate the existing population within the relevant accessibility threshold and combine this with the estimated population of the new development
 - compare the existing amount of open space and the total population with the quantity standards developed for that typology in the PPG17 study to decide if after the development there will be sufficient quantity within recommended distances of the development site to meet local needs.
 - if, when assessed against the relevant PPG17 quantity standards, there is a sufficient amount of that type of open space in the local areas to meet the needs of the total population, the Council may expect developer contributions to enhance the quality of open spaces within that accessibility threshold.
 - where it has been decided that a contribution is required to improve provision locally, reference should be made to the quality standards for each typology and assessment against these standards. Contributions should only be considered necessary where the quality of local provision is considered below the quality vision as outlined in the PPG17 assessment.

PLAN 6

Apply the PPG17 assessment's local standards to decide whether the development creates a need for new open space or a need to improve the quality of existing open space in the local area

Determine whether the open space can/should be provided on-site.

- 14.41 In instances where a quantitative deficiency has been identified, it is necessary to determine whether the open space should be provided on-site. A new area of open space should be required where the existing amount of open space is insufficient to cater for the needs of the total population. The requirement should only be to such an extent as to cover the needs of the people who will be living in the new housing development.

SECTION 14 – PLANNING OVERVIEW

- 14.42 If a housing development generates a need for new open space then wherever possible this should be provided on-site. However, in many circumstances it will not be possible to achieve this. It is recommended that minimum size standards for each typology are developed to ensure that provision is useable and can be viably maintained.

Table 14.4 Off-site development examples

When should development be provided off-site?	
Tynedale Council	Includes a matrix detailing the on and off-site provision thresholds: at less than three dwellings – financial contribution for children’s play space and no requirement for outdoor sports; three to nine dwellings – financial contribution for children’s play and outdoor sports; 10 or more dwellings, on-site provision for children’s play and financial contribution for outdoor sport
Fareham Borough Council	Presumption in favour of on-site. Includes a number of factors to consider eg size of development site and whether site is located near to existing good open space. Includes a matrix of when on/off-site is considered appropriate according to the number of dwellings and open space type.
Milton Keynes Council	On-site provision (in existing Milton Keynes area) is worked out according to number of dwellings and type of open space, eg sites of 10 – 49 dwellings, on-site is normally required. Sites of 50-199 dwellings, on-site provision for LEAPs and Local Parks will normally be sought.
Mid Devon District Council	On-site provision is usually required when a development is 25 dwellings plus. There is a general preference for on-site provision.
Cambridge City Council	Any shortfall in provision, which cannot be accommodated on-site, should be met through commuted payments and be spent on identified projects
Stockport Metropolitan Borough Council	Commuted payments are acceptable for small scale developments and funds will be held in an interest earning account until enough is accumulated for improvements
Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council	Thresholds are set for different types of open space and whether provision is appropriate on or off-site. Off-site provision is generally acceptable when development is too small to reasonably accommodate formal or informal open space and high density schemes
Reading Borough Council	In most cases, it is more appropriate to seek off-site contributions, especially in small developments.

PLAN 7	Identify appropriate minimum size thresholds for on-site provision for each typology. Develop a matrix approach to determine the threshold of dwellings for on versus off-site provision as a guide only. A case by case approach will still be required.
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14.43 If it is not possible to provide the open space required on-site, then contributions should be sought towards the new provision or enhancement of that type of open space within the accessibility threshold. Where this is not possible, then contributions towards quality improvements could be considered as an alternative. Some different approaches to where off-site contributions should be spent are highlighted in Table 14.5.

Table 14.5 Off-site contributions

Where should the off-site contribution be spent?	
Fareham Borough Council	Open Space Survey provides a framework for open space requirements. SPG sets out a list of appropriate items developer contributions can be spent on.
Mid Devon District Council	Catchment areas are used to ensure provision is related to the development. Contributions generated within a catchment area will be spent within a catchment area. Catchments are based on the grouping of parishes, based on: anticipated rate of future residential development in an area and the location of existing facilities that could be extended or improved and the potential locations for the provision of new facilities. The SPG advocates the use of a pooled fund for these catchment areas.
Leicester City Council	For larger developments, the Council will be able to indicate exactly where any contributions made by developers will be spent. Smaller developments – may be appropriate to pay into an area based open space fund. Fund will be ring-fenced within the area based budget.
Stockport Metropolitan Borough Council	Funds will be used within the area easily accessible from the funding development. For children’s/casual play space this will be within 1000 metres from the funding development.
Reading Borough Council	Open Spaces Audit and Strategy points to a need for qualitative improvements to meet the needs of both existing population and those occupying new developments.

Where should the off-site contribution be spent?	
	Developments will contribute separately towards improvements on the basis of needs in relation to borough wide facilities and the needs in respect of smaller localised facilities. Capital expenditure to meet the needs of existing and future population is a key requirement in Reading and as such new developments should make contributions towards identified areas of open space that serve the whole borough. Additional contributions are also required to improve play and other facilities in the local area. This will include specific works or improvements set out in the Open Space, Sport and Recreation Strategy or other approved programmes.
Salford City Council	When identifying a suitable site, the City Council will look at the availability of sites within a reasonable walking distance of the development. Where local play facilities are deemed adequate, the City Council will seek the contribution for alternative outdoor recreation needs in the area.

Calculate the recommended open space contribution for new open spaces.

- 14.44 The level of developer contributions for off-site provision will depend on whether it includes the costs of land acquisition. Standard costs towards the enhancement of existing open space and provision of new open spaces (across all typologies) should be clearly identified and revised annually.
- 14.45 The cost of open space can be difficult to determine based on what elements of open space provision to include within the costing, for example, whether the cost of a facility should include site preparation, eg levelling, drainage, special surfaces and what ancillary facilities to include within costings, what level of equipment and land costs. The costs should be based on local costings but a guide can be found on the Sport England website: http://www.sportengland.org/kitbag_fac_costs.doc and the NPFA Cost Guide for Play and Sport.

For each typology, the size of provision or contributions should be based on:

number of people (in terms of increased demand over capacity within accessibility catchment of the development) x quantity provision per person x cost of provision per hectare

Worked example: contribution towards amenity greenspace

- a housing development for 70 dwellings has been submitted to the Council. The development consists of 30 four-bed dwellings, 30 three-bed dwellings and 10 two-bed dwellings. This will result in 230 additional residents living in the locality.
- the agreed accessibility catchment for amenity greenspace is a 10 minute walk time or 480 metres. Within this distance of the housing development there is currently 0.2 hectares of provision.

SECTION 14 – PLANNING OVERVIEW

- the estimated population within 480 metres of the housing development is 800 people. Combined with the estimated population (230) this gives a total population of 1030.
- the quantity standard for amenity greenspace is 0.3 hectares per 1000 population. Multiplied by the total population (1030) produced a requirement for 0.31 hectares of amenity green space. The existing amount of amenity green space is 0.2 hectares.
- 0.2 hectares of amenity green space within 480 metres is a lower level of provision than the required 0.31. The developer will therefore be required to provide further provision.
- the size requirement can be calculated by multiplying the quantity standard per person by the population of the new development. In this example this represents 0.0003 hectares per person multiplied by 230 people, producing a requirement for 0.07 hectares. Given the shortfall in provision is 0.11 hectares, in order to meet the needs of the people who will be living in the new housing development; the full quantity provision should be secured.
- reference should be made to the agreed minimum size standards to determine whether the requirement should be on-site or off-site. In this example the minimum acceptable size is 0.2 hectares, so a contribution towards off-site provision should be sought.

14.46 It is unreasonable to ask the developer to fund the entire shortfall in the area, and the contribution can only seek to obtain a contribution for the impact of the additional housing.

- if the open space were to be provided off-site, the estimated cost for the provision of amenity greenspace is £8,200 on the basis of a site being 0.2ha (2000m²) in size. The cost per hectare is therefore £41,000.
- the agreed local standard for provision is 0.30 ha per 1000 population, or 0.0003 ha per person
- using the formula set out above, the contribution required for a 70 dwelling development is:
 - 230 (number of people in development in terms of increased demand over capacity within accessibility catchment of the development) X 0.0003 (requirement per person) X 41,000 (cost of provision per hectare)
 - the contribution required towards amenity greenspace is £2829

14.47 The application of this formula ensures that the level of provision required from developments is worked out proportionally as to the level of increased demand the development incurs.

14.48 The study can be used as a tool to determine the level of open space and indoor facilities required in major new urban extensions as well as within smaller new housing developments. The existing level of provision is measured against the projected population which shows how much open space should be provided to meet the open space standards, however this includes existing deficiencies.

SECTION 14 – PLANNING OVERVIEW

- 14.49 The worked example above can be applied to an urban extension area to calculate the required level of open space for the overall area as part of site-specific proposals in the LDF.

PLAN 8	11.21 Use a formula for the calculation of the provision of open space requirement. Update costings regularly.
PLAN 9	11.22 Utilise the methodology above to assess the impact of major growth against agreed quantity standards to proactively plan for emerging open space, sport and recreation needs.

- 14.50 Maintenance sums are also an important element of any S106 process. A review of the approach taken by other authorities is set out below at Table 14.6.

Table 14.6 Maintenance approaches

Maintenance	
Tynedale Council	Developers are expected to make a contribution equivalent to 25 years maintenance costs, where a) they are providing on-site facilities and asking the Council to take on responsibility for management and maintenance or b) making a financial contribution to the capital costs of provision of facilities in the area.
Fareham Borough Council	Maintenance of sites is required. If transferred to the Council, this is usually done after a period of 12 months, following completion of open space. The developer is only liable for maintenance of the amount of open space equivalent to that required by the development where the Council demonstrates that the off-site provision is of direct benefit to the residents of the proposed development (based on NPFA defined sphere of influence for equipped and 1 km radius of development site for outdoor sports facilities). Maintenance rates are worked out on a number of beds/open space type basis and are updated annually.
Milton Keynes Council	Developer will be required to maintain the site for a period of 12 months after completion. Maintenance sum will then be required for a period of 20 years following establishment. The sum is based on contract prices and allows for inflation.
Reading Borough Council	The Council will normally adopt and maintain properly laid out open space, subject to a commuted sum payment. The commuted sum payment should cover 20 years of maintenance costs.

Maintenance	
	<p>Commutated maintenance sum is calculated using current contract prices and maintenance costs for maintaining open spaces (ie work schedules) and multiplied to establish a 20 year figure. This allows for inflation of contract prices and deflation for diminishing present values over time.</p>
Harrogate Borough Council	<p>Where the provision of open space is principally of benefit to the occupants of a proposed development rather than the wider public, the developer will normally be required to pay a commuted sum to cover the cost of future maintenance.</p> <p>New provision of open space should be maintained by the developer for 12 months and will be transferred to the Council after this period with the commuted sum.</p> <p>Revise figures annually for the cost of maintaining different types of open space. Total commuted payment is calculated by adding 10% contingencies to the annual costs and multiplied by the number of years.</p> <p>Maintenance is required for a period of five years.</p>
Sedgemoor District Council	<p>Arrangements will be made for the transfer of new areas of open space to the Council (or Parish Council) after a period of 12 months.</p> <p>A commuted maintenance sum will be required for 15 years after the year of adoption by the Council.</p> <p>The commuted maintenance sum shall equate to the anticipated future expenditure of 15 years annual maintenance costs taking into consideration the cost of inflation and the interest received on the diminishing average balance of the sum.</p> <p>Sum is calculated by: costs and expenses estimated for the first year's maintenance based on the Council's ground maintenance bills, minus the interest received on the annual maintenance sum, with the cost of inflation added (in accordance with the annual rate of increases in the Retail Price Index at the time of calculation).</p>
Daventry Council	<p>Maintenance sum will be for a 20 year period.</p> <p>Maintenance costs should be based on current costs of maintaining the specific type of outdoor space that has been provided with an allowance made for inflation, calculated over a number of years. Examples are provided for the cost of maintenance per sq metre for a range of facilities.</p>

14.51 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.

SECTION 14 – PLANNING OVERVIEW

14.52 Where facilities for open space 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. From the review of existing supplementary planning policy maintenance periods are normally between 5 and 25 years
- 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.

PLAN 10	Set out maintenance (commuted sums) required and update these regularly.
PLAN 11	Prepare an SPD detailing the approach towards open space developer contributions

Summary and recommendations

14.53 The open space sport and recreation study is an invaluable tool in the formulation and implementation of planning policies. This relates to both the protection and enhancement of existing open space and the framework for developing planning obligations.

14.54 The study provides the tools with which the value of an open space can be assessed on a site-by-site basis, as and when a development proposal is submitted for an existing piece of open space. Similarly, this approach can be the basis for determining what type of open space provision is appropriate to be provided within a housing development and for pre-empting growth implications as part of the LDF.

14.55 The use of a standard formula for open space provision in new housing developments (based on the cost of provision) will greatly aid the negotiation process and provide a transparent approach in line with Circular 05/2005.

14.56 There are many other factors to consider in administering planning obligations such as determining occupancy rates, costings and on-site versus off-site provision. The Council's approach should be set out clearly within a Supplementary Planning Document.

14.57 Maintenance sums are an important element of open space provision. It is not considered reasonable to expect maintenance in perpetuity, however the maintenance agreements made by those local authorities reviewed are typically of 20 years duration.

14.58 More generally, it is important to note that the provision standards are only the starting point in negotiations with developers and high quality environments will not result simply from applying them in a mechanical way. This is why it is desirable

SECTION 14 – PLANNING OVERVIEW

also to complement provision standards with design guidance that concentrate on effective place making.

SECTION 14 – PLANNING OVERVIEW

14.59 The recommendations for the planning overview section are as follows:

Summary of recommendations

PLAN1	Ensure developer contributions can be made to all dwellings where necessary in local policies (ie one dwelling and above).
PLAN2	Devise a matrix approach to clearly state the types of housing mix that will be required to contribute to open space.
PLAN3	Include a statement to clearly set out the approach to affordable housing.
PLAN4	Apply the policy to commercial development.
PLAN5	Require developer contributions for all types of open space, sport and recreation facilities covered in the PPG17 audit (with local standards).
PLAN6	Apply the PPG17 assessment's local standards to decide whether the development creates a need for new open space or a need to improve the quality of existing open space in the local area.
PLAN7	Identify appropriate minimum size thresholds for on-site provision for each typology. Develop a matrix approach to determine the threshold of dwellings for on versus off-site provision as a guide only. A case by case approach will still be required.
PLAN8	Use a formula for the calculation of the provision of open space requirement. Update costings regularly.
PLAN9	Utilise the methodology above to the assess the impact of major growth against agree quantity standards to proactively plan for emerging open space, sport and recreation needs.
PLAN10	Set out maintenance (commuted sums) required and update these regularly.
PLAN11	Prepare an SPD detailing the approach towards open space developer contributions.

