

Kingston Open Space Assessment

Volume 1: Greenspace Needs Assessment

May 2006

JOB NUMBER: 5036490.1525.001			DOCUMENT REF: Document6			
0	Residents Survey	LP	RA	RS	PMW	Aug 05
1	Draft Report	LP	RA	RS	PMW	Oct 05
2	Final Report	RA	RS	JF		
		Originated	Checked	Reviewed	Authorised	Date
Revision	Purpose Description	ATKINS				

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

Atkins was commissioned by the Royal Borough of Kingston in April 2005 to undertake an assessment of open space within the Borough. The study has provided a qualitative and quantitative audit and analysis of the supply of, and demand for, open space provision in the Borough to inform the preparation of an Open Space Strategy.

This study has been prompted by the emergence of recent reports and guidance emphasising the value of assessing recreational and open space requirements, most notably Planning Policy Guidance 17 (PPG17, 2002) which encourages local authorities to adopt a methodology which assesses the wider recreational needs of the local community and makes appropriate provision for sport and open space facilities in light of those assessments.

The study includes an assessment of the quantity, quality and value of parks and open spaces in Kingston and identifies whether provision is meeting local needs. It develops local standards and measures to address deficiencies in open space provision.

National, regional and local strategies and initiatives provide a framework to influence the development of an Open Space Study. Sport, open spaces and recreation all contribute to people's quality of life and consequently cross a number of national and local government competences including; planning, leisure and recreation, health, education and crime. The implications of the relevant strategies relating to the Borough have been considered.

2. ASSESSMENT OF LOCAL OPEN SPACE NEEDS

Differential levels of need within the Borough were considered based upon a number of objective demographic and socio-economic indicators which influence the open space needs of individual localities. Output areas which have high population and housing densities and high levels of deprivation were identified as the areas of greatest public open space need which may require a special approach to the development of standards or additional provision.

It is recommended that open space enhancement is prioritised in these areas due to the lack of access to private gardens and the overall density of development which means that there tend to be fewer amenity spaces, natural and semi-natural areas including urban trees particularly within the areas of highest density.

Perceptions of Open Space and Sports Need

A telephone survey of 1000 residents was undertaken to inform usage patterns and explore attitudes towards and perceptions of open space and sports facilities. The findings of this survey are incorporated into the report and inform the recommendations.

3. APPROACH AND METHODOLOGY

This study reviews the existing open space typology and develops a hierarchy of parks provision in line with recent guidance to provide a comprehensive basis for assessing the quantity, quality and accessibility of open spaces in Kingston. The assessment is informed by an up to date audit of open spaces within the Borough.

Revised Open Space Typology

The open space typology used within the Borough has been reviewed, in the light of advice within PPG17, to consider the importance of all types of open space. Information provided in the Council database and the site assessments of each privately managed open spaces has been used to classify each open space with reference to the typology of open space types included within the Annex to PPG17. The identification of the open space type was based upon consideration of the primary role and function of individual spaces.

The existing Greater London Authority parks hierarchy (see table E.1) is used as a basis for the consideration of the provision for and access to larger public open spaces. Within Kingston there are a total of 43 parks these include, 1 District Park, 17 local Parks, 13 Small Local Parks and 12 Linear Open Spaces.

Table E.1 – GLA Public Park Hierarchy

Open Space Categorisation	Approx Size of Open Space and Distance from Home	Characteristics
Regional Parks and Open Spaces (Linked Metropolitan Open Land and Green Belt corridors) Weekend and occasional visits by car or public transport	400 hectares 3.2-8 km	Large areas and corridors of natural heathland, downland, commons, woodland and parkland also including areas not publicly accessible but which contribute to the overall environmental amenity. Primarily providing for informal recreation with some non-intensive active recreation uses. Car parking at key locations.
Metropolitan Parks Weekend and occasional visits by car and public transport	60 ha 3.2 km or more where the park is appreciably larger	Either i) natural heathland, downland, commons, woodland etc, or ii) formal parks providing for both active and passive recreation. May contain playing fields, but at least 40 hectares for other pursuits. Adequate car parking.
District Park Weekend and occasional visits by foot, cycle, car and short bus trips	20 ha 1.2 km	Landscape setting with a variety of natural features providing for a wide range of activities, including outdoor sports facilities and playing fields, children's play for different age groups, and informal recreation pursuits. Should provide some car parking
Local Parks Pedestrian visits	2 ha 0.4 km	Providing for court games, children's play spaces or other areas of a specialist nature, including nature conservation areas.
Small Local Parks and Open Spaces Pedestrian visits especially by children, particularly valuable in high density areas	Under 2 ha Less than 0.4km	Gardens, sitting-out areas, children's play spaces or other areas of a specialist nature, including nature and conservation areas.
Linear Open Spaces Pedestrian visits	Variable Where feasible	The Thames, canals, other waterways and associated open spaces and towpaths; paths; disused railways; nature conservation areas; and other routes which provide opportunities for informal recreation. Often characterised by features or attractive areas which are not fully accessible to the public but contribute to the enjoyment of the space.

Other Types of Open Space Provision

There are a number of other forms of open space provision within the Borough in addition to public parks. These have been categorised according to ten different types of open space provision: Provision for children and teenagers; Amenity Green Space; Outdoor Sports

Facilities / Playing Fields; Allotments / Community Gardens / Urban Farms; Cemeteries and Churchyards; Natural or Semi-Natural Urban Greenspaces; Civic spaces / pedestrianised areas; Accessible countryside in urban fringe, Green Spaces within Grounds of Institution; and Other.

Standards of provision have been developed for the following categories of other open space where it is important that local needs are provided for locally on a consistent basis:

- Provision for children and teenagers;
- Natural or semi-natural greenspace;
- Allotment provision.

Within certain areas of the Borough amenity greenspace and other types of open space form an integral part of the urban fabric and contribute towards local character and distinctiveness. For this reason it is not appropriate to define consistent quantity or access standards relating to such provision. Within areas of deficiency other forms of urban greenspace provision such other open spaces can be of particular value and represent possible opportunities for meeting local deficiencies.

4. SUPPLY OF OPEN SPACE

Within Kingston a total of 318 open spaces were identified following a comprehensive survey in summer 2005 of all privately owned open spaces, greater than 0.25 ha in size (additionally 35 public parks were surveyed). Together these spaces comprise a total of some 851ha. Parks represent the largest proportion of open space in terms of area (19% of total open space area) Golf Courses (15%) are the second largest open space type area in the Borough and public playing fields represent 14% of open space area.

Parks

43 public parks were identified from the 318 open spaces. These have been classified according to the typologies indicated in the revised parks hierarchy. Overall public park provision comprises a total of 19% of all open space within the Borough.

Distribution and access to public parks within the Borough has been considered using three indicators: consideration of the distribution of parks by ward/population; consideration of indicative threshold populations for different parks within the typology; and application of park catchments to the current distribution of public parks within the Borough. Overall there is some 1.12ha of public park provision per 1,000 population, although this varies significantly between wards from 3.18ha per 1,000 population in Chessington South to none in Coombe Hill and Surbiton. However, ward level comparisons are potentially misleading and should be viewed in the context of overall levels of open space provision and the pattern of land uses within each ward.

The study identifies areas deficient in access to all public parks as classified by the parks hierarchy. Parks deficiency areas have been derived by considering pedestrian access to any form of public park. Those areas of the Borough which are deficient in public parks are defined as those which are further than 800m from any public park. This assessment takes account of those areas of the Borough which are served by public parks located beyond the Borough boundary. When considering park deficiencies on a ward by ward basis, the wards with the largest areas of public park deficiency include Coombe Hill, Coombe Vale and Surbiton. It should be recognised that the process of identifying deficiencies is a desktop application of the hierarchy catchments and does not take into account other criteria such as quality and function.

The study considers the significance of the deficiency areas and recognises that in areas with a higher proportion of terraces, flats and apartments the significance is greater as residents are less likely to have access to private gardens. Additionally, the pattern of land use influences the significance of the deficiency areas. Several of the deficiency areas include large areas of private open space, areas of industrial development which do not merit the same levels of public open space provision as residential areas.

Children's Play Areas

This study has identified provision for children's play Kingston within open spaces over 0.25 ha in size. It has also included an assessment of the role of open space for informal children's play as well as dedicated play provision. There are some significant areas within Kingston where open spaces are not provided with dedicated children's play areas.

Of a sample of 318 open spaces 28 spaces had some form of dedicated children's play provision. Only 28% of children's play areas meet all of the criteria set by the NPFA for a Local Equipped Area for Play (LEAP) or Neighbourhood Equipped Areas for Play (NEAP). Only 7 open spaces have play areas which fully fulfil the criteria associated with a LEAP and one space fully meets the NEAP criteria.

The assessment identifies the areas deficient in access to formally provided children's play provision but also identifies other publicly accessible open spaces which may have the potential to incorporate dedicated children's play facilities and help reduce the deficiencies

Allotments

At present there are some 41.70ha of actively managed allotment land in Kingston. There are currently 23 active allotment sites within the Borough containing 980 plots. 15 of the sites are managed by the council the others are leased from the Council managed and managed by an allotment association. Overall across the City some 772 plots are currently occupied, this represents an occupancy rate of 80%. However, there are 7 sites which have full occupancy levels. These are Addison Garden Allotment, Addison Allotment Extensions,

Beverley Park Allotment Gardens, Grange Road Allotment Gardens, Park Road Allotments, Wilverley Crescent Allotments and Wolsey Drive Allotments. There are 111 vacant plots. Overall there is significant scope for improvements in the quality of allotment sites.

Natural and Semi-Natural Open Space

The study identified the number and distribution of open spaces subject to either landscape or environmental designations or local nature conservation designations. The study also considered the extent to which open spaces represent accessible natural or semi-natural green space consistent with the English Nature definition.

62 open spaces were either wholly or partly designated as Sites of importance of nature conservation. Of the open spaces that were surveyed as part of this study 64 spaces have at least 5% natural green space coverage.

5. QUALITY ASSESSMENT

The range and condition of facilities within each of the open spaces was assessed using a scoring criteria method derived from the Green Flag assessment system, where 0 is considered to be very poor and 10 is considered to be excellent.

The assessment identifies that most public parks tend to score consistently high at 6-7 (fair-good) in most categories. An important aspect to a qualitative assessment is the need to integrate decision-making on park improvements with the assessment of quantity and accessibility of provision. In areas deficient in public open space and where there are limited opportunities to increase supply, either by the creation of new spaces, or by increasing access to private spaces, the only way of addressing deficiency will be to ensure that the potential of existing spaces is fully realised where appropriate and there is improved access to them where possible.

6. VALUE

The benefits and value of open spaces to local communities extends beyond their active recreational role. Both public and private open spaces perform recreational and non-recreational roles contributing to community and quality of life. An assessment of the value of open spaces has been undertaken which considers the context within which the open space lies, the level and type of use associated with the space and the wider benefits it generates for people, biodiversity and the wider environment.

The following types of value have been examined:

- The context of the open space including local open space needs, park deficiencies, site access arrangements and barriers of access to and within the open space;

- The recreational function performed by the open space;
- The structural role of open space in separating and defining communities;
- The amenity value of space;
- Historical / Heritage value of spaces;
- The ecological and environmental roles performed by spaces;
- The existing and potential educational value of spaces to the community; and
- The cultural roles spaces perform (e.g. community venues, performance spaces).
- Quality, quantity and accessibility standards have been proposed for Local Nature Reserves and Natural and Semi-Natural Greenspace.

7. RECOMMENDATIONS

Local Standards

Assessing Needs and Opportunities, the companion guide to PPG17, recommends that local authorities set local provision standards which incorporate a quantitative, qualitative and accessibility component.

A series of locally based open space standards has been recommended based upon the findings of the assessment of local open space needs and consideration of the supply, quality and value of all types of open space provision within Kingston.

The standards relating to each type of open space provision which are required to meet the needs of the Borough up to 2016 are identified below and summarised in E.2.

Public Parks

The study recommends the following quantity, quality and access standards for public park provision:

Quantitative component

At present there is public park provision within the Borough of 1.12 ha per 1,000 population. Up to 2016 it is expected that population in the Kingston will increase by 12,000.

The standard should also reflect the additional provision required to ameliorate those deficiencies in access to parks/open spaces in Kingston which are significant. The recommended standard is therefore derived principally from the measurement of existing provision, and taking account of additional provision required to ameliorate existing deficiencies in access to public park provision within the Borough.

Therefore, taking all these factors into consideration, to meet the needs of Kingston up to 2016 it is recommended that the quantity of public park provision should increase by 12ha. The additional park provision should be located within areas which currently experience deficiencies in access to park provision in order to alleviate existing deficiencies. The need for an additional 12ha of public park provision has not taken account of the available opportunities to meet the standard within each deficiency area. However, it is considered that it represents a sound basis for deriving a Borough-wide standard of provision.

The standard of provision to meet the needs of the City up to 2016 is therefore **1.11 ha of public park provision per 1,000 population**.

Accessibility Component

The following access standards are recommended for inclusion within the forthcoming Local Development Framework.

- All residents within the Borough should have access to a Metropolitan Park within 3.2km from home;
- All residents within the Borough should have access to a District Park within 1.2km from home;
- All residents within the Borough should have access to a Local Park within 800m from home;
- All residents within the Borough should have access to a Small Local Park within 400m from home;
- All residents within the City should have access to an area of public park (as defined within the study) within 800m from home.

Qualitative Component

Public parks within the Borough should be of adequate quality and provide the range of facilities associated with their respective tier of the parks hierarchy. Those public parks identified which either under perform in terms of their value to the local community or their condition should be improved consistent with the guidelines identified.

Children's Play Provision

Quantity and Accessibility Component

Kingston appears to be underserved with formal opportunities for children's play within public parks. In order to ameliorate those deficiencies in access to formal children's play provision,

it is recommended that opportunities for both formal and informal children's play should be increased.

The following standards are recommended for inclusion within the forthcoming Local Development Framework.

- Residents should have access to 0.8ha per 1000 population of children's play provision consistent with NPFA play area size standards.
- All residents within the Borough should have access to areas of formal and informal play provision for children and teenagers within 400m from home.

Qualitative component

Children's play provision within the Borough should be of adequate quality and provide the range of facilities associated with the size of the facility. The NPFA 6 acre Standard (2001) should be used to assess levels of adequacy in terms of the range and quality of provision.

Allotments

The role of allotments is in a period of transition and their value is undergoing reappraisal. More recently interest in allotments has increased due to public awareness of 'green' issues and concerns over links between food and health. Modern housing developments are also being developed with smaller garden sizes which may stimulate demand for community gardens and allotments. Demographic changes including a larger number of older, but relatively healthy individuals could also stimulate demand for allotment plots as allotment participation is highest amongst the over 50s.

The study recommends the following standards for allotment provision:

Quantitative Component

Existing allotment needs equate to 14.05 plots per 1,000 households. To meet the needs of the Borough up to 2016 it is recommended that a standard of **0.35 ha of allotment land per 1,000 population** is included within the forthcoming Local Development Framework. In order to meet this standard an area of up to 14.34 ha would need to be brought forward up to 2016. Opportunities for bringing forward new allotment sites should be investigated within wards where there are the highest levels of latent demand and open space need.

Accessibility Component

At present significant latent demand exists for allotments within certain parts of the Borough due to lack of accessibility, furthermore there are waiting lists in the Borough. Given that

allotment sites do not have to be particularly large, allotment provision could be associated with new development in the Borough. Scope may exist within underserved areas to bring forward allotment land through diversification of existing open spaces such as playing fields and on infill sites. At allotment sites where there is unlikely to be demand opportunities may exist to diversify areas of disused allotment land for other open spaces uses or possibly other land uses.

The following access standard is recommended for inclusion within the forthcoming Local Development Framework.

- All residents within the Borough should have access to an allotment garden within 800m of home.

Qualitative Component

Allotment sites should be of adequate quality and support the needs of the local community. Allotment sites which under perform in terms of their value to the local community should be improved.

Natural and Semi-Natural Green space

A desk top analysis of existing nature conservation and ecological designations was undertaken to identify sites of identified nature conservation importance. English Nature has recommended that local authorities set standards relating to natural greens pace provision known as the Accessible Natural Green space Standard (ANGSt). On the basis of this analysis, this study recommends the following natural green space standard:

Quantitative Component

To meet the needs of the City up to 2016 it is recommended that the standard of **1 ha of Natural or Semi-Natural Green space per 1,000 population** is included within the forthcoming Local Development Framework. In order to meet this standard there is no need for the quantity of natural green space to increase subject to the relevant access standards being met.

Accessibility Component

The following access standards are recommended for inclusion within the forthcoming Local Development Framework:

- All residents within the Borough should have access to a natural or semi-natural green space of at least 2ha in size within 300m of home;

- All residents within the Borough should have access to a natural or semi-natural green space of at least 20ha in size within 2km of home.

Qualitative Component

Areas of natural and semi-natural green space should be of adequate quality and support local biodiversity. Areas of natural and semi-natural green space which either under perform in terms of their value to the local community or local biodiversity should be enhanced.

Amenity Green Space and Civic Spaces

A quantitative standard for the provision of amenity green space or civic spaces is not recommended. However, it is expected that a design led approach would be used to identify the level of provision appropriate to the context (i.e. levels of overall open space needs, whether the site is located within a conservation area) and the scale and type of the individual residential, employment or mixed use development. Supplementary planning document should be prepared identifying the design criteria to be used to incorporate amenity green space appropriate to particular types of development.

**Table E.2 – Summary of Local Open Space Standards
(to meet needs up to 2016)**

Open Space Type	Quantity Standard	Area required to meet needs up to 2016	Accessibility Standard	Quality Standard
Public Parks	1.11ha per 1,000 population	177ha including 12 ha additional public parks to alleviate deficiencies)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All residents within the Borough should have access to a Metropolitan Park within 3.2km from home; All residents within the Borough should have access to a District Park within 1.2km from home; All residents within the Borough should have access to a Local Park or Small Local Park within 800m from home; All residents within the Borough should have access to a Small Local Park within 400m from home; and All residents within the Borough should have access to an area of public park within 800m from home. The definition of a public park as identified within the parks hierarchy defined within Chapter 4. 	Public parks within the Borough should meet the Green Flag 'good' quality standard. Open spaces identified within Chapter 10 for improvement should be prioritised.
Children's Play	0.8 ha per 1,000 population (could be incorporated within any category of public open space provision)	N/A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All residents within the Borough should have access to areas of formal and informal play provision for children and teenagers within 400m from home. 	Children's play provision within the Borough should be of adequate quality and provide the range of facilities associated with the size of the facility. The guidelines set out within the NPFA 6 acre Standard (2001) should be used to assess levels of adequacy in terms of the range and quality of provision.

Table E.3 (Continued) – Summary of Local Open Space Standards (to meet needs up to 2016)

Open Space Type	Quantity Standard	Area required to meet needs up to 2016	Accessibility Standard	Quality Standard
Natural Greenspace	1 ha of Statutory designated ecological land per 1,000 population.	N/A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All residents within the Borough should have access to a natural or semi-natural greenspace of at least 2ha in size within 300m of home; All residents within the Borough should have access to a natural or semi-natural greenspace of at least 20ha in size within 2km of home; All residents within the Borough should have access to a natural or semi-natural greenspace of at least 100ha in size within 5km from home. 	Areas of natural and semi-natural greenspace should be of adequate quality and support local biodiversity. Areas of natural and semi-natural greenspace which either under perform in terms of their value to the local community and local biodiversity should be enhanced consistent with the guidelines identified in Chapter 10. Those spaces identified within Chapter 10 should be prioritised for improvement.
Allotments	0.35ha of allotment land per 1,000 population.	51.96 ha (including an additional 14.34 ha of allotment land)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All residents within the Borough should have access to an allotment garden within 800m of home. 	Allotment sites should be of adequate quality and support the needs of the local community. Allotment sites which under perform in terms of their value to the local community consistent with the criteria relating to the role of sites identified in Chapter 8 should be improved. Those sites identified within Chapter 10 should be prioritised for improvement.

Enhancing the Green Network to meet the needs of Neighbourhoods

The study summarises existing provision, needs and local deficiencies and provide priorities for open space improvements on a spatial basis, based on the 4 existing neighbourhoods in the Borough (See Table E.3 below).

Table E.3 – Open Space Needs by Neighbourhood

Neighbourhood	Existing Deficiencies	Measures to Address Deficiencies	
Kingston Town	Public Parks – Access	Kingston Town does not have any areas outside of the 800m catchment area, and therefore no deficiency in access to public parks.	No measures required as currently no access deficiencies.
	Quantity	Both Norbiton and Canbury wards are below the quantitative standard of 1.11 ha of public parkland per 1,000 population. The Kingston Town neighbourhood as a whole is below the standard with only 1ha/1000.	Seek new open space provision as part of new developments in these wards.
	Quality	11 Public Parks The Kingston Town neighbourhood 3 fall short of the qualitative standard. These spaces are 22 (Latchmere Rec Ground), 17 (Athlestan Rec Ground), 111 (Kingston Rd Rec Ground).	Targeted improvements should be made to the quality of these sites.
	Children’s Play Provision – Access	Overall access to children’s play area in the neighbourhood is generally good, however areas to in south west of Grove, the east of Canbury and the north of Norbiton are deficient in terms of their access to children’s play facilities.	Within the neighbourhood potential may exist to upgrade the provision of play facilities at the following sites 17, 111, 90, 62, 8, 4106, 54 to NEAP / LEAP standards. There is limited potential to meet the deficiencies in access to children’s play at existing open spaces in the neighbourhood, therefore it will be necessary to seek children’s play facilities through new development.
	Quality	Out of 9 children’s play areas identified in this neighbourhood one meets the LEAP standard and one meets the standards for a play centre. The others have been assessed as not meeting the standard.	

Neighbourhood	Existing Deficiencies	Measures to Address Deficiencies
Kingston Town	<p>Natural / semi natural green spaces – Access</p> <p>The entire neighbourhood is within 2000m of an open space 20ha with an existing ecological designation or identified as a natural/semi natural green space. However, large parts are over 300m of an open space of at least 2ha with an existing ecological designation or identified as a natural/semi natural green space.</p>	<p>Investigate the potential to improve ecology at sites within deficiency areas. Site 93 St Marks Church, Site 22 Latchmere Recreation Ground are two sites where this may potentially be possible.</p>
	<p>Quantity</p> <p>Canbury and Tudor wards, are below the quantitative minimum standard of 1 ha of natural greenspace per 1,000 population. Canbury has no natural greenspace per 1,000 population</p>	
	<p>Allotments – Access</p> <p>The neighbourhood has three areas deficient in terms of access to allotments, a large area in the centre of the neighbourhood, and smaller areas one to the south and one to the north.</p>	
<p>Quantity</p> <p>In terms of meeting the quantity standard of 0.35ha of allotment land per 1000 population, all wards but Tudor fall below the standard, Canbury has no allotment provision.</p>		
<p>Amenity Spaces</p> <p>The Kingston Town neighbourhood has the greatest number of amenity green spaces in the Borough, this equates to 0.1ha of amenity greenspace per 1000 population</p>	<p>Assess the quality of each amenity space, implement targeted enhancements to the open spaces that have been identified as having a high value, but are poor in terms of their overall quality.</p>	

Neighbourhood	Existing Deficiencies	Measures to Address Deficiencies
Maldens & Coombe	<p data-bbox="394 339 488 432">Public Parks – Access</p> <p data-bbox="394 568 488 600">Quantity</p> <p data-bbox="394 735 488 767">Quality</p> <p data-bbox="394 951 533 1078">Children’s Play Provision – Access</p> <p data-bbox="394 1214 488 1246">Quality</p>	<p data-bbox="1294 339 1968 568">Part of the deficiency area that covers the neighbourhood contains other types of open space. The opportunity that these provide is likely to be limited as of the sites large enough to provide park facilities, some are schools, and the others are privately run sports facilities such golf courses. It may therefore be necessary to seek new park provision as part of new housing developments.</p> <p data-bbox="1294 703 1968 767">Targeted improvements should be made to the quality of these sites.</p> <p data-bbox="1294 951 1968 1142">There may be potential to meet the some deficiencies in access to children’s play at existing open spaces in the neighbourhood at site 31 (Barton Green rec Ground), and sites 188, 191, 195 all of which are amenity greenspace near housing areas. It will also be necessary to seek children’s play facilities as part of new housing developments.</p> <p data-bbox="1294 1198 1968 1358">Within the neighbourhood potential may exist to upgrade the provision of play facilities at site 300 (Blagdon Road Rec Ground) to NEAP / LEAP standards. Play areas at site 83 (Open Land on England Way) and site 84 (Fairmead Close) should be assessed to establish if it meets NEAP / LEAP</p>

Neighbourhood	Existing Deficiencies	Measures to Address Deficiencies
Maldens & Coombe	<p>Natural / semi natural green spaces – Access</p> <p>Most of the neighbourhood is within 2000m of an open space of 20ha in size with an existing ecological designation or identified as a natural/semi natural green space except a small part in the south east of the neighbourhood. Most of the Coombe Hill ward is within 300m of an open space of at least 2ha with an existing ecological designation or identified as a natural/semi natural green space. However large parts of the rest of the neighbourhood are beyond this catchment</p>	<p>Investigate the potential to improve ecology at of sites at least 2ha within deficiency areas, sites 26 (Dickerage Rec Ground), 300 (Blagdon Rd Rec Ground), and 198 (Land at South Lane, may provide opportunities for publicly accessible natural/semi natural green space.</p>
	<p>Quantity</p> <p>Beverley, Coombe Vale and St James wards, are below the quantitative minimum standard of 1 ha of natural greenspace per 1,000 population. Beverley has no natural greenspace per 1,000 population</p>	
	<p>Allotments – Access</p> <p>This neighbourhood has three areas deficient in terms of access to allotments, a large area in the north of the neighbourhood, and two smaller areas to the south and centre of the neighbourhood are further than 800m from an allotment site.</p>	<p>There is limited potential to convert existing open spaces to allotment use, will need to seek allotment provision through new development.</p>
	<p>Quantity</p> <p>In terms of meeting the standard of 0.35 ha of allotment land per 1000 population, one ward meets the standard and four wards are below the standard (Coombe Vale, Coombe Hill Old Malden and St James). Overall the neighbourhood is below the standard.</p>	
	<p>Amenity Spaces</p> <p>The neighbourhood has the highest total area of amenity green spaces in the Borough, this equates to 0.14ha of amenity greenspace per 1000 population</p>	<p>Assess the quality of each amenity space, implement targeted enhancements to open spaces that have been identified as having a high value, but are poor in overall quality.</p>

Neighbourhood		Existing Deficiencies	Measures to Address Deficiencies
Surbiton	Public Parks- Access	The Surbiton Neighbourhood deficiency areas (areas outside of the 800m catchment area of public parks) are mainly located in the west of the neighbourhood where a large portion of Surbiton Hill is deficient, and a small area of Berrylands ward is deficient.	Part of the deficiency area that covers the neighbourhood contains other types of open space. The opportunity that these provide is likely to be limited as of the sites large enough to provide park facilities, three are schools, and one is a tennis club. To address some deficiency, there may be opportunities to diversify the use of Site no.16 (The wood) to upgrade the site to a small local park. The site is largely woodland so this may not be possible. It may therefore be necessary to seek new park provision as part of new housing developments. Targeted improvements should be made to the quality of sites. There may be potential to meet the some deficiencies in access to children's play at at site 210 (Land at Cranleigh Hobill Walk). It will also be necessary to seek children's play facilities as part of new housing developments Within the neighbourhood potential may exist to upgrade the provision of play facilities at the following sites 15 (Alexandra Rec Ground) and 45 (Public Open Space West) to NEAP / LEAP standards. Site 288 (Knollmead Play Ground should be assessed to establish if it meets NEAP / LEAP standards
	Quantity	With the exception of the Alexandra ward (2.99ha/1000), all other wards within the neighbourhood are below the quantitative standard of 1.11 ha of public parkland per 1,000 population, including Surbiton Hill with no public parkland. The Surbiton Neighbourhood as a whole is below the standard with only 1.03ha/1000.	
	Quality	Of the 6 Public Parks in the Surbiton Neighbourhood has 3 parks which fall short of the qualitative standard. These spaces are sites 42 (Raeburn Open Space), 102 (King Georges Field), 45 (Public Open Space West)	
	Children's Play Provision – Access	Access to children's play areas varies across the neighbourhood, with deficiencies throughout within all wards.	
	Quality	Out of four children's play areas identified in the neighbourhood one met the LEAP standard. Two have been assessed as not meeting the standards, the remaining play area (site 288) has not been assessed as part of this study.	

Neighbourhood	Existing Deficiencies	Measures to Address Deficiencies
Surbiton	<p>Natural/semi-natural greenspace - Access</p> <p>The entire neighbourhood is within 2000m of an open space of 20ha with an existing ecological designation or identified as a natural/semi natural green space. However large parts of the neighbourhood are over 300m from an open space of at least 2ha with an existing ecological designation or identified as a natural/semi natural green space.</p>	<p>Investigate the potential to improve ecology at sites of at least 2ha within deficiency areas, there may be opportunities at site 15 (Alexandra Rec Ground) and 24 (Tolworth Main Allotments for publicly accessible natural/semi natural green space.</p>
	<p>Quantity</p> <p>All wards, except Alexandra are below the quantitative minimum standard of 1 ha of natural greenspace per 1,000 population.</p>	
	<p>Allotments - Access</p> <p>There is one area in the west of the neighbourhood, which is further than 800m from an allotment site.</p>	<p>There is limited potential to convert existing open spaces to allotment use, will need to seek allotment provision through new development.</p>
	<p>Quantity</p> <p>In terms of meeting the standard of 0.35ha of allotment land per 1000 population, all but Alexandra fall below the standard, including Berrylands with no allotment provision. However overall the neighbourhood is below the standard.</p>	
<p>Amenity Spaces</p> <p>The neighbourhood has the lowest number of amenity green spaces in the Borough (0.09ha/1000).</p>	<p>Assess the quality of each amenity green space, implement targeted enhancements to the open spaces that have been identified as having a high value, but are poor in terms of their overall quality.</p>	

Neighbourhood	Existing Deficiencies	Measures to Address Deficiencies
South of Borough	<p data-bbox="398 355 479 443">Public Parks- Access</p> <p data-bbox="551 355 1216 512">The South of the Borough Neighbourhood has large deficiency area (areas outside of the 800m catchment area of public parks) in the South in Chessington South ward. There are small deficiency areas in Tolworth & Hook Rise Ward, Chessington North & Hook.</p> <p data-bbox="398 584 479 611">Quantity</p> <p data-bbox="551 568 1216 759">Two wards within the neighbourhood Chessington South and Tolworth & Hook Rise meet the quantitative standard of 1.11 ha of public parkland per 1,000 population, the remaining ward Chessington North & Hook is below the quantitative standard. The South of Borough as a whole meets the quantitative standard.</p> <p data-bbox="398 831 479 858">Quality</p> <p data-bbox="551 815 1216 975">Of the 7 Public Parks in the South of Borough neighbourhood has 3 park spaces which fall short of the qualitative standard. These spaces are sites 103 (Church Fields Rec Ground), 99 land at coppard Hill, 268 (Mansfield Open Space & Playground).</p>	<p data-bbox="1247 355 1982 616">Part of the deficiency area that covers the neighbourhood contains other types of open space. To address this deficiency, there may be opportunities to diversify the use of existing spaces to accommodate functions associated with public parks. Site 272 (Queen Mary Recreation Ground) is currently a playing field which could be enhanced to incorporate some of the functions more commonly associated with public parks by improving access and embedding a range of informal recreation opportunities.</p> <p data-bbox="1247 831 1982 858">Targeted improvements should be made to the quality of sites.</p>

Neighbourhood	Existing Deficiencies	Measures to Address Deficiencies
South of Borough	<p>Children’s Play Provision – Access</p> <p>Access to children’s play area varies across the neighbourhood. The centre of the Borough is particularly well served while significant areas in the South (South of Borough Ward) and the North (Tolworth & Hook Rise) are deficient in terms of their access.</p> <p>Quality</p> <p>Out of 8 children’s play areas identified in the neighbourhood two meet the LEAP standard. Three do not meet the standards. Play areas at sites 286, 270 and 269 have not been assessed as part of this study.</p>	<p>Within the neighbourhood potential may exist to upgrade the provision of play facilities at the following sites 103 (Church Fields Rec Ground) 99 (Land t Coppard Hill) and 268 (Mansfield open Space) to NEAP / LEAP standards. Play areas at site 286 (Woodview playground) and site 270 (Rear of Fennel Court) and 269 (King Edwards Recreation ground) should be assessed to establish if they meet NEAP / LEAP standards.</p> <p>There is limited potential to meet the deficiencies in access to children’s play at existing open spaces in the south of the neighbourhood. However this part of the neighbourhood does not have a large population, therefore opportunities should be sought in this area as part of new housing developments only where there is particular need.</p>
	<p>Natural / semi natural green spaces.</p> <p>A large area in Chessington South and a small part of Chessington North & Hook Wards area beyond 2000m of an open space 20ha with an existing ecological designation or identified as a natural/semi natural green. However most of Chessington South is within 300m of an open space of at least 2ha with an existing ecological designation or identified as a natural/semi natural green space, whilst large parts of the North of the neighbourhood are deficient in access to open spaces.</p> <p>Quantity</p> <p>Out of three wards in the neighbourhood, Chessington North & Hook is the only ward below the quantitative minimum standard of 1 ha of natural greenspace per 1,000 population.</p>	<p>Investigate the potential to improve ecology at sites of at least 2ha within deficiency areas in the north of the neighbourhood, there may be opportunities at site 103 (Church Fields Rec Ground), 99 ((Land at Coppard Hill North) for publicly accessible natural/semi natural green space.</p>

Neighbourhood	Existing Deficiencies	Measures to Address Deficiencies
South of Borough	<p data-bbox="398 424 1196 584">Allotments – Access The South of Borough Neighbourhood is largely deficient in terms of access to allotments. Areas further than 800m from an allotment site stretch from the north of the neighbourhood into the south of the neighbourhood, the south of this neighbourhood has the largest deficiency area.</p> <p data-bbox="398 639 1196 831">Quality In terms of meeting the standard of 0.35 ha of allotment land per 1000 population, Chessington North & Hook ward meets the standard, and Tolworth and Hook Rise, and Chessington South fall below the Standard. Overall the neighbourhood has the lowest provision in the whole Borough and is well below the standard.</p> <p data-bbox="398 887 1196 1078">Amenity space The neighbourhood has few amenity green spaces and the lowest total area of amenity greenspace in the Borough. However, the neighbourhood is sparsely populated and generally low density housing with gardens. South of Borough Neighbourhood has 0.38ha of amenity greenspace per 1000 population.</p>	<p data-bbox="1247 424 1921 552">In addition to bringing forward allotment space through new development, Investigate the potential to accommodate a multi-purpose allotment /outdoor class room within one of the school grounds (site 159 or site 164) located in the area of deficiency.</p> <p data-bbox="1247 887 1921 1015">Assess the quality of each amenity green space, implement targeted enhancements to the open spaces that have been identified as having a high value, but are poor in terms of their overall quality.</p>

Policy Recommendations

The Study provides comprehensive information on each open space surveyed to allow an informed assessment of the impact of development proposals on the value of individual open spaces. Planning decisions should have regard to the analysis undertaken on current levels of provision, the identified deficiencies and the quality and value of the open spaces within or surrounding a development site.

It is recommended that proposals for new housing development should be accompanied by proposals to improve open space provision. The nature of such improvements should reflect the additional open space needs generated as a result of the proposed development.

If the proposed development is located within an identified area of deficiency for public park, children's play, playing pitch, natural greenspace or allotment provision, it should be necessary for additional land to be brought into the relevant open space use. The developer could be asked to make a contribution towards the provision of the open space. It may be appropriate for such provision to be incorporated within the curtilage of the development. Alternatively a contribution to off-site provision may be appropriate.

If the proposed development is not located within an area which is deficient in either quantity or access to open space provision, it will be recommended that consideration should then be given to any deficiency in open space quality or value. The developer could be required to make a contribution towards the enhancement of the quality of open space provision including the range of facilities and their condition.

9. NEXT STAGE

The open space standards proposed within the study should be used to formulate planning policies within the forthcoming Local Development Framework.

The results of this study and the open space consultation should inform the preparation of an Open Space Strategy. These strategies will include action plans to identify timescales, relevant stakeholders and potential funding sources.

1. INTRODUCTION

BACKGROUND

- 1.1 Atkins was commissioned by the Royal Borough of Kingston in April 2005 to undertake an assessment of Open Space needs within the Borough. The purpose of the study has been to produce a qualitative and quantitative audit and analysis of the supply, demand and accessibility of open space provision in the Borough and to provide recommendations which will inform the preparation of the Council's Open Space Strategy.
- 1.2 This study has been prompted by the emergence of recent reports and guidance emphasising the value of assessing recreational and open space requirements. According to Planning Policy Guidance Note 17 (PPG17, 2002) on Sport, Open Space and Recreation, local authorities should adopt a methodology which assesses the wider recreational needs of the local community and make appropriate provision in the light of those assessments. The study is set in this national and regional framework and aims to support and inform the following local initiatives:
- The policies of the forthcoming Local Development Framework (LDF);
 - The forthcoming open space strategy;
 - The current improvement review of parks; and
 - Provide a methodology for securing planning obligations for new open space provisions or improvements to existing spaces.
- 1.3 The lack of coordinated and accessible information on the type and quality of facilities is preventing an informed assessment of these formal and informal recreation needs and opportunities.
- 1.4 The process was also informed by undertaking telephone interviews with 1000 residents which provided an insight into local perceptions and use of open spaces within the Borough.

SCOPE OF THE STUDY

- 1.5 The aim of the Kingston Open Space Study is to assess and analyse the open spaces outside of the Council's ownership and combine this information with existing information relating to Council owned spaces, the varied functions of open spaces and the needs of local people.
- 1.6 The results of this analysis will:
- Inform the development of the Local Development Framework (LDF);
 - Provide the Council with adequate planning guidance and open space standards;
 - Assist the Council in identifying needs for new open spaces and outdoor sports facilities;
 - Inform the future management of open spaces and sports facilities including the identification of opportunities to enhance and reconfigure open space provision;
 - Enable the Council to identify priorities for future investment and provide a rationale to secure external funding for the improvement and additional provision of facilities particularly via developer contributions.
- 1.7 This Report includes an assessment of the quantity, quality and value of parks and open spaces in Kingston and identifies whether provision is meeting local needs. It develops local standards and measures to address deficiencies in open space provision and to meet the future needs of the Borough. The findings from the Residents' Survey are fed into this report and inform the assessment of informal recreation needs.
- 1.8 A full list of open spaces in Kingston is illustrated in Figures 1.1. Sites are illustrated by ownership in Figure 1.2 and in relation to wards in Figure 1.3.

Volume 1: Open Space Assessment

- 1.9 This element of the Open Space study has been undertaken in four phases:
- **Phase 1: The National, Regional and Local Framework**
A desk top study looking at the national, regional and local initiatives and an analysis of the local context.
 - **Phase 2: Assessment Of Supply**
Looking at the quantity and quality of the open spaces in the Borough and identifying opportunities for improvement and enhancement.

- **Phase 3: Assessment Of Demand**
Identifying strategic, borough-wide concerns and assessing the demand for open space.
- **Phase 4: Recommendations to inform Strategy**
Analysis of strategic demand and supply resulting in recommendations for the protection and enhancement of existing spaces to inform the Open Space Strategy and guide policy development.

Volume 2: Residents Survey Report

- 1.10 This sets out the survey methodology and the findings from the residents survey.

STRUCTURE OF THIS REPORT

- 1.11 This report follows the structure of the approach starting with a review of the current national, regional and local strategies, guidance and initiatives in Chapter 2, an assessment of local open spaces needs and priorities in Chapter 3. Chapter 4 outlines the approach to planning open space provision and Chapters 5 and 6 provide an assessment of the quantity and quality of the supply of open space in the Borough. Chapter 7 considers the different roles that open spaces play and Chapter 8 provides a demand assessment for allotments. Chapters 9 and 10 build on the results of the study to identify open space standards and the development of a Green Network. The report concludes with a summary of conclusions and recommendations in Chapter 11.

2. NATIONAL, REGIONAL AND LOCAL FRAMEWORK

INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 National, regional and local strategies and initiatives provide a framework to influence the development of an Open Space Strategy. Sport, open spaces and recreation all contribute to people's quality of life and consequently cross a number of national and local government competences including; planning, leisure and recreation, health, education and crime. Table 2.1 illustrates the relationship of the Strategy process to other guidance, strategies and initiatives.

NATIONAL POLICY

Urban White Paper

- 2.2 In November 2000 the Government published its Urban White Paper "Our towns and cities: the future - Delivering an urban renaissance". The White Paper recognises that well managed public open spaces improve the attractiveness of urban areas and help to promote a healthier lifestyle. It also highlights the need for improvements in their management and maintenance.
- 2.3 The White Paper identifies the need for more imaginative thinking about open space planning and design and proposes three key areas of action:
- Development of a shared vision for the future of our parks, play areas and open spaces;
 - Improved information on the quality and quantity of parks and open spaces and the way in which they are used and maintained;
 - Improved planning and design of new parks, play areas and public spaces and the management and maintenance of existing ones.
- 2.4 This study will provide the up to date information and analysis on open spaces in Kingston to inform the shared vision and improved management and protection measures.

- 2.5 The Urban Parks Forum and an Urban Green Space Task Force was established and given a remit to advise the Government on its proposals for improving the quality of urban parks, play areas and green spaces. To address the problem of the poor state of open space and recreation facilities the Urban White Paper promised new planning guidance on open space, sport and recreation (PPG17). It specifically referred to 'parks, play areas and public spaces', recognising that they were "vital to enhancing the quality of urban environments and the quality of our lives".

PPG17 – Sport, Open Space and Recreation

- 2.6 According to Planning Policy Guidance Note 17 on Sport, Open Space and Recreation published in July 2002. Open spaces, sport and recreation underpin people's quality of life and are fundamental in delivering broader Government objectives, these include:

- **Supporting an urban renaissance** – local networks of high quality and well managed and maintained open spaces, sports and recreational facilities help create urban environments that are attractive, green and safe. Green spaces within urban areas perform vital functions as areas for nature conservation and biodiversity and by acting as 'green lungs' can assist in meeting objectives to improve air quality;
- **Supporting rural renewal** - the countryside can provide opportunities for recreation and visitors can play an important role in the regeneration of the economies of rural areas. Open spaces within rural settlements and accessibility to local sports and recreational facilities contribute to the quality of life and well being of people who live in rural areas;
- **Promotion of social inclusion and community cohesion** - well planned and maintained open spaces and good quality sports and recreation facilities can play a major part in improving people's sense of well being in the place they live. As a focal point for community activities, they bring together members of deprived communities and provide opportunities for people for social interaction;
- **Health and well being** - open spaces, sports and recreational facilities have a vital role to play in promoting healthy living and preventing illness, and in the social development of children of all ages through play, sporting activities and interaction with others; and
- **Promoting more sustainable development** – by ensuring that open space, sports and recreational facilities (particularly within urban areas) are easily accessible by walking and cycling and that more heavily used or intensive sports and recreational facilities are planned for locations well served by public transport.
- Source: PPG 17, 2002

- 2.7 In establishing the value of existing recreational facilities to the community and the need for new facilities, PPG17 recommends that Authorities should undertake robust assessments of the existing and future needs of their communities for open space, sports and recreational facilities. Guidelines describing how such assessments

should be completed are set out in 'Assessing Needs and Opportunities: A Companion Guide to PPG17' (ODPM, 2002). This study addresses almost all of the issues pertaining to playing pitches and allotments which are identified in the guide.

2.8 The guidelines recommend that audits of local open space needs should:

- Cover the differing and distinctive needs of the population for open space and built sports and recreational facilities including those working in and visiting areas;
- Include audits of existing open space, sports and recreational facilities including usage, accessibility, costs and opportunities for new open space and facilities. Audits should establish the quantity and quality of spaces; and
- Identify specific needs and quantitative or qualitative deficits or surpluses.

2.9 PPG17 advises Local Authorities to use the information gained from their assessment of needs and opportunities to set locally derived standards for the provision of open space, sports and recreational facilities in their areas. Such standards form the basis for redressing quantitative and qualitative deficiencies through the planning process. The Companion Guide to PPG17 provides guidance as to how Local Authorities should identify and apply provision standards based upon assessments of local need.

2.10 Research undertaken by Atkins on behalf of the London Planning Advisory Committee (LPAC, 2000) identified that whilst standards may provide a useful basis for comparison, it is generally considered that on their own, standards are inadequate in addressing a wide range of mainly qualitative factors that include issues such as sustainability and biodiversity, accessibility and socio-economic trends in planning and also the changing use and function of open space.

2.11 The assessment of demand is not a precise science and many of the established standards are essentially intuitive rather than based on up to date research into how people use open space.

Approaches to Planning Open Space Provision

2.12 PPG17 and the London Plan advises local authorities to draw up their own open space standards including standards for outdoor pitch sports for inclusion within their UDP. Such standards should be based upon a robust and defensible assessment of local needs.

- 2.13 The Transport, Local Government and the Regions select committee in its report “Public Spaces: The Role of PPG17 in the Urban Renaissance” (February 2002) and PPG 17 both emphasise the need to recognise the multiple roles which open spaces perform and their relevance to the Government’s wider objectives for the urban renaissance and the quality of life.

Urban Green Space Task Force

- 2.14 The Urban Green Space Task Force was set up in January 2001 to advise the Government on its proposals for improving the quality of urban parks, play areas and green spaces and take forward the open space proposals outlined in the Urban White Paper “Our Towns and Cities: the future”. Its objective is to create green spaces which are safe, accessible and sustainable and which cater for everyone. The use of innovative partnership working is encouraged. The Task Force recognises the importance of working with local communities to ensure high quality design and maintenance of these areas.
- 2.15 Its Final Report “Green Spaces, Better Places” was published in May 2002 together with its sister document “Improving Urban Parks, Play Areas and Green Spaces”. Whilst the report emphasises a comprehensive and integrated approach towards open space several of the recommendations relating to management and resources are applicable to allotments and open spaces with an element of outdoor sports provision.
- 2.16 The report recommends long term strategies for managing supply and demand of open space in order to meet continuing social and demographic change. Furthermore, open space and recreation should occupy a more prominent role within wider corporate strategies to support community needs such as safety, health and services for children and young people, elderly people and those who are disadvantaged.
- 2.17 The work of the Task Force also includes consideration of more integrated approaches to planning, designing, managing and maintaining green spaces, linking these to community strategies, local development plans, cultural strategies and area plans. It has researched the potential for improved partnerships and the creation of good practice networks to improve current practice.

Strategy for Sustainable Development

- 2.18 The Second annual report on the Strategy for sustainable development “A Better Quality of Life” was published in March 2002. Sustainable development is now at the heart of local authority decision-making and long-term planning. The Local Government Act 2000 has given Councils the duty of preparing Community

Strategies for promoting and improving the economic, social and environmental well-being of their areas and contributing to the achievement of sustainable development in the UK.

2.19 These strategies will involve all key local partners through local strategic partnerships which will be the main vehicle for delivering Neighbourhood Renewal and Community strategies building on the success of Local Agenda 21.

2.20 The Sustainable Development Strategy sets out a number of factors which are needed to build sustainable communities in our cities, towns and rural areas including:

- Meeting people's social needs: promoting better health, housing and access to services and recreation;
- Improving local surroundings: revitalising town centres and tackling degraded urban environments;
- Reducing crime and the fear of crime;
- Addressing problems of poverty and social exclusion in the most deprived communities;
- Making it easier for people to get involved in their communities; and
- Co-ordinating policies to bring these objectives together.

Sports Policy and Strategy

2.21 Sport England is the agency responsible for advising the Government on sports matters. It also acts as a statutory consultee on certain developments relating to sports pitches. In addition it is responsible for distributing several sources of funding and fostering:

- Promotion of social justice in sport;
- Increased sports participation;
- Development of community sports programmes and facilities; and
- Appropriate planning for sport and recreation.

2.22 Further reference to Sport England Guidance is made throughout this document where appropriate. The most relevant documents relating to playing pitch management and provision and the role of playing pitches in regeneration initiatives are:

- Towards a Level Playing Field (2003);
- Planning Across Boundaries: Guidance on Local Strategies for the Development of Sport (2001);
- Playing Fields for Sport Revisited (2000);
- Sport and Regeneration (2001); and
- Planning Policies for Sport (1999).

2.23 The Cabinet Office has also been taking an increasing interest in sport through the Social Exclusion Unit and Performance and Innovation Unit.

2.24 The Government's Policy Action Team report (PAT 10) on the contribution of the arts and sport to regeneration found that participation and the provision of services to support participation in sport can help address neighbourhood renewal by improving communities performance on the four key indicators of more jobs, less crime, better health and improved educational attainment. It also recognised that sport can play a significant role in strengthening local community cohesion. The report placed importance on connecting the sports development agenda with the rest of the social inclusion and community development agenda.

2.25 The Government's Performance and Innovation Unit is currently undertaking a project on Government policy in relation to sport. It notes that sports participation can bring beneficial impacts to the participant including:

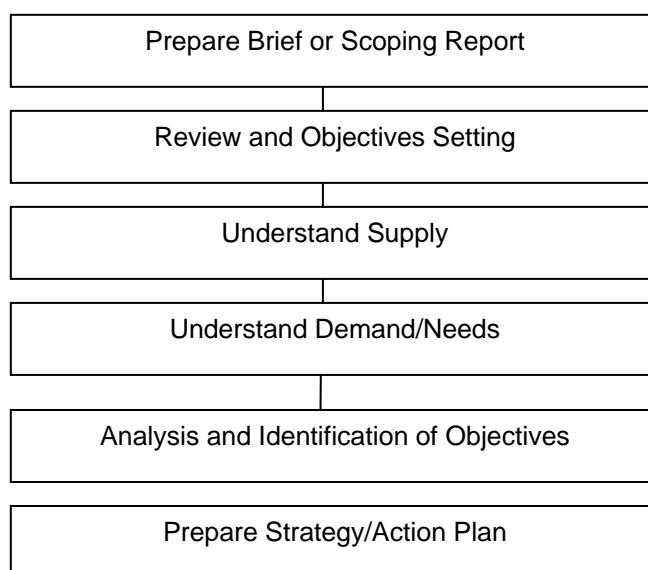
Health – regular physical activity can significantly reduce the incidence of heart disease, stroke and some cancers and improve function and coordination, reducing the risk of accident and injury – especially amongst older people. Sports based physical activity is also beneficial to mental health, with the benefits strongest for participation in team sports;

Education – OFSTED reports in May 2000 found that schools that focused on sport and physical education raised academic standards more rapidly than their counterparts. They have also found that sport can reduce social exclusion, improve attendance records, and become hubs of community sports development; and

Social Exclusion – Evidence exists to suggest that participating in sporting activities increases people's sense of integration into their local community. This community integration is then in turn likely to have beneficial outcomes such as reducing crime and increasing educational attainment.

REGIONAL POLICY

- 2.26 The Greater London Authority (GLA) has now completed the Spatial Development Strategy which is the strategic planning framework for open space at regional level.
- 2.27 The London Plan, published in Feb 2004, seeks the protection of Green Belt and Metropolitan Open Land, and emphasises the contribution that London's open spaces make to the quality of the environment and quality of urban life. In particular it:
- Recognises the importance and value of London's open space network in its widest sense and encourages Borough's to develop functional and physical linkages between open spaces and improve accessibility to open space based on local needs;
 - Advises Borough's to develop local standards as set out in the open space hierarchy, to identify broad areas of open space deficiency and to identify priorities for improvement based upon assessments of local need;
 - Re-emphasises the need for Borough's to resist development of Green Belt and Metropolitan Open Land. Borough's are also encouraged to protect local open spaces that are of value or have potential to be of value to local communities; and
 - Encourages the production of open space strategies at Borough level to protect, create and enhance open spaces in accordance with the forthcoming GLA Guide to Open Space Strategies.
- 2.28 The GLA's Guide to preparing Open Space Strategies, which was published in March 2004, recommends the following framework for the preparation of an Open Space Strategy.

Table 2.1 - GLA Recommended Approach to an Open Space Strategy

- 2.29 In November 2001, the GLA's green spaces investigative committee called on the mayor to create a London parks forum to find more money and improve the protection and management of green spaces. The London Parks and Greenspace Forum has recently been established and will work in partnership with other organisations to gather data, share information and experience and secure funding.
- 2.30 The Mayor of London commissioned London Play to develop a Guide to Preparing Play Strategies, which serves as a companion document to the Guide to Preparing Open Space Strategies and was completed in April 2005. It sets out the methods for providing accessible children's spaces with high quality, free and inclusive play opportunities. Subsequent provision standards for children and young people's play and informal recreation stemming from this guide are expected to be completed in early 2006.

LOCAL POLICY

Community Plan

- 2.31 The Kingston Community Leadership Forum has produced the Community Plan for the Borough for 2004-2009.
- 2.32 The Kingston's Community Plan sets out a vision for the Borough that believes working together in partnership will ensure that the Borough will be a clean, safe and tolerant society where all of its residents can reach their full potential and can prosper.
- 2.33 The Plan identifies six themes, which will help to achieve the overall vision for Kingston. The objective of each theme is set out below:
- Environment: To Live Safe, healthy, rewarding lives, with access to an undiminished natural environment, while protecting the future well being of others;
 - Community Safety: Ensure that the Borough continues to be the safest London Borough in which to live, work or visit and that we can make a major difference to the quality of life for our residents by reducing incidents of anti-social behaviour;
 - Health and Social Care: Improve the overall health of the wider Kingston community;
 - Education and Lifelong Learning: Make Kingston a place where everyone values, enjoys and benefits from learning;
 - Local Economy and Housing: Ensure that the economy is prosperous and thriving, generating a diverse range of employment opportunities and providing goods and services for the whole community;
 - Transport: Ensure that Kingston achieves a sustainable transport system accessible to all;

Local Open Space Planning Framework – Unitary Development Plan

- 2.34 Kingston Council adopted its UDP: First Alteration in August 2005. The UDP First Alteration will be saved for three years from the time of adoption and will form part of the Local Development Framework. This study will inform the review of open space and leisure policies as part of the work to prepare an LDF.

2.35 The purpose of the UDP is to guide development in the Borough by setting out a framework of policies and proposals against which planning applications and development proposals will be assessed.

2.36 The UDP sets out policies to ensure that open spaces are protected and enhanced. The most relevant policies relate to the following issues:

Open Environment

- Biodiversity
- Safeguarding & Enhancing Open Land
- The Green Belt
- Reuse of Buildings in the Green Belt
- Agriculture in the Green Belt
- Metropolitan Open Land
- Appearance and Under Use of Open Land
- New Buildings in Green Belt and Metropolitan Open Land
- Protection of Other Open Land
- Open Space Improvement and Ancillary Development
- Development Adjoining Open Space
- New Public Open Space Provision
- Green Corridors
- Sites of Nature Conservation Importance
- Species Protection
- Stables, Riding Schools and other similar establishments
- Footpaths and Bridleways
- Thames Policy Area
- Appropriate Riverside Uses
- Moorings
- The River and Water Environment
- Flooding
- Water Conservation and Control

Recreation and Leisure

- Diversifying Leisure Facilities
- Outdoor Recreational Facilities
- Dual Use of Education and Community Facilities for Leisure Purposes
- Enhanced Use of Existing Leisure Facilities
- Allotments
- Children's Play Provision

A Play Strategy for Royal Borough of Kingston Upon Thames 2005-2008

- 2.37 The Council Learning and Children's Services and representatives from the voluntary sector have developed a play strategy for all children and young people between the ages 0-14.
- 2.38 The Strategy is universal but has a specific focus on improving access to play for disabled children and young people at risk of social exclusion.
- 2.39 The Play Strategy aims to improve play facilities and increase opportunities for play for all children and young people who live in the Borough.
- 2.40 There are 14 objectives which the strategy is based on these are set out below:
- Develop a Play Partnership to plan for and co-ordinate the use of resources or improvements to play;
 - Appoint a 'Play Champion' to highlight the importance of play;
 - Improve neighbourhood roads to create safe and attractive areas where children can play near their homes;
 - Ensure the Council's review of parks leads to improved facilities and use of designated open spaces for children's play;
 - Continue Improvements to Dickerage Adventure Playground so that it expands and improves its provision for children's play;
 - Explore options for the development of other adventure playground facilities through the identification of external funding;
 - Continue to consult children and young people on the development of play provision in Kingston;
 - Develop new play provision for 8-13 years olds through facilities in parks and playgrounds and more supervised activities;
 - Improve access to, and facilities for, play for disabled children within existing play provision and the development of new provision;
 - Improve access to and facilities for, play for vulnerable children and families within existing play provision and the development of new provision;
 - Ensure review of Council's leisure services contract provides for improved opportunities and provision for affordable play;
 - Develop extended schools as a key means to expand the range of community services available through schools;
 - Ensure plans to improved childcare to age 14 include the expansion of affordable care and play opportunities;
 - Improve the range and quantity of childcare and play work training available to develop the play work and childcare workforce.

Cultural Strategy

- 2.41 The Borough Cultural strategy, which was published in 2002, has two key aims – to develop a strong cultural base for the community by improving the infrastructure, range and quality of cultural activity, and to improve opportunities for all citizens to access cultural activities.
- 2.42 The Strategy will achieve these aims through 6 objectives. Each objective has an action plan that sets out tasks that will completed over the period of the Strategy. Those tasks that are relevant to this report include;
- Review of playing fields and recreational open spaces;
 - Accessibility of open spaces;
 - Use and accessibility of walks through the Borough;
 - Implement the active sports programme;
 - Improve provision of sports activity for people with disabilities;
 - Work with sports clubs to raise standards of performance in the Borough;
 - Work with schools to raise standards of educational achievement in cultural curriculum areas (e.g sports);
 - Raise standards of sports and play opportunities for young people in Kingston;
 - Overcome barriers to participation in the cultural life of the community; and
 - Make effective use of sports facilities and other venues for staging cultural activities.

Local Agenda 21 Plan

- 2.43 The Council has developed a Local Agenda 21 Plan that sets out environmental action plans in order to achieve sustainable development in Kingston.
- 2.44 The Plan will be used to set a framework and direction for the environment, inform policy making (including development of the LDF), engage community action partnerships, initiate change, and inspire individual and corporate action.
- 2.45 The action plan is split into topics, each topic has some key aims and objectives. The following are relevant to this study:
- Control waste, litter and graffiti;
 - Increase the active promotion, support and publicise alternative leisure options to shopping;

- Encourage accessible and affordable leisure and cultural facilities;
- Placing walking at the top of the road priority hierarchy, with a walking infrastructure that is convenient and connected;
- Secure high quality design of walking routes to accommodate walkers of all abilities and provision of ample seating;
- Devise a sustainability test for procedures used for looking after public open spaces with regard to chemicals used, planting, materials, machinery. This should also be encouraged for private gardens and private open spaces;
- Incorporate high proportion of landscaping and high quality accessible, safer and user friendly greened open space within future development;
- Audit the green open space in the Borough noting current designation to see if adequately protected;
- Improve and encourage the better use of allotments;
- Prepare a biodiversity action plan;
- Use the audit of open space to list sites managed primarily for nature conservation and sites where management could be improved;
- Encourage the production of management plans for council owned sites managed primarily for nature conservation;
- Encourage owners of privately owned land to take nature conservation into account in their management regime;
- Green walking routes and improved network of footpaths. Find out the current position and where existing paths need to be improved and made safer and identify where newly created paths are needed. Find out where signs and information boards are needed;
- Protect and enhance the special character and wildlife value of the river Thames and Hogsmill and Bonesgate corridors. Review policies in UDP with regard these two areas; and
- Encourage the public to be responsible for and involved with their local open spaces.

CROSS-CUTTING BENEFITS

- 2.46 The Urban Green Spaces Task Force Report states that “strategic planning for parks and green spaces must take place alongside strategies for housing, community development and safety and economic regeneration” (p10). Local authorities should recognise that most open space, with good planning and management, can perform multiple functions. Amongst the most important are:

Recreation

- Parks and open spaces provide the setting and facilities for formal and informal recreation. From walking the dog to playing football or bowls, it is important that people have a wide range of activities to choose from.

Culture, Education and Tourism

- Many spaces form an important part of London's cultural heritage and are places where cultural activities take place. These activities can include community events, shows, carnivals and firework displays. The educational value of parks is also important. Many schools make use of nearby open spaces for ecology and sporting purposes.

Economic Development and Regeneration

- Relevant council programmes should be including green space as an essential aspect of neighbourhood regeneration. Such space can significantly enhance the quality of life, promote community spirit and attract business and residents to an area.

Visual Amenity

- Neglect can turn green spaces into eyesores. However, well maintained green spaces can provide variety in the urban scene and provide an outlook for those living nearby. They also contribute to a general appreciation of a local environment.

Community Identity

- Parks and other open green spaces can contribute to a sense of community ownership, pride and belonging.

Health

- Parks can be promoted to encourage exercise and as places for quiet and relaxation, they also provide a 'lung' of fresh air away from the traffic and pollution of the roads.

Environment and Biodiversity

- There are possibilities for biodiversity in even the most built up areas of the Borough. Some sites may have potential to be corridors for flora and fauna. Green space also plays a role in collecting water run-off from developed sites helping to mitigate against flooding.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.47 This study is based on the national, regional and local open space planning framework and takes into account new government thinking on sustainable development and the role that parks play in the quality of life of residents.
- 2.48 It recognises that most open space, with good planning and management can perform multiple functions and provide a variety of benefits which cut across the Council's strategic priorities. An Open Space Strategy is vital to bring all those who are responsible and have an interest together with a common purpose and a shared understanding of what can be done to enhance and maintain green space for the future.

3. LOCAL OPEN SPACE NEEDS AND PRIORITIES

INTRODUCTION

3.1 The Companion Guide to PPG17 identifies that it is impossible to identify local needs properly without involving local communities. Several strands of research have been undertaken to gain an understanding of open space and sports needs within the Borough including:

- A telephone survey of 1,000 residents identifying usage patterns, perceptions and attitudes relating to open space and sport provision in the Borough;
- Workshops – with community stakeholders to inform the identification of needs & priorities for improvement.

3.2 A telephone survey of residents within the Borough was specifically undertaken to inform this study. The findings of this Residents' Survey are summarised here and are presented in detail within Volume 2. The findings of the other strands of research undertaken separately on behalf of the Council have been summarised and integrated within the report to provide a complete picture of needs within the Borough.

3.3 In addition to considering attitudes and perceptions of needs and priorities a review was undertaken of a number of objective indicators that influence open space needs.

PERCEPTIONS OF OPEN SPACE NEED

3.4 In July 2005, 1000 residents of Kingston were interviewed in a telephone survey. The objectives of the survey were as follows:

- To identify groups of residents which use open spaces and sports facilities;
- To assess patterns of usage and determine the purposes for which the open spaces and sports facilities are used;
- To explore attitudes towards and perceptions of open spaces and sports facilities;
- To identify reasons for non-use; and

- To determine issues, problems and potential improvements that could increase usage of Kingston's open spaces and sports facilities.
- 3.5 As reported in the Urban Green Space Task Force (UGSTF) reports, use and perceptions of open spaces and sports facilities are likely to vary between particular demographic groups (notably age, gender and ethnicity). The Kingston survey also sought to identify whether use of and attitudes towards open spaces and sports facilities did in fact differ between several socio-demographic groups.
- 3.6 The Survey Report describes the methodology of the study in more detail. The main findings of the consultation relevant to this study are listed below. The detailed findings are incorporated into the relevant chapters of this Report.

Use of Open Spaces

- 69% of respondents visit Metropolitan, Regional or large open spaces. These spaces appear to be especially popular with 25-34 and 35-44 year olds, with 73% of respondents from each age category using these spaces. Usage of large open spaces does vary according to geographic area of residence; respondents living in the areas farthest away from large open spaces (Surbiton and the South of the Borough) are least likely to visit them. 65% of respondents from Surbiton and 51% from the South of the Borough visit Metropolitan, Regional or large open spaces, compared with 73% of respondents from Maldens & Coombe and 81% from Kingston Town. Richmond Park was the most frequently mentioned park, with 45% of respondents having visited it at some point, followed by Bushy Park in Richmond (13%), Beverley Park (6%), Alexandra Recreation Ground (4%) and Canbury Gardens (4%).
- 34% of respondents visit riverside walks, and these spaces are popular across all age categories. Although these spaces are well-used by respondents from all areas of the Borough, respondents from Kingston Town are most likely to use riverside walks, with 41% doing so.
- A moderate proportion of respondents (23%) visit smaller local parks / gardens. Although these spaces are used in similar proportions by respondents from all age groups, respondents from the South of the Borough are most likely to use small local parks / gardens (28%) and those from Kingston Town are least likely to do so (19%).
- Overall, 12% of respondents use outdoor sports facilities, with male respondents twice as likely as female respondents to do so. 20% of respondents aged 16-24 use these open spaces, making this age group the most likely to visit outdoor sports facilities.
- A total of 20 respondents (2% of total), fairly evenly distributed across all age categories and areas of residence, use allotments.

- Only 10% of respondents do not use any form of open space. Respondents from the oldest and youngest age groups are most likely not to visit open spaces, with 14% of respondents from the 16-24 age group and 15% of the 60+ age group stating as such. There is some variation in non use by neighbourhood, only 6% of respondents from Kingston Town area stated that they are not using any form of open space, compared to 13% in Surbiton.
- Amenity greenspaces within housing areas are the most frequently visited open spaces, 33% of those who use these spaces visit them several times per week, other types of open space which are frequently visited include allotments (30% of those who visit go several times per week) and smaller local parks / gardens (27% of those who visit go several times per week). Cemeteries are the least frequently type of open space, with 51% of those that visited cemeteries only going several times per year, about once every six months or less often.
- A high proportion of visits last under one hour cemeteries 87%, children's play areas 74% and smaller local parks / gardens 71%. In contrast, a large proportion of visits made to outdoor sports facilities / playing fields (66%), Metropolitan / Regional / large open spaces (63%), riverside walks (60%) and natural greenspace areas (58%) last over one hour.

Reasons for Visits

- The most popular reason for visiting open space is walking (cited by 49% of respondents who use open spaces), followed by exercise (26%), fresh air (25%), children's play (23%) and relaxing / sitting outside (19%). This range of uses indicated that open spaces within the Borough support a wide range of recreational uses.
- Reasons for visiting open spaces do not vary significantly across age groups, with a few exceptions. The youngest respondents, those aged 16-24, are most likely to visit open spaces in order to meet friends, whilst respondents aged 25-34 and 35-44 are most likely to use open spaces for children's play. Only respondents aged 60+ cite looking at wildlife as a significant reason for using open spaces.

Mode of Travel

- Overall, walking (44%) and the car (44%) are the most popular means of travelling to open spaces. The more local open spaces tend to be reached on foot, whilst more people tend to drive to open spaces which could be slightly further afield. Few respondents travel by modes such as bus or train.
- Respondents aged 16-24 exhibit the highest cycle use of all the age groups and are also the most likely, along with respondents aged 60+, to use buses or trains to visit open spaces. Respondents from Kingston Town show the lowest levels of car usage when visiting open spaces (37%), whilst respondents from Maldens & Coombe show the highest levels of car usage (51%).

Quality of Open Spaces

- The majority of respondents consider the parks and open spaces they use to be of good quality (85% good or very good). The types of spaces perceived to be of the greatest quality were Metropolitan / Regional / large open spaces (54% rated them “good” or “very good”) and riverside walks (54%). Smaller open spaces also received positive quality scores, with 68% of cemetery users, 70% of allotment users and 73% of smaller local park / garden users rating them as “good” or “very good”.

Satisfaction with Open Spaces

- Respondents were asked to identify their levels of satisfaction with the open space provision in their areas. Overall, 83% of respondents were either “satisfied” or “very satisfied”. Only 6% were “dissatisfied” or “very dissatisfied”. Respondents from the South of the Borough are less likely than respondents in other areas of the Borough to be satisfied with open space provision in the area.

Quality of Life

- 84% of respondents stated that open spaces “contribute a little” or “contribute a lot” to their quality of life. Respondents living in Kingston Town are most likely to identify the contribution of open spaces to quality of life, with 91% doing so. In contrast, only 76% of respondents from the South of the Borough feel that open spaces contribute “a lot” or “a little” to quality of life.

Non-use

- Few respondents identified problems with the parks and open spaces themselves as a deterrent to use but instead suggested that non-use was determined by personal constraints such as not having enough time (42%). However, poor accessibility to open spaces (9%) and safety fears (6%) were also cited as significant reasons for non-use.

Improvements

- Of the improvements suggested, the most frequently mentioned relate to safety and the condition of open spaces in terms of less litter (15%), park rangers / wardens (15%), improved safety (14%), more benches / litter bins (11%), improved maintenance / attractiveness (10%) and removal of graffiti (9%).

ASSESSMENT OF LOCAL OPEN SPACE NEEDS

- 3.7 There are a number of objective indicators which influence the open space needs of individual localities within the Borough.

Demographic Profile

- 3.8 The demographic profile of a borough has a direct influence on sport participation levels and open space usage as people's involvement in sport generally varies according to age. Table 3.1 illustrates the demographic profile of the Royal Borough of Kingston upon Thames compared to the London and England average.
- 3.9 Table 3.1 shows that Kingston has a slightly lower proportion of children under the age of 18 than compared to the national average (22.7% compared to 21.1%). There is a higher proportion of 18-44 year olds with the Kingston compared to England as a whole. The proportion of over 65s in Kingston is lower than the National average (13% compared to 16%). The age profile of residents influences the range and type of recreation provision needed, especially in relation to children's play and the balance between dedicated and informal recreational activities. Although at the Borough level, the age profile of residents does not vary significantly from the London average, some variation may exist at the ward level.
- 3.10 Research undertaken by RSGB (2003)¹ and Hayslip and Panek² (1989) has investigated the use of public parks in England with regards to Social Inclusion. The findings from the study found that open space use varied according to age: younger age groups being more likely to use parks than older ones:

“The extent and nature of participation in leisure and recreation change with a person's age. Generally speaking, participation in leisure activities declines with age, although there are variations according to one's income level, personality, interest, health condition, ability level, transportation, education level and a number of social characteristics.”³

- 3.11 RSBG found that those between the age of 25 and 44 were found most likely to make use of a given open space, with 70% of respondents claiming to have used a park during the course of the last year. The proportion of population under 45 in Kingston is a higher than the national average so open space within the Borough may experience relatively high levels of demand.

¹ 'The Use of Public Parks in England' (2003) – RSGB Market Research

² Hayslip, B and Panek, P. E (1989) – Adult Development and Ageing. (Harper & Row)

³ Hayslip and Panek; 1989, as cited in Pigram et al; 2003, p51

Table 3.1 – Demographic Profile

Age Cohort	Total in group	% Kingston	% London	% England
0-4	9215	6.3	6.7	6.0
5-7	5108	3.5	3.8	3.7
8-9	3461	2.4	2.5	2.6
10-14	8473	5.8	6.1	6.6
15	1618	1.1	1.2	1.3
16-17	3269	2.2	2.4	2.5
18-19	3893	2.6	2.3	2.4
20-24	11754	8.0	7.4	6.0
25-29	12818	8.7	9.7	6.7
30-44	36125	24.5	25.7	22.6
45-59	26344	17.9	16.1	18.9
60-64	5511	3.7	3.9	4.9
65-74	9344	6.3	6.5	8.3
75-84	7359	5.0	4.3	5.6
85-89	1986	1.3	1.1	1.3
90 & over	995	0.7	0.5	0.6
Total	147273	100	100	100

Data Source: 2001 Census.

Ethnicity

3.12 The ethnic profile of Kingston must also be considered as it is likely to have an influence on sport participation levels in the Borough. Table 3.2 demonstrates that the Borough has a significantly higher proportion of white (all) inhabitants (85%) than the London average (60%).

- 3.13 The largest populations in Kingston other than white are Asian or Asian British Indian (3.6%) which is below the London average, and Asian or Asian British Other (2.6%) which is above the London average.

- 3.14 RSGB also found that the use of parks varied with regards to ethnic groups. The findings identify that those from Black and Ethnic Minority communities are less likely to visit parks compared to white people. This information is shown in Table 3.3.

Table 3.2 – Ethnic Group Populations

	Population	% Kingston	% London	% England
White: British	111810	75.9	59.8	87.0
White: Irish	3201	2.2	3.1	1.3
White: Other White	9381	6.4	8.3	2.7
Mixed: White and Black Caribbean	591	0.4	1.0	0.5
Mixed: White and Black African	392	0.3	0.5	0.2
Mixed: White and Asian	1398	1.0	0.8	0.4
Mixed: Other Mixed	976	0.7	0.9	0.3
Asian or Asian British: Indian	5322	3.6	6.1	2.1
Asian or Asian British: Pakistani	1916	1.3	2.0	1.4
Asian or Asian British: Bangladeshi	384	0.3	2.1	0.6
Asian or Asian British: Other Asian	3844	2.6	1.9	0.5
Black or Black British: Caribbean	772	0.5	4.8	1.1
Black or Black British: African	1406	1.0	5.3	1.0
Black or Black British: Other Black	131	0.1	0.8	0.2
Chinese	2026	1.4	1.1	0.4
Other Ethnic Group	3723	2.5	1.6	0.4
Total	147273	100	100	100

Table 3.3 – In the last 12 months have you visited a park?

Yes/No	White %	Black and Ethnic Minority %
Yes	63	57
No	37	44

OPEN SPACE NEED INDICATORS

- 3.15 Several indicators have been derived to show variations in open space need within the Borough. These are described below and highlighted in Figures 3.1-3.6.

Population Density

- 3.16 Population density represents an indicator of open space need as it provides an indication of access to public open space in the widest sense including civic spaces, amenity greenspaces and parks and the availability of private open space in the form of back gardens and yards.
- 3.17 Figure 3.1 indicates housing density by Census output area derived from the 2001 Census. The measure of residential density used is dwellings per hectare which has been calculated from the total population divided by average household size within Kingston (2.3 persons per household) divided by area of census output area. The density indicators shown in Figure 3.1 relate to gross densities including all open space, infrastructure etc. The density categories used reflect the 30-50 dwellings per hectare (dph) definitions identified within PPG 3 (Housing) relating to new housing development. Below 30 dph is considered to be low density and above 70 dph very high density (the Kingston average is 21).
- 3.18 On the whole Kingston has low or very low residential densities. There are particularly large areas of very low density in South of the Borough in the north east corner of the Borough, and along the Hogsmill River. Areas of medium to very high population density are concentrated around the town or district centres, in particular the areas to the north and to the east of Kingston town centre have high and very high housing densities.

Housing Type

- 3.19 Housing type is another indicator of open space need as, like density, it provides an indication of access to private open space in the form of gardens or yards. Figure 3.2

shows the percentage of dwellings within each ward that are either terraced houses, flats or apartments.

- 3.20 Out of a total of dwellings located in the Borough, only 18.8% are terraced, compared to 26% in both London and England as a whole. Flats, maisonettes or apartments account for 36% of dwelling space in Kingston. This compares with 49% in London as a whole, and just under 20% in England. This suggests that residential properties include a higher proportion of private open space than is found elsewhere in London, but a lower proportion than is found nationally.
- 3.21 The highest proportions of terraced dwellings, flats, or apartments (>90%) are situated mainly in and around Kingston, Surbiton and New Malden town centres. These areas also contain above Borough average levels of terraced dwellings, flats, or apartments (55-89%). There is an area with a significantly above Borough average (>90%) proportion of higher density housing along Kingston Hill around Kingston Hospital. There are some clusters of above Borough average levels of terraced dwellings, flats, or apartments (55-89%) in the south and east of the Borough, generally located adjacent to railway lines, or major roads.

Child Densities

- 3.22 Child densities provide an indication of the need for children's play provision within the Borough. The demographic information above demonstrates that Kingston has a slightly lower proportion of children between 0-15 than the London and National average. Figure 3.3 shows the % of the population within each ward aged 0-15 years old based on 2001 Census data.
- 3.23 Child density is reasonably high in Kingston, but this does vary across the Borough with the East and South of the Borough and the area to the north of Kingston Town Centre having higher child densities. The two areas with highest child densities are in Tolworth/Worcester Park and Norbiton/New Malden. There is a large area of low child density in Kingston Town Centre, Surbiton and Berrylands.

Household Composition

- 3.24 Analysis of Table 3.4 shows that Kingston has more single person households than the national average this may result in there being more demand for sport in Kingston in comparison to elsewhere, although compared to the London average it has less single person households. In addition, the Borough also has fewer pensioners than the national average, although more than London. Since pensioners are the least likely group to take regular exercise, it can be argued that the demand for active recreation in the area will increase further compared to the national average, but the increase is likely to be less than London as a whole.

- 3.25 Since those with children are generally perceived to have less time to participate in sport and recreation, the proportion of households with dependent children in a Borough is a critical factor in determining demand for sport. Kingston has a lower proportion of households with dependent children than both London and the National average; the consequence of this is likely to increase the demand for sport in the area.
- 3.26 Certain aspects of Kingston's household composition are therefore likely to increase demand for recreation in the Borough compared to the national average, these include the higher proportion of single person households and the lower proportion of pensioner households than seen nationally.
- 3.27 There are some aspects of Kingston's household composition which could mean there are higher rates of recreation participation in the Borough when compared to London as a whole (such as higher proportions of pre-family households and lower proportions of households with dependent children). However, the fact that Kingston has fewer single person households, and more pensioner households means that recreation participation is likely to be at similar level to those seen elsewhere in London.

Table 3.4 – Household Composition

Household Type	No. Households in Kingston	% Household Kingston	% Household London	% Household England
Pre family	10578	17.2	13.8	17.76
Empty nesters and households with non-dependent children	5001	8.1	8.7	9.33
Households with dependent children	17499	28.4	28.9	29.45
Single person and other households	16101	26.2	30.2	19.75
Pensioner Households	12297	20	18.4	23.71
All Households	61426	100	100	100

Health

- 3.28 Recent best practice guidance identifies the contribution of open space towards healthy living⁴. Open spaces have a preventative effect on ill health as a population which is health in mind, body and spirit is more productive and makes less demand on medical services. Green spaces help to reduce stress, provide formal and informal opportunities for physical activity and sport and provide environments for relaxation and stress relief.
- 3.29 Parks and open spaces with public access provide potential benefits to health. However on the whole the population of the Borough is in good health. Figure 3.4 identifies the percentage of the population not in good health (derived from the 2001 Census). If the data is taken at ward level, each ward within Kingston is below the national average of 9% of the population not in good health. There are some pockets within the Borough that have an above average percentage of the population not in good health, however only one of these is significantly above the national average. It is important to maintain healthy lifestyles, and improve those areas that in comparison to the rest of the Borough have higher proportions of the population who are not in good health.

Indices of Deprivation

- 3.30 Research suggests that the propensity of people to participate in sport is influenced by the affluence of the area in which they live⁵. Not only is the provision of sport and recreation facilities likely to be better in more affluent areas, but the level of disposable income that is available to spend on sport and leisure activities also tends to be higher.
- 3.31 The Index of Multiple Deprivation is shown as a rank of all output areas (a lower level than ward boundaries) across England. On the whole Kingston ranks low on the index of deprivation, none of the output areas are in the top 10% most deprived in England.
- 3.32 Figure 3.5 shows the indices of deprivation ranking for the Borough, the figure highlights that some areas in Grove and Norbiton wards that are within the 20% most deprived Super output areas, and are therefore the most deprived parts of the Borough. It will be important to ensure that open space provision adequately meets the needs of those in lower income groups in these areas.

⁴ 'Green Spaces, Better Places – final report of the Urban Green Spaces Taskforce'. DTLR (2002)

⁵ 'General Household Survey 2002-2003' – Office of National Statistics (2004)

Working Hours

- 3.33 Those in employment may also have difficulties in accessing recreation opportunities due to a lack of time rather than financial resources. The increasing demands that are being placed on individuals both from the workplace, but also from within the family, have gradually served to erode the amount of time that is available to participate in leisure activities. For many, a further issue arises due to the fact that an opportunity to participate in a leisure activity may not necessarily coincide with an individual's working hours, thereby preventing the individual from participating. Both of these factors play a crucial role in determining the amount of leisure activities that an individual or family is likely to participate in.
- 3.34 Table 3.5 shows the number of hours per week that those in employment in Kingston work. Analysis of the data shows that males living in Kingston are more likely to work longer than 38 hours when compared to the national and London averages. The proportion of females in Kingston working more than 38 hours is equivalent to the London average but higher than the national average.

Table 3.5 – Working Hours

Working Hours	No. Persons	% Kingston Workforce	% London Workforce	% England Workforce
Males				
All males aged 16-74 in employment	40748	54.4	53.5	54.2
Males aged 16-74 in employment working (hours a week): Part-time: 1-30	4243	5.7	5.8	5.2
Males aged 16-74 in employment working (hours a week): Full-time: 31-37	5553	7.4	8.0	8.0
Males aged 16-74 in employment working (hours a week): Full-time: 38-48	20958	28.0	26.5	27.9
Males aged 16-74 in employment working (hours a week): Full-time: 49 or more	9994	13.3	13.2	13.1
Females				
All females aged 16-74 in employment	34145	46.6	46.5	45.8
Females aged 16-74 in employment working (hours a week): Part-time: 1-30	12206	16.3	14.3	19.4
Females aged 16-74 in employment working (hours a week): Full-time: 31-37	6745	9.0	11.1	10.2

Females aged 16-74 in employment working (hours a week): Full-time: 38-48	11947	16.0	16.5	13.1
Females aged 16-74 in employment working (hours a week): Full-time: 49 or more	3247	4.3	4.5	3.2

Composite Assessment of Local Need

- 3.35 Differential levels of need within the Borough were considered based upon the above findings. Figure 3.6 provides a composite assessment based on the following; areas with high residential densities (>51 Dwellings Per Hectare), areas with a high proportion of terraced dwellings, flats and or apartments (above Kingston average 54.9%), areas with comparatively high child densities (above the Kingston average 18.8%), areas that have above the national average proportion of the population not in good health (>9.1%), areas that are in the 40% most deprived SOAs in the Country. The figure illustrates how many of the above criteria are fulfilled for each output area.
- 3.36 Figure 3.6 illustrates that there are several specific areas within the Borough which, according to the composite assessment of the above factors, may have greater need for open space provision. The areas of greatest need lie in the northern and central regions of Kingston, primarily in the Kingston and Surbiton town centre areas. There is little composite need in the southern, eastern and far northern reaches of the Borough.

4. APPROACH TO PLANNING AND OPEN SPACE PROVISION

INTRODUCTION

- 4.1 PPG17 and the London Plan advises local authorities to draw up their own standards for open space, sports and recreation provision for inclusion within their Local Development Frameworks. These standards should be based upon a locally based assessment of open space needs.

APPROACHES TO PLANNING OPEN SPACE PROVISION

- 4.2 PPG17 recommends that any assessment takes into account:
- The overall level of supply in Kingston, including the degree to which provision meets needs from beyond the local authority boundary;
 - The accessibility of locations;
 - The level of usage of facilities;
 - The particular functions which certain facilities may perform, for example as a meeting place for one age group or community;
 - The potential for a recreational use to contribute to wider social or regeneration objectives for Kingston;
 - The potential for new use, for example by achieving dual use of a facility or by bringing a private open space into public use;
 - The potential to focus improved recreational provision of a particular site, in preference to lower level use of less accessible locations.
- 4.3 The two main approaches traditionally used to assess open space needs are the National Playing Fields Association (NPFA) six acre standard and use of an open space hierarchy.
- 4.4 The NPFA standard relates playing space provision to population and recommends that there should be a minimum of 6 acres (2.43 hectares) of outdoor playing/recreational space per 1000 people. The standard recommends that the 6

acre provision is broken down to take account of the different needs of different age groups. This standard can be easily applied but takes little account of the distribution of open space and people's access to it. Children's play provision is assessed in Chapter 5.

- 4.5 Recreational roles can be either active/formal e.g. sports, or passive/informal e.g. dog walking. The activity may have dedicated provision e.g. sports pitches, or informal provision where there are no formal facilities but other evidence suggests an activity takes place. Non-recreational roles include the ecological, educational, social, cultural and amenity roles that an open space might play.
- 4.6 The Government's companion guide to PPG17 'Assessing Needs and Opportunities' (2002) recommends that the hierarchy approach can provide the basis to develop local standards as it identifies characteristics, size and effective catchment of different types of open spaces.
- 4.7 The Greater London Authority's best practice guidance 'Guide to Preparing Open Space Strategies' (2004) also recommends that a hierarchy approach is used, but adapts the approach used in PPG17 to best reflect the types of open space found within London (Figure 4.1).
- 4.8 However, it is recommended that local authorities develop their own open space typologies to reflect local characteristics and facilities and the recreational and non-recreational functions of open spaces. An understanding of the types of open space will provide a basis for analysing the results of the site audits and enable an assessment of whether the range and types of open space functions in the local area meet the needs of local people.
- 4.9 This study reviews the existing open space hierarchy in line with recent guidance to provide a comprehensive basis for assessing the quantity, quality and accessibility of open spaces in Kingston.

SURVEY METHODOLOGY

Survey Design and Methodology

- 4.10 The survey of private and educational open space was undertaken in Summer 2005 by appropriately qualified planning and landscape consultants. A five page survey pro-forma was developed incorporating the existing survey of Council-managed spaces that was carried out by the Council in (2003/4) to capture the key features and characteristics relating to each site. Many of the questions followed a criteria based approach to assessment informed by a survey guide to enable a consistent

basis of assessment. The pro-forma and explanatory notes are attached as Appendix A.

4.11 Open space sites within the Borough were identified from the following information sources:

- A review of the Council's adopted UDP proposals map;
- The Council's Open Space Study (1992);
- A desk top assessment of Ordnance Survey mapping of Kingston;
- A desk top assessment of aerial photography of Kingston.

4.12 The resulting list of 58 privately-managed sites was then verified by the Council. The total number of open spaces in the Borough is 318.

4.13 Public open spaces within 1km of the Borough boundary have also been plotted in order that their potential role in meeting open spaces needs within Kingston can be identified. These sites have been identified on Figure 5.1 - 5.6 with catchment areas applied according to their position within the Parks Hierarchy. Figure 5.5 identifies the extent to which open spaces within Kingston address deficiencies within neighbouring authorities and vice versa.

4.14 Given the scale of the survey and resource limitations, the range of data collected on site was targeted towards those functions and characteristics which were necessary in order to fulfil the purposes of the brief and meet the requirements of national planning policy guidance. The main objectives of the study were:

- To provide an audit of space not in the Council's ownership and combine this information relating to Council owned spaces which have already been assessed to provide a comprehensive assessment of open space;
- To identify deficiencies in provision of open space, in line with the London Plan open spaces hierarchy;
- To develop a set of local open space standards based upon an assessment of local needs; and
- To provide a robust methodology for open space provision of improved facilities in conjunction with residential developments.

Approach to Analysis

- 4.15 The detailed approach to individual aspects of the analysis is explained within the relevant chapters. This report provides an analysis of key findings relevant to the UDP. The full findings of the site surveys are included within an electronic copy of the database which will allow more detailed analysis of the individual open spaces surveyed.
- 4.16 As set out above 58 privately managed sites were identified, 55 of these were fully assessed (3 sites inaccessible). Additionally 35 Council managed open spaces were fully assessed. Information for the remaining Council managed open spaces within the Borough was provided by the Council. The Council information and the information collected from site surveys have been integrated within the database.

DEVELOPMENT OF AN OPEN SPACE HIERARCHY

- 4.17 Open space provision in Kingston is currently classified according to a modified version of the former LPAC open space hierarchy. The LPAC hierarchy was used by most London Boroughs, at the time the UDP was first adopted in 1998. The current Kingston UDP identifies parks and public open space (POS) and urban green space and applies a 400m catchment area around parks and POS to identify deficiencies in public open space.
- 4.18 The LPAC hierarchy has now been replaced by the GLA to reflect the provisions of PPG17 and adopted as part of the London Plan. The updated hierarchy, identified in Table 4.1, takes into account issues relating to the quality and accessibility of open space in London.

Open Space Typology

- 4.19 Council managed sites were assessed by Council Officers, using the information collected by the Council each open space was classified with reference to the typology of open space types included within the Annex to PPG17 (Table 4.4). The classification of Council managed open spaces has been verified to ensure a consistent approach to analysis.
- 4.20 The identification of the open space type was based upon consideration of the size, its primary role and function, recreational value, access arrangements and physical character. The other roles performed by spaces are considered in Chapters 7 and 8.
- 4.21 Public parks were classified according to the GLA hierarchy, as illustrated in table 4.1.

Approach to Public Park Provision

- 4.22 The GLA's best practice guidance 'Guide to Preparing Open Space Strategies' (2004), suggests that the updated hierarchy should be used by London Boroughs when preparing open space assessments. For the purposes of consistency and cross-boundary thinking the updated hierarchy has been used as the basis for public park classification within the study (Table 4.1).
- 4.23 The classification of parks within the different levels of the hierarchy was determined by the size of the space, the degree of public access, usage patterns derived from the residents survey, the range of facilities provided, the physical character of the park and the recreational value of the space.

Table 4.1 – GLA Public Park Hierarchy

Open Space Categorisation	Approx Size of Open Space and Distance from Home	Characteristics
Regional Parks and Open Spaces (Linked Metropolitan Open Land and Green Belt corridors) Weekend and occasional visits by car or public transport	400 hectares 3.2-8 km	Large areas and corridors of natural heathland, downland, commons, woodland and parkland also including areas not publicly accessible but which contribute to the overall environmental amenity. Primarily providing for informal recreation with some non-intensive active recreation uses. Car parking at key locations.
Metropolitan Parks Weekend and occasional visits by car and public transport	60 ha 3.2 km or more where the park is appreciably larger	Either i) natural heathland, downland, commons, woodland etc, or ii) formal parks providing for both active and passive recreation. May contain playing fields, but at least 40 hectares for other pursuits. Adequate car parking.
District Park Weekend and occasional visits by foot, cycle, car and short bus trips	20 ha 1.2 km	Landscape setting with a variety of natural features providing for a wide range of activities, including outdoor sports facilities and playing fields, children's play for different age groups, and informal recreation pursuits. Should provide some car parking
Local Parks Pedestrian visits	2 ha 0.4 km	Providing for court games, children's play spaces or other areas of a specialist nature, including nature conservation areas.
Small Local Parks and Open Spaces Pedestrian visits especially by children, particularly valuable in high density areas	Under 2 ha Less than 0.4km	Gardens, sitting-out areas, children's play spaces or other areas of a specialist nature, including nature and conservation areas.

Open Space Categorisation	Approx Size of Open Space and Distance from Home	Characteristics
Linear Open Spaces	Variable	The Thames, canals, other waterways and associated open spaces and towpaths; paths; disused railways; nature conservation areas; and other routes which provide opportunities for informal recreation. Often characterised by features or attractive areas which are not fully accessible to the public but contribute to the enjoyment of the space.
Pedestrian visits	Where feasible	

- 4.24 To reflect the updated regional best practice and the findings of the site appraisals regarding open space functions, parks have been classified within the parks hierarchy. Table 4.2 shows how many parks in Kingston are classified in each of the types within the hierarchy. The hierarchy of parks is illustrated in Figure 5.1-5.5.

Table 4.2 – Number of Parks Classified under Each Park Type when using the GLA Hierarchy

Public Park Type	Number of parks – GLA hierarchy
Regional Parks	0
Metropolitan Parks	0
District Parks	1
Local Parks	17
Small Local Parks	13
Linear Open Space	12

- 4.25 Where a park does not fulfil the size thresholds defined for a particular park type but performs the range of functions identified associated with that park type the park has been classified on the basis of its range of functions.
- 4.26 Where the spaces were assessed as not having the appropriate facilities, such as children's play and other recreation, associated with the park type, the space was then classified according to the facilities it did provide. For example, a space over 2ha would meet the size requirements for a Local Park but, if it did not provide recreation facilities, it would not meet the GLA criteria for a Local Park and be reclassified accordingly. Many of these spaces could be upgraded with the introduction of facilities to the meet the GLA hierarchy criteria.

- 4.27 All of the open spaces classified as parks within the parks hierarchy are publicly owned (all by Royal Borough of Kingston). The ownership of all open spaces in Kingston is illustrated in Figure 1.2.

Range of Facilities Provision within Public Parks

- 4.28 Park quality and attractiveness of parks is an important factor in people's use of open spaces. The PPG17 companion guide recognises the importance of the predisposition of individuals to use parks and relative attraction of different parks. A highly motivated and mobile user may be prepared to travel further to reach a park than the average person, while another person living immediately adjacent to the same park may never visit it at all.
- 4.29 The variety of user demands or aspirations are recognised as a fundamental principle of the Parks Hierarchy (Table 4.1). However, in practice even if an area is not deficient in open space, it may be that the open space leaves certain recreational needs unmet. The distribution of facilities by type of public park is identified in Table 4.3.

Table 4.3 – Park Facilities

Park Type Features	No. of Sites	Pitch Sport	Court Sport	Other	Children's Play	Putting	Paddling	Skateboarding	Sheltered Seating	Toilets	Café
Metropolitan / Regional Park	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
District Park	1	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	1
Linear Open Space	12	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Local Park	17	13	11	6	13	0	0	0	0	5	2
Small Local Park / Open Space	13	4	0	0	7	0	0	1	0	1	0
Total	43	18	12	6	22	0	0	1	0	7	3

- 4.30 Table 4.3 demonstrates that some public parks do not provide the full range of typical facilities that may be expected at that park type. However, it should be noted that the description of park facilities is general and not intended to be prescriptive. Furthermore, the provision of a wide range of facilities within a predominantly natural park could harm its character. It is considered that the analysis of facilities should be undertaken on a park-by-park basis taking into account the character of each park and proximity of other parks which may have an oversupply of certain facilities.

Chapters 6 and 7 examine the quality of provision and different roles of open spaces in more detail.

District Parks, Metropolitan Park & Regional Parks

- 4.31 The Residents' Survey identified that approximately 69% of users travelled to a Regional, Metropolitan or a District Park, such as Richmond Park, Bushy Park Wimbledon Common, Hampton Court Park, and Epsom Common. There are no Regional or Metropolitan parks within Kingston, however those situated within surrounding Boroughs do serve the needs of Kingston's residents.
- 4.32 Only one District Park has been identified within Kingston, due to recreational role that it plays. 69% of people that use Manor Park travel up to 10 minutes and 94% of journeys take up to 15 minutes. The effective catchment area of the District parks in Kingston is 15 minutes walking distance (equivalent to 1.2km). It is recommended that a 1.2km pedestrian catchment for District Parks is used to reflect existing patterns of usage but also the potential to enhance the range of provision at those spaces with smaller catchment areas.
- 4.33 Access to public parks within the borough is considered further in Chapter 5 including the definition of deficiency areas.

Other Types of Open Space

- 4.34 There are a number of other forms of open space provision within the Borough in addition to public parks. These have been categorised according to nine different types of open space as defined within Table 4.4 (taken from the Annex to PPG17) and illustrated in Figure 4.1.

Table 4.4 – Other Open Space Provision

Type of Open Space	Definition
Provision for children and teenagers (incorporated into public park hierarchy)	Play areas (including LAPs, LEAPs and NEAPs), skateboard parks, outdoor basketball goals and 'hanging out' areas (including teenage shelters).
Amenity Green Space	Includes informal recreational spaces and housing green spaces. This category would include green spaces in and around housing areas, large landscaped areas, and domestic gardens.
Outdoor Sports Facilities / Playing Fields	Those sites which are not located within a public park and which the primary role is for formal recreation. Sites include tennis courts, bowling greens, sports pitches, golf courses, athletics tracks, school playing fields, other institutional playing fields and outdoor sports areas. Categorise by ownership i.e. public/private/education.

Type of Open Space	Definition
Allotments / Community Gardens / Urban Farms	Open spaces where the primary use is allotment gardening or community farming.
Cemeteries and Churchyards	
Natural or Semi-Natural Urban Greenspaces	Woodland (coniferous, deciduous, mixed) and scrub, grassland (e.g. downland, meadow), heath or moor, wetlands (e.g. marsh, fen), open and running water, wastelands (including disturbed ground), bare rock habitats (e.g. cliffs, quarries, pits).
Civic spaces / pedestrianised areas	More formally laid out hard surfaced public spaces including squares, pedestrian streets, sitting out areas and space surrounding the docks. These spaces would not normally have a formal recreational function.
Accessible countryside in urban fringe areas	
Green Spaces within Grounds of Institution	Open space located within the grounds of hospitals, universities and other institutions which are accessible to the general public or some sections of the public. This definition also includes education sites where there is only hard surface and or amenity open space (no pitch sports provision).
Other	Agricultural Land and former airfields which perform a structural or amenity role.

4.35 It is necessary to set locally based standards of provision for the following categories of open space where it is important that local needs are provided for locally on a consistent basis:

- Provision for children and teenagers (refer to Chapter 5);
- Natural or semi-natural greenspace (refer to Chapter 7);
- Allotment provision (refer to Chapter 8).

4.36 It will be necessary for the Council to include a standard relating to outdoor pitch sports with the LDF following the approach identified within Sport England Guidance 'Towards a Level Playing Field' (2003). This aspect of open space need was not within the scope of this assessment.

4.37 It is not possible to set Borough-wide standards of provision for the remaining types of open space provision. However, amenity greenspace and civic spaces should be integrated within new areas of residential, mixed use and commercial development within the Borough. The exact level and type of provision should be responsive to the nature of the development and the existing level and type of open space provision. Within certain areas of the Borough amenity greenspace and other forms of open space form an integral part of the urban fabric and contribute towards local character and distinctiveness. For this reason it is not appropriate to define a consistent

quantity or access standards relating to such provision. Within areas of deficiency other forms of open space provision can be of particular value and represent possible opportunities for meeting local deficiencies.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.38 It is considered that the use of the GLA open space hierarchy is the most appropriate means of planning open space in Kingston. This study has used this approach to address the issues identified in PPG17. The hierarchy of open space has been amended and the typology of open space expanded to reflect the findings of the Residents' Survey and the roles of different open space types, and accessibility issues. Chapter 5 shows the application of the hierarchy to existing spaces within Kingston.

5. ASSESSMENT OF SUPPLY

INTRODUCTION

5.1 This chapter examines the current supply of public parks and provision for children and teenagers within the Borough through the application of the hierarchy defined in the previous chapter. It provides the following:

- Findings of the assessment of individual parks and their role within the parks hierarchy;
- An analysis of the current provision in terms of its quantity and accessibility, and consideration of the range of open space functions;
- Benchmarking of existing provision against ideal levels of provision and levels of provision in other Boroughs;
- A recommended access standard for each level of the parks hierarchy based upon analysis of existing and future open space need, existing usage and travel patterns, and the potential to introduce additional spaces to address deficiencies;
- Application of the proposed access standard to identify deficiencies in provision, in terms of access to parks; and
- Analysis of existing children's play provision and identification of appropriate standards to meet existing and future needs in terms of quality and access.

EXISTING OPEN SPACE PROVISION

5.2 Within Kingston a total of 318 spaces were identified using the methodology described in Chapter 4. Together these spaces comprise some 839 ha of land within the Borough.

5.3 Table 5.1 indicates that golf courses are the type of provision which take up the largest area representing 15.3% of total open space area. Private playing fields have the second largest land take occupying 14.2% of all open space area. Local Parks (13.3%) natural / semi-natural spaces (12%), and public playing fields (10.3%) also account for a significant proportion of open space area in the Borough.

- 5.4 In terms of the number of spaces, amenity green spaces are the most common form of open space provision in Kingston with a total of 92 sites across the Borough.
- 5.5 A summary of open space provision within the Borough by type and ward is included in Appendix B. Spaces extending across 2 or more wards have been attributed to the ward in which the greatest proportion of each space lies.

Table 5.1 – Open Space Provision by Type

Open Space Type	No. Sites	Area (ha)	% Total Open Space
Metropolitan Park	0	0.00	0.0%
District Park	1	10.36	1.2%
Local Park	17	113.38	13.3%
Small Local Park / Open Space	13	18.93	2.2%
Linear Park / Open Space	12	22.34	2.6%
Total Park Provision	43	165.01	19.4%
Agriculture	2	2.71	0.3%
Allotments	23	41.70	4.9%
Amenity Green Space	92	17.81	2.1%
Cemeteries	5	18.54	2.2%
Golf Course	5	130.56	15.3%
Green Space Within Institution Grounds	13	16.25	1.9%
Horticulture	6	2.22	0.3%
Natural / Semi Natural	18	102.13	12.0%
Play Space	37	22.09	2.6%
Playing Field (public)	28	87.47	10.3%
Playing Field (private)	25	121.07	14.2%
Reservoir / Water Body	2	42.54	5.0%
Woodland	14	47.83	5.6%
Other (Specify)	1*	32.65	3.8%
Vacant	4	0.55	0.1%
Total Other Space Provision	275	686.11	80.6%
Total Open Space	318	851.12**	100%

* Sewage Works. **Includes the three open spaces outside the Borough Boundary total open space inside the Borough is 839ha

EXISTING PUBLIC PARK PROVISION

- 5.6 Of the 318 open spaces surveyed, 43 public parks and linear open spaces providing some 165 ha of open space were identified. These have been classified according to the typologies indicated in the Parks Hierarchy (Table 4.1). Overall, public park provision comprises 19% of all open space within the Borough.
- 5.7 In order to derive an appropriate quantitative standard of public park provision, a number of indicators have been reviewed including:

- Levels of existing open space provision by ward and for the Borough as a whole;
- Indicative population thresholds required to support each type of park provision;
- Analysis of the size of parks within each level of the hierarchy to test the appropriateness of size ranges identified within the GLA parks within the Kingston context; and
- Comparative benchmarking of existing open space standards and levels of public park provision in other outer London boroughs.

Open Space by Ward

5.8 Overall within the Borough there are 5.70 ha of open space and 1.12 ha of public park provision per 1,000 population. However, Table 5.2 demonstrates that the levels of provision vary significantly between wards. The overall level of public park provision ranges from 0 ha per 1,000 population in Coombe Hill and Surbiton Hill to 3.18 ha per 1,000 population in Chessington South.

5.9 It should be recognised that ward level comparisons are potentially misleading and should be viewed in the context of overall levels of open space provision and the pattern of land uses within each ward.

Table 5.2 – Open Space by Ward

Ward	Total Public Park Area* (Ha)	Population 2001	Public Park Area per 1,000 population (Ha)	Total Open Space Area (Ha)	Total Open Space Area per 1,000 population (Ha)
Alexandra	27.06	9,045	2.99	89.27	9.87
Berrylands	8.29	9,278	0.89	13.88	1.50
Beverley	14.26	9,488	1.50	24.30	2.56
Canbury	0.81	9,604	0.08	7.45	0.78
Chessington North & Hook	8.82	8,721	1.01	46.17	5.29
Chessington South	30.18	9,488	3.18	159.53	16.81
Coombe Hill	0	10,318	0.00	170.09	16.48
Coombe Vale	2.30	9,271	0.25	17.11	1.85
Grove	10.07	7,864	1.28	49.46	6.29
Norbiton	3.35	8,844	0.38	29.30	3.31
Old Malden	8.76	9,013	0.97	26.74	2.97
St James	11.35	8,571	1.32	62.90	7.34
St Marks	3.97	9,644	0.41	19.17	1.99
Surbiton Hill	0	10,191	0.00	7.89	0.77
Tolworth & Hook Rise	17.31	9,531	1.82	85.69	8.99
Tudor	18.48	8,403	2.20	30.17	3.59
Total / Average	165.01	147,274	1.12	839.1**	5.70***

* Total public park area includes the sum of the following for each ward: Linear Park / Open Space, Metropolitan Parks, District Parks, Local Parks and Small Local Parks / Open Spaces. ** This total open space area does not include sites 154, 337 and 339 which are located outside the Borough. *** Based on total open space area of 839.1ha

Source: Population data from 2001 Census

5.10 Although several wards provide above-average levels of public park space, many wards fall below the Borough average of 1.12 ha of public park area per 1,000 population. The wards that fall below the Borough average are:

- Berrylands;
- Canbury;
- Chessington North & Hook;
- Coombe Hill;
- Coombe Vale;
- Norbiton;
- Old Malden;
- St Marks;
- Surbiton Hill;

Indicative Park Thresholds

5.11 In order to identify areas of the Borough which are deficient in public park provision, appropriate catchment areas for existing parks must be established. Catchment areas can relate to geographical distance or population. Geographical catchment areas reflect the physical area around a park from which the majority of its users will originate. The size of these catchment areas varies according to the size of a park and its position in the GLA Parks Hierarchy. Population catchment areas, or park population thresholds, reflect the number of people who will be adequately served by a particular park and are derived from a borough's average population density.

5.12 The indicative threshold population for each type of public park type within the Borough was derived by applying the average population density to standard catchment areas for each type of park according to the GLA Parks Hierarchy. The findings of the 2001 Census show that the Borough has a population density of 39.54 persons per hectare and a household size of 2.34 persons per household. Table 5.3 shows the resulting indicative threshold population for Borough parks within the hierarchy. In Kingston, Local and Small Local Parks will typically serve a catchment with a population of some 8,000 people or 3,400 households, whilst District Parks will have a catchment threshold of some 17,900 people or 7,600 households.

Metropolitan and Regional Parks will have a catchment threshold of some 127,200 people or 54,400 households.

Table 5.3 – Indicative Park Population Thresholds

Catchment Type	Size of catchment area (ha)	Rounded Threshold Population*	Rounded Threshold Households*
400m radius (Small Local Parks)	50.27	2000	900
800m radius (Local Parks)	201.06	8000	3400
1200m radius (District Parks)	452.39	17900	7600
3200m radius (Metropolitan and Regional Parks)	3216.99	127200	54400

* Threshold populations and households rounded to nearest 100

5.13 From the size of the threshold population within each type of catchment area, it is possible to establish the theoretical level of provision that would be necessary to meet the needs of the whole Borough. Table 5.3 demonstrates that a local park, with a catchment area of 800m will serve approximately 8,000 people. This means that Kingston, with a 2016 population of 159,319 would need 20 local parks in order to serve its entire population. Table 5.4 identifies differences in actual public park provision levels and theoretical levels.

Table 5.4 – Shortfalls in Public Park Provision Based on Indicative Park Population Thresholds

Park Type	Current provision	Number of parks required for 2016 population (based on 2001 population density)*	Min Size of park type (ha)	Area (ha) of parks required for 2016 population (based on 2001 pop density)*	Current provision area (ha)*	Difference required to make up shortfall (ha)
Small Local	13	80	0.4	32	18.93	13.07
Local	17	20	2	40	113.38	-73.38
District	1	9	20	180	10.36	169.64
Metropolitan	0	2	60	120	0	120

* Rounded up to the nearest whole number

5.14 Table 5.4 demonstrates that, assuming the population were evenly spread and that park catchments would not overlap, a further 13 ha of Small Local Parks, 170 ha of District Parks and 120 ha of Metropolitan Parks would be required in order to meet the needs of the whole Borough. It is important to understand that this is a largely

theoretical exercise, as the population density will vary throughout the Borough and catchment areas will never fit perfectly together without overlapping.

Size of Existing Spaces

- 5.15 The range of open space sizes within each park category was reviewed to ensure it was broadly consistent with the GLA size parameters. Although there were a few outliers within each category which were slightly larger or smaller than the GLA size threshold (Table 5.5), the spaces performed within the appropriate park category if the relevant functions associated with the space were represented within the space.

Table 5.5 – Comparison between GLA Size Parameters and the Classification of Existing Public Parks in Kingston

Park Classification	GLA Size Guide	Size Range of Kingston Public Parks within Category	Average size of Park
Regional Park	400ha	N/A	N/A
Metropolitan Park	60ha	N/A	N/A
District Park	20ha	10.36ha	10.36
Local Park	2ha	2.10 – 17.31ha	6.67
Small Local Park	Under 2ha	0.04 – 5.51ha	1.45
Linear Open Space	Variable	0.09 – 8.51ha	1.86

ACCESSIBILITY OF PUBLIC PARK PROVISION

- 5.16 To identify a locally based access standard for public park provision we have reviewed the appropriateness of using the catchment distances recommended at the regional level in the GLA Parks hierarchy. To establish a locally based access standard and identify how well the existing distribution of provision meets the needs of the community, it is necessary to examine the following range of indicators:

- The distribution of parks by ward / population;
- Indicative threshold populations for different parks within the typology;
- Existing patterns of open space access by park type considering the mode of transport and travel times;
- Existing access patterns by age, gender and sub-area within the Borough and underserved groups / areas;
- Community perceptions of existing levels of open space provision, including perceptions of open space non-users;
- The application of park catchments to the current distribution of public parks within the Borough and identification of existing deficiencies in access;

- The significance of access deficiencies considering land use patterns and local needs (considering objective indicators and public perceptions); and
 - The potential to address access deficiencies through identified opportunities to increase park provision.
 - Defining Effective Catchment Areas
- 5.17 Kingston currently uses the LPAC hierarchy to define catchment areas for public parks. Existing patterns of use provide the most robust basis upon which to base a future access standard. The telephone survey undertaken as part of the study identified usage levels, travel modes and travel times for different types of open space provision in the Borough. The findings of the survey have been compared with other surveys of park use undertaken for other local authorities in London by Atkins and other consultants and with surveys conducted at the national level.
- 5.18 However, existing usage and travel patterns cannot be used directly as the basis for deriving an access standard to address future needs without considering whether a standard reflecting existing usage patterns addresses the needs of the community. This issue is considered later in this chapter.

Effective Catchment Distances

- 5.19 The catchment distances defined below relate to the typical effective catchment area for each park type. The effective catchment area represents the area from which 70-80% of park users are likely to be drawn from. The assumption is made that the catchment area and threshold population should reflect the average for each park category. Variations in catchment area size and the number and frequency of visits can be explained by a number of factors including:
- The range of facilities and environments within parks and their quality and condition affect the attractiveness of each space to potential users. Parks with a wider range of facilities than may be expected will have extended catchment areas, perhaps beyond the distance parameters identified in Table 4.1. The number and frequency of visits is also likely to be higher;
 - The demographic and socio-economic structure of the population residing within the park catchment and the extent to which park facilities meet their needs;
 - The pattern of land use within the park catchment, particularly patterns of residential development and population density; and
 - The range of park and open space opportunities within the locality will influence the usage levels of individual spaces.

- 5.20 However, it is important to consider variations in catchment area size for spaces within the same level of the hierarchy when identifying priorities for enhancing the quality and access of spaces.

Converting Travel Time to Distances

- 5.21 Research undertaken on behalf of LPAC in 1992 identifies that a 5-minute pedestrian travel time represents a distance of 400m on the ground for less mobile sections of the community, including parents with young children, the elderly and disabled. However, a straight line distance cannot be directly used to represent a pedestrian catchment on a map as the actual walking distance is influenced by severance factors (e.g. railway lines, busy roads), topography, the location of park entrances and the morphology and grain of the surrounding pedestrian route network.⁶
- 5.22 As a result of these factors, the area included within a catchment is typically reduced by some 50%. The research recommends that a fixed radius equal to 70% of the catchment distance be used to represent catchment area spatially; therefore, a fixed radius of 280m from the edge of the open space has been used to represent a 400-metre walking distance on the ground, and a fixed radius of 560m has been used to represent an 800-metre walking distance.
- 5.23 In this example the 400m and 800m catchment distances would be adopted as the standards; however, it is recommended that each catchment's accompanying 70% fixed radius (280m and 560m) is also plotted to emphasise the importance of adopting a more sensitive approach to assessing the catchments of parks on a case by case basis.

Existing Patterns of Use

Local and Small Local Parks

- 5.24 According to the Residents Survey 78% of those surveyed who use local and small local parks travel to these spaces on foot, with 44% of journeys taking less than 5 minutes and 35% taking 5-10 minutes. Therefore, a total of 79% of journeys made to these spaces last 10 minutes or less (sum of journeys lasting 5 minutes or less and journeys lasting 5-10 minutes). Although these figures apply to both local and small local parks and indicate that a 10-minute (or 800m) catchment area reflects current patterns of usage for these spaces, it would be inappropriate to apply this catchment area to both types of spaces, given the smaller size and more limited range of facilities found at small local parks.

⁶ 'Open Space Planning in London' – LPAC (1992), Page 107, Paragraph 6.2.19

- 5.25 It is therefore recommended that a 400m access standard (corresponding with a 5-minute journey) be used in relation to small local parks and an 800m access standard (corresponding with a 10-minute journey) be used in relation to local parks. The 400m standard for small local parks reflects a smaller catchment area due to more limited facilities and recreational offerings, whilst the 800m standard for local parks reflects a larger catchment area resulting from more extensive facilities as well as residents survey data indicating that the majority of visits to these spaces last 10 minutes or less.

District Parks

- 5.26 Only one District Park exists in the Borough – Manor Park in the Maldens and Coombe area. Of the respondents who visit Manor Park, 75% travel on foot and 69% of journeys last 10 minutes or less. Because a significant proportion (25%) of journeys made to Manor Park last between 10 and 15 minutes, it is therefore more appropriate to apply a larger catchment area of 1.2 km (15-minute walking distance) to this District Park.

Metropolitan Parks & Regional Parks

- 5.27 Although there are no Metropolitan or Regional Parks within Kingston, there are several large open spaces which border Kingston which serve Kingston residents. According to the residents survey, there are three Metropolitan Parks which significant proportions of Kingston residents visit – Epsom Common (Epsom and Ewell), Wimbledon Common (LB Merton) and Hampton Court Park in (LB Richmond upon Thames). Additionally, two Regional Parks (Richmond Park and Bushy Park in Richmond upon Thames) attract a significant proportion of visitors from Kingston.
- 5.28 According to the Residents' Survey, the majority of users of Regional or Metropolitan Parks travel by car (53%) with 69% of journeys originating in Kingston taking under 15 minutes. 34% of visitors to Regional and Metropolitan Parks travel by foot. Although the effective catchment for metropolitan parks is 15 minutes (1.2km) for Kingston users, it is recommended that a 3.2km catchment area is adopted in relation to metropolitan parks to reflect the fact that for those users not using cars the catchment and travel distance is longer.
- 5.29 Those visiting the Regional Parks (Bushy Park and Richmond Park) mainly travel by car (67%). 61% of visitors to Richmond Park take up to 15 minutes to travel to the Park. 50% of visitors to Bushy Park take up to 15 minutes, this reflects an average walking distance of about 1.2km considerably less than the 3.2km catchment suggested in the GLA hierarchy. However, as with Metropolitan Parks it is recommended that a 3.2km catchment is applied.

- 5.30 Given the proximity of these large open spaces to Kingston, when the 3.2km catchment area is applied they extend into the Borough and help meet its need for Metropolitan and Regional open space.

Verification of Proposed Catchment Distances

- 5.31 It is necessary to test the robustness of using existing usage and travel patterns as the basis of deriving park access standards by considering how well they reflect community needs. Five factors have been considered.

Usage Levels

- 5.32 The usage of public parks within Kingston has been compared with similar surveys undertaken by Atkins in other London Boroughs. Within Kingston 69% of residents use Regional, Metropolitan or large public parks and gardens and 47% use small public parks at least once a year. These represent high levels of open space usage, compared with 52% and 20% (use of large and small parks, respectively) in Havering, 58% and 17% in Hackney, and 73% and 17% in Enfield. The use of smaller local parks and gardens in Kingston is markedly higher when compared with other London Boroughs surveyed.

Comparison of Sub-area Access Patterns with the Distribution of Spaces

- 5.33 Maps of Metropolitan, Regional and District Park catchment areas (Figures 5.1 – 5.4) indicate that parts of Surbiton and the South of the Borough lack access to large open spaces. With regard to Local and Small Local Parks, catchment area maps indicate that the distribution of these smaller open spaces is fairly even across the Borough, with all four geographical areas of the Borough showing similar levels of access to local or small local parks.
- 5.34 According to the residents survey, 69% of users take up to 15 minutes to reach a large public park (Metropolitan, District and large open spaces). However, within Surbiton and the South of the Borough only 64% and 57% of park users, respectively, take under 15 minutes to reach a large open space.
- 5.35 On average 79% of users travel up to 10 minutes to reach a small public park (Local and Small Local Park levels of the hierarchy). The proportions of users from each neighbourhood area who are able to reach small local parks and gardens within 10 minutes do not vary significantly. 80% of users from Maldens & Coombe and the South of the Borough can reach these spaces in 10 minutes, whilst 78% of users from Kingston Town and Surbiton can do so.

- 5.36 Therefore, a preliminary comparison of open space distribution maps with residents survey data indicates that there is some correlation between the geographical distribution of public parks in Kingston and residents' access patterns.

Patterns of Non-Use

- 5.37 According to the residents survey, approximately 10% of respondents do not use any form of open space. Respondents from Maldens & Coombe and Surbiton exhibit slightly higher levels of non-use, with 11% and 13% of respondents from these areas, respectively, not using open spaces.
- 5.38 With regard to low use of open spaces, an average of 34% of Kingston residents use Metropolitan, Regional and large local parks several times a year or less. Across the four geographical areas of Kingston, the proportion of residents using large open spaces with this frequency does not vary from the average (33%).
- 5.39 An average of 22% of Kingston residents use smaller local parks and gardens several times a year or less. The proportion of residents from each sub-area of the Borough using small open spaces with this frequency does vary from this average. There are higher levels of infrequent use of small parks and gardens in the South of the Borough (25% use small open spaces several times a year or less) and in Maldens and Coombe (27% use small open spaces several times a year or less). This difference from the average could reflect a variation in the ease of access to small open spaces or the quality of these spaces.
- 5.40 Across the Borough 9% of low / non-users cited "too far away or cannot get to" as a reason for infrequent usage. Kingston Town (11%), Surbiton (13%) and the South of the Borough (10%) all have greater than average scores in this area, thus indicating that these areas have lower levels of provision.

Community Satisfaction with Existing Levels of Open Space Provision

- 5.41 The residents survey measured respondents' levels of satisfaction with existing levels of open space provision in their areas. These levels of satisfaction can help to identify whether improving open space provision is a community priority for particular areas of the Borough. Within Kingston as a whole, 84% of respondents were satisfied with levels of existing provision. This indicates general support for broadly maintaining the existing level of open space provision in the Borough. The South of the Borough is the only sub-area with a below-average level of satisfaction; 79% of respondents from this area were satisfied with open space provision in their local area. This level of satisfaction is still relatively high, and with only 8% of respondents from this particular area expressing dissatisfaction with open space provision, it is clear that in

all sub-areas of the Borough there is general support for maintaining existing levels of provision.

5.42 Opportunities to Increase Provision

5.43 There is little opportunity to increase provision within the Kingston area, apart from the conversion of spaces from one use to another. The need for additional space in the green belt is limited due to the accessibility of existing country parks and restricted existing opportunities to provide additional spaces in these areas.

APPLICATION OF PARK CATCHMENT AREAS

5.44 Figures 5.1 to 5.4 demonstrate the distribution of the different types of public parks throughout the Borough and identify their assumed catchment areas by foot, car and public transport in accordance with the criteria in the Parks Hierarchy (Table 4.1). This provides a basis for identifying the parts of the Borough which are not adequately served (in terms of access) by public parks.

5.45 The identification of areas of open space deficiency is sensitive both to the actual catchments adopted for different types of parks and the manner in which they are applied. People can often only enter parks via gates and they must either follow the street pattern or use available public transport services to reach the park. Busy roads and railway lines act as barriers severing the park from portions of its assumed catchment area.

5.46 It should be recognised that the process of identifying deficiencies is a desk-top application of the hierarchy catchments and does not take into account other criteria, e.g. quality and function, which also inform the catchment of a park. These issues are discussed further in Chapter 6.

Small Local Parks

5.47 The open space assessment identified 13 open spaces which fulfil the criteria of a Small Local Park. This includes some spaces which, despite meeting the correct size criteria for a Local Park, have been classified as a Small Local Park due to their more limited provision and facilities. In some cases Small Local Parks have the potential to meet demand for Local Parks where none are accessible, but in general these parks do not typically provide the range of provision that would be expected of a Local park.

5.48 Figure 5.1 identifies areas within Kingston which fall outside the 400m and 280m pedestrian catchment areas of Small Local Parks. It demonstrates that large areas of the Borough are outside the 400m catchment area of Small Local Parks, although some of the areas outside the 400m catchment area are served by larger Local Parks

which can fulfil the same function as Small Local Parks. It should therefore be noted that areas deficient in access to Small Local Parks may not be deficient in terms of access to parks in general (see Figure 5.5). Kingston wards with significant portions outside the 400m catchment for Small Local Parks include Coombe Hill, Beverley, Old Malden, Alexandra, Tolworth & Hook Rise and Chessington South.

Local Parks

- 5.49 The open space assessment identified 17 open spaces which fulfil the criteria of a Local Park and provide the range of facilities and recreational offerings typically expected of this type of open space.
- 5.50 Figure 5.2 identifies areas within Kingston which fall outside the 800m and 560m pedestrian catchment areas of Local Parks. It demonstrates that two significant areas of the Borough fall outside the 800m catchment areas of Local Parks – one in the far south of the Borough in Chessington South ward, and the other in the north of the Borough comprising parts of Coombe Hill and Coombe Vale wards. It is important to note, however, that both of these areas are served by larger parks which can fulfil the function of Local Parks. As is the case with Small Local Parks, areas deficient in access to Local Parks may not be deficient in access to parks in general (see Figure 5.5 for areas deficient in public parks). Areas outside the 800m catchment include a significant portions of Chessington South and Coombe Hill wards, as well as smaller portions of Coombe Vale and Old Malden wards.

District, Metropolitan and Regional Parks

- 5.51 The open space assessment identified one open space which fulfils the criteria of a District Park. There are no Metropolitan or Regional Parks in Kingston.
- 5.52 Figure 5.3 identifies the location of the one District Park (Manor Park) in Kingston and illustrates that there are many areas which fall outside the District Park catchment area of 1.2km. As Manor Park lies in the east of the Borough, all areas in the north, south and west of Kingston are beyond a 15-minute journey to this District Park. The 1.2km catchment area of Manor Park extends to cover the whole of Old Malden ward, the majority of St James ward and a small portion of Alexandra ward; all other wards in the Borough are outside the catchment area.
- 5.53 Figure 5.4 illustrates the 3.2km catchment areas assigned to the Metropolitan and Regional Parks located outside of, but bordering Kingston. It demonstrates that with the exception of the whole of Old Malden and portions of Alexandra, St James and Tolworth & Hook Rise wards, all other areas of the Borough fall within the catchment areas of these large parks. Therefore, with regards to Metropolitan and Regional

Parks, most of Kingston is adequately provided for despite the absence of such spaces within immediate Borough boundaries.

Park Deficiency Areas

5.54 Figure 5.5 identifies areas deficient in access to all public parks identified within the parks hierarchy. Park deficiency areas have been derived by considering pedestrian access to any form of public park (Metropolitan / Regional Parks, District Parks, Local Parks, Small Local Parks and Linear Open Spaces). Other open space provision, including all types of open space not included within the parks hierarchy, is excluded from this figure.

5.55 Those areas of the Borough deficient in access to public parks are defined as those which are further than 400m from any form of small local park and 800m from any other public park as illustrated by the purple shaded areas in Figure 5.5. The main areas include:

- Zone 1 – North region of Borough – area outside of the 800m catchment area which includes a large part of Coombe Hill ward and small portions, Coombe Vale;
- Zone 2 – Central region of the Borough – part of Surbiton Hill and small parts of Berrylands and Alexandra;
- Zone 3 – Southern tip of Borough – reasonably large area in sparsely inhabited region of Chessington South ward;

5.56 Table 5.6 demonstrates this deficiency on a ward basis and illustrates that Coombe Hill (24%) has public park deficiency areas which occupy a quarter of the total land area in the ward. The following wards have no areas public park deficiency; Canbury, Chessington North & Hook, Grove, Norbiton, Old Malden, St Marks, Tolworth & Hook Rise and Tudor. The total area of public park deficiency across the entire Borough is 209.66 ha.

Table 5.6 – Parks Deficiency by Ward

Ward	Deficiency Area (Ha)	Total Area (Ha)	% Deficient
Alexandra	0.73	268.66	0.27%
Berrylands	1.93	145.43	1%
Beverley	0.39	187.57	0%
Canbury	0.00	123.83	0%

Chessington North and Hook	0.00	193.81	0%
Chessington South	63.54	752.95	8%
Coombe Hill	83.11	442.55	19%
Coombe Vale	40.34	164.90	24%
Grove	0.00	192.30	0%
Norbiton	0.00	134.49	0%
Old Malden	0.00	180.00	0%
St James	0.03	216.60	0%
St Marks	0.00	137.69	0%
Surbiton Hill	19.64	165.50	12%
Tolworth and Hook Rise	0.00	260.10	0%
Tudor	0.00	158.01	0%
Total	209.71	3724.38	6%

Significance of Deficiency Areas

- 5.57 It is important for the assessment to relate quantitative deficiencies (as identified in Table 5.6 and illustrated in Figure 5.5) to the character, land uses, density and other needs of areas within the Borough. Interestingly, there is correlation between the public park deficiency areas shown in Figure 5.5 and lower density areas identified in Figure 3.2. Wards with a more suburban character tend to have significant concentrations of private open space which, although not accessible to the general public, provides relief from the built up area and contributes towards visual amenity.
- 5.58 Two examples of this are the park deficiency areas in the north of the Borough (Coombe Hill, Coombe Vale wards) and in the southern tip of the Borough (Chessington South ward) which lie in less densely populated suburban areas. Despite the higher concentration of private amenity space, the lack of publicly accessible park space in these areas is still significant, as these spaces do not support the range of functions which parks offer.

PROPOSED QUANTITY AND ACCESSIBILITY STANDARDS

PUBLIC PARK PROVISION

Quantitative Component

- 5.59 At present there is public park provision within the Borough of 1.12 ha per 1,000 population.

- 5.60 To sustain this level of provision and meet the needs of the Borough up to 2016 it is recommended that a minimum of six 2ha Local Parks would be required in order to meet the needs of areas public park deficiency identified in Figure 5.5. The quantity of public park provision should increase by some 12 ha (7%). In addition to alleviating existing public park deficiency in the Borough, this additional provision is necessary to meet deficiencies arising from an increase in the Borough's population to 2016. The additional parks may need to be brought forward at new open space sites or through the adaptation / redesign of existing spaces. The exact size of parks should reflect development constraints and opportunities.
- 5.61 The standard of provision to meet the needs of the Borough up to 2016, has been derived by taking existing levels of park provision (average per 1,000 population) + the additional provision required to address existing deficiencies in access (12 ha). The standard of provision is therefore 1.11ha of public park provision per 1,000 population (population based upon GLA projections for 2016 of 159,319).

Accessibility Component

- 5.62 The following access standards are recommended for inclusion within the LDF. The rationale for the standards broadly reflects the GLA parks hierarchy amended to reflect patterns of usage in the Borough, community expectations, the physical context of the Borough and potential to increase provision:
- All residents within the Borough should have access to a Regional or Metropolitan Park within 3.2km from home;
 - All residents within the Borough should have access to a District Park within 1.2km from home;
 - All residents within the Borough should have access to a Local Park within 800m from home;
 - All residents within the Borough should have access to a Small Local Park within 400m from home; and
 - All residents within the Borough should have access to an area of public park within 800m from home. The definition of a public park is as identified within the parks hierarchy defined within Chapter 4.
- 5.63 Quality standards in relation to public parks are considered in Chapter 6.

OPPORTUNITIES TO ALLEVIATE PUBLIC PARK QUANTITY AND ACCESS DEFICIENCIES

Addressing Deficiencies in Quantity

- 5.64 Proposals for new housing development should be accompanied by proposals to improve open space provision. The nature of such improvements should reflect the additional open space needs generated as a result of the proposed development.
- 5.65 If the proposed development is located within an identified area of public park deficiency, it will be necessary for additional land to be brought into public park use. The developer will be required to make a contribution towards the provision of a public park. It may be appropriate for such provision to be incorporated within the curtilage of the development or alternatively, a contribution to off-site provision may be appropriate.
- 5.66 If the proposed development is not located within an area which is deficient in either quantity or access to public open space provision, then consideration will be given to any deficiency in public park quality or value. The developer will be required to make a contribution towards the enhancement of the quality of public park provision including the range of facilities and their condition.

Adaptation of Other Forms of Open Space

- 5.67 Figure 5.6 identifies other forms of open space provision located within the park deficiency areas. It is possible to reduce park deficiency areas by upgrading the roles and range of functions provided at other publicly accessible open spaces and negotiating for community use of non-public open spaces. The other open spaces which are publicly accessible within the deficiency areas are identified below:
- Amenity Green Space;
 - Allotments;
 - Natural and Semi-Natural Urban Green Spaces; and
 - Outdoor Sports Facilities/ Private Playing Fields.
- 5.68 Measures to help address open space deficiencies are discussed in more detail in Chapter 10.

Opportunities to Alleviate Deficiencies

- 5.69 With reference to Figure 5.6, opportunities to alleviate deficiencies in public park provision are considered below:
- Chessington South – Site 306 has the potential to accommodate facilities to upgrade its status to a Local or Small Local Park, which would help alleviate park deficiency in the southern tip of the Borough.
 - Chessington South – Site 272 could accommodate additional facilities to upgrade its status to a Local Park, which could help to significantly reduce the deficiency area in Chessington South ward.
 - Surbiton Hill – Site 16 could accommodate children’s play or other facilities to upgrade its status to a Small Local Park and address the deficiency in the central region of the Borough.
 - Coombe Hill, Coombe Vale – Limited opportunities exist to upgrade publicly accessible spaces to public park status within the deficiency area. Although small green spaces are numerous, many of these are owned by private schools and are not accessible to the public. Remaining large green spaces in this area are privately-run recreational grounds (golf courses, cricket clubs, etc.).
- 5.70 Large parts of the Borough are outside of the 1.2km catchment area of a District Park. This is because, as discussed above, the only District Park in Kingston lies in the far east of the Borough. District Parks have a larger range of facilities than Local and Small Local Parks, so any deficiency in access to these spaces may be addressed by improving facilities at existing smaller public parks.
- 5.71 Metropolitan and Regional Parks will also be able to fulfil the role that District Parks play in providing a range of facilities for Borough residents. Figure 5.4 illustrates that the three Metropolitan and two Regional Parks immediately bordering Kingston have catchment areas which effectively extend to cover all but a small eastern part of the Borough, much of which falls into the District Park catchment area of Manor Park. Therefore, the deficiency of District Parks across much of the Borough is not of great significance as most of these areas will fall within the 3.2km catchment area of the bordering Metropolitan and Regional Parks.
- 5.72 However, even when taking into account the role of Metropolitan and Regional Parks outside the Borough, some eastern portions of Alexandra and Tolworth & Hook Rise wards will still fall outside the catchment of a District Park. Sites 102 (King Georges Field) and 46 (public open space) are currently Local Parks which could fulfil District Park status with the addition of extra facilities, such as improved children’s play and recreational facilities. Natural and semi-natural greenspaces also have the potential

to fulfil the role of District Parks, provided that they are upgraded to include a wider range of facilities.

Improving Public Park Accessibility

- 5.73 It will be important to consider what practical measures could be undertaken to extend the present catchments. Such measures could include creating more park gates, or establishing clearly sign posted routes to parks that avoid busy roads. Quiet roads could be 'greened' to enable safe access to a network of parks.
- 5.74 The information collected on non-public spaces within these areas of deficiency can also be interrogated to assess whether they could play a role in meeting the deficiencies. The quality of facilities and condition of open spaces should also be taken into account when prioritising investment. In areas deficient in public parks and where there are limited opportunities to increase supply, either by creating new spaces, improving other types of public open spaces, or by increasing public access to private spaces, the only way of addressing deficiency will be to ensure that the potential of existing spaces is fully realised and there is improved access to them where possible. This is discussed in the next chapter.
- 5.75 At the Metropolitan / Regional / District Park level efforts should be made to improve the accessibility of these parks by public transport through the creation of better links between parks and major public transport routes or, where this is not possible, considering how routes to parks from transport stops and interchanges could be sign-posted and made more pleasant.
- 5.76 The PPG17 companion guide recognises the importance of the predisposition of individuals to use parks and relative attraction of different parks. A highly motivated and mobile user may be prepared to travel further to reach a park than the average person while another person living immediately adjacent to the same park may never visit it at all. Similarly the varying quality and attractiveness of parks is an important factor in people's use of open spaces. The importance of qualitative considerations is discussed further in the next chapter.
- 5.77 Chapter 10 identifies measures for enhancing the existing green network concentrating on areas which are currently deficient in public park provision.

PLANNING CHILDREN'S PLAY PROVISION

- 5.78 Open space provides an important role in serving children's play needs. It is widely acknowledged that the importance of children's play extends far beyond the activity itself but contributes towards child development through the development of a wide range of physical, social and emotional skills and abilities. The key issues relating to

children's play are the nature and location of play, the influence of age and gender, safety and risk issues and consideration of the types of play environments needed to meet play needs.

Location of Play

5.79 The outdoor environment is a key environment for children's play particularly during summer months. Play takes place in a range of environments many of which are not planned play environments, including the street, back gardens and 'natural/wild' areas such as woods, areas of wasteland, disused buildings, back alleys and garage areas in addition to conventional planned play areas. All of these spaces afford opportunities for play and a range of different experiences which are likely to appeal to particular groups of children. Studies of children's play have emphasised the appeal and use of unofficial play areas in addition to planned children's play areas.

Age and Gender

5.80 Age and gender strongly influence the nature and type of play. Coffin and Williams (1989)⁷ suggest a five-fold evolution of play over the course of childhood:

- Toddlers aged 1-3 tend to play alongside rather than with other children. Activity focuses upon experimentation with new found abilities and role play;
- Pre-school children show higher levels of inquisitiveness, practice new physical skills, enjoy constructional play and begin to acquire skills in social play;
- Primary school children (aged 5-10) commonly develop interests in the environment (animals and plants in particular) and explore environments more widely. They continue to enjoy constructional play and play involving movement, ball play and wheeled objects. This age group is highly sociable.
- Older children (aged 10-13) are more competitive, show wider incidence of sexes playing apart and roam further from home. Playing games and organised activities is important for this group and more time may be spent in conversational and social activity. Constructional and movement play continues to be important; and
- Adolescents (aged 14-16) display more focused patterns of activity, including interests in hobbies, music and dance; greater independence which may be reflected in informal street based groups, and some return to mixed group activity. It is debatable whether this group actually recognise their actions as 'play'.

⁷ Coffin, G. and Williams, M. (1989) Children's Outdoor Play in the Built Environment, London: National Children's Play and Recreation Unit.

5.81 Parkinson (1987)⁸ notes the influence of gender both on locations of play and the distance from home. Females are more likely to go on organised outings and play in the garden at home. In comparison boys are more likely to play in the street or at a friend's house. Both sexes utilised planned playgrounds although boys tended to patronise facilities located further from home. As children get older there is a greater desire for more adventurous, risk taking activities outside of controlled environments which may include negotiation and testing boundaries. Parkinson notes that these activities are part of growing up and are necessary in order to provide a degree of challenge and excitement for older children.

Safety and Risk

5.82 Parental perceptions of risk and safety influence patterns of play including when and where children may play and with whom, although parental influences decrease with age. The need for parental supervision (perceived or actual) is particularly strong in relation to toddlers and pre-school children, although supervision of primary and older is increasingly common. Behaviour patterns of parents with children have altered significantly in response to growing fears over safety of children particularly relating to car and cycle accidents, assaults, and abductions, accidents whilst at play, drug taking and substance abuse and anti social behaviour. Despite the fact that the risk of accidents is relatively small, parents seek to place restrictions on their children's mobility and independence in response to these concerns and anxieties which leads to more localised patterns of play or a greater degree of supervised play including parents transporting children from a to b.

5.83 Within the context of the issues identified above traditional forms of children's play provision have been criticised. Some forms of equipped play areas can be almost valueless in meeting the developmental needs of children. The design of play areas has also been criticised for taking the needs and concerns of adults such as noise and disturbance more seriously than children's play needs. Williams (1995)⁹ notes several problems with existing patterns of children's play provision including:

- An over-emphasis on unsupervised play areas containing fixed equipment rather than informal play opportunities;
- The pre-occupation with safety surfaces resulting in the creation of unchallenging environments directed primarily at younger children; and
- A strong emphasis on the 'containment' of children within dedicated 'play' areas to discourage young people congregating in other areas.

⁸ Parkinson, C.E. (1987) *Where Children Play: An Analysis of Interviews About Where Children Aged 5-14 Normally Play and their Preference for Out of School Activities*, Birmingham. Association for Children's Play and Recreation.

⁹ Williams (1995) *Outdoor Recreation and the Urban Environment*, Routledge, London.

- 5.84 To overcome these problems Williams identifies the need to engage children and young people in the identification and design of play opportunities as part of the planning process in order that play environments meet local needs and priorities.

Standards of Play Provision

- 5.85 There are currently no adopted national standards relating to children's play provision. However, a structured approach to the planning and provision of children's play areas has been developed by the National Playing Fields Association (NPFA). The standards of provision recommended by the NPFA were revised in 2001 and reflect changing views towards children's play provision. In particular the guidelines emphasise the need to provide both designated areas and casual play opportunities which respond to the needs of different age groups and which are of value to the development of children and young people.
- 5.86 The NPFA recommends a minimum standard of outdoor space for children's play of 0.8 hectares per 1000 people by:
- Providing Local Areas for Play (LAPs), Local Equipped Areas for Play (LEAPs) and Neighbourhood Equipped Areas for Play (NEAPs) in locations based upon walking time; and
 - Providing the balance as casual playing space within areas of amenity open space.
- 5.87 This study has identified provision for children's play in Kingston. It has also included an assessment of the role of open space for informal children's play as well as dedicated play provision in the form of dedicated play areas. Dedicated children's play provision within parks and private spaces was assessed against the NPFA criteria for classification as a LEAP or NEAP through the site assessments, with the full range of criteria outlined in the guide to the pro-forma included in Appendix A. Additionally, the assessment included consideration of the number and range of types of activities/opportunities available, provision of informal and hard surface play areas, safety issues and provision of other amenities (seating, bins etc).
- 5.88 Of the 318 open spaces, 28 sites have some kind of children's play provision. All 28 sites are managed by Kingston Council, and of these, 20 have been assessed as part of the open space survey.
- 5.89 Table 5.7 shows that 7 children's play areas fulfil the criteria set by the NPFA for a LEAP, one open space qualifies as a NEAP, and 20 play areas do not qualify as either a LEAP or a NEAP ('Other'). However, many of these 20 play areas fulfil some of the criteria for a LEAP and could be classified as such if minor improvements were

made to them. Similarly, some spaces which are classified as LEAPs could be reclassified as NEAPs if minor improvements were made.

Table 5.7 – Dedicated Children’s Play Provision

Type of Children’s Play Provision (excluding schools)	No. of Open Spaces	% of Total Open Spaces*
LEAP	7	2.2%
NEAP	1	0.3%
Other	20	6.3%
No Children’s Play Provision	252	91.2%
Total	318	100.0%

5.90 Although some of the children’s play sites that did not meet the LEAP or NEAP criteria were located within the grounds of public housing estates and offered only 2 or 3 different items of play equipment, several play sites did offer a significant number of play equipment pieces. Whilst many of the less well-equipped sites would not be able to upgrade to LEAP status due to space constraints, they might still perform an important role where the nearest LEAP is further than 400m away.

5.91 Table 5.8 categorises the 28 children’s play areas according to the age of children catered for in each space. The majority of spaces (19) have provision for both younger and older children, whilst five spaces cater exclusively for children under 7 and four spaces cater exclusively for children over 13.

Table 5.8 – Ages of Children Catered for at Play Areas

Provision Age	No. of Children’s Play Areas with Provision
Under 7	5
Over 13	4
Provision for Both Under 7 and Over 13	19
Total	28

5.92 Of the 28 sites with children’s play facilities, 20 of these were assessed in terms of their condition. The condition of children’s play provision in Kingston was scored according to its range and type of play equipment and other facilities including provision of seating, skateboarding facility, rebound wall, hard playing surface, informal games area, absorbing safety surface and play area boundary. This score was used to classify the condition of children’s play, as shown in Table 5.9.

Table 5.9 – Condition of Children’s Play Provision

Quality of Children’s Play Provision (excluding schools)	No. of Children’s Play Areas	% of Play Areas with Assessment of Condition*
Good	7	35%
Fair	12	60%
Poor	1	5%
Not Assessed	8	N/A
Total	28	100%

* Based on total of 20 play areas for which a condition survey was undertaken.

5.93 Of the sample of 20 spaces where a condition survey was undertaken, 60% of children’s play areas in Kingston were assessed to be in ‘fair’ condition. The remainder are mostly in ‘good’ condition (35%) with only one site considered to be in ‘poor’ condition. To improve the quality of individual play spaces, existing spaces should aim to fulfil the criteria set out by the NPFA to qualify as a LEAP.

Access to Children’s Play Provision

5.94 The distribution of children’s play provision is shown in Figure 5.7. Although the distribution of children’s play areas within open spaces is relatively even across the Borough, there are significant areas within the Surbiton and Maldens & Coombe neighbourhoods where open spaces with dedicated children’s play areas are not provided. Figure 5.7 identifies areas of the Borough which are outside the 280m and 400m catchment areas of formally provided children’s play facilities.

5.95 Wards which are specifically affected by a deficiency in children’s play facilities include Coombe Hill, St James, Surbiton Hill, and Tolworth and Hook Rise. By adding children’s play facilities to existing parks and open spaces, these areas of deficiency could be dramatically reduced.

5.96 The distribution of play areas, and those areas that are deficient in children’s play provision are outlined below by ward:

- Coombe Hill – Although there is only one children’s play area in this ward, it is classified as a LEAP and is of good quality. Approximately 80% of the ward does not have access to a play area within 400m (some of this deficiency may be met by provision across the Borough boundary).
- Coombe Vale – Two play areas were identified in this ward, one of which is the only play in the entire Borough classified as a NEAP.

- Beverley – There are three play areas in this ward, one of which is classified as a LEAP. Of the three play areas, two are in fair condition, whilst there is no information on the condition of the third.
- St James – Primary provision comes from the children's play facilities at the Borough's only District Park, Manor Park. This play area is classified as a LEAP and is in good condition.
- Old Malden – Although this area does not have any children's play areas located within its ward boundaries, play areas in neighbouring wards have catchment areas which extend across its borders with a fairly high level of provision.
- Tudor – There is strong provision of children's play areas in this ward, with four facilities located there. One of these four is classified as a LEAP, and only a very small area of this ward remains deficient in access to children's play facilities.
- Canbury – This ward has one children's play area in fair condition. Provision in neighbouring wards extends to Canbury to meet some of its need for play facilities.
- Norbiton – This ward is well-served, particularly by provision in surrounding wards. There is one play facility of fair quality in Norbiton.
- Grove – Although there are two play facilities in the ward, areas in the south and west are deficient in access to children's play facilities. Neither of the two facilities are classified as a LEAP or NEAP.
- St Marks – The central portion of the ward does not have sufficient children's play provision, but the two facilities in the ward help to meet the needs of the eastern and western portions. One of these play areas is classified as a LEAP.
- Berrylands – There are no children's play facilities in the ward. Provision in neighbouring wards does meet some of the need, but approximately 50% of the ward is not served by children's play areas.
- Surbiton Hill – As with Berrylands, there are no children's play facilities in the ward. There is minimal provision extending from other wards, and as such a large majority of the ward lies outside the 400m catchment area for play facilities.
- Alexandra – Three play facilities along the western and eastern border of the ward create a fair level of provision for the ward. However, there may be an issue with the quality of these play spaces; one is in fair condition, one is in poor condition, and there is no information regarding the condition of the third.
- Tolworth and Hook Rise – There are no children's play facilities in the ward, and little provision from neighbouring wards spills over. Approximately 85% of the ward is outside the 400m catchment areas of play facilities in surrounding wards.

- Chessington North and Hook – This ward is very well served with children’s play facilities. There are three play areas in the ward, one of which is a LEAP in fair condition.
- Chessington South – Although there are large areas within this ward which fall outside the 400m catchment areas for children’s play areas, there are five play areas which provide a reasonable level of amenity for local residents. One of these play areas is a LEAP in good condition.

PROPOSED QUANTITY, ACCESSIBILITY AND QUALITY STANDARDS

Quantitative and Accessibility Component

- 5.97 There are significant areas within Kingston which are deficient in access to dedicated children’s play areas. In order to ameliorate those deficiencies in access, it is recommended that additional opportunities for both formal and informal children’s play are brought forward.
- 5.98 The following access standards are recommended for adoption.
- Residents should have access to 0.8 ha per 1,000 population of children’s play provision consistent with the NPFA play area size standards. Provision could take the form of dedicated open space provision or form part of an other type of publicly accessible open space (e.g. public park, natural or semi-natural greenspace);
 - All residents within the Borough should have access to areas of formal and informal play provision for children and teenagers within 400m from home.
- 5.99 Proposals for new housing development should be accompanied by proposals to improve children’s play provision. The nature of such improvements should reflect the additional play provision needs generated as a result of the proposed development. The exact form of play provision should be identified following consultation with the local community to identify local priorities.
- 5.100 If the proposed development is located within an identified area of deficiency for children’s play provision it will be necessary for additional land to be brought into use for the purposes of children’s play. The developer will be required to make a contribution towards the provision for children and teenagers. It may be appropriate for such provision to be incorporated within the curtilage of the proposed development. Alternatively, a contribution to off-site provision may be appropriate.
- 5.101 If the proposed development is not located within an area which is deficient in access to formal children’s play provision then consideration should be given to any

deficiency in quality or value of existing children's play provision. The developer will be required to make a contribution towards the enhancement of the quality of existing provision which may include improving the range facilities for particular age groups not well served at present and improving the condition of facilities provided.

Qualitative Component

- 5.102 Children's play provision within the Borough should be of adequate quality and provide the range of facilities associated with the size of the facility. The NPFA 6 acre Standard (2001) should be used to assess levels of adequacy in terms of the range and quality of provision.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Distribution of Open Space

- 5.103 Kingston has a relatively low quantity of public parks with some 1.12 ha of public park space per 1,000 population. The provision of public parks equates to approximately 20% of the total area of open space in the Borough. However several large public parks in adjoining Boroughs help to meet some needs within Kingston.
- 5.104 Those areas of the Borough which are deficient in access to public parks include portions of Coombe Hill, Coombe Vale, Surbiton Hill, Berrylands and Chessington South wards. There are some other publicly accessible open spaces, all of which include amenity greenspace, public playing fields and natural and semi-natural greenspace, which may have the potential to address the lack of public park provision by providing additional facilities.
- 5.105 The hierarchy of open space has been amended and the typology of open space expanded to reflect the findings of the Residents Survey and the roles of different open space types, and accessibility issues in Kingston.
- 5.106 A public parks standard of 1.11 ha per 1,000 population is proposed for new development in the Borough based upon established levels of provision per 1,000 population and the additional provision required to address both existing deficiencies in public park access and future deficiencies arising from an increasing population to 2016.
- 5.107 The study has identified locally based park access standards based upon existing patterns of usage, travel patterns and community perceptions and expectations. All residents should have access to public park provision of some form within 800m of home. Appropriate access to Local Park, District and Metropolitan Park provision should also be provided in accordance with the standards identified.

- 5.108 Measures to extend the existing catchments of existing parks will need to be considered in order to reduce deficiencies in access. Measures will be different for each park but could include creating more park gates, 'greening' of routes and better signposting. Priority areas for improvement are discussed in more detail in Chapter 10.
- 5.109 This study has identified provision for children's play in Kingston. 28 open spaces have dedicated provision of children's play areas, with 8 of these spaces fulfilling the criteria associated with the NPFA LEAP and NEAP classifications. However, a number of open spaces with 'Other children's play provision' fulfil some of the criteria for a LEAP and could meet this quality standard if minor improvements were made to the play space. Similarly, some spaces currently categorised as a LEAP could be reclassified as a NEAP with minor improvements.
- 5.110 The assessment identifies the areas deficient in access to formally provided children's play provision but also identifies other publicly accessible open spaces which may have the potential to incorporate dedicated children's play facilities and help reduce deficiencies in the Borough.

6. QUALITY OF SUPPLY

INTRODUCTION

- 6.1 Research undertaken by the Green Space Task Force highlights the importance that users of open spaces place on quality of facilities and condition of landscape.
- 6.2 As qualitative factors are often difficult to assess objectively, it is important to establish a methodology to enable the consistent scoring and ranking of the condition and quality of spaces. Many aspects of open space quality raise detailed issues of park management and maintenance which are beyond the scope of this study.
- 6.3 Quality Assessment
- 6.4 The quality assessment has been conducted for each of the 55 privately managed sites that were surveyed (Figure 1.2). Site Surveys of 35 public parks in the Kingston were also carried out in order that a quality assessment of the Boroughs main parks could be completed.
- 6.5 The range and condition of facilities within each open space were assessed using a scoring criteria method derived from the Civic Trust Green Flag standard assessment. The standard is based partly on a physical site appraisal of 27 criteria relating to the range, quality and condition of park facilities and park management arrangements which accounts for 70% of the overall score and a desk research element which comprises of the remaining 30% of the score.
- 6.6 The open space assessment included consideration of 18 green flag criteria which could be assessed through a visual appraisal of the site. The dimensions of quality considered were:
- The conservation of natural features;
 - The conservation of landscape features;
 - The conservation of buildings and structures;
 - The provision of educational interpretation facilities;

- Standards of arboricultural and woodland management;
- Whether the space was welcoming;
- The accessibility of a site and the safety of site access;
- How well signposted the space is;
- Whether there is equality of access to and within the space;
- The safety of equipment and facilities;
- Levels of personal security within the space;
- Evidence of dog fouling and availability of appropriate provision (designated bins, dog walks);
- The appropriate provision of facilities for the type of space;
- The quality of facilities;
- The cleanliness of a site including litter and waste management arrangements;
- Standards of grounds maintenance and horticulture;
- Standards of building and infrastructure maintenance; and
- Standards of equipment maintenance.

6.7 The criteria which were not assessed related to the sustainability of management and maintenance practices (4 criteria), the level of community involvement (2 criteria), marketing and promotion (2 criteria) and implementation of the park management plan (1 criterion).

6.8 Each of the 18 criteria was attributed a score between 0 and 10, where 0 is considered to be very poor and 10 is considered to be exceptional. The score for each of the criterion was evaluated against a range of issues relating to each factor these are described fully within the guide to the site survey pro-forma (refer to Appendix A). The green flag scoring system used to assess each criteria within the standard is as follows:

- 0-1 Very Poor;
- 2-4 Poor;
- 5-6 Fair;
- 7 Good;

- 8 Very Good;
 - 9 Excellent;
 - 10 Exceptional.
- 6.9 Not all of the criteria were applicable to each type of open space (e.g. conservation of buildings, equipment maintenance). Therefore an average score was derived for each open space based upon those aspects of quality considered. However, a percentage score was also calculated which assumed all 18 quality variables.
- 6.10 The minimum quality standard required for an open space to reach the Green Flag standard is 66% (taking account of the desk top and site based aspects of the assessment). The open space must achieve an overall score of more than 60% on the site based assessment.
- 6.11 Figure 6.1 shows the distributions of open spaces (public parks & privately managed spaces) across the Borough according to their overall quality scores. It should be noted that 90 spaces out of 318 within the Borough were assessed as part of the study and therefore the figure only shows the quality of assessed open spaces. It is evident that whilst none of these 90 spaces are scored as “very poor”, a few are scored as “poor”. Overall, the findings of the quality assessment of these 90 spaces are encouraging, with the majority of spaces rated as “fair” or “good”. Tudor, Canbury, Coombe Hill, St James, Alexandra and Chessington South wards all have open spaces rated as “very good”.
- 6.12 Table 6.1 provides an indication of how each type of open space performs against the 18 Green Flag criteria assessed on site. However, it is important to note that this only provides an indication of quality for those sites assessed and therefore is not an accurate reflection of the quality in each of the open space types.
- 6.13 The average score shows the average of those variables scored at each site. Whilst the “Average all criteria column” provides an indicator of how each site fares against all 18 criteria and represents the overall quality of each open space type. This average score takes into account all of the total possible assessment variables mentioned above. The main public parks were assessed and therefore the average figures for the quality of parks provide a good indication of the quality at the 36 main parks within the Borough.

Table 6.1 – Quality Assessment by Space Type (Overall Average Scores)

Open Space Type	Average (all criteria)	Average assessed criteria	Number of Sites in Category which were surveyed
District Park	6.06	6.41	1
Local Park	5.19	6.12	17
Small Local Park	4.65	6.05	11
Provision for Children and Teenagers	2.89	4.33	1
Linear open space/green corridors	4.36	5.70	5
Amenity Green Space	4.83	6.71	4
Greenspaces within Grounds of Institution	6.48	7.29	3
Natural or Semi Natural	3.47	5.61	22
Outdoors Sports Facilities	6.18	6.91	23
Other	4.72	6.33	3
Total Average	4.91	6.22	90

- 6.14 Table 6.2 demonstrates the average scores for various green flag categories for different open space types. The scores used are the average assessed criteria for scores derived from the variables assessed and do not include the variables which did not apply to the space. The Green Flag minimum score of 6.6 serves as a standard against which to evaluate the quality of each open space type across the various categories.
- 6.15 It is evident that the provision of educational information is generally lacking, at an average score across all types of open spaces of 4.5, which falls within the 'poor' category. As the category with the lowest average score, the provision of educational information has the greatest potential for improvement. Signage (5.5) and equal access for all (5.8) also receive average scores which fall into the 'fair' category. The highest average scores relate to the conservation of buildings and structures (6.9), litter and waste management (6.8) and safe equipment and facilities (6.7).

Table 6.2 – Quality Assessment: Average Scores for Each Space Type According to Different ‘Green Flag’ Categories

Open Space Type	Welcoming	Good and safe access	Signage	Equal access for all	Safe equipment and facilities	Personal Security	Dog Fouling	Appropriate Provision of Facilities	Quality of facilities	Litter and waste management	Grounds Maintenance and Horticulture	Building Infrastructure and Maintenance	Equipment Maintenance	Conservation of Natural Features	Conservation of Landscape Features	Conservation of buildings and structures	Arboriculture	Provision of educational information
District Park	7.0	7.0	7.0	6.0	7.0	6.0	7.0	7.0	7.0	7.0	6.0	6.0	6.0	6.0	5.0	6.0	6.0	N/A
Local Park	6.4	6.3	4.9	6.0	6.6	6.8	6.3	6.3	6.2	6.5	6.5	5.8	5.8	6.0	6.3	5.8	6.0	3.7
Small Local Park	6.4	6.3	5.1	6.2	6.3	6.5	6.1	6.2	5.7	6.3	5.7	5.8	5.9	7.0	6.7	6.0	7.0	4.5
Provision for Children and Teenagers	2.0	3.0	3.0	3.0	N/A	4.0	5.0	5.0	N/A	5.0	5.0	N/A	N/A	6.0	6.0	N/A	6.0	N/A
Linear Open Space	5.2	5.2	4.6	5.4	5.2	5.6	5.2	6.6	5.8	6.4	6.0	7.0	5.7	7.0	7.0	N/A	7.0	N/A
Amenity Green Space	6.3	6.8	5.0	5.8	6.0	7.5	7.7	6.5	6.3	6.5	7.0	7.0	6.0	7.0	7.3	7.0	7.0	N/A
Greenspaces within grounds of institution	6.7	7.0	7.0	7.0	7.7	8.3	N/A	7.3	7.0	8.0	7.3	8.0	7.3	6.3	7.0	8.0	6.3	N/A
Natural or Semi Natural Greenspace	5.2	5.2	5.0	5.0	6.3	5.6	6.0	5.9	6.5	6.3	5.7	6.3	6.0	6.6	6.3	6.5	6.6	N/A
Outdoor Sports Facilities	6.7	6.5	6.3	6.2	7.3	7.3	7.3	7.3	7.3	7.7	7.3	7.0	7.0	6.2	6.9	7.0	6.2	7.0
Other	6.5	7.0	6.5	6.5	7.0	8.0	N/A	6.0	6.0	7.3	6.3	7.3	7.0	5.0	5.7	7.0	5.0	N/A
Average All Spaces	6.1	6.0	5.5	5.8	6.7	6.6	6.3	6.5	6.5	6.8	6.4	6.5	6.4	6.3	6.6	6.9	6.3	4.5

- 6.16 Although Table 6.2 demonstrates that the 'provision for children and teenagers' open space type scores consistently low, with scores for all categories below the Green Flag standard of 6.6, it should be recognised that only one of this type of open space was assessed.
- 6.17 With regard to only the open space types which classify as public parks (District Park, Local Park, Small Local Park and Linear Open Space), the District Park category tends to have higher scores across most criteria. It must be recognised, however, that only one open space is classified as a District Park. The scores for Local Parks, Small Local Parks and Linear Open Spaces consistently fall below the Green Flag standard of 6.6. Key quality issues for these three types of public parks relate to signage, quality of facilities, equipment maintenance, conservation of buildings and structures and provision of educational information.
- 6.18 Greenspaces within grounds of institutions have the most positive scores of all the open space types, with average scores for a strong majority (14/18) of criteria above the 6.6 Green Flag standard. Outdoor sports facilities also have highly positive scores across the various Green Flag categories; this type of open space has above-average scores for 13 of the 18 categories.
- 6.19 Local Parks and natural or semi-natural greenspaces have the lowest number of above-average quality scores; each of these spaces has scores above the Green Flag standard of 6.6 for only two of the 18 categories. Small Local Parks also have a low number of scores equal to or greater than 6.6, with scores for only three categories meeting the Green Flag standard.
- 6.20 Table 6.2 demonstrates that the criteria on which all open space types score highest are building infrastructure and maintenance (scores range from 5.8-8.0) and conservation of buildings and structures (scores range from 5.8-7.0). The quality categories with the highest number of open space types receiving scores above or equal to 6.6 include safe equipment and facilities, personal security, building infrastructure and maintenance and conservation of landscape features. These four categories each have five open spaces types with scores over the 6.6 Green Flag standard.
- 6.21 An important aspect to a qualitative assessment is the need to integrate decision-making on park improvements with the assessment of the quantity and accessibility of provision. In areas deficient in public open space and where there are limited opportunities to increase supply, either by the creation of new spaces, or by increasing public access to private spaces, the only way of addressing deficiency will be to ensure that the potential of existing spaces is fully realised where appropriate, and there is improved access to them where possible.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- 6.22 Open space policy has been primarily concerned with the quantity and distribution of open space. This study updates this information but also considers the range and condition of facilities within open spaces and the quality of those facilities.
- 6.23 Open spaces can fulfil many urban needs often in highly sustainable ways. They are generally local facilities accessible to people of all ages and backgrounds. They can be used for exercise, education, meeting people, community events, and to encourage the movement of flora and fauna. They also contribute to the visual amenity of a local area, breaking up the urban fabric and providing an escape from the traffic and built environment.
- 6.24 In order to fully understand the quality of open spaces within Kingston there will be a need to complete an assessment of quality for those Council-managed spaces not audited as part of this study.
- 6.25 The analysis undertaken in this chapter illustrates that some of the parks do not provide a typical range of facilities. The characteristics identified within the parks hierarchy should be used as a guide to illustrate the range of amenities that people might expect.
- 6.26 A strategy for improving the range and condition of facilities within parks should be developed to take into account:
- The unique character of these parks and the potential to incorporate further facilities;
 - Whether there is a deficiency in the provision of open space in the area;
 - The proximity of other parks which may have an oversupply of certain facilities; and
 - The local social conditions (Chapter 3).
- 6.27 The companion guide to PPG17 (2002) suggests that an understanding of the Borough's characteristics will help to inform the priority given to different parts of the Strategy and can identify possible priorities for open space improvements. Chapter 7 develops a priority matrix to relate the quality and value of existing provision to local need to provide framework for identifying future investment priorities.
- 6.28 Investment in improved provision should be tied to a tailor-made management plan for each individual park. The 1995 Comedia report 'Park Life – Urban Parks and Social Renewal' (p 79) recommends that this would involve as a minimum:

- Defining the purpose of each park and open space;
- Undertaking at least a minimal form of survey to establish who uses the park and what for;
- Re-formulating budgets so that expenditure is tied to objectives; and
- Developing new guidelines for open space that are more flexible and responsive to needs.

6.29 Consultation with local user groups and other stakeholders can help to define the sorts of facilities, amenities and activities that might be required in a certain area. The Residents' Survey identifies the sorts of improvements people would like to see to existing open spaces (discussed in Chapter 3).

PROPOSED QUALITY STANDARD

Public Parks

6.30 Public parks within the Borough should be of good quality and provide the range of facilities associated with their respective tier of the parks hierarchy. The Green Flag assessment identifies spaces with a ranking of 6 or above to be considered as good quality. Those public parks which under perform either in terms of their value to the local community or their condition should be improved consistent with the guidelines identified. Open spaces identified within Chapter 10 for improvement should be prioritised.

7. VALUE OF OPEN SPACE

INTRODUCTION

7.1 Value is a different and separate concept from quality. It relates to three things:

- Context: a space which is inaccessible may be of little value, irrespective of its quality. If there is a high level of open space provision in an area some of it may be of relatively little value, conversely if there is very little provision even a space of mediocre quality may be highly valuable.
- Level and type of use: context should also be interpreted in terms of use by people and wildlife.
- The wider benefits it generates for people, biodiversity and the wider environment.

7.2 The benefits and value of open spaces to local communities extends beyond their active recreational role. Both public and private open spaces perform recreational and non-recreational roles contributing to community and quality of life. These roles are examined under the following headings:

- Recreational;
- Structural;
- Amenity;
- Historical / Heritage;
- Ecological;
- Educational;
- Cultural; and
- Social.

7.3 The recreational value of open spaces in Kingston has been assessed by considering the recreational roles performed at each site and indications of informal use.

- 7.4 Non-recreational roles relate the value or function of an open space to the structure or amenity of the Borough as a whole. Open spaces with significant ecological or nature conservation value are identified later in this chapter and proposals are made to improve the accessibility of local residents to areas of nature conservation.
- 7.5 The educational, cultural and social roles relate to indirect benefits and values associated with presence and use of open spaces. Assessment of the additional benefits and value offered by individual open spaces is significant when considering their importance.

RECREATIONAL VALUE

- 7.6 The recreational value of open spaces in Kingston has assessed by considering the recreational roles performed at each site and the indicators of informal use. Active recreational roles include pitch sports, other outdoor sports and other active recreational activities such as allotment gardening. Informal recreational activities include walking and dog walking, children's play, teenagers 'hanging out', sitting out, relaxation and other pastimes such as remembrance at memorial gardens and cemeteries.
- 7.7 A recreation score was derived for each open space based upon the number of active and informal recreational roles each space performed, whether they represented a major or minor role within the open space, whether there was dedicated provision or whether the activity was supported informally. Appendix D provides further details of the scoring system used to assess recreational value. A standardised % score for each space was derived.
- 7.8 Table 7.1 identifies the number, and percentage, of open spaces within the Borough which performed selected active and informal recreational roles. It also identifies whether these roles were major or minor and whether the provision was deemed 'dedicated' or 'informal'.
- 7.9 A major role is defined as where either 40% of the site area or estimated usage is dedicated to the role identified. A minor role was identified where the activity represented a lower level of usage or land take. 'Dedicated provision' is defined as a site where equipment designed for that particular recreational use is evident, with 'informal provision' defined as a site where the recreational activity takes place without such equipment. The % columns for the minor and major role, and for the dedicated and informal provision, show what % of the sites offer opportunities for each form of recreation.

Table 7.1 – Recreational Role of Open Spaces (Parks & Privately Managed Open Spaces)

Recreation Type	Any Recreational Role		Major Role		Minor Role		Dedicated provision		Informal Provision	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Active Recreation										
Pitch Sports	37	41	29	32	8	9	29	32	6	6.6
Court Sports	27	30	3	3.3	24	26.6	30	33.3	0	0
Golf/Putting	2	2.2	2	2.2	0	0	2	2.2	0	0
Watersports	2	2.2	0	0	2	2.2	1	1.1	0	0
Noisy Sports	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Other Activity	11	12.2	5	5.5	6	6.6	10	11.1	1	1.1
Informal Recreation										
Walking/Dog										
Walking	51	56.6	21	23.3	30	33.3	12	13.3	38	42.2
Children's Play	19	21.1	3	3.3	16	17.7	19	21.1	0	0
Teenagers Hanging out	11	12.2	0	0	11	12.2	0	0	10	11.1
Sitting										
Out/Relaxation	52	57.7	13	14.4	39	43.3	27	30	25	27.7
Cycling	13	14.4	1	1.1	12	13.3	3	3.3	10	11.1
Other Activity	3	3.3	1	1.1	2	2.2	2	2.2	1	1.1

Includes the information for 90 open spaces surveyed as part of this study

- 7.10 Table 7.1 illustrates that the most common role which those open spaces that were assessed perform is for walking/dog walking followed by sitting out/relaxation. Of the assessed sites a reasonably high proportion (41%) accommodated some form of pitch sports; however this reflects the fact that a high proportion of the assessed sites were private sports grounds, or school playing fields, and may not be representative of the overall picture in Kingston.
- 7.11 Table 7.2 sets out the recreational use that is evident at the Council owned sites that were not assessed as part of this study. The analysis is based on the existing information provided by Royal Borough of Kingston about dedicated recreational facilities at each open space. Council information does not distinguish whether the recreational role is major or minor, it simply represents whether facilities for each of the recreational roles are present.

Table 7.2 - Recreational Role of Open Spaces (Other Open Spaces)

Recreational Role		
Recreation Type	No.	%*
Active Recreation		
Pitch Sports	16	7
Court Sports	4	1.8
Golf/Putting	1	0.4
Watersports	No info	N/A
Noisy Sports	0	0
Other Activity	4	1.8
Informal Recreation		
Walking/Dog Walking	101	44.3
Children's Play	7	3.1
Teenagers Hanging out	No info	N/A
Sitting Out/Relaxation	58	25.4
Cycling	3	1.3
Other Activity	0	0

*As a percentage of the 228 Other Open spaces.

- 7.12 Based on the information available it is clear that the most common activity for which open spaces provide facilities is walking/dog walking followed by sitting out/relaxation. Although this is consistent with findings of the sites that were surveyed, it is not possible to draw conclusions about whether these are playing a 'major' role at these sites.

STRUCTURAL ROLE

- 7.13 The structural role of open spaces as identified by the site surveys are shown in Table 7.3. Open Spaces which are considered to perform a structural and/or amenity role are illustrated in Figure 7.1.
- 7.14 Table 7.3 illustrates the number of open spaces which provide different types of structural role. These sites form significant elements in the Borough's overall physical structure and include a combination of green open spaces, such as public parks and gardens, cemeteries, green spaces within grounds of institutions and natural/semi natural greenspace. They provide a physical and visual break between major residential areas and help to distinguish between different neighbourhoods and communities.

Table 7.3 – Structural Role of Open Spaces (Parks & Privately Managed Open Spaces)

Structural Role	No. of Open Spaces	Area of Open Space (ha)	% Total Area of all Open Space
Clearly distinguishable from the built up area providing separation between different communities	12	118.36	26
Contributes to the special identity of Kingston	1	2.89	1
Creates a positive and significant open space experience when passed or crossed while travelling on the adjacent main road networks and railways	23	182.49	39
Contributes to the sense of place of the local area	3	17.09	4
Helps to define neighbourhoods within the urban area	27	191.18	41
Accommodates recognised and recognisable features of local importance (e.g. buildings/structures, landscape, events and activities)	7	10.86	2
Total open spaces with structural role	54	367.79	79
Total open spaces with no structural role	36	95.21	21
Structural Land Use Designations (all open spaces)			
Metropolitan Open Land	67	463.44	56
Green Belt	23	120.06	15

7.15 Table 7.3 shows that out of the 90 open spaces assessed 54 open spaces in the Borough fulfil at least one of the structural roles identified. The most common structural role is the contribution that open space makes in helping to define neighbourhoods in the local area. A total of 27 open spaces meet this criterion. There are 36 sites that do not have a structural role. Table 7.3 also identifies the number of open spaces with structural land use designations these are illustrated on Figure 7.2. Out of the 318 open spaces in the Borough, 67 were classified as 'Metropolitan Open Land' and 22 sites were within the Green Belt. This represents a fairly significant proportion of total green space within the Borough.

AMENITY VALUE

7.16 The ways in which open space contributes to the visual amenity of its area are influenced by the amount of open space in the area, the visual envelope of the open space and the contribution it makes to the street scene.

7.17 The Council database of Council owned and or managed sites included two criteria of amenity value of open space. These criteria were also used to assess the amenity value of the additional 90 open spaces assessed as part of the study (see guide to proforma Appendix A for criteria definitions):

Can the site be seen from the surrounding area?

- Complete view into the site
- Partial view into the site
- No view into the site

What is the character of the built form surrounding the site?

- All hard surface
- Some green spaces e.g. trees or grass verges
- Large wayside gardens or big front lawns

7.18 Where open spaces are 'partially' or 'completely' visible from the surrounding area, the open space is assessed as providing amenity value. Views of open space can be visually attractive, and can provide relief from the built environment. The amenity value of an open space will also depend on the character of the surrounding area. Open spaces in areas that are made up largely of hard surfaces will be of more value than an open space that is predominantly made up of large gardens. Open spaces in areas where there are 'some green spaces' are also assessed as having amenity value. The more criteria the space fulfils the greater the amenity value of the space.

7.19 The overall amenity value of open spaces within the Borough is summarised within Table 7.4. This illustrates that 79% of the total area of all open spaces offer amenity value based the criteria identified above, 57 open spaces are assessed as offering 'significant' amenity value as they provide complete views and are in an area of hard surfacing.

Table 7.4 – Amenity Value of Open Space

Amenity Value	No. of Open Spaces	% Total Area of all Open Spaces	Area of Open Space (ha)
Significant amenity value (complete views in area of hard surface)	57	5	46.39
Total open space with amenity value	263	79	674.66
No amenity role	55	21	176.47

EDUCATION

- 7.20 Urban open spaces can represent an educational resource for both children and adults either on an organised basis, such as schools using open spaces for activities linked to the curriculum, or on a more informal basis (nature walks etc.). Educational roles should be assessed in terms of the potential benefit to the wider community (not just schools).
- 7.21 Information provided by the Council for all Council owned and managed open spaces set out whether the open space had any form of educational use. Open spaces were classified as providing one of the following levels of educational use;
- No use
 - Some Use
 - Highly used
- 7.22 The Open spaces that were assessed as part of this study were classified in the same way as the Council owned sites. Additionally the open spaces were scored for the educational interpretation or information provided at the site was
- 7.23 It is suggested that a survey of schools' use of parks and playing fields is undertaken to fully establish the educational role that open spaces play. Questions to be asked could include:
- Location of activity;
 - Activity undertaken;
 - Frequency of visit;
 - Difficulties arising from using the open space;
 - Criteria for choosing the open space;
 - Other comments.
- 7.24 Open spaces in Kingston were assessed on their existing educational roles. Table 7.5 below sets out the findings of this assessment. A total of 111 (35%) open spaces in Kingston have existing educational role, of those that do have an educational role 46 (15% of total open spaces) were 'highly used'.

Table 7.5 – Educational Role of Open Spaces

	No. of Open Space	% of Total Open Spaces
Educational Role		
Highly Used	46	15
Some Use	65	20
No Use	207	65
Total Open Space with Education Role	111	35

HERITAGE VALUE

- 7.25 Open spaces within Conservation areas are of heritage value as they provide a setting for the built fabric within these areas. The heritage value of spaces is incorporated within the composite assessment of open space value described later in this chapter.
- 7.26 Within the Borough there 43 open spaces which form part of a Conservation Area. Measures to enhance the heritage value of open spaces are described in Chapter 10.

SOCIAL AND CULTURAL

- 7.27 Open spaces can also represent a source of wider social benefits and cultural value providing the setting for sport, community meetings, fairs, firework displays, picnics etc. Social benefits are recognised as perhaps the most obvious benefits and opportunities that urban open spaces provide for City living (Urban Open Spaces, 2003). The social and cultural benefits associated within open spaces include:
- Community focus – A sense of community can be provided by open spaces which host small and large events and both organised and informal gatherings. Open spaces also represent a source of local identity and pride;
 - Cultural focus – Parks and open spaces are important for people from different cultures. They provide a venue for religious services, festivals and charity events;
 - Social focus – Open spaces provide opportunities for social interaction and the development of social capital through family and group outings, community events and activities, meetings between friends and chance encounters. Participation in physical recreation has shown to contribute towards a reduction of incivilities and anti-social behaviour among participants;
 - Health benefits – Open spaces provide benefits to health. Exercise and physical activity contribute towards physical well being. Whilst peace and quiet, social

interaction, opportunities for aesthetic appreciation and proximity to nature is beneficial to mental health and well being;

- Educational focus – Open spaces provide opportunities for children’s play which are beneficial to child development. These benefits are not confined to children’s play areas but other features and experiences on offer within open spaces. Open spaces provide visual stimulation, opportunities to develop and appreciation of wildlife and the natural environment, opportunities to improve cognitive, co-ordination and communication skills through play. Open spaces can provide a safe environment for informal play and adventure which can foster a sense of independence; and
- Heritage focus – Open spaces can be of historic value and provide opportunities for people to engage and interpret with the historic environment which can provide a sense of community identity.

7.28 Information on cultural role was provided for each of the Council owned sites. Information on cultural role has also been collected for the sites that were assessed as part of the study. Table 7.6 summarises the existing cultural roles performed by open spaces in Kingston. 20 open spaces perform a cultural role either through the provision of dedicated facilities to support cultural activities or through events held within the space.

Table 7.6 – Cultural Roles Performed by Open Spaces

Cultural Role	No. of Open Space	% of Total Open Spaces
Carnival	0	0
Fair	11	3.5
Fireworks	3	0.9
Markets	0	0
Events Programme	1	0.3
Indoor Venue	6	1.8
Total Open Space with Cultural Role	20	6.3

ECOLOGICAL ROLE

7.29 The Government has set out the need to promote biodiversity through the preparation of Local Biodiversity Action Plans (LBAPs) which include the provision of natural and semi-natural greenspace. Two definitions of ecological value have been considered to inform the development of an appropriate locally based standard natural or semi-natural greenspace. These are:

- Existing ecological designations as defined at the regional level through the GLA Phase 1 Habitat Assessments (refer to Figure 7.3); and

- Identification of open spaces of natural and semi-natural greenspace value using the English Nature definition of Accessible Natural Greenspace.

Existing Ecological Designations

- 7.30 A desk top analysis of existing nature conservation and ecological designations was undertaken to identify sites of identified nature conservation importance based on the GLA Ecological Appraisal work undertaken in 2001.
- 7.31 The ecological value of sites was classified by the GLA according to the criteria defined in 'Policy, Criteria and Procedures for Identifying nature conservation sites in London' (revised July 2000), which is recommended by the Mayor of London's draft Biodiversity Strategy as the basis for such work. Following a London Ecology Unit ecological survey of Kingston in 1992, sites were designated as being of either Metropolitan Importance, of Borough Importance (Grade 1 or 2), or of Local Importance. 62 sites within the Borough met the criteria for one of these ecological designations.
- 7.32 Table 7.7 provides a breakdown of the total area ecological designations as defined by the GLA ecological appraisals and the number of spaces which are wholly or partly included within these designations.

Table 7.7 – Areas of Ecological Value in Kingston

Ecological Designations	No. of Open Spaces	% of Open Spaces	Total Area (ha)	Area per 1,000 pop (2001) Ha
Site of Metropolitan Importance	7	2.2	79.72	0.54
Site of Borough Importance Grade 1	27	8.3	99.73	0.68
Site of Borough Importance Grade 2	15	4.6	122.26	0.83
Site of Local Importance	13	4.0	27.49	0.19
Total	62	19.1	329.2	2.24

- 7.33 These sites are identified on Figure 7.3 overlaid with the boundaries of sites considered as part of the open space assessment. Sites that area covered by ecological designations are generally owned and managed by Royal Borough of Kingston
- 7.34 Table 7.7 shows that a total of 329.2ha of land within Kingston is designated with one or more statutory ecological designations. This equates to 2.24ha of natural greenspace per 1,000 population (using 2001 figures). Assuming existing greenspace provision within the Borough does not change, Kingston would have 2.07ha of natural greenspace per 1,000 population in 2016 (using 2016 population projection figures).

7.35 Using this definition of natural greenspace it is also possible to conduct an analysis of natural greenspace by ward. Table 7.8 shows that Coombe Hill Ward has the greatest levels of provision per 1000 population, with 12.94ha in 2001. Beverley, Canbury and Coombe Vale Ward currently have no natural greenspace.

Table 7.8 – Total Areas Subject to Ecological Designations

	Total Ecological Designation (ha)	Population 2001	Ecological Designation per 1,000 population 2001 (ha)	Population 2016*	Ecological Designation per 1,000 population 2016 (ha)
Alexandra	32.04	9046	3.54	9775	3.28
Berrylands	7.91	9279	0.85	10027	0.79
Beverley	0	9488	0	10252	0
Canbury	0	9603	0	10377	0
Chessington North and Hook	5.27	8721	0.60	9424	0.56
Chessington South	59.26	9488	6.25	10252	5.78
Coombe Hill	133.52	10318	12.94	11149	11.98
Coombe Vale	0	9271	0	10018	0
Grove	20.68	7866	2.63	8500	2.43
Norbiton	13.39	8842	1.51	9554	1.40
Old Malden	12.88	9011	1.43	9737	1.32
St James	5.53	8572	0.65	9263	0.60
St Mark's	5.33	9644	0.55	10421	0.51
Surbiton Hill	1.44	10191	0.14	11012	0.13
Tolworth and Hook Rise	27.81	9529	2.92	10297	2.70
Tudor	4.14	8402	0.49	9079	0.46
Total	329.2	147273	2.24	159139	2.07

*Population projections for each individual ward are worked out via GLA borough wide projection.

Accessible Natural Greenspace Provision

7.36 The second definition of natural greenspace considered is the Accessible Natural Greenspace Standard (ANGSt). English Nature has recommended that local authorities set standards relating to natural greenspace using this definition as guide provision. This guidance was formally issued in 1996 within 'A Space for Nature'. The recommended standards are:

- Provision of at least 1ha of Local Nature Reserve per 1,000 population;
- That no person should be located more than 300m from their nearest area of natural greenspace of at least 2ha in size;
- That there should be at least one accessible 20ha site within 2km from home;
- That there should be one accessible 100ha site within 5km; and

- That there should be one accessible 500ha site within 10km.
- 7.37 These standards are used by a wide range of local authorities throughout the country, including Manchester and Sheffield, to inform natural greenspace provision. However, relatively few authorities outside London have adopted formal standards of natural greenspace provision within their development plans.
- 7.38 The ANGSt model was reviewed by English Nature in 2003 (Accessible Natural Greenspace Standards in Towns and Cities: A Review and Toolkit). The review identified a number of problems with the model.
- 7.39 The definition of natural greenspace used within the model “Areas naturally colonised by plants and animals” was considered to be unclear and impractical. This definition also excludes man made types of vegetation which predominate within urban areas and which have high biodiversity value. A complete knowledge of the history of each site would be required to determine whether a site has been naturally colonised or had resulted from planting and management.
- 7.40 The review also identified the need for more flexibility regarding the distance and size criteria and role within the hierarchy to reflect local circumstances. English Nature has yet to adopt revised natural greenspace standards following the review. However, the review does recommend that the ecological value of greenspace should be determined through undertaking a Phase 1 Habitat survey. The revised PPG17 also recommends that local authorities derive locally based standards of provision rather than adopt nationally derived standards wholesale. However, the ANGst standards reflect the distribution of natural and semi-natural sites required within urban areas to support high levels of biodiversity and flora and fauna communities.
- 7.41 The distribution of accessible natural greenspace provision has been assessed using the findings of the open space site appraisals.
- 7.42 A definition of natural greenspace for use within the study includes the following types of urban greenspace:
- Open spaces which are designated with National, or Local nature conservation designations (including SSSIs, SMI, SBI, SLI, LNRs); or
 - Open which include areas of natural heathland, downland, common or natural woodland, wasteland/derelict areas, water area, or informal grassland.
- 7.43 The natural greenspace coverage within open spaces in the Borough is identified in Table 7.9 and illustrated in Figure 7.4. Table 7.9 illustrates the total area of broad habitat types within open spaces as well as the number of spaces where each habitat

type is represented, whilst Figure 7.4 provides a map of these spaces across Kingston.

Table 7.9 – Natural Greenspace Provision (Parks & Privately Managed Open Spaces)

Natural Greenspace Provision	No of Open Spaces	Area (in ha)
Natural Heathland / Downland / Common	0	0
Natural Woodland	19	49.85
Wetland	1	1.12
Scrubland	7	6.48
Unimproved meadows	14	81.74
Informal recreational grassland	41	98.93
Total Open Spaces with Natural Greenspace Provision	58	238.11

Note: Only includes natural greenspace provision, rather than other types of open space, within ecological designated sites

Quantity of Natural Greenspace

- 7.44 Within the parks and privately managed open spaces in the Borough assessed as part of the study, there are 58 spaces which have at least 5% natural greenspace coverage (17.8% of all 325 open spaces in the Borough). The total area of natural greenspace in Kingston using this definition equates to 238.11 ha. This equates to 1.62ha of natural green space per 1000 population
- 7.45 The study assessed 90 parks and privately managed open space out of the 318 open spaces within the Borough and therefore it is not possible to provide an exact figure for the amount of natural greenspace in the Borough. For the purposes of this study it has therefore been assumed that each open space in the Borough includes some natural green space provision. This equates to 5.5ha of natural green space per 1000 population. Following this assumption Kingston will have 5.14ha per 1000 population in 2016.

Application of the ANGSt Accessibility Criteria

- 7.46 Table 7.10 demonstrates that assuming each open space within the Borough has an element of natural green space there are 94 spaces within the Borough which have natural greenspace areas over 2ha in size representing an overall area of 746.68ha.

Table 7.10 – Areas of Natural Greenspace (by size)

Natural/ Semi Natural Urban Greenspace and Other Natural Green Space	No. of Open Spaces	Area (in Ha)
Sites > 20 Hectares	5	205.79
Sites 2-20 Hectares	90	540.89
Sites < 2 Hectares	223	104.44
Total	318	851.12

Note: Includes area of ecological designations.

- 7.47 Figure 7.5 shows the distribution of natural/ semi-natural green space, whilst Figure 7.6 identifies the areas of the Borough further than ANGSt accessibility criteria.
- 7.48 Figure 7.6 identifies wards that have large areas that are greater than 300m from an area of natural greenspace at least 2ha in size. It is evident that all wards include areas of deficiency to varying degrees.
- 7.49 The Chessington South ward has a large area outside the 2000m catchment area of natural greenspace bigger than 20ha, Chessington North & Hook and Old Malden also have small areas outside the 2000m catchment area of natural greenspace bigger than 20ha. However it should be noted that this deficiency is not significant as there are natural greenspaces over the Borough boundary of sufficient size to ensure the needs in the this area are met.
- 7.50 Individually, there aren't any open spaces within the Borough are larger than 100ha in size to fulfil the criteria for the 5km catchment within the ANGSt standard. However Wimbledon Common on the North East Borough Boundary and Epsom Common & Ashted and Leatherhead Common to the South fulfil this role. No spaces fulfil the criteria of being greater than 500ha in size. However Richmond park to the north of the Borough is approximately 1000ha in size, and the vast majority of the Borough with the exception of the South tip would fall within the 10km catchment area.

Deriving an Appropriate Standard for Natural and Semi-natural Greenspace

- 7.51 The definition which should be used to derive a quantitative natural and semi-natural greenspace standard has been considered.
- 7.52 The English Nature ANGSt approach recommends that the quantitative component is based upon Local Nature Reserves. Section 21 of the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949, provides local authorities the power to acquire, declare and manage Local Nature Reserves (LNRs). The LNR designation is not a lower level of designation within the hierarchy but represents sites which provide public access to wildlife and natural habitats.

- 7.53 The adopted UDP states that, the Council will not allow development that will harm sites of Special Scientific interest, national or local nature reserves or sites of nature conservation importance. The Council will designate new Local Nature Reserves where appropriate. The suitability of sites is dependent on their habitat type, community value, ownership, public access and availability of resources. There are a significant number of publicly accessible sites subject to ecological designations which are not designated as Local Nature Reserves.
- 7.54 Figure 7.6 illustrates natural greenspace provision within open spaces combined with selected ecological designations within the Borough. It is recommended that areas of natural greenspace and the area included within ecological designations are used to derive a quantitative standard for natural greenspace provision.

Access Standard

- 7.55 It is proposed that local standards are developed for accessible natural greenspace based upon the lower 3 tiers of the ANGSt model. Deficiencies in access should be considered in relation to Figure 7.6 which considers access both designated ecological sites and accessible natural greenspace areas within open spaces. New provision should be provided to address deficiencies in access. However, where provision is already provided the need to enhance the quality of existing provision should be considered in relation to new development proposals.

NATURAL AND SEMI-NATURAL GREENSPACE PROVISION STANDARD

Quantitative Component

- 7.56 It is considered that the measurement of land included within ecological designations within Kingston provides the most appropriate method to establish a quantitative standard for natural greenspace. Kingston currently has 329.2ha of natural greenspace subject to ecological designations 2.24ha per 1,000 population (using 2001 census figures) which will fall to 2.07ha per 1,000 population by 2016.
- 7.57 Whilst existing ecological sites should be protected through the LDF, given the wide variations in provision between the urban fringe and the built up area it is considered that a minimum standard of 1 ha of natural greenspace per 1,000 population is an achievable standard for new development on a ward level basis.
- 7.58 Proposals for new housing development should be accompanied by proposals to improve existing natural and semi-natural greenspace provision including ecological designations and natural greenspace areas within open spaces. The nature of such improvements should reflect the additional open space needs generated as a result of the proposed development.

- 7.59 If the proposed development is located within an identified area deficient in access to natural or semi-natural greenspace it will be necessary for additional land to be brought into use for this purpose. The developer will be required to make a contribution towards the provision of natural and semi-natural greenspace. It may be appropriate for such provision to be incorporated within the artillage of the development. Alternatively, a contribution to off-site provision may be appropriate.
- 7.60 If the proposed development is not located within area which is deficient in access to natural or semi-natural greenspace then consideration will be given to any deficiency in quality or value of existing natural or semi natural greenspace areas. The developer will be required to make a contribution towards the enhancement of the quality of existing provision.

Accessibility Component

- 7.61 The following access standards are recommended for inclusion within the forthcoming Local Development Framework:
- All residents within the Borough should have access to a designated ecological site or natural or semi-natural greenspace of at least 2ha in size within 300m of home;
 - All residents within the Borough should have access to a designated ecological site or natural or semi-natural greenspace of at least 20ha in size within 2km of home.
 - All residents within the Borough should have access to a designated ecological site or natural or semi natural greenspace of at least 100ha within 5km of home.
- 7.62 Where it is not possible to achieve the above levels of provision the quality of sites <2ha should be improved or contributions should be directed to improving linkages to existing or planned accessible natural greenspaces within the Borough and surrounding urban fringe area.

Qualitative Component

- 7.63 Areas of natural and semi-natural greenspace should be of adequate quality and support local biodiversity. Areas of natural and semi-natural greenspace which either under perform in terms of their value to the local community and local biodiversity should be enhanced consistent with the guidelines identified in this chapter. Those spaces identified within Chapter 10 should be prioritised for improvement.

COMPOSITE VALUE ANALYSIS

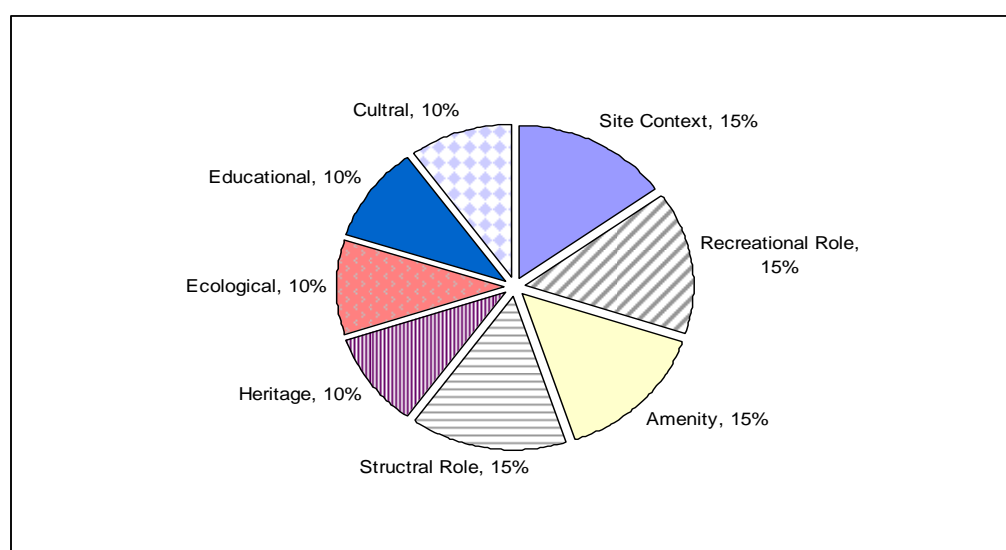
7.64 A composite assessment of the value of open spaces was undertaken which considered the context within which the open space lies, the level and type of use associated with the space and the wider benefits it generates for people, biodiversity and the wider environment.

7.65 The following types of value were examined:

- The site access arrangements and barriers of access to and within the open space;
- The recreational function performed by the open space;
- The structural role of open space in separating and defining communities;
- The amenity value of space;
- Heritage value of spaces;
- The ecological and environmental roles performed by spaces;
- The existing and potential educational value of spaces to the community; and
- The cultural roles spaces perform (e.g. community venues, performance spaces).

7.66 The criteria used to assess each of these dimensions of value are described fully in Appendix D. Each of the values were weighted and given a percentage score. These are identified in Figure 7.9 below.

Figure 7.9 – Value Weightings



- 7.67 The value of individual spaces within Kingston is illustrated in Figure 7.7, and the overall value of spaces within the Borough is summarised within Table 7.11. The value scores should be viewed as an indicator of the “richness” of individual spaces. The only major aspect of site value which could not be established from the on site assessments were usage levels of individual spaces. The residents’ survey provides an indication of the usage for the largest parks and other open spaces by type.
- 7.68 Figure 7.7 shows that almost all open spaces with the area have value of some kind, along one or more dimensions described above. The open spaces that perform the most roles are likely to be the most valued spaces to the community, however the reverse is not necessarily true.
- 7.69 With reference to Figure 7.7 the red and pink colours indicate the open spaces of greatest value. The value scores should not be used to directly compare different types or sizes of open space as for example it is not expected that an amenity space within a housing area should be of the same value as a district park.

Table 7.11 – Composite Value Scores

Range of Score %	No. Open Spaces	% Open Spaces
0 to 10	67	21.1
11 to 20	101	31.8
21 to 30	110	34.6
31 to 40	35	11
41 to 50	5	1.6
51 to 60	0	0
61 to 70	0	0
71 to 80	0	0
81 to 90	0	0
91 to 100	0	0
Total	318	100

- 7.70 Table 7.11 shows the distribution of value scores. It should be recognised that a score of more than around 15% indicates that an open space is contributing significantly to one or more of the dimensions of value described above. Only rarely do individual open spaces fulfil all of the dimensions of value identified in the highest category. Many spaces score either 1-10% or 11-20%, many of these open spaces that receive a lower value score are either outdoor sports facilities which often have a limited number of functions.
- 7.71 The value scores should not be viewed on a continuum. A space which has a score of 50% does not necessarily contribute twice as much value to the community as a space which scores 25%. It is important to consider each of the different dimensions

of “value” individually when considering the value of open space sites to the community.

7.72 The value scores provide a snapshot of existing open space value. However, this is not fixed and can be enhanced over time through improvements to the open space. Some aspects of value are more easily changed than others through enhancement and improvement. The potential to enhance open spaces within the Borough within the context of the Green Network is discussed in Chapter 10.

COMBINING QUALITY AND VALUE

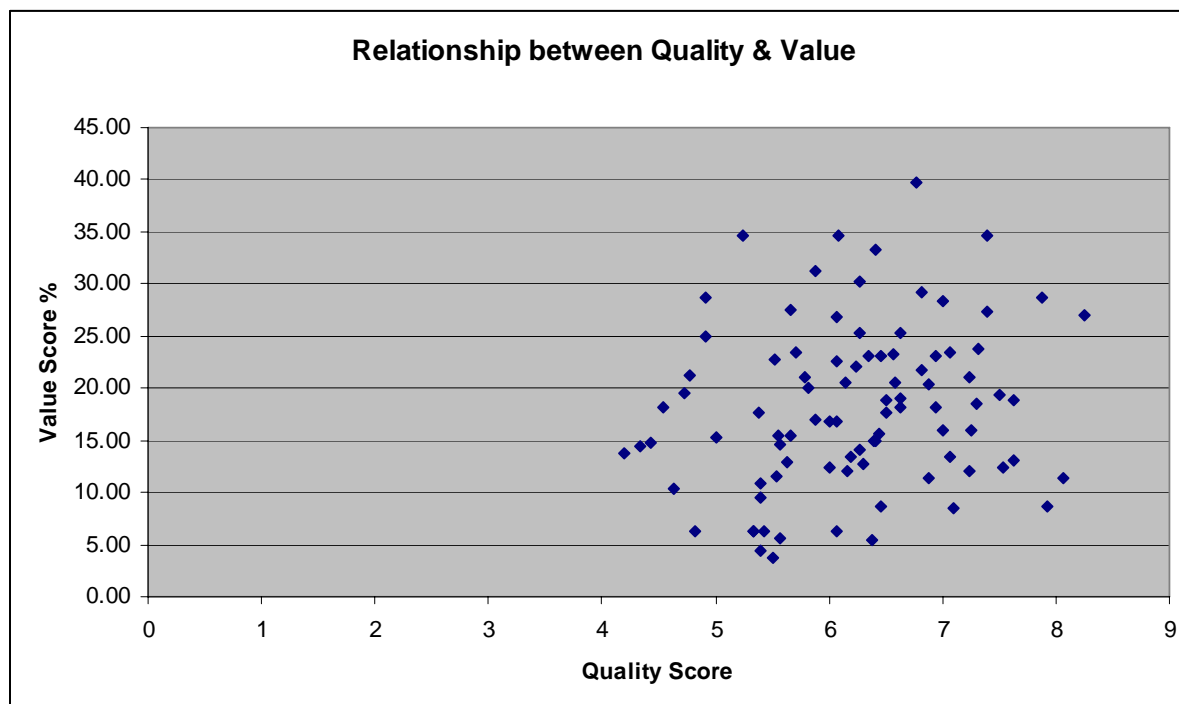
7.73 Assessing the quality and value of open spaces is fundamental to identifying those spaces or facilities which should be given the highest level of protection by the planning system, those which require enhancement and those which may no longer be needed for their present purpose.

7.74 The Companion Guide to PPG17 recommends using this simple high/low classification to provide a means of determining the most appropriate policy approach to each open space. It also provides a basis for linking planning, design, management and maintenance.

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

7.75 The relationship between the quality and value of open spaces within Kingston is illustrated by Figure 7.11 below. It plots the quality and value scores for each open space on a graph. Appendix D illustrates the results of this exercise on a park by park basis.

Figure 7.10 – Combining Quality and Value Scores



- 7.76 Many of the high quality low value spaces represent mono-functional open spaces which only contribute to the community in a limited way. Within areas of identified deficiency (in terms of quantity, quality or access) it is important that such spaces do not under perform in terms of their potential value and multi-functionality and are improved to fulfil their potential.
- 7.77 The average score for value is 19.1 and the average score for quality is 6.2. Figure 7.10 demonstrates that many spaces in Kingston have a fair or good quality score, at around 6 to 8, where as many spaces score between 10% and 30% for the value assessment. This may be explained by the fact that a large proportion of open space in the Borough are outdoor sports facilities such playing fields or golf courses (39.8% of all sites) which may often be of reasonable quality but not always represent areas of education, heritage, recreation, environmental or ecological value and therefore score relatively low on the value assessment. This does not mean that the space is not valued, as it will often have a high amenity value score, it just means that it does not offer the 'richness' of other spaces such as public parks .
- 7.78 215 of the 318 open spaces (68%) score over 15% in the value assessment which indicates that the open space is contributing significantly to one or more of the dimensions of value.

- 7.79 By using the average scores for value and quality, it is possible to establish how many of Kingston's open spaces are assessed as above and below the average quality and value. Table 7.12 demonstrates that 30% of the 90 parks and privately managed open spaces are assessed as being of 'high quality and high value', and 16.7% are of low quality and high value. 22.2% of low value spaces were assessed as high quality and 31.1% as low quality.

Table 7.12 – Relationship Between Quality and Value

Quality-Value Rating	No. Open Spaces	% Open Spaces
High Quality & Value	27	30
Low Quality High Value	15	16.7
High Quality Low Value	20	22.2
Low Quality and Value	28	31.1
Total	90	100

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- 7.80 The value placed on open space is multi-functional and relates to a range of roles. Each open space will have a different mix of values to each individual user.
- 7.81 The study has shown that many of the open spaces surveyed are being used by schools and communities as an educational resource and location for social events. It is considered that the use of spaces by schools should be investigated further to demonstrate their demand.
- 7.82 The network of open spaces also provides a valuable ecological resource. Kingston benefits from a number of areas of nature conservation interest or importance and such areas offer opportunities for the conservation of wildlife and for raising environmental awareness.
- 7.83 There are areas of the Borough which are deficient in accessible natural or semi-natural greenspace provision. Chapter 10 identifies open spaces which could possibly address this deficiency subject to new management regimes which adopt some of the landscaping and habitat creation measures identified.
- 7.84 27 spaces within the Borough (30% of those assessed) were assessed as being of high quality and of high value to the community. Many of the high quality low value spaces represent mono-functional open spaces which only contribute to the community in a limited way. Within areas of identified deficiency (in terms of quantity, quality or access) it is important that such spaces do not under perform in terms of their potential value and multi-functionality and are improved to fulfil their potential.

8. ALLOTMENT NEEDS

INTRODUCTION

- 8.1 The role of allotments is in a period of transition and their value is undergoing reappraisal. Traditionally allotments were developed within urban areas from the latter half of the 19th century onwards to provide the urban poor access to land to grow their own fruit and vegetables. The spread of allotments was linked to development of high density housing without gardens. Growth of allotments intensified once again during the first and second world wars when they were used to supplement national food production.
- 8.2 Since 1945, provision of allotments nationally has declined due to housing developments which include larger gardens, although there was a brief resurgence in the 1970s following the Thorpe Inquiry on the future of allotments and subsequent initiatives to reinvent allotments as communal 'leisure gardens'.
- 8.3 More recently interest in allotments has increased due to public awareness of 'green' issues and concerns over links between food and health. Modern housing developments are also being developed with smaller garden sizes which may stimulate demand for community gardens and allotments. Demographic changes including a larger number of older, but relatively healthy individuals could also stimulate demand for allotment plots as allotment participation is highest amongst the over 50s.
- 8.4 Within the policy arena, the contribution of allotments to urban regeneration, sustainable development and quality of life is being increasingly recognised. Benefits of allotments include:
- Access to affordable fresh vegetables, physical exercise and social activity;
 - Localised food production brings environmental benefits of reducing use of energy and materials for processing, packaging and distributing food. Allotments also perform a role in recycling of green waste;
 - Therapeutic value associated with the promotion of good physical and mental health. Gardening is identified as one of the Health Education Council's recommended forms of exercise for the over 50s;

- Allotments are an important component of urban green space and provide a green lung within urban environments;
- Cultivated and untended plots contribute towards maintaining biodiversity particularly where plots are maintained using organic methods;
- Allotments have an important role to play in the implementation of plans for encouraging local sustainable development and community development. Potential links exist with local schools, and with the mentally and physically ill and disabled; and
- Allotments have an important historical and cultural role in community heritage, values and identity.

POLICY CONTEXT

National Context

The Allotment Acts

- 8.5 The legal framework for Allotments has developed in a piecemeal fashion and is encapsulated within a number of Acts identified below.

Table 8.1 – Principal Allotments Legislation

Act and Date	Relevance
Small Holdings and Allotments Act 1908	Consolidated all previous legislation and laid down the basis for subsequent Acts. Placed duty on local authorities to provide sufficient allotments according to demand. Makes provision for local authorities to compulsorily purchase land to provide allotments.
Allotments Act 1922	Limited the size of an individual allotment to one quarter of an acre and specified that they should mostly be used for growing fruit and vegetables.
Allotments Act 1925	Required local authorities to recognise the need for allotments in any town planning development. Established 'statutory' allotments which a local authority could not sell or convert to other purposes without Ministerial consent.
Allotments Act 1950	Made improved provisions for compensatory and tenants rights. Confined local authority's obligation to 'allotment gardens' only.

- 8.6 For legal purposes there are two types of allotment. 'Statutory Allotment' status refers to land of which the freehold or very long lease is vested in the allotments authority, and which was either originally purchased for allotments or subsequently appropriated for allotment use. Statutory allotments are afforded protection under

section 8 of the Allotments Act 1925 which provides that the consent of the Secretary of States must be obtained for disposal of land by a local authority which they have appropriated for the use of allotments, if it is proposed to sell, appropriate or use that land for a use other than allotments.

- 8.7 Such consent may not be given unless the Secretary of State is satisfied that:
- The allotment in question is not necessary and is surplus to requirements;
 - Adequate provision will be made for displaced plot holders, or that such provision is unnecessary or impracticable;
 - The number of people on the waiting list has been taken into account; and
 - The authority has actively promoted and publicised the availability of allotment sites and has consulted the National Society of Allotments and Leisure Gardeners.
- 8.8 Various parameters have been laid down through case law to assist in the definition of 'adequate provision' and 'not necessary' etc.
- 8.9 A 'temporary allotment' is land rented by the authority but ultimately destined for some other use. Unlike local authority allotments, privately companies and institutions are not under any obligation to provide allotments. Neither temporary nor privately owned allotments are afforded protection under the various allotment Acts although they are subject to protection through planning legislation.

Planning Policy Guidance Note 17 – Sport Open Space and Recreation

- 8.10 The national planning framework relating to allotments is set out in PPG17 published in July 2002. This guidance identifies the role of informal open space including allotments as performing:
- The strategic function of defining and separating urban areas;
 - Contributing towards urban quality and assisting urban regeneration;
 - Promoting health and well being;
 - Acting as havens and habitats for flora and fauna;
 - Being a community resource for social interaction; and
 - A visual amenity function.

PPG17 also identifies the issues which Local Planning Authorities should take into account in considering allotment provision and circumstances when disposal may be appropriate.

The Future of Allotments

8.11 The Fifth Report of the Select Committee on Environment, Transport and Regional Affairs prepared a report entitled 'The Future of Allotments' in 1998. The report made recommendations including:

- Consolidation of allotment legislation;
- Need for increased recognition of the multifunctional value of allotments;
- Need to plan for increased allotment demand. Improvements to quality of provision are required in order to convert latent demand into actual demand;
- Allotments should be integral to local authority leisure strategies and local agenda 21 initiatives;
- Local authorities should publish annually details of allotment provision;
- All local authorities should make clear the designation of sites as either statutory or temporary within Local Plans. Furthermore temporary sites should be identified with their final intended use along with expected date of change of use;
- With the exception of sites which are ultimately intended for use as cemeteries, the report recommends that any 'temporary' site which has been in continuous use as allotments for thirty years or more be automatically re-designated as 'statutory' subject to an appeal by a local authority;
- All local authorities examine the potential for self-management of their allotment sites.

Growing in the Community

8.12 Following the 'Future of Allotments' report a best practice guide on management of allotments was produced by the Local Government Association, DETR, GLA and the Shell Better Britain Campaign in 2001. This guide is referred to further in this chapter.

Local Context

The Kingston Unitary Development Plan

8.13 The Kingston Unitary Development Plan First Alteration includes a policy which seeks to protect allotment sites from development (Policy RL6).

ASSESSING ALLOTMENT NEEDS

- 8.14 The revised PPG17 states that in preparing development plans, local authorities should undertake an assessment of the likely demand for allotments and their existing allotment provision, and prepare policies which aim to meet the needs in their area.
- 8.15 There is no formal guidance on how allotment needs should be assessed, however the Local Government Association good practice guide 'Growing in the Community' identifies issues which should be considered. Local Authorities are duty bound to provide allotments for their residents if they consider there is demand, under section 23 of the 1908 Allotments Acts (as amended). The 1969 Thorpe Report recommended a minimum standard of allotment provision of 0.2 hectares (0.5 acres) per 1,000 population. In the context of Kingston this would equate to an area of 29.45ha. In 1996, the National Allotment survey identified an average provision in England of 15 plots per 1,000 households. The current rate of allotment provision in Kingston is 15.6 plots per 1,000 households.
- 8.16 It will be important to ensure that local standards of provision reflect local circumstances of supply and demand. This assessment fulfils the requirements of the Revised PPG17 to provide a robust and defensible assessment of allotment needs accounting for different components of demand identified above.

ALLOTMENT SUPPLY

- 8.17 In total, 23 allotment sites have been identified in the Royal Borough of Kingston, equating to a total of approximately 42 ha of actively managed land in the Borough. The average size of the allotment sites in the Borough is around 1.8 ha.
- 8.18 Allotment plot sizes in Kingston can vary, however most plots are 250m² (10 rods) although some are 5 rods (125 m²).
- 8.19 Table 8.2 summarises allotment supply and occupancy in the Borough. Occupancy rates vary greatly from site to site; some are completely full and maintain waiting lists, others have only a handful of unoccupied plots, and some have significant proportions of unused plots.
- 8.20 At 6 of the Council sites 34 plots have been classified as 'unlettable' (these have not been included in the current number of total plots identified). These plots have been unused for some time and have now become overgrown with weeds, and small saplings and this means that without major work they are unlettable at the present time. However these sites could be brought back into use if sufficient investment is provided to carry out the work needed to make the sites lettable.

Table 8.2 – Allotment Supply and Capacity

Site ID	Site	Size (ha)	Total Plots **	Total Occupied	% Occupied
18	Addison Garden Allotments	1.43	33.5	33.5	100
280	Addison Allotments Extension	1.47	15	15	100
35	Alric Avenue Allotments	4.14	151	143	95
	Beverley Park Allotment				
278	Gardens	0.72	21	21	100
285	Churchfields Allotments	1.21	18	6.5	36
32	Dickerage Road Allotments	0.54	16	15	94
29	Elm Road Allotments	2.16	70	65	93
	Grange Road Allotment				
61	Gardens	0.04	2	2	100
27	Groveland Way Allotments	1.45	57	28	49
	Hook Leisure Gardens Assoc.				
4	Allotments, Hook Road	5.78	60	48	80
	Kingshill Ave Allotment				
37	Gardens,	0.87	8.5	5.5	65
	Kingston Road Allotment				
63	Gardens	1.33	28	16	57
36	Kingston Vale Allotments	0.92	22*	17.5*	80*
28	Knollmead Allotments	4.53	109.5***	44.5	41
25	Ladywood Allotments	0.40	15	8.5	57
282	Malden Manor Allotments	0.86	60	42	70
281	Moor Lane Allotments	1.71	44.5	30.5	69
19	Parkfields	0.82	49	45	92
20	Park Road Allotments	0.82	42	42	100
	Raeburn Avenue Allotments,				
284	Stirling Walk	0.52	24	21	88
24	Tolworth Main Allotments	8.57	56	44.5	79
50	Wilverley Crescent Allotments	0.09	8	8	100
21	Wolsey Drive Allotments	1.32	70	70	100
Total		41.70	980	772	80

* Exact plot number and occupancy unavailable; estimate of total plots based on site's land area divided by the average plot size (250 m²); assumes 60% of site land area used for actual plots and 40% used for pathways, communal areas, etc. Estimate of occupancy based on average occupancy throughout the borough.

** Total plots does not include those classed as unlettable

*** N.B 30 of the total plots are currently laid to grass

NB. Addison Garden Allotments & Addison Extensions effectively managed as one site.

Table 8.3 – Allotment Supply and Capacity by Ward

Ward	Allotment Area (ha)	Population (2001)	Area (ha) / 1000
Alexandra	13.62	9046	1.51
Berrylands	0	9279	0.00
Beverley	4.86	9488	0.51
Canbury	0	9603	0.00
Chessington North and Hook	5.78	8721	0.66
Chessington South	2.92	9488	0.31
Coombe Hill	0.92	10318	0.09
Coombe Vale	2.71	9271	0.29
Grove	0.04	7866	0.00
Norbiton	1.33	8842	0.15
Old Malden	1.82	9011	0.20
St James	1.45	8572	0.17
St Mark's	2.90	9644	0.30
Surbiton Hill	0	10191	0.00
Tolworth and Hook Rise	0.4	9529	0.04
Tudor	2.95	8402	0.35
TOTAL	41.70	147,273	0.28

8.21 There are a total of 980 allotment plots within Kingston, spread across a total of 41.7 ha. There are currently 7 fully occupied sites these are Addison Garden Allotments and Addison Allotment Extensions, Beverley Park Allotment Gardens, Grange Road Allotment Gardens, Park Road Allotments, Wilverley Crescent Allotments and Wolsey Drive Allotments. The average area of allotment gardens per 1,000 population is 0.28 ha.

MANAGEMENT

8.22 Of the 23 allotment sites in the Borough the Council manages 15. Management of the sites is carried out on a quarterly basis and involves; mowing of grass and communal areas repairing boundary fencing and signage, and plot preparation to ensure sites can be re-let.

8.23 The other eight allotment sites are leased from the Council and managed by voluntary allotment associations. The associations are responsible for the day to day running and managing sites and letting of the plots. The following associations manage sites in Kingston;

- Alric Allotment Association;
- Hook Leisure Gardens Allotments; and
- Tudor Allotments Association.

8.24 Kingston Federation of Allotment Gardens was established 3 years ago with the aim of stimulating allotment gardening in Kingston. The formation of the Federation was

prompted by the Council and is funded by the Council. Meetings of the Federation are held every month. The Federation is working to improve the management of Council owned sites.

- 8.25 A range of facilities exist at allotment sites within the Borough, and provision varies between sites. All the Council managed sites offer water supplies, some have car parking and also offer individual or communal storage/trading sheds, but most don't have toilets. The quality of facilities at some Council managed sites could be improved. Those that are voluntarily managed

DEMAND ASSESSMENT

- 8.26 In addition to manifest demand (i.e. the number of occupied allotments) there are also two forms of latent demand:

- Latent Suppressed Demand – comprised of individuals who would rent an allotment but are unable to do so and is indicated by existing allotment waiting lists. Figures are likely to fluctuate throughout the year with greatest demand in summer months.
- Latent Potential Demand – comprised of people who would rent an allotment now or in the future if adequate provision was available in their locality. Influences on potential demand include demographic characteristics, accessibility and availability of allotments, quality and standard of allotment management, public awareness and extent of allotment promotion, potential changes in demand resulting from diversification in allotment usage or initiatives to foster allotment cultivation.

Latent Suppressed Demand

- 8.27 When considering the adequacy of allotment provision within Kingston, it is necessary to conduct an analysis of the extent of demand that cannot be met by existing provision. The best indicator of this latent suppressed demand is the number of people that are currently on the waiting list for an allotment plot.
- 8.28 At the time of writing, Addison Garden, Beverley Park, Churchfields, Dickerage Road, Grange Rd, Kingston Rd, Moor Lane, Park Rd, Parkfields, Raeburn Ave, Tolworth Main, Wilverley Crescent and Wolsey Drive all had active waiting lists. There are currently 111 people on waiting lists for an allotment plot.

Accessibility and Demand Catchments

- 8.29 The extent of unfulfilled demand needs to be considered in conjunction with the size and distribution of sites (see Figure 8.1). The accessibility of allotment sites and allotment catchment areas are considered below.

Latent Potential Demand

- 8.30 It is important to analyse the accessibility of allotments within the Borough along with their demand catchments.
- 8.31 The GLA open space hierarchy estimates that small open spaces under 2ha are likely to have a pedestrian catchment area of 400 metres and that most users will travel from within that area. The Residents Survey identified that 60% of respondents who use allotments travel to these spaces on foot and that 75% of journeys took 10 minutes or less. Given the small sample of respondents and the likelihood that allotment users travel by foot to allotment sites, a 10-minute (800m) catchment area (by foot) has been used to represent the effective catchment area of each allotment site. This area has been adjusted to 560m to take into consideration the local street pattern and morphology of the area.
- 8.32 Figure 8.1 illustrates the catchment area applicable to allotment sites. However, it cannot be concluded that there is sufficient need in the underserved areas for additional allotment sites from this information alone.
- 8.33 Previous studies have found that although participation is highest amongst those who live in close proximity to their plot, the relationship between site size, occupancy, availability and catchment area indicates that some plot holders are able and prepared to travel to alternative sites where a plot is not available at their nearest site. However, the extent to which local allotment demand can be satisfied outside of the immediate neighbourhood is limited. Many plot holders wish to be near to their plot for reasons of security and ease of access. Some residents are currently excluded from allotment gardening by the distribution and availability of vacant plots within the Borough.
- 8.34 At present, parts of several wards are not well served by the existing distribution of allotment sites. Table 8.4 illustrates the extent of latent demand in the least well-served wards. Across the Borough it is estimated that around 44% of households (approximately 27,365) are not well served by the distribution of existing allotment sites. These under-served households are predominantly located in Berrylands, Canbury, Coombe Hill, St Marks and Surbiton Hill.

8.35 When this number of households is multiplied by the current allotment gardening participation level in Kingston of 14.05 plots per 1000 households (comprised of the number of plots currently occupied and the number of people on waiting lists, per 1,000 households) we find that latent demand in the Borough could exist outside the 800m catchment areas for up to 395 plots. If the distribution of allotment sites were improved, this demand could be satisfied.

Table 8.4 – Estimated Allotment Needs Arising from Households Lying outside Allotment Catchments

Ward	Estimated % of households outside of allotment catchment*	No. households 2001	Estimated no. of households beyond allotment catchment	Estimated latent demand (No. Plots)
Alexandra	0%	3722	0	0
Berrylands	75%	3965	2974	43
Beverley	15%	4055	608	9
Canbury	85%	4104	3488	50
Chessington North and Hook	40%	3727	1491	22
Chessington South	50%	4055	2028	29
Coombe Hill	75%	4409	3307	48
Coombe Vale	10%	3962	396	6
Grove	25%	3361	840	12
Norbiton	50%	3779	1890	27
Old Malden	40%	3852	1541	22
St James	25%	3663	916	13
St Marks	60%	4121	2473	36
Surbiton Hill	85%	4355	3702	53
Tolworth and Hook				
Rise	20%	4073	815	12
Tudor	25%	3591	898	13
TOTAL		62,794	27,365	395

7 These estimates reflect a visual assessment of the percentage of **built-up area** within each ward that is outside of an allotment catchment area.

Demographic Change

8.36 It is evident that the number of households within Kingston is expected to increase during the period up to 2016 (Table 8.5). The population of the Borough may increase by some 8% (up to some 159,139 people or 68,008 households).

8.37 Assuming one plot is rented per household and the allotment participation rate of 14.05 plots per 1,000 households in Kingston remains unchanged, it is estimated that there will be demand for an additional 73 plots between 2001 and 2016 due to demographic change. Additional demand resulting from other factors is considered separately below.

Table 8.5 – Estimated Allotment Needs Arising from Demographic Change to 2016

Year	2001	2016
Population Scenario	Baseline	
Population Estimate	147,273	159,139
Estimated No. Households	62,819	68,008*
Estimated plot requirement (Assumes 14.45 plots per 1,000 households)	883	956
Additional Plots due to Population Increase	N/A	73

7 Based on 2001 ratio of 2.34 persons per household

QUALITY AND MANAGEMENT

- 8.38 The quality, condition and management of allotments also influence potential demand. Allotments which are well maintained and have vacant plots which are available for use with little clearance of scrub and rubbish are likely to prove more attractive than overgrown plots.
- 8.39 The condition and maintenance of facilities including fences, the water supply, toilets, communal huts, sheds and greenhouses, paths, and waste areas will also influence the attractiveness of allotment sites to potential plot holders, particularly if it is sought to broaden demand and attract new users.
- 8.40 The condition of allotments in Kingston is generally very good due to the high demand for plots. Although Atkins has not surveyed and assessed allotment sites in Kingston in terms of their quality / condition, the Council has provided some limited information regarding the condition of the various sites. Plots that are rented but left unmanaged are quickly reported to site representatives and the occupier encouraged to either start making use of the site again or to give it up for another user.

Initiatives to Promote and Broaden Demand

- 8.41 The way in which plots are promoted and publicised also influences demand. In line with sustainability objectives to broaden the demand for allotments, the following channels could be used to promote and broaden demand:

- Diversifying use of allotments through promoting activities such as bee keeping, and horticulture (not for commercial purposes);
- Encouraging community plots or plot sharing and integrating allotments with other open space types (e.g. combining allotment provision with outdoor classrooms);
- Testing and encouraging demand by managing a number of demonstration plots at various locations;
- Developing links with voluntary sector organisations and community groups who may benefit from allotment gardening; and
- Improving assistance for new tenants and 'aftercare' services for existing tenants.

8.42 In addition specific groups likely to benefit from the health and economic benefits that may be derived from allotment gardening could also be targeted. Rent concessions are permitted by allotment law and are granted by many Local Authorities. Concessions could be promoted to additional target groups.

8.43 It is estimated that active promotion and marketing of allotments could lead to perhaps a 10% increase in the number of occupied plots within the Borough up to 2016 depending on the scale and success of initiatives. This would represent a take up of about 77 plots.

DERIVATION OF ALLOTMENT STANDARD

8.44 To fulfil this need and existing latent demand, allotment land will need to be identified and brought forward for allotment use to meet the needs of under served areas and the increased demand resulting from population growth. To summarise total latent demand amounts to 656 plots and comprises:

- Suppressed demand – 111;
- Net potential demand from areas underserved by existing provision – 395 plots
- Demand associated with net household growth 2001-2016 – 73 plots.
- Marketing Initiatives – 77 plots

8.45 The average number of plots per ha at existing allotment sites within the Borough is around 24 plots per hectare. Based on these figures, Table 8.6 illustrates that it is possible that 14.34 ha of allotment land would need to be brought into use to meet existing deficiencies and needs associated with household growth within the Borough between 2001 and 2016. It should be recognised that this land requirement assumes that the average size of allotment plots does not increase. The wards which should be prioritised for the development of new allotment sites are in identified Table 8.4

above. Wards which include areas of greatest open space need should also be prioritised for improvement as these areas have a high proportion of households who do not have access to a back garden (refer to chapter 3).

Table 8.6 – Proposed Standard based on Total Land Need to 2016

	No. Plots	Area (ha) Assumes 23.5 plots per ha
Under served areas	395	16.81
Suppressed Demand	111	4.72
Demographic Change	75	3.11
Marketing Initiatives (up to 10% increase on occupied plots)	80	3.28
Needs arising from under served areas (Vacant Plots, Demographic Change, Marketing Initiatives)*	545	23.19
Vacant Plots	-208	-8.85
Existing Allotment area	980	41.7
Total Need	1317	56.04
Standard / 1000 (at estimated pop of 159,319 in 2016)*		0.35

TOWARDS THE DEVELOPMENT OF AN ALLOTMENTS STRATEGY

- 8.46 The Council has an opportunity to develop a coherent vision for allotments within Kingston. This vision should recognise the multiple roles which allotments can play and the benefits of allotment gardening and be used as a basis to gather support and funding for improvements from other sources within the Council, external funding sources and relevant community and voluntary sector partners.
- 8.47 The vision should include an action plan which seeks to integrate allotment gardening within other strategies and programmes and identifies improvements to individual allotment sites and other projects and initiatives to foster participation in allotment gardening. It will be necessary to identify resources to implement projects including human resources to implement improvements.
- 8.48 The value of allotments as described earlier in this chapter includes their role as:
- Open space;
 - Providing opportunities for informal recreation;
 - A sustainable food source;
 - A resource for health;

- A community resource;
- An educational tool;
- A resource for biodiversity; and
- A place for composting and the management of green waste.

8.49 At present not every allotment site within the Borough performs all of the above roles. All allotment sites do however form an important component of urban green space as defined in PPG 17.

8.50 Allotments also contribute towards the landscape character of the Borough by providing visual amenity in the form of relief from the built up area or by allowing views beyond the immediate area. Many allotment sites, including Alric Avenue, Beverley Park and Malden Manor have some form of nature conservation value although most sites in Kingston are intensively cultivated due to high demand.

8.51 Potential may exist to increase the nature conservation value of some sites through identifying areas to develop as wildlife habitat within under-utilised areas. At other sites, smaller areas could be enhanced with particular attention given to those allotments located within areas deficient in natural and semi-natural greenspace provision.

8.52 In addition to the functions outlined above, significant scope exists to develop active social and educational roles through links with schools and other community organisations. These roles can be encouraged through specific initiatives which integrate allotments within other strategies and programmes and fostering allotments within the wider community.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Provision

8.53 There is currently provision for 980 allotment holders within the Borough, with 772 plots occupied. Overall it is estimated that between 2001 and 2016 there will be demand for an additional 73 plots arising from demographic changes, 395 plots from areas underserved by existing provision and 77 potential additional sites due to marketing initiatives. In addition, there currently exists suppressed latent demand for 111 plots at existing sites within the Borough. Therefore, there is an estimated requirement for up to 56 hectares of allotment land, depending upon the success of marketing initiatives.

Distribution and Access

- 8.54 At present significant latent demand exists for allotments within certain parts of the Borough due to lack of accessibility. Suppressed demand currently runs at 111 plots but total latent potential demand is at 656 plots. However, this figure could be higher due to the high proportion of residences without back gardens within deficiency areas (refer to Figure 3.2 and Figure 8.1).
- 8.55 Given that allotment sites do not have to be particularly large, allotment provision could be associated with new development in the Borough. Scope may exist within underserved areas to bring forward allotment land through diversification of existing open spaces such as playing fields and development of allotments on infill sites. Within other local authorities, school sites have proved good locations where there is sufficient space available as funding can be sought to develop allotments jointly as outdoor classrooms for curriculum use and as a community resource. Opportunities for bringing forward new allotment sites should be investigated within wards where there are the highest levels of latent demand and open space need.

Management and Resources

- 8.56 At present allotment provision is generally owned by Kingston Council although some sites are managed by the allotment association. Additional funding would secure a more comprehensive management and maintenance strategy. This may be achieved by integrating the improvement of allotments within other initiatives relating to regeneration, neighbourhood renewal and Local Agenda 21 and bidding for external funding. Other ways of funding improvements to allotment sites are:
- Increased rents: the best value process provides an opportunity to compare allotment rents to those in surrounding areas and cost of other recreational and leisure activities provided by the Council. It will be important to consider the overall cost and the quality of the service provided and to consider whether service users wish to pay more for an improved service.
 - Further devolved management: used to cut the cost of allotment provision through passing day to day management of sites to plot holders.
- 8.57 Several external funding sources exist which could be drawn upon to fund specific projects rather than ongoing management and allotment administration. These may include:
- Local Agenda 21 funds;
 - National Lottery New Opportunities Fund;
 - The SEED programme;

- The ENTRUST Landfill tax credit scheme;
- The Co-operative Group Community Divided;
- The Shell Better Britain Campaign; and
- Support in kind including B&Q Quest, BTCV, probation service.

PROPOSED ALLOTMENTS STANDARD

Allotment Provision

Quantitative Component

- 8.58 To meet the needs of the Borough up to 2016 it is recommended that a standard of **0.35 ha of allotment land per 1,000 population** is adopted. In order to meet this standard 56.04 ha of allotment land (an additional 14.34 ha) would need to be brought forward up to 2016.
- 8.59 Proposals for new housing development should be accompanied by proposals to improve allotment provision. The nature of such improvements should reflect the additional open space needs generated as a result of the proposed development but also take into consideration average garden sizes.
- 8.60 If the proposed development is located within an identified area deficient in access to allotment provision it will be necessary for additional land to be brought into use for this purpose. The developer will be required to make a contribution towards the provision of allotments. It may be appropriate for such provision to be incorporated within the artillage of the development. Alternatively a contribution towards off-site provision may be appropriate.
- 8.61 If the proposed development is not located within an area which is deficient in access to allotment provision then consideration will be given to any deficiency in quality or value of existing allotment sites serving the development. The developer may be required to make a contribution towards the enhancement of existing provision.

Accessibility Component

- 8.62 The following access standard is recommended:
- All households within the Borough should have access to an allotment garden within 800m of home.

Qualitative Component

- 8.63 Allotment sites should be of adequate quality and support the needs of the local community. Allotment sites which under perform in terms of their value to the local community consistent with the criteria relating to the role of sites identified in Chapter 8 should be improved. Those sites identified within Chapter 10 should be prioritised for improvement.

9. OPEN SPACE STANDARDS

INTRODUCTION

- 9.1 A series of locally based open space standards have been recommended based upon the findings of the assessment of local open space needs within the Borough. The assessment, summarised within the preceding chapters of this Volume, has considered the supply, quality and value of all types of open space provision within Kingston and levels of demand for playing pitch and allotment provision. The analysis of local needs has also informed an open space hierarchy for public park and natural and semi-natural greenspace provision within the Borough. It will be necessary for the Council to derive a standard relating to outdoor pitch sports following completion of a playing pitch assessment.
- 9.2 Assessing Needs and Opportunities, the companion guide to PPG17, recommends that local authorities set local provision standards which incorporate a quantitative, qualitative and accessibility component.
- 9.3 The purpose of these standards is to afford adequate levels of provision for each type of open space within the Borough based upon existing needs and the future needs of the Borough up to 2016. The standards identified at the end of the relevant chapters and summarised in Table 9.1 will enable the formulation of planning policies to protect existing open spaces where appropriate and to identify areas where additional open space provision is required.
- 9.4 Whilst planning policies are an effective mechanism to deliver an appropriate level of open space provision and to improve access to open space within the Borough, it is also necessary to prepare an open space strategy to secure improvements to the quality and value of open spaces. Such a strategy will be based upon the qualitative requirements which have been highlighted within this assessment. The study has identified areas of the Borough and individual spaces which should be prioritised for enhancement within such a strategy.
- 9.5 We do not recommend that a quantitative standard is adopted for the provision of amenity greenspace or civic spaces. However, it is expected that a design led approach would be used to identify the level of provision appropriate to the context (i.e. levels of overall open space needs, whether the site is located within a

conservation area) and the scale and type of the individual residential, employment or mixed use development. Supplementary planning guidance should be prepared identifying the design criteria to be used to incorporate amenity greenspace appropriate to particular types of development.

**Table 9.1 – Summary of Local Open Space Standards
(to meet needs up to 2016)**

Open Space Type	Quantity Standard	Area required to meet needs up to 2016	Accessibility Standard	Quality Standard
Public Parks	1.11ha per 1,000 population	177ha including 12 ha additional public parks to alleviate deficiencies)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All residents within the Borough should have access to a Metropolitan Park within 3.2km from home; All residents within the Borough should have access to a District Park within 1.2km from home; All residents within the Borough should have access to a Local Park or Small Local Park within 800m from home; All residents within the Borough should have access to a Small Local Park within 400m from home; and All residents within the Borough should have access to an area of public park within 800m from home. The definition of a public park as identified within the parks hierarchy defined within Chapter 4. 	Public parks within the Borough should meet the Green Flag 'good' quality standard. Open spaces identified within Chapter 10 for improvement should be prioritised.
Children's Play	0.8 ha per 1,000 population (could be incorporated within any category of public open space provision)	N/A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All residents within the Borough should have access to areas of formal and informal play provision for children and teenagers within 400m from home. 	Children's play provision within the Borough should be of adequate quality and provide the range of facilities associated with the size of the facility. The guidelines set out within the NPFA 6 acre Standard (2001) should be used to assess levels of adequacy in terms of the range and quality of provision.

Table 9.1 (Continued) – Summary of Local Open Space Standards (to meet needs up to 2016)

Open Space Type	Quantity Standard	Area required to meet needs up to 2016	Accessibility Standard	Quality Standard
Natural Greenspace	1 ha of Statutory designated ecological land per 1,000 population.	N/A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All residents within the Borough should have access to a natural or semi-natural greenspace of at least 2ha in size within 300m of home; All residents within the Borough should have access to a natural or semi-natural greenspace of at least 20ha in size within 2km of home; All residents within the Borough should have access to a natural or semi-natural greenspace of at least 100ha in size within 5km from home. 	Areas of natural and semi-natural greenspace should be of adequate quality and support local biodiversity. Areas of natural and semi-natural greenspace which either under perform in terms of their value to the local community and local biodiversity should be enhanced consistent with the guidelines identified in Chapter 10. Those spaces identified within Chapter 10 should be prioritised for improvement.
Allotments	0.35ha of allotment land per 1,000 population.	51.96 ha (including an additional 14.34 ha of allotment land)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All residents within the Borough should have access to an allotment garden within 800m of home. 	Allotment sites should be of adequate quality and support the needs of the local community. Allotment sites which under perform in terms of their value to the local community consistent with the criteria relating to the role of sites identified in Chapter 8 should be improved. Those sites identified within Chapter 10 should be prioritised for improvement.

10. MEETING OPEN SPACE NEEDS

INTRODUCTION

10.1 This chapter considers how the open space needs identified within the study can potentially be addressed and prioritised. We have presented the findings in the following format:

- Consideration of the potential scope for change and improvement of individual open space sites;
- Identification on a neighbourhood basis of how existing deficiencies in open space quantity, quality and access may be addressed to better meet local needs through enhancement of the existing green network; and
- Identification of an approach to areas where existing levels of provision have been met.

SCOPE FOR CHANGE AND IMPROVEMENT

10.2 The open space site assessments undertaken for parks and privately managed open spaces included identification of the physical potential for sites to accommodate a range of possible changes. The evaluation of potential is intended to identify possible opportunities and not to assess the feasibility of improvements or identify particular projects.

10.3 Table 10.1 provides a summary of the overall number of open spaces with scope for each of the changes/improvements.

Table 10.1 – Scope for Change / Improvement

Scope for Change / Improvement Categories	No of Sites	% of all Surveyed Spaces
Potential for improved site utilisation (through site redesign / improvement)	10	11.1
Potential Opportunities for Introducing other open space uses	1	1.1
Potential for usage which could contribute to social / regeneration objectives	2	2.2
Potential to improve landscaping	11	12.2
Potential to improve accessibility within the park	6	6.7
Potential for enhancing historic value	0	0
Physical Potential to intensify use of existing pitches	3	3.3
Physical potential to accommodate changing rooms / social facilities	0	0
Physical potential for additional pitches	1	1.1
Potential to improve safety aspects within the park	0	0
Other	12	13.3
No real scope for improvement	49	54.4

Based on assessment of 90 parks & privately managed open spaces

Potential for Improved Utilisation

- 10.4 During the course of the open space site assessments some 10 sites (10.8% of parks and privately owned spaces) were identified as having potential for improved site utilisation (see Figure 10.1). Identification of sites indicates that there are either areas within the site which have no particular role or purpose, or that there are facilities or parts of the site which may be under used perhaps due to the quality of the environment or the condition of existing provision.

Potential Opportunities for Introducing Other Open Space Uses

- 10.5 The former Sports ground at Clayton Rd was the only one of the 90 parks and privately owned sites (1.1% parks and privately owned spaces) identified as having potential for the introduction of other open space uses (refer to Figure 10.1). Identification of sites indicates that either all or part of the site does not currently fulfil the primary role of the open space suggested by its place within the open space hierarchy. There is the potential for re-defining the primary role of the space or potential to diversify the range of open space functions currently performed by the space to increase its value to the community.

Potential for Usage Which Could Contribute to Social and Regeneration Objectives

- 10.6 The site assessment identified 2 open spaces Public open Space East (ID No.46), and Public Open Space West (ID No.45) where potential exists for usage which could contribute towards delivering social or regeneration benefits to the surrounding area. This could be where site improvements could enhance the attractiveness of facilities

to local users thus increasing participation. Alternatively, improvements to facilities or other qualitative improvements could contribute towards the improvement of the local environment thus assisting in sustaining and enhancing the 'liveability' and quality of life in the surrounding area.

Potential to Improve Landscaping

- 10.7 Some 11 sites (12.2% of open spaces) were identified as having potential to improve landscaping and the quality of the environment within the park (refer to Figure 10.1). Almost all sites could potentially be subject to minor landscaping improvements. These open spaces were only selected where there was a strong justification for making improvements to improve the value of the site to the community through providing a more varied environment within the park or where existing landscapes are of poor quality and require enhancement measures rather than simple improvements to management or maintenance.

Potential to Improve Accessibility within the Park

- 10.8 Some 6 sites (6.5%) were identified as having potential to improve accessibility within the open space (refer to Figure 10.1). Such sites were identified because they have barriers to pedestrians, cyclists or those with mobility difficulties which preclude or discourage potential users from the space, or because the condition of existing paths and routes through the space are inadequate. Another reason for identifying the potential for improving access was the number and attractiveness of entrances to the open space.

Potential to Improve Historic Value

- 10.9 No open spaces were identified as having the potential enhance the historic value of the open space. The open spaces of cultural heritage value within the Borough should be seen as key interpretation assets for schools and lifelong learning programmes. Improved intelligibility of the open spaces can be achieved through enhancements such as planting and modern landscaping which reflects/copies the original forms, and also through the use of sensitive and appropriate interpretation facilities. These can take the form of portable media such as pamphlets or even tours or simple display boards.
- 10.10 At present disparities are evident in relation to the interpretation facilities amongst the various sites across the Borough. In most cases where interpretation facilities exist they consist of display boards summarising the historic development of the site. Some of the sites identified in the assessment as being good examples of well-preserved designed landscapes, that are also well-maintained, disappoint by the quality or lack of interpretation facilities.

Potential to Enhance Cultural Value

- 10.11 Existing Council information did not provide information on the potential to improve cultural value, and this was not assessed during the surveys (as cultural value of privately managed sites is likely to be less significant). However parks of a certain type and size could be expected to have potential to provide a venue for large scale or small scale events or permanent performance or community facilities. 8 parks out of the 34 assessed may have potential for enhancement of cultural value (refer to Table 10.2).
- 10.12 The Information available for Council managed open spaces does not include an assessment of the potential for enhancement at each open space, without a full assessment of Council managed sites it is not possible to conclude which of these sites has potential for enhancement.
- 10.13 Of the 90 parks and privately managed sites surveyed 47 (50%) were assessed as having no real scope for improvement. Of these 47 open spaces 22 were public parks. This does not mean that these spaces are exceptional enough so as to require no further improvements, nor should it preclude improvements to such sites and ongoing maintenance and investment that will be required in order to sustain the existing quality of facilities.
- 10.14 Public parks which were identified as having the greatest opportunity for introducing changes were; Athelston recreation ground, Barton Green Recreation Ground, Cromwell Avenue, Green Lane Recreation, King Georges Field, Mansfield Open Space, King Edwards Recreation Ground.

ENHANCING THE GREEN NETWORK TO MEET THE NEEDS OF NEIGHBOURHOODS

- 10.15 The open space needs of different areas within the Borough vary. The following analysis of the needs is based on the 4 existing Neighbourhood Areas that the Royal Borough of Kingston has identified. The neighbourhoods are; Kingston Town, Maldens & Coombe, Surbiton, and South of the Borough.
- 10.16 A summary of the needs and deficiencies within each neighbourhood and the potential opportunities to meet those needs is provided in Table 10.2.

Table 10.2 – Open Space Needs by Neighbourhood

Neighbourhood	Existing Deficiencies	Measures to Address Deficiencies	
Kingston Town	Public Parks – Access	Kingston Town does not have any areas outside of the 800m catchment area, and therefore no deficiency in access to public parks.	No measures required as currently no access deficiencies.
	Quantity	Both Norbiton and Canbury wards are below the quantitative standard of 1.11 ha of public parkland per 1,000 population. The Kingston Town neighbourhood as a whole is below the standard with only 1ha/1000.	Seek new open space provision as part of new developments in these wards.
	Quality	11 Public Parks The Kingston Town neighbourhood 3 fall short of the qualitative standard. These spaces are 22 (Latchmere Rec Ground), 17 (Athlestan Rec Ground), 111 (Kingston Rd Rec Ground).	Targeted improvements should be made to the quality of these sites.
	Children’s Play Provision – Access	Overall access to children’s play area in the neighbourhood is generally good, however areas to in south west of Grove, the east of Canbury and the north of Norbiton are deficient in terms of their access to children’s play facilities.	Within the neighbourhood potential may exist to upgrade the provision of play facilities at the following sites 17, 111, 90, 62, 8, 4106, 54 to NEAP / LEAP standards. There is limited potential to meet the deficiencies in access to children’s play at existing open spaces in the neighbourhood, therefore it will be necessary to seek children’s play facilities through new development.
	Quality	Out of 9 children’s play areas identified in this neighbourhood one meets the LEAP standard and one meets the standards for a play centre. The others have been assessed as not meeting the standard.	

Neighbourhood	Existing Deficiencies	Measures to Address Deficiencies
Kingston Town	<p>Natural / semi natural green spaces – Access</p> <p>The entire neighbourhood is within 2000m of an open space 20ha with an existing ecological designation or identified as a natural/semi natural green space. However, large parts are over 300m of an open space of at least 2ha with an existing ecological designation or identified as a natural/semi natural green space.</p>	<p>Investigate the potential to improve ecology at sites within deficiency areas. Site 93 St Marks Church, Site 22 Latchmere Recreation Ground are two sites where this may potentially be possible.</p>
Quantity	<p>Canbury and Tudor wards, are below the quantitative minimum standard of 1 ha of natural greenspace per 1,000 population. Canbury has no natural greenspace per 1,000 population</p>	
Allotments – Access	<p>The neighbourhood has three areas deficient in terms of access to allotments, a large area in the centre of the neighbourhood, and smaller areas one to the south and one to the north.</p>	<p>In addition to bringing forward allotment space through new development, Investigate the potential to accommodate a multi-purpose allotment /outdoor class room within one of the school grounds (site 326 or site 122) located in the area of deficiency.</p>
Quantity	<p>In terms of meeting the quantity standard of 0.35ha of allotment land per 1000 population, all wards but Tudor fall below the standard, Canbury has no allotment provision.</p>	
Amenity Spaces	<p>The Kingston Town neighbourhood has the greatest number of amenity green spaces in the Borough, this equates to 0.1ha of amenity greenspace per 1000 population</p>	<p>Assess the quality of each amenity space, implement targeted enhancements to the open spaces that have been identified as having a high value, but are poor in terms of their overall quality.</p>

Neighbourhood	Existing Deficiencies	Measures to Address Deficiencies
Maldens & Coombe	<p>Public Parks – Access</p> <p>The Maldens & Coombe has deficiency areas (areas outside of the 800m catchment area of public parks) in the North of the neighbourhood in Coombe Hill and parts of Coombe Vale wards.</p>	<p>Part of the deficiency area that covers the neighbourhood contains other types of open space. The opportunity that these provide is likely to be limited as of the sites large enough to provide park facilities, some are schools, and the others are privately run sports facilities such golf courses. It may therefore be necessary to seek new park provision as part of new housing developments.</p>
	<p>Quantity</p> <p>With the exception of Beverley and St James wards all other wards within the neighbourhood are below the quantitative standard of 1.11 ha of public parkland per 1,000 population, including Coombe Vale which has no public parkland. The Maldens & Coombe Neighbourhood as a whole is below the standard with only 0.79ha/1000.</p>	<p>Targeted improvements should be made to the quality of these sites.</p>
	<p>Quality</p> <p>Of the 8 Public Parks in the Maldens & Coombe Neighbourhood 4 of these park spaces fall short of the qualitative standard. These spaces are sites 40 (Green Lane), 31 (Barton Green Rec Ground), 46 (Public Open Space East), 34 (Cromwell Avenue Rec Ground).</p>	
	<p>Children’s Play Provision – Access</p> <p>Access to children’s play area in the neighbourhood varies across the neighbourhood, with large deficiencies in the north particularly Coombe Hill, Coombe Vale, there are also significant deficiencies in St James, Old Malden.</p>	<p>There may be potential to meet the some deficiencies in access to children’s play at existing open spaces in the neighbourhood at site 31 (Barton Green rec Ground), and sites 188, 191, 195 all of which are amenity greenspace near housing areas. It will also be necessary to seek children’s play facilities as part of new housing developments.</p>
	<p>Quality</p> <p>Out of 7 children’s play areas in the neighbourhood three meet the LEAP standard and one meets the NEAP Standard. One play area does not meet the standards, the remaining two play areas at sites 83 and 84 have not been assessed as part of this study.</p>	<p>Within the neighbourhood potential may exist to upgrade the provision of play facilities at site 300 (Blagdon Road Rec Ground) to NEAP / LEAP standards. Play areas at site 83 (Open Land on England Way) and site 84 (Fairmead Close) should be assessed to establish if it meets NEAP / LEAP standards.</p>

Neighbourhood	Existing Deficiencies	Measures to Address Deficiencies
Maldens & Coombe	<p>Natural / semi natural green spaces – Access</p> <p>Most of the neighbourhood is within 2000m of an open space 20ha with an existing ecological designation or identified as a natural/semi natural green space except a small part in the south east of the neighbourhood. Most of the Coomber Hill ward is within 300m of an open space of at least 2ha with an existing ecological designation or identified as a natural/semi natural green space. However large parts of the rest of the neighbourhood are beyond this catchment</p>	<p>Investigate the potential to improve ecology at of sites at least 2ha within deficiency areas, sites 26 (Dickerage Rec Ground), 300 (Blagdon Rd Rec Ground), and 198 (Land at South Lane, may provide opportunities for publicly accessible natural/semi natural green space.</p>
	<p>Quantity</p> <p>Beverley, Coombe Vale and St James wards, are below the quantitative minimum standard of 1 ha of natural greenspace per 1,000 population. Beverley has no natural greenspace per 1,000 population</p>	
	<p>Allotments – Access</p> <p>This neighbourhood has three areas deficient in terms of access to allotments, a large area in the north of the neighbourhood, and two smaller areas to the south and centre of the neighbourhood are further than 800m from an allotment site.</p>	<p>There is limited potential to convert existing open spaces to allotment use, will need to seek allotment provision through new development.</p>
	<p>Quantity</p> <p>In terms of meeting the standard of 0.35 ha of allotment land per 1000 population, one ward meets the standard and four wards are below the standard (Coombe Vale, Coombe Hill Old Malden and St James). Overall the neighbourhood is below the standard.</p>	
	<p>Amenity Spaces</p> <p>The neighbourhood has the highest total area of amenity green spaces in the Borough, this equates to 0.14ha of amenity greenspace per 1000 population</p>	<p>Assess the quality of each amenity space, implement targeted enhancements to the open spaces that have been identified as having a high value, but are poor in terms of their overall quality.</p>

Neighbourhood	Existing Deficiencies	Measures to Address Deficiencies
Surbiton	<p data-bbox="394 293 479 389">Public Parks- Access</p> <p data-bbox="562 293 1283 421">The Surbiton Neighbourhood deficiency areas (areas outside of the 800m catchment area of public parks) are mainly located in the west of the neighbourhood where a large portion of Surbiton Hill is deficient, and a small area of Berrylands ward is deficient.</p> <p data-bbox="394 517 479 549">Quantity</p> <p data-bbox="562 469 1283 628">With the exception of the Alexandra ward (2.99ha/1000), all other wards within the neighbourhood are below the quantitative standard of 1.11 ha of public parkland per 1,000 population, including Surbiton Hill with no public parkland. The Surbiton Neighbourhood as a whole is below the standard with only 1.03ha/1000.</p> <p data-bbox="394 676 479 708">Quality</p> <p data-bbox="562 692 1283 820">Of the 6 Public Parks in the Surbiton Neighbourhood has 3 park spaces which fall short of the qualitative standard. These spaces are sites 42 (Raeburn Open Space), 102 (King Georges Field), 45 (Public Open Space West)</p> <p data-bbox="394 868 524 995">Children’s Play Provision – Access</p> <p data-bbox="562 868 1283 932">Access to children’s play areas varies across the neighbourhood, with deficiencies throughout within all wards.</p> <p data-bbox="394 1043 479 1075">Quality</p> <p data-bbox="562 1059 1283 1198">Out of four children’s play areas identified in the neighbourhood one met the LEAP standard. Two have been assessed as not meeting the standards, the remaining play area (site 288) has not been assessed as part of this study.</p>	<p data-bbox="1312 293 1966 628">Part of the deficiency area that covers the neighbourhood contains other types of open space. The opportunity that these provide is likely to be limited as of the sites large enough to provide park facilities, three are schools, and one is a tennis club. To address some deficiency, there may be opportunities to diversify the use of Site no.16 (The wood) to upgrade the site to a small local park. The site is largely woodland so this may not be possible. It may therefore be necessary to seek new park provision as part of new housing developments.</p> <p data-bbox="1312 676 1966 740">Targeted improvements should be made to the quality of sites.</p> <p data-bbox="1312 884 1966 1011">There may be potential to meet the some deficiencies in access to children’s play at at site 210 (Land at Cranleigh Hobill Walk). It will also be necessary to seek children’s play facilities as part of new housing developments</p> <p data-bbox="1312 1075 1966 1246">Within the neighbourhood potential may exist to upgrade the provision of play facilities at the following sites 15 (Alexandra Rec Ground) and 45 (Public Open Space West) to NEAP / LEAP standards. Site 288 (Knollmead Play Ground should be assessed to establish if it meets NEAP / LEAP standards</p>

Neighbourhood	Existing Deficiencies	Measures to Address Deficiencies
Surbiton	<p>Natural/ semi-natural greenspace - Access</p> <p>The entire neighbourhood is within 2000m of an open space of 20ha with an existing ecological designation or identified as a natural/semi natural green space. However large parts of the neighbourhood are over 300m from an open space of at least 2ha with an existing ecological designation or identified as a natural/semi natural green space.</p>	Investigate the potential to improve ecology at sites of at least 2ha within deficiency areas, there may be opportunities at site 15 (Alexandra Rec Ground) and 24 (Tolworth Main Allotments for publicly accessible natural/semi natural green space.
	<p>Quantity</p> <p>All wards, except Alexandra are below the quantitative minimum standard of 1 ha of natural greenspace per 1,000 population.</p>	
	<p>Allotments – Access</p> <p>There is one area in the west of the neighbourhood, which is further than 800m from an allotment site.</p>	There is limited potential to convert existing open spaces to allotment use, will need to seek allotment provision through new development.
	<p>Quantity</p> <p>In terms of meeting the standard of 0.35ha of allotment land per 1000 population, all but Alexandra fall below the standard, including Berrylands with no allotment provision. However overall the neighbourhood is below the standard.</p>	
<p>Amenity Spaces</p> <p>The neighbourhood has the lowest number of amenity green spaces in the Borough (0.09ha/1000).</p>	Assess the quality of each amenity green space, implement targeted enhancements to the open spaces that have been identified as having a high value, but are poor in terms of their overall quality.	

Neighbourhood		Existing Deficiencies	Measures to Address Deficiencies
South of Borough	Public Parks- Access	The South of the Borough Neighbourhood has large deficiency area (areas outside of the 800m catchment area of public parks) in the South in Chessington South ward. There are small deficiency areas in Tolworth & Hook Rise Ward, Chessington North & Hook.	Part of the deficiency area that covers the neighbourhood contains other types of open space. To address this deficiency, there may be opportunities to diversify the use of existing spaces to accommodate functions associated with public parks. Site 272 (Queen Mary Recreation Ground) is currently a playing field which could be enhanced to incorporate some of the functions more commonly associated with public parks by improving access and embedding a range of informal recreation opportunities.
	Quantity	Two wards within the neighbourhood Chessington South and Tolworth & Hook Rise meet the quantitative standard of 1.11 ha of public parkland per 1,000 population, the remaining ward Chessington North & Hook is below the quantitative standard. The South of Borough as a whole meets the quantitative standard.	
	Quality	Of the 7 Public Parks in the South of Borough neighbourhood has 3 park spaces which fall short of the qualitative standard. These spaces are sites 103 (Church Fields Rec Ground), 99 land at Coppard Hill, 268 (Mansfield Open Space & Playground).	

Neighbourhood	Existing Deficiencies	Measures to Address Deficiencies
South of Borough	<p>Children's Play Provision – Access</p> <p>Access to children's play area varies across the neighbourhood. The centre of the Borough is particularly well served while significant areas in the South (South of Borough Ward) and the North (Tolworth & Hook Rise) are deficient in terms of their access.</p> <p>Quality</p> <p>Out of 8 children's play areas identified in the neighbourhood two meet the LEAP standard. Three do not meet the standards. Play areas at sites 286, 270 and 269 have not been assessed as part of this study.</p>	<p>Within the neighbourhood potential may exist to upgrade the provision of play facilities at the following sites 103 (Church Fields Rec Ground) 99 (Land t Coppard Hill) and 268 (Mansfield open Space) to NEAP / LEAP standards. Play areas at site 286 (Woodview playground) and site 270 (Rear of Fennel Court) and 269 (King Edwards Recreation ground) should be assessed to establish if they meet NEAP / LEAP standards.</p> <p>There is limited potential to meet the deficiencies in access to children's play at existing open spaces in the south of the neighbourhood. However this part of the neighbourhood does not have a large population, therefore opportunities should be sought in this area as part of new housing developments only where there is particular need.</p>
	<p>Natural / semi natural green spaces.</p> <p>A large area in Chessington South and a small part of Chessington North & Hook Wards area beyond 2000m of an open space 20ha with an existing ecological designation or identified as a natural/semi natural green. However most of Chessington South is within 300m of an open space of at least 2ha with an existing ecological designation or identified as a natural/semi natural green space, whilst large parts of the North of the neighbourhood are deficient in access to open spaces.</p> <p>Quantity</p> <p>Out of three wards in the neighbourhood, Chessington North & Hook is the only ward below the quantitative minimum standard of 1 ha of natural greenspace per 1,000 population.</p>	<p>Investigate the potential to improve ecology at sites of at least 2ha within deficiency areas in the north of the neighbourhood, there may be opportunities at site 103 (Church Fields Rec Ground), 99 ((Land at Coppard Hill North) for publicly accessible natural/semi natural green space.</p>

Neighbourhood	Existing Deficiencies	Measures to Address Deficiencies
South of Borough	<p data-bbox="394 376 1196 539">Allotments – Access The South of Borough Neighbourhood is largely deficient in terms of access to allotments. Areas further than 800m from an allotment site stretch from the north of the neighbourhood into the south of the neighbourhood, the south of this neighbourhood has the largest deficiency area.</p> <p data-bbox="394 592 1196 783">Quality In terms of meeting the standard of 0.35 ha of allotment land per 1000 population, Chessington North & Hook ward meets the standard, and Tolworth and Hook Rise, and Chessington South fall below the Standard. Overall the neighbourhood has the lowest provision in the whole Borough and is well below the standard.</p> <p data-bbox="394 836 1196 1034">Amenity space The neighbourhood has few amenity green spaces and the lowest total area of amenity greenspace in the Borough. However, the neighbourhood is sparsely populated and generally low density housing with gardens. South of Borough Neighbourhood has 0.38ha of amenity greenspace per 1000 population.</p>	<p data-bbox="1245 376 1921 507">In addition to bringing forward allotment space through new development, Investigate the potential to accommodate a multi-purpose allotment /outdoor class room within one of the school grounds (site 159 or site 164) located in the area of deficiency.</p> <p data-bbox="1245 836 1921 970">Assess the quality of each amenity green space, implement targeted enhancements to the open spaces that have been identified as having a high value, but are poor in terms of their overall quality.</p>

PARKS DEFICIENT IN QUALITY

10.17 As explained in chapter 6, The Green Flag Assessment identifies spaces with a ranking of 6 or above to be considered as good quality. Those public parks which fall below this average score are therefore considered to be deficient in quality. The following is a list of all spaces classified as public parks which currently do not meet the quality score of 6 and are thus deficient in quality:

Kingston Town

- No.17 Athelstan Recreation Ground (Small Local Park)
- No.22 Latchmere Recreation Ground (Local Park)
- No.111 Kingston Road Recreation Ground (Local Park)

Maldens & Coombe

- No.31 Recreation Ground (Small Local Park)
- No.34 Cromwell Avenue Recreation Ground (Small Local Park)
- No.40 Green Lane Recreation Ground (Local Park)
- No.46 Public Open Space East (Local Park)

Surbiton

- No.42 Raeburn Open Space (Local Park)
- No.45 Public Open Space West (Small Local Park)
- No. 102 King Georges Field (Local Park)

South of the Borough

- No 99 Land at Coppard Hill North (Local Park)
- No 103 Church Fields Recreation Ground (Local Park)
- No.268 Mansfield Open Space & Playground (Small Local Park)

MEETING DEFICIENCIES IN QUALITY

10.18 Deficiencies in the quality and value of spaces were identified in Chapter 7. Possible measures to enhance the quality and value of spaces to the community should be pursued within the parks strategy on a site by site basis. The prioritisation of sites for

improvement should be guided by their position in the Quality-Value quadrant identified in Chapter 7, their position within the Borough's green space network including whether sites can alleviate deficiencies or lie within an area of open space need and whether the site can accommodate change or improvement.

10.19 Improvements themselves may include the simple upgrading, improvement, replacement or enhancement of existing facilities or aspects of park quality. However, within some open spaces a more comprehensive approach may be required which may include re-focusing the role of all or part of the open space in order to better meet local needs. Open space improvements should be considered within the context of future management needs and requirements. Embedding revenue generating activities within open spaces and maximising the involvement of the community and voluntary sector provide opportunities to maximise the presence of the open space within the community and make sustainable long term management of the site achievable.

10.20 Where open spaces do not have a positive identity or an established role, the toolkit of possible themes identified below could be employed to re-focus the role of spaces or parts of spaces. The ideas below represent suggestions for the Council to foster community discussion of the range of possibilities and do not represent solutions in themselves without appreciation of the context and issues associated with individual spaces.

- Improved community focus (amphitheatres, outdoor dining, picnic and barbeque areas, shelters and temporary structures, spaces for festivals and events);
- Outdoor cultural venue including spaces for consumption (cinema in the park, art exhibitions, sculpture trails and public art, music and performance areas, outdoor reading room) and artistic production (spaces for inspiration/contemplation, views/vistas, landscapes etc);
- Outdoor gym (enhancement of health benefits, sports facilities, trim trails);
- Spaces for relaxation (Varied landscapes and possibly indoor facilities including sauna, spa etc.);
- Wireless Park – (Provision of wireless internet access in order to provide “inspirational/outdoor workspace” particularly within Country and District Parks and spaces close to town centres. Technology can also be used to deliver historical/environmental/nature conservation interpretation;
- “Green beach” - pleasure spaces surrounding water space (i.e lake, paddling pool/lido, fountain/water feature). Should include spaces for relaxation, sport and recreation and appropriate vegetation;

- Spaces for education (adult learning, improved interpretation, spaces for teaching cycle proficiency);
- The “extreme” park to meet the needs of older children and teenagers not well provided for within existing spaces (skateboard ramps, artificial grass skiing/long boarding slope, mountain bike trails/multi-function cycling facility, designated paths for in-line skating, outdoor climbing wall, outdoor karting/motor sports).
- Blurring the boundaries between different open space types to maximise use and shared management responsibility (e.g. a jointly provided allotment garden, community garden and outdoor classroom);
- Enabling open spaces for evening and night-time use (lighting strategy, floodlighting, embedding evening attractions);
- Consideration of spaces/facilities in the air/below ground (viewing platforms, tree walk, earth sheltered structures for changing provision etc.).

10.21 In addition to these ideas within a wide range of spaces there will be a need to embed spaces for nature, for dogs and for play.

MAINTAINING AN ADEQUATE SUPPLY OF OPEN SPACE

10.22 PPG17 Planning for Open Space Provision identifies the criteria to be used to protect open spaces which are of high value to a local community. It also identifies the criteria to determine whether a space which is surplus to requirements and can be considered for alternative uses.

10.23 Paragraph 10 of PPG17 identifies that “existing open space, sport and recreation buildings and land should not be built on unless an assessment has been undertaken which has clearly shown that open space or the buildings and land to be ‘surplus to requirements. For open space, surplus to requirements should include consideration of all the functions that open space can perform”.

10.24 PPG 17 recognises that not all open space, sport and recreational land and buildings are of equal merit and some may be available for alternative use. However, it is necessary for developers will need to consult the local community and demonstrate that their proposals are widely supported by them. In summary to determine whether an open space can be considered for alternative uses:

- A robust open space assessment needs to show that the space is not needed to meet local open space requirements;
- The open space is not required to meet an identified deficiency in another type of open space; and

- Consultation with the local community needs to be carried out. The onus is on the developer to demonstrate that there is widespread community support for their proposals.

10.25 Proposals for alternative non open space uses at established playing field sites would need to be considered in relation to current Sport England guidelines relating to the development of playing fields. The Council would be required to consult Sport England on all planning applications relating to the development of playing fields greater than 0.2ha.

10.26 As with other development proposals alternative uses would need to be considered in relation to the provisions of the Development Plan and other material considerations.

Partial Disposal and Land Exchanges

10.27 Paragraph 12 of PPG17 recognises that development of open spaces may provide an opportunity for local authorities to remedy deficiencies in provision where there is an identified surplus in one type of open space and a deficiency in another type. Planning conditions and obligations can be used to secure part of the development site for the type of provision which is in deficit.

10.28 Development may also provide the opportunity to exchange the use of one site for another to substitute for any loss of open space, sport or recreational facility. PPG17 identifies that the new land and facilities should be at least as accessible to current and potential new users at least be equivalent in terms of size, usefulness, attractiveness and quality.

Development within Open Spaces

10.29 Paragraph 16 of PPG17 identifies that the recreational quality of open spaces can be eroded by insensitive development or incremental loss of the site. In considering planning applications either within, or adjoining open space PPG17 recommends that local authorities should weigh any benefits offered to the community against the loss of open space that will occur. In considering planning applications Local Authorities should:

- (i) Avoid any erosion of recreational function and maintain or enhance the character of spaces;
- (ii) Ensure open spaces do not suffer from increased overlooking, traffic flows or other encroachment;

- (iii) Protect and enhance those parts of the rights of way network that might benefit open space; and
- (iv) Consider the impact of any development on biodiversity and nature conservation.

AREAS WITH PROVISION ABOVE MINIMUM OPEN SPACE STANDARDS

10.30 The open space assessment has identified in broad terms parts of the Borough where the minimum standards of open space provision have been met in order that areas which have the potential to be surplus to requirements can be established. In order to confirm whether a space was surplus to requirements the following tests should be applied consistent with the requirements of PPG17.

- (i) Is the space located within an area of the Borough which experiences an open space deficiency for any type of open space provision either in terms of the quantity or accessibility of provision (refer to Table 9.1);
- (ii) Does the space have the potential to meet any identified deficiency considering its location, size and character (refer to Table 10.2);
- (iii) Is the open space or its facilities of high quality, or of particular value to the community and merits protection despite minimum standards of provision having been met (Refer to the findings of the quality-value matrix (Figure Figures 6.1 & 7.8 and Appendix E);

10.31 Open space which fulfil either criteria (i) and (ii) or criteria (iii) may represent spaces which are surplus to requirements if it can be demonstrated that there is widespread community support for alternative use. Whilst the residents survey provides a summary of perceptions of provision at the sub area level the information is not sufficiently detailed to identify perceptions relating to individual spaces.

11. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

11.1 The Kingston Open Space Study and the accompanying database and GIS mapping provide a comprehensive assessment of the supply and demand for open space which includes:

- An analysis of current open space provision;
- A typology of open spaces relevant to Kingston;
- A classification of public open spaces;
- The identification of deficiencies in provision in terms of access to public open space;
- The qualitative distribution of public open space including the range and condition of facilities;
- The value of individual open spaces reflecting the wider contribution that open spaces make to the community and to the quality of life;
- The identification of deficiencies in provision in terms of access to natural greenspace and nature conservation;
- An understanding of the relative importance of open space as a cultural heritage resource, potential threats to historic open spaces and opportunities for their protection and enhancement;
- Opportunities to protect and enhance the Green Network;
- The contribution that non public open spaces make to addressing open space deficiencies;

11.2 The results will:

- Inform the review of the Local Development Framework;
- Provide the Council with adequate planning guidance and open space standards;

- Assist the Council in identifying needs for new open spaces and outdoor sports facilities;
 - Inform the future management of open spaces and playing pitches including the identification of opportunities to enhance and reconfigure open space provision;
 - Enable the Council to identify priorities for future investment and provide a rationale to secure external funding for the improvement and additional provision of facilities particularly via developer contributions.
- 11.3 The study includes an assessment of the quantity, quality and value of parks and open spaces in Kingston and identifies whether provision is meeting local needs. It develops local standards and measures to address deficiencies in open space provision. The findings from the resident's consultation have informed the preparation of this report.
- 11.4 This chapter brings together the conclusions and recommendations from each of the separate elements of the study. The recommended standards for provision are summarised in Table 9.1.

POLICY FRAMEWORK

- 11.5 This study is consistent with planning guidance and other supporting strategies at the national, regional and local level and takes into account new government thinking on sustainable development and the role that green space plays in the quality of life of residents.
- 11.6 It recognises that most open space, with good planning and management, can perform multiple functions and provide a variety of benefits which cut across the Council's strategic priorities. An Open Space Study is vital to bring all those who are responsible and have an interest together with a common purpose and a shared understanding of what can be done to enhance and maintain green space for the future.
- 11.7 The forthcoming Kingston LDF should update policies relating to open space, sport and recreation needs in the Borough to reflect the approach to open space provision identified in this report.

OPEN SPACE NEEDS AND PRIORITIES

- 11.8 The identification of local needs and priorities has taken account of the findings of the Residents Survey and other consultation undertaken by the council in relation to parks and open spaces.

11.9 Open space needs and priorities are varied across the Borough. Differences in population density, the proportion of flats & terraced dwellings, child densities and indices of deprivation generally correspond to those areas where large scale housing developments exist, such as public housing estates.

- Areas of high population density (gross residential densities >50 dwellings/hectare) and/or wards with a high proportion of dwellings which are terraced or are flats (refer to Figure 3.2) should be prioritised for improvements to the provision of small local parks, local parks, children's play areas amenity greenspaces and allotments where there is an identified deficiency in either the quantity or access.
- The range and quality of open space provision within these open spaces should also reflect the increased range of functions which these spaces are required to fulfil which would normally be performed by back gardens. Such functions include children's play, informal games, sitting out/relaxation, picnics/outside dining, gardening and family/community gatherings.

11.10 The reason for prioritising these areas is due to lower than average access to private gardens within these areas and the overall density of development which means that there tend to be fewer amenity spaces, natural and semi-natural areas including urban trees particularly within the areas of highest density.

- Child densities are reasonably high in the Borough, but this does vary in particular Tolworth and Hook Rise, Alexandra, Norbiton, Coombe Vale, and Beverley have output areas which have child densities significantly greater than the London average (refer to Figure 3.3). These wards should be prioritised for improvement where there are inadequate opportunities for children's play for all age groups (refer to Chapter 5).
- On the whole the population in Kingston is in good health, there is only one ward which has an output area where a significantly higher proportion of the population are 'not in good health' compared with the national average (refer to Figure 3.4). Although poor health is not a particular problem in Kingston, open spaces all areas of the Borough should provide formal and informal opportunities for physical activity and a range of environments which provide spaces for relaxation and stress relief in order to help maintain a healthy population.

11.11 Where such opportunities do not exist new formal and informal opportunities for physical activity should be embedded within communities in order to encourage increased rates of physical activity. Within all communities there should be spaces for relaxation either within existing parks or within linear open spaces. Both of these roles can potentially contribute towards preventing ill health.

- None of the wards in Kingston have super output areas that currently ranked within the top 10% most deprived super output areas nationally. There are some super output areas ranked within the 20% most deprived super output areas nationally these are concentrated to the east of Kingston town centre. As a result open spaces are likely to have a limited role in regenerating communities however in the more deprived parts of Kingston it will be important to:
 - Provide environments which are attractive green and safe;
 - Provide green lungs to assist in improving air quality;
 - Establish a sense of place and well being and improving the image and identity of communities and;
 - Provide a range of opportunities for sport and recreation.

11.12 Such improvements should be instrumental in enhancing local quality of life.

APPROACH TO PLANNING OPEN SPACE PROVISION

11.13 It is considered that using the parks hierarchy concept is the most appropriate means of planning open space in Kingston. This study has used this approach to address the issues identified in PPG17. The hierarchy of open space has been amended and the typology of open space expanded to reflect the roles of different open space types, and the variations in accessibility and usage patterns between principal settlements and other parts of the Borough.

ASSESSMENT OF SUPPLY

11.14 Kingston has a relatively low quantity of public park provision for an outer London Borough, with 1.12ha of public parks per 1000 population. The provision of public parks equates to 19.4% of the total area of open space in the Borough. There are some large public parks in surrounding Borough's which provide for some of the needs of Kingston's residents. The distribution of public park provision varies significantly between wards.

11.15 There are some areas of the Borough which are deficient in public open space these are illustrated on Figure 5.5. Measures to extend the existing catchments of existing parks will need to be considered in order to reduce deficiencies in access. Measures will be different for each park but could include creating more park gates, 'greening' of routes and better signposting.

11.16 This study has identified provision for children's play in Kingston. 71% of the children's play areas do not meet all of the criteria set by NPFA for a LEAP or NEAP.

7 open spaces have play areas which fully fulfil the criteria associated with a LEAP and only 1 spaces fully meet the NEAP criteria. A number of open spaces with 'Other children's play provision' fulfil some of the criteria for a LEAP and could be classified as such if minor improvements were made to the play space.

11.17 The assessment identifies the areas deficient in access to formally provided children's play provision but also identifies other publicly accessible open spaces which may have the potential to incorporate dedicated children's play facilities and help reduce the deficiencies.

QUALITY OF SUPPLY

11.18 Open space policy has been primarily concerned with the quantity and distribution of open space. This study updates this information but also considers the range and condition of facilities within open spaces and the quality of those facilities compared with the Green Flag standard. Chapter 6 identifies that the majority of open spaces are classified as having a fair or good quality and range of facilities. The overall findings of the resident's survey are consistent with this assessment.

11.19 A strategy for improving the range and condition of facilities within public parks should be developed to take into account:

- The unique character of these parks and the potential to incorporate further facilities;
- Whether there is a deficiency in the provision of open space in the area;
- The proximity of other parks which may have an oversupply of certain facilities;
- Recommendations to enhance the Green Network; and
- Local social conditions.

VALUE OF OPEN SPACE

11.20 The value placed on open space is multi-functional and relates to a range of roles. Each open space will have a different mix of values to each individual user.

11.21 The study has shown that some of the open spaces surveyed are being used by schools and communities as an educational resource and location for social events.

11.22 The network of open spaces also provide a valuable ecological resource. There are areas of the Borough which are deficient in accessible natural or semi-natural greenspace provision. Chapter 10 identifies open spaces which could possibly

address this deficiency subject to new management regimes which adopt some of the landscaping and habitat creation measures identified.

11.23 Around 31% of those open spaces assessed were identified as being below the Kingston average in terms of the quality and value. 27 spaces within the Borough (30%) were identified as representing open spaces of high quality and of high value to the community. Many of the high quality low value spaces represent mono-functional open spaces which only contribute to the community in a limited way, such as amenity spaces. Within areas of identified deficiency (in terms of quantity, quality or access) it is important that such spaces do not under perform in terms of their potential value and multi-functionality and are improved to fulfil their potential

LOCAL STANDARDS

Proposed Standard for Provision of Public Parks

11.24 Taking into account of 2016 population projections, this study recommends a quantity standard of 1.11 ha of public parks per 1,000 population and an increase in public open park provision of 12ha.

11.25 The following access standards are recommended for inclusion within the forthcoming Local Development Framework.

- All residents within the Borough should have access to a Regional Park within 3200m from home;
- All residents within the Borough should have access to a Metropolitan Park within 3200m from home;
- All residents within the Borough should have access to a District Park within 1200m from home;
- All residents within the Borough should have access to a Local Park within 800m from home;
- All residents within the Borough should have access to a Small Local Park within 400m from home;
- All residents within the Borough should have access to a public park as defined by the parks hierarchy defined in Table 4.1 within 800m from home.

11.26 Public parks within the Borough should be of good or very good quality and provide the range of facilities associated with their respective tier of the parks hierarchy. Those public parks identified within Chapter 6 and 7 which either under perform in

terms of their value to the local community or their condition should be improved consistent with the guidelines identified.

11.27 Children's play provision should be of adequate quality and provide the range of facilities associated with the size of the facility. The Council's supplementary planning guidance and guidelines set out within the NPFA 6 acre Standard (2001) should be used to assess levels of adequacy in terms of the range and quality of provision.

Proposed Standard for Provision of Natural Greenspace

11.28 The proposed standard for provision of natural greenspace is 1.0ha per 1,000 population. The Borough as a whole will meet this target in 2016. However, the distribution of natural greenspace in the Borough means that all wards (identified in figure 7.11), have some degree of deficiency.

11.29 The following access standards are recommended for inclusion within the forthcoming Local Development Framework:

- All residents within the Borough should have access to a natural or semi-natural greenspace of at least 2ha in size within 300m of home;
- All residents within the Borough should have access to a natural or semi-natural greenspace of at least 20ha in size within 2km of home;

ASSESSING ALLOTMENT NEEDS

11.30 The revised PPG17 states that in preparing development plans, local authorities should undertake an assessment of the likely demand for allotments and their existing allotment provision, and prepare policies which aim to meet the needs in their area.

Proposed Standard for Provision of Allotments

11.31 The recommended standard of allotment provision to meet needs up to 2016 is **0.35ha per 1,000 population**. Allotment provision should be increased by up 14.34 ha to meet these needs.

11.32 The following access standard is recommended for inclusion within the forthcoming Local Development Framework.

- All households should have access to an allotment garden within 800m of home.

- 11.33 Allotment sites should be of adequate quality and support the needs of the local community. Allotment sites which under perform in terms of their value to the local community consistent with the criteria relating to the role of sites identified in Chapter 8 should be improved.
- 11.34 Given that allotment sites do not have to be particularly large, allotment provision could be associated with new development in the Borough. Scope may exist within underserved areas to bring forward allotment land through diversification of existing open spaces such as playing fields and development of allotments on infill sites. Within other local authorities, school sites have proved good locations where there is sufficient space available as funding can be sought to develop allotments jointly as outdoor classrooms for curriculum use and as a community resource. Opportunities for bringing forward new allotment sites should be investigated within wards where there are the highest levels of latent demand and open space need.
- 11.35 At those allotment sites where there is unlikely to be demand even taking account of latent and potential demand then opportunities exist to diversify areas of underutilised plots or disused allotment land for other open space and nature conservation uses. If there is no existing or potential need for any other open space uses then it may be appropriate to consider other possible land uses.

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

Development Control Decisions

- 11.36 The Study provides comprehensive information on open spaces outside council ownership that have been surveyed as part of this study. This has supplemented information available on Council owned sites provided by the Council. This information allows an informed assessment of the impact of development proposals on the value of individual open spaces. Development control decisions should have regard to the analysis undertaken on current levels of provision, the identified deficiencies and the quality and value of the open spaces within or surrounding a development site.
- 11.37 Proposals for new housing development should be accompanied by proposals to improve open space provision. The nature of such improvements should reflect the additional open space needs generated as a result of the proposed development. Recommended standards for open space provision are summarised in Table 9.1.
- 11.38 If the proposed development is located within an identified area of deficiency for public park, children's play, natural greenspace or allotment provision, it will be necessary for additional sites to be brought into the relevant open space use. The developer will be required to make a contribution towards the provision of the open

space. It may be appropriate for such provision to be incorporated within the curtilage of the development. Alternatively a contribution to off-site provision may be appropriate.

11.39 If the proposed development is not located within an area which is deficient in either quantity or access to open space provision, then consideration will be given to any deficiency in open space quality or value. The developer will be required to make a contribution towards the enhancement of the quality of open space provision including the range facilities and their condition.

11.40 A framework to guide developer contributions should be prepared to provide a rationale for calculating the contributions associated with individual development proposals.

Enhancement of Open Spaces

11.41 This study has identified criteria for assessing the quality and value of each open space surveyed. It is recommended that the Open Space Strategy focuses on improving those public spaces which are underperforming in line with the guidelines and suggested opportunities for improvement.

11.42 The study has also identified how existing deficiencies in open space quantity, quality and access may be addressed on a neighbourhood basis to better meet local needs.

NEXT STAGE

11.43 The open space standards proposed within the study should be used to formulate planning policies within the forthcoming Local Development Framework.

11.44 The results of this study and the open space consultation should also inform the preparation of an Open Space Strategy. This strategies will include action plans to identify timescales, relevant stakeholders and potential funding sources.

11.45 It was beyond the scope of this study to assess the demand for playing pitches and to identify deficiencies in the playing pitch and outdoor sports provision. In order develop a playing pitch standard and develop a playing pitch strategy, a full assessment consistent Sport England guidelines is recommended.