

Braintree District Council

BRAINTREE GREEN SPACES STRATEGY

Adopted September 2008

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INTRODUCTION

The need for a green spaces strategy has arisen from the growing recognition of the importance of outdoor activity as a key contributor to a healthy lifestyle. Open spaces and sport and recreation underpin people's quality of life and are fundamental to delivering the broader Government objectives of supporting an urban renaissance, supporting a rural renewal, promoting social inclusion and community cohesion, health and well being and promoting more sustainable development.

The Government recognises that open space and sport and recreation facilities can make our towns and villages better places in which to live, and the role of planning in ensuring that there are sufficient of them and that they are in the right places. They also need to be of high quality, attractive to use and well managed and maintained. The focus on concentrating development within existing towns makes open spaces attractive for development, and therefore they need to be safeguarded by the planning system.

The local strategic partnership, Communities and People Together (PACT), envisages a safer, cleaner and healthier District, promoted by improved leisure facilities and safeguarded through protection of the countryside and enhancement of the natural and built environment. Two of the key directions of Braintree District Council are to create a cleaner and greener District and making the District a better place to live, work and play.

The key aims of the Strategy are to provide accessible high quality green spaces and sport and recreation facilities which meet the recreational needs of all sections of the community, to engage the local community to participate in their improvement and to raise their profile and promote their benefit to the District. It draws on the results of the PPG17 open space audit and the household, user and sports clubs surveys that provide the basis for setting provision, quality and accessibility standards. The Strategy makes recommendations for the provision and improvement of green spaces, and provides a basis developing planning policies and proposals and improving the management and maintenance of green spaces.

1.0 THE VISION

- 1.1 It is important to set out a vision of how green spaces will be in the future with regard to their role in the community and their impact on the environment. The following visions statements were adopted by the Green Spaces Strategy Development Group on 27 July 2007:

Overall

- 1.2 One of the Council's Directions and Ambitions is to provide attractive and cleaner open spaces which enhance the well being and quality of life for residents and visitors. Its open spaces and sports and recreation facilities contribute to a healthy, safe, cleaner and greener District in which:
- (a) The recreational needs of residents for open spaces and sport and recreation facilities are met;
 - (b) All localities have good access to open space and sport and recreation facilities;
 - (c) All sections of the community, including those with physical, visual and learning impairment, have access to open spaces and sport and recreation facilities;
 - (d) Sustainable practices are core to the management of all open spaces;
 - (e) Green spaces are managed to maximise biodiversity through the protection and enhancement of wildlife habitats; and
 - (f) Green spaces are managed to protect and enhance the historic environment and to maximise their cultural value.
- 1.3 Our vision is to provide high quality, accessible, green spaces that meet the needs of all, including both Braintree's residents and visitors. The following visions were set for the six types of green space included in the audit:

Parks and Urban Greenspace

- 1.4 Definition:
Urban parks, formal gardens and country parks that provide opportunities for a variety of informal recreation and community events.

High quality, accessible, well maintained, safe and attractive parks and urban green spaces, in which residents have the opportunity to lead active, healthy lifestyles and are encouraged to care for their parks and open spaces. The parks and green spaces form a well connected network of spaces that are well designed, providing safe and pleasant areas to sit, walk or play, which include well maintained facilities including sufficient seats, bins and toilets, and are clean and free from fouling and litter.

Amenity Green Spaces

- 1.5 Definition:
Green spaces and planting designed primarily to soften the urban fabric, providing a setting for the built environment.

High quality, well-designed, clean, well maintained areas free of litter and fouling, providing a visual amenity and relief from the built form for nearby residents. Mostly laid to grass they also include areas of tree and shrub planting to create habitat for fauna and flora.

Sports and Recreation Facilities

- 1.6 Definition:
Natural or artificial surfaces, publicly or privately owned which are used for formal sport and recreation.

A range of high quality, well-designed and accessible sports and recreation facilities that meet the future needs of the District's residents. The facilities are well equipped and well maintained, with high quality playing surfaces supported by adequate changing rooms and parking and free of litter and fouling. High quality facilities are encouraging greater participation in sport and recreation in the District and are helping to create a healthy community.

Natural and Semi-natural Greenspaces

- 1.7 Definition:
Areas of mostly undeveloped land with limited or no maintenance which have been colonised by vegetation and wildlife – includes woodlands, river banks, river floodplains and wetlands, dismantled railways, scrub, grassland and disused mineral workings.

The District's residents enjoy high quality, well-designed natural and semi-natural greenspaces within the urban areas and the countryside. These spaces are managed to encourage native flora and fauna and increase biodiversity and some provide an educational resource. These spaces are appropriately designed and maintained so that there is a balance between visitor activity and the need to safeguard the natural environment.

Green corridors

- 1.8 Definition:
Linear green spaces including riverside paths, cycleways, unmetalled rights of way such as byways and bridleways and dismantled railways where the primary purpose is to provide opportunities for walking, cycling and horse riding.

A network of green corridors, managed to promote biodiversity, provide attractive routes between open spaces for the District's residents and enable the movement and refuge of wildlife in both urban and rural areas.

Children's Play Spaces

1.9 Definition:

Equipped play areas, skateboard areas and teenage shelters and other spaces with the primary purpose of providing opportunities for play and social interaction involving children and young people.

Accessible, well-designed, high quality play areas that provide a safe environment in which children of all ages and abilities develop their imagination and have fun. Any equipment is safe, well designed and well maintained.

2.0 POLICY BACKGROUND AND OTHER GUIDANCE

National Agenda for Open Spaces

- 2.1 ***The Urban White Paper - Our Towns and Cities - The Future (2000)***
This initiative brought greenspace and open spaces out of the cold and into the heart of the government change agenda as a key contributor to urban renaissance, community regeneration, social inclusion, crime reduction, health promotion and lifelong learning. The paper proposed the appointment of a ministerial Urban Green Spaces Task Force and the Green Flag award as a national standard; both being accepted by the Government.

- 2.2 ***Green Spaces, Better Places – The Final Report of the Urban Green Spaces Taskforce (DTLR, 2002)***
The Taskforce recognised that parks and green spaces are a popular and precious resource that can make a valuable contribution to the attractiveness of a neighbourhood, to the health and well being of people and expand educational opportunities for both children and adults. Their main conclusions were:
- Parks and open spaces remain popular despite a decline in both quality and quantity.
 - Open spaces make a valuable contribution to the quality of life and help deliver wider social, economic and environmental benefits.
 - Planners and planning mechanisms need to take better account of the need for parks and open spaces, including management and maintenance issues.
 - Parks and open spaces should be central to any vision of sustainable modern towns and cities
 - Strong civic, local pride and responsibility are necessary to achieve the vision reinforced by a successful green spaces strategy
 - There is a need for a more co-ordinated approach at the national level to guide local strategies.

- 2.3 ***Improving urban parks, play areas and green space (DTLR, May 2002)***
This research examined patterns of use, barriers to use and the wider role of open space in urban regeneration. It demonstrated links between parks and other green spaces in meeting wider local authority objectives linked to agendas such as education, health, environment, diversity, safety, jobs and regeneration. In particular they:
- Contribute to social inclusion because they are free and accessible to all
 - Can become a centre of community spirit
 - Contribute to child development through scope for outdoor, energetic and imaginative play
 - Offer numerous educational advantages
 - Provide a range of health, environmental and economic benefits.

- 2.4 The report also highlighted a number of issues in the management, funding and integration of open spaces into the wider context of urban

renewal and planning:

- Community involvement – can lead to increased use, enhancement of quality and richness of experience, and ensure that facilities are suited to local needs
- Resources – the decline in quality resulted from declining local authority open space budgets, and external sources such as the Heritage Lottery Fund and Section 106 Agreements are now of most value.
- Partnerships – between local authorities and community groups, funding agencies and business can result in significant added value, both in terms of finances and quality of green space
- Urban renewal – integration of urban green space into urban renewal are brought about by:
 - Attracting inward investment through the provision of attractive landscapes
 - Grassroots green space initiatives
 - Parks used as flagships in neighbourhood renewal
 - Strategic multi-agency area-based regeneration, linking environment and the economy.

2.5 Because green spaces are predominantly owned, managed and maintained by local authorities, the Government believes that strong local leadership is essential for improving parks and green spaces. To improve the parity of parks and green spaces with other local authority services will require a shared vision, integrated approaches and strategic planning at a local level.

2.6 Regional Development Agencies support improvements to urban green spaces through their target to deliver urban renaissance and excellence in design.

PPG17 – Planning for Open Space, Sport and Recreation (July 2002) and its Companion Guide (September 2002)

2.7 This study has been undertaken in accordance with the guidance provided in Planning Policy Guidance Note 17 (Planning for Open Space, Sport and Recreation (July 2002) and its Companion Guide (September 2002)). PPG17 gives priority to open space, advocating that planning policies for open space, including playing fields, should be based upon local standards that are derived from a robust assessment of local need. It encourages the principle of negotiating commuted sums for off-site open space provision from new housing developments.

Living Places: Cleaner, Safer, Greener (ODPM, October 2002)

2.8 The two main points arising from this report are that liveability can be enhanced by reducing anti-social behaviour, and that places should be cleaner, safer and greener.

Sustainable Communities: Building for the Future (ODPM, February 2003)

2.9 Having identified the need to create and maintain places in which people will want to live, with parks and open spaces being a key consideration

because they are a focal point of community life, the Government's plan for building sustainable communities including funding for the local environment ("liveability"), including parks and public spaces, of £201 million during the period 2003-2006.

- 2.10 A number of funding opportunities were announced, including a Green Spaces and Sustainable Communities Programme and the Heritage Lottery Fund Urban Parks Programme. This audit of open spaces in Braintree District will help to identify priorities where funding may assist in enhancing existing green spaces.

CABE Space

- 2.11 The Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment (CABE) set up CABE Space to promote the role of parks and open spaces in the UK. Its aim is *"to bring excellence to the design, management and maintenance of parks and public spaces in towns and cities."*

CABE Space provides advice on strategic issues, including open space assessments and parks management. It encourages people to think holistically about green space and its role in health and well being of communities, routes to school and work and recreation through play and sport. Their goal is to ensure that people have easy access to well-designed and well-maintained public space. CABE Space's studies show that:

- It is essential to have strategic vision and political commitment
- Communities must think long-term
- Local authorities should start by making the case for high quality green spaces within their organisation
- There is a need to market parks and green spaces
- There is a need to manage resources more efficiently
- It is beneficial to work with others in partnerships
- There is a need to keep monitor investments and outcomes
- Local authorities should consult widely and get public support for their work.

Green Space Strategies – a Good Practice Guide (CABE space, May 2004)

- 2.12 The Good Practice Guide draws from PPG17 (see paragraph 2.7) and emphasises the importance of having green space strategies in place. These are essential if local authorities are to:

- Reinforce local identity and enhance the physical character of an area, thereby shaping existing and future development
- Maintain visual amenity and increase the attractiveness of a locality, thereby creating a sense of civic pride
- Secure external funding and make cost-effective use of capital and revenue expenditure
- Improve physical and social inclusion, including accessibility, particularly for young, disabled and older people
- Protect and enhance levels of biodiversity and ecological habitats

Is the Grass Greener...? Learning From Innovations in Urban Green Space Management (CABE Space, July 2004)

- 2.13 This looks at good and bad urban green space management worldwide and describes some of the common problems faced in English towns and cities. These include:
- Poor maintenance
 - Insecure and hostile environments
 - Incoherent approaches to management, with conflicting interventions by a multitude of agencies and no clear overall responsibility
 - Lack of facilities and amenities. Green spaces offering little to their users and becoming havens for anti-social behaviour
 - Poor design – unwelcoming and created with poor quality materials.

Manifesto for Better Public Spaces (CABE Space, 2003)

- 2.14 This manifesto highlights 10 ways to improve quality:
- Ensure that creating and caring for well-designed parks and other public places is a national and local political priority
 - Encourage people of all ages to play an active role in deciding what our parks and public spaces should be like and how they should be looked after
 - Ensure people understand the importance of good design to the vitality of our towns, cities and suburbs, and that designers, planners and managers have the right skills to create high quality public spaces
 - Ensure the care of parks and public spaces is acknowledged to be an essential service
 - Work to increase public debate about the issue of risk in outside spaces, and encourage decision-makers to give more weight to the benefits of interesting spaces, rather than to the perceived risks.
 - Work to ensure that health policy recognises the role of high quality parks and public space in helping people to be physically active, to recover from illness and to increase their general health and well-being
 - Work to ensure that good paths and seating, play opportunities, signs in local languages, cultural events and art are understood to be essential elements of great places.
 - Encourage designers and managers to protect and enhance biodiversity and promote the enjoyment of parks and public spaces to local people
 - Seek to ensure that public spaces feel safe to use by encouraging councils to adopt a positive approach to crime prevention through investment in good design and management of the whole network of urban green spaces
 - Encourage people from all sectors of the community to give time to improve the local environment. Working together, people can transform our public spaces to improve everyone's quality of life.

The Value of Public Space (CABE Space, March 2004)

- 2.15 This report uses specific examples to illustrate the economic, social, environmental, physical and mental health value of high quality parks and open spaces.

A Guide to Producing Park and Green Space Management Plans (CABE Space, May 2004) -

- 2.16 Promotes wider use of management plans by highlighting their benefits and identifies the steps to be taken in writing them. Advice is given on the content and structure of management plans.

The Civic Trust

- 2.17 Emphasises the key role of open spaces in its promotion of 'urban renaissance'. In its response to PPG17 it was concerned that there was too strong an emphasis on sport, with no mention of English Heritage or the Heritage Lottery Fund. Other deficiencies highlighted were the cultural and social dimensions of open space, the concept of landscape, the heritage aspects of landscape, urban ecology and sites without SSSI, SPA or SAC status, educational value of open space managed for landscape or wildlife value, and how contaminated land could be brought back into recreational or amenity use.

English Nature

- 2.18 Provides advice on wildlife and habitat and access to natural greenspaces, promoting its accessible natural green space standards. Finding that its 1995 research report '*Accessible natural green space in towns and cities – a review of appropriate size and distance criteria*' was seldom used, it undertook further work that largely endorsed the earlier findings.
- 2.19 The PPG17 Companion Guide recognises that regular contact with nature contributes to people's well being and quality of life, and relatively passive but frequent recreation within natural greenspaces can provide significant health benefits. This contact also plays an important role in helping safeguard our national treasure of wildlife and geological features, provides everyone with an excellent chance to learn about nature and the practical ways in which it can be protected and ensures that urban areas continue to function ecologically. This is the basis for the Accessible Natural Greenspace Standard (ANGSt) developed by English Nature, which states that:
- No person should live more than 300m from their nearest area of natural greenspace of at least 2ha. in size
 - There should be at least one accessible 20ha site within 2km. of home
 - There should be one accessible 100ha. site within 5km. of home.
 - There should be one accessible 500ha. site within 10km. of home.
- 2.20 Its key recommendations were:
- English Nature should provide additional support by providing practical guidance and promoting its standards

- Local authorities should develop green space strategies to ensure balanced green space planning, and should set local green space standards
- Central government should develop a single framework for integrated green space planning.

Forestry Commission

- 2.21 Amongst its key aims are developing opportunities for woodland recreation, and increasing public understanding and community participation in forestry. Its executive agency, Forest Enterprise, is responsible for forest management, and one of its aims is to increase opportunities for public recreation.

A Sporting Future for the Playing Fields of England - Playing Fields for Sport Revisited (Sport England, 2000)

- 2.22 These documents are Sport England's planning policy statement on playing fields. It acknowledges that playing fields are one of the most important resources for sport in England, providing space for outdoor pitch sports. In urban areas these are becoming an increasingly scarce resource, and it aims to ensure that there is no further reduction in supply. It also acknowledges that playing fields have an important landscape function, can provide a strategic gap and a resource for other community activities and informal recreation.

Planning for Open Spaces (Sport England, September 2002)

- 2.23 In response to the revised PPG17 (paragraph 2.7), it referred to the five exceptions to its policy on planning applications that are reflected in PPG17. It reiterated that Sport England should continue to be consulted on development proposals affecting playing fields, land used as playing fields in the previous 5 years or playing fields proposed in a development plan. With the traditional Six Acre Standard being challenged in development plans, it stresses the importance of setting local standards. When undertaking playing pitch assessments as part of an overall open space assessment, local authorities should have regard to the advice and methodology given in ***Towards a Level Playing Field: A manual for the production of playing pitch strategies.***

Local Planning Policy Context

Regional Policy:

East of England Plan (RSS14)

- 2.24 The East of England Plan (EEP) was published in May 2008 by the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government. It covers the period to 2021 and sets a vision, objectives and core strategy for the longer term. EEP *Policy ENV1: Green Infrastructure* states:

“Areas and networks of green infrastructure should be identified, created, protected, enhanced and managed to ensure an improved and healthy environment is available for present and future communities. Green

infrastructure should be developed so as to maximise its biodiversity value and, as part of a package of measures, contribute to achieving carbon neutral development and flood attenuation. In developing green infrastructure opportunities should be taken to develop and enhance networks for walking, cycling and other non-motorised transport.

“Local Development Documents should:

- Define a multiple hierarchy of green infrastructure, in terms of location, function, size and levels of use, based on analysis of natural, historic, cultural and landscape assets, and the identification of areas where additional green infrastructure is required;
- Require the retention of substantial connected networks of green space in urban, urban fringe and adjacent countryside areas to serve the growing communities in key centres for development and change; and
- Ensure that policies have regard to the economic and social as well as environmental benefits of green infrastructure assets and protect sites of European or international importance for wildlife.

“Assets of regional significance for the retention, provision and enhancement of green infrastructure include:

the Norfolk and Suffolk Broads; the Norfolk Coast, Suffolk Coast & Heaths, Dedham Vale and Chilterns Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty; and the Heritage Coasts (shown on the Key Diagram);

- Other areas of landscape, ecological and recreational importance, notably the Community Forests (Thames Chase, Marston Vale and Watling Chase), the Brecks, Epping Forest, Hatfield Forest, the Lee Valley Regional Park and areas around the Stour Estuary, and
- Strategically significant green infrastructure projects and proposals, such as the Great Fen Project, Wicken Fen Vision, the Milton Keynes to Bedford Waterway Park, and green infrastructure projects around the fringes of Greater London and associated corridors.”

- 2.25 Green infrastructure refers to networks of protected sites, nature reserves, green spaces, waterways and green linkages. It seeks to promote the provision of multi-functional green infrastructure having a range of benefits to the community. It should be considered as a system where all linked elements contribute to an overall whole, delivering amenity, recreation, biodiversity, carbon absorption and air filtration, along with a spatial identity and the making of place.
- 2.26 The BGSS is part of the evidence base for the LDF and will be used to develop the spatial strategies of the LDF. As a background document it is not intended to include a spatial strategy. It is the intention that a multiple hierarchy of green spaces will be defined in a LDD.

Local Policy:

Braintree District Local Plan Review (Adopted July 2005)

- 2.27 Aims to ensure that provision is made for open space, sporting and

recreation facilities in sustainable locations to meet the needs of the District to improve people's quality of life.

- 2.28 Aims to promote social inclusion and accessibility, to protect open spaces and sports and recreation facilities from development and to make urban areas attractive places in which to live.
- 2.29 Its objectives are to:
- Provide new facilities through planning agreements and obligations,
 - Provide public open space in new developments,
 - Improve the quality of parks and open spaces,
 - Support the use of disused railway lines for recreation and nature conservation,
 - Ensure that open spaces are located and designed to minimise the risk of crime and vandalism, and
 - To provide adequate land for allotments to meet the future needs of the District.
- 2.30 The current open space standards are the National Playing Fields Association minimum standards for outdoor playing space of 2.43 hectares per 1,000 people, broken down into:
- Outdoor sport – pitches, greens and courts of 1.6 to 1.8 hectares, and
 - Children's Playing Space of 0.6 to 0.8 hectares per 1,000 population, subdivided into:
 - Outdoor equipped play spaces/adventure playgrounds of 0.2-0.3 ha
 - Casual or informal space within housing areas 0.4 – 0.5 ha
- 2.31 The Plan recognises the importance of river valleys, linear parks and disused railways for informal recreation, and encourages further provision for informal recreation, including country parks and water recreation.

Local Development Framework

- 2.32 The following documents are to be produced within the Local development Framework:
- Core Strategy Development Plan Document.
 - Development Control Policies DPD.
 - Allocations Document DPD.
 - Open Space Supplementary Planning Document.

Links with Other Local Strategies

District of Tomorrow, a Community Strategy and Action Plan, (PACT)

- 2.33 The local strategic partnership, Partners and Community Together (PACT) has a vision to create:
- A District in which everyone is able to access high quality services and means of transport.

- A District in which everyone takes responsibility for making the District a safer, cleaner and healthier place to live.
- A prosperous and vibrant District, in which everyone is welcome.
- A District in which everyone has opportunity to meet their full potential and contribute fully in decisions which affect their communities.

2.34 The Community Strategy for Braintree District has the following objectives:

- To improve leisure facilities in the District, promote healthy communities
- To safeguard the countryside against inappropriate development, and
- To protect and enhance the natural and built environment.

2.35 In furtherance of these objectives the Action Plan 2004-2014 proposes the following actions:

In the short term (1-2 years):

- (1) Regenerate open spaces at the heart of the Templars Estate in Witham, led by Templars Doorstep Green Committee and others
- (2) Provide and promote activities for healthy living, with a focus on children and young people (under 20s)

In the medium term (3-5 years):

- (1) Provide local green spaces and play areas on estates through community partnerships.
- (2) Increase access to community and leisure facilities across the District and encourage the provision of local village leisure activities through partnership working between the Council, schools, parish councils and community groups.
- (3) Increase education about wildlife and the countryside.

In the long term (5-10 years):

- (1) Open up schools to greater community use by pursuing the Extended School Strategy.
- (2) Produce and implement management plans for 300 hectares of public open space covering 30 hectares per year by 2014.

2.36 The Community Strategy is currently being reviewed, including a new vision for the future.

Corporate Plan 2004-2008

2.37 The four areas that make up the Direction and Ambition of the Council are:

- Creating a cleaner and greener District
- Helping people to feel safe and well
- Making the District a better place to live work and play
- Improve performance and deliver better value.

An open space strategy will play an important role in helping to realise these ambitions.

- 2.38 The Corporate Plan is currently being reviewed. The Plan for 2008-2012 is likely to be approved in February 2008.

Corporate Action Plan 2007-2008

- 2.39 The Corporate Plan is implemented through an annual action plan. One of the priorities of the Council for 2007-2008 is to improve the appearance of the District. A District where residents, communities and visitors can make more use of our public open spaces, enjoying the fact that they have been well looked after and that they can be used by everyone in a safe, pleasant and informed way is an expected outcome under this priority.
- 2.40 Projects which will be carried out in 2007-2008 to achieve this outcome are given in Appendix 2.
- 2.41 The Corporate Action Plan for 2008-2009 is being prepared at the time of publication.

Local Area Agreement 2008-11 – Liberating Potential, Fulfilling Lives (Essex County Council/Braintree District Council)

- 2.42 Priority 10 of the Local Area Agreement refers to a 'Well-managed Environment' which seeks the following outcomes:
- Enhance Essex's coast and countryside and accommodate the impact of growth and climate change for the benefit of both the local environment and wildlife and local communities
 - Preserve and improve biodiversity and the historic environment
Protect Essex's natural and historic resources and promote their sustainable and efficient use
 - Increase access to and use of the natural environment to support healthy and active lifestyles
 - Increase understanding and awareness of the countryside and environment.

Within this priority the partnership has included a local indicator 10.1 titled *Progressing the Living Landscapes Vision – the number of Living Landscapes Areas with a Management Vision*.

- 2.43 The vision is to establish large areas of countryside which are good for wildlife, recognise the importance of history and culture and integrate the social and economic benefits for people. These living landscapes will be ecologically-functioning areas that are large enough to provide resilience and connectivity for wildlife, access and employment for people, sustainable low carbon contributions to the economy and are able to adapt to climate change. This vision will influence the management of open spaces within these areas.

Community Wellbeing Strategy (Essex County Council)

- 2.44 One of four priorities of the Community Wellbeing Strategy (in preparation) focuses upon ensuring public spaces are friendly, clean, attractive and usable by 'improving atmospherics and practicalities of our areas'. Work will be undertaken to ensure safe public access, provide 'walkable neighbourhoods' to reduce the need to travel by car, identify priority

footpath improvements, find funds to improve accessibility for all and create safe, attractive environments in which to live. The BGSS is compatible with this strategy.

Essex Strategy - Liberating Potential, Fulfilling Lives (Essex County Council, 2008-2018)

- 2.45 The Essex Community Strategy is currently being prepared to cover the period 2008-2018. One of its aims is to promote sustainability and protect the County's physical environment. Essex is targeted for substantial growth over the period to 2021 within the East of England Plan (May 2008). Accommodating this growth needs to be considered alongside the protection and/or enhancement of nature conservation and key habitats; valued landscapes; heritage and historic features; air and water quality; water resources; outdoor recreation areas; and the undeveloped coast and countryside. The Strategy also seeks to maximise the benefits of the Olympic Games in 2012 by encouraging increased participation in sport throughout the country.

Sporting Lives, Sporting Futures, Sporting Partnerships – A Physical Education and Sports Development Strategy for Essex (Essex County Council)

- 2.46 Produced by a steering group of professionals and volunteers following wide-ranging consultation, the strategy is a blueprint to help shape future sporting provision in Essex. It advocates:
- A planned, co-ordinated approach to physical education and sports provision as well as facility provision to avoid duplication
 - Create a better match between the community's needs and what is provided
 - Provide for all sections of the community to participate in physical education, sport and recreation at a level appropriate to their needs and aspirations.

Braintree District Rural Policy and Action Statement (2005)

- 2.47 Advocates 'rural proofing' whereby policy makers systematically consider the differential impacts in rural areas and consider what adjustments or compensations might be made to fit rural circumstances.

Braintree District Community Safety Strategy (2005-2008)

- 2.48 The Community Safety Strategy proposes actions to address the five priority areas of anti-social behaviour, drugs and alcohol misuse, domestic violence, hate crime and prolific/other priority offenders. Other strategic issues to be addressed are use of intelligence/information sharing, data mapping/profiling and communications/ publicity.

3.0 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

3.1 The Braintree Green Spaces Strategy supports the Council's aims and objectives for the District's green spaces, including:

- Improving the **quality** of green spaces in Braintree District.
- Establishing an effective strategy for the **delivery** of green spaces and sport and recreation facilities.
- Improving the **awareness and use** of Braintree's green spaces and the facilities available within them.
- Informing future **planning, management and maintenance policies** for green spaces, including the emerging Local Development Documents for the period to 2021 and beyond.
- Providing a **community resource** for education and cultural activities and to encourage community involvement in the planning and management of green spaces.
- Conserving and enhancing the **natural environment** and encouraging biodiversity.
- Conserving the **historic environment** and encouraging **cultural activities** where appropriate.
- Moving towards more **sustainable grounds maintenance** and reducing the need for chemical pesticides and herbicides.
- Maximising **funding** opportunities.

3.2 In furtherance of these aims the Green Spaces Strategy has the following objectives:

- To provide accessible, high quality green spaces and sport and recreation facilities which meet the recreational needs of all sections of the community.
- To use external awards and accreditations to raise standards of our green spaces.
- To make green spaces accessible to all.
- To make information and facilities available to all.
- To engage the local community, local user groups and other stakeholders to participate in the improvement of green spaces.
- To raise the profile of green spaces and to promote their benefit to the District and secure greater use and involvement by the local community.
- To consult regularly with the local community and user groups to ensure that the green spaces and facilities remain appropriate to their needs and are well used.

4.0 DEVELOPING STANDARDS

Quantity Standards

- 4.1 The methodology for determining quantity standards was firstly to assess the amount of existing open space of different typologies, to compare these with the household and user surveys which revealed whether the existing provision is adequate, too little or too much, and finally to benchmarking with other local authorities. For the purposes of deriving quantity standards both audited and un-audited sites were included; these sites are listed and shown on the maps included in the *Report on the Audit of Open Spaces within Braintree District – Addendum 1*. The local authorities selected include Maidstone and Cherwell, which are in the list of most similar authorities to Braintree District, Vale Royal and Harborough which have a rural hinterland around one or more towns, and Chelmsford and Thurrock, two Essex local authorities that have completed PPG17 audits.
- 4.2. Table 1 shows that there is a wide variation in provision of each typology. Taking amenity greenspaces as an example, Witham Urban Sub-area provision is over four times that in Braintree Urban sub-area, but conversely has a significantly smaller area of parks and gardens than other urban areas. In setting a standard for a particular typology, it would be unrealistic to expect a deficiency in a sub-area to be made good if that sub-area has an excessive amount of other types of open space; the intention of the strategy is to ensure that each sub-area should have an overall level of provision which is equitable. However, in any given sub-area deficiencies in a particular typology will be addressed through the land use planning and development process as opportunities arise.
- 4.3. Table 2 compares existing provision with household survey responses on the adequacy of provision to form the basis of a proposed quantity standard where appropriate. The quantity of existing green space provision was measured against current population (2004 estimates). The recommended standards are based on the level of existing provision, with a slight increase for future children's play provision in response to householders' views. The total of standards set for parks and gardens, outdoor sports provision, amenity greenspaces and provision for children and young people is 4.20 hectares (ha) per thousand people. Figures from the benchmark local authorities are given for comparison. Where provision standards are being set, the strategy will seek to increase provision within areas of existing deficiency.

DEVELOPING STANDARDS

Table 1: QUANTITY ANALYSIS OF OPEN SPACE

| Area | Total Population | Parks & Gardens | | | | | Natural/ semi-natural Greenspaces | |
|--------------------------|------------------|-----------------|-------------------------------|-------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| | | Area (Ha.) | Hectares per 1,000 population | Proposed Standard | Current Surplus or Deficit | Surplus or deficit in hectares | Area (Ha.) | Hectares per 1,000 population |
| Total Urban Braintree | 46,820 | 77.47 | 1.65 | 1.20 | +0.45 | +21.29 | 38.34 | 0.82 |
| Total Urban Halstead | 11,913 | 3.42 | 0.29 | 1.20 | -0.91 | -10.88 | 1.44 | 0.21 |
| Total Urban Witham | 24,910 | 4.87 | 0.20 | 1.20 | -1.00 | -25.02 | 18.12 | 0.73 |
| Total Urban Areas | 83,643 | 85.76 | 1.03 | 1.20 | -0.17 | -14.61 | 57.90 | 0.69 |
| Total Rural Braintree | 16,887 | 3.85 | 0.23 | 1.20 | -0.97 | -16.41 | 99.36 | 5.88 |
| Total Rural Halstead | 24,621 | 42.54 | 1.73 | 1.20 | +0.53 | +12.99 | 163.77 | 6.65 |
| Total Rural Witham | 16,028 | 1.22 | 0.08 | 1.20 | -1.12 | -18.01 | 5.75 | 0.36 |
| Total Rural Area | 57,536 | 47.61 | 0.83 | 1.20 | -0.37 | -21.43 | 268.88 | 4.67 |
| District Totals/Averages | 141,179 | 133.37 | 0.94 | 1.20 | -0.26 | -36.04 | 326.78 | 2.31 |

| Area | Total Population | Green Corridors | | Outdoor Sports Provision | | | | |
|--------------------------|------------------|-----------------|-------------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------------|
| | | Area (Ha.) | Hectares per 1,000 population | Area (Ha.) | Hectares per 1,000 population | Proposed Standard | Current Surplus or Deficit | Surplus or deficit in hectares |
| Total Urban Braintree | 46,820 | 26.82 | 0.57 | 68.46 | 1.46 | 2.00 | -0.54 | -25.18 |
| Total Urban Halstead | 11,913 | 21.86 | 1.83 | 20.83 | 1.75 | 2.00 | -0.25 | -3.00 |
| Total Urban Witham | 24,910 | 35.02 | 1.41 | 28.82 | 1.16 | 2.00 | -0.84 | -21.00 |
| Total Urban Areas | 83,643 | 83.70 | 1.00 | 118.11 | 1.41 | 2.00 | -0.59 | -49.18 |
| Total Rural Braintree | 16,887 | 4.43 | 0.26 | 33.12 | 1.96 | 2.00 | -0.04 | -0.65 |
| Total Rural Halstead | 24,621 | 19.81 | 0.80 | 54.47 | 2.21 | 2.00 | +0.21 | +5.23 |
| Total Rural Witham | 16,028 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 38.26 | 2.39 | 2.00 | +0.39 | +6.20 |
| Total Rural Area | 57,536 | 24.24 | 0.42 | 125.85 | 2.19 | 2.00 | +0.19 | +10.78 |
| District Totals/Averages | 141,179 | 107.94 | 0.76 | 243.96 | 1.73 | 2.00 | -0.27 | -38.40 |

| Area | Total Population | Amenity Green Space | | | | | Children's Play Provision | | | | |
|--------------------------|------------------|---------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------------|---------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------------|
| | | Area (Ha.) | Hectares per 1,000 population | Proposed Standard | Current Surplus or Deficit | Surplus or deficit in hectares | Area (Ha.) | Hectares per 1,000 population | Proposed Standard | Current Surplus or Deficit | Surplus or deficit in hectares |
| Total Urban Braintree | 46,820 | 14.62 | 0.31 | 0.80 | -0.49 | -22.84 | 3.39 | 0.07 | 0.20 | -0.13 | -5.97 |
| Total Urban Halstead | 11,913 | 4.70 | 0.39 | 0.80 | -0.41 | -4.83 | 2.34 | 0.20 | 0.20 | 0.00 | -0.04 |
| Total Urban Witham | 24,910 | 34.56 | 1.39 | 0.80 | +0.59 | +14.53 | 3.25 | 0.13 | 0.20 | -0.07 | -1.73 |
| Total Urban Areas | 83,643 | 53.88 | 0.64 | 0.80 | -0.16 | -13.03 | 8.98 | 0.11 | 0.20 | -0.09 | -7.75 |
| Total Rural Braintree | 16,887 | 7.36 | 0.44 | 0.80 | -0.36 | -6.15 | 1.30 | 0.08 | 0.20 | -0.12 | -2.08 |
| Total Rural Halstead | 24,621 | 14.64 | 0.59 | 0.80 | -0.21 | -5.06 | 2.81 | 0.11 | 0.20 | -0.09 | -2.11 |
| Total Rural Witham | 16,028 | 6.93 | 0.43 | 0.80 | -0.37 | -5.89 | 1.30 | 0.08 | 0.20 | -0.12 | -1.91 |
| Total Rural Area | 57,536 | 28.93 | 0.50 | 0.80 | -0.30 | -17.10 | 5.41 | 0.09 | 0.20 | -0.11 | -6.10 |
| District Totals/Averages | 141,179 | 82.81 | 0.59 | 0.80 | -0.21 | -30.13 | 14.39 | 0.10 | 0.20 | -0.10 | -13.85 |

| TOTAL OPEN SPACES | | | | | | |
|--------------------------|------------------|------------|-------------------------------|-------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Area | Total Population | Area (Ha.) | Hectares per 1,000 population | Proposed Standard | Current Surplus or Deficit | Surplus or deficit in hectares |
| Total Urban Braintree | 46,820 | 229.10 | 4.88 | 4.20 | +0.68 | +32.46 |
| Total Urban Halstead | 11,913 | 54.59 | 4.58 | 4.20 | +0.38 | +4.55 |
| Total Urban Witham | 24,910 | 124.64 | 5.02 | 4.20 | +0.82 | +20.02 |
| Total Urban Areas | 83,643 | 408.33 | 4.88 | 4.20 | +0.68 | +57.03 |
| Total Rural Braintree | 16,887 | 149.42 | 8.86 | 4.20 | +4.66 | +78.64 |
| Total Rural Halstead | 24,621 | 298.04 | 12.09 | 4.20 | +7.89 | +194.63 |
| Total Rural Witham | 16,028 | 53.46 | 3.34 | 4.20 | -0.86 | -13.86 |
| Total Rural Area | 57,536 | 500.92 | 8.71 | 4.20 | +4.51 | +259.41 |
| District Totals/Averages | 141,179 | 909.25 | 6.43 | 4.20 | +2.23 | +316.44 |

DEVELOPING STANDARDS

Table 2: CURRENT PROVISION AND PROPOSED STANDARDS

| Typology | Current provision in Braintree | Adequacy of existing provision | Comparison with Other Local Authorities | | | Proposed Braintree Local Standard |
|------------------------------------|--------------------------------|---|---|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|---|
| | | | Local Authority | Current provision | Local Standard | |
| Parks and gardens | Urban 1.21 Rural 2.76 | The majority of respondents (59%) consider that current provision is "about right". Over a third consider that there is an too little. | Cherwell | Urban 0.48 Rural 0.69 | Urban 0.60 Rural 0.70 | 1.20 (urban areas and rural settlements with a population of over 3,000) |
| | | | Maidstone | Urban 2.27 Rural 0.00 | Urban 2.30 | |
| | | | Newark & Sherwood | 1.90 | 0.60 – 0.80 | |
| | | | Harborough | 0.25 | 0.50 | |
| | | | Chelmsford | 3.15 | 2.00 | |
| | | | Thurrock | 0.43 | 0.70 | |
| Natural & semi-natural greenspaces | Urban 2.09 Rural 34.22 | The majority of respondents (53%) consider that current provision is "about right", although 40% considered that there was not enough. | Cherwell | Urban 0.56 Rural 3.20 | Urban 0.56 Rural 3.20 | 2.00 |
| | | | Maidstone | 15.83 | No standard set | |
| | | | Newark & Sherwood | No information | No standard set | |
| | | | Harborough | No information | No standard set | |
| | | | Chelmsford | 14.78 | 2.00 | |
| | | | Thurrock | 10.32 | 2.00 | |
| Green corridors | Urban 1.28 Rural 0.36 | The majority of respondents (59%) consider that current provision is about right, although one third thought that there was too little. | Cherwell | No information | No standard set | NS |
| | | | Maidstone | 779m length | No standard set | |
| | | | Newark & Sherwood | No information | No standard set | |
| | | | Harborough | No information | No standard set | |
| | | | Chelmsford | 0.13 | 0.20 | |
| | | | Thurrock | | NS | |
| Outdoor sports provision | Urban 1.98 Rural 2.15 | A small majority of respondents (44%) considered that there was not enough sports provision. | Cherwell | Urban 1.46 Rural 3.62 | Urban 1.50 Rural 3.62 | 2.00 |
| | | | Maidstone | Urban 1.37 Rural 2.61 | Urban 1.40 Rural 2.70 | |
| | | | Newark & Sherwood | 2.06 | 2.50 | |
| | | | Harborough | 5.21 | 0.57 | |
| | | | Chelmsford | 2.16 | 1.25 | |
| | | | Thurrock | 1.05 | Urban 1.00-1.30 Rural 2.30 | |
| Amenity green space | Urban 0.78 Rural 0.83 | The majority of respondents (47%) felt that there was sufficient amenity greenspace, although nearly 40% felt that there was not enough. | Cherwell | Urban 0.42 Rural 0.59 | Urban 0.50 Rural 0.60 | 0.80 |
| | | | Maidstone | Urban 0.65 Rural 0.79 | Urban 0.70 Rural 0.80 | |
| | | | Newark & Sherwood | 0.60 | 0.60 | |
| | | | Harborough | 0.77 | 0.90 | |
| | | | Chelmsford | 0.81 | 0.81 | |
| | | | Thurrock | 0.42 | 0.80 | |
| Children's play provision | Urban 0.13 Rural 0.09 | 55% of respondents from urban areas consider that there is insufficient play provision whilst 51% from rural areas felt provision is "about right". | Cherwell | Urban 0.05 Rural 0.10 | Urban 0.09 Rural 0.12 | 0.20 |
| | | | Maidstone | Urban 0.12 Rural 0.09 | Urban 0.12 Rural 0.09 | |
| | | | Newark & Sherwood | 0.36 | 0.75 | |
| | | | Harborough | 0.12 | 0.30 | |
| | | | Chelmsford | 0.12 | 0.30 | |
| | | | Thurrock | 1 eqpt. for 33 children (5-16) | 1 eqpt. for 33 children (5-16) | |
| Allotments | Urban 0.46 Rural 0.38 | Whilst most people (38%) had no opinion, 36% of respondents felt considered that provision is "about right". | Cherwell | Urban 0.13 Rural 0.44 | Urban 0.15 Rural 0.44 | NS |
| | | | Maidstone | Urban 0.21 Rural 0.18 | Urban 0.21 Rural 0.18 | |
| | | | Newark & Sherwood | 0.22 | 0.50 | |
| | | | Harborough | 0.29 | 0.35 | |
| | | | Chelmsford | 0.32 | 0.30 | |
| | | | Thurrock | 0.25 | 15 plots | |
| Cemeteries and burial grounds | Urban 0.17 Rural 0.69 | The vast majority of respondents felt that provision was "about right". | Cherwell | No information | No standard set | NS |
| | | | Maidstone | Urban 0.56 Rural 0.49 | Urban 0.66 Rural 0.59 | |
| | | | Newark & Sherwood | No information | No standard set | |
| | | | Harborough | No information | No standard set | |
| | | | Chelmsford | 0.25 | No standard set | |
| | | | Thurrock | No information | 150-170 graves pa. | |

NB. Figures in tables are hectares per thousand people

- 4.4 The following provision standards were recommended by The Green Spaces Strategy Development Group in August 2007 and endorsed by the Local Committees as the basis for assessing the requirements for green space provision:

| | <u>Hectares per thousand people</u> |
|---|--|
| Parks and gardens | 1.2 ha in urban sub-areas & rural settlements with a population of over 3,000. |
| Outdoor sports provision | 2.0 ha |
| Amenity greenspaces | 0.8 ha |
| Provision for children and young people | 0.2 ha |
| Total | 4.2 ha |

- 4.5 No local standards have been set for green corridors or natural and semi-natural greenspaces, notwithstanding their contribution to outdoor recreation, visual amenity and biodiversity. Green corridors were audited where they are accessible and used by the public, and these areas have been incorporated into the overall provision figures. They make a significant contribution to greenspace provision. In line with PPG17 green corridors will be provided where and when opportunities arise to use and provide access to linear features such as dismantled railways or river valleys which are inaccessible at present. Furthermore, green corridors may also be provided as part of the amenity space on new housing sites. Where there are opportunities for securing additional green corridors, these will count towards the greenspace requirement within that ward or sub-area.
- 4.6 The District has large areas of woodland and other natural and semi-natural greenspaces, many of which are County Wildlife Sites and most of which are located in the rural areas. Furthermore, the majority are not open to the public, although some may have public footpaths passing through or alongside them. Consequently they are not considered for the purposes of this audit unless they are formally open to the public or are within or adjoining built-up areas. Generally no new semi-natural greenspaces will be created, although there may be occasional opportunities to create additional habitats.
- 4.7 For the other typologies the view was taken that the primary purpose of allotments and burial grounds was not open space or outdoor sport and recreation, and that although they may have an ancillary use for informal recreation and relaxation they were excluded from the audit. Consequently no standards were set for these uses and they were not included in the overall open space quantity of provision.
- 4.8 Although the household survey suggests that there is only limited support for allotment provision, there is evidence to show an increasing popularity of and demand for allotments. Gardening and horticulture are receiving increasing coverage in the media, and influencing people's interest in growing their own plants, herbs and vegetables. The Council has undertaken a study of its own allotments and has an Action Plan to assess the level of demand and the future provision of land for allotments

in the District. The need for additional supply will be addressed in the Local Development Framework.

Accessibility Standards

- 4.9 Information on accessibility is derived from the household and user surveys, which asked people to state their expected mode of travel and journey time to each type of open space. PPG17 recommends that the 75% percentile of responses be used to indicate the time and distance that the majority of people will be willing to travel to any particular space. The distance thresholds do not give an accurate indication of the catchment of a particular space since catchments will reflect barriers or severance factors such as major roads and railways, but they do provide a measure of “effective catchment”.
- 4.10 Table 3 shows the modes and times of travel given by household survey respondents. The accessibility standards recommended are derived from the household survey and the benchmarking exercise referred to above. Indicative distances are based on the travel times. Comparison between the mode and journey time that people expect to travel and the actual mode and time cited by people most frequently using open space in the same typology shows a number of differences:
- Users of amenity greenspace and green corridors are prepared to travel for 5 and 9 minutes respectively compared with the general public expectation of 9 and 15 minute journey; the percentage of users of these spaces prepared to walk was higher than indicated in the household survey.
 - For outdoor sports provision expectations were evenly divided over walking and driving within a 15 minute travel time. In contrast over half of people who last used this type of space drove, and most of these people live in urban areas. This suggests that the standard for outdoor sports provision should be based on car travel.
 - For children’s play provision it is recommended that toddler/junior equipped play areas should be within a 5 minute walking distance and teenage provision should be within 10 minutes walking distance. The accessibility standards recommended by the Strategy Development Group are:

| | |
|-------------------------------------|----------------------------|
| Parks and gardens distance) | 12.5 min. walk (1 km |
| Natural and semi-natural greenspace | 15 min. walk (1.2 km) |
| Green corridors | 15 min. walk (1.2 km) |
| Amenity greenspace | 5-10 min. walk (400-800m) |
| Children’s play provision: | |
| - Toddler/junior | 5 min. walk (400m) |
| - Teenage | 10 min. walk (800m) |
| Outdoor sports provision | 10-15 min. drive (4-6 km.) |
| Allotments | No standards |
| Cemeteries and burial grounds | No standards |

DEVELOPING STANDARDS

Table 3: SETTING ACCESSIBILITY STANDARDS – Expected Travel Times (Household Survey)

Urban Areas

| Typology | Under 5 mins. | 6-10 mins. | 11-15 mins. | 16-20 mins. | 21-30 mins. | Over 30 mins. |
|-------------------------------|---------------|------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|---------------|
| Parks and gardens | 24% | 46% | 18% | 8% | 4% | 1% |
| Natural Greenspace | 16% | 41% | 22% | 10% | 8% | 2% |
| Green Corridors | 19% | 37% | 21% | 14% | 9% | 0% |
| Amenity Greenspace | 52% | 31% | 9% | 4% | 3% | 1% |
| Children's Play Provision | 51% | 34% | 8% | 4% | 2% | 1% |
| Outdoor Sports Facilities | 9% | 43% | 26% | 14% | 7% | 2% |
| Allotments | 17% | 39% | 18% | 15% | 9% | 2% |
| Cemeteries and Burial Grounds | 8% | 34% | 26% | 19% | 9% | 4% |
| Civic Hard Spaces | 9% | 41% | 24% | 16% | 9% | 1% |
| Total Journeys | 23% | 39% | 19% | 11% | 6% | 1% |

75%

11 mins.
14 mins.
15 mins.
9 mins.
8.5 mins.
14.5 mins.
15 mins.
17 mins.
15 mins.

Rural areas

| Typology | Under 5 mins. | 6-10 mins. | 11-15 mins. | 16-20 mins. | 21-30 mins. | Over 30 mins. |
|-------------------------------|---------------|------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|---------------|
| Parks and gardens | 31% | 39% | 17% | 6% | 6% | 0% |
| Natural Greenspace | 31% | 32% | 24% | 7% | 7% | 0% |
| Green Corridors | 27% | 31% | 18% | 12% | 12% | 0% |
| Amenity Greenspace | 55% | 29% | 11% | 2% | 3% | 0% |
| Children's Play Provision | 48% | 39% | 10% | 0% | 2% | 0% |
| Outdoor Sports Facilities | 17% | 34% | 25% | 13% | 11% | 1% |
| Allotments | 32% | 38% | 18% | 7% | 4% | 1% |
| Cemeteries and Burial Grounds | 24% | 34% | 21% | 11% | 8% | 2% |
| Civic Hard Spaces | 17% | 29% | 21% | 21% | 10% | 1% |
| Total Journeys | 32% | 34% | 18% | 9% | 7% | 0% |

75%

11.5 mins.
12.5 mins.
15 mins.
8.5 mins.
8.5 mins.
15 mins.
11.5 mins.
14 mins.
17 mins.

Braintree District

| Typology | Under 5 mins. | 6-10 mins. | 11-15 mins. | 16-20 mins. | 21-30 mins. | Over 30 mins. |
|-------------------------------|---------------|------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|---------------|
| Parks and gardens | 27% | 43% | 17% | 7% | 5% | 1% |
| Natural Greenspace | 23% | 37% | 23% | 9% | 8% | 1% |
| Green Corridors | 23% | 35% | 20% | 13% | 10% | 0% |
| Amenity Greenspace | 53% | 30% | 10% | 3% | 3% | 0% |
| Children's Play Provision | 49% | 37% | 9% | 2% | 2% | 0% |
| Outdoor Sports Facilities | 12% | 39% | 26% | 13% | 8% | 2% |
| Allotments | 24% | 39% | 18% | 11% | 7% | 1% |
| Cemeteries and Burial Grounds | 15% | 34% | 24% | 16% | 9% | 3% |
| Civic Hard Spaces | 12% | 36% | 23% | 19% | 9% | 1% |
| Total Journeys | 27% | 37% | 19% | 10% | 7% | 1% |

75%

11.5 mins.
13 mins.
14 mins.
9 mins.
8.5 mins.
15 mins.
13 mins.
15 mins.
16 mins.

DEVELOPING STANDARDS

Table 4: SETTING ACCESSIBILITY STANDARDS

| Typology | National Standards | Local Authority | Local Standard | Household Survey – Expected | | Household Survey – Last used space | | Proposed Braintree Local Standard |
|------------------------------------|---|-----------------|---|--|--------------------------------------|--|--|--|
| | | | | Mode | Time | Mode | Time | |
| Parks and gardens | None | Cherwell | 15 min. walk | Urban: Walk (87%) Rural: Walk (75%) | 12 min. | Urban: Walk (78%) Rural: Walk (72%) | Urban: 15 min. Rural: 9 min. | 12.5 min. walk (1 km distance) |
| | | Maidstone | 15-20 min. walk | | | | | |
| | | Vale Royal | 15 min. drive | | | | | |
| | | Harborough | 10 min. drive | | | | | |
| | | Chelmsford | 10 min. drive | | | | | |
| | | Thurrock | Community Park: 1 km Local Park: 0.7 km Satellite Park 0.4 km | | | | | |
| Natural & semi-natural greenspaces | English Nature Accessible Greenspace Standards (ANGSt): Min. 2 ha. accessible natural greenspace per 1,000 people with nobody living more than 300m. from the nearest natural greenspace; 2km from a site of 20 ha; 5km from a site of 100 ha; 10km from a site of 500 ha. | Cherwell | 10-15 min. walk | Walk (68%) Drive (18%) | Urban: 14 min. Rural: 12.5 min. | Walk (67%) Drive (24%) | Urban: 16 min. Rural: 12 min. | 15 min. walk (1.2 km) |
| | | Maidstone | 10-15 min. walk | | | | | |
| | | Vale Royal | 15 min. walk | | | | | |
| | | Harborough | 20 min. walk | | | | | |
| | | Chelmsford | 20 min. walk | | | | | |
| | | Thurrock | 300m 2ha from 20 ha. site | | | | | |
| Green corridors | None | Cherwell | No standard set | Urban: Walk (70%) Rural: Walk (63%) Drive (21%) | 15 min. | Urban: Walk (75%) Rural: Walk (82%) | 9 min. | 15 min. walk (1.2 km) |
| | | Maidstone | No standard set | | | | | |
| | | Vale Royal | 15 min. walk | | | | | |
| | | Harborough | 20 min. walk | | | | | |
| | | Chelmsford | 20 min. walk | | | | | |
| | | Thurrock | No standard set | | | | | |
| Outdoor sports facilities | None | Cherwell | 15 min. walk | Urban: Walk (45%) Drive (39%) Rural: Walk (40%) Drive (42%) | 15 mins. | Urban: Walk (38%) Drive (56%) Rural: Small sample size | Urban: 11.5 mins. Rural: 13 mins. | 10-15 min. drive (4-6 km) |
| | | Maidstone | 10-15 min. walk | | | | | |
| | | Vale Royal | 10-15 min. drive | | | | | |
| | | Harborough | 10 min. drive | | | | | |
| | | Chelmsford | 10-15 min. drive | | | | | |
| | | Thurrock | Sport England standards for each sport | | | | | |
| Amenity greenspace | None | Cherwell | 5-10 min. walk | Walk (88%) | 9 min. | Walk (96%) | 5 min. | 5-10 min. walk (400-800m) |
| | | Maidstone | 5-10 min. walk | | | | | |
| | | Vale Royal | 10 min. walk | | | | | |
| | | Harborough | 10 min. walk | | | | | |
| | | Chelmsford | 10 min. walk | | | | | |
| | | Thurrock | 100m without need to cross a road | | | | | |
| Children's play provision | NPFA: LAPs (ages 4-6): 1 min. walk or 100m (60m in a straight line). Min. area 100sqm. Typically without play equipment – could be described as amenity greenspace. LEAPs (age min. 5): Min. area 400 sqm, located 400m or 5 mins. walk along pedestrian routes (240m in a straight line). NEAPs (age min. 8): Min. area 1,000 sqm, located 1,000m or 15 mins. walk along pedestrian routes (600m in a straight line).* | Cherwell | 5 min. walk NEAPs: 15 min. walk | Walk (89%) | 8.5 mins. | Walk (83%) | Small sample size | Toddler/Junior: 5 min. walk (400m) Teenage: 10 min. walk (800m) |
| | | Maidstone | 10-15 min. walk | | | | | |
| | | Vale Royal | 10 min. walk | | | | | |
| | | Harborough | 5-10 min. walk | | | | | |
| | | Chelmsford | 5-10 min. walk | | | | | |
| | | Thurrock | Toddler: 1-4 play items within 1 min. walk Small: 5-8 items within 5 min. walk Large: 9 or more items within 15 min. walk | | | | | |
| Allotments | None | Cherwell | 10 min. walk | Urban: Walk (58%) Drive (26%) Rural: Walk (67%) Drive (23%) | Urban: 15 mins. Rural: 11.5 mins. | Small sample size | Small sample size | None |
| | | Maidstone | No standard set | | | | | |
| | | Vale Royal | 15 min. drive | | | | | |
| | | Harborough | 10 min. drive | | | | | |
| | | Chelmsford | 10 min. drive | | | | | |
| | | Thurrock | Plot: Distance ratio | | | | | |

* LAP = Local Area for Play; LEAP = Local Equipped Area for Play; NEAP = Neighbourhood Equipped Area for Play (NPFA)

- 4.11 The catchment areas shown on maps 10 to 17 are based on these accessibility standards and graphically illustrate where there are gaps in provision of each typology. Used in conjunction with the provision standards, which show where there are surpluses or shortfalls in provision on a sub-area basis, the Council can direct the provision of and improvements to green spaces in the sub-areas of greatest need.

Quality Standards

- 4.12 Quality standards are a much more subjective issue. There is a variety of national guidance available such as Green Flag criteria, on which part of the audit survey form was based, and Countryside Agency or English Nature guidance which would be appropriate for natural and semi-natural greenspaces and green corridors. Quality standards could also be based on the vision statements that have been endorsed by the Strategy Development Group and benchmark green spaces.
- 4.13 The Strategy Development Group decided that the quality standards would be set by taking the top quartile within each typology, and taking the overall quality score of the lowest in the quartile to use as a minimum standard for that typology. All spaces below that standard would be assessed under the main headings of:
- welcoming place
 - health, safety and security
 - clean and well-maintained
 - culture, heritage and community use
- Improvements to those spaces would be based on bringing up to standard those features of the spaces which were found to be of sub-standard quality, with priority being given according to the quality:value matrix.
- 4.14 Although this method could be found wanting if the overall quality of the green spaces are poor to begin with, it is equally unhelpful to set the standard too high since this would bring about unrealistic expectations of the Council being able to bring the quality of all spaces up that standard. This is not to say that Braintree Council is not concerned with quality at the highest level, for there is already a programme to bring the best and most well-used public parks and gardens up to Green Flag standard.

5.0 APPLICATION OF PROVISION STANDARDS

- 5.1 The sub-area studies refer to the open space provision required at the end of the Braintree District Local Plan Review period to 2011. Calculations have been based on the 2001 Census population, adjusted to reflect the housing developments due to be completed in the period to 2011. Although the provision standards exclude natural and semi-natural greenspaces and green corridors, where these types of green space are located within and adjacent to settlements they have been taken into consideration in the analysis for each sub-area.
- 5.2 The locations of future housing areas to be developed in the period to 2021 must await further development of the LDF's Core Strategy and the level and distribution of growth which will be adopted. The housing provision set by the Core Strategy will consequently generate the need for further open space provision in addition to that identified in this Green Spaces Strategy.
- 5.3 The provision standards will be used to:
- Identify strategic locations for new green spaces.
 - Identify green spaces which are of low quality and low value in areas of surplus provision which can be considered surplus to requirements and agree alternative uses.
 - Identify opportunities for the development of a network of linkages between green spaces, particularly through the identification of new green corridors.
 - Encourage further community use agreements for school playing fields to meet the requirements for further outdoor sports provision.
- 5.4 Figures for outdoor sports provision only include school playing fields where there is a community use agreement or other arrangement for public use. Where there is potential for extending community use of school playing fields to remedy local shortfalls in provision these are noted. It should be recognised however that these spaces are not permanently available to the community and could be withdrawn in the future.
- 5.5 Overall the District has a surplus of 2.2 hectares (ha) per thousand people over the standard requirements, and the only Sub-Area in which there is an overall deficiency is Witham Rural, where the shortfall is 0.9 ha per thousand. This masks deficiencies in the provision of different types of space in some wards, and which will need to be addressed by the green spaces strategy. The overall quantity of green spaces should offer more opportunities to remedy deficiencies in particular typologies by providing opportunities for re-designation of spaces as an alternative to requiring new provision.

Braintree Urban Sub-Area

- 5.6 There are over 77 hectares of **parks and gardens** in the Braintree Urban sub-area. According to the quantity standards this is more than adequate to meet needs to 2011 (overprovision of 21 hectares), yet only 52% of household respondents expressed satisfaction with the amount of provision. Since 40 hectares of these parks and gardens are at Great Notley Country Park it is not surprising that elsewhere in the sub-area people consider that there is a shortfall in provision. Land between King George's Playing Field and Braintree Rugby Club was laid out after the audit was completed and provides a further 3.4 hectares of formal open space. This site would also be appropriate for use as a playing field.
- *The Braintree Local Plan Review makes provision for 10.4 ha of informal open space along the River Blackwater between Deanery Hill and Canes Mill Court, near Bradford Bridge, Bocking. In addition there are four areas allocated along the River Brain in Braintree which would provide a further 12.3 ha.*
 - *Land in private ownership west of Pods Brook Road has de facto public access and could be considered for future provision.*
- 5.7 **Outdoor sports provision** will be deficient by 25 hectares.
- Clearly the 38 hectares of natural and semi-natural greenspaces cannot provide outdoor playing facilities without a significant change of character and loss of biodiversity. There may be scope to provide additional playing facilities in some parks and gardens, possibly:*
- *Review playing pitch provision at Great Notley Country Park*
 - *Five primary schools each have playing fields in excess of 1 hectare.*
 - *Land adjacent to Braintree Rugby Club could provide 3.4 hectares.*
- The local development framework will provide the opportunity to secure more sports provision and further reduce the deficiency.
- 5.8 **Amenity greenspace** is inadequate to meet needs to 2011 (23 hectares shortfall), although this is compensated for by 26 hectares of green corridors many of which have a similar function to amenity space. Amenity space can only be increased where there are redevelopment or development opportunities. No further provision is considered necessary.
- 5.9 **Provision for children & young people** will need to be increased to meet needs (6 hectares shortfall).
- The shortfall in play provision is greatest in Bocking Blackwater and Bocking South wards, with smaller deficiencies in the three Braintree wards and Great Notley and Braintree West. Potential new sites are:
- *In Bocking Blackwater at Vanguard Way, Julien Court Road, and in one of the Mountbatten Way estate amenity spaces;*

- *In Bocking South at Rosemary Avenue and Gypsy Corner;*
- *In Braintree Central at Nayling Road/Jersey Way area, the eastern end of Clare Road, Trotters Field and Marshalls Park;*
- *In Braintree South at Notley Road (near to High School), Hillside Gardens and Parklands.*

Halstead Urban Sub-Area

- 5.10 There will be an under-provision in **parks & gardens** of 11 hectares.
- *The Local Plan Review proposal for new formal recreation provision at the corner of Tidings Hill/Oak Road will provide approximately 1 hectare of informal recreation space.*
- 5.11 There is provision for 21 hectares for **outdoor sports provision**, which will leave a small shortfall of 3.0 hectares by 2011.
- *The Local Plan Review proposal approximately 6 hectares at Sudbury Road for outdoor sport and recreation would meet this shortfall.*
- 5.12 There will be an under-provision in **amenity greenspace** of 4.8 ha.
- *With 21 hectares of green corridors, Halstead has a considerable amount of open space on its doorstep to compensate for the relatively small deficiency in amenity greenspace.*
- 5.13 **Provision for children & young people** will just fail to meet the provision standards for 2011 (0.04 ha shortfall, equating to one small equipped play area).
- *The shortfall in play provision is equivalent to a small, equipped play area. Any further provision should be in St. Andrews ward, ideally in the Gardeners Road/Nether Court area or Colne Road/Coggeshall Road area.*

Witham Urban Sub-Area

- 5.14 There will be a significant deficiency in **parks and gardens** of 25.0 hectares by 2011.
- *Witham has large areas of open space in the form of green corridors (35 hectares) and natural and semi-natural greenspaces (18 hectares). The Riverside Park (classified as a green corridor in the Open space audit) runs through the centre of Witham and provides a valuable open space resource which is reasonably accessible to most parts of the town and in many ways fulfils the role of a park.*
 - *The first phase of the Maltings Lane neighbourhood provided 10.1 ha of amenity greenspace in the form of structural landscaping. A further 13.3 ha of informal recreation areas, 3.5 ha of structural amenity open space (including hard spaces in the neighbourhood centre) and 3.1 ha of outdoor sports provision is to be provided in the second phase of the development, including a school playing field of 1.1 ha.*

- *The additional informal open space being provided at Maltings Lane will help to meet the deficiency in formal parks or gardens. There are also opportunities to create additional space within some of the playing fields or the larger amenity greenspace. The prime areas of search for a new park are the Spa Road area, Bramble Road or Manor Road/Cypress Road (but surrounded by highway, although access to cemetery could be downgraded by design and road closure).*
- *The Braintree Local Plan Review includes a proposal for additional open space of 3.6 ha along the River Brain north of the Witham settlement boundary.*

5.15 **Outdoor sports provision** will be deficient by 21 hectares by 2011. This figure is exaggerated because Rickstones School playing field (8.9 ha), which serves Witham Urban Sub-Area, is located within Bradwell, Silver End and Rivenhall ward (Rivenhall parish, Witham Rural sub-area). The true deficiency is therefore around 12 ha.

- *This will be met in part by 2.1 hectares of playing fields currently being provided at Maltings Lane plus a possible 1.1 hectares from community use of the new primary school field. Much of the existing provision relies on community use of the two main secondary school fields, John Bramston and Rickstones. Only two junior schools have fields of over 1 hectare which could potentially be used by the community.*
- *There is consequently a real need for additional playing fields of up to 10 hectares in the Witham area, preferably in the southeast of the town. This should be addressed through the local development framework.*

5.16 With 34.6 hectares, Witham Urban sub-area has the most **amenity greenspace** of the three main urban areas in Braintree District, giving an overprovision of 14.5 hectares in 2011.

5.17 There will be a deficiency in **provision for children & young people** of 1.7 hectares in 2011.

- *The greatest deficiencies in play provision are in South and West wards. In Witham West the areas of need are Bramble Road/Honeysuckle Road area, Humber Road/Tamar Avenue area and Brain Road/Mersey Road area. In Witham South the Maltings Lane neighbourhood will provide a further 7 play spaces totalling 0.9 ha comprising 6 Local Areas for Play and one Local Equipped Area for Play. Other areas of need are in the vicinities of Maltings Lane/Dengie Close and Olivers Drive/Ashby Road.*

Braintree Rural Sub-Area

5.18 Within the rural areas the threshold for requiring the provision of **parks and gardens** is any settlement with a population over 3,000. Coggeshall is the only settlement of this size in Braintree Rural sub-area; it has

minimal provision of parks and gardens of just 0.07 hectares, a deficiency of 5.1 hectares.

- *The deficiency in parks and gardens at Coggeshall would be met by the Local Plan Review proposal for the permanent use of Vicarage Field for Formal Recreation.*

5.19 Braintree Rural sub-area has a small **outdoor sports provision** deficit of 0.6 hectares.

- *There are outdoor sports provision surpluses at Coggeshall, Panfield and Three Fields, but deficits at Black Notley and Rayne.*

5.20 Braintree Rural sub-area has an **amenity greenspace** deficiency of 6.1 hectares.

- *Braintree Rural sub-area has 4.4 ha of green corridors and 99.4 ha of natural and semi-natural greenspaces, including 80 ha at Marks Hall Gardens and Arboretum. On balance therefore these spaces could be said to make up for this deficiency. Amenity space deficits at Black Notley, Panfield and Rayne are to some extent compensated for by green corridors or excess sports provision.*

5.21 The sub-area has a deficiency of 1.9 ha in **provision for children and young people**.

- *Most villages have inadequate provision for children and young people. Additional play spaces are needed at Black Notley, Coggeshall, Cressing & Stisted, Panfield (in Shalford village), Rayne and each of the Three Field villages.*

Halstead Rural Sub-area

5.22 Sible Hedingham and Earls Colne are the only two settlements with a population over 3,000. Sible Hedingham has a small surplus of provision of **parks and gardens** (0.6 hectares), whilst Earls Colne has a deficiency of 2.0 hectares.

- *At Earls Colne a deficiency of 2 hectares in parks and gardens is not compensated for by surpluses in other types of provision.*

5.23 The overprovision of 5.2 ha in **outdoor sports facilities** is largely based on the use of school playing fields at Gosfield and Sible Hedingham.

- *The overprovision in outdoor sports facilities is relatively low when spread across a number of parishes, many of which have very small populations. Gosfield and the Hedinghams in fact have overprovision, whilst Three Colnes has a 3.8 ha deficit and Yeldham a 1.9 ha deficit. Several parishes look to the Suffolk towns of Haverhill and Sudbury for their services, including sports provision. There are no green spaces appropriate for a change of use to make good this provision, so new provision would have to be by way of a new land allocation.*

- 5.24 By 2011 there will be a shortfall in the provision of **amenity greenspace** of 5.1 hectares.
- 5.25 There will be an under-**provision for children and young people** of 2.1 ha.
- *Hedingham & Maplestead, Stour Valley South & Yeldham all have deficiencies in provision for children and young people of over 0.35 ha. At Sible Hedingham Christmas Field, and Summerfields (when adopted and laid out as public open space) could be considered for new provision, whilst there is potential for new provision as part of the redevelopment of the Premdor site. At Castle Hedingham there is potential for new provision at Church Lane adjacent the Club. There are few opportunities elsewhere – only Little Hyde Road where the amenity greenspace is tucked away in a corner of the development, possibly at Bures Hamlet where only Cambridge Way could be a possibility and on Twinstead village green.*

Witham Rural Area

- 5.26 The three settlements with over 3,000 population all have a need for **parks and gardens** – Hatfield Peverel (5.3 ha), Kelvedon (3.9 ha) and Silver End (3.7 ha).
- *Additional parks and gardens at the three main settlements can only be met by new provision.*
- It is difficult to see a suitable opportunity at Kelvedon except at the bottom of Feering Hill (water meadows, flooding, in Feering) or along the Blackwater River behind the Riverside Way estate.*
- At Hatfield Peverel part of the Strutt Memorial Ground could be converted to informal space, although the land is not owned by Braintree District Council.*
- Although at less than 1 ha the Memorial Gardens at Silver End are small, in view of the money being spent to raise the standard to achieve Green Flag status, it is considered that an additional formal park could not be justified.*
- 5.27 Witham Rural sub-area will have an overprovision of 6.2 ha in **outdoor sports provision** in 2011, based partly on the community use of school playing fields at Silver End and Rivenhall (where 8.9 ha serves Witham Urban sub-area This also includes a significant shortfall of 8.3 hectares at Kelvedon.
- *The deficiency at Kelvedon would be addressed by the Local Plan Review proposal at London Road.*
- 5.28 There will be a 5.9 ha shortfall in **amenity greenspaces**.
- *The main three settlements all lack amenity greenspace. More could be made of the River Blackwater at Kelvedon, but otherwise new*

amenity greenspaces could only be achieved through new development or redevelopment. These shortfalls are also compensated for by natural/semi-natural greenspace of 9.7 ha at Feering and 4.4 ha at Kelvedon.

- 5.29 There will be a shortfall in **provision for children & young people** of 1.9 ha.

All wards are deficient in play provision, but again the main three settlements have the strongest needs. Areas of search would be at:

- *Hatfield Peverel – Willow Crescent area, New Road or The Pines estate, but there are no obvious opportunities.*
- *At Kelvedon the ideal location would be on the Heron Road estate or Dowches Gardens/Church Road area.*
- *At Silver End, toward the south of the village. Joseph Gardens amenity space was considered by the Council to be an unsafe location for play equipment. It is typical of many of the small play spaces designed into the housing estates of the 1970s and 1980s, being hidden from public view and consequently giving rise to safety issues.*

Strategic locations for new green spaces.

- 5.30 In some areas deficiencies in green space provision can only be met through new land use allocations. The Local Plan Review includes allocations for public open space, and the following should be carried forward into the Local Development Framework as part of the Green Spaces Strategy:

Tidings Hill/Oak Road, Halstead (1 hectare; formal open space)
Sudbury Road, Halstead (6 hectares; sports provision)
London Road, Kelvedon (2 hectares; sports provision)

Land for the following additional spaces should be identified in the Allocations Document:

Up to 10 hectares of playing fields at Witham.
Vicarage Field, West Street, Coggeshall
Up to 2 hectares of parks and gardens in Earls Colne
Up to 3 hectares of outdoor sports provision in Three Colnes ward
Up to 2 hectares of outdoor sports provision in Yeldham ward
Up to 5 hectares of parks and gardens in Hatfield Peverel
Up to 4 hectares of parks and gardens at Kelvedon

It is anticipated that most of the additional play provision required can be located within existing open spaces in the District. In some areas of deficiency there are no obvious locations within existing open spaces, and new sites may need to be found. These are most likely to be met developer contributions arising from new housing developments.

Green spaces surplus to requirements

- 5.31 Whilst it is not the Council's policy to sell off open spaces, in exceptional circumstances where Council-owned land is of poor quality and is little used, and there is no local need for other types of open space to be provided through a change of use of that land, then disposal will be considered.

Opportunities for the development of a network of linkages between green spaces

- 5.32 The river valleys and former rail corridors in the District provide the best opportunities for linkages between green spaces. Where the river valleys run through the centres of the main urban areas they already provide a significant amount of public open space, but opportunities remain to complete or extend these corridors. At Braintree there are unimplemented Local Plan Review proposals to provide some 11 hectares of additional informal open space along the four sections of the River Brain, and over 10 hectares along the River Blackwater between Deanery hill and Bradford Bridge. At Witham there is an unimplemented planning permission for additional informal open space around the River Brain on the north side of Witham. At Halstead a river walk is being provided through the town centre where possible to link the open valley to the east and west.
- 5.33 The County Council, in conjunction with Braintree District Council, has opened up two rail corridors in the District, the Flitch Way and the Blackwater Rail Trail, linking Braintree and Dunmow and Braintree and Maldon respectively. There are gaps in the Blackwater Rail Trail where the railway bridges across the Brain and Blackwater rivers have been removed; the erection of a new bridge over the Brain is a priority. The Council will be seeking funding opportunities to provide a new bridge across the river Brain. Bridging the Blackwater, which forms the boundary between Braintree and Maldon Districts would be desirable in the long term to complete the Trail, but there are no plans to fund this at present.
- 5.34 The Local Plan Review also proposes to open up the dismantled Colne Valley railway on either side of the Halstead, although the line has been built over where the railway passed through the town. In the long term the route could be opened up between Sible Hedingham and White Colne, but the main drawback is the number of river crossings which would require substantial bridges to be provided. This land is now in mixed private ownership, and part is within a golf course, but a long-distance path could be created over much of the route, perhaps with small diversions where necessary. Between Sible Hedingham and Haverhill much of the line has been reinstated to agriculture, and although short sections survive in the Yeldham and Birdbrook areas, new footpath links would be required to make much of this accessible.

5.35 Braintree Council is committed to extending the cycleway network through the main towns. There are opportunities to promote new cycleways and footpaths links by improving some of the existing green corridors, and re-opening new lengths of corridor in features such as dismantled railways.

Extending community use agreements of school playing fields

5.36 There are 14 school playing fields over 1 hectare in size which do not have community use agreements, although there are instances of community use without such an agreement. If these were available to the community at weekends and evenings they would provide an extra 45 hectares of outdoor sports provision in the District, and in some areas meet existing shortfalls (see above).

RAISING THE QUALITY OF GREEN SPACES

Table 5: QUALITY:VALUE MATRIX

| | |
|--|---|
| <p><i>HIGH QUALITY – HIGH VALUE</i></p> <p>Silver End Memorial Gardens Halstead Public Gardens Black Notley Playing Field Gosfield Hall Park Playing Field Atlas Works, Massingham Drive, Earls Colne Coe's Meadow, The Street, Bulmer Marks Hall Estate, Marks Hall Road, Coggeshall Millennium Green, Halstead Road, Earls Colne Great Notley Country Park East Town Country Park, Coupals Road, Sturmer Brockwell Meadows LNR, Teal Way, Kelvedon Sandpits Nature Reserve, Gosfield Brooks Wood, Hedingham Road, Gosfield Path N & S of Ridings Avenue, Great Notley The Valley Walk, Foxearth Path from Notley Green to Queenborough Lane, Great Notley Cycleway adj. Community Hall, Great Notley Halstead Road Sports Ground, Earls Colne Cricket Ground, St.Peters Road, Bocking South Cricket Ground, Rye Mill Lane, Feering Tennis Courts, St.James Street, Castle Hedingham Bowling Green, Hatfield Road, Witham South Braintree Bowling Club, Clare Road, Braintree Central</p> | <p>The Green, Finchingfield Grove Fields AG, High Garrett, Bocking North Spansey Court, Windmill Road, Halstead Trinity Silver End Memorial Gardens Playground Playground adj. Great Notley Primary School John Ray Millennium Green, Black Notley Blackwater River Walk, Witham Mill Road Playing Field, Helions Bumpstead Camping Close Recreation Ground, Steeple Bumpstead School & Community Field, Coggeshall Road, Feering Sports Facilities, The Discovery Centre, Great Notley Notley Green, Great Notley Raynehall Green, Shalford Road, Rayne Little Hyde Road AG, Great Yeldham Toppesfield Verges, The Causeway, Toppesfield Lilly Corner, Water Lane, Steeple Bumpstead De Vere Road Playground, Earls Colne Alan Road Playground, Witham South Shaw Road Playground, Witham North Nonancourt Way Playground, Earls Colne</p> |
| <p><i>HIGH QUALITY – LOW VALUE</i></p> <p>Land in front of Notley High School, Braintree South Brian Tebutts Garden, West Street, Coggeshall Memorial Garden, Newland Street, Witham CHC John Ray Millennium Green, Black Notley Rydal Way NSNG, White Courts, Great Notley Chelmer Road NSNG, Braintree East John Ray Walk, Mary Ruck Way/Constable Way, Black Notley</p> | <p>Richard de Clare School PF, Halstead St.Andrews St Andrews C of E Primary School PF, Halstead St.Andrews Edith Borthwick School PF, Bocking North The Rickstones School, Witham North Colchester Road/Bluebridge Industrial Estate, Halstead St.Andrews London Road/Windermere Ave. AG, Great Notley White Colne Meadows NSNG, White Colne</p> |
| <p><i>LOW QUALITY – HIGH VALUE</i></p> <p>Blake Drive Playing Field, Bocking Blackwater Informal Park, The Avenue, Braintree Central Informal Park, Coldnailhurst Ave/Rosemary Ave. Vicarage Field NSNG, West Street, Coggeshall Morleys Road NSNG, Earls Colne Land south of Park Lane NSNG, Earls Colne Green corridor, Bridport Way, Bocking Blackwater Eastern perimeter, Bocking Blackwater Blackwater Rail Trail, Witham South Terling Football Ground, Fairstead Road, Terling Bramston Sports Ground, Stevens Road, Witham South AG north of Motts Lane, Witham North River Walk north of Chipping Hill, Witham CHC</p> | <p>Witham Park, Maldon Road, Witham CHC Bulford Lane, Witham Road, Black Notley Land behind Humber Road Estate, Witham West Parklands NSNG, Braintree South Sturmer Common, Coupals Road, Sturmer Playing Field, Baythorne End, Birdbrook Playing Field, Church Road/North Road, Great Yeldham Church Road AG, Kelvedon Land at Tesco, Great Notley Pelly Avenue Playground, Witham South Ebenezer Close Playground, Witham CHC Mallows Lane Playground, Gainsford End, Toppesfield</p> |
| <p><i>LOW QUALITY – LOW VALUE</i></p> <p>Spansey Court Kickabout Park, Halstead Leywood Close/Cressing Road NSNG Land east of Summerfields, Sible Hedingham Land behind Pintail Crescent, Great Notley Cant Way Playground, Braintree East</p> | <p>Bulford Lane, Witham Road, Black Notley Land behind Humber Road Estate, Witham West Parklands NSNG, Braintree South Sturmer Common, Coupals Road, Sturmer</p> |

6.0 RAISING THE QUALITY OF GREEN SPACES

6.1 For each typology sites were ranked by quality, based on the PPG17audit. Appendix 1 shows the site rankings, with quality being assessed separately for the four main themes of welcoming place, health, safety and security, cleanliness and maintenance, and culture, heritage and community. These tables are used as a basis for targeting improvements to the quality of the green spaces.

6.2 The rankings enable us to set a benchmark at the minimum standard of the top quartile of each type of space, and to programme improvements to spaces falling below the top quartile, focussing on those aspects most responsible for lowering the quality of them. For example, if a space fell below the benchmark level due to a low score for welcoming place, then improvements would be concentrated on raising the quality of the space as a welcoming place to a level which would meet the benchmark standard. The advantage of this method is that detailed improvements which will have the greatest impact on overall quality can be determined for each site.

6.3 It is also essential to target scarce financial resources to those spaces which will give the greatest benefit to the community. Therefore a second sieving process was undertaken by comparing the quality of green spaces with their value to the community as measured by the level of use and any wider benefits that the spaces provide. A simple quality/value matrix was used to identify priorities for the improvement, protection or disposal of green spaces. Table 5 shows the green spaces ranked into four main categories:

High quality/high value: The ideal for all spaces. These will be the best local green spaces; the planning system should seek to protect them.

High quality/low value: These spaces are likely to have low usage, poor accessibility and be of low benefit to the community. The options for these spaces are to enhance the value of the main use, to consider whether a different main use would enhance its value to the community, or if neither of these is possible to consider a complete change of use.

Low quality/high value: These green spaces serve the community well and therefore their quality should be enhanced and the spaces protected through the planning system.

Low quality/low usage: Where it is possible to enhance the value of the green space, the quality should also be enhanced. Where their value cannot be enhanced, then the green spaces will be considered surplus to requirements and alternative uses considered.

6.4 The Green Spaces Strategy will raise the overall quality of green spaces in the following ways:

- i) Improving quality ratings through a phased improvement programme based on the quality-value matrix.

- ii) Preparing improvement plans for each site in the improvement programme.
- iii) Preparing management and maintenance plans for selected sites, including where appropriate nature conservation management, habitat protection and habitat creation.
- iv) Promoting sustainable land management and maintenance practices.
- v) Encouraging native flora and fauna in appropriate places.
- vi) Identifying requirements for new signage/entrances to sites with a common BDC “branding”.
- vii) Identifying opportunities for events and activities reflecting the cultural and heritage value of a site where appropriate in selected greenspaces to encourage greater use and involvement from a wider cross-section of the community.
- viii) Raising awareness and promoting the use of green spaces which have high quality and accessibility but low usage.
- ix) Ensuring that new sports provision will be created and maintained to the standards of governing bodies.
- x) Increasing accessibility and ensuring that green spaces meet DDA requirements.
- xi) Protecting key high quality, high use, and high accessibility green spaces from development.
- xii) Management and maintenance plans will provide for the management, protection and interpretation of the historic environment where appropriate.

A phased quality improvement programme

- 6.5 A quality improvement programme will be drawn up based on the quality-value matrix. The priority will be to improve low quality high value sites; this will have the biggest impact on the community. For high quality low value sites the approach will be to examine why these sites are not well used. If the problem is one of accessibility then steps will be taken to improve accessibility where possible, but if the problem cannot be overcome then consideration will be given to changing the use of the site to enhance its value and encourage greater use. For example, this could mean changing low value amenity space to semi-natural space by planting and managing for nature conservation to increase interest in the site. Low quality low value sites will be assessed to see if they have a future role in meeting the needs of the community – where there is a potential role quality improvements will be programmed, where there is not they may be considered surplus to requirements. The level of provision will be taken into consideration in determining the future of these sites.

Improvement plans

- 6.6 An improvement plan will be prepared for each site listed in the improvement programme. The programme will include sites owned, managed or maintained by the District Council. The Council will also promote the improvement of sites in the ownership of other public bodies or in private ownership through a promotional campaign and use of the Council's website.

Management and maintenance plans

- 6.7 For the most important high quality high value spaces the Council will prepare management and maintenance plans for the long-term management and maintenance regimes to be used by the Parks Service. The plans will include proposals for nature conservation management, habitat protection and, where the opportunity arises, habitat creation to increase biodiversity in green spaces. Maintenance codes will include the planting and pruning regimes and to be employed and the use of chemicals. Where deemed appropriate the management and maintenance plans will be agreed following consultation with the local communities. Further details are given in Section 7.

Sustainable land management and maintenance practices

- 6.8 The plans referred to above will incorporate the latest codes of sustainable land management and maintenance. The Council will also promote more sustainable land management and maintenance by private bodies and individuals on spaces that are well used by the community.

Encouraging native flora and fauna

- 6.9 Similarly the management and maintenance plans will include policies for promoting the establishment of native species of flora and fauna and where possible distinct to the local area in appropriate spaces, and encourage the introduction of wildlife management to the less well-used areas within informal open spaces and playing fields.

Common BDC "branding"

- 6.10 With the adoption of the Green Spaces Strategy the Council will embark on an ambitious programme of raising the quality of the District's green spaces and of securing the provision of additional spaces to meet future needs. It is recommended that a new 'branding' should be introduced to give a common theme or image to Council-owned open spaces. The most effective way of doing this is through new signage, information boards and entrances which have a common theme in terms of design, colour and content. This could either be based on existing signage or be of a completely new design. For the most widely used spaces the information boards should all include the name of the site, opening times (if applicable), contact number and plan of the site showing main facilities such as pitch areas, ponds, planted areas and paths. Where the local community has an input into the design or management of the site, this will be acknowledged on information boards or signs.

Events and activities

- 6.11 Along with raising the public profile of green spaces and introducing a new image, it is recommended that in appropriate spaces the Council will promote events and activities with the objective of extending the use of the spaces and encouraging greater involvement from a wider cross-section of the community. In determining which sites are appropriate for hosting community events, the main considerations will be proximity to public transport, availability of car parking within or near to the space, and impact on the amenity of nearby residents. It is recommended that a list be prepared of suitable open spaces and the types of community use that would be most appropriate for the space and its surroundings. In green spaces with a heritage value the historic environment can be a source of inspiration for cultural events and activities which promote the history of their communities and reinforce people's sense of place.

Raising awareness

- 6.12 Raising public awareness of the variety of public green spaces that exist in the District and promoting greater use of them is essential, particularly as greater resources are being devoted to them. There is need to promote the use of green spaces which have high quality but low usage.
- 6.13 The Council will raise awareness its green spaces and ensure that they are accessible to all communities by the use of:
- (i) Publicity material to inform residents of the green spaces strategy, the management plans for individual spaces and local events and activities programmes.
 - (ii) The Council's website, on which the Green Spaces Strategy, management plans, local planning policies can be viewed. There will also be an interactive map of the District's open spaces, giving detailed information on many of the open spaces. The website will also be used to inform and consult with the community about events and activities and other Council activities.
 - (iii) The local media, to publicise the strategy, events and activities.

Creating and maintaining sports provision

- 6.14 This Green Spaces Strategy is intended to ensure that there is sufficient green space of the right amount, of the right type and in the right place to meet the future needs of the District. As such it relates to the provision and care of land, rather than the provision of specific sports facilities. Clearly new sports provision should always be created and maintained to the standards of governing bodies, and the Council will ensure this happens where it assumes responsibility for the open space.
- 6.15 Braintree Council's Action Plan for Allotments will recognise the need for improved management of the Council's allotments and greater investment in the allotments service. The Plan includes actions that will address the infrastructure condition of existing allotment sites, the need to improve facilities at some of the sites, and future management and maintenance arrangements.

Increasing accessibility

- 6.16 The audit revealed that more than half of all green spaces failed to meet Disability Discrimination Act requirements for equal accessibility. Whilst 67% of parks and gardens and 57% of amenity greenspaces meet the requirements, only one third of natural and semi-natural greenspaces and just 39% of green corridors comply. This situation clearly needs to be addressed, with a priority given to parks and gardens, children's play provision and outdoor sports grounds which are high value spaces. It is recommended that an assessment be made of the green spaces which are not fully DDA compliant and a programme of improvements be undertaken to ensure compliance.

Protecting key green spaces from development.

- 6.17 Given a national agenda which seeks to increase participation in outdoor activities and a background of continuing population growth which in the interests of sustainability is being directed to urban areas, it is essential that there are planning policies in place to protect the most important green spaces from development. Existing Braintree District Local Plan Review Policy RLP 136 protects the formal recreation sites that are shown on the Proposals Map. Through the Core Strategy Development Plan Document and the Development Control Policies Development Plan Document, the Council will continue to protect from development green spaces with the highest quality, highest value and greatest degree of accessibility.

Historic Environments

- 6.18 Where green spaces have a historic environment, management and maintenance plans will provide for the management, protection and interpretation of that environment. When planning habitat management within historic environments, historic practices will be considered when appropriate.

7.0 MANAGEMENT AND MAINTENANCE

Management plans for appropriate strategic green spaces

7.1 The Council will prepare management and maintenance plans for the most important strategic green spaces, including allotments, within its control. They will be usable tools, available to all staff involved in managing and maintaining the Council's open spaces. There will be a clear distinction between a management plan and a maintenance plan:

- A management plan will set out objectives and goals, define the purpose of the open space, set out standards and guidelines, identify conflicts and mitigation measures, management actions and monitoring arrangements,
- A maintenance plan for the open space will define the day-to-day programme of maintenance, usually set out over the year or over a period of years, e.g. the grass is cut from March to October on a 3-weekly rotation. It does not state why this is done or what is trying to be achieved.

Where appropriate, in drawing up management plans, the Council will consult with other specialist stakeholders.

7.2 Management plans have already been prepared for five green spaces:

Cuckoo Wood, Great Notley
Former Black Notley Hospital site
Marks Farm Estate, Braintree East
Nether Court, Halstead
Forsyth Drive, Braintree

Two others are in preparation – Bocking Blackwater and Bradford Meadows. 18 other management plans are proposed:

John Ray Park, Braintree
Weavers Park, Braintree
Clare Road, Braintree
Coldnailhurst Avenue/Meadowside, Braintree
Beckers Green/King George V Playing Field, Braintree
Flitch Way (District Council part)
Great Notley village
Land adjacent to railway, Forest Road, Witham
Land adjacent to railway, Allectus Way, Witham
Spa Road, Witham
Land off Maldon Road, Witham
Brook Walk (Townfield End), Witham
Freebournes Estate, Witham
River Walk, Halstead
Braintree Cemetery
Bocking Cemetery
Halstead Cemetery
Witham Cemetery

“Model” management and maintenance plans for green spaces of each typology.

- 7.3 In addition to detailed management plans to be prepared under paragraph 7.1 the Council will prepare “model” management and maintenance plans for each of the open space types referred to in the audit. Where appropriate, in drawing up model management plans the Council will consult with or other relevant stakeholders. The “models” would be based on some of the management plans already prepared under paragraph 7.2, with the aim of meeting ‘Green Flag’ criteria for those parts that are relevant. Possible examples would be the plans for Halstead Public Gardens and Bocking Blackwater.

Raising standards through example and encouragement.

- 7.4 The “model” management and maintenance plans will not only influence the way that the Council manages and maintains the bulk of its green spaces which are not of strategic importance. They will be made available to the public and other bodies as examples of best management and maintenance practice, and encourage other landowners to raise the quality of their green spaces.

Environmental education and interpretation

- 7.5 On-site signage, interpretation boards and leaflets will be used to inform the community and maximise the educational potential of green spaces. The interpretation of a green space will include its function, its past use and remaining evidence of its past, its future management and maintenance and its use for cultural and social events. Training and educational opportunities for the public will be introduced.

Encouraging community involvement.

- 7.6 The Council currently involves the local community in its green spaces work in a number of ways. Local communities are consulted and encouraged to input their ideas into a number of projects including bids for Green Flag awards, Parks for People and other lottery bids. The Bocking Blackwater project was selected from a number of community bids for joint resources from Essex County Council and Braintree District Council in 2007. The project seeks to raise the quality of this natural and semi-natural greenspace in the north east of the Braintree Sub-Area. Representatives from the community sit on a number of advisory groups, including the Green Spaces Strategy Development Group. Inputs from local communities will be sought in the preparation of the management plans referred to above, and the formation of ‘Friends’ groups to be involved in the management and maintenance of the most strategic spaces will be encouraged. These groups will be supported in making external funding applications.

Management for biodiversity.

- 7.7 Biodiversity is a core component of sustainable development, underpinning economic development and economic prosperity. Protecting and enhancing biodiversity meets the Council’s core values (see paragraph 2.35); retention and enhancement of our biodiversity is vital to our locally distinctive and sustainable communities.

- 7.8 Conservation of biodiversity is vital in our response to climate change and the delivery of key ecosystem services such as food, timber production, flood management, pollination and provision of clean air and water. Braintree District Council has a key role to play in conserving biodiversity, through its role in:
- Developing and influencing local policies and strategies;
 - Planning and development control;
 - Owning and managing Council owned land;
 - Procurement;
 - Education, awareness raising and advisory functions.
- 7.9 Under Section 40 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 all public authorities, in exercising their functions, must have regard to the purpose of conserving biodiversity. Wherever possible the Council will seek to protect, restore and enhance populations and habitats of living organisms in its open spaces; it will lead by example.
- 7.10 The historic environment contributes to the quality of life, having economic, social, spiritual and amenity values. Historic places give people a sense of the past and reflect changes over time. Protection and enhancement of the historic environment is essential to local distinctiveness and a community's sense of place. Where a site has heritage value this will be protected and enhanced through management plans and maintenance regimes.

Management and personnel skills

- 7.11 Existing management practices and personnel skills need to be reviewed to make a more effective use of resources. The following issues are recognised:
- Operational issues include a lack of staff presence on sites and a need for improved communication. Staff presence would reduce instances of vandalism and graffiti, reduce the fear of crime and encourage greater use of spaces. Although it is not feasible to return to the manning levels of forty years ago, there is scope for increasing the involvement of local communities, to act as the ears and eyes of the Council, and to assist in management and maintenance where appropriate. Communications between managers and front line staff should be improved, with staff being encouraged to give feedback on operational or management issues, and at the same time being encouraged to use their own initiatives. This could be part of a move towards a more holistic site management, which in turn would make better use of staff resources.
 - Improve staff skills through a new District Council training policy. There is a need for improved training for staff, to ensure a skill pool appropriate to the requirements of the new management and maintenance plans. Opportunities should be taken to provide training on site to minimise disruption to the service.
 - Generating financial resources: there should be continual assessment of external funding and grant opportunities so that

opportunities will be taken as they arise to enable the action programme to be carried out. Ways should be sought to increase revenue from green spaces by extending the scope of their use.

- Use of non-financial resources: Volunteer labour, coupled with memorials and 'in-kind' contributions from the community or business, can make a significant impact on the Council's ability to deliver the actions proposed under this Green Spaces Strategy

8.0 THE ACTION PLAN

8.1 There are already plans in place to improve open spaces in Braintree District, through both the PACT Action Plan 2004 - 2014 and the Corporate Strategy Action Plan 2007-2008 (see Appendix 2). The PACT Action Plan includes:

In the short term (2004-2005):

- (i) Regenerating open space at the heart of the Templars Estate in Witham, involving the establishment of a Templars Doorstep green Committee.
- (ii) Providing and promoting activities for healthy living with the focus on children and young people to 19 years of age through the setting up of the Children's and Young People's Strategic Partnership.
- (iii) Working in partnership with the Environment Agency to encourage community ownership of river walks.

In the medium term (2006-2008):

- (i) Providing local green spaces and play areas on housing estates through community partnerships.
- (ii) Increasing access to community and leisure facilities across the District and encourage the provision of local village leisure activities through partnership working between the Council, schools, parish councils and community groups.
- (iii) Increasing education about wildlife and the countryside in conjunction with English Nature.

In the long term (2009-2014):

- (i) Open up schools to greater community use by pursuing the Extended School Strategy in conjunction with Essex County Council.
- (ii) Produce and implement management plans for 300 hectares worth of public open space, covering 30 hectares per year by 2014.

8.2 The Corporate Action Plan includes seeking green flag status for Great Notley Country Park, Halstead Public gardens and Silver End memorial Gardens, submitting a 'Parks for People' bid for Maldon Road Park in Witham, further developing the facilities at the Discovery Centre and Great Notley Country Park, refurbishing 11 children's play areas owned by the Borough Council and seeking NPFA awards for at least four play areas, and working in partnership with others to improve Halstead river walk, parish council play areas at Earls Colne and to carry out environmental improvements to the River Blackwater open space in Bocking Blackwater ward.

8.3 The Green Spaces Strategy will provide the basis for continuing to improve green space provision in Braintree District. A Green Spaces Action Plan will be prepared by the end of 2008, and will include consideration of allotments following the further study referred to in

paragraph 4.8. The Action Plan will include the following:

- Strategic policies for provision.
- The programme for raising the quality of green spaces.
- Proposals for improved links, including cycleways, between green spaces.
- Management and maintenance plans.
- Advice to the community and other landowners.
- Marketing and educational activities (including involvement of the community).
- Costs and funding.

8.4 The Action Plan will define:

- The steps, personnel and timescale for achieving the strategy's aims. Relationship to the Best Value review process and to service delivery plans. A table to show:
- A list of actions, including more detailed site-specific activities where appropriate.
- Who will carry out the actions, e.g. Council personnel, community and other stakeholders.
- A timetable prioritising the actions to be carried out.
- The estimated costs of the programme.
- The funding sources appropriate to each action.
- Performance indicators.

Working in partnership

8.5 The Council already works in partnership with the Friends Groups, parish and town councils in a mainly advisory capacity. The Council also works with groups from organisations such as the PSCOs, Scouts and MENCAP, working together to improve public open space. It also gives advice on the setting up of formal groups, making grant applications, and biodiversity issues, and runs events and volunteer days. The Council intends to extend partnership working for the purposes of implementing this Strategy and will identify key partners with an interest in green spaces who may need to be brought into this process.

8.6 Although currently the District does not have a well-developed network of community groups, the number of groups working on public open space is growing well and will continue to support the growing number of community groups in the District. Examples of these groups are 'Friends' groups, 'In Bloom' groups and 'consultative' groups for the purposes of consultation and involvement in park development work. During the last six months of 2007 new Friends Groups have been formally set up to work on Bocking Blackwater and Bradford Meadows, and the Council is

currently supporting grant applications to another recently formed group in Black Notley. The Council will continue to engage the community in the planning, management and maintenance of green spaces and support further partnerships or groups whenever and wherever the opportunity arises.

- 8.7 The Council also works in partnership with Essex County Council on the Bocking Blackwater Project and on the County owned Country Parks at Great Notley, Flitch Way and Blackwater Rail Trail.
- 8.8 The Council's approach to raising awareness referred to in paragraphs 6.12-6.13 will be the key to successful partnership working.

9.0 SETTING PRIORITIES

9.1 The suggested priorities will be derived from the following:

- Produce and implement management plans for three sites per year, plus one cemetery per year, in the first four years.
- Identifying the top twenty low quality/high value sites from the quality-value matrix for action in the short-term.
- Address accessibility issues to ensure that the most important green spaces meet the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act.
- Addressing the most significant deficiencies in provision. These are considered to be:
 - Outdoor sports provision in Braintree Urban sub-area.
 - All types of green space provision at Kelvedon in the Witham Rural sub-area
 - Adopting a new strategy for provision for children and young people.

10.0 MONITORING AND REVIEW PROCEDURES

10.1 It is essential to maintain the impetus provided by the open space audit and development of this Strategy. The process has given us a detailed picture of the green spaces in the District, and information which will be of benefit to a number of Council services and to the local community. It is a firm foundation on which to build future policy and to raise the quality of green spaces in the District. Therefore it is important to ensure that there is a programme of continuous monitoring so that the information base can be updated and green space policies changed when necessary. The following will be the key components of the monitoring and review procedures for the Green Spaces Strategy:

- Action Plan to be reviewed annually.
- Strategy and Action Plan to be reviewed against corporate policy, performance criteria and targets every three to five years.
- Supplement national performance indicators (Audit Commission) with tailor-made local performance indicators, e.g. measuring levels of use and user satisfaction with green spaces.
- Green Flag Award criteria as a measure of quality. In using this national standard as a local performance indicator, improvements can be prioritised across the network of green space.
- Green space audits to be undertaken every five years by the Council's Street Scene team to update information on the quality, accessibility and use of green spaces.
- Consultation with the community to be carried out every five years to review the needs of the community and the use of green spaces.

10.2 It is proposed that the Annual Monitoring Report will include the following indicators to measure the effectiveness of the Strategy:

- Amount of new open space provided
- Amount of financial contributions obtained through Section 106 Agreements
- The number of green spaces with green flag awards, management plans and maintenance plans in place
- The number of green spaces which have been improved
- The amount of open space which has been lost

11.0 MARKETING

- 11.1 The aim of the marketing initiatives will be to ensure that the green spaces are accessible to the whole community by:
- Making the local community aware of the Green Spaces Strategy and the green spaces which are available to meet the sport and leisure needs of the local community and visitors through:
 - Publicity materials, e.g. leaflets, brochures.
 - Website information, including interactive mapping.
 - The local media e.g. reporting of events, publicity for new initiatives and actions arising from the Strategy.
 - Further developing and promoting the events and activities programme.
 - Making the green spaces attractive and welcoming by improving the entrances and providing information, interpretation and signage.
- 11.2 Publicity material must be attractive and made readily available to local residents and visitors alike. The initial publications will include a leaflet showing all the significant green spaces in the District in map form with brief details of sites, and a leaflet for each of the main spaces which will include a map, directions, main features, details of major events where applicable and contact details; these would be made available through the tourist information office. The Green Spaces Strategy should also be available, to describe the concept and the aims of the Strategy. A map of the cycling routes in the District would include details of the most important greenspaces.
- 11.3 The Council's website will be used to advertise the Strategy and explain its aims and objectives, and to encourage community involvement. It is also intended to have an interactive mapping window to access details of the most important green spaces. Where sites are being promoted by events or activities these will be listed on the website; community run events would also be included. Examples of activities are tournaments, music events, craft markets, firework displays, and interpretive events.
- 11.4 The local media will have an important role to play in providing information about greenspace initiatives, projects and events and public consultation and community involvement. The media will include newspaper and radio coverage.

12.0 FUNDING

12.1 Delivery of the Green Spaces Strategy and Action Plan will clearly be dependent upon the resources that are available to the Council. Section 106 contributions will be important, particularly in regard to meeting the green space requirements of new provision, but also in addressing some of the current needs. The following is a list of sources for funding. It is not necessarily exhaustive, some additional sources may become available during the life of the Strategy and existing sources may cease. Some sources are available directly to the community or parishes and not through the District Council; some will rely on pump-priming and local raising of funds.

- Section 106 contributions for creating greenspaces in areas of deficiency, funding improvements to existing greenspaces and providing walking, cycling and other linear routes to provide green linkages between spaces. There is a long-term funding issue of the maintenance of greenspaces, and a limit on the period over which developer responsibility is reasonable. It may be necessary to pass responsibility onto parishes where appropriate, or to obtain an endowment fund wherever possible to cover these ongoing costs. The test of Circular 1/97 must be met by Section 106 Agreements, and developers cannot be expected to pay sums which exceed the demand arising from the development in order to fully resolve existing deficiencies.
- Sale of Council land surplus to requirements, with ring-fencing of proceeds from sale of green spaces. This may prove difficult to achieve in Braintree District where there are few opportunities, and it is likely to be a slow process taking up to three years to introduce due to the planning process and possible legal or other restrictions. Reinvestment of proceeds to carry out significant projects would provide political credibility for the sale of Council land.
- Business funding/sponsorships.
- Partnerships with the community/voluntary sector. This is often essential to obtain investment from funding bodies, and through the creation of “friends” groups the community can be encouraged to take ownership of greenspaces.

The Council will make the most of any opportunity for bidding for funds which may present itself at the time the funding is required.

APPENDIX ONE

**REPORT ON
THE AUDIT OF OPEN SPACES
WITHIN BRAINTREE DISTRICT**

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Introduction

- S1 The preparation of a green spaces strategy for Braintree District is divided into two stages – an audit of existing open spaces and assessment of local need, and the development of the strategy itself. This Interim Report on the Audit of Open Spaces in Braintree District brings together the findings of the open space surveys and the consultation exercises with householders, users of open spaces and sports clubs. Its primary objective is to inform Council officers and members and assist the Strategy Development Group in its task of developing future plans and policies for open spaces and sport and recreation facilities in the District for endorsement by the Council.
- S3 This Interim Report is structured so that it can be refined and added to following the work of the Strategy Development Group. It is divided into a number of sections that examine the background to the Audit, the methodology used, the policy context, reports on the eight open green space typologies and the strategy development that represents the final stage of this project.
- S4 Also included are a series of appendices that summarise in tabular form the results of the audits and the public consultations. They are included in some detail in this Interim Report as member of the Steering Group may wish to study this in some detail in due course. It is intended that a simplified version of these tables, particularly the audit tables, will be included in the final published document.

Aims of the Assessment

- S5 The study aims to provide an updated, clear picture of existing and future needs for open space, sport and recreation in Braintree and the extent to which those needs are met in terms of quality, quantity and accessibility. The main focus of the study is to:
- Identify local demand for various types of open space
 - Set local standards based on assessments of local needs
 - Identify specific needs, surpluses or deficiencies both now and in the future
 - Provide a strategic focus for the Council, enabling the best use of existing and future open spaces
 - Provide a basis for future planning policies and management/maintenance policies for Council-owned land

Methodology

- S6 The study includes all open space and outdoor sport and recreation types identified in accordance with guidance provided in Planning Policy Guidance Note 17 *Planning for Open Spaces, Sport and Recreation*

(July 2002) and its *Companion Guide* (September 2002). These include parks and gardens, natural and semi-natural greenspaces, green corridors, outdoor sports facilities, amenity greenspace, provision for children and young people, allotments and cemeteries and other burial grounds. The quality audit excluded allotments and burial grounds, as well as the natural and semi-natural greenspaces outside urban and urban fringe areas.

S7 This report has been derived from desk research, consultations, a detailed audit and analysis of existing provision, including quantity, quality, accessibility, usage and value, and a GIS digitised mapping of all green spaces linked to the audit results.

S8 A final report will be published to incorporate the green spaces strategy. The strategy will provide for the following needs:

- A more even distribution of open space in relation to the local population
- A better interconnection between open spaces, providing a corridor of movement for wildlife and improving cycle and pedestrian links between different parts of an area, so reducing the amount of car travel.
- Addressing deficiencies in the quality of provision
- Meeting future needs and demands
- Providing a more sustainable environment, with greater biodiversity, and the conservation of a variety of habitat types
- Providing a system in which stakeholders, including users, can become involved in decisions relating to the management of open spaces
- Identifying existing and potential sources of funding or other resources and targeting resources to where the need is greatest.

PPG17 Five Step process

S7 The study was undertaken in accordance with the guidance provided in Planning Policy Guidance Note 17 (PPG17). The *Companion Guide* sets out a 5-step process for undertaking a local assessment of open space, sport and recreation:

- Step 1 – Identifying local needs
- Step 2 – Auditing local provision
- Step 3 – Setting provision standards
- Step 4 – Applying provision standards
- Step 5 – Developing a green spaces strategy

This Report comprises Steps 1 and 2 of this process and provides the quantitative and qualitative analysis to be used in developing provision standards and a green spaces strategy.

Identification of Local Needs

S8 To identify local needs the following techniques were used:

- Desk-based research of national, regional and local policies and strategies which will influence the need for open space and sport and recreation provision.
- Reviewing existing plans and policies, and research already undertaken by the Council.
- A major public consultation exercise in the form of a household questionnaire survey. Forms were sent to 4,421 households and 670 (16%) completed forms were returned.

Auditing Local Provision

S9 The audit of open spaces was carried out following the typology guidelines in PPG17, but with a number of limitations. Although all open spaces were subject to a quantitative audit, qualitative audits were limited by the following:

- Allotments and burial grounds were excluded.
- Private parks and gardens in rural areas were excluded.
- Natural and semi-natural greenspaces were only included where they are within or adjacent to urban areas or villages.
- School playing fields were only included where they are used by the community.
- Amenity greenspaces quality audits were restricted to a minimum size of 0.2 hectares.

S10 Following a desk study to compile a list of open spaces, parish and town councils assisted in the mapping exercise by confirming or amending the mapped open spaces. Each site to be included in the quality audit was mapped on a GIS base, then visited and assessments made of their quality, usage and accessibility. Site dimensions and boundaries were checked visually to ensure that the GIS mapping was accurate.

Analysis Areas

S11 Braintree District covers an area of 1,300 square miles and has over 60 parishes and 22 wards. For the purposes of undertaking the assessment of the open spaces audited, the District was split into six analysis sub-areas, based on the area committee structure. Although using identifiable neighbourhoods within the main urban areas, larger parishes and an amalgamation of smaller parish areas would have been preferred, the study would have become over-complicated, requiring many more sub-areas in the report. The six sub-areas are:

- Braintree Urban Area
- Halstead Urban Area
- Witham Urban Area
- Braintree Rural Area
- Halstead Rural Area
- Witham Rural Area

S12 Table ES1 lists the wards and parishes which fall within each sub-area. Although generally there are several parishes to each ward area, there are certain wards which split parish council areas or which straddle two rural sub-areas. These are Black Notley and Terling, Coggeshall and North Feering and Stisted and Cressing. The mapping is shown in Figure ES1.

Digitisation and Database Development

S13 Following completion of the audit, all mapping was verified and amended where necessary. The mapping was digitised and the linked to a Microsoft Excel Spreadsheet giving basic information about each space. It is the most comprehensive record of open space in Braintree that has ever been assembled. The GIS mapping and spreadsheet will enable the information to be updated over time, either through resurveys or updating on an ad hoc basis to reflect changes as they take place on the ground. By mapping all open spaces regardless of whether they were subject to the quality audit, the system allows for further site assessments to be undertaken if required.

Setting and Applying Provision Standards

S14 The Council will set quantity, quality and accessibility standards will be set for parks and gardens, outdoor sports facilities, amenity greenspace and provision for children and young people. These will be used to identify where there are gaps in provision and to set priorities to remedy this. Open spaces were also analysed by catchment areas, based on public consultation which has revealed the distances which most people are prepared to travel to each type of open space.

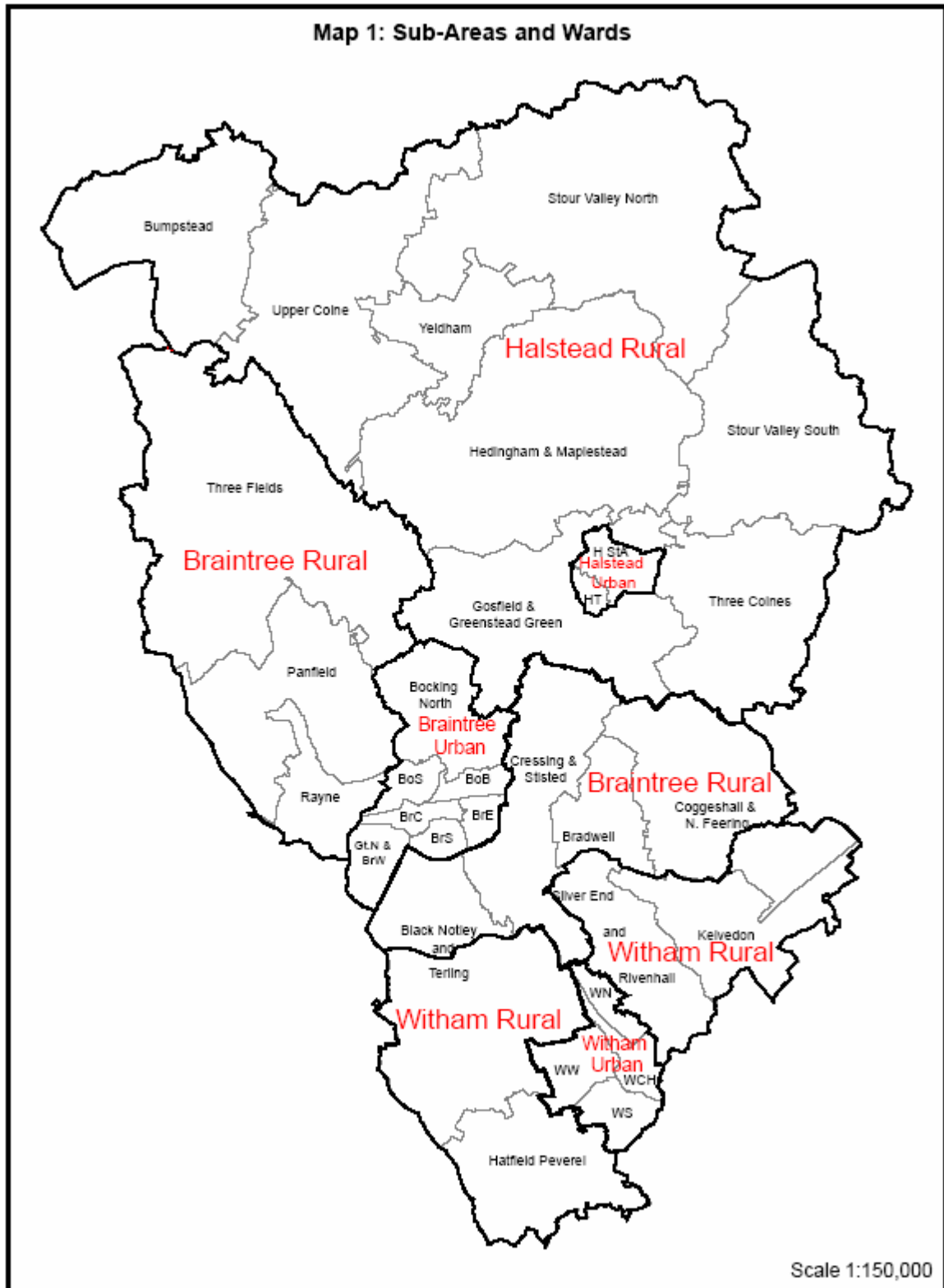
S15 Quantity standards will be set after measuring the area of each individual automatically through the GIS mapping system. The amount of each type of space will be calculated proportionate to the ward populations, and quantity standards set after taking into account survey responses and the vision statements.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Table ES1: Analysis areas by ward, parish and 2001 Census population

| Sub-Area | Ward | Population | Parish/Town | Population |
|-----------------|---|---|---|------------|
| Braintree Urban | Bocking Blackwater | 7,962 | - | |
| | Bocking North | 4,215 | - | |
| | Bocking South | 4,978 | - | |
| | Braintree Central | 6,502 | - | |
| | Braintree East | 6,118 | - | |
| | Braintree South | 6,535 | - | |
| | Great Notley and Braintree West | 5,420 | Great Notley | 4,815 |
| | | | - | |
| | | 41,730 | | |
| Braintree Rural | Black Notley and Terling (part) | 1,646 | Black Notley only | 1,646 |
| | Bradwell, Silver End and Rivenhall (part) | | Bradwell only | 512 |
| | Coggeshall and North Feering (part) | 4,327 | Coggeshall only | 4,327 |
| | Cressing and Stisted | 2,155 | Cressing | 1,538 |
| | | | Stisted | 617 |
| | Panfield | 2,036 | Bardfield Saling | 179 |
| | | | Great Saling | 261 |
| | | | Panfield | 850 |
| | | | Shalford | 746 |
| | Rayne | 2,162 | Rayne | 2,162 |
| | Three Fields | 3,818 | Finchingfield | 1,348 |
| | | | Great Bardfield | 1,238 |
| | | | Wethersfield | 1,232 |
| | | 16,144 | | |
| Halstead Urban | Halstead St Andrews | 6,280 | Halstead (Town) | 11,053 |
| | Halstead Trinity | 4,773 | | |
| | | 11,053 | | |
| Halstead Rural | Bumpstead | 2,418 | Helions Bumpstead | 473 |
| | | | Steeple Bumpstead | 1,481 |
| | | | Sturmer | 464 |
| | Gosfield and Greenstead Green | 2,032 | Gosfield | 1,364 |
| | | | Greenstead Green and Halstead Rural | 668 |
| | | | | |
| | Hedingham and Maplestead | 6,207 | Castle Hedingham | 1,142 |
| | | | Gestingthorpe | 421 |
| | | | Great Maplestead | 355 |
| | | | Little Maplestead | 294 |
| | | | Sible Hedingham | 3,665 |
| | | | Wickham St Paul | 330 |
| | | | | |
| | Stour Valley North | 2,131 | Belchamp Otten & St.Paul | 495 |
| | | | Belchamp Walter | 198 |
| | | | Borley | 99 |
| | | | Bulmer | 568 |
| | | | Foxearth & Liston | 349 |
| | | | Lt Yeldham, Ovington & Tilbury-juxta-Clare (part) | 194 |
| | | | Pentlow | 228 |
| | | | | |
| | Stour Valley South | 2,065 | Alphamstone and Lamarsh | 354 |
| | | | Bures Hamlet | 765 |
| | | | Great Henny, Lt Henny, Middleton & Twinstead | 467 |
| | | | Pebmarsh | 479 |
| | Three Colnes | 4,848 | Colne Engaine | 979 |
| | | | Earls Colne | 3,389 |
| White Colne | | | 480 | |
| Upper Colne | 2,121 | Ashen | 315 | |
| | | Birdbrook | 369 | |
| | | Ridgewell | 503 | |
| | | Stambourne | 401 | |
| | | Toppesfield | 533 | |
| Yeldham | 2,041 | Great Yeldham | 1,715 | |
| | | Lt Yeldham, Ovington & Tilbury-juxta-Clare (part) | 326 | |
| | | | | |
| | | 23,863 | | |
| Witham Urban | Witham Chipping Hill & Central | 4,412 | | |
| | Witham North | 5,018 | | |
| | Witham South | 6,154 | | |
| | Witham West | 6,886 | | |
| | | 22,470 | | |
| Witham Rural | Black Notley and Terling (part) | 1,581 | Terling & Fairstead | 980 |
| | | | White Notley & Faulkbourne | 601 |
| | Bradwell, Silver End and Rivenhall (part) | 4,473 | Rivenhall | 732 |
| | | | Silver End | 3,741 |
| | Coggeshall and North Feering (part) | 451 | Feering (north of railway) | 451 |
| | Hatfield Peverel | 4,384 | Hatfield Peverel | 4,384 |
| | Kelvedon | 5,019 | Feering (south of railway) | 1,534 |
| | | Kelvedon | 3,485 | |
| | | 15,908 | | |

Figure ES1 – Analysis Areas



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- S16 Quality standards will be set using the results of the open space audit. The quality of each site was assessed by looking at a number of factors:
- The overall quality of the site
 - The degree to which the site is a “welcoming place”
 - The degree to which the site is a healthy, safe and secure place
 - Cleanliness and maintenance of open and planted areas, and of furniture and buildings
 - The number and quality of sports facilities and play equipment
 - Recognition of the site’s natural, historic and cultural heritage
 - The degree of interpretation and community involvement.

These were rated from ‘very good’ to ‘very poor’, and the scores were used to give a quality factor.

- S17 Accessibility standards will be set using information obtained through the household and user surveys. The effective catchment of each type of open space is defined as the distance travelled by around 75% of users. This information will then be compared with drive time catchments derived from national surveys and those adopted by other local authorities.

- S18 The majority of respondents walked to their favourite open space, and most of the remainder travelled by car, with only a minority using buses or bicycles. Details of catchment times and modes of travel are given under each of the typology headings – this information will be used to identify catchment areas on a map base. All thresholds will be examined during the strategy development for evidence of patterns relating to facilities of different scales or qualities to see whether hierarchies of provision exist.

Open Space Needs

- S19 The Green Spaces Strategy will seek to address deficiencies in open space provision, set against identified future needs and the standards to be adopted by the District Council. The audit reveals the following areas of deficiency:
- Parks and Gardens
Within Braintree Urban Area there is a deficiency of parks and gardens in Braintree East, Bocking North, Witham North and Witham South. In the larger rural settlements, there is a deficiency of parks and gardens at Coggeshall, Hatfield Peverel and Kelvedon.
 - Natural and Semi-Natural Greenspace
The distribution of natural or semi-natural greenspace reflects the landscape and the impacts of human activity on it. Much of the District is quite wooded and this is reflected in the average rural density of over 34 ha. of natural and semi-natural greenspace per thousand people. Within the urban areas there is little of this type of

space in Bocking North, Witham North and Halstead Trinity wards, although they all have access to river valleys that run through the three main towns.

- Green Corridors
Green corridors have an important role in recreation and the movement of wildlife, particularly where they form linkages between other types of open space. Following mostly man-made features such as railways and green lanes, their distribution is sporadic, although opportunities do exist to extend the network. They are absent from the Witham Rural and much of Braintree Rural sub-areas, as well as Bocking South, Braintree East, Braintree South, Halstead Trinity and Witham North wards.
- Outdoor Sports Facilities
There is a fairly even distribution of outdoor sports facilities throughout Braintree District, within both rural and urban areas. All rural wards have at least one playing field used for sporting activities, primarily cricket and association football. Deficiencies can be identified in Braintree Central and Halstead Trinity, but these areas are within a reasonable travelling distance of a sports facility.
- Amenity Greenspace
Amenity greenspace has a valuable role in providing a visual amenity in what would otherwise be a hard urban landscape. The District Council acknowledges the importance of these spaces and most housing developments of the past twenty years have incorporated amenity green spaces within them. The wards with the lowest densities of amenity greenspace are Braintree East, Bocking North, Bocking Blackwater and Rayne.
- Provision for Children and Young People
All wards have at least one play area, although the distribution and quality of provision is variable. Provision is generally good in the rural areas, with the three main towns are reasonably well provided with play spaces, varying from 1 space per 353 people to one space per 2,163 people, whilst no community with a population of fewer than 765 is without a play area. Coggeshall, Rayne and Stour Valley north have the lowest provision per head. The play provision in the urban areas serve much larger populations, ranging from 1 space per 1,054 population to 1 space per 6,502 population; Braintree Central, Braintree South, Halstead St. Andrews and Bocking Blackwater have the lowest provision per head. The report also highlights a number of sites of poor quality which need to be re-equipped or otherwise improved.
- Allotments
Although the District is reasonably well served by allotments, there is a notable deficiency in Witham, where the only allotment garden is in Witham North ward near to the railway station. Other urban wards deficient in allotments are Great Notley/Braintree West, Braintree East, Braintree South and Bocking Blackwater. Most rural wards

have allotments, although none are to be found in Panfield and Three Fields, and there are deficiencies in Bumpstead and Black Notley.

- Cemeteries and Burial Grounds

In the past burial grounds were much smaller and localised, mostly being found in churchyards. In the late twentieth century the trend was towards large municipal crematoriums and cemeteries to cater for a local authority's needs. All the rural areas have churchyards or other burial grounds. Within the main urban wards there is an absence of burial grounds in Bocking Blackwater, Braintree East, Braintree South, Great Notley/Braintree West, Witham South and Witham West, but generally there are burial grounds within easy reach of most people. In any event new provision will only be related to the needs of the community and not as a means of securing additional open space for recreational use.

Quality

S20 Although the community surveys generally reflect the audit findings, there are several instances where the surveys do not reflect the quality recorded in the audit. The surveys revealed the contribution that open spaces make to people's quality of life, and that there is almost universal acknowledgement of their importance, even though they may not always meet people's expectations. The most significant findings are:

- Nearly a quarter of the 34 parks and gardens averaged a score of 3.5 or more.
- The importance of open spaces can be enhanced by being multifunctional. 43% of parks and gardens have sports pitches, ball courts or children's play areas and 45% of outdoor sports facilities have playgrounds.
- 75% of household respondents were satisfied with the overall quality of parks and gardens, and although users were generally more critical of them, 18% were nevertheless satisfied with their quality.
- The overall quality of natural and semi-natural greenspaces reflects the extent of planting and maintenance, although sites which are not maintained may have a nature conservation value.
- 28% of respondents use natural and semi-natural greenspaces more frequently than other types of open space.
- Whilst many natural and semi-natural open spaces are managed for nature conservation, few of them have good interpretive media.
- 55% of respondents rated amenity spaces as good or very good, and they are usually well maintained. Many people would like to see more litter bins, dog bins and seats on the larger amenity spaces.
- The range, location and condition of play equipment are generally good. Most are clean and well-maintained, and there is rarely any evidence of problems. Most are very accessible and well-used,

although a number of individual play areas do suffer from vandalism and anti-social behaviour.

- The most common complaints about parks and gardens are the absence or poor quality of toilet provision, too much litter and inadequate lighting.
- Although the audit suggests that natural and semi-natural spaces have few problems, respondents frequently complained about litter.
- Green corridors suffer most from dog fouling; this is because they are frequently used for exercising of dogs and too many owners fail to remove faeces.
- Outdoor sports facilities also score well for quality and maintenance, but community surveys show dissatisfaction with the number of seats and the number and quality of toilet provision.

1 INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

Aims and Scope

- 1.1 An audit of open space provision and sports and recreation facilities started in April 2006 to provide an informed basis for the Open Space Supplementary Planning Document which is to be published in the autumn of 2007. In the longer term the audit will be used as a basis for developing planning policies as part of the Local development Framework and developing a green spaces strategy that will address management issues. It will enable the Council to respond to any pressures brought about by future development.
- 1.2 The study is undertaken on the basis of the revised Planning Policy Guidance Note 17 (PPG17) *Planning for Open Space, Sport and Recreation* (July 2002) and its companion guide *Assessing Needs and Opportunities: A Companion Guide to PPG17* (September 2002). PPG17 states “the government expects all local authorities to carry out assessments of needs and audits of open space and sports and recreational facilities”. It states that well designed and implemented planning policies for open space, sport and recreation are fundamental to delivering broader Government objectives, including:
- supporting urban renaissance
 - supporting rural renewal
 - promotion of social inclusion and community cohesion
 - health and well being
 - Promoting more sustainable development.
- 1.3 The main policy changes brought about by this PPG are:
- Local authority decisions regarding open space must be informed by local needs assessments and an audit of existing provision. The audits should include qualitative, quantitative and accessibility considerations, and non-monetary value of land including the levels of use. National standards are no longer regarded as meeting local needs, although they can be regarded as benchmarks.
 - The definition of open space should be taken to mean all open space of public value, including areas of water that offer important opportunities for sport and recreation.
 - A greater emphasis is placed on qualitative assessments, as this will allow local authorities to identify potential for increased use through better design, management and/or maintenance.
 - It advocates the setting of local standards that take into account local demography, the specific needs of residents and the nature of the built environment.
 - It provides guidance on the different types of open space and acknowledges that open spaces often perform multiple functions.

- It advocates maintaining an adequate supply of open space and planning for new open space.
- 1.4 For the purposes of this study, comprehensive mapping of all open space typologies was undertaken to enable quantitative assessments to be made. The audit focussed on specific typologies or subgroups within typologies, based on the requirement to prepare planning policies for these typologies. The quantitative information will enable the Council to readily undertake future audits of spaces excluded from this study should the need arise. Further details of which typologies were included in the audit, with or without limitations, are given in the Methodology.

Local Assessment of Need

- 1.5 The advantages to the Council of undertaking a local need assessment are that:
- The Council will be able to plan effectively by identifying priority areas for improvement and target the types of open space required.
 - The Council can ensure that the future needs of the community will be met by high quality, accessible open spaces.
 - Funding can be sought and invested in places where there is the greatest need.
 - The Council will have robust data upon which policies to protect spaces of highest quality and levels of use can be formulated, and proposals to increase the quality and usability of spaces with potential for improvement.
 - Locally set standards can be derived from the assessments and used for the planning of improvements to and provision of new spaces.
 - There will be greater clarity and certainty for developers and landowners.
 - Identify areas of open space that are under-used or of little value, and which could be put to an alternative beneficial use.

Background

- 1.6 Braintree District has a population of 130,170 (2001 Census). This is estimated to have risen to 137,800 in the 2005 mid-year population Estimates (ONS). It comprises three towns together with a large rural hinterland containing over 60 parishes. Braintree, with a population of 41,700, is the largest town and the heart of the District, Witham is the second largest town located in the A12 corridor, and Halstead is a small town with a rural hinterland stretching to the Suffolk border. The northern and eastern fringes of the District have close links with the towns of Haverhill, Sudbury and Bures, which are located in St. Edmondsbury and Babergh districts of Suffolk. The southern extremity of Braintree District has links to Chelmsford, the county town.

2 ASSESSMENT METHODOLOGY

2.1 This study of open spaces and sport and recreation facilities has been undertaken in accordance with PPG17 and follows the advice given in the *Companion Guide*. The *Companion Guide* is a comprehensive guide to the undertaking of an open space audit and needs assessment, giving detailed suggestions of the way in which these studies should be carried out. The main guiding principles are:

- Local needs will vary according within the District according to socio-demographic and cultural characteristics;
- The provision of good quality and effective open space relies on creative design, landscape management and maintenance as well as effective planning. The green spaces strategy following from this audit will address these issues.
- The delivery of high quality and sustainable open space may depend more on improving and enhancing existing open space rather than making new provision.
- The value of open space depends primarily on meeting identified local needs and the wider benefits they generate for people, wildlife and the environment.
- Rural areas cannot expect to have the same degree of access to and range of open space as urban areas, although villages will expect to have some provision.
- Some spaces may be found almost exclusively in either rural or urban areas, so separate rural and urban standards may be required.

Types of Open Space

2.2 The PPG17 definition of open space is “*all open space of public value, including not just land, but also areas of water such as rivers, canals, lakes and reservoirs which offer important opportunities for sport and recreation and can also act as a visual amenity.*”

2.3 PPG17 identifies 9 typologies of open space, including 8 types of green open space and 1 type of hard urban open space. For the purposes of this study the eight types of green open space have all been mapped electronically on GIS to provide a basis for quantitative analysis. The Audit is intended to provide information to be used in the development of a green spaces strategy, and more immediately, in the preparation of a Supplementary Planning Document on Open Space. To enable the completion of the Audit within a relatively short timescale, the Council decided to focus on those typologies where the Council is in a position to influence future provision and to limit the scope of some typologies to concentrate on the urban areas. Consequently the scoping is more restrictive than that recommended in PPG17; this is explained in Table 1.

Table 1: Definition of typologies as used by Braintree District Council

| PPG17 Typology | Primary Purpose | Excluded from Braintree audit |
|--|--|--|
| Parks and gardens | Accessible, high quality opportunities for informal recreation and community events. <i>Includes Country Parks.</i> | |
| Natural and semi-natural greenspaces, including urban woodland | Wildlife conservation, biodiversity and environmental education and awareness. Natural and semi-natural greenspaces and woodland will only be included where they are within or abut urban boundaries and are publicly accessible. <i>Includes nature reserves, sites of special scientific interest and registered parks and gardens.</i> | Natural and semi-natural greenspaces in the countryside unless accessible by the public. This audit could be undertaken in the future as part of a Local Biodiversity Action Plan. |
| Green corridors | Walking, cycling or horse riding, whether for leisure purposes of travel, and opportunities for wildlife migration. <i>Green corridors will include green lanes, disused railways and some watercourses.</i> | Footpaths, including long distance paths, cycleways and bridleways will be excluded unless they form part of a wider, greener corridor. |
| Outdoor sports facilities | Participation in outdoor sports, such as pitch sports, tennis, bowls, athletics or countryside and water sports. | Countryside and water sports facilities and golf courses will be excluded. |
| Amenity greenspace | Opportunities for informal activities close to home or work or enhancement of the appearance of residential or other areas. | 'SLOAP' (space left over after planning) and other incidental areas of land such as road verges that are not intended for a specific use. Excludes ponds, reservoirs and lakes that are not otherwise attached to open land. |
| Provision for children and young people | Areas designed primarily for play and social interaction involving children and young people, such as equipped play areas, ball courts, skateboard areas and teenage shelters. | |
| Allotments, community gardens and urban farms | Opportunities for those people who wish to do so to grow their own produce as part of the long-term promotion of sustainability, health and social inclusion. | These do provide important visual spaces, but are not otherwise used by the general public. The Council will have control over its own allotments. The Local Plan Review seeks to prevent the loss of allotments. |
| Cemeteries, disused churchyards and other burial grounds | Quiet contemplation and burial of the dead, often linked to the promotion of wildlife conservation and biodiversity. | Council-owned cemeteries will be subject to a separate audit. The Local Plan Review provides for a cemetery extension. |
| Civic and market squares and other hard surfaced areas designed for pedestrians. | Provide a setting for civic buildings, public demonstrations and community events. | The Council has already undertaken improvements to pedestrian areas in Braintree Town Centre. |

2.4 The following land uses were excluded from the audit:

- All natural and semi-natural greenspaces located in the countryside and not formally accessible to the public.
- Farmland and farm tracks, private roads and private gardens are excluded from the definitions given in PPG17. In addition, footpaths, including long-distance paths, cycleways and bridleways are excluded unless they form part of a wider green corridor.
- Countryside and water sports facilities and golf courses are excluded from the audit of outdoor sports facilities. This is because the Council is generally not in a position to influence this type of provision.
- SLOAP (space left over after planning, i.e. in and around blocks of flats), grass verges on the side of roads and small, insignificant areas of grassland or trees e.g. on the corner of two roads are also excluded from the PPG17 typologies.
- However, where verges are of a significant size and local amenity value they have occasionally been audited, e.g. where they effectively form a linear village green or are provided as amenity features on housing estates. Structured landscaping frameworks provided as part of a development have also been included in the audit since local residents use these as an open space resource.
- All allotments, cemeteries and churchyards and hard-surfaced civic spaces have been excluded from the quality audit. The Council has already identified land for further cemetery provision, whilst allotments will be the subject of a future, specific study. Churchyards are obviously only sited around churches and most are not under the control of local authorities, and the Council has been undertaking improvements to civic spaces in Braintree town centre.

2.5 All of the PPG17 typologies were included in the quantitative analysis of open space in preparation for the supplementary planning document on open space contributions, which is due to be published towards the end of 2007. To ensure that the study could be undertaken within a relatively short timescale, the audit excluded natural and semi-natural greenspaces in rural areas, amenity green spaces under 0.2 hectares in area, and all allotments and cemeteries. The Council is responsible for three closed churchyards. The definitions of each typology used by the Council in the audit are given under the individual chapters.

2.6 Using the guidance given in PPG17 Annex, the Audit included:

- All open spaces and sports and recreation facilities that came within its scope irrespective of ownership and whether or not there is public access. The reason for this is that all forms of provision contribute to meeting local needs.
- All primary schools, secondary schools and other educational institutions regardless of whether or not they are open to the public.
- Open spaces of particular historical or cultural interest or value, including scheduled monuments or listed buildings within them.
- Open spaces or sport and recreation facilities outside Braintree District but used regularly by Braintree District residents. These are primarily in Haverhill, Bures and Sudbury in Suffolk.
- A standard audit form was used to obtain a consistent level of detail on existing provision. The need to progress the audit in early 2006 meant that it was not possible to ensure that the information was directly compatible with adjoining authorities.
- The Green Spaces Strategy will incorporate a system for regular monitoring of open spaces, for example as part of the process of monitoring grounds maintenance contracts, in order to update the information database and avoid the need to repeat the audit at frequent intervals.

2.7 Many spaces are multifunctional, so it has been necessary to classify them by their primary purposes, as recommended in PPG17, to avoid double counting in the audit. This particularly affects outdoor sports provision and provision for children and young people, where these are often provided as part of a larger open space, usually an informal park or a large amenity space. In these instances they will have been audited as part of the park or amenity greenspace.

Analysis Areas

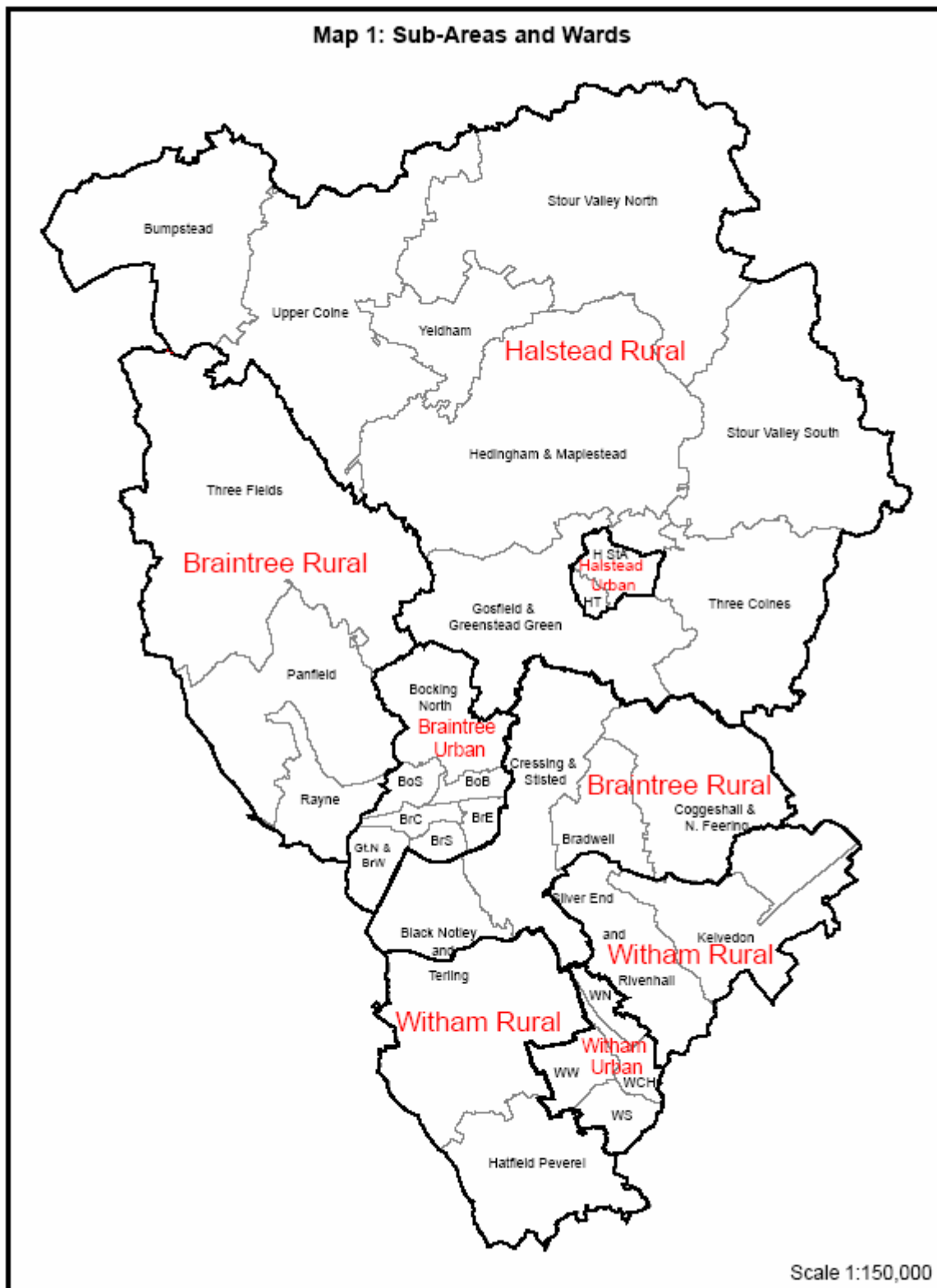
2.8 There are 62 parishes, 19 rural wards and 14 urban wards in Braintree District. The initial, detailed assessment was carried out at ward level within the urban areas and at parish level in the rural areas, but information was also prepared for each ward in the rural areas. For the purposes of this report, the overall assessment is based on the six geographic areas described below:

- Braintree Urban
- Braintree Rural
- Halstead Urban
- Halstead Rural
- Witham Urban
- Witham Rural

Table 2: Analysis areas by ward, parish and 2001 Census population

| Sub-Area | Ward | Population | Parish/Town | Population |
|-----------------|---|---|--|------------|
| Braintree Urban | Bocking Blackwater | 7,962 | - | |
| | Bocking North | 4,215 | - | |
| | Bocking South | 4,978 | - | |
| | Braintree Central | 6,502 | - | |
| | Braintree East | 6,118 | - | |
| | Braintree South | 6,535 | - | |
| | Great Notley and Braintree West | 5,420 | Great Notley | 4,815 |
| | | 41,730 | | |
| Braintree Rural | Black Notley and Terling (part) | 1,717 | Black Notley | 1,646 |
| | | | Unparished area | 71 |
| | Bradwell, Silver End and Rivenhall (part) | 512 | Bradwell | 512 |
| | Coggeshall and North Feering (part) | 4,327 | Coggeshall | 4,327 |
| | Cressing and Stisted | 2,155 | Cressing | 1,538 |
| | | | Stisted | 617 |
| | Panfield | 2,036 | Bardfield Saling | 179 |
| | | | Great Saling | 261 |
| | | | Panfield | 850 |
| | | | Shalford | 746 |
| | Rayne | 2,162 | Rayne | 2,162 |
| | Three Fields | 3,818 | Finchingfield | 1,348 |
| | | | Great Bardfield | 1,238 |
| | | | Wethersfield | 1,232 |
| | | 16,727 | | |
| Halstead Urban | Halstead St Andrews | 6,280 | Halstead (Town) | 11,053 |
| | Halstead Trinity | 4,773 | | |
| | | 11,053 | | |
| Halstead Rural | Bumpstead | 2,418 | Helions Bumpstead | 473 |
| | | | Steeple Bumpstead | 1,481 |
| | | | Sturmer | 464 |
| | Gosfield and Greenstead Green | 2,460 | Gosfield | 1,364 |
| | | | Greenstead Green and Halstead Rural | 668 |
| | | | Unparished area | 428 |
| | Hedingham and Maplestead | 6,207 | Castle Hedingham | 1,142 |
| | | | Gestingthorpe | 421 |
| | | | Great Maplestead | 355 |
| | | | Little Maplestead | 294 |
| | | | Sible Hedingham | 3,665 |
| | | | Wickham St Paul | 330 |
| | | | Stour Valley North | 2,131 |
| | Belchamp Walter | 198 | | |
| | Borley | 99 | | |
| | Bulmer | 568 | | |
| | Foxearth & Liston | 349 | | |
| | Lt Yeldham, Ovington & Tilbury-juxta-Clare (part) | 194 | | |
| | Pentlow | 228 | | |
| | Stour Valley South | 2,065 | Alphamstone and Lamarsh | 354 |
| | | | Bures Hamlet | 765 |
| | | | Great Henny, Lt Henny, Middleton & Twinstead | 467 |
| | | | Pebmarsh | 479 |
| | Three Colnes | 4,848 | Colne Engaine | 979 |
| | | | Earls Colne | 3,389 |
| | | | White Colne | 480 |
| | Upper Colne | 2,121 | Ashen | 315 |
| Birdbrook | | | 369 | |
| Ridgewell | | | 503 | |
| Stambourne | | | 401 | |
| Toppesfield | | | 533 | |
| Yeldham | 2,041 | Great Yeldham | 1,715 | |
| | | Lt Yeldham, Ovington & Tilbury-juxta-Clare (part) | 326 | |
| | | 24,291 | | |
| Witham Urban | Witham Chipping Hill & Central | 4,412 | | |
| | Witham North | 5,018 | | |
| | Witham South | 6,154 | | |
| | Witham West | 6,886 | | |
| | | 22,470 | | |
| Witham Rural | Black Notley and Terling (part) | 1,581 | Terling & Fairstead | 980 |
| | | | White Notley & Faulkbourne | 601 |
| | Bradwell, Silver End and Rivenhall (part) | 4,473 | Rivenhall | 732 |
| | | | Silver End | 3,741 |
| | Coggeshall and North Feering (part) | 451 | Feering (north of railway) | 451 |
| | Hatfield Peverel | 4,384 | Hatfield Peverel | 4,384 |
| | Kelvedon | 5,019 | Feering (south of railway) | 1,534 |
| | | | Kelvedon | 3,485 |
| | | 15,908 | | |

Map 1 – Analysis Areas



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- 2.9 PPG17 recommends that the analysis areas relate to well-defined neighbourhoods rather than arbitrary ward boundaries, and that the boundaries are well defined by features such as rivers, railways or main roads. Whilst some of the wards do reflect well-defined neighbourhoods, others may divide neighbourhoods. Where there are significant anomalies, allowance has been made in the analysis, e.g. in assessing whether the needs of communities are being met. Full details of the analysis areas are given in table 2 and figure 1.
- 2.10 For the purposes of this study the District has been divided into six analysis areas based on the Planning Committee structure. The Braintree, Halstead and Witham components have each been divided into their urban and rural parts, based primarily on Ward boundaries. However, there are anomalies in the Braintree area, with the three Wards of Black Notley and Terling, Cressing and Stisted, and Coggeshall and North Feering being split between the Braintree and Witham areas. A breakdown of how the parishes and wards are amalgamated is given in Table 2 and illustrated in Figure 1.
- 2.11 The alternative would have been to identify neighbourhoods within the town areas, which may not have equated to the ward boundaries or super output areas, together with the 54 parish and town council areas. This would not have given sufficient focus for presenting the audit and survey information

The Audit Process

- 2.12 Initial desk research was carried out using a number of sources, including a parish audit of 2004, local plan information, Council land terriers, GIS mapping, aerial photography and other relevant local documentation, to build up a comprehensive list of open spaces. The parish councils were asked to verify information held on each parish and to correct any errors or omissions. A comprehensive list of open spaces and sports and recreation facilities were then mapped on GIS and used as the basis for undertaking the 2006 audit.
- 2.13 The audit was carried out by planning officers and the precise boundaries of the spaces and their typologies were verified on site. Where additional open spaces were 'discovered' during site visits, these were also audited and added to the original mapping. The majority of the site audits were undertaken during the summer of 2006, using a questionnaire to assess:
- the overall quality of the site
 - the degree to which the site is a "welcoming place"
 - the degree to which the site is a healthy, safe and secure place
 - cleanliness and maintenance of open and planted areas, and of furniture and buildings
 - the number and quality of sports facilities and play equipment
 - recognition of the site's natural, historic and cultural heritage
 - the degree of interpretation and community involvement

- 2.14 Demographic information was obtained from the 2001 Census of Population, with future estimates being obtained for wards and parishes. These will be used to inform the strategy development process.

Analysing the Audit

Identifying Effective Catchment Areas

- 2.15 The audit will be used to define effective catchment areas for different forms of provision, and different modes of transport, to identify those areas not currently served by existing open spaces or sport and recreation facilities. The household and user surveys will provide the basic information, and they show that catchments vary widely from person to person. To overcome this problem the definitions were based on the concept of the 'effective catchment', defined as the distance travelled by around 75-80% of users, of each form of provision in the adopted typology.
- 2.16 These will be compared with effective drive time catchments obtained from national surveys, by Sport England, for example. The majority of people questioned walked to their favourite open space, and most of the remainder travelled by car, with only a minority using buses or bicycles. Details of catchment times and modes of travel are given under each of the typology headings – this information will be used to identify catchment areas on a map base. All thresholds will be examined during the strategy development for evidence of patterns relating to facilities of different scales or qualities to see whether hierarchies of provision exist.

Analysing the Quality and Value of Provision

- 2.17 Quality and value are fundamentally different and can be completely unrelated. For example, a high quality facility or open space may be located where it is inaccessible and therefore of little value; while if a run-down or derelict facility is the only one in an area it may be immensely valuable. Audit site surveys, backed by the household and users surveys, were used to assess the quality of provision. This will be followed by a desk study as part of the strategy development to assess the value of a site having regard to its location, function and accessibility. The results will be combined into a composite quality and value matrix to inform future open space planning policy.

Analysing the Quantity of Provision

- 2.18 From the effective catchments estimates will be made of the approximate number of people served by each facility or open space in the area. Existing provision will be listed by reference to type, amount of useful area in each facility (*as defined in Companion Guide paragraph 5.7*) and the population within its effective catchment. Where catchments

overlap, the population will be proportionally split between the overlapping catchments. The quantity of provision per person is calculated within the effective catchments from which the quantity of existing provision per person is derived.

Analysing Levels and Types of Use

- 2.19 Although there is no information available on the level of use of open spaces, the household and user surveys provided information on the type of use made of each form of provision. Where pitches were recorded this gave information on the level of sports provision, backed by the results of the sports clubs survey. The PPG17 Companion Guide accepts that informed guesses are preferred to simply ignoring the facilities in question. This analysis is presented under each typology heading.

3 PARKS AND GARDENS

Definition

- 3.1 This type of open space includes urban parks, formal gardens and country parks that provide opportunities for various informal recreation and community events.
- 3.2 Typically they are areas of land normally enclosed, designed, constructed, managed and maintained as public parks or gardens, intended to provide accessible, high quality opportunities for informal recreation and community events. In the context of this audit they do not therefore include informal open space, or parkland not normally accessible for public enjoyment. Also included in this typology are informal open spaces within an urban setting that do not fall into other categories such as green corridors or natural and semi-natural grasslands and recreation grounds in rural areas which are not used primarily for sport.
- 3.3 Country parks are larger open spaces usually provided by local authorities to enable residents and visitors to enjoy a natural, countryside atmosphere with the benefit of amenities and organised activities not normally available in the open countryside. Typically, country parks will provide car parking, paths and trails, interpretation and educational or participative events designed to increase awareness and enjoyment of the countryside.

Strategic Context

- 3.4 Sport England, the Countryside Agency and English Heritage commissioned a national survey, undertaken in 2005, of the provision of parks in England. The main aims were to establish:
- how many adults in England use parks
 - what activities people take part in when visiting parks
 - the reasons why people visit particular parks
 - the levels of satisfaction with the amenities on offer
 - why non-users do not use parks
- 3.5 Their definition of parks was wider than the Braintree definition, including both formal parks, such as urban parks, country parks and recreation grounds, and informal parks such as village greens and common land. The most significant findings were:
- Just under two-thirds of adults in England had visited a public park during the previous 12 months.

- There is a bias in the use of parks by social groups, with almost three quarters of adults from the higher social group visiting a park compared with only half of those from a lower social group.
- People from black and ethnic minority communities have a relatively low participation rate, as well as those with disabilities
- Over 8 in 10 adults who used a park in the previous 12 months did so at least once a month during the spring/summer with almost two-thirds visiting a park at least one a week. Women tend to visit parks more often than men.
- It is estimated that the 24.3 million adults who use parks make approximately 1.2 billion visits to parks during the spring and summer months and 600 million visits during the autumn and winter months – a total of 1.8 billion visits each year.
- The most popular type of park visited was an urban or city park.

Background

- 3.6 The existing size and distribution of parks and gardens were determined over a long period. During that time there have been changes to the nature and pattern of settlements as well as to people's recreational activities. People's needs have changed along with their patterns of work and leisure time, and their expectations in terms of the nature of the provision. Some parks may no longer be in the most appropriate locations relative to where people live and conversely in some areas of housing development new provision may not have kept up with population growth.

Key Findings in Relation to Parks - Consultation

General

- 3.7 Parks and gardens generally serve local neighbourhoods and are mainly accessed by foot, so the community expects parks to be sufficient in number to be accessed by a short walk. Surveys showed that 87% of people most frequently use the open space nearest to them.
- 3.8 In Braintree District only one in seventeen (6%) of local people say that they do not make use of their local park, and over two-thirds (69%) visit parks and gardens at least once a month. In comparison with these findings a national survey found that just under two-thirds of adults used their parks during the course of a year and in Thurrock 57% visit parks and gardens at least once a month. It appears that Braintree's residents make much greater use of their parks.
- 3.9 Parks and gardens rank second behind natural and semi-natural greenspaces for the open space type used most frequently by residents (nearly a quarter of households).

- 3.10 The main reasons given for not using parks and open spaces were lack of time, poor quality or condition, too long a distance from home and no suitable facilities. Nearly half of the people using open spaces outside the District were visiting parks, representing around 10% of all people most frequently using parks and gardens. 50% of respondents living in Stour Valley South ward used parks in Suffolk; most of these were residents of Bures Hamlet using the recreation ground in Bures.

Quantity of Provision

- 3.11 The audit examined 38 Parks and Gardens, of which 7 were formal parks and gardens and 31 were informal parks, including the 2 country parks at Great Notley and Coupals Road (Sturmer). These also include both public and private sites that are accessible to the public. The audit covered 105 hectares (ha.) of the total amount of 139 hectares of parks and gardens in the District.

- 3.12 Great Notley Country Park is the largest park in municipal ownership, with 40.3 ha. of playing fields, informal recreational space and a natural concert bowl centred on the Discovery Centre. This Country Park is still being developed and will provide a major resource serving the whole of the District as well as parts of Uttlesford and Chelmsford districts. Essex County Council is committed to spending £1.8 million on the Park. The second largest country park straddles the District boundary at Sturmer (4.2 ha.). There are a number of large informal parks in the District, the largest being between Skitts Hill and Rifle Hill, Braintree (6.3 ha.) and Coldnailhurst Avenue, Bocking (6.8 ha.). The River Brain Walk provides 3.4 ha. of informal parkland in the heart of Braintree. There are parks over 2 ha in area at Sible Hedingham, Witham and Finchingfield. Other settlements have playing fields that are usually marked out with pitches and are listed under "Sports Grounds", and the local community also uses these for informal recreation.

- 3.13 The most important formal parks and gardens in the District are Braintree and Bocking Public Gardens (2.2 ha.), Halstead Public Gardens (1.3 ha) and Silver End Memorial Gardens (0.9 ha.).

- 3.14 A number of other private parks and gardens were excluded from the audit. These included the following:

| | |
|--------------------------------|----------|
| Hedingham Castle Park | 24.3 ha. |
| Saling Hall Park, Great Saling | 4.7 ha. |
| Courtyard House, Great Saling | 16.9 ha. |
| Shalford Park | 8.9 ha. |

Hedingham Castle Park, along with the castle, is open to the public on a regular basis and has consequently been taken into consideration in assessing provision standards for parks and gardens.

Provision Standards

- 3.15 According to the audit and desk research of non-audited sites there are nearly 139 hectares of parks and gardens in the District, equating to 1.04 hectares per 1,000 people. Over half of local people (59%) believe that the number of parks and gardens is about right, but over a third (35%) consider that there is insufficient quantity. Table 3 gives a breakdown for the six study sub-areas:

Table 3: Parks and Gardens by Area and Geography

| Sub-Area | Area of Parks and Gardens (Hectares) | Population | Hectares per thousand population |
|-----------------|---|-------------------|---|
| Braintree Urban | 77.3 | 41,730 | 1.85 |
| Halstead Urban | 10.9 | 11,050 | 0.99 |
| Witham Urban | 4.9 | 22,470 | 0.22 |
| Braintree Rural | 3.8 | 16,730 | 0.23 |
| Halstead Rural | 40.7 | 24,290 | 1.68 |
| Witham Rural | 1.2 | 17,430 | 0.07 |
| Total | 138.8 | 133,700 | 1.04 |

- 3.16 It was likely that the answers given in the household survey took into consideration open spaces beyond the respondents' own neighbourhoods. Two thirds of people in Halstead (69%) and all rural areas (66%) were satisfied with the provision of parks and gardens compared with only half in Braintree (52%) and Witham (53%) urban areas. Yet the table above shows a wide variation in the amount of provision between the three rural sub-areas. There was least satisfaction with the quantity of parks and gardens in Terling and White Notley (58%), Yeldham (57%), Bocking Blackwater (51%), Braintree South (47%) and Witham North (50%). Most of these areas are poorly served by current provision, but Bocking Blackwater does have a sizeable playing field that is used as informal recreation space.

Multi-functionality

- 3.17 Sports pitches, ball courts and children' playgrounds are found in 15 parks and gardens (i.e. 43% of this type of space). 13 parks and gardens have children's playgrounds, 5 have grass pitches and 3 have ball courts. These sports pitches and courts are considered in detail as part of the analysis of Outdoor Sports and Recreation Facilities in Section 2.4 of this Report, and the playgrounds considered in the analysis of Provision for Children and Young People in Section 2.6.

Table 4: List of Parks and Gardens

| Area | Site | Ward | Size (ha.) |
|-----------------|--|-------------------------------------|------------|
| Braintree urban | Playing Field, Blakes Drive | Bocking Blackwater | 2.39 |
| Braintree urban | Weavers park, Bocking End | Bocking Blackwater | 3.37 |
| Braintree urban | Bridport Way, Kings Park Village | Bocking Blackwater | 0.40 |
| Braintree urban | Informal Park, Glebe Avenue/ Churchill Road | Bocking North | 1.46 |
| Braintree urban | Braintree & Bocking Public Gardens, Bocking End | Bocking South | 2.18 |
| Braintree urban | Meadowside, off Coldnailhurst Ave | Bocking South | 4.06 |
| Braintree urban | Bradford Meadows, Coldnailhurst Avenue/ Rosemary Avenue | Bocking South | 6.84 |
| Braintree urban | Marshalls Park | Braintree Central | 2.20 |
| Braintree urban | Informal Park, The Avenue | Braintree Central | 0.22 |
| Braintree urban | River Brain Walk, Tortoiseshell Way | Braintree Central | 3.37 |
| Braintree urban | Lower King, Beckers Green Way | Braintree East | 0.35 |
| Braintree urban | Land between Skitts Hill & Rifle Hill | Braintree South | 6.26 |
| Braintree urban | Land in front of Notley High School, Notley Road | Braintree South | 1.60 |
| Braintree urban | John Ray Linear Park, between Skitts Hill and Mill Hill | Braintree South | 0.60 |
| Braintree urban | Hoppit Mead | Braintree South | 1.87 |
| Braintree urban | Great Notley Country Park | Great Notley & Braintree West | 40.03 |
| Braintree rural | Black Notley Recreation Ground | Black Notley & Terling | 1.03 |
| Braintree rural | Community land at Hadfield Drive | Black Notley & Terling | 1.77 |
| Braintree rural | John Ray Millennium Green | Black Notley & Terling | 0.96 |
| Braintree rural | Brian Tebbutts Garden, West Street, Coggeshall | Coggeshall & North Feering | 0.07 |
| Braintree rural | Horsefield, off Stephen Marshall Avenue, Finchingfield | Three Fields | 2.29 |
| Halstead urban | Spansey Court kickabout park | Halstead St Andrews | 0.81 |
| Halstead urban | Halstead Public Gardens | Halstead Trinity | 1.33 |
| Halstead rural | Humphreys Meadow, Steeple Bumpstead | Bumpstead | 0.81 |
| Halstead rural | East Town Country Park, Coupals Road, Sturmer/Haverhill | Part in Bumpstead | 4.19 |
| Halstead rural | Rectory Road Playing Field, Sible Hedingham | Hedingham & Maplestead | 2.50 |
| Halstead rural | Land in front of Church, Foxearth | Stour Valley North | 0.32 |
| Halstead rural | Coe's Meadow, Bulmer | Stour Valley North | 1.39 |
| Halstead rural | Pebmarsh Playing Field | Stour Valley South | 1.61 |
| Halstead rural | Atlas Works, Massingham Drive, Earls Colne | Three Colnes | 0.09 |
| Halstead rural | Land adjacent Village Hall, White Colne | Three Colnes | 0.50 |
| Halstead rural | Millennium Green, Earls Colne | Three Colnes | 1.97 |
| Witham urban | Memorial Garden, Newland Street, Witham | Witham Chipping Hill & Central | 0.11 |
| Witham urban | Witham Park, Maldon Road | Witham Chipping Hill & Central | 1.36 |
| Witham urban | The Carraways, east of Constance Close | Witham South | 0.52 |
| Witham urban | Informal Park, Bramble Road | Witham West | 2.24 |
| Witham rural | Silver End Memorial Gardens | Bradwell, Silver End & Rivenhall | 0.91 |

Quality

- 3.18 Parks and gardens in the District generally scored well for quality. In terms of overall quality of the parks and gardens in terms of landscape and furniture, including equipment and buildings, the following spaces averaged a score of 3.5 or over:

Black Notley Recreation Ground
Silver End Memorial Gardens
Halstead Public Gardens
Atlas Works, Massingham Drive, Earls Colne
John Ray Millennium Green, Black Notley
Brian Tebbutts Garden, Coggeshall
Coe's Meadow, Bulmer
Pebmarsh Playing Field

The only park to fall into the "poor" category was Spansey Court Kickabout Park at Halstead.

- 3.19 These findings were backed by the household and user surveys. Over 87% of households were satisfied with the overall design and layout of parks and gardens, the condition of fences, railings and hedges, and planted and grass areas, with 20%-25% being very satisfied. Around three-quarters of households were satisfied or with information and signage, parking and the maintenance and management of parks and gardens.
- 3.20 The main criticisms of these spaces related to toilet provision, where two-thirds of households were dissatisfied, with over 30% being very dissatisfied, and lighting, where nearly half were dissatisfied. Over a third of households were dissatisfied with the adequacy of litter bin provision and general cleanliness, the range of play equipment where provided and the amount and condition of seating.
- 3.21 Users who were surveyed in the parks were generally more critical of them, and scores rarely matched those from either the audit or household surveys. Nevertheless the following parks and gardens averaged over 2.8 (where 3 represented "satisfied"):

Silver End Memorial Gardens
Braintree and Bocking Public Gardens
Rectory Road Playing Field, Sible Hedingham
Great Notley Country Park
Halstead Public Gardens
Weavers Park, Bocking Blackwater

Welcoming Parks and Gardens

- 3.22 On the theme of a "welcoming park", the overall standard was high for entrances. 83% of parks and gardens were easy to find, 91% has main entrances classified as "good", including 23% that were "very good". 88% had good and safe access and where there are cycle routes within the parks they were all at least "good". Only 23% of parks and gardens

had adequate signage to them and only half of them had information boards. Where information was made available, 93% listed the byelaws, 67% gave the name of the park or garden and 65% gave emergency contact details. Only a minority had a plan of the space or details of its facilities. The most welcoming parks and gardens were:

Halstead Public Gardens
Silver End Memorial Gardens
Black Notley Recreation Ground
Atlas Works, Massingham Drive, Earls Colne
East Town Country Park, Sturmer/Haverhill
Weavers Park, Bocking Blackwater
Memorial Garden, Newland Street, Witham

- 3.23 The household survey supported these findings with over 90% being satisfied with the visibility of the entrance and 98% with pedestrian accessibility. 80% of households were satisfied with accessibility by bicycle and 83% satisfied with wheelchair or pushchair access. The lowest score was for public transport, with a quarter of households dissatisfied with accessibility. 92% of households were satisfied with opening times, and 82% considered that signage to the space was satisfactory. User satisfaction was slightly lower, although a higher number of users (91%) considered wheelchair/pushchair accessibility to be satisfactory. A higher number of users (32%) considered access by public transport to be unsatisfactory.

Accessibility

- 3.24 The audit included an assessment on access and parking. 85% of parks and gardens had bus stops within 5 minutes walk of an entrance, whilst only 21% were recorded as having safe road crossings. Although 41% of parks and gardens had car parking, whether on street or off-street, within 5 minutes walk, only 3 of the 38 parks and gardens had the benefit of cycle parking and just 8 had reserved disabled bays within this distance.
- 3.25 Information on accessibility is mostly derived from the household and user surveys. 84% of the 200 households that stated that they are frequent users of parks and gardens walk to them, and 20% travel by car. 5% stated that they cycled to parks and gardens whilst just 1% used buses. 65% of households took under 10 minutes to reach a park or garden, but only 7% travelled for over 20 minutes. These figures are broadly similar for all pedestrians, whilst 60% of car drivers took under 10 minutes and 15% more than 20 minutes.
- 3.26 PPG17 recommends that the 75% percentile of responses be used to indicate the time and distance that the majority of people will be willing to travel to any particular space. This is therefore used to help inform accessibility standards. The distance thresholds do not give an accurate indication of the catchment of any particular space, which will reflect barriers or severance factors such as major roads or railways, but they do provide a measure of “effective catchment”.

- 3.27 The results for both pedestrians and drivers were markedly similar, probably because the time taken to reach a park or garden was more important to people than the mode of travel. For pedestrians the 75% percentile suggests a maximum walking time of 12.5 minutes and for drivers a maximum drive time of 15 minutes.
- 15 minutes drive time suggests an indicative minimum distance of 6 kilometres.**

4 NATURAL AND SEMI-NATURAL GREENSPACES

Definition

- 4.1 Natural and semi-natural greenspaces are mostly areas of undeveloped land with limited or no maintenance, which have been colonised by vegetation and wildlife. This type of open space includes woodland, river floodplains and wetlands, disused or dismantled railways, scrub, grasslands and disused mineral workings. The primary function of natural greenspaces is one of providing biodiversity and nature conservation, but they can have an important role in environmental education and awareness. Natural and semi-natural greenspaces include sites of special scientific interest, local nature reserves and county wildlife sites.

Key Findings in Relation to Natural and Semi-natural Greenspaces

General

- 4.2 Natural and semi-natural greenspaces have an important function in maintaining biodiversity, and need to be protected for environmental reasons as well as for the open space function which they frequently have. This is recognised in the Draft East of England Plan in which biodiversity will be protected and enriched through the conservation, restoration and re-establishment of key resources by, amongst other things, “establishing networks of semi-natural green spaces in built-up areas”.
- 4.3 Their importance to people is evidenced by the fact that they are the most frequently visited type of open space in the Braintree District, by 35% of urban residents and 53% of rural residents. 22% of people visit this type of space on a daily basis. They provide a variety of environments, including river valleys, meadows and woodland. Only 5% of residents stated that they do not use these spaces.

Quantity of provision

- 4.4 The audit examined 33 natural and semi natural green spaces in the District of which 19 are located within Braintree, Witham or Halstead and the remainder in other smaller settlements. This audit included sites that were publicly accessible. The River Blackwater sites in Bocking Blackwater ward are the largest sites surveyed, totalling 19.3 ha. Most of the sites are in the ownership of parish councils or Braintree District Council and left unlocked. Just over 215 hectares of space were examined which equates to 1.6 ha per 1000 population.
- 4.5 In total there were 630 respondents to the customer satisfaction survey on current provision of sites, of this total 52% of people stated that provision was about right, with 40% thinking there was not enough

provision. Only 0.48% of respondents (3) thought that there was too much provision of natural and semi -natural greenspace.

Table 5: Audited Natural and Semi-natural Greenspaces by Area and Geography

| Sub Area | Area of Natural Semi Natural Open Spaces | Population | Hectares per thousand population |
|-----------------|--|------------|----------------------------------|
| Braintree Urban | 33.7 | 41,730 | 0.8 |
| Halstead Urban | 1.4 | 11,050 | 0.1 |
| Witham Urban | 4.4 | 22,470 | 0.2 |
| Braintree Rural | 95.8 | 16,730 | 5.7 |
| Halstead Rural | 76.4 | 24,290 | 3.1 |
| Witham Rural | 5.8 | 17,430 | 0.3 |
| Total | 217.5 | 133,700 | 1.6 |

4.6 In addition to the provision already listed a further 1,927 hectares of County Wildlife Sites is present in the district. These sites are all in the open countryside and fall outside the scope of this Assessment; consequently they were not included in the survey work. These sites comprise the following:

- 1,531 hectares of woodland ranging in size from Bovingdon Hall Woods in Bocking, which covers nearly 70 hectares, to 0.5 hectares at Aldercar Wood Valley, Gosfield; the average site size is 8 hectares.
- 197 hectares of grassland sites averaging 4 hectares in size. The largest site is the 45-hectare Moynes Park Estate in Steeple Bumpstead and the smallest site is Ovington Meadow, Ovington, which covers just 0.8 hectares.
- 23 mosaic sites that comprise a number of different types of landscape features, totalling 181 hectares.
- Lastly there are 3 fresh water sites at Gosfield Lake, Wethersfield Manor and Mill Race Lakes totalling 17 hectares.

Quality

4.7 The majority of sites score average or better in terms of landscape quality. Sites in, or close, to urban areas scored poorly in terms of relief from the built up area, but scored well overall. Sites scoring an average of 3 or higher in the survey are:

- River Blackwater
- River Blackwater South
- Natural Greenspace, Chelmer Road Braintree
- Natural Greenspace, Marlowe Close Braintree
- Natural Greenspace White Courts Great Notley
- Broaks Wood, Hedingham Road, Gosfield

- Marks Hall Gardens & Arboretum, Coggeshall.

Sites that are rated as significantly below average are:

- Bulford Lane, Witham Road, Black Notley
- Vicarage Field, West Street, Coggeshall
- Land east of Summerfields, Sible Hedingham

The first two sites scored poorly in terms of relief from the built environment and visibility, although they did score well on space boundaries. The site at Sible Hedingham is proposed as a public open space and cyclepath in the Braintree Local Plan Review.

- 4.8 All sites with open planted areas scored well in terms of cleanliness and maintenance.
- 4.9 All sites allow dogs to be walked, but despite this dog fouling does not appear to be a universal problem. It is likely that on larger, more natural, sites this problem may not be as obvious. The provision of dog bins is also considered to be below average however this does not appear to reflect the level of dog fouling which was considered a minor problem.
- 4.10 The informal and natural nature of these sites also reflects the lack of safety equipment and supervision in all but two of the sites. There are few built facilities but where they are present they tend to be of a good quality. Also levels of antisocial behaviour are considered to not be a problem or very low. None of the sites have play equipment.

Accessibility

- 4.11 Limited car parking in the majority of cases with only 3% of sites having reserved disabled spaces. Also there are no cycle parking facilities however this is probably unnecessary due to the nature and usage of the site. Entrances to the sites tend to be reasonable and the majority are cycle friendly. Signage is also limited with only 7% of sites considered to have enough signs. Of the existing signs 69% would not meet Disability Discrimination Act requirements.
- 4.12 The most common form of travel to these sites is by foot with 70 respondents also the majority of respondents take less than 5 minutes to reach the space. The next most popular mode of transport was the car followed by cycling.

Value

- 4.13 This type of open space has been rated as very important for recreational purposes but the perception is that further space should be provided. Average use is once every one to four weeks and has the highest percentage of users with 28% of respondents stating that they use natural green spaces most frequently. In terms of conservation,

heritage and community involvement value, this type of site is managed primarily as a natural habitat, this is not always apparent as the communication of the nature conservation objectives is limited.

4.14 Sites that scored highest for natural habitat management were:

- Sandpits Nature Reserve, Gosfield,
- Whetmead, Perry Road, Witham Central,
- River Blackwater, Bradford Street, Bocking South,
- Coggeshall Pieces, Halstead
- Greene Drive, Braintree
- Broaks Wood, Gosfield
- Stoneley Park, Shalford
- Sturmer Common, Sturmer
- River Walk, Terling.

Of these sites only Coggeshall Pieces scored top for communication of nature conservation objectives. Sandpits Nature Reserve, Brockwell Meadows and Broaks Wood all scored above average.

4.15 None of these sites are involved with any sort of built heritage conservation or host cultural activities, and only one, Brockwell Meadows, had any form of sports facilities.

4.16 The main reasons given for visiting natural and semi-natural greenspaces are fresh air, going for a walk and taking exercise. The least popular use was that of a meeting place. The main reasons given by people for not using this type of space were a lack of time, followed by distance from the home. A significant number of people stated that they would not use these spaces outside of daylight hours, whilst the presence of other people would encourage greater use.

5 GREEN CORRIDORS

Definition

- 5.1 This open space type includes paths along river valleys, cycleways, unmetalled rights of way such as byways and bridleways, and disused railway lines where the primary purpose is to provide opportunities for walking, cycling and horse riding, whether for leisure purposes or travel, and opportunities for wildlife migration.
- 5.2 These linear landscape features can create a network of links or “corridors” providing links for people and wildlife. They will frequently connect urban areas to the surrounding countryside, but may also have an important role in linking other types of open space to each other.

Key Findings in Relation to Green Corridors - Consultation

General

- 5.3 Green corridors have an important ecological role in allowing the passage of wildlife and connecting communities otherwise isolated by a hostile environment. They generally provide opportunity-led spaces rather than demand-led spaces, and for this reason provision standards are not considered to be appropriate for them.
- 5.4 Green corridors also allow the movement of people in more environmentally sustainable forms such as walking and cycling, and PPG17 recommended that planning policies should promote the use of green corridors to link housing areas to the Sustrans national cycle network, towns and city centres, places of employment and community facilities. In this sense they may be considered as demand-led and can be created in urban environments as part of new development areas. Local planning authorities are asked to take opportunities to establish linear routes, such as dismantled railway lines, roads or canal and river banks, as green corridors and supplement them by proposals to ‘plug-in’ access to them from as wide an area as possible. The Draft east of England Plan states that local development documents should define a multiple hierarchy of green infrastructure, and green corridors would form the links between connected networks of green spaces.
- 5.5 Green corridors are the third most frequently visited type of space in Braintree District, with 23% of residents stating that they use them the more frequently than other types of space. In urban areas the figure is nearly 26%.
- 5.6 Braintree South, Stour Valley North, Witham Central and Yeldham had the most frequent users of *green corridors*. The surveys identified that in the last 12 months visits to green corridors by the local residents within the Braintree District have predominantly been monthly.

- 5.7 The most popular types of green corridor with Braintree residents are river walks (13% of respondents), footpaths, bridlepaths and green lanes in the countryside (8%) and disused railway corridors (7%).
- 5.8 The main reasons given for using green corridors were to walk, get fresh air and to observe wildlife. The main reasons given for *not* using green corridors were lack of time, poor quality and condition and too far from home.

Quantity

- 5.9 The audit of *green corridors* included the Flitch Way, John Ray Walk, and River Walks, Dismantled Railways and sections of the Colne Valley Path in the Braintree District. The audit examined 32 *green corridors* covering an area of 96.7 ha in the District. The largest spaces in the District are found along the major river valleys and dismantled railway lines: -

| | |
|--------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Colne Valley at Halstead | 31.6 hectares in 2 sections |
| Blackwater River at Witham | 28.0 hectares in 5 sections |
| Flitch Way, Rayne to Braintree | 11.1 hectares |
| Blackwater Rail Trail, Witham | 5.6 hectares in 3 sections |

Also of significance are the green corridors that form part of the landscape framework at Great Notley which form the footpath and cycleway network and include nearly 14 hectares of public open space.

- 5.10 Nearly two-thirds of people completing the household survey believed that the provision of *green corridors* in the Braintree District is generally 'about right' whilst a smaller majority of 54% of users took this view. However, a sizeable minority of 27% of householders and 38% of users considered that there was "too little". In the following areas the majority view was that there is 'too little provision': -

Bocking South
 Halstead Trinity
 Bradwell
 White Notley and Terling

Quality

- 5.11 The audit identified that the Green corridors in the District generally scored well for quality and this was supported by the household survey in the following categories: overall design, railings and hedges, planted and grassed areas, maintenance and management, quality of paths.

Green corridors that performed well

- 5.12 The audit identified that the following spaces performed well (with an average score of 3 or above) in terms of the overall quality of the green corridors (landscape quality/design): -

John Ray Walk (Mary Ruck Way/Constable Way), Black Notley
The Valley Walk (The Stour Valley), Foxearth
Flitch way (Braintree to Rayne), Braintree
Blackwater River, Witham
Teal Close, Great Notley
Pathway, London Road to Notley Green, Great Notley
Pathway, Notley Green to Queensborough Lane, Great Notley
Pathway, North and South of Ridings Avenue, Great Notley

Green corridors that performed poorly

- 5.13 Various factors were considered during the audit of the green corridors and ranked accordingly i.e. very poor to very good. The audit identified the green corridors that performed poor or very poor (with an average score of 2 or below) for the following factors: -

Landscape Quality & Design

Blackwater Rail Trail, Witham South
Land off Bridport Way, Bocking Blackwater
Land behind Pintail Crescent, Braintree

Welcoming Place – Entrances/Access/Parking/Signage/Social

Dismantled Railway, Off Station Road, Sible Hedingham
Riverwalk, North of Chipping Hill, Witham Central
Blackwater Rail Trail, Witham South
Land behind Pintail Crescent, Braintree

Health, Safe and Secure – Control of Dogs/Safety/Personal Security

Riverwalk (North of Chipping Hill), Witham Central
Nethercourt Riverwalk, Off Nethercourts, Halstead St Andrews
Land off Bridport Way, Bocking Blackwater
Land behind Pintail Crescent, Braintree

Clean and Well Maintained

Land either side of Bridport Way, Bocking Blackwater
Eastern perimeter north of woodland, Bocking Blackwater
Land behind Pintail Crescent, Braintree

Ideal features for Green Corridors

- 5.14 The household survey identified that the top 5 ideal features for green corridors would be: -
1. Clean and litter free
 2. Natural features (wildlife)

3. Clear footpaths
4. Nature conservation area
5. Flowers/trees and shrubs

Summary of Audit

5.15 *Litter*

The audit identified that 41% of the green corridors had an adequate number of litterbins. The household survey and user survey indicated dissatisfaction with litter in green corridor spaces.

Wildlife

The audit identified that the management of wildlife in the green corridor spaces was generally good.

Paths

The audit identified that the cleanliness and surfacing of the paths was generally good. This reflected the responses from the household survey, which indicated the quality of the paths was good.

Flowers/trees and shrubs

The audit identified that quality of the flowers/trees and shrubs was generally good. This reflected the responses in the household and user survey.

Problem factors within green corridors

The household survey identified the following problems within green corridor spaces:

- Vandalism/Graffiti
- Litter
- Antisocial behaviour
- Dog fouling
- Noise
- Smells

Vandalism/Graffiti/Antisocial Behaviour

The audit indicated 'any evidence of graffiti, vandalism or anti social behaviour' was generally good within the green corridor spaces. However, the following sites were identified as performing poorly: -

- Land behind Pintail Crescent, Braintree West
- Land off Bridport Way, Bocking Blackwater

River Colne, off High Street, Halstead St Andrews

Dog Fouling

The audit identified that dog fouling was generally a problem within green corridor spaces. The following sites were identified as performing poorly: -

Flitch way, Braintree
Riverwalk, (North of Chipping Hill), Witham Central
Blackwater Rail Trail, Off Pasture Road, Witham Central
Land between Dengie Close and Town End Field, Witham
Nether court, Halstead
River Colne, off High Street, Halstead St Andrews
Land off Bridport Way, Bocking Blackwater
Land behind Pintail Crescent
The Walk, Great Bardfield

Safety/security for green corridors

The household survey identified that the presence of others, clear route to space and adequate lighting would make people feel safer when using green corridors. The audit identified that 90% of the green corridors had adequate lighting with 20% of the sites providing good self-surveillance. The household survey indicated dissatisfaction (with a score of below 2.5) with lighting within green corridors.

Accessibility

The household survey identified that accessibility to *green corridors* by foot, cycle or public transport was satisfactory. The audit identified that for 90% of green corridors, bus stops were located within a 10-minute walk. The audit further identified that safe cycling within green corridors was ranked as 'good'. Only 38% of green corridors had provision for car parking within 5 minutes walk. However, the household survey indicated satisfaction with the provision of car parking facilities. The household survey indicated that walking was the preferred mode of transport to green corridors, with 77% of people walking 14% of people cycling and 8% travelling by car. The household survey indicated that 46% of people took 5 minutes or less to travel to green corridors. 36% of people travelled 5 –10 minutes, 12% of people travelled 10 – 15 minutes, 3% of people travelled 15 – 20 minutes, 3% of people travelled 20 –30 minutes.

Entrances to Green Corridors

The audit identified that that the entrances to green corridors were generally easy to find however, only 25% of the spaces had enough signs pointing to the space. The household survey indicated a level of satisfaction for the visibility of the site entrance to green corridors.

Access for the disabled

Only 21% of the green corridors provided reserved disabled car parking spaces, with only 38% of the sites audited complying with the Disability Discrimination Act.

Value

- 5.16 The household survey identified the following green corridors were used most frequently: -

Fritch Way, Braintree to Rayne
Riverwalk, Witham
Riverwalk, rear of Fairview Estate, Braintree
John Ray footpaths, Black Notley
Blackwater Rail Trail, Witham

Nature Conservation Objectives

- 5.17 The audit identified that interpretive signage was only found at 11% of the green corridors audited and that the communication of nature conservation objectives was predominantly poor.

6 OUTDOOR SPORT FACILITIES

Definition

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

Key Findings in Relation to Sport and Recreation Facilities

General

- 6.2 Outdoor sports facilities enable people to enjoy a healthy and fit life through fresh air and exercise. Typically active participants are in the younger age groups (under 40 years of age), and because most participants of pitch sports are of school or working age, activities tend to be concentrated on weekends. Nevertheless some sports can be enjoyed by older people, and many clubs have veteran sections within them.
- 6.3 The household survey and user survey included questions on the following types of outdoor sports facilities: athletics tracks, tennis courts, multi use areas, football pitches, rugby pitches, cricket pitches, hockey pitches, bowling greens, skateboard parks, golf courses and water sport facilities. Although 45% of respondents do not participate in outdoor sports, 23% use sports facilities on at least a weekly basis, and 1 in 12 stated that they use them more frequently than other types of open space. The most popular activities are golf (19% of respondents), football (16%) and tennis (9%). Water sports were undertaken by 18%, reflecting the use of the District's three indoor swimming pools.
- 6.4 Whilst club facilities generally have restricted public access, playing fields, including the marked pitches within them, are frequently available for use by the general public for informal or passive recreation when they are not in use for sport. This gives them an added value, and ensures that some use of them is made during weekdays.
- 6.5 The survey indicated that the main reasons for using outdoor sports facilities were fresh air, to take the children out and to take exercise.
- 6.6 56% of respondents stated that they do not use sports facilities. The main reasons given for *not* using outdoor sports facilities were lack of time, poor quality or condition and no suitable facilities.

Quantity of Provision

- 6.7 The audit of outdoor sport facilities included football pitches, cricket grounds, tennis courts, recreation grounds, playing fields, bowling greens and community fields. The audit examined 89 outdoor sport

facilities covering an area of 200 ha in the District. This included both private/council/parish outdoor sports facilities. Bocking North, Coggeshall and Hatfield Peverel had the most outdoor sport facilities that were audited.

Largest/smallest outdoor sports facility

6.8 The largest outdoor sport facility in the Braintree District is the Halstead Cricket Club, Sudbury Road, Halstead at 9.7 ha. The smallest outdoor sport facility in the Braintree District is the multi use games area at the Discovery Centre, Great Notley, Braintree at 0.11 ha.

Areas where there is 'too little' provision of outdoor sports facilities

6.9 Feedback from the surveys indicated that there is an under-provision of outdoor sports facilities in the Braintree District, particularly in the urban areas. The following areas were identified as having 'too little' provision:-

- Bocking South
- Braintree Central
- Braintree South
- Great Notley & Braintree West
- Halstead Trinity
- Witham North
- Witham South
- Witham West
- Black Notley & Terling
- Rayne
- Bumpstead
- Yeldham
- Kelvedon

6.10 The survey asked whether people considered that there was an overprovision or under-provision of any particular sport. The responses were influenced by whether or not the respondent participated in sport, and not surprisingly most people identifying shortfalls in provision were active participants. The surveys indicated that tennis is an under represented sport in the Braintree District.

Provision Standards

Table 6: Outdoor Sports Provision by Area and Geography

| Sub- Area | Area of Outdoor Sports Facilities (Hectares) | Population | Hectares per thousand population |
|-----------------|--|------------|----------------------------------|
| Braintree Urban | 52.7 | 41,730 | 1.3 |
| Halstead Urban | 16.0 | 11,050 | 1.4 |
| Witham Urban | 31.6 | 22,470 | 1.4 |
| Braintree Rural | 30.9 | 16,730 | 1.8 |
| Halstead Rural | 40.6 | 24,290 | 1.7 |
| Witham Rural | 27.8 | 17,430 | 1.6 |
| Total | 199.6 | 133,700 | 1.5 |

Table 7: Outdoor Sports Provision by Type of Playing Surface

| Sub – Area | Tennis Courts | MUGAs | Playing Pitches | Cricket Pitches | Hockey Pitches | Bowling Greens | Rugby Pitches |
|-----------------|---------------|----------|-----------------|-----------------|----------------|----------------|---------------|
| Braintree Urban | 14 | 4 | 19 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 3 |
| Halstead Urban | 1 | 0 | 7 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Witham Urban | 0 | 1 | 9 | 0 | 1 | 3 | 3 |
| Braintree Rural | 3 | 0 | 23 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Halstead Rural | 11 | 1 | 27 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Witham Rural | 6 | 2 | 15 | 3 | 0 | 2 | 0 |
| TOTAL | 35 | 8 | 100 | 11 | 3 | 8 | 6 |

Quality

- 6.11 Outdoor sport facilities in the District generally scored well for quality in the audit and this was supported by the household survey in the following categories: location, car parking, quality of services, changing facilities, value for money.

Outdoors sports facilities that performed poorly.

- 6.12 Various factors were considered during the audit of the outdoor sport facilities and ranked accordingly i.e. very poor to very good. The audit identified the outdoor sport spaces that performed poor or very poor (with an average score of 2 or below) for the following factors: -

Landscape Quality & Design

Football Ground – Fairstead Road, Terling
Gypsy Corner – Panfield Lane, Bocking South

Welcoming Place – Entrances/Access/Parking/Signage/Social

Playing Field – Pebmarsh Road, Colne Engaine
Bramston Sports Ground, off Stevens Road, Witham South

Health, Safe and Secure – Control of Dogs/Safety/Personal Security

Football Ground, Fairstead Road Terling
Bramston Sports Ground, off Stevens Road, Witham South

Clean and Well Maintained

Football Ground, Fairstead Road, Terling
Gypsy Corner – Panfield Lane, Bocking South

Outdoors sports facilities that performed well

- 6.13 The audit identified that the following spaces performed well (with an average score of 3 or above) in terms of the overall quality of the outdoor sport space.

Landscape Quality & Design

Playing field, Church Road, Bradwell
School & Community Field, Coggeshall Road, Feering
Cricket Ground, Kelvedon Road, Coggeshall

Gosfield Hill Park, Playing Field, Gosfield

Ideal features for outdoor sport facilities.

- 6.14 The household survey identified that the top 5 ideal features for outdoors sport facilities would be: -
1. Clean and litter free
 2. Play equipment
 3. Well-kept grass
 4. Seating
 5. Toilets.

Summary of Audit

6.15 *Litter*

The audit identified that only 35% of the outdoor sports facilities had an adequate number of litterbins. This reflected the responses in the household and user surveys, which indicated that litter was a minor problem.

Play equipment

The audit identified that 46% of the outdoor sport facilities provided play equipment. Generally, the range, location and condition of the play equipment were good. This reflected the responses in the household survey. However, the user survey identified dissatisfaction (with a score of 2.5 or below) with the range of play equipment at Great Notley Green, Braintree King George V, Witham Rickstones Playing Field and Witham Recreation Ground.

Well-kept grass

The audit identified that the maintenance of the grassed areas was generally good. This reflected the responses in the household survey and user survey, which indicated that maintenance/management of outdoor sport facilities, was generally good.

Seating

The audit identified that only 32% of the outdoor sports facilities had an adequate number of seats. This reflected the responses in the household and user surveys, which indicated dissatisfaction with the provision of seats.

Toilets

The audit identified that 97% of the outdoor sport facilities had an adequate number of toilets. The household survey indicated dissatisfaction with the quality of the toilets.

Dog Fouling

The audit identified that little nuisance was caused by dog fouling. However, feedback from the household survey indicated a minor problem with dog fouling within outdoor sports facilities.

Safety/security for outdoor sport facilities

The surveys indicated that lighting, CCTV and staff on site would make people feel safer when using outdoor sport facilities. The audit identified that 88% of the outdoor sports facilities had adequate lighting, with 60% of the sites providing good self-surveillance and 40% providing staff surveillance. The household survey indicated dissatisfaction (with a score of below 2.5) with lighting within outdoor sport facilities.

Accessibility

Travel by public transport to outdoor sports facilities ranked as poor in the household surveys. However, the audit identified that for 83% of the outdoor sport facilities, bus stops were located with a 10-minute walk.

The household survey indicated that walking was the preferred mode of transport to outdoor sport facilities, with 54% of people walking. 37% of people choose to travel to outdoor sport facilities by car, whilst only 6% travelled by bike and 3% chose to travel by public transport.

The household survey indicated that 37% of people took 5 minutes or less to travel to outdoor sport facilities, 29% of people travelled 5-10 minutes, 21% of people travelled 10-15 minutes, 8% of people travelled 15-20 minutes, 2% of people travelled 20-30 minutes and 2% of people travelled over 30 minutes to an outdoor sport facility.

Entrance to outdoor sport facilities

The audit identified that the entrances to outdoor sport facilities were generally not easy to find with only 20% of the outdoor sports facilities having enough signs pointing to the space. However, the household survey indicated a level of satisfaction for the visibility of the site entrance to outdoor sport facilities.

Access for the disabled

Only 8% of outdoor sport facilities provided reserved disabled spaces, with only 48% of the sites audited complying with the Disability Discrimination Act.

Value

- 6.16 The household survey identified that the following outdoor sports facilities were used most frequently: -

- Black Notley Playing Field
- Feering Playing Field
- Notley Green
- Rivenhall Golf Club

Sports Club Surveys

- 6.17 A total of 96 sports club surveys were sent out. Responses were received from 31. Most responses were received from football and cricket clubs. Due to the lack of responses it is difficult to form general conclusions, particularly as many of the clubs answered a lot of the questions with reference to their own club.

Members

- 6.18 Across all sports the group with the highest proportion of participants is 'Male, Under 18'. Overall (all sports and ages ranges), three times more males participate in sport than females. 14 clubs have seen an increase in membership, most notably cricket and football clubs. 9 have seen a decrease in membership, particularly tennis clubs. 8 have remained static. The majority of clubs plan to increase their membership. 28 have an Equal Opportunities Policy and 25 have a Child Protection Policy.

Provision

- 6.19 Generally it is felt that the overall sports provision in the Braintree District is adequate.

Best and Worst Pitches

- 6.20 8 clubs consider their own pitches to be the best they play on. These are:
- Silver End Bowls Club
 - Coggeshall Town Cricket Club
 - Halstead Fennes Cricket Club
 - Gestingthorpe Cricket Club
 - Braintree Lawn Tennis Club (Astroturf)
 - Castle Hedingham Bowls Club
 - Braintree Rugby Club
 - Earls Colne Football Club

3 clubs consider their own pitches to be the worst they play on. These are:

Braintree Lawn Tennis Club (Grass)
Gosfield Tennis Club
Crittall Bowls Club

9 clubs indicated that they would consider using public pitches in the future. Only one club, Witham Hockey Club, indicated that their pitch is not in their preferred location.

Facilities

6.21 Only 17 train on their own pitches. Two clubs (Witham Hockey Club and Earls Colne Cricket Club) train in neighbouring districts.

Clubs were asked to score a range of facilities from 1 to 4, where:

1 = Very Poor
2 = Poor
3 = Good
4 = Very Good

Overall, the factors that scored the lowest (less than 2.5 out of 5) were signposting, showers and parking.

On average the firmness, grip, bounce, evenness and overall quality of pitches was considered 'Good'.

40% of clubs do not consider their facilities meet the needs of the disabled, mainly due to access arrangements.

61% of clubs are hoping to refurbish facilities in the future. However, only 5 have a written development plan. Only 13 consider that the existing sports facilities meet all the clubs needs.

Problems

6.22 The three biggest problems experienced by clubs are adult and junior recruitment and lack of volunteers. Many of the clubs raised issues and problems relating specifically to their own club or sport. Seven of the clubs experience problems with self-funding and 12 with a lack of external funding.

7 AMENITY GREENSPACES

Definition

- 7.1 Amenity greenspace is a generic description for green space and planting which are designed primarily to soften the urban fabric, providing a setting for the built environment. They are public open spaces that primarily provide visual enjoyment by enhancing the appearance of the local environment. They may provide opportunities for informal recreation and occasionally support children's play equipment or wildlife habitats.

Key Findings on Amenity Greenspaces

General

- 7.2 Amenity greenspaces vary considerably in their function, ranging from small areas of grass on housing estates to larger areas within housing estates which, although primarily created for visual amenity, can be used actively by local residents. Although their main role is to provide a visual relief from an otherwise harsh urban environment, they are very much local spaces important to local neighbourhoods. Generally they only cater for passive recreation, but occasionally they provide an area for children to play ball games and they may accommodate play equipment.
- 7.3 Because of their role in 'softening' the urban environment by visually breaking up areas of buildings and hard-surfaced spaces, they are appreciated by people. In all but two, rural, wards they were rated as between "important" and "very important to the local community."
- 7.4 10% of people use amenity spaces more frequently than other types of space, and 20% do not use them at all. Only 2.3% of respondents in the District stated that an amenity greenspace was their most frequently used space. The results are influenced by the location of the respondent, and use and appreciation of amenity greenspace is usually higher in areas where there is a high level of provision. This shows the importance of providing amenity spaces in areas of new development.

Quantity

- 7.5 There are 107 amenity greenspaces included within this audit covering an area of 54 hectares. Of this 24 are in Witham, 11 in Braintree and the remainder in villages and rural areas. It is generally indicated in the customer satisfaction survey that too little space is provided. Braintree District Council owns 48 of these sites with the majority of remaining sites being owned by parish council's. All bar one of the sites are publicly accessible.
- 7.6 The largest site can be found at Bramble Road Witham and is 4ha in size, other large sites can be found in Braintree. The largest site not in a

built up area is White Colne Meadows in White Colne and is 1.64 ha. The average site in this study is 0.5 hectares.

7.7 The public perception of amenity green spaces is that amenity greenspaces form a very important or important function. In terms of availability and supply the perception is that there is not enough land available for this purpose. However, in terms of actual usage these sites score relatively low with visits being monthly or occasional usage. The most frequent users of this type of site are tend to be within urban areas with Braintree and Great Notley having higher than average use, the lowest usage was reported in Feering, however Feering has higher than average use of other open space types.

7.8 The most common problems associated with this type of site was littering and dog fouling.

Provision Standards

Table 8 gives a breakdown for the six study sub-areas:

Table 8: Amenity Greenspace by Area and Geography

| Sub Area | Area of Amenity Green Spaces | Population | Hectares per thousand population |
|-----------------|------------------------------|------------|----------------------------------|
| Braintree Urban | 7.9 | 41,730 | 0.2 |
| Halstead Urban | 2.3 | 11,050 | 0.2 |
| Witham Urban | 24.8 | 22,470 | 1.1 |
| Braintree Rural | 4.8 | 16,730 | 0.3 |
| Halstead Rural | 9.0 | 24,290 | 0.4 |
| Witham Rural | 4.8 | 17,430 | 0.3 |
| Total | 53.6 | 133,700 | 0.4 |

Quality

7.9 Most sites score well in terms of landscape quality and most sites score above average in providing relief from the existing urban area and visibility. The majority of sites score well in terms of cleanliness with the following areas scoring poorly:

- Land off Church Road – Kelvedon
- Buttermere (White Courts) – Great Notley/Braintree West
- Trottersfield, Crossing Road – Braintree Central

55% of sites scored 3 or higher in terms of overall quality and of these sites the following scored 4;

- Amenity Space, Tilkey Road, Coggeshall
- Land of Firwoods, Tidings Hill, Halstead South
- Epping Way, Windsor Close, Witham South
- Grass verges, Gershwin Boulevard, Witham South

The majority of areas had grassed areas, flowerbeds and trees which all were well maintained, with only two sites Windsor Close and Nethercourts, Halstead, scoring poorly.

- 7.10 Of all these sites only Church Lane, Castle Hedingham had toilet facilities, however this level of provision is considered adequate. There was more demand for additional litterbins, dog bins and seats with an average of 43% citing provision as inadequate.
- 7.11 Of all the sites only 3 have any form of multiple use. Sites at Wickham St Paul and Great Notley have playing pitches and St. Giles Road in Kelvedon has a scout hut. The quality of pitches is reasonable averaging a score of 2.5.

Accessibility

- 7.12 In the majority of cases the site was easy to find and the main entrance was considered to be in a good condition in all but one case Motts Lane/Cut Throat Lane. 90% of sites have bus routes within a 10 minute walk however there are no cycle parking facilities within and only 24% of sites have car parking within 5 minutes walk. Where car parking is available, only 1% of these have any form of reserved parking for people with disabilities.
- 7.13 In terms of site signage only 7% have any interpretive signs, mostly conveying basic information such as byelaws and the name of the site. Of these signs 39% are not in accordance with the Disability Discrimination Act.
- 7.14 Of all sites amenity green spaces proved to be the fifth most popular. None of the sites are locked at night.
- 7.15 In terms of access these types of site were considered favourable for people with buggies and pushchairs and for people travelling by foot. Public transport access is perceived as limited, and once at the site the limited signage is also identified as a problem.

Value

- 7.16 The conservation, heritage and community involvement value of these sites is variable as not all sites are managed specifically with conservation in mind. 17 are managed as natural habitats all of these sites score well with the exception of Buttermere (White Courts) in Great Notley/Braintree West. The extent to which the historic landscape structure is well preserved scores well and where historic buildings and features are present these also score highly for conservation. The majority of these sites however do not score well in terms of communicating applicable nature conservation objectives. There is also a notable lack of interpretive signage on 97% of sites.

8 PROVISION FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

Definition

- 8.1 This type of open space includes areas such as equipped play areas, skateboard areas and teenage shelters with a primary purpose to provide opportunities for play and social interaction involving children and young people.
- 8.2 Whilst the report is concerned principally with sites having equipped play provision, a few sites have been included where they were established as purpose-built equipped play areas, but where the equipment has since been removed. Play provision was included under the typology of Provision for Children and Young People where play activity was the primary use of the site. Many other children's playgrounds and play areas are located within parks, playing fields and occasionally within amenity areas or green corridors, and are subservient to the main function of those spaces. In these cases they were audited as part of the larger space, although they have been included in the quantitative analysis and assessment of provision standards

Key Findings in Relation to Play Spaces

General

- 8.3 Visiting children's play areas is the fourth most frequent use of open space – district-wide 18% of people visit them more frequently than other types of space. Younger children are usually accompanied by parents or grandparents, whilst older children are usually accompanied by friends and their use of teenage provision is much more social. Few respondents cited play provision as their main open space destination.
- 8.4 Surveys indicated that 7% of people use open spaces to take the children out and 6% of people use open spaces to take the children to use the play equipment. Play spaces ranked fourth out of nine for the open space type most frequently used by residents.
- 8.5 The results of the User Surveys show that people consider children's play equipment to be quite important in open spaces. When ranking the importance of open space for children's play equipment an average score of 4.1 out of 5 was given. When ranking the importance of open space for teenage play equipment an average score of 3.4 out of 5 was given.
- 8.6 The main reasons given for using play spaces were to take exercise, for fresh air, walking, and to take the children out. The main reasons given for not using play spaces were due to a lack of equipment, poor quality and condition of equipment, and not feeling safe.

8.7 5.6% of the people who responded to the Household Survey indicated that using play equipment was their main reason for visiting open spaces.

Quantity

8.8 41 spaces defined under the typology of ‘Children’s Play Areas’ were audited, amounting to 10.9 hectares. 85% of the play spaces provided toddler play equipment and 90% provided junior play equipment. Only 13% made provision for teenage play equipment.

8.9 A further 59 sites of different typologies, most significantly ‘Sports Grounds’ contained play equipment. Of these, 70% contained toddler play equipment, 87% contained junior play equipment and 22% contained teenage equipment. Therefore, in total, 100 open spaces in the Braintree District contain play equipment. Because they formed part of a larger space, there is incomplete information on the size of these areas. The sizes of these play areas will need to be assessed through site surveys before existing overall provision can be calculated and provision standards set as part of the strategy development process.

8.10 The following table provides a breakdown of the 41 defined ‘Children’s Play Areas’ in each of the six study sub-areas:

Table 9: Provision for Children and Young Persons by Sub-Area and Total Area of Sites

| Sub-Area | No. of Sites | Site Area of ‘Children’s Play Areas’ (Hectares) | Population | Hectares per thousand population |
|-----------------|--------------|---|----------------|----------------------------------|
| Braintree Urban | 12 | 3.08 | 41,730 | 0.07 |
| Halstead Urban | 3 | 2.26 | 11,050 | 0.20 |
| Witham Urban | 6 | 2.30 | 22,470 | 0.10 |
| Braintree Rural | 3 | 0.55 | 16,730 | 0.03 |
| Halstead Rural | 12 | 1.85 | 24,290 | 0.08 |
| Witham Rural | 5 | 0.89 | 17,430 | 0.05 |
| Total | 41 | 10.93 | 133,700 | 0.08 |

The following table shows how many sites are located in each sub-area for the further 60 sites.

Table 10: Provision for Children and Young Persons within Other Types of Open Space, by Sub-Area and Total Area of Sites

| Sub-Area | No. of sites | Estimated Areas | Population | Hectares per thousand population |
|-----------------|--------------|-----------------|----------------|----------------------------------|
| Braintree Urban | 10 | 0.42 | 41,730 | 0.01 |
| Halstead Urban | 2 | 0.08 | 11,050 | 0.01 |
| Witham Urban | 5 | 0.98 | 22,470 | 0.04 |
| Braintree Rural | 13 | 0.93 | 16,730 | 0.06 |
| Halstead Rural | 22 | 1.19 | 24,290 | 0.05 |
| Witham Rural | 7 | 0.36 | 17,430 | 0.02 |
| Total | 59 | 3.97 | 133,700 | 0.03 |

- 8.11 The Household Results showed that the majority of people living in the urban areas considered there to be too little play equipment available, whereas in the rural areas the majority considered the provision to be about right. The User Survey results show that on average it is considered that there is insufficient children's and teenage play equipment.

Quality

- 8.12 A number of factors were considered when auditing children's play areas and these were ranked from Very Good (4) to Very Poor (1). The Audit results (for the 'Children's Play Area' typology) showed that generally the range, location and condition of play equipment is good across the District. Most play areas are clean and well maintained. Generally there was little evidence of dog fouling, graffiti and vandalism. Compared to other typologies, play areas scored slightly below average with regard to landscape and design and there was a distinct lack of first aid/emergency equipment and information.
- 8.13 The further 60 sites which contained play equipment were audited as part of the wider open space of which they formed part of. These results have not been included in this analysis, as the results would not reflect the quality of the play space alone.

Children's play spaces that performed well

- 8.14 The following sites *performed well* (with an average score of >3):
- Playground adjacent Great Notley Primary School;
 - Playground at Silver End Memorial Gardens;
 - Playground at Shaw Road, Witham;
 - Playground at Nonancourt Way, Earls Colne;
 - Playground at De Vere Road, Earls Colne;
 - Playground at Helions Bumpstead Village Hall;
 - Playground off Alan Road, Witham.

Children's play spaces that performed poorly

- 8.15 The following identifies the *poorest performing* spaces by category:

Landscape Quality & Design

- Playground at Cant Way, Braintree;
- Tey Road Close, Earls Colne

Welcoming Place – Entrances/Access/Parking/Signage/Social

- Playground at Cant Way, Braintree;
- Playground off Ebenezer Close, Witham

Healthy, Safe and Secure – Control of Dogs/Safety/Personal Security

- Playground at Halstead Road, Earls Colne;

- Playground at Pelly Avenue, Witham

Clean and Well Maintained

- Playground at Cant Way, Braintree;
- Playground off Ebenezer Close, Witham

The User Surveys showed that satisfaction with the range of play equipment available varied. Silver End Memorial Gardens and Feering Recreation Ground scored highly but people were particularly dissatisfied at Rickstones Playing Field, Halstead Public Gardens, King George V Playing Field (Braintree) and Witham Recreation Ground.

Accessibility

- 8.16 Generally the spaces audited were easy to find, although only 8% had signs pointing to the space. 93% of the spaces had bus stops within a 10-minute walk but less than a third had safe road crossings to the site. 64% had car parking within a 5 minute walk but only 5% of spaces provided cycle parking.
- 8.17 Most of the people who answered the User Surveys had travelled up to 15 minutes to reach the site. The Household Survey indicated that people are prepared to travel up to 20 minutes. Walking is the most popular mode of travel, followed by travelling by car.

Value

- 8.18 The responses to the Household Survey showed that the following play spaces were *most frequently used*:
- Public Gardens, Braintree
 - Playground, Rayne
 - Weavers Park, Braintree
 - Memorial Gardens, Silver End
 - King George V Playing Field, Braintree
 - Park, Feering
 - Playing Field, Church Street, Gosfield
 - Public Gardens, Halstead
 - Kings Road Park, Halstead
 - Recreation Ground, Sible Hedingham

Problems

- 8.19 A number of issues concerning play spaces were also raised by the public in the Household Surveys. These responses are listed in Table 11.

2007 Update

8.21 Braintree's Play Spaces Strategy has an ongoing commitment to the improvement of children's equipped play areas. The strategy favours the replacement of equipment at the largest and most well used play areas, coupled with the removal of equipment from the smaller play areas where there are issues of security and safety arising from their location or ageing equipment. Since the audit was undertaken improvements have been made to several play spaces.

Table 11: Issues raised through the Household Survey

| | |
|--|---|
| Weavers Park, Braintree | Large groups of youths, bad language |
| Weavers Park, Braintree | Many problems |
| King George V Playing Field, Braintree | Vandalism |
| King George V Playing Field, Braintree | Dog fouling |
| Kings Park Village, Braintree | Play area damaged |
| Play Area, Maysent Road, Braintree | Graffiti |
| Goldingham Drive, Braintree | No proper access, poor equipment, vandalism |
| Kings Road Park, Halstead | Vandalism, litter |
| Park, Ramsey Road, Halstead | Vandalism |
| Park, Ramsey Road, Halstead | Too much litter, broken glass, rowdy youths |
| Recreation Ground, Sible Hedingham | Litter, dirty |
| Park, Shalford | Nothing for children |
| Spa Road Park, Witham | Facilities not working, broken |
| Flora Road Park, Witham | In a mess, not suitable for children |

PROVISION FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

Table 12: List of Sites with Provision for Children and Young People

| PROVISION FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE | | | |
|--|------------------------------|---|--------------------------------|
| Ref. No. | Name of OS | Road | Location |
| 60011 | Play area | Adj. The Moyns Park, The Street | Birdbrook |
| 60070 | Playground | Fabians Close/ Colne Rd | Coggeshall |
| 60091 | Playground | Church Street | Colne Engaine |
| 60096 | Playground | Heards Lane, Cornish Hall End | Finchingfield |
| 60116 | Playground | Nonancourt Way | Earls Colne |
| 60117 | Play area | Hillie Bunnies | Earls Colne |
| 60120 | Playground | De Vere Rd | Earls Colne |
| 60121 | Playground | Halstead Rd | Earls Colne |
| 60137 | Tey Road Close | Tey Road | Earls Colne |
| 60158 | Playground | Off Stephen Marshall Ave | Finchingfield |
| 60234A | Playground | area surrounding Village Hall | Helions Bumpstead |
| 60236 | Playground | Off The Chase | Kelvedon |
| 60249 | Playground | Land between Glebe Rd & Thorne Rd | Kelvedon |
| 60263 | Playing Field | Off Oak Road | Little Maplestead |
| 60315 | Playground | Brook Meadow | Sible Hedingham |
| 60321 | Playground Memorial Gardens | Silver Street | Silver End |
| 60370 | Playground | The Dismals | Terling |
| 60375 | Playground | Off Mallows Lane, Gainsford End | Toppesfield |
| 60389 | Play Area | Vicarage Road | White Notley |
| 60395 | Playground | Shaw Rd | Witham North |
| 60459 | Playground | Off Ebenezer Close | Witham Chipping Hill & Central |
| 60475 | Playground | Rosebay Close | Witham West |
| 60514 | Playground | Pelly Ave | Witham South |
| 60518 | Alan Road Playground | Off Alan Road | Witham South |
| 60523 | Playground | Claudius Way | Witham South |
| 60584 | Playground | Deanery Hill | Bocking North |
| 60586 | Playground | Glebe Ave/ Churchill Rd | Bocking North |
| 60588 | Playground | Ashpole Rd | Bocking North |
| 60589 | Playground | Adjacent to Primary School, Church St | Bocking North |
| 60621 | Playground | Clare Road | Great Notley/Braintree West |
| 60623 | Playground | Acorn Avenue | Braintree Central |
| 60639 | Playground | Cant Way | Braintree East |
| 60642 | Playground | Twelve Acres | Braintree East |
| 60647 | Playground | Milton Ave | Braintree South |
| 60648 | Playground | Goldingham/Park Drive | Braintree South |
| 60666B | Playground | Levens Way | Great Notley/Braintree West |
| 60671 | Community Hall | Great Notley | Great Notley/Braintree West |
| 60748 | Playground | Mill Chase | Halstead St Andrews |
| 60789 | Playing Field | Off Ramsey Road | Halstead Trinity |
| 60871 | Playground | adjacent to Great Notley Primary School | Great Notley/Braintree West |
| 60931 | Rubens walk | Off Parkfields | Earls Colne |
| PROVISION WITHIN PARKS AND GARDENS | | | |
| 1a0607 | Public Gardens | Bocking End | Bocking South |
| 1a0768 | Halstead Public Gardens | Kings Rd | Halstead Trinity |
| 1b0018 | Black Notley Rec. Ground | off John Ray Gardens | Black Notley |
| 1b0034 | Coe's Meadow | The Street | Bulmer |
| 1b0277 | Playground and Playing Field | The Street | Pebmarsh |
| 60452 | Witham Park | Off Maldon Road/Kings Chase | Witham Chipping Hill & Central |
| 1b0473 | Informal Park | Bramble Rd | Witham West |
| 1b0562 | Playing field | Blake Drive | Bocking Blackwater |
| 1b0564 | Informal Park | Weavers Park | Bocking Blackwater |
| 1b0566 | Bridport Way | Kings Park Village | Bocking Blackwater |
| 1b0601 | Meadowside | Off Coldnailhurst | Bocking South |
| 1b0632,60633 | Lower King | Beckers Green Way | Braintree East |

PROVISION FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

| Ref. No. | Name of OS | Road | Location |
|---|---|--|-----------------------------|
| 1b0930 | Millennium Green | Halstead Rd | Earls Colne |
| PROVISION WITHIN GREEN CORRIDORS | | | |
| 30355 | Dismantled Railway | Sturmer Pocket Park | Sturmer |
| 30846 | Path | Land next to White Courts Primary School | Great Notley/Braintree West |
| PROVISION WITHIN SPORTS GROUNDS | | | |
| 40008 | Playing Field | Gages Road | Belchamp St Paul |
| 40020 | Playing Field | Witham Road | Black Notley |
| 40027 | Playing Field | Blackmore End | Wethersfield |
| 40029 | Playing field | Church Road | Bradwell |
| 40072 | Recreation ground | East Street | Coggeshall |
| 40105 | Recreation ground | Jeffreys Rd | Cressing |
| 40166 | Sports ground | Church Street | Gestingthorpe |
| 40174 | Gosfield Hill Park Playing field | Church Rd | Gosfield |
| 40179 | Great Bardfield Recreation Ground | Off The Walk | Great Bardfield |
| 40189 | Playing field | Monkslodge Rd | Great Maplestead |
| 40195 | Playing Field | Behind Village Hall | Great Saling |
| 40197 | Playing field | Church Rd/North Rd | Great Yeldham |
| 40211 | Playing Field | Burtens Green Rd | Greenstead Green |
| 40215 | Strutt Memorial Recreation Ground | | Hatfield Peverel |
| 40245 | Playing Field | The Chase | Kelvedon |
| 40270 | Playing Field | Off School Road | Little Yeldham |
| 40272 | Playground/recreation ground | Ulting Road, Nounsley | Hatfield Peverel |
| 40274 | Playing Field | Queens Gardens | Panfield |
| 40283 | Rayne Community Field | Gore Road | Rayne |
| 40291 | Playing field | Drury lane | Ridgewell |
| 40295 | Albert Moss Playing field | Church Rd | Rivenhall |
| 40305 | Sports ground | Church end | Shalford |
| 40310 | Playing field | Recreation Ground, Recreation Road | Sible Hedingham |
| 40313 | Outdoor Sports Facility | Oxford Meadow | Sible Hedingham |
| 40326 | Playing field | To north of Silver Street | Silver End |
| 40333 | Playing fields | Church Road | Stambourne |
| 40336 | Playground/recreation ground | Camping Close | Steeple Bumpstead |
| 40350 | Playing fields | Kings Lane | Stisted |
| 40380 | Derek Plannery Memorial Playing Fields | Hudsons Road | Wethersfield |
| 40397, 1b0404 | Sports ground | Rickstones Rd/Manor Rd | Witham North |
| 40476 | Play Area | Off Spa Road | Witham West |
| 40513 | Playing Field | Ridgewell Road, Baythorne End | Birdbrook |
| 40629ABC | King George V Playing Field | Leywood Close/Cressing Rd | Braintree East |
| 40770 | Playing field | Kings Rd | Halstead Trinity |
| 40860 | Playing Field | Off Hall Road | Belchamp Walter |
| 40948 | Toppesfield Playing Field | | Toppesfield |
| 40054 | Playing Field | St James Street/New Park | Castle Hedingham |
| 4a0147 | School & Community Field | Coggeshall Rd | Feering |
| PROVISION WITHIN AMENITY GREENSPACES | | | |
| 50214,50222 | Amenity Greenspace | Hadfelda Square, The Street | Hatfield Peverel |
| 50337A/B | Playground, North Crescent/ x3 green spaces | Haverhill Road | Steeple Bumpstead |
| 50391A | Amenity Greenspace | The Green | Wickham St Paul |
| 50396 | Community Centre | Forest Rd | Witham North |
| 50800 | Slough Farm Rd | Colne Valley Close | Halstead St Andrews |

9 DEVELOPMENT OF A GREEN SPACES STRATEGY

- 9.1 The primary purpose of the Audit is to assist the Council in preparing a Green Spaces Strategy which explore how future needs of the District's residents can be met through future planning policy, including provision of new spaces and the enhancement of existing spaces, and the means by which these can be provided. The Strategy will also suggest ways in which management and maintenance regimes of open spaces, sports and recreation facilities in Council ownership can be improved.
- 9.2 The Council will be engaging external stakeholders and representatives of the community in this process, through the establishment of a Strategy Development Group. The Group's main tasks will be to:
- Set an agreed vision for the future of open spaces and sport and recreation provision in the District that can be fed into the Community Plan and the Local development Framework core policy. This will take into account the preliminary vision statements and the results of the consultation exercises.
 - Define and apply local provision standards to include quantitative, qualitative and accessibility standards for each type of open space. The standards will be used to determine whether there is a surplus or deficiency in existing provision in terms of accessibility, quality, value and quantity. The spatial distribution of unmet needs will be identified and future needs forecast.
 - identify and evaluate the following strategic options:
 - Existing provision to be protected
 - Existing provision to be enhanced
 - Existing provision to be relocated in order to meet local needs more effectively or to make a better overall use of land
 - Proposals for new provision
 - Identify sites which are surplus to requirements and which could be used to meet a local deficiency in another type of provision.
 - To agree a draft strategy and implementation plan that will set policies and priorities for the planning, management and maintenance of open spaces and sports and recreation facilities.
- 9.3 The Greenspaces Strategy will identify existing provision to be protected or protected, identify areas in which new provision is required, identify opportunities for new, enhanced or relocated provision, identify any sites which may be surplus to requirements and evaluate of strategic options. The outcome will be the preparation of a draft strategy and implementation plan.

- 9.4 The open space audit will be used to draft local policies for the Open Space Supplementary Planning Document, which will be drafted later in the year and will determine the way in which new open space will be delivered in the future, including the use of Section 106 agreements. Secondly, it will inform the Local Development Framework policies and allocations which will eventually replace the Braintree District Local Plan Review. Finally it will lead to new policies for the management and maintenance of open spaces in Council ownership, and encourage other landowners to give improved stewardship to open spaces in their control.

APPENDIX A1: SITE AUDIT SCORES

APPENDIX A2: SITE AUDITS – QUALITY ANALYSIS

APPENDIX A3: HOUSEHOLD SURVEY – QUALITY ANALYSIS

APPENDIX A4: HOUSEHOLD SURVEY – TRAVEL ANALYSIS

APPENDIX A5: SITE LOCATION MAPS

APPENDIX TWO

Corporate Action Plan 2007-2008

Projects to be carried out in 2007-2008 to achieve the outcome of a District where residents, communities and visitors can make more use of our public open spaces, enjoying the fact that they have been well looked after and that they can be used by everyone in a safe, pleasant and informed way is an expected outcome under this priority.

- AD3 Maintain Great Notley Country Park to the standards required for Green Flag status and apply for a 'Green Flag' Award.
- AD4 Maintain Halstead Public Gardens and Silver End Memorial Gardens to the standards required for Green Flag status and apply for Green Flag awards and Green Heritage Accreditation for both.
- AD5 In partnership with others – continue to develop proposals and secure funding to improve the river walk between Halstead Town Bridge and Chapel Street.
- AD6 Work with Earls Colne Parish Council and part-fund the refurbishment of play sites in the village.
- AD7 Refurbish the playgrounds at:
 - 1. Kings Road Park, Halstead
 - 2. Halstead Public Gardens
 - 3. King George V Playing Field, Braintree
 - 4. Meadowside, Braintree
 - 5. Stubbs Lane open space, Braintree
 - 6. Rosebay Close, Witham
 - 7. Glebe Avenue, Braintree
 - 8. Spa Road, Witham
 - 9. Bramble Road, Witham
 - 10. Hillie Bunnies, Earls Colne
 - 11. Gulls Croft or Weavers Park, Braintree
- AD8 Maintain our play areas to the standards laid down by the National Playing Fields Association (NPFA) and apply for NPFA awards for at least 4 play areas.
- AD9 In partnership with Essex County Council and local community groups, carry out environmental improvements to the open space along the River Blackwater in Braintree.
- AD10 In partnership with others draw up proposals and provide match funding for a 'Parks for People' bid for Maldon Road Park in Witham.
- AD11 In partnership with Essex County Council – carry out Phase 1 of the two-year project to develop and improve the facilities at the Discovery Centre and Great Notley Country Park.

APPENDIX THREE

Common BDC “branding”

The priority Council-owned sites for this programme are:

Parks and gardens with existing information boards

Silver End Memorial Gardens
Halstead Public Gardens
Witham Park
Weavers Park, Braintree
Great Notley Country Park
Bramble Road, Witham
Meadowside, Bocking
Spansey Court Kickabout Park, Halstead

Other parks and gardens

Marshalls Park
Blake Drive, Bocking Blackwater
River Brain Walk
John Ray Linear Park

Events and activities

The following Council-owned sites may be suitable for this new function:

Weavers Park, Bocking Blackwater
Blakes Drive, Bocking Blackwater
Sports Ground, Clockhouse Way, Braintree East
King George V Playing Field, Leywood Close, Braintree East
Kings Road Playing Field, Halstead Trinity
Ramsey Road Playing Field, Halstead Trinity
Camping Close Recreation Ground, Steeple Bumpstead
Witham Park/adjacent sports ground, Maldon Road, Witham
Rickstones Playing Field, Rickstones Road, Witham
Bramble Road, Witham

Increasing accessibility

The following Council spaces require improvements to meet the requirements of the Act:

Parks and Gardens:

Witham Park
Bramble Road, Witham
Blake Drive Playing Field, Bocking Blackwater
Glebe Avenue/Churchill Road, Bocking North
Coldnailhurst Avenue/Rosemary Avenue, Bocking South
Land between Skitts Hill & Rifle Hill, Braintree South
Spansey Court Kickabout Park, Halstead Trinity

John Ray Linear Park, Braintree South

Children's Play Provision:

Tey Road Close, Earls Colne
Stephen Marshall Avenue, Finchingfield
The Chase, Kelvedon
Ebenezer Close, Witham
Rosebay Close, Witham
Pelly Avenue, Witham
Claudius Way, Witham
Glebe Avenue/Churchill Road, Bocking North
Ashpole Road, Bocking North
Clare Road, Braintree Central
Milton Avenue, Braintree South
Mill Chase, Halstead St Andrews
Ramsey Road, Halstead Trinity
Slough Farm Road, Halstead

Outdoor Sports Provision:

Recreation Ground, East Street, Coggeshall
Playing Field, Kings Road, Halstead Trinity
Hillside Gardens, off Orchard Drive, Braintree South
Sporting 77 Field, Panfield Lane/Deanery Road, Bocking N.
Sports Ground, Clockhouse Way, Braintree East
Sports Ground, Rickstones Road, Witham
King George V Playing Field, Leywood Close, Braintree East
Bramston Sports ground, Stevens Road, Witham South

APPENDIX FOUR

LOCAL PLAN REVIEW OPEN SPACE PROPOSALS NOT YET IMPLEMENTED

Braintree Urban Sub-Area

Informal Open Space

| | |
|---|-------------------------------------|
| River Blackwater between Deanery Hill & Canes Mill Court, nr Bradford Bridge, Bocking North | 10.42 ha. incl. 0.13 ha (30585) |
| River Brain between Pods Brook Road & London Road, Braintree Central | 4.33 ha. |
| River Brain between London Road & Notley Road, Braintree South (not audited nor mapped) | 2.90 ha. |
| River Brain between allotments adj. swimming pool & Skitts Hill, Braintree South (not audited nor mapped) | 1.35 ha. excl. "Davies" Skitts Hill |
| River Brain between Rye Grass Way/20622 & A120, Braintree South | 3.75 ha. |

Formal Open Space

| | |
|---|----------|
| Land between King George's Field and Rugby Ground, Braintree East | 3.38 ha. |
|---|----------|

Witham Urban Sub-Area

Informal Open Space

| | |
|---|----------|
| River Brain north of settlement boundary, Witham Chipping Hill & Central/Witham West (extension of 30433) | 3.60 ha. |
|---|----------|

Formal Recreation

| | |
|---|----------|
| The Rickstones High School Playing Field, Witham North (no CUA) | 8.88 ha. |
|---|----------|

Green Corridor

| | |
|--|----------|
| Blackwater Rail Trail between Benton Hall Golf Club & River Blackwater, Witham South | 0.42 ha. |
|--|----------|

Halstead Urban Sub-Area

Formal Recreation

| | |
|---|----------|
| Sports Grounds, Sudbury Road, Halstead St Andrews | 6.00 ha. |
| Tidings Hill, Halstead Trinity | 1.00 ha. |

Green Corridors

Dismantled railway west of Doe's Corner. N.B. This notation has not been continued into Proposals Map 67. * see next page

Dismantled railway east of Colchester Road. N.B. This notation has not been continued into Proposals Map 67. 1.60 ha. Blue Br. to Langley Mill**

APPENDIX FIVE

NEW OPEN SPACE PROPOSALS BY SUB-AREA

The following proposals would meet the deficiencies which have been identified through the PPG17 audit. New land allocations and other significant changes in the type of open space will be identified in the Allocations Development Plan Document.

Braintree Urban

New Play Provision:

Vanguard Way, Bocking Blackwater
Julien Court Road, Bocking Blackwater
Mountbatten Way area, Bocking Blackwater
Rosemary Avenue, Bocking South
Gypsy Corner, Bocking South
Nayling Road/Jersey Way, Braintree Central
or Clare Road (east end), Braintree Central
or Trotters Fields, Braintree Central
or Marshalls Park, Braintree Central
Notley Road (near High School), Braintree South
or Hillside Gardens, Braintree South
or Parklands, Braintree South

Outdoor Sports Provision:

Review proposals for playing pitches at Great Notley Country Park
Coldnailhurst/Rosemary Avenue/Churchill Road areas?
Community use of Alec Hunter School would provide an additional 6.2
hectares
4 primary schools each have playing fields in excess of 1 hectare.
Community centre field adjacent to Braintree Rugby Club.

Halstead Urban

Parks and Gardens Provision:

Tidings Hill/Oak Road (1 hectare)

Outdoor Sports Provision:

Sudbury Road (6 hectares)

New Play Provision:

Nether Court/Gardners Road area, Halstead St. Andrews
or Colne Road/Coggeshall Road area, Halstead St. Andrews

Witham Area

Parks and Gardens:

- Maltings Lane informal recreation area (13.3 hectares to be provided as part of the Maltings Lane residential development)
- Spa Road area (conversion of playing fields and amenity greenspace)
- Bramble Road area (conversion of amenity greenspace)
- Manor Road/Cypress Road (conversion of amenity area)

Outdoor Sports Provision:

- Maltings Lane (2.1 hectares within the new residential development).
- Community use of proposed junior school at Maltings Lane residential development.
- New site of up to 10 hectares to be identified

New Play Provision:

- Bramble Road/Honeysuckle Road area, Witham West
- Humber Road/Tamar Avenue area, Witham West
- Brain Road/Mersey Road area, Witham West
- Maltings Lane/Dengie Close area, Witham South
- Olivers Drive/Ashby Road, Witham South

Braintree Rural

Parks and Gardens Provision:

- Vicarage Field, West Street, Coggeshall

New Play provision:

- Black Notley
- Coggeshall
- Cressing & Stisted
- Panfield (Shalford)
- Rayne
- Great Bardfield, Three Fields
- Wethersfield, Three Fields
- Finchingfield, Three Fields

Halstead Rural

Parks and Gardens Provision:

- Up to 2 hectares at Earls Colne is required on a site to be identified.

Outdoor Sports Provision:

- Up to 3 hectares is required in Three Colnes ward.
- Up to 2 hectares is required in Yeldham ward.

New Play provision:

- Christmas Field, Sible Hedingham
- Summerfields, Sible Hedingham

Church Lane, Castle Hedingham
Bures Hamlet
Great Yeldham,
Twinstead Village Green

Witham Rural

Parks and Gardens Provision:

Up to 5 hectares is required at Hatfield Peverel, although part of the Strutt Memorial Gardens could provide some of this.

Up to 4 hectares is required at Kelvedon.

Outdoor Sports Provision:

2 hectares at London Road, Kelvedon

New Play Provision:

Willow Crescent area, Hatfield Peverel

New Road, Hatfield Peverel

The Pines Estate, Hatfield Peverel

Heron Road area, Kelvedon

Dowches Gardens/Church Road area, Kelvedon

Silver End (south end)

APPENDIX SIX

AUDIT SURVEY FORM

Name of Open Space

Location of Open Space

| |
|--|
| |
| |

Ref. No.

Date of Survey

Weather Conditions

| |
|--|
| |
| |

| |
|--|
| |
|--|

01. Type of Open Space

(assess main function and tick one box only)

- Playing fields/sports grounds
- School playing field
- (Formal Park or Garden
- (Informal Park or Garden
- Provision for children and young people
- Amenity greenspace
- Natural/semi-natural greenspace & woodland within urban areas
- Green corridors/linear open space

02. Ownership

(tick one box only)

- Public:
- Braintree District Council
 - Essex County Council
 - Parish/Town Council
- Private
- Joint ownership
 - Common land
- Other (please state)
- Not known

03. Access Arrangements

(tick one box only)

- General public access
- De facto* public access
- Restricted access (e.g. to club members)
- No access
- Shared use
- Other

04. Locked at night?

| | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Yes | No |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Overall Quality of the Open Space

(tick one box only)

Landscape Quality

- 05. A rich and stimulating environment?
- 06. Variation in scale of spaces?
- 07. Attractive space boundaries?
- 08. Clarity of space's structure - understandable with a clear focus and orientating features?
- 09. Degree of visibility from the surrounding area?
- 10. Does it provide relief from the built-up area?

Design

- 11. Design of furniture?
- 12. Location of furniture?
- 13. Design of buildings?
- 14. Location of buildings?
- 15. How attractive is the overall design of the space?

| | n/a | Very good | Good | Poor | Very poor |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 05. A rich and stimulating environment? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 06. Variation in scale of spaces? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 07. Attractive space boundaries? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 08. Clarity of space's structure - understandable with a clear focus and orientating features? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 09. Degree of visibility from the surrounding area? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 10. Does it provide relief from the built-up area? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 11. Design of furniture? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 12. Location of furniture? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 13. Design of buildings? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 14. Location of buildings? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 15. How attractive is the overall design of the space? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

A Welcoming Place

| | n/a | Very good | Good | Poor | Very poor |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Entrances | | | | | |
| 16. How easy is it to find the entrance points? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 17. Condition of the main entrance? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 18. Condition of secondary entrance(s)? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Access

| | | | | | |
|--|--------------------------|---------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------|
| 19. Is there good and safe access? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 20. Is there safe cycling through the space? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 21. Are there bus stops within 10 min. walk of open space entrance(s)? | | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | | No <input type="checkbox"/> | |
| 22. Are there safe road crossings close to the open space entrance(s)? | | <input type="checkbox"/> | | <input type="checkbox"/> | |

Parking

| | | |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 23. Is there car parking within 5 min. walk of the open space? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 24. Is there cycle parking within the open space? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 25. Are there reserved disabled spaces? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Signage

| | | |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 26. Are there enough signs pointing to the space? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|

| | Very good | Good | Poor | Very poor | No signs |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 27. Are they sufficient, well located, easy to read and informative? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

| | | | | | |
|-------------------------------------|--|---------------------------------|--|--------------------------------|--|
| 28. Are there information board(s)? | | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | | No <input type="checkbox"/> | |
|-------------------------------------|--|---------------------------------|--|--------------------------------|--|

If yes, does the main information board include the following:

| | | |
|-------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 29. Name of site | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 30. Opening times | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 31. Emergency contact details | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 32. Plan of site | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 33. Details of facilities | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 34. Bye-laws | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

| | Very good | Good | Poor | Very poor | No signs |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 35. Is the general signage within the space sufficient, well-located and easy to read? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Social Access

| | | | | | |
|---|--|---------------------------------|--|--------------------------------|--|
| 36. Does the infrastructure meet the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act? | | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | | No <input type="checkbox"/> | |
|---|--|---------------------------------|--|--------------------------------|--|

37. If not, what changes need to be made to cater for:

physically impaired

.....

visually impaired

.....

Healthy, Safe and Secure

Control of Dogs

| | | | | |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| | Yes | | No | |
| 38. Are dogs permitted? | <input type="checkbox"/> | | <input type="checkbox"/> | |
| | Very good | Good | Poor | Very poor |
| 39. Assess the degree of dog fouling. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 40. If yes to Q38, assess the adequacy of dog-free zones and bins for removal of excrement? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Safety

| | | | | |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| | Yes | | No | |
| 41. Are the facilities and equipment safe? | <input type="checkbox"/> | | <input type="checkbox"/> | |
| | Very good | Good | Poor | Very poor |
| 42. Provision of first aid and/or emergency equipment and information? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Personal Security

| | | | | |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| | Staff | Self | None | |
| 43. Is there staff supervision or good self-surveillance? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | |
| | Very good | Good | Poor | Very poor |
| 44. Is there any evidence of graffiti, vandalism or anti-social behaviour? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Clean and Well Maintained

Open Areas

| | | | | | |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| | n/a | Very good | Good | Poor | Very poor |
| 45. Are the open areas of the park clean? Are there problems of graffiti, flyposting and litter? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 46. How clean are the drives and paths? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 47. How good is the surfacing of the drives and paths? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Planted Areas

| | | | | | |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 48. How well maintained are the grassed areas? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 49. How well maintained are the flower beds? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 50. How well maintained are the shrubs? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 51. How well maintained are the trees? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 52. How well maintained are the water features? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 53. Are areas managed for wildlife habitat value appropriately maintained? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Furniture

Where the following furniture is provided, state the number of each item, assess whether the number is appropriate to the space's size and location and whether they are clean, well-maintained and fit for purpose.

| | No. of facilities | Adequate in no.?(Y/N) | Very good | Good | Poor | Very poor |
|---------------------|----------------------|-----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|
| 54. Railings | <input type="text"/> | <input type="text"/> | <input type="text"/> | <input type="text"/> | <input type="text"/> | <input type="text"/> |
| 55. Litter bins | <input type="text"/> | <input type="text"/> | <input type="text"/> | <input type="text"/> | <input type="text"/> | <input type="text"/> |
| 56. Dog litter bins | <input type="text"/> | <input type="text"/> | <input type="text"/> | <input type="text"/> | <input type="text"/> | <input type="text"/> |
| 57. Seats | <input type="text"/> | <input type="text"/> | <input type="text"/> | <input type="text"/> | <input type="text"/> | <input type="text"/> |
| 58. Toilets | <input type="text"/> | <input type="text"/> | <input type="text"/> | <input type="text"/> | <input type="text"/> | <input type="text"/> |
| 59. Lighting | <input type="text"/> | <input type="text"/> | <input type="text"/> | <input type="text"/> | <input type="text"/> | <input type="text"/> |
| 60. Shelters | <input type="text"/> | <input type="text"/> | <input type="text"/> | <input type="text"/> | <input type="text"/> | <input type="text"/> |

Buildings

| | n/a | Very good | Good | Poor | Very poor |
|------------------------------------|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|
| 61. Are buildings well maintained? | <input type="text"/> | <input type="text"/> | <input type="text"/> | <input type="text"/> | <input type="text"/> |

Sport and Recreation Facilities

Where the following facilities exist, give the number of facilities and assess whether they are clean/free from litter, well-maintained and fit for purpose. Are the facilities appropriate to the space's size and location? Are there appropriate levels of facilities for all sectors of the community?

| | No. of facilities | | Very good | Good | Poor | Very poor |
|---|----------------------|-----|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|
| 62. Sports pavilion | <input type="text"/> | 71. | <input type="text"/> | <input type="text"/> | <input type="text"/> | <input type="text"/> |
| 63. Playing pitches | <input type="text"/> | 72. | <input type="text"/> | <input type="text"/> | <input type="text"/> | <input type="text"/> |
| 64. Bowling green | <input type="text"/> | 73. | <input type="text"/> | <input type="text"/> | <input type="text"/> | <input type="text"/> |
| 65. Tennis courts | <input type="text"/> | 74. | <input type="text"/> | <input type="text"/> | <input type="text"/> | <input type="text"/> |
| 66. Multi-ball courts | <input type="text"/> | 75. | <input type="text"/> | <input type="text"/> | <input type="text"/> | <input type="text"/> |
| 67. Cycle circuits | <input type="text"/> | 76. | <input type="text"/> | <input type="text"/> | <input type="text"/> | <input type="text"/> |
| 68. Jogging track with/without exercise facilities? | <input type="text"/> | 77. | <input type="text"/> | <input type="text"/> | <input type="text"/> | <input type="text"/> |
| 69. Refreshment facilities | <input type="text"/> | 78. | <input type="text"/> | <input type="text"/> | <input type="text"/> | <input type="text"/> |
| 70. Other (please state)..... | <input type="text"/> | 79. | <input type="text"/> | <input type="text"/> | <input type="text"/> | <input type="text"/> |

Play Equipment

| | | | | | | | |
|---|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|
| 80. Is there any children's play equipment present? | | Yes | <input type="text"/> | No | <input type="text"/> | | |
| 81. If no to Q80, do you consider that play equipment should be present? | | | <input type="text"/> | | <input type="text"/> | | |
| 82. If yes to Q80, tick the appropriate box if any of the following items of equipment are present? | Toddler play eqpt | Junior play eqpt | Teenage play eqpt | Skateb'd Ramps | Shelter | Other | |
| | <input type="text"/> | <input type="text"/> | <input type="text"/> | <input type="text"/> | <input type="text"/> | <input type="text"/> | |
| 83. Wide range of equipment present? | | Very good | <input type="text"/> | Good | <input type="text"/> | Poor | <input type="text"/> |
| 84. Is the location of the equipment good? | | | <input type="text"/> | | <input type="text"/> | | <input type="text"/> |
| 85. Is the condition of the equipment good? | | | <input type="text"/> | | <input type="text"/> | | <input type="text"/> |

Conservation and Heritage

Natural Heritage

| | n/a | Very good | Good | Poor | Very poor |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 86. Extent to which the areas are managed as natural habitats. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 87. Degree to which nature conservation objectives are communicated effectively? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Historic Heritage

| | | | | | |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 88. Extent to which the historic landscape structure is well preserved. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 89. Extent to which historic buildings and features are appropriately conserved | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Cultural heritage

| | | | | | |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 90. Use of space for cultural activities such as art or theatre? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|

Community Involvement

| | n/a | Frequently used | Often used | Not often used | Rarely used |
|---|--------------------------|---------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------|
| 91. Are there any interpretive signs in the space? | | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | | No <input type="checkbox"/> | |
| 92. Extent to which the space is used for educational activities (e.g. by schools or rangers) | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 93. Extent to which the space is used for events | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |