

SECTION 7

PROVISION FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

Provision for children and young people

Introduction and definition

- 7.1 PPG17 states that the broad objective of provision for children and young people is to ensure that they have opportunities to interact with their peers and learn social and movement skills within their home environment. At the same time, they must not create nuisance for other residents or appear threatening to passers-by.
- 7.2 This typology encompasses a vast range of provision, from small areas of green space with a single piece of equipment (similar to the typology of amenity greenspace) to large, multi purpose play areas. The National Playing Fields Association (NPFSA) categorises play facilities into three distinct types of facility, specifically:
- Local Areas of Play (LAPs)
 - Local Equipped Areas of Play (LEAPs)
 - Neighbourhood Equipped Areas of Play (NEAPs).
- 7.3 PPG17 notes that using these sub-types of provision for children and young people often ignores the needs of older children. Each site and range of equipment has a different purpose and often serves a different age group and catchment. Provision of facilities for children does not necessarily negate the need for provision for young people and vice versa.
- 7.4 For this reason, this typology has been subdivided and provision for children and facilities for young people have been analysed separately.
- 7.5 Provision for children is taken to include equipped children’s play areas and adventure playgrounds that are perceived to cater for children under 12.
- 7.6 Facilities for young people includes the following types of provision:
- Multi-Activity Play Areas (MAPAs)
 - skateparks
 - youth shelters
 - informal kickabout areas
 - BMX tracks.
- 7.7 Within Wyre Forest, Brinton Park Play Area in Kidderminster, Riverside Park Play Facilities in Stourport and Northwood Lane Play Area in Bewdley are identified as sites of strategic importance. These are high quality sites in the District that offer a wide range of facilities and attract residents from across the District as well as visitors from further afield. These sites were regularly commended throughout consultation and were found to be a popular destination for residents and visitors alike.
- 7.8 This section of the report sets out the strategic context, key findings emerging from consultation and assessment of current provision for children and young people. Local standards have been derived from the consultation undertaken as part of this study and are therefore directly representative of local needs. The application of

these standards provides the Council with a number of policy options for the delivery of facilities for young people and children.

Figure 7.1 – Riverside Play Area, Stourport



Strategic context

7.9 The key issues for children and young people's facilities arising from a review of strategic documents are:

- Policy LR3 of the **Wyre Forest District Adopted Local Plan** states that proposals for residential development should include the provision of children's play space. This should meet the NPFA Six Acre Standard, including LEAPs and NEAPs, as follows:
 - on sites where 75 – 200 new child bed spaces will be produced, a Local Equipped Area for Play should be provided
 - on sites providing 200+ child bed spaces, a Neighbourhood Equipped Area for Play will be required
 - if there is nearby play space, off-site improvements may be required under Section 106 obligations
 - development that will have an adverse impact on the quality or quantity of play space will not be permitted.
- the values underpinning the **Worcestershire Play Strategy** are:
 - to contribute to the five outcomes for children and young people: being healthy; staying safe; enjoying and achieving; making a positive contribution; achieving economic well being
 - to recognise the importance of play for children and their families both in its own right and in relation to wider agendas such as health, social inclusion and community safety
 - to provide facilities and services that meet all children's needs, encouraging social inclusion and embracing people with disabilities
 - to be prepared to offer challenge, whilst managing risk

- to extend the choice and control that children have over play opportunities. To recognise a child's need to push boundaries, to be independent and have self esteem
 - to use play positively to foster respect for and amongst children and young people
 - to acknowledge that every child needs and has the right to play and that play is an essential part of growing up
 - to ensure that children and young people have safe and easy access to a range of play opportunities within a reasonable distance of their homes
 - to strive to achieve the best quality possible for the greatest number of people.
- the four targeted outcomes of the strategy are:
 - increased opportunities for children and young people to access and enjoy a variety of play
 - provision of inclusive play opportunities
 - promote a greater understanding of the importance of play
 - involvement of children and young people in the design and delivery of play.
 - the **Wyre Forest District Planning Obligations SPD 2007** states that it is important to protect existing open space and play provision and upgrade facilities where appropriate. The council uses the NPFA standards for the provision of outdoor playing space (2.4 ha per 1000 people) and requires maintenance payments covering a 20 year period
 - the **Wyre Forest Sustainable Community Strategy** identifies meeting the needs of children and young people as a key theme. The strategy seeks to ensure that all children and young people in Wyre Forest District are healthy, safe, enjoy life and achieve success, make a positive contribution and benefit from economic wellbeing.

Consultation – Assessing Local Needs

7.10 Consultation undertaken as part of this study highlighted the following key issues relating to provision for children and young people:

- there is a need for more imaginative and exciting play in addition to increased provision for children
- the lack of youth clubs and facilities available for use at night for young people is a key issue across the District. This highlights the importance of considering equipped provision for children and young people in the context of wider facilities and opportunities
- in addition to providing young people and children with an opportunity to play, facilities for children and young people encourage social interaction and provide educational opportunities.

Quantity of provision

7.11 The quantity of provision for children and young people across Wyre Forest is summarised in Tables 7.1 and 7.2 below.

Table 7.1 – Provision for children across Wyre Forest

Analysis areas	Current provision	Number of sites	Smallest site (hectares)	Largest site (hectares)	LDF population (2026)	Provision per 1000 population (2026)
Bewdley	0.40	4	0.05	0.17	9,697	0.0412
Stourport	1.15	9	0.02	0.32	20,811	0.0553
Kidderminster East	0.91	10	0.01	0.24	30,827	0.0295
Kidderminster West	1.28	7	0.01	0.46	27,419	0.0467
Rural East	0.35	3	0.08	0.15	10,772	0.0325
Rural West	0.02	1	-	0.02	2,874	0.0070
Overall	4.11	34	0.01	0.46	102,400	0.0412

7.12 The key issues emerging from Table 7.1 above and consultations relating to the quantity of provision include:

- respondents to the household survey portray a split in opinion regarding the provision of play areas for children. 34% indicate provision is about right while 34% indicate there is insufficient provision. This is reflective of the distribution of facilities to an extent, as analysis of provision per 1000 residents highlights that the total supply varies from 0.007 ha per 1000 in the southern rural area to 0.05ha per 1000 in Stourport
- similar results are highlighted in three of the five analysis areas. However, higher levels of dissatisfaction are shown in Kidderminster West and the rural areas, where 40% of residents feel provision is insufficient
- surprisingly, despite dissatisfaction from residents, the greatest quantity of provision in terms of hectares is located in Kidderminster West (1.28 ha). Despite having the highest quantity of provision however, there are fewer sites in Kidderminster West and higher populations. This suggests that there may be accessibility deficiencies in this area
- the lowest provision per 1000 is found in the Rural West area and this corresponds to the household survey findings where dissatisfaction is high.

7.13 Table 7.2 summarises the quantity of facilities for young people across Wyre Forest.

Table 7.2 – Provision for young people across Wyre Forest

Analysis areas	Current provision	Number of sites	Smallest site (hectares)	Largest site (hectares)	LDF population (2026)	Provision per 1000 population (2026)
Bewdley	0.33	4	0.04	0.16	9,697	0.0330
Stourport	0.38	4	0.07	0.17	20,811	0.0183
Kidderminster East	0.67	6	0.05	0.24	30,827	0.0217
Kidderminster West	0.42	4	0.05	0.23	27,419	0.0153
Rural East	0.14	1	0.01	0.14	10,772	0.0139
Rural West	0	-	-	-	2,874	0.0000
Overall	1.94	19	0.01	0.24	102,400	0.0189

7.14 The key issues emerging from Table 7.2 above and consultations relating to the quantity of provision for young people include:

- responses from the household survey indicate the majority of residents (65%) feel that the provision of open space for young people is insufficient. Only 12% of respondents stated provision was about right or more than enough, supporting the perception of insufficient provision in Wyre Forest
- analysis of provision per 1000 residents indicates that the spread of facilities is relatively consistent across the District, although it is notably lower in the rural areas. This is also supported by the analysis of the number of facilities in each area
- across the individual analysis areas findings are consistent with the overall responses to the household survey. Over 61% of residents in each area indicate there is not enough provision, supporting the perception that there is insufficient provision.

Setting provision standards – quantity

7.15 The recommended local quantity standards have been derived from the local needs consultation and audit of provision and are summarised overleaf. Full justification for each of the standards is provided within Appendix F.

7.16 Both standards require an increase on existing levels of provision in light of the findings of the local needs assessment, where there was an overwhelming concern that provision is insufficient.

Quantity standard – provision for children (see Appendices E and F – standards and justification, worksheet and calculator)

Existing level of provision	Recommended standard
0.04 ha per 1000 population	0.05 ha per 1000 population
Justification	
<p>The general consensus established throughout consultation was that there is a lack of provision of children’s play areas. Furthermore residents at drop in sessions and respondents to the IT children’s survey identified the need for increased provision for children, particularly in Kidderminster.</p> <p>In light of the conclusive perception of insufficient provision for children in Wyre Forest, it is recommended the local standard is set above the existing level of provision. This would ensure that opportunities to provide new play areas are taken and would also mean that where appropriate, new developments include suitable provision for children. The provision of facilities of suitable quality is particularly important considering that only 31% of residents feel the quality of play areas is good.</p> <p>The main complaint identified during consultation was a lack of interesting and exciting facilities. Therefore, a key consideration for the Council should be the design of any new provision, ensuring that it is fit for its purpose. One of the outcomes of the Worcestershire Play Strategy is that children and young people are involved in the design and delivery of play and the Council should look to adhere to this.</p> <p>Although setting the standard above the existing level of provision creates a focus on increasing provision in the District, all play areas should achieve the recommended quality standard. This will require qualitative improvements to a number of sites in Wyre Forest.</p> <p>While setting a quantity standard above the existing level of provision is reflective of local expectations for a greater quantity of provision of play areas, it is the application of the accessibility standard that should determine the value of existing sites and identify areas where new provision is required. Setting a quantity standard above the existing level alongside a challenging accessibility standard should ensure that provision is equitably distributed.</p>	

Quantity standard – provision for young people (see Appendices E and F – standards and justification, worksheet and calculator)

Existing level of provision	Recommended standard
0.018 ha per 1000 population	0.030 ha per 1000 population
Justification	
<p>The insufficient provision of facilities for young people was a key theme raised throughout consultation. The dissatisfaction with the provision of this typology was one of the three most conclusive of all typologies. The lack of provision, coupled with a lack of appropriate facilities was acknowledged to have a negative effect on the quality of other typologies in the District, for example parks.</p> <p>The local standard has been set above the existing level of provision to address the need for the increased provision of facilities for young people. When combined with the accessibility standard, this will allow the identification of any locational deficiencies in the District and establish priorities for increased provision.</p> <p>Although setting the standard at this level will prioritise the provision of new facilities, the Council should be aware of the requirement to enhance the quality of facilities in Wyre Forest. This is particularly important, considering the quality of young people’s facilities was considered to be poor by respondents to the household survey.</p>	

Current provision - quality

- 7.17 The quality of provision for children and young people was assessed through site visits. It is important to note that site assessments are conducted as a snapshot in time and are therefore reflective of the quality of the site on one specific day.
- 7.18 The quality scores are weighted according to the findings of the local consultation. Those elements that were highlighted through consultation as being a particularly important determinant of the quality have been weighted higher to ensure that they have a greater influence on the overall quality score that each site achieves. The full rationale behind this approach is set out in appendix G. Cleanliness and maintenance was perceived to be the key issue for both facilities for children and young people in Wyre Forest. For young people, security and safety was considered to be more important than the actual facilities at the site. The range and type of facilities took on greater importance in the provision of sites for children.
- 7.19 The quality of provision for children is summarised in Table 7.3 overleaf. Issues arising from the assessment of facilities for young people are set out in Table 7.4.

Table 7.3 – Quality of provision for children

Geographical area	Number of sites	Range of quality scores (%)	Average quality scores (%)	Lowest quality sites	Highest quality sites
Bewdley	4	40 – 68	55	Bark Hill Play Area – ID 162	North Wood Lane Play Area – ID 312
Stourport	9	40 – 60	50	Hanstone Road Play Area – ID 540	Riverside Play Area – ID 535
Kidderminster East	10	38 –72	59	Upton Road Play Area – ID 521	Borrington Park Play Area – ID 506
Kidderminster West	7	32 – 72	54	Lister Road Play Area – ID 192	Brinton Park Play Area – ID 167
Rural East	4	44 – 60	54	Wolverley Memorial Play Area – ID 44	Cookley Playing Fields Play Area – ID 21
Rural West	1	-	60	-	New Forest Close Play Area Play Area – ID 577
Overall	35	32 –72	55	Lister Road Play Area – ID 192	Brinton Park Play Area – ID 167

Table 7.4 – Quality of provision for young people

Geographical area	Number of sites	Range of quality scores (%)	Average quality scores (%)	Lowest quality sites	Highest quality sites
Bewdley	4	56 – 64	60	St Annes MAPA – ID 519	Shaw Hedge Road MAPA – ID 536
Stourport	4	40 – 70	57	Hanstone Road – ID 539	Riverside Park Young People – ID 534
Kidderminster East	6	40 – 62	57	Dunlin Drive MAPA – ID 43	Borrington Park MAPA – ID 505
Kidderminster West	4	40 – 66	56	Jubilee Drive – ID 172	Brinton Park Skatepark – ID 516
Rural East	2	58 – 60	59	Shaw Hedge Road Skate park – ID 537	Cookley Skate park – ID 543
Rural West	-	-	-	-	-
Overall	20	40 – 70	57	Jubilee Drive – ID 172	Riverside Park Young People – ID 534

7.20 The key issues emerging from Tables 7.3 and 7.4 and the consultation relating to the quality of facilities for children and young people are:

- findings from the household survey highlight a split in opinion concerning the quality of children’s play areas. 31% of respondents feel the quality of play areas are good, 44% average and 25% poor. Analysis of the findings of the site assessments reveals that the overall quality of facilities is average (55%)
- within the individual analysis areas similar results are portrayed in three of the five analysis areas. This is supported by analysis of the average score in each area, which suggests that the overall quality of facilities is consistent across the District. However, in Kidderminster East the majority of residents feel the quality of this typology is good (38%) and in Kidderminster West 37% of residents state the quality of play areas is poor. This is reflected in the findings of the site assessments, which highlight a particular variation in the scores of sites in Kidderminster West (scores range from 32% to 72%). This indicates that facilities are of varying quality in this area
- 66% of respondents to the household survey state the quality of young people’s open space is poor and only 8% of residents indicate the quality of

facilities is good, highlighting that there is negativity surrounding the quality of provision for young people

- findings across the individual analysis areas mirror the overall responses; with over 58% of respondents in each analysis area indicating that the quality of young people's provision is poor. Like the responses emerging from the household survey, the quality of sites is consistent across the District, with the average score of a facility being 57%. Despite this, the scores achieved vary from 40% – 67% indicating that facilities are of varying quality in each of the areas
- as with children's provision, the lowest level of satisfaction is shown in Kidderminster West, with 82% of residents stating that the quality of young people's provision is poor. Scores of between 40% and 70% were achieved in this area; Jubilee Drive being the poorest facility and Brinton Park skatepark achieving the highest score.

Setting provision standards – quality

- 7.21 The recommended local quality standard for provision for children and young people is summarised overleaf. Full justifications and consultation relating to the quality of provision for the local standard is provided within Appendix G.
- 7.22 The quality standard summarises the key aspirations of residents of Wyre Forest with regards provision for children and young people.

Quality Standard (see Appendix G)

Recommended standard – provision for children		
Local consultation, national guidance and best practice suggest that the following features are essential and desirable to local residents:		
Essential	Desirable	
Clean/litter free	Dog free area	
Facilities for the young	Litter bins	
Toilets	On site security	
Detailed analysis of the local consultation suggests that with regards to play areas for children, the relative importance of the key components is as follows:		
Component of quality	Proportion of possible total responses received	Weighting
Security and safety	18%	2
Cleanliness and maintenance	43%	4
Vegetation	15%	1
Ancillary accommodation	18%	3
Analysis highlights the need for innovative and imaginative provision of facilities for children.		

Recommended standard – provision for young people		
Local consultation, national guidance and best practice suggest that the following features are essential and desirable to local residents:		
Essential	Desirable	
Equipment	Equipment maintenance	
Good access	Clean/litter free	
Range of facilities	Litter bins	
Detailed analysis of the local consultation suggests that with regards to facilities for young people, the relative importance of the key components is as follows:		
Component of quality	Proportion of possible total responses received	Weighting
Security and safety	46%	3
Cleanliness and maintenance	52%	4
Vegetation	29%	1
Ancillary accommodation	41%	2
Analysis highlights the need for innovative and imaginative provision of facilities for young people.		

Setting provision standards – accessibility

- 7.23 The accessibility of sites is paramount in maximising usage as well as providing opportunities for people to use the site. The recommended local standard is set in the form of a distance threshold and is derived directly from the findings of the local consultations.
- 7.24 Local access to provision for children and young people is particularly important in order to promote use of the site. In some instances, territorial issues prevent young people from using facilities that would appear to be in close proximity to their home.
- 7.25 Site specific accessibility issues were also analysed as part of the programme of site visits where information and signage, transport and general issues were assessed.
- 7.26 Consultation and analysis highlights that the key issues with regards to accessibility of provision for children and young people include:

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- current and expected travel methods highlight a clear preference for walking to children’s play areas – this reinforces the expectation that facilities are provided locally
- 65% of respondents to the household survey indicated they prefer to walk to young people’s facilities – again there is an expectation that these facilities would be located in close proximity to the home
- site assessments reveal that access to facilities for both children and young people is generally average. However, one significant area identified for improvement was signage.

7.27 The recommended local accessibility standards for children and young people are summarised below. It can be seen that residents expect to travel further to reach facilities for young people than they do for children, however provision of both types of facilities is expected to be in close proximity to the home. Full justification for the local standard is provided within Appendix H.

7.28 It is recognised that some facilities may attract users from a wider catchment and this will be discussed in the analysis that follows. While these facilities do not negate the need for local provision, they provide an additional and frequently used District wide resource.

Accessibility Standard (see Appendix H)

Recommended standard – Provision for Children
10 MINUTE WALK TIME
Justification
73% of current users and 89% of respondents to the household survey expect to walk to a children’s play area. In light of this, it is recommended a walk time be set to meet the expectations of current and prospective users.
A local standard of a 10 minute walk time is recommended in line with the 75% threshold level and modal response. Setting a standard at this level will ensure the provision of locally accessible children’s play areas and allow for a balance between quantity and quality.

Recommended standard – Provision for Young People
15 MINUTE WALK TIME
Justification
The majority of respondents to the household survey expect to walk to young people’s facilities (65%). However, within the rural area residents indicate a willingness to drive to young people’s facilities, indicating an expected lack of access to local facilities within a rural settlement.
A 15 minute walk time has been set based upon the 75% threshold level indicated in findings from the household survey. Setting a local standard at this level will highlight deficiencies in the area and allow for some young people’s facilities to be provided in larger strategic sites, such as parks. The local standard is broadly representative of the opinions of all residents in all areas.

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Applying provision standards

- 7.29 The application of the recommended quality, quantity and accessibility standards is essential in understanding the existing distribution of open space, sport and recreation facilities and identifying areas where provision is insufficient to meet local need.
- 7.30 The quantity standards enable the identification of areas that do not meet the minimum provision standards, while the accessibility standards will help determine where those deficiencies are of high importance. Applying the standards together is a much more meaningful method of analysis than applying the standards separately. The application of these standards is set out below in Table 7.5. In light of the significance of the proximity of facilities to the home, the application of accessibility standards is particularly important.
- 7.31 The findings of the application of these standards should complement the principles set out in the play strategy and inform future decision making.

Table 7.5 – Application of quantity standard

Analysis areas	Children	Children	Young people	Young people
	Current balanced against local standard - children (0.05 hectares per 1000 population)	Future balanced against local standard - children (0.05 hectares per 1000 population)	Current balanced against local standard – young people (0.030 hectares per 1000 population)	Future balanced against local standard – young people (0.030 hectares per 1000 population)
Bewdley	-0.06	-0.08	0.04	0.03
Stourport	0.16	0.11	-0.21	-0.24
Kidderminster East	-0.55	-0.63	-0.21	-0.25
Kidderminster West	-0.02	-0.09	-0.36	-0.40
Rural East	-0.16	-0.19	-0.16	-0.17
Rural West	-0.12	-0.12	-0.08	-0.09
Overall	-0.74	-1.01	-0.97	-1.13

Green = above the minimum standard; Red = below the minimum standard

7.32 The application of the local standard for quantity results in the following issues:

- in terms of children's facilities, the application of the local standard (0.05ha per 1000 population) generates an overall shortfall in provision across the District of -1.01 hectares by 2026. Shortfalls will exist in all areas with the exception of Stourport, where provision will be sufficient to meet the minimum standard
- shortfalls of provision for children are greatest in Kidderminster East, where an additional 0.63 hectares will be required by 2026
- for young people's facilities, the local standard of 0.29ha per 1000 population shows that up to 2026 all areas, except Bewdley analysis area (0.03 ha), will experience a shortfall in provision
- the total deficiency across the District equates to -1.13 hectares, with Kidderminster West having the greatest shortfall (-0.40ha). Provision in Bewdley will only just be sufficient to meet demand.

7.33 In light of the local nature of both facilities for children and facilities for young people, consideration has been given to the application of the quantity standard at a ward level. This further highlights shortfalls and surpluses and is set out in Table 7.6 (children) and Table 7.7 (young people) overleaf.

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Table 7.6 – Provision of facilities for children by ward

Ward	Population	Provision for children (hectares)	Local Standard (ha/1000)	Per 1000 population current	TOTAL Requirement	Surplus / Deficiency
Aggborough and Spennells	7,225	0.210	0.05	0.0290657	0.36125	-0.15125
Areley Kings	6,041	0.300	0.05	0.0496607	0.30205	-0.00205
Bewdley and Arley	6,295	0.150	0.05	0.0238284	0.31475	-0.16475
Blakedown and Chaddesley	4,264	0.120	0.05	0.0281426	0.2132	-0.0932
Broadwaters	7,787	0.360	0.05	0.0462309	0.38935	-0.02935
Cookley	2,491	0.150	0.05	0.0602168	0.12455	0.02545
Franche	7,071	0.300	0.05	0.0424268	0.35355	-0.05355
Greenhill	7,293	0.040	0.05	0.0054847	0.36465	-0.32465
Haberley and Blakebrook	6,477	0.460	0.05	0.0710205	0.32385	0.13615
Lickhill	7,131	0.340	0.05	0.0476791	0.35655	-0.01655
Mitton	6,541	0.510	0.05	0.0779697	0.32705	0.18295
Offmore and Comberton	6,901	0.100	0.05	0.0144907	0.34505	-0.24505
Oldington and Foley Park	5,261	0.300	0.05	0.0570234	0.26305	0.03695
Rock	2,366	0.020	0.05	0.0084531	0.1183	-0.0983
Sutton Park	7,167	0.220	0.05	0.0306962	0.35835	-0.13835
Wolverley	2,096	0.080	0.05	0.0381679	0.1048	-0.0248
Wribbenhall	4,574	0.250	0.05	0.0546568	0.2287	0.0213

7.34 It can be seen that there are only five wards where the level of provision for children is sufficient to meet the needs of the local population. The greatest shortfalls exist in:

- Greenhill – 0.32 ha
- Offmore and Comberton – 0.24 ha
- Bewdley and Arley – 0.16 ha
- Aggborough and Spennells – 0.15 ha.

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Table 7.7 – Provision for young people by ward

Ward	Population	Provision for young people (hectares)	Local Standard (ha/1000)	Per 1000 population current	TOTAL Requirement	Surplus / Deficiency
Aggborough and Spennells	7,225	0.05	0.03	0.0069204	0.21675	-0.16675
Areley Kings	6,041	0.02	0.03	0.0033107	0.18123	-0.16123
Bewdley and Arley	6,295	0.04	0.03	0.0063542	0.18885	-0.14885
Blakedown and Chaddesley	4,264	0	0.03	0	0.12792	-0.12792
Broadwaters	7,787	0.16	0.03	0.0205471	0.23361	-0.07361
Cookley	2,491	0.14	0.03	0.0562023	0.07473	0.06527
Franche	7,071	0	0.03	0	0.21213	-0.21213
Greenhill	7,293	0	0.03	0	0.21879	-0.21879
Habberley and Blakebrook	6,477	0.05	0.03	0.0077196	0.19431	-0.14431
Lickhill	7,131	0.07	0.03	0.0098163	0.21393	-0.14393
Mitton	6,541	0.29	0.03	0.0443357	0.19623	0.09377
Offmore and Comberton	6,901	0.46	0.03	0.066657	0.20703	0.25297
Oldington and Foley Park	5,261	0.23	0.03	0.0437179	0.15783	0.07217
Rock	2,366	0	0.03	0	0.07098	-0.07098
Sutton Park	7,167	0.14	0.03	0.019534	0.21501	-0.07501
Wolverley	2,096	0	0.03	0	0.06288	-0.06288
Wribbenhall	4,574	0.29	0.03	0.0634018	0.13722	0.15278

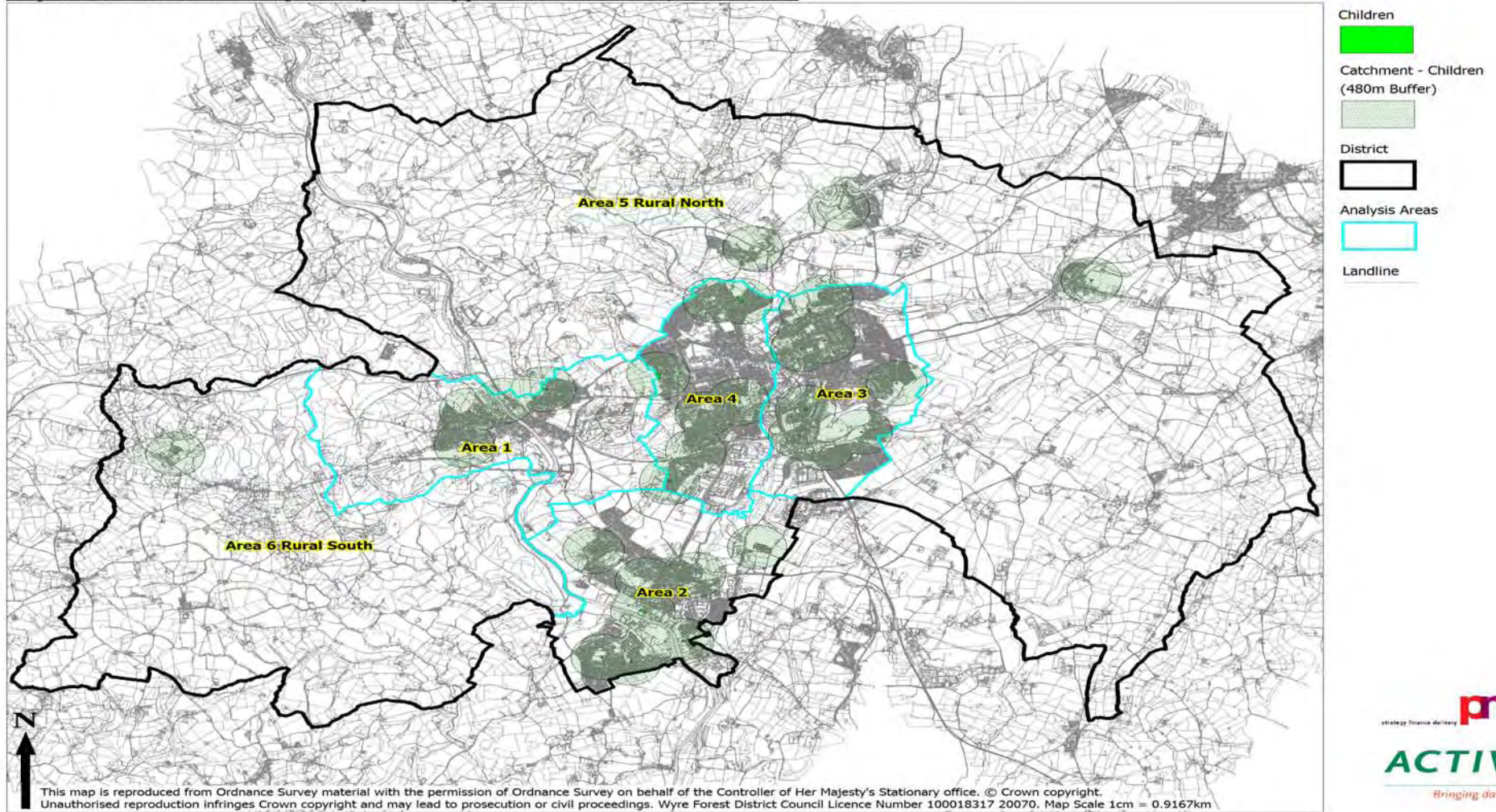
7.35 Similarly, there are only five wards where the level of provision for young people is sufficient to meet local needs. The wards that contain the largest deficiencies per 1000 population are:

- Greenhill – 0.22 ha
- Franche – 0.21 ha
- Aggborough and Spennells – 0.17
- Areley Kings – 0.16 ha.

7.36 The application of the local accessibility standards in relation to provision for children and young people is set out in Map 7.1 and 7.2 overleaf.

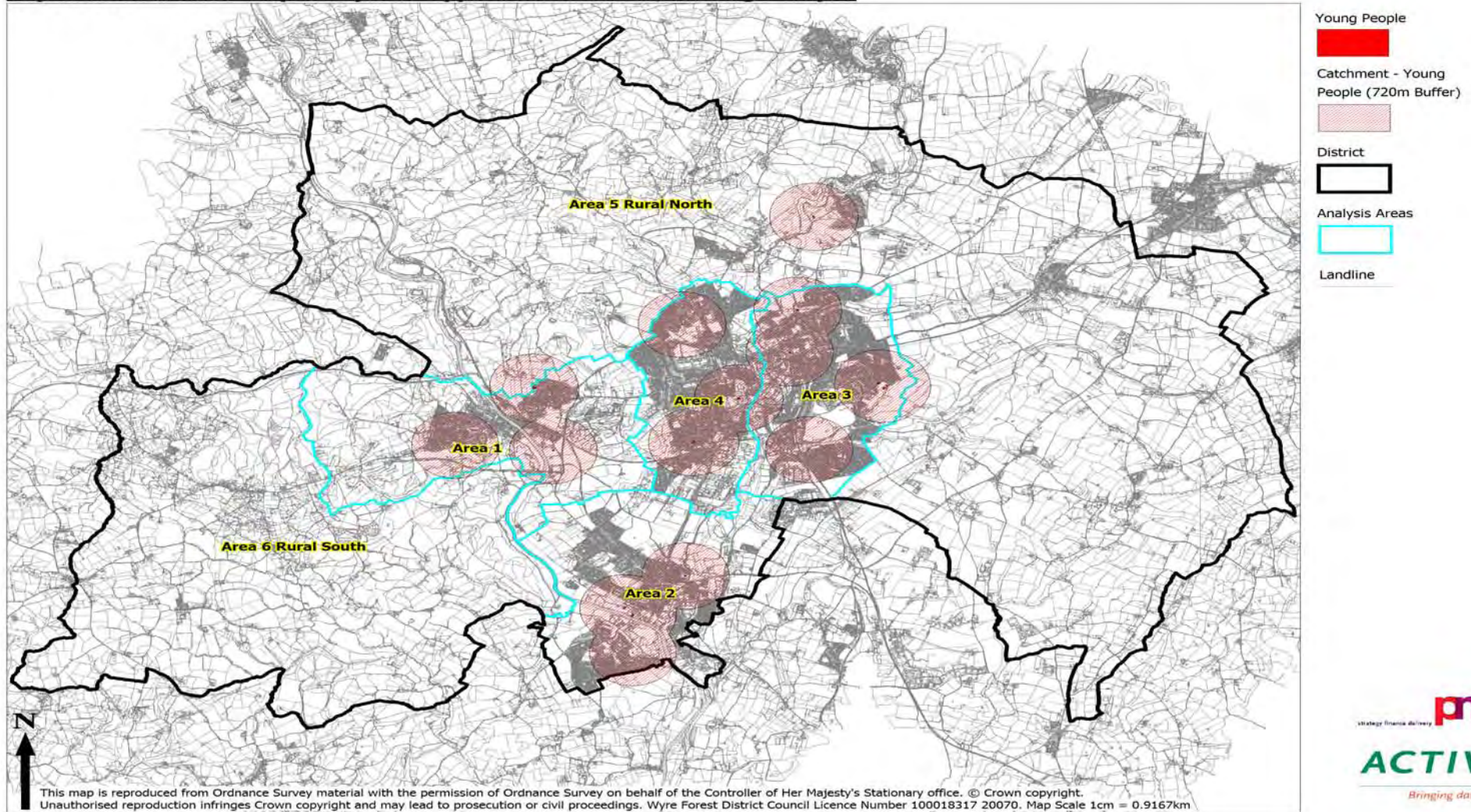
Map 7.1 – Provision for children in Wyre Forest

Wyre Forest OSS - Open Space Type Catchments, Children



Map 7.2 – Provision for young people in Wyre Forest

Wyre Forest OSS - Open Space Type Catchments, Young People



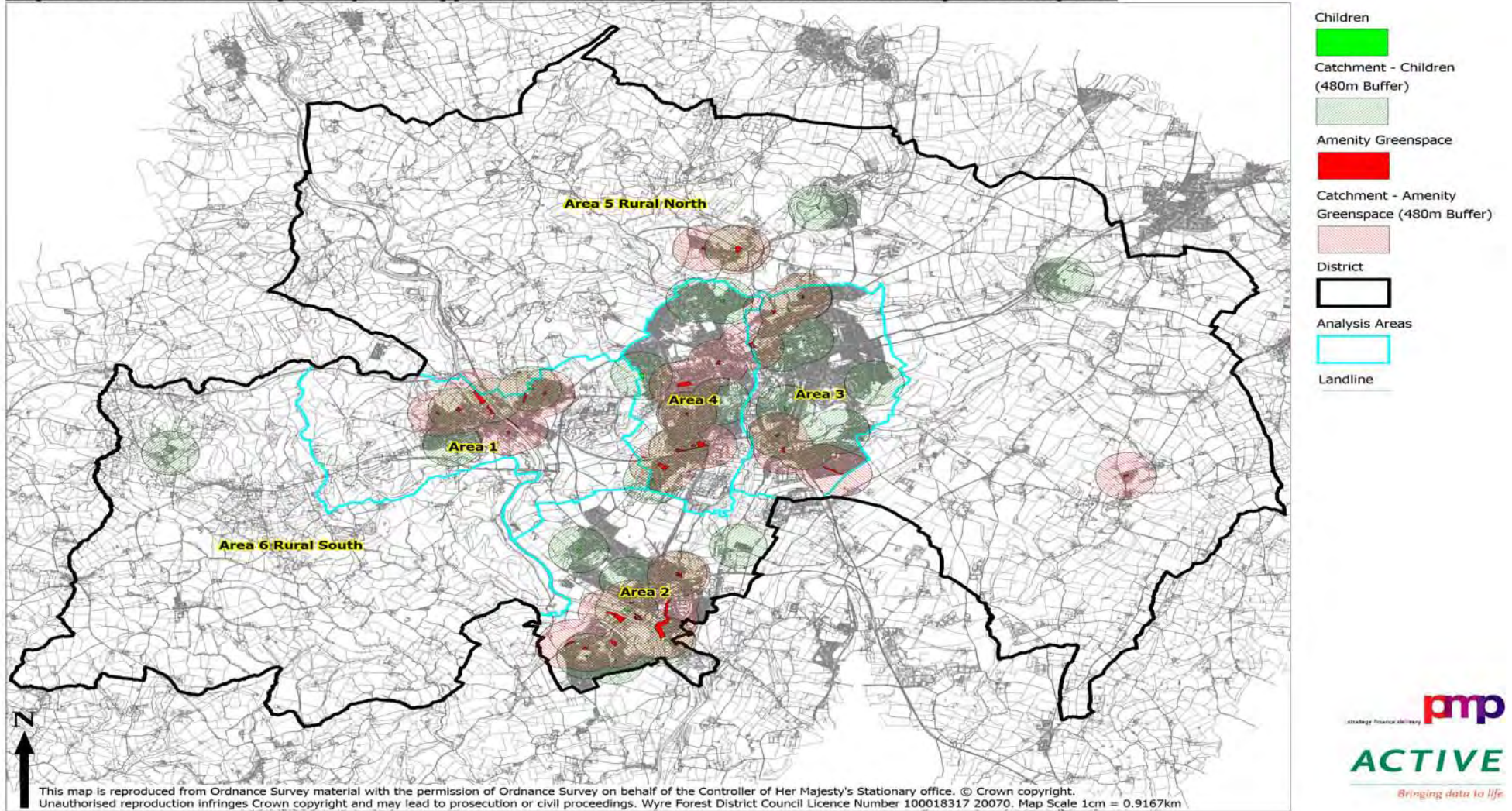
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- 7.37 Map 7.1 highlights that there is an even distribution of children’s play areas across the District, with the majority of residents within the recommended 10 minute catchment of a play area. However, despite this equitable distribution of facilities, there remain some key areas of deficiency, particularly in Kidderminster East and Kidderminster West analysis areas.
- 7.38 Additionally, it is clear from Map 7.1 that a number of facilities for children have overlapping catchments and are therefore serving similar residents. This suggests that there may be scope for the rationalisation of play areas in some parts of Wyre Forest (although it will be important to analyse the specific value of each site in detail).
- 7.39 Map 7.2 illustrates that there is a good distribution of young people’s facilities across the District, however, predominantly due to the lack of facilities for young people in Wyre Forest, a number of areas are outside the recommended distance threshold of a facility. This is particularly evident in the Kidderminster analysis areas and north of the Stourport analysis area.
- 7.40 While this section focuses primarily on equipped areas for children and young people, it is also essential to consider the role that amenity green spaces play in reducing the need for the provision of facilities for young people and children. Areas deficient in both amenity space and formal facilities should be a particular priority for new provision, as this indicates that there is a distinct lack of opportunities. The provision of amenity green space in relation to facilities for children and young people is set out overleaf in Maps 7.3 and 7.4.

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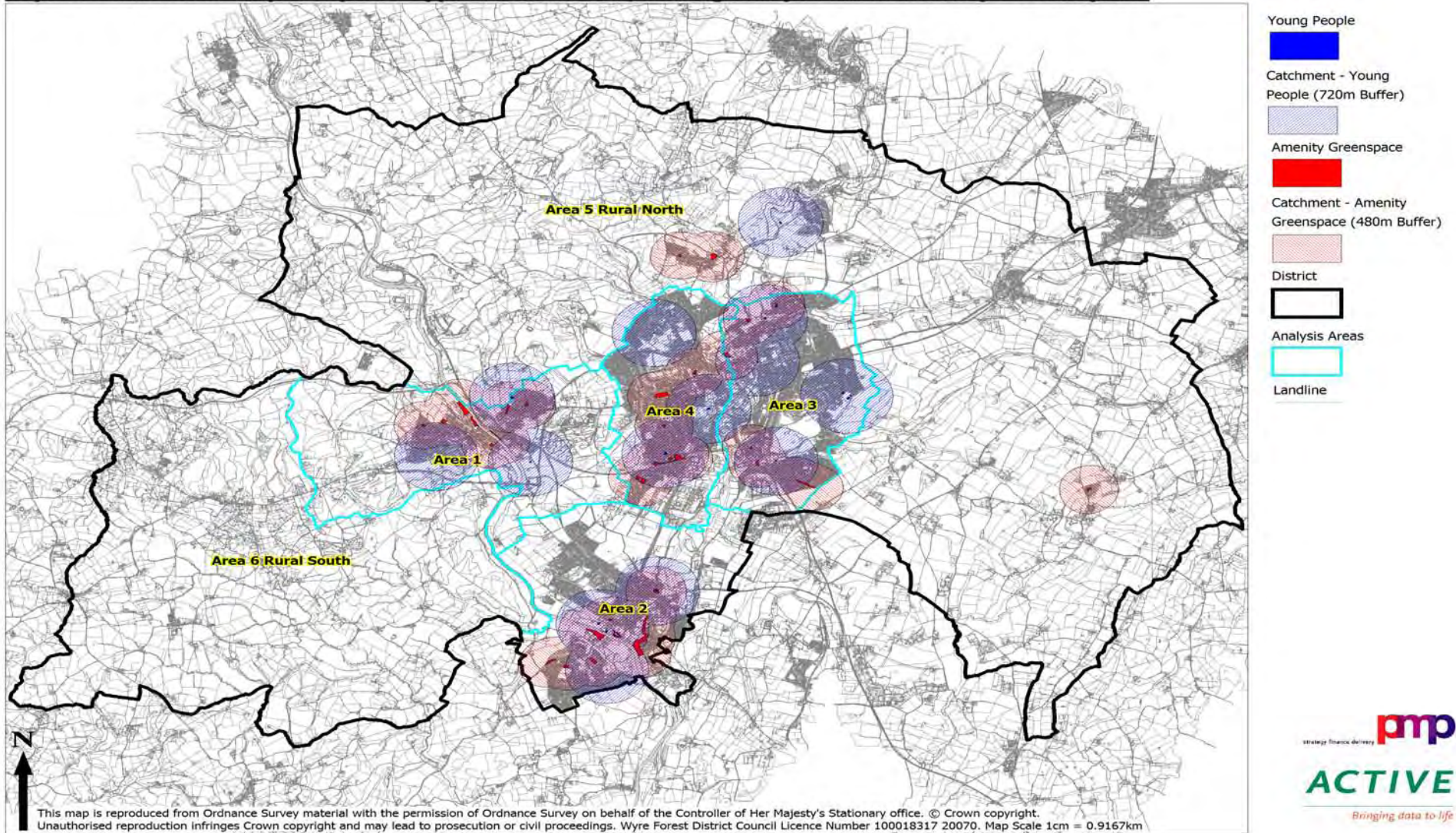
Map 7.3 – Provision for children and amenity green space

Wyre Forest OSS - Open Space Type Catchments, Children and Amenity Greenspace



Map 7.4 – Provision for young people and amenity green space

Wyre Forest OSS - Open Space Type Catchments, Young People and Amenity Greenspace



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- 7.41 Map 7.3 illustrates that when combining the provision of children’s play areas and amenity green space the majority of residents have access to at least one of these typologies. However, despite this, key areas of deficiency in Kidderminster East and Kidderminster West analysis areas remain.
- 7.42 Similar to the findings for children’s facilities, when the provision of amenity green space and young people’s facilities is amalgamated the majority of residents have access to at least one of these typologies. Despite this, a large proportion of residents in the north of the Stourport analysis area and west of the Kidderminster West analysis area are outside the recommended catchment of either typology. Specific deficiencies will be returned to later in this section.

Quality of provision

- 7.43 While the quantity of provision was the overriding theme of consultations, the quality of provision was also considered to be important and many existing facilities were criticised for the lack of innovative and exciting play equipment.
- 7.44 The site assessments provide an indication of the quality of existing facilities and it is clear that there is significant variation across the District. The quality standard and related site assessments should inform a programme of improvements, highlighting sites in need of upgrading. Sites serving unique catchments that are considered to be of poor quality should be given particular priority.
- 7.45 The Worcestershire Play Strategy identifies the need to provide facilities containing an element of risk.

C1	Use the findings of the quality assessment to inform a programme of improvements across facilities for children and young people. Where the opportunity arises, priority should be given to poor quality play areas serving unique catchments. Consideration should be given to the provision of an appropriate variety of facilities.
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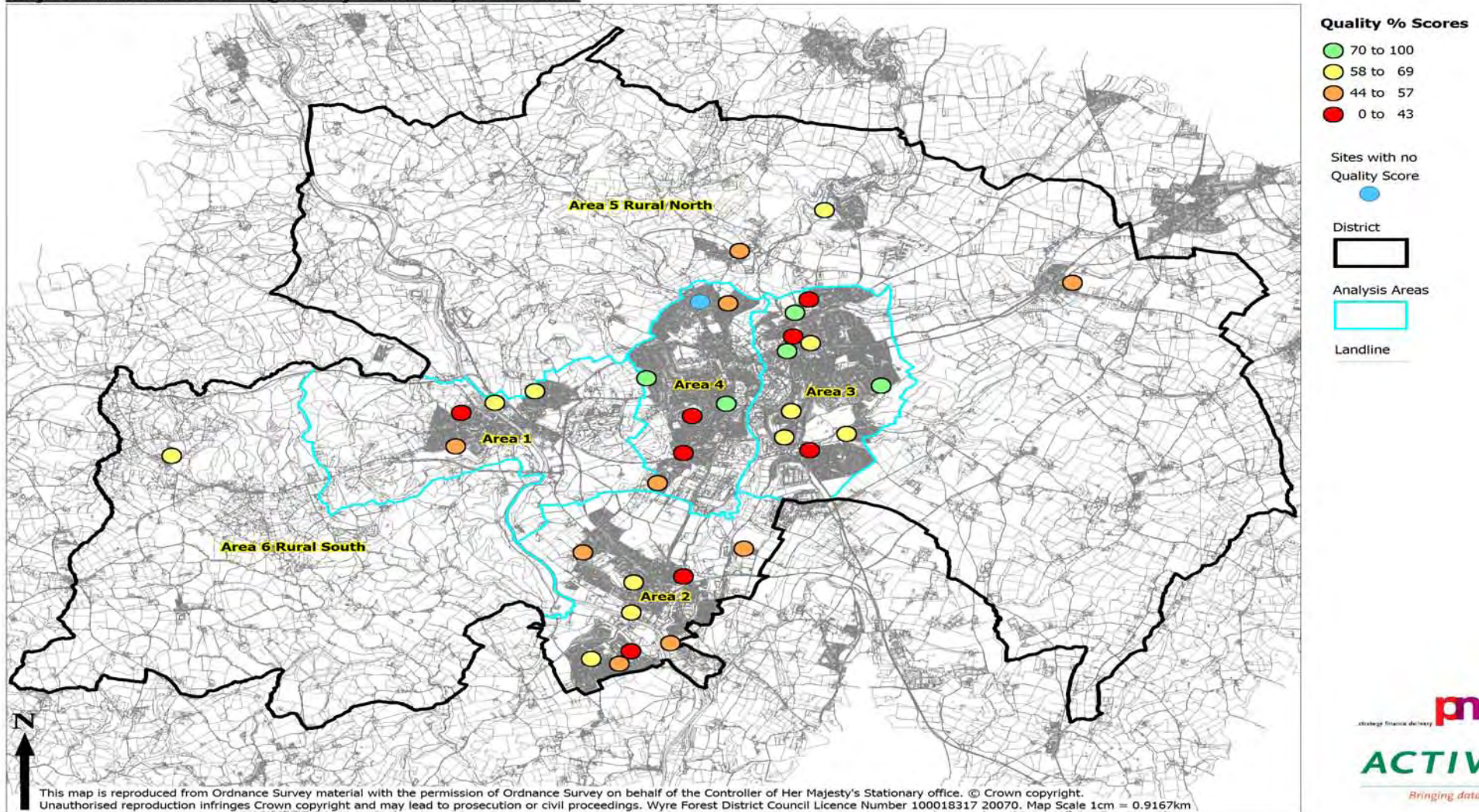
- 7.46 Further related to the development of high quality opportunities for play for both children and young people is the need to involve the target audience in the design and development of facilities. This will be particularly important in light of the overwhelming dissatisfaction with the quality and variety of existing sites and is also a key priority of the Worcestershire Play Strategy.

C2	Encourage and facilitate involvement of young people and children in the design and development of local facilities.
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- 7.47 The distribution of the quality of children’s play areas and young people’s facilities can be seen on Maps 7.5 and 7.6 overleaf. This highlights that there are clusters of high quality and poorer quality facilities.

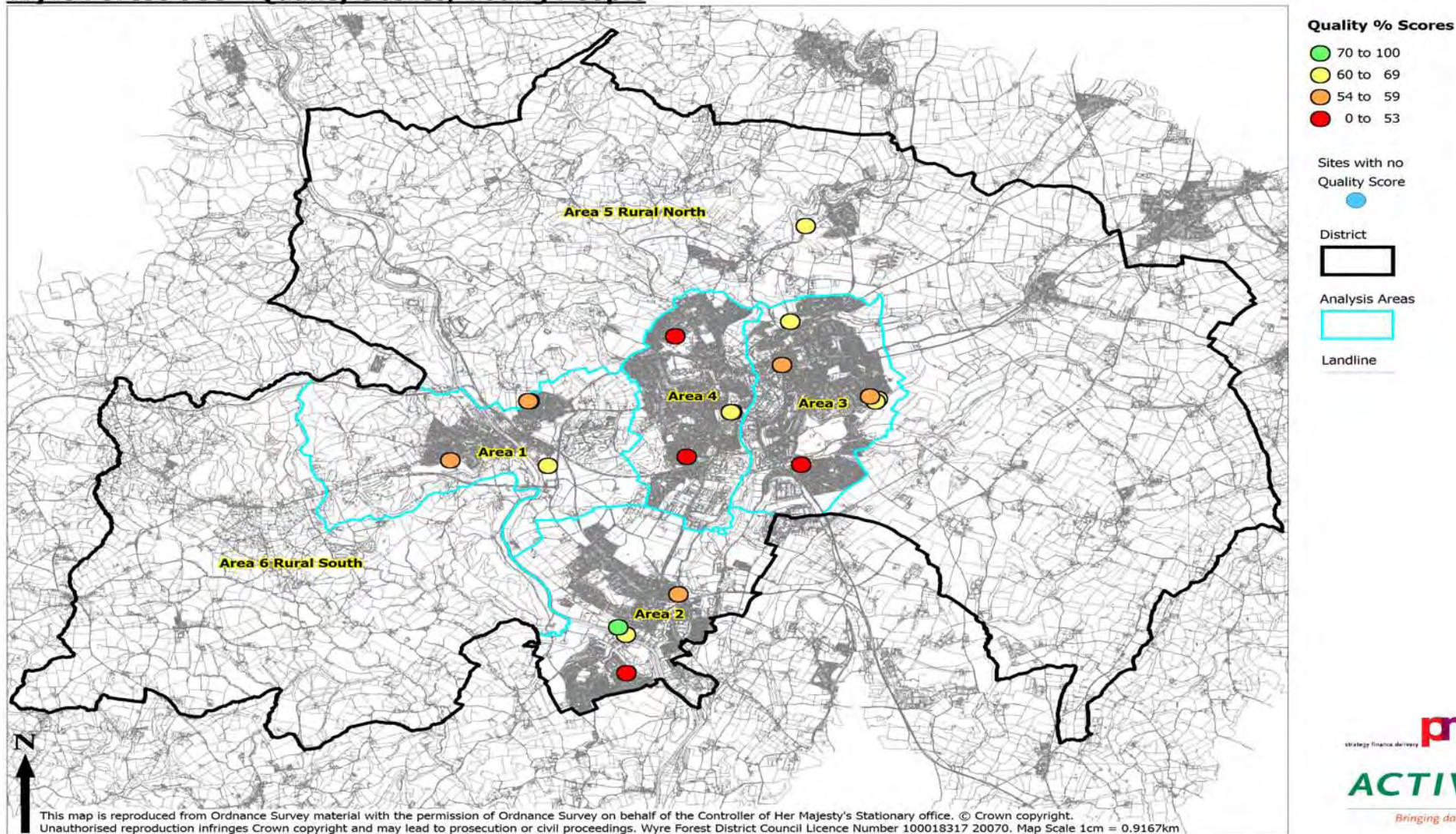
Map 7.5 – Quality of children’s play areas in Wyre Forest

Wyre Forest OSS - Quality Scores, Children



Map 7.6 – Quality of young people’s facilities in Wyre Forest

Wyre Forest OSS - Quality Scores, Young People



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- 7.48 Map 7.5 illustrates the poor quality of children’s play areas within Wyre Forest, particularly evident in the Stourport analysis area. High quality facilities are concentrated in the Kidderminster analysis areas, highlighting a poor distribution of high quality facilities in the District.
- 7.49 Similar to the application of the quality standard for children’s play areas, map 7.6 shows the poor quality of young people’s facilities within Wyre Forest. The quality of sites within each analysis area is consistent, however the only high quality site is located within the Stourport analysis area.
- 7.50 As well as guiding the enhancement of existing sites, the quality standard should also drive new provision and all new sites should be developed taking into account the identified aspirations of the local residents.

C3	Any new facilities should meet the recommended quality standard. Provision of a range of facilities and effective maintenance were perceived to be of particular importance.
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- 7.51 Consideration should be given to the feasibility of delivering new sites in partnership with schools, to maximise usage of the facilities and ensure best possible use of resources.

C4	Investigate opportunities to deliver new facilities for both children and young people at school sites. These facilities would meet the needs of the community at the same time as optimising the use of resources.
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- 7.52 In light of the localised nature of play provision, consideration has been given to priorities within each analysis area through the interpretation of the quantity, quality and accessibility assessments. In terms of locating priority areas for new facilities, new provision should be targeted at those areas outside the distance threshold where there are sufficient people to justify new provision. This emphasises the importance of access in determining the need for new provision for children.

Bewdley analysis area

- 7.53 Analysis of the quantity standard for children’s provision indicates that by 2026 there will be insufficient provision to meet local need (-0.08 ha). Although there is a small quantitative shortfall in the provision of children’s play areas, application of the accessibility standard reveals that the majority of residents in this area of the District are within the recommended catchment of a site. Only Bewdley town centre is outside of the catchment area for a facility (Figure 7.2).

Figure 7.2 – Deficiency in Bewdley town centre



- 7.54 Although Severn Side South (located in Bewdley town centre) is primarily a residential area, Bewdley town centre is predominately a commercial area and therefore the provision of a play area in this part of Bewdley would have limited value.
- 7.55 Additionally, Northwood Lane Play Area is located in close proximity to this area of deficiency. This is a large play area that is of strategic importance to the District and has a wider catchment than many of the local facilities. As well as serving local residents, people are willing to travel further to use this facility.
- 7.56 In light of the location of this site in close proximity to the central area, along with the limited number of residents in the area of deficiency, increasing access from Bewdley town centre and maintaining the high quality standard of this site should be a priority. This may include maximising signage to the site to increase the awareness of visitors to the area.

C5	Seek to increase access and maintain the high quality standard of Northwood Lane Play Area.
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- 7.57 The provision of Jubilee Gardens in Bewdley, the only Green Flag park in the District, also provides many recreational opportunities for visitors to Bewdley town centre as well as local residents.
- 7.58 In consideration of the even distribution of children’s play areas and the location of Northwood Lane Play Area in the Bewdley analysis area, the future focus should be placed on enhancing the quality of current facilities.

C6	Seek to achieve the recommended quality standard at all play areas in Bewdley analysis area. Use the findings from the site assessments to identify specific sites in need of priority improvements.
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7.59 Quantitative analysis reveals that the Bewdley analysis area is the only area in the District that will have sufficient provision of young people’s facilities by 2026 (0.03 ha). Accessibility mapping illustrates that the majority of residents have access to a young people’s facility, however as with children’s provision, residents in Bewdley town centre are outside the recommended catchment for facilities for young people (figure 7.3).

Figure 7.3 – Deficiency in Bewdley town centre



7.60 As highlighted earlier, this area of Bewdley is not predominantly residential and therefore does not specifically require facilities for young people. The location of Jubilee Gardens (a strategic park in the District) and good provision of amenity green space in the area also means residents located in an area deficient in the provision of young people’s facilities have access to an amenity green space and park.

7.61 In consideration of the above, the Council should aim to increase access to existing young people’s facilities in the area. Should the need arise, consideration could be given to the new provision of a young people’s facility at one of the larger amenity green space sites, for example Greenacres Lane (2.14 ha).

C7	Seek to increase access to existing young people’s facilities in the area. Should the need arise, consider the provision of a new young people’s facility within Greenacres Lane amenity green space.
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Stourport analysis area

7.62 Application of the quantity standard indicates that the Stourport analysis area has sufficient provision for children to meet current and future needs. Stourport analysis area is the only area in Wyre Forest where there is sufficient provision of facilities for children to meet the minimum quantity standard. Accessibility mapping reinforces

this good level of provision, with nearly all residents able to access a children’s play area within the recommended travel time. The only clear area of deficiency can be found to the north west of Stourport town centre (figure 7.4).

Figure 7.4 – Deficiency to the north west of Stourport town centre



7.63 The majority of residents in the area deficient of provision for children, can access Memorial Park within the recommended catchment threshold. Within this park is a children’s play area, however due to the location of this site in the park residents are outside the accessibility threshold and therefore access to this play area and others in the District should be increased to provide opportunities for those residents located in an area of deficiency.

C8	Seek to increase access to children’s play areas in Stourport analysis area, particularly access to larger, valuable sites such as Memorial Park Play Area.
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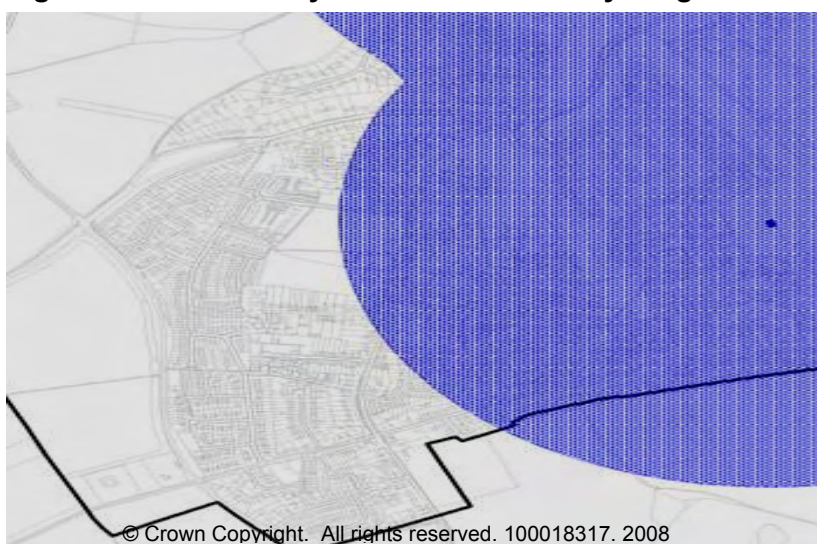
7.64 One other area of deficiency in the analysis area can be found to the east of Stourport town centre. Although residents in this area are outside the catchment of a children’s play area, an industrial works takes up a large proportion of this area and therefore there is no need for a facility in this location. This area is characterised by high density housing and there are therefore limited opportunities to provide a new facility. Despite this, consideration should be given to demand for further provision in this area, particularly in light of lack of green space in the area.

7.65 The provision for young people in Stourport analysis area is insufficient to meet current and future needs. Based on 2026 population projections there will be a shortfall of -0.24 hectares. Application of the accessibility standard reinforces this shortfall, with the key areas of deficiency located to the north west of Stourport town centre and to the west of Areley Kings (Figures 7.5 and 7.6) overleaf.

Figure 7.5 – Deficiency to the north west of Stourport town centre



Figure 7.6 – Deficiency to the west of Areley Kings



- 7.66 The majority of residents outside the accessibility catchment of a young people’s facility to the north west of Stourport town centre are within the catchment area of Memorial Park. This park is the largest park in Stourport (10 ha) and to alleviate deficiencies, consideration could be given to the provision of a new facility within this park.

C9	Consider the provision of a new young people’s facility within Memorial Park.
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- 7.67 The deficiency of young people’s provision to the west of Areley Kings is a key issue considering the majority of residents in this area cannot access a park or garden or amenity green space. In light of this, opportunities for new provision in this area should be seized.

C10	Seize opportunities to provide new young people’s facilities in Areley Kings.
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7.68 The lack of innovative play opportunities was a key theme throughout consultation. ‘The Wild Walshes Play Project’ will ensure the development of natural play at Layamon Walk in Stourport. As part of the project a BMX track, stone monoliths and seating and landscaping will be included. The project will also increase access to Redstone Marsh Nature Reserve, reconnecting people with natural open space. The project will provide excellent opportunities for both children and young people.

C11	Encourage the development of ‘The Wild Walshes Play Project’ within Stourport to ensure maximum benefit for children and young people is gained from this project.
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Kidderminster East analysis area

7.69 The Kidderminster East analysis area has the greatest quantitative shortfall of children’s play areas in the District (-0.63 ha). Application of the accessibility standard exemplifies this shortfall with a large proportion of residents in the centre of the analysis area outside of the recommended catchment of a children’s play area (Figure 7.7).

Figure 7.7 – Deficiencies in Kidderminster East analysis area



7.70 The deficiency of provision in this area is particularly important as the majority of residents are also outside of the catchment for an amenity green space or a park and garden. The location of the railway line also reduces the catchment of existing facilities in this area, particularly in Greenhill and Comberton, which further exacerbates existing deficiencies. New provision in this area of Wyre Forest should be a key priority.

C12	Provide a new facility for children within existing areas of deficiency in the Kidderminster East analysis area.
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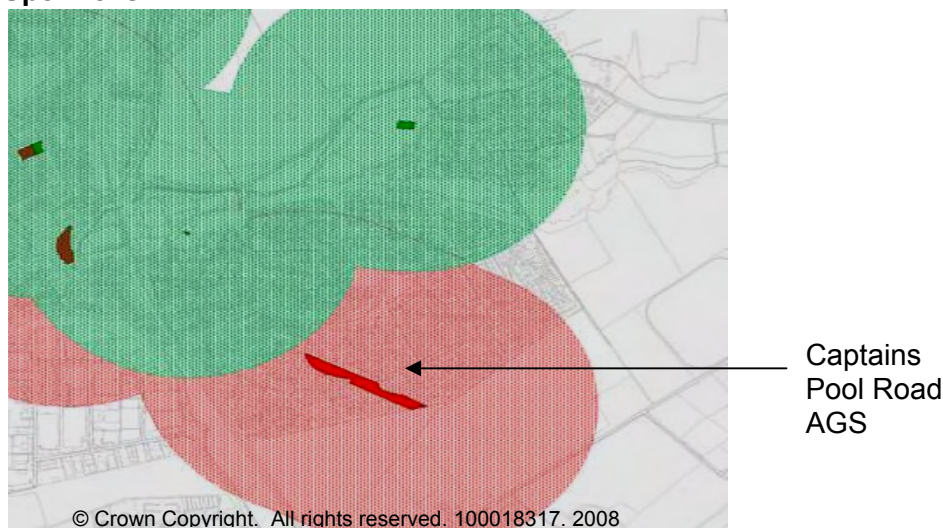
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- 7.71 Sites to the north of Kidderminster town centre are in close proximity to one another and serve the same population. This creates clear deficiencies in Greenhill and Offmore and consideration should be given to the redistribution of existing play areas to alleviate deficiencies in these areas of Kidderminster. Unsurprisingly, the application of the quantity standards reinforces this with the greatest shortfall in the provision of children’s play areas being found in Offmore and Comberton ward.

C13	Consider the redistribution of children’s play areas north of Kidderminster town centre to extend the catchments to residents located in areas of deficiency. Offmore and Comberton ward is a particular priority.
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- 7.72 Analysis on a ward-by-ward basis reveals that Aggborough and Spennells ward has the fourth highest deficiency in the District (-0.15 ha). Within Spennells, a large proportion of residents cannot access a children’s play area, however when combining the provision of children’s play areas and amenity green space it can be seen that all residents in this area have access to either an amenity green space or children’s play area (Figure 7.8).

Figure 7.8 – Provision of children’s play areas and amenity green space in Spennells

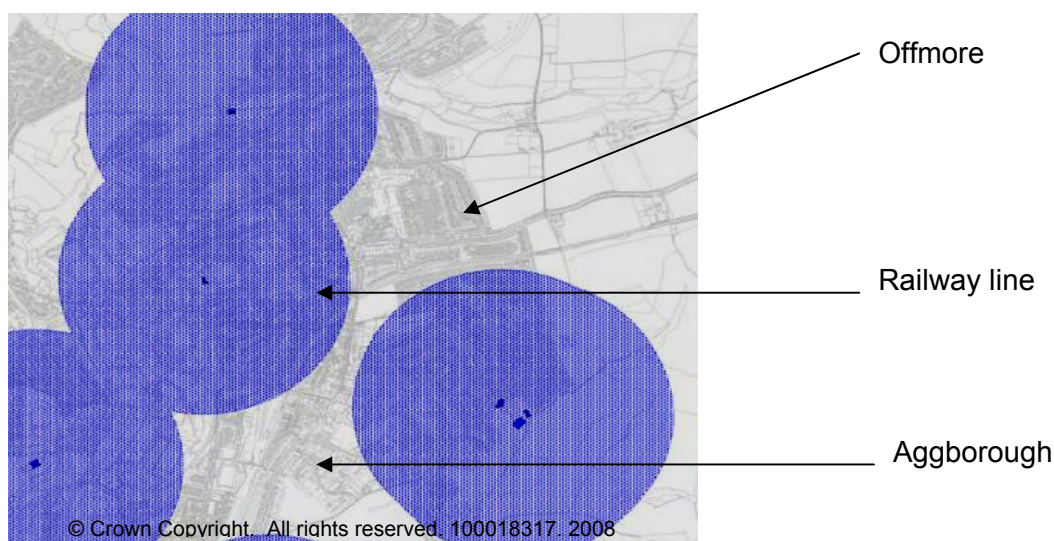


- 7.73 The location of Captains Pool Road, a large amenity green space (1.1 ha) provides a significant opportunity for a new children’s play area in this area of deficiency.

C14	Consider the provision of a new facility for children within Captains Pool Road AGS.
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- 7.74 As with provision for children, the Kidderminster East analysis area has a large quantitative shortfall with the provision for young people (-0.25 ha). Application of the accessibility standard highlights similar areas of deficiency found with children’s provision. A significant amount of residents located in Greenhill, Offmore and Comberton are unable to access a young person’s facility within the recommended 15 minute walk time (Figure 7.9). Deficiencies are further extended with the location of the railway line creating a natural barrier to access and therefore reducing the catchment of a young people’s facility.

Figure 7.9 – Deficiencies in Kidderminster East analysis area



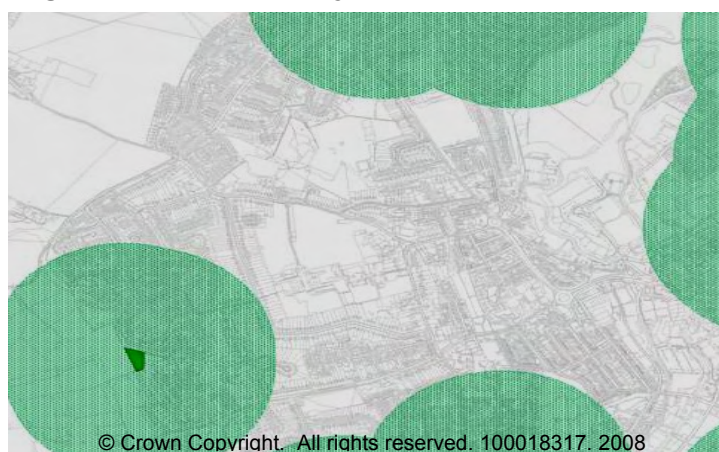
- 7.75 The location of amenity green space and parks and gardens in the Kidderminster East analysis area means the majority of residents located in areas outside the catchment of a young people’s facility are also unable to access an amenity green space or park and garden.
- 7.76 The key areas of deficiency are located in Aggborough and Offmore (illustrated in Figure 7.9). In consideration of the lack of amenity green space and parks and gardens in these areas, the new provision of a young people’s facility should be a priority.

C15	Prioritise the new provision of young people’s facilities within Aggborough and Offmore.
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Kidderminster West analysis area

- 7.77 Application of the quantity standard reveals Kidderminster West will experience a shortfall in the provision of children’s play areas of -0.09 hectares by 2026. Accessibility mapping further illustrates this shortfall, with the majority of residents in the north of the analysis area outside the recommended accessibility catchment of a children’s play area (Figure 7.10).

Figure 7.10 – Deficiency in the north of Kidderminster West analysis area



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- 7.78 Brinton Park Play Area is located in close proximity. This play area is identified as a strategic site and attracts users from a far larger catchment than the local standard of a 10 minute walk time. While this does not negate the need for localised provision, this site serves the majority of residents located in this area of deficiency.

C16	Seek to increase access to Brinton Park Play Area to maximise the opportunities the site provides for residents located in areas of deficiency.
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- 7.79 The distribution of amenity green space in the analysis area means the majority of residents in the centre of the area of deficiency have access to an amenity green space (Figure 7.11 below). Within this area is Woodbury Road AGS and this site is a large site (2 ha) that could be considered for the provision of a new play area.

Figure 7.11 – Provision for children and amenity green space in Kidderminster West analysis area



C17	Consider the provision of a new play area within Woodbury Road AGS.
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- 7.80 Although the provision of amenity green space helps alleviate deficiencies in the centre of the area of deficiency, the majority of residents in Franche and Habberley are outside the catchment threshold of a young people's facility and an amenity green space. Furthermore, consultation highlighted that a lack of facilities for young people is causing particular issues in Franche. Opportunities to address deficiencies in these areas should be seized.

C18	Seize opportunities to provide a new facility for young people within Franche and Habberley.
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7.81 Quantitative analysis of facilities for young people in the Kidderminster West analysis area highlights a shortfall of -0.40 ha by 2026. This shortfall is the greatest in the District and analysis on a ward by ward basis shows that the Aggborough and Spennells ward, located in this analysis area, has the third greatest deficiency of all wards in Wyre Forest (-0.17 ha). Application of the accessibility standard illustrates this shortfall, with clear areas of deficiency located in the north east and centre of the analysis area (Figures 7.12 – 7.13).

Figure 7.12 – Deficiencies in the north east of the Kidderminster West analysis area



Figure 7.13 – Deficiencies in the centre of the Kidderminster West analysis area



7.82 The majority of residents in these areas of deficiency are also outside the recommended catchment of an amenity green space, however the location of Brinton Park in the analysis area, a large strategic park, does in reality provide access to a park for all residents in the area. Within Brinton Park is a variety of young people's facilities and therefore focus should be placed on increasing access to Brinton Park. Consideration should also be given to the provision of a young people's facility within

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the north east of the analysis area due to the fact that residents in this area do not have access to young people's facility or amenity green space.

C19	Focus on increasing access to Brinton Park. Consider any potential opportunities of new provision of a young people's facility within the north east region of the Kidderminster West analysis area.
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- 7.83 Within the centre of the Kidderminster West analysis area the Rifle Range is an area of significant deprivation. A large proportion of residents within this area of deprivation are outside the recommended catchment of a young people's facility. The location of Bewdley Hill AGS, in close proximity to this area, is a large amenity green space that provides potential opportunities for new provision. As highlighted in section 4, this amenity green space is recommended as a potential upgrade to a local park and therefore a young people's facility could be incorporated within this site.

C20	Prioritise the new provision of a young people's facility in the centre of Kidderminster West analysis area. Consider the location of a new young people's facility within Bewdley Hill AGS.
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Rural East analysis area

- 7.84 Provision for both children and young people is particularly challenging within a rural area, as even residents living in small villages expect access to a facility. In order to effectively serve residents, it is therefore likely that the level of provision would exceed the recommended minimum standard.
- 7.85 There are frequently few opportunities to provide formal play facilities within villages, and any new development of facilities should take into account the demand from the local community.
- 7.86 Wyre Forest District Council is offering more play opportunities for children living in rural and deprived areas of the District through 'The Play Ranger Project'. This project enables children who have limited access or insufficient provision of play areas in the area, to play in close proximity to their homes by providing adult supervision for children. This scheme is expected to benefit thousands of children in Wyre Forest and is a particularly valuable resource to residents in the rural and deprived areas of the District.

C21	Continue the development of 'The Play Ranger Project' in deprived and rural areas of the District.
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- 7.87 Application of the quantity standard would suggest that based on the median size of existing facilities within Wyre Forest, a play area should be provided as a minimum if the population of a village exceeds 1480. Decisions regarding the provision of facilities in other smaller settlements should be based on demand from the local residents. Consideration should be given to the deliverability of play facilities on school sites to maximise the use of resources.

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- 7.88 It should be ensured that all villages have at least one type of informal open space where play can be promoted.

C22	Protect rural facilities and support parish Councils in the ongoing provision and maintenance of these sites. Provide new facilities in areas where there is sufficient population or where local demand is expressed.
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- 7.89 In a similar vein, effective provision for young people is challenging within the rural area and it would not be realistic to expect dedicated facilities for young people in every village. Alternative solutions should be explored to ensure that local needs are met, for example the provision of mobile facilities for young people or the Play Ranger project. Additionally, it will be essential to ensure good public transport links between villages and facilities to maximise opportunities for young people. Many residents also raised the opportunities arising through improvements to existing green corridor networks, which could allow young people to cycle to different settlements safely in order to reach facilities.

C23	Consider public transport links in the planning and development of new facilities for young people and ensure that facilities are accessible to young people within the rural area.
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- 7.90 While it is recognised that provision is particularly challenging in the rural area, key areas of deficiency are discussed below.
- 7.91 Application of the quantity standard reveals that the provision of children's play areas in the Rural East analysis area is insufficient to meet current and future needs. Although there is a quantitative shortfall in the area, accessibility mapping highlights that facilities are evenly distributed, with the majority of residents able to access a children's play area within the recommended accessibility catchment. There are a number of smaller settlements, such as Chaddesley Corbett, that do not have a children's play area, however based on the local standard (0.05 ha per 1000 population) the provision of a play area within these settlements would not be expected.
- 7.92 One area of concern is the location of the railway line in Blakedown, which reduces access to the only facility in this settlement, meaning residents in the west of Blakedown are outside the recommended catchment of a children's play area.
- 7.93 Based on the good distribution of children's play areas in the Rural East analysis area, focus should be placed on enhancing access to and improving existing facilities. It may necessary to adopt a partnership approach with other providers.

C24	Seek to improve access to existing children's play areas in the Rural East analysis area, taking into account natural barriers that may affect access.
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- 7.94 Consistent with the findings for children’s provision, there is a shortfall of young people’s provision in the Rural East analysis area. As highlighted, in the rural areas, in order to achieve an even distribution of facilities it is likely that provision above the minimum standard will be required, due to the dispersed nature of settlements.
- 7.95 Based on future population projections there will be a deficiency of 0.17 ha. Application of the accessibility standard further exemplifies this shortfall, with only residents in Cookley able to access a young people’s facility. Clear areas of deficiency are evident in larger settlements in the analysis area, such as Fairfield and Blakedown (Figures 7.14 and 7.15).

Figure 7.14 – Deficiencies in Fairfield



Figure 7.15 – Deficiencies in Blakedown



- 7.96 Local consultation revealed the highest dissatisfaction with the provision of young people’s facilities was in the rural areas of the District and although based on the local quantity standard there is no specific requirement to provide a dedicated facility in both Blakedown and Fairfield, opportunities to provide new facilities (or alternative play opportunities) within these areas of the analysis area should be investigated.

C25	Investigate opportunities for the provision of facilities (or alternative play opportunities) for young people in Fairfield and Blakedown. As highlighted, links with other settlements will be of particular importance in these areas.
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Rural West analysis area

- 7.97 Only one children’s play area, New Forest Close Play Area, is located within the Rural West analysis area and application of the local standard indicates there is a shortfall of children’s provision within this area of the District. Accessibility mapping illustrates that only residents in Far Forest have access to a children’s play area.
- 7.98 Despite only residents in Far Forest being within the recommended accessibility catchment of a children’s play area, based on the quantity standard, there is no need to provide a dedicated facility within any other settlement in the analysis area. Therefore, demand for new provision within villages such as Rock should be monitored and new facilities provided where there is sufficient demand to warrant one. The provision of alternative opportunities through the Play Rangers Scheme should also be explored.

C26	Monitor the demand for new provision within various settlements in the analysis area. Consider the provision of a new play area in settlements that indicate sufficient demand.
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- 7.99 A significant undersupply of young people’s provision in the Rural West analysis area is evident, with no facilities located within the analysis area. Application of the quantity standard further illustrates this deficiency, highlighting a future requirement of 0.09 ha by 2026. As with the northern rural area, while no single settlement is sufficiently large to justify a facility when measured against the quantity standard, it will be important to monitor demand for facilities and consider opportunities for alternative play.
- 7.100 In light of this undersupply of young people’s facilities within this area of the District, appropriate locations for new provision within larger settlements should be identified.

C27	Identify appropriate locations for the provision of young people’s facilities within the Rural West analysis area. As highlighted, links with other settlements will be of particular importance in these areas.
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Summary and recommendations

- 7.101 Equipped provision for children and young people was the overriding theme of consultations throughout the study with residents expressing concerns over the quantity of provision, as well as highlighting that the quality of many facilities is insufficient and that facilities are perceived to be boring and not challenging.

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- 7.102 The recommended local standards address these issues, setting challenging criteria that can be used to identify priority areas. Analysis of existing facilities highlight that there is significant variation in the quality of sites although sites are distributed relatively evenly across the District.
- 7.103 Application of the standards highlights particular priorities for new provision in the Kidderminster East and Kidderminster West analysis areas. In contrast, residents in the Bewdley analysis area have a greater access to facilities for young people and children and there are fewer accessibility and/or quantity deficiencies.
- 7.104 Any new facilities developed should meet the suggested quality criteria and should provide exciting play opportunities for children and young people. Site assessments carried out at existing facilities should also be used to inform decisions on those facilities in need of enhancement.
- 7.105 Effectively providing facilities in the rural area is an important challenge and it will be essential to ensure that public transport links are maximised.
- 7.106 Consideration should be given to delivering facilities for young people and children at school sites to maximise resources and ensure that all residents are able to access at least one facility.

SECTION 8

OUTDOOR SPORTS FACILITIES

Outdoor sports facilities

Introduction and definition

- 8.1 PPG 17 guidance considers the provision of both indoor and outdoor sports facilities. For clarity, these amenities are separated into two distinct typologies within this document. This section considers the provision of outdoor sports facilities across Wyre Forest.
- 8.2 'Outdoor sports facilities' is a wide-ranging category which includes both natural and artificial surfaces for sport and recreation and considers all facilities regardless of ownership. Examples include playing pitches, athletics tracks, bowling greens and golf courses. The primary purpose of all sites within the outdoor sports typology is facilitating participation in formal sports.
- 8.3 PPG17 considers the overall provision of all the different types of outdoor sports facilities and does not break down the typology into more detailed assessments for each sport. Sub strategies, considering the specific supply and demand for each sport, should be undertaken in order to fully understand localised demand for each facility type. The Worcestershire County Playing Pitch Strategy provides specific information regarding shortfalls and surpluses of pitches in the District and will be used to inform the development of the local standards contained within this report.
- 8.4 PPG17 states that the provision of outdoor sport facilities is normally demand-led and therefore it is possible to develop and use a population-based quantity standard. The use of this standard will help to ensure that there is an adequate supply of outdoor sport facilities over the LDF period. Participation will not only be dependent on the number of facilities but also on the degree to which facilities are accessible and of sufficient quality to persuade people that they are worth using. Therefore as with the other typologies covered by this report, quantity issues need to be considered alongside the locally derived quality and accessibility standards.
- 8.5 Outdoor sports facilities are often a focal point of a local community, functioning as a recreational and amenity resource in addition to a formal sports facility. This is particularly true of pitches, which may have a secondary function of a local dog walking and kickabout area.
- 8.6 The effective provision of formal and informal facilities for sports will be instrumental if Wyre Forest District Council is to increase participation rates in line with national and local targets.
- 8.7 The recent Active People Survey (Sport England 2007) highlights that Wyre Forest currently falls in the middle quartile nationally in terms of participation in sport and active recreation, with 20.1% of residents participating on at least three occasions weekly. This is below the national average.
- 8.8 The Active People survey indicates that when compared with the other authorities in Worcestershire, participation in Wyre Forest is low, with only residents of Redditch participating less frequently. The number of residents who volunteer in sport is also higher than Redditch, but lower than other authorities. 24% of adults are members of clubs.

- 8.9 In contrast to the participation figures, satisfaction with existing leisure facilities in Wyre Forest is high (76.5%). This is higher than all other authorities in Worcestershire with the exception of Wychavon.

Figure 8.1 – Baxter Gardens Tennis Courts



Strategic context

- 8.10 The key issues for outdoor sports facilities arising from a review of strategic documents are:
- the **Regional Sports Facility Framework for the West Midlands** sets out the context of sport in the region and outlines the priorities for the future investment in sport and active recreation facilities. It considers the period up to 2021 and assesses the impact of population change, and the facility requirements that will be needed if the targets for participation in sport and active recreation are to be met and support is to be given to the highest levels of elite sport. As well as highlighting key priorities across the region the strategy proposes a network of facilities at a local and regional level. This document should guide the delivery of facilities within Wyre Forest and ensure that facilities are planned taking into account those in adjacent authorities and wider region
 - the framework indicates that the key issues facing the Hereford and Worcestershire CSP relate to the age of facilities. The key conclusions for the area include that across the CSP there is sufficient provision of sports halls and swimming pools, although there are shortfalls in some areas. Additionally, there are good levels of health and fitness provision and commercial sector provision is particularly high in Worcestershire. There may be a need for additional athletics, synthetic pitches and specialist indoor bowls facilities across the CSP area up to 2021. Wyre Forest is not listed as a specific priority for any new provision although the role that the Building Schools for the Future (BSF) programme can play in the improvement of existing facilities is highlighted
 - **Sign up for Sport**, the regional plan for sport outlines seven main outcomes, specifically:
 - increase participation in club and community sport

- improve levels of sport performance
 - widen access to sport
 - improve the health and well being of people through sport
 - create safer and stronger communities through sport
 - improve education through PE and sport
 - benefit the economy through sport.
- the provision of appropriate indoor and outdoor sports facilities will be essential in the achievement of these objectives in Wyre Forest
 - the **Worcestershire Playing Pitch Strategy** indicates that the ratio of pitches to adults in Worcestershire is currently better than the National average at 1:843. Within Wyre Forest, there is 105.5 ha of playing pitches, 75% of which are available for community use. Of these pitches there is a surplus of 30.9, however there is a shortfall of pitches for junior football (-0.1), junior rugby (-2.6) and hockey (-0.8). The Playing Pitch Strategy estimated that by 2009, there would be a surplus of 31.4 pitches in Wyre Forest
 - the **North Midlands Facility Plan** for rugby identifies 6 key areas for improvement, specifically pitches, changing facilities, training and coaching facilities, social areas, floodlighting and spectator facilities. The facility plan sets out a four tier structure. Kidderminster RUFC is a tier three club (has a well established junior section and should have floodlit training facilities and more than one pitch). Stourport RUFC, Chaddesley Corbett RUFC and Bewdley RUFC are tier four clubs offering recreational rugby. The plan identifies the need for training lights at Kidderminster as well as improved changing facilities at Stourport
 - the **Worcestershire Cricket Board Draft facilities strategy** outlines the minimum expected standards for cricket provision and identifies key priorities. Bewdley CC, Kidderminster Victoria CC and Stourport on Severn CC are all focus clubs. Following a full audit of provision, the strategy will identify gaps and then will prioritise projects across the district.
 - the **Wyre Forest District Adopted Local Plan** contains a number of policies relating to outdoor sports facilities:
 - Policy LR9 states that private playing fields, together with sports pitches situated within educational establishments, will be safeguarded to protect their contribution to sports pitch provision in the District and their value as urban amenity open spaces. Section 106 obligations may be required to secure playing fields as part of larger new developments:
 - developments that will result in the loss of playing fields will not be allowed, unless; the proposal is for minor development required in the connection with the use as playing fields **or** alternative or improved provision of at least equivalent community benefit is made available

- Policy LR10 states that the Council will safeguard the area shown on the proposals map north-west of Minster Road, Stourport-on-Severn for outdoor sports use. Proposals for outdoor sports facilities will be encouraged within this area
- Policy LR14 only permits proposals for golf development where there will be no adverse impact on the character and appearance of the landscape and areas of conservation or ecological importance **and** access can be gained from suitable roads without an adverse impact of road safety
- Policy GB3 states that within the Green Belt, the use of land for outdoor sport and recreation will normally be allowed unless there is an adverse impact on the use or amenity of neighbouring land and buildings, including residential properties.
- the **Wyre Forest Sustainable Community Strategy** one of the key themes of the strategy is to improve health and wellbeing by working in partnership with local people and organisations, to promote, sustain and improve the physical and mental health and wellbeing of the local community.

Consultation – Assessing Local Needs

8.11 Consultation undertaken as part of the study highlighted the following key issues:

- 64% of respondents to the household survey do not use outdoor sports facilities. This reinforces the specialist nature of these facilities and is reflective of a participation rate similar to that suggested by the 2007 Active People Survey
- residents identified both quantitative and qualitative issues with regards to outdoor sports facilities. Changing facilities in particular were perceived to be a key issue
- the importance of outdoor sports facilities was emphasised by residents, with many viewing the protection of this type of open space as essential.

Quantity of provision

8.12 The quantity of outdoor sports facilities across Wyre Forest is summarised in Table 8.1 overleaf. Calculations include all outdoor sports facilities regardless of their primary purpose. Consideration will be given to the specific type of facility provided during the application of local standards.

Table 8.1 – Provision of outdoor sports facilities across Wyre Forest

Analysis areas	Current provision	Number of sites	Smallest site (hectares)	Largest site (hectares)	LDF population (2026)	Provision per 1000 population (2026)
Bewdley	9.55	7	0.06	3.63	9,697	0.98
Stourport	56.81	22	0.1	12.86	20,811	2.73
Kidderminster East	28.54	20	0.07	4.82	30,827	0.93
Kidderminster West	32.50	16	0.06	10.20	27,419	1.19
Rural East	52.33	17	0.1	10.48	10,772	4.86
Rural West	5.89	3	0.67	4	2,874	2.05
Overall	185.62	85	0.06	12.86	102,400	1.81

8.13 The key issues emerging from Table 8.1 and consultations relating to the quantity of outdoor sports facilities across the District include:

- analysis of the provision of outdoor sports facilities per 1000 population illustrates that facilities are not equitably distributed across the District – the number of facilities ranges from 22 in the Stourport analysis area to seven in the Bewdley analysis area and just three in the southern rural settlements
- the highest level of outdoor sports facilities is found in the Stourport analysis area, where there are currently 22 sites equating to 56.81 hectares. When calculating provision per 1000 population, the level of outdoor sports facilities in the Stourport analysis area equates to 2.73 ha per 1000, while the Rural East analysis area contains 4.86 hectares per 1000
- of the facility types surveyed, dissatisfaction was shown with the provision of synthetic turf pitches and tennis courts. The highest level of satisfaction was shown for grass pitches, with 46% of respondents indicating that provision is about right. This supports the overall findings of the Playing Pitch Strategy, although this document identified that in some instances the balance between senior and junior pitches did not meet local need
- within the individual analysis areas residents in Kidderminster East demonstrated the highest level of satisfaction for synthetic turf pitches and golf courses. However, respondents in this area also portrayed the highest levels of dissatisfaction with the provision of grass pitches, tennis courts and bowling greens.

8.14 The distribution of specific facilities will be considered later in this section as part of the application of standards.

Setting provision standards – quantity

- 8.15 The recommended local quantity standard for outdoor sports facilities has been derived from the local needs consultation and audit of provision and is summarised below. Full justification for the local standard is provided within Appendix F.

Quantity Standard (see Appendices E and F – standards and justification, worksheet and calculator)

Existing level of provision	Recommended standard
1.91 ha per 1000	1.91 ha per 1000
Justification	
<p>Due to the broad nature of the sports facilities included within this typology, it is recommended that this standard is used for planning need only. Detailed studies (such as a playing pitch strategy) should be used to ascertain the detailed provision required for each type of facility.</p> <p>Overall there is general satisfaction with the current level of provision. The findings from the Worcestershire Playing Pitch Strategy identify there is an overall surplus of pitches in Wyre Forest, with minor shortfalls in the provision of pitches for hockey, junior football and junior rugby. Furthermore there was an emphasis on the quality of outdoor sports facilities established throughout consultation, suggesting quality is more important than quantity.</p> <p>In light of the above evidence, it is recommended that the local standard is set at the existing level of provision. Golf courses are excluded from calculations due to the large area of these sites and their subsequent tendency to skew figures.</p> <p>Setting the standard at the existing level of provision will allow the Council to focus on improving access to existing/new facilities and identify any locational deficiencies that may exist. It will also ensure the quantity of outdoor sports facilities is sufficient to meet the needs of residents in Wyre Forest. This will support the Council in achieving increases in participation in line with national targets, but allow an overall focus on improving the quality of outdoor sports facilities. Respondents to the sports club survey highlighted a desire for the improvement of changing facilities and this should be a key priority for the Council. If new provision is required to meet future needs, the Council should explore the delivery of high quality facilities through access to school sites.</p>	

Current provision - quality

- 8.16 The quality of existing outdoor sports facilities in the District was assessed through site visits and is set out in Table 8.2 overleaf. It is important to note that site assessments are conducted as a snapshot in time and are therefore reflective of the quality of the site on one specific day.

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- 8.17 The quality scores are weighted according to the findings of the local consultation. Those elements that were highlighted through consultation as being a particularly important determinant of quality have been given a higher weighting to ensure that they have a greater influence on the overall quality score that each site achieves. The full rationale behind this approach is set out in Appendix G. The quality of both the playing surface and the ancillary accommodation were deemed to be particularly important for the provision of outdoor sports.

Table 8.2 – Quality of outdoor sports facilities across Wyre Forest

Geographical area	Number of sites	Range of quality scores (%)	Average quality scores (%)	Lowest quality sites	Highest quality sites
Bewdley	7	52 – 74	60	Bewdley Bowling Club – ID 310	Bewdley Tennis Club – ID 313
Stourport	22	40 – 68	59	Gilt Edge Bowling Club – ID 562	Stourport Sports Ground STP – ID 528
Kidderminster East	20	40 – 78	57	Clensmore Street Basketball Court – ID 512	Chester Road Bowling Green – ID 122
Kidderminster West	16	54 – 70	60	Kidderminster Carolions RFC – ID 71	Sutton Park Community Primary School Playing Field – ID 296
Rural East	17	38 – 74	59	The Wolverley Memorial Bowling Green – ID 107	Heathfield School Playing Fields – ID 35
Rural West	3	58 – 72	63	Rock Sports FC – ID 225	Bewdley Town Football Club – ID 73
Overall	85	38 – 78	59	The Wolverley Memorial Bowling Green – ID 107	Chester Road Bowling Green – ID 122

- 8.18 The key issues emerging from Table 8.2 and the consultation relating to the quality of outdoor sports facilities include:

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- the majority of respondents to the household survey feel that the quality of outdoor sports facilities is average (46%). However, a significant amount of residents also regard the quality to be poor (34%). This suggests that in comparison to some other types of open space, sports facilities are perceived to be of lower quality
- the average quality score of an outdoor sports facility in Wyre Forest is 59%, indicating that overall, facilities are average – this is in line with many other types of open space. Despite this, the range of scores awarded to outdoor sports facilities highlights the significant variation in quality of facilities (38 – 78%)
- across the individual analysis areas results mirror the overall findings
- the highest level of satisfaction can be found in Kidderminster East, where 30% of respondents state that the quality of outdoor sports facilities is good. Surprisingly, the quality of sites is actually marginally poorer in this area than in some other areas of the District.

Setting provision standards – quality

- 8.19 The recommended local quality standard for outdoor sports facilities is summarised overleaf. Full justifications and consultation relating to the quality of provision for the local standard is provided within Appendix G. The standard highlights the key aspirations of local residents with regards sports facilities.

Quality Standard (see Appendix G)

Recommended standard – OUTDOOR SPORTS FACILITIES		
Local consultation, national guidance and best practice suggest that the following features are essential and desirable to local residents:		
Essential	Desirable	
Clean/litter free	Changing facilities	
Well kept grass	Good site access	
Parking facilities	On site security	
Detailed analysis of the local consultation suggests that with regards to outdoor sports facilities, the relative importance of the key components is as follows:		
Component of quality	Proportion of possible total responses received	Weighting
Security and safety	24%	3
Cleanliness and maintenance	43%	4
Vegetation	12%	1
Ancillary accommodation	18%	2

Setting provision standards – accessibility

- 8.20 The accessibility of sites is paramount in maximising usage. The recommended local standard is set in the form of a distance threshold and is derived directly from the findings of the local consultations.
- 8.21 Minster Road Sports Ground is a large outdoor sports facility in the District that provides a wide range of facilities for residents in Wyre Forest. The site is a District wide facility that provides excellent access for residents in Wyre Forest due to its central location in the District. Although the local accessibility standard for outdoor sports facilities has been applied for this site, in reality, the size and location of this site means it serves a much larger catchment than identified.
- 8.22 Site specific accessibility issues were also analysed as part of the programme of site visits where information and signage, transport and general accessibility issues were assessed.
- 8.23 Consultation and analysis highlights that the key issues with regards accessibility were:
- findings from the household survey identify that the majority of residents expect to drive to outdoor sports facilities, with the exception of grass pitches where residents expect to walk
 - information and signage was perceived to be poor at a number of sites.
- 8.24 The recommended local accessibility standard for outdoor sports facilities is summarised overleaf. Full justification for the local standard is provided within Appendix H. The standard reflects the aspiration that pitches will be provided in close proximity to the home.

Accessibility Standard (see Appendix H)

Recommended standard
10 MINUTE WALK TIME = GRASS PITCHES
15 MINUTE DRIVE TIME = SYNTHETIC TURF PITCHES, BOWLING GREENS, GOLF COURSES
Justification
<p>There are several factors to consider in setting a standard for outdoor sports facilities. In particular, the range of facilities that lie within this typology makes it difficult to set a meaningful standard that can be applied across the board as per PPG17 requirements. For example, residents have significantly different expectations for synthetic turf pitches (to which they are willing to travel further) than they do for grass pitches (where there is a presumption of more localised provision).</p> <p>Findings from local consultation suggest two standards should be set. A walk time standard has been set for grass pitches and a drive time for tennis courts, bowling greens, synthetic turf pitches and golf courses. These standards have been recommended in line with the expected travel methods and to reflect the specialist nature of this typology, with all facility types not expected to be provided locally.</p> <p>75% of respondents to the household survey indicated they would be willing to travel for 10 minutes to access a grass pitch. A local standard of a 10 minute walk time has therefore been set to reflect the expectation that these facilities would be provided locally. For the five facilities where there is an expectation to drive a standard of a 15 minute drive time has been set based upon the 75% threshold level. Although the 75% level was slightly higher for synthetic turf pitches at 20 minutes a 15 minute drive time has been set due to the perception that there is currently insufficient provision.</p>

Applying provision standards

- 8.25 Given the broad nature of the outdoor sports facilities typology within PPG17, standards should only be applied to give a broad indication of planning need. In light of the demand led nature of each type of facility, specific studies identifying the nature of facilities required should be carried out to provide a further basis for informed decision making.
- 8.26 The application of the recommended quality, quantity and accessibility standards is essential in understanding the existing distribution of outdoor sports facilities and identifying areas where provision is insufficient to meet local need.
- 8.27 The quantity standards enable the identification of areas that do not meet the minimum provision standards, while the accessibility standards will help determine where those deficiencies are of high importance. Applying the standards together is a more meaningful method of analysis than applying the standards separately.

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8.28 Table 8.3 below summarises the application of the quantity standard for outdoor sports facilities.

Table 8.3 – Application of quantity standard

Analysis areas	Current balanced against local standard (1.91 hectares per 1000 population)	Future balanced against local standard (1.91 hectares per 1000 population)
Bewdley	-7.98	-8.97
Stourport	19.16	17.06
Kidderminster East	-27.24	-30.34
Kidderminster West	-17.11	-19.87
Rural East	32.85	31.76
Rural West	0.71	0.40
Overall	0.39	-9.96

Green = above the minimum standard, Red = below the minimum standard.

8.29 As can be seen on the previous page:

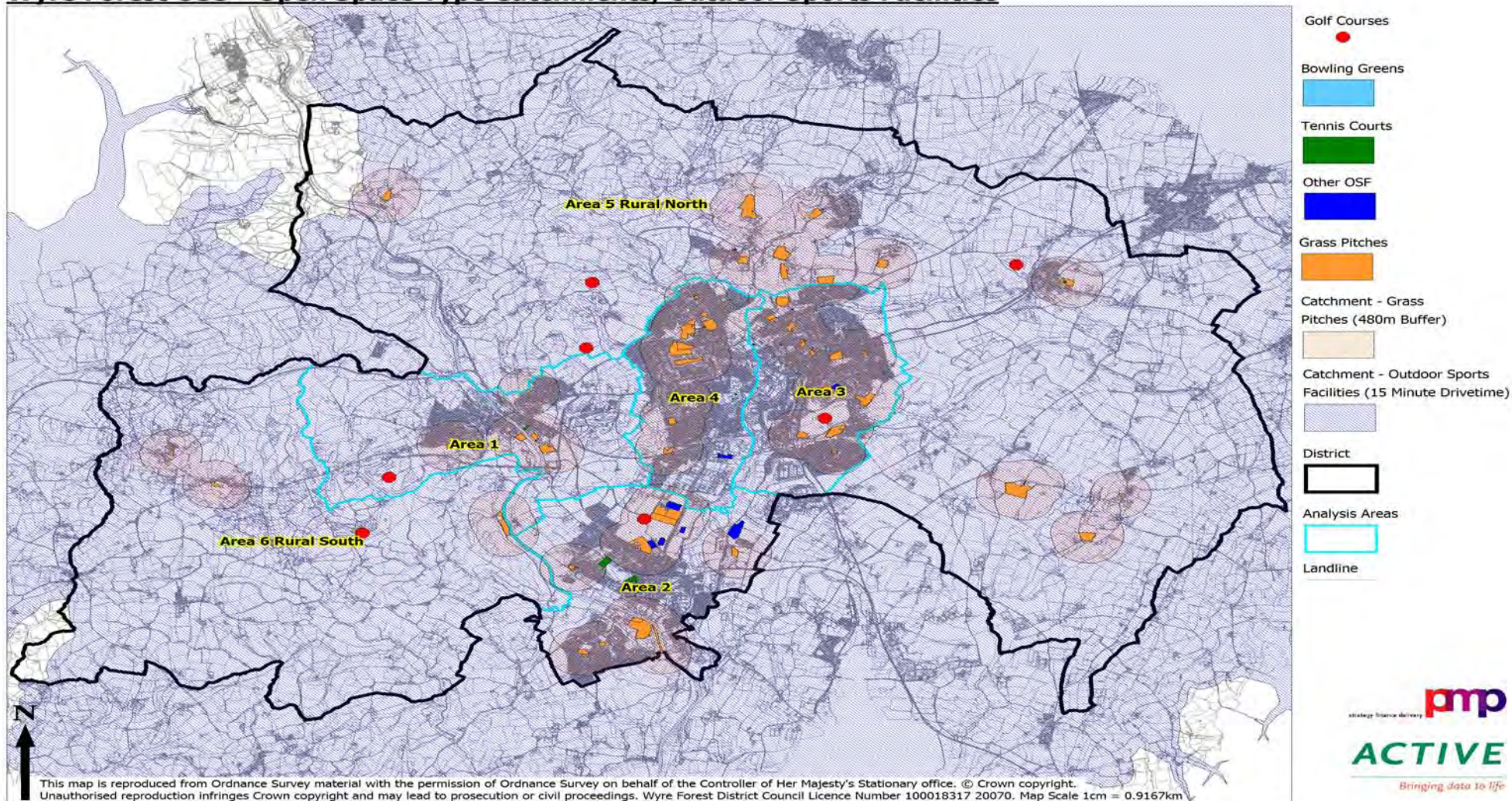
- the recommended local standard is set at the existing level of provision at 1.91 ha per 1000 population – this means that overall there is sufficient provision to meet local needs, although the quantity of facilities in Bewdley and Kidderminster fall below the minimum standard
- although current supply is sufficient to meet demand, application of the quantity standard based on population projections indicates that there will be a shortfall of –9.96 ha of outdoor sports facilities by 2026
- only provision in the rural areas and Stourport will exceed the recommended local standard. This indicates that as a minimum, new provision will be required in Bewdley and Kidderminster.

8.30 The application of the local accessibility and quality standards for outdoor sports facilities is set out overleaf in Maps 8.1 and 8.2.

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Map 8.1 – Provision of outdoor sports facilities in Wyre Forest

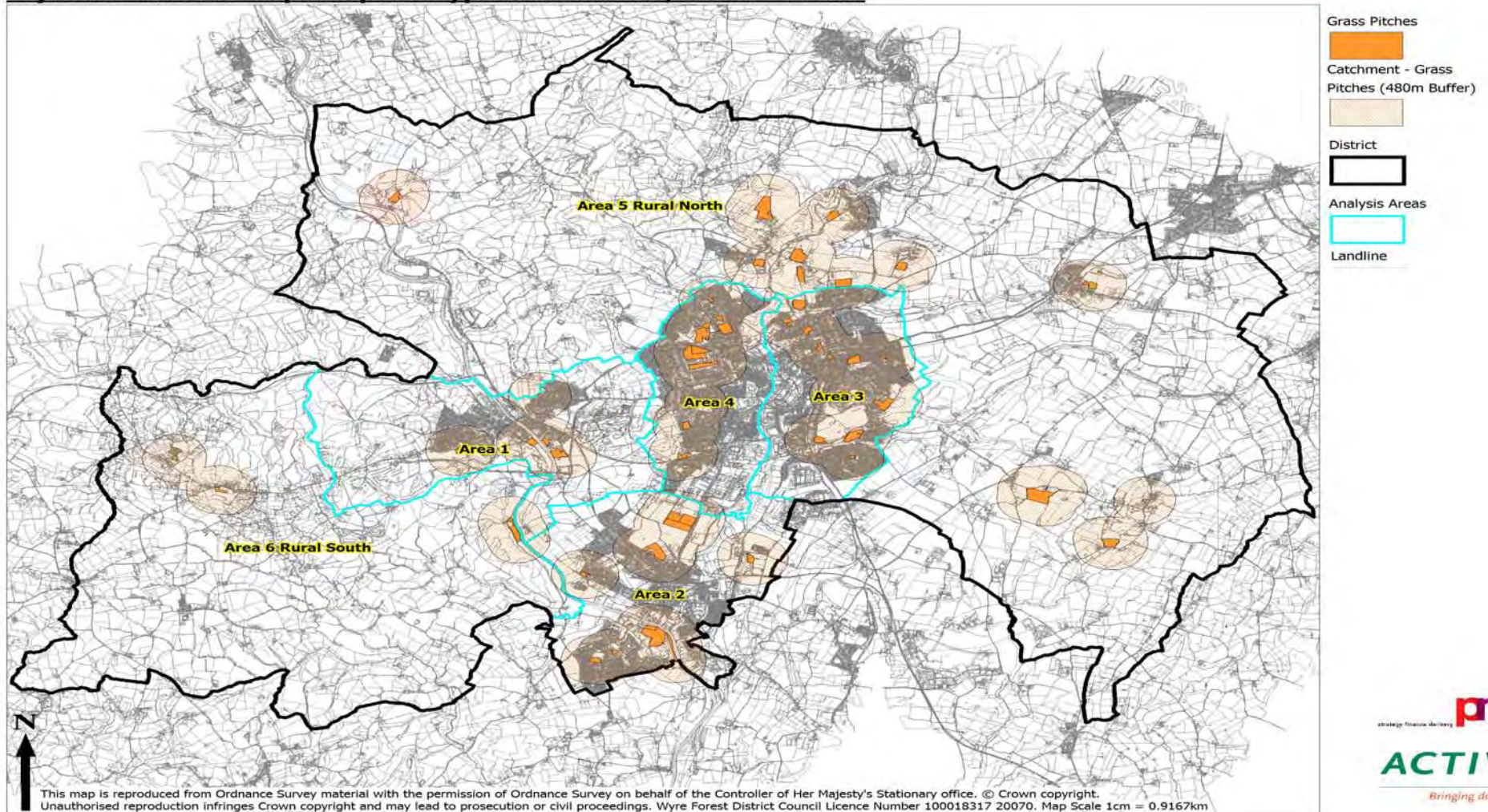
Wyre Forest OSS - Open Space Type Catchments, Outdoor Sports Facilities



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Map 8.2 – Provision of grass pitches in Wyre Forest

Wyre Forest OSS - Open Space Type Catchments, Grass Pitches



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- 8.31 The key issues arising from the accessibility mapping regarding the distribution of sites include:
- there is an even distribution of outdoor sport facilities across both the urban and rural areas of the District
 - all residents in Wyre Forest have access to at least one outdoor sports facility within the recommended travel time
 - school facilities have restricted accessibility and in some instances are not accessible at all. The importance of enhancing access to school facilities was raised throughout consultations and this will be returned to later in this section
 - analysis of the spread of different types of outdoor sports facilities indicates that pitches are evenly distributed and that the majority of residents are able to access local provision. In contrast, bowling greens, tennis courts and larger sites containing multiple facilities are focused predominantly within the Stourport analysis area.
- 8.32 The distribution of the different facility types in Wyre Forest is summarised in Table 8.4 below.

Table 8.4 – Distribution of different outdoor sports facilities across Wyre Forest

Area	Bowling Greens (no. of sites)	Tennis Courts (no. of sites)	Pitches (no. of sites)	Golf Courses	Other facilities
Bewdley	1	1	5	2	0
Stourport	7	2	10	1	5
Kidderminster East	2	2	13	1	3
Kidderminster West	4	1	10	0	2
Rural East	3	2	13	3	0
Rural West	0	0	3	1	0

Applying the quantity, quality and accessibility standards

- 8.33 Quantity standards enable the identification of areas that do not meet the minimum provision standards, while the accessibility standards will help determine where those deficiencies are of high importance. Quality standards outline the key aspirations of local residents and provide an indication as to where sites may currently fall below expectations.
- 8.34 Consultation indicated that while the quantity of facilities is problematic in some areas, there is a real need to improve the quality of many existing sites. This was reflected by the quantity standard, which was set at the existing level of provision.

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- 8.35 Site visits highlighted that existing facilities are currently average, with the mean score of a site being 59%, although there is a significant variation in the range of scores achieved. Respondents to the sports club survey indicated a desire for improved changing facilities and in some instances highlighted this as much as an issue as the quality of pitches. As there are few accessibility deficiencies, the initial focus should be on the enhancement of existing facilities.
- 8.36 Sites have therefore been divided into quartiles according to their quality. This analysis is set out in Table 8.5 below and a selection of sites falling into each category is listed. A full list of all scores achieved during site assessments can be found within Appendix C. To fall within the top quartile, a score of 70% would be required.

Table 8.5 – Detailed analysis of the quality of existing sites

Above upper quartile	70% +	(78%) Chester Road Bowling Green – ID 122 (70%) Churchill and Blakedown Sports Centre – ID 221
Median – Upper quartile	62% - 69%	(68%) Bewdley Cricket Club – ID 307 (62%) Gilt Edge Bowling Green – ID 561
Lower quartile – median	56% - 61%	(60%) Springfield Park OSF – ID 525 (56%) Areley Common Recreation Ground – ID 140
Less than lower quartile	55% and below	(54%) Bewdley Leisure Centre Playing Fields – ID 175 (38%) Wolverley Memorial Bowling Green – ID107

- 8.37 As highlighted in Table 8.5 above:
- only nine sites achieved a quality score of 70% or greater. The majority of these sites are grass pitches, indicating this facility to be of higher quality than the other outdoor facilities in the District
 - in contrast, 16 sites scored below 55%. A large amount of bowling greens were classified in this category, suggesting that bowling greens are of poorer quality than other outdoor sports facilities in Wyre Forest. All sites in this bottom quartile should be identified as priorities for improvement.

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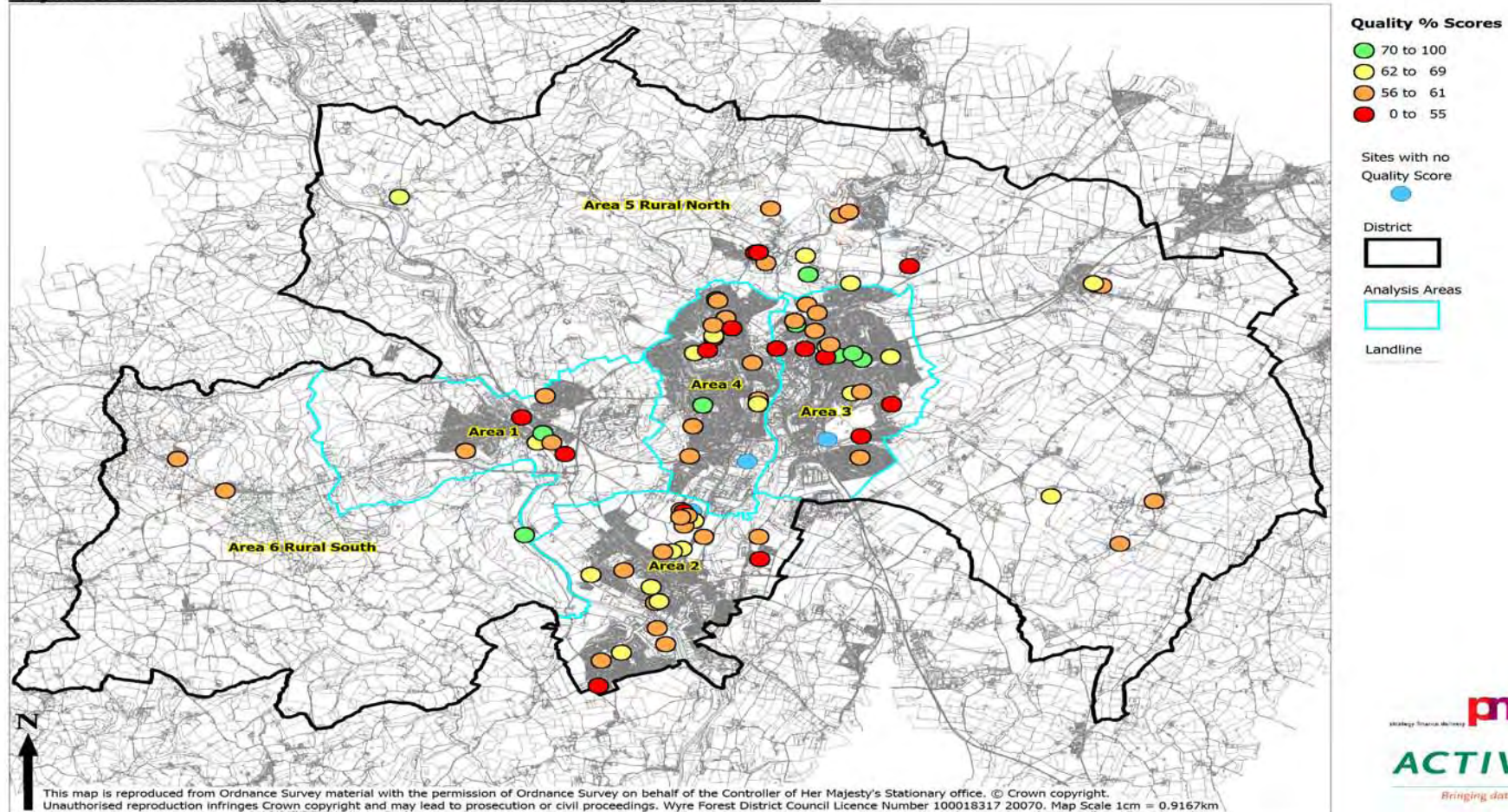
OSF1	<p>Seek to improve the quality of outdoor sports facilities, to achieve 70% (the score required to fall within the top quartile). This should ensure that all are fit for their intended purpose.</p> <p>Sites should meet National Governing Body criteria. This includes the provision of appropriate changing facilities.</p>
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8.38 Map 8.3 overleaf illustrates the application of the quality standard for outdoor sports facilities in the District.

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Map 8.3 – Quality of outdoor sports facilities in Wyre Forest

Wyre Forest OSS - Quality Scores, Outdoor Sports Facilities



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- 8.39 Map 8.3 illustrates an even spread of facilities of high and low quality across all areas of the District. However, despite this even distribution the majority of high quality sites are focused in the north of the Kidderminster East analysis area.
- 8.40 Clusters of poor quality facilities are evident in Wyre Forest. These are particularly noticeable in the Kidderminster, Stourport and rural analysis areas (Figures 8.2 – 8.4).

Figure 8.2 – Clusters of poor quality sites within the Kidderminster analysis areas



Figure 8.3 – Cluster of poor quality sites within the Stourport analysis area

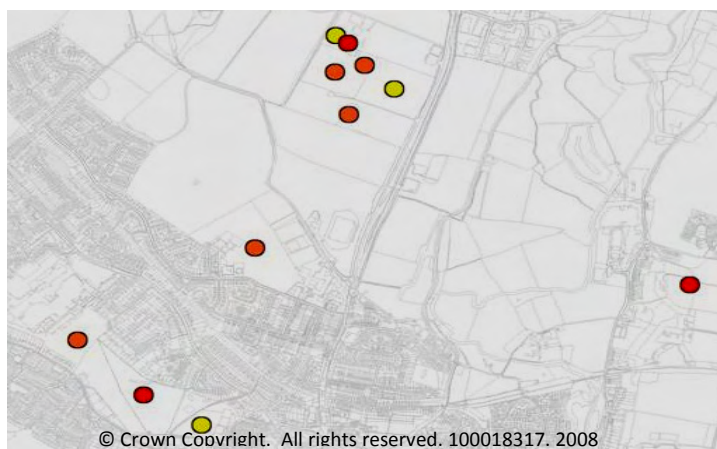
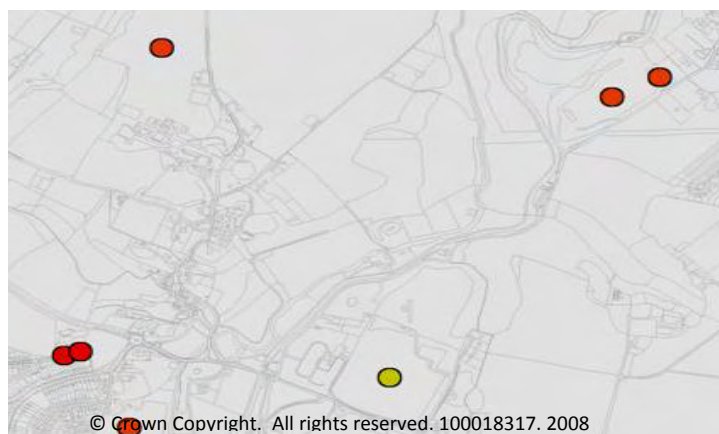


Figure 8.4 – Cluster of poor quality sites within the rural analysis areas



SECTION 8 – OUTDOOR SPORTS FACILITIES

- 8.41 In addition to the quality of outdoor sports facilities, consultation highlighted that the quantity of provision in some areas is problematic.
- 8.42 As previously highlighted, all residents have access to either a bowling green, tennis court or larger outdoor sports facility within the recommended 15 minute drive time. Although all residents in the District have access to one of these facilities the distribution of sites is poor.
- 8.43 Although PPG17 groups together all outdoor sports facilities, in order to appropriately understand the provision of different facilities, consideration is given to the location of each of the different types of facility provided. Table 8.3 summarised the distribution of different types of facility across the district. In light of the expectation that tennis courts and bowling greens will be provided within a drivetime distance and are not expected within close proximity of the home, consideration has been given to the provision of these facilities at a District wide level.

Tennis courts

- 8.44 Tennis courts are concentrated in the urban areas of the District, with six of the eight stand alone tennis courts located within the urban analysis areas and at least one facility located within each of the three main towns. Although residents in the rural area have significantly fewer tennis courts than the urban area, the greatest level of satisfaction was portrayed within the rural analysis areas.
- 8.45 In consideration of this, focus should be placed on increasing access and enhancing the quality of existing tennis courts in the District. In areas where there is a demand for increased provision, the use of school sites should be considered to address this demand.

OSF2	Focus on increasing access and enhancing the quality of existing tennis courts in the District. Use the findings of the site assessments to identify poor quality sites in need of improvement.
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Bowling greens

- 8.46 The provision of bowling greens is significantly higher within the Stourport and Kidderminster West analysis areas, with 10 of the 15 facilities situated in these areas. Overall, there was a general satisfaction with the current level of provision and unsurprisingly the greatest level of satisfaction was portrayed within the Kidderminster West analysis area.
- 8.47 There are a number of high quality bowling greens in the District; however the average quality score of a bowling green is 56% indicating that there are also some poor quality sites. Indeed, there is one bowling green that falls within the bottom quartile. Therefore the focus should be on the maintenance and enhancement of quality of the existing facilities. Consultation did not reveal any demand for new facilities.

OSF3	Seek to enhance the quality of bowling greens in the District aiming to achieve a quality score in the upper quartile level (70%). Use existing high quality sites as examples of good practice.
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Other outdoor sports facilities

8.48 Larger facilities containing various outdoor sports facilities are concentrated in the urban areas of the District, particularly within the Stourport analysis area. These sites offer significant recreational and sporting opportunities for residents in the District. Multi sports sites provide a variety of opportunities, as well as being more economically sustainable and these sites should therefore be protected from development.

OSF4	Protect all outdoor sports facilities from development.
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8.49 Due to the fact that all residents have access to a tennis court, bowling green or other outdoor sports facility within the recommended 15 minute drive time, these will not be discussed further in relation to each analysis area. The provision of grass pitches will be the main point of the discussion for the remainder of the application of the standards.

Grass pitches

8.50 The Worcestershire Playing Pitch Strategy identified three priorities for improvement:

- the protection of existing provision

OSF5	Protect existing pitches through a general presumption against developing on playing pitches unless it can be demonstrated under the terms of PPG 17 that the pitches are surplus to requirements. This should include marketing the pitches for a period of not less than 18 months for sport at the land value for this use. Evidence of these activities is to be submitted to the Local planning department. After this period consideration should be given to the use of the playing pitches as other forms of use with in the typology of PPG 17.
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- enhancement of existing provision

OSF6	Seek to enhance the quality of existing playing pitches in Wyre Forest. Use the findings from site assessments and consultation to identify priorities for improvement. Improvements should tie in with the priorities of the regional facility strategy and the sport specific regional governing body priorities.
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- overcoming identified deficiencies.

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- 8.51 The Worcestershire Playing Pitch Strategy estimates there will be a surplus of 31.4 ha of playing pitches by 2009. Despite a surplus of provision there is a shortfall of pitches for junior football (-0.1), junior rugby (-2.6) and hockey (-0.8).
- 8.52 In light of the findings of the playing pitch strategy full size adult pitches that could be redesignated for the use of junior football and junior rugby should be identified. To alleviate shortfalls in hockey, consideration should be given to the new provision of a synthetic turf pitch. If this is not feasible the Council should seek to obtain formal community use agreements with schools in the District.

OSF7	Identify potential adult pitches that could be redesigned for the use of junior football and junior rugby. Consider the development of a new synthetic turf pitch for the use of hockey at a strategic location within the District. If this is not feasible the Council should seek to obtain formal community use agreements with schools in the District.
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- 8.53 The Worcestershire Playing Pitch Strategy highlighted that the ratio of pitches to the adult population is higher in Wyre Forest than it is in the other areas of Worcestershire, as well as higher than the national average. There are 54 sites containing pitches, of which the majority are dedicated to football.
- 8.54 There are four main rugby clubs in the district (Kidderminster, Stourport, Bewdley and Chaddersley Corbett) as well as several cricket clubs. The largest cricket clubs are located in Kidderminster and Stourport.
- 8.55 Synthetic pitches are specialised pitches which primarily serve the needs of hockey clubs for competitive fixtures as well as football clubs for all weather training. Third generation facilities can also be used for rugby. The regional facilities strategy identifies that there is a need for additional synthetic pitches across the region.
- 8.56 There are currently two synthetic facilities located in Wyre Forest at King Charles Secondary School and Stourport High School. Active Places Power indicates that the provision per 1000 population is 0.03, which mirrors both the West Midlands and national average.
- 8.57 The existing two facilities are located in close proximity to two of the existing hockey clubs (Stourport and Kidderminster). The playing pitch strategy indicates that there is a shortfall of almost one pitch. Only Chaddesley Corbett Hockey Club does not have local access to facilities. In light of this, any new provision should be linked with this club or in the larger settlement of Bewdley, the only town in the district where residents do not have access to a synthetic turf pitch. Prior to the development of a facility, usage of existing sites and latent demand should be re-evaluated. In addition to investigating the need for an additional site, efforts should focus on ensuring that existing provision remains of sufficient quality to meet local needs and that the appropriate facilities are provided on site to encourage participation.

OSF 8	Monitor the demand for additional synthetic pitches in light of the shortfall identified in the playing pitch strategy and the lack of provision in Bewdley and to serve Chaddesley Corbett Hockey Club. Maintain and improve the quality of the existing sites.
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- 8.58 The analysis below and overleaf considers the distribution of outdoor sports pitches in each of the four analysis areas. While this provides an indication of the distribution of facilities and the extent to which the provision of pitches meets community need, in light of the demand led nature of facilities, consideration should be given to updating the Playing Pitch Strategy, which currently runs up to 2009. This will enable the consideration of latent demand as well as providing an assessment of the potential impact of the achievement of the target of a 1% increase in participation on the demand for pitches.

OSF 9	Update the Playing Pitch Strategy ensuring that latent demand and the impact of a 1% increase in participation per annum is considered.
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Bewdley analysis area

- 8.59 Application of the quantity standard reveals there is insufficient provision of outdoor sports facilities to meet current and future demand. Accessibility mapping highlights a poor distribution of facilities with sites located in close proximity to one another creating overlapping catchments. Despite a poor distribution of facilities the majority of residents do have access to a grass pitch within the recommended 10 minute walk time. Deficiencies do however exist predominately in Bewdley town centre, but also to the west and east of this area (Figure 8.5).

Figure 8.5 – Deficiencies in Bewdley analysis area



- 8.60 Only one grass pitch within the analysis area is publicly owned and consultation identified the need for increased provision of publicly accessible sports pitches within Bewdley. Opportunities for the provision of a new publicly accessible grass pitch should be seized.

OSF10	Seize opportunities to provide a publicly accessible grass pitch within the Bewdley analysis area.
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- 8.61 Due to the high density of housing and commercial buildings in these areas of existing deficiency there is currently little opportunity to provide a new grass pitch.

SECTION 8 – OUTDOOR SPORTS FACILITIES

Therefore the focus should be placed on increasing access to school facilities in the area.

OSF 11	Maximise access for the community to schools in Bewdley, both state owned and private. School facilities can provide opportunities for both formal sports and informal recreation in areas that may be otherwise devoid of provision.
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- 8.62 Bark Hill AGS is located in an area deficient in the provision of sports pitches and provides opportunities for informal sport and recreation. Access to this site and other informal sites in the District should be increased through the provision of green linkages from residential areas.

Stourport analysis area

- 8.63 The provision of outdoor sports facilities is highest in the Stourport analysis area and quantitative analysis of the provision indicates there is sufficient supply to meet current and future demand. Although there is sufficient provision of outdoor sports facilities application of the quantity standard highlights a number of overlapping catchments, creating deficiencies within and to the east of Stourport town centre and in the north of the analysis area (Figures 8.6 and 8.7 below and overleaf).

Figure 8.6 – Deficiencies within Stourport town centre



Figure 8.7 – Deficiencies in the north of Stourport analysis area



- 8.64 Only Areley Kings Football Pitches and Areley Common Recreation Ground are publicly owned facilities, the remainder of facilities are located either at school sites or voluntary clubs. Increasing access to school sites should therefore be a key priority.

OSF12	Provide additional community facilities in Stourport by maximising access for the community to local school sites, both state owned and private.
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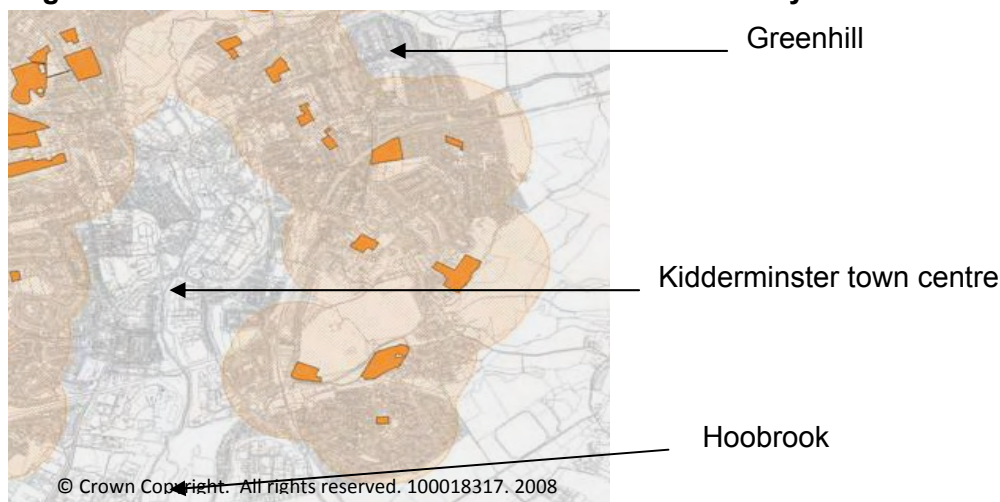
- 8.65 Residents within Stourport town centre outside the recommended catchment of a grass pitch do have access to a tennis court, bowling green and a large site containing a range of outdoor sports facilities. Memorial Park is also in close proximity to these residents offering various informal sport and recreation opportunities. Residents in the north of Stourport, outside the catchment of a grass pitch, have local access to a tennis court. Therefore, any new provision of pitches should be concentrated in the north of Stourport. With the exception of this, the future focus should be placed on increasing access to existing outdoor sports facilities and informal open space.
- 8.66 Policy LR10 of the Local Plan states that the Council will safeguard the area shown on the proposals map north-west of Minster Road, Stourport-on-Severn for outdoor sports use and that proposals for outdoor sports facilities will be encouraged within this area. The Council should monitor demand in this area for increased provision of outdoor sports facilities.

Kidderminster East analysis area

- 8.67 Although application of the quantity standard reveals a large shortfall in the provision of outdoor sports facilities, accessibility mapping illustrates a good distribution of sites with the majority of residents able to access a grass pitch within the

recommended travel times. Despite this, a key area of deficiency is evident in Kidderminster town centre and pockets of deficiency are also evident in Hoobrook and Greenhill (Figure 8.8).

Figure 8.8 – Deficiencies in the Kidderminster East analysis area



8.68 The greatest shortfall in provision is located within the Kidderminster East analysis area and based on future population projections a large deficiency of –30.34 hectares is expected. Consultation reflects the large undersupply of provision in the area, with residents in the Kidderminster East analysis area demonstrating the greatest level of dissatisfaction with the provision of grass pitches. In consideration of the low level of provision and high levels of dissatisfaction in the area the Council should investigate demand in detail. New grass pitch provision within this area should be prioritised if demand is expressed. S106 agreements could provide opportunities for new provision.

OSF13	Prioritise the new provision of a grass pitch within the Kidderminster East analysis area. New provision should be located in an area where there is a lack of pitches and demand for a new facility.
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8.69 The balance of public and private outdoor sports facilities is even and public facilities are well distributed across the analysis area and are a valuable resource to the local community. It is important the Council ensures these sites are of high quality so they remain frequently used and provide benefits to local residents.

Kidderminster West analysis area

8.70 Similar to the findings the Kidderminster East analysis area, quantitative analysis indicates there is insufficient provision of outdoor sports facilities within Kidderminster West analysis area. Only one tennis court (Brinton Park Tennis Courts) is located in the area, however the provision of bowling greens is high (five sites). Accessibility mapping highlights a relatively good distribution of grass pitches with the only clear area of deficiency located on the eastern boundary of Kidderminster town centre (Figure 8.9 overleaf).

Figure 8.9 – Deficiencies in Kidderminster West analysis area



- 8.71 Publicly owned grass pitches are well distributed within the analysis area, with one facility located in each of the four wards in the area. The protection and enhancement of these sites is therefore crucial in providing a network of publicly accessible sports pitches.
- 8.72 Due to the urban density of Kidderminster there is limited opportunity to provide new grass pitches. Therefore, to alleviate existing deficiencies in the area the Council should seize any opportunities for new provision and seek developer contributions if required.

OSF 14	Seize potential opportunities to provide new sports pitches in the Kidderminster West analysis area. Consider the use of developer contributions to achieve this new required provision.
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Rural analysis areas

- 8.73 Application of the quantity standard indicates there is adequate provision of outdoor sports facilities in the rural analysis areas to meet current and future demand. This sufficient provision is further highlighted by the fact that the second greatest amount of provision is located in the Rural East analysis area (52.33 ha). The nature of the rural settlements means that in order to adequately serve residents and to ensure local provision of facilities, it is likely that provision will need to be significantly above the minimum quantity standard.
- 8.74 Accessibility mapping highlights this high level of provision with nearly all residents in the larger settlements able to access a grass pitch within the recommended 10 minute walk time. Although residents in Rock are not within the recommended catchment of a grass pitch, new facilities will only be required where there is an expressed demand.

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- 8.75 Outdoor sports facilities can also fulfil a similar role to informal open space in villages. In many villages, the outdoor sports provision is at school sites. Opening these facilities to the local community would maximise opportunities for residents.

OSF15	Maximise access to local school sites for the community within rural settlements. School facilities can provide opportunities for both formal sports and informal recreation in areas that may be otherwise devoid of provision.
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- 8.76 As previously mentioned the new provision of sports facilities should be demand led. Although only minor accessibility deficiencies exist within the analysis area, demand within these areas should be monitored and the Council should consult with Parish Councils and sports clubs to identify any demand for new facilities.

OSF16	Monitor the demand for new provision within the rural analysis areas. Consult with Parish Councils and sports clubs to identify if there is sufficient demand for increased provision within these areas.
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- 8.77 Within the Rural West analysis area all outdoor sports facilities are owned by schools and sports clubs and therefore offer limited casual access and pay and play opportunities. This reinforces the need to explore casual access to existing facilities.

Summary

- 8.78 Outdoor sports facilities is a wide ranging category of open space which includes both natural and artificial surfaces for sport and recreation that are owned and managed by Town and Parish Councils, sports associations, schools and individual sports clubs. Examples include playing pitches, athletics tracks, bowling greens and golf courses with the primary purpose of participation in outdoor sports.
- 8.79 This PPG17 study considers the provision of all the different types of outdoor sport facilities as one and does not break down the typology into more detailed assessments for each sport. If undertaken, a playing pitch strategy considers current and future pitch provision in detail as a bespoke element of outdoor sport facilities.
- 8.80 Consultation highlights issues with both the existing quality of facilities and the quantity of facilities. Analysis of the existing provision supports this, as there is a significant variation in the quality of facilities, with site assessment scores ranging from 38% to 78%. Particularly issues with the provision of changing rooms were constantly highlighted throughout consultation.
- 8.81 Within the District there are a significant amount of facilities at school sites. School facilities represent a key opportunity to provide additional sites maximising the use by the community, particularly in the rural areas. Access should be negotiated at both state and private schools.
- 8.82 The distribution of outdoor sport facilities across the District is uneven, with high levels of provision located in the Stourport and Kidderminster analysis areas. There is also a large difference in the amount of land dedicated to these facilities, which is reflective of the type of facilities in each area. To some extent this determines the level of quantitative shortfall/surplus in an area and it is essential that this is therefore only treated as an indication of demand.

SECTION 8 – OUTDOOR SPORTS FACILITIES

- 8.83 Analysis of the application of standards highlights key deficiencies with the provision of grass pitches within the Kidderminster analysis areas. The main reason for this is the dense urban nature of the area and a poor distribution of facilities. There are also deficiencies in Bewdley. While this should guide the provision of new facilities, it will be essential to firstly maximise the usage of existing sites. The impact of achieving a 1% increase in participation on the demand for pitches should be considered as part of the regular process of updating the playing pitch strategy. The current playing pitch strategy highlights deficiencies.
- 8.84 Synthetic pitches are specialised facilities which are used primarily for competitive hockey and football training. The playing pitch strategy identified a shortfall of facilities and new provision should therefore be considered. Bewdley is the only main town without a facility, while Chaddesley Corbett Hockey Club does not have a local facility. While demand for additional facilities should be monitored on an ongoing basis, the quality of the existing sites should be maintained and enhanced to ensure that the facilities adequately cater for the needs of the clubs.
- 8.85 Improvements to the provision for bowls across the district should focus on improving the quality of existing sites. There are several examples of good practice. Despite an uneven distribution of bowling greens, consultation did not reveal any demand for additional facilities.
- 8.86 Like bowls, enhancements to the quality of existing tennis facilities were perceived to be of greater importance than the provision of new facilities.
- 8.87 In light of the importance of sports facilities to local residents and the potential impact on demand should targets of a 1% increase in participation per annum be realised all sports facilities should be protected from development.

SECTION 9

INDOOR SPORTS FACILTIES

Indoor sports facilities

Introduction

- 9.1 PPG17 states that it is essential to consider the role that indoor sports facilities play in meeting the needs of local residents. It states that the provision of swimming pools, indoor sports halls, indoor bowls and indoor tennis should be considered as part of the local supply and demand assessment.
- 9.2 The methodology for the assessment of indoor facilities is slightly different to other PPG 17 typologies in that specific demand modelling can be undertaken using Sport England parameters and demand modelling tools.
- 9.3 For clarity, outdoor and indoor sports have been separated into two distinct typologies within this document. This section considers the provision of indoor sports facilities across Wyre Forest.

Strategic context and consultation

- 9.4 The **2008 – 2011 Sport England Strategy** focuses on the improvement of the opportunities for sport in the run up to the London Olympics, targeting:
- 1m people doing more sport by 2012-13
 - a reduction in post-16 drop-off in at least five sports by 25% by 2012-13.
 - a quantifiable increase in satisfaction (actual measure to be determined¹)
 - improved talent development systems in at least 25 sports.
 - a major contribution to the delivery of the Five Hour Sport Offer.
- 9.5 The **Regional Sports Facility Framework for the West Midlands** sets out the context of sport in the region and outlines the priorities for the future investment in sport and active recreation facilities. It considers the period up to 2021 and assesses the impact of population change, and the facility requirements that will be needed if the targets for participation in sport and active recreation are to be met and support is to be given to the highest levels of elite sport. As well as highlighting key priorities across the region the strategy proposes a network of facilities at a local and regional level. This document should guide the delivery of facilities within Wyre Forest and ensure that facilities are planned taking into account those in adjacent authorities and wider region
- 9.6 The framework indicates that the key issues facing the Hereford and Worcestershire Community Sports Partnership (CSP) relate to the age of facilities. The key conclusions for the area include that across the CSP there is sufficient provision of sports halls and swimming pools, although there are shortfalls in some areas.
- 9.7 Additionally, there are good levels of health and fitness provision and commercial sector provision is particularly high in Worcestershire. There may be a need for additional athletics, synthetic pitches and specialist indoor bowls facilities across the CSP area up to 2021. Wyre Forest is not listed as a specific priority for any new provision although the role that the Building Schools for the Future (BSF) programme can play in the improvement of existing facilities is highlighted.

Sign up for sport - A Regional Plan for Sport in the West Midlands (2004-2008) - Sport England (West Midlands)

- 9.8 Sport England as the national agency driving sports development takes a strategic lead on the provision of sport.
- 9.9 Sign up for sport is a plan for sport and physical activity in the region. Its formulation has involved national, regional and local consultations with key stakeholders, agencies and organisations across the private, public and voluntary sectors that fully understand the strategic issues and local needs of the region.
- 9.10 The plan highlights the following seven main outcomes:
- increasing levels of participation in club and community sport
 - improving levels of sports performance
 - widening access to sport
 - improving the health and well being of people through sport
 - creating safer and stronger communities through sport
 - improving education through PE and sport
 - benefiting the economy through sport.
- 9.11 As a consequence of this adopted plan, the Council has the responsibility of becoming a partner agency in the delivery of these priorities, ensuring that the framework of the West Midlands plan for sport filters through into local sport and leisure strategy planning.
- 9.12 The provision of indoor sports facilities will also be instrumental in the achievement of the aims and objectives of the Wyre Forest Sustainable Community Strategy. One of the key themes of this strategy is to improve health and wellbeing by working in partnership with local people and organisations to promote, sustain and improve the physical and mental health and wellbeing of the local community.
- 9.13 The recent Active People Survey found that the percentage of adults participating in at least 30 minutes moderate intensity sport and active recreation (including recreational walking) on three or more days a week in Wyre Forest is 20.1%. This indicates that levels of physical activity in the District are broadly similar to the national level. Local, regional and national objectives target an increase of 1% in participation per annum. The impact of the achievement of this target on the provision of facilities in Wyre Forest is significant and will be returned to later in this section.
- 9.14 The Sport England Choice and Opportunity Indicator, a measure of access to quality sports facilities, indicates that 42.12% of the population Wyre Forest reside within 20 minutes travel time of a **range of three different sports facility types** of which one has achieved a quality assured standard. This places Wyre Forest in the second to bottom quartile nationally. This analysis provides an indication of the choice and opportunity that residents have.
- 9.15 Sport England has subdivided the population into nineteen segments which all have different characteristics and consequently are likely to engage in sport in different ways. The dominant market segments in Wyre Forest are:

SECTION 9 – INDOOR SPORTS FACILITIES

- **Elsie and Arnold** - those that do participate tend towards low intensity activities, such as walking, bowls or dancing (traditional ballroom), safe environments would encourage this group to walk more often
- **Roger and Joy** – are likely to participate in activities such as swimming, walking, sailing, golf, fishing and bowls
- **Philip** – prefers sports such as sailing, the gym, football, jogging, badminton, golf, cycling and cricket
- **Tim** – likes activities such as canoeing, skiing, cricket, golf, cycling, football and squash.

9.16 This population profile information provides an opportunity to tailor the leisure facilities provided to the likely aspirations of residents. It is important to ensure that facilities are appropriately designed to encourage participation. Of particular relevance to indoor facilities is the preference for those classified as “Elsie and Arnold” to play bowls and “Roger and Joy” who have the propensity to participate in swimming and bowls. Appropriate swimming and bowls facilities will be essential if participation levels in the district are to be maximised.

9.17 Wyre Forest are in Wave 7 of the Building Schools for the Future programme. This programme will see significant investment in all five secondary schools, including the sports facilities and will ensure that higher quality facilities are provided. In particular, schools will benefit from sports halls which are fit for purpose and are likely to be open to the community outside of school hours. This will mean that the stock of publicly accessible facilities will increase.

Consultation

9.18 Consultation with residents identified the need for new and enhanced indoor sports facilities. In particular swimming pools and indoor courts were identified as being in need of improvement. There was an overall focus on the quality of facilities as opposed to the quantity.

9.19 A significant number of residents identified the need for an indoor bowls facility in the District, reflecting the profile of the population as summarised by the Sport England Market Segmentation.

9.20 The household survey identified that the cost of using a facility, as well as the cleanliness, maintenance and range of activities provided are important considerations for residents of Wyre Forest.

Quality

9.21 The PPG17 Companion Guide reinforces that design and management are factors integral to the successful delivery of a network of high quality sport and recreation, stating that:

“Quality depends on two things: the needs and expectations of users, on the one hand, and design, management and maintenance on the other.”

9.22 The quality standard for indoor sports facilities should reflect the views and aspirations of the local community and should be linked to the national benchmark and design criteria. Residents considered the following key issues to be of particular importance in the provision of a high quality indoor facility:

SECTION 9 – INDOOR SPORTS FACILITIES

- Cleanliness and maintenance (15%) of changing facilities and toilet facilities
- Range of activities (14%)
- Maintenance (12%)
- Ease and security of parking (10%)
- Welcoming staff (8%).

9.23 Less than 5% of residents indicated that longer opening hours, childcare facilities, refreshments and cycle stands were of particular importance to them.

9.24 These findings have therefore been used to drive the recommended quality standard for indoor sports provision which are set out below.

Recommended standard – INDOOR SPORTS FACILITIES	
Local consultation, national guidance and best practice suggest that the following features are essential and desirable to local residents:	
Essential	Desirable
Safe and secure parking facilities	Good access
Clean toilets and changing facilities	Equipment maintenance
Range of facilities	Welcoming staff.

9.25 As demonstrated, improvements to the quality of existing facilities were highlighted as being of greater importance than increases in the overall quantity of provision. Further detail on the views and aspirations of the local community, alongside the recommendations for the local quality standard can be found in Appendix G.

Benchmarking and design specifications

9.26 In line with PPG17 recommendations, in addition to establishing a quality vision for sports facilities based on local community needs, a quality standard for indoor sport and recreation facilities has been set using national benchmarks, Sport England Technical Design Guidance Notes and Quest Best Practice Standards. Key objectives underpinning this quality standard are:

- to provide clear guidance relating to facility specifications, ensuring suitability of design for the targeted range of sports and standards of play as well as individual requirements for specialist sports and uses
- to ensure high standards of management and customer service are attained, which meet or exceed customer expectation and lead to a quality leisure experience for all users of facilities.

9.27 The quality standard is therefore split into two components:

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

9.28 It can be seen that some elements of the quality standard, derived from local needs and aspirations, are linked to the specifications detailed in QS1 and QS2.

QS1: Quality standard (design and technical)

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

- 9.29 A full list of Sport England Design Guidance Notes can be found on, and are available to download free, from the Sport England website.

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

- 9.30 The space requirement for most sports depends on the standard of play – generally the higher the standard, the larger the area required. Although the playing area is usually of the same dimensions, there is a need to build in provision for increased safety margins, increased clearance height, spectator seating, etc. Similarly, design specification varies according to level of competition with respect to flooring type and lighting lux levels, for example.
- 9.31 Sport England Design Guidance Notes are based on eight standards of play. Consideration should be given to the desired specification of the facility in question at the outset.

QS2: Quality standard (facility operation and management)

QS2: All leisure providers to follow industry best practice principles in relation to a) Facilities Operation, b) Customer Relations, c) Staffing and d) Service Development and Review. The detail of the internal systems, policies and practices underpinning implementation of these principles will correlate directly to the scale of facility, varying according to the position of the facility within the levels of the established hierarchy.

Supply and demand analysis – developing standards

- 9.32 In order to evaluate the adequacy of existing facilities, supply is compared to an estimated demand. The foundations of all demand assessments are analysis of the demographic nature of the resident population within the local authority. Consideration is also given to the impact of facilities in surrounding local authorities.
- 9.33 The findings of supply and demand models should inform the development of provision standards. Quantity standards should only be applied through the planning process where new facilities are required, and where part of the need for new provision is generated by the impact of the new development. The application of provision standards will be critical however in the event of significant population growth.
- 9.34 The Facilities Planning Model (FPM) was updated following the 2001 census (in 2003) and a rerun was also undertaken in February 2008. The rerun is based on over 65,000 records collected as part of the National Benchmarking Service as well as specific surveys carried out across the country with the purpose of updating the FPM. The parameters used in the FPM are therefore directly representative of usage. This means that the use of the FPM for analysis of the provision of sports halls and swimming pools provides a robust understanding of supply and demand in an area and consequently of the adequacy of supply to meet demand.

Current position

- 9.35 A broad review of indoor sport and recreation facilities has been undertaken to guide future planning across Wyre Forest. This review was based on the Active Places database and the FPM.
- 9.36 This review considers the facilities managed by Wyre Forest District Council and also takes into account facilities owned by other providers, including schools and commercial operators.
- 9.37 Provision of sports halls, swimming pools, indoor tennis and indoor bowls has been considered in terms of quality, quantity and accessibility. For clarity, the provision of each type of facility is considered individually.

Sport halls

Context

- 9.38 Within Wyre Forest there are currently 11 sports facilities that contain sports halls, which equates to 44 courts across the district. Table 9.1 overleaf outlines detailed information on each of these sites.
- 9.39 Wyre Forest Glades Leisure Centre is the main provider of sports halls in the district, containing eight courts which are publicly accessible at all times. Stourport Sports Centre contains six courts and also offers full public access. As well as the publicly accessible facilities, Wolverley High School also offer pay and play community use of their 5 court school sports hall and Stourport High provide pay and play community use. There is limited access to the other schools.
- 9.40 Four sites contain halls of only one court in size. In light of the limited types of sport that can be played in a one court hall, these halls are excluded from demand modelling. The exception to this is where a site contains both a larger hall and a smaller hall. Both Wolverley High School and King Charles School contain a four court hall and a one court hall and provision at these sites is therefore included.
- 9.41 Baxter College contains a four court hall. The site is used by some clubs, including Kidderminster Badminton Club. The site was excluded from the national FPM run and will therefore be considered as an additional opportunity within this analysis.
- 9.42 The provision of sports halls in Wyre Forest is summarised overleaf.

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Table 9.1 – Provision of sports halls in Wyre Forest

Site Name	Ward	Number of courts	Ownership	Access	Management	Year built	Year refurbished
Holy Trinity School	Greenhill	1	Other Independent School	Sports Club / Community Association	Education (in house)	1965	-
Heathfield School	Wolverley	3	Other independent school	Private			2005
Stourport High School Club	Lickhill	1	Community school	Sports Club / Community Association	DC Leisure in partnership with WFDC	-	-
Bewdley Leisure Centre	Wribbenhall	3	Community school	Pay and Play	DC Leisure in partnership with WFDC	1990	2003
Baxter College		4	College	Sports Club / Community Association	Education (in house)		
Kidderminster Youth House	Greenhill	4	Other	Pay and Play	Local Authority (in house)	1975	-
Winterfold House School Sports Hall	Blakedown and Chaddersley	4	Other Independent School	Private Use	Education (in house)	2000	2006
King Charles I Secondary School (King Charles Sports Centre)	Offmore and Comberton	1 & 4	Voluntary Controlled School	Sports Club / Community Association	Education (in house)	1955 & 1978	- & 2006
Wolverley High School	Wolverley	1 & 4	Community school	Pay and Play	Education (in house)	1960 & 1960	-
Stourport Sports Centre	Areley Kings	6	Local Authority	Pay and Play	DC Leisure in partnership with WFDC	1974	2006

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Wyre Forest Glades Leisure Centre	Greenhill	8	Local Authority	Pay and Play	Commercial Management	1986	2008
Total number of courts		44					

Consultation

- 9.43 49% respondents to the household survey feel that the provision of sports halls is sufficient. 21% of residents indicate provision is insufficient.
- 9.44 The individual analysis areas portray differing results to the overall findings, with respondents feeling there are not enough sports halls. The greatest dissatisfaction is shown in Stourport, where 26% of residents feel provision was insufficient.
- 9.45 General comments from residents focused on the need for new and enhanced indoor sports facilities. Indoor courts were perceived to be of poor condition and in need of refurbishment.
- 9.46 66% of respondents to the household survey expect to drive to a sports hall. 27% of residents prefer to walk to access this facility type. Similar perceptions are reflected in the individual analysis areas.
- 9.47 Based on the 75% threshold level (as advocated by PPG17 companion guide) residents in Wyre Forest would be prepared to travel for 15 minutes by car to access a sports hall.

Supply and Demand Analysis – Adequacy of existing provision

- 9.48 In order to analyse the adequacy of the existing provision of sports halls across Wyre Forest, consideration has been given to the quantity, quality and access to existing sites.

Quality of existing provision

- 9.49 The quality of facilities is particularly important to local residents. The age of facilities, along with the quality of the sites may influence how likely residents are to use facilities.
- 9.50 Analysis of the quality of sites demonstrates that:
- the most recently built facility in the district is Winterfold House School sports hall which does not offer public access at this point in time
 - of the four sites offering unrestricted public access, the most recently built facility is Bewdley Leisure Centre which was built in 1990
 - in total, five of the 11 sites have been refurbished since their initial development. Three of these sites are those which offer unrestricted public access and they have all been refurbished in the past five years. The most recently refurbished site in Wyre Forest is the Wyre Forest Glades in Kidderminster, which was refurbished in 2008. These recent refurbishments suggest that there are some high quality, publicly accessible sports halls in the district
 - while there are some high quality new sites, there are four sites over 20 years old which have not yet been refurbished. These sites are considered to be less attractive to residents and this is reflected within the FPM which suggests that Wolverley High School is the least attractive facility in the district (capacity 27%) followed by King Charles I Secondary School (capacity 47%) and Kidderminster Youth House (capacity 65%). Improving the attractiveness of these facilities would increase their theoretical capacity to meet the needs of residents
 - Stourport Sports Centre, one of the main public facilities has achieved Quest Accreditation, with a score of 83%. This means that the centre is highly commended. Of particular note with regards the quality of facilities, the centre is

perceived to have helpful and welcoming staff and to be well presented in terms of cleanliness and maintenance. Consultation identified that these features are particularly important to local residents. Furthermore, the range of activities offered was considered to be good

- Wyre Forest Glades Leisure Centre has also achieved Quest Accreditation with a score of 83% and the assessment concluded that the site offers high quality opportunities for residents, particularly for those who are from groups with traditionally low participation rates. The centre was also considered to be adequate in terms of cleanliness and maintenance.

Quantity of provision

9.51 The FPM indicates that 14.2% of badminton courts in Worcestershire are located in Wyre Forest. Approximately 21% of the population in Worcestershire reside in Wyre Forest indicating that provision is perhaps disproportionate to the population. Wyre Forest contains 3.2 courts per 10000 residents. This compares poorly with both the regional figure (3.7 courts) and the national average (3.8 courts) again suggesting that provision in Wyre Forest is lower than in other areas. This is surprising given the rural nature of Wyre Forest. As a general rule, more facilities are required in rural areas to adequately meet the needs of the population.

9.52 The FPM measures the adequacy of the quantity of provision based on the demand (in terms of number of visits) compared to the capacity of the facilities in the area to accommodate these visits. It concludes that the existing facilities in Wyre Forest are capable of sustaining 5150 visits per week. Demand is equivalent to 4300 visits which equates to 27 courts. The facility at Baxter College is not included within these calculations. The overall supply is therefore marginally higher than recorded (this facility is accessible to clubs only and does not offer pay and play).

9.53 This indicates that in quantitative terms, existing facilities are just sufficient to meet demand. This supports the views expressed during consultation, where 49% of residents feel that supply is sufficient. In order to ensure that supply is sufficient to effectively meet demand it is necessary to ensure that supply is greater than demand.

Access to facilities

9.54 Access to facilities is perhaps the most important determinant of the adequacy of facilities.

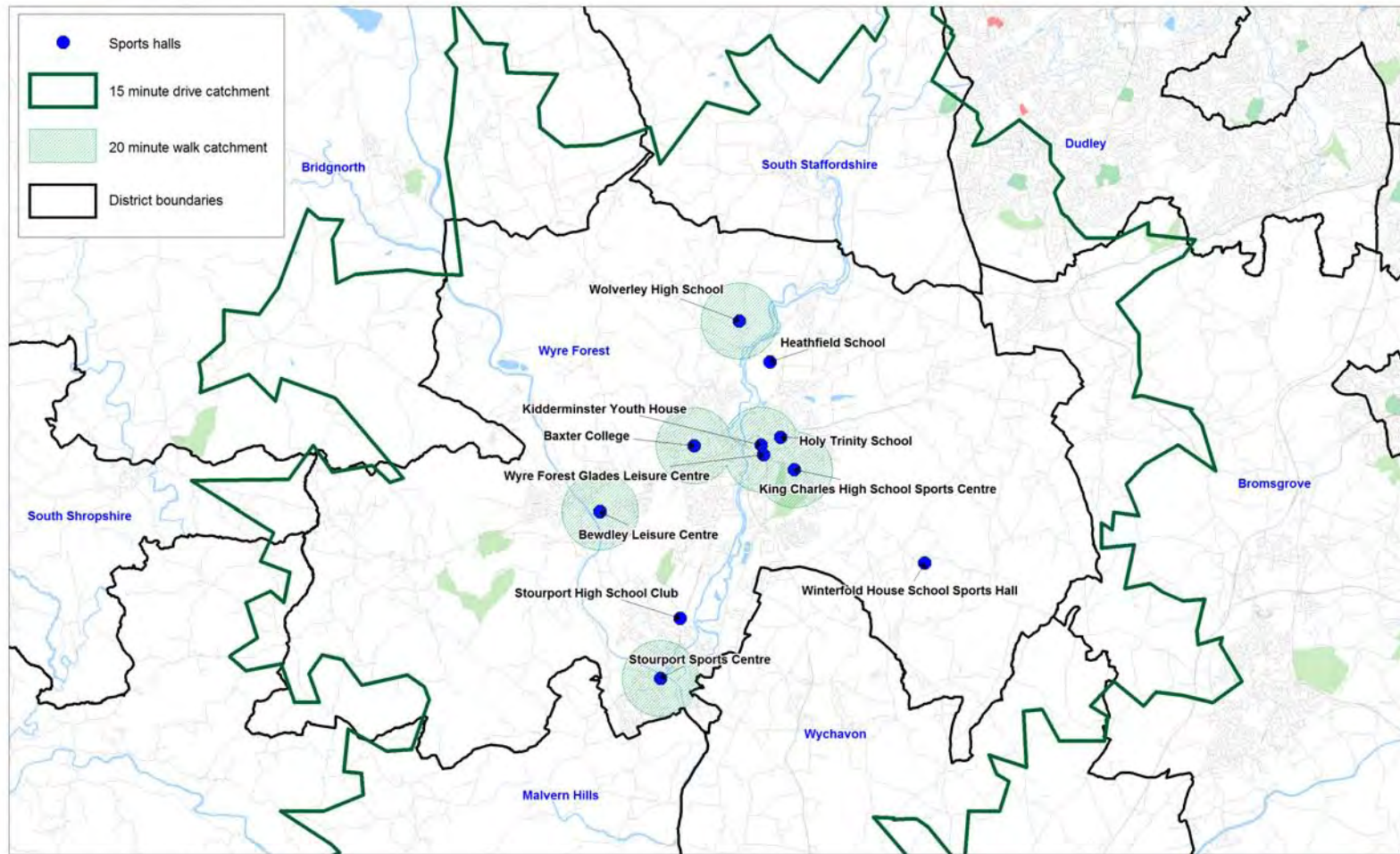
9.55 The findings of the household survey and other consultations suggest that residents in Wyre Forest expect to travel by car to reach a facility (65%). This is supported by the fact that only 13% of households are without access to a car compared to 19.5% in England. Only 27% of respondents indicated that they would expect to walk to indoor facilities. Despite the fact that only 27% of respondents would expect to travel on foot, it will still be necessary to ensure local access to facilities, particularly in areas of low car ownership.

9.56 Findings from the household survey demonstrate that for those residents who expect to drive to a facility, the 75% level is 15 minutes. The modal response is 10 minutes. For those who would expect to travel on foot, the 75% level is a 20 minute walk.

9.57 Map 9.1 overleaf therefore illustrates the distribution of existing sports halls and demonstrates the catchments, based on the above assumptions, which facilities in Wyre Forest serve.

SECTION 9 – INDOOR SPORTS FACILITIES

Map 9.1 – Sports Hall Provision



Sports halls



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- 9.58 It can be seen that when considering access by car, all residents are within a 15 minute drivetime of at least one facility. Access to facilities on foot is however more limited although the majority of residents in the three main towns of Kidderminster, Stourport and Bewdley are able to walk to a facility. It is in these areas where the majority of residents without access to a car are located. Facilities are particularly clustered around Kidderminster.
- 9.59 In order to assess the degree to which demand is met by the supply of facilities, the FPM takes into account the location of existing sports halls and the likely means of transport that people will use to reach the site. It also takes into account the profile of the population and the type of facilities that are provided to serve the population.
- 9.60 The national FPM run demonstrates that in terms of access to sports halls, 89.1% of residents are located within the catchment area of a facility. This is a high proportion of residents, although it falls marginally below the region (91.8%) and England (90.2%).
- 9.61 The FPM suggests that 91.3% of those who travel by road are satisfied, while only 8.7% are satisfied if they wish to travel on foot. 41.5% of unmet demand from those travelling by is due to a lack of capacity at facilities and only 3.1% is due to residents being outside of the appropriate catchment. This is reflected in Map 9.1
- 9.62 In contrast, for those wishing to walk to facilities, only 4.4% of unmet demand occurs because facilities do not have capacity and the remainder is a result of being outside of the catchment for facilities. The unmet demand therefore largely arises as a result of the rural nature of the district and the lack of access for some residents within the towns.
- 9.63 Analysis suggests that unmet demand is equivalent to 467 visits per week. This equates to circa 3 courts. Map 1 in Appendix I illustrates the level of unmet demand in the district and provides an indication as to the location of this unmet demand. It can be seen that there are no areas of the district where unmet demand is sufficiently high to warrant the provision of an additional facility. Map 2 (appendix I), which considers aggregated unmet demand in the district suggests that there are no locations where a potential facility would meet more than 2.7 courts of unmet demand. Furthermore, Baxter College is excluded from this analysis. This facility is located in Kidderminster, the area of highest unmet demand.
- 9.64 This suggests that while the supply and demand for sports halls is closely balanced, there are currently sufficient sports halls to meet the needs of the population at the current time. In addition to the larger sports halls, there are a range of smaller community halls which act as local facilities and can host a range of activities including dance and aerobics. Such facilities are particularly valuable in the more rural settlements. Key facilities in Wyre Forest include Stourport Community Centre, Wribbenhall Community Centre, Woodbury Centre, Broadwaters Centre, Kidderminster, Franche Community Centre and Wyre Forest Day Opportunities.

Summary – sports halls

- 9.65 Analysis of the quantity, quality and accessibility of sports halls indicates that overall there is sufficient quantity to meet demand and that 89.1% of demand is met. Facilities are well distributed across the district and there are no areas of high unmet demand. The majority of unmet demand is from those who expect to walk to facilities. Analysis demonstrates that the existing facilities are at / almost at capacity (currently running at 79.9%). Wyre Forest Glades and Stourport Sports Centre are particularly busy.

SECTION 9 – INDOOR SPORTS FACILITIES

- 9.66 Given the quantity of demand that is met, the focus should be on maintaining the quality of sports halls. If the 1% increase in participation is achieved, in light of the close balance of demand with supply, consideration should be given to the adequacy of sports halls. This will also be in the case as the population increases in the district.
- 9.67 Sites with a lack of public access are excluded from calculations. Improved access to these sites may help to reduce any programming difficulties at key sites in the District where there is high demand. This will be particularly important over the LDF period. Improvements to the quality of existing facilities will also increase the capacity of these facilities.
- 9.68 As participation increases, consideration should be given to the maximisation of resources on school sites and access by the community. Programmes such as Building Schools for the Future and the extended schools programme offer significant opportunities. Wyre Forest are in Wave 7 of the Building Schools for the Future programme. This programme will see significant investment in all five secondary schools, including the sports facilities and will ensure that higher quality facilities are provided. In particular, schools will benefit from sports halls which are fit for purpose and are likely to be open to the community outside of school hours. This will mean that the stock of publicly accessible facilities will increase and will be more equipped to meet demand. This will be important in light of the close balance between supply and demand.
- 9.69 Providers of all indoor sports facilities should strive to achieve the quality vision and where possible, larger sites should work towards Quest accreditation, the national benchmark for quality. As highlighted, this has already been achieved by Wyre Forest Glades and Stourport Sports Centre.
- 9.70 It must be noted that while this analysis considers the amount of residents that are within the appropriate catchment of a sports hall, this differs from the Sport England Choice and Opportunity Indicator, which evaluates the number of residents within a 20 minute catchment of three facilities, one of which is quality assessed. This considers the range of different opportunities that residents have, rather than their access to each facility type.

Swimming pools

Context

- 9.71 There are currently six large swimming pools within Wyre Forest, equating to 20 lanes and 2042m² of water space. There is also a learner pool located at the Sebastian Coe Health Club.
- 9.72 The main swimming pools in the district are outlined in Table 9.2 overleaf.
- 9.73 Table 9.2 reveals that two of the six pools allow unrestricted public access (Stourport Sports Centre and Wyre Forest Glades). Both of these facilities are owned by Wyre Forest Council (and managed by Wyre Forest Leisure Community Association Ltd) and although the pool at the Wyre Forest Glades Leisure Centre is predominantly used as a leisure pool, this pool is the largest in the district (1121.25m²).
- 9.74 The remaining provision of swimming pools in the district is made up of two school sites and two private membership clubs. Holy Trinity School offers access to sports clubs and organisations.
- 9.75 In addition to the pools mentioned above there are also small swimming pools at Winterfold School, Waves Health and Leisure Club and Little Lakes Golf Club (a lido). There is also a facility at King Charles 1 School, equivalent to 162m² of pool water. Due to the size and nature of these facilities they have been excluded from demand modelling calculations. There is no public access to any of these facilities.
- 9.76 In addition to the six larger swimming pools, there are three small swimming pools at primary schools in the district, specifically Franche Primary School, Cookley Sebright Primary School and Chaddesley Corbett Primary School. While these sites are too small to be included within demand modelling, they nevertheless offer opportunities for swimming lessons and for local schools to use their facilities. The facility at Franche Primary School is also available to hire for parties.
- 9.77 Table 9.2 overleaf summarises the provision of swimming pools in Wyre Forest.

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Table 9.2 – Provision of swimming pools in Wyre Forest

Site name	Ward	Number of lanes	Area (m ²)	Ownership	Access	Management	Year built	Refurbished
Holy Trinity School	Greenhill	4	162	Other Independent School	Sports Club / Community Association	Education (in house)	1965	2006
JJB Fitness Club (Kidderminster)	Greenhill	1	180	Commercial	Registered Membership use	Commercial Management	2004	-
Sebastian Coe Health Club (Bewdley)	Wribbenhall	6	250	Commercial	Registered Membership use	Commercial Management	1990	-
Stourport Sports Centre	Areley Kings	5	312.5	Local Authority	Pay and Play	Commercial Management	1974	-
Wyre Forest Glades Leisure Centre	Greenhill	N/A	1121.25	Local Authority	Pay and Play	Commercial Management	1986	2006
Franch Primary School	Franch	N/A	Small Pool	School	Sports Club	Education		
Chaddesley Corbett Primary School	Blakedown and Chaddesley	N/A	Small Pool	School	School	Education		
Cookley Sebright Primary School	Cookley	N/A	Small Pool	School	School	Education		

Consultation

- 9.78 43% of residents indicate that the quantity of swimming pools is adequate. 36% of residents feel provision is insufficient.
- 9.79 Across the individual analysis areas there is a split in opinion regarding the provision of swimming pools. The majority of residents in Bewdley and Kidderminster West feel provision is insufficient, however in the three remaining areas residents feel provision is about right.
- 9.80 General comments from residents focused on the need for new and enhanced indoor sports facilities. In particular swimming pools were identified as having poor changing facilities, especially family changing and as suffering from poor maintenance.
- 9.81 Swimming facilities across the district were considered to be good quality by attendees at drop in sessions.
- 9.82 The majority of residents expect to drive to a swimming pool (67%). Findings within the geographical areas are consistent with the overall findings.
- 9.83 Based on the district wide 75% threshold level, residents would be prepared to travel for up to 15 minutes to access a swimming pool.

Supply and Demand Analysis – Adequacy of existing provision

- 9.84 In order to analyse the adequacy of the existing provision of swimming pools across Wyre Forest, consideration has been given to the quantity, quality and access to existing sites.

Quality of existing provision

- 9.85 The quality of indoor swimming pools was a more frequently raised subject than the quantity during consultations. As previously highlighted, many residents felt that pools were of poorly maintained and sometimes lacking in cleanliness.
- 9.86 Analysis of the quality of existing sites across the district demonstrates that:
- the quality of the commercial facilities is higher than the public centres. Sebastian Coe Health Club was built in 1990 while the JJB Fitness Club pool was built during 2004.
 - the two public facilities are significantly older than these two facilities, with Stourport Sports Centre being built in 1974 and Wyre Forest Glades Leisure Centre in 1986. However, the pool at Wyre Forest Glades was refurbished in 2006
 - Stourport Sports Centre, one of the main public facilities has achieved Quest Accreditation, with a score of 83%. This means that the centre is highly commended. Of particular note with regards the quality of facilities, the centre is perceived to have helpful and welcoming staff and to be well presented in terms of cleanliness and maintenance. Consultation identified that these features are particularly important to local residents. Furthermore, the range of activities offered was considered to be good

- Wyre Forest Glades Leisure Centre has also achieved Quest Accreditation with a score of 83% and the assessment concluded that the site offers high quality opportunities for residents, particularly for those who are from groups with traditionally low participation rates. The centre was also considered to be adequate in terms of cleanliness and maintenance.

Quantity of provision

- 9.87 The FPM indicates that 30.2% of swimming pool water is located in Wyre Forest. Approximately 21% of the population in Worcestershire reside in Wyre Forest and it can therefore be seen that the quantity of swimming pool water is good in comparison to other areas. Water space in Wyre Forest equates to 20.9m² per 1000. As anticipated in light of the ratio of pools to the population this is favourable compared to the regional average of 12.2m² / 1000 and the England average of 13m² per 1000.
- 9.88 Consultation demonstrates that 43% of residents believe that the quantity of swimming pools is adequate. 36% of residents feel provision is insufficient.
- 9.89 The FPM measures the adequacy of the quantity of provision based on the demand (in terms of number of visits) compared to the capacity of the facilities in the area to accommodate these visits. It concludes that the existing facilities in Wyre Forest are capable of sustaining 15286 visits per week. Demand is equivalent to 5257 visits.
- 9.90 This indicates that in quantitative terms, existing facilities are more than sufficient to meet demand, with demand equivalent to less than half of supply. Despite this, consultation demonstrated that in some areas, it was perceived that additional facilities were required (Bewdley).
- 9.91 The presence of the three small swimming pools at the school sites in the rural settlements further enhances the supply of facilities. These sites provide opportunities for small scale swimming lessons and therefore offset demand from other facilities.

Access to facilities

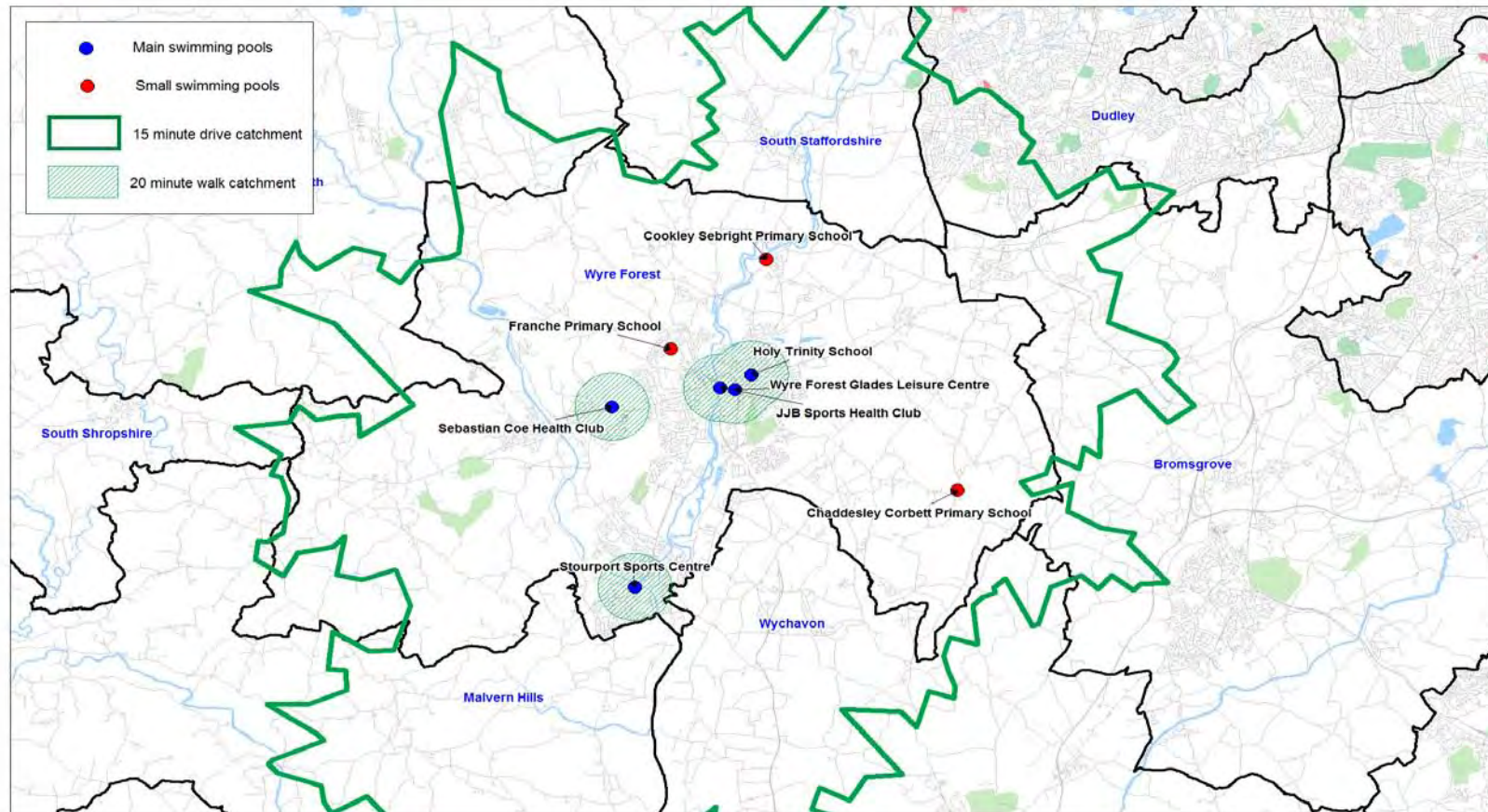
- 9.92 Access to facilities is perhaps the most important determinant of the adequacy of provision of facilities. This is also reflective of the consultation findings, where some residents perceived there to be insufficient as there were no facilities located in close proximity to their home.
- 9.93 Consultation suggests that the majority of residents would expect to travel by car (66%). 25% would anticipate walking and the remainder would use either public transport or would travel by bike.
- 9.94 Consultation demonstrated that for those residents who expected to walk to a facility, the 75% threshold level was 20 minutes, i.e residents expect to walk up to 20 minutes to reach a facility. For those expecting to drive, a 15 minute drivetime was expected.
- 9.95 Map 9.2 overleaf illustrates the distribution of existing facilities and demonstrates the catchments that facilities in Wyre Forest serve, using both the walk time and drive time catchment.
- 9.96 It can be seen that the majority of residents are outside of a walk time catchment for a swimming pool but are able to reach a facility within the suggested 15 minute

SECTION 9 – INDOOR SPORTS FACILITIES

drivetime. Like sports halls, swimming pools are predominantly clustered around the Kidderminster Area.

SECTION 9 – INDOOR SPORTS FACILITIES

Map 9.2 – Swimming



Swimming pools

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- 9.97 The Sport England FPM indicates that in Wyre Forest, 94.9% of demand is met. This means that 94% of residents live within the appropriate catchment of a swimming pool and that that facility has sufficient capacity to meet their needs.
- 9.98 Reflecting the distribution of facilities, 86.8% of residents travelling by car are satisfied. The use of swimming pools in Wyre Forest by those who travel by car is further reinforced when it can be seen that 50.4% of visits are imported i.e residents travel from other areas to use facilities in Wyre Forest. Over 80% of visits to all pools in the district are made by car. The Sport England FPM also takes into account the profile of the population and the type of facilities that are provided to serve the population. Only residents whose profile indicates that they would be able to afford to use commercial facilities are deemed to have potential to use those facilities.
- 9.99 The FPM therefore indicates that there is sufficient capacity to accommodate demand for swimming pools. Analysis of the amount of water space that each person in Wyre Forest has access to (personal share) reinforces this, demonstrating that each person in the district has access to a higher quantity of water than the national average. This is illustrated on Map 3 (Appendix I).
- 9.100 Analysis of unmet demand demonstrates that the amount of residents in the district with poor access to facilities is so low that there are no locations in the district where unmet demand exceeds 20m². A standard sized swimming pool is 212m². Although there is no swimming pool in Bewdley (where consultation demonstrates that dissatisfaction is highest) residents still have access to other facilities in and outside of the district. This is illustrated in Map 4 in Appendix I.
- 9.101 Given the low levels of unmet demand and the unused capacity in existing facilities it appears that population growth and / or increases in participation will not generate sufficient demand to warrant a new swimming pool.
- 9.102 As part of the initiatives to combat the culture of sedentary lifestyles, £140 million of investment has been set aside to provide free swimming for residents over the age of 60. It is intended that the money will support local authorities to provide free access to pools as well as providing free lessons and introducing swimming coordinators.
- 9.103 The fund aims to encourage local authorities to open up nearly 1,600 publicly owned swimming pools free to over 60s. More than 10 million older people in England stand to benefit from the move.

It will also be used as a challenge fund to encourage local authorities to offer free swimming and to rejuvenate and maintain pools. The fund will also support initiatives such as the provision of free lessons for adults who cannot swim, and the introduction of swimming coordinators to maximise and sustain uptake.

- 9.104 If Wyre Forest was to participate in this opportunity, demand for swimming may increase and as a consequence, the capacity at swimming pools would be reduced.

Summary – Swimming Pools

- 9.105 Analysis of the quantity, quality and accessibility of swimming pools indicates that the key issue for swimming provision in Wyre Forest is the quality of facilities. 94% of demand is met and there is sufficient capacity within the facility stock to meet demand.
- 9.106 The public pools in the district are older than the commercial facilities. In particular, Stourport Sports Centre is an ageing facility. In addition to the additional revenue and

SECTION 9 – INDOOR SPORTS FACILITIES

capital funding that ageing facilities require, this means that they may be less attractive to local residents.

- 9.107 Given that new provision is therefore not required; the future focus should be on improvements to the existing facilities. Public transport links to existing centres should also be maximised.
- 9.108 Demand for swimming and capacity at existing pools should be monitored, particularly in light of the free swimming initiative, which may generate additional demand from the over 60's population should this be implemented in Wyre Forest.
- 9.109 It must be noted that while this analysis considers the amount of residents that are within the appropriate catchment, this differs from the Sport England Choice and Opportunity Indicator, which evaluates the number of residents within a 20 minute catchment of three facilities, one of which is quality assessed. This considers the range of different opportunities that residents have, rather than their access to each facility type.

Indoor bowls

- 9.110 Wyre Forest currently has no indoor bowls centre.
- 9.111 Active Places reveals the nearest indoor bowls centre can be found at Bromsgrove and District Indoor Bowls Club. There are an additional four facilities within a 20 mile radius of Wyre Forest including sites at Solihull, Erdington, Malvern and Stirchley.

Consultation

- 9.112 32% of residents feel the provision of indoor bowls facilities is insufficient. Only a small minority of residents indicate the provision of this type of indoor bowls facility is sufficient (9%). The remainder of residents had no opinion on the quantity of indoor bowls. Similar results are portrayed within the individual analysis areas.
- 9.113 General comments by respondents to the household survey identified the need for the provision of indoor bowls facilities in the District. This was reinforced by comments made at the drop in sessions.

Supply and Demand

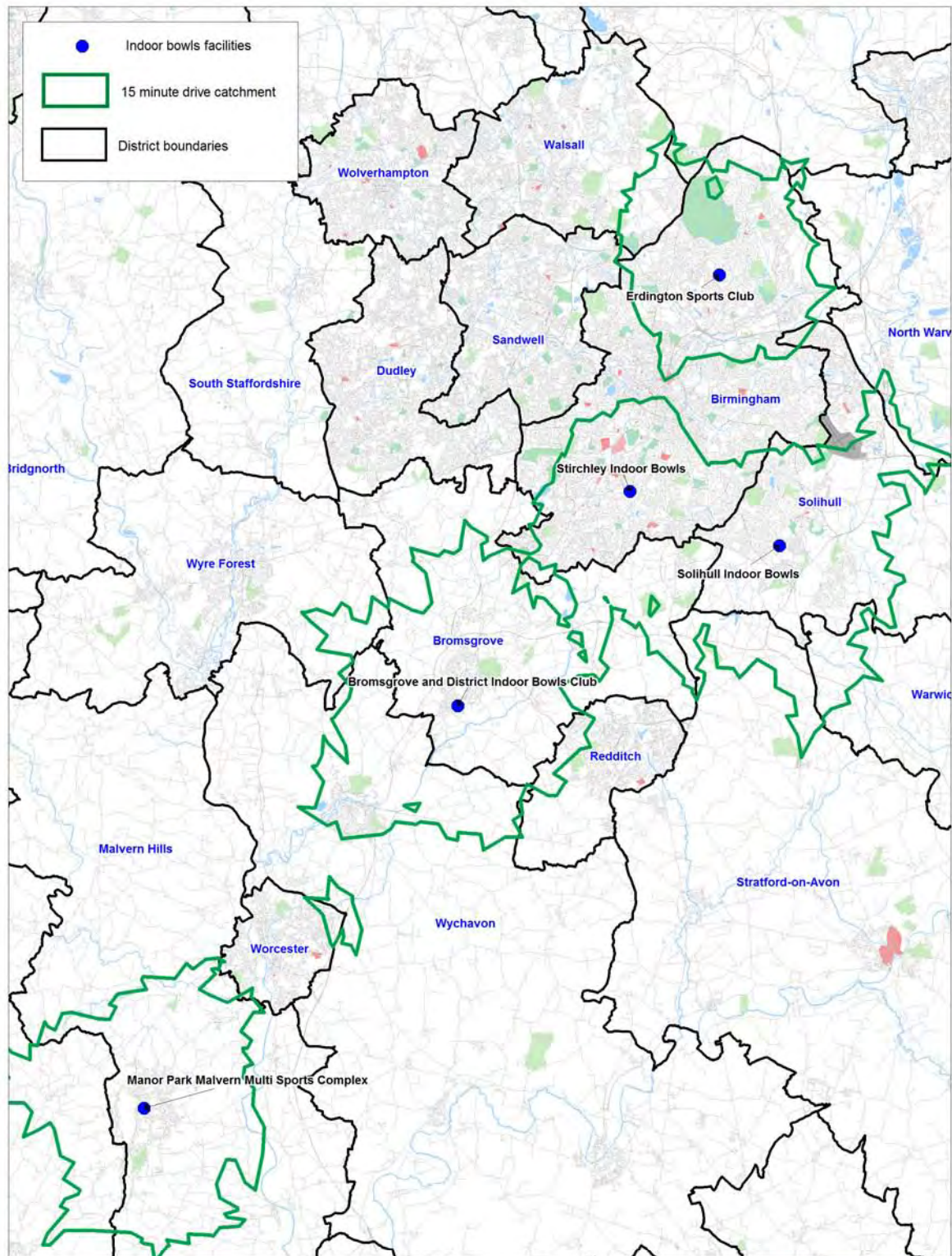
- 9.114 Active Places Power reveals that no demand for indoor bowls is met within Wyre Forest. This compares to 26% of demand met in the West Midlands and over 50% met nationally.
- 9.115 Local consultation undertaken reveals that 70% of respondents would expect to drive to an indoor bowls rink. The 75% threshold level District wide was a 15 minute drive time. Findings within the geographical areas are consistent with the District wide result.
- 9.116 Map 9.3 illustrates that there are no bowls facilities in Wyre Forest and that the nearest facility in Bromsgrove is only accessible to a few residents in the south east of Wyre Forest. This reinforces the perceptions arising through consultation that there are insufficient indoor bowls facilities in the District.
- 9.117 In addition to meeting the demand expressed during consultation, the provision of more bowling rinks may contribute to increases in physical activity. 'Elsie and Arnold', one of the dominant population groups, enjoy activities such as bowls. Furthermore, the West Midlands Regional Sports Facility Strategy identified the need for an additional indoor bowls centre within Worcestershire.

Summary – indoor bowls

- 9.118 There are no indoor bowls centres in Wyre Forest and as a consequence, Active Places Power indicates that no demand in Wyre Forest is met. This is reinforced by the application of the accessibility standard which suggests that no residents have appropriate access to a facility.
- 9.119 The need for an indoor bowls facility within Wyre Forest was a key theme established throughout consultation. With no stand alone indoor bowls facility located in the District opportunities for the provision of a facility should be considered. This should be centrally located in the district to maximise the number of residents within it's catchment. The Sport England Facility Calculator indicates that a population the size of Wyre Forest would generate demand for circa 6 bowling rinks.

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Map 9.3 – Indoor Bowls in Wyre Forest



Indoor bowls

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Indoor tennis

Context

- 9.120 Wyre Forest currently does not have any indoor tennis facilities within the District. However, there are four clubs registered to the Lawn Tennis Association (LTA).
- 9.121 Active Places reveals the nearest indoor tennis centre is located in Bromsgrove at the David Lloyd Club. This means that residents have to travel a significant distance to reach their nearest facility. There are a further eight facilities located within a 20 mile radius of Wyre Forest.

Consultation

- 9.122 34% of respondents to the household survey feel that the provision of indoor tennis facilities is insufficient. 10% of residents indicate provision is sufficient. Findings within the individual analysis areas are consistent with the overall result.

Current Provision

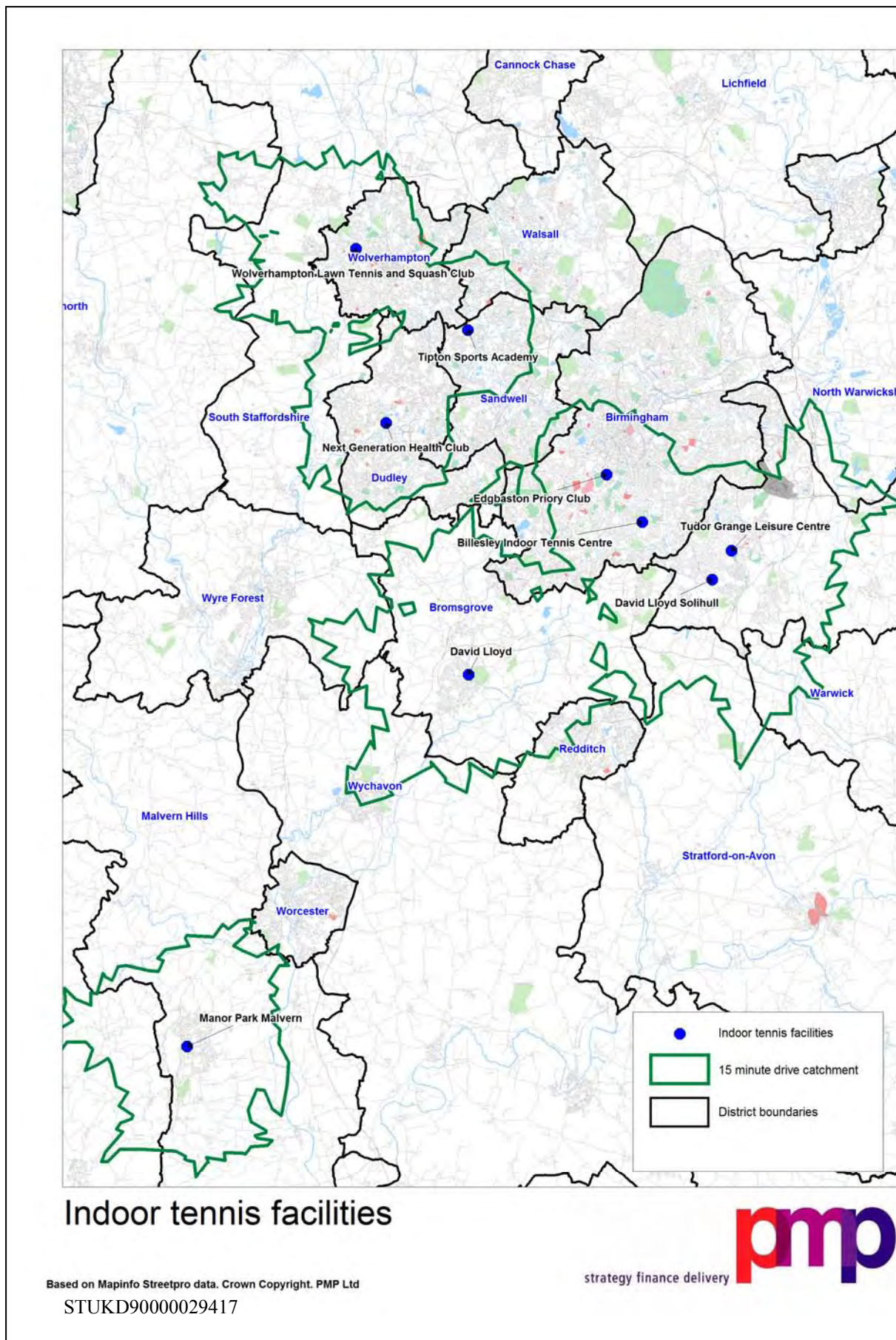
- 9.123 There are no facilities for indoor tennis in Wyre Forest. This compares poorly to both the national average (0.03 facilities per 1000) and the regional average (0.01 facilities per 1000).
- 9.124 In *'Priority Project Funding, Policy and Operational Procedures'*, the LTA states that one indoor court can serve 200 regular tennis players. We know from national LTA research that 5% of people in the UK play tennis and 2% of the population play regularly. It is therefore reasonable to assume that around 1970 (2%) of the local population play tennis regularly. This was reinforced in the recent Active People survey which indicated that nationally, just over 2% of residents play tennis regularly. Using these figures, the demand for indoor tennis courts within Wyre Forest would theoretically be 10 courts. This suggests that there is unmet demand of 10 courts.
- 9.125 70% of respondents would expect to drive to an indoor tennis facility. The 75% threshold level District wide was a 15 minute drive time. Findings within the geographical areas are consistent with the District wide result.
- 9.126 Map 9.4 overleaf demonstrates the location of indoor tennis facilities in Wyre Forest. It can be seen that most residents are outside of a 15 minute drive of an indoor tennis facility and only those in the far south east are within the appropriate catchment of a facility. This suggests that limited demand in the district is met.

Overall summary – indoor tennis

- 9.127 There are no indoor tennis facilities within Wyre Forest and the nearest facility is located in Bromsgrove, out of the suggested 15 minute catchment area. This suggests that there is unmet demand within the district.
- 9.128 While consultation expressed limited need for an indoor tennis facility, demand should be monitored and a facility provided within the district if required.

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Map 9.4 - Indoor Tennis Facilities - Wyre Forest



The future provision of indoor facilities in Wyre Forest

9.129 Analysis of the current supply and demand of indoor sports facilities in Wyre Forest concludes that:

- there are sufficient swimming pools to meet current and future demand in quantitative terms. Pools are ageing and focus should be placed on improving the quality of facilities and providing public transport linkages
- the supply of sports halls is in balance with demand. Changes to the current levels of participation and population growth may see demand become greater than supply. New provision may therefore be required. Any new facilities should be linked to school sites in order to maximise the use of resources
- there are no bowls facilities in the district and the need for a facility was a key theme of consultation. New provision should therefore be considered. This is of particular importance in light of the profile of the population which indicates that one of the dominant population groups has a strong propensity to participate in bowls
- there are no indoor tennis facilities in the district. Consultation did not uncover need for a facility within Wyre Forest and demand should therefore be monitored on an ongoing basis.

9.130 Other key issues raised that should be addressed in order to increase participation and use at leisure centres include:

- ensure that the pricing structure is attractive to all sections of the community
- ensure that facilities are inviting to the general public through effective maintenance and management regimes. The cleanliness and maintenance, along with parking and provision of a wide variety of facilities was considered to be particularly important.

9.131 From a planning perspective this therefore suggests that:

- Contributions may be required to improve the quality of public swimming pools in the district
- Population growth may generate the need for additional sports halls as there is insufficient capacity in the current stock to meet future demand. The Sport England Facility Calculator indicates that 0.28m² per 1000 population should be requested
- Contributions may be required towards the provision of a new indoor bowls centre in the district – the Sport England Facility Calculator indicates that contributions equivalent to 0.07 rinks per 1000 population would be appropriate.

SECTION 10
ALLOTMENTS

Allotments

Introduction and definition

- 10.1 This typology includes all forms of allotments. The primary purpose of allotments is to provide opportunities for people to grow their own produce as part of the long-term promotion of sustainability, health and social inclusion. This type of open space may also include urban farms.
- 10.2 Like other open space types, allotments can provide a number of wider benefits to the community in addition to their primary purpose. These include:
- bringing together different cultural backgrounds
 - improving physical and mental health
 - providing a source of recreation
 - making a wider contribution to the green and open space network.
- 10.3 Allotments are becoming increasingly popular nationally, following the recognition of the role that they can play in encouraging all sectors of the community to participate in active recreation. Many residents in Wyre Forest acknowledged the recreational benefits associated with using an allotment.
- 10.4 Changing trends in house building, with an increasing focus on flats and apartments, may also generate an upturn in the demand for allotments, as residents without access to private gardens seek alternatives.
- 10.5 The quality, quantity and accessibility of allotments in Wyre Forest are discussed in this section, alongside the key issues relating to the quality and quantity of provision.
- 10.6 Analysis of the current provision of allotments across the District is set out overleaf.

Figure 10.1 – Example of an allotment



Quantity of provision

10.7 The quantity of allotments across Wyre Forest is summarised in Table 10.1 below.

Table 10.1 – Provision of allotments across Wyre Forest

Analysis area	Current provision (hectares)	Number of sites	Smallest site (hectares)	Largest site (hectares)	LDF population (2026)	Provision per 1000 population (2026)
Bewdley	0.00	0	-	-	9,697	0.0031
Stourport	3.72	2	1.73	1.99	20,811	0.1788
Kidderminster East	6.80	3	1.47	3.79	30,827	0.2206
Kidderminster West	5.07	6	0.12	2.9	27,419	0.1849
Rural East	2.36	4	0.17	1.19	10,772	0.2191
Rural West	0.00	-	-	-	2,874	0.0000
Overall	17.95	15	0.12	3.79	102,400	0.1756

10.8 The key issues emerging from Table 10.1 and consultations relating to the quantity of provision of allotments include:

- findings from the household survey reveal 66% of respondents feel the provision of allotments is insufficient. This perception of insufficient provision is the most conclusive of all typologies within the District. This is perhaps surprising given that the majority of these residents do not currently use allotments and is perhaps evidence of the growing demand and recognition of the role of these facilities
- within Wyre Forest there are 15 allotment sites and these are fairly well distributed across the District. There are no allotments within the Bewdley analysis area, although one site in the Kidderminster West analysis area is located on the border of Bewdley. This allotment does not serve the residents of Bewdley
- within the individual analysis areas a similar perception is evident and this is consistent across the District. The highest level of dissatisfaction with allotments is found in the Kidderminster West analysis area, where 76% of residents indicate that provision is insufficient. Although this area contains the largest number of sites, provision per 1000 is lower than in some other areas suggesting that there may be capacity issues at some sites

SECTION 10 – ALLOTMENTS

- when considering the amount of provision per 1000 population it can be seen that the greatest level of provision is in the Kidderminster East analysis area. There are no allotments in the Rural West analysis area
- the size of sites ranges significantly from 0.12ha to 3.79ha, indicating a varied amount of allotment plots in each site in Wyre Forest. Larger sites are frequently more popular than smaller sites as they offer a greater variety of amenities.

10.9 There are 15 allotment sites situated within Wyre Forest. Of these, nine are Wyre Forest Community Housing sites which currently have waiting lists, once again enforcing the growing popularity of allotments in the District. The site that currently has the highest demand is Greatfield allotments, with 15 people on the waiting list.

Setting provision standards – quantity

10.10 The recommended local quantity standard for allotments has been derived from the local needs consultation and audit of provision and is summarised below. Full justification for the local standard is provided within Appendix F.

10.11 The standard recommends an increase on the existing level of provision. This is based on the existing waiting lists in addition to expressed demand from local residents.

Quantity Standard (see Appendices E and F – standards and justification, worksheet and calculator)

Existing level of provision	Recommended standard
0.184 ha per 1000	0.191 ha per 1000
Justification	
<p>A standard above the existing level of provision has been set to address the demand for the increased provision of allotments in Wyre Forest. The clear perception established through all consultations was that the existing provision of allotments is insufficient.</p> <p>There are currently 64 people on a waiting list for an allotment plot, equating to 9% of the current stock of allotments. Setting the quantity standard above the current level of provision will allow the Council to concentrate on the provision of new allotments to reflect current waiting lists. The increased provision of allotments will be particularly important in light of the growing demand for this typology, supported by the 14% of respondents to the household survey who indicate they would be interested in renting an allotment plot. In addition to meeting existing demand, it is likely that new development will generate additional demand for facilities.</p>	

Current provision - quality

10.12 The quality of existing allotments in the District was assessed through site visits and is set out in Table 10.2 overleaf. It is important to note that site assessments are conducted as a snapshot in time and are therefore reflective of the quality of the site on one specific day.

10.13 The quality scores are weighted according to the findings of the local consultation. Those elements that were highlighted through consultation as being a particularly important determinant of the quality of allotments have been weighted higher to ensure that they have a greater influence on the overall quality score that each site achieves. The full rationale behind this approach is set out in Appendix G.

Table 10.2 – Quality of allotments across Wyre Forest

Analysis area	Number of sites	Range of quality scores (%)	Average quality scores (%)	Lowest quality sites	Highest quality sites
Bewdley	0	-	-	-	-
Stourport	2	56 – 60	58	Kingsway Allotments – ID 215	Abberley Avenue Allotments – ID 141
Kidderminster East	3	51 – 60	54	Chester Road Allotments – ID 13	Dunclent Crescent Allotments – ID 294
Kidderminster West	6	56 – 62	57	Dowles Road Allotments – ID 151	Northumberland Avenue Allotments – ID 79
Rural East	4	56	56	-	-
Rural West	-	-	-	-	-
Overall	15	51 – 62	56	Chester Road Allotments – ID 13	Northumberland Avenue Allotments – ID 79

10.14 The key issues emerging from Table 10.2 and the consultation relating to the quality of allotments include:

- 53% of respondents to the household survey regard the quality of allotments to be average. 26% of residents also indicate they are poor while 21% feel it to be good. This infers that the quality of sites may be varying

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- findings across the individual analysis areas are consistent with the District wide perception, with the majority of respondents in each area indicating that the quality of allotments is average
- the average quality score of an allotment in Wyre Forest is 56% and the range of scores is 51% – 62%. This suggests that in fact there is little variation in the overall quality of sites in the District.

10.15 Rear Queens Head Allotments and Arley Lane Allotments are currently unused and therefore classified as closed allotment sites. These sites have however been assessed due to the potential recreation opportunities these sites could offer to local residents if they are made useable.

Setting provision standards – quality

10.16 The recommended local quality standard for allotments is summarised below. Full justifications and consultation relating to the quality of provision for the local standard is provided within Appendix G.

10.17 The quality standard summarises the features that residents consider to be an important determinant of the quality of provision.

Quality Standard (see Appendix G)

Recommended standard – ALLOTMENTS		
Local consultation, national guidance and best practice suggest that the following features are essential and desirable to local residents:		
Essential	Desirable	
Parking facilities	Toilets	
Well kept grass	Seating	
Good site access	Footpaths	
Detailed analysis of the local consultation suggests that with regards to allotments, the relative importance of the key components is as follows:		
Component of quality	Proportion of possible total responses received	Weighting
Security and Safety	13%	3
Cleanliness and maintenance	27%	4
Vegetation	7%	1
Ancillary accommodation	12%	2

Setting provision standards – accessibility

- 10.18 The accessibility of sites is paramount in maximising usage. The recommended local standard is set in the form of a distance threshold and is derived directly from the findings of the local consultations.
- 10.19 Site-specific accessibility issues were also analysed as part of the site visits and information and signage, transport and general accessibility issues were assessed.
- 10.20 Consultation and analysis highlights that 65% of residents expect to walk to their local allotment while 31% prefer to travel by car. This indicates that allotments are expected to be local to the home.
- 10.21 Site assessments indicate that the majority of allotments are poor in terms of general access and information and signage. Transport was rated as average.
- 10.22 The recommended local accessibility standard for allotments is summarised below. Full justification for the local standard is provided within Appendix H.

Accessibility Standard (see Appendix H)

Recommended standard
10 MINUTE WALK TIME
Justification
<p>The provision of allotments is very much a demand led typology and this should be reflected in the application of the accessibility and quantity standards. As such any deficiencies that are highlighted through the application of the study should be assessed further to indicate if there is any demand in that area.</p> <p>A clear preference for walking is established through consultation and therefore a walk time standard has been set. Based upon the 75% threshold level the standard has been set at a 10 minute walk time.</p> <p>This represents a significantly challenging standard, however the sufficient provision of allotments in the District will provide an alternative form of recreation and physical activity for residents.</p>

*a straight-line distance of 720m has been used rather than the pedestrian distance of 1200m. This is based on average walking distances reduced by a factor of 40% to account for the fact that people do not walk in straight lines. The 40% factoring is based on the approach set out in the NPFA Six Acre Standard.

Applying provision standards

- 10.23 The application of the recommended quality, quantity and accessibility standards is essential in understanding the existing distribution of open space sport and recreation facilities and identifying areas where provision is insufficient to meet local need.
- 10.24 Table 10.3 overleaf sets out the results of the application of the quantity standard to the current distribution of allotments.

Table 10.3 – Application of quantity standard

Analysis areas	Current balanced against local standard (0.191 hectares per 1000 population)	Future balanced against local standard (0.191 hectares per 1000 population)
Bewdley	-1.72	-1.82
Stourport	-0.05	-0.25
Kidderminster East	1.22	0.91
Kidderminster West	0.11	-0.17
Rural East	0.41	0.30
Rural West	-0.52	-0.55
Overall	-0.54	-1.58

Green = above the minimum standard, Red = below the minimum standard.

10.25 Key issues arising from Table 10.3 include:

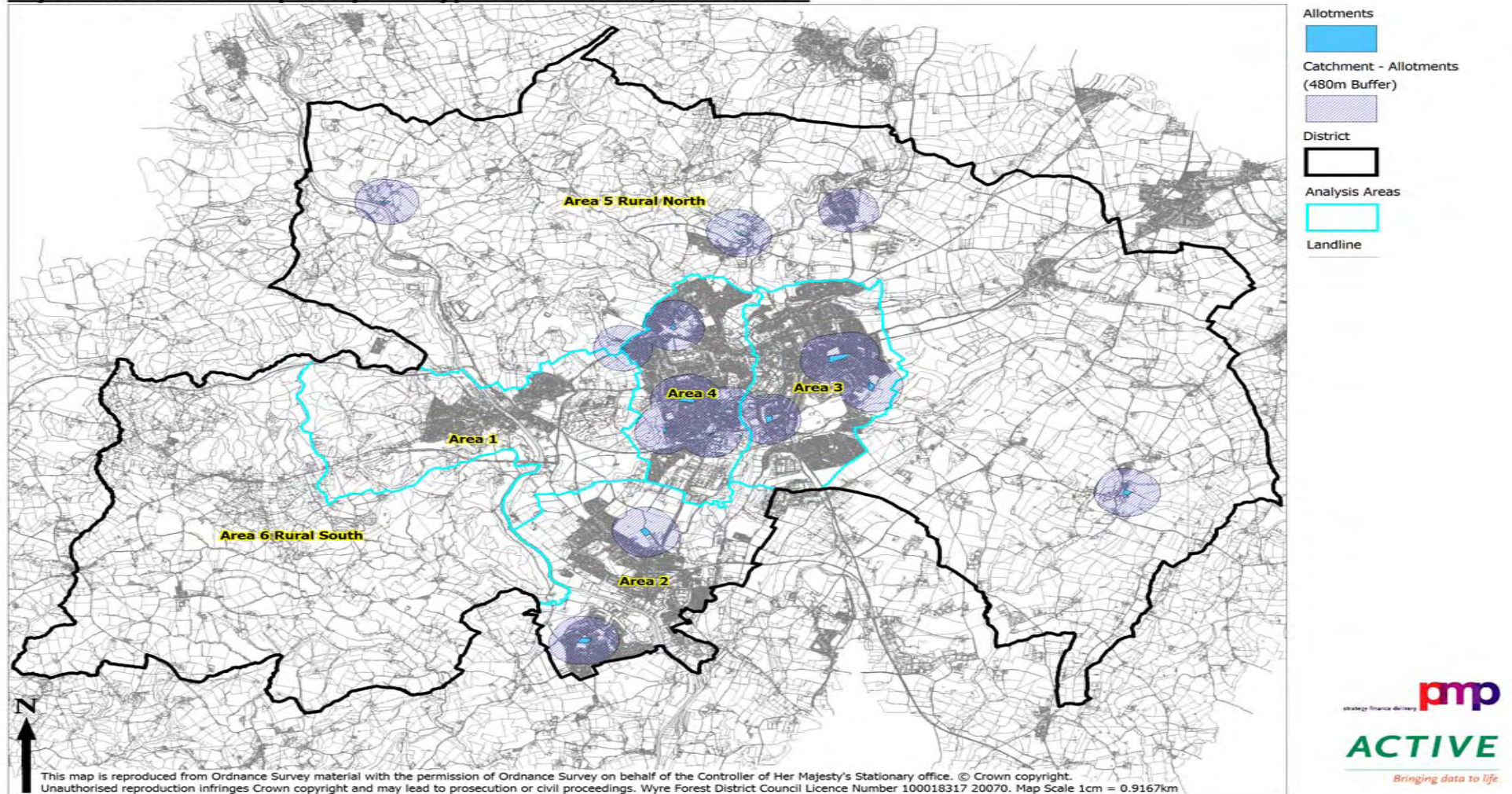
- the current provision of allotments in the District is insufficient to meet the recommended minimum standards. This is exemplified by the waiting lists present at over half of the sites. The quantity standard suggests that there are particular shortfalls in provision in the Bewdley, Stourport and Rural West analysis areas
- based on the local standard of 0.191 hectares per 1000 population, four of the six analysis areas will have a deficiency by 2026. Although there is currently sufficient provision in the Kidderminster West analysis area, this will be insufficient to meet local demand by 2026. Despite this current adequate provision, waiting lists are particularly high in the Kidderminster West analysis area
- the overall deficiency District wide will be –1.58 hectares by 2026.

10.26 The application of the local accessibility and quality standards for allotments is set out overleaf.

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Map 10.1 – Provision of allotments in Wyre Forest

Wyre Forest OSS - Open Space Type Catchments, Allotments



SECTION 10 – ALLOTMENTS

- 10.27 Map 10.1 highlights that allotments are evenly distributed across the District, with the exception of the Bewdley analysis area, where there is only one site located on the eastern border of the area.
- 10.28 Clear accessibility deficiencies are evident in the Bewdley analysis area, centre of Stourport analysis area, centre of Kidderminster West analysis area and north of Kidderminster East analysis area.

Applying provision standards – identifying geographical areas

- 10.29 In order to identify geographical areas of importance and those areas where there is potential unmet demand we apply both the quantity and accessibility standards together. The quantity standards identify whether areas are quantitatively above or below the recommended minimum standard and the accessibility standards will help to determine where those deficiencies are of high importance.
- 10.30 In light of the demand led nature of allotments, application of the quantity, quality and accessibility standards should be treated as a starting point only. Detailed research and monitoring should be undertaken prior to the development of new allotments. Consideration of existing waiting lists is a particularly useful indicator of latent demand.

ALL1	Regularly review, investigate and monitor demand for allotment provision and look for opportunities where demand is increasing through ongoing evaluation of waiting lists. Ensure new housing developments allow for any increase in demand as necessary.
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- 10.31 As well as ensuring that the provision of allotments is sufficient in quantitative terms, consideration should also be given to the achievement of the qualitative standard. This will ensure that all allotments are of adequate standard to meet local need and to encourage new users.

ALL2	Seek to improve the quality of existing allotment sites in order to ensure that all sites are of adequate quality to meet the needs of local residents.
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- 10.32 The breakdown of provision by analysis areas has previously revealed that with the exception of the Kidderminster East and Rural East analysis area, there are significant deficiencies across the District and that all areas will have shortfalls by 2026 when measured against the minimum quantity standard. This is reinforced by current waiting lists. There are 64 people on the waiting list for an allotments plot, which equates to 9% of the current stock of allotments in Wyre Forest. Waiting lists are particularly high within the Kidderminster West analysis area.
- 10.33 In light of the shortfalls of allotments across the District, the good distribution of facilities (where all allotments serve unique catchment areas) and the high levels of use at all allotment sites, all provision should be protected from development.

ALL3	Ensure continued support to allotment providers and associations across Wyre Forest and protect these sites from development.
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10.34 Demand in each of the geographical areas of the District is evaluated in the sections that follow. In some instances, extension of existing sites (or reduction in the size of plots to accommodate more residents) may provide an appropriate alternative to the development of new sites.

Bewdley analysis area

10.35 The largest quantitative deficiency is found within the Bewdley analysis area, with a shortfall of –1.82 ha expected by 2026. Accessibility mapping reinforces this shortfall with the only allotment site (Salisbury Road) located on the eastern border of the analysis area, meaning all residents in the Bewdley analysis area are outside the recommended catchment of an allotment plot (Figure 10.2). Furthermore, there are waiting lists at this site, indicating that there is latent demand within the area.

Figure 10.2 – Deficiencies in Bewdley analysis area



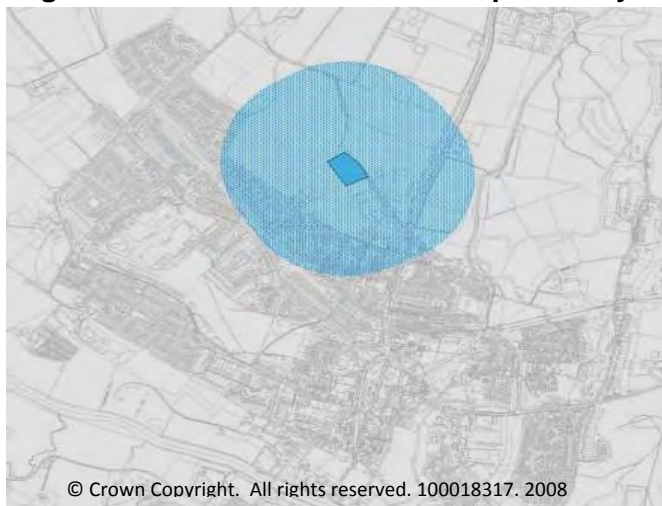
10.36 Based on the average size of an allotment plot (250m²) an additional 73 allotment plots would be required to meet the recommended quantity standard. In consideration of the large quantitative shortfall and accessibility deficiencies at least one new allotment site should be provided within the Bewdley analysis area.

ALL4	Investigate the demand for the provision of allotments in the Bewdley analysis area and provide a new site if demand is expressed. This should be centrally located in order to serve as many residents of the town as possible.
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Stourport analysis area

10.37 Application of the accessibility standard illustrates clear areas of deficiency in the central and southern areas of Stourport analysis area (Figure 10.3). Accessibility deficiencies in the area are reinforced by quantitative analysis of the provision of allotments, which shows that a shortfall of –0.25 ha is expected by 2026.

Figure 10.3 – Deficiencies in Stourport analysis area



10.38 The current deficiency in the Stourport analysis area indicates a requirement for only ten allotment plots. There are no waiting lists on existing sites and therefore demand within this area should be monitored to identify any requirements for increased provision.

ALL5	Monitor the demand for the provision of allotments in the Stourport analysis area and examine the need for additional sites across the area as the population grows.
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Kidderminster east analysis area

10.39 The provision of allotments within the Kidderminster East analysis area is sufficient to meet current and future demand. Despite the adequate levels of provision, accessibility mapping highlights clear deficiencies in the north and south of the analysis area. These deficiencies are illustrated in Figure 10.4 below.

Figure 10.4 – Deficiencies in the Kidderminster east analysis area



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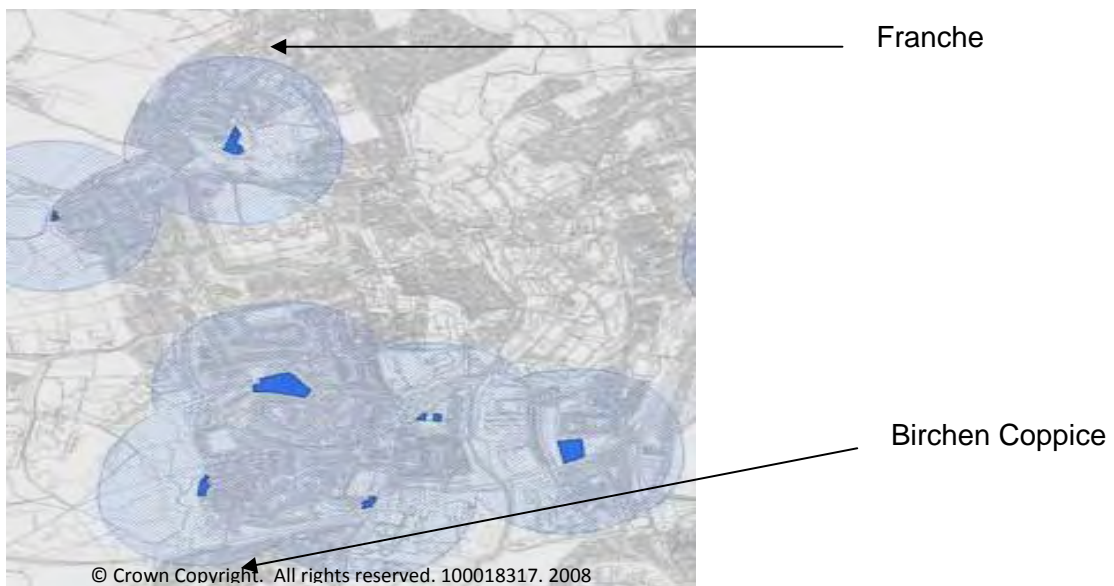
- 10.40 Current waiting lists exist at all allotment sites in the area (Aggborough Crescent (10), Dunclent Crescent (6) and Chester Road (5)). The area may therefore benefit from further provision of allotment plots should the opportunity arise.
- 10.41 Existing sites should be afforded protection and opportunities for new provision should be considered.

ALL6	Protect existing allotment sites in the Kidderminster East analysis area and consider the opportunities for new provision, ideally located within the area of existing deficiency.
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Kidderminster West analysis area

- 10.42 Application of the quantity standard reveals that provision is currently sufficient to meet demand. However, based on future population projections there will be a future requirement for 0.17 ha (7 plots). Accessibility mapping enforces this minor shortfall with the majority of residents in Birchen Coppice, Summerhill, Blakebrook and Franche unable to access an allotment site within the recommended 10 minute walk time (Figure 10.5 overleaf).

Figure 10.5 – Deficiencies in Kidderminster West analysis area



- 10.43 A large number of sites within the area currently have waiting lists and Tomkinson Drive allotments have the largest waiting list in the District (15 people). This indicates that there is latent demand and opportunities for new provision (or the extension of existing provision) should be considered.

ALL7	Assess the demand for the increased provision of allotments within the Kidderminster West analysis area.
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Rural East analysis area

10.44 Based on current and future population projections there is adequate provision of allotments within the Rural East analysis area to meet demand. Accessibility mapping reinforces this, with nearly all residents in the larger settlements able to access an allotment site within the recommended 10-minute walk time. Only residents in Blakedown and the south of Fairfield do not have access to an allotment (Figures 10.6 and 10.7).

Figure 10.6 – Deficiencies in Blakedown



Figure 10.7 – Deficiencies in the south of Fairfield



10.45 Due to the fact that all residents in Blakedown cannot access an allotment, the demand for allotments in this area should be considered.

ALL8	Focus on maximising access and maintaining and improving the quality of existing allotment sites in the Rural East analysis area. Assess the demand for the increased provision of allotments within Blakedown.
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Rural West analysis area

- 10.46 Analysis of the quantity of provision in the Rural West analysis area indicates that there is expected to be a large shortfall in the provision of allotments by 2026 (-0.55 ha). No allotment sites are situated in this area of the District and application of the accessibility standard further illustrates this with no residents within the outlying villages within the recommended catchment of an allotment. Despite this, it would be unreasonable to suggest that all villages should contain allotments and opportunities for new provision should therefore be demand led.

ALL9	Support Parish Councils in the provision of new allotment sites where specific demand is identified.
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Summary

- 10.47 The current provision of allotments in Wyre Forest is 17.95 ha. Waiting lists in the District equate to 9% of the current stock.
- 10.48 The provision of allotments per 1000 population is greatest in the Kidderminster East and Rural East analysis areas, highlighting a good distribution of allotments in both the urban and rural areas of the District.
- 10.49 Results from the household survey reveal a large dissatisfaction with the current provision of allotments in the District.
- 10.50 The quality of allotments in the District is average with the mean quality score of a site being 56%. This highlights the need for qualitative improvements in Wyre Forest.
- 10.51 The local accessibility standard has been set at a 10 minute walk time, indicating the desire for the local provision of allotments in Wyre Forest. Application of the accessibility standard highlights key deficiencies within the Kidderminster analysis areas, Stourport analysis area and particularly in the Bewdley analysis area.

SECTION 11

CEMETERIES AND CHURCHYARDS

Cemeteries and churchyards

Introduction

- 11.1 This typology encompasses both churchyards contained within the walled boundary of a church and cemeteries outside the confines of a church. These include private burial grounds, local authority burial grounds and disused churchyards. Although the primary purpose of this type of open space is burial of the dead and quiet contemplation, these sites frequently have considerable value for the promotion of wildlife conservation and biodiversity.
- 11.2 Some churchyards contain areas of unimproved grasslands and various other habitats. They can make a significant contribution to the provision of urban greenspace providing a sanctuary for wildlife in the urban settlements and often providing historic value to the more rural landscapes.
- 11.3 Cemeteries and churchyards can be a significant open space provider in rural areas. In some instances, cemeteries and churchyards may be the only open space within a settlement.
- 11.4 In urban areas they can represent a relatively minor resource in terms of the land, but can be important for nature conservation.

Figure 11.1 – St George’s Church, Kidderminster



Consultation

- 11.5 Consultation on the provision of churchyards and cemeteries in Wyre Forest highlighted that:
- 49% of respondents to the household survey do not use churchyards and cemeteries. However, 23% of respondents use this typology more than once a month
 - 58% of respondents consider the quality of cemeteries and churchyards to be of average quality. However, a significant amount of respondents also rate their quality as good (36%)
 - respondents identified the ideal features of cemeteries and churchyards as well kept grass, clean and litter free and parking facilities.

Current position

11.6 There are currently 24 cemeteries and churchyards in Wyre Forest. The distribution of sites across the District is summarised in Table 11.1 below.

Table 11.1 – Provision of churchyards and cemeteries in Wyre Forest

Analysis area	Current provision	Number of sites	Smallest site (hectares)	Largest site (hectares)	LDF population (2026)	Provision per 1000 population (2026)
Bewdley	0.56	1	-	-	9,697	0.0577
Stourport	3.54	3	0.50	2.09	20,811	0.1701
Kidderminster East	2.50	2	1.15	1.35	30,827	0.0811
Kidderminster West	9.50	2	1.60	7.90	27,419	0.3465
Rural East	4.71	12	0.10	0.99	10,772	0.4372
Rural West	2.03	4	0.33	0.68	2,874	0.7063
Overall	22.84	24	0.10	7.90	102,400	0.2230

11.7 It can be seen from Table 11.1 that:

- there is an uneven distribution of sites across the District, with 12 of the 24 sites located in the Rural East analysis area of the District. However, despite this area having the greatest number of sites, Kidderminster West analysis area contains the largest quantity of provision in terms of hectares. This suggests that the sites in this area of the town are larger than some others across the District. The lowest level of provision per 1000 of cemeteries and churchyards is in the Bewdley analysis area where there is only one site (equivalent to 0.0577 ha per 1000 population)
- the size of sites is wide ranging with the smallest being 0.09ha and the largest 7.9ha. This is representative of the different functions of cemeteries and churchyards.

Setting provision standards

Quantity standard

- 11.8 No quantity standards have been set for cemeteries and churchyards. PPG17 Annex states: *"many historic churchyards provide important places for quiet contemplation, especially in busy urban areas, and often support biodiversity and interesting geological features. As such many can also be viewed as amenity greenspaces. Unfortunately, many are also run-down and therefore it may be desirable to enhance them. As churchyards can only exist where there is a church, the only form of provision standard which will be required is a qualitative one."*
- 11.9 For cemeteries, PPG 17 Annex states: *"every individual cemetery has a finite capacity and therefore there is steady need for more of them. Indeed, many areas face a shortage of ground for burials. The need for graves, for all religious faiths, can be calculated from population estimates, coupled with details of the average proportion of deaths which result in a burial, and converted into a quantitative population-based provision standard."*

Quality

- 11.10 The quality of each site has been assessed through a detailed site visit and the completion of a detailed pro forma described in section 2. This is provided in detail in Appendix G. It is important to note that the quality score represents a snapshot in time and records only the quality of the site at the time of the site visit. The quality of cemeteries across the District is set out in Table 11.2 overleaf.
- 11.11 The quality of cemeteries and churchyards can be particularly important in encouraging local residents to use these sites for recreational purposes.

Table 11.2 – The quality of cemeteries and churchyards in Wyre Forest

Analysis area	Number of sites	Range of quality scores (%)	Average quality scores (%)	Lowest quality sites	Highest quality sites
Bewdley	1	-	60	-	All Saints Church Wribbenhall – ID 555
Stourport	3	-	60	-	All Saints Church Wilden – ID 590
Kidderminster East	2	64 – 68	66	St Mary's Church – ID 100	St George's Churchyard – ID 99
Kidderminster West	2	50 – 86	68	St John The Baptist Churchyard – ID 76	Kidderminster Cemetery – ID 39
Rural East	12	42 – 78	60	St James Churchyard – ID 575	Holy Trinity Trimpley – ID 284
Rural West	4	54 – 68	65	Holy Trinity Church Far Forest – ID 584	St Giles' Church Heightington – ID 586
Overall	24	42 – 86	62	St James Churchyard – ID 575	Kidderminster Cemetery – ID 39

11.12 Analysis of the quality of cemeteries and churchyards highlights that:

- the majority of respondents to the household survey perceive the quality of churchyards and cemeteries to be average (58%). However, 36% of respondents also indicate the quality of this typology is good
- site assessments support the findings from the household survey with the quality of cemeteries and churchyards and the average score is 62%
- analysis of the scores achieved indicates that the overall quality of provision is consistent across the District, with similar averages in each area. Despite this, the range of scores (42% - 86%) reveals significant differences in the quality of provision. There are a number of high quality sites in the District, such as Kidderminster Cemetery (86%) and Holy Trinity Trimpley (78%).

Quality standards

11.13 In setting local standards for churchyards and cemeteries, it is only appropriate to set a quality standard and take into account any national or local standards. Full indication of consultation and justifications for the recommended local standard are provided within Appendix G. The recommended local standard, derived directly from consultation across Wyre Forest has been summarised overleaf.

Quality Standard (see Appendix G)

Recommended standard – CEMETERIES AND CHURCHYARDS		
Local consultation, national guidance and best practice suggest that the following features are essential and desirable to local residents:		
Essential		Desirable
Well kept grass		Toilets
Clean/litter free		Flowers/trees
Parking facilities		Footpaths
Detailed analysis of the local consultation suggests that with regards to cemeteries and churchyards, the relative importance of the key components is as follows:		
Component of quality	Proportion of possible total responses received	Weighting
Security and Safety	9%	1
Cleanliness and maintenance	65%	4
Vegetation	16%	2
Ancillary accommodation	19%	3

Accessibility standards

11.14 With regards to accessibility there are no definitive national or local standards for cemeteries and churchyards. There is no realistic requirement to set catchments for such typologies as they cannot easily be influenced through planning policy and implementation.

Applying provision standards – identifying geographical areas

11.15 Given that it is not appropriate to set any local quantity or accessibility standards it is also not appropriate to state areas of deficiency or need or examine the spatial distribution of these sites.

11.16 It is however important to consider the quality of the provision of cemeteries and churchyards and strive to achieve the quality criteria set for all churchyards and cemeteries.

11.17 Sites scoring well in terms of quality should be considered examples of good practice. The value of cemeteries and churchyards in the promotion of biodiversity and provision of habitats should be reinforced.

CC1	Stakeholders should recognise and promote the nature conservation value of closed cemeteries and churchyards and consider working towards developing more awareness of ecological management of cemeteries and churchyards.
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11.18 In areas of limited open space provision (or where churchyards are the only open space type), churchyard and cemetery sites are of particular importance. In these areas, enhancement is particularly important to ensure local residents value them. This is particularly the case in the rural area where the provision of other types of open space is limited.

CC2	In areas of limited open space provision, churchyard and cemetery sites are of particular importance. Enhancements to the accessibility and quality of sites should be prioritised in these areas.
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Summary

11.19 Cemeteries and churchyards can be a significant open space provider in some areas, particularly in rural areas. In other areas they can represent a relatively minor resource in terms of the land required, but are important for nature conservation.

11.20 Local standards for accessibility and quantity have not been set as it is not covered in the remit of this study. However, it is recognised that there is a need for an increase in the level of cemetery provision within the District, and it remains important to consider the future delivery of cemeteries and churchyards anticipating future demand as well as assessing the current level of provision, separate to this study.

11.21 The essential and desirable features set out in the quality standards should guide the future development and improvement of cemeteries and churchyards across the District. The quality of cemeteries and churchyards in the District is currently average. This is reflected in the findings of the household survey, with 58% of respondents thinking that the quality of sites is average. 36% of respondents also felt that the quality was good.

11.22 In some instances, cemeteries and churchyards are the only type of open space within a village, making them a particularly valuable element of the rural green space network. Enhancements to accessibility and quality should be prioritised in these areas.

11.23 The wider benefits of churchyards are key and it is wrong to place a value on churchyards and cemeteries focusing solely on quality and accessibility. In addition to offering a functional value, many cemeteries and churchyards have wider benefits including heritage, cultural and landscape values.

SECTION 12

CIVIC SPACES

Civic spaces

Definition

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

Figure 12.1 – Severn Side South, Bewdley



Strategic context and consultation

- 12.2 Civic spaces can be important areas of open space in urban areas and town centres.
- 12.3 As PPG 17 states *'the purpose of civic spaces, mainly in town and city centres, is to provide a setting for civic buildings, and opportunities for open air markets, demonstrations and civic events. They are normally provided on an opportunistic and urban design led basis. Accordingly it is for planning authorities to promote urban design frameworks for their town and city centre areas'*.
- 12.4 Civic spaces are an important asset in towns and settlements across Wyre Forest. It is the only public open space that is not considered to be green open space.
- 12.5 27% of respondents from the household survey stated that they visit a civic space more than once a month. However only 3% of respondents identified this type of open space as the type they use most frequently. This does not necessarily suggest that residents do not use these open spaces, just that they visit other types on a more frequent basis.
- 12.6 There are no definitive national or local standards for civic spaces. However, the Wyre Forest District Adopted Local Plan does make references to the provision of public open space.
- 12.7 Policy LR1- proposals for development that will lead to the loss or reduction of parks, **public open spaces** or other open space areas will not be allowed, except when the equivalent or increased provision is provided. Development that will have an adverse impact on these areas will not be permitted. This policy therefore recognises the role that civic spaces play in providing for the community.

Setting provision standards

Quantity standard

- 12.8 Four civic spaces have been identified throughout the audit, specifically:
- Severn Side North – Site ID 305
 - Severn Side South – Site ID 306
 - St Mary’s Civic Space – Site ID 558
 - Weavers Wharf Civic Space – Site ID 559.
- 12.9 As may be expected, these sites are located within the urban areas of the District. Consultation suggests that the majority of residents consider the provision of civic spaces to be insufficient (66%). This perception was the second most conclusive in the District and is consistent across all analysis areas.
- 12.10 Analysis of the more qualitative elements of the household survey indicated that people value the use of civic spaces as meeting places and feel that they provide a “sense of belonging” to a place.
- 12.11 PPG17 suggests that it is not realistic to set a quantity standard for civic spaces in light of their specialist nature.
- 12.12 Therefore we recommend that **no provision standard** is set. However, PPG17 adds that it is desirable for planning authorities to promote urban design frameworks for their town and city centres. The design and planning of new neighbourhoods in Wyre Forest should take into account the high demand for new civic spaces from local residents and ensure that such spaces are incorporated within master plans.

Quality standard

- 12.13 The quality of each site has been assessed through a detailed site visit and the completion of a detailed pro forma described in Section 2. More detail is provided in Appendix G. It is important to note that the quality score represents a snapshot in time and records only the quality of the site at the time of the site visit. The quality of civic spaces across the District is set out in Table 12.1 overleaf.

Table 12.1 – The quality of civic spaces in Wyre Forest

Analysis area	Number of sites	Range of quality scores (%)	Average quality scores (%)	Lowest quality sites	Highest quality sites
Bewdley	2	70 - 73	72	Severn Side North – ID 305	Severn Side South – ID 306
Stourport	0	-	-	-	-
Kidderminster East	1	60	-	-	St Mary’s Civic Space – ID 558
Kidderminster West	1	60	-	-	Weavers Wharf Civic Space – ID 559
Rural East	0	-	-	-	-
Rural West	0	-	-	-	-
Overall	4	60 – 73	66	St Mary’s Civic Space – ID 558	Severn Side South – ID 306

12.14 The key issues emerging from Table 12.1 and consultations relating to the quantity of provision of civic spaces include:

- responses within the individual areas are consistent with the overall findings and the highest level of satisfaction is found in Kidderminster West analysis area, where 47% of residents feel the quality of civic spaces is good
- residents at drop in sessions identified dog fouling as the main issue at this type of open space
- the average quality score for a civic space in Wyre Forest is 66%. The range of scores from 60 – 73 suggests that the overall quality of sites is consistent
- a high level of satisfaction was also shown by residents in the Kidderminster East, analysis area where St Mary’s Civic Space is located. Residents in Kidderminster have access to a higher quantity of civic spaces than other residents of the District.

12.15 In setting local standards for civic spaces, it is only appropriate to set a quality standard. Full details of the consultation and justifications for the recommended local standard are provided within Appendix G. The recommended local standard, derived directly from consultation across Wyre Forest has been summarised below:

Quality Standard (see Appendix G)

Recommended standard – CIVIC SPACES		
Local consultation, national guidance and best practice suggest that the following features are essential and desirable to local residents:		
Essential	Desirable	
Well kept grass	Toilets	
Clean/litter free	Flowers/trees	
Parking facilities	Footpaths	
Detailed analysis of the local consultation suggests that with regards to civic spaces, the relative importance of the key components is as follows:		
Component of quality	Proportion of possible total responses received	Weighting
Security and Safety	9%	1
Cleanliness and maintenance	65%	4
Vegetation	16%	2
Ancillary accommodation	19%	3

Accessibility standard

12.16 PPG17 states that there is no realistic requirement to set catchments for such a typology as it cannot be easily influenced through planning policy and implementation. However, it is recommended that the Council consider the accessibility of civic spaces, as a standard can be used for broad planning need, particularly in the more urban areas of the District.

12.17 The accessibility of sites is paramount in maximising usage. The recommended local standard is set in the form of a distance threshold and is derived directly from the findings of the local consultations.

12.18 Site-specific accessibility issues were also analysed as part of the programme of site visits and information and signage, transport and general issues were assessed.

SECTION 12 – CIVIC SPACES

- 12.19 Responses to the household questionnaire showed that more people would expect to walk to civic spaces as opposed to drive (51% walk compared to 42% drive). Despite an overall preference for walking, there is also a reliance on the use of the car (42%). This suggests that there are improvements that could be made to the accessibility of civic spaces in order to promote walking as a preferred travel method.
- 12.20 Site assessment ratings show all of the civic spaces are average in terms of transport links, general site access and information and signage. Access to these sites is often facilitated by their primary location within the key town centres.
- 12.21 The provision of civic spaces in rural areas is rare. Separate accessibility standards for urban and rural areas have therefore been set to reflect this.
- 12.22 The recommended local accessibility standard for civic spaces is summarised below. Full justification for the local standard is provided within Appendix H.

Accessibility standard (see Appendix H)

Recommended standard
20 MINUTE WALK TIME (URBAN) 20 MINUTE DRIVE TIME (RURAL)
Justification
<p>It is important to note that PPG17 states that there is no realistic requirement to set catchments for such a typology as it cannot be easily influenced through planning policy and implementation. Therefore strict adherence to an accessibility standard (in terms of highlighting area inside and outside the catchment of existing provision) would be counterproductive. However, it is recommended that the Council consider the accessibility of civic spaces within a 20 minute walk time for the urban area and a 20 minute drive time or the rural area.</p> <p>Considering the location of civic spaces in the context of a 20 minute walk time in the urban area and 20 minute drive time in the rural area is consistent with the 75% threshold level as advocated in PPG17. A drive time for the rural area has been set due to the high level of dissatisfaction with the current level of provision, with 67% of respondents to the household survey indicating there is a lack of civic spaces.</p> <p>Whilst the accessibility standard can be used for broad planning need, it should not be adopted as policy to influence future civic space provision.</p>

*a straight-line distance of 720m has been used rather than the pedestrian distance of 1200m. This is based on average walking distances reduced by a factor of 40% to account for the fact that people do not walk in straight lines. The 40% factoring is based on the approach set out in the NPFA Six Acre Standard.

Summary

- 12.23 There are four civic spaces across the District, all of which are located in the urban areas. Throughout the consultation, the aesthetic importance of civic spaces was discussed and they were perceived to be regularly used by both visitors and residents.
- 12.24 The nature of this typology means that they are very specific to their locality. Whilst no quantity standard has been set, careful consideration should be given when new developments are designed to the opportunity to provide appropriate civic spaces.
- 12.25 An accessibility and quality standard has been set as a benchmark for new areas of civic space and the maintenance of existing areas across the District.

SECTION 13
GREEN CORRIDORS

Green corridors

Definition

- 13.1 This open space type includes towpaths along canals and riverbanks, cycleways, rights of way and disused railway lines. Green corridors are linear routes with a primary purpose of providing opportunities for walking, cycling and horse riding, whether for leisure purposes or travel. Green corridors also facilitate wildlife migration and provide access to the wider countryside.
- 13.2 Although the role that all green corridors play in the provision of open space and recreation within local authority areas is recognised, the focus in this study is on important urban corridors and public rights of way (PROW). Green corridors can be particularly valuable in the urban towns, facilitating links between open spaces and local residents. Green corridors also provide valuable linkages between the towns and outlying rural settlements. As highlighted throughout this report, in many instances enhancing links between open spaces will be as important as the development of new sites.

Figure 13.1 – Canal towpath, Kidderminster



Strategic context and consultation

- 13.3 In addition to improving sustainability and linking urban areas with nearby rural countryside, green corridors represent an important chance to promote sustainable transport by cycle and on foot. Provision and use of green corridors will be a key determinant in the achievement of targets for participation in sport and active recreation.
- 13.4 The latest government plan published by the Department for Transport and entitled “Walking and Cycling: an action plan” states:
- “Walking and cycling are good for our health, good for getting us around, good for our public spaces and good for our society, for all these reasons we need to persuade more people to choose to walk and cycle more often”*
- 13.5 Therefore it is important to address any qualitative deficiencies of green corridors and capitalise on opportunities to increase and enhance the network. Providing a high quality infrastructure will not only increase use of green corridors, but linkages between sites will increase usage of individual open space sites and reduce barriers to access.

SECTION 13 – GREEN CORRIDORS

- 13.6 The rural nature of Wyre Forest lends itself to the provision of linear corridors which link open spaces (and settlements) together. The District contains a wide variety of canals and towpaths that form the basis of the green infrastructure.
- 13.7 In the main, the County Council (Worcestershire County Council) are responsible for the public rights of way (PROW) in the District. Worcestershire has a network of 3,000 miles of public rights of way and the Worcestershire Countryside Service has a statutory responsibility for these Public Rights of Way.
- 13.8 As a Highway Authority, Worcestershire County Council has a duty to assert and protect the rights of way network. However the responsibility for ensuring the paths are safe and convenient for the public to use is shared between a number of others including the District councils, landowners and users.
- 13.9 Worcestershire County Council's responsibilities include:
- signposting paths where they leave a metalled road
 - waymarking paths along the route of the path
 - clearance of undergrowth
 - ensuring landowners comply with their responsibilities.
- 13.10 Under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000, Worcestershire County Council was required to produce a Rights of Way Improvement Plan by 2007, outlining countryside access improvements over the next five years.
- 13.11 The Worcestershire County Council Rights Of Way Improvement Plan outlines a number of strategic aims for the County, including:
- to provide a rights of way network that meets the needs of the public
 - to ensure the rights of way network is easy to use
 - to balance the different needs of users and others with an interest in the rights of way network
 - to raise awareness of, promote and build confidence in the rights of way network
 - to manage resources and the rights of way network in an efficient and targeted manner.
- 13.12 As well as being a key partner in the delivery of the Rights of Way Improvement Plan, Wyre Forest District Council's commitment to the provision of green corridors is emphasised in several documents including the Adopted Local Plan and Cycling Strategy, in particular:
- Objective 44 of the Local Plan is to improve safety and enhance access and facilities for vulnerable road users
 - Objective 66 of the Local Plan promotes the formula of green transport plans in connection with existing or proposed developments that would create significant volumes of traffic or traffic problems that need to be addressed

SECTION 13 – GREEN CORRIDORS

- Policy TR6 of the Local Plan forbids development that is likely to have a detrimental effect on the Wyre Forest cycle route network. Where appropriate, S106 obligations may be required for contributions towards off site cycle infrastructure
- Policy TR18 indicates that developments likely to have significant transport implications will be subject to a Transport Assessment
- Policy TR19 states that all new developments that would create significant transport problems must provide a transport plan
- the Wyre Forest Cycle Strategy aims to promote cycling as a sustainable form of transport and provides a framework for this to be achieved
- one of the key aims of the strategy is to treble the amount of residents cycling (in line with Governmental targets) by 2010.

GC1	The Council should work in tandem with Worcestershire County Council, the PCT and other key partners to help maximise the use of green corridors and Public Rights of Way in the District.
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Consultation

13.13 Consultation on the provision of green corridors in Wyre Forest was undertaken through a variety of methods. The findings showed that:

- green corridors are used more frequently than all other open space in the District by 8% of residents. 49% of residents use green corridors once a month or more
- the quality of green corridors is perceived to be good by the majority of respondents to the household survey (49%). 40% of residents state the quality of this typology is average
- dog fouling and litter were considered to be the main problems experienced when using green corridors in Wyre Forest
- cycle paths and canal tow paths were particularly valued by residents in the District.

GC2	Building on the popularity of green corridors, the Council should look to enhance and develop pathways along the rivers and canals.
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Current position

13.14 The linear nature of green corridors means it is inappropriate to measure the area and assess these spaces. Nevertheless their importance within the District should not be undermined as they provide an essential linkage between open spaces and increase the accessibility of other sites.

Quality

- 13.15 While it is inappropriate to measure the area of green corridors, quality is central to their use and value both as a recreational resource and also as a means of enhancing wildlife.
- 13.16 A quality vision, based on the aspirations of the local community of Wyre Forest has therefore been set below. Full justifications for the recommended local standards are provided within Appendix G.

Quality Standard (see Appendix G)

Recommended standard – Green corridors		
Local consultation, national guidance and best practice suggest that the following features are essential and desirable to local residents:		
Essential	Desirable	
Clean/Litter free	Water features	
Footpaths	Well kept grass	
Nature features	Flowers and trees	
Detailed analysis of the local consultation suggests that with regards to green corridors, the relative importance of the key components is as follows:		
Component of quality	Proportion of possible total responses received	Weighting
Security and Safety	4%	1
Cleanliness and maintenance	37%	4
Vegetation	33%	3
Ancillary accommodation	14%	2

GC3	Providers of green corridors in Wyre Forest should aspire to the essential and desirable quality features.
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Quantity standard

13.17 The Annex A of PPG17 – Open Space Typology states:

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

13.18 It is therefore recommended that no provision standard should be set. PPG17 goes onto to state that:

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

13.19 The Wyre Forest District is connected to the National Cycle Route via Sustrans Route 45. The route integrates Stourport, Kidderminster and Bewdley.

GC4	Linking existing green corridors with open spaces in the District should be a key priority for the Council. This will provide opportunities for informal recreation and alternative means of transport, using all types of open spaces.
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Accessibility standard

13.20 There is no requirement to set catchments for green corridors as they cannot be easily influenced through planning policy and implementation.

Applying provision standards

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

13.22 The aim is to provide an integrated network of high quality green corridors linking open spaces together and opportunities for informal recreation and alternative means of transport. Consideration should also be given to the provision of effective wildlife corridors, enabling the migration of species across the District.

13.23 Specific opportunities to develop increased linkages were discussed in earlier sections of this study. Particular priority should be given to the development of green corridors within the more urban areas of the District where there are deficiencies of open space, particularly Kidderminster.

GC5	Investigate the feasibility of a green infrastructure study to help maximise the linkages of open spaces with green corridors and help create a network of multi-functional greenspace in Wyre Forest. This should serve as an extension to this PPG17 Study.
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Summary

- 13.24 Green corridors provide opportunities close to peoples homes for informal recreation, particularly walking and cycling, as part of every day activities, for example, travel to work or shops. Therefore the development of a linked green corridor network will help to improve the health and well being of the local community. In this way, green corridors can be integral to the achievement of targets for increased active recreation.
- 13.25 There are already a large number of footpaths and green corridor networks within the study area and consultation indicates that they are well-used. Future opportunities and developments should seek to enhance the pathways along rivers and canals.
- 13.26 Future development needs to encompass linkages between large areas of open space, create opportunities to develop the green corridor network and utilise potential development sites. Development should consider both the needs of wildlife and humans.
- 13.27 A network of multi-functional greenspace will contribute to the high quality natural and built environment required for existing and new sustainable communities in the future. An integrated network of high quality green corridors will link open spaces, helping to alleviate other open space deficiencies and provide opportunities for alternative means of transport.

SECTION 14

PLANNING OVERVIEW

Overview of open space, sport and recreation provision in Wyre Forest

- 14.1 This study has been completed in accordance with the requirements of the latest Planning Policy Guidance Note 17 and its Companion Guide.
- 14.2 This section summarises the local standards set and the application of the local standards for all typologies in each area of the District. Consideration is then given to the implementation of the study in a planning policy and development control context. The findings of this report should be used as an evidence base for the development of a green space strategy as well as the LDF.

Current position

- 14.3 The current provision of all open space, sport and recreation facilities in Wyre Forest is summarised in Table 14.1 overleaf. Detailed information on the provision of each type of space can be found throughout the individual sections and in Appendix E.
- 14.4 Areas where the quantity of each type of open space falls below the minimum standard are highlighted in red. All figures are presented in hectares.

SECTION 14 – SUMMARY AND PLANNING OVERVIEW

Table 14.1 - Current total provision of open space, sport and recreation facilities in Wyre Forest

Analysis Area	Town parks (ha)	Local parks (ha)	Amenity green space (ha)	Natural and semi natural open space (ha)	Provision for children (ha)	Provision for young people(ha)	Outdoor sports facilities (ha)	Allotments (ha)
Bewdley	0.88	0.99	5.40	21.64	0.40	0.32	9.55	0.03
Stourport	16.89	0.25	11.82	59.41	1.15	0.38	56.81	3.72
Kidderminster East	2.76	22.83	2.72	24.83	0.91	0.67	28.54	6.80
Kidderminster West	11.60	0.00	5.90	41.56	1.28	0.42	32.5	5.07
Rural East	0.00	0.00	1.54	70.11	0.35	0.15	52.33	2.36
Rural West	0.00	0.00	0.00	6.33	0.02	0.00	5.89	0.00
Overall	32.13	24.07	27.38	223.88	4.11	1.94	185.62	17.98
COMMENTS (District wide)	Existing provision below recommended standard	Existing provision below recommended standard	Existing provision below recommended standard	Existing provision below recommended standard	Existing provision below recommended standard	Existing provision below recommended standard	Existing provision below recommended standard	Existing provision below recommended standard

Current provision – quality

14.5 Analysis of the quality of open spaces across the District indicates that:

- the quality of parks within the District is average. Larger parks are generally of higher quality than local parks and Jubilee Gardens and Brinton Park are seen as examples of good practice. Parks are particularly valued within Wyre Forest and local parks are considered to be an important open space for children. Local Standards were set at the existing level of provision in order to encourage a focus on the enhancement of the quality of existing sites
- the quality of natural and semi natural open spaces is lower than some other typologies. Improvements to the quality of natural sites were considered to be of particular importance. Natural and semi natural open space within the District is highly valuable to local residents, particularly within the urban settlements. The abundance of nearby countryside combined with the provision of natural and semi natural open space is integral to the character of the District. Local standards were set at the existing level of provision in order to ensure a focus on qualitative enhancements
- the quality of amenity green space was perceived to be average by local residents. Amenity green space is one of least used typologies in the District and existing sites are perceived to be largely valued from a landscape perspective rather than for recreational use
- quantity was considered to be a greater issue than quality for children and young people, however quality also emerged as a key issue. Analysis of existing sites highlighted significant variations in the quality of existing facilities and this was also reflected through the findings of the local consultation, where the need for challenging and innovative facilities was raised. Recent improvements of young people's facilities were regularly commended and encouraged
- the quality of outdoor sports facilities is the most varied of all typologies, with some excellent examples and some poorer facilities. Improvements to the quality of facilities were perceived to be of particular importance to residents and sports clubs. A key issue identified by sports clubs was a lack of changing facilities at outdoor sports facilities
- local residents perceived addressing quantitative issues to be of greater priority than enhancing the quality of allotments in Wyre Forest. The quality of allotments in the District is consistent and consultation highlighted that cleanliness and maintenance are the two most valued features of a site.

Current provision – accessibility

14.6 The accessibility of all open space sites is discussed throughout the report. Accessibility is central if deficiencies are to be appropriately understood. In summary, the key issues emerging from the analysis of accessibility are:

- while all residents of the rural areas are able to access parks and gardens, there are shortfalls within the urban areas. New provision should be considered in the Stourport and Kidderminster analysis areas

- the distribution of natural and semi natural open spaces is fairly even, however clear areas of deficiency are evident in the urban areas of the District. Providing green linkages to the nearby countryside will be essential to combat these areas of deficiency
- the distribution of amenity green space is poor, with sites concentrated in the urban areas of the District. The relationship between amenity green space, parks and provision for children was highlighted. Although improvements to the quality of provision should be prioritised, opportunities for new provision should be seized in the Kidderminster West analysis area. There are opportunities to upgrade existing amenity green space to meet deficiencies in parks in the Kidderminster East and West analysis areas
- reflecting the findings of the quantity standards, there are large clusters of residents who are unable to access facilities for children and young people. Several priorities for new provision were also identified
- the distribution of outdoor sports facilities is even and there are few deficiencies across the District. One issue however is the lack of publicly owned facilities in certain areas of Wyre Forest. Additionally, in some instances the balance of provision does not meet local need, with insufficient facilities for junior teams and surpluses of larger size facilities. Increased access to school sites for the local community will be instrumental in the effective delivery of outdoor sports facilities
- the distribution of allotments is even across the District, with the exception of the Bewdley analysis area. It is within this area where there is a priority for new provision.

14.7 In summary therefore, the key issues relating to quality, quantity and accessibility arising through this study which should be addressed as part of a green space strategy include:

- the need for access to local parks in some of the urban areas of the District
- the need for qualitative enhancements of natural and semi natural open space and amenity green space
- provision of additional opportunities for children and young people
- opportunities for increased provision of allotments
- opportunities to increase access to school sites.

9.1 Analysis of the current supply and demand of indoor sports facilities in Wyre Forest concludes that:

- there are sufficient swimming pools to meet current and future demand in quantitative terms. Pools are ageing and focus should be placed on improving the quality of facilities and providing public transport linkages
- the supply of sports halls is in balance with demand. Changes to the current levels of participation and population growth may see demand become greater than supply. New provision may therefore be required. Any new facilities should be linked to school sites in order to maximise the use of resources

- there are no bowls facilities in the district and the need for a facility was a key theme of consultation. New provision should therefore be considered. This is of particular importance in light of the profile of the population which indicates that one of the dominant population groups has a strong propensity to participate in bowls
- there are no indoor tennis facilities in the district. Consultation did not uncover need for a facility within Wyre Forest and demand should therefore be monitored on an ongoing basis.

The plan led system

- 14.8 The overall conclusions of the report should be used to guide future planning policy and to inform development control decisions.
- 14.9 The Wyre Forest District Adopted Local Plan has an end date of 2011. This plan continues to form part of the Development Plan for the District, together with the West Midlands Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) until it is superseded by the new plan for the District, the Wyre Forest District Local Development Framework. The key policies relating to the provision of open space, sport and recreation facilities within the existing Adopted Local Plan include:
- LR1 – outdoor recreational open space
 - LR2 – developer contributions to amenity green space provision within new developments
 - LR3 – developer contributions to children’s play space provision within new residential developments
 - LR4 - allotments
 - LR9 – outdoor sports facilities
 - LR14 – golf development
 - LR17 – major commercial leisure developments
 - GB3 – the Green Belt.
- 14.10 These policies have been saved until the adoption of the Local Development Framework for Wyre Forest. This Local Development Framework will provide the long term development vision for the District and will be made up of a series of Development Plan Documents (DPDs) and Supplementary Planning documents (SPDs).
- 14.11 DPDs should include general policies on open space, sport and recreation facilities that are supported by the findings of this study and other relevant documents. This PPG17 study should be used as a supporting evidence base for all Local Development Documents and the policies within them.
- 14.12 Key issues emerging from this study which should be covered in planning policies within the Wyre Forest Local Development Framework include:
- in light of the value of open spaces to residents, the LDF should protect open space from development - this should include all types of open space

SECTION 14 – PLANNING OVERVIEW

- the LDF should facilitate the proactive planning and delivery of new open space where it is required through appropriate allocations and policies. Allocations for new sites may be required for allotments and parks
- the LDF should maximise opportunities arising from new developments through the inclusion of appropriate local standards – the Council should seek contributions towards all types of open space identified within this study.

14.13 The saved policies within the Wyre Forest District Adopted Local Plan cover many of the above issues. These should be updated in the new LDF to reflect the findings of this study.

14.14 The remainder of this section provides guidance on the use of this PPG17 study, particularly with regards the determination of developer contributions and identification of strategic priorities for open space.

Strategic context and overview

Planning Policy Guidance Note 17: Planning for open spaces, sport and recreation

- 14.15 PPG17 emphasises the importance of undertaking robust assessments of the existing and future needs of local communities for open space, sport and recreational facilities.
- 14.16 Local authorities should use the information gained from their assessments of needs and opportunities to set locally derived standards for the provision of open space, sports and recreational facilities.
- 14.17 Assessments of need undertaken in relation to PPG17 should drive the future provision of open space, sport and recreation facilities. Planning contributions can be a key source of funding to ensure that provision of open space, sport and recreation facilities meets the aims and objectives of current and future residents.
- 14.18 With regards the use of planning obligations, paragraph 33 of PPG17 states; *“Planning obligations should be used as a means to remedy local deficiencies in the quantity or quality of open space, sports and recreation provision. Local Authorities will be justified in seeking planning obligations where the quantity or quality of provision is inadequate or under threat, or where new development increases local needs. It is essential that local authorities have undertaken detailed assessments of needs and audits of existing facilities, and set appropriate local standards in order to justify planning obligations.”*

Assessing needs and opportunities: A Companion Guide to PPG17

- 14.19 Whilst the advice within the Companion Guide was written at a time when the guidance on developer contributions was contained within Circular 1/97, its recommendations on the implementation of developer contributions are still highly relevant.
- 14.20 Diagram 1 of the Companion Guide shows how to deal with the redevelopment of an existing open space or sports/recreation facility, using developer contributions and planning conditions.
- 14.21 Crucially, paragraph 9.1 states that provided authorities have undertaken assessments of need and audits of existing facilities compliant with PPG17, locally determined provision standards will meet the tests of reasonableness set out in paragraph 7 of Department of the Environment Circular 1/97, Planning Obligations. Whilst Circular 05/2005 has superseded this circular, the reference to “reasonableness” remains.
- 14.22 The Companion Guide states that additional provision will be needed when the total amount of provision within the appropriate distance threshold of the site is or will be below the amount required in the area following the development. The decision as to whether on-site provision or a contribution to off-site provision is more appropriate depends primarily on whether the total quantity of each form of new provision required as a result of the proposed development is above the minimum acceptable size in the adopted provision standards. If it is, then new provision should normally be on-site; if not, the developer should be required to contribute to off-site provision.

- 14.23 Before seeking contributions to off-site provision, authorities should be satisfied that they will be able to use them within an appropriate distance threshold of the proposed development site. If they do not use them within an agreed time frame, developers are able to submit an S106 application for their return. This underlines the importance of ensuring planning obligations are implemented or enforced in an efficient and transparent way, in order to ensure that contributions are spent on their intended purposes and that the associated development contributes to the sustainability of the areas. This will require monitoring by the Local Planning authority.
- 14.24 Whilst the Council will be justified in seeking contributions for the full range of open space, sport and recreation facilities for which they have adopted provision standards, in practice they will have to be realistic and in many instances prioritise within the findings of the local needs and audit assessment. This will vary depending on the location of the planning application.

Circular 05/2005: Planning obligations

- 14.25 This Circular replaces the Department of the Environment Circular 1/97, with the changes only concerning the negotiation of planning obligations. This Circular will act in the interim period before further reforms are brought forward.
- 14.26 Planning obligations are intended to make acceptable development that would otherwise be unacceptable in planning terms. They may be used to:
- prescribe the nature of a development (eg proportion of affordable housing)
 - compensate for loss or damage created by a development (eg loss of open space)
 - mitigate a developments impact (eg through increased public transport provision).
- 14.27 Planning obligations should only be sought where they meet all of the following tests:
- relevant to planning
 - necessary to make the proposed development acceptable in planning terms
 - directly related to the proposed development
 - fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind to the proposed development
 - reasonable in all other aspects.

Developer Contributions in Wyre Forest

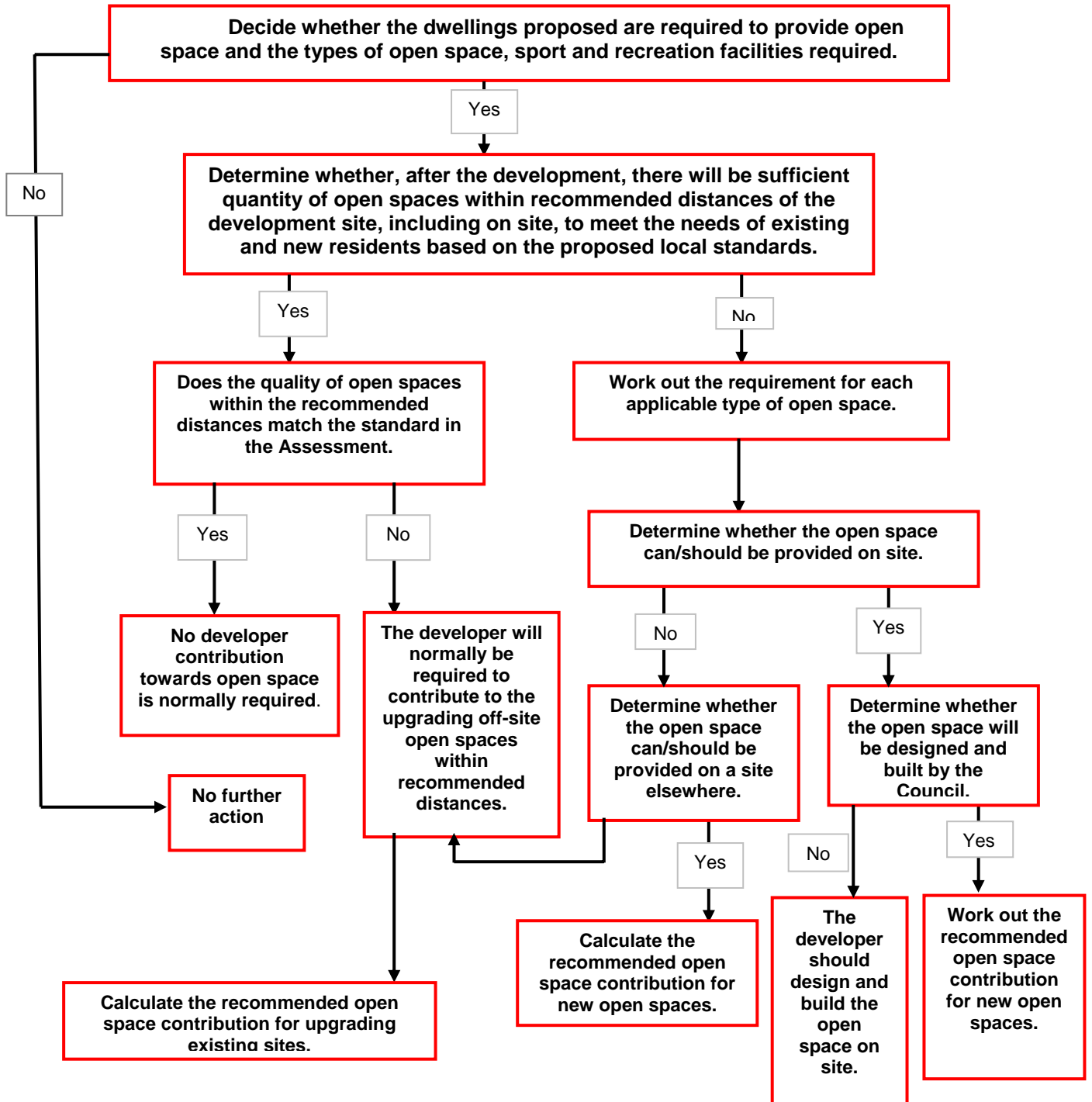
- 14.28 The plan led system ensures that Local Planning authorities clearly define requirements for contributions and the type of development that will be permissible.
- 14.29 As well as outlining the general policies for the future delivery of open space, DPDs should also consider the principles and use of planning obligations. For example, matters to be covered by planning obligations and factors to take into account when considering the scale and form of contributions.

- 14.30 Planning obligations can be in kind or in the form of financial contributions. Policies on the types of payment, including pooling and maintenance payments, should be set out within Local Development Frameworks and developers should be able to predict as accurately as possible the likely contributions they will be asked to pay. Many local authorities now include a S106 contributions calculator on their website ensuring that the system is transparent to all developers.
- 14.31 More detailed policies applying the principles set out in the Development Plan Document, for example, specific localities and likely quantum of contributions, ought to then be included in Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD). Dependent of the scope of the SPD, the Council may wish to also consider the development of codes of practice in negotiating planning obligations, so as to make clear the level of service a developer can expect.
- 14.32 The Wyre Forest Planning Obligations SPD was adopted during February 2007 and outlines the current requirements for the provision of open space, sport and recreation facilities. This is based on the saved policies in the Adopted Local Plan which are derived from the National Playing Fields standards.

Determining Developer Contributions – good practice

- 14.33 The flow diagram overleaf provides more detail on the process for determining developer contributions using the local standards recommended as part of this study. It is based on a review of best practice and national guidance. A worked example is also provided later in this section.
- 14.34 It is intended as a guide for Wyre Forest District Council on how to use the information contained within this report to effectively plan existing and future provision. It is intended to guide the Council in the implementation of the Planning Obligations SPD and in future reviews of this document.

Figure 14.1 - Proposed process for determining open space requirements (adapted from Swindon Borough adopted SPG: 2004)



1. Determine whether the dwellings proposed are required to provide open space

- 14.35 The first stage in the flow diagram is to determine whether the dwellings proposed are required to provide open space and which types of open space, sport and recreation facilities will require developer contributions.
- 14.36 Policies LR2, LR3 and LR4 within the Adopted Adopted Local Plan currently consider the provision of open space within residential and employment development. These policies use national standards to determine the required contributions and indicate that contributions/on site provision will be required as part of new development. Policy LR2 states that development proposals must, where appropriate, include provision for amenity space (including LAPs). S106 agreements may be sought for the provision and enhancement of amenity space. Policy LR3 specifically indicates that developments resulting in 75 - 200 child bedspaces will be required to contribute towards on site provision of a LEAP. If the development results in over 200 child bedspaces a NEAP will be required. The policy further states that if there is a nearby play space, off site improvements may be required under S106 obligations.
- 14.37 Where a development includes affordable housing, the contribution towards open space/play area provision will be reduced by 50%.
- 14.38 Based on the review of the existing SPD and good practice guidance, it is recommended that the following approach be taken:
- continue to base the nature and scale of obligations sought from development on the size of development and the impact on open space, sport and recreation provision
 - clearly set out the circumstances under which contributions would be required towards other types of open space as well as parks
 - consider whether contributions are required from industrial, commercial and employment development.

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

- 14.39 The determination of shortfalls/surpluses relies on the use and application of appropriate standards of provision.
- 14.40 The existing Adopted Local Plan and SPD relies on national standards within existing policies on sport and recreation facilities.
- 14.41 These national standards should be replaced by the local standards set out within this PPG17 report. The Council should determine for which types of open space they would like to receive contributions and should set out these local standards within the Local Development Framework. This should include quantity, quality and accessibility standards.
- 14.42 The use of these locally derived standards ensures that contributions requested are directly in line with proven local need and that there is full justification and rationale for the standards set.

SECTION 14 – PLANNING OVERVIEW

- 14.43 These standards should then be used to determine the contributions required. In order to ensure that the requirement on developers is fair and consistent, contributions should be applied based on the increased level of demand only. This ensures that the developer is paying directly for the associated impact of the development rather than it being dependent on what open space happens to be around the development. It is still essential to consider the existing provision within the area in order to understand the impact that the new development will have.
- 14.44 If there is no quantitative or accessibility deficiency there may be a qualitative deficiency that needs to be addressed.
- 14.45 A detailed worked example is set out at the end of this section.
- 14.46 To identify the level of quantitative, qualitative and accessibility deficiency within the area of the development, the PPG17 study should be applied for each of the types of open space. In simple terms, this is as follows:
- estimate the number of residents living in the proposed development (being explicit about assumed occupation rates)
 - calculate the existing amount of open space within the agreed accessibility threshold of the new development. For example, there may be an existing quantitative undersupply of parks and gardens, provision for young people and children and allotments in the area of the development site
 - estimate the existing population within the relevant accessibility threshold and combine this with the estimated population of the new development
 - compare the existing amount of open space and the total population with the quantity standards developed for that typology in the PPG17 study to decide if after the development there will be sufficient quantity within recommended distances of the development site to meet local needs.
- 14.47 If when assessed against the relevant PPG17 quantity standards, there is a sufficient amount of that type of open space in the local area to meet the needs of the total population, the Council may expect developer contributions to enhance the quality of open spaces within that accessibility threshold.
- 14.48 Where it has been decided that a contribution is required to improve provision locally, reference should be made to the quality standards for each typology and the assessment against these standards. Contributions should only be considered necessary where the quality of local provision is considered below the quality standard as outlined in the PPG17 assessment.

PLAN1	Set out the local standards produced within the PPG17 document within the LDF. These should be used as a basis for determining the contributions required.
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PLAN2	Apply these local standards to decide whether the development creates a need for new open space or a need to improve the quality of existing open space in the local area
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3. Determine whether the open space can/should be provided on site.

- 14.49 In instances where a quantitative deficiency has been identified, it is necessary to determine whether the open space should be provided on site. A new area of open space should be required where the existing amount of open space is insufficient to cater for the needs of the total population. The requirement should only cover the needs of the people who will be living in the new housing development.
- 14.50 If a housing development generates a need for new open space then wherever possible this should be provided on-site. However, in many circumstances it will not be possible to achieve this. It is recommended that minimum size standards for each typology are developed to ensure that provision is useable and can be viably maintained. If the quantitative need for a type of open space is equivalent to or above the minimum size threshold then new provision should be required on site.

PLAN3	Identify appropriate minimum size thresholds for on-site provision for each typology. Develop a matrix approach to determine the threshold of dwellings for on-site versus off-site provision as a guide only. A case-by-case approach will still be required.
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- 14.51 If it is not possible to provide the open space required on site, then contributions should be sought towards the new provision or enhancement of that type of open space within the accessibility threshold. It must be proven that the contribution will be used to improve or provide new provision that is directly related to the development in question.

Pooled contributions

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

4. Calculate the recommended open space contribution for new open spaces.

- 14.54 The level of developer contributions for off-site provision will depend on whether it includes the costs of land acquisition. Standard costs towards the enhancement of existing open space and provision of new open spaces (across all typologies) should be clearly identified and revised annually. They should be based on local circumstances.

14.55 The cost of open space can be difficult to determine based on what elements of open space provision to include within the costing. For example, whether the cost of a facility should include site preparation, eg levelling, drainage, special surfaces and what ancillary facilities to include within costings, what level of equipment and land costs. A guide can be found on the Sport England website: http://www.sportengland.org/kitbag_fac_costs.doc and the NPFA Cost Guides for Play and Sport.

PLAN4	Calculate local costs for each type of open space (per person) so that an appropriate contribution towards the provision of off site open space can be determined.
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Worked example – calculating the requirement for new provision from a development in Wyre Forest

14.56 A worked example, contribution towards amenity green space, is provided as follows:

- a housing development for 70 dwellings has been submitted to the Council. The development consists of 30 four-bed dwellings, 30 three-bed dwellings and 10 two-bed dwellings. This will result in 230 additional residents living in the locality
- the agreed accessibility catchment for amenity green space in this example is a 10 minute walk time or 480 metres. Within this distance of the housing development there is currently 0.27 hectares of provision
- the estimated population within 480 metres of the housing development is 800 people. Combined with the estimated population from the new development (230), this gives a total population of 1030
- the quantity standard for amenity green space is 0.29 hectares per 1000 population. Multiplied by the total population (1030) produced a requirement for 0.299 hectares of amenity greenspace. The existing amount of amenity greenspace is 0.27 hectares
- 0.27 hectares of amenity green space within 480 metres is a lower level of provision than the required 0.299. The developer will therefore be required to provide further provision
- the size requirement can be calculated by multiplying the quantity standard per person by the population of the new development. In this example this represents 0.00029 hectares per person multiplied by 230 people, producing a requirement for 0.0667 hectares. Given the shortfall in provision is 0.0667 hectares, in order to meet the needs of the people who will be living in the new housing development; the full quantity provision should be secured
- reference should be made to the agreed minimum size standards to determine whether the requirement should be on site or off site. In this example the minimum acceptable size is 0.2 hectares, so either there should be on site provision of a single piece of land at least 0.2ha in area, or a contribution towards off site provision should be sought.

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

- if the open space were to be provided off-site, the estimated cost for the provision of amenity greenspace is £8,200 on the basis of a site being 0.2ha (2000m²) in size and the cost per hectare being £41,000 (example only)
- the agreed local standard for provision is 0.29 ha per 1000 population, or 0.00029 ha per person
- using the formula set out above, the contribution required for a 70 dwelling development is:
 - 230 (number of people in development in terms of increased demand over capacity within accessibility catchment of the development) X 0.00029 (requirement per person) X £41,000 (cost of provision per hectare)
 - the contribution required towards amenity greenspace is **£2734.47**.

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

14.59 This PPG17 study can be used to determine the level of open space and indoor sport and recreation facilities required in major new urban extensions as well as within smaller new housing developments. The above methodology should be repeated for each type of open space for which contributions are required.

Maintenance

14.60 Maintenance sums are also an important element of any Section 106 process. The Wyre Forest District Council SPD sets out the current policy for maintenance, stating that the Council will require a maintenance payment covering a 20 year period, payable upon the adoption of the on-site play area facility. If a play area is not provided for within the development, alternative arrangements should be put in place for the long term maintenance of the facility. With regards to off site provision, for developments where there are existing play spaces within the distances specified by the NPFA, developers will be required to provide an appropriate commuted sum payment for off site improvements.

14.61 Contributions towards all open space types should give consideration to the long-term maintenance requirements.

14.62 In addition to the use of the recommended local standards for determining the required level of developer contributions, these standards should also be used to determine the recreational value of an open space site and inform decisions on individual planning applications and priorities for investment.

Summary and recommendations

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

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- 14.64 The study provides the tools in which the value of an open space can be assessed on a site-by-site basis, as and when a development proposal is submitted for an existing piece of open space. Similarly, this approach can be the basis for determining what type of open space provision is appropriate to be provided within a housing development and for pre-empting growth implications as part of the LDF.
- 14.65 The use of a standard formula for open space provision in new housing developments based on the cost of provision will greatly aid the negotiation process and provide a transparent approach in line with Circular 05/2005. This formula should be based on the recommended local standards contained within this report.
- 14.66 There are many other factors to consider in administering planning obligations such as determining occupancy rates, costings and on versus off site provision. The Council's approach is set out in a Supplementary Planning Document. This should be updated to reflect the new standards produced as part of this study.
- 14.67 Maintenance sums are an important element of open space provision. It is not considered reasonable to expect maintenance in perpetuity, however the authorities reviewed are typically securing maintenance for up to 20 years.
- 14.68 More generally, it is important to note that the provision standards are only the starting point in negotiations with developments. High quality environments will not result simply from applying them in a mechanical way. It is desirable also to complement provision standards with design guidance that concentrates on effective place making.