



WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL

OPEN SPACE ASSESSMENT REPORT

MAY 2017

QUALITY, INTEGRITY, PROFESSIONALISM

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PART 1: INTRODUCTION.....	1
1.1 Report structure	2
1.2 National context	2
1.3 Local context.....	3
PART 2: METHODOLOGY	6
2.1 Analysis areas.....	6
2.2 Auditing local provision (supply)	8
2.3 Quality and value	9
2.4 Quality and value thresholds	10
2.5 Identifying local need (demand).....	11
2.6 Accessibility standards	11
PART 3: GENERAL OPEN SPACE SUMMARY	12
3.1 Usage.....	12
3.2 Accessibility.....	13
3.3 Availability	14
3.4 Quality.....	15
3.5 Value.....	17
3.6 Summary.....	18
PART 4: PARKS AND GARDENS	19
4.1 Introduction	19
4.2 Current provision.....	19
4.3 Accessibility.....	19
4.4 Quality.....	22
4.5 Value.....	24
4.6 Summary.....	25
PART 5: NATURAL AND SEMI-NATURAL GREENSPACE	26
5.1 Introduction	26
5.2 Current provision.....	26
5.3 Accessibility.....	29
5.4 Quality.....	32
5.5 Value.....	34
5.6 Summary.....	35
PART 6: AMENITY GREENSPACE.....	36
6.1 Introduction	36
6.2 Current provision.....	36
6.3 Accessibility.....	36
6.4 Quality.....	39
6.5 Value.....	41
6.6 Summary.....	42

PART 7: PROVISION FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE	43
7.1 Introduction	43
7.2 Current provision	43
7.3 Accessibility.....	43
7.4 Quality.....	47
7.5 Value.....	48
7.6 Summary.....	49
PART 8: ALLOTMENTS	50
8.1 Introduction	50
8.2 Current provision	50
8.3 Accessibility.....	50
8.4 Quality.....	53
8.5 Value.....	54
8.6 Summary.....	55
PART 9: CEMETERIES/CHURCHYARDS.....	56
9.1 Introduction	56
9.2 Current provision	56
9.3 Accessibility.....	56
9.4 Quality.....	59
9.5 Value.....	60
9.6 Summary.....	60
PART 10: CIVIC SPACE.....	61
10.1 Introduction	61
10.2 Current provision	61
10.3 Accessibility.....	61
10.4 Quality.....	62
10.5 Value.....	62
10.6 Summary.....	63
APPENDIX ONE: Quality and Value criteria by open space typology	64

ABBREVIATIONS

DCLG	Department for Communities and Local Government
DDA	Disability Discrimination Act
DPD	Development Plan Document
FIT	Fields in Trust
FOG	Friends of Group
GIS	Geographical Information Systems
KKP	Knight, Kavanagh and Page
LNR	Local Nature Reserve
MAPA	Multi activity play area
NPPF	National Planning Policy Framework
NSALG	National Society of Allotment and Leisure Gardeners
ONS	Office of National Statistics
PPG	Planning Policy Guidance
PPS	Playing Pitch Strategy
RoSPA	Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents
SOA	Super Output Areas
SPD	Supplementary Planning Document
SSSI	Sites of Special Scientific Interest
WFDC	Wyre Forest District Council

WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL OPEN SPACE ASSESSMENT

PART 1: INTRODUCTION

1. This is the Open Space Assessment Report prepared by Knight Kavanagh & Page (KKP) for Wyre Forest District Council (WFDC). It focuses on reporting the findings of the research, site assessments, consultation, data analysis and GIS mapping that underpin the open space study.
2. The Assessment Report provides detail with regard to what provision exists in the area, its condition, distribution and overall quality. It considers the demand for provision based upon population distribution and consultation findings. The Recommendation Paper (to follow the assessment report) will give direction on the future requirements for provision of accessible, high quality and sustainable open spaces. Together they will help to inform and act as an evidence base to the Wyre Forest Local Plan Review being undertaken.
3. In order for planning policies to be 'sound' local authorities are required to carry out a robust assessment of need for open space, sport and recreation facilities. We advocate that the methodology to undertake such assessments should still be informed by best practice including the Planning Policy Guidance 17 (PPG17) Companion Guidance; *Assessing Needs and Opportunities* published in September 2002.
4. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) has replaced PPG17. However, assessment of open space facilities is still normally carried out in accordance with the Companion Guidance to PPG17 as it still remains the only national best practice guidance on the conduct of an open space assessment.
5. Under paragraph 73 of the NPPF, it is set out that planning policies should be based on robust and up-to-date assessments of the needs for open space, sports and recreation facilities and opportunities for new provision. Specific needs and quantitative or qualitative deficiencies and surpluses in local areas should also be identified. This information should be used to inform what future provision may be required in an area.
6. As a prerequisite paragraph 74 of the NPPF states existing open space, sports and recreation sites, including playing fields, should not be built on unless:
 - ◀ An assessment has been undertaken, which has clearly shown the site to be surplus to requirements.
 - ◀ The loss resulting from the proposed development would be replaced by equivalent or better provision in terms of quantity and quality in a suitable location.
 - ◀ The development is for alternative sports and recreational provision, the needs for which clearly outweigh the loss.
7. In accordance with best practice recommendations a size threshold of 0.2 hectares has been applied to the inclusion of some typologies within the study. This means that, in general, sites that fall below this threshold are not audited. The table overleaf details the open space typologies included within the study:

WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL OPEN SPACE ASSESSMENT

Table 1.1: Open space typology definitions

	Typology	Primary purpose
Greenspaces	Parks and gardens	Accessible, high quality opportunities for informal recreation and community events.
	Natural and semi-natural greenspaces	Wildlife conservation, biodiversity and environmental education and awareness. Includes urban woodland and beaches, where appropriate.
	Amenity greenspace	Opportunities for informal activities close to home or work or enhancement of the appearance of residential or other areas.
	Provision for children and young people	Areas designed primarily for play and social interaction involving children and young people, such as equipped play areas, MUGAs, skateboard areas and teenage shelters.
	Allotments	Opportunities for those people who wish to do so to grow their own produce as part of the long term promotion of sustainability, health and social inclusion.
	Cemeteries, disused churchyards and other burial grounds	Quiet contemplation and burial of the dead, often linked to the promotion of wildlife conservation and biodiversity.

1.1 Report structure

Open spaces

8. This report considers the supply and demand issues for open space provision across Wyre Forest. Each part contains relevant typology specific data. Further description of the methodology used can be found in Part 2. The report as a whole covers the predominant issues for all open spaces originally defined in 'Assessing Needs and Opportunities: A Companion Guide to PPG17'; it is structured as follows:

- ❖ Part 3: General open space summary
- ❖ Part 4: Parks and gardens
- ❖ Part 5: Natural/ semi-natural greenspace
- ❖ Part 6: Amenity greenspace
- ❖ Part 7: Provision for children/ young people
- ❖ Part 8: Allotments
- ❖ Part 9: Cemeteries/churchyards

1.2 National context

National Planning Policy Framework

9. The NPPF sets out the planning policies for England. It details how these are expected to be applied to the planning system and provides a framework to produce distinct local and neighbourhood plans, reflecting the needs and priorities of local communities.
10. It states that the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. It establishes that the planning system needs to focus on three themes of sustainable development: economic, social and environmental. A presumption in favour of sustainable development is a key aspect for any plan-making and decision-taking processes. In relation to plan-making the NPPF sets out that Local Plans should meet objectively assessed needs.

WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL

OPEN SPACE ASSESSMENT

11. Under paragraph 73 of the NPPF, it is set out that planning policies should be based on robust and up-to-date assessments of the needs for open space, sports and recreation facilities and opportunities for new provision. Specific needs and quantitative and qualitative deficiencies and surpluses in local areas should also be identified. This information should be used to inform what provision is required in an area.
12. As a prerequisite paragraph 74 of the NPPF states existing open space, sports and recreation sites, including playing fields, should not be built on unless:
 - ✦ An assessment has been undertaken, which has clearly shown the site to be surplus to requirements.
 - ✦ The loss resulting from the proposed development would be replaced by equivalent or better provision in terms of quantity and quality in a suitable location.
 - ✦ The development is for alternative sports and recreational provision, the needs for which clearly outweigh the loss.

1.3 Local context

13. This study and its findings are important in their contribution to the Council's emerging Local Plan Review. They are an integral part of identifying and regulating the open space infrastructure. Through recognising open space provision in plan form, it can be assessed in terms of quantity, quality and accessibility, whilst strengthening its presence in planning policy for the future and maximising opportunities for investment.

Population and distribution

14. The total population, from the 2015 Mid-Year Estimates in Wyre Forest was 99,503* with slightly more females to males. There is a higher proportion of 65-79 year olds in Wyre Forest (18%) compared to the West Midlands (15.9%). This age group will increase in size over the coming years as people live longer. These residents are likely to be retired and time rich, with a need to be as physically active as possible in order to remain independent. As a combination of factors, it suggests careful consideration should be given to the development of sport and physical activity offers within the area.
15. The majority of the population is centred in and around the central (Kidderminster) and southern (Stourport) areas of the District.

Wyre Forest District Council: Core Strategy (2006-2026)

16. Wyre Forest's Core Strategy identifies the type of place the District will be in 2026. To achieve this, the strategy lists 13 key development objectives, which are listed below.

Table 1.2: WFDC's key development objectives

Number	Objective
1	To provide a range of high-quality, highly energy efficient, and affordable housing options for residents of all ages and needs to achieve sustainable communities.
2	To diversify and grow the District's economy, emphasising the development of the service sector, high tech industry and sustainable tourism.
3	Continue to develop Kidderminster as the strategic centre for the District and beyond and to maintain the important roles of Stourport-on-Severn and Bewdley as market towns.

* Source: ONS 2015 Mid Year Estimate

WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL OPEN SPACE ASSESSMENT

Number	Objective
4	Support the viability of the District's villages and rural areas and assist in opportunities for diversification.
5	Safeguard and enhance the District's unique landscape character, Green Belt, natural environment and green infrastructure.
6	To conserve and enhance the District's heritage assets.
7	Safeguard and enhance natural resources, minimise waste and increase recycling, especially the re-use of land and buildings.
8	Safeguard and replenish the District's rich and varied biodiversity and geodiversity, including that within the three town centres.
9	Ensure the District is equipped to adapt to and mitigate the impacts of climate change by ensuring that future developments are low or zero-carbon and that they do not increase flood risk to new and existing property.
10	Improve the District's air quality, particularly in the town centre areas of Kidderminster, Stourport-on-Severn and Bewdley.
11	Support the development of an accessible, integrated, sustainable transport network through new and existing developments to provide attractive alternatives for all residents and visitors and promote sustainable freight transport.
12	Help foster community pride and healthy lifestyles in the District through supporting and involving its many local communities in both the urban and rural areas
13	Maximise community cohesion and safety and ensure new developments positively contribute towards crime reduction, improved health care and education across the District for the benefit of all residents.

17. To help foster healthy lifestyles, The District Council will resist the loss of any community services and facilities, including leisure facilities, unless an appropriate alternative is provided or, evidence is presented that the facility is no longer required and suitable alternative uses have been considered. Any alternative provision should be of equal or better quality and be located in an appropriate and, where feasible, sustainable location.

Development and housing growth numbers anticipated

18. Notwithstanding ONS figures on population growth, it is recommended that regard is given to Wyre Forest's housing need, which is listed in Wyre Forest District Core strategy (Policy DS05). The Local Authority plan to deliver 4,000 net additional dwellings for the period covering 2006 – 2026.
19. During 2009 the Council undertook a Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) to assess the indicative capacity for potential residential sites within the District and to inform the production of the Local Development Framework. The sites identified through the SHLAA process have also been subject to an independent viability appraisal. Based on this evidence provided and reflecting the principle to provide the majority of new housing development within the main towns of Kidderminster and Stourport-on-Severn, the table below sets out the level of housing that could be delivered within each five year phasing period.

Table 1.3: Anticipated level of potential housing delivery within the District's settlements

Location	2006-2011	2011-2016	2016-2021	2021-2016
Kidderminster	630	780	660	400
Stourport	330	680	160	70
Bewdley	100	80	-	-
Rural areas	140	90	160	-
Total	1200	1630	980	470

WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL OPEN SPACE ASSESSMENT

Wyre Forest District Council: Local Plan Review

20. The District Council is currently in the process (at the time of writing) of undertaking a Local Plan Review. This will replace the current Adopted Core Strategy, Site Allocations and Policies Local Plan and Kidderminster Central Area Action Plan.
21. This study forms part of the evidence base supporting the Local Plan Review. The findings of this work should help to inform future decision making processes with regard to the Local Plan Review.

Worcestershire Health and Wellbeing Board: Joint Health & Wellbeing Strategy 2016-21

22. The strategy's vision is to ensure Worcestershire residents are healthier, live longer, and have a better quality of life, especially those communities and groups whose health is currently the poorest. To achieve this vision, the key priorities are as follows:
 - ◀ Good mental health and well-being throughout life.
 - ◀ Being active at every age.
 - ◀ Reducing harm from alcohol at all ages.
23. To achieve the priority of being active at every age, the strategy lists the key performance indicators:
 - ◀ Reduce the number of children aged 4 - 5 classified as overweight or obese.
 - ◀ Reduce the number of children aged 10 – 11 classified as overweight or obese.
 - ◀ Increase cycling and walking travel measures for adults
 - ◀ Increase the number of adults achieving at least 150 minutes of physical activity per week in accordance with UK Chief Medical Officer (CMO) recommended guidelines on physical activity.
 - ◀ Develop programmes for older people taking up Strength and Balance training.
 - ◀ Enhance the numbers of people, including volunteers, taking part in health walks.

WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL OPEN SPACE ASSESSMENT

PART 2: METHODOLOGY

2.1 Analysis areas

24. For mapping purposes and audit analysis, Wyre Forest is divided into five analysis areas (reflecting the geographic and demographic nature of the area).
25. These allow more localised assessment of provision in addition to examination of open space surplus and deficiencies at a more local level. Use of analysis areas also allows local circumstances and issues to be taken into account. The area is therefore, broken down as follows:

Table 2.1: Population by analysis area

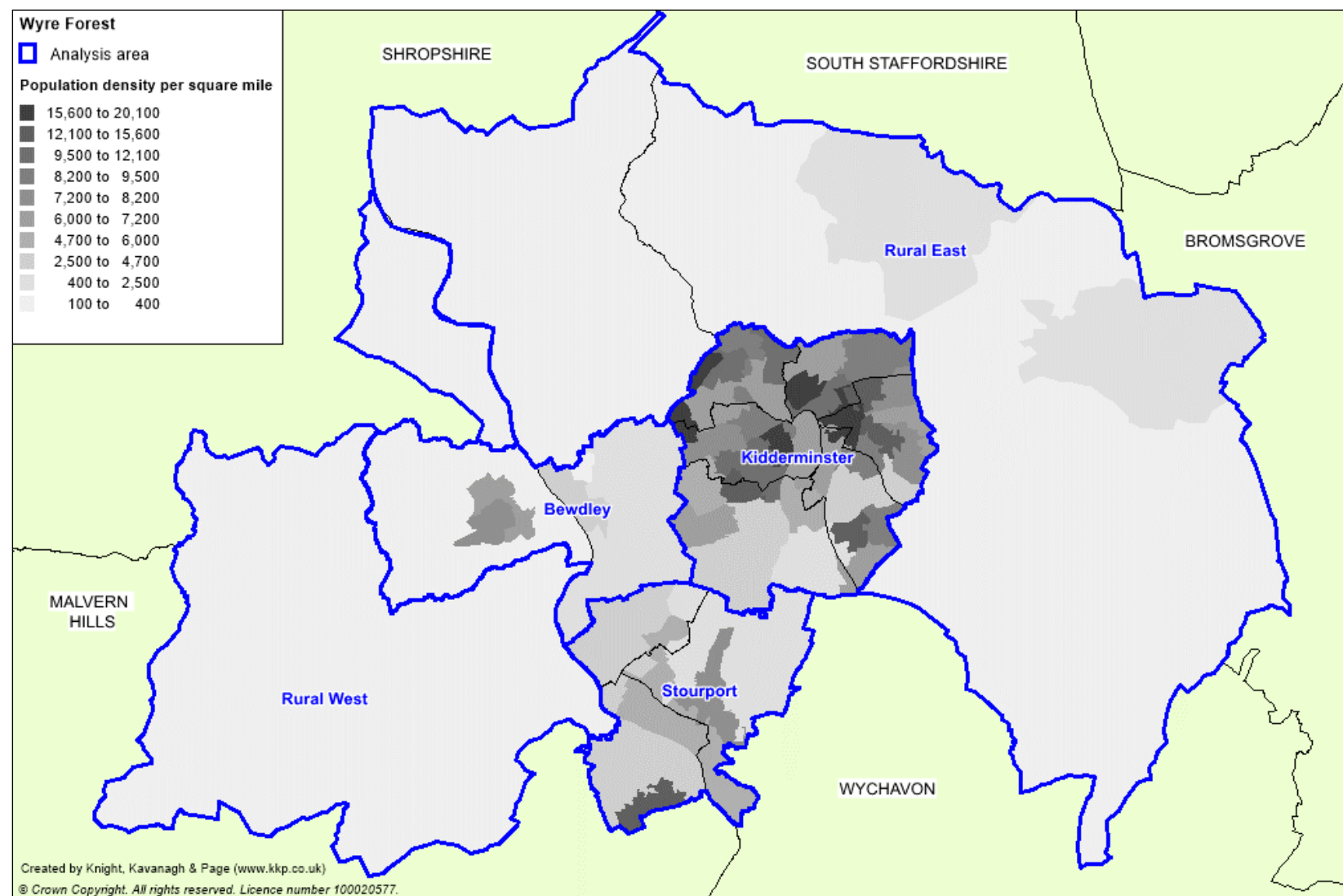
Analysis area	Population*
Bewdley	6,251
Kidderminster	56,185
Rural East	10,773
Rural West	5,791
Stourport	20,503
Wyre Forest	99,503

26. Figure 2.1 overleaf shows the map of analysis areas with population density.

* Source: ONS 2015 Mid Year Estimate

WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL OPEN SPACE ASSESSMENT

Figure 2.1: Analysis areas in Wyre Forest



WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL

OPEN SPACE ASSESSMENT

2.2 Auditing local provision (supply)

27. The site audit for this study was undertaken by the KKP Field Research Team. In total, 174 open spaces (including provision for children and young people) are identified and mapped. For varying reasons such as not being able to be accessed or viewed at time of assessment, 171 sites have been assessed to evaluate site value and quality.
28. A point to note, if there is more than one form of play provision (equipped play area, teenage provision or splash park/paddling pool) within one site, they have been grouped together to create one site.
29. Each site is classified based on its primary open space purpose, so that each type of open space is counted only once. The audit, and the report, utilise the following typologies in accordance with the Guidance:
1. Parks and gardens
 2. Natural and semi-natural greenspace
 3. Amenity greenspace
 4. Provision for children and young people (including MAPA's and outdoor gyms)
 5. Allotments
 6. Cemeteries/churchyards
30. In accordance with best practice recommendations a size threshold of 0.2 hectares has been applied to the inclusion of some typologies within the study. This means that, in general, sites that fall below this threshold are not audited. However, any sites below the threshold (i.e. those that are identified through consultation as being of significance) are included. The table below details the threshold for each typology:

Typology	Size threshold
Parks and gardens	no threshold applied
Natural and semi-natural greenspace	0.2 ha
Amenity greenspace	0.2 ha
Provision for children and young people	no threshold applied
Allotments	no threshold applied
Cemeteries/churchyards	no threshold applied

Database development

31. All information relating to open spaces is collated in the project open space database (supplied as an Excel electronic file). All sites assessed, identified and assessed as part of the audit are recorded on it. The database details for each site are as follows:

Data held on open spaces database (summary)

- ◆ KKP reference number (used for mapping)
- ◆ Site name
- ◆ Ownership
- ◆ Management
- ◆ Typology
- ◆ Size (hectares)
- ◆ Site visit data

32. Sites are primarily identified by KKP in the audit using official site names, where possible, and/or secondly using road names and locations.

2.3 Quality and value

33. Quality and value are fundamentally different and can be unrelated. For example, a high-quality space may be inaccessible and, thus, be of little value; however, a rundown (poor quality) space may be the only one in an area and thus be immensely valuable. As a result, quality and value are also treated separately in terms of scoring. Each type of open space receives separate quality and value scores. This also allows for application of a high and low quality/value matrix to further help determine prioritisation of investment and to identify sites that may be surplus within and to a particular open space typology.

Analysis of quality

34. Data collated from site visits is initially derived upon those from the Green Flag Award scheme (a national standard for parks and green spaces in England and Wales, operated by Keep Britain Tidy). This is utilised to calculate a quality score for each site visited. Scores in the database are presented as percentage figures. The quality criteria used for the open space assessments carried out are summarised in the following table.

Quality criteria for open space site visit (score)

- ◆ Physical access, e.g., public transport links, directional signposts,
- ◆ Personal security, e.g., site is overlooked, natural surveillance
- ◆ Access-social, e.g., appropriate minimum entrance widths
- ◆ Parking, e.g., availability, specific, disabled parking
- ◆ Information signage, e.g., presence of up to date site information, notice boards
- ◆ Equipment and facilities, e.g., assessment of both adequacy and maintenance of provision such as seats, benches, bins, toilets
- ◆ Location value, e.g., proximity of housing, other greenspace
- ◆ Site problems, e.g., presence of vandalism, graffiti
- ◆ Healthy, safe and secure, e.g., fencing, gates, staff on site
- ◆ Maintenance and cleanliness, e.g., condition of general landscape & features
- ◆ Groups that the site meets the needs of, e.g., elderly, young people
- ◆ Site potential

35. Criteria for assessing the provision for children and young people are also built around Green Flag. It is a non-technical visual assessment of the site, including general equipment and surface quality/appearance plus an assessment of, for example, bench and bin provision. This differs, for example, from an independent RosPA review, which is a more technical assessment of equipment in terms of play and risk assessment grade.

Analysis of value

36. Site visit data plus desk based research is calculated to provide value scores for each site identified. Value is defined in the Companion Guide relation to the following three issues:
- ◆ Context of the site i.e. its accessibility, scarcity value and historic value.
 - ◆ Level and type of use.
 - ◆ The wider benefits it generates for people, biodiversity and the wider environment.

37. The value criteria set for audit assessment is derived as:

Value criteria for open space site visits (score)

- ◆ Level of use (observations only), e.g., evidence of different user types (e.g. dog walkers, joggers, children) throughout day, located near school and/or community facility
- ◆ Context of site in relation to other open spaces
- ◆ Structural and landscape benefits, e.g., well located, high quality defining the identity/ area
- ◆ Ecological benefits, e.g., supports/promotes biodiversity and wildlife habitats
- ◆ Educational benefits, e.g., provides learning opportunities on nature/historic landscapes
- ◆ Social inclusion and health benefits, e.g., promotes civic pride, community ownership and a sense of belonging; helping to promote well-being
- ◆ Cultural and heritage benefits, e.g., historic elements/links (e.g. listed building, statues)
- ◆ Amenity benefits and a sense of place, e.g., attractive places that are safe and well maintained; helping to create specific neighbourhoods and landmarks
- ◆ Economic benefits, e.g., promotes economic activity and attracts people from near and far

Value - non site visit criteria (score)

- ◆ Designated site such as Local Nature Reserve or Local Wildlife Sites
- ◆ Educational programme in place
- ◆ Historic site
- ◆ Listed building or scheduled monument on site
- ◆ Registered 'friends of' group to the site

38. Play provision for children and young people is scored for value as part of the audit assessment. Value, in particular is recognised in terms of size of sites and the range of equipment it hosts. For instance, a small site with only one or two items is likely to be of a lower value than a site with a variety of equipment catering for wider age ranges.
39. A full list of the criteria used to assess quality and value is set out in Appendix One.

2.4 Quality and value thresholds

40. To determine whether sites are high or low quality (as recommended by guidance); the results of the site assessments are colour-coded against a baseline threshold (high being green and low being red). The primary aim of applying a threshold is to identify sites where investment and/or improvements are required. It can also be used to set an aspirational quality standard to be achieved at some point in the future and to inform decisions around the need to further protect sites from future development (particularly when applied with its respective value score in a matrix format).
41. The baseline threshold for assessing quality can be set around 66%; based on the pass rate for Green Flag criteria (site visit criteria also being based on Green Flag). This is the only national benchmark available for quality of parks and open spaces. However, the site visit criteria used for Green Flag is not appropriate for every open space typology as it is designed to represent a sufficiently high standard of site. Quality thresholds are, thus, worked out so as to better reflect average scores for each typology. Consequently, the baseline threshold for certain typologies is amended to better reflect this.
42. For value, there is no national guidance on the setting of thresholds. The 20% threshold applied is derived from our experience and knowledge in assessing the perceived value of sites. Whilst 20% may initially seem low it is relative score - designed to reflect those sites that meet more than one aspect of the criteria used for assessing value (as detailed earlier). The table below sets out the quality and value scores for each typology.

WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL OPEN SPACE ASSESSMENT

Table 2.2: Quality and value thresholds by typology

Typology	Quality threshold	Value threshold
Parks and gardens	66%	20%
Natural and semi-natural greenspace	45%	20%
Amenity greenspace	40%	20%
Provision for children and young people	55%	20%
Allotments	45%	20%
Cemeteries/churchyards	40%	20%
Civic spaces	50%	20%

2.5 Identifying local need (demand)

43. Consultation to identify local need for open space provision has been carried out via a combination of face-to-face meetings, surveys and telephone interviews. It has also been conducted with key local authority officers (in respect of each typology). An online Open Spaces Survey was created and used to gather the wider views of local people; 121 responses were returned.
44. In addition, consultation with all parish and town councils was undertaken. This was in the form of either face to face meetings, online survey or via telephone.
45. The findings of the consultation and survey carried out are used, reviewed and interpreted to further support the results of the quality and value assessment. A summary of the Open Spaces Survey findings is set out in Part 3.

2.6 Accessibility standards

46. Accessibility standards for different types of provision are a tool to identify communities currently not served by existing facilities. It is recognised that factors that underpin catchment areas vary from person to person, day to day and hour to hour. For the purposes of this process, this problem is overcome by accepting the concept of 'effective catchments', defined as the distance that is willing to be travelled by the majority of users.
47. Guidance on appropriate walking distance and times is published by Fields in Trust (FIT) in its document *Beyond the Six Acre Standard* (2015). These guidelines have been converted in to an equivalent time period in the table below.

Table 2.3: FIT walking guidelines

Open space type	Walking guideline	Approximate walk time equivalent
Parks and gardens	710m	9 minute
Amenity greenspace	480m	6 minute
Natural and semi-natural greenspace	720m	9 minute
Provision for children and young people	100m - 1,000m	1 - 12 ½ minute

48. For play areas, a 10-minute walk time has been used to reflect the average walk time equivalent from FIT (approximately 7 minutes) but that 25% of respondents to the Open Space Survey are willing to walk 15 minutes in order to access such provision.

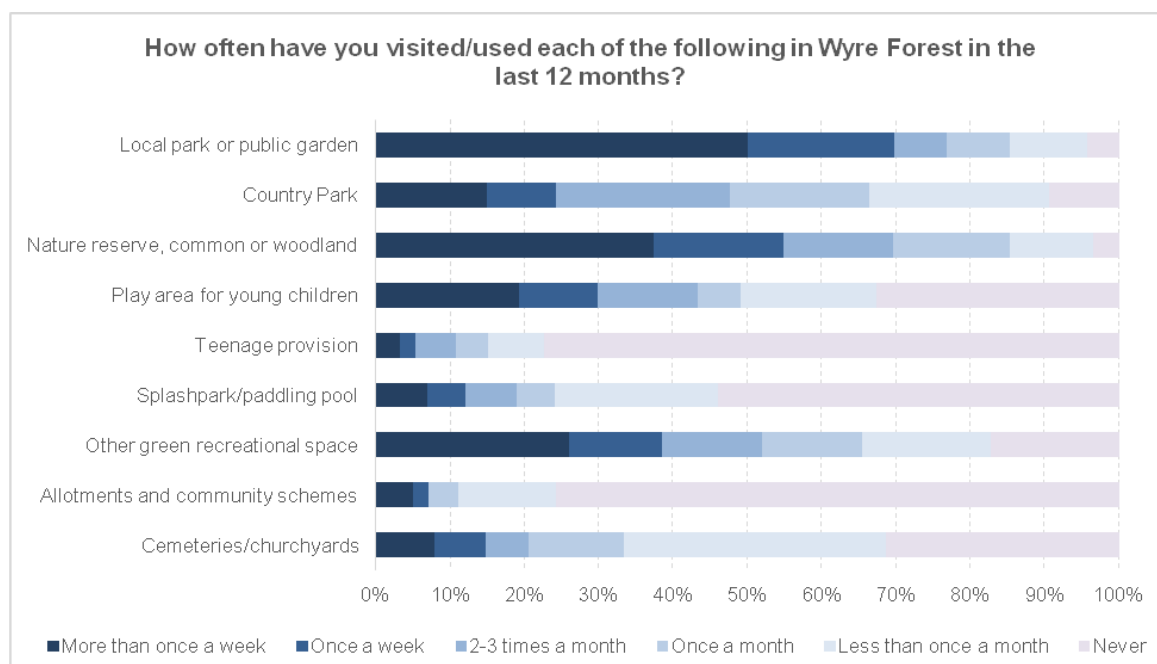
PART 3: GENERAL OPEN SPACE SUMMARY

49. This section describes generic trends and findings from the quality and value ratings for each typology in Wyre Forest. It also includes a summary of the 121 responses from the Open Spaces Survey. Site specific and typology issues are covered in the relevant sections later in the report.
50. Within the Open Space Survey a number of questions did not include the typology of allotments due to this form of provision often receiving a high volume of 'no opinion' responses due to a small cross section of residents assessing allotment provision. Both cemeteries and civic spaces were also excluded from the question due to these forms of provision providing a service rather than recreation opportunities.

3.1 Usage

51. The Open Spaces Survey participants were asked how often they visit any type of open space in Wyre Forest. Most respondents identify visiting open space more than once a week (67%).
52. The forms of open space provision reported as most frequently visited are parks and gardens and semi-natural greenspace (nature reserve, common or woodland), with 50% and 37% of respondents reporting they visit this type of provision more than once a week respectively.

Figure 3.1: Frequency of visits to open space in the previous 12 months (%)



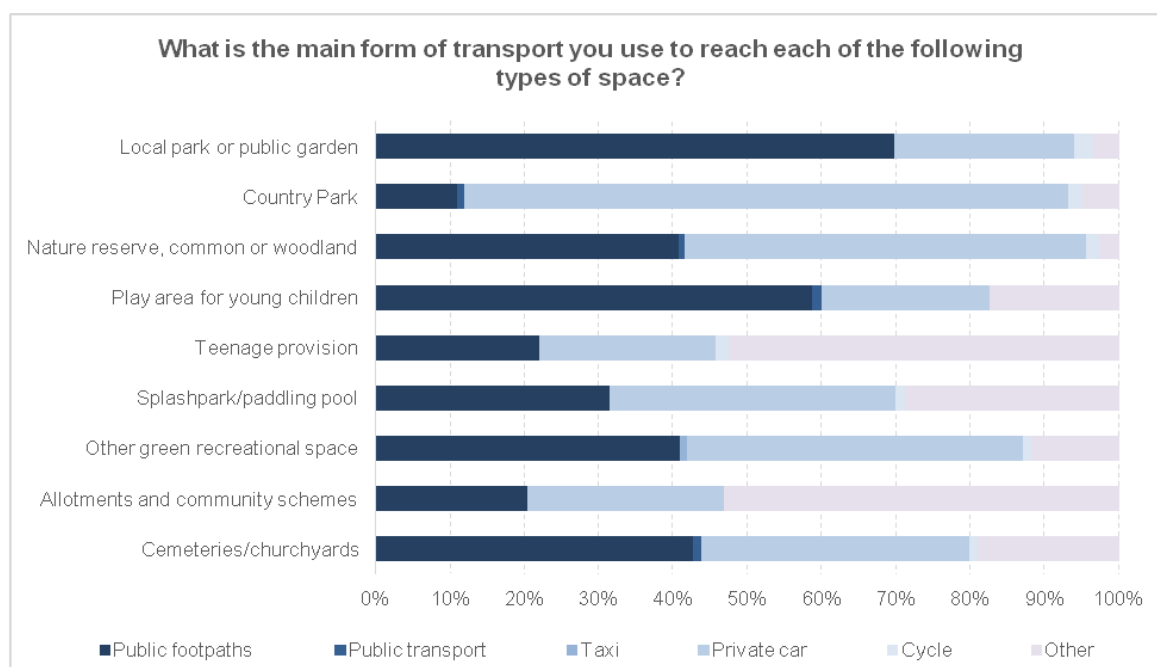
53. Typologies such as allotments and teenage provision are reported as being visited less frequently. This is likely attributed to these forms of provision being accessed by a small percentage of the population within Wyre Forest due to their function and attraction to people with specific interests.

WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL OPEN SPACE ASSESSMENT

3.2 Accessibility

54. Results from the Parks and Open Space Survey shows that individuals prefer to travel to open space provision either by walking or by car, depending on the type of open space provision being visited.

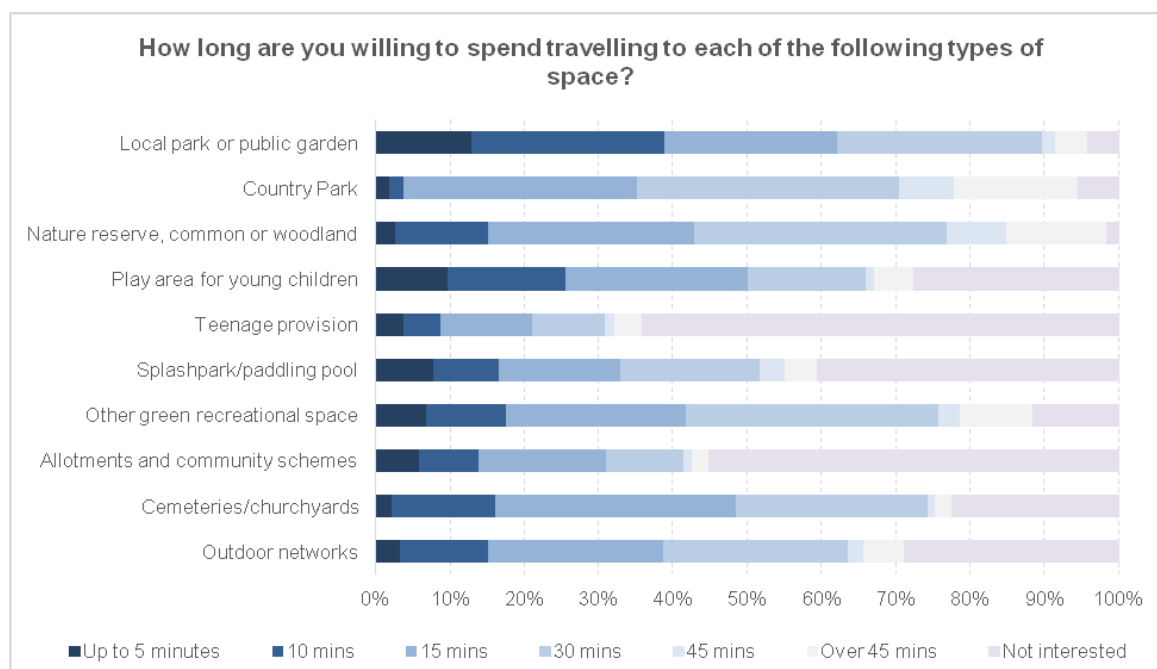
Figure 3.3: Travel method in order to access provision (%)



55. A preference of walking is identified in order to access parks and gardens (70%) and play areas for young children (59%). Respondents report preferring to use a private car to access country parks (81%) and nature reserves, common or woodland (54%). For other forms of provision such as cemeteries, there is a more varied preference on method of travel.
56. In order to access most forms of provision, respondents report being willing to travel by walking. For parks and gardens responses are split, with 26% of respondents saying they are willing to travel 10 minutes by walking and 28% being willing to travel 30 minutes by car.
57. For Country parks (a form of natural and semi-natural greenspace), most respondents (35%) will travel up to 30 minutes and by car (81%).
58. A quarter of respondents (25%) state a willingness to travel 15 minutes in order to access a play area for young children.

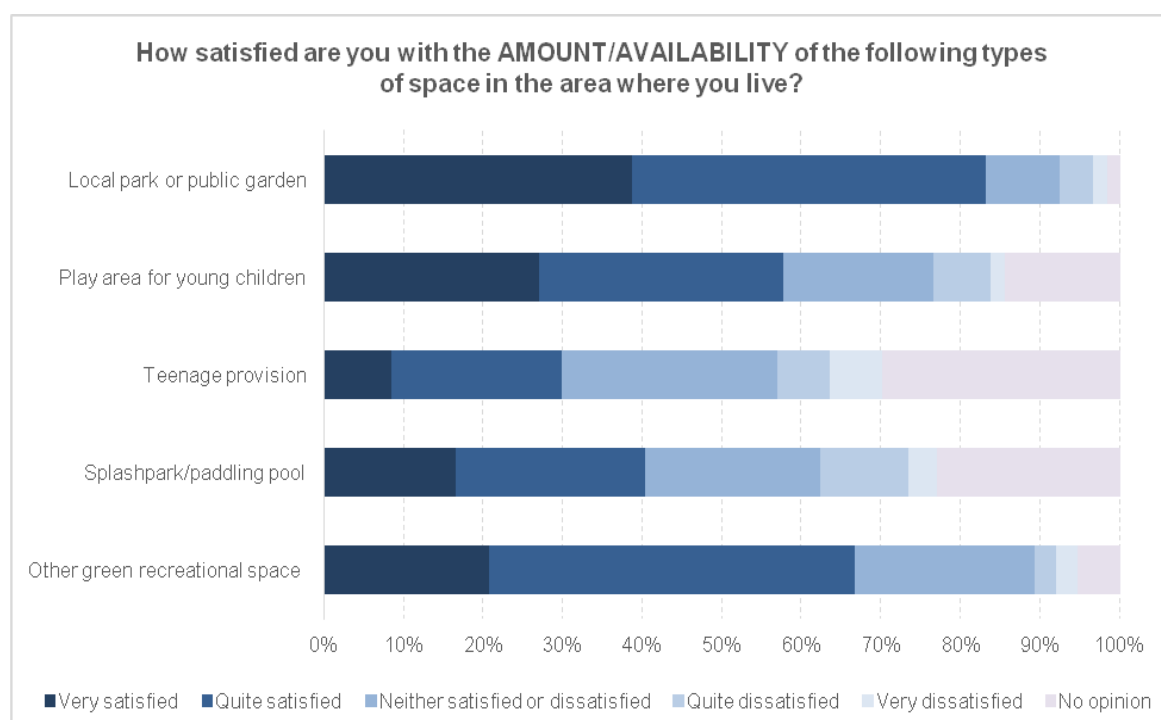
WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL OPEN SPACE ASSESSMENT

Figure 3.4: Time willing to travel to open space sites (%)



3.3 Availability

Figure 3.5: Satisfaction with amount/availability of open spaces (%)



59. For most typologies respondents generally consider the availability i.e. the amount of provision, to be either quite or very satisfactory.

WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL OPEN SPACE ASSESSMENT

60. Parks are especially viewed positively in terms of availability with 46% of respondents rating availability as quite satisfactory and 39% rating availability as very satisfactory. Other typologies such as play areas for young children and amenity greenspace are also viewed as predominantly being to a satisfactory level in terms of availability.

3.4 Quality

61. The methodology for assessing quality is set out in Part 2, Table 3.2 summarises the results of all the quality assessments for open spaces across Wyre Forest.
62. Most assessed open spaces in Wyre Forest (68%) rate above the quality thresholds set. Proportionally there are a higher percentage of provision for children and young people (80%), cemeteries (79%), civic spaces (75%) and natural and semi-natural greenspace (73%) that rate above the threshold for quality.
63. Quality of other open space typologies is generally still positive but with slightly greater proportions of sites rating below the thresholds set. For instance, 42% of amenity greenspace, 46% of parks and gardens and 43% of allotments rate below the threshold.
64. Any site-specific quality issues are highlighted in the typology specific sections later in the report.

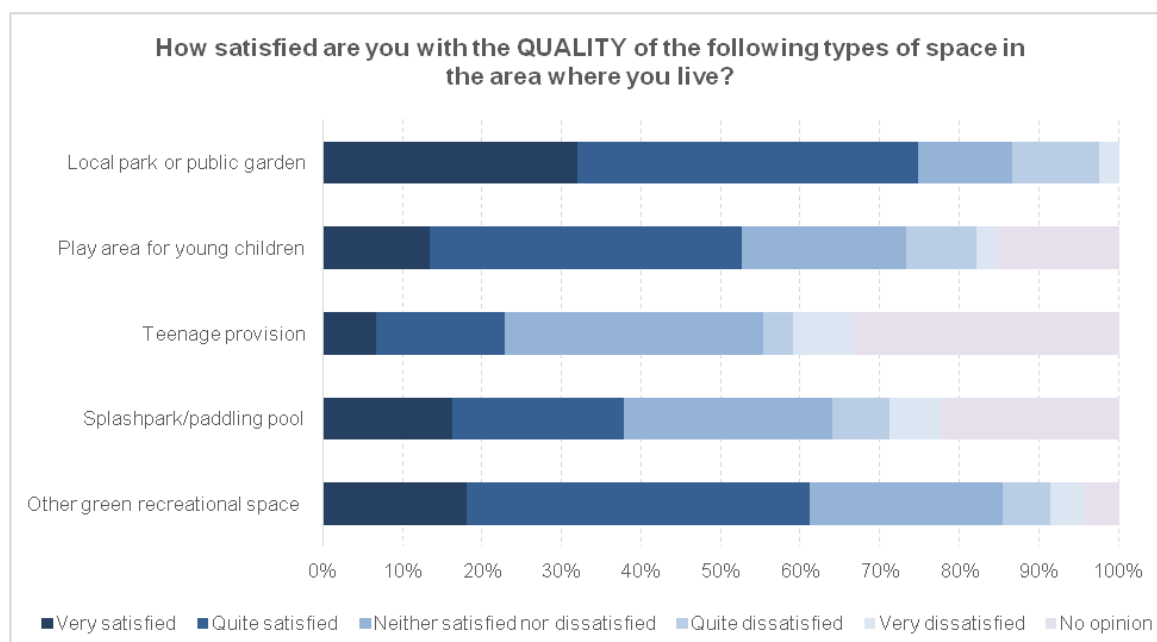
Table 3.2: Quality scores for all open space typologies

Typology	% threshold	Scores			No. of sites	
		Lowest score	Average score	Highest score	Low	High
Allotments	45%	36%	48%	62%	5	7
Amenity greenspace	40%	13%	42%	72%	22	30
Cemeteries	40%	37%	47%	81%	5	19
Children's play areas	55%	17%	66%	89%	8	32
Civic spaces	50%	41%	56%	73%	1	3
Parks and gardens	66%	43%	65%	87%	6	7
Semi/natural greenspace	45%	31%	52%	82%	7	19
TOTAL		13%	52%	89%	54	117

65. The typology Open Spaces Survey respondents report as being most satisfactory for quality is parks and gardens, with 75% of respondents describing the quality of this form of provision as either very satisfactory or quite satisfactory. This is followed by amenity greenspace of which 61% of respondents rate as being either very or quite satisfactory.
66. For the purpose of the Open Spaces Survey, provision for children and young people was broken down into three elements: play areas for young children, teenage provision and splash parks/ paddling pools. Play areas for young children scores well with 52% being rated as quite satisfactory or very satisfactory. Splash parks/ paddling pools were reported to be the least satisfy with 14% of respondents reporting to be either dissatisfied or very dissatisfied.

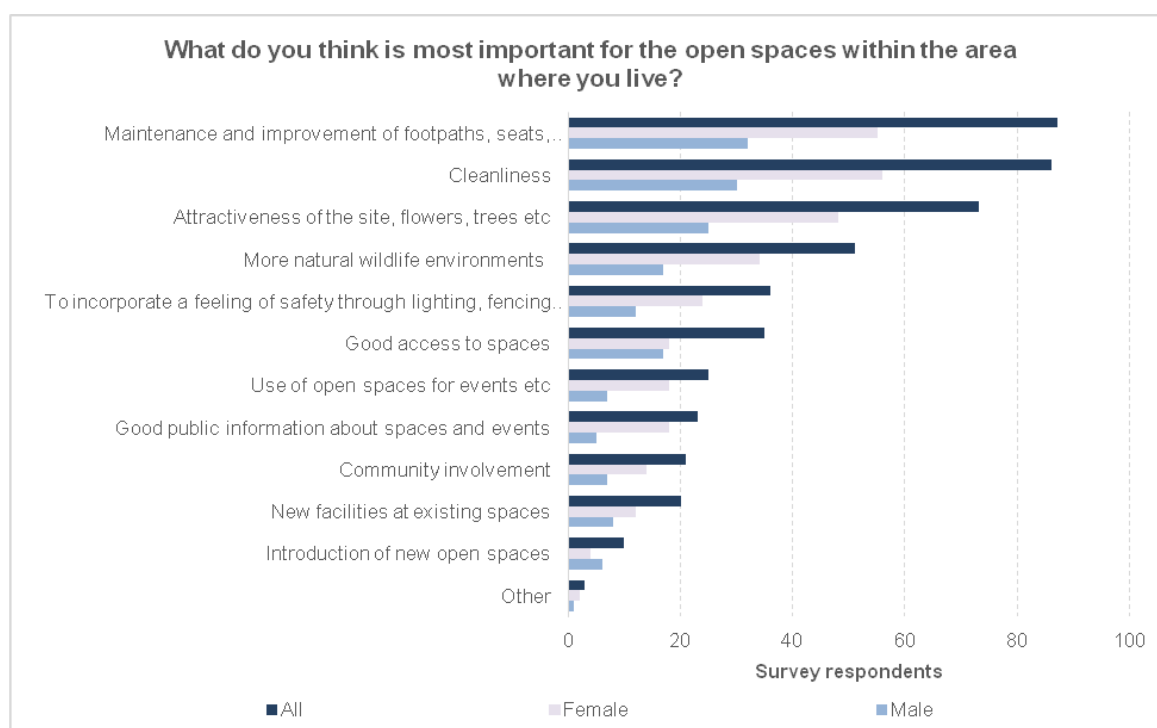
WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL OPEN SPACE ASSESSMENT

Figure 3.6: Satisfaction with quality of open spaces (%)



67. Respondents were asked what, within open spaces, is most important to them. The most common answer by participants is maintenance improvements to existing ancillary features e.g. paths, seating (87%). This is followed by cleanliness (86%) and attractiveness of sites e.g. flowers, trees (73%). Providing more natural wildlife environments at sites is also a common answer (51%).

Figure 3.7: What is important to residents within open space sites



WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL OPEN SPACE ASSESSMENT

3.5 Value

68. The methodology for assessing value is set out in Part 2 (Methodology). The table below summarises the results of the value assessment for open spaces across Wyre Forest.
69. A high value site is considered to be one that is well used by the local community, well maintained (with a balance for conservation), provides a safe environment and has features of interest; for example, play equipment and landscaping. Sites that provide for a cross section of users and have a multi-functional use are considered a higher value than those offering limited functions and that are thought of as bland and unattractive.
70. The majority of sites (92%) are assessed as being above the threshold for value, reflecting their role in and importance to local communities and environments.
71. For the typologies for cemeteries, natural and semi-natural greenspace and parks and gardens, no sites score below the value threshold. The typology with the highest amount of sites scoring below the threshold is amenity greenspace. This is not uncommon and often reflects a lack of ancillary features or perceived maintenance at some sites.
72. It is important to remember that even though a site may score above the threshold for value, it may still be of higher quality and vice versa. Both factors should be recognised when considering the future of sites moving forwards.

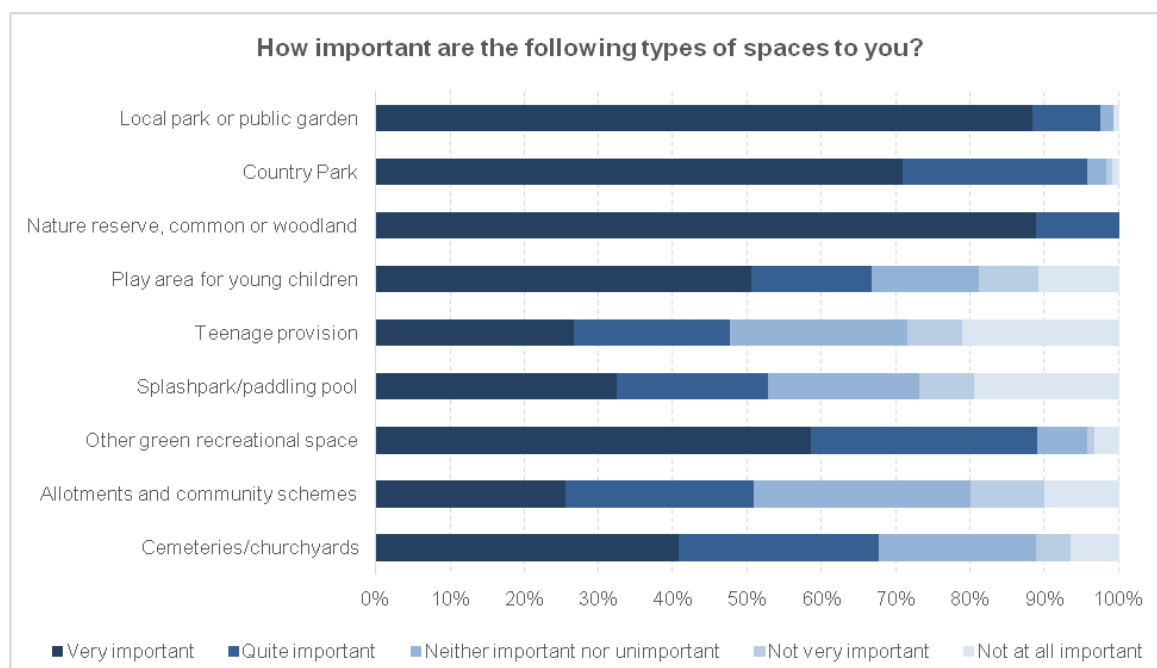
Table 3.3: Value scores for all open space typologies

Typology	% Threshold	Scores			No. of sites	
		Lowest score	Average score	Highest score	Low	High
Allotments	20%	19%	35%	48%	1	11
Amenity greenspace	20%	7%	28%	50%	11	41
Cemeteries	20%	22%	39%	60%	0	24
Children's play areas	20%	13%	39%	64%	1	39
Civic spaces	20%	11%	33%	44%	1	3
Parks and gardens	20%	23%	51%	71%	0	13
Semi/natural greenspace	20%	24%	43%	79%	0	26
TOTAL		7%	37%	79%	14	157

73. The majority of all survey respondents view open spaces as being either very important or quite important; reflecting the high value placed on such provision. The open space typologies on which the respondents placed the most importance are parks and gardens and natural and semi-natural greenspace, with 98% and 100% of respondents respectively stating these forms of provision are either very important or quite important.
74. The fact that all forms of open space provision are viewed as important, highlights the continuing need to ensure their availability and sufficient quality.

WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL OPEN SPACE ASSESSMENT

Figure 3.8: Importance of open spaces (%)



3.6 Summary

General summary

- ◆ In total 174 sites in Wyre Forest are identified as open space provision, equating to 621 hectares of accessible provision. Of these sites, 171 are assessed for quality and value. There are instances of additional provision, particularly in terms of natural and semi-natural greenspace, explained in more detail within the typology specific section.
- ◆ Accessibility standards for the majority of open space typologies are set as a walk time. Any gaps in catchment mapping are identified within each typology section.
- ◆ Most open spaces (68%) rate above the thresholds set for quality. Proportionally there are a higher percentage of cemeteries (79%), provision for children and young people (80%), civic spaces (75%) and natural and semi-natural greenspace (73%) that rate above the threshold for quality.
- ◆ Parks and natural sites (including country parks) are highlighted through consultation as significant forms of open space, which are popular for people to visit on a frequent basis.
- ◆ Nearly all open spaces (92%) are assessed as being above the threshold for value. This reflects the importance of open space provision and its role offering social, environmental and health benefits.

WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL

OPEN SPACE ASSESSMENT

PART 4: PARKS AND GARDENS

4.1 Introduction

75. This typology covers urban parks and formal gardens (including designed landscapes), which provide accessible high quality opportunities for informal recreation and community events. The provision of country parks is included within the typology of natural and semi-natural greenspace due to their greater role in conservation and environmental education.

4.2 Current provision

76. There are 13 sites classified as parks and gardens in Wyre Forest, the equivalent of over 56 hectares. No site size threshold has been applied and, as such, all sites have been included within the typology.

Table 4.1: Distribution of parks by analysis area

Analysis area	Parks and gardens		
	Number of sites	Total hectares	Current standard (ha per 1,000 population)
Bewdley	3	1.86	0.30
Kidderminster	6	20.25	0.36
Rural East	-	-	-
Rural West	-	-	-
Stourport	4	17.14	0.84
Wyre Forest	13	56.20	0.56

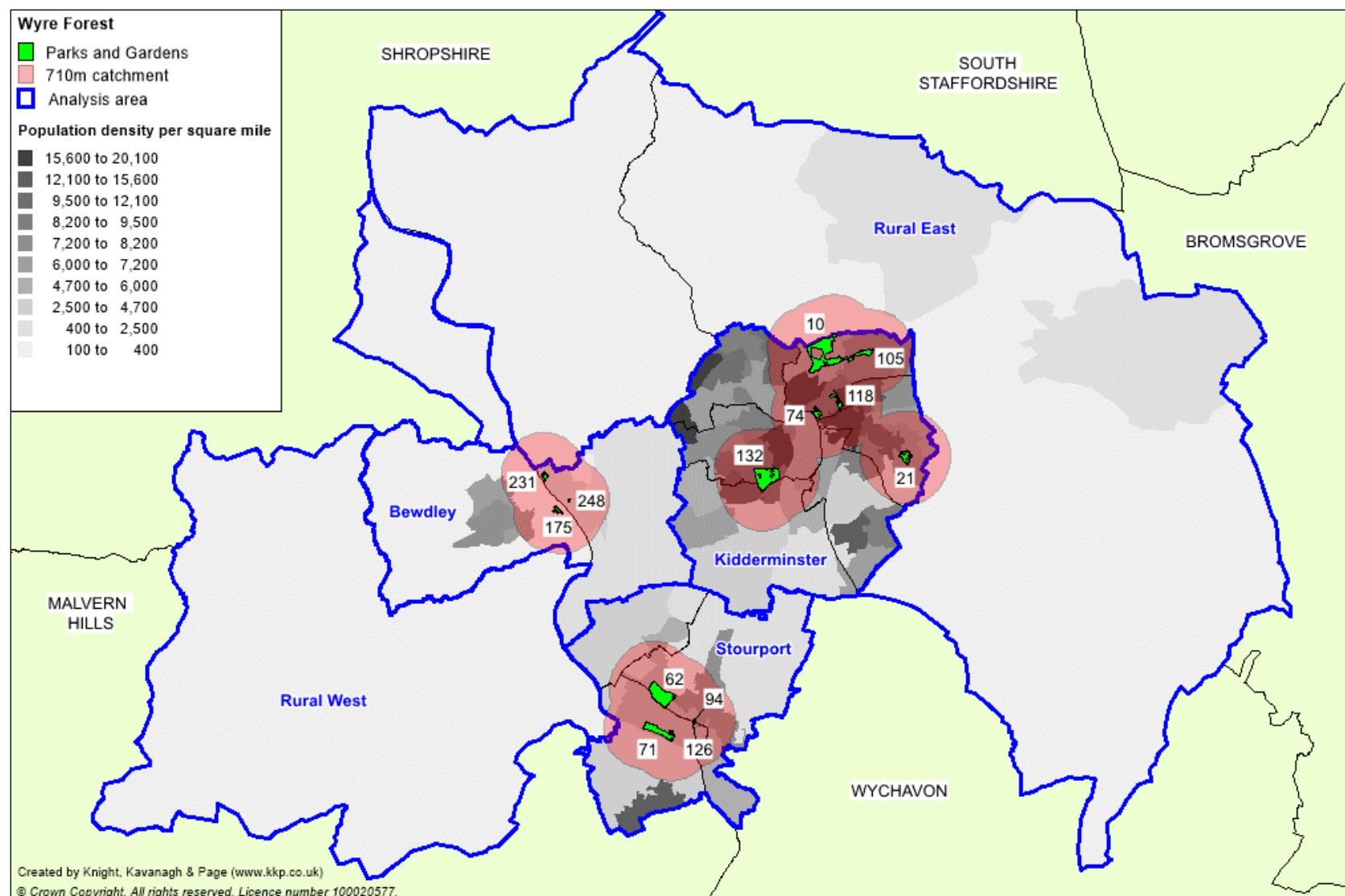
77. The majority of park and garden provision is located in the Kidderminster Analysis Area (20.25 hectares). Stourport Analysis Area closely follows this, with 17.14 hectares an equivalent to 0.84 hectares per 1,000 head of population. Bewdley has the least amount of parks and gardens provision and as such has the smallest provision per 1,000 population (0.30 hectares). There is no parks and gardens provision located in the Rural East or Rural West analysis areas.
78. Other types of open space such as country parks can also contribute to the perception of parks and gardens provision. There are four country parks identified in Wyre Forest. However, for the purpose of the study such sites are identified and categorised by their primary role; which for country parks is to provide opportunities and access to natural greenspace and their associated activities (e.g. access to nature, walking). More detail on these sites is set out in Part 5.

4.3 Accessibility

79. For catchment mapping the FIT walking distance of 710m (approximately 9 minute walk-time) has been applied. Figure 4.1 shows the standard applied to natural and semi-natural greenspace to help inform where deficiencies in provision may be located.

WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL OPEN SPACE ASSESSMENT

Figure 4.1: Parks and gardens with 710m walking distance (approx. nine minute walk-time) mapped against analysis area



WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL OPEN SPACE ASSESSMENT

Table 4.2: Key to sites mapped

Site ID	Site name	Analysis area	Quality score	Value score
175	QEII Gardens	Bewdley	66.2%	71.4%
231	Riverside North Park	Bewdley	56.3%	47.6%
248	Garden Of Rest	Bewdley	46.4%	24.8%
10	Springfield Park	Kidderminster	79.0%	64.8%
21	Borrington Park (WFCH)	Kidderminster	50.4%	45.7%
74	St George's Park	Kidderminster	69.5%	57.1%
105	Broadwaters Park	Kidderminster	79.4%	50.5%
118	Baxter Gardens	Kidderminster	69.3%	60.0%
132	Brinton Park	Kidderminster	72.8%	71.4%
62	Stourport Memorial Park (STC)	Stourport	65.7%	39.0%
71	Riverside Park	Stourport	87.3%	61.9%
94	Stourport War Memorial Garden (STC)	Stourport	53.0%	41.0%
126	Villeneuve-Le-Roi Gardens (STC)	Stourport	42.9%	22.9%

80. Based on a 710m walking distance, catchment gaps are identified in all five analysis areas; however, significant catchment gaps are identified in Bewdley, Kidderminster and Stourport analysis areas.
81. These gaps are also noted in areas of higher population density. The largest gaps can be seen in Kidderminster Analysis Area. Despite these noted gaps, it is likely these gaps are being met by other forms of open space provision such as natural and semi-natural greenspace and amenity greenspace. Both these forms of provision can provide similar opportunities to that of parks and gardens if maintained to a good standard.
82. Responses to the Open Spaces Survey suggest that respondents are generally happy with the amount of parks and gardens provision, with 45% of respondents reporting they are quite satisfied and 39% reporting they are very satisfied with the amount and availability of park and garden provision. Furthermore, only 6% of respondents describe being either quite dissatisfied (4%) or very dissatisfied (2%).

WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL OPEN SPACE ASSESSMENT

4.4 Quality

83. To determine whether sites are high or low quality (as recommended by the Companion Guidance); scores from site assessments are colour-coded against a baseline threshold (high being green and low being red). The table overleaf summarises the results of the quality assessment for parks in Wyre Forest. A threshold of 66% is applied in order to identify high and low quality. Further explanation of how the quality scores and thresholds are derived can be found in Part 2 (Methodology).

Table 4.3: Quality ratings for parks by analysis area

Analysis area	Scores			Spread	No. of sites	
	Lowest score	Average score	Highest score		Low <66%	High >66%
Bewdley	46%	56%	66%	20%	2	1
Kidderminster	50%	70%	79%	29%	1	5
Rural East	-	-	-	-	-	-
Rural West	-	-	-	-	-	-
Stourport	43%	62%	87%	44%	3	1
Wyre Forest	43%	65%	87%	44%	6	7

84. Just over half (54%) of parks and garden sites in Wyre Forest rate above the threshold for quality.
85. Findings from the Open Spaces Survey suggest that residents are generally content with quality of parks and gardens, with 43% of respondents describing park quality as being quite satisfactory and 32% describing it as very satisfactory. Moreover, only 14% of respondents believe quality of park provision to be quite dissatisfactory (11%) or very dissatisfactory (3%).
86. The highest scoring site is Riverside Park with (87%), located in Stourport. This is closely followed by Broadwaters Park (79%) and Springfields Park (79%), both of which are situated in Kidderminster.
87. These sites have an excellent level of maintenance and general appearance, as well as attractive landscaping. Furthermore, they have a broad range of ancillary features and facilities including parking, lighting, seating, signage, picnic tables and bins. The sites are also noted as having good personal security and good links to public transport, disabled access, wildlife areas and water features. Riverside Park and Broadwaters Park also have toilets on site.
88. Two other sites worth noting are Brinton Park and QEII Gardens, both of which, are Green Flag Award sites. These sites also score high for quality with 73% and 66% respectively. Similarly, to the sites mentioned above, these sites are observed as having an excellent level of maintenance and general appearance, as well as attractive landscaping. They also have a number of ancillary features such as signage, seating and bins. In addition, the sites are noted as having good personal security. Brinton Park also has parking on site.

WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL OPEN SPACE ASSESSMENT

89. Other sites in Wyre Forest which score high for quality are:
- ✦ Brinton Park (73%)
 - ✦ St George's Park (70%)
 - ✦ Baxter Gardens (69%)
90. It is worth noting that the Council plan to submit an application to the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) for a project at Brinton Park in 2017. The Council is currently developing plans for the park alongside its partners and residents.
91. Some of the key elements within the project aims are to restore heritage aspects of the park, as well as add possible new features including an amphitheatre, a new pavilion with cafe and toilets, a small lake feature and bridge and a World War I memorial. Furthermore, there are plans to improve signage, car parking and lighting at the site.
92. Of the six sites that score low for quality, the lowest scoring sites are:
- ✦ Villeneuve-Le-Roi Gardens (40%)
 - ✦ Garden of Rest (46%)
93. It is important to note, although these sites do score below the threshold for quality, they do not have any specific quality issues. These sites are observed as having a good overall standard of maintenance and cleanliness as well as having good pathways, which allow for disabled access. The main reason for lower quality scores is a lack of additional features in comparison to higher scoring sites such as signage, lighting and picnic tables.
94. Should these lower scoring sites be scored against criteria for other typologies, such as amenity greenspace, they may score above the quality threshold. Therefore, it may be worth reviewing the primary use of these sites and based on this, look to reclassify. Alternatively, providing more features and facilities at these sites such as bins, benches, signage and lighting will improve the quality of the sites against the parks quality criteria.
95. The majority (75%) respondents to the Open Spaces Survey satisfied with the quality of parks and gardens provision, with 32% being very satisfied and 43% being quite satisfied.
96. As previously mentioned there are currently two Green Flag Award sites in Wyre Forest; Brinton Park and QEII Gardens. The Green Flag Award scheme is licensed and managed by Keep Britain Tidy. It provides national standards for parks and greenspaces across England and Wales. The Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) highlight the importance placed on Green Flag status as an indicator of high quality.
97. Given the high quality scores of a number of sites in the Wyre Forest area, such as Riverside Park, Broadwaters Park and Springfields Park, the Council may wish to explore increasing its portfolio of Green Flag Award sites.
98. The Springfields Park is a site highlighted by WFDC forming part of one the opportunities to enhance the countryside assets of the District (see Table 5.7). The site has the potential to facilitate a country style café venue. The proposal would only be considered further if an alternative proposal for the nearby Stour Valley Countryside Portal was viewed as not viable. All proposals are at an early stage with no funding in place.

WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL OPEN SPACE ASSESSMENT

99. The proposals are partly being considered in order to help alleviate the pressure on some existing natural sites viewed as being at capacity from a biodiversity and recreational use. In addition, by enhancing provision at certain sites the proposals have the potential to offer improved recreational opportunities to the area whilst also boosting the physical connections to surrounding settlements and destinations. This could help increase tourism in addition to the physical and mental activity benefits. The potential retail and franchise opportunities could also help in terms of local economy.
100. The Stourport Riverside Meadows Development and Implementation Strategy details the future potential for Riverside Park. The Council's vision for the site is to complement the redevelopment of the town and basins with a park offering a regionally significant tourist and leisure destination.
101. The space will offer heritage, cultural and recreational attractions which aim to increase the range and proportion of population visiting the park, the quality of the experience of visitors to the park and to provide a long term, financially viable development of the site.

4.5 Value

102. To determine whether sites are high or low value (as recommended by the Companion Guidance); the scores from the site assessments have been colour-coded against a baseline threshold (high being green and low being red). The table below summarises the results of the value assessment for parks in Wyre Forest. A threshold of 20% is applied in order to identify high and low value. Further explanation of how the value scores are derived can be found in Part 2 (Methodology).

Table 4.4: Value scores for parks by analysis area

Analysis area	Scores			Spread	No. of sites	
	Lowest score	Average score	Highest score		Low <20%	High >20%
Bewdley	25%	48%	71%	46%	0	3
Kidderminster	46%	58%	71%	25%	0	6
Rural East	-	-	-	-	-	-
Rural West	-	-	-	-	-	-
Stourport	23%	41%	62%	39%	0	4
Wyre Forest	23%	51%	71%	48%	0	13

103. All parks are assessed as being of high value from the site visit assessments. One of the key aspects of the value placed on parks provision is that they can provide opportunities for local communities and people to socialise.
104. The highest scoring sites for value are the two Green Flag Award sites, Brinton Park (71%) and Jubilee Gardens (71%). Both these sites meet all of the non-technical assessment criteria for value. Firstly, these sites have a significant sense of place within the community. They also provide opportunities for people to socialise and partake in activities beneficial to health such as walking or jogging. In addition, these sites have good ecological value with mature trees, shrubs and grassed areas. Furthermore, educational value is noted at these sites, with interpretative boards about the parks history at Brinton Park and a green theatre located at QEII Gardens. Due to these educational elements, the sites also provide cultural and heritage value. Grade two listed walls also encompass QEII Gardens.

105. The ability for people to undertake a range of different activities such as exercise, dog walking or taking children to the play area are frequently recognised. This is fully supported from the findings of the consultation. Several comments cite the importance and role parks provide to the area and to peoples everyday lives.

4.6 Summary

Parks and gardens

- ✦ There are 13 sites classified as parks and gardens totalling over 56 hectares.
- ✦ Based on a 710m walking distance, catchment gaps are identified in all five analysis areas; however, significant catchment gaps are identified in Bewdley, Kidderminster and Stourport analysis areas.
- ✦ It is likely that these gaps are being met by other forms of open space. This is supported by responses to the Open Spaces Survey, with 84% of respondents being either very or quite satisfied with amount and availability of parks provision.
- ✦ Just over half (54%) of parks score above the threshold for quality. The highest scoring sites are observed as having a good range of features and facilities, which are maintained to a high standard.
- ✦ The sites which score below the threshold for quality are not reported to have any specific quality issues. Their low score is attributed to a lack of features and facilities present at higher scoring sites.
- ✦ Wyre Forest currently has two Green Flag Award sites, Brinton Park and QEII Gardens. Both these sites score high for quality and are the two joint highest scoring sites for value.
- ✦ Should the Council wish to increase its portfolio of Green Flag Award sites, there are a number of sites scoring particularly high for quality, Riverside Park, Broadwaters Park and Springfield Park, which could be put forward.
- ✦ All park and garden sites score high for value; a reflection to the social interaction, health benefits and sense of place sites offer.

PART 5: NATURAL AND SEMI-NATURAL GREENSPACE

5.1 Introduction

106. For the purposes of this study provision of natural and semi-natural greenspace is primarily focused on sites of biodiversity and conservation importance. Local plans sometimes refer to Section 41 habitats, often interchanging with Biodiversity Action Plans (BAPs), or 'habitats and species of principal importance in England'.
107. This refers to the 2006 Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act. Section 41 sets out that the Secretary of State is obliged to publish a list of habitats and species which are of principal importance for the conservation of biodiversity in England. The list guides decision-makers such as councils and statutory undertakers to their duty to have regard to the conservation of biodiversity in England.
108. The 19 habitat action plans set out within the Worcestershire Biodiversity Action Plans have been used as a starting point to identify sites across Wyre Forest documented as being of biodiversity and conservation importance. Other sites provided by WFDC but recognised as providing wildlife habitats and opportunities as well as having recreational functions often associated with such forms of provision (i.e. country parks etc) are also included.

5.2 Current provision

109. In total, 26 sites are identified in this report as natural and semi-natural greenspace; an equivalent to over 1,719 hectares of provision. The biggest contributor to this is the Wyre Forest at 1,046 hectares. In addition, a further 930 hectares of the site remains outside the District boundary. If the proportion of the Wyre Forest outside of the District is included there would be a total of 2,649 hectares of natural provision. Table 5.1 provides a breakdown to the hectares of provision for each analysis area*.

Table 5.1: Distribution of natural and semi-natural greenspace by analysis area

Analysis area	Natural and semi-natural greenspace	
	Number of sites	Total hectares
Bewdley	2	350.72
Kidderminster	6	147.14
Rural East	7	327.77
Rural West	4	767.72
Stourport	7	126.05
Wyre Forest	26	1,719.40

110. It is recognised that sites within the District have limitations and restrictions in terms of access. For instance, access to the whole or part of a site may not be allowed in order to preserve its high conservation value.
111. Several sites are identified as having access restricted to set pathways and/or may contain areas of land not permitted for access (i.e. marshes, wet areas). There are also examples where public access to a site is not possible without permission (e.g. Wilden Marsh).

* Several sites site across more than one analysis area. In such instances, sites are attributed to the analysis they are predominantly located. Wyre Forest is proportioned due to its large size.

WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL OPEN SPACE ASSESSMENT

112. At sites where access is only via a designated pathway it is possible to calculate the 'accessible' area by multiplying the length of the paths on site by an accepted common width (1.5m).
113. The Worcestershire Habitats Inventory (WHI) has also been used in order to identify parts of sites not accessible at all (i.e. marsh and water bodies). The WHI is an online mapping tool displaying the land use and habitat data for the county. It provides a baseline of information about the natural environment.
114. On this basis, Table 5.2 sets out the distribution of natural and semi-natural provision incorporating only those sites or parts of sites viewed as accessible.
115. In addition, Wyre Forest is not included in the distribution table due to a large proportion of the site being outside of the study area. It is recognised that parts of the site are not fully accessible. For example, the Go Ape activity company uses part of the site, which incurs a charge in order to access the area. It is not possible to determine the true amount of the site which is accessible due to its large size.
116. The table also proportions the amount of provision for those sites which sit across more than one analysis area.

Table 5.2: Distribution of accessible natural and semi-natural greenspace by analysis area

Analysis area	Natural and semi-natural greenspace	
	Total hectares	Current standard (ha per 1,000 population)
Bewdley	60.70	9.71
Kidderminster	65.61	1.17
Rural East	136.61	12.68
Rural West	30.23	5.22
Stourport	133.07	6.49
Wyre Forest	426.22	4.28

117. Most natural and semi-natural provision deemed accessible is located in the Kidderminster Analysis Area (136 hectares) and Stourport Analysis Area (133 hectares).
118. However, the Rural East Analysis Area has the most provision per 1,000 head of population with 12.68. The analysis area contains two particularly large natural and semi-natural forms of provision in Kingsford Country Park (80.77 hectares) and Hurcott Pool and Wood Nature Reserve (32.52 hectares).
119. The current standard per 1,000 head of population significantly increases from 4.28 hectares to 14.79 hectares when the Wyre Forest site is included. The parts of the Wyre Forest included within the study area is located over two analysis areas; the Rural West and Bewdley.

Table 5.3: Accessible natural and semi-natural greenspace with inclusion of Wyre Forest

Analysis area	Natural and semi-natural greenspace	
	Total hectares	Current standard (ha per 1,000 population)
Wyre Forest	1,471.89	14.79

WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL OPEN SPACE ASSESSMENT

120. It is important to recognise that other open spaces such as parks and amenity greenspace may also provide some opportunities and activities associated with natural and semi-natural greenspace. However, for the purposes of this report we have focused on sites of a biodiversity and conservation importance.

Designations

121. As set out earlier, Section 41 habitats, often interchanging with Biodiversity Action Plans (BAPs), or 'habitats and species of principal importance in England' have been used to predominantly identify sites for inclusion within this study.
122. The 19 habitat action plans within the Worcestershire Biodiversity Action Plans have been used as a starting point to identify sites across Wyre Forest documented as being of biodiversity and conservation importance. Table 5.4 provides a summary to the sites within Wyre Forest District highlighted in at least one of the Biodiversity Action Plans. Sites with a Local Nature Reserve (LNR) or Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) are also listed.

Table 5.4: Summary of site designation

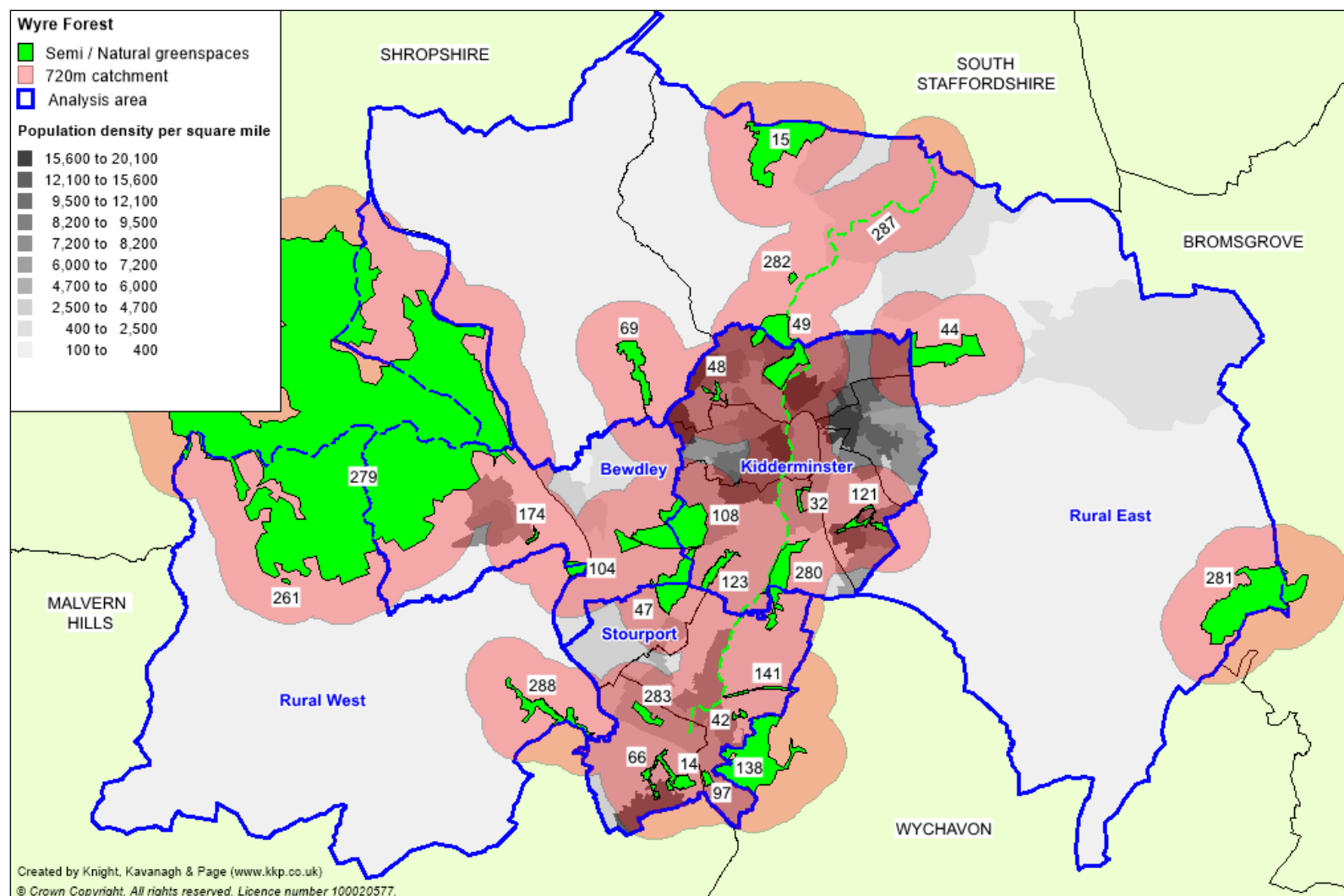
Site name	Biodiversity Action Plan	LNR	SSSI
Areley Wood	H5: Woodland	-	SSSI
Blake Marsh Nature Reserve	-	LNR	-
Burlish Top Nature Reserve	H11: Grassland H12: Lowland Heath	LNR	-
Callow Hill Show Ground	-	-	SSSI
Chaddesley Woods	H5: Woodland	-	SSSI (partial)
Devils Spittleful and Rifle Range Nature Reserve	H11: Grassland H12: Lowland Heath	-	SSSI
Habberley Valley Nature Reserve	H11: Grassland	LNR	-
Half Crown Wood Local Nature Reserve	-	LNR (partial)	-
Hartlebury Common	H4: Scrub H11: Grassland H12: Lowland Heath	LNR	SSSI
Hurcott Pool and Wood Nature Reserve	H7: Wet Woodland H16: Ponds and Lakes	LNR	SSSI (partial)
Kingsford Country Park	H12: Lowland Heath	LNR	-
Puxton and Stour Valley Nature Reserves	H6: Veteran Tree H9: Fen & Marsh H10: Wet Grasslands	-	SSSI
Redstone Marsh Nature Reserve	-	LNR	-
Spennells Valley Nature Reserve	H7: Wet Woodland	LNR	-
Staffordshire and Worcester Canal	H15: Canals	-	-
Wilden Marsh	H6: Veteran Tree H8: Reedbeds H9: Fen & Marsh	-	-
Wyre Forest	H2: Traditional Orchards H4: Scrub H5: Woodland	-	SSSI
Vicarage Farm Heath Nature Reserve	H12: Lowland Heath	-	-

5.3 Accessibility

123. Natural England's Accessible Natural Greenspace Standard (ANGSt) provides a set of benchmarks for ensuring access to places near to where people live. They recommend that people living in towns and cities should have one hectare of statutory Local Nature Reserves per thousand population.
124. On this basis, a population such as Wyre Forest (99,503) is recommended to have approximately 100 hectares of LNR. As it stands, using Table 5.4 to identify sites with a LNR, the Wyre Forest District more than meets this standard with 249 hectares of LNR.
125. For catchment mapping the FIT walking distance of 720m (approximately 9 minute walk-time) has been applied. Figure 5.1 shows the standard applied to natural and semi-natural greenspace to help inform where deficiencies in provision may be located.

WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL OPEN SPACE ASSESSMENT

Figure 5.1: Natural and semi-natural greenspace with 720m (approx. nine minute walk-time) mapped against analysis areas



WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL OPEN SPACE ASSESSMENT

Table 5.5: Key to natural and semi-natural greenspace mapped

Site ID	Site name	Analysis area	Quality score	Value score
14	Redstone Marsh Nature Reserve	Stourport	52.5%	40%
15	Kingsford Country Park	Rural East	61.3%	46.3%
32	Aggbrough Crescent	Kidderminster	41.3%	24.2%
42	The Dell NSN	Stourport	30.7%	25.3%
44	Hurcott Pool and Wood Nature Reserve	Rural East	65.1%	57.9%
47	Burlish Top Local Nature Reserve	Stourport, Bewdley & Kidderminster	80%	68.4%
48	Blake Marsh Nature Reserve	Kidderminster	52.5%	51.6%
49	Puxton and Stour Valley (Proposed Stour Valley Country Park)	Rural East	49.0%	41.1%
66	Half Crown Wood Local Nature Reserve	Stourport	50.9%	51.6%
69	Habberley Valley Nature Reserve	Rural East	51.8%	47.4%
97	Britannia Gardens	Stourport	49.9%	24.2%
104	Blackstone Meadows Country Park	Rural West	48.6%	24.2%
108	Devil's Spittleful and Rifle Range Nature Reserve	Kidderminster	61.8%	62.1%
121	Spennells Valley Nature Reserve	Kidderminster	54.4%	57.9%
123	Vicarage Farm Heath Nature Reserve	Kidderminster	42.2%	29.5%
138	Hartlebury Common	Stourport	72.1%	57.9%
141	Leapgate Country Park	Stourport	44.5%	31.6%
174	Snuff Mill Walk	Bewdley	32.6%	24.2%
261	Callow Hill Show Ground	Rural West	42.9%	31.6%
279	Wyre Forest	Rural West & Bewdley	82.4%	78.9%
280	Wilden Marsh	Kidderminster & Stourport	48.3%	40%
281	Chaddesley Woods	Rural East	49.3%	51.6%
282	Bishops Field	Rural East	45.1%	29.5%
283	Moorhall Marsh	Stourport	45.1%	34.7%
287	Staffordshire and Worcester Canal	Rural East, Kidderminster & Stourport	54.7%	63.2%
288	Areley Wood	Rural West	37.4%	30.5%

126. The majority of all analysis areas with denser populations are covered by natural and semi-natural provision based on a 720m walking distance catchment. The only notable gap is within the Kidderminster Analysis Area which is also within an area of higher population density; particularly to the east of the area. This gap may be served by other forms of open space such as parks and gardens provision.
127. Further to this, people are likely to travel further to access larger forms of provision such as country parks and sites such as Wyre Forest due to the range and quality of opportunities they provide.

WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL OPEN SPACE ASSESSMENT

5.4 Quality

128. To determine whether sites are high or low quality (as recommended by the Companion Guidance) scores from the site assessments are colour-coded against a baseline threshold (high being green and low being red). The table below summarises the results of the quality assessment for natural and semi-natural greenspace in Wyre Forest. A threshold of 45% is applied in order to identify high and low quality. Further explanation of how the quality scores are derived can be found in Part 2 (Methodology).
129. It is not unusual for natural and semi-natural sites to be intentionally without ancillary facilities in order to reduce misuse/inappropriate behaviour whilst encouraging greater conservation and promotion of flora and fauna activity. However, this may result in some sites scoring lower due to a lack of ancillary features in comparison to other sites.
130. Sites located across more than one analysis area have been allocated to the area the majority of the site is found. For example, Wyre Forest has been included within the Rural West Analysis Area for the purposes of the quality assessment.

Table 5.6: Quality rating for natural and semi-natural greenspace by analysis area

Analysis area	Scores			Spread	No. of sites	
	Lowest score	Average score	Highest score		Low <45%	High >45%
Bewdley	33%	33%	33%	-	1	0
Kidderminster	41%	50%	62%	21%	2	4
Rural East	45%	54%	65%	20%	0	7
Rural West	37%	53%	82%	45%	2	2
Stourport	31%	53%	80%	49%	2	6
Wyre Forest	31%	52%	82%	51%	7	19

131. The majority (73%) of natural and semi-natural greenspace in the District rate above the threshold for quality. Two sites; Leapgate Country Park (44.5%) and Callow Hill Show Ground (42.9%), only just score marginally below the threshold set for quality.
132. The three lowest scoring sites are The Dell NSN (31%), Snuff Mill Walk (33%) and Areley Wood (37%). These sites are reported as having lower levels of ancillary features or facilities such as seating, bins or interpretation.
133. The four highest scoring natural and semi-natural sites in the District are:
- ◀ Wyre Forest (82%)
 - ◀ Burlish Top Local Nature Reserve (80%)
 - ◀ Hartlebury Common (72%)
 - ◀ Hurcott Pool and Wood Nature Reserve (65%)
134. All of these sites are maintained to a high level and have a range of ancillary features such as parking, signage, benches and bins. Furthermore, they provide additional recreation opportunities such as a fitness trails, cycling, horse riding, fishing and nature walks. These sites are also observed as having a high level of conservation; with all four recognised as Section 41 sites.

WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL OPEN SPACE ASSESSMENT

135. WFDC identify that some sites are at capacity or even over capacity from a biodiversity perspective. It highlights measures are needed to be taken to provide alternative provision in order to dilute the pressure on existing sites. This is considered to affect some of the Districts larger sites such as Habberley Valley Nature Reserve and Devils Spittleful and Rifle Range Nature Reserve.
136. The Council also highlights a number of opportunities to enhance the countryside assets within the District. Four proposals are identified; two of these are at sites classified as natural and semi-natural greenspace; Stour Valley Countryside Portal is on the Puxton and Stour Nature Reserves (KKP 49) and Spennells Valley is on the Spennells Valley Nature Reserve (KKP 121). The other proposals are on sites classified as amenity greenspace and parks and gardens.

Table 5.7: Opportunities to enhance countryside assets

Proposal	KKP ref	Description
1. Stour Valley Countryside Portal	KKP 49	Potential creation of a country style café within or at the edge of Crossley Park retail park. Would offer connection to Wolverley village.
2. Wyre Forest Gateway	KKP 170	Potential of café on riverside offering safer cycling and walking trails between Wyre Forest and River Severn.
3. Spennells Valley	KKP 121	Potential to remove derelict changing rooms on site and replace with a café/ice cream outlet. Current investigations to renovate the existing building into a community facility are ongoing.
4. Springfield Park	KKP 10	Potential creation of a country style café within Park. Would be in replacement of old changing rooms on site. Would only be considered if Proposal 1 is not a viable option.

137. All four proposals have the potential to offer enhanced recreational opportunities to the area whilst also improving the physical connections to surrounding settlements and destinations. This could help boost tourism in addition to physical and mental activity. The potential retail and franchise opportunities could also help in terms of economic benefits.

WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL OPEN SPACE ASSESSMENT

5.5 Value

138. To determine whether sites are high or low value (as recommended by the Companion Guidance) scores from site assessments have been colour-coded against a baseline threshold (high being green and low being red). The table below summarises the results of the value assessment for natural and semi-natural greenspace in Wyre Forest. A threshold of 20% is applied in order to identify high and low value. Further explanation of how the value scores are derived can be found in Part 2 (Methodology).

Table 5.8: Value scores for natural and semi-natural greenspace by analysis area

Analysis area	Scores			Spread	No. of sites	
	Lowest score	Average score	Highest score		Low <20%	High >20%
Bewdley	24%	24%	24%	-	0	1
Kidderminster	24%	44%	62%	38%	0	6
Rural East	29%	48%	63%	34%	0	7
Rural West	24%	41%	79%	55%	0	4
Stourport	24%	42%	68%	44%	0	8
Wyre Forest	24%	43%	79%	49%	0	26

All natural and semi-natural sites rate above the threshold for quality. The generally high value of sites reflects their function as sites of biodiversity and conservation importance.

139. As discussed earlier, many sites are recognised for their importance in terms of conservation for habitats and species. The focus for site identification in this study has been Section 41 sites. A number of sites are also identified as being LNRs and/or SSSIs. Such designations further add to a sites conservation and biodiversity value.
140. It is highlighted by WFDC that keeping a balance between recreation opportunities and habitat preservation is a challenge. The Council highlights the need to alleviate the pressure at some sites viewed as being at capacity from a biodiversity perspective. This is considered to be affecting some of the Districts larger sites such as Habberley Valley Nature Reserve and Devils Spittleful and Rifle Range Nature Reserve. Consequently, measures are needed to be taken to provide alternative provision in order to dilute the pressure on such sites.
141. Consultation also highlights that a number of natural and semi-natural greenspace sites offer social and educational benefits. Sites provide traditional opportunities for walking/cycling/horse riding and to learn and experience wildlife habitats and species; several sites are adjacent or located nearby educational facilities (i.e. primary schools, colleges). Subsequently they offer opportunities as outdoor education places to learn and interact with nature. A number of sites are also identified as hosting coffee mornings. This adds to the value of sites due to their importance within the community for socialising and community cohesion.
142. In addition to the proposals set out earlier, there is also a desire to create a cafe within the hut at Habberley Valley Nature Reserve. However, finding someone willing to take on the responsibility of managing the cafe is proving difficult. Should this desire be realised, it would work alongside the community centre currently run in the old visitors centre on site. The community centre allows for a number of groups such as schools and disabled groups to take part in environmental education sessions.

WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL OPEN SPACE ASSESSMENT

143. The highest scoring sites for value are recognised as having a balance between biodiversity and conservation importance as well as a wider range of opportunities for exercise, learning and social inclusion. For example, Wyre Forest scores the highest for value with 79% due to the wide range of activities and opportunities it offers. Similarly, Burlish Top Local Nature Reserve, the second highest site for value with 68%, provides walking, running and horse riding routes in addition to historic and educational opportunities due to its links to WWII. The whole site is also recognised as a LNR.

5.6 Summary

Natural and semi-natural greenspace summary

- ♦ There are 26 natural and semi-natural greenspace sites covering over 1,719 hectares. However, it is recognised that many sites have restrictions in terms of access for conservation reasons. On this basis, there is considered to be 426 hectares of accessible provision; an equivalent to 4.28 hectares per 1,000 population.
- ♦ The majority of all analysis areas are covered by natural and semi-natural provision based on a 720m walking distance catchment. The only notable gap is within the Kidderminster Analysis Area. This gap is also within an area of higher population density.
- ♦ There are eight designated LNRs in the District as well as a number of SSSI. Natural England's ANGSt recommends 1 hectare of provision per 1,000 population. For the District this would mean 100 hectares of LNR provision. With 249 hectares, this is sufficient being met.
- ♦ Nearly three quarters (73%) of natural and semi-natural greenspace sites rate above the threshold for quality. Those that rate below the threshold mainly do so due to a lack of ancillary features and facilities.
- ♦ Despite the high quality of provision, there are some sites considered by WFDC to be at capacity in terms of biodiversity and use. Measures to help alleviate the pressure on such sites is needed.
- ♦ Related to this, there are a number of proposals being explored by WFDC to help enhance the ability of other sites to attract and accommodate greater user numbers. This could help improve the quality and use of such sites but also help with the balancing of the recreational and conservation roles of other sites deemed to be at capacity.
- ♦ All sites rate above the threshold for value. A reflection on the ecological, social and health benefits that sites provide. All sites are recognised for their ecological value with several being highlighted as sites of biodiversity and conservation importance. Higher scoring sites have a balance of ecological value but also recreational and educational benefits. Several sites provide opportunities to exercise and socialise whilst others act as 'outdoor' classrooms for local schools to use for learning.

WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL

OPEN SPACE ASSESSMENT

PART 6: AMENITY GREENSPACE

6.1 Introduction

144. This is defined as sites offering opportunities for informal activities close to home or work or enhancement of the appearance of residential or other areas. It includes informal recreation spaces, housing green spaces, village greens and other incidental space. For the purposes of this study, recreation grounds have been included within this typology.

6.2 Current provision

145. There are 52 amenity greenspace sites in Wyre Forest; equivalent to over 77 hectares of provision. Sites are most often found within areas of housing and function as informal recreation space or open space along highways that provide a visual amenity. A number of recreation grounds are also classified as amenity greenspace.

Table 6.1: Distribution of amenity greenspace sites by analysis area

Analysis area	Amenity greenspace		
	Number	Size (ha)	Current standard (ha per 1,000 population)
Bewdley	10	10.34	1.65
Kidderminster	23	31.77	0.56
Rural East	8	18.04	1.67
Rural West	2	3.77	0.65
Stourport	9	13.88	0.68
Wyre Forest	52	77.81	0.78

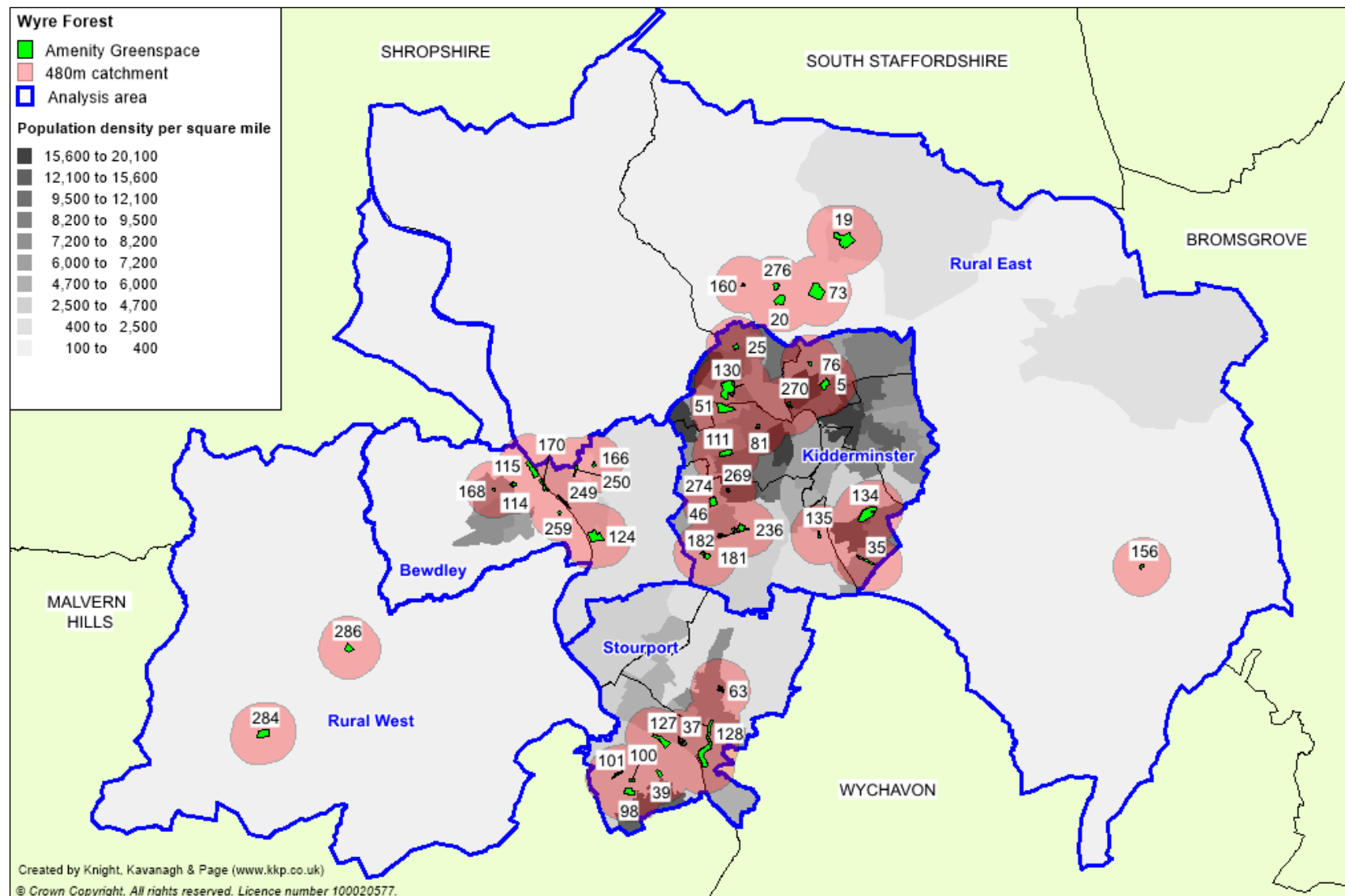
146. There is a wider range in variation of site sizes within this typology compared to others. The size of amenity greenspace provision varies from the smallest incidental grass area separating houses from the road, such as Clensmore Street in Kidderminster (0.20 ha) to the larger River Stour AGS (6.15 ha). The analysis area with the highest number of sites is Kidderminster; however, proportionally the Rural East has the most provision with 1.67 hectares per 1,000 head of population.
147. The larger sites, identified as recreation grounds, serve a different purpose to smaller grassed areas and verges; often providing an extended range of opportunities for recreational activities due to their size and facilities.

6.3 Accessibility

148. For catchment mapping the FIT walking distance of 480m has been applied. Figure 6.1 shows the standard applied to amenity greenspace to help inform where deficiencies in provision may be located.

WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL OPEN SPACE ASSESSMENT

Figure 6.1: Amenity greenspace with a walking distance of 480m mapped against analysis area



WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL OPEN SPACE ASSESSMENT

Table 6.2: Key to sites mapped

Site ID	Site name	Analysis area	Quality score	Value score
2	Selba Drive	Kidderminster	34.4%	20%
5	Sladen Playing Field	Kidderminster	34.1%	20%
19	Cookley Playing Fields	Rural East	32.7%	25.6%
20	Wolverley Playing Fields	Rural East	25.5%	20%
25	King George V Playing Field	Kidderminster	61.1%	36.7%
26	Carpet Trades Way	Kidderminster	40.9%	22.2%
27	Franche Road	Kidderminster	40%	20%
28	Habberley Road	Kidderminster	40.9%	20%
35	Captains Pool Road AGS	Kidderminster	37.0%	38.9%
37	Canal Basins Open Space	Stourport	72.1%	50%
39	Erneley Close	Stourport	29.1%	14.4%
46	Jubilee Drive AGS	Kidderminster	20.9%	8.9%
51	Habberley Road Sports Ground	Kidderminster	53.2%	38.9%
59	Heronswood	Kidderminster	33.6%	20%
63	Manor Farm Park	Stourport	42.6%	33.3%
73	Brown Westhead Park Playing Fields	Rural East	45.1%	27.8%
76	Oxbow Way	Kidderminster	40.2%	27.8%
78	Clensmore Street	Kidderminster	47%	41.1%
81	Bentons Court	Kidderminster	42.1%	21.1%
98	Areley Common Recreation Ground	Stourport	58.5%	44.4%
100	Wenlock Way AGS	Stourport	30.0%	14.4%
101	Dunley Road AGS	Stourport	18.2%	28.9%
111	Bewdley Hill AGS	Kidderminster	65.8%	43.3%
114	Bark Hill Park	Bewdley	43.3%	20%
115	Greenacres Lane	Bewdley	46.1%	31.1%
124	Bewdley LC Playing Fields	Bewdley	57.6%	50%
127	Riverside Walk AGS	Stourport	29.1%	17.8%
128	River Stour AGS	Stourport	23.2%	38.9%
130	White Wickets	Kidderminster	48.9%	38.9%
134	Spennells Valley Playing Fields	Kidderminster	49.4%	43.3%
135	Green Adjacent to Viaduct Pub	Kidderminster	29.5%	7.8%
137	Riverside	Stourport	29.5%	20%
143	Blakedown Millennium Green	Rural East	43.8%	25.6%
156	The Green	Rural East	25.9%	8.9%
160	Sebright Green	Rural East	46.8%	20%
161	Bridge Road	Rural East	27.7%	18.9%
166	Queensway	Bewdley	36.4%	8.9%
168	Tanners Hill AGS	Bewdley	43.6%	20%
170	Severn Side North AGS	Bewdley	57.9%	36.7%
177	Riverside AGS	Bewdley	51.7%	38.1%
181	Meridith Green	Kidderminster	35.2%	8.9%
182	Ferguson Drive AGS	Kidderminster	37.6%	8.9%
236	Woodbury Road AGS	Kidderminster	24.1%	31.1%
249	Beales Corner Riverside	Bewdley	42.7%	27.8%

WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL OPEN SPACE ASSESSMENT

Site ID	Site name	Analysis area	Quality score	Value score
250	Millenium Green, Wribbenhall	Bewdley	42.3%	25.6%
259	Open Space Adjacent to QEII Gardens	Bewdley	69.7%	37.8%
269	Lister Road AGS	Kidderminster	49.9%	50%
270	Clensmore Street AGS	Kidderminster	13.2%	6.7%
274	Naylors Close Playing Field	Kidderminster	45.3%	26.7%
276	Land Adjacent To Wolverley Playing Fields	Rural East	45.3%	25.6%
284	Rock Millennium Green	Rural West	58.2%	48.9%
286	Bliss Gate Field	Rural West	38.5%	48.9%

149. Catchment mapping shows a reasonable coverage of sites against a 480m walking distance. The only notable gap is located in the Kidderminster Analysis Area; particularly to the central and east areas. This gap may be met by other forms of provision such as parks and gardens provision.
150. Respondents to the Open Spaces Survey are generally satisfied with the amounts of amenity greenspace in the District. The highest proportion rate being quite satisfied (46%) followed by a further 21% that are very satisfied. Further supporting the existing amount of provision is the small proportion of respondents that state being either quite dissatisfied (3%) or very dissatisfied (3%).

6.4 Quality

151. To determine whether sites are high or low quality (as recommended by the Companion Guidance); the scores from site assessments have been colour-coded against a baseline threshold (high being green and low being red). The table below summarises the results of the quality assessment for amenity greenspaces in Wyre Forest. A threshold of 40% is applied in order to identify high and low quality. Further explanation of how the quality scores and thresholds are derived can be found in Part 2 (Methodology).

Table 6.3: Quality ratings for amenity greenspaces by analysis area

Analysis area	Scores			Spread	No. of sites	
	Lowest score	Average score	Highest score		Low <40%	High >40%
Bewdley	36%	49%	70%	34%	1	9
Kidderminster	13%	40%	66%	53%	10	13
Rural East	26%	37%	47%	21%	4	4
Rural West	38%	48%	58%	20%	1	1
Stourport	18%	37%	72%	54%	6	3
Wyre Forest	13%	42%	72%	59%	22	30

152. Over half of amenity greenspace in Wyre Forest (58%) rates above the threshold for quality. The highest ratings sites for quality are Canal Basins Open Space (71%) and Open Space Adjacent to QE II Gardens (69%).

WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL OPEN SPACE ASSESSMENT

153. Both of the sites are observed as having good levels of maintenance and cleanliness as well as disabled friendly pathways. In addition, the sites have ancillary features such as benches and signage. Both sites are also described as having good personal security for site users. The Canal Basins Open Space also has parking and lighting.
154. Other sites that score particularly high in Wyre Forest are:
- ◀ King George VI Playing Field (61%)
 - ◀ Areley Common Recreation Ground (59%)
 - ◀ Bewdley Hill AGS (58%)
 - ◀ Rock Millennium Green (58%)
 - ◀ Severn Side North AGS (58%)
155. The Severn Side North AGS is a site highlighted by WFDC forming part of one the opportunities to enhance the countryside assets of the District (see Table 5.7). The site has the potential to facilitate a café venue with the possibility of an improved offer for walking and cycling along the river to places such as the Wyre Forest. The proposal is at an early stage with no funding in place.
156. Some of the lowest scoring amenity greenspace sites in Wyre Forest are:
- ◀ Clensmore Street (13%)
 - ◀ Dunley Road AGS (18%)
 - ◀ Jubilee Drive AGS (21%)
157. These sites are described as being overgrown and scruffy. Jubilee Drive AGS is also reported as having issues with litter on the site. Furthermore, none of these sites have ancillary features, making them less attractive to potential users.
158. It is worth noting that most sites that rate low for quality are observed as being fairly basic pockets of green space. These tend to be small grassed areas lacking ancillary facilities and therefore not intended to encourage extensive recreational use. However, ensuring these sites are still maintained to a good standard is important, especially as amenity greenspace often serves as a visual amenity, breaking up the urban form.
159. There are some larger sites which score low for quality, River Stour AGS (32%) and Cookley Playing Fields (33%). This again is mainly attributed to a lack of ancillary features and that they exist to provide space for recreation use such as football, walking and dog walking.
160. Most respondents to the Open Spaces Survey are generally satisfied with the quality of amenity greenspace. Most (61%) respondents are quite satisfied (43%) in terms of quality with a further 15% being very satisfied. Furthermore, there are only a small proportion of respondents that are either quite dissatisfied (6%) or very dissatisfied (4%). There is also a noticeable proportion of respondents (24%) that are neither satisfied nor dissatisfied with the quality of amenity greenspace; a possible reflection to the typologies role as visual amenity (without any great attraction for physical use).

WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL OPEN SPACE ASSESSMENT

6.5 Value

161. To determine whether sites are high or low value (as recommended by the Companion Guidance) site assessments scores are colour-coded against a baseline threshold (high being green and low being red). The table below summarises the results. A threshold of 20% is applied in order to identify high and low value. Further explanation of the value scoring and thresholds can be found in Part 2 (Methodology).

Table 6.4: Value ratings for amenity greenspace by analysis area

Analysis area	Scores			Spread	No. of sites	
	Lowest score	Average score	Highest score		Low <20%	High >20%
Bewdley	9%	30%	50%	41%	1	9
Kidderminster	7%	26%	50%	43%	5	18
Rural East	9%	22%	28%	19%	2	6
Rural West	49%	49%	49%	0%	0	2
Stourport	14%	29%	50%	36%	3	6
Wyre Forest	7%	28%	50%	43%	11	41

162. The majority of amenity greenspaces (79%) rate above the threshold for value. Overall, a greater proportion of sites are rated high for value compared to quality.
163. Amenity greenspace should also be recognised for its multi-purpose function, offering opportunities for a variety of leisure and recreational activities. It can often accommodate informal recreational activity such as casual play and dog walking.
164. Many sites in Wyre Forest District offer a dual function and are amenity resources for residents as well as being visually pleasing.
165. All sites that score low for value also score low for quality. This is often the case, due to quality having a direct impact on site value. If a site has fewer features and facilities, it is less attractive to visitors. Furthermore, if sites are not maintained to a reasonable standard, people are less likely to visit.
166. The lowest scoring site for value is Green Adjacent to Viaduct Pub (8%). Similar to quality, sites rating below the value threshold tend to be smaller grassed areas with no noticeable features. They are recognised as providing some visual amenity to their locality and it is important to note that the main role of certain sites may be to simply act as a grassed area, providing breaks in the urban form. However, maintaining even small basic sites to a reasonable standard is important.
167. Some of the highest scoring amenity greenspace sites for value in Wyre Forest are:
- ✦ Canal Basins Open Space (50%)
 - ✦ Bewdley LC Playing Fields (50%)
 - ✦ Lister Road AGS (50%)
 - ✦ Rock Millennium Green (49%)

168. These sites are recognised for the level of accessible recreational opportunities they offer to an excellent standard of quality intended for a wide range of users. All four are noted as providing opportunities of social and health benefits, which meet the needs of a variety of people. Their high value is likely a reflection of their ability to cater for a wide range of people and uses.
169. These attributes add to the quality, accessibility and visibility of amenity greenspace. Combined with the presence of ancillary facilities (e.g. benches, landscaping and trees), it is therefore more likely that the better-quality sites are more respected and valued by the local community.

6.6 Summary

Amenity greenspace summary

- ◆ There are 52 amenity greenspace sites in Wyre Forest; over 77 hectares of provision.
- ◆ The Kidderminster analysis area has 23 sites and the greatest of provision with 31 hectares; however, proportionally the Bedwley and Rural East analysis areas have the most provision with 1.65 and 1.67 hectares per 1,000 head of population respectively.
- ◆ Catchment mapping shows a reasonable coverage of sites against a 480m walking distance. The only notable gaps are located in the Kidderminster Analysis Area.
- ◆ Over half (58%) of amenity greenspaces rate above the threshold for quality.
- ◆ Most sites that rate low for quality are observed as being fairly basic pockets of green space. These tend to be small grassed areas lacking ancillary facilities and therefore not intended to encourage extensive recreational use. However, ensuring these sites are still maintained to a sufficient standard is important, especially as they often serve as a visual amenity.
- ◆ The majority of amenity greenspaces (79%) rate above the threshold for value. Overall, a greater proportion of sites are rated high for value compared to quality. All sites that score low for value also score low for quality.
- ◆ Amenity greenspace can make a valuable contribution to visual aesthetics for communities – hence most sites rate above the threshold for value.

PART 7: PROVISION FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

7.1 Introduction

170. Provision for children is deemed to be sites consisting of formal equipped play facilities typically associated with play areas. This is usually perceived to be for children under 12 years of age. Provision for young people can include equipped sites that provide more robust equipment catering to older age ranges incorporating facilities such as skate parks, BMX, basketball courts, youth shelters and MAPAs (multi activity play areas).

7.2 Current provision

171. A total of 40 sites are identified as provision for children and young people in Wyre Forest.
172. A point to note all provision for children and young people within a site is included under one site name and reference number. For example, Brinton Park includes an equipped play area, MAPA and skate park, all of which is included within the Brinton Park Play Area.
173. The table below shows the distribution. No site size threshold has been applied and as such all provision is identified and included within the audit.

Table 7.1: Distribution of provision for children and young people by analysis area

Analysis area	Provision for children and young people		
	Number	Size (ha)	Current standard (ha per 1,000 population)
Bewdley	5	0.73	0.12
Kidderminster	21	3.47	0.06
Rural East	3	0.50	0.05
Rural West	2	0.04	-
Stourport	9	7.42	0.36
Wyre Forest	40	12.17	0.12

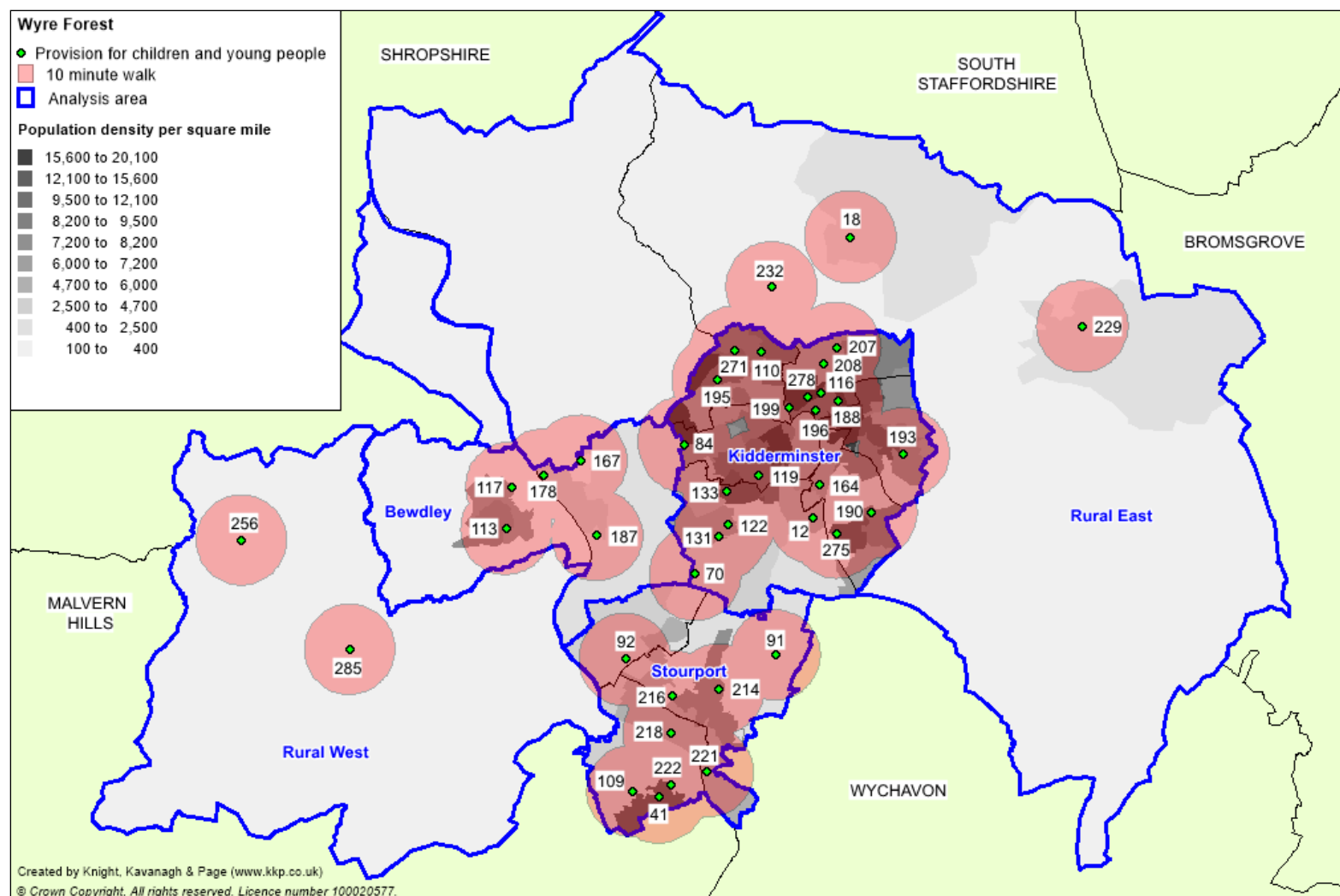
174. The majority of play sites (53%) are located in the Kidderminster Analysis Area; however, Stourport Analysis Area has the most provision in hectares (7.42 ha). Subsequently, Stourport Analysis Area has the most provision per 1,000 population (0.36). Rural West currently has just two sites, equating to just 0.03 hectares.

7.3 Accessibility

175. For catchment mapping a walk time of 10 minutes has been applied. This is intended to reflect the average walk time equivalent from FIT (approximately 7 minutes) but that 25% of respondents to the Open Space Survey are willing to walk 15 minutes in order to access such provision.
176. Figure 7.1 shows the standard applied to help inform where deficiencies in provision may be located.

WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL OPEN SPACE ASSESSMENT

Figure 7.1: Provision for children and young people with 10-minute walk time mapped against analysis areas



WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL OPEN SPACE ASSESSMENT

Table 7.2: Key to sites mapped

Site ID	Site name	Analysis area	Types of play provision			Quality score	Value score
			Toddler	Child	Youth		
12	Forester Way Play Area	Kidderminster	Yes	Yes	-	76.2%	41.8%
18	Cookley Playing Fields Play Area	Rural East	Yes	Yes	Yes	36.5%	45.5%
41	Hermitage Way Play Area	Stourport	Yes	Yes	-	74.1%	41.8%
70	Kinver Avenue Play Area	Kidderminster	Yes	Yes	Yes	62.4%	41.8%
84	Truro Drive Play Area	Kidderminster	Yes	Yes	-	76.2%	41.8%
91	Wilden Top Play Area	Stourport	-	Yes	-	52.1%	41.8%
92	Garland Road Play Area	Stourport	Yes	Yes	-	57.4%	20%
109	Areley Kings Play Area	Stourport	Yes	Yes	-	77.7%	41.8%
110	Willowfield Drive Play Area	Kidderminster	Yes	Yes	-	72.3%	32.7%
113	Wyre Hill Play Area	Bewdley	-	-	Yes	69.1%	41.8%
116	Grasmere Close Play Area	Kidderminster	Yes	Yes	-	53.2%	32.7%
117	Bark Hill Play Area	Bewdley	-	-	Yes	68.1%	38.2%
119	Brinton Park Play Area	Kidderminster	Yes	Yes	Yes	80.9%	60%
122	Jubilee Drive	Kidderminster	Yes	Yes	-	67.4%	54.5%
131	Woodbury Road Play Area	Kidderminster	Yes	Yes	-	48.9%	29.1%
133	Lister Road Play Area	Kidderminster	Yes	Yes	Yes	57.8%	45.5%
164	Hoo Road Play Area	Kidderminster	Yes	Yes	-	74.5%	20%
167	Shaw Hedge Road Play Area	Bewdley	-	-	Youth	69.1%	41.8%
178	Riverside North Play Area	Bewdley	Yes	Yes	-	74.8%	41.8%
187	Bewdley Leisure Centre MAPA	Bewdley	-	-	Youth	37.2%	20%
188	Baxter Gardens Play Area	Kidderminster	Yes	Yes	-	89.4%	56.4%
190	Spennells Valley Play Area	Kidderminster	Yes	Yes	Yes	71.6%	41.8%
193	Borrington Park Play Area	Kidderminster	Yes	Yes	Yes	62.4%	60%
195	Wilton Avenue MAPA	Kidderminster	Yes	Yes	Yes	58.9%	54.5%
196	St Georges Park Play Area	Kidderminster	Yes	Yes	-	81.2%	63.6%

WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL OPEN SPACE ASSESSMENT

Site ID	Site name	Analysis area	Types of play provision			Quality score	Value score
			Toddler	Child	Youth		
199	Clensmore Street Basketball Court	Kidderminster	-	-	Youth	17%	12.7%
207	Upton Road Play Area	Kidderminster	Yes	Yes	Yes	42.2%	38.2%
208	Springfield Park Play Area	Kidderminster	Yes	Yes	Yes	88.7%	60%
214	Manor Park Farm Play Area	Stourport	Yes	Yes	-	74.5%	32.7%
216	Stourport Memorial Park Play Area	Stourport	Yes	Yes	-	49.6%	20%
218	Riverside Play Area	Stourport	Yes	Yes	Yes	85.8%	27.3%
221	Britannia Gardens Play Area	Stourport	Yes	-	-	73.8%	20%
222	Hanstone Road	Stourport	Yes	Yes	Yes	61.7%	41.8%
229	Blakedown Play Area	Rural East	Yes	Yes	-	56.7%	41.8%
232	Wolverley Memorial Play Area	Rural East	Yes	Yes	-	75.5%	41.8%
256	New Forest Close Play Area	Rural West	Yes	Yes	-	76.2%	20%
271	King George V Playing Field Play Area	Kidderminster	Yes	Yes	-	63.1%	38.2%
275	Dunlin Drive Play Area	Kidderminster	-	-	Youth	67.7%	38.2%
278	Jerusalem Walk Play Area	Kidderminster	-	Yes	Yes	80.1%	38.2%
285	Bliss Gate Play Area	Rural West	Yes	Yes	-	67%	38.2%

WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL OPEN SPACE ASSESSMENT

177. There is generally a good spread of play provision across Wyre Forest. Areas with a greater population density are within a 10-minute walking distance of a form of play provision. There are areas of less population density, which are not covered by catchments.
178. In general, responses to the Open Space Survey suggest people are satisfied with provision for children and young people. In terms of play areas for young children, 58% of respondents report being either quite satisfied (27%) or very satisfied (31%). For splash pools, respondents report being either quite satisfied (24%) or very satisfied (17%). Concerning teenage provision 8% of respondents are very satisfied and 22% are quite satisfied; however, a high percentage of people (29%) do state they have no opinion.

7.4 Quality

179. In order to determine whether sites are high or low quality (as recommended by guidance); the scores from the site assessments have been colour-coded against a baseline threshold (high being green and low being red). The table below summarises the results of the quality assessment for play provision for children and young people in Wyre Forest. A threshold of 55% is applied in order to identify high and low quality. Further explanation of the quality scoring and thresholds can be found in Part 2 (Methodology).
180. Quality assessments of play sites do not include a detailed technical risk assessment of equipment. For an informed report on the condition of play equipment the site managers own inspection reports should be sought. These are often undertaken on an annual basis.

Table 7.3: Quality ratings for provision for children and young people by analysis area

Analysis area	Scores			Spread	No. of sites	
	Lowest score	Average score	Highest score		Low <55%	High >55%
Bewdley	37%	64%	75%	38%	1	4
Kidderminster	17%	66%	89%	72%	4	17
Rural East	37%	56%	76%	39%	1	2
Rural West	67%	72%	76%	9%	0	2
Stourport	50%	67%	86%	36%	2	7
Wyre Forest	17%	66%	89%	72%	8	32

181. The quality of play provision in Wyre Forest is generally good, with 80% of sites scoring above the quality threshold. This trend of good quality can be seen across all analysis areas. Of the eight sites that score below the threshold set for quality, the lowest scoring sites are:
- ✦ Clensmore Street Basketball Court (17%)
 - ✦ Hanstone Road Play Area (25%)
 - ✦ Bewdley Leisure Centre MAPA (37%)
182. The two lowest scoring sites, Clensmore Street Basketball Court and Hanstone Road Play Area, are observed as having low standards for maintenance and cleanliness, in particular the Clensmore Street Basketball Court site, which scores the lowest possible score for the maintenance element of the non-technical assessment.

WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL OPEN SPACE ASSESSMENT

183. All of the lowest scoring sites all lack basic ancillary features such as seating and bins. Furthermore, they have no controls to prevent illegal use.
184. Due to lower standards of quality and maintenance and a lack of ancillary features, these sites are observed as having lower levels of use.
185. The two highest rating sites in Wyre Forest are Springfield Park Play Area and Baxter Gardens Play Area, both scoring 89%. Both sites have recreation activities suitable for both toddlers and children and provides a broad range of well maintained equipment. These sites also provide a good range of ancillary features and facilities such as parking, seats, bins, informative signage and safety barriers at site entrances. Furthermore, the sites have sufficient boundary fencing and controls to prevent illegal use. The latter adds to the sites being recognised as offering good personal security to site users. Other sites to receive particularly high ratings for quality include.
- ◆ Riverside Play Area (86%)
 - ◆ St Georges Park Play Area (81%)
 - ◆ Brinton Park Play Area (81%)
186. Respondents to the Open Spaces Survey tend to reflect the general good quality of play provision in the District. In terms of play areas for young children, 53% of respondents report being either quite satisfied (39%) or very satisfied (14%). For splash pools, respondents report being either quite satisfied (22%) or very satisfied (16%). Concerning teenage provision 7% of respondents are very satisfied and 16% are quite satisfied; however, a high percentage of people (33%) do state they have no opinion. Teenage provision has the highest percentage of dissatisfaction in terms of quality, with 12% of responses either quite or very dissatisfied.

7.5 Value

187. To determine whether sites are high or low value (as recommended by the Companion Guidance) site assessment scores are colour-coded against a baseline threshold (high being green and low being red). The table overleaf summarises the results of the value assessment for children and young people in Wyre Forest. A threshold of 20% is applied in order to identify high and low value. Further explanation of the value scoring and thresholds can be found in Part 2 (Methodology).

Table 7.4: Value ratings for provision for children and young people by analysis area

Analysis area	Scores			Spread	No. of sites	
	Lowest score	Average score	Highest score		Low <20%	High >20%
Bewdley	20%	37%	42%	22%	0	5
Kidderminster	13%	43%	64%	51%	1	20
Rural East	42%	43%	45%	4%	0	3
Rural West	20%	29%	38%	18%	0	2
Stourport	20%	32%	42%	22%	0	9
Wyre Forest	13%	39%	64%	51%	1	39

WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL OPEN SPACE ASSESSMENT

188. All play provision, with the exception of one site scores high for value. This demonstrates the role play provision provides in allowing children to play but also the contribution sites make in terms of giving children and young people safe places to learn, to socialise with others and in creating aesthetically pleasing local environments.
189. The only site to score low for quality, Clensmore Street Basketball Court (13%), also scores low for quality. Quality can directly impact on a sites value, with people being less likely to use a site that does not provide a desirable environment.
190. Sites scoring particularly high for value tend to reflect the size and amount/range as well as standard of equipment present on site. Some of the highest scoring sites are:
- ◀ Springfield Park Play Area (60%)
 - ◀ Borrington Park Play Area (60%)
 - ◀ Brinton Park Play Area (60%)
 - ◀ St Georges Park Play Area (63%)
 - ◀ Baxter Gardens Play Area (56%)
191. Diverse equipment to cater for a range of ages is also essential. More specifically, provision such as skate park facilities and MAPAs are highly valued forms of play. Sites containing such forms of provision tend to rate higher for value.
192. It is also important to recognise the benefits of play in terms of healthy, active lifestyles, social inclusion and interaction between children plus its developmental and educational value. The importance of play and of children's rights to play in their local communities is essential.

7.6 Summary

Provision for children and young people summary

- ◀ There are 40 play provision sites in Wyre Forest.
- ◀ There is generally a good spread of play provision across Wyre Forest. Areas with a greater population density are within a 10-minute walking distance of play provision.
- ◀ The quality of play provision in Wyre Forest is generally good, with 80% of sites scoring above the quality threshold. This trend of good quality can be seen in all analysis areas.
- ◀ The two lowest scoring sites, Clensmore Street Basketball Court and Hanstone Road Play Area, are observed as having low standards for maintenance and cleanliness, in particular the Clensmore Street Basketball Court site, which scores the lowest possible score for the maintenance element of the non-technical assessment.
- ◀ All play provision, with the exception of one site, is rated above the threshold for value; reflecting the important role such sites provide.
- ◀ The only site to score low for quality, Clensmore Street Basketball Court (13%), also scores low for quality. Quality can directly impact on a sites value, with people being less likely to use a site that does not provide a desirable environment.

WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL OPEN SPACE ASSESSMENT

PART 8: ALLOTMENTS

8.1 Introduction

193. Allotments is a typology which covers open spaces that provide opportunities for those people who wish to do so to grow their own produce as part of the long term promotion of sustainability, health and social interaction. This includes provision such as allotments, community gardens and city farms.

8.2 Current provision

194. There are 14 sites classified as allotments in Wyre Forest, equating to over 17 hectares. Of these 14 sites, 12 are assessed for quality and value. This is due to two sites, Arley Lane Allotments and Rear Queens Head Allotments being un-locatable at time of site assessment. However, all 14 sites are taken into account when calculating available provision.
195. No site size threshold has been applied to allotments and as such all provision is identified and included within the audit.

Table 8.1: Distribution of allotment sites by analysis area

Analysis area	Allotments		
	Number of sites	Size (ha)	Current standard (Ha per 1,000 population)
Bewdley	-	-	-
Kidderminster	8	11.54	0.21
Rural East	4	2.35	0.22
Rural West	-	-	-
Stourport	2	3.71	0.18
Wyre Forest	14	17.60	0.18

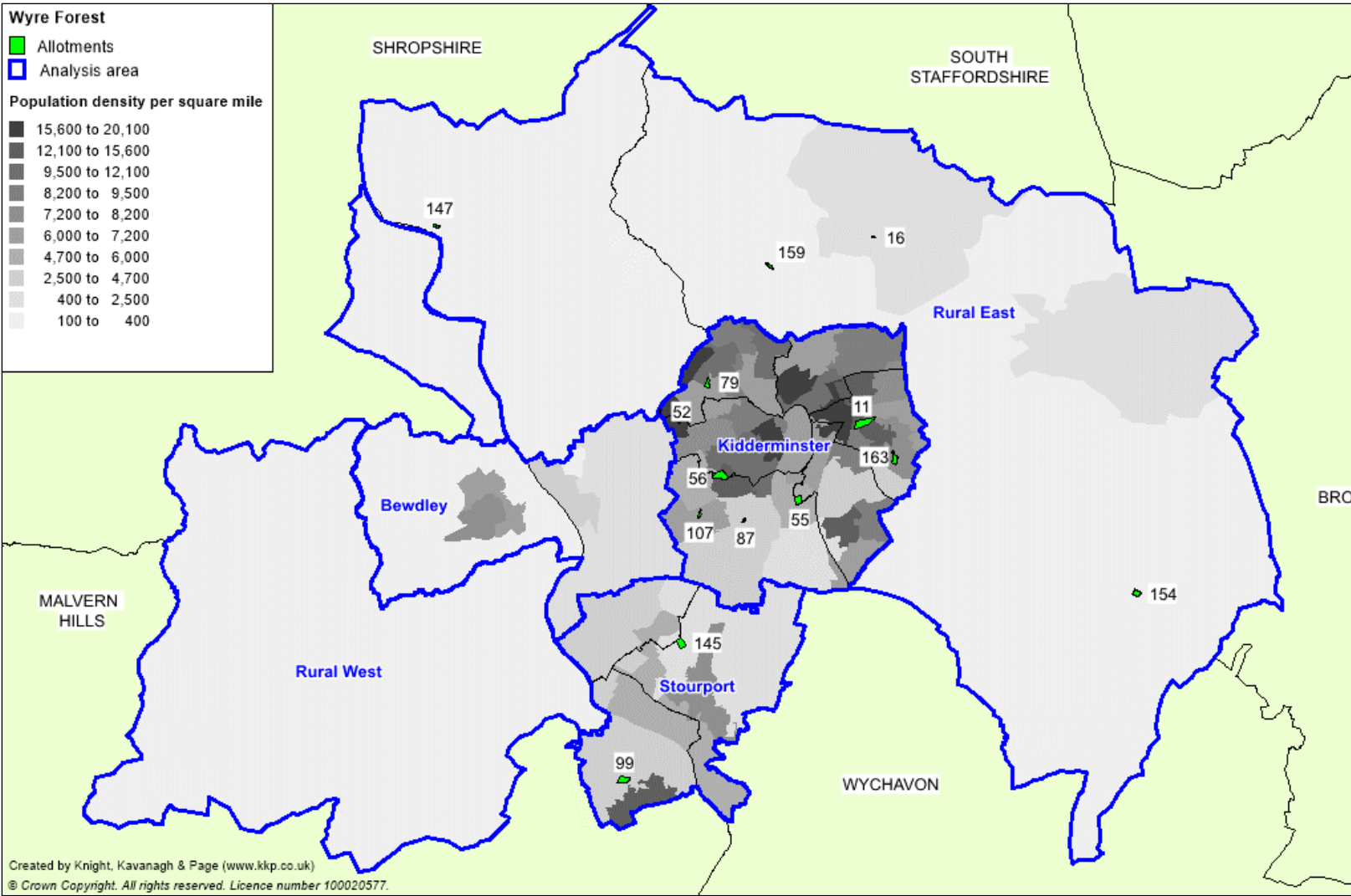
196. The majority of sites (eight) are located in the Kidderminster Analysis Area. However, proportionally, Rural East Analysis Area has the most provision per 1,000 head of population (0.22 hectares). Two analysis areas, Bewdley and Rural West currently have no identified allotment provision.
197. The National Society of Allotment and Leisure Gardeners (NSALG) suggests a national standard of 20 allotments per 1,000 households (20 per 2,000 people based on two people per house or one per 100 people). This equates to 0.25 hectares per 1,000 population based on an average plot-size of 250 square metres (0.025 hectares per plot).
198. Wyre Forest, as a whole, based on its current population (99,503) does not meet the NSALG standard. Using this suggested standard, the minimum amount of allotment provision required for Wyre Forest is 24.88 hectares. Therefore, there is a shortfall of 7.28 hectares.

8.3 Accessibility

199. No accessibility standard is set for this typology and there is no realistic requirement to set such standards. Provision should be based on demand. Figure 8.1 shows allotment sites mapped against analysis area.

WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL OPEN SPACE ASSESSMENT

Figure 8.1: Allotments mapped against analysis areas



WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL OPEN SPACE ASSESSMENT

Table 8.2: Key to sites mapped

Site ID	Site name	Analysis area	Quality score	Value score
11	Chester Road Allotments	Kidderminster	42.5%	34.4%
16	Cookley Allotments	Rural East	45.6%	37.5%
52	Salisbury Drive Allotments	Kidderminster	45.2%	35.9%
55	Aggborough Allotments	Kidderminster	53.8%	34.4%
56	Greatfield Road Allotments	Kidderminster	43.1%	46.9%
79	Franch Allotments	Kidderminster	42.9%	37.5%
87	Railway Bridge Allotments	Kidderminster	49.4%	37.5%
99	Abberley Avenue Allotments	Stourport	57.7%	34.4%
107	Rifle Range Allotments	Kidderminster	44.6%	62.5%
145	Kingsway Allotments	Stourport	36.4%	56.3%
147	Arley Lane Allotments	Rural East		
154	Hemmingway Allotments	Rural East	47.9%	40.6%
159	Rear Queens Head Allotments	Rural East		
163	Comberton Allotments	Kidderminster	61.9%	39.1%

Ownership/management

200. There are five allotment associations in Wyre Forest that between them manage ten allotment sites. Both Stourport Parish Council and Chaddesley Corbett Parish Council also manage sites. The largest site is Comberton Allotments with 77 plots; however, consultation with Comberton Community Allotments suggests this number will increase over time due to larger plots being split in half when they become available. The smallest site is Salisbury Drive Allotments, with just six plots. The table below shows the management and the number of plots on each allotment

Table 8.3: Management and number of plots on allotment sites

Management	Allotment sites	Number of plots
Comberton Community Allotments	Chester Road Allotments	12 – CCA only manage a few plots here.
	Comberton Allotments	77
FHC Community Allotments Association	Cookley Allotments	10
	Salisbury Drive Allotments	6
	Franch Allotments	41
	Aggborough Allotments	61
Aggborough and Foley Park Allotment Association	Railway Bridge Allotments	7
	Greatfield Road Allotments	64
West Kidderminster Allotment Society	Rifle Range Allotments	14
	Rear Queens Head Allotments	40
Stourport Town Council	Abberley Avenue Allotments	Unknown
	Kingsway Allotments	Unknown
	Arley Lane Allotments	Unknown
Chaddesley Corbett Parish Council	Hemmingway Allotments	34

WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL OPEN SPACE ASSESSMENT

201. Three allotment associations responded to consultation, Comberton Community Allotments, West Kidderminster Allotment Society and Aggborough and Foley Park Allotment Association. All three report being responsible for the maintenance of the sites they manage. Comberton Community Allotments report asking cross sections of plot holders to do regular checks of the site to ensure that plots are being cared for. These individuals then report back to the committee. This is a common quality checking process adopted by allotment associations.

Demand

202. Consultation highlights a steady demand for the continuing provision of allotment sites and plots across the District.
203. West Kidderminster Allotment Society reports the highest current demand with around five individuals on each of its sites waiting lists. However, in contrast, there are only two people on the waiting list with Comberton Community Allotments (two sites). Further to this, Aggborough and Foley Park Allotment Association report no waiting lists (two sites); however, it does report this will change as it leads into the summer months. It should be noted that all three allotment associations suggest that waiting list numbers tend to increase leading into summer.

8.4 Quality

204. To determine whether sites are high or low quality (as recommended by the Companion Guidance) the site assessment scores have been colour-coded against a baseline threshold (high being green and low being red). The table below summarises the results of the quality assessment for allotments in Wyre Forest. A threshold of 45% is applied in order to identify high and low quality. Further explanation of how the quality scores and thresholds are derived can be found in Part 2 (Methodology).

Table 8.4: Quality ratings for allotments by analysis area

Analysis area	Scores			Spread	No. of sites	
	Lowest score	Average score	Highest score		Low <45%	High >45%
Bewdley	-	-	-	-	-	-
Kidderminster	42%	48%	62%	19%	4	4
Rural East	46%	47%	48%	2%	-	2
Rural West	-	-	-	-	-	-
Stourport	36%	47%	58%	21%	1	1
Wyre Forest	36%	48%	62%	25%	5	7

WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL OPEN SPACE ASSESSMENT

205. The majority (58%) of allotment provision in Wyre Forest scores above the threshold for quality. Both allotment sites in Rural East Analysis Area score high for quality. The Stourport and Kidderminster Analysis Areas both have half of provision scoring above the threshold.
206. A point to note, the majority of sites that score below the threshold, only do so marginally. This is a result of no allotment sites having specific quality issues. Sites tend to score lower due to fewer ancillary features and facilities in comparison to higher scoring sites. The lowest scoring site is Kingsway Allotments (36%), located in the Stourport Analysis Area.
207. The highest scoring sites are Comberton Allotments (62%) and Abberley Avenue Allotments (58%). Both score well due to good general maintenance and cleanliness, including the upkeep of sheds and greenhouses. These sites also have good personal security for users, sufficient boundary fencing, informative signage and parking. In addition, Abberley Avenue Allotments has toilets on site and Comberton Allotments has good controls to prevent illegal use.

8.5 Value

208. In order to determine whether sites are high or low value (as recommended by the Companion Guidance) site assessments scores have been colour-coded against a baseline threshold (high being green and low being red). The table below summarises the results. A threshold of 20% is applied to identify high and low value. Further explanation of how the value scores and thresholds are derived can be found in Part 2 (Methodology).

Table 8.5: Value ratings for allotments by analysis area

Analysis area	Scores			Spread	No. of sites	
	Lowest score	Average score	Highest score		Low <20%	High >20%
Bewdley	-	-	-	-	-	-
Kidderminster	34%	41%	63%	28%	0	8
Rural East	38%	39%	41%	3%	0	2
Rural West	-	-	-	-	-	-
Stourport	34%	45%	56%	22%	0	2
Wyre Forest	34%	41%	63%	28%	0	12

209. All allotments in Wyre Forest are assessed as high value. This is a reflection of the associated social inclusion and health benefits, amenity value and the sense of place offered by such forms of provision.
210. All allotments sites are described as providing opportunity for people of all ages to enjoy time outdoors and be active through horticultural activities. Furthermore, allotment sites provide educational value, with plot holders having the chance to learn to grow different types of plants and produce. Allotments also have a great sense of place within communities and as long as sites are well maintained, provide visual amenity for locals.
211. The value of allotments is further demonstrated by the existence of waiting lists identified at sites signalling greater demand for provision.

8.6 Summary

Allotments summary

- ◀ There are 14 allotments sites in Wyre Forest: equating to over 17 hectares. Of these, ten are owned/managed by allotment associations. The rest are either owned and/or managed by parish councils.
- ◀ Wyre Forest, as a whole, based on its current population (99,503) does not meet the NSALG standard. Using the NSALG standard, the minimum amount of allotment provision required for Wyre Forest is 24.88 hectares. Therefore, there is a shortfall of 7.28 hectares.
- ◀ Most sites (58%) score above the threshold for quality. The highest scoring sites are Comberton Allotments (62%) and Abberley Avenue Allotments (58%).
- ◀ The majority of sites that score below the threshold, only do so marginally and tend to score lower due to fewer ancillary features and facilities rather than having specific quality issues.
- ◀ All allotments are assessed as high value reflecting the associated social inclusion and health benefits, and the sense of place offered by provision.
- ◀ Waiting list numbers combined with catchment mapping suggests that continuing measures should be made to provide more plots at existing sites in order to ensure that current demand is being met.

WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL OPEN SPACE ASSESSMENT

PART 9: CEMETERIES/CHURCHYARDS

9.1 Introduction

212. Cemeteries and churchyards include areas for quiet contemplation and burial of the dead. Sites can often be linked to the promotion of wildlife conservation and biodiversity.

9.2 Current provision

213. There are 25 sites classified as cemeteries/churchyards, equating to over 30 hectares of provision in Wyre Forest. No site size threshold has been applied and as such all provision identified is included within the audit.

Table 9.1: Distribution of cemeteries by analysis area

Analysis area	Cemeteries/churchyards	
	Number of sites	Size (ha)
Bewdley	1	0.56
Kidderminster	4	12.00
Rural East	12	4.71
Rural West	4	2.04
Stourport	4	11.58
Wyre Forest	25	30.89

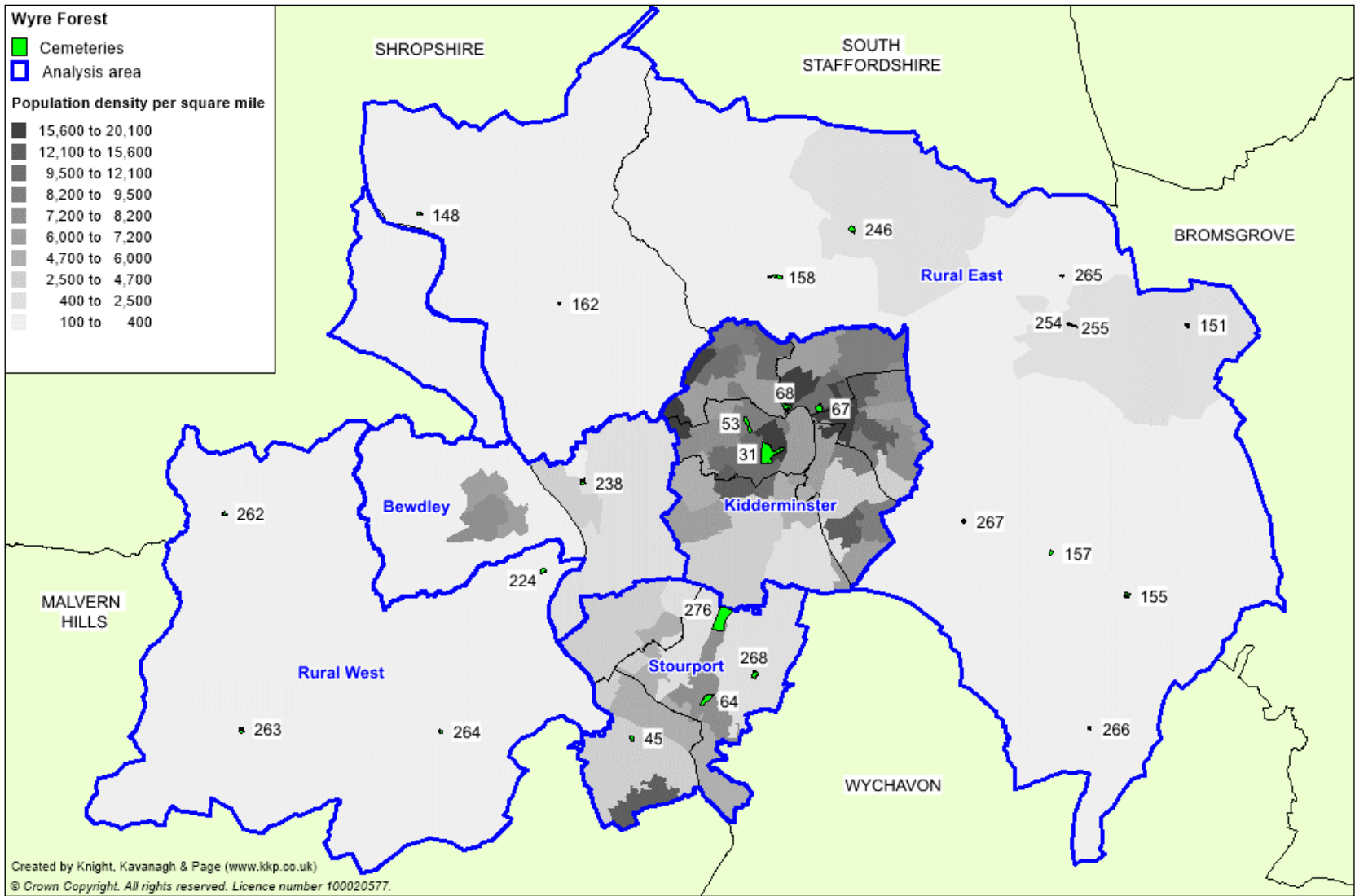
214. The largest contributor to burial provision in the area is Kidderminster Crematorium and Cemetery (8.04 hectares), which is located in the Kidderminster Analysis Area.

9.3 Accessibility

215. No accessibility standard is set for this typology and there is no realistic requirement to set such standards. Provision should be based on burial demand.
216. Figure 9.1 shows cemeteries and churchyards mapped against analysis areas.

WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL OPEN SPACE ASSESSMENT

Figure 9.1: Cemetery sites mapped against analysis area



WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL OPEN SPACE ASSESSMENT

Table 9.2: Key to sites mapped

Site ID	Site name	Analysis area	Quality score	Value score
31	Kidderminster Cemetery	Kidderminster	60.3%	44.4%
45	St Bartholomews Church	Stourport	50.1%	48.1%
53	St John the Baptist Churchyard	Kidderminster	43.9%	28.4%
64	St Michaels Church	Stourport	54.4%	56.8%
67	St George's Churchyard	Kidderminster	37.1%	46.9%
68	St Marys Church	Kidderminster	58.4%	60.5%
148	St Peters Arley	Rural East	36.9%	35.8%
151	St Peters Churchyard, Broome	Rural East	47.3%	35.8%
155	St Cassians Chaddesley Corbett Churchyard	Rural East	38.5%	35.8%
157	Harvington Hall Churchyard	Rural East	41.9%	35.8%
158	St John the Baptist	Rural East	50.7%	38.3%
162	Holy Trinity Trimpley	Rural East		
224	St Leonards Ribbesford	Rural West	37.5%	35.8%
238	All Saints Church Wribbenhall	Bewdley	49.2%	29.6%
246	St Peters Churchyard, Cookley	Rural East	41.1%	28.4%
254	St James Churchyard	Rural East	51.3%	34.6%
255	St James Cemetery	Rural East	40.7%	22.2%
262	Holy Trinity Church Far Forest	Rural West	37.1%	22.2%
263	St Peter and St Paul's Church Rock	Rural West	59.9%	44.4%
264	St Giles' Church Heightington	Rural West	48.5%	29.6%
265	St James The Great, Churchill	Rural East	41.1%	34.6%
266	St Michael's Church Rushock	Rural East	47%	54.3%
267	St Mary's Church Stone	Rural East	41.1%	46.9%
268	All Saint's Church Wilden	Stourport	44.8%	28.4%
277	Kidderminster Cemetery and Crematorium	Kidderminster	80.9%	60.5%

217. In terms of provision, mapping demonstrates a fairly even distribution across the District. As noted, the need for additional cemetery provision should be driven by the requirement for burial demand and capacity.

Management and maintenance

218. The Council manages and maintains Kidderminster Cemetery and is responsible for maintaining fencing, pathways, water supply, grass and tree management.
219. It is suggested through consultation that there is very limited burial capacity remaining on this site; however, some of the remaining plots have already been purchased. Although there are very few burial plots left, there are a higher number of cremation plots remaining. It is reported that there is no possibility of expansion of this site.
220. A new crematorium and cemetery was opened in 2012 as part of a partnership between Wyre Forest District Council and Dignity. Dignity manages this site on behalf of the Council. This cemetery is approximately eight hectares in size.

WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL OPEN SPACE ASSESSMENT

9.4 Quality

221. To determine whether sites are high or low quality (as recommended by the Companion Guidance) site assessments scores are colour-coded against a baseline threshold (high being green and low being red). The table below summarises the results of the quality assessment for cemeteries in Wyre Forest. A threshold of 40% is applied in order to identify high and low quality. Further explanation of how the quality scores and threshold are derived can be found in Part 2 (Methodology).

Table 9.3: Quality ratings for cemeteries by analysis area

Analysis area	Scores			Spread	No. of sites	
	Lowest score	Average score	Highest score		Low <40%	High >40%
Bewdley	49%	49%	49%	0%	0	1
Kidderminster	37%	50%	60%	23%	1	3
Rural East	37%	43%	51%	14%	2	9
Rural West	37%	46%	60%	23%	2	2
Stourport	45%	50%	54%	10%	0	3
Wyre Forest	37%	47%	81%	44%	5	18

222. The majority of cemeteries and churchyards in Wyre Forest (78%) rate above the threshold set for quality.
223. The highest scoring site for quality is Kidderminster Cemetery and Crematorium (80.9%). This is due to the site being maintained to a high standard with attractive landscaping as well as having a good range of ancillary features and facilities such as parking, toilets, benches, signage, bins and lighting. Furthermore, the site has good pathways, which are suitable for disabled users of the site. Kidderminster Cemetery is the second highest scoring site with 60%. This site scores well for similar reasons to that of Kidderminster Cemetery and Crematorium.
224. Kidderminster Cemetery and Crematorium also provides a child burial area whilst Kidderminster Cemetery provides a garden of remembrance. These additional elements can provide users with space to reflect and remember loved ones.
225. A point to note, all sites which score low for quality only marginally fall below the 40% threshold. The lowest scoring site for quality is St Peters Arley, with 37%. This site has no specific quality issues and is in fact observed as being maintained to a high standard. The only reason for this sites lower quality score is a lack of ancillary features in comparison to higher scoring sites; however, it is important to take into account that this is a small churchyard site, which is likely to have less footfall. Therefore, the few benches it has is likely to be enough to accommodate user requirements.

WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL OPEN SPACE ASSESSMENT

9.5 Value

226. To determine whether sites are high or low value (as recommended by the Companion Guidance) site assessment scores are colour-coded against a baseline threshold (high being green and low being red). The table below summarises the results of the value assessment for cemeteries in Wyre Forest. A threshold of 20% is applied in order to identify high and low value. Further explanation of how the value scores and threshold are derived can be found in Part 2 (Methodology).

Table 9.4: Value ratings for cemeteries by analysis area

Analysis area	Scores			Spread	No. of sites	
	Lowest score	Average score	Highest score		Low <20%	High >20%
Bewdley	30%	30%	30%	0%	0	1
Kidderminster	28%	45%	60%	32%	0	4
Rural East	22%	37%	54%	32%	0	11
Rural West	22%	33%	44%	22%	0	4
Stourport	28%	44%	57%	28%	0	3
Wyre Forest	22%	39%	60%	38%	0	24

227. All identified cemeteries and churchyards are assessed as being of high value, reflecting the role in community lives. In addition, the cultural/heritage value of sites and the sense of place they provide to and for the local community are acknowledged in the site assessment data. Sites also often receive a score for value from their contribution to wildlife/habitats or sense of place to the local environment.
228. Even those sites which score below the threshold for quality rate above the threshold for value. As noted above, despite this, they still obviously provide a role to the communities they serve. This is evidenced by assessments reporting a high number of the sites having local heritage, historical interest and sense of place within their community. The majority of sites were also noted as having high or reasonable levels of use.
229. Cemeteries and churchyards are important natural resources, offering both recreational and conservation benefits. As well as providing burial space, cemeteries and churchyards can offer important low impact recreational benefits (e.g. habitat provision, wildlife watching).

9.6 Summary

Cemeteries summary

- Wyre Forest has 25 cemeteries and churchyards: over 30 hectares of provision.
- The majority of cemeteries and churchyards (78%) rate as high for quality.
- A point to note, all sites which score low for quality only marginally fall below the 40% threshold. The lowest scoring site for quality is St Peters Arley, with 37%.
- All cemeteries are assessed as high value in Wyre Forest, reflecting that generally provision has a cultural/heritage role and provide a sense of place to the local community.
- Burial provision is driven by the demand for burials and capacity. Although Kidderminster Cemetery is fast approaching burial capacity, the creation of the eight hectare site at Kidderminster Cemetery and Crematorium, has relieved pressure on burial space and will provide plots for many years to come.

WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL OPEN SPACE ASSESSMENT

PART 10: CIVIC SPACE

10.1 Introduction

230. The civic space typology includes civic and market squares and other hard surfaced areas designed for pedestrians, providing a setting for civic buildings, public demonstrations and community events.

10.2 Current provision

231. There are four civic space sites, equating to less than one hectare of provision, identified in Wyre Forest. In addition, there are likely to be other informal pedestrian areas, streets or squares which may be viewed as providing similar roles and functions as civic space.

Table 10.1: Distribution of civic spaces by analysis area

Analysis area	Civic space	
	Number of sites	Size (ha)
Bewdley	2	0.23
Kidderminster	2	0.33
Rural East	-	-
Rural West	-	-
Stourport	-	-
Wyre Forest	4	0.56

232. Civic space provision is identified in two analysis areas; Bewdley and Kidderminster. All provision is identified as being relatively small in size.
233. The largest form of provision is St Marys Civic Space. Approximately 0.21 hectares in size; it is located in the Kidderminster Analysis Area.
234. Other sites and areas will function in a secondary role similar to civic space provision. For example, park sites such as Stourport Memorial Park provide uses associated with civic spaces - including local community events and services. For the purposes of this report such sites have not been classified as civic space provision due to their more prominent primary function and use.

10.3 Accessibility

235. No accessibility standard has been set for civic spaces.

Table 10.2: Summary of sites

Site ID	Site name	Analysis area	Quality score	Value score
171	Severn Side North	Bewdley		
172	Severn Side South	Bewdley		
240	St Marys Civic Space	Kidderminster		
241	Weavers Wharf Civic Space	Kidderminster		

WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL OPEN SPACE ASSESSMENT

10.4 Quality

236. In order to determine whether sites are high or low quality (as recommended by guidance); the scores from the site assessments have been colour-coded against a baseline threshold (high being green and low being red). The table below summarises the results of the quality assessment for civic spaces in Wyre Forest. A threshold of 55% is applied in order to identify high and low quality. Further explanation of how the quality scores and thresholds are derived can be found in Part 2 (Methodology).

Table 10.3: Quality ratings for civic spaces by analysis area

Analysis area	Scores			Spread	No. of sites	
	Lowest score	Average score	Highest score		Low <55%	High >55%
Bewdley	51%	55%	59%	8%	0	2
Kidderminster	43%	58%	73%	30%	1	1
Rural East	-	-	-	-	-	-
Rural West	-	-	-	-	-	-
Stourport	-	-	-	-	-	-
Wyre Forest	43%	57%	73%	30%	1	3

237. Three out of the four civic spaces rate above the threshold set. The sites are all relatively small in size but are observed as being of an overall good quality.
238. The only site to rate below the threshold is Weavers Wharf Civic Space. No specific quality concerns are highlighted. The site is noted as having a lack of ancillary facilities (e.g. seating, bins) in comparison to the other forms of provision.

10.5 Value

239. To determine whether sites are high or low value (as recommended by the Companion Guidance) site assessment scores have been colour-coded against a baseline threshold (high being green and low being red). The table below summarises the results of the value assessment for civic spaces in Wyre Forest. A threshold of 20% is applied in order to identify high and low value. Further explanation of how the value scores and thresholds are derived can be found in Part 2 (Methodology).

Table 10.4: Value ratings for civic spaces by analysis area

Analysis area	Scores			Spread	No. of sites	
	Lowest score	Average score	Highest score		Low <20%	High >20%
Bewdley	37%	40%	42%	5%	0	2
Kidderminster	21%	33%	44%	23%	0	2
Rural East	-	-	-	-	-	-
Rural West	-	-	-	-	-	-
Stourport	-	-	-	-	-	-
Wyre Forest	21%	36%	44%	23%	0	4

WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL OPEN SPACE ASSESSMENT

240. All four civic spaces are rated as being of high value, reflecting their role as an important function to the local communities and areas. Sites such as St Marys Civic Space also have historic and cultural benefits as it contains a war memorial. Others such as Severn Side North and Weavers Wharf Civic Space form part of shopping areas and therefore have social, economic and amenity value.
241. The Stourport Riverside Meadows Development and Implementation Strategy details the future potential for the Riverside Meadows. One of the drivers for change in the local area is to the possible creation of a dedicated market space. This could improve local the economy due to the potential of market stalls. It would also be in-keeping with Stourport's history as a market town.

10.6 Summary

Civic space summary

- ▶ Four sites are classified as civic spaces in Wyre Forest equating to less than one hectare of provision.
- ▶ Other forms of provision in the area (e.g. parks and gardens) also provide localised opportunities associated with the function of civic space.
- ▶ Quality and value of provision is good with an acceptable maintenance and appearance. Sites are recognised as providing an important social, economic and amenity role to local communities and areas.

WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL OPEN SPACE ASSESSMENT

APPENDIX ONE: QUALITY AND VALUE CRITERIA BY OPEN SPACE TYPOLOGY

The quality criteria used to score different types of open space are set out in the tables below. A summary of the scoring system is set out in Section 2.3 of the Open Space Assessment Report. It is important to recognise that in some instances criteria is weighted to reflect that some criterion is viewed as being more important for one form of open space compared to a different type of open space.

Quality criteria

	Parks and Gardens	Semi / Natural greenspace	Amenity greenspace	Play provision	Allotments	Cemeteries	Civic spaces
<i>Main entrance</i>	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
<i>Other entrances</i>	Yes	Yes	Yes	-	Yes	Yes	Yes
<i>Gradient and value</i>	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
<i>Personal security</i>	Yes	Yes (distance to be seen)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
<i>Ramps and guardrails adequacy</i>	-	-	-	-	-	Yes	Yes
<i>Boundary fencing adequacy</i>	Yes	-	-	Yes	Yes	Yes	-
<i>Controls to prevent illegal use adequacy</i>	Yes	-	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	-
<i>Parking Number and location</i>	Yes	Yes	-	Yes	Yes	Yes	-
<i>Parking - Appropriateness of provision</i>	Yes	Yes	-	Yes	Yes	Yes	-
<i>Parking - Quality</i>	Yes	Yes	-	Yes	Yes	Yes	-
<i>Toilets accessibility and appearance</i>	Yes	Yes	-	-	-	Yes	Yes
<i>Seats and benches - Number and location</i>	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	-	Yes	Yes
<i>Seats and benches - Appropriateness of provision</i>	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	-	Yes	Yes
<i>Seats and benches - Maintenance</i>	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	-	Yes	Yes
<i>Picnic tables - Number and location</i>	Yes	Yes	-	-	-	-	-
<i>Picnic tables - Appropriateness of provision</i>	Yes	Yes	-	-	-	-	-
<i>Picnic tables - Maintenance</i>	Yes	Yes	-	-	-	-	-
<i>Litter bins - Number and location</i>	Yes	Yes (at appropriate points)	Yes	Yes	-	Yes	Yes

WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL OPEN SPACE ASSESSMENT

	Parks and Gardens	Semi / Natural greenspace	Amenity greenspace	Play provision	Allotments	Cemeteries	Civic spaces
<i>Litter bins - Appropriateness of provision</i>	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	-	Yes	Yes
<i>Litter bins - Maintenance</i>	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	-	Yes	Yes
<i>Dog foul bins - Number and location</i>	Yes	Yes (at appropriate points)	-	-	-	-	-
<i>Dog foul bins - Appropriateness of provision</i>	Yes	Yes	-	-	-	-	-
<i>Dog foul bins - Maintenance</i>	Yes	Yes	-	-	-	-	-
<i>Lighting - Number and location</i>	Yes	-	-	-	-	Yes	Yes
<i>Lighting - Appropriateness of provision</i>	Yes	-	-	-	-	Yes	Yes
<i>Lighting - Maintenance</i>	Yes	-	-	-	-	Yes	Yes
<i>Overall maintenance and cleanliness</i>	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
<i>Drainage</i>	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
<i>Landscaping design</i>	Yes	Yes	-	-	-	Yes	Yes
<i>Landscaping maintenance</i>	Yes	Yes	-	-	-	Yes	Yes
<i>Paths</i>	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes (surface quality)	Yes	Yes	Yes
<i>Conservation</i>	Yes	Yes	-	-	-	Yes	-
<i>Maintenance of buildings and artefacts</i>	Yes	Yes	-	Yes (equipment quality)	Yes	Yes	Yes
<i>Needles</i>	Points deducted	Points deducted	Points deducted	Points deducted	Points deducted	Points deducted	Points deducted
<i>Motor bikes</i>	Points deducted	Points deducted	Points deducted	Points deducted	Points deducted	Points deducted	Points deducted
<i>Glass</i>	Points deducted	Points deducted	Points deducted	Points deducted	Points deducted	Points deducted	Points deducted
<i>Abandoned cars</i>	Points deducted	Points deducted	Points deducted	Points deducted	Points deducted	Points deducted	Points deducted
<i>Fire damage</i>	Points deducted	Points deducted	Points deducted	Points deducted	Points deducted	Points deducted	Points deducted
<i>Horse tracks</i>	Points deducted	Points deducted	Points deducted	Points deducted	Points deducted	Points deducted	Points deducted
<i>Physical access - public transport links/stops</i>	Yes	Yes (or doorstep accessible)	Yes	-	Yes	Yes	Yes
<i>Physical access - safe crossing places</i>	Yes	-	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL OPEN SPACE ASSESSMENT

	Parks and Gardens	Semi / Natural greenspace	Amenity greenspace	Play provision	Allotments	Cemeteries	Civic spaces
<i>Access social - minimum entrance widths 1.5m</i>	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
<i>Access social - directional signposts</i>	Yes	Yes	Yes	-	Yes	Yes	Yes
<i>Parking well signed</i>	Yes	-	-	-	-	Yes	Yes
<i>Easy to read/clear messages</i>	Yes	Yes	Yes	-	Yes	Yes	Yes
<i>Well maintained and free from graffiti</i>	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
<i>Basic up to date information</i>	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
<i>Signage that detracts from quality of the site</i>	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
<i>Situated at entrance/strategic point</i>	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
<i>Maps and graphics</i>	Yes	Yes	-	-	-	Yes	Yes
<i>Evidence of site marketing</i>	Yes	Yes	Yes	-	Yes	Yes	Yes
<i>Signs at accessible height</i>	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

Value criteria

	Parks and Gardens	Semi / Natural greenspace	Amenity greenspace	Play provision	Allotments	Cemeteries	Civic spaces
<i>Other green space of same typology close by</i>	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
<i>Level of use (observation only)</i>	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
<i>IOD Multiple Deprivation Rank</i>	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
<i>Meets needs of Elderly</i>	Yes	Yes	Yes	-	Yes	Yes	Yes
<i>Meets needs of Juniors</i>	Yes	Yes	Yes	-	-	-	Yes
<i>Meets needs of Teenagers</i>	Yes	-	Yes	-	-	-	Yes
<i>Meets needs of Disabled</i>	Yes	-	Yes	-	Yes	Yes	Yes
<i>Meets needs of Families</i>	Yes	Yes	Yes	-	Yes	Yes	Yes
<i>Meets needs of Visual Amenity</i>	Yes	Yes	Yes	-	Yes	Yes	Yes
<i>Meets needs of Other</i>	Yes	Yes	Yes	-	Yes	Yes	Yes
<i>Structure and landscape benefits</i>	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL OPEN SPACE ASSESSMENT

	Parks and Gardens	Semi / Natural greenspace	Amenity greenspace	Play provision	Allotments	Cemeteries	Civic spaces
<i>Ecological benefits</i>	Yes	Yes (on Section 41 list)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
<i>Educational benefits</i>	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
<i>Social inclusion and health benefits</i>	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
<i>Cultural and heritage benefits</i>	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	-	Yes	Yes
<i>Amenity benefits and a sense of place</i>	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
<i>Economic benefits</i>	Yes	Yes	-	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
<i>Designated as LNR/SSSI/Other</i>	-	Yes	-	-	-	-	-
<i>Educational programme (if known)</i>	Yes	Yes	-	-	Yes	-	-