

Civic spaces

Definition

- 13.1 Civic spaces is the only urban open space within the open space categories provided in PPG17. This type of open space includes civic and market squares and other hard surfaced community areas designed for pedestrians with the primary purpose of providing a setting for civic buildings, public demonstrations and community events.

Quantity

- 13.2 There are 3 main civic spaces within Harborough at present, both of which are in Market Harborough. These are:
- The Square, Market Harborough
 - Church Square, Market Harborough
 - Lutterworth Town Square.
- 13.3 There is a further civic space within Broughton Astley – the Western area of the district. This is currently under development.
- 13.4 In addition, there is one civic space within the more rural areas of the district – the Fleckney Band Stand. There are no further civic spaces within the rural area - this is due to the predominantly rural nature of the area containing small hamlets and villages. Civic spaces relates mainly to larger urban areas.

Setting provision standards

- 13.5 There are no definitive national or local standards for civic spaces and the Local Plan makes no reference to any provision standards for civic spaces.
- 13.6 There is a total of 0.94 ha of civic space provided over the 4 sites audited (excluding Lutterworth Town Square). However consultation responses indicate that there is a small deficiency of provision. 57% suggest a deficiency of provision compared to 43% who feel that levels of provision are about right. No respondents perceived there to be a surplus of civic spaces.
- 13.7 It is not possible to make a reasoned judgement in setting provision standards for civic spaces within Harborough due to the limited amount of civic space provision. Furthermore, PPG17 suggests that it is not realistic to set a quantity standard for civic spaces.
- 13.8 Therefore from the analysis it is suggested that **no provision standard** is set. However, PPG17 adds that it is desirable for planning authorities to promote urban design frameworks for their town and city centres.

Quality

- 13.9 Overall, the quality of the civic spaces within Harborough is relatively good – 50% were rated as average and 50% good.

Accessibility

- 13.10 Accessibility to civic spaces is also good, with 75% of provision rated as either good or very good. The civic spaces within Market Harborough are located in the town

centre with good public transport links. The band stand in Fleckney is less accessible due to the more rural location of the village.

Catchment

13.11 A breakdown of the results of the analysis of catchment thresholds is illustrated in table 13.1 below.

Table 13.1 Time prepared to travel

	Median	Mean	Mode	Min	Max	75%
Walk	15	17	20	5	60	20 minutes
Cycle	0	0	0	0	0	
Bus	10	12	10	5	30	
Car	9	9	5	5	20	10 minutes

13.12 75% of respondents indicated that they would be willing to walk up to 20 minutes, and to drive up to 10 minutes to reach a civic space. No respondents perceived cycling to be a suitable form of transport.

13.13 It was suggested that as a result of the nature of civic spaces, which are always likely to be centrally located within urbanised and more populated areas, a car is the most appropriate mode of transport.

13.14 These characteristics of civic spaces suggest that setting a definitive accessibility standard for civic spaces is largely inappropriate, particularly in rural areas, where it may not be expected that civic spaces would be located in close proximity.

Assessment of value (Usage v Quality v Accessibility)

13.15 The civic spaces within the district of Harborough are of both good quality and accessibility, and are well used. Only Fleckney Bandstand is not used very frequently. They are therefore highly valued open spaces.

Summary

13.16 The rural nature of most of the district means there are fewer civic spaces than any other type of open space. Due to the existence of such a small number of sites it is considered inappropriate to set local standards for civic spaces.

13.17 Those civic spaces that do exist are rated as good or average.

13.18 Accessibility to existing civic spaces is rated as good or very good, and 75% of people would expect to travel up to 10 minutes in a car.