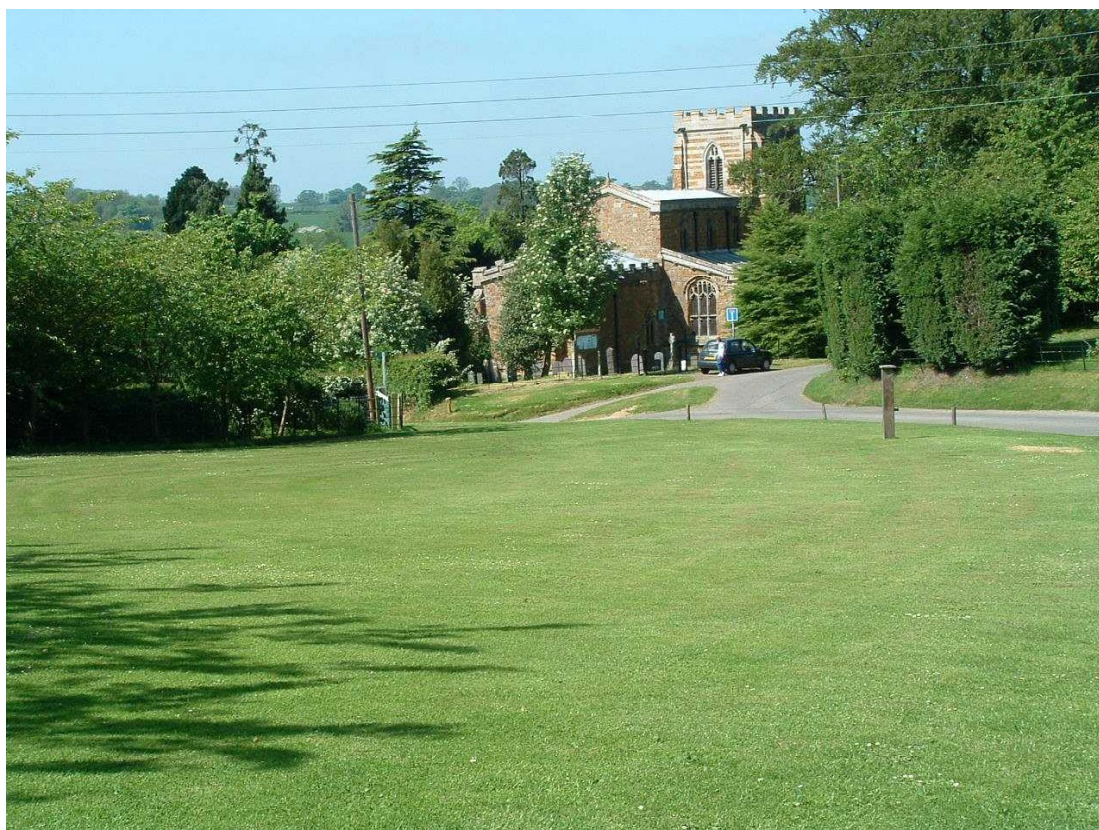


Amenity greenspace

Definition

- 8.1 This type of open space is most commonly found in housing areas. It includes informal recreation spaces and greenspaces in and around housing with its primary purpose to provide opportunities for informal activities close to home or work or enhancement of the appearance of residential or other areas. An example of amenity green space is shown in picture 8.1 below.

Picture 8.1 - Lowesby Village Green – an example of amenity greenspace



- 8.2 In rural areas examples of this type of open space consist of village greens and the grounds around village halls.

Specific strategic context and consultations

Doorstep Greens and Millennium Greens (Countryside Agency)

- 8.3 The Doorstep Greens programme is helping communities around England to create their own new amenity green space, or to transform existing open spaces to meet their needs. Many projects have been funded in urban and rural areas, particularly in disadvantaged areas, to create and manage 'multi-purpose' community greens and for the community to be involved in creating open space.
- 8.4 The aim of the Millennium Greens initiative is to provide new areas of public open space close to people's homes that could be enjoyed permanently by the local community. They were to be breathing spaces - places for relaxation, play and

enjoyment of nature and pleasant surroundings. They could be small or large, and in urban or rural locations.

- 8.5 The Harborough Improvement Team is exploring the possibility of landscaping and restoring land within Market Harborough to provide more open spaces and green areas as well as opportunities to develop land on new estates into usable community space. Doorstep Greens has been cited as a potential funding source. Such work will need to be co-ordinated with the work of the Council's Leisure Service section.

Consultation

- 8.6 Consultation highlighted the following key issues

- amenity greenspace sites can be large useful areas of land but also can be small pieces of land within housing estates that may be too small to have any significant recreational value. However there is an aesthetic value of small amenity greenspace sites within housing areas.
- when dealing with developers contributions towards the provision of amenity greenspace sites it is important that consideration should be given to amalgamating the required open space to provide a significant useful area of open space rather than the same amount of quantity provision in many less useful smaller segments. Further investigation should be undertaken into the perceived value of small amenity green space sites within the district
- despite the clear high impact on maintenance costs, many villages indicated that they valued village greens, particularly within the more rural areas.

Quantity

- 8.7 Open spaces such as playing pitches are classified under the category of outdoor sports facilities (see section 10) as their primary purpose, however in many instances, they do provide the function of amenity greenspace in more rural areas and urban areas where there is limited amenity greenspace. Frequently, areas designated as official sports pitches are used for dog walking midweek, and are a vital piece of open land within the community. This should be taken into account if it is necessary to make a more detailed specific analysis of an area.

Setting provision standards

- 8.8 The process for setting local quantitative standards is described within PPG 17 Companion Guide 'Assessing Needs and Opportunities' and this process has been followed in order to set a local standard for the district of Harborough. A diagrammatic format of this process is provided within Appendix C – 'Quantity Standards' along with a summary of all calculations.
- 8.9 The only national standard for amenity greenspace provided is 0.5 ha per 1,000 population based on the current UK average of all applicable local authorities provision standards for amenity open space as defined in the Rethinking Open Space Report (2001).
- 8.10 Although the existing Local Plan outlines the specific standards for casual and informal space, these numerical standards apply only to provision for outdoor sports and children within housing estates.

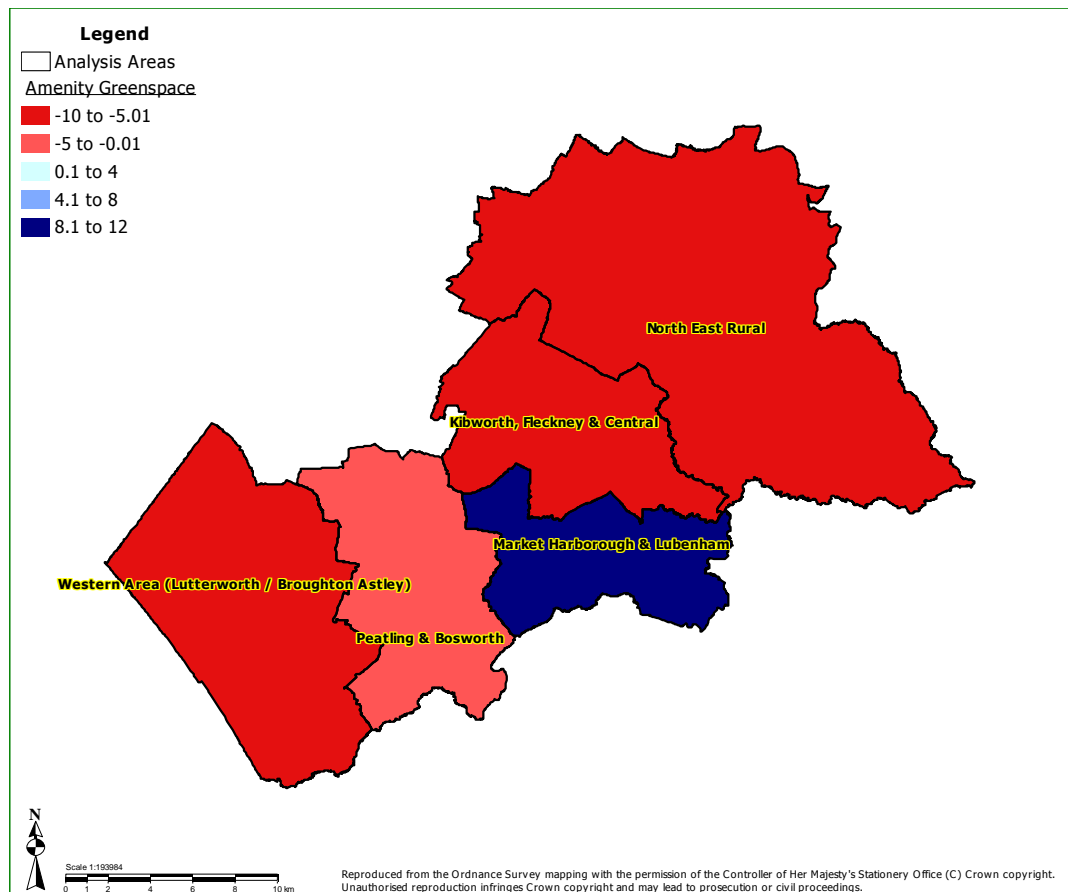
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- 8.11 It is stated that amenity open space and areas of strategic landscaping should be provided within or adjoining new housing development. Provision of amenity green space should be provided in addition to space satisfying play space requirements and should allow additional landscaping as required. It is noted that the Council will not adopt small amenity area, but may consider the adoption of amenity green space that is located adjacent to play areas.
- 8.12 The total provision of amenity green space within Harborough District Council amounts to 58.73 hectares. This is equivalent to 0.77 hectares per 1000 population.
- 8.13 Consultation through questionnaires indicated that while 63% of respondents felt that there were sufficient amenity green spaces within the district, 34% indicated that there was a shortfall. Only one response suggested a surplus – within the Peatling and Bosworth area. This suggests that provision is currently about right although a higher provision level would help to increasingly meet the needs of over a third who suggested there was a shortfall.
- 8.14 Importantly, all responses within Market Harborough and Lubenham suggested that levels of provision were about right although the current provision of just under 1.4 ha per 1,000 population is high compared to the overall provision and national standard mentioned in paragraph 8.9. This provision maybe a result of the large amenity greenspace areas provided within the many new housing developments on the edge of town.
- 8.15 The higher levels of deficiency were indicated in rural areas particularly the North East Rural area where provision was less than 0.4 ha suggesting provision should be higher than this level. This is supported by the more qualitative consultation methods (e.g. neighbourhood ‘drop-in’ sessions) where a key outcome was the lack of general open space in rural areas.
- 8.16 The other urban area (Lutterworth and Broughton Astley) has a provision of just over 0.5 ha per 1,000 population with 70% of consultation responses suggesting this was about right although 30% still feeling this is deficient level of provision.
- 8.17 Given the above statistics a provision standard should be significantly above 0.5 ha but also below 1.4 ha and given that overall 34% of responses suggest existing provision (currently 0.77ha) is deficient the standard should be slightly above this to meet local needs. Therefore a local standard of 0.9 ha per 1,000 population
- 8.18 The need for amenity green space is not confined to housing areas, it may also be developed within village or urban centres, or to serve other purposes such as reducing noise or providing shelter from prevailing winds. This supports the fact that there are no significant differences in the level of provision and perceived local need for amenity green space between the rural and the more urban areas of the district, hence the suggested standard should be applied to all analysis areas.
- 8.19 The analysis suggests that **a provision standard for the district of Harborough of 0.9ha per 1,000 population** is provided.
- 8.20 The importance of amenity green space in enhancing the visual appearance of areas must also be taken into account. PPG17 insinuates that in addition to the application of standards, “higher quality local environments will result from the use of an urban design led approach .

Applying provision standards

- 8.21 When applying the provision standard of 0.8ha – 1ha per 1000 people, there is an overall deficit of amenity green space within the district. Depending upon which standard is used (0.8 or 1ha per 1000), this shortfall varies from 2.52 ha up to 17.83 hectares. This will have increased by 2016 up to a ceiling of 29.84 hectares.
- 8.22 When applying the suggested provision standards within each analysis area the following issues arise:
- within the Market Harborough and Lubenham area, total provision amounts to 1.39 ha per 1000 people. Although this will decrease to 1.15 ha by 2016, application of the standard still results in a small oversupply of between 8.78 - 13.29 ha total (between 4.16 and 9.59 by 2016). This indicates that there is no demand for additional provision with Market Harborough and Lubenham, based on the current population
 - there is a shortfall of provision within all of the other four areas, the largest of which is in Lutterworth and Broughton Astley.
 - levels of deficiency in Peatling and Bosworth are very small, equivalent to less than 1 hectare in total.
- 8.23 The full results of the application of quantity standards can be found in Appendix C and are summarised in section 19.
- 8.24 Figure 8.1 overleaf demonstrates the surplus / deficiencies within each analysis area based on the provision standard of 0.9 ha per 1,000 population for 2004. All maps are provided in Appendix O including projection surplus and deficiency maps for 2016 based on future populations.

Figure 8.1 - Current Surplus & Deficiency of Amenity Greenspace by Analysis Area (2004)



Quality

- 8.25 58% of amenity green space sites within the district are considered to be of good quality, and only 7% overall are poor or very poor. This suggests that the quality of amenity green space sites is not as good overall as other typologies.
- 8.26 Within Market Harborough and Lubenham, 47% of sites are rated either good or very good with 45% of all amenity green space in the area rated as average.
- 8.27 Quality is particularly high in Peatling and Bosworth, where 73% of sites are rated as good or very good. In fact, there are no sites that are considered to be poor within either Kibworth, Fleckney and Central or Peatling and Bosworth.
- 8.28 In North East Rural, 52% of sites are rated as very good and in the Western Area, 67% of sites are considered to be good or very good.

Accessibility

- 8.29 Accessibility of amenity greenspace in the district is good, with 64% of sites considered to have good or very good accessibility. Only 10% of sites are rated as poor or very poor.

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- 8.30 Overall, accessibility of amenity green space sites in Market Harborough and Lubenham is positive with 40% of sites considered to be good or very good. There are however a number of sites with very poor accessibility, for example within the urban area of Market Harborough, Lindsey Gardens and the Ridgeway received very poor ratings. Consultation however identified that these sites are intended primarily as a visual amenity, and are important sites for this purpose. A number of other sites also serve as a visual amenity.
- 8.31 Kibworth, Fleckney and Central had no negatively rated amenity green space sites and 89% were rated as good or very good, indicating that accessibility is particularly high within this area.
- 8.32 Similarly, North East Rural had an impressive 71% of its sites rated as very good and 85% of sites within Peatling and Bosworth were rated good or very good.
- 8.33 Accessibility to amenity green space sites doesn't seem to be a major problem and many appear to have good accessibility.

Catchment

- 8.34 Table 8.1 below presents the distances people are willing to travel to reach amenity green space sites, based on consultation responses. The median, mean, mode have been identified, in addition to the time that 75% of respondents are willing to travel.
- 8.35 PPG17 indicates that accessibility standards should be based on the time and appropriate mode of transport that 75% of the population are willing to use and travel.

Table 8.1 Time prepared to travel

		Overall - Harborough District - Parish Councils						Members
		Median	Mean	Mode	Min	Max	75%	General Consensus
Walk		10	12	10	5	15	10 - 15 minutes	5 minutes
Cycle		5	7	5	2	10		
Bus		8	6	10	5	10		
Car		5	5	5	1	10		

- 8.36 Almost all consultation responses indicated that they would expect to travel on foot, suggesting that provision of this type of open space should be local to residents.
- 8.37 75% of responses indicated a willingness to walk for about 10 minutes to use amenity green space. This was also the median and the mode response. Opinions ranged from 5 – 15 minutes walk.

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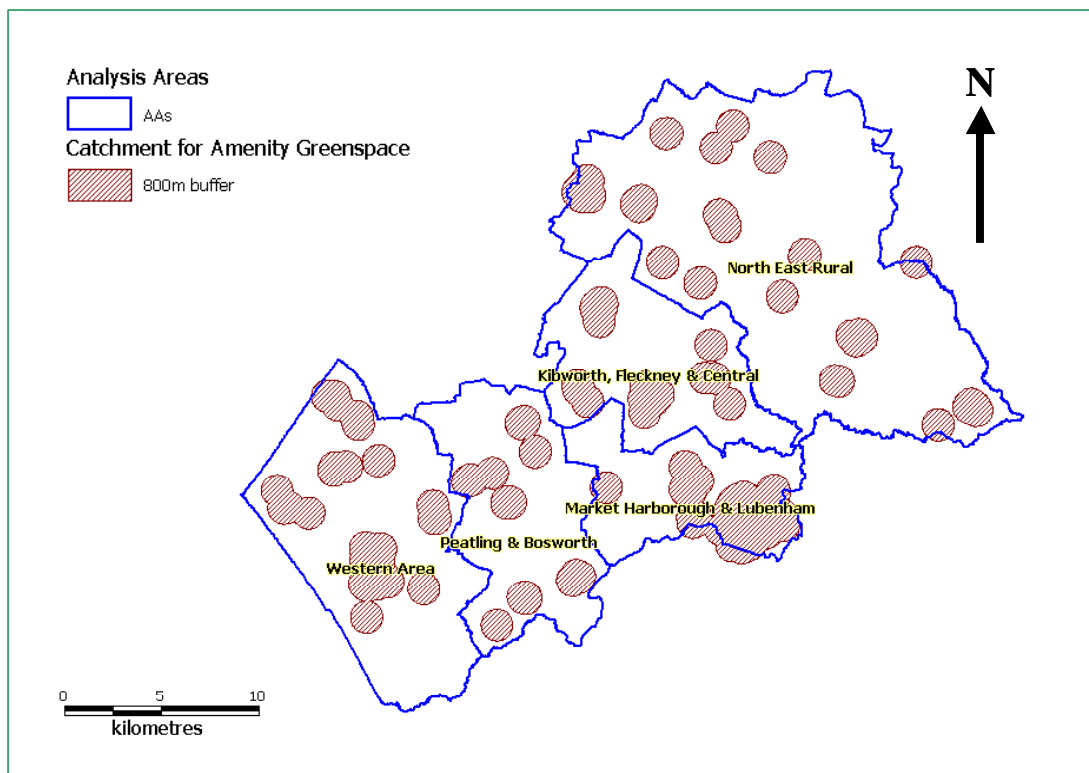
8.38 A 10-minute walking standard catchment area should therefore be considered to be the most appropriate accessibility standard. The recommended accessibility standard and appropriate travelling distance are set out in table 8.2 below.

Table 8.2 Recommended Accessibility Standard

Local Standard - Amenity Green Space	
Recommended Travel Time	Estimated equivalent distance
10 minute walk	800m

8.39 Figure 8.2 below illustrates the application of this standard to the provision of amenity greenspace within the district. All maps are provided in Appendix O which demonstrates clearly the areas outside the recommended catchment area.

Figure 8.2 - Accessibility Threshold – Parks and Gardens



8.40 As can be seen in Figure 8.2 above, there are some areas within the district that are outside of the recommended catchment area.

Assessment of value (Usage v Quality v Accessibility)

8.41 There are nine amenity green space sites within the district that have high levels of use, in addition to very high quality and very good accessibility. These sites are of very high value to the district and should be protected where possible. They are:

- Great Glen Recreation Ground
- Memorial Green Stonehall Court Flats - Great Glen
- Village Green - Great Bowden
- Village Green at Billesdon
- Common Land North End - Hallaton
- The Cross Amenity Green Space – Hallaton (see picture 8.1 below)
- Village Green - Lowesby
- Arnesby Village Hall
- Shearsby Village Green

Picture 8.2 – The Cross Amenity Green Space – Hallaton



8.42 Simborough Road Recreation Ground (Market Harborough) is the only site which has high use and quality but poor accessibility. There are no well used sites with poor

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quality, indicating that both good accessibility and good quality are important in ensuring that a site is well-used and has a high value to the community.

- 8.43 The majority of sites that have low usage are of lower quality (primarily rated average), suggesting that the improved quality of such sites may increase usage by the community. On sites where accessibility is poor effort should be made to increase the accessibility, in order to enhance the usage.
- 8.44 On sites where usage is low, despite good quality and accessibility, analysis should be undertaken as to whether the primary purpose of the site is appropriate. There are a number of sites to which this is relevant, including:
- Monroe Close, Market Harborough
 - Stablegate Way Open Space , Market Harborough
 - Fleetwood Gardens, Market Harborough
 - Village Green in Smeeton Westerby
 - St Catherines Green - Houghton on the Hill

Summary

- 8.45 There are a number of green space sites within Harborough which are highly valued. The quality of amenity green space is however lower than some of the other typologies in the district. Despite this, almost 60% of sites were rated as good or very good.
- 8.46 Accessibility of amenity green space is relatively good. Catchment area analysis indicates that such spaces should be relatively local facilities, and 75% of people would expect to have an amenity green space within a 10 minute walk, (or 800m) of their residence.
- 8.47 When applying the suggested standard of 0.8 – 1 hectare per 1000, there is a small oversupply of amenity green space within the Market Harborough and Lubenham area, and an undersupply in all other areas. This suggests that there is no requirement for additional amenity green space within Market Harborough and Lubenham at present, although there are further development opportunities in all other areas. When considering levels of amenity green space, the impact of the proposed space on the environment should also be taken into account.
- 8.48 When comparing the quantitative analysis and accessibility analysis it is clear there are many areas where there are quantitative deficiencies based on the provision standard as well as these areas being outside the recommended catchment of amenity greenspace. However, some playing fields in these areas may provide the function of amenity greenspace and therefore this should be considered when undertaking further detailed analysis.