

Overall summary

Introduction

- 19.1 The study has been undertaken in accordance with the requirements of the latest Planning Policy Guidance Note 17 (Planning for Open Space Sport and Recreation, July 2002) and its Companion Guide (September 2002).
- 19.2 The overall aim of the project was to:
- consider the local context of open space in Harborough
 - undertake an audit of open space in line with PPG17 typologies
 - undertake consultation to ascertain the demand for open space within the district
 - assess the extent to which demand is currently satisfied
 - set and apply local provision standards based on local needs and aspirations
 - and advise on the implication for the development of policies on open space, sport and recreation for the Local Development Framework (LDF).
- 19.3 The study has provided:
- an overview of the open space resource within the District according to definitions provided within PPG17
 - a review of relevant plans and strategies and national developments
 - detailed consultations using various methods including parish council questionnaires, sports clubs questionnaires, neighbourhood drop in sessions and consultation with internal and external agencies to establish the key issues and needs
 - consideration of relevant and appropriate provision standards
 - provision of a site value 'assessment table' to help identify priorities and actions from simple quality, usage and accessibility assessments
 - a planning review
 - a review of possible funding sources for improvements and future developments
 - a summary of key issues based on the main findings from the supply and demand analysis in terms of quantity, quality, accessibility and value.
- 19.4 The following sections summarise the key findings of the study, under the headings of quantity, quality, accessibility and value.

Quantity

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- 19.5 From the quantity analysis, in association with consultations and surveys undertaken, we are able to determine provision standards appropriate for a number of types of open space within the district.
- 19.6 PPG17 advocates the development of local standards rather than the use of national standards which do not take into account the local context. The standards have therefore been developed for consideration by the Council and are in hectares per 1000 population.

These standards are outlined in table 19.1 below.

Table 19.1

PPG17 Typology	Quantity Provision Standard
Parks and Public Gardens	0.5 hectares per 1000 population
Natural and Semi Natural Space	8.5 hectares rural area, 1.5 hectares urban area
Green Corridors	PPG17 suggests that the setting of a quantitative standard is inappropriate
Outdoor Sports Facilities	Recommended that any standard set for such typology would be meaningless due to the wide ranging facilities included. Further recommended that quantity standards, if required, should be assessed on a facility basis e.g. using the Sport England playing pitch methodology for grass pitches. Existing playing pitch strategy on a county wide-basis suggests a pitch standard of 0.57 ha per 1,000 population.
Amenity Green Spaces	0.8 – 1.0 ha per 1000 population
Provision for Children & Young People	0.3 ha per 1000 population
Allotments	0.35 ha per 1000 population
Cemeteries and Churchyards	PPG17 suggests quantity standard not required due to the nature of the typology. However if a quantity standard is needed this should be a quantitative population based provision standard but also take into account statistics on the average number of deaths which result in burials.
Civic Spaces	PPG17 suggests that a quantitative standard is inappropriate for this open space type

- 19.7 Indoor sport and recreation facilities were analysed using a combination of club questionnaires and supply and demand models based on local demographics and participation rates. It was concluded that:
- provision of additional sports hall space (existing undersupply of 5 courts following opening of new Lutterworth Sports Centre) should be a priority.
 - existing swimming provision marginally exceeds demand, hence there is no immediate need (or future need based on current participation rates) for additional facilities

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- there is an undersupply of health and fitness provision (around 100 stations following opening of new Lutterworth Sports Centre) within the district
- the village halls have an important role to play with regards to indoor sport and recreation provision within the district.

Quality

19.8 The majority of sites within Harborough are of good quality in particular:

- cemeteries and churchyards
- outdoor sports facilities
- parks and gardens.

19.9 There is less satisfaction with indoor sports provision.

19.10 The main quality issues within the district are:

- dog fouling
- parking
- toilets

19.11 A general quality vision could be developed, based on qualities that consultees have highlighted as good practice. This vision for open spaces could be:

“a clean, litter and dog fouling free area that is well-lit and provides a level of varied vegetation and biodiversity, including well-kept grass and other natural features where suitable. The site should be regularly maintained and have suitable parking in close proximity where appropriate. “

19.12 This could be used as a benchmarking measurement to assess where open space sites are now and what improvements could be made in the future. It could be broken down into a detailed assessment matrix as follows for any future quality assessments of sites :

- a clean and litter free
- dog fouling free area
- well-lit
- varied vegetation and biodiversity
- well-kept grass
- natural features provided where appropriate
- maintained to reasonable standard
- suitable parking in close proximity

19.13 Full details of quality analysis by site can be found in Appendix L. Quality factors can be found in Appendix M.

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Accessibility

- 19.14 Accessibility is a key assessment of open space sites. Without accessibility for the public the provision of good quality or good quantity of open space sites would be of little benefit to the community.
- 19.15 PPG17 encourages that any new open space sites or enhancement of existing sites should ensure accessibility by environmentally friendly forms of transport such as walking, cycling and by public transport. There is a real desire to move away from a reliability on the car.
- 19.16 There is an overall satisfaction level by residents regarding accessibility to existing sites.
- 19.17 The main area of concern is public transport, which was rated as poor or very poor by 70% of residents.
- 19.18 The consultations both through the parish questionnaire, workshops and neighbourhood 'drop-in' sessions provide specific information to assist in establishing distance thresholds and accessibility standards for each type of open space as defined by PPG17. Table 19.2 shows recommended distance thresholds for each type of open space.

Table 19.2

Open Space Type	Realistic Mode of transport (from analysis)	Recommended Travel Time	Estimated Equivalent Distance
Parks and Gardens	Drive by Car	10 mins	4km (urban)
Natural Open Spaces	Walk	20 mins	1.6km
Green Corridors	Walk	20 mins	1.6km
Amenity Green Space	Walk	5 mins	400m
Play Spaces for Children and Young People	Walk	5-10 mins	400m - 800m
Outdoor Sports Facilities	Drive by Car	10-15 mins	4km – 6km
Allotments	Drive by Car	5 - 10 mins	2km - 4km
Cemeteries and Churchyards	Drive by Car	10 mins	4km
Civic Spaces	Drive by Car	10 mins	4km

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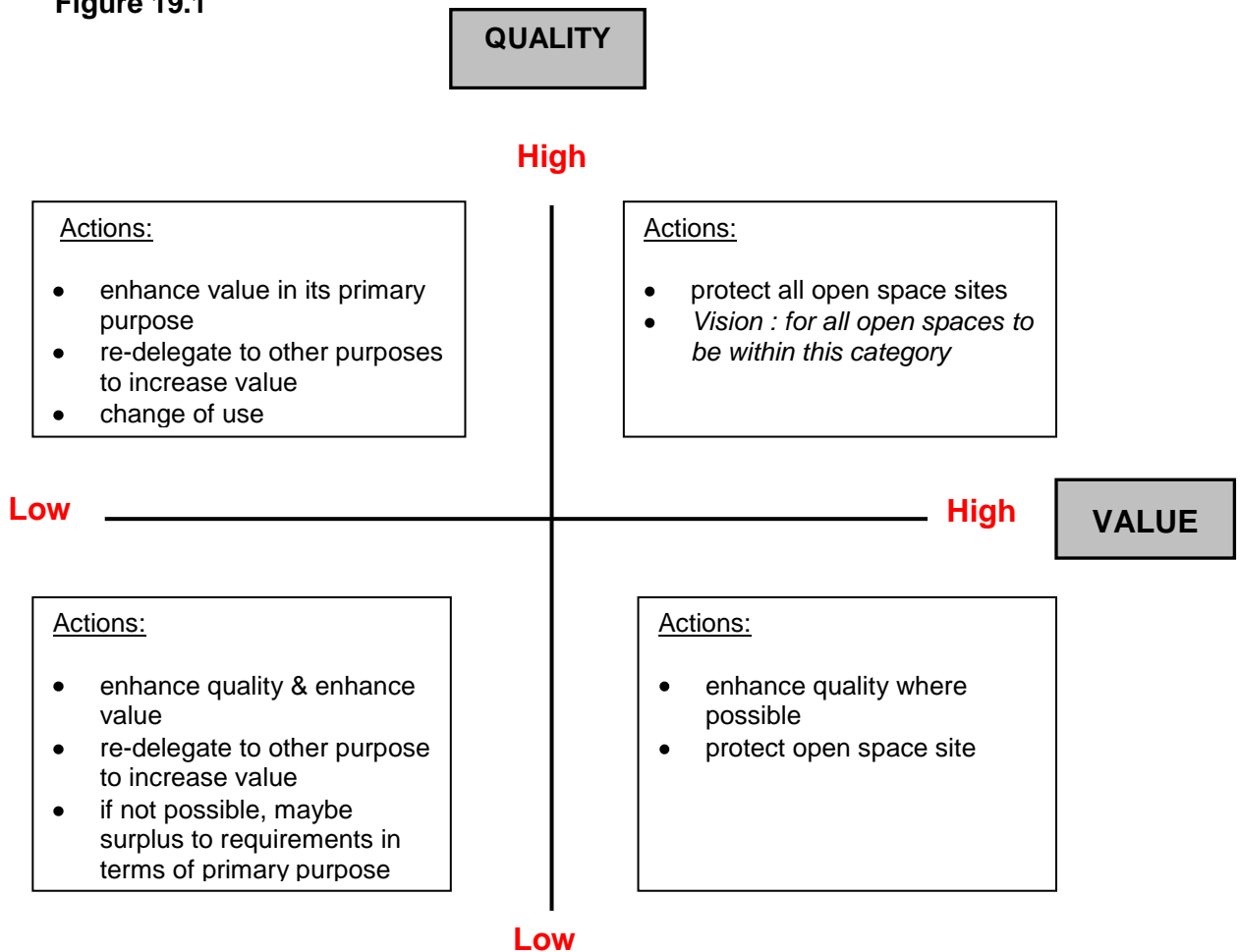
19.19 It is not entirely straightforward to set specific distance thresholds for each type of open space for all areas as there are many dependencies. However these standards, as PPG17 recommends, provides guidance in order to identify gaps in provision and meet the local needs of Harborough residents.

19.20 Full details of accessibility analysis by site can be found in Appendix L. Accessibility factors can be found in Appendix M.

Value

19.21 The value of open space sites takes into account the usage, quality and accessibility of a site. The matrix below outlines the recommended actions for different sites. Specific sites falling into these categories for each typology are outlined in sections 5 – 14.

Figure 19.1



Planning Review

19.22 The analysis of existing and emerging policy concluded that:

- consideration should be given to an early review of the adopted SPG with a view to producing a revised SPD which encompasses aspects from the adopted SPD together with current internal documents

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- within the emerging planning system, strategic open space policy should be contained within the core strategy of the DPD
- within the emerging planning system, a more detailed policy which addresses open space and new residential development should be contained within the housing DPD
- AAPs will contain focused area assessments in which more specific local requirements may be set
- SPDs provide more detailed policy requirement and ensure a clear framework for developers. SPDs have added flexibility and allow for regular updates and amendments
- in areas of acute deficiency or opportunity and where the private sector is unlikely to be harnessed (through development or section 106) a more proactive approach towards asset disposal should be considered.

The analysis of existing open space guidance concludes that:

- local standards should be set for different open space typologies
- consideration should be given to the application of different local standards for urban and rural locations and between areas of over provision and under provision
- consideration should be given to providing formulas and worked examples within SPD to show the scale of off-site financial contributions;
- if financial contributions are insufficient to provide new recreation space beyond the ability of individual developments, special area based open space funds should be considered to contribute towards district wide projects. A list of projects and estimated costs contained within the SPD, which can be regularly updated, should be considered.