

Parks and gardens

Definition

- 5.1 This type of open space includes urban parks, formal gardens and country parks that provide opportunities for various informal recreation and community events.

Strategic context and consultation

- 5.2 A national survey commissioned by Sport England, the Countryside Agency and English Heritage was undertaken during 2003, looking at the provision of parks within England. The aims of the survey were to establish:
- how many adults in England use parks
 - what activities people take part in when visiting parks
 - the reasons people visit particular parks
 - the levels of satisfaction with the amenities on offer
 - why non-users do not use parks.
- 5.3 The definition of a park used in the survey was very broad and included both formal provision such as town parks, country parks and recreation grounds and also less formal provision such as village greens and common land.
- just under two thirds of adults in England had visited a public park during the previous 12 months
 - there is a distinct bias in the use of parks by social groups, with almost three quarters of adults from the higher social group visiting a park compared with only half of those from the lower social group
 - people from black and ethnic minority communities also have relatively low participation as well as those adults with a disability
 - over 8 in 10 adults who had used a park in the previous 12 months did so at least once a month during the spring/ summer with almost two thirds visiting a park at least once a week, and women tended to visit parks more often than men
 - it is estimated that the 24.3 million adults who use parks make approximately 1.2 billion visits to parks during the spring and summer months and 600 million visits during the autumn and winter months – a total of 1.8 billion visits a year
 - the most popular type of park visited was an urban/ city park.
- 5.4 A survey undertaken as part of the cultural strategy (September 2002) indicated that almost all respondents considered the provision of parks within the district to be adequate.
- 5.5 Welland Park is the flagship facility for the district, and is the most used open space within Market Harborough. It is considered very accessible by local residents, and significant recent investment has seen improvements to the park, and it is now

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highlighted as an example of good practice. Welland Park was instrumental in winning East Midlands in Bloom during 2002 / 2003.

- 5.6 A number of residents support the view that Welland Park is highly valued and well used, not just in Market Harborough but throughout the district. The dog walking area was highly regarded, and a number of consultees expressed support for this to be repeated in other areas. This supports the vision to implement the Dogs Fouling of Land Act 1996, highlighted in the Best Value Performance Plan. Welland Park can be seen in Picture 5.1 below.

Picture 5.1 – Welland Park



Quantity

- 5.7 In addition to the large parks discussed above, there are a number of smaller parks and gardens within the district, many of which are memorial gardens.

Setting provision standards

- 5.8 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.
- 5.9 There are no definitive national or local standards for parks and gardens.
- 5.10 The audit has discovered 18.83 hectares of parks and gardens in total. This represents provision equivalent to 0.25 hectares per 1000 population at present.

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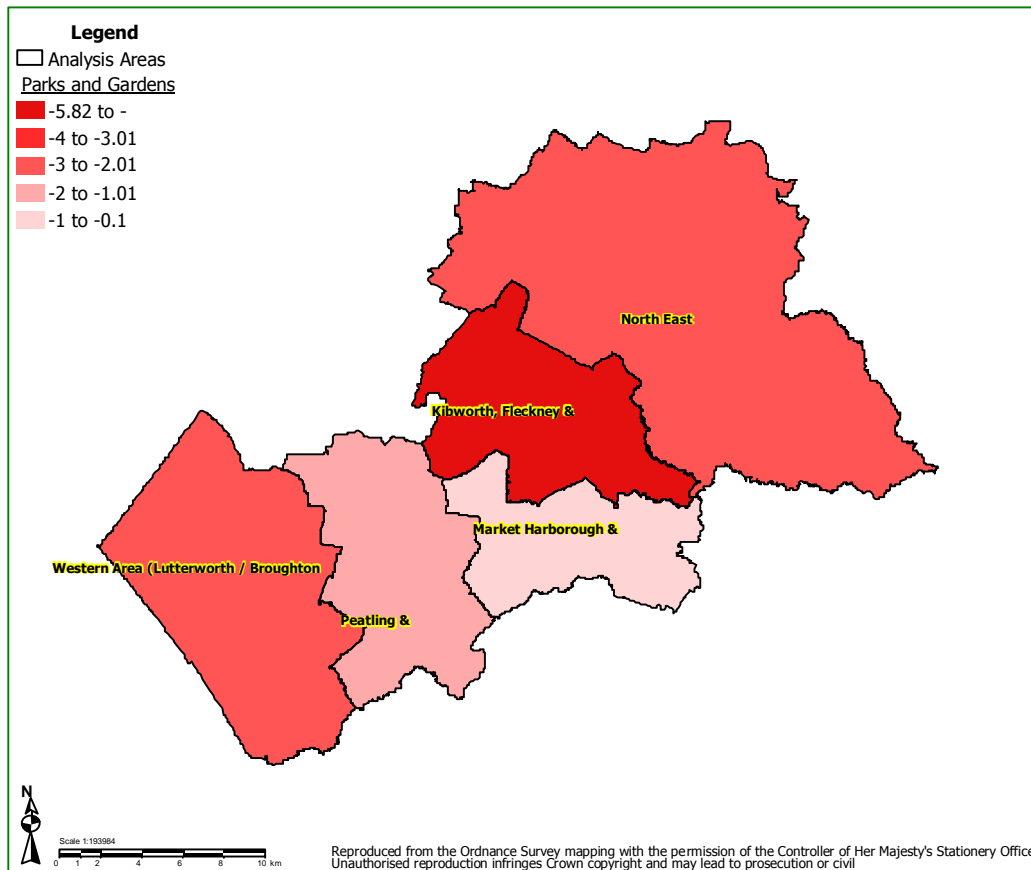
- 5.11 There were no indications from consultation that there was a surplus of parks and gardens in the district. However, 59% of questionnaire responses suggested the level of provision was about right, 41% of responses suggesting that there was a deficiency. This indicates that provision standards should be higher than the total existing level of 0.25 ha across the district.
- 5.12 In Market Harborough and Lubenham, which has a current provision level of 0.39, all respondents indicated that this was about right. This area includes the provision of Welland Park and suggests that a local standard should be at this level. More qualitative consultation through the neighbourhood drop-in sessions also supports the quality and quantity of this provision.
- 5.13 In the North East Rural area (current provision of 0.23 ha per 1,000 population), 33% of respondents suggested there was a deficiency and Lutterworth and Broughton Astley (current provision of 0.31 ha per 1,000 population), where only 50% felt that provision was about right and 50% suggested there was a deficiency of provision. These consultation findings support a local standard above 0.23 and 0.31 ha per 1,000 population.
- 5.14 There are no significant differences in the level of provision and perceived local need for parks and gardens between the rural and the more urban areas of the district, suggesting the same standard could be applied to the whole of the district. Also parks and gardens is a typology that one would expect to be realistically provided both in urban and rural areas.

5.15 Therefore from the analysis it is suggested that for the district of Harborough a local **provision standard of 0.4 ha per 1,000 population** is applied.

Applying provision standards

- 5.16 When applying the provision standards suggested the following analysis can be undertaken.
- 5.17 When applying the provision standard of 0.4 ha per 1000 population to the district as a whole, there is a total shortfall of provision equivalent to 11.79 hectares. This is predicted to increase in by 2016 (based on population projections) to 16.6 hectares.
- 5.18 The main issues arising from the application of standards are:
- there is a deficiency in each analysis area although the levels of shortfall vary across the district
 - the smallest deficiency is in Market Harborough and Lubenham (where Welland Park is located) and amounts to 0.22 hectares – this will reach 1.57 hectares in 2011
 - the largest deficiency is 5.82 hectares located in Kibworth, Fleckney and the Central area.
- 5.19 Figure 5.1 overleaf demonstrates the surplus / deficiencies within each analysis area based on the provision standard of 0.4 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 5.1 - Current Surplus & Deficiency of Parks and Gardens by Analysis Area (2004)



5.20 The application of the provision standard for each area is summarised in section 19, and can be found in Appendix C.

Quality

5.21 The quality of parks and gardens in the district overall is very good. No parks and gardens were considered to be of poor quality, and 66% were rated as good or very good.

5.22 In Market Harborough and Lubenham and the North East Rural analysis areas parks were rated as very good. As previously highlighted, Welland Park in Market Harborough is considered to be a high quality urban park. In addition to being well used and high quality, it is a good example of clever management maintaining a balance between nature conservation needs and intensive recreation.

5.23 There are no parks and gardens in Peatling and Bosworth at present, and parks in the remaining two analysis areas (Western and Kibworth, Fleckney and Central) were rated as average.

5.24 One of these areas deemed to be average is Lutterworth Country Park. Consultation highlighted that residents are currently frustrated at the lack of progress made with the development of the park due to a lack of funding. It is perceived to be lacking infrastructure and facilities, however as previously highlighted, it has been identified as a primary aim of the leisure service to get the park up to a standard where it can be enjoyed and valued by residents of the district, once S106 or other funding becomes available.

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Accessibility

- 5.25 Overall over 70% of parks and gardens in the district were considered to have either good or very good accessibility. No sites were thought to have poor or very poor accessibility.
- 5.26 Access to parks and gardens in Market Harborough and the North East Rural area is considered very good and no sites are considered to be average or below.
- 5.27 In analysis areas 4 and 5 accessibility to all but 1 of the sites is deemed to be average – The Memorial Gardens in Broughton Astley are highlighted as being very accessible and very well used.

Catchment

- 5.28 Parish Clerks were asked to comment on the most appropriate, in terms of time prepared to travel, for parks and gardens. This was combined with opinions of others consulted. Table 5.1 below summarises the mean, median and mode of responses.
- 5.29 The table also indicates for how long 75% of respondents are willing to travel. According to PPG17, this is the most appropriate means of defining local accessibility standard for each type of open space.

Table 5.1 Time prepared to travel

		Overall - Harborough District - Parish Councils						Members
		Median	Mean	Mode	Minimum	Maximum	75%	General Consensus
Walk		15	15	20	5	60	20 minutes	
Cycle		10	8	10	2	20		20 minutes
Bus		24	14	10	5	20		
Car		5	8	5	1	30	10 minutes	15 minutes

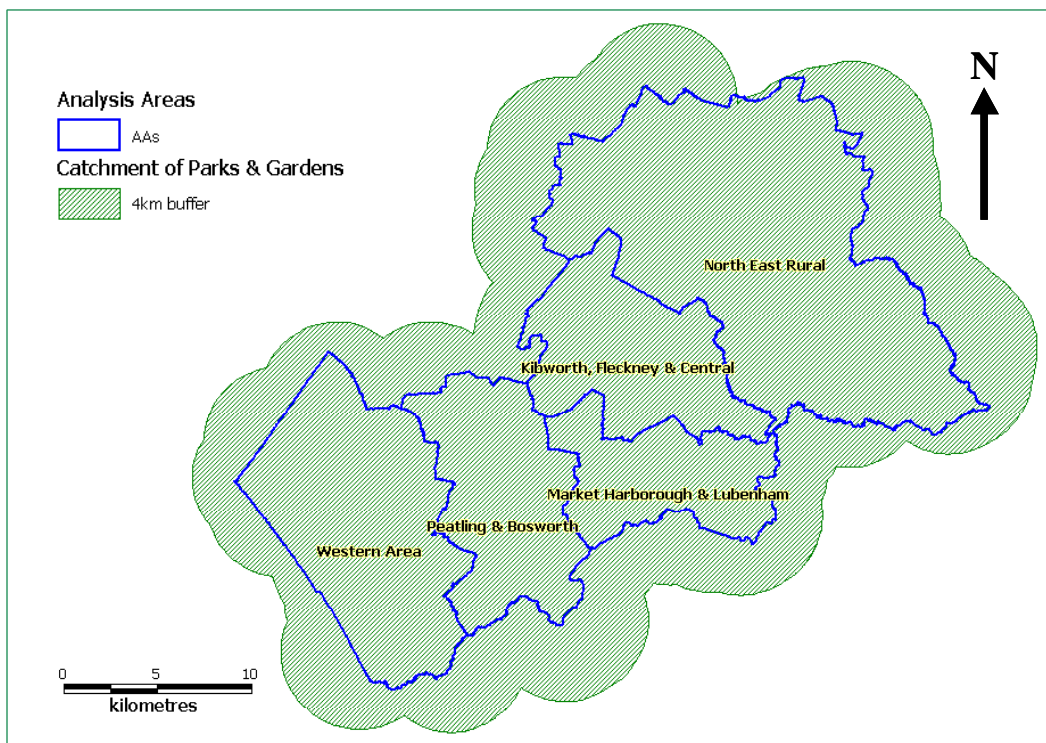
- 5.30 There was a diverse set of opinions regarding the time people were prepared to walk to parks and gardens.
- 5.31 Responses varied from people who felt 5 to 60 minutes walk would be appropriate, while some respondents felt car journeys of up to 30 minutes would be acceptable.
- 5.32 On the whole people appreciate that parks and gardens cater for a larger geographical area than some types of open space and as such are prepared to travel further. 75% of respondents suggested that they would expect to drive for 10 minutes to a park or garden.

Table 5.2 Recommended Accessibility Standard

Local Standard – Parks and Gardens	
Recommended Travel Time	Estimated equivalent distance
10 minute drivetime	4km

5.33 Figure 5.2 below illustrates the application of this standard to the provision of parks and gardens within the district. All maps are provided in Appendix O which demonstrates clearly the areas outside the recommended catchment area.

Figure 5.2 - Accessibility Threshold – Parks and Gardens



5.34 As can be seen in Figure 5.2 above, all residents within the district have access to a park or garden within a ten minute drivetime, or 4kms of their house.

Assessment of value (Usage v Quality v Accessibility)

5.35 Most sites that have a high level of use would normally have a good or very good quality and accessibility rating. Most sites with a low level of use would have an average or poor quality and accessibility rating. This is because the factors are

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related and interlinked. However there are deviations to this, which suggests that these sites would need some further analysis.

- 5.36 The accessibility and quality of parks and gardens within Harborough overall is good, and there are number of sites which have high use – these are sites that are of high value and importance and should therefore be a priority for protection. These include Welland Park, Broughton Astley Memorial Gardens and Market Harborough Memorial Gardens. There are further sites which are also used often, which have good quality and accessibility.
- 5.37 Although the quality of Byways Garden in Stoughton is considered good, and the accessibility very good, it is thought there is currently very little use of the site. This indicates that although the site is of good quality, little value is placed upon it at present. Investigations should be made to establish why this is the case.

Summary

- 5.38 When applying the suggested provision standard of 0.4 ha per 1000 population each analysis area has a deficiency in parks and gardens with some areas clearly worse off than others. The largest area of deficiency is Kibworth, Fleckney and Central.
- 5.39 However the accessibility of parks and gardens within the district is considered to be good, and consultation suggests that 75% are willing to travel up to 10 minutes in the car. This demonstrates that although there are perceived quantitative deficiencies all people are within the recommended catchment of this typology.
- 5.40 Due to the fact there is only a small number of parks and gardens within the district the quality of these types of open space is particularly important. It appears that the quality of parks and gardens within Harborough is good, although there are a number of sites which may benefit from investigations into improvement.