

**A REPORT BY STRATEGIC LEISURE FOR WIRRAL METROPOLITAN
BOROUGH COUNCIL**

Open Space Assessment
A Draft Report
August 2009

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Introduction

Definition of Open Space

- 1.1 The most complete description of open space comes from the Council of Europe Recommendation No. R (86)11 of the Committee of Ministers States on Urban Open Space (1). As revised by the Institute of Leisure and Amenity Management, outlined below is a derivative of that description:

“Urban parks and green spaces are an essential part of the urban heritage and infrastructure, being a strong element in the architectural and landscape character of towns and cities, providing a sense of place and engendering civic pride. They are important for enabling social interaction and fostering community development, as well as providing an outdoor classroom for biological and ecological studies. Public green spaces help to conserve natural systems, supporting ecosystems and providing the contrast of designed landscapes and conserved wildlife habitats within our urban settlements”.
- 1.2 The Town and Country Planning Act 1990 defines open space as land laid out as a public garden or used for the purpose of public recreation or previously used as a burial ground. This definition does not go far enough in recognising the variety of open space types both private and public that is currently available within the Borough.
- 1.3 Open Space for the purpose of developing this report is the collective term that pulls together the provision of parks and public gardens, natural open spaces including nature reserves and public woodlands, facilities for outdoor sports, amenity areas, children’s play areas allotments, cemeteries and crematoria
- 1.4 In accordance with national guidance each of the different types of Open Space provision has been developed into a local typology for the Borough.
- 1.5 In developing an analysis of the Borough, calculations have been undertaken at Electoral Ward level, to enable the Council to identify priorities within more localised areas within the Borough.
- 1.6 A comprehensive audit of Open Space within the Borough was undertaken during July and August 2008. The audit examined the range and quality of provision in the Borough’s parks and open spaces, natural green spaces, allotments, children’s play areas, outdoor sports facilities, cemeteries and crematoria.
- 1.7 Each site was visited and evaluated by experienced open space auditors who assessed the sites against best practice methodologies such as the national quality standard for parks, the Green Flag Award. The results of the audit were then collated and analysed to enable standards of provision to be recommended for each type of Open Space within the Borough.

- 1.8 The outcome is an analysis of the quantity and quality of open space that is firmly based on local evidence. The typologies for Wirral are identified in Figure 1.1

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Figure 1.1 – Wirral Open Space Typologies

Typology		Primary Purpose
Parks and Gardens:	Major Park	Intensively managed sites providing accessible, high quality opportunities for formal and informal recreation and children’s play including community events
	Country Park	
	Local Park	
Natural and Semi Natural Green spaces (Countryside and Woodland)		Less intensively managed sites, including woodlands, providing accessible opportunities for informal recreation and the appreciation of nature and wildlife including wildlife conservation, biodiversity and environmental education.
Outdoor sports facilities –		Sites providing for participation in formal outdoor sports such as pitch sports, tennis, bowls, athletics or countryside and water sports
Amenity Green Space		Smaller scale sites providing opportunities for informal activities close to home or work or for the enhancement of the appearance of residential or other areas
Provision for Children and Young People		Sites and facilities primarily designed and managed for play and social interaction by children and young people, such as equipped play areas, ball courts, skateboard parks and teenage shelters
Allotments		Sites providing opportunities for people who wish to grow their own produce offering benefits for the promotion of sustainability, health and social inclusion
Cemeteries and Closed Churchyards		Sites which may provide additional opportunities for quiet contemplation and natural wildlife.

- 1.9 The audit included all open space across the Borough to which there was legitimate public access. The majority of sites were under the ownership and management of Wirral Council but the audit also included privately owned land with public access and land held and managed for open space and recreation by other bodies such as Registered Social Landlords, the National Trust, the Woodland Trust and the Port Sunlight Village Trust.
- 1.10 Private land with no public access, including domestic gardens, agricultural land and the wider countryside, the public rights of way network, beaches, coastal promenades and walkways, golf courses and school grounds which are not open for use by the general public have not been included.
- 1.11 The collection and analysis of data has been restricted to sites within the administrative boundary of the Metropolitan Borough of Wirral and has been quantified on a Borough wide and Ward basis (See Map 1).

The Importance of Open Space

- 1.12 Open Space is important for formal and informal recreation, local amenity and quality of life but can also contribute to the wider social agendas of health, local pride and identity, environmental education, environmental quality and biodiversity.

Health

- 1.13 The health benefits of open space are well documented. Access to good quality, well maintained open space has significant impact on our physical health and mental well being. They provide opportunities to enjoy the natural world and to get involved in a wide range of leisure activities; they encourage people to walk more, to participate in sport or to simply enjoy the green and natural environment. The more attractive and accessible the green space is, the more likely it is to be used by a wide range of people. It has long been accepted that physical activity is a major contributor to good health and can reduce coronary heart problems, diabetes, certain cancers and mental health problems. Trees and Woodlands can also help to reduce the effect of urban pollution and allotments can provide an opportunity for the promotion of more sustainable and organic lifestyles.

Sense of Place and Civic Pride

- 1.14 Well managed, good quality open spaces can improve the appearance of an area and can attract tourists and visitors. Good quality open spaces and areas for wildlife can also help to create a positive image for an area, helping to attract inward investment and new residents, supporting local regeneration and housing market renewal. At the local level they can stimulate local pride and make people feel good about where they live and work.
- 1.15 Research by national organisations such as the Commission for the Built Environment (CABE) [ref in footnote - “Does Money Grow on Trees?” (2005)] indicates that property values can be higher, by as much as 10%, in areas with good quality open space. Open spaces can also contribute to community cohesion by bringing people together, by providing meeting venues and by providing social spaces for a wide variety of events and activities. They can form an essential part of urban heritage, such as at Birkenhead Park and Port Sunlight Village, exert a major influence on urban fabric and play an integral role in providing for balanced and sustainable communities.

Education

- 1.16 Open spaces can provide a valuable resource for all-age education as outdoor classrooms, spaces for training in vocations such as nature conservation, horticulture, community work, landscaping, forestry and sports development and can provide an important environment for children to learn and play through physical exercise and social interaction.

Environment

- 1.17 Open spaces can provide an essential role in supporting the species diversity, by providing habitat and a rich variety of flora and fauna. This is of particular importance in an increasingly urbanised society where urban expansion has meant that true countryside has become increasingly distant from most people. Open space is being recognised as having an increasingly important role to play in mitigating the effects of climate change, through urban cooling and the provision of shade and shelter. Open spaces can also act as part of a wider network of wildlife corridors that allow the migration of plants and animals from one area to another, acting as important stepping stones between urban and rural habitats.

Economy

- 1.18 There are also economic benefits in terms of the attraction of visitors and the provision of employment in the provision and maintenance of sports and other community facilities, including retailing.

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Section 2

Methodology

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2 Methodology Development of a Quantity Audit

2.1 With the development of digital mapping and the use of GIS (geographical Information systems) it has been possible to ensure that all sites can be identified with accurate boundaries drawn. Through having a comprehensive list of all sites with a clear understanding of amount, type, and location, base line information on which the future standards can be developed. Attached to this information is a database that is accessible to all staff members and can be regularly updated with information added or removed. The availability of this Borough wide information will enable decisions to be made for investment, rationalisation, and priorities for developer contributions.

2.2 The development of the quantity audit has been undertaken in 3 key stages namely:

- Stage 1 Initial work undertaken by the Council to establish an open space database
- Stage 2 Gis work completed in house by Planning Service staff
- Stage 3 A comprehensive audit of all identified greenspace above 0.1 ha in size

Stage 1

2.3 An initial assessment was carried out by Planning Services as part of the first stage of work to support the Unitary Development Plan 2000. The work included the identification and mapping sites in detail for both public and private provision and the setting of the initial typologies and standards for parks and greenspace

Stage 2

2.4 The audit was extended and progressed with in-house staff using GIS data from the Ordnance Survey, All sites already mapped went through a verification process using in house knowledge to confirm names, define more accurately site boundaries, identify both land owners and maintenance responsibilities, identify other features contained within each sites and capture the hectares of individual sites and an X Y grid reference as well as allocating a primary typology. Additional sites that were identified were also included in this verification process.

2.5 Features such as a playground or football pitch that were identified within a sites boundary were accounted for in separate typologies. The datasets that sit behind each of the GIS typology layers noted whether they were a whole stand-alone site or whether they were part of a bigger site. The dataset criteria used in this work is attached in the Appendices.

Stage 3

2.6 Open and Green Space was quantified using GIS using a size threshold of 0.1ha (the minimum size of a mini soccer pitch and therefore big enough to cater for informal kick

about) or above by greenspace consultants Strategic Leisure who worked alongside Council officers to verify a complete and final list to be considered and quantified to enable a detailed quality audit to be undertaken as the next step and to build on work regarding quality previously undertaken by the Council.

- 2.7 It is important to note that the provision for children and young people includes an element of double counting as many of the fixed play facilities are contained within the footprint of other typologies and as such has been included within the calculation for that typology.
- 2.8 Detailed discussions took place between Council officers from the parks and planning services and the consultants to ensure the quantitative element was correct prior to site visits.
- 2.9 The quantitative sum of each typology would be established as the baseline provision for each type of space in the Borough. The quantitative sum would be calculated against existing population and this will enable the Council to use the information against predicted population growth to establish a quantitative standard per 1000 population. The use of ha per 1000 is a recognised means of expressing provision levels and should be used until further guidance is given from central government regarding calculating provision. The evidence gathered will enable the Council to make informed decisions regarding the future provision to meet local demand.
- 2.10 The baseline position identifies the spatial distribution of each type of open space on a Borough wide, and local Ward level.
- 2.11 Whilst it is recognised that other types of provision exist such as Institutional sites, Agricultural Land Cemetery and Churchyards, Private grounds etc it is not possible to set quantity standards for such provision.

Development of a Quality Audit

- 2.12 The setting of a quality standard allows for an objective view as to whether an existing Open and Green Space meets a determined level of quality. In addition it allows for the setting of a benchmark against which improvements can be measured and priorities identified.
- 2.13 The initial work has been built on by external consultants who have undertaken a quality audit of all types of open space across the Borough (where access has been permitted).
- 2.14 The initial work included a methodology that was developed for the quality assessment and was based on the Green Flag Award Scheme. This is the most recognised national measure for parks and open spaces and provides a base on which all sites irrelevant of type can be assessed and measured for quality. The scheme is endorsed by, CABE Space, the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister

(OPDM) and the Civic Trust.

2.15 A proforma was produced to enable the information to be recorded in a consistent manner using the Green Flag criteria as the basis. The criteria were developed into a series of questions which were structured to be used for a one-off site visit survey and be used generically across a range of open space typologies. The following criteria have been considered regarding the condition of greenspace across the City :

- Welcoming
- Good and safe access;
- Signage;
- Equal access for all;
- Equipment and facilities;
- Personal security within the park;
- Dog fouling;
- Quality of facilities;
- Litter and waste management;
- Grounds maintenance;
- Provision of appropriate marketing information
- Building and infrastructure maintenance;
- Arboriculture and woodland management;
- Conservation of natural features, wild fauna and flora;
- Conservation of landscape features;
- Conservation of buildings and structures;
- Appropriate provision for the community;

2.16 In addition, a number of other elements were included in order to capture further information, which

would inform the longer-term priorities. These included the following inventories

- Outdoor activities for children;
- Outdoor sports facilities;
- Toilets, changing rooms and refreshment provision;
- Park furniture

2.17 Quality relates to the range of facilities and physical infrastructure contained within individual sites and the level and extent to which it is seen as being 'fit for purpose', the audit considers factors such as accessibility, safety, management, maintenance and overall impression it also considers the presence of fixtures such as benches, bins, gates, signage hedges trees and paths.

2.18 Although the audit was primarily driven by PPG17, the information collated will provide the Borough with a comprehensive overview of the condition of the greenspace provision and will provide a level of management information not previously available. The information will enable the Borough to make informed decisions with regards to the resources required to undertake improvements in site management and maintenance.

2.19 A comprehensive audit of over 400+ individual sites has been undertaken based on the variety of greenspace provision across the Borough.

- 2.20 The scores provide a means of comparing sites by type The audit also gives a clear and robust overview of the physical condition of greenspace across the Borough and within defined local wards.
- 2.21 In the assessment of greenspace quality Inspections have been undertaken via a site visit and the completion of a scored proforma.
- 2.22 The quality assessment proforma is based on a number of key criteria encompassing the quality aspects of the Green Flag Programme, ILAM Parks Management Guidance and the Tidy Britain Scheme. Sites are scored and rated based on the sub typology they may fall into. The scores are set based on best practice and would be expected to be present on sites of that type. As such sites are scored out of a potential total, that score is translated into a percentage to enable the site to be given a rating. This then allows for them to be measured against the quality line rating that has been specifically developed for the Wirral in Figure 2.3 illustrated below:

Figure 2.3 Open Space Quality Line

0% - 15%	16% - 30%	31% - 45%	46% - 60%	61% - 75%	76% +
Very Low	Low	Lower Middle	Upper Middle	High	Very High

- 2.23 The criteria used are outlined below:

Figure 2.4 –Wirral Typology

TYPOLOGY	ASSESSMENT CRITERIA
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TYPOLOGY	ASSESSMENT CRITERIA
Parks/Gardens or Recreation Ground	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Entrance areas • Presence and quality of signage and information • Boundary fencing and hedges • Tree management • The quality of key furniture including seats, bins, toilets • The quality of maintenance, grass cutting, pathways • Cleanliness • The quality of specific facilities including play provision, bowls greens and multi-use games areas (shown as separate assessment)
Natural & Semi Natural Greenspace	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Entrance areas • Presence and quality of signage and information • Boundary fencing and hedges • Tree management mature and young trees • The quality of key furniture including seats, bins, dog bins • Naturalistic Grass Areas • The quality of maintenance, grass cutting, pathways • Cleanliness
Outdoor Sport	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Entrance areas • Presence and quality of signage and information • Boundary fencing and hedges • Tree management mature and young trees • The quality of key furniture including seats, bins, dog bins • The quality of maintenance, grass cutting, pathways • Cleanliness • Facility Assessment(pitches, greens courts)
Amenity Space	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presence and quality of signage and information • Boundary fencing and hedges • Tree management • The quality of key furniture including seats, bins, dog bins • The quality of maintenance, grass cutting, pathways • Cleanliness

TYPOLOGY	ASSESSMENT CRITERIA
Allotments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Entrance areas • The presence of water supply • Whether the site is served by toilets • Secure fencing around the site • Signage to identify management, usage arrangements, special events and the availability of plots • The presence of facilities such as composting bins, a shop and car parking.
Cemeteries and Churchyards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Main entrance safety, cleanliness, and natural presence • Signage • Upkeep and safety of the graves • Quality of roads and pathways • Provision of bins and seats • Boundary fencing and hedges

2.24 The quality audit provides an indicative rating of quality out of 100%. It is important to note that the quality score represents a “snapshot” in time and records the quality of the site at the time of the visit audit. Detailed analysis is provided within each of the typology findings.

2.25 For allotments the proforma is based on space audit guidance from the National association of Allotment and Leisure Gardeners Association and also taken from best practice.

2.26 For the assessment of Children’s play Strategic Leisure made use of a Play value Assessment derived from the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (ROSPA) Play value assessment.

Assessing Accessibility

2.27 An assessment of accessibility has been undertaken to identify the number of households within the 400m of all open space above 1.5 ha as defined within the Unitary Development plan. However for each typology deemed to be local such as parks, natural greenspace, amenity space, children’s play the 400m threshold has been applied to all sites within these typologies. For outdoor sport and allotments which are very much demand led facilities the threshold has followed best practice advocated by Sport England and the Fields in Trust (Formerly the NPFA) and is set at a 1000m of where people live.

2.28 The adopted thresholds are identified below;

Figure 2.5 - Accessibility Threshold by Strategic Grouping

Typology	Accessibility Distance Threshold
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Parks and Gardens	400 metres
Natural and Semi Natural Green Space	400 metres
Outdoor Sports Facilities	1000 metres
Amenity Green Space	400 metres
Provision for Children and Young People	400 metres
Allotments and Community Gardens	1000 metres
Cemeteries and Churchyards	1000 metres

- 2.29 The distance thresholds identified above considers the thresholds indicated above and the uses the thresholds above to make detailed analysis of how accessible greenspace is in the Borough
- 2.30 The definition of greenspace is taken to mean any greenspace that is publicly accessible. The use of GIS digital mapping has captured the number of address points within the distance thresholds of typologies to identify the accessibility issues.

Developing a Local Typology

- 2.31 PPG17 guidance advocates the development of a local typology for the different types of greenspace within the Borough. For this purpose we are referring to the range of green areas that are used by the public and are in the main managed by Wirral Borough Council.
- 2.32 The strategy considers core typologies of provision in Wirral, as well as setting out plans and policies for each of the typologies the strategy proposes provision standards to ensure that people have equal access to the range of typologies regardless of where they live.
- 2.33 Open and green space land within the Borough has been categorised into one of 7 typologies. Each typology identified has a specific definition which helps to allocate the land under its primary use. For further clarification and to help with future analysis each typology has then been split into a number of specific classes which describe the type and main use of the site. The typologies used for the Borough have been developed primarily from PPG17 typologies

Figure 2.7 - Wirral Typology

Typology	Definition
Parks & Gardens	Accessible, high quality opportunities for informal recreation and community events
Natural And Semi Natural Sites	Sites for wildlife conservation, biodiversity, environmental education and awareness
Outdoors Sports Facilities	Sites which allow for participation in outdoor sports, such sports, tennis, bowls, athletics

Typology	Definition
Amenity Greenspace	Supplementary open greenspace that enhances the appearance of the Borough
Provision For Children And Young People	Designed primarily for play and social interaction involving children and young people, such as equipped or unequipped play spaces, ball courts, skateboard areas and teenage shelters
Allotments, Community Gardens, And Urban Farms	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

2.34 The audit has concentrated on the following typologies

- Parks & Gardens
- Natural & Semi Natural Greenspace
- Outdoor Sports Facilities
- Amenity Greenspace
- Provision for Children & Young People
- Allotments, Community Gardens and Urban Farms
- Cemeteries and Closed Churchyards and other Burial Grounds

Section 3

Current Provision

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3 Introduction

- 3.1 This section summarises the findings of the audit and identifies the key issues that have emerged for the quantity, quality and accessibility of provision for each of the typologies.
- 3.2 Each open space site has been identified from information provided by Council officers based on information contained within the Council's Geographical Information Systems (GIS) and management databases. Each site has been verified by a site visit in order to provide a comprehensive factual assessment.
- 3.3 All identified sites have been plotted using GIS and the size of each site determined electronically, to provide an analysis of the level of provision across the Borough and within each Electoral Ward.

Overall Type and Quantity of Provision

- 3.4 Table 3.1 summarises the overall provision (quantity) of open space in Wirral by typology.

Table 3.1 Summary of Open Space by typology

Typology	Number of sites	Total area (hectares)	Provision per 1,000 population (hectares)
Parks and Gardens	55	650.5	2.07ha/1,000
Natural and Semi Natural Green Space	83	506.3	1.62ha/1,000
Outdoor Sports Facilities	272	1617.11	5.17ha/1,000
Amenity Green Space	137	119	0.38ha/1,000
Provision for Children and Young People	48	20.85	0.07ha/1,000
Allotments and Community Gardens	45	53.9	0.17ha/1,000
Cemeteries and Churchyards	9	87.8	0.28ha/1,000

- 3.5 The majority of Wirral's Open Space provision is provided by Parks and Gardens and Natural and Semi-Natural Greenspace and provision for Outdoor Sport. (See Map 2)
- 3.6 The NPFA would recommend 1.6-1.8 ha of open space for formal sport for youth and adult use with a minimum within the provision for 1.2ha per 1000 being for pitch sport. The audit has identified 1617.11 ha of

potential outdoor sports provision (note this figure includes school playing fields and golf course both public and private. Further work is required to establish the extent of community use especially of school playing fields)

- 3.7 The NPFA would recommend 0.6-0.8 ha per 1000 for children's playing space (including fixed play and play space within housing areas).
- 3.8 Natural England would recommend
- An accessible natural greenspace of at least 2 hectares in size, no more than 300 metres (5 minutes walk) from home
 - At least one accessible 20 hectare site within two kilometres of home
 - One accessible 100 hectare site within five kilometres of home
 - One accessible 500 hectare site within ten kilometres of home
 - Statutory Local Nature Reserves at a minimum level of one hectare per thousand population
- 3.9 The Thorpe Report would recommend 0.5 acres per 1000 for allotments (This is the equivalent of 18 plots per 1000 households based on a plot being 300 square yards).
- 3.10 The National Society for Allotments would recommend 20 standard 300 square yard plots per 1000 households

Overall Quality of Provision

- 3.11 Data on the quality of provision has been gathered through detailed site assessments undertaken during the each site visit.. The key criteria for each typology provide each site with a score between 1 and 100. The scores for each site have then been categorised in accordance with the quality line.
- 3.12 A summary of the overall quality of provision by Electoral Ward is set out in Appendix [x] to this report.
- 3.13 The analysis indicates that the general quality of Open Space provision across the Borough is lower than 50% on the scoring matrix and that lower quality scores tend to be concentrated in Wards associated with poorer areas in the east of the Borough. This often tends to relate to the absence in best practice terms would be minimum facilities provided for the public. These include signage, benches, bins, good quality footpaths and sites that are well maintained safe and welcoming. .This would argue a general need for existing open spaces to be improved where resources can be made available and may justify the drawing down of monies and site specific improvements through section 106 legal agreements. See Map 3

Table 3.2 Quality Value Line

0% - 15%	16% - 30%	31% - 45%	46% - 60%	61% - 75%	76% +
Very Low	Low	Lower Middle	Upper Middle	High	Very High

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Analysis by Typology

- 3.14 The position with regard to each separate typology is considered in turn below, to identify the key issues relating to the current quantity, quality and distribution of each broad type of provision.
- 3.15 This analysis has also been used to recommend local standards of provision.

Parks and Gardens

Parks and Gardens provide accessible, high quality opportunities for a range of informal recreation activities, formal sporting opportunities and community events. The typology **includes urban parks, country parks and formal public gardens.**

Quantity – Parks and Gardens

- 3.16 The audit revealed a total of 55 sites within the Parks and Gardens typology occupying 650.5 hectares of land and providing a current standard of **2.07ha for every 1,000*(See Footnote)** residents across the Borough as whole Further detail on the sites included under this typology can be found in Appendix [4] to this report.(See Map1)
- 3.17 The sites can be classified as follows:
- 8 large parks (449.3ha or 1.43ha per 1,000) including [5] Country Parks(370.65ha) (note Bidston Hill has been classified within the natural and semi natural typology)
 - 36 local parks (193.5ha or 0.61ha per 1,000)
 - 11 formal gardens (7.8ha or 0.03ha per 1,000)
- 3.18 The breakdown of total space by Ward is shown in Table3.3 below.

Table3.3 Provision of Parks and Gardens by Electoral Ward

Ward	Area population	Total sites	Total hectares	Hectares per 1,000
Bebington	15424	3	19.3	1.25
Bidston & St James	14225	1	2.87	0.20
Birkenhead & Tranmere	14149	2	9.75	0.69
Bromborough	13822	7	9.85	0.71
Clatterbridge	14701	3	7.22	0.49
Claughton	14615	1	57.49	3.94
Eastham	13988	2	44.73	3.20

Footnote* - (based on a population of 313,079 Source: ONS Mid Year 2005)].

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Ward	Area population	Total sites	Total hectares	Hectares per 1,000
Greasby Frankby & Irby	14569	3	59.67	4.10
Heswall	13723	4	12.25	0.89
Hoylake & Meols	13337	5	5.43	0.41
Leasowe & Moreton East	14368	2	25.74	1.79
Liscard	14602	0	0	0
Moreton West & Saughall Massie	13932	2	97.26	7.00
New Brighton	13969	4	13.49	0.97
Oxton	13841	1	16.48	1.19
Pensby & Thingwall	13386	2	159.54	11.92
Prenton	14032	1	5.42	0.39
Rock Ferry	13959	1	11.39	0.82
Seacombe	14504	2	22.33	1.54
Upton	15737	2	8.39	0.53
Wallasey	15030	1	9.49	0.63
West Kirby & Thurstaston	13166	6	52.4	3.98
Total	313,079	55	650.5	2.07

- 3.19 An analysis by Electoral Ward does not always take account of the wider pattern of provision across the area, for example, where a major site in one Ward may also serve a catchment population within an adjacent Ward.
- 3.20 The inclusion of the larger Country Parks also has a significant effect on the totals for some Wards. Unlike the smaller local parks, many of the Country Parks are facilities of Borough wide importance located in areas more remote from residential communities. The results of the Ward based analysis therefore needs to be cross-referred against the mapped distribution of open space set out in Appendix [x] to this report.
- 3.21 An analysis of the above data illustrates the following key issues:
- Five of the Six Wards with provision ahead of the Borough average have Country Parks within their boundaries. The sixth, Claughton Ward, includes Birkenhead Park (57.49 ha), at the eastern edge of the Ward.
 - The Borough wide average excluding the Country Parks would be 0.89ha per 1000 people.

- Liscard Ward has no sites under the Parks and Gardens typology, with no audited parks or formal gardens falling within the Ward. The proximity of Central Park (21.15 ha), in adjoining Seacombe, addresses some of the needs in the southern part of the Ward.
- Bidston and St James Ward has the next lowest level of provision with one site of 2.87ha. This is mainly due to the categorisation of many of the larger open spaces within the Ward as Semi and Natural Greenspace, (Bidston Hill being one)
- Pensby & Thingwall has by far the greatest overall level of provision – nearly a quarter of the Wirral's entire stock of parks and gardens (159.54ha) - but this is accounted for by Arrowe Country Park (153 ha) in the northern most part of the Ward. The only other Park and Garden in this Ward is Ridgewood Park in Pensby.
- The figure for Moreton West and Saughall Massie is dominated by North Wirral Coastal Park (88.09 ha).
- The average site size for the Borough is [20ha] or [9ha] excluding the 5 Country Parks
- Bromborough has the greatest number of sites (7). However, these total just 9.85ha, giving an average site size of 1.41ha.

Quality – Parks and Gardens

- 3.22 Quality inspections were undertaken as part of the site visit to each of the sites. The quality assessment was based on a number of key criteria encompassing the quality aspects of the Green Flag Award, ILAM Parks Management Guidance and the Tidy Britain Scheme. (See Map2) The key criteria for Parks and Gardens are set out in Table 3.4.

Table3.4 Parks and Gardens Quality Criteria

Parks and Gardens	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Entrance areas • Presence and quality of signage and information • Boundary fencing and hedges • Tree management • The quality of key furniture including seats, bins, toilets • The quality of maintenance, grass cutting, pathways • Cleanliness • The quality of specific facilities including play provision, bowls greens and multi-use games areas (shown as separate assessment)
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3.23 A summary of the quality scores for each Ward is shown below in Table 3.5. It should be noted that the quality of individual facilities such as play areas and playing pitches have been scored separately and are considered in a later section of this report. Wards that rated above the overall average for quality are indicated in Green and those that rated below the Borough average are indicated in Red

3.24 Quality scores for each individual site are provided in Appendix [x] of this report.

Table3.5 Parks and Gardens Summary Quality Scores by Electoral Ward

Ward	Area population	Total sites	Quality range (%)	Average quality score
Bebington	15424	3	28%-58%	43%
Bidston & St James	14225	1	29%	29%
Birkenhead & Tranmere	14149	2	37%-71%	54%
Bromborough	13822	7	15%-48%	35%
Clatterbridge	14701	3	54%-81%	63%
Claughton	14615	1	45%	45%
Eastham	13988	2	54%-78%	66%
Greasby Frankby & Irby	14569	3	47%-78%	62%
Heswall	13723	4	39%-58%	45%
Hoylake & Meols	13337	5	32%-63%	49%
Leasowe & Moreton East	14368	2	26%-58%	42%
Liscard	14602	0	N/A	N/A

Footnote* - (based on a population of 313,079 Source: ONS Mid Year 2005)].
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Ward	Area population	Total sites	Quality range (%)	Average quality score
Moreton West & Saughall Massie	13932	2	33%-44%	39%
New Brighton	13969	4	59%-66%	62%
Oxton	13841	1	42%	42%
Pensby & Thingwall	13386	2	28%-44%	36%
Prenton	14032	1	29%	29%
Rock Ferry	13959	1	36%	36%
Seacombe	14504	2	43%-59%	51%
Upton	15737	2	34%-44%	39%
Wallasey	15030	1	54%	54%
West Kirby & Thurstaston	13166	6	29%-70%	51%
Total	313,079	55	15%-81%	48%

3.25 Analysis of the data collected shows the following key issues:

- The Borough wide average score for the quality of Parks and Gardens sites was 48%, at the top end of the lower middle range of potential scores against the key criteria in Table 2.2.
- There is a significant variation in the range of quality scores – from 15% (very low) to 81% (very high)
- The average score for twelve Wards (55% of the wards in the Borough) falls below the Borough average of 48%
- The Borough currently has 8 Green Flag Parks, which must achieve a minimum score of 75% to qualify for the Award.
- The two Wards with the lowest overall quality rating – Prenton and Bidston & St James – have only one site in each Ward
- Eastham obtained the highest overall average score – of 66%. However, this was only across two sites, one of which had obtained a Green Flag Award.
- For Wards with four or more sites, New Brighton scored the highest (62%), with all sites of a consistently good standard (59-66% range) while Bromborough scored worst (35%) with scores ranging from 15% to 48%
- Within the three sub-categories, local parks scored an average of 47% (average); large parks 53% (average) and formal gardens 45% (below average)
- Of the sites assessed, 7 of the 55 had no litter bins (13%); 26 had no signage (47%) and 13 had no seating (24%). Only eight sites (15%) had lighting and eight sites offered toilets (15%).

Footnote* - (based on a population of 313,079 Source: ONS Mid Year 2005)].

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Accessibility – Parks and Gardens

- 3.26 In considering the accessibility threshold Table 3.5 identifies that 48% of the total number of households in the Borough are within 400m of a park or garden site, Table 3.5 also identifies the breakdown within each of Ward Areas and the percentage of households within 400m of parks and gardens. It is important to recognise that where there may be accessibility deficiencies these may be met by sites classified within the other typologies (See Map 5)

Table 3.5 Accessibility threshold by Ward Area

Area	Number of households in Area	No. of households within 400m catchment	% of households <u>within</u> catchment area	% of households <u>outside</u> catchment area
Bebington	6,709	3,263	49%	51%
Bidston & St James	7,461	3,044	41%	59%
Birkenhead & Tranmere	8,069	3,853	48%	52%
Bromborough	6,844	4,153	61%	39%
Clatterbridge	6,041	2,630	44%	56%
Claughton	6,740	3,120	46%	54%
Eastham	6,153	2,003	33%	67%
Greasby Frankby & Irby	6,176	2,942	48%	52%
Heswall	6,015	3,604	60%	40%
Hoyle & Meols	6,040	3,402	56%	44%
Leasowe & Moreton East	6,700	3,110	46%	54%
Liscard	7,086	2,579	36%	64%
Moreton West & Saughall Massie	6,220	3,123	50%	50%
New Brighton	7,231	4,126	57%	43%
Oxton	7,152	2,474	35%	65%
Pensby & Thingwall	6,100	3,373	55%	45%
Prenton	6,142	3,112	51%	49%
Rock Ferry	7,114	3,325	47%	53%
Seacombe	7,326	5,311	72%	28%
Upton	7,355	2,958	40%	60%
Wallasey	6,587	1,560	24%	76%
West Kirby & Thurstaston	5,809	3,864	67%	33%

Footnote* - (based on a population of 313,079 Source: ONS Mid Year 2005)].
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Area	Number of households in Area	No. of households within 400m catchment	% of households <u>within</u> catchment area	% of households <u>outside</u> catchment area
Total	147,070	70,929	48%	52%

3.27 From Table 3.5 the following the accessibility of parks and gardens can be summarised as follows

- Seacombe has the greatest number of households within the defined catchment with 72% of all households within 400m of a park or garden, West Kirkby and Thurstaston has 67% of households within the catchment .
- Wallasey has the least percentage of households within the defined catchment for parks and gardens with 245 of the total households in the Ward being within the threshold, Eastham also has a low percentage of households(33% within the catchment.
- 8 Wards fall below the average of 48% of households within the 400 m catchment threshold for parks and gardens

Comparison at the Ward level can be misleading and need to be viewed in the context of the overall open and green space provision in each Area. Owing to the fact that a Ward may be deficient in parks but have a surplus of other types of greenspace that may serve the function of a local park.

Standards

Recommended Standard	
Quantity	To achieve and maintain a minimum standard of 2.07ha for every 1,000 people across Wirral MBC
Quality	To achieve 61% or above as the minimum standard for Parks and Gardens in the Borough To Maintain the Boroughs 8 Green Flag Parks to achieve scores above 75%
Accessibility	To maintain all the Borough's Country Parks to achieve 75% or above To focus improvements on Wards with the most limited existing provision under this typology To provide an accessible park or garden within 400m of where people live

Natural and Semi Natural Greenspace

Natural and Semi Natural green spaces are areas of unmanaged or managed land promoting a countryside experience or a wildlife, biodiversity interest such as a Local Nature Reserve. These sites, take a variety of forms, which are often important for their contribution to biodiversity and habitats for flora and fauna as well as provision for informal recreation and the appreciation of nature. ***The typology can include green corridors, woodlands, scrubland, wetland and other nature conservation areas.***

Quantity – Natural and Semi Natural Greenspace

- 3.28 The audit revealed a total of 83 sites within the Natural and Semi Natural Greenspace typology, occupying 506.3 hectares of land and providing a current standard of **1.62ha for every 1,000** residents across the Borough as a whole. Further detail on sites included under this typology can be found in Appendix [4] to this report.(See Map1)
- 3.29 The sites include:
- 10 Nature Reserves (187.14 ha or 0.59ha per 1,000)
 - 73 General natural areas (319.17 ha or 1.01ha per 1,000)
- 3.30 The breakdown of total space by Ward is shown in Table 3.6 below.

Table 3.6 Provision of Natural and Semi Natural Greenspace by Electoral Ward

Ward	Area population	Total sites	Total hectares	Hectares per 1,000
Bebington	15424	3	17.8	1.16
Bidston & St James	14225	10	109.4	7.70
Birkenhead & Tranmere	14149	0	N/A	N/A
Bromborough	13822	6	36.8	0.71
Clatterbridge	14701	11	46.9	2.67
Claughton	14615	2	1.7	0.12
Eastham	13988	3	7.8	0.06
Greasby Frankby & Irby	14569	7	28.4	1.95
Heswall	13723	7	49.5	3.61
Hoylake & Meols	13337	6	18.9	1.42

Ward	Area population	Total sites	Total hectares	Hectares per 1,000
Leasowe & Moreton East	14368	3	2.3	0.16
Liscard	14602	2	2.6	0.18
Moreton West & Saughall Massie	13932	2	1.2	0.09
New Brighton	13969	0	N/A	N/A
Oxton	13841	0	N/A	N/A
Pensby & Thingwall	13386	0	N/A	N/A
Prenton	14032	2	3.2	0.07
Rock Ferry	13959	2	1.5	0.11
Seacombe	14504	0	N/A	N/A
Upton	15737	6	20.1	1.28
Wallasey	15030	1	14.9	0.99
West Kirby & Thurstaston	13166	10	143.2	10.93
Total	313,079	83	506.3	1.62

3.31 The figures in Table 3.6 do not include the large areas of natural and semi natural greenspace associated with many of the Borough's Country Parks, which are classified under a separate typology as Parks and Gardens.

3.32 An analysis of the above data, nevertheless, illustrates the following key issues:

- Five Wards with no NSNG provision at all and the number of Wards with a low number of sites, underlines the uneven distribution of this type of open space across the Borough.
- The low level of provision recorded for Eastham and Moreton West and Saughall Massie excludes the substantial areas of semi natural greenspace associated with Eastham Country Park and North Wirral Coastal Park
- West Kirby & Thurstaston has the highest overall level of provision – with over a quarter of the Borough's stock of NSNG space (143.2ha) split across 10 sites including Thurstaston Common, which (75 ha) which is the largest single NSGN site in Wirral[?]
- The high level of provision in Bidston and St James contrasts strongly with the low level of provision recorded for Parks and Gardens. In other Wards, such as [Liscard, New Brighton,

Footnote* - (based on a population of 313,079 Source: ONS Mid Year 2005)].

Birkenhead and Prenton], the low level of provision of NSNG as well as of Parks and Gardens illustrates a cumulative shortfall of open space.

- The average site size for the Borough is 6.1ha
- Clatterbridge has the greatest number of sites (11) with an average size of 4.26ha.

Quality – Natural and Semi Natural Green Space

3.33 Quality inspections were undertaken as part of the site visit to each of the sites. The quality assessment was based on a number of key criteria encompassing the quality aspects of the Green Flag Award, ILAM Parks Management Guidance and the Tidy Britain Scheme. (See Map 2) The key criteria for NSNG are set out in Table 3.7.

Table 3.7 Natural and Semi Natural Greenspace Assessment

Criteria

Natural & Semi Natural Greenspace	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Entrance areas • Presence and quality of signage and information • Boundary fencing and hedges • Tree management mature and young trees • The quality of key furniture including seats, bins, dog bins • Naturalistic Grass Areas • The quality of maintenance, grass cutting, pathways • Cleanliness
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3.34 A summary of the quality scores for each Ward is shown below in Table 3.8. Quality scores for each individual site are provided in Appendix [x] to this report.

Table 3.8 Natural and Semi Natural Greenspace Summary Quality Scores by Electoral Ward

Ward	Area population	Total sites	Quality range (%)	Average quality score
Bebington	15424	3	20-65	43%
Bidston & St James	14225	10	9-59	30%
Birkenhead & Tranmere	14149	0	N/A	N/A
Bromborough	13822	6*	10-35	22%
Clatterbridge	14701	11	15-50	28%
Claughton	14615	2	2-13	8%

Footnote* - (based on a population of 313,079 Source: ONS Mid Year 2005)].

Ward	Area population	Total sites	Quality range (%)	Average quality score
Eastham	13988	3	33-38	35%
Greasby Frankby & Irby	14569	7	16-62	34%
Heswall	13723	7	26-37	32%
Hoylake & Meols	13337	6	23-36	30%
Leasowe & Moreton East	14368	3	7-29	16%
Liscard	14602	2	17-28	22%
Moreton West & Saughall Massie	13932	2	15-18	17%
New Brighton	13969	0	N/A	N/A
Oxton	13841	0	N/A	N/A
Pensby & Thingwall	13386	0	N/A	N/A
Prenton	14032	2*	42	42%
Rock Ferry	13959	2	16-24	20%
Seacombe	14504	0	N/A	N/A
Upton	15737	6	6-35	18%
Wallasey	15030	1	46	46%
West Kirby & Thurstaston	13166	10	25-64	40%
Total	313,079	83	2-65	29%

3.35 Analysis of the data collected shows the following key issues:

- The Borough wide average score for the quality of NSNG sites was 29%, rating within the low band width range of potential scores against the key criteria in Table 3.7.
- The low scores are largely accounted for by the fact that 51 sites (61% of sites classified within this typology) lacked signage, 63 sites (76%) had no litter bin and 63 sites (76%) had no seating for visitors. Important elements that contribute to the visitor experience..
- There is a wide variation in the range of quality scores achieved – from 2% (very low) to 65% (high)
- Claughton has the lowest overall quality rating, scoring just 8% across two sites, including the poorest site in the Borough – Vyner Road South Open Space, which scored just 2%.

Footnote* - (based on a population of 313,079 Source: ONS Mid Year 2005)].

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- Every Ward with multiple sites has at least one site with a score classified as low
- Wallasey scored the highest overall Average –of 46% (. However, this was across only one site – Cross Lane Community Woodland, it is important to recognise that this was not the highest scoring natural and semi natural greenspace. It is the only site classified within this typology within Wallasey. The highest scoring site was found to be Storeton Wood in Bebbington (rated at 65%)
- [Of Wards with four or more sites, West Kirby & Thurstaston scored highest (40%), with several sites of a consistently middle scoring quality (25-64% range), while Upton scored worst (18%) with scores ranging from 6% to 35%.

Natural England Standards

- 3.36 Natural England (formerly English Nature) has recommended that local authorities set standards relating to natural greenspace provision known as the Accessible Natural Greenspace Standard (ANGSt). This guidance was formally issued in 1996 within 'A Space for Nature'. The recommended standards are:
- That no person should be located more than 300m from their nearest area of natural greenspace of at least 2ha in size;
 - Provision of at least 1ha of Local Nature Reserve per 1,000 population;
 - That there should be at least one accessible 20ha site within 2km from home;
 - That there should be one accessible 100ha site within 5km; and
 - That there should be one accessible 500ha site within 10km.
- 3.37 The ANGSt model was reviewed by Natural England (then known as English Nature) in 2003 (Accessible Natural Greenspace Standards in Towns and Cities: A Review and Toolkit). The review identified a number of problems with the model.
- 3.38 The definition used within the model of natural greenspace as “areas naturally colonised by plants and animals” was identified as being unclear and not practical. The definition also excluded man made types of vegetation, which predominate within urban areas, which can often also have a high biodiversity value.
- 3.39 Natural England has yet to adopt revised natural greenspace standards following the review. However, the review does recommend that the ecological value of greenspace should be determined through undertaking a Phase 1 Habitat survey. National planning policy also recommends that local authorities adopt locally based standards of provision rather than adopt nationally derived standards without local justification.

3.40 The Wirral audit findings reveal that:

- There is **506 ha** of provision, equating to **1.72ha** per 1,000 population of natural and semi natural greenspace
- 41 sites are below 2 ha in size
- 42 sites fall between the 2-20 ha category, identified within the ANGSt Standards

Area	Number of households in Area	No. of households within 400m catchment	% of households <u>within</u> catchment area	% of households <u>outside</u> catchment area
Bebington	6,709	2,232	33%	67%
Bidston & St James	7,461	3,640	49%	51%
Birkenhead & Tranmere	8,069	0	0%	100%
Bromborough	6,844	4,126	60%	40%
Clatterbridge	6,041	4,761	79%	21%
Cloughton	6,740	2,142	32%	68%
Eastham	6,153	2,144	35%	65%
Greasby Frankby & Irby	6,176	4,435	72%	28%
Heswall	6,015	3,703	62%	38%
Hoylake & Meols	6,040	2,744	45%	55%
Leasowe & Moreton East	6,700	2,141	32%	68%
Liscard	7,086	1,417	20%	80%
Moreton West & Saughall Massie	6,220	1,571	25%	75%
New Brighton	7,231	0	0%	100%
Oxton	7,152	0	0%	100%
Pensby & Thingwall	6,100	614	10%	90%
Prenton	6,142	1,494	24%	76%
Rock Ferry	7,114	1,249	18%	82%
Seacombe	7,326	157	2%	98%
Upton	7,355	4,536	62%	38%

Footnote* - (based on a population of 313,079 Source: ONS Mid Year 2005)].

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Wallasey	6,587	1,847	28%	72%
West Kirby & Thurstaston	5,809	3,994	69%	31%
Total	147,070	48,947	33%	67%

- 9 sites are over 20 ha in size
- Under ANGSt there would be a requirement for 313 ha of land designated as Local Nature Reserve. At present Wirral has only ten sites designated as Local Nature Reserves covering 187.14 ha, implying a potential requirement for a further 128ha of land to be designated as Local Nature Reserve. It is important to note that this standard applies only for sites officially designated as Local Nature Reserves as such the Borough needs to identify sites that could be officially designated from within the existing natural and semi natural greenspace provision.

Accessibility – Natural and Semi Natural Green Space

- 3.41 In considering the accessibility threshold Table 3.9 identifies that 33% of the total number of households in the Borough are within 400m of a natural and semi natural greenspace site, Table 3.9 also identifies the breakdown within each of Ward Areas and the percentage of households within 400m of natural and semi natural greenspace. It is important to recognise that where there may be accessibility deficiencies these may be met by sites classified within the other typologies(See Map6)

Table 3.9 Accessibility threshold by Ward Area

- 3.42 From Table 3.9 the following the accessibility of natural and semi natural greenspace can be summarised as follows
- Clatterbridge has the greatest number of households within the defined catchment with 79% of all households within 400m of a natural and semi natural greenspace, West Kirkby and Thurstaston has 69% of households within the catchment.
 - 3 Wards Birkenhead &Tranmere, New Brighton and Oxtan have no sites that have been classified as having the primary purpose of being natural and semi natural greenspace
 - Seacombe has the lowest percentage of households within the defined catchment for natural and semi natural greenspace with 2% of the total households in the Ward being within the threshold, Seacombe has the greatest number of households within the catchment for parks and gardens and it has to be recognised that the parks and gardens with the variety of habitats and landscape may serve a similar purpose to natural and semi natural greenspace in providing people with access to nature.
 - 12 Wards fall below the current average of 33% of households within the 400 m catchment threshold for natural and semi natural

greenspace

- 3.43.1 Comparison at the Ward level can be misleading and need to be viewed in the context of the overall open and green space provision in each Area. Owing to the fact that a Ward may be deficient in parks but have a surplus of other types of greenspace that may serve the function of a local park.

As a minimum there should be an accessible natural or semi natural greenspace within 400m of where people live

DRAFT

Standards

Recommended Standard	
Quantity	<p>To achieve and maintain a minimum standard of 1.6 ha for every 1,000 people across Wirral MBC</p> <p>To provide at least 1.0 ha of Local Nature Reserve for every 1000 people</p>
Quality	<p>To achieve 61% or above as the minimum standard for Natural and Semi Natural Greenspaces in the Borough</p> <p>To maintain the Borough's Local Nature Reserves to achieve a score of 75% or above</p> <p>To focus improvements on Wards with the most limited existing provision under this typology balanced against local needs for other alternative forms of provision</p>
Accessibility	<p>To provide an accessible good quality natural or semi natural greenspace within 400m of where people live</p>

Outdoor Sports Facilities

- 3.43 This typology includes a variety of community accessible sports facilities (public and private) providing for participation in outdoor sports, including facilities such as playing pitches, bowling greens and tennis courts.
- 3.44 The audit of provision for outdoor sport includes all those facilities within other typologies including parks and open spaces. It also includes those stand alone sites specifically provided for sport. Further work is required to establish the level and range of community accessible provision that is included within the overall figure. .(See Map 1)
- 3.45 Other more informal facilities, such as multi-use games areas (MUGAs) have been included within the other listed typologies. Given their primary intended use, these sites have been included under the assessment of provision for children and young people.

Quantity – Outdoor Sports Facilities

- 3.46 The audit has revealed a total of 272 potential outdoor sports facilities, occupying 1617.11 hectares of land. This equates to a current standard of **5.17ha for every 1,000** residents across the Borough as a whole
- 3.47 It is important to note that the level and extent of community use of school playing fields has not been established due to no extensive consultation being undertaken during the course of this assessment
- 3.48 Further detail on the sites included under this typology can be found in Appendix [4] to this report.
- 3.49 The sites can be classified as follows:
- 58 bowling green sites providing 78 greens (14.50 ha or 0.05ha per 1000) this is provided on 29 private sites(3.74ha) with 31 greens, 27 public sites (5.87 ha) with 45 greens and on 2 sites with 2 greens
 - 62 active tennis court sites providing 251 courts on 13.64 ha or a provision of 0.04ha per 1000. These are provided on 19 education sites(69 courts on 3.50 ha) a provision of 0.01 ha per 1000, 17 private club sites (92 courts on 5.04 ha) a provision of 0.01 ha per 1000, 5 private school sites (15 courts on 0.94 ha) and 21 public sites (75 courts on 4.16ha) a provision of 0.01 ha per 1000. There is also one site that is classified as a seasonal provision, and provides 4 courts on 0.18 ha
 - 13 Artificial Turf Pitches(ATP's) (6.67 ha or 0.02 ha per 1000)

- There are 123 playing fields providing 323.99ha or 1.0ha per 1000(this figure needs to be treated with caution as it includes all provision). Ideally provision needs to reflect only those facilities that are accessible to the community; as such private sites and schools need to be consulted to establish the level and range of provision that is readily accessible to the community through formal access agreements.
- 54 public playing fields providing 153 pitches on 185.82 ha (0.59ha per 1000). The playing fields provide the following
 - 136 football pitches(92 senior, 28 junior and 16 mini pitches)
 - 3 Rugby pitches
 - 4 Cricket tables
 - 2 Grass Hockey pitches
 - 8 pitches that are for other sport
- 22 Education sites providing 31 pitches on 38.39ha (0.122 ha per 1000) the pitch provision is as follows 3 junior football, 11 rugby pitches, 6 cricket wickets, 6 grass hockey and 5 synthetic or gravel pitch provision
- 47 private sites providing 99 pitches on 99.78 ha (0.3 ha per 1000) the private sites provide the following
 - 30 football pitches(25 senior, 0 junior and 5 mini pitches)
 - 32 Rugby pitches(28 senior and 5 mini pitches)
 - 24 Cricket
 - 1 Grass Hockey pitches
 - 11 pitches that are for other sport
- 16 golf courses (588.27 ha or 1.87ha per 1000)
- 3 athletics tracks (4.54ha)

3.50 The breakdown of total space by Ward is shown in Table 3.10 below.

Table 3.10 Quantitative Provision of Outdoor Sports Facilities (total) by Electoral Ward

Ward	Area population	Total sites	Total hectares	Hectares per 1,000
Bebington	15,424	14	112.79	7.31
Bidston & St James	14,225	9	38.76	2.72
Birkenhead & Tranmere	14,149	4	2.87	0.20

Footnote* - (based on a population of 313,079 Source: ONS Mid Year 2005)].
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Ward	Area population	Total sites	Total hectares	Hectares per 1,000
Bromborough	13,822	13	34.87	2.52
Clatterbridge	14,701	8	86.48	5.88
Claughton	14,615	14	108.35	7.41
Eastham	13,988	19	163.40	11.68
Greasby Frankby & Irby	14,569	10	26.15	1.79
Heswall	13,723	14	75.11	5.47
Hoyle & Meols	13,337	19	136.67	10.25
Leasowe & Moreton East	14,368	19	149.78	10.42
Liscard	14,602	5	5.02	0.34
Moreton West & Saughall Massie	13,932	6	31.42	2.26
New Brighton	13,969	8	16.96	1.21
Oxton	13,841	12	39.01	2.82
Pensby & Thingwall	13,386	13	184.98	13.82
Prenton	14,032	11	64.62	4.61
Rock Ferry	13,959	12	28.82	2.06
Seacombe	14,504	11	34.29	2.36
Upton	15,737	13	56.52	3.59
Wallasey	15,030	22	122.20	8.13
West Kirby & Thurstaston	13,166	16	98.04	7.45
Total	313,079	272	1617.11	5.17

3.51 An analysis of the data in the table highlights the following key points with regard to the overall quantity of outdoor sports facilities:

- The lowest level of provision is Birkenhead & Tranmere, which has four sites totalling 2.87ha which is equivalent to 0.20ha/1,000. Liscard also has few sites classified as outdoor sport (5 sites totalling 5.02ha or a provision of 0.34 ha per 1000 population) There are 11 Wards with a provision level under the Borough average of 5.17ha per 1,000.
- Eastham has highest level of provision overall, with 163.40 ha, equivalent to 11.68 ha per 1,000,
- The average site size is 3.76 hectares excluding golf courses 6.1

Footnote* - (based on a population of 313,079 Source: ONS Mid Year 2005)].

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hectares (including golf courses)

- Wallasey has the greatest number of sites (22)

3.52 UDP Standards state there is to be a provision of playing fields (school, public and private) with secured community use of 1.21ha per 1000, further detailed work is required to establish the level and extent of community use especially on education and private sites.

3.53 The Council has undertaken a Playing Pitch Strategy (undertaken in 2002 and adopted in 2004 and ideally this needs to be updated to reflect the changes to the Towards a Level Playing Field methodology advocate by Sport England. This will provide the Council with a clear and comprehensive needs based assessment of supply and demand for sports pitches and the level and extent of future provision predicted through the use of team generation rates based on participating population.

Quality – Outdoor Sports Facilities

3.54 Quality inspections were undertaken as part of the site visit to each of the publicly-accessible sites. The quality assessment was based on a number of key criteria encompassing the quality aspects of the Green Flag Award, as well as criteria detailed in Towards a Level Playing Field – the playing pitch assessment guidance issued by Sport England. (See Map 2) The key criteria for Formal Outdoor Sport are set out in Table 3.11.

Table 3.11 Assessment Criteria for Outdoor Sports Sites

Outdoor Sport	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Entrance areas• Presence and quality of signage and information• Boundary fencing and hedges• Tree management mature and young trees• The quality of key furniture including seats, bins, dog bins• The quality of maintenance, grass cutting, pathways• Cleanliness• Facility Assessment(pitches, greens courts)
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3.55 Only publicly accessible sites were evaluated for quality. Private sites with no right of public access have not been assessed. A significant number of sites have therefore not been quality scored. The results set out in Table 3.12 below only refer to the audited facilities (total number 44). The list of sites included is provided in Appendix [x].

3.56 [The quality scores for each site audited are provided in Appendix [x] to this report.

3.57 A summary of the quality scores for each Ward is shown below in Table 3.12.

Table 3.12 Outdoor Sports Facilities Summary Quality Scores by Electoral Ward

Ward	Area population	Quality range (%)	Average quality score
Bebington	15424	34-66	45%
Bidston & St James	14225	77	77%
Birkenhead & Tranmere	14149	N/A	N/A
Bromborough	13822	15-56	34%
Clatterbridge	14701	N/A	N/A
Claughton	14615	31-44	39%
Eastham	13988	18-30	26%
Greasby Frankby & Irby	14569	N/A	N/A
Heswall	13723	31-43	38%
Hoylake & Meols	13337	27-29	28%
Leasowe & Moreton East	14368	22-39	31%
Liscard	14602	21	21%
Moreton West & Saughall Massie	13932	38	38%
New Brighton	13969	36	36%
Oxton	13841	13-15	14%
Pensby & Thingwall	13386	37-70	54%
Prenton	14032	27	27%
Rock Ferry	13959	N/A	N/A
Seacombe	14504	34	34%
Upton	15737	47	47%
Wallasey	15030	9-34	21%
West Kirby & Thurstaston	13166	20-68	41%
Total	313,079	9-77	36%

3.58 It is important to note that the audit was undertaken out of season for many pitch based sports as such many sites were not rated for the quality of pitches, this has a marked effect on the average quality as

Footnote* - (based on a population of 313,079 Source: ONS Mid Year 2005)].
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potential good quality sites have not been rated. It is equally important to realise that the audit is a snapshot in time and again quality may vary dependent on whether sites audited had been cut that week, had suffered from extensive litter or over use for example following a weekend of wet weather.

3.59 Analysis of the data collected shows the following key issues:

- Across Wirral MBC as a whole, publicly accessible sites scored an average of 36% - a lower middle score. 11 Wards obtained a lower middle score, five a low score, one a very low score. Only two Wards obtained an upper middle score or very high score.

Area	Number of households in Area	No. of households within 1,000m catchment	% of households within catchment area	% of households outside catchment area
Bebington	6,709	6,672	99%	1%
Bidston & St James	7,461	7,131	96%	4%
Birkenhead & Tranmere	8,069	7,190	89%	11%
Bromborough	6,844	5,837	85%	15%
Clatterbridge	6,041	4,829	80%	20%
Claughton	6,740	6,740	100%	0%
Eastham	6,153	5,741	93%	7%
Greasby Frankby & Irby	6,176	5,837	95%	5%
Heswall	6,015	5,328	89%	11%
Hoylake & Meols	6,040	5,906	98%	2%
Leasowe & Moreton East	6,700	4,862	73%	27%
Liscard	7,086	7,086	100%	0%
Moreton West & Saughall Massie	6,220	5,928	95%	5%
New Brighton	7,231	7,231	100%	0%
Oxton	7,152	7,151	100%	0%
Pensby & Thingwall	6,100	4,083	67%	33%
Prenton	6,142	6,142	100%	0%
Rock Ferry	7,114	7,115	100%	0%
Seacombe	7,326	7,222	99%	1%

Footnote* - (based on a population of 313,079 Source: ONS Mid Year 2005)].

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Upton	7,355	6,976	95%	5%
Wallasey	6,587	6,587	100%	0%
West Kirby & Thurstaston	5,809	4,609	79%	21%
Total	147,070	136,203	93%	7%

- There is a significant range of qualities shown by the results, from 9% (very low) to 77% (very high)
- Oxtun has the lowest overall quality rating, scoring 14% across two sites. The poorest site overall was in Wallasey – the School Lane Playing Fields, which scored just 9%
- Bidston & St James scored highest, but only over one site – Bidston Sports Centre – which was the highest scoring site in the audit (77%)
- Only three Wards had five or more publicly accessible sites – Bromborough (score 34%); Wallasey (21%) and West Kirby & Thurstaston (41%)

3.60 It is important to note that many of the private sites were not rated for quality and from experience the quality of these sites does tend to be slightly higher as they often have dedicated grounds men, have a greater control in bad weather and have limited misuse though illegal or informal play.

Accessibility – Outdoor Sport

3.61 In considering the accessibility threshold Table 3.13 identifies that 93% of the total number of households in the Borough are within 1000m of an outdoor sports site, Table 3.13 also identifies the breakdown within each of Ward Areas and the percentage of households within 1000m of outdoor sport sites. It is important to recognise that where there may be accessibility deficiencies these may be met by sites classified within the other typologies (See Map 8)

Table 3.13 Accessibility threshold by Ward Area

- 3.62 From Table 3.13 the following the accessibility of outdoor sport based on distance thresholds can be summarised as follows
- 7 wards have 100% of households within the defined threshold (Claughton, Liscard, New Brighton, Oxtun, Prenton, Rock Ferry and Wallasey)
 - Bebington, Bidston St James, Eastham, Hoyle & Meols, Moreton West & Saughall Massie, Seacombe and Upton all have over 90% of households within the catchment of 1000m
 - 7 wards fall below the current average of 93% of all households within 100m of a sports facility site (Bromborough, Clatterbridge, Heswall, Leasowe and Moreton Pensby & Thingwall and West Kirby & Thurstaston)
 - It is important to recognise that golf courses and school playing fields

are included and these are not fully accessible and a such further research is needed to establish the level and extent of community use is available.

- 2.1 Sport facilities are a demand led provision and as such the Council needs to consider supply and demand using the Playing Pitch Strategy as the point of reference for future provision rather than the quantitative standards identified above.

Standards

Recommended Standard	
Quantity	To establish standards based on supply and demand and to establish provision per 1000 based on community accessible sites
Quality	To achieve 61% or above as the minimum standard for Outdoor sports provision
Accessibility	To provide a good quality Sports facility within 1000m of where people live

Amenity Green Space

The Amenity Green Space (AGS) typology includes *open space in housing areas, village greens, informal recreational space and hard-surfaced areas designed for pedestrians that provide opportunities for informal activities close to home or work*. They may function both as casual recreation areas as well as providing aesthetic value.

- 3.63 The AGS sites in this study have been split into two types:
- Active amenity spaces – locally accessible areas which provide opportunities for informal activities, for example dog walking or informal play
 - Visual amenity spaces – areas which generally only improve the visual appearance of residential or built-up areas.

Quantity – Amenity Green Space

- 3.64 The audit revealed a total of 137 sites classified as Amenity Green Space (AGS) typology. Ppg17 guidance advocates a size threshold of 0.2 ha, However for the purpose of this assessment the audit has included sites of 0.1 ha (This ensures that the small greenspaces

provided in housing areas for informal recreation are recognised, the reason being these are often the only local space children and young people may have to play on close to where they live). See Map1

- 3.65 The sites can be classified as follows:
- active amenity spaces – 72 sites totalling 90.3 hectares (or 0.28ha per 1,000)
 - visual amenity spaces – 65 sites totalling 28.7 hectares (or 0.09ha per 1,000)
- 3.66 The total provision of AGS is therefore 119 hectares, equal to **0.38ha for every 1,000** residents across the Borough as a whole. Further detail on the sites included under this typology can be found in Appendix [4] to this report.
- 3.67 The breakdown of total space by Ward is shown in Table 3.14 below.

Table 3.14 Quantitative Provision of Amenity Green Space (total) by Electoral Ward

Ward	Area population	Total sites	Total hectares	Hectares per 1,000
Bebington	15424	4	1.8	0.12
Bidston & St James	14225	10	14.9	1.05
Birkenhead & Tranmere	14149	2	0.7	0.05
Bromborough	13822	18	13.1	0.95
Clatterbridge	14701	7	2.7	0.18
Claughton	14615	7	5.4	0.37
Eastham	13988	5	4.6	0.33
Greasby Frankby & Irby	14569	6	2.6	0.18
Heswall	13723	1	0.5	0.04
Hoylake & Meols	13337	5	3.4	0.26
Leasowe & Moreton East	14368	5	2.5	0.17
Liscard	14602	3	1.6	0.11
Moreton West & Saughall Massie	13932	8	8.5	0.61
New Brighton	13969	11	12.4	0.89
Oxton	13841	6	4.2	0.30
Pensby & Thingwall	13386	2	1.8	0.14

Footnote* - (based on a population of 313,079 Source: ONS Mid Year 2005)].
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Ward	Area population	Total sites	Total hectares	Hectares per 1,000
Prenton	14032	1	0.2	0.01
Rock Ferry	13959	6	5.5	0.42
Seacombe	14504	5	2.7	0.19
Upton	15737	9	4.6	0.29
Wallasey	15030	8	24.0	1.6
West Kirby & Thurstaston	13166	4	1.4	0.11
Total	313,079	137	119	0.38

3.68 An analysis of the data in Table 2.7 highlights the following key points:

- The lowest level of provision is in Prenton, which has only one audited AGS site of 0.2ha. Heswall too has just one site, of 0.5ha.
- The highest level of provision is in Wallasey (24 hectares), over 19 hectares of which is at Kings Parade which has been split into five sub-sites
- Bidston & St James is the only other Ward with more than 1ha of AGS for every thousand people. The majority of Wards have levels of provision well below this level.
- Bromborough has the greatest number of sites (18) ahead of New Brighton (11) and Bidston & St James (10).
- The average overall site size is 0.87ha, which provides a reasonably sized site likely to be useful to local people and to function strongly as amenity space close to where people live

3.69 **The provision of AGS needs to be considered alongside the local provision of other types of open space such as Parks and Gardens and provision for Children and Young People.**

Quality – Amenity Green Space

3.70 Quality inspections were undertaken as part of the site visit to each of the AGS sites. The quality assessment was based on a number of key criteria encompassing the quality aspects of the Green Flag Award, ILAM Parks Management Guidance and the Tidy Britain Scheme. (See Map 2) The key criteria for AGS are set out in Table 2.2.

3.71 The sites have been assessed against the quality line shown in Figure 3.15. The quality scores for each site are provided in Appendix [x] to this report.

Table 3.15 Assessment Criteria for Amenity Greenspace

Amenity Space

- Presence and quality of signage and information
- Boundary fencing and hedges
- Tree management
- The quality of key furniture including seats, bins, dog bins
- The quality of maintenance, grass cutting, pathways
- Cleanliness

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3.72 A summary of the quality scores for each Ward is shown below as Table . 3.16

Table 3.16 Amenity Green Space Summary Quality Scores by Electoral Ward

Ward	Area population	Total sites	Quality range (%)	Average quality score
Bebington	15424	4	29-58	48%
Bidston & St James	14225	10	26-72	41%
Birkenhead & Tranmere	14149	2	38-41	39%
Bromborough	13822	18	5-54	25%
Clatterbridge	14701	7	39-56	49%
Claughton	14615	7	21-54	33%
Eastham	13988	5	11-35	25%
Greasby Frankby & Irby	14569	6	17-58	39%
Heswall	13723	1	48	48%
Hoylake & Meols	13337	5	36-57	49%
Leasowe & Moreton East	14368	5	26-37	32%
Liscard	14602	3	10-34	22%
Moreton West & Saughall Massie	13932	8	14-44	30%
New Brighton	13969	11	23-60	41%
Oxton	13841	6	17-51	32%
Pensby & Thingwall	13386	2	39-50	45%
Prenton	14032	1	51	51%
Rock Ferry	13959	6	21-53	39%
Seacombe	14504	5	31-55	40%
Upton	15737	9*	8-42	28%
Wallasey	15030	8	25-58	43%
West Kirby & Thurstaston	13166	4	28-50	41%
Total	313,079	137	5-72	38%

* Some sites were not available due to access issues. These have not

Footnote* - (based on a population of 313,079 Source: ONS Mid Year 2005)].

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been counted in the score [these sites include Home Farm Close(Site ID8940), Hoole Road(Site ID 939), New Hey Road (Site ID and Carr Bridge Road Backland all where locked with no access at the time of auditing)

3.73 Analysis of the data in Table 3.16 illustrates the following key issues:

- Across Wirral MBC as a whole, amenity green space scored 38%. No Wards scored a very low rating overall.
- There is notable variation in the quality scores – from 5% (very low) to 72% (high)
- The lowest scoring Wards were Liscard (22%), Bromborough (25%) and Eastham (25%)

Area	Number of households in Area	No. of households within 400m catchment	% of households <u>within</u> catchment area	% of households <u>outside</u> catchment area
Bebington	6,709	3,871	58%	42%
Bidston & St James	7,461	5,537	74%	26%
Birkenhead & Tranmere	8,069	2,533	31%	69%
Bromborough	6,844	5,506	80%	20%
Clatterbridge	6,041	3,611	60%	40%
Claughton	6,740	4,771	71%	29%
Eastham	6,153	3,540	58%	42%
Greasby Frankby & Irby	6,176	3,459	56%	44%
Heswall	6,015	530	9%	91%
Hoylake & Meols	6,040	2,070	34%	66%
Leasowe & Moreton East	6,700	3,280	49%	51%
Liscard	7,086	3,433	48%	52%
Moreton West & Saughall Massie	6,220	4,908	79%	21%
New Brighton	7,231	6,861	95%	5%
Oxton	7,152	3,670	51%	49%
Pensby & Thingwall	6,100	1,643	27%	73%
Prenton	6,142	1,502	24%	76%
Rock Ferry	7,114	5,260	74%	26%
Seacombe	7,326	4,985	68%	32%

Footnote* - (based on a population of 313,079 Source: ONS Mid Year 2005)].

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Upton	7,355	4,636	63%	37%
Wallasey	6,587	4,482	68%	32%
West Kirby & Thurstaston	5,809	2,586	45%	55%
Total	147,070	82,674	56%	44%

- Prenton scored the highest overall score (51%) but this was only across a single site (Osmaston Road War Memorial, Site ID 144)
- Within the two sub-categories, active amenity spaces scored an average of 34% while visual amenity sites scored an average of 39%, both falling within the lower middle range of possible scores
- Of the 137 sites assessed, only 30 had litter bins (22%); 29 had seating (21%) and 22 sites had lighting (16%)

Accessibility – Amenity Greenspace

- 3.74 In considering the accessibility threshold Table 3.17 identifies that 56% of the total number of households in the Borough are within 400m of an amenity greenspace site, Table 3.17 also identifies the breakdown within each of Ward Areas and the percentage of households within 400m of amenity greenspace sites. It is important to recognise that where there may be accessibility deficiencies these may be met by sites classified within the other typologies (See Map 7)

Table 3.17 Accessibility threshold by Ward Area

- 3.75 From Table 3.17 the following the accessibility of amenity greenspace based on distance thresholds can be summarised as follows
- New Brighton has 95% of all households within 400m of amenity greenspace sites
 - Only 9% of households in Heswall have access to amenity greenspace within 400m of where they live
 - The current borough wide average is that 565 of all households are within 400m of amenity greenspace sites.
 - 12 Wards have a higher percentage of households within 400m than the identified average of 56% of households
 - 9 Wards fall below this average for the percentage of households within the 400m threshold

Standards

- 3.76 The National Playing Fields Association in their 6 acre standard identify that there should be a provision of 0.6-0.8ha per1000 of children's playing space including fixed play within housing areas. In considering this if we apply an expected provision of 0.7ha (mid point between 0.6 and 0.8) then the standard would require a provision of 219ha of amenity space.

- 3.77 The Council needs to consider how amenity greenspace is provided in

Footnote* - (based on a population of 313,079 Source: ONS Mid Year 2005)].

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the future .The Council should consider not accepting small fragmented insignificant spaces provided by developers in new residential development as they are often difficult to maintain, they have the potential to become nuisance sites for residents and they provide limited recreational value. The preference should be to seek investment from developers to improve existing space rather than inherit more of the same, If the need is to provide more it is best if the space is consolidated to form a large enough site of recreational purpose as part of the residential layout and development design, ideally if this can be linked to existing space to create a larger site overall this would be more valuable. .

Recommended Standard	
Quantity	0.38 ha per 1,000 population across Wirral MBC as the minimum Future provision to be no less than 1ha in size
Quality	To achieve 61% or above as the minimum standard
Accessibility	To provide amenity greenspace within 400m of where people live

Provision for Children and Young People

- 3.78 Provision for Children and Young People (CYP) consists of areas designed primarily for play and social interaction involving children and young people, such as equipped play areas, multi-use games areas (MUGA), teen shelters, BMX tracks and skateboard parks. The provision of facilities for children and young people is important in facilitating opportunities for play and physical activity and the development of movement and social skills. (See Map 1)
- 3.79 A variety of types of open space can provide children and young people with these opportunities, but the audit has used the principle of 'primary purpose' to define the main typology within which each site should fall.

Quantity – Children and Young People

- 3.80 The audit has revealed a total of 99 sites occupying 25.79 ha or a provision of 0.36 ha per 1000 population. Further detail on the sites included under this typology can be found in Appendix [4] to this report.
- 3.81 The sites can be classified as follows;

73 public play areas (14.34 ha or 0.20ha per 1,000)
 38 Mugas
 4 Skate parks
 1 BMX Track

- 3.82 The above provision is provided by ward as follows in Table 3.18 , its important to note that sites may have a mix of the above facilities

Table 3.18 Provision for Children and Young People by Electoral Ward

Ward	Area population	Total sites	Total hectares	Hectares per 1,000
Bebington	15,424	3	0.38	0.02
Bidston & St James	14,225	10	2.66	0.19
Birkenhead & Tranmere	14,149	3	0.67	0.05
Bromborough	13,822	5	1.21	0.09
Clatterbridge	14,701	4	0.39	0.03
Claughton	14,615	1	0.51	0.03
Eastham	13,988	5	1.19	0.09

Footnote* - (based on a population of 313,079 Source: ONS Mid Year 2005)].
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Ward	Area population	Total sites	Total hectares	Hectares per 1,000
Greasby Frankby & Irby	14,569	2	0.47	0.03
Heswall	13,723	4	0.63	0.05
Hoylake & Meols	13,337	5	0.82	0.06
Leasowe & Moreton East	14,368	10	1.91	0.13
Liscard	14,602	1	0.17	0.01
Moreton West & Saughall Massie	13,932	2	0.30	0.02
New Brighton	13,969	7	3.16	0.23
Oxton	13,841	1	0.19	0.01
Pensby & Thingwall	13,386	2	0.59	0.04
Prenton	14,032	3	0.47	0.03
Rock Ferry	13,959	7	0.81	0.06
Seacombe	14,504	13	3.68	0.25
Upton	15,737	5	0.50	0.03
Wallasey	15,030	3	3.93	0.26
West Kirby & Thurstaston	13,166	3	1.15	0.09
Total	313,079	99	25.79	0.08

3.83 An analysis of the data in Table 3.19 illustrates the following key issues:

- Three wards have one identified site (Claughton, Liscard and Oxton)
- Only three Wards have provision that runs into double figures – Bidston & St James; Leasowe & Moreton East; and Seacombe
- The average number of sites per ward is 5
- The average site size across the Borough is 0.43ha
- In terms of land provided three wards have significantly greater provision (New Brighton 3.16ha, Seacombe 3.68 ha and Wallasey 3.93ha).
- Sites in Wallasey are larger than elsewhere averaging 1.31 ha compared to an average size of 0.26ha across the Borough.

3.84 The Council need to consider moving away from the provision of small sites with limited equipment in favour of larger sites that provide more opportunity and greater play value.

3.85 The provision identified is outlined below by type and by ward

Table 3.20 Provision by Type by Electoral Ward

WARD	Play Area	MUGA	SKATEPARK	BMXTRACK
Bebington	3	2	0	0
Bidston & St James	6	6	0	0
Birkenhead & Tranmere	5	3	0	0
Bromborough	3	2	0	0
Clatterbridge	3	0	0	0
Cloughton	1	1	0	0
Eastham	3	3	1	0
Greasby Frankby & Irby	2	0	0	0
Heswall	4	0	1	0
Hoyle & Meols	4	1	0	0
Leasowe & Moreton East	10	3	0	0
Liscard	1	0	0	0
Moreton West & Saughall Massie	2	0	1	0
New Brighton	5	3	1	0
Oxton	1	0	0	1
Pensby & Thingwall	2	1	0	0
Prenton	1	0	0	0
Rock Ferry	3	5		
Seacombe	7	3	0	0
Upton	2	1	0	0
Wallasey	2	2	0	0
West Kirby & Thurstaston	3	2	0	0
Total	73	38	4	1

3.86 Table 3.20 identifies the significant variance in the provision of play facilities for children and young people across the Borough.

3.87 From the above

- Every ward has a fixed play provision Liscard has the least provision with a solitary site whereas Leasowe and Moreton has 13 different facilities for children and young people
- 6 Wards are not served by a multi use games area whereas other wards such as Rock Ferry (5) and Bidston St James (6) are served by the greatest numbers of Mugas.
- There are 4 skate facilities and 1 BMX track provided in the Borough

3.88 The audit has identified approximately 473 pieces of fixed play equipment in the Borough and the spatial distribution of equipment is

Footnote* - (based on a population of 313,079 Source: ONS Mid Year 2005)].

outlined below in Table 3.21

Table 3.21 Provision by Type by Electoral Ward

WARD	Total	% of Equipment
Bebington	15	3%
Bidston & St James	30	6%
Birkenhead & Tranmere	32	7%
Bromborough	22	5%
Clatterbridge	21	4%
Claughton	13	3%
Eastham	20	4%
Greasby Frankby & Irby	15	3%
Heswall	25	5%
Hoylake & Meols	35	7%
Leasowe & Moreton East	49	10%
Liscard	6	1%
Moreton West & Saughall		3%
Massie	14	
New Brighton	34	7%
Oxton	6	1%
Pensby & Thingwall	16	3%
Prenton	5	1%
Rock Ferry	16	3%
Seacombe	42	9%
Upton	18	4%
Wallasey	11	2%
West Kirby & Thurstaston	28	6%
Total	473	100

3.89 From the table above

- Leasowe and Moreton East has the greatest percentage of the overall fixed play equipment within the Borough at 10%, Seacombe also has a relatively high provision at 9% compared to the other wards.
- Three wards have 1% or less of the total equipment (Liscard, Oxton and Prenton)
- The provision in Claughton is in Birkenhead Park and it represents 3% of the total across the Borough.

3.90 The above provision per ward can be used as an indicator to compare against the population of children and young people aged 0-19 to establish the ratio of equipment per child. This needs further consideration as detailed population for children and young people based on the mid term figures is not readily available on a ward by ward basis.

Quality – Provision for Children and Young People

3.91 Quality Inspections were undertaken as part of the site visit to each of

Footnote* - (based on a population of 313,079 Source: ONS Mid Year 2005)].

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the sites with fixed play equipment within the Borough. The quality assessment for play areas has been based on the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (ROSPA) "Play Value Assessment" and looks at a variety of criteria including the overall appearance of the site, the ambience and the type of equipment by age range. The quality inspections consider a number of factors, which have been used to rate the quality and value of each local play facility.:(See Map 2)

Ward	Area population	Total sites	Quality range (%)	Average quality score
Bebington	15424	3	30%-43%	43%
Bidston & St James	14225	10	12%-35%	35%
Birkenhead & Tranmere	14149	3	21%-38%	38%
Bromborough	13822	5	31%-40%	37%
Clatterbridge	14701	4	27%-35%	32%
Claughton	14615	1	39%	39%
Eastham	13988	5	26%-42%	34%
Greasby Frankby & Irby	14569	2	29%-38%	33%
Heswall	13723	4	16%-32%	22%
Hoylake & Meols	13337	5	22%-37%	31%
Leasowe & Moreton East	14368	10	15%-48%	31%
Liscard	14602	1	42%	42%
Moreton West & Saughall Massie	13932	2	31%-35%	33%
New Brighton	13969	7	27%-47%	36%
Oxton	13841	1	38%	38%
Pensby & Thingwall	13386	2	13%-33%	23%
Prenton	14032	3	40%	40%
Rock Ferry	13959	7	26%-38%	33%
Seacombe	14504	13	24%-49%	33%

Footnote* - (based on a population of 313,079 Source: ONS Mid Year 2005)].

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Upton	15737	5	31%-38%	34%
Wallasey	15030	3	27%-29%	28%
West Kirby & Thurstaston	13166	3	24%-35%	28%
Total	313,079	99	12%-49%	32%

3.92 It is important to note that good quality play provision is not simply about providing equipment. It is also about the environment that equipment is situated in. The audit has therefore included elements which best practice play areas have been found to promote, including factors such as diversities in texture, use of wildflowers and landscaping.

3.93 In supporting the generation of a 'sense of place' it considers whether the play area is locally related to reflect some local significance. For example, where the site is near a railway, whether the design reflects the theme of trains and railways.

3.94 Site scores not only consider the condition of the equipment, they also consider the play value of the entire designated play area. This includes consideration for the different types of activity that the play area would allow including:

- Overall site features including access gates, whether the area is pollution and noise free, presence of shade, access for the disabled, appropriate signage, locally related features and seating
- Equipment for Toddlers, Juniors and Teenagers have been assessed as discrete elements within the overall play value assessment.

3.95 A summary of the quality scores for each Ward is shown in Table 3.22, below. Quality scores for each individual site are provided in Appendix [x] of this report.

Table 3.22 Children and Young People Summary Quality Scores by Electoral Ward

3.96 Analysis of the data in Table 3.22 illustrates the following key issues:

- Across Wirral MBC as a whole, provision for children and young people sites scored an average of 32%, in the lower middle range of possible scores
- There is significant variation in the quality scores – from 12% (very low) to 49% (middle range)
- Heswall has the lowest overall quality rating (22%). A further three Wards - Pensby& Thingwall; Wallasey and West Kirkby and Thurstaston - all score 30% or less
- Liscard obtained the highest overall score (42%) but this was based on only one site – the Urmson Road Play Area, which was the best marked site of all
- Bidston and had the poorest scoring site in the Borough (Bidston

Footnote* - (based on a population of 313,079 Source: ONS Mid Year 2005)].

Village Road) which scored 12%

3.97 Factors that affect the quality score of the provision for children and young people identified that basic elements such as signage, seating, litter bins, self closing gates on play areas across the Borough where lacking and these are summarised below

- 43 Play Areas (59% of the Borough Total) have no signage
- 12 Play Areas (16% of the Borough Total) have no seating provided
- 22 Play Areas (30% of the Borough Total) have no litter bin provision

Area	Number of households in Area	No. of households within 400m catchment	% of households <u>within</u> catchment area	% of households <u>outside</u> catchment area
Bebington	6,709	4,263	64%	36%
Bidston & St James	7,461	6,097	82%	18%
Birkenhead & Tranmere	8,069	6,346	79%	21%
Bromborough	6,844	3,926	57%	43%
Clatterbridge	6,041	1,692	28%	72%
Cloughton	6,740	3,517	52%	48%
Eastham	6,153	4,456	72%	28%
Greasby Frankby & Irby	6,176	2,838	46%	54%
Heswall	6,015	2,957	49%	51%
Hoylake & Meols	6,040	4,705	78%	22%
Leasowe & Moreton East	6,700	5,806	87%	13%
Liscard	7,086	4,195	59%	41%
Moreton West & Saughall Massie	6,220	3,947	63%	37%
New Brighton	7,231	5,708	79%	21%
Oxton	7,152	3,241	45%	55%
Pensby & Thingwall	6,100	3,373	55%	45%
Prenton	6,142	4,047	66%	34%
Rock Ferry	7,114	5,720	80%	20%
Seacombe	7,326	7,089	97%	3%
Upton	7,355	3,686	50%	50%

Footnote* - (based on a population of 313,079 Source: ONS Mid Year 2005)].

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Wallasey	6,587	2,286	35%	65%
West Kirby & Thurstaston	5,809	3,141	54%	46%
Total	147,070	93,036	63%	37%

- 10 Play Areas (14% of the Borough Total) have limited access for wheelchairs and 7 sites(10%) are considered non accessible to people with disabilities

Accessibility – Children and Young People

3.98 In considering the accessibility threshold Table 3.23 identifies that 63% of the total number of households in the Borough are within 400m of fixed play equipment sites, Table 3.23 also identifies the breakdown within each of Ward Areas and the percentage of households within 400m of fixed play equipment sites. (See Map 9)

Table 3.23 Accessibility threshold by Ward Area

3.99 From Table 3.23 the following the accessibility of provision for children and young people based on distance thresholds can be summarised as follows

- Seacombe has 97% of all households within 400m of provision for children and young people sites (Seacombe also has the highest percentage of households within 400m of a park and garden)
- Only 28% of households in Clatterbridge have access to provision for children and young people within 400m of where they live
- The current borough wide average is that 63% of all households are within 400m of provision of fixed play equipment for children and young people (play areas balls courts, skate parks etc)
- 11 Wards have a higher percentage of households within 400m than the identified average of 56% of households

10 Wards fall below this average for the percentage of households within the 400m threshold

3.100 Further work is required to establish the number of play areas that fall within the Leap/ Neap category advocated by the Fields in Trust and to identify how the recently developed Play Strategy will inform the future provision of fixed play equipment in green space across the Borough

Standards

Recommended Standard	
Quantity	0.07 ha per 1,000 population across Wirral MBC as the minimum ?

Quality	To achieve 61% or above as the minimum standard and to provide a range of fixed equipment and natural play to meet the needs of children and young people
Accessibility	To provide fixed play facilities for children and young people within 400m of where they live.

Allotments and Community Gardens

- 3.101 This section considers the provision of both public and private allotments across the Wirral. Most sites are managed by the Council, but some are also privately managed, either by trust, or other private organisation. They provide areas with natural features for cultivation of fruit, flowers and vegetables that involve working with people, plants and, in appropriate circumstances, animals.
- 3.102 Allotments are in a period of transition at a local and national level, with their value as a resource being re-appraised. They have traditionally been provided in urban areas, which are poor in accessible space, to allow people space to grow their own fruit and vegetables. More recently allotments are of increased public interest due to the increased concerns generated through the links to health and food and the desire to grow home produce.

Quantity – Allotments

- 3.103 The audit revealed a total of 45 sites within the allotments typology, occupying 53.9 hectares of land and providing a current standard of **0.17ha for every 1,000** residents across the Borough as a whole – the equivalent of x plots for every 1,000 residents. Further detail on the sites included under this typology can be found in Appendix [4] to this report. (See Map 1)
- 3.104 These sites can be classified as follows:
- Council managed allotments – 39 sites (total 50.21 hectares)
 - Trust/private managed allotments – six sites (total 3.69 hectares)
- 3.105 The breakdown of total space by Ward is shown in Table 3.24 below.

Table 3.24 Provision of Allotments by Electoral Ward

Ward	Area population	Total sites	Total hectares	Hectares per 1,000
Bebington	15424	2	4.95	0.26
Bidston & St James	14225	6	4.04	0.28

Footnote* - (based on a population of 313,079 Source: ONS Mid Year 2005)].
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Ward	Area population	Total sites	Total hectares	Hectares per 1,000
Birkenhead & Tranmere	14149	1	0.37	0.03
Bromborough	13822	5	2.02	0.15
Clatterbridge	14701	2	0.46	0.03
Claughton	14615	4	2.97	0.20
Eastham	13988	3	5.35	0.38
Greasby Frankby & Irby	14569	1	1.35	0.09
Heswall	13723	0	N/A	N/A
Hoyle & Meols	13337	1	2.21	0.17
Leasowe & Moreton East	14368	0	N/A	N/A
Liscard	14602	2	2.3	0.16
Moreton West & Saughall Massie	13932	0	N/A	N/A
New Brighton	13969	1	0.21	0.02
Oxton	13841	2	2.07	0.15
Pensby & Thingwall	13386	1	0.79	0.06
Prenton	14032	2	6.55	0.47
Rock Ferry	13959	4	8.55	0.62
Seacombe	14504	2	4.71	0.32
Upton	15737	2	1.44	0.09
Wallasey	15030	2	1.27	0.08
West Kirby & Thurstaston	13166	2	1.99	0.15
Total	313,079	45	53.9	0.17

3.106 An analysis of the data in Table 3.24 illustrates the following key issues:

- the average site size is 1.18 hectares
- there are no allotments provided in three Wards – Heswall, Leasowe & Moreton East and Moreton West & Saughall Massie

Footnote* - (based on a population of 313,079 Source: ONS Mid Year 2005)].

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- the next lowest level of provision is in New Brighton, which has just one site of 0.21ha
- four Wards have four or more allotment sites - Rock Ferry; Cloughton; Bidston & St James and Bromborough
- Rock Ferry has the greatest overall level of provision, split over four sites.
- Bidston & St James has the greatest number of sites (6)

Quality – Allotments

3.107 Quality inspections have been undertaken at each of the allotment sites across the Borough. The key criteria are set out in Table 3.25. Quality scores for each individual site are provided in Appendix [x] to this report.(See Map 2)

Table 3.25 Assessment Criteria for Allotments

Allotments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Entrance areas • The presence of water supply • Whether the site is served by toilets • Secure fencing around the site • Signage to identify management, usage arrangements, special events and the availability of plots • The presence of facilities such as composting bins, a shop and car parking.
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3.108 A summary of the quality scores for each Ward is shown in Table 2.12 below.

Table 3.26 Allotment Summary Quality Scores by Electoral Ward

Ward	Area population	Total sites	Quality range (%)	Average quality score
Bebington	15424	2	30-53	41%
Bidston & St James	14225	6	12-31	20%
Birkenhead & Tranmere	14149	1	25	25%
Bromborough	13822	5	4-40	20%
Clatterbridge	14701	2	40-46	43%
Cloughton	14615	4	10-31	21%
Eastham	13988	3	35-43	28%
Greasby Frankby &	14569	1	20	20%

Footnote* - (based on a population of 313,079 Source: ONS Mid Year 2005)].
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Ward	Area population	Total sites	Quality range (%)	Average quality score
Irby				
Heswall	13723	0	N/A	N/A
Hoylake & Meols	13337	1	30	30%
Leasowe & Moreton East	14368	0	N/A	N/A
Liscard	14602	2	28-45	37%
Moreton West & Saughall Massie	13932	0	N/A	N/A
New Brighton	13969	1	27	27%
Oxton	13841	2	18-34	26%
Pensby & Thingwall	13386	1	24	24%
Prenton	14032	2	33-49	41%
Rock Ferry	13959	4	16-24	20%
Seacombe	14504	2	18-30	24%
Upton	15737	2	37-42	39%
Wallasey	15030	2	31-40	36%
West Kirby & Thurstaston	13166	2	38-52	45%
Total	313,079	83	2-52	30%

3.109 Analysis of the data in Table 3.26 illustrates the following key issues:

- across the Borough as a whole, the average score for allotment sites was classified as low
- there is a reasonable level of variation in the quality scores – from 4% (very low) to 52% (upper middle) but the majority of the typology falls within the lower middle and lower range of possible scores
- Quality inspections have been undertaken at each of the allotment sites across the Borough. The key criteria are set out in Table 2.2. The sites have been assessed against the quality line shown in figure 2.1. Quality scores for each individual site are provided in Appendix [x] to this report.
- Bromborough; Rock Ferry and Greasby Frankby & Irby have the lowest overall quality rating, scoring 20% across their sites.
- The poorest site overall is in Bromborough – the Shore Drive allotments, which scored just 4%

Footnote* - (based on a population of 313,079 Source: ONS Mid Year 2005)].

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- None of the sites obtained an upper middle or better score – 12 Wards obtained a low score with the remaining seven obtaining lower middle scores
- West Kirby & Thurstaston scored the highest overall – recording an average of 45% across two sites
- for Wards with four or more sites, West Kirby & Thurstaston scored the highest (40%), with several sites of a consistently average standard (25-64% range) while Upton scored worst (18%) with scores ranging from 6% to 35%.

National Standards - Allotments

- 3.110 The guidance on assessing allotments is vague and not formalised. The 'Growing in the Community' guidance advocated by the Local Government Association and guidance from the National Association of Allotment and Leisure Gardeners identifies some issues that need to be scrutinised and considered.
- 3.111 Privately owned and temporary allotments are not afforded protection under the allotments acts, they are however recognised in planning policy guidance e.g. PPG 17 recognises the need for local authorities to undertake robust assessments of need and this need includes demonstrating the demand for allotments.
- 3.112 In 1969 the Thorpe Report recommended a minimum standard of 0.2 ha per 1,000 population although it is unclear if this was ever adopted or put forward as a national recommendation. If the Thorpe Report recommended 0.2 ha per 1,000 population was applied in the Wirral, in total, 62.6 hectares would be required (an additional 8.7 hectares).
- 3.113 Ideally, the assessment of supply and demand should be based on the number of plots across the Council and the number of people on waiting lists.
- 3.114 The National Society for Allotments and Leisure Gardeners identifies a provision of 20 allotment plots per 1,000 households. PPG 17 Advocates a move away from the application of National Standards to the development of local standards based on local needs.

Accessibility – Allotments

- 3.115 In considering the accessibility threshold Table 3.27 identifies that 68% of the total number of households in the Borough are within 1000m of an allotment site, Table 3.27 also identifies the breakdown within each of Ward Areas and the percentage of households within 1000m of allotment sites. (See Map 10)

Table 3.27 Accessibility threshold by Ward Area

Area	Number of households in Area	No. of households within 1,000m catchment	% of households within catchment area	% of households outside catchment area
Bebington	6,709	6,234	93%	7%
Bidston & St James	7,461	5,736	77%	23%
Birkenhead & Tranmere	8,069	5,566	69%	31%
Bromborough	6,844	5,976	87%	13%
Clatterbridge	6,041	1,808	30%	70%
Claughton	6,740	4,416	66%	34%
Eastham	6,153	5,261	86%	14%
Greasby Frankby & Irby	6,176	3,542	57%	43%
Heswall	6,015	0	0%	100%
Hoylake & Meols	6,040	4,462	74%	26%
Leasowe & Moreton East	6,700	2,683	40%	60%
Liscard	7,086	6,206	88%	12%
Moreton West & Saughall Massie	6,220	1,598	26%	74%
New Brighton	7,231	5,350	74%	26%
Oxton	7,152	5,222	73%	27%
Pensby & Thingwall	6,100	198	3%	97%
Prenton	6,142	5,021	82%	18%
Rock Ferry	7,114	7,115	100%	0%
Seacombe	7,326	5,671	77%	23%
Upton	7,355	7,355	100%	0%
Wallasey	6,587	5,705	87%	13%
West Kirby & Thurstaston	5,809	4,713	81%	19%
Total	147,070	99,838	68%	32%

3.116 From Table 3.27 the following the accessibility of provision for allotments based on distance thresholds can be summarised as follows

- 2 Wards Rock Ferry and Upton have 100% of households within 1000m of an allotment site
- Heswall has no identified allotment provision
- Pensby & Thingwall has only 35 of households within the 1000m

Footnote* - (based on a population of 313,079 Source: ONS Mid Year 2005)].

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access threshold

- 12 wards have a higher percentage of households within the defined catchment than the borough wide average of 68% of all households
- 7 Wards fall below this average for the percentage of households within the 400m threshold

3.117 Further work is required to establish the number of plots and the waiting list to establish standards for the future Standards

Recommended Standard	
Quantity	0.17 ha per 1,000 population across Wirral MBC as the minimum
Quality	To achieve 61% or above as the minimum standard To ensure that all Council managed sites as a minimum have a running water supply, toilet facility
Accessibility	To provide an accessible allotment plot within 1000m of where people live

Cemeteries and Churchyards

- 3.118 Cemeteries and churchyards can provide a valuable contribution to the portfolio of open space provision within an area. For many, they can provide a place for quiet contemplation in addition to their primary purpose as a final resting place.
- 3.119 They also often have wildlife conservation and biodiversity value. In the context of this study, it is important to acknowledge that cemeteries are not created with the intention of providing informal or passive recreation opportunities.
- 3.120 Cemeteries and churchyards can make a significant contribution to the provision of urban green space, sometimes providing a sanctuary for wildlife in urban areas devoid of greenspace. Although many have restricted access, they still provide a useful resource for the local community. A wide variety of habitats can be often be found supporting the other open space types such as areas of semi-natural and natural areas.
- 3.121 Within urban areas, cemeteries and churchyards are often among the few areas of greenspace where the local community is able to have some contact with the natural world. Within rural communities they often provide a strong link to local history and heritage.

Quantity – Cemeteries

- 3.122 There are a total of revealed a total of 9 sites, occupying 87.8 hectares. This equates to **0.28ha per 1,000** population across Wirral MBC. As Cemeteries primary function is for the burial of the dead no further quantitative analysis is undertaken as part of this review.

Quality – Cemeteries

- 3.123 Site assessments were undertaken at the nine cemeteries across the MBC area.
- 3.124 The quality scores key criteria against which the sites are assessed include:
- Main entrance safety and cleanliness
 - Signage
 - Upkeep and safety of graves/memorials
 - Quality of roads and pathways
 - Provision of bins and seats.

3.125 It is felt that whilst the quality of cemeteries may be of relevance it is not thought necessary to reflect the variance in quality at the ward level and to therefore simply reflect the overall quality of sites that have been audited. As such the overall average quality for cemeteries was found to be 65% therefore of high quality

Standards

Recommended Standard	
Quantity	No standard set
Quality	To achieve 61% or above as the minimum standard

DRAFT

Section 4

Resourcing the Borough's Greenspace

Resourcing the Borough's Greenspace

Introduction

4.1 The Borough Council has endeavoured whenever possible to invest in its greenspace provision. It is increasingly becoming difficult to maintain sites let alone develop them through significant improvement. Improved revenue funding with increased capital support from central Government is not likely and as such more creative financing methods including partnerships will be required to help continue to improve maintenance and greenspace improvement initiatives.

Revenue Funding

4.2 The Borough Council maintains its Greenspaces within cash limited budgets and due to financial pressures faced by the Council year in year out, revenue funding for the Borough's greenspace has not increased for a number of years with parks budgets remaining static for some time. Rising maintenance costs and sustained lack of capital means that this is beginning to show in the condition of the Borough's greenspaces in particular in the condition of the infrastructure including buildings, walls, fences, paths, benches, bins and playground equipment.. The range and diversity of greenspace provided across the Borough means that it is essential that resourcing and financial planning follow a strategic framework. Wirral like many authorities across the country has its fair share of problems associated with its greenspaces, vandalism, illegal tipping and abuse are often difficult to predict and increasingly drain resources, resources that could be best spent providing safer cleaner higher quality greenspace for local people.

4.3 It is important to note that it will be necessary to assess the financial implications for each type of provision.

Capital Funding

4.4 The capital required to improve the infrastructure within the Borough's greenspaces is not within the financial resources held by the Council, hence the need to maximise the capital opportunities held outside by national governing bodies and government agencies.

4.5 CABE Space supports the idea of a strategic framework. The CABE manifesto states that political support is essential, as is making the case for high quality greenspace both internally within the Council and externally with the Borough's many partners, regional bodies and national governing bodies. The key starting point for Greenspace is to secure 'Buy In' across the Council. The development of a Parks Champion is increasingly seen as a means of driving forward the greenspace agenda and the Council will develop this initiative inviting interest from the elected members.

- 4.6 In order to deliver a vision for a network of good quality, accessible clean and safe greenspace across the Borough it will be essential to direct financial support at both external and internal funding sources to secure the future improvement of new and existing provision.
- 4.7 The development of partnerships will be fundamental to the delivery of good quality greenspace. The Borough has already made great inroads into partnership working in greenspace through the establishment of community initiatives such as Friends of Parks and the self management of the Borough's Council allotments through the Allotments Society and many others.
- 4.8 Partnership with the private sector can also bring benefits and funding to improve the Borough's greenspace. Authorities such as Halton Borough Council have increasingly forged partnerships with the private sector and are the first local authority to have a Starbuck's coffee shop in Victoria Park, rejuvenating day time and weekend use of the park and associated facilities and driving out the undesirable elements and anti social behaviour by packing the park with people. Oldham Borough Council have transformed former redundant bowls pavilions into vibrant community focussed café's by working in partnership with local business enabling reinvestment in tired and redundant buildings, revitalising the bowling greens and bringing people back into the parks.
- 4.9 Wholesale commercial sponsorship is very difficult to obtain. Working in partnership with third parties may prove more attractive to local, regional or nationally recognised commercial sector investors.

Lottery Funding

- 4.10 The Council has already had success in securing available Lottery funding for a number of projects, from a number of Lottery funding pots.
- 4.11 Lottery funds vary in grant size and funding criteria. The most known for improving greenspace is the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF). Funds are particularly available for projects that include works carried out to sites or facilities of outstanding interest and importance to the national heritage. Funding is provided for complete projects in relation to parks or for conservation and restoration of park features and grants can vary from £50,000 to £5 million. Securing funding relies on sustainability, stakeholder involvement and demonstrate the heritage and value of the park funding is being sought for. The Council has recently used this funding stream to maximise the opportunity for the restoration of Birkenhead Park.

Big Lottery Fund

- 4.12 Initially developed from the combined resource of the Community Fund (providing funds for charities, community and voluntary sectors) and

the New Opportunities Fund (funds for environmental, health and education projects). The BLF provides funding opportunities in relation to Greenspace. A key funding source was the Children's Play Fund and the Council successfully secured £750,000 to improve play provision across the Borough. This funding is not just for outdoor play. The funding identified for outdoor play aims to provide more adventurous play space. Other BLF funding streams that are available include:

- 4.13 The Young People's Fund- aimed at providing support to projects and initiatives that improve opportunities for young people in local communities. Funding is available to groups and community organisations to enable them to run and develop local initiatives with and for young people. Funding is also available for individuals to help make a difference in their local community.
- 4.14 Changing Spaces – funding is available until 2009 to enable communities to undertake environmental improvements that include community space or improving accessibility to the natural environment. The parks programme focuses on the following objectives:
- To provide better more accessible parks that are relevant to the local community they cater for
 - To increase community and pride in parks through greater involvement
 - To improve safety in parks
 - To ensure the long term maintenance and management
 - To increase the number of skilled rangers conservation officers and volunteers
- 4.15 The Well Being Fund- to promote healthy lifestyle initiatives that increase participation in physical activity, educate communities about the benefits of healthy eating or develop early intervention programmes to common mental health programmes

Lottery Small Grants Scheme

- 4.16 The Small Grants Scheme offers 'Awards for All' funding between £500-£5000 for small scale projects and initiatives that involve local people in their community, these small scale projects can include park improvements or local environment work.

Land Fill Tax Credit

- 4.17 Landfill operators can contribute 6.5% of their landfill tax liability to environmental bodies that are approved by ENTRUST. The funding projects include environmental, community and social initiatives that comply with a set of specified objectives such as the maintenance and provision of public amenity or the restoration and repair of buildings open to the public that have historical or architectural significance in a

local environment. Initiatives have to be within a defined distance of landfill or extraction operations.

Barclay's Site Saver

- 4.18 A grant mechanism to transform derelict land through community based projects into leisure and recreational facilities, the funding available varies between £4000 and £10000 per project

The Esmee Fairburn Foundation

- 4.19 Funding is available for initiatives or projects that are primarily focussed on improving the quality of life of people who face disadvantage. Projects that are eligible include the enhancement or preservation of open space, good management of allotments, woodlands or gardens. The grants available appear to have no limits and the average grant size for environmental based initiatives in 2008 was £69,000.

Governing Bodies - Sport England

- 4.20 Sport England support two funding streams aimed at encouraging people to start, succeed or stay in sport, the funding sources available are national funding or community level.
- National Funding- £130 Million is being invested by Sport England in 30 key sports with 10 English priority sports identified, 10 UK/GB priority sports and 10 English development /world class sports.
 - Community Investment Fund- Sport England is investing in the North West Region over the next five years. Funding is linked to the Regional Plan for Sport with priority given to projects that deliver the best returns on investment through increased participation in sport on existing facilities and infrastructure, projects need to have 65% partnership funding of the total cost.

Football Foundation

- Facilities Scheme- provides money to develop new or improve facilities for community benefit. These include changing rooms or clubhouses, grass or artificial pitches and multi-use games areas. Applicants in most cases are expected to provide 50% match funding but in certain circumstance up to 90% funds are available
- Community Scheme-aims to create opportunities and build communities by funding projects that use football and sport as a force for social change, to address social exclusion and inequalities in education and health.
- Goalpost Safety Scheme- provides grants for the replacement of unsafe goalposts
- Small Grants Scheme- for small projects that aim to increase participation by both players and volunteers in grass roots football by supporting the costs associated with providing new activity.

Conclusion

- 4.21 There are a range of funding streams available to develop and improve Greenspace across the Borough. Securing the funds is not easy and requires time and effort as well as robust evidence and reasoning for the investment. A co-ordinated approach is needed to secure these funds, by the Council, its partners and its communities. The appointment of a parks development officer and parks champion could improve communication regarding greenspace initiatives and opportunities.

Developer Contributions

- 4.22 Success will require the internal commitment to buy into initiatives such as Section 106 funding and developer contributions linked to the growth or regeneration aspirations for the Borough. Ensuring that appropriate revenue funding is in place to sustain capital investment in greenspace should be a key long term management objective.
- 4.23 This open space report provides evidence on the quantity, quality and accessibility of publicly accessible greenspace across the Borough. This evidence needs to be used to strengthen existing planning policies and support the Local Development Framework through the development of appropriate Development Plan policies and Supplementary Planning Documents and to use the evidence to generate clear and transparent negotiation with developers to generate significant investment. The Open Space Assessment provides the evidence that will enable the Council to move to the next stage and prioritise the need for local investment through community and stakeholder consultation.
- 4.24 When considering the implementation of planning policy that entails developer on or off site contributions it is worthwhile reviewing how other authorities determine when provision should be on or off site. Outlined below are examples of other local authority approaches:
- Fareham Borough Council- the Council favour on site contribution, dependent upon a number of factors that include the size of the development site and the proximity to existing good quality provision. A matrix identifies when on or off site contributions are appropriate in accordance with the number and type of dwellings proposed.
 - Stockport MBC- The Council commuted sum payments are sought even for small scale developments, with the funds being held in an investment / interest earning account to accrue funds to enable improvements
 - Harrogate Borough Council – The Council seek provision on site whenever possible. Where provision would fall below a specified size the Council will seek off site contributions

- Worcester City Council- shortfalls in provision not accommodated on site are met through commuted sum payments that are then allocated and spent on identified projects
- 4.25 Maintenance sums are an important consideration when dealing with developer contributions. Research shows that the approach varies significantly across local authorities:
- Fareham Borough Council – maintenance payments are required 12 months after a site or provision is transferred to the Council. Maintenance is calculated by the number of bed spaces and the type of provision and is updated annually
 - Stockport MBC – Maintenance payments are required 12 months after handover. Maintenance sums are calculated using current rates with a multiplier and are for 15 years
 - Harrogate Borough Council- the Council revise the maintenance payments required on an annual basis by adding 10% contingencies to the annual cost and multiplying by the number of years. Maintenance is normally required for 5 years
- 4.26 PPG17 identifies that the simplest way to express the requirements for future maintenance is to express it in terms of a sum per unit of provision such as £/ hectare or £/ sqm.
- 4.27 The general approach, which has become the norm for many local authorities, has been to multiply the typical cost of annually maintaining a facility by an agreed number of years. The guidance advocates that a fair way to negotiate with developers is to calculate the net present value of the anticipated revenue payments. The commuted sum payment is then based on:
- The estimated cost of annual maintenance- established on a cost adequate to maintain the provision to the standards required.
 - It is good practice to work to use an appropriate benchmark cost with an assumed rate of inflation.
 - An agreed time period for which payment is to cover (research shows that the time period expected varies from 5-25 years)
- 4.28 The Council should ensure that developers with permission for new developments make contributions towards the capital expenditure that is initially required to provide and enhance provision and towards the ongoing revenue cost of maintaining the provision.
- 4.29 The Council should use the audit findings as a means of identifying where provision and quality improvements require further investment.
- 4.30 Analysis of existing guidance on open space leads to the conclusion that:

- The Council should establish and set standards for the different typologies of open space provision within the Borough
 - The Council should ensure that all new housing development contributes to open space provision, including the development of single dwellings
 - A list of priority projects should be maintained, wherever possible to contain costing details which can be annually updated. Initial priorities should be linked to the priorities identified in the audit to bring sites up to a good standard
- 4.31 The Council, through local planning policies, should ensure that the adopted standards demonstrate the principles of Best Value(?) and the requirement to consult local people and communities, to ensure that local people have access to a network of good quality facilities within their local area.
- 4.32 The Council should consider the development of a Borough Wide greenspace fund (pooled fund). especially for significant sites more remote from the urban areas, such as Country Parks, which may have fewer developments to generate the funds necessary for significant improvements but which will nevertheless still incur additional demand from developments elsewhere within the Borough. This would ensure contributions are always sought to support these sites as well as create the means to enhance and improve existing provision or provide new provision to address more local deficiencies and needs.
- 4.33 Circular 05/2005 states that contributions from developers should only be sought where they are directly related to the proposed development. Pooled funds will therefore need to be carefully administered to be ring fenced to particular areas, based around the accessibility standards identified earlier within this report.
- 4.34 The improvements that can be provided to open space should be supported by an appropriate Development Plan policy and detailed within an adopted Supplementary Planning Document. This could include improvements to access to facilities. While the exact improvements to provision may not be identified at the outset, it may be more appropriate to use the township level to ring fence pooled funds for the more rural areas. In urban areas, the accessibility thresholds can be applied.
- 4.35 The pooled funds could be used to secure additional investment for green infrastructure, either by using monies direct from the fund to undertake improvements or as a source of match funding to secure greater levels of external investment.
- 4.36 One of the assets available to the Borough is land, some of which is not used to its maximum capacity. The Council is naturally reluctant to release greenspace for disposal. However. the benefits of reinvesting a substantial part of the proceeds from any sale could be considerable,

particularly when realistic alternatives to close the funding gap are not available. A number of larger Councils, such as Bristol and Leeds, are going down this route to enable them to improve their green infrastructure to a standard more fit for local needs.

Section 5

Generic Recommendations

5. Generic Recommendations

Design of Greenspace

5.1 The design of greenspace has a major role to play in the delivery of sustainable communities. Good design can develop a stronger sense of local community and responsibility. CABE Space has outlined the need for good design in a number of publications and guidance documents. It is possible to design and create green infrastructure to meet people's aspirations to enable people to take greater pride in their local area and help preserve facilities for future generations.

5.2 The following principles are taken from best practice and although not exhaustive, give an indication as to what is necessary to secure the long term sustainability, value and management of greenspaces. Greenspace design should therefore:

- Maximise positive use by the community
- Be easily accessible for all members of the community
- Provide facilities that are accessible to all
- Be part of a wider network that provide traffic free routes through residential areas and links to other areas via bus stops and cycle ways
- Provide a sense of place for local people and reflect local history or culture
- Facilitate high quality and effective management and maintenance
- Facilitate local communities involvement in new or future provision
- Minimise the opportunity for anti social behaviour and design out opportunities for crime
- Have clear vistas and sight lines across the site, maximising personal safety and casual surveillance
- Prevent any sense of isolation or insecurity through the use of appropriate lighting
- Provide a setting for adjoining buildings, whilst minimising any detrimental effect on local amenity
- Be designed and managed to benefit wildlife, provide integrated habitat areas and support and allow the movement of wildlife, plants and animals. The site should ideally provide a range of habitat types
- Have an appropriate mix of mown grass areas and indigenous planting with mown areas that are large enough to facilitate informal kick about and mini soccer

- Safeguard the integrity of any existing open space or space of heritage value and where appropriate enhance the setting of listed features
- Wherever possible implement flood storage or sustainable urban drainage systems (SUDS) to negate flood risk and other local land drainage problems
- Provide for local children - it is important that facilities match the age range of children and young people within each locality
- Provide surfaced tarmac paths that are at least 2metres wide and concrete edged
- Provide adequate litter bins that are in keeping with the area, set into a concrete surface for ease of maintenance
- Provide adequate seating that is in keeping with the area. Seating in children's play areas should be set into appropriate safety surfacing. Seating in open space should have arm rests and be linked to paths, provided in both sunny and shaded areas and allow for wheelchairs and pushchairs to park alongside off the path.
- All sites should have signage to inform people of the site name, ownership and contact details
- Larger sites or sites, which people are expected to cross to get to nearby facilities such as schools or shops, should have street lighting
- Sites in new housing developments should have housing fronting on to the site to allow for natural surveillance.
- Site specific management plans should be prepared for larger sites, especially for new provision

5.3 In order to identify the series of actions that should be taken by the Council, a number of recommendations have been made. The recommendations include the use of the information gathered as part of this study and the further development of this assessment in future years. The following recommendations are made:

- a) Audit the quantity and quality of sport, leisure and open spaces on a regular basis, every five years and publish the findings. This will allow trend data to be collated and improvements to be tracked. It is important that findings are published to enable wider stakeholders to track progress.
- b) Develop a central record of all open space to include the findings of the assessment undertaken. Currently many different sections of the Council hold this information; this information is not always consistent. The central record should include access to GIS mapping.
- c) Establish a central consultation database for the Council, using the data and contacts gathered through this study. This information is held currently by a number of different sections in the Council and is, again, not always consistently maintained; establishing a central

database, which is regularly updated, will address these issues for the future.

- d) Address the current fragmented responsibilities for the management, development and future provision of open space across the Borough through the establishment of a consultative Steering Group, involving representatives from both sport and leisure, planning and grounds maintenance, from both the public, voluntary and private sector, to consider specific site development proposals relating to existing, former and proposed sport and leisure provision. This inter-departmental group should be established to share, and utilise the expertise of leisure and planning officers, to ensure that specific site development issues are fully considered, and the implications shared, before decisions on maintenance and new facilities are made.
- e) Continue to develop the marketing information produced about parks and open space facilities, key activities accommodated and access arrangements. The Council should seek to work with key partners in future marketing, such as the local Primary Care Trust (PCT), the wider voluntary sector, education, the Youth Service etc to ensure that open space fulfils a valuable role in meeting wider social objectives (e.g. health improvement, increased active participation).
- f) Develop an access standard regarding physical access for users and potential users with limited mobility.
- g) Review maintenance standards in consultation with local people. Report on performance annually. Quality standards should be set for each of the open space typologies.
- h) Develop and fund a programme of up-to-date signage installation, a key weakness of many sites audited. Develop a consistent approach to the provision of signage at all sites, through a rolling programme of installation and improvement. All sites should have a sign with site details, ownership and contact numbers. This can address a number of issues including helping with the reporting of vandalism and improving community safety.
- i) Continue to work towards reducing the effects of crime and anti-social behaviour in parks and open spaces and To establish and implement a programme of action to address the actual, and perceived, issues of safety in parks and open spaces. This could take the form of installing CCTV at identified sites, or investing in park/open space infrastructure to encourage increased use, which in turn may have a positive impact on the fear of crime because more people are likely to be around.

Parks and Open Space

- 5.4 The Borough has achieved success at the Green Flag Award. This needs to be continued. However, success should not be at the expense of other sites and the Borough needs to use the audit underlying this study to improve all sites categorised as Parks and Gardens to a Good Standard, paying particular attention to sites classified as Country Parks and Local Parks. Up-to-date management plans are needed for all major formal greenspaces.
- 5.5 The recommendations below have been drawn up in response to the assessment undertaken and need to be viewed as complementary to any policies developed. This principle applies to all managed open space. The recommendations are focused on addressing facility deficiencies, as the first priority:
- a) Use the results, issues and recommendations of the audit to develop locally responsive policies and practices
 - b) Ensure that any identified deficiencies in provision are addressed as a priority in the Local Development Framework
 - c) Continue to develop and support Friends Groups for key parks and open spaces to increase local involvement and ownership
 - d) Continue to review, develop and improve site Management Plans and extend the practice of management planning to a greater range of parks and open spaces
 - e) Continue to test the quality and “performance” of formal spaces through entering externally judged competitions and quality recognition schemes (e.g. Green Flag/ Britain in Bloom).
 - f) Raise the benchmark standard of provision by improving all sites to a good standard
 - g) Develop an asset register of the facilities within sites such as benches, bins, location, date installed, lifetime expectancy, replacement timeframe
 - h) Develop quality standards for each typology of open space that are achievable and realistic
 - i) Continue to recognise the importance of the gateway sites as a means of raising the image of the Borough and address the quality issues identified in this assessment
 - j) Ensure that any future provision is well designed, serves a clearly defined purpose and is appropriate in size (anything below 0.2ha is not readily useable by children and young people without the potential for conflict with neighbours)

Natural / Semi-natural greenspace

- 5.6 Recommendations for natural and semi-natural greenspace include:
- a) Use the results, issues and recommendations of the audit to develop locally responsive policies and practices
 - b) Ensure that any identified deficiencies are addressed as a priority in the Local Development Framework

- c) Develop a rolling programme of renewal and improvements for bins, signage and seating etc.
- d) Develop a walking strategy to set out how existing walking networks link together and develop the footpath network to link into wider networks outside the Borough
- e) Increase the awareness of opportunities for walking in the Borough
- f) Link the use of open space and sport and recreation facilities with travel awareness initiatives
- g) Take a strategic approach to the development and provision of cycling routes across the Borough given the importance and health benefits of this mode of transport in a congested area linked to the provision of quality open spaces
- h) Develop the Biodiversity Action Plan for the Borough to include urban open spaces
- i) Adopt appropriate management and maintenance programmes for nature conservation sites to better reflect their natural characteristics
- j) Develop an education/resource centre to develop a better local awareness and understanding of open space and of nature conservation sites in particular
- k) Protect all existing nature conservation sites
- l) Develop a Green Infrastructure plan for the Borough
- m) Develop site specific habitat management schedules

Provision for Children and Young People

5.7 The following recommendations are made in relation to provision for children and young people:

- a) Quantify existing sites against FIT categories LEAP/ NEAP to establish appropriate size and equipment threshold.
- b) Provide 'Good' quality sites as a minimum standard
- c) Improve the security of play areas through introduction of CCTV or staff presence
- d) Expand signage on all sites with site details and contact numbers
- e) Develop equipment that caters for children and young people with disabilities
- f) Involve young people in the design and choice of provision
- g) Aspire to deliver a hierarchy of provision and continue to directly address the surplus/deficiency imbalance across the Borough
- h) Consider moving away from only providing fixed play equipment as a means to catering for children and young people
- i) Improve provision for Young People, especially Teenagers and Toddlers, through the hierarchy by making the provision within the Boroughs main parks larger and more adventurous in terms of the range of equipment and the element of reasonable risk
- j) Ensure that the recommended accessibility thresholds are implemented

Outdoor Sports Facilities

Bowling Greens

- a) Work with the local Bowls Clubs to improve the quality of both existing Greens and ancillary facilities
- b) Priority should be given to the improvement of 'below average' sites.
- c) Work with the local Bowls Clubs to promote the sport in the Borough, and encourage participation by younger as well as older people
- d) Review security measures at greens located in parks, in light of the reduction in staff presence on some sites
- e) Improve the publishing of information at parks about opportunities to play bowls

Tennis Courts

- a) Retain the current provision of tennis courts and work with key partners and private clubs to maintain their quality and improve access for potential new participants
- b) Develop a programme of court improvement in the Parks
- c) Ensure public courts have appropriate quality nets and equipment

Allotments

- 5.8 The following recommendations are made in relation to allotment provision and the continued establishment of a working group between the Borough and the Allotment Secretaries :
- a) Identify the number of plots and established waiting list to understand demand and future need
 - b) Establish a programme of facility development with a focus on toilet provision
 - c) Establish a programme that will develop facilities for users/potential users with limited mobility
 - d) Review the mechanism for the allocation of vacant plots to reduce the number of empty plots, and address the local demand for allotments
 - e) Work with Allotment Societies to develop, improve and enhance the existing allotment provision
 - f) Develop partnerships to increase the value and accessibility of allotments, to include schools (where sites are close enough) and the further development of health-related project.

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