

Swale Borough Council

Swale Open Space Strategy

2009 - 2014
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strategic leisure

Part of Scott Wilson Limited



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Section 1

Introduction

1 Introduction

- 1.1 Swale's Open Space Strategy has been developed in accordance with best practice, national policy and the Local Development Framework to provide a strategic framework for the future management of the Borough's open spaces. The strategy is supported by the accompanying PPG17 audit and assessment report and associated appendices and will cover a five year period between 2009 and 2014. The work provides a robust and comprehensive evidence base to enable Swale Borough Council to develop planning policies as part of the future Local Development Framework, sufficient to withstand scrutiny at an Examination in Public.
- 1.2 The Strategy also addresses the requirements of Planning Policy Guidance Note 17 (PPG17): Planning for Open Space, Sports and Recreational Facilities, 2002, ODPM (now DCLG), which sets out government guidance in relation to the development of clear and transparent planning policies for parks, open spaces, outdoor sports and recreational facilities. The PPG17 guidance calls for local authorities to set standards for open space that recognise both the present level of provision, and local people's views and aspirations regarding the present and future provision. It therefore has a requirement for local authorities to undertake two main pieces of work:
- **An audit of current provision, examining**
 - **Quantity** – what type of open space is present, how much of each type is there and what is the primary purpose?
 - **Quality** – how well does this provision meet the purpose for which it is intended when measured against best practice?
 - **Accessibility** – is the space provided actually in the places where it is needed, and are there communities that are not well served by existing provision, how far do people have to travel to get to the different facilities and provision?
 - **Consultation with local people to establish what use is made of different types of space, what barriers prevent people from using space, and how well existing provision meets people's needs and aspirations**
- 1.3 The outcome is a robust local assessment of provision at both a Borough wide and Settlement Area level.
- **There are four guiding principles for local assessments:**
 - The enhancement and improvement of the quality and accessibility of existing provision and facilities;
 - The development and delivery of a network of good quality open space that is sustainable;
 - Local need identified through consultation and the establishment of standards;
 - The value of open space for sport and recreational facilities and the wider benefits they bring through health, social interaction, community cohesion, biodiversity and the well being of local people.
- 1.4 The results of this work serve two purposes. They guide the authority in the development of a strategy for future development of different types of open space, and they also serve as evidence to support the Council's requirements for contributions from developers where planned developments create an additional demand for different types of space.



Section 2

Methodology

2 Methodology

2.1 The Open Space Strategy has been developed following the stages as outlined in the companion guide to PPG17 'Assessing Needs and Opportunities' as published by the former Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (2002) and guidance published by CABI Space. This has included the following:

- **The development of an open space working group of external and internal stakeholders to work alongside and champion the development of the PPG17 audit and Open Space Strategy**
- **A comprehensive review of existing strategies, corporate documents and policies that may influence open space (this includes planning policy)**
- **Identification of all existing open space**
- **The establishment of a steering group and project board of internal and external stakeholders to oversee the development of the Open Space Strategy**
- **Consultation with key stakeholders within the Borough Council and external agencies**
- **A digital mapping assessment that initially identified the range of provision by its specific type or purpose. This in turn has been built into a comprehensive dataset that has incorporated the quality and accessibility findings from the site audits and consultation. This has been developed into a computer based Geographic Information System (GIS) digital map that can be reviewed and updated to guide and support the Council to make informed spatial management decisions in the future. The GIS data can be utilised to establish and to test local standards of provision at the Borough and Settlement Area level**
- **The development of an Action Plan to guide future management and planning decision in relation to open space**

Definition of Open Space

2.2 For the purpose of this strategy 'open space' is a collective term that refers to the current provision of parks and gardens, amenity greenspace, children's play areas, outdoor sports facilities such as sports grounds, natural and semi-natural greenspace, allotments and cemeteries. Although they offer valuable open space to residents and visitors to Swale, beaches have been excluded from this study so as not to influence quantity standards in non-coastal areas.

2.3 PPG17 guidance advocates the development of a local typology for the different types of open space within the Borough. For this strategy we are referring to the range of open space that are used by the public and are in the main managed by Swale Borough Council.

2.4 The Open Space Strategy considers core typologies of provision, 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. The typologies for Swale and their subsequent hierarchy of provision are identified in Figure 1.

2.5 The objective of the hierarchy is to provide the Borough with a network of spaces that are accessible to people. The hierarchy will ensure that people have access to a wide range of sites from the largest such as the Borough's destination sites down to the smaller spaces provided in new residential areas. Many sites will contain other types of provision such as the more formal and specific children's fixed play areas or provision for sport such as bowls or tennis, others will provide for specific needs such as allotments, or private sports clubs.

Figure 1 - Swale PPG17 Open Space Typologies

Typology	Hierarchy of Provision	Primary Purpose & Vision
Parks and Gardens	Destination Significance	Accessible, high quality opportunities for informal recreation, community events and enhanced biodiversity where appropriate. The typology includes urban parks, country parks, formal public gardens and recreation grounds.
	Local Significance	
	Neighbourhood Significance	
Natural and Semi-Natural Greenspace	Destination Significance	Natural and semi-natural areas providing access to wildlife, environmental education and awareness, biodiversity and nature conservation. The typology includes woodlands, scrubland, wetland and nature conservation areas. Sites that promote respect and understanding of natural areas through programmes of interpretation, conservation and management.
	Local Significance	
	Neighbourhood Significance	
Amenity Greenspace	Amenity Greenspace	Open space in housing areas, village greens, informal recreational space and hard-surfaced areas designed for pedestrians (civic space). Opportunities for informal activities close to home or work or enhancement of the appearance of residential or other areas.
Formal Outdoor Sport	Formal Outdoor Sport	Sites specifically intended to meet demand for formal participation in sport including pitch sports, tennis, bowls and athletics.
Provision for Children and Young People	Destination Spaces – formerly NEAP	Areas designed primarily for play and social interaction involving children and young people, such as equipped play areas, multi-use games areas and skateboard parks.
	Local Spaces – formerly LEAP	
	Neighbourhood spaces – formerly LAP	
Allotments	Allotments	Opportunities for those people who wish to grow their own produce as part of the long term promotion of sustainability, health and social inclusion. Allotments also offer opportunities for community gardens and biodiversity value.
Cemeteries	Cemeteries	Quiet contemplation and burial of the dead, often linked to the promotion of wildlife conservation, biodiversity and to provide a link to the past.

Audit and Assessment

- 2.6 There are three core elements of work required as part of this strategy, these being an audit of current provision, public consultation and the development of local standards. The audit and assessment of open space was undertaken in mid-2008 and examined provision of parks and gardens, provision for children and young people, natural and semi-natural greenspace, allotments, cemeteries, outdoor sports facilities and amenity greenspace.
- 2.7 The audit of current provision involves an assessment of quantity, quality and accessibility and for each element the information required is outlined as follows:-
- **Quantity** - to identify the open space by type and to develop a local typology that identifies what type of space it is, what is its primary purpose and how much is there?
 - **Quality** - what is the current physical condition of each site and its infrastructure and does it meet the purpose for which it was provided?
 - **Accessibility** - Is the right type of space in the right place to meet local need or demand, which neighbourhoods or communities are not served by provision and what is an acceptable distance for local people to travel to the differing provision?
- 2.8 Consultation has been undertaken with stakeholders, governing bodies, user groups, local people, schools, clubs and people with an interest in open space provision. This is necessary to establish the local levels of use made for each type of space. It also lets people have their say as to whether provision meets their local needs and to what extent it meets their aspirations. It helps identify the barriers that may prevent people from using the space provided.
- 2.9 The development of local standards will help to guide the planning process in relation to identifying deficiencies in provision in terms of which neighbourhoods or local communities are not best served by open space. The standards will establish clear thresholds for quantity, quality and accessibility of provision and guide the space required from development.
- 2.10 The desired outcome is to provide an Open Space Strategy for the Borough that uses sound evidence, is based on a robust assessment of local need and helps:
- **To meet the requirements of Planning Policy Guidance Note 17 (PPG17): Planning for open space, sport and recreation through the development of local standards of provision relating to each different type of open space. PPG17 advocates that standards need to be set in relation to quantity, quality and accessibility that are based on local need.**
 - **To provide high quality networks of accessible open space and outdoor recreational facilities that are valued by the local community and cater for local need in both urban and rural areas.**
 - **To provide fit for purpose provision that is economically and environmentally sustainable.**
 - **To ensure that the Borough provides an appropriate balance between new provision and ensures that existing provision is improved and enhanced.**
 - **To provide clarity for developers and land owners with regards to what the Council expects from development proposals in relation to open space provision.**
 - **To provide a clear framework of investment that balances increased accessibility, enhancement and improvement to existing provision, and new provision.**
 - **To deliver a consistent approach through relevant strategies that supports the emerging Local Development Framework**

- **To provide a fully connected Green Infrastructure within the urban and rural environment that can increase biodiversity in line with PPS9 (Planning Policy Statement 9: Biodiversity and Geological Conservation), Woodland Policy NRM5 (South East Plan) and Policy CC8 on green infrastructure (South East Plan).**



Section 3

A vision for Open Space in Swale

3 A Vision for Open Space in Swale

3.1 It is important that a vision is adopted to reflect the aspirations for open space in meeting the Borough Council's corporate objectives. In October 2007 a workshop was held with Council officers and key stakeholders associated with open space in Swale. The focus of the workshop was to find out (from the point of view of key stakeholders) which key open space issues, themes and challenges should be a priority in Swale and to help the Borough Council to articulate a vision statement for the Open Space Strategy.

3.2 From this workshop, Swale's vision for open space is:

'Swale's stunning environment and biodiversity prompts an inspirational response. Our open spaces will reflect a confident, contemporary and innovative approach to sustainable design and management and provide a refuge for biodiversity. The aim is to maximise the potential, transforming perceptions and re-engaging communities with the inherent 'Spirit of Swale'.

3.3 **So Swale's Open Space Strategy will focus on:**

- **Sense of Place** – diverse open spaces which express the distinctive identity of local landscapes, culture, art and heritage
- **Access for all** – well connected, convenient and popular open spaces which encourage community activity and discourage anti-social behaviour
- **Interpretation** – which triggers understanding and stimulates a sense of enquiry
- **Regeneration** – high quality open spaces which add value and are a catalyst for economic growth
- **Biodiversity** – innovative conservation management designed to connect, enhance and create valued habitats
- **Quality** – ongoing high standards of maintenance
- **Promotion** – designed to raise awareness and 'market' the wide range of open spaces in Swale
- **Community Empowerment** - building confidence and community ownership

3.4 The Strategy provides a clear framework and approach that determines the priorities for investment, guides policy and identifies opportunities for the Borough and its partners in relation to the Borough's Open Spaces.

3.5 In order for the Borough to achieve the network of accessible good quality open space of the right type, in the right place for the right needs will require investment and as such will greatly depend on the availability of funding both capital and revenue. The Capital funding will be required to improve quality and accessibility of existing space and to design and provide new space where required. The revenue funding will ensure long term sustainability of sites.



Section 4

The Approach

4 The Approach

- 4.1 The Strategy covers all open spaces where there is legitimate public access. The Council owns and manages much of the provision but there are areas under private control or that are not fully accessible to the public due to security measures such as fenced allotments.
- 4.2 The following open space types are not considered in any great depth as part of this strategy due to limited access by the public or the size and scale of sites affecting quantity standards:
- **Private land including domestic gardens, countryside, the public rights of way network, private sports grounds or school grounds with no community use.**
 - **National Nature Reserves, Designated Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB's)**
 - **Beaches**
 - **Golf Courses**
- 4.3 The geographical scope of the Strategy conforms to the administrative boundary of Swale Borough Council.

A review of existing plans, policies and strategies

- 4.4 In order to develop an Open Space Strategy for the Borough it has been necessary to consider and review the existing extensive number of plans, policies and strategies produced by the Council and its partners that have an influence on open space across the Borough and the 3 settlement areas. These existing documents have to be considered as they provide an important source of information, background and context with regards to provision and policy that has shaped the current provision of open space. A full review of all strategic documents can be found in the accompanying PPG17 audit and assessment report.

National Standards

- 4.5 Swale's open space policy has been influenced by national standards that have been produced by national bodies. The most influential has been the standards set through the National Playing Fields Association (NPFA) and Sport England. Other national bodies such as Natural England (formerly English Nature), the Lawn Tennis Association and to a lesser degree the Association of Leisure and Allotment Gardens have all promoted standards of provision. These have all been considered and applied where relevant or possible and are discussed within the relevant sections of the Open Space Strategy.
- 4.6 These have all been considered and applied where relevant or possible and are discussed within the relevant sections of the PPG17 Audit and Assessment document which accompanies this strategy.
- 4.7 PPG17 guidance advocates the development of locally determined provision standards based on local needs that are sustainable and more importantly reflect local circumstance.

Audit and Digital Mapping

- 4.8 The study adheres to the guidance detailed in "Assessing Needs and Opportunities: A Companion Guide to PPG17" providing guidance on undertaking local assessments of open space, sport and recreation provision. The Council already hold large amounts of information in relation to open space. This information is spread through different departments and divisions within the Council and external bodies. This has resulted in parts to an inconsistent approach to the provision of open space. The Council is not alone in this as many other authorities are finding they are in a similar position as they also undertake the required PPG17 assessments.

- 4.9 A key stage in developing the strategy was to pull together the information currently held by the Council and governing bodies into a digital data base. The database has pulled together the threads of information and has captured sites by creating digital layers for each of the different typologies.
- 4.10 The database has been created to enable the Council to regularly update the information and to use the information as a management tool to guide future decisions for planning and management of open space.
- 4.11 In developing the Open Space Strategy a comprehensive qualitative audit of open space, sport and recreational facilities in terms of quality and accessibility has been undertaken to support the quantitative data captured as part of the digital mapping. The audit has assessed each site against best practice in terms of the physical condition of the site and the infrastructure within them.
- 4.12 Digital maps have been produced from the database and are an important element in providing the information that has guided the development of this Open Space Strategy.

Comparison with other local authorities

- 4.13 It is useful to gauge provision within the Borough against other similar local authorities, and as such the findings and standards from other PPG17 assessments provide a valuable point of comparison. The use of this information is dependent upon its availability and accessibility. Provision within the Borough has been compared with neighbouring local authorities in Kent and those of a similar size where possible. This benchmarking data has been used to compare both quantity and accessibility standards.
- 4.14 PPG17 advocates that local authorities should move away from the use of national provision standards in order to develop local standards that best fit the Borough and local need. The use of benchmarking with other local authorities is useful to ensure the people of Swale are provided with a good level of facilities and provision.



Section 5

Assessing Needs

5 Assessing Needs

- 5.1 In order to develop a strategy and set local policies from it, it was essential to consult with the local community to gain an insight into local needs and aspirations. It was also important to ascertain the views of local communities as part of the community planning process. The Council undertook consultation with the residents and Borough Council staff living within Swale. This took place through a standard questionnaire approach as follows:
- **Online Questionnaire** – this went ‘live’ in September 2008 and was made available to local people until November 2008. The survey was advertised in the local press, on the Council Web Site, public libraries and internal intranet.
 - **Paper Questionnaires** – a paper copy of the questionnaire was available from Council Offices on request.
 - **Freephone Consultation** – The Council advertised the opportunity to provide comments and complete the public survey via a freephone telephone line made available throughout the consultation process.
- 5.2 Consultation with the public has attempted to identify local needs and aspirations and importantly to identify the issues at a local level to enable informed decisions about the future management and provision of open space to be developed. Evidence gathered from other Council-initiated consultation has also been used to strengthen the development of this strategy.

Key Stakeholders and User Groups

- 5.3 Consultation has been undertaken with internal consultees at the Council, regional agencies and other relevant individuals. The consultees are all people who in some way or another have an influence or involvement in the provision, management, maintenance or public use of open space across the Borough. A full review of all consultation and a list of key consultees can be found in Appendix 2.
- 5.4 Questionnaire surveys were sent to Friends of Parks Groups, Allotment Societies, Schools, Sports clubs Elected Members and In Bloom Groups. Children & Young People were consulted via focus group meetings and questionnaires distributed at the Council’s Youth Forum and via schools.
- 5.5 The Council have an active Access Group the aim of which is to identify and highlight access issues across Swale. As part of the study, a focus group was established to discuss specific issues regarding open space and disabled users throughout the Borough. The group consists of volunteers who either have an impairment or are carers or have particular knowledge or desire to help disabled people



Section 6

Key Findings

6 Key Findings

- 6.1 The Open Space Strategy identifies the issues that will need to be addressed and will form a key planning and management document for the future provision across the Borough by setting out the future vision for enhancing, improving, preserving and managing the Borough's open spaces. The Open Space Strategy provides the framework to enable the Borough to achieve key objectives over the next 5 years. The key issues (derived from consultation) and a summary of the quantitative and qualitative assessment findings are listed below.

Key Issues

- **There is currently a lack of financial and human resources for implementation within the Council**
- **The quality of open spaces is variable throughout the Borough without reason, a consistency of quality needs to be provided**
- **Most open spaces in the Borough are not presently fit to run large events**
- **There is scope to improve community access at school sites across the Borough**
- **There are very few 'friends of parks' groups – to raise funding and provide community ownership**
- **There are limited outdoor facilities for teenagers**
- **Swale have an interim policy on developer contributions the next opportunity to amend developer contribution policy will be the core strategy**
- **Swale's biggest asset is its natural environment, but the natural environment could be utilised more than it presently is to improve the benefits or tourism and social inclusion**

Priorities

- **Priorities include improving the quality of open spaces throughout the borough**
- **Regeneration should be high on the agenda – linking into wider initiatives such as Thames Gateway Parklands - Creating a Cleaner and Greener Swale**
- **Improve awareness of parks and open space that Swale already has, with a view to increasing participation and accessibility. This requires additional marketing budget and also the type, mix and quality of marketing**
- **Links to education and improved use of funding for community groups**
- **Creating unique selling points for each park and open space wherever possible (i.e. bringing outdoor play and concerts into parks where access, location and size allows)**
- **There is a real need for coordination across departments to reduce duplication and ensure best value;**
- **There is a need to 'raise the bar' on the provision of developer contributions from Section 106 or the Community Infrastructure Levy. This will help to deliver the quality of provision required by the local community**

- **Open spaces are seen as an essential part of fully connected multifunctional Green Infrastructure, throughout urban and rural environments, to benefit the populace and biodiversity alike**

Quantity

- 6.2 From the site audit and GIS mapping exercise the following provision has been identified across the administrative boundary for Swale Borough. Figure 2 identifies the provision by type, number and quantity. It also identifies the current levels of provision per 1,000 population. The spatial distribution of these open spaces can be seen in Figures 4, 5 and 6. Detailed site information can be found in Appendix 1.
- 6.3 The Borough currently has 908.84 ha of land identified as open space this is provided on 233 sites and gives a current overall provision of 7.39 ha per 1,000 population. Quantity standards have been set using current levels of provision. It is important to note that for the purpose of setting standards the Borough's National Nature Reserves and Golf Courses have been excluded from the calculations as they would significantly skew the calculations due to their size.

Figure 2 - Quantity of Open Space in Swale

Typology	No. of sites	Total Area (ha)	Provision per 1,000 population (ha)
Parks and Gardens	26	135.90	1.11
Natural & Semi-Natural Greenspace	21	533.74	4.36
Outdoor Sports Facilities	58	134.10	1.09
Amenity Greenspace	72	55.41	0.45
Provision for Children and Young People (stand alone play areas)	11	1.00	0.24*
Provision for Children and Young People (facilities within other typologies)	58	6.18	
Allotments	24	24.08	0.20
Cemeteries and Closed Churchyards	21	22.61	0.18
Total	233	908.84	7.39

* Combined provision including sites within other typologies – calculated using the children's population aged 2-17 yrs

Quality

- 6.4 To ensure the Open Space Strategy complies with PPG17 guidance a quality assessment has been undertaken on the Borough's open spaces. The quality audit essentially has four recognised purposes these are:
- **To gauge the quality of each site at a given time, through the evaluation of the site infrastructure its condition and quality. The sites are measured in a consistent and objective way and the audit reflects the condition of sites from a visitors perspective;**
 - **To identify site characteristics and features that result in some sites being low quality and to provide information regarding the opportunity for improvement;**
 - **To establish a quality standard for the Borough's open space provision;**

- **To identify sites that the Council should protect and those that would benefit from improvement.**

- 6.5 Quality relates to the range of facilities and physical infrastructure contained within individual sites, 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.
- 6.6 A comprehensive audit of 225 individual sites has been undertaken based on the variety of open space provision across the Borough. The scores provide a means of comparing sites both by type and within the individual hierarchical tiers that have been developed as part of the Open Space Strategy. The audit also gives a clear and robust overview of the physical condition of open space across the Borough and within defined areas.
- 6.7 Quality Inspections have been undertaken via a site visit and the completion of a scored proforma. 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. The quality assessment results for each site can be seen in Figures 4, 5 and 6. Greater detail can be found in Appendix 1 and the quality criteria in Appendix 3. The site scores are translated into a percentage and then measured against the quality line rating:

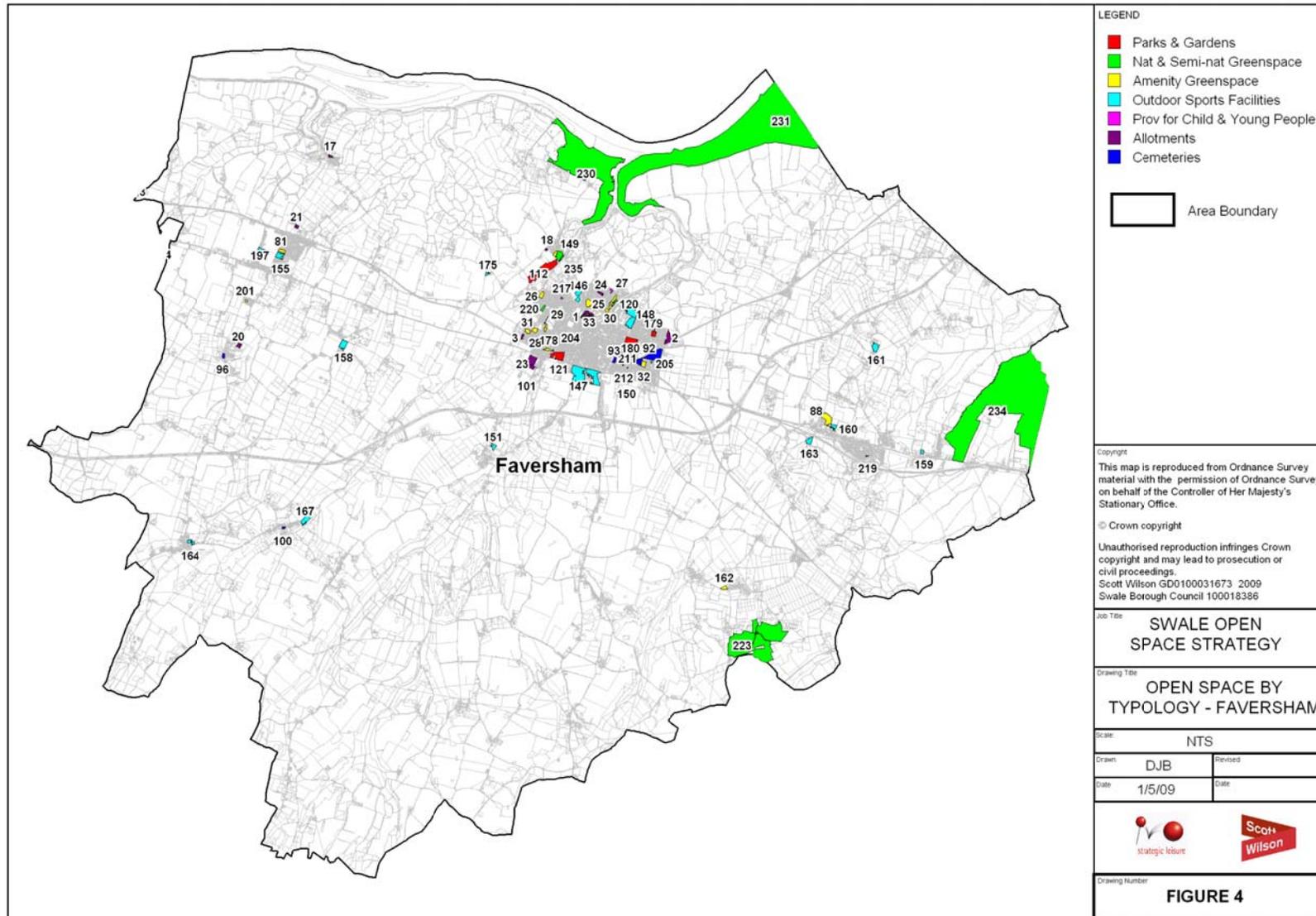
Quality Line

0% - 15%	16% - 30%	31% - 45%	46% - 60%	61% - 75%	76% +
Very Poor	Poor	Below Average	Average	Good	Excellent

- 6.8 Figure 3 identifies the significant variance in the range of quality both within individual typologies and across the different classifications of open space. That said the table also shows a fairly consistent 'average' quality across the different typologies resulting in an overall Borough wide rating of 49% or a rating of average in accordance with the quality line above.

Figure 3 - Summary of Quality across all audited Open Space in Swale

Typology	No. of Sites Audited	Quality Range (%)	Average Quality Score (%)
Parks and Gardens	26	28-73%	50%
Natural and Semi Natural Greenspace	21	20-74%	45%
Outdoor Sports Facilities	54	15-80%	50%
Amenity Greenspace	72	21-79%	50%
Provision for Children and Young People (stand alone play areas)	11	32-81%	56%
Allotments	20	20-56%	39%
Cemeteries and Closed Churchyards	21	21-81%	53%
Total	225	15-81%	49%



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Quality Line

0% - 15%	16% - 30%	31% - 45%	46% - 60%	61% - 75%	76% +
Very Poor	Poor	Below Average	Average	Good	Excellent

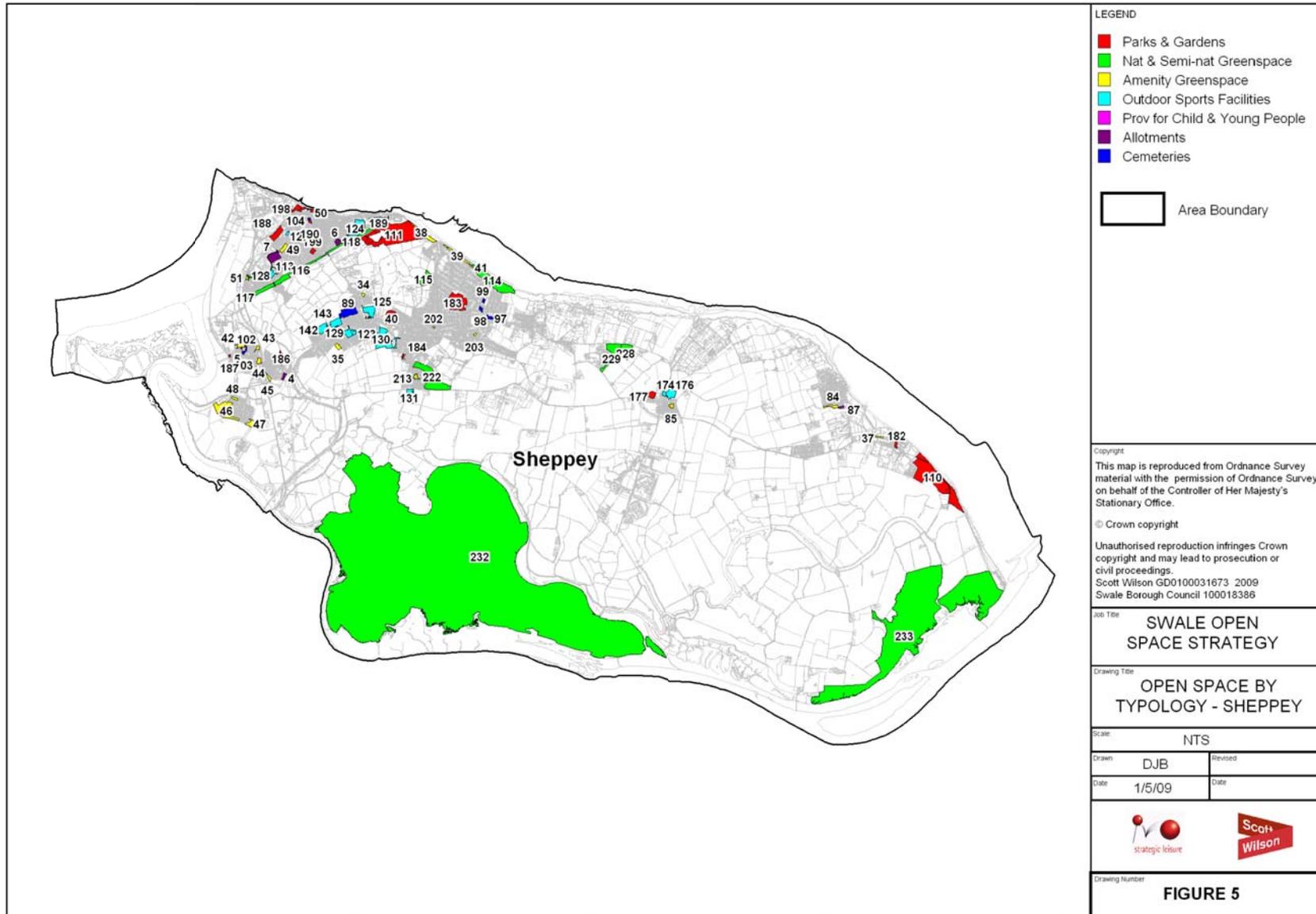
Figure 4 (contd.) – Site details of all open space in Faversham settlement area

ID	Site Name	Typology	Hierarchy	Area (Ha)	Quality Score
1	Stonebridge Ponds	Allotments	Allotments	1.90	45%
2	Millfield Allotments	Allotments	Allotments	2.01	56%
3	St Nicholas Road	Allotments	Allotments	0.35	No Audit
17	Conyer Road	Allotments	Allotments	0.29	32%
18	Colegates Road	Allotments	Allotments	0.18	31%
20	Lynsted Allotment Site	Allotments	Allotments	0.60	No Audit
21	Station Row	Allotments	Allotments	0.42	27%
23	Ospringe Allotments	Allotments	Allotments	3.14	41%
24	North Preston	Allotments	Allotments	0.41	47%
25	Reedland Crescent Open Space	Amenity Greenspace	Amenity Greenspace	1.20	46%
26	Wildish Road Open Space	Amenity Greenspace	Amenity Greenspace	0.70	54%
27	Brook Road Open Space	Provision for Children and Young	Local	0.27	32%*
28	Wheler Court Open Space	Amenity Greenspace	Amenity Greenspace	0.71	48%
29	Hazebrouk Road Open Space	Amenity Greenspace	Amenity Greenspace	0.61	67%
30	Front Brents	Amenity Greenspace	Amenity Greenspace	1.47	62%
31	Sumpter Way Open Space	Amenity Greenspace	Amenity Greenspace	0.65	45%
32	Love Lane Estate Open Space	Amenity Greenspace	Amenity Greenspace	0.85	46%
33	Flood Lane Open Space	Amenity Greenspace	Amenity Greenspace	0.18	41%
81	Teynham Village Hall Open Space	Amenity Greenspace	Amenity Greenspace	0.67	47%
88	Boughton Open Space	Amenity Greenspace	Amenity Greenspace	2.81	34%
92	Faversham Cemetery	Cemetery	Cemetery	5.70	70%
93	St. Catherine's	Cemetery	Cemetery	0.55	56%
96	St. Peter & St. Paul, Lynsted	Cemetery	Cemetery	0.34	55%
100	St. Peter & St Paul, Newnham	Cemetery	Cemetery	0.20	64%
101	St. Peter & St. Paul, Water Lane	Cemetery	Cemetery	0.79	64%
112	Oare Gunpowder Works	Parks & Gardens	Destination	7.55	64%
120	Crab Island	Natural & Semi-natural Greenspace	Neighbourhood	0.27	44%
121	King Georges Playing Field, Faversham	Parks & Gardens	Local	3.02	52%
146	Davington Primary School	Outdoor Sports Facilities	Outdoor Sports	1.64	58%
147	The Abbey School	Outdoor Sports Facilities	Outdoor Sports	9.97	51%
148	Queen Elizabeths Grammar School	Outdoor Sports Facilities	Outdoor Sports	5.10	50%
149	Oare Recreation Ground	Amenity Greenspace	Amenity Greenspace	0.48	54%
150	Faversham Town Football Club	Outdoor Sports Facilities	Outdoor Sports	0.90	74%

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ID	Site Name	Typology	Hierarchy	Area (Ha)	Quality Score
151	Lorenden Prep School	Outdoor Sports Facilities	Outdoor Sports	0.68	No Audit
155	Teynham Parochial CE Primary School	Outdoor Sports Facilities	Outdoor Sports	1.21	64%
158	Norton Sports Club	Outdoor Sports Facilities	Outdoor Sports	1.80	38%
159	Dunkirk Village School	Outdoor Sports Facilities	Outdoor Sports	0.40	25%
160	Boughton Under Blean School	Outdoor Sports Facilities	Outdoor Sports	0.86	36%
161	The Dawes Community Centre	Outdoor Sports Facilities	Outdoor Sports	1.46	52%
162	Selling CE Primary School	Amenity Greenspace	Amenity Greenspace	0.53	56%
163	Poplar View Recreation Ground	Outdoor Sports Facilities	Outdoor Sports	1.07	25%
164	Doddington Primary School	Outdoor Sports Facilities	Outdoor Sports	0.73	35%
167	Sharsted Sports Club	Outdoor Sports Facilities	Outdoor Sports	1.65	38%
175	Luddenham School	Outdoor Sports Facilities	Outdoor Sports	0.30	No Audit
178	Lionfield Open Space	Amenity Greenspace	Amenity Greenspace	0.56	47%
179	Millfield	Parks & Gardens	Local	0.81	42%
180	Faversham Recreation Ground	Parks & Gardens	Destination	8.16	71%
197	Frognal Lane Recreation Ground	Outdoor Sports Facilities	Outdoor Sports	3.16	24%
201	Batteries Close Play Area	Amenity Greenspace	Amenity Greenspace	0.16	56%
204	Lower Road Play Area	Provision for Children and Young	Local	0.14	31%*
205	Windermere Play Area	Amenity Greenspace	Amenity Greenspace	0.10	43%
211	Hilton Close Play Area	Provision for Children and Young	Local	0.03	42%*
212	Finch Close Play Area	Provision for Children and Young	Neighbourhood	0.04	27%*
217	Giraud Drive Play Area	Provision for Children and Young	Local	0.12	26%*
219	Horselees Road Play Area	Provision for Children and Young	Local	0.09	22%*
220	Wildish Road	Natural & Semi-natural Greenspace	Neighbourhood	0.46	27%
223	Perry Woods	Natural & Semi-natural Greenspace	Local	49.34	67%
230	Oare Marshes Reserve	Natural & Semi-natural Greenspace	Destination	85.36	74%
231	South Swale Reserve	Natural & Semi-natural Greenspace	Destination	208.45	49%
234	Blean Woods	Natural & Semi-natural Greenspace	Local	174.78	67%
235	Oare Meadow	Natural & Semi-natural Greenspace	Neighbourhood	1.78	47%

* Overall play quality score



Swale Borough Council
Swale Open Space Strategy

Quality Line

0% - 15%	16% - 30%	31% - 45%	46% - 60%	61% - 75%	76% +
Very Poor	Poor	Below Average	Average	Good	Excellent

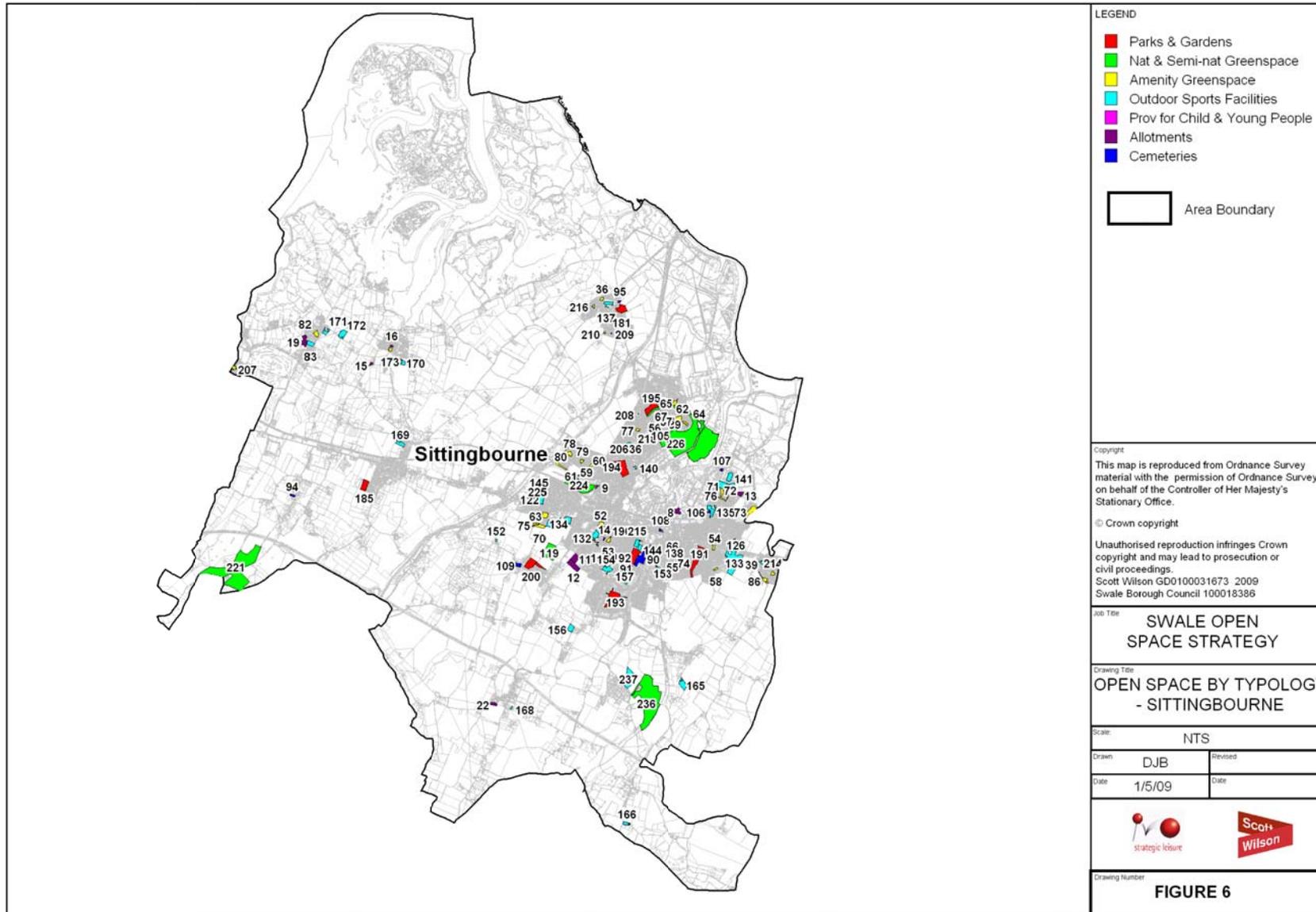
Figure 5 (contd.) – Site details of all open space in Sheppey settlement area

ID	Site Name	Typology	Hierarchy	Area (Ha)	Quality Score
4	Eastern Avenue	Allotments	Allotments	0.68	No Audit
5	Coronation Crescent	Allotments	Allotments	0.22	20%
6	Nursery Close	Allotments	Allotments	1.69	29%
7	Medway Road	Allotments	Allotments	3.33	48%
34	Power Station Road	Amenity Greenspace	Amenity Greenspace	0.30	60%
35	Rosemary Avenue Open Space	Amenity Greenspace	Amenity Greenspace	0.82	36%
37	The Promenade Car Park Open Space	Amenity Greenspace	Amenity Greenspace	0.45	22%
38	Marine Parade	Amenity Greenspace	Amenity Greenspace	2.28	21%
39	Minster Leas 2	Amenity Greenspace	Amenity Greenspace	2.08	69%
40	Abbey Rise	Parks & Gardens	Local	4.29	42%
41	Minster Leas 1	Amenity Greenspace	Amenity Greenspace	0.23	48%
42	Whiteways Open Space	Amenity Greenspace	Amenity Greenspace	1.37	40%
43	Foxley Road Open Space	Amenity Greenspace	Amenity Greenspace	0.42	30%
44	Queenborough Castle	Amenity Greenspace	Amenity Greenspace	0.80	52%
45	Harold Street Open Space	Amenity Greenspace	Amenity Greenspace	0.53	43%
46	Rushenden Hill	Amenity Greenspace	Amenity Greenspace	7.89	47%
47	Old Sewerage Road	Amenity Greenspace	Amenity Greenspace	1.22	54%
48	Well Road Open Space	Amenity Greenspace	Amenity Greenspace	0.40	43%
49	Fleet Avenue Open Space	Amenity Greenspace	Amenity Greenspace	1.09	38%
50	Open space rear of Sheerness Swimming Pool	Amenity Greenspace	Amenity Greenspace	0.29	38%
51	Queensway Open Space	Amenity Greenspace	Amenity Greenspace	0.24	39%
84	Linear Park 2	Amenity Greenspace	Amenity Greenspace	1.10	32%
85	Anne Boleyn Close Open Space	Amenity Greenspace	Amenity Greenspace	0.55	55%
87	Linear Park 1	Provision for Children and Young	Destination	0.20	41%*
89	Sheppey Cemetery	Cemetery	Cemetery	4.73	49%
97	Minster Abbey	Cemetery	Cemetery	0.70	49%
98	Union Road Burial Ground	Cemetery	Cemetery	0.49	25%
99	Love Lane Burial Ground	Cemetery	Cemetery	0.31	33%
102	North Road Cemetery	Cemetery	Cemetery	0.21	33%
103	The Holy Trinity	Cemetery	Cemetery	0.30	36%
104	Holy Trinity, Sheerness	Cemetery	Cemetery	0.18	60%
110	Leysdown Coastal Park	Parks & Gardens	Destination	27.18	47%

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ID	Site Name	Typology	Hierarchy	Area (Ha)	Quality Score
111	Bartons Point Coastal Park	Parks & Gardens	Destination	30.92	53%
113	The Fleet	Natural & Semi-natural Greenspace	Neighbourhood	1.83	50%
114	Minster Cliffs	Natural & Semi-natural Greenspace	Local	12.14	56%
115	Scrapsgate Field	Natural & Semi-natural Greenspace	Neighbourhood	4.64	35%
116	Queenborough Lines 3	Natural & Semi-natural Greenspace	Neighbourhood	5.36	25%
117	Queenborough Lines 1	Natural & Semi-natural Greenspace	Neighbourhood	4.04	25%
118	Queenborough Lines 2	Natural & Semi-natural Greenspace	Neighbourhood	4.96	45%
123	Halfway House Primary School	Outdoor Sports Facilities	Outdoor Sports	0.71	15%
124	Cheyne Middle School	Outdoor Sports Facilities	Outdoor Sports	5.73	30%
125	Danley Middle School	Outdoor Sports Facilities	Outdoor Sports	3.49	35%
127	St Edwards RC Primary School	Outdoor Sports Facilities	Outdoor Sports	0.34	32%
128	West Minster Primary School	Outdoor Sports Facilities	Outdoor Sports	1.07	28%
129	Sheerness East FC	Outdoor Sports Facilities	Outdoor Sports	1.84	41%
130	Minster College	Outdoor Sports Facilities	Outdoor Sports	9.27	29%
131	Sheppey Rugby Club	Outdoor Sports Facilities	Outdoor Sports	3.45	43%
142	Sheerness Steel Football Club	Outdoor Sports Facilities	Outdoor Sports	3.06	39%
143	Sheppey Sports Club	Outdoor Sports Facilities	Outdoor Sports	2.79	55%
174	Eastchurch CE Primary School	Outdoor Sports Facilities	Outdoor Sports	0.64	44%
176	Eastchurch Cricket Ground	Outdoor Sports Facilities	Outdoor Sports	2.55	36%
177	Dicksons Field	Parks & Gardens	Local	1.46	37%
182	The Spinney	Parks & Gardens	Local	0.53	41%
183	The Glen	Parks & Gardens	Local	9.10	28%
184	Lovell Road Open Space	Parks & Gardens	Neighbourhood	0.31	41%
186	King Georges Playing Field, Sheppey	Parks & Gardens	Local	1.94	41%
187	Queenborough Park	Parks & Gardens	Neighbourhood	0.16	42%
188	Festival Playing Field	Parks & Gardens	Local	2.84	40%
189	Seager Road	Outdoor Sports Facilities	Outdoor Sports	3.24	30%
190	Trinity Gardens	Parks & Gardens	Neighbourhood	0.23	61%
198	Beachfields Park	Parks & Gardens	Local	2.36	72%
199	Vincent Gardens	Parks & Gardens	Local	0.69	42%
202	Noreen Avenue Play Area	Amenity Greenspace	Amenity Greenspace	0.10	42%
203	New Road Play Area	Amenity Greenspace	Amenity Greenspace	0.21	33%
213	Buckthorne Road Play Area	Amenity Greenspace	Amenity Greenspace	0.58	60%
222	Thistle Hill Community Woodland	Natural & Semi-natural Greenspace	Local	13.93	50%
228	Kingsborough Manor Community Woodland,	Natural & Semi-natural Greenspace	Local	5.35	20%
229	Kingsborough Manor Community Woodland,	Natural & Semi-natural Greenspace	Local	7.38	48%
232	Elmley Marshes	Natural & Semi-natural Greenspace	Destination	1212.43	76%
233	Swale National Nature Reserve	Natural & Semi-natural Greenspace	Destination	219.82	41%

* Overall play quality score



Swale Borough Council
Swale Open Space Strategy

Quality Line

0% - 15%	16% - 30%	31% - 45%	46% - 60%	61% - 75%	76% +
Very Poor	Poor	Below Average	Average	Good	Excellent

Figure 6 (contd.) – Site details of all open space in Sittingbourne settlement area

ID	Site Name	Typology	Hierarchy	Area (Ha)	Quality Score
8	Bayford Court	Allotments	Allotments	1.01	45%
9	Staplehurst Road	Allotments	Allotments	0.19	31%
10	Homewood Avenue	Allotments	Allotments	0.08	35%
11	Riddles Road North	Allotments	Allotments	1.66	54%
12	Riddles Road South	Allotments	Allotments	2.30	54%
13	East Hall Farm Allotments	Allotments	Allotments	0.85	33%
14	College Road	Allotments	Allotments	0.13	37%
15	Breach Road	Allotments	Allotments	0.29	40%
16	School Lane	Allotments	Allotments	0.21	No Audit
19	Oak Lane	Allotments	Allotments	1.51	39%
22	Silver Street	Allotments	Allotments	0.63	31%
36	Sanderling Way Open Space	Amenity Greenspace	Amenity Greenspace	0.32	60%
52	Tavistock Close	Amenity Greenspace	Amenity Greenspace	0.78	51%
53	Manor Grove	Amenity Greenspace	Amenity Greenspace	0.48	47%
54	Prince Charles Avenue	Amenity Greenspace	Amenity Greenspace	0.39	40%
55	Merlin Close Open Space	Amenity Greenspace	Amenity Greenspace	0.29	42%
56	Adisham Green	Amenity Greenspace	Amenity Greenspace	0.30	51%
57	Vaughan Drive Open Space	Amenity Greenspace	Amenity Greenspace	0.82	48%
58	Swanstree Open Space	Amenity Greenspace	Amenity Greenspace	0.24	44%
59	Jacinth Drive Green	Amenity Greenspace	Amenity Greenspace	0.34	47%
60	Amethyst Drive Open Space	Amenity Greenspace	Amenity Greenspace	1.23	50%
61	Emerald Crescent Green	Amenity Greenspace	Amenity Greenspace	0.50	38%
62	Kemsley Drain Walk	Amenity Greenspace	Amenity Greenspace	0.49	57%
63	Maylam Gardens 1	Amenity Greenspace	Amenity Greenspace	0.92	72%
64	Recreation Way Open Space	Amenity Greenspace	Amenity Greenspace	0.44	50%
65	Recreation Way	Amenity Greenspace	Amenity Greenspace	0.52	55%
66	Chilton Avenue	Amenity Greenspace	Amenity Greenspace	0.65	67%
67	Aylewyn Green	Amenity Greenspace	Amenity Greenspace	0.66	50%
68	Newman Drive Lake	Amenity Greenspace	Amenity Greenspace	0.81	64%
69	Yeates Drive Open Space	Amenity Greenspace	Amenity Greenspace	0.42	48%
70	Maylam Gardens 3	Amenity Greenspace	Amenity Greenspace	0.90	51%
71	Murston Recreational Ground 2	Outdoor Sports Facilities	Outdoor Sports	1.96	52%
72	Murston Recreational Ground 1	Outdoor Sports Facilities	Outdoor Sports	2.66	52%

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ID	Site Name	Typology	Hierarchy	Area (Ha)	Quality Score
73	East Hall Farm Sports Ground	Amenity Greenspace	Amenity Greenspace	1.92	50%
74	Fallowfield Open Space	Amenity Greenspace	Amenity Greenspace	0.37	40%
75	Maylam Gardens 2	Amenity Greenspace	Amenity Greenspace	0.26	53%
76	Hugh Price Close Open Space	Amenity Greenspace	Amenity Greenspace	1.06	52%
77	Satis Avenue Open Space	Amenity Greenspace	Amenity Greenspace	0.31	45%
78	Balas Drive Open Space	Amenity Greenspace	Amenity Greenspace	0.57	62%
79	Argent Way Open Space	Amenity Greenspace	Amenity Greenspace	0.31	53%
80	Staplehurst Road Link Buffer Zone	Amenity Greenspace	Amenity Greenspace	1.48	59%
82	The Paddock	Amenity Greenspace	Amenity Greenspace	0.78	45%
83	Recreation Ground, Oak Lane	Outdoor Sports Facilities	Outdoor Sports	0.92	58%
86	Village Green - Bapchild	Amenity Greenspace	Amenity Greenspace	0.65	63%
90	Bell Road Cemetery	Cemetery	Cemetery	3.58	65%
91	Capel Road Cemetery	Cemetery	Cemetery	1.39	81%
94	St. Michaels, Hartlip	Cemetery	Cemetery	0.35	68%
95	All Saints, Iwade	Cemetery	Cemetery	0.23	43%
105	Holy Trinity Church, Sittingbourne	Cemetery	Cemetery	1.20	49%
106	All Saints Church, Sittingbourne	Cemetery	Cemetery	0.29	67%
107	Old Murston Churchyard	Cemetery	Cemetery	0.23	21%
108	St. Michael's Church, Sittingbourne	Cemetery	Cemetery	0.21	61%
109	St. Peter & St. Paul, Borden	Cemetery	Cemetery	0.63	63%
119	Cryalls Lane Nature Reserve	Natural & Semi-natural Greenspace	Local	5.70	48%
122	The Grove Park (south)	Outdoor Sports Facilities	Outdoor Sports Facilities	5.04	59%
126	Landsdowne Primary School	Outdoor Sports Facilities	Outdoor Sports Facilities	1.78	60%
132	Woodgrove Primary School	Outdoor Sports Facilities	Outdoor Sports Facilities	1.54	60%
133	Sittingbourne Community College	Outdoor Sports Facilities	Outdoor Sports Facilities	8.34	76%
134	The Westlands School	Outdoor Sports Facilities	Outdoor Sports Facilities	5.58	69%
135	Murston Junior School	Outdoor Sports Facilities	Outdoor Sports Facilities	1.77	60%
136	Regis Manor community School	Outdoor Sports Facilities	Outdoor Sports Facilities	1.66	57%
137	Iwade Community Primary School	Outdoor Sports Facilities	Outdoor Sports Facilities	0.96	No Audit
138	South Avenue Junior School	Outdoor Sports Facilities	Outdoor Sports Facilities	1.31	74%
139	Bapchild & Tonge CE Primary School	Outdoor Sports Facilities	Outdoor Sports Facilities	0.48	71%
140	Milton Court Primary School	Outdoor Sports Facilities	Outdoor Sports Facilities	0.19	38%
141	Central Park Stadium	Outdoor Sports Facilities	Outdoor Sports Facilities	1.28	73%
144	Borden Grammar School	Outdoor Sports Facilities	Outdoor Sports Facilities	3.36	44%
145	The Grove Park (north)	Outdoor Sports Facilities	Outdoor Sports Facilities	1.81	34%
152	Borden CE Primary School	Outdoor Sports Facilities	Outdoor Sports Facilities	0.14	64%
153	Fulston Manor School	Outdoor Sports Facilities	Outdoor Sports Facilities	3.67	56%
154	Minterne Community Junior School	Outdoor Sports Facilities	Outdoor Sports Facilities	1.61	42%
156	Tunstall CE Primary School	Outdoor Sports Facilities	Outdoor Sports Facilities	1.13	42%

Swale Borough Council
Swale Open Space Strategy

ID	Site Name	Typology	Hierarchy	Area (Ha)	Quality Score
157	Uk Paper Leisure Club	Outdoor Sports Facilities	Outdoor Sports Facilities	5.21	80%
165	Rodmersham Cricket Ground	Outdoor Sports Facilities	Outdoor Sports Facilities	1.77	69%
166	Milstead & Frinstead CE Primary School	Outdoor Sports Facilities	Outdoor Sports Facilities	0.56	53%
168	Bredgar CE Primary School	Outdoor Sports Facilities	Outdoor Sports Facilities	0.17	60%
169	Newington CE Primary School	Outdoor Sports Facilities	Outdoor Sports Facilities	1.05	No Audit
170	Lower Halstow School	Outdoor Sports Facilities	Outdoor Sports Facilities	0.69	74%
171	Holywell Primary School	Outdoor Sports Facilities	Outdoor Sports Facilities	0.77	56%
172	Upchurch Cricket Club	Outdoor Sports Facilities	Outdoor Sports Facilities	1.59	63%
173	Chapel Meadow	Amenity Greenspace	Amenity Greenspace	0.34	50%
181	Village Park Iwade	Parks & Gardens	Local	2.18	44%
185	Orchard Drive	Parks & Gardens	Local	2.00	33%
191	Rectory Playing Field	Parks & Gardens	Local	6.04	49%
192	Sittingbourne Recreation Ground	Parks & Gardens	Local	3.23	63%
193	King Georges Playing Field, Sittingbourne	Parks & Gardens	Destination	6.46	73%
194	Milton Recreation Ground	Parks & Gardens	Local	7.39	65%
195	Kemsley Recreational ground	Parks & Gardens	Local	2.61	54%
196	Johnson House Gardens	Parks & Gardens	Local	0.95	39%
200	Borden Playstool	Parks & Gardens	Local	3.49	62%
206	Denbigh Close Play Area	Provision for Children and Young	Local	0.05	20%*
207	Homefield Drive	Amenity Greenspace	Amenity Greenspace	0.46	78%
208	Eleanor Drive Play Area	Provision for Children and Young	Local	0.02	37%*
209	Alefe Way	Provision for Children and Young	Neighbourhood	0.03	37%*
210	Mansfield Drive Play Area	Amenity Greenspace	Amenity Greenspace	0.09	69%
214	Randle Way	Amenity Greenspace	Amenity Greenspace	0.40	79%
215	Anselm Close Play Area	Amenity Greenspace	Amenity Greenspace	0.07	56%
216	Shooters Chase Play Area	Amenity Greenspace	Amenity Greenspace	0.21	62%
218	Diligent Drive Play Area	Provision for Children and Young	Local	0.01	12%
221	Queendown Warren	Natural & Semi-natural Greenspace	Local	31.90	58%
224	The Meads Community Woodland	Natural & Semi-natural Greenspace	Local	9.90	50%
225	Rose Hill Woods	Natural & Semi-natural Greenspace	Neighbourhood	3.69	46%
226	Church Marshes Country Park	Natural & Semi-natural Greenspace	Destination	52.69	33%
236	Cromers Wood	Natural & Semi-natural Greenspace	Local	26.57	51%
237	Woodstock Club	Outdoor Sports Facilities	Outdoor Sports	5.99	75%

* Overall play quality score



Section 7

Setting Provision Standards

7 Setting Provision Standards

- 7.1 This section examines the development of local standards for the open space typologies as classified in Section 2. The local standards consider surpluses and deficiencies in provision on the basis of the quantitative assessments undertaken. GIS mapping has been utilised to illustrate a number of key aspects.
- 7.2 Standards of provision have been derived for the Borough on the basis of
- **Consultation with local residents**
 - **Consultation with specific user groups**
 - **Consultation with key providers**
 - **Consultation with key stakeholders**
- 7.3 Local residents were asked a range of questions regarding current open space provision with relation to quantity, quality and accessibility. The survey of local residents and other consultation findings have been used to inform the appropriate distance thresholds. The responses have been used to set provision standards and applied using GIS mapping. The consultation and survey findings also reveal the local communities' perception of accessibility, quantity and quality of provision.
- 7.4 PPG 17 advocates the development of standards for all the major typologies of provision. The total amount of open space by typology has been measured as part of this audit of provision. The assessment of quantity has been undertaken on the basis of:
- **A review of the number of sites and size of provision, in relation to local population**
 - **The identification of a site typology based on the 'primary purpose' of each site**
- 7.5 This section sets out the provision standards for the various categories of open space looking at quantity, quality and accessibility. A detailed assessment of provision standards can be found in the accompanying PPG17 audit and assessment report which accompanies this strategy. A summary of the standards is as follows:

Parks & Gardens

- 7.6 The Borough has identified a hierarchy of provision for its parks. Within that hierarchy the sites are defined by purpose Destination Sites, Local Sites, Neighbourhood Sites. The parks and public gardens are an integral part of the Borough's open space infrastructure. They provide a sense of place for the local community and provide landscape quality to particular urban areas.
- 7.7 The Borough provides 26 accessible parks and garden sites covering 135.9 hectares and therefore an overall provision of 1.11 ha per 1,000 population. The recommended minimum standards are:

Quantity	Quality	Accessibility
<p><u>Standard</u></p> <p>To ensure provision does not fall below the current level of 1.11 ha per 1,000 population</p>	<p><u>Standard</u></p> <p>To achieve and maintain Green Flag status in 3 parks across the Borough (one in each settlement area)</p> <p>To strive for all Destination sites</p>	<p><u>Standard</u></p> <p>To provide access to parks and gardens and for all households in the Borough to be within:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2,000m of a Destination site, or

Quantity	Quality	Accessibility
	<p>to be of a 'good' quality (61% or above)</p> <p>All Local and Neighbourhood sites to be of an 'average' quality (46% or above)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 800m of a Local sites, or 400m of a Neighbourhood site

- 7.8 Quantity standards are based on current levels of provision and therefore no current quantitative deficiencies are present across the Borough. Appendix 5 applies the Borough quantity standard on a settlement area basis. This should be referred to where development takes place to ensure provision does not fall below the current Boroughwide standard of 1.11 ha per 1,000 population. Applying the current Borough standard to each settlement area demonstrates there is a shortfall of parks and gardens in Faversham and Sittingbourne and an abundance in Sheppey.
- 7.9 The quality standard for parks and gardens require the Borough to achieve and maintain the Green Flag Award at 3 sites across the Borough (one in each settlement area). The Faversham area currently has a Green Flag for **Oare Gunpowder Works**. With improvements in infrastructure and an operational management plan we would recommend taking forward **King George's Playing Field** (Sittingbourne) and **Beachfields Park** (Sheppey) for the award.
- 7.10 As part of the quality auditing process a detailed database of site information has been collated (Appendix 1) with a breakdown of quality scores by key criteria. This should be referred to when looking for site specific quality improvements e.g. improvements to infrastructure such as signage, seating and bins and management issues such as site cleanliness and tree management. The following sites fall below the desired quality standard for parks and gardens, we would recommend prioritising these sites first for improvements:

ID	Site Name	Settlement Area	Hierarchy
110	Leysdown Coastal Park	Sheppey	Destination
111	Bartons Point Coastal Park	Sheppey	Destination
183	The Glen	Sheppey	Local
185	Orchard Drive	Sittingbourne	Local
177	Dicksons Field	Sheppey	Local
196	Johnson House Gardens	Sittingbourne	Local
188	Festival Playing Field	Sheppey	Local
184	Lovell Road Open Space	Sheppey	Neighbourhood
186	King Georges Playing Field, Sheppey	Sheppey	Local
182	The Spinney	Sheppey	Local
187	Queenborough Park	Sheppey	Neighbourhood
199	Vincent Gardens	Sheppey	Local
179	Millfield	Faversham	Local
40	Abbey Rise	Sheppey	Local
181	Village Park Iwade	Sittingbourne	Local

- 7.11 Map 10 demonstrates the access standard for parks and gardens. Despite there being significant deficiencies throughout the rural areas of the Borough the GIS analysis has identified that 81% or 51,471 households in the Borough are within the combined access catchments set for parks and gardens. Importantly 19% of households are not currently within the catchment area. It is important to recognise that people will undoubtedly make use of the open space nearest to where they live and that may not be a site classified as a park or garden.

Natural and Semi-Natural Greenspace

- 7.12 It is widely understood that sites of a natural or semi-natural nature that are accessible enhance the quality of life for people. The wildlife and biodiversity benefits that these sites also contribute are often neglected. Biodiversity is important to the quality of the air that people breathe, to the richness in variety of species in an area and as an indicator of the health and quality of a local environment. These areas not only have benefits in terms of biodiversity they can also be valuable to local economies and as a tourist asset.
- 7.13 The Borough has 21 sites classified as natural and semi-natural greenspace covering 535.74 hectares and providing an overall standard of 4.36 ha per 1,000 population. The recommended minimum standards are:

Quantity	Quality	Accessibility
<p><u>Standard</u></p> <p>To ensure provision does not fall below the current level of 4.36 ha per 1,000 population</p>	<p><u>Standard</u></p> <p>To strive for all Destination sites to be of a 'good' quality (61% or above)</p> <p>All Local and Neighbourhood sites to be of an 'average' quality (46% or above)</p>	<p><u>Standard</u></p> <p>To provide access to natural and semi-natural greenspace and for all households in the Borough to be within:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2,000m of a Destination site, or • 800m of a Local site, or 400m of a Neighbourhood site

- 7.14 Quantity standards are based on current levels of provision and therefore no current quantitative deficiencies are present across the Borough. Appendix 5 applies the Borough quantity standard on a settlement area basis. This should be referred to where development takes place to ensure provision does not fall below the current Boroughwide standard of 4.36 ha per 1,000 population. Applying the current Borough standard to each settlement area demonstrates there is a shortfall of natural and semi-natural greenspace in Sheppey and Sittingbourne and an abundance in Faversham, however this does not include significantly sized National Nature Reserves in Sheppey.
- 7.15 As part of the quality auditing process a detailed database of site information has been collated (Appendix 1) with a breakdown of quality scores by key criteria. This should be referred to when looking for site specific quality improvements e.g. improvements to infrastructure such as signage, seating and bins and management issues such as site cleanliness and woodland management. The following sites fall below the desired quality standard for natural and semi-natural greenspace, we would recommend prioritising these sites first for improvements:

ID	Site Name	Settlement Area	Hierarchy
233	Swale National Nature Reserve	Sheppey	Destination
231	South Swale Reserve	Faversham	Destination
228	Kingsborough Manor Community Woodland, Phase 2	Sheppey	Local
116	Queenborough Lines 3	Sheppey	Neighbourhood
117	Queenborough Lines 1	Sheppey	Neighbourhood
220	Wildish Road	Faversham	Neighbourhood
226	Church Marshes Country Park	Sittingbourne	Destination
115	Scrapsgate Field	Sheppey	Neighbourhood
120	Crab Island	Sheppey	Destination
118	Queenborough Lines 2	Sheppey	Neighbourhood

- 7.16 Map 11 demonstrates the combined access standards for natural and semi-natural greenspace across the Borough. Due to the location of natural and semi-natural greenspace away from urban areas there are notable deficiencies in access to these sites. Areas such as northern Sheerness, central Minster, Queenborough, Leysdown, central and west Sittingbourne, South Faversham and Boughton Street are all outside the catchment areas.
- 7.17 The GIS analysis confirms these findings and has identified that 39% or 24,690 households in the Borough are within the combined access catchments set for natural and semi-natural greenspace. Importantly 61% of households are not currently within the catchment areas. It is important to recognise that people will undoubtedly make use of the space nearest to where they live and that may not be a site classified as natural and semi-natural greenspace.

Formal Outdoor Sports

- 7.18 This section considers the wide range of outdoor sports provision across the Borough. It includes specific sites developed within the hierarchy to focus resources and to promote sport and recreation these are the sports grounds, Outdoor sports facilities, for the purposes of the assessment have been sub-divided into the following facilities:
- **Sports Grounds – Sites specifically developed to cater for sport often containing provision or facilities for more than one sport**
 - **Sites provided with community access not included as a typology within the strategy, such as schools that allow the community use of their outdoor sports facilities**
 - **Further details regarding the provision of grass pitches have been developed within the separate Playing Pitch Strategy**
- 7.19 The audit has identified 58 sites that have been classified as outdoor sport, these occupy 134.1 ha and provide 1.09 ha per 1,000 population
- 7.20 The recommended minimum standards are:

Quantity	Quality	Accessibility
To ensure provision does not fall below the current level of 1.09 ha per 1,000 population	To strive for all formal outdoor sport sites to be of an 'average' quality (46% or above)	To provide an accessible outdoor sports facility within 800m of where people live

- 7.21 Quantity standards are based on current levels of provision and therefore no current quantitative deficiencies are present across the Borough. Appendix 5 applies the Borough quantity standard on a settlement area basis. This should be referred to where development takes place to ensure provision does not fall below the current Boroughwide standard of 1.09 ha per 1,000 population. Applying the current Borough standard to each settlement area demonstrates there is a shortfall of formal outdoor sport facilities in Faversham and Sheppey and an abundance in Sittingbourne.
- 7.22 As part of the quality auditing process a detailed database of site information has been collated (Appendix 1) with a breakdown of quality scores by key criteria. This should be referred to when looking for site specific quality improvements e.g. improvements to infrastructure such as parking, signage and bins and management issues such as site cleanliness. The following sites fall below the desired quality standard for formal outdoor sport, we would recommend prioritising these sites first for improvements:

ID	Site Name	Settlement Area
123	Halfway House Primary School	Sheppey
197	Frognal Lane Recreation Ground	Faversham
163	Poplar View Recreation Ground	Faversham
159	Dunkirk Village School	Faversham
128	West Minster Primary School	Sheppey
130	Minster College	Sheppey
124	Cheyne Middle School	Sheppey
189	Seager Road	Sheppey
127	St Edwards RC Primary School	Sheppey
145	The Grove Park (north)	Sittingbourne
164	Doddington Primary School	Faversham
125	Danley Middle School	Sheppey
160	Boughton Under Blean School	Faversham
176	Eastchurch Cricket Ground	Sheppey
158	Norton Sports Club	Faversham
140	Milton Court Primary School	Sittingbourne
167	Sharsted Sports Club	Faversham
142	Sheerness Steel Football Club	Sheppey
129	Sheerness East FC	Sheppey
156	Tunstall CE Primary School	Sittingbourne
154	Minterne Community Junior School	Sittingbourne
131	Sheppey Rugby Club	Sheppey
174	Eastchurch CE Primary School	Sheppey
144	Borden Grammar School	Sittingbourne

- 7.23 Map 13 demonstrates the access standard for formal outdoor sport. Despite there being significant deficiencies throughout the rural areas of the Borough, Minster, Leysdown and Queenborough. The GIS analysis has identified that 72% or 45,786 households in the Borough are within 800m of an outdoor sports facility. 28% (18,058 households) are not within 800m of an outdoor sports site.
- 7.24 It is important to recognise that people will undoubtedly make use of the facilities that have good changing, accessible facilities and are reasonable priced for use, as such they may travel further a field to use facilities than the one nearest to where they live.

Amenity Greenspace

- 7.25 The Borough's amenity greenspaces provide a number of functions for example, the civic spaces provide the opportunity for events with a civic purpose, whilst the less formal amenity spaces provided mainly in residential areas enables local people to take part in recreation close to home.
- 7.26 The Borough has 72 sites that have been classified as amenity greenspace these sites occupy 55.41ha and provide the Borough with a provision of 0.45ha per 1,000 population
- 7.27 The recommended minimum standards are:

Quantity	Quality	Accessibility
<p><u>Standard</u></p> <p>To ensure provision does not fall below the current level of 0.45 ha per 1,000 population</p>	<p><u>Standard</u></p> <p>To ensure that sites are maintained to a quality standard of 'average' or above (46% or above). This includes ensuring facilities and infrastructure are 'fit for purpose'.</p>	<p><u>Standard</u></p> <p>To provide amenity greenspace within 400m of where people live</p>

- 7.28 Quantity standards are based on current levels of provision and therefore no current quantitative deficiencies are present across the Borough. Appendix 5 applies the Borough quantity standard on a settlement area basis. This should be referred to where development takes place to ensure provision does not fall below the current Boroughwide standard of 0.45 ha per 1,000 population. Applying the current Borough standard to each settlement area demonstrates there is a shortfall of amenity greenspace in Faversham and Sittingbourne and an abundance in Sheppey.
- 7.29 As part of the quality auditing process a detailed database of site information has been collated (Appendix 1) with a breakdown of quality scores by key criteria. This should be referred to when looking for site specific quality improvements e.g. improvements to infrastructure such as seating and bins and management issues such as site cleanliness. The following sites fall below the desired quality standard for amenity greenspace, we would recommend prioritising these sites first for improvements:

ID	Site Name	Settlement Area
38	Marine Parade	Sheppey
37	The Promenade Car Park Open Space	Sheppey
43	Foxley Road Open Space	Sheppey
84	Linear Park 2	Sheppey
203	New Road Play Area	Sheppey
88	Boughton Open Space	Faversham
35	Rosemary Avenue Open Space	Sheppey
49	Fleet Avenue Open Space	Sheppey
50	Open space rear of Sheerness Swimming Pool	Sheppey
61	Emerald Crescent Green	Sittingbourne
51	Queensway Open Space	Sheppey
54	Prince Charles Avenue	Sittingbourne
74	Fallowfield Open Space	Sittingbourne
42	Whiteways Open Space	Sheppey
33	Flood Lane Open Space	Faversham

ID	Site Name	Settlement Area
202	Noreen Avenue Play Area	Sheppey
55	Merlin Close Open Space	Sittingbourne
205	Windermere Play Area	Faversham
45	Harold Street Open Space	Sheppey
48	Well Road Open Space	Sheppey
58	Swanstree Open Space	Sittingbourne
77	Satis Avenue Open Space	Sittingbourne
82	The Paddock	Sittingbourne
31	Sumpter Way Open Space	Faversham

- 7.30 Map 12 demonstrates the access standard for amenity greenspace. Due to the location and size of catchment areas for amenity greenspace there are notable deficiencies in access to these sites. Areas such as central Minster, northern and southern Sheerness, central and southern Sittingbourne and the east area of Faversham are all outside the catchment areas and are deficient in amenity greenspace.
- 7.31 The GIS analysis has identified that 57% or 36,113 households in the Borough are within 400m of an amenity greenspace. Importantly 43% (27,731 households) are not within 400 m of amenity greenspace. It is important to recognise that people will undoubtedly make use of the space nearest to where they live and that may not be a site classified as amenity greenspace.

Provision for Children and Young People

- 7.32 For the purposes of developing the Open Space Strategy provision for children and young people has concentrated the research on the fixed play provision within the Borough and consists of equipped play areas and other specialist provision such as multi use games areas and wheeled play provision or skate parks.
- 7.33 The provision facilities for children and young people are important in facilitating opportunities for physical activity and the development of movement and social skills. As such the results for quality audit for play provision are often much lower than expected as the audit considers not only the physical condition of the equipment it considers the range, play value and measures them against models that are considered best practice in terms of play provision
- 7.34 The audit and assessment examines space designated for children’s play, but recognises that children play in a wide variety of other spaces as well.
- 7.35 The audit undertaken has revealed that there are 69 sites that have provision for children and young people, occupying 7.18 hectares. The provision is split between sites that are specifically provided for children and young people (i.e. stand alone play areas) and provision within other typologies e.g. parks. The total number of play areas classified as ‘stand-alone sites’ is 11, with the remaining 58 play areas located on sites classified within other typologies
- 7.36 The recommended minimum standards are:

Quantity	Quality	Accessibility
<p><u>Standard</u></p> <p>To ensure provision does not fall below the current level of 0.24 ha per 1,000 children’s population (aged 2-17 years)</p>	<p><u>Standard</u></p> <p>To strive for all play sites to be of an ‘average’ play quality (46% and above)</p>	<p><u>Standard</u></p> <p>To provide access for all households in the Borough to be within 400m of provision for children and young people</p>

- 7.37 Quantity standards are based on current levels of provision and therefore no current quantitative deficiencies are present across the Borough. Appendix 5 applies the Borough quantity standard on a settlement area basis. This should be referred to where development takes place to ensure provision does not fall below the current Boroughwide standard of 0.24 ha per 1,000 children's population. Applying the current Borough standard to each settlement area demonstrates there is a shortfall of provision for children and young people in Sittingbourne and an abundance in Faversham and Sheppey.
- 7.38 As part of the quality auditing process a detailed database of site information has been collated (Appendix 1) with a breakdown of quality scores by key criteria. This should be referred to when looking for site specific quality improvements e.g. improvements to infrastructure such as seating and bins and management issues such as site cleanliness. The following sites fall well below the desired quality standard for provision for children and young people, we would recommend prioritising these sites first for improvements:

ID	Site Name	Settlement Area	Hierarchy
218	Diligent Drive Play Area	Sittingbourne	Local
205	Windermere Play Area	Faversham	Neighbourhood
183	The Glen	Sheppey	Local
206	Denbigh Close Play Area	Sittingbourne	Local
88	Boughton Open Space	Faversham	Local
219	Horselees Road Play Area	Faversham	Local
45	Harold Street Open Space	Sheppey	Local
26	Wildish Road Open Space	Faversham	Local
110	Leysdown Coastal Park	Sheppey	Local
217	Giraud Drive Play Area	Faversham	Local
178	Lionfield Open Space	Faversham	Local
212	Finch Close Play Area	Faversham	Neighbourhood
40	Abbey Rise	Sheppey	Local
184	Lovell Road Open Space	Sheppey	Local
53	Manor Grove	Sittingbourne	Local
186	King Georges Playing Field, Sheppey	Sheppey	Local
34	Power Station Road	Sheppey	Local
46	Rushenden Hill	Sheppey	Local

- 7.39 Map 14 demonstrates the access standard for provision for children and young people. Due to the location and size of catchment areas for provision for children and young people there are notable deficiencies in access to these sites. Areas such as north Minster, north and west Sittingbourne and central Faversham are all outside the catchment areas.
- 7.40 The GIS analysis has identified that 60% or 38,144 households in the Borough are within the combined access catchments set for provision for children and young people. Importantly 40% of households are not currently within the catchment areas.

Allotments

- 7.41 This section considers the provision of both public and private allotments across the Borough. The accessibility of open space varies greatly dependent upon the type of provision, and it is by their very nature that allotments are only accessible with restrictions in that you must be a tenant or plot holder. Allotments provide a key type of provision within the overall portfolio of open space, sport and recreation facilities. From the consultation undertaken, the value of allotments is significant, providing facilities for physical activity in addition to the promotion of healthy eating and educational value. The provision of allotments is a statutory function for local authorities under a number of legislative acts including the 1950 Allotment Act.
- 7.42 The audit undertaken has revealed that there are 24 sites occupying 24.08 hectares and providing 0.20 ha per 1,000 population
- 7.43 The recommended minimum standards are:

Quantity	Quality	Accessibility
<u>Standard</u> To ensure provision does not fall below the current level of 0.20 ha per 1,000 population	<u>Standard</u> To ensure that sites are maintained to a quality standard of 'average' or above (46% or above). This includes ensuring facilities and infrastructure are 'fit for purpose'.	<u>Standard</u> To provide an accessible allotment plot within 800m of where people live

- 7.44 Quantity standards are based on current levels of provision and therefore no current quantitative deficiencies are present across the Borough. Appendix 5 applies the Borough quantity standard on a settlement area basis. This should be referred to where development takes place to ensure provision does not fall below the current Boroughwide standard of 0.20 ha per 1,000 population. Applying the current Borough standard to each settlement area demonstrates there is a shortfall of allotments in Sheppey and Sittingbourne and an abundance in Faversham.
- 7.45 This needs to be considered with caution as from the audit a number of sites have vacant plots whilst others have substantial waiting lists. Further discussion needs to be undertaken to identify the exact number of vacant plots and those on waiting lists.
- 7.46 As part of the quality auditing process a detailed database of site information has been collated (Appendix 1) with a breakdown of quality scores by key criteria. This should be referred to when looking for site specific quality improvements e.g. improvements to infrastructure such as signage and parking and management issues such as site cleanliness. The following sites fall below the desired quality standard for allotments, we would recommend prioritising these sites first for improvements:

ID	Site Name	Settlement Area
5	Coronation Crescent	Sheppey
21	Station Row	Faversham
6	Nursery Close	Sheppey
22	Silver Street	Sittingbourne
18	Colegates Road	Faversham
9	Staplehurst Road	Sittingbourne
17	Conyer Road	Faversham
13	East Hall Farm Allotments	Sittingbourne
10	Homewood Avenue	Sittingbourne
14	College Road	Sittingbourne

ID	Site Name	Settlement Area
19	Oak Lane	Sittingbourne
15	Breach Road	Sittingbourne
23	Ospringe Allotments	Faversham
8	Bayford Court	Sittingbourne
1	Stonebridge Ponds	Faversham

7.47 Map 15 demonstrates the access standard for allotments. There are notable deficiencies in access to these sites. Areas such as Minster, Leysdown, north and south Sittingbourne are all outside the catchment areas.

7.48 The GIS analysis has identified that 48% or 30,673 households in the Borough are within 800m of an allotment site. Importantly 52% (33,171 households) are not within 800m of an allotment site. It is important to recognise that people will undoubtedly make use of the allotments that have a good reputation; this means they may travel to a site that is further than the one nearest to home.

Cemeteries

7.49 Cemeteries 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. They often have wildlife conservation and bio-diversity 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.

7.50 There are 21 sites identified as cemeteries equating to 22.61 hectares of provision across the Borough. The recommended minimum standards are:

Quantity	Quality	Accessibility
<u>Standard</u>	<u>Standard</u>	<u>Standard</u>
No quantitative Standard Set	The proposed standard for Cemeteries is 61% plus or to a 'good' standard	No standard set

7.51 As part of the quality auditing process a detailed database of site information has been collated (Appendix 1) with a breakdown of quality scores by key criteria. This should be referred to when looking for site specific quality improvements e.g. improvements to infrastructure such as signage and parking and management issues such as site cleanliness. The following sites fall below the desired quality standard for cemeteries, we would recommend prioritising these sites first for improvements:

ID	Site Name	Settlement Area
107	Old Murston Churchyard	Sittingbourne
98	Union Road Burial Ground	Sheppey
99	Love Lane Burial Ground	Sheppey
102	North Road Cemetery	Sheppey
103	The Holy Trinity	Sheppey
95	All Saints, Iwade	Sittingbourne
97	Minster Abbey	Sheppey
89	Sheppey Cemetery	Sheppey
105	Holy Trinity Church, Sittingbourne	Sittingbourne
96	St. Peter & St. Paul, Lynsted	Faversham
93	St. Catherine's	Faversham
104	Holy Trinity, Sheerness	Sheppey



Section 8

Recommendations & Action Plan

8 Recommendations & Action Plan

8.1 A number of recommendations are made in relation to all sites and the assessment undertaken. These are concerned with the use of information gathered and the further development of the study in future years. The following recommendations are made:

- a) Audit sport, leisure and open spaces on a regular basis (every two/three years) and publish 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. 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.
- 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 leisure, culture, regeneration and planning, 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 a planning decision is made. Where appropriate, external partners should also be consulted including town and parish councils.
- e) Continue to develop the marketing information produced about the parks and open space facilities available, 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, Kent County Council (education) etc. to ensure that open space fulfils a valuable role in meeting wider social objectives (e.g. health improvement, increased active participation).
- f) Working with the Swale Access Group develop an access standard regarding physical access to open space for those users and potential users with a disability.
- g) Review maintenance standards for open space, and agree with local people any changes. Report on performance annually. It is important to set quality standards for each of the open space categories.
- h) Develop and fund a programme of signage installation. The absence of signage or the presence of outdated signage was found to be 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 the reduction of the effects of crime and anti-social behaviour in parks and open spaces in the interests of community safety.
- j) Establish and implement a programme of action to address the actual, and perceived, issues of safety in open spaces. This could take the form of installing CCTV at identified sites, improving design or investing in 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.
- k) Consider a restructure in the service to facilitate the need for greater development and securing of external funding e.g. open space development team

Parks and Gardens

- 8.2 Management plans are needed for some of the major formal green spaces. The Council should work towards achieving its own local quality standard to ensure that the Borough's key parks and gardens are maintained to a standard that is satisfactory. It should also consider benchmarking against national awards such as Green Flag but success should not be at the expense of other sites and the Council should use the audit to improve all sites that fall below the quality standards.
- 8.3 The recommendations detailed below form a response to the assessment undertaken and need to be viewed as complementary to any policies developed within the Open Space Strategy. This principle applies to all managed open spaces.
- 8.4 The recommendations made in this report are focused on addressing facility deficiencies. On the basis of the assessment undertaken the following recommendations are made:

- a) Focus on increasing overall quality of sites rather than quantity. Raise the standard by improving destination sites to a 'good' standard and all others to an 'average' standard, by ensuring budgets are not set to simply maintain sites rather they are set to allow for continuous improvement.
- b) Ensure that the policies put in place will address the identified provision deficiencies as a priority in the production of a Local Development Framework (LDF). Prioritise potential Green Flag sites and those listed in paragraph 7.9.
- c) Develop and support Friends Groups for key parks and open spaces to increase local involvement and ownership.
- d) Develop and improve site Management Plans and extend the practice of management planning to a greater range of parks and open spaces.
- e) Test the fit for purpose function, quality and 'performance' of the more formal spaces through entering externally judged competitions and quality recognition schemes (e.g. Green Flag/ Britain in Bloom).
- f) Develop an asset register of the facilities within sites such as benches, bins, location, date installed, lifetime expectancy, replacement timeframe.
- g) To continue to recognise the importance of the sites classified as a Destination provision as a means of raising the Borough image and address the quality issues identified.
- h) Ensure that future provision is well designed, serves a purpose and is appropriate in size

Natural and Semi-Natural Greenspace

8.5 A number of recommendations are made in response to the assessment findings. These are:

- a) These sites are intrinsic to the Council's bio-diversity policies and need to be surveyed for ecological value on a regular basis.
- b) Ensure that these sites are proactively managed using recognised best practice countryside management and estate management techniques to enhance their ecological and environmental education value.
- c) Identified provision deficiencies are addressed as a priority in the production of a Local Development Framework (LDF).
- d) Work to develop a rolling programme of renewal and improvements, e.g. bins, signage and seating. Prioritise sites listed in paragraph 7.15.
- e) Develop a Walking Strategy to set out how the Borough's existing walking networks link together.
- f) Further develop the footpath network and link into wider footpath networks outside of the Borough.
- g) Link the use of both open space and sport and recreation facilities with travel awareness initiatives.
- h) 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.
- i) Protect all existing nature conservation sites.

Outdoor Sports Facilities

8.6 The following recommendations are made in response to the findings of the Outdoor Sport Assessment. These are:

- a) Addressing pitch deficiencies outlined in the playing pitch strategy by strengthening and developing partnership working with private providers, Governing Bodies and neighbouring authorities, a Sports Forum for Swale should be used to facilitate this.
- b) Explore and develop closer partnership working with Education and the role of school facilities to support mini and junior sport and potentially provide additional community accessible facilities.
- c) Community use agreements (to an agreed specification) should be established for all future school redevelopment schemes.
- d) Work with clubs to aid club and sport development through accreditation e.g. Sportsmark.
- e) Undertake regular condition surveys on changing facilities at regular intervals to identify any remedial work that may be required, identify any additional disability access requirements and provide an estimated lifespan for each building.
- f) Undertake a feasibility study into developing a central hub facility for Clubs.
- g) Use the findings of the playing pitch strategy to prioritise investment in facilities.

Amenity Greenspace

8.7 The following recommendations are made in relation to Amenity Greenspace:

- a) Ensure that the recommended standards are implemented and prioritise improvement of site quality (see paragraph 7.29).
- b) Develop a plot data base with contact details for each site
- c) Ensure that future provision is well designed, serves a purpose and is appropriate in size (anything below 0.1 ha is not readily useable by children and young people without the potential for conflict with neighbours)

Provision for Children and Young People

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

- a) Consider providing a balance of fixed play equipment and natural play opportunities as a means of catering for children and young people.
- b) Improve provision for Young People, especially teenagers and toddlers, through the hierarchy and also by making the provision within the Borough's main parks more adventurous and bigger in terms of the range of equipment and the element of risk. Use initial findings of the audit to prioritise poor quality sites (see paragraph 7.38)
- 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 the hierarchy of provision and continue to address the imbalance across the Borough (see paragraph 7.40 and Map 14).
- h) Ensure that the recommended accessibility thresholds are implemented.
- i) Future fixed play provision should be in keeping with the Borough's Play Strategy.

Allotments

8.9 The following recommendations are made in relation to allotment provision:

- a) The Council needs to work with allotment holders and societies to identify demand and to develop an allotment strategy to provide a strategic framework for the future provision of allotments
- b) A programme of facility development with a focus on sites which currently fall below the quality standard listed in paragraph 7.46
- c) Facilities for users/potential users with a disability need to be further developed.
- 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. Partnerships could include, schools (where sites are close enough) and the further development of health-related projects and community gardens.

Cemeteries

8.10 The following recommendations are made in relation to cemeteries:

- a)** To provide 'Good' quality sites as a minimum, focussing on sites listed in paragraph 7.51 which currently fall below the quality standard.
- b)** Provide quiet areas for reflection and contemplation
- c)** Undertake an assessment of future demand in relation to burial spaces

Action Plan

Sense of Place

SENSE OF PLACE				
Aim	Action to be taken	Intended Outcome	Lead Department	Timescale & cost
Establish a multi-agency steering group	Develop a Parks and Open Space Steering Group with internal and external partners e.g. town and parish councils	Steering Group to meet 4 times a year and to coincide with budgetary timescale to approve annual action plan and to undertake ongoing review of strategy.		
To develop a Parks Champion	To seek and identify an appropriate elected member to take on the mantle as Parks and Open Spaces champion	To ensure corporate approach to the future management and improvement of the Borough's parks and open spaces		
To protect historic, environmental and cultural quality of parks and open spaces	Identify possible funding streams and submit funding applications	Major restoration and refurbishment of key parks and open space.		
	Prepare a strategy for art in the parks	Strategic approach to the delivery of public art in green space		
Achieve and sustain the Green Flag Award	Develop management plans for a key park in each of the three settlement areas and work towards securing Green Flag status	Demonstrate sustained improvement		
		Increase community involvement and ownership		
		Raise the profile of the Borough		
		Develop a closer working link with Ranger Service, environmental organisations, trusts, friends groups and parks staff		

Swale Borough Council
Swale Open Space Strategy

SENSE OF PLACE				
Aim	Action to be taken	Intended Outcome	Lead Department	Timescale & cost
Prepare Development Plans for major green spaces in consultation with local community.	Assess needs for individual local sites through local consultation	To identify future improvements in the provision of open space, the quality of and access to existing open spaces and parks, such as provision of sensory gardens		
	Deliver Playing Pitch Strategy and Children's Play Space Strategy recommendations	To improve sports and play facilities.		
		Secure sustained investment to deliver the continued improvement and implementation of both strategies		
		To improve drainage		
		To provide sustainable adventure play spaces that create a level of risk. Improve the opportunity for teenagers		
	Develop a positive approach to engaging young people	Creation of a Young Ranger Service / Young Friends Groups and to proactively engage young people of all ages in the decision making process and factors that affect their local space		
To develop a workforce equipped with the skills and training to lead and manage the implementation of the vision for parks and open space across the Borough	Continue to administer Staff Development Reviews (SDRs) for all staff involved in Parks and open space management and maintenance in partnership	Skilled and confident workforce		
	Continue to ensure appropriate learning and development mechanisms are in place	E.g. Appropriate habitat management, sustainable maintenance techniques, reducing the carbon footprint of maintenance. Adhere to the principle of reduce, reuse, recycle		
	Increase the range of skills within the workforce including working with the public	Ensures the staff are equipped to contribute to the national agenda and puts the skills back		
	Develop green apprentice scheme	Creates opportunity amongst young people and potential for increased partnership through national organisation such as Groundwork or probationary services		

Access for All

ACCESS FOR ALL				
Aim	Action to be taken	Intended Outcome	Lead Department	Timescale & cost
Create and encouraging opportunities for participating in active and passive recreation	Identify non-participating groups and reasons for non-participation to encourage more open space and park users.	Regular online on site survey opportunities to increase participation in healthy lifestyles.		
	Increase existing arts, sports and recreational facilities e.g. through Art in the Park, Health Walks and summer sports camps.	Work through GP referrals to activate health walking initiatives in parks and open space		
	Provide wider and more diverse active recreation opportunities in parks and open spaces including street sports facilities	Promote greater access to information and routes to physical activity		
	Continue to promote value of allotments to health and well being	Review number of plots allocated per person on allotments reduces the waiting list and encourages more people to take part		
	Create grow your own areas in parks and flower beds and introduce orchards as part of tree improvement planting schemes	Encouraging local people to participate and to have locally sourced five a day healthy eating options. Consult Transition Group to trial pilot projects.		
To improve accessibility to parks and open space	Undertake accessibility audit of parks and open space compliant with the Disability Discrimination Act (1995)	Develop a costed action plan to improving access and ensuring parks and open space is accessible and inclusive in the widest sense		
	Work with partners, schools, clubs and community groups to ensure alterations to sites include accessibility improvements	Ensures parks and open space and facilities are accessible to all		

Swale Borough Council
Swale Open Space Strategy

ACCESS FOR ALL				
Aim	Action to be taken	Intended Outcome	Lead Department	Timescale & cost
Develop accessible play for all	Develop play areas that include facilities that are accessible to children and young people of all abilities	All new play areas will be DDA Compliant and provide a high percentage of equipment that is accessible to all		
Ensure compliance with Section 17 Crime and Disorder Act	Carry out Section 17 mapping exercise	Strategic approach to tackling anti-social behaviour in parks and open spaces		
	Increase the policing within parks and open spaces	Greater confidence amongst the community, reduced crime and vandalism in parks and open space		
	Develop links with the crime and Disorder Partnership and create a 'Park Watch' Scheme in key parks and open spaces	Improved partnership approach to maximise use of resources and to encourage greater involvement by the community in taking ownership		
	Support and develop diversionary activities programmes such as Streetwise Soccer half-term clubs	Increased opportunity for young people to engage in positive activities		
Promote parks and open spaces as venues for events and community activities	Establish process for event application and management	Ensure events are suitably managed, sustainable and safe		
	Develop an online booking system and information resource	Creates and generates added income Supports community cohesion, ensure events can be held on parks and open space		
	Develop a regional and local events programme to attract visitors to parks and open space	To increase Parks and Open Spaces visitor numbers and to support Community and Cultural Strategy.		
	Develop specific areas in parks and open space as events arenas	Providing venues and focus for local and larger scale events		

Interpretation

INTERPRETATION				
Aim	Action to be taken	Intended Outcome	Lead Department	Timescale & cost
To increase the number and availability of staff in line with the National Parkforce agenda	To develop greater depth of cover at weekends including maintenance	A Volunteer Park Ranger Service leading to Improved standards Increased security and personal safety		
		Reduced anti social behaviour		
		Reduced fear of crime		
	To review staff working patterns to ensure staff presence at peak visitor periods	Demonstrate sites that have a personnel presence with a person symbol on plans		
Enables people to make informed decisions about which sites they may wish to use				
To increase the number and availability of staff in line with the National Parkforce agenda	Develop a Volunteer Park Ranger Service	Maximise the use of volunteers to increase perception of safety to develop greater depth of cover at weekends including maintenance		
Promote parks and open space for education and learning	Promote recycling	To meet government waste minimisation targets and to contribute towards using resources such as water more efficiently.		
	Pursue green waste composting with waste service providers.	Provide allotment sites with free water butts.		
		Encourage allotment associations to apply for grant aid to carry out encourage recycling.		
	Promote parks and open space as outdoor classroom	Parks and open space used as learning environment Educate people to the value of parks and open space.		
Develop Ranger working with schools pack	To provide local schools with outdoor curricula activities			

Regeneration

REGENERATION				
Aim	Action to be taken	Intended Outcome	Lead Department	Timescale & cost
Maximising existing resources to enable improvement in parks and open spaces to be carried out whilst ensuring the continued maintenance of spaces	Identify opportunities to access funding from other sources, e.g. sponsorship, Government agencies and funding regimes, planning agreements and other bodies.	To ensure the sustained delivery of good quality Parks and Open Spaces that caters for the needs of the community.		
	To work proactively in partnership with others to seek and secure external funding and sponsorship.	Prepare development and management plans to support application bids.		
	Help local community groups and associations to access funding directly.	To support rural renaissance through supporting projects.		
Review Developer Contributions	Undertake annual review of current funding opportunities through developer contributions	Clear framework for developer contributions based on single bed units and the development of a pooled central green space fund		
Encourage better working partnerships with external organisations and community groups	Prepare a register of external funding opportunities available to fund parks and open space developments	Improved quality, accessibility and diversity of parks and open space provision		
	Assess opportunities for additional income through negotiation of appropriate concessions and sponsorship	Secure income to contribute to funding delivery of new standards		

Biodiversity

BIODIVERSITY				
Aim	Action to be taken	Intended Outcome	Lead Department	Timescale & cost
To develop Local Nature Reserves and areas of biodiversity and implement sustainable management practices	Ensure the implementation of the Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) is monitored and measured annually and ensure that there is continued compliance with the Biodiversity Duty outlined in the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006	Monitoring the ecological value of parks and open space		
		To support the development of a species rich Borough through increased species diversity and increased habitat		
		Encouraging pollen rich species will help increase and protect native insects such as bees		
To develop Local Nature Reserves and areas of biodiversity and implement sustainable management practices	Work in Partnership with the National Trust, Groundwork and local communities to establish further designated Local Nature Reserves	Encourage local community groups and associations to apply for funding to carry out environmental improvements		
		Reduced carbon footprint of the service		
		Improve the environmental impact of the service		

Quality

QUALITY				
Aim	Action to be taken	Intended Outcome	Lead Department	Timescale & cost
Improve liveability of local communities by ensuring quality accessible green space is provided for all	Deliver a programme of liveability/green space improvements in line with neighbourhood management priorities	Creation of a matrix of improvement projects to be delivered in line with Play Strategy, Playing Pitch Strategy, Open Space Strategy and neighbourhood management/ Friends group priorities		
To ensure all open spaces are maintained to the quality standards identified	Review how the grounds and infrastructure maintenance is delivered across all parks and open spaces	Develop and adopt new standards which brings the quality of all sites up to a Good or above quality rating		
	Develop local standards for the provision, quality and access to parks and open spaces through consultation	To ensure that open spaces and parks are developed in a consistent manner to ensure that the character of the space is retained.		
	Introduce an annual external appraisal/ critical friend assessment of key parks and open spaces	External expertise can highlight and refresh interest and help drive improvement in parks and open space		
	Monitor the quality of existing Parks and Open Spaces	Introduce performance monitoring to collate evidence of improvement or continuous performance To provide evidence of need for funding applications.		
		To demonstrate continuous improvement		
	Improve first impressions of sites by improving entrances, signage and infrastructure	Utilise the findings from the site audits to improve individual sites and overall typology scores		
	Demonstrate improvement to all parks and open spaces	Establish a continued investment programme in open space and establish a Swale Quality Open Spaces standard		

Promotion

PROMOTION				
Aim	Action to be taken	Intended Outcome	Lead Department	Timescale & cost
Produce an annual Report on the value of parks and open space in Swale	Work with partners to identify opportunities and positive contributions	Raised awareness of the opportunities in parks and open space		
Raise awareness of the value and opportunities parks and open space has to offer	Prepare parks and open space marketing and communications plan	To increase the amount of interpretative and environmental information about parks and open spaces.		
Develop Eco-Tourism and promote Swale's natural open space resource	Develop an Eco-Parks Visitor Centre and café for visitors	Promoting environmental education, encouraging wider school use and opportunities for existing non users		

Community Engagement

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT				
Aim	Action to be taken	Intended Outcome	Lead Department	Timescale & cost
Encouraging ownership and use of parks and open spaces through social inclusion, to ensure that the benefits provided by parks and open spaces are maximised.	To work with other Council departments, neighbouring authorities, local, national and regional agencies such as the Primary Care Trust, Police, Youth and Community Services to provide an effective parks and open space service.	To help to secure and seek external funding to enhance parks and open spaces. To ensure that there is a seamless provision of facilities across Council boundaries		
		To develop local policy agreements to increase the range and level of services provided.		
	To work with and continue to establish community and user groups such as Friends of the Park groups	To encourage greater capacity building within the community. To give young people, ethnic minority groups and other under represented group's skill confidence and opportunities to participate and influence parks and open space policy decisions.		
		This should result in the better provision and quality of facilities and help to engender civic pride and ownership.		
Work with schools to encourage ownership amongst young people	Build on work with schools through rangers and seek to ensure that all Friends groups have a young friends component	Develop interest and responsibility amongst young people to ensure long term sustainability of parks and open space		

Swale Borough Council
Swale Open Space Strategy

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT				
Aim	Action to be taken	Intended Outcome	Lead Department	Timescale & cost
Ensure effective community engagement	Development of fora and user groups	Greater stakeholder involvement in services delivered.		
	Develop a consultation plan setting out guidelines for inclusive consultation and involvement in the decision making process for parks and open space	All community sectors to feel involved in parks and open space		
	Undertake regular customer satisfaction and user surveys	Ensure sustained community consultation		
	Develop a survey framework to cover both users and non users	To provide feedback on service delivery and to highlight areas for improvement		
	Expand the network of Friends groups	Develop a friends newsletter enhanced community ownership and involvement. Establish an annual Friends of Parks get together and develop a greenspace forum		
	Establish a network of parks and open space volunteers	Promoting greater appropriate use of parks and open space		

Scott Wilson Limited

Disclaimer

Forecasts and recommendations in any proposal, report or letter are made in good faith and on the basis of the information before the Company at the time. Their achievement must depend, among other things, on effective co-operation of the Client and the Client's staff. In consequence, no statement in any proposal, report or letter is to be deemed to be in any circumstances a representation, undertaking, warranty or contractual condition.



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