

Open Space, Sport and Recreation Strategy

September 2010

Babergh District Council



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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background

This Open Space Sport and Recreation Strategy (OSSRS) provides an overview of open space, sport and recreation provision in the Babergh District. It builds on an Audit and Assessment of open space, sport and recreation carried out 2009/10. It indicates current provision, identifies shortfalls and deficiencies in relation to quantity, quality and accessibility of open space facilities throughout the district. It was approved by Babergh's Strategy Committee on 29th July 2010.

The Babergh Development Framework (BDF) requires a sound evidence base to enable strong policies to be written into Local Development Documents. Planning Policy Guidance Note No.17 "Planning for Open Space, Sport and Recreation" (July 2002) provides the national context in relation to open space, sport and recreation facilities which will form part of this evidence base. Local authorities are advised to carry out a robust needs assessment of such facilities, and the publication "Assessing Needs and Opportunities: A Companion Guide to PPG17" (September 2002) gives more detail on how this is to be done.

The Council has produced the audit and assessment in-house in order to make use of available staff resources. This has involved the Open Spaces, Planning Policy, and Community Safety & Leisure Sections. A database now exists, which holds current information on the quantity and quality of all open spaces in the district. A full report, by parish, illustrating the provision and assessment position for each parish is now being compiled, a complete set will be provided by the end of 2010.

By providing a clear picture of existing provision and advising on deficiencies in quality, quantity and accessibility, the assessment will:

- advise on the drafting of appropriate planning policies in the BDF up to 2031 by contributing to a strong evidence base;
- facilitate production of a strategy that will enable delivery of a network of accessible, high quality open spaces, and sport and recreation facilities;
- assist the Council and its partners with applications for grant aid, improving site management, securing external funding and in getting financial contributions from new development and securing delivery of open space improvements on the ground in a form and location where they are needed; and
- meet the requirements of Planning Policy Guidance Note No.17 or any emerging guidance which replaces it.

PPG17 guidance states that open spaces and sport and recreation facilities underpin people's good quality of life. Many sites have value in landscape and biodiversity terms and can act as green lungs where air quality can be safeguarded. They can be focal points for local communities and improve the sense of well being where people live, particularly for deprived areas. They have a role to play in promoting healthy living and also offer opportunities for walking and cycling where they are well related to existing and new development.

Future policies prepared through the Babergh Development Framework, such as Development Management Policies will be informed by this strategy and the evidence base which underpins it. Well-worded planning policies are fundamental in delivering broader Government objectives that include:

- supporting an urban renaissance
- supporting a rural renewal
- promotion of social inclusion and community cohesion
- health and well being
- promoting more sustainable development

The protection of existing open space and sport and recreation facilities is a key part of PPG17 guidance. At the national level there has been concern over the loss of playing fields and a perceived lack of investment in existing open spaces and in the creation of new facilities. The assessment of open space and sport and recreation facilities through PPG17 is a means of addressing Government objectives at the local level.

1.2 What the Strategy includes

Open space sport and recreation means many different things to us all. It is important to clearly define the type and function of open space, sport and recreation to ensure that we plan for the facilities needed within our communities. The typologies and their definitions included in this Strategy and the supporting Audit and Assessment are listed below. (These are based on the typologies and definitions set out in PPG17).

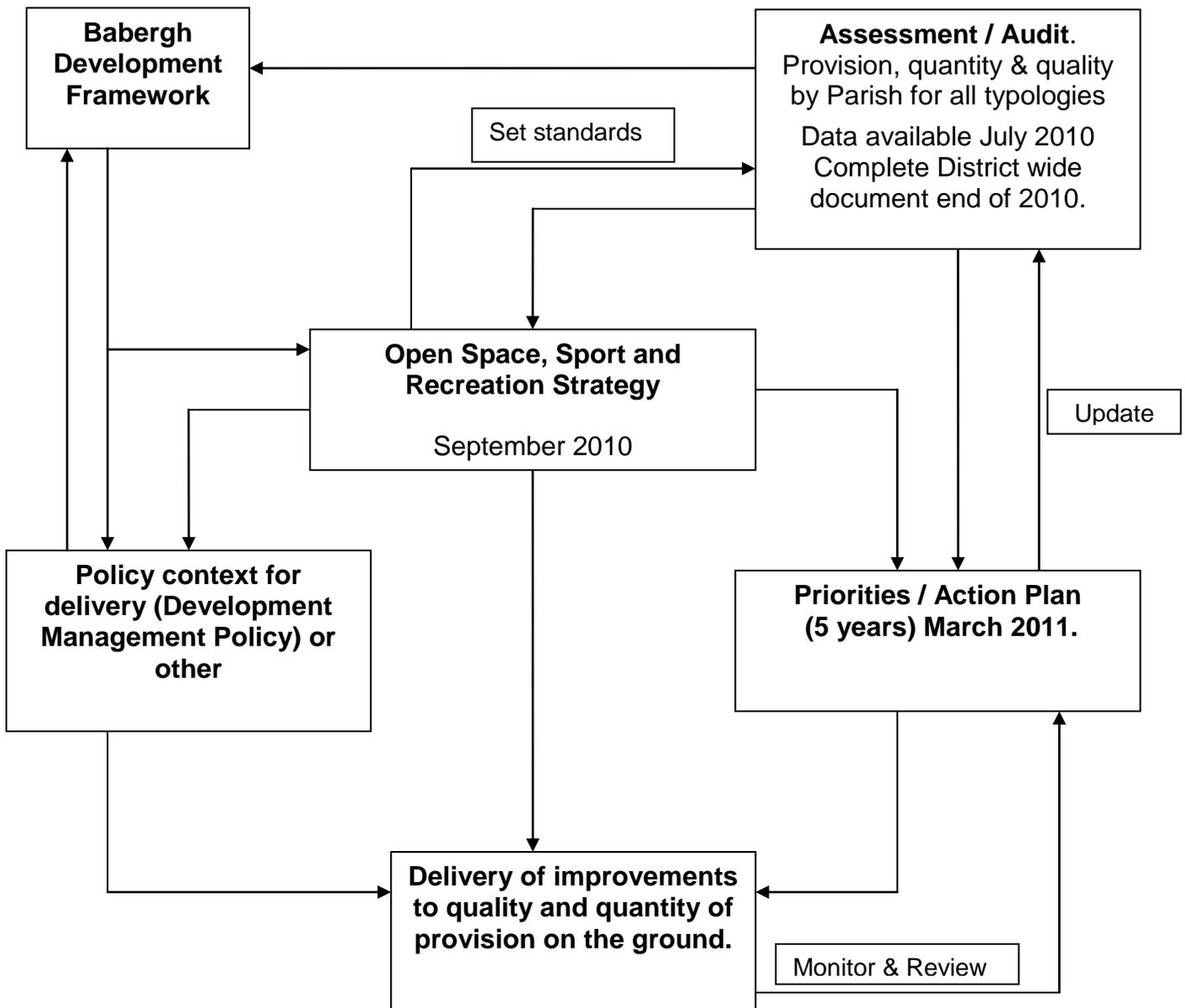
- **Parks and gardens** – Accessible, high quality opportunities for informal recreation and community events.
- **Natural and semi-natural urban greenspaces** – Areas for wildlife conservation, biodiversity and opportunities for environmental education.
- **Green corridors** – Places for walking, cycling and horse riding, whether for leisure or for travel. Also provide opportunities for wildlife migration.

- **Outdoor sports facilities** – Areas providing for participation in outdoor sports such as pitch sports, tennis, bowls and athletics as well as countryside and water sports.
- **Amenity greenspace** – areas for informal activities close to home or work. Also enhancement of the appearance of residential or other built up areas.
- **Provision for children and teenagers** – areas designed primarily for play and social interaction including children and young people. Includes equipped play areas, ball courts, skateboard areas and teenage shelters.
- **Allotments** – opportunities for those who wish to, for growing their own produce as part of a long term promotion of sustainability, health and social inclusion.
- **Cemeteries and churchyards** – quiet areas serving a function for burials, but also areas for contemplation and also linked to the promotion of wildlife conservation and biodiversity.
- **Civic spaces** – provide a setting for civic buildings and contribute to character and function of urban spaces. Provide areas for community events.
- **Swimming Pools** – Indoor swimming pools managed for public use either by, or for the Local Authority.
- **Indoor Sports halls / leisure centres** – Indoor sports facilities provided and managed for public use, including shared use in the case of school facilities. Includes sports halls and other indoor facilities often provided alongside a main sports hall including, squash courts and fitness gym facilities;
- **Other indoor facilities** – Includes more specialist facilities such as ice rinks and indoor tennis centres.

For each of the typologies listed above, the Audit / Assessment indicates the current provision. This Strategy identifies minimum standards of provision in terms of quantity, quality and accessibility, where appropriate. The Audit and Assessment uses these minimum standards to identify deficiencies. The strategy summarises the key findings of the quantity and quality assessment, highlighting any general issues of concern and overall trends or gaps in provision.

1.3. How will the Strategy be used?

As indicated this Strategy provides an overview and sets the context for ensuring adequate provision for open space, sport and recreation in the form and location that it is needed most. In order to secure delivery, further work is necessary to clearly identify priorities within parishes and throughout the district. The following framework applies;



2. **CONTEXT**

Open space sport and recreation covers a wide range of interests where the provision of facilities cuts across many sustainable development objectives. A number of planning policy documents and other guidance notes provide some context for production of an open space sport and recreation strategy for the Babergh District.

2.1. **National**

All types of open space sport and recreation facilities, including green infrastructure and built sports provision, are featured in the strategy. The following Planning Policy Guidance Notes (PPG) and Planning Policy Statements (PPS) are relevant. Other policy publications are also important:

PPG 17 – Planning for Open Space Sport and Recreation (July 2002) and its Companion Guide: Assessing Needs and Opportunities (September 2002)

- Local needs should be assessed by undertaking an audit of all open space sport and recreation facilities;
- The assessment can be used to set local standards for the minimum provision for open space sport and recreation;
- An adequate supply of open space and sport and recreation facilities should be maintained in terms of quantity, quality and accessibility;
- Planning policies should make provision for new facilities;
- Sufficient provision is ensured for local sports and recreation facilities to serve new development;

PPS 1 – Delivering Sustainable Development (January 2005)

- Good planning ensures the right development in the right place at the right time. It makes a positive difference to people's lives and helps deliver homes, jobs and better opportunities for all, whilst protecting and enhancing the natural and historic environment and conserving the countryside and open spaces that are vital resources for everyone.
- At the heart of sustainable development is the simple idea of ensuring a better quality of life for everyone, now and for future generations.

PPS 7 – Sustainable Development in Rural Areas (August 2004)

- Quality of life and the environment in rural areas can be raised through promotion of thriving, inclusive and sustainable rural communities, ensuring people have decent places to live by improving the quality and sustainability of their localities. This includes open space and sport and recreation facilities in rural locations.

- More sustainable patterns of development are sought including the provision of appropriate leisure opportunities to enable urban and rural dwellers to enjoy the wider countryside, in particular in urban fringe areas.

PPS 9 – Biodiversity and Geological Conservation (August 2005)

- Sustainable development is promoted by ensuring that biological and geological diversity are conserved as an integral part of social environmental and economic measures.
- Conservation, enhancement and restoration of England’s wildlife and geology diversity can be achieved by sustaining and where possible improving the quality and extent of natural habitat and geological and geomorphological sites.
- Contributing to rural renewal and urban renaissance by enhancing biodiversity in green spaces and within development so that they are used by wildlife and valued by people, recognising that healthy functional ecosystems can contribute to a better quality of life and to people’s sense of well being.
- Ensuring that development takes account of the role and value of biodiversity in supporting economic diversification and contributing to a high quality environment.

Draft PPS Planning For a Natural and Healthy Environment Consultation March – June 2010.

Consultation on this new PPS took place in the Spring 2010, the draft aims to review and streamline a number of current PPGs and PPSs including PPG 17, PPS9 and parts of PPS7. Although this is a consultation document, a number of key themes flow from it which are relevant which may form the basis of the final PPS including;

- Overarching objective to deliver safe and attractive places to live, which respect the character of the area, promote health and wellbeing and reduce social inequalities by ensuring that people have access to high quality open spaces, green infrastructure and sports, recreational and play spaces and facilities which are safely and easily accessible by walking, cycling or public transport.
- Referring to the evidence base for Local Development Frameworks – Local Planning Authorities should undertake and keep up-to-date:
 - Assessments of existing and future needs of their communities for open space, green infrastructure, sport, recreation and play facilities; and
 - Audits of existing provision in their area of such land and facilities taking into account its quantity, quality and accessibility, typology and location;

- Local Planning authorities should include local standards in their LDFs for quantity, quality and accessibility for open space and facilities for sport, recreation and play;
- Where deficiencies are identified in open space or land and facilities for sport, recreation and play the Local Planning Authority should identify opportunities to enhance existing areas or facilities or create new ones.

Spatial Planning for Sport & Active Recreation (Sport England - 2005)

Sport England sees the spatial planning system as an opportunity to deliver both its own aspirations for sport and active recreation, whilst contributing to those of the public, private and voluntary sectors. It enables a planned approach to the provision of facilities, and adds value to the work of others by delivering sustainable development goals.

- Through partnership working Sport England seeks to ensure that the interests of sport and active recreation are well represented, actively promoted and appropriately developed in the interests of all;
- A broader view is taken of the role of spatial planning as an enabling function which goes beyond the setting and delivery of land use policy;
- Opportunities for delivering an enhanced quality of life for communities in the short, medium and longer term are better identified;
- Spatial planning is able to take advantage of the unique ability for sport and active recreation to contribute to a wide array of policy and community aspirations;
- Partnership working is developed and stimulated by sport and active recreation being recognised as a common interest;
- Using sport and recreation as one of the building blocks of planning and delivery of sustainable communities;

Sport England has developed a significantly-sized suite of policy documents and developmental tools to assist in the planning of sport and recreation facilities that follow on from the above guidance;

Planning and Design for Outdoor Sport and Play (Fields In Trust (FIT), formerly the National Playing Fields Association - 2008)

The established Six Acre Standard used by the former National Playing Fields Association since the 1930s has been retained within new guidance that is seen as being fit for the 21st century. Planning and Design for Outdoor Sport and Play (PAD) continues to uphold the original FIT recommendation that 6 acres of recreational space is required for every 1000 people. It also provides a detailed framework of issues relating to quantity, quality and accessibility of outdoor facilities for sport and play and the importance of local assessments and standards.

Green Infrastructure Strategies - An Introduction for Local Authorities and their partners (Natural England / Forestry Commission - July 2008)

This document introduces the concept of green infrastructure strategies, with reference to Growth Points in the United Kingdom. Green infrastructure is recognised as positively contributing to the quality of people's living and working environments and in generating economic benefits. Natural England has identified 5 tests where new development should:

- Provide green space within 300m of every home;
- Support an increase in priority species and habitats in and around sites;
- Provide a wide variety of parks, wild areas and open spaces to meet the needs of both nature and people;
- Be equipped to cope with the effects of climate change and extreme weather events;
- Be designed to ensure it fits into any surrounding countryside and into its landscape setting.

Green Space Strategies- A Good Practice Guide (CABE Space 2004, reprinted 2006)

CABE Space was established in 2003 by the Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment (CABE), which champions the quality of our buildings and spaces. It was set up at the request of the Government following the recommendations of the Urban Green Spaces Taskforce (Green Spaces Better Places 2002) to promote the role of parks and open spaces in the UK. A number of reports have been commissioned, and CABE Space provides advice on strategic issues in relation to open spaces management, as well as raising their profile. The Good Practice Guide highlights a number of points:

- Attractive, safe and accessible parks and green spaces provide positive social, economic and environmental benefits, and improve public health, well-being and quality of life;
- Green space issues cut across most local authority functions and a sound strategy based on joined-up thinking will help achieve corporate objectives to improve the environment, recreation and leisure provision and with effective community involvement;
- A green space strategy sets out an authority's vision for its green space and the goals it wants to achieve, and advises on resources, methods and time needed to meet these goals.

The publication provides detailed guidance for local authorities preparing strategies and a number of case studies are included in the document.

Haven Gateway Sub Region

The Haven Gateway is one of a number of sub-regions identified in the former East of England Plan (2008) as having potential to develop further as a major focus for economic development and growth. It includes much of the eastern part of the Babergh District. Growth Point status was achieved in 2006 from the Department for Communities and Local Government, and the earlier work of the Haven Gateway Partnership provides a platform for the current round of initiatives. Increased leisure, sport and recreation provision will be needed where new development occurs in order to underpin the Government's sustainable development agenda. New development should be located so as to minimise pressure on the more sensitive areas such as Sites of Special Scientific Interest or Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

Haven Gateway Green Infrastructure Strategy (June 2008)

The Strategy was published by the Haven Gateway Partnership and advises on the provision of green infrastructure within the Growth Point. Green infrastructure is a connected system of protected sites, nature reserves, greenspaces and greenway linkages. By providing for multi-functional uses, e.g. wildlife, recreation, and cultural experience, it contributes to quality of life whilst also delivering landscape, historic and ecological benefits. It will be particularly important in settlements and surrounding areas proposed for regionally or sub-regionally significant development.

Accessible natural greenspace provides opportunities for informal recreation in a natural setting, which is seen as important for quality of life, healthy living and sense of place. Existing greenspace provision throughout the Haven Gateway area was investigated, for sites of 2.0 hectares and over. Future needs were identified, based on the accessible natural greenspace standards developed by Natural England, and adapted by the Town & Country Planning Association referred to in section 5.5 below.

2.2. Local

At the local level a number of policies provide some background to the production of the Open Space Sport and Recreation Strategy. They contain relevant cross-cutting themes and objectives that support the overall purpose of the Strategy, and can assist in making projects happen through access to funding and in identifying priorities for action.

Transforming Suffolk – Suffolk’s Community Strategy (2008 – 2028, Suffolk Strategic Partnership)

The Strategy looks ahead to the issues and challenges likely to be faced over the coming years and articulates a vision that all partners are committed to achieving. The following themes apply:

- The Greenest County;
- Safe, Healthy and Inclusive Communities;

Babergh East Community Plan (2008-2010, Babergh East Local Strategic Partnership)

Key Issues:

- Reducing crime and the fear of crime;
- Health improvement;
- Access to services and facilities;
- Services for young people;
- Protecting and enhancing the environment;

Making Life Better - Community Strategy (2006-2016, Western Suffolk Local Strategic Partnership)

Objectives:

- Maximise the potential of all children and young people;
- Develop and maintain a safe, strong and sustainable community;
- Create and support healthier communities;

Priorities:

- Encourage achievement in children and young people;
- Make Western Suffolk a safer place and build a stronger community
- Protect our natural and built environment and local biodiversity, and ensure sustainable development;
- Reduce avoidable early deaths by providing education and support on health and wellbeing;
- Alleviate poverty and reduce health inequalities.

Babergh District Council Strategic Plan (2008 - 2018)

Issues:

- A greener and cleaner Babergh;
- A safe and healthier Babergh;
- Vibrant places and communities;

Outcomes:

- New housing developments are supported by adequate infrastructure improvements.
- The right balance between protecting the natural environment and supporting development opportunities for the area and its people.
- Babergh's environment is clean, with little environmental vandalism such as fly tipping and is recognised as such by residents.
- A more active population with healthier lifestyles.
- Active local villages and communities.
- Public services appropriately reflect the needs, aspirations and choices of individuals from different groups; such as older people, in their design, resourcing and delivery.

Babergh Local Plan Alteration No 2 (2006)

The Plan contains detailed policies that provide a framework for development control purposes and for guidance on future development in the district. Work is progressing on its successor which will be a series of documents comprising the Babergh Development Framework. Until all of the relevant Development Plan Documents are adopted, many of the policies have been "saved" which retains their status until the Core Strategy and Development Management Policies replace the local policy context for the district. The policies are still applicable at the time of writing this document. A number of them relate to open spaces and sport and recreation facilities. A full list of relevant policies is set out in Appendix 1.

Babergh District Council Play Policy (2007)

The Council has developed a play policy to:

- Support delivery of its corporate objective of promoting healthy living and reducing health inequalities;

- Commit to Article 31 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child which states ‘children have the right to rest and leisure, to engage in play and recreational activities appropriate to their age and to participate freely in cultural life and the arts’;
- Complement the county wide “Play Matters – A Strategy for Suffolk”.

The Council requires an up-to-date formal set of shared and agreed values and principles to underpin the development of play across the district. The development of a play policy is considered essential in delivering the recognised needs of the ‘Every Child Matters’ framework.

A number of themes emerged during production of the Policy:

- All children and young people want and need open playing spaces which can be facilitated through parks and recreational areas where they have opportunities to identify equipment and apparatus they want to play on.
- There are clear indications that all children want open spaces to play, kick a ball, meet friends, ride bikes which are not necessarily supervised but where they need to feel safe.
- There is a need to work with parishes where there is limited or no play provision to ascertain whether there is a desire to make provision and, if so, to work with the community to identify opportunities and funding.
- There is a need to engage with Suffolk County Council to explore the potential for greater involvement of youth workers in the district and to explore the funding of them through the county council, district council, town/parish councils and local strategic partnerships.

3. VISION AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STRATEGY

3.1. Background

Adequate provision of good quality open space contributes towards meeting many wide ranging, cross-cutting objectives. The make up of the Babergh district, primarily rural, with 3 main urban areas at Sudbury (with Great Cornard), Hadleigh and the Ipswich fringe, means that it includes extensive areas of countryside.

Much of the countryside is of high environmental quality and as such is protected by landscape or biodiversity designations including;

- Dedham Vale Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty
- Suffolk Coast and Heaths Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty
- Special Landscape Areas in the Brett, Box, Glem and Stour Valleys, and in Chad Brook
- Stour & Orwell Estuaries Ramsar/Special Protection Area/Site of Special Scientific Interest
- SSSIs and County Wildlife Sites

- Conservation Areas
- Historic Parklands
- Tree Preservation Orders

Much of the countryside contributes towards some of the typologies of open space included in this strategy particularly areas of accessible natural and semi-natural green space and woodlands. Other open space, sport and recreation provision tends to be concentrated in the built up areas of the towns and villages, reflecting the demand, closest to where people live. Whatever the function of spaces around the district, they all make an important contribution towards objectives which seek to achieve a healthy and sustainable community including;

- Environment, conservation and biodiversity;
- Health;
- Sustainability; and
- Climate Change.

Strategy Vision

Everyone in the district will have reasonable access to all types of open space, sport and recreation. The spaces provided will serve a range of functions, meet appropriate minimum standards and be of an acceptable size and quality for all to enjoy.

3.2. Strategy Objectives

- Provide an up to date evidence base for open space, sport and recreation facilities;
- Identify open space, sport and recreation facilities which are important to the communities which they serve and seek to protect them from alternative uses or from development;
- Establish minimum local standards of provision for key types of open space, sport and recreation as bench mark targets. These standards are to reflect quantity, quality and accessibility requirements;
- Identify deficiencies in provision and quality to provide a clear evidence base for securing financial contributions from planning permissions for residential development in areas where a need is evident;
- To improve the quality of existing facilities where qualitative issues are identified to maximise the opportunity for use of the facilities;
- To enable priorities to be set for improvements to open space, sport and recreation provision throughout the district, within catchment areas and Parishes;

- Define catchment areas for key facilities based on the function of the type of facility to ensure a hierarchy of open space, sport and recreation facilities are reasonably accessible to everyone;
- To inform policy formulation for the planning and operation of open space, sport and recreation facilities in the future, in particular, the policy context for enhanced provision through the Babergh Development Framework;
- To provide and support a network of open spaces which contribute to local biodiversity and nature conservation value;
- To ensure an adequate provision of green infrastructure is provided throughout the district and beyond to provide recreation and nature conservation opportunities;
- To ensure the opportunities for participation in a range of recreation and sport activities are accessible to all to promote healthy lifestyles;
- To ensure that provision for open space, sport and recreation is commensurate with future housing growth through out the district.

4. CURRENT PROVISION

4.1. Background

The district wide audit of open space sport and recreation identifies current provision for all the typologies of recreation facility listed in 1.2 above. It also provides a quality assessment and identifies relevant accessibility requirements where appropriate.

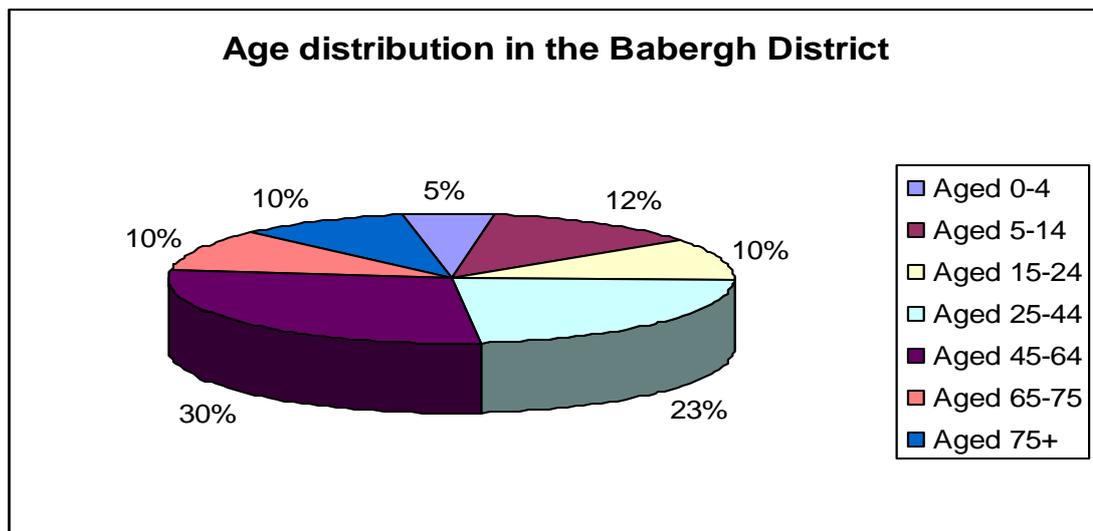
Having identified the current provision it is important to assess the extent to which this provision meets both existing and projected demand. An estimation of demand is influenced by a number of factors, including;

- Availability of facilities;
- Number of people with good / reasonable access to facilities;
- Quality of the facilities;
- Participation levels in activities;
- Existence of clubs / organised groups for the activity (does not apply to all activities); and
- Demographic make up of the area.

There are many complex models available to attempt to indicate levels of demand, at best these can only provide an estimate. For the purposes of this strategy the demand indicators have been influenced by recognised participation rates, Sport England's Active People web based data, questionnaire survey of clubs and organisations and questionnaires to High / Upper school children. Establishing local parameters based on demand indicators and bench-mark standards, allows us to take the assessment of need a stage further, - the setting of local minimum standards of provision. Minimum recommended standards may be set by typology (where appropriate) based on quantity, quality and accessibility.

4.2. Demographics of the District

The demographic make up of the district is important in reflecting local needs in the district, or within specific parts of it. A summary of the demographic make up and any key variations is set out here, the implications of which are reflected in the needs assessment and standard setting.



Figures from the 2008 mid estimate Populations

It can be seen from the above chart that the majority of people in the district fall between the ages of 25-64 (53%). Children and Teenagers (between 0-18) make up 24% of the Babergh population. This latter proportion is important when looking at the needs for young children and teenagers. Equally the older population require adequate provision for open space sport and recreation, but the nature of their demands will clearly be different. Local variations of population distribution are therefore import in looking at priorities.

The 2001 census shows that the parishes of Semer, Shelley and Holbrook have the highest percentage of children (around 27-30%). Holbrook is significantly higher due to the inclusion of the boarding school population in the census. Other larger parishes (all at 20% +) are also considered to have a sufficiently high proportion of children to influence the type of demand for provision. These include Bildeston, Brantham, Chilton, Ewarton, Glemsford, Great Cornard, Harkstead, Lawshall, Lindsey, Pinewood, Shotley and Stoke by Nayland. Lavenham has the lowest proportion, with just 10%.

5. SETTING LOCAL STANDARDS

5.1. *Background*

National guidance from a number of sources, including the Government (via Planning Policy Guidance Notes or more recent Planning Policy Statements), Sport England, Natural England and CABI to name a few, all underpin the need to set minimum standards, locally, for sport and recreation provision. PPG 17 recognises the role that national standards can play as benchmarks, such as the former NPFA open space standards, as the need for facilities is largely related to population, however, there are a number of other factors which influence need which may vary from location to location and sometimes between different areas within a district.

CABI (Open Space Strategies Best Practice Guide) states that open space standards provide an easy-to-use, transparent foundation for the negotiation of planning agreements, providing planning authorities with a robust method for assessing the type, amount, location and quality of provision in an area. It is acknowledged that standards may be challenged, so should be evidence based. CABI suggests that standards for quantity, quality and accessibility should be set for each typology. Although they refer only to open space typology, the same principles apply to built facilities and Sport England advocate the same approach.

Often one approach will be adequate for a consistent district wide approach. However, in some cases, particularly where there is mix of urban and rural settlements within an area, more than one approach may be required, usually a variance of distance thresholds for accessibility standards.

CABI's "Open Space Strategies Best Practice Guide" indicates that the best way to set out standards is as follows;

- Quantity standards: area of provision per thousand population;
- Quality standards: a description of the required design and management / operational standards; and
- Accessibility standards: a distance threshold that takes into account any physical barriers to the movement or access, (e.g. major roads).

This approach is followed and set out for each typology in the sections below.

5.2. *Quantity Standards*

The quantity standards indicated for each typology are intended to be a minimum. A provision standard by hectares is provided per 1000 population, unless otherwise stated. Areas are largely defined by the distinct parish / settlement boundaries, unless a wider catchment area applies, which is specified. The minimum standard is expressed for the district as a whole, as well as for defined local areas where applicable. The data base is supported by GIS mapping, illustrating all provision on a map. An overview of the provision is shown on the maps 1-7.

5.3. Quality Standards

The audit of open space, sport and recreation includes a thorough qualitative assessment of each facility throughout the district. Standard criteria were assessed using a scoring system, providing a comparative element throughout the district. The quality standards are based on the assessment criteria, establishing a benchmark for provision which is deemed to be “good” as reflected by the scores. The quality standard is expressed in terms of the requirements which are considered either essential or desirable to meet the quality standard sought for each typology. There is a balance between striving for the highest quality whilst retaining aspirations which are achievable. This is addressed in the scoring by weighting the criteria in terms of relative importance for the typology. Questionnaire surveys of clubs and organisations representing some of the users have also informed the quality assessment.

5.4. Accessibility Standards

Accessibility standards are based on identifying a reasonable minimum distance threshold which people should have to travel to gain access to each typology of provision. This is based on either a walking / cycling time in built up areas, or driving time in rural areas or for some typologies which serve a wider catchment area. The distance thresholds used are based on recommended benchmarks, and also informed by questionnaire survey responses about where members or users actually come from to use particular facilities as well as the questionnaire responses from secondary school age children in the district. Physical barriers are also taken into account and standards reflect these where appropriate, this will always be considered when standards are applied on a site by site basis. Many facilities have well established national benchmark accessibility standards, such as Accessible Natural Green space and playing fields. Where these exist they are indicated with a justification for any need to vary from these for the local area.

5.5 Current provision and Local Standards by Typology

Urban Parks and Gardens

In Babergh, it is only the urban areas of Sudbury and Hadleigh where the provision of Urban Parks and Gardens is relevant. Although large open spaces and recreation grounds can offer many of the same facilities as an urban park, the function of the latter also often provides a more formal environment, offers important opportunities for recreational enjoyment, in the most built up areas, usually close to town centres. For the two main towns in the district this type of facility is important and has a valuable role, in Sudbury this is provided by Belle Vue Park and in Hadleigh Toppesfield Gardens. It is recognised that urban parks serve much of the rural catchment area beyond the towns and as such, parts of the district will also benefit from good access to parks at Bury St Edmunds, Ipswich and Colchester. There are no recognised quantitative standards for urban parks and gardens and due to the limited location it is difficult to suggest a local quantification. However, it is considered that the qualitative standard is still relevant and this is set out below;

Minimum Standard for Urban Parks and Gardens

	No minimum standard recommended
Quality Standard	
Essential Features <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Clean, safe and litter and graffiti free;• Clear well maintained pedestrian access within and to and from the park;• Well stocked with flowers and trees;• Parking for users close by and cycle parking within or outside the park;	
Desirable Features <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Good signage and information about location of the park;• Well maintained, clean, toilet provision;• Good information about the facilities , contacts etc;• Good access to and from car parking areas in the town;• Green flag award status (national quality benchmark).	

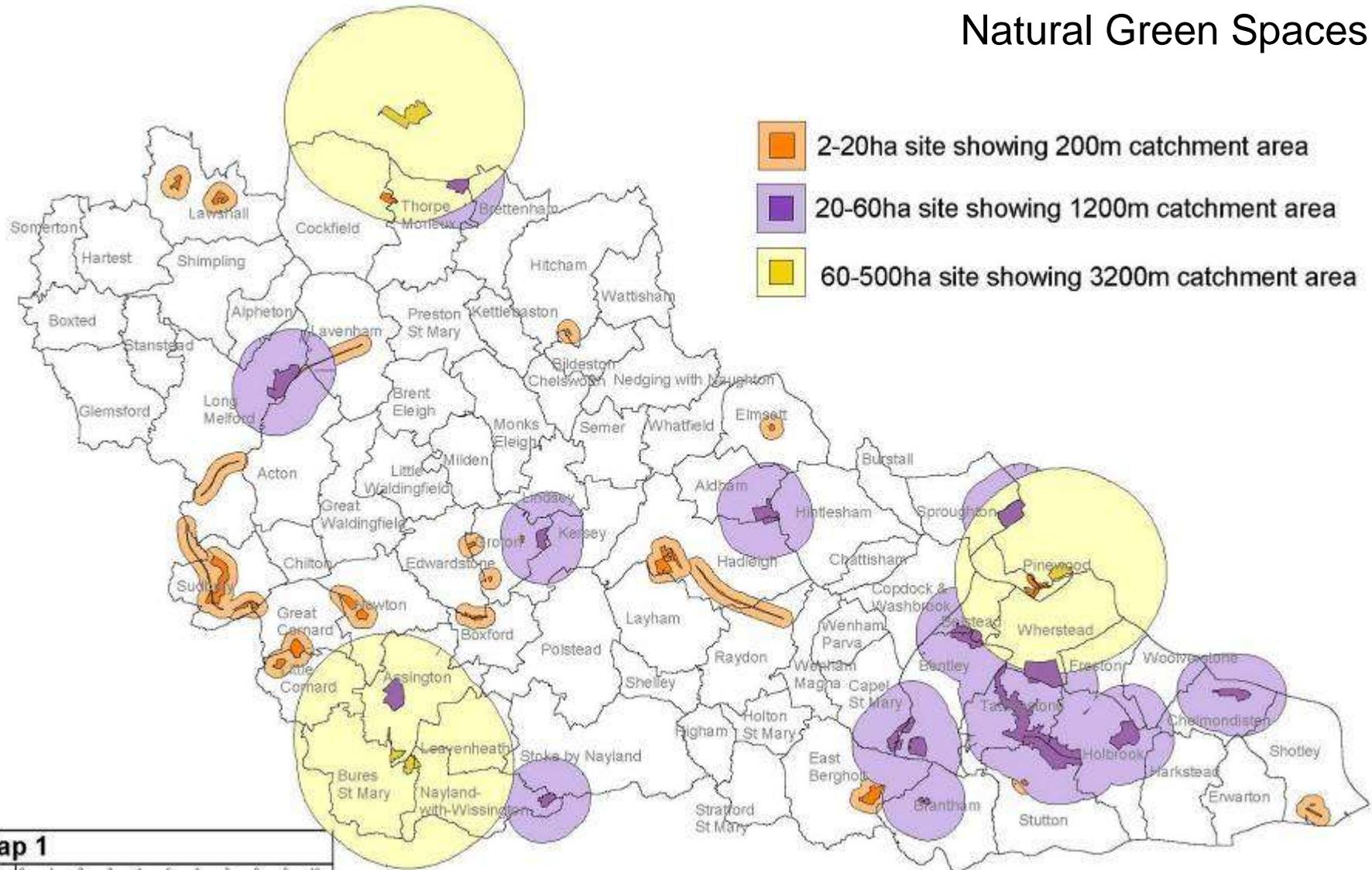
Natural and semi-natural urban greenspaces –

Definition and function - Open spaces within or close to urban / built up areas which provide for wildlife conservation, biodiversity and opportunities for environmental education. Such areas also often serve as amenity areas, or provide public rights of way within them and may form part of a wider network of green corridors or green infrastructure.

Natural and semi-natural green space, contributes towards a network of green infrastructure, within and beyond the district. The audit identifies areas from 0.2 hectares in size. Green infrastructure, including accessible natural and semi-natural green space is often provided on a larger scale at Country Parks, nature reserves and woodlands. The Haven Gateway Green Infrastructure Strategy (HaGGIS) uses the accessibility thresholds established by the Town and Country Planning Association and Natural England for Accessible Natural Green Space (ANGSt). To provide a complete picture of the provision of the larger green infrastructure sites throughout the district, data is provided above for the rest of the district comparable with that from the HaGGIS. The distribution of provision is also important in relation to the provision of public rights of way. Maps 1 and 2 below illustrate the public rights of way, provision and the associated catchment areas based on these ANGSt standards as follows;

- The ANGSt are based on the concept that everyone should live with the following distances of the size of accessible natural green space area indicated;
 - 2.0 ha+ within 300m of home – the Neighbourhood level
 - 20.0 ha+ within 1.2km of home – the District level
 - 60.0 Ha+ within 3.2km of home – the Sub-regional level
 - 500.0 Ha+ within 10km of home – the Regional level

Natural Green Spaces



Map 1

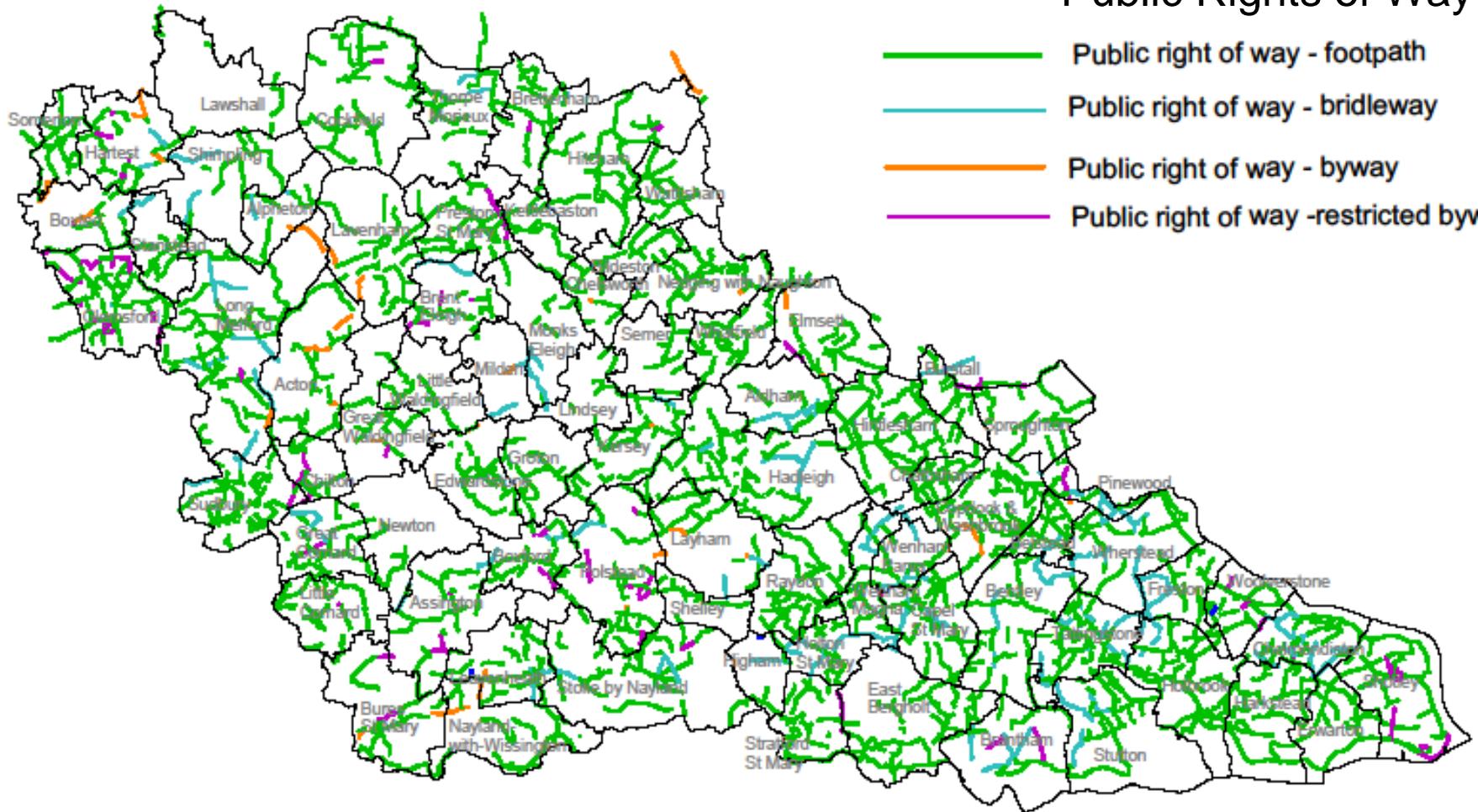


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Public Rights of Way

- Public right of way - footpath
- Public right of way - bridleway
- Public right of way - byway
- Public right of way - restricted byway



Map 2



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Minimum Standards for Natural and Semi natural accessible green space

Existing level of provision	Recommended level of minimum provision
8.1 hectares per 1000 population	No Minimum standard recommended
Justification	
<p>The national benchmark standard for each of the sizes of ANGSt is considered to be of most relevance to large urban areas, where the gaps between open spaces could be a significant distance amongst extensive built up areas. Within a rural district this issue is usually less relevant. Large open space / recreational spaces are located within and adjoining the district. Much of the district consists of large areas of countryside, supported by a good network of public rights of way which provide immediate access and linkages to areas of accessible natural green space.</p>	
Quality Standard	
<p>The variety of provision and dual function of many areas of open space make a quality standard difficult to define. Therefore no direct standard is recommended, although the general standard applicable to other provision particularly informal spaces such as amenity space are relevant.</p>	
Accessibility Standard	
<p>No standard is recommended. It is considered more appropriate to look at opportunities to promote and enhance the access to, and between, the full range of types of open space located within and adjoining the district. Together these spaces whatever their function, contribute towards accessible natural green space. This is a more pragmatic approach to aim to maintain and enhance access, rather than aspire to extensive additional provision which is often likely to be difficult to deliver.</p>	

Green corridors

Definition / function - Places for walking, cycling and horse riding, whether for leisure or for travel. Also provide opportunities for wildlife migration.

Areas which comprise green corridors have not been recorded separately within the audit. Many may serve a secondary function as a green corridor, providing either a right of access, or a migration link for wildlife, or both. The value of such areas throughout the district, particularly within the built up areas is recognised, however due to the opportunity for so many other types of open space typology to also fulfil this function it is not considered necessary to quantify this provision in its own right.

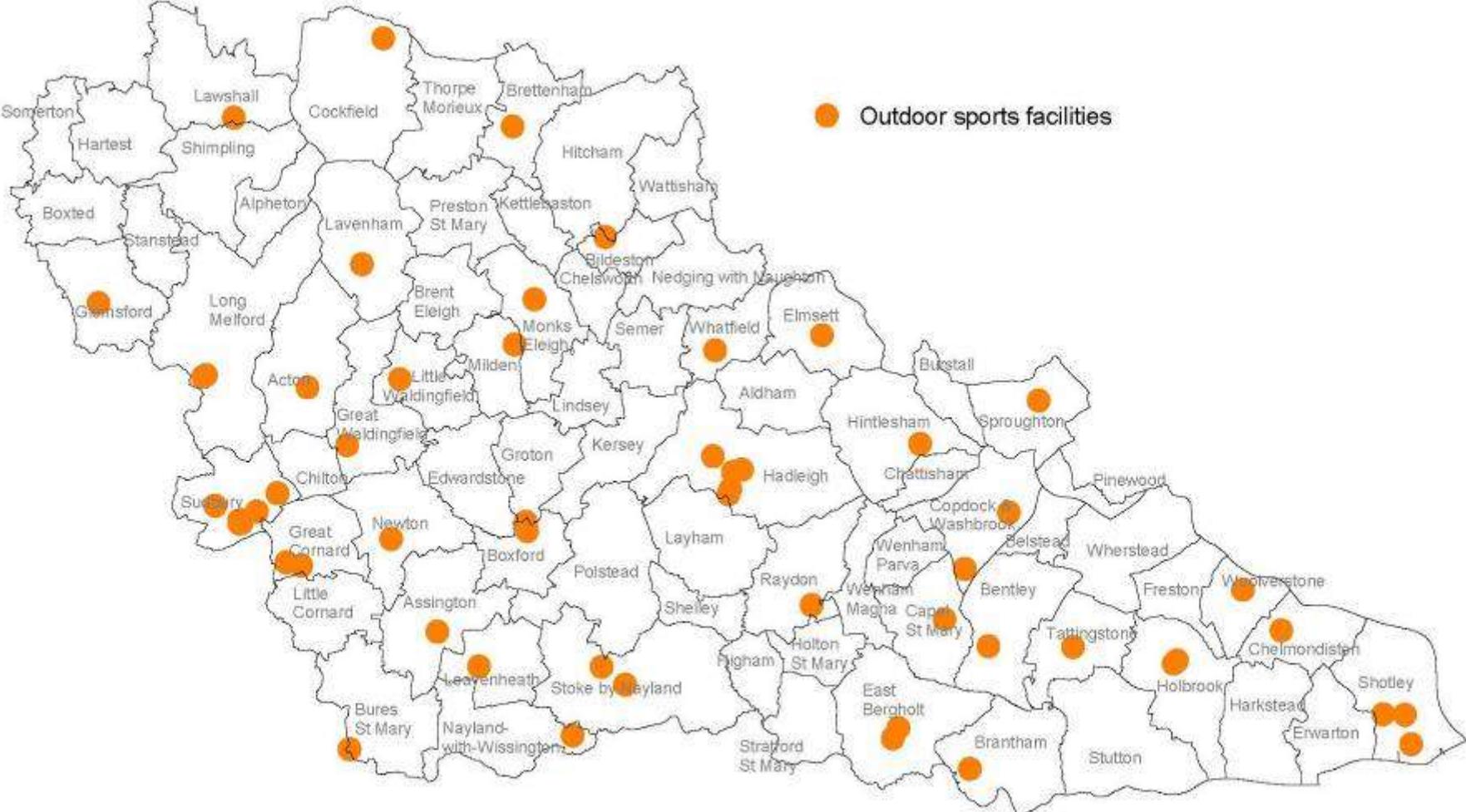
No standards are recommended.

Outdoor sports facilities

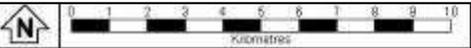
Definition and function - Areas providing for participation in outdoor sports, such as pitch sports- football, hockey, cricket, tennis, bowls and athletics, as well as countryside and water sports. Facilities include grass pitches for a variety of sports, all weather- multi sports pitches, tennis courts, bowling greens and athletics tracks, as well as the ancillary facilities that support the participation in these activities, including changing rooms and car parking.

The provision for outdoor sports and recreation usually caters for a wide range of sports on grass pitches or hard surface courts, which are often shared to accommodate a variety of activities. For this reason the overall approach to the standards for outdoor sports provision is collective and includes pitch and hard court areas. Facilities for outdoor sports activities are grouped together in the audit and assessment as often a number of sports share the same overall space, e.g. football, hockey, cricket; and tennis, netball, basketball. The overall provision is shown on map 3 below.

Outdoor Sports Facilities



Map 3



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A hierarchical approach applies to the function of different types of outdoor sports facilities. For the purposes of this strategy the following hierarchy and thresholds (based on benchmark distance thresholds recommended by Sport England or Fields In Trust (FIT) formerly National Playing Fields Association (NPFA) are relevant;

- All weather synthetic turf pitches -1 synthetic all weather pitch within 20mins drive time;
- Athletics tracks -1 synthetic 6 lane track per 250,000 people 45 mins drive in rural areas;
- Playing pitches (as set out below);

Minimum Standards for Outdoor Sports

Existing level of provision	Recommended level of minimum provision
1.5 hectares per 1000 population	1.6 hectares per 1000 population
Justification	
<p>FIT and Sport England recommend a benchmark for outdoor sports, which has been considered as a starting point, taking into account the geography of the area and the urban and rural mix of the district. Comparator Authorities using the CIPFA comparator Model have also been assessed, including Mid Suffolk and Mid Devon (as our closet comparative neighbours). Mid Suffolk standard 1.72ha per 1000 population; Mid Devon 1.58ha per 1000.</p>	
Quality Standard	
<p>Essential Features</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grass cover to be well maintained, drained and cut; • Facilities provided to meet national sport governing body specifications; • Where shared users there is to be an established recreation management structure; • No evidence of vandalism; <p>Desirable Features</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good provision of ancillary facilities including changing rooms and toilets; • Adequate parking, especially if competition / leagues participated in to accommodate visitors; • Good clear sign posting to assist visitors using facilities. 	
Accessibility Standard	
<p>15 min drive time of home within average of 12km radius</p> <p>This is based on FIT recommended minimum and related to the geography of the area, it also reflects information provided by the questionnaire respondents of clubs and organisations of the time / distance the users tend to travel to use facilities.</p>	

Amenity greenspace

Definition / function - Areas for informal activities close to home or work that enhance the appearance of residential or other developed areas. As amenity greenspace provides for a multitude of functions it is important that adequate provision is made, particularly within built up areas. For open space to serve an amenity value a minimum size of 0.2ha is generally required, therefore only those sites of 0.2ha or above are recorded in the audit. A minimum standard is recommended, for the district, in practice it is acknowledged that this is of most relevance in the built up areas, particularly where development is proposed. It is also important to recognise that many other areas of open space, such as playing fields, often also have an amenity value.

Minimum Standard for Amenity Space

Existing level of Provision	Recommended level of minimum provision
0.9 hectares per 1000 population	0.6 hectares per 1000 population
Justification	
The existing provision of amenity space is very good. It is important to set a standard that maintains a similar level of provision and is particularly important for built up areas and in areas where new residential development occurs in the future.	
Quality Standard	
<p>Essential Features</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> All new amenity greenspaces must adhere to the Fields in Trust national standard of minimum 0.2ha in size and be accessible to all with a legitimate use. All amenity greenspaces must be adequately maintained to provide a clean/litter free, safe, free of graffiti environment and where appropriate enhanced to reflect the needs of the users, the local biodiversity and heritage. <p>Desirable Features</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improvement to existing facilities should be designed in consultation with the intended user group. Access by unauthorised users should be deterred by the use of appropriate barriers or other restrictions. 	
Accessibility Standard	
No standard is recommended.	

Provision for children and teenagers

Definition / function - Areas designed primarily for play and social interaction for children and young people, including equipped play areas, ball courts and skateboard areas.

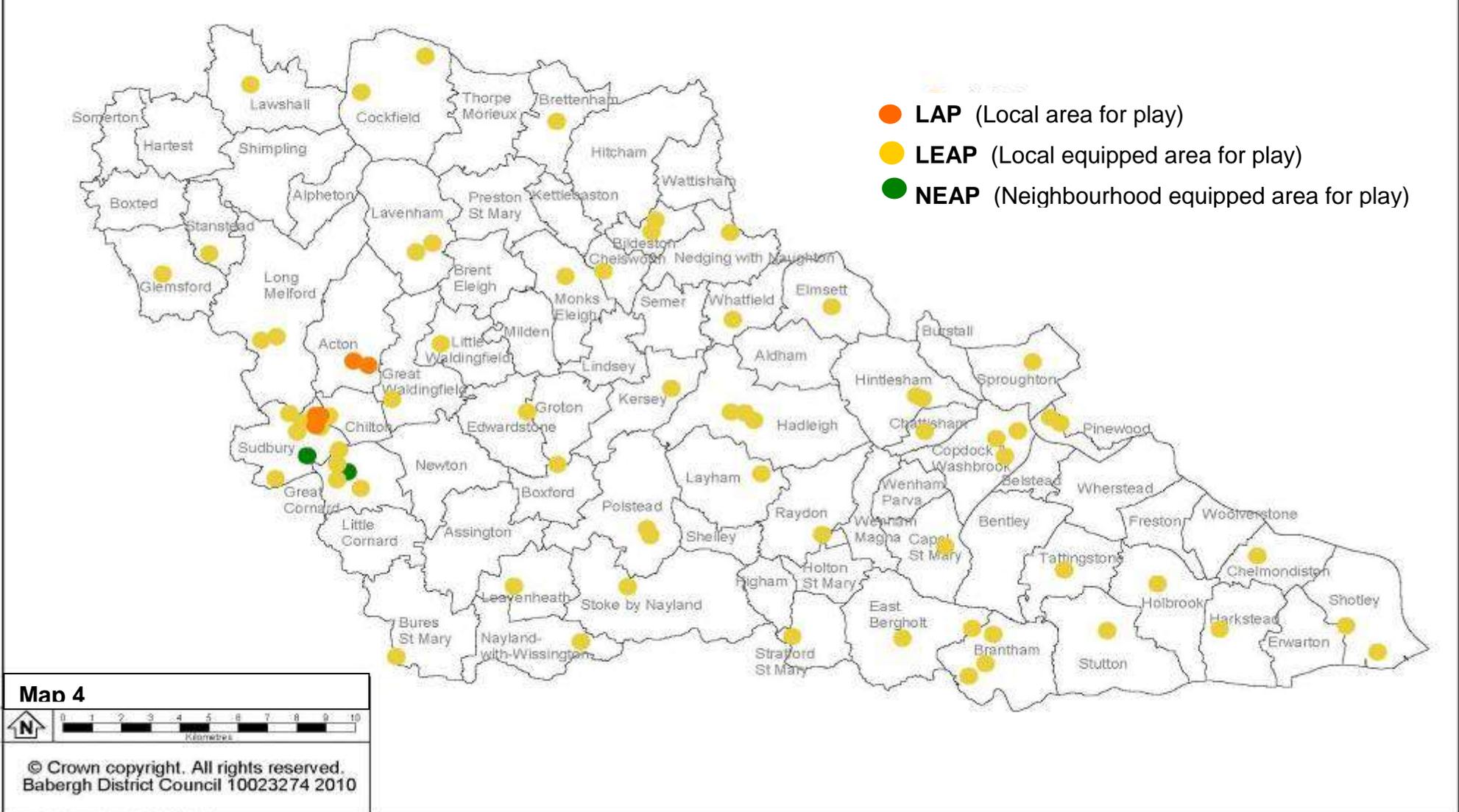
The provision for children and teenagers is split into types of provision based on the function of the space / facility. This is based on recognised hierarchy of open space provision for play and social interaction, which is based on the assumption that everyone should have close and easy access to small play areas for the very young and that larger facilities aimed at older children and teenagers can be located a further distance away and serve a larger number of people. The hierarchy used is based on the FIT definitions, illustrated below together with an additional intermediate local definition due to the size of many developments in Babergh;

- Local Areas for Play (LAPs) - areas for informal play and recreation (doorstep areas);
- Local Areas of Play + (LAP+) - areas for play and informal recreation with limited play equipment provided for very young children. (these may be expressed as LAP + 1-4 (see table below) These Babergh additions have been introduced to help bridge the gap of provision due to the nature, position and size of many developments.
- Local Equipped Areas for Play (LEAPs) - areas for play and informal recreation with play equipment provided for young children;
- Neighbourhood Equipped Areas for Play (NEAPs) - equipped areas for play and informal recreation and provision for children and young people.

Accessibility

Based on the hierarchy of provision of facilities for play, the larger facilities serve a wider catchment area which is determined by distance thresholds which relate to a distance or time from where people live. FIT (formerly NPFA) recommend minimum distances, which have been used as a bench mark to establish better than minimum local accessibility standards. A summary for each type of play provision is provided below, and the existing provision in the district is illustrated on Map 4 below.

Outdoor Play Areas (LAP, LEAP and NEAPs)



Minimum Standards for Local Area for Play

Provision of LAPs relates only to residential areas and as such a standard per 1000 population does not sensibly apply. Instead the requirements for the provision of LAPs (and LAP+ 1-4) to be provided with new residential development are set out below. In some cases, for larger developments a flexible approach to provision is required and needs to be considered in relation to other provision such as LEAPs and NEAPs. The variation of requirements for larger developments is also shown.

Play area type	LAP	LAP+1	LAP+2	LAP+3	LAP+4
Maximum development size Ha	0.66	2.6	4.6	6.6	8.6
Maximum distance (metres) to furthest house (straight line)	46	94	132	160	178
Maximum number of houses per play area	20	60	110	170	240
Minimum activity zone (az) m ²	150	200	250	325	400
Minimum activity and buffer zone m ²	600	900	1600	2500	3350
Minimum distance from az to property boundary (metres)	5	10	13	16	18

Existing level of Provision	Recommended level of minimum provision
0.0046 hectares per 1000 population	No minimum standard per 1000 population is recommended. All new residential development should provide for an adequate provision of LAPs. The variation requirements for larger developments are also set out below.
Justification	
LAPs and LAP+ have been a requirement for large site development for several years at Babergh, secured through section 106 agreements, justified by Adopted Local Plan Policy. The recommended standard is based on a calculation which BDC has applied to large site proposals in negotiation on planning applications.	
Quality Standard	
Essential Features	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All new play areas must adhere to Babergh's locally set standards • All play areas must be clean/litter free, safe, free of graffiti and provide a stimulating environment in which children are encouraged to play. • Play equipment will range from:- <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ a LAP with low level features for very young children and a seat or two ○ LAP+ with an additional piece of play equipment based on lap number. <p style="text-align: center;">Over 50% of pieces should have more than one play feature/type</p>	

Desirable Features

- All play spaces should have natural surveillance and be within sight of walking or cycling routes or desire lines.
- New or improved facilities should be designed in consultation with the intended user group and include appropriate seating, signage, waste bins, disabled access, lighting and equipment suitable for all abilities.
- A combination of formal and natural landscape and play features

Accessibility Standard

LAPs should be within very easy walking distance of home

- Less than 1 minute walk and less than 50m straight line

LAP+ should be within easy walking distance of home

- Between 1 & 3 minutes walk at between approximately 100-200m straight line

This is based on FIT recommended minimum to achieve better than minimum local accessibility standards and related to the geography of the area, it also reflects information provided by the questionnaire respondents of school children of the time / distance the users tend to travel to use facilities.

Minimum Standards for Local Equipped Areas for Play

Existing level of Provision	Recommended level of minimum provision (note - this will vary depending on the type of LAP)
1.01 hectares per 1000 population	0.42 hectares per 1000 population
Justification	
LEAPs have been a requirement for large site development for several years at Babergh, secured through section 106 agreements, justified by Adopted Local Plan Policy. The recommended standard is based on a calculation which BDC has applied to large site proposals in negotiation on planning applications. This is summarised below:	
Play area type	LEAP
Maximum development size Ha	10.6
Maximum distance (metres) to furthest house (straight line)	184
Maximum number of houses per play area	318
Minimum activity zone (az) m2	625
Minimum activity and buffer zone m2	4225
Minimum distance from az to property boundary (metres)	20
Quality Standard	
<p>Essential Features</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All new play areas must adhere to Babergh’s locally set standards • All play areas must be clean/litter free, safe, free of graffiti and provide a stimulating environment in which children are encouraged to play. • Play equipment will include a minimum of 5 pieces of equipment of which over 50% will have multiple features of play <p>Desirable Features</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All play spaces should have natural surveillance and be within sight of walking or cycling routes or desire lines. • New or improved facilities should be designed in consultation with the intended user group and include appropriate seating, signage, waste bins, disabled access, lighting and equipment suitable for all abilities. • A combination of formal and natural landscape and play features 	
Accessibility Standard	
<p>less than 200m straight line from home /less than 5mins walk / 2mins bike ride</p> <p>This is based on FIT recommended minimum and related to the geography of the area, it also reflects information provided by the questionnaire respondents of school children of the time / distance the users tend to travel to use facilities.</p>	

Minimum Standards for Neighbourhood Equipped Areas for Play

Existing level of Provision	Recommended level of minimum provision
0.0048 ha per 1000 population	0.40 hectares per 1000 population
Justification	
NEAPs have been a requirement for large site development for several years at Babergh, secured through section 106 agreements, justified by Adopted Local Plan Policy. The recommended standard is based on a calculation which BDC has applied to large site proposals in negotiation on planning applications. This is summarised below.	
Play area type	NEAP
Maximum development size Ha	66
Maximum distance (metres) to furthest house (straight line)	460
Maximum number of houses per play area	1980
Minimum activity zone (az) m ²	1600
Minimum activity and buffer zone m ²	20000
Minimum distance from az to property boundary (metres)	50
Quality Standard	
<p>Essential Features</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All new play areas must adhere to Babergh's locally set standards • All play areas must be clean/litter free, safe, free of graffiti and provide a stimulating environment in which children are encouraged to play. • Play equipment will include a minimum of 8 pieces of equipment of which over 50% will have multiple features of play • At least 1/3 of activity area hard surfaced as a Multi Use Games Area (MUGA) or as an equipped skateboard/BMX site <p>Desirable Features</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All play spaces should have natural surveillance and be within sight of walking or cycling routes or desire lines. • New or improved facilities should be designed in consultation with the intended user group and include appropriate seating, signage, waste bins, disabled access, lighting and equipment suitable for all abilities. • A combination of formal and natural landscape and play features 	
Accessibility Standard	
<p>Less than 460m straight line from home within 15 min walk or 6 min bike ride of home</p> <p>This is based on FIT recommended minimum and related to the geography of the area, it also reflects information provided by the questionnaire respondents of school children of the time / distance the users tend to travel to use facilities.</p>	

Allotments

Definition / function - Areas to provide an opportunity for those who wish to grow their own produce as part of a long term promotion of sustainability, health and social inclusion. Map 5 below indicates those locations where allotments are currently provided. The audit includes more detail of these in relation to their size, and where possible the number of plots included on each site. The audit includes a qualitative assessment of allotments which includes the facilities on the sites which may be shared, such as access storage facilities. PPG17 states that: "local authorities should make adequate provision for allotments". The national recommended bench mark for quantitative standards is provided by the National Society for Allotments and Leisure Gardeners (NSALG). NSALG recommends that the irreducible minimum provision today (2010) should be 20 plots per 1000 households. This equates to 0.6 hectares per 1000 population based on an average occupancy of 2.4 persons per dwelling and a 5 rod plot size (125 m²). Adequate provision of allotments is important and supports many current objectives linked to a healthy lifestyle which should be encouraged.

It is considered that the standard advised by the NSALG is appropriate to adopt as a local standard for Babergh, based on the existing level of use, demand and waiting lists. It is therefore considered that 20 plots per 1000 households should be established as the evidenced local standard.

Measurements of allotment plots

- The NSALG recognise the “10 Rod” allotment plot, in law, as the standard allotment plot measurement. A “10 Rod” plot measures 250 m²
- Many allotment owners divide their sites into “5 Rod” plots, as this is more space effective. A “5 Rod” plot measures 125 m²

With the above measurements in mind, allotment plots, and in turn sites, vary in size dependent on what measurements the individual management body cares to implement.

With regards to accessibility, there are no definitive national or local standards for this type of open space. Obligatory standards in this respect, derived from standards set by the majority of other local authorities should be based on a travel time of 15 minutes. The location and geography of the area in which the allotments are located are likely to determine whether these 15 minutes should be walking, cycling or driving.

Minimum Standards for Allotment provision

Existing level of Provision	Recommended level of minimum provision
28 plots per 1000 households provision within Babergh; (0.6ha per 1000 population)	20 plots per 1000 households provision within Babergh; (0.6ha per 1000 population)
Justification	
<p>Whilst it is clear from the above figures that Babergh’s existing level of allotment provision exceeds the national recommended benchmark by 8 plots, this fails to illustrate that, although the district as a whole delivers adequate allotment plot provision, certain key areas are inadequately served in terms of accessibility standards, whilst other areas maybe overprovided for. It has been identified that allotment provision needs to be strategic in order to achieve sustainable access for all district residents. The suggested accessibility standard would ensure that allotment sites are provided in Sudbury/Great Cornard, Hadleigh, the Ipswich Policy Area and all sustainable villages. The suggested quantitative standard would ensure that these areas provide enough allotment plots to adequately meet, not only their own needs, but also the needs of their identified dependent parishes.</p>	
Quality Standard	
<p>Essential Features</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good quality land • Safe vehicular access • Vehicular parking provision on or near the site • Well maintained paths and roadways • Allotment plot allocations to be a minimum of “5 rod” (125 m²) in size 	

Desirable Features

- Secure site
- Water supply
- WC
- Secure equipment storage
- Communal equipment

Suggested Accessibility Standard

900m within 15 min walk for those who reside within a town or sustainable village; or

5.6km within 15 min drive for those who reside outside a town or sustainable village.

This is based on benchmark standard of 15 min travel time for other open space provisions.

Allotment Provision in Hadleigh

Whilst anomalies against the recommended level of minimum provision are evident throughout Babergh, Hadleigh (taking into account the dependent parish of Layham) is by far the most anomalous. When applying the recommended standard of 20 plots per 1000 households (or 0.6 hectares per 1000 population), Hadleigh already exceeds the standard by 77 allotment plots and still demonstrates a need with 58 persons on its combined waiting lists. The two allotment management bodies involved have stated that all but a few allotment holders reside in Hadleigh and so this cannot explain the high demand for allotment plots. Whilst there is no definitive explanation for this anomaly, many factors have been offered, a combination of which may explain the anomalous figures:

- **Deceptive waiting list figures** - With two independent management bodies responsible for the three allotment sites, Hadleigh does not have the benefit of a single waiting list. Locally sourced information implies that individuals may appear on both waiting lists involved. If all the persons on the smaller waiting list also appear on the larger, this would reduce the combined waiting list for Hadleigh as a whole from 58 to 33 persons. This factor alone would not fully explain the anomaly as the demand for allotment provision in Hadleigh would still exceed the recommended level of minimum provision by an over subscription of 110 plots.
- **Existing allotment holders renting more than one plot** - Locally sourced information has also implied that some allotment holders may rent more than one allotment plot. In order to fully account for the anomalous figures, this factor would be dependent on all existing allotment holders renting two plots each, in Hadleigh. This factor is unlikely to fully account for the anomaly, but it is likely to be a contributing factor.

- **A high number of persons over the age of 65 in Hadleigh** - Having had regard for many detailed allotment studies undertaken by local councils across the country, it is evident that by far the largest age group holding allotments is the over 65s. According to data gathered by the 2001 census, there were 1,375 persons aged 65 or over residing in Hadleigh in 2001. Therefore, only 15% (211) of the population over 65, in Hadleigh, would be required to fully meet the total supply and demand of existing allotment plots in Hadleigh.
- **Current increase in popularity** - Nationally allotments are becoming increasingly popular, following the recognition of the role that they can play in encouraging all sectors of the community to participate in active recreation. Increased emphasis on home grown food across the media has also been attributed to increased demand for allotments. The rising focus on physical activity and health has also contributed to increased use of allotments, with such activities providing an alternative option to participation in formal sport, particularly for older residents.
- **The circumstances of Hadleigh** - Hadleigh is a large population centre within a wide rural setting and, although technically a town, it is not large enough, and it does not have the facilities, to insist upon its residents, a fully urban way of life. As such, Hadleigh residents are likely to be in tune with countryside and agricultural pursuits and are therefore more likely to show an interest in allotment holding than the other more urban, large population centres elsewhere.

Cemeteries and Churchyards

Definition / function - Quiet areas serving a function for burials but also areas for contemplation, and also linked to the promotion of wildlife conservation and biodiversity. The location of cemeteries and churchyards tends to correspond to the location of parish churches.

The quality assessment is primarily focussed on those areas which are shared, rather than individual private spaces within the churchyards / cemeteries. For example elements which help keep areas tidy such as bins and providing an environment suitable for contemplation providing enough seating etc. Provision of cemeteries and churchyards is demand driven and tends to be linked to churches. It is not appropriate to indicate accessibility requirements for this typology of provision.

No minimum standards are recommended

Civic spaces

Definition / function - Provide a setting for civic buildings and contribute to character and function of urban spaces. Provide areas for community events. This type of provision tends to be associated with very much larger urban areas than those within Babergh, such as town squares, or large public pedestrian areas. Sudbury and Hadleigh town centres, have a few important small areas which provide an important setting for civic buildings which also serve other functions, including, markets and access routes, however, it is not considered that these meet the intended definition as “civic spaces”. The areas which serve an urban civic function, such as the market places in Sudbury and Hadleigh are not quantified, nor are a qualitative or accessibility standard considered appropriate.

No minimum standards are recommended.

Swimming pools

Provision for swimming pools considers primarily publicly run pools for community use, managed by or for the Local Authority. In Babergh provision is confined to Hadleigh and Sudbury, with both facilities being managed for the council by South Suffolk Leisure. Additional provision during the summer months is provided at Great Cornard at the Upper school by an outdoor pool which has unrestricted public access (offering free swimming for all under 17s and over 60s in 2010). As with other larger recreation facilities, swimming pools serve a wide catchment area and as such many areas of Babergh benefit from being within the catchment area and within a reasonable distance of facilities provided in Ipswich, Bury St Edmunds and Colchester. In addition, although not fully inclusive, due to membership and charging structures, it is acknowledged that provision of swimming pool facilities by the private sector does contribute to some extent to provision in the district. Many people, in fact, prefer this use this type of facility. As the availability of these facilities is restrictive, this element is not included in the assessment of facilities; however, provision by this sector is very good with a good distribution of facilities in the rural and urban areas.

Measurements for swimming pools for community use:

- Community Pool: 6 lanes and 25m in length
- Small community pool or school pool: 4 lanes and 20m in length

Sport England recommends that everyone should be within 5.6 km / 15 min travel time of a swimming pool. This catchment area is illustrated on map 6 below in relation to the facilities within the district at Hadleigh and Sudbury and those in adjoining areas, whose catchment areas include parts of the district. The suggested minimum standards below are based on a realistic approach in relation to the geography of the district and a provision level which is achievable. Local standards already set by comparable authorities, including neighbouring Mid-Suffolk have also been considered. As the two urban areas are already provided with a swimming pool, close to the recommended size, it is likely that a continued commitment to improving and maintaining the quality of that provision is of most relevance.

Minimum Standards for Indoor Swimming Pool provision

Existing level of Provision	Recommended level of minimum provision
8.03 msq / 1000 population provision within Babergh; 15.33msq / 1000 pop'n provision including Ipswich	9.18 msq per 1000 population
Justification	
<p>The national benchmark is a guideline for all types of area, which is not always achievable in a rural area. The large facilities such as swimming pools need to be in sustainable locations which in the case of Babergh are Hadleigh and Sudbury. Some other authorities have adapted national benchmarks for swimming pool provision, including Mid-Suffolk. The suggested standard is consistent with Mid-Suffolk, which is logical due to the similarities between the areas, the identification of Mid-Suffolk as one of Babergh's nearest comparator authorities and the move towards joint working between the two authorities. Based on Mid-Suffolk's standard;</p> <p>Whilst provision in Babergh alone (8.03m² per 1,000 pop.) falls short of the indicative minimum set by Mid-Suffolk (9.18m² per 1,000 pop.) the external influence of Ipswich increases this figure to a more than satisfactory level (15.33m² per 1,000 pop.).</p>	
Quality Standard	
<p>Essential Features</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4 lane pool for community use • 20m lanes • Adequate changing facilities for male and females as well as provision for families and people with special needs <p>Desirable Features</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 6-8 lane for higher level pools • 25m lanes • Spectator area • Refreshments area 	
Accessibility Standard	
<p>5.6km within 15 min drive</p> <p>This is based on Sport England minimum benchmark standard</p>	

Note: Hadleigh Pool falls one lane short of Sport England's Design Guidance Note on a Community Pool.

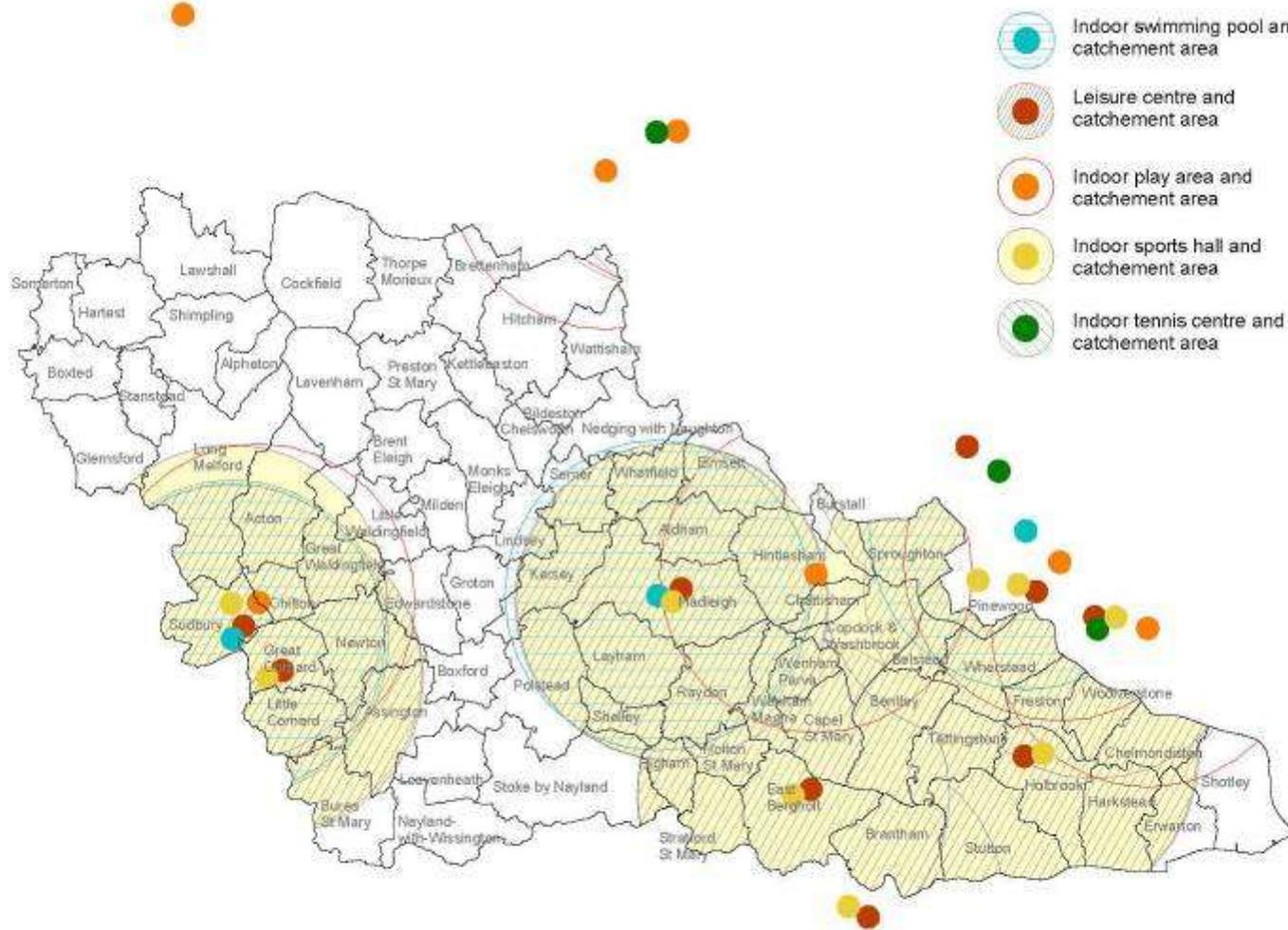
Hadleigh Swimming Pool, **5 lane pool**

Type: Publicly managed

Sudbury Kingfisher Leisure Centre, **6 lane pool**
(Additional facilities incl. sauna / spa / gym)

Type: Publicly managed

Indoor Sports Facilities



Map 6



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Indoor sports halls and Leisure centres

Provision for indoor sports activities is generally reliant on provision of sports halls which have the capacity for a number of courts to be marked out, allowing for participation in a variety of activities. Sport England recommends design guidance for such sports halls indicated below;

A four (Badminton) court configuration is required for virtually all sports that need to be played along the length of the space and is regarded as better value for money”

The Dimensions of a four court hall are set out as: 33m long, by 18m wide, and by 7.6m high.

Other facilities are also often associated with indoor sports provision including fitness Gym facilities and squash courts. Large scale provision often combines indoor, outdoor and swimming facilities, usually classified as a Leisure Centre. Facilities for indoor sports provision are assessed collectively whether they comprise a large scale leisure centre or a standard small scale sports hall. Many of the Secondary Schools provide comprehensive shared use with the community for the Indoor sports facilities. This is the case with all of the High / Upper schools in Babergh, where these are managed for shared community use; the facilities are included in the provision in the district.

As with swimming pools, the accepted distance to travel to a sports hall facility is such that provision outside the Babergh District also contributes to the demand with facilities in Manningtree, Ipswich, and Colchester all serving a catchment area which includes some areas of Babergh’s population. The provision within and beyond the district is shown on map 6 above indicating the catchment area served by the facility based on Sport England’s recommended benchmark of;

5.6 km from home 15 min drive (walk / cycle in rural areas)

As a predominantly rural area, this standard needs to reflect the geography of the district and surrounding area. Having regard to the location and similarities between Babergh and Mid-Suffolk, the suggested provision requirements using the minimum standard of provision set by Mid-Suffolk is illustrated below;

Minimum Standards for Indoor sports hall provision

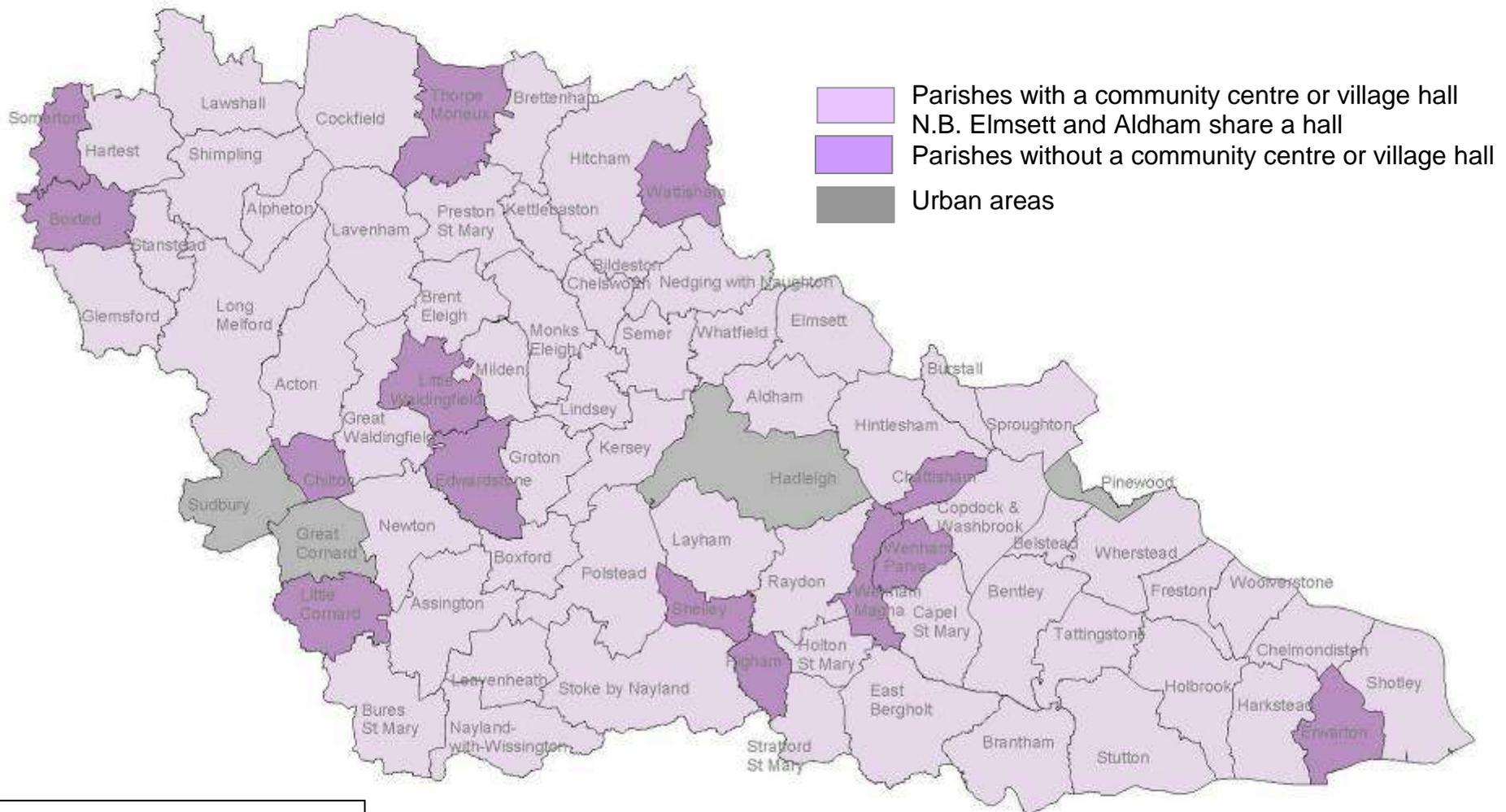
Existing level of Provision	Recommended level of minimum provision
<p>37.64m² per 1,000 population provision within Babergh;</p> <p>77.80m² per 1,000 population provision including Ipswich and Manningtree</p>	<p>39.78m² per 1,000 population</p>
<p>Justification</p>	
<p>The national benchmark is a guideline for all types of area, which is not always achievable in a rural area. The large facilities such as sports halls need to be in sustainable locations which in the case of Babergh are Hadleigh and Sudbury. Some other authorities have adapted national benchmarks for sports hall provision, including Mid-Suffolk. The suggested standard is consistent with Mid-Suffolk, which is logical due to the similarities between the areas, the identification of Mid-Suffolk as one of Babergh's nearest comparator authorities and the move towards joint working between the two authorities. Based on Mid-Suffolk standard;</p> <p>Whilst Babergh alone (37.64m² per 1,000 pop.) falls short of the indicative minimum set by Mid-Suffolk (39.78m² per 1,000 pop.) external provision from Ipswich and Manningtree increase this figure to a more than satisfactory level (77.80m² per 1,000 pop.).</p>	
<p>Quality Standard</p>	
<p>Essential Features</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Four court hall • Court dimension minimum 18mx10m at a height of 7.6m • Changing facilities for male and female • Facilities for people with disabilities • Equipment stores • Facilities for sports including hoops and nets • Court markings for various sports <p>Desirable Features</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Permanent basket ball hoops • Spectator facilities • Refreshments • Court markings for wide range of sports including 5 a-side football 	
<p>Accessibility Standard</p>	
<p>5.6km within 15min drive</p> <p>This is based on Sport England recommended benchmark standard</p>	

Community centres / village halls;

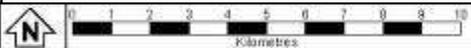
The resultant information of parish profiling has indicated that Babergh is well covered in terms of community centre and village hall provision, with those small parishes not containing a meeting place, sharing such facilities with larger neighbouring towns or villages. This is illustrated on map 7 below which shows all those parishes which have a village / community hall. As a rural district the generous distribution of village / community halls is important. Most parishes have their own hall, or good access to a shared facility. It is not therefore considered appropriate to set a minimum standard for quantity or accessibility for this facility.

While community centres and village halls are not pivotal for indoor sports and recreation provision for the district, they are recognised as a potential indoor recreational resource and often have a role to play. Those of 162m² + of floor space or more are capable of providing for indoor sports such as Badminton, Aerobics, Indoor Bowls, table-tennis etc. Most other halls, especially in smaller parishes, due to their size and height restrictions are limited in their ability to provide much in the way of indoor sport. However, many of the halls already contribute to recreational provision including activities such as bowls, martial arts and keep fit classes, which are an important provision in the rural areas. When village halls or community centres are being improved, rebuilt or extended, Sport England provides extensive design guidance to ensure that opportunities for sport and recreation in village halls are maximised.

Community Centres and Village Halls



Map 7



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Other indoor recreation facilities

Other indoor recreation facilities can include specialist facilities such as indoor tennis, squash and ice-rinks. The latter is an activity for which there is an expectation of a regional or sub regional level of provision, rather than district wide. Facilities currently exist in Norwich, Cambridge and Chelmsford. Although all some distance away, it is not realistic to expect an ice-rink to be located in a predominantly rural area such as Babergh. Large scale facilities such as ice-rinks need to be located in large urban areas to ensure the location is sustainable and accessible to an extensive catchment area. A similar principle also applies to indoor tennis. Other indoor facilities are often included within sport hall complexes, as is the case with squash courts.

No minimum standards are recommended for other indoor recreation facilities.

6. Summary of Key issues, trends and recommended action

Having carried out a thorough audit and assessment of all open space, sport and recreation provision throughout the district and considered appropriate minimum standards of provision for each typology for quantity, quality and accessibility, it is possible to identify key issues and trends which help inform priorities for the future. This in turn will provide the opportunity to enhance the overall provision of facilities and ensure that new development is properly provided with adequate facilities.

This section identifies the overall position in relation to quantity, quality and accessibility and highlights any particular issues including any specific deficiencies associated with individual locations. Finally recommended actions are set out to inform the way in which any identified issues may be addressed in the future.

Urban Parks and Gardens

Both Sudbury and Hadleigh have a park which meets the definition of an urban park or garden. There are no quantity standards, so it is not possible to identify any quantitative issues. The nature of the function of an urban park is such that the amount of space provided is of less importance than the quality of what is available.

Toppesfield Garden Hadleigh

There are no quantity or accessibility issues for this park; however, based on the assessment some quality issues are evident with an identified need for improvement of the following;

- Main entrance;
- Quality of bins;
- Quality of seats;
- Quality of toilets; and
- Quality of information.

Sudbury- Belle Vue Park

There are no quantity or accessibility issues for this park, however based on the assessment some quality issues are evident with an identified need for improvement of the following;

- Toilets;
- Quality of the main entrance;
- Provision of information; and
- Overall cleanliness of the park.

Priorities

Toppesfield Gardens and Belle View Park are important facilities for the market towns in the district. Improvements to the quality of these parks, particularly the entrance, toilets, bins, seating and information in Hadleigh and main entrance, information, toilets and cleanliness in Sudbury should be a priority, together with maintaining the overall quality of the facilities and ensuring improvements and updating of facilities is maintained in accordance with the requirements of the users.

Natural and Semi-natural green space

As a rural area the overall access to natural and semi-natural green space is generally very good throughout the district. The national accessibility benchmarks are not recommended as a local standard, nor is the quantity standard. However, based on these standards the provision and access within the district overall is beyond the minimum.

Key larger facilities such as Alton Water and Arger Fen are included in this typology. These and others are located within the district and beyond. Parts of the west of the district are more remote from such provision. However, the range of open space provided in adjoining areas and on a smaller scale makes this a lesser concern than it would be if this was considered in isolation. Also important is the access to these and other open spaces through a good network of public rights of way. Good access can make a significant difference to the availability of the network of green spaces for the population to enjoy.

The importance of semi-natural and natural green space is heightened in the urban areas, where it may be at more of a premium. However, many open spaces also fulfil this function and the overall network and links within and beyond the urban areas is important.

Priorities

The key action point for the future in respect of Natural and Semi-natural green space is to ensure that the urban areas continue to have good access to such areas. Attention should be paid to ensuring public rights of way are maintained and enhanced to ensure good access to green

spaces and the countryside is provided on the door step of where most people live. There may be opportunities to enhance the links made by public right of way improvements and any opportunities to create better access, - particularly in more heavily populated areas, should be encouraged where the capacity exists to do so.

Green Corridors

Green corridors are not really a provision in their own right, but instead offer an important secondary function of other open spaces. For this reason no standards are applied to this type of open space.

It is the linkages between spaces which is important in this case. Sometimes this may be to provide a wildlife or biodiversity value, sometimes as an access route, and sometimes both. Ensuring the gaps between the various types of open spaces are not too great is important, particularly in urban areas, as the countryside provides a natural environment, serving the same function.

Priorities

When considering layouts and detailed design of landscaping and access routes as part of new development, consideration should be given to the opportunities to link green spaces, or footpaths or cycleways with existing areas.

Outdoor Sports

In terms of District provision for outdoor sports the overall quantity of provision is the equivalent of **1.5 hectares per 1000 population**. This falls short of just 0.1 hectares per 1000 population to rise up to the minimum standard recommended for the district of **1.6 hectares per 1000 population**. The overall quality also fares well for the district as a whole. However, local variations are evident throughout the district, with many of the smaller rural villages fairing well compared to some of the larger settlements.

The audit and assessment illustrates the extent of deficiency or surplus by parish in terms of quantity based on 1.6 hectares per 1000 population. This is useful for an overview of where more provision is required, however, it must be remembered that most of the outdoor sports facilities serve a catchment area beyond the parish itself, so areas showing a surplus may actually be serving several parishes within the catchment area which must be taken into account when considering whether the existing provision is adequate.

A number of areas are significantly deficient, including the following;

- Stutton
- Polstead
- Stratford St Mary
- Brantham
- Great Waldingfield
- Holbrook
- Glemsford
- Pinewood
- Sudbury
- Great Cornard.

All of those listed above have a deficiency of more than 1 hectare, with Sudbury, Great Cornard and Pinewood as much as 9.08 hectares, 6.36 hectares and 6.42 hectares respectively.

All of the facilities have also been assessed in terms of quality, looking at the facility itself, the ancillary facilities that often go with outdoor sports provision such as changing rooms, the access and parking as well as details such as grass cover, drainage and levels. A questionnaire was sent to all known sports clubs and users groups and the information provided on quality matters has been reflected in the assessment. Where this information is not available, every effort will be made to check quality data with users as the audit and assessment data is presented by parish. Overall quality scores suggest many areas do not have any quality concerns, however, in most locations some element of the outdoor sports provision is highlighted as poor quality and as being in need of improvement.

A number of common quality issues arise repeatedly including poor drainage which can limit the availability for play, changing facilities and parking. A detailed assessment of each relevant quality point will be presented in the parish summaries.

The issue of quality is important not only as a good bench mark to aim for, but also as often it is the quality of a facility, particularly a grass pitch which limits the amount of use. This in turn impacts on demand and supply, which may be able to be address competing users of a limited facility, simply by improving the drainage of a pitch for example.

The questionnaire responses gave a clear message that the availability of facilities in some areas is a concern, one of the key areas being Sudbury, where some sports teams are using village pitches several miles away as there are no pitches available closer to Sudbury. Whilst there may be a degree of acceptance for participants to travel to use facilities, it is more appropriate to aim for a more sustainable approach to the provision of facilities closer to the urban areas.

Where quantity is a significant issue, particularly in sustainable locations, it is often better to provide a facility which may have a multi functional use serving a wider catchment area, such as an all weather synthetic pitch. This extends the availability for use and is not fraught with common problems associated with grass and drainage.

Priorities

Opportunities to address the identified shortfalls of outdoor sports provision should be sought as a priority. The use of financial contributions within the areas where there are deficiencies or the catchment areas which are served by the facilities should be encouraged.

Enhancement of the quality of existing provision, especially if it extends the opportunity for use of an outdoor sports facility, should be encouraged as a priority.

Consideration of addressing significant shortfalls of provision by the provision of an all weather pitch in sustainable locations should be investigated as a priority.

Amenity Green space

The overall provision of amenity green space throughout the district is very good, with existing provision equivalent to **0.9 ha per 1000 population**, which is considerably greater than the recommended standard for the district of **0.6 ha per 1000 population**. The amenity space quantity standard is largely about ensuring adequate provision of such areas within new residential development areas. Many areas serve an amenity function as a secondary use, so there are no quantity issues. In terms of quality the types of spaces identified as amenity areas are varied, and the nature of their use is very informal, hence there being few issues related to quality of existing provision.

Priorities

It is important to ensure that a good standard of amenity space is maintained within the built up areas. New residential development should ensure that the minimum provision of amenity space is provided and well related to other spaces and the design and layout of the area it is intended to serve.

Provision for Children and Teenagers

This includes all types of play area which follow a recognised hierarchy, broken down into Local Areas for Play LAP+, Local Equipped Areas for Play and Neighbourhood Equipped Areas for Play.

Local Areas for Play

The provision of LAPs is an open space facility which primarily relates to built up residential areas. Many LAPs are provided as part of a residential development to serve the young children living very close by. Most of them are smaller than 0.2 hectares (which is the minimum size of space included in the audit). There is an important distinction between a LAP and an amenity area, in as much the former is intended to be for young children to play. Whilst amenity areas often attract children to play on them, they are not specifically intended for that purpose and could equally be a planted area or a small group of trees. The existing provision of areas defined as LAPs is very poor, particularly in many of the larger settlements. However, this is partly due to the minimum size included in the audit. Many are smaller than this; they make an important contribution, but are not quantified. It is considered that the standard recommended should be a requirement for new residential areas: this also applies to the accessibility standard and the quality criteria.

There may however be a number of areas which currently qualify as a Local Area for Play, which could be improved and as such upgraded to a Local Equipped Area for Play, or a variation between the two of a LAP+1 (up to 4).

Priorities

Adequate provision of LAPs and where appropriate the variation up to LAP+4 are to be provided as a priority in new residential development and the requirements set out to be considered in the layout and design of residential schemes.

Local Equipped Area for Play

The overall current provision of LEAPs is equivalent to **1.01 hectares per 1000 population**; this is significantly higher than the recommended standard of **0.42 hectares per 1000 population**. As an overview this is a very healthy provision. There are some variations around the district with some parishes showing a shortfall, those which are greater than 0.3 hectares are listed below.

- Pinewood
- Glemsford
- Bentley

In terms of quality, the assessment indicates many repeated issues include information, access, the condition of equipment, provision of seating and bins and the overall cleanliness. In most cases, even where provision is good, there are some elements which could be improved to achieve the best quality possible. Often this can be achieved by quite modest improvements, and this assessment is helpful in identifying priorities in this context. The overall distribution of LEAPs is pretty good with most parishes having at least 1. However, some do not have any provision. These are listed below:

- Bentley
- Groton
- Little Waldingfield
- Higham
- Wenham Magna
- Wattisham
- Chattisham
- Somerton
- Wenham Parva
- Hartest
- Belstead
- Milden
- Alpheton
- Shimpling
- Kettlebaston
- Preston St Mary
- Boxted
- Semer
- Woolverstone
- Newton
- Little Cornard
- Thorpe Morieux
- Brent Eleigh
- Preston
- Ewarton
- Lindsey
- Shelley
- Assington
- Holton St Mary
- Aldham
- Burstall
- Wherstead

Some of the Parishes without any LEAP provision have a small population and it may be acceptable to use facilities at adjoining villages. The type of use, however, is usually aimed at Children between 7 and 12 years old, so a safe distance from home within the settlement is preferable and should be a priority. In many cases there may be areas which are LAPs, or other smaller un-quantified areas which could be upgraded to LEAPs.

Priorities

Provision of at least one LEAP in the larger settlements should be a priority for addressing the quantitative shortfalls. Opportunities to do this by upgrading existing facilities should be explored to identify more likely schemes for delivery.

Improvements to the quality of existing provision should be a priority especially where such issues may be restricting the use of facilities.

Financial contributions from residential development should be used to address the identified improvements in the locations where the development occurs. These should include quantitative and qualitative, subject to an agreed protocol under this scheme.

NEAPs

The existing provision equates to **0.0048 hectares per 1000 population** against the standard of **0.4 hectares per 1000 population**. Some areas currently defined as LEAPs may qualify as a NEAP with a few qualitative improvements. This will be monitored as the Parish summaries are provided. A NEAP is a facility for play which is aimed at teenagers and a key area where there is a need to address provision, particularly in some of the larger settlements. Although teenagers are somewhat more mobile than younger children, usually by bike, a good distribution of these facilities is important. As with other hierarchies of play space, in many cases it may be possible to upgrade existing LEAPs to NEAPs, thus addressing deficiencies in provision more readily. Large developments should ensure that new provision is provided to serve the residential areas, so as not to add further to the deficiency.

Priorities

The provision of NEAPs throughout the district in the larger settlements is a priority. Opportunities for upgrading existing LEAP facilities should be explored first to aim to achieve this more quickly and better value for money.

New development of larger residential areas should ensure adequate NEAP provision, to prevent exacerbating the shortfall of provision by increasing demand. Provision of such facilities or improvements to existing should include consultation with the users to ensure local demands are met where possible.

Allotments

Provision of allotments throughout the district is varied. Many parishes have no provision while others may either fall short of or exceed the recommended standard of 20 plots per 1000 households. The suggested local standard is that Sudbury/Great Cornard, Hadleigh, the Ipswich policy area, and the key service centres should provide enough allotment plots to adequately meet their own needs and those of their identified dependent parishes, in line with the national recommended standard. An application of this suggested standard identifies a need in the following locations:

- Sudbury / Great Cornard
- The Ipswich Policy Area
- Brantham
- Holbrook
- Glemsford (North)
- Lavenham
- Cockfield
- Acton

The appropriate local standard has identified that a reasonable distance to travel to use allotments should be 15 min walk for residents within the town or village where allotments are provided; and 15 min drive for residents outside of these areas. The audit has identified any key issues or deficiencies with existing sites and these shall be sought to be rectified.

Priorities

Ensure that existing allotment sites are maintained and appropriately managed.

Financial contributions from residential development should be used to address the identified need in the locations where the development occurs. These should include quantitative and qualitative improvements, subject to an agreed protocol under this scheme.

Cemeteries and Churchyards

No issues are identified in relation to the provision of cemeteries and church yards, as the nature of this typology does not require quantitative assessment. In terms of quality, the assessment considers the shared spaces and access facilities associated with this use. Generally good quality is identified, suggesting that the only relevant action is to maintain the quality of the cemeteries and churchyards throughout the district.

Priorities

Ensure the quality of churchyards and cemeteries is maintained throughout the district.

Civic Spaces

No issues, as no spaces are defined under this typology.

Swimming Pools

The provision of swimming pools in the district, together with those that serve the district in locations including Ipswich, Colchester and Bury St Edmunds is more than adequate when considered against the recommended standard of **9.18msq per 1000 population**, with provision meeting **15.33msq per 1000 population Provision including Ipswich**. Provision by the private sector also contributes towards meeting demand. Although this is not fully inclusive, it meets some people's personal preference for use, although this has not been quantified.

Quality has not been assessed in detail, however, consideration has been given to the criterion which suggests a facility meets good standard of provision. Both of the community facilities in Babergh (at Hadleigh and Sudbury) have ongoing improvements to aim to maintain and enhance the quality of the facilities provided. Work to improve the changing facilities at Hadleigh pool has recently been completed. It is important to ensure that quality is maintained and ongoing improvements continue as required. A need for additional provision is not evident and also not a deliverable option in the foreseeable future, placing greater importance on maintaining the quality of the existing provision. The location of the facilities in Sudbury and Hadleigh and proximity of Ipswich results in a good distribution of facilities. It is also evident that if any of these facilities were no longer available, those parts of the district would be remote from community swimming pools which would be unacceptable and unsustainable.

Priorities

Ensure that continued improvements to the swimming pool facilities are maintained to secure good quality provision for swimming for community use.

Indoor Sports Halls

The provision of indoor sports in the district, together with those that serve the district in locations including Ipswich, Manningtree Colchester and Bury St Edmunds is more than adequate when considered against the recommended standard of **39.78m² per 1000 population**, with provision meeting **77.80m² per 1000 population Provision including Ipswich and Manningtree**. Provision by the schools which offer shared use has been included. All of the High / Upper schools in the district offer shared community use of sport facilities. This provides a good distribution of indoor sports provision spread across the district. Provision by the private sector also contributes toward meeting demand and, although not fully inclusive, meets some people's personal preference for use and is relevant, although this has not been quantified.

Quality has not been assessed in detail, however, consideration has been given to the criterion which suggests a facility meets good standard of provision. There are no particular quality issues, other than to ensure the provision is maintained and continuous improvements are made as required.

Priorities

Ensure that continued improvements to the Indoor sports hall facilities are maintained to secure good quality provision for indoor sports activities and recreation for community use.

Village and Community Halls

There are quantitative issues as provision is very good throughout the district. The demands of a parish on its village or community hall vary and as such it is difficult to make any qualitative recommendations. However, it is important to recognise the value of these community facilities, particularly in the rural areas, and the potential they may have to contribute towards sport and recreation provision.

Priorities

If village or community halls are to be extended, improved or replaced consideration should be given to the opportunities for extending the role the hall could offer for sport and recreation provision where appropriate.

Other Indoor recreation facilities

There are no issues related to the facilities in this typology

Operation and Management of Provision of sport and recreation facilities

As new facilities come forward, either as a result of on-site provision associated with larger development, or through recreational contributions, consideration will be given to the opportunities for long term management of facilities for the intended users through the voluntary sector such as community trusts, recreational trusts or sports organisations. Very often facilities are multi functional and as such need to be jointly managed at an operational level to ensure facilities are well maintained and suitable for all users.

There are examples where this already operates and works well through strong sports ground or recreational trusts. Where appropriate this long term operational management may be secured through a Planning Agreement in respect of new provision. Where additional provision is through improving existing facilities, operational management by the voluntary sector by groups associated with the function of the facilities will be strongly encouraged.

7. Conclusions and recommended Actions

The Strategy and Audit and Assessment, indicates that there is wide variation in the provision and quality facilities for open space, sport and recreation across the District. All typologies include some provision, although in many cases the quantity, distribution and quality are lower than required. Based on the output of the audit and assessment and consideration against the standard set out in the Strategy, the following actions are recommended;

- ***A Priorities and Action Plan be prepared for the District in consultation with the Parish and Town Council's to identify priorities based on the issues identified and the standards set,***
- ***Opportunities to address shortfall in provision of outdoor sports facility by improving the quality of existing provision be explored as a priority.***
- ***Opportunities to address outdoor sports provision shortfalls by providing all weather multi function facilities, be explored particularly in urban / sustainable locations;***
- ***The opportunity for areas currently serving needs as Local Areas for Play to be up graded to Local Equipped Areas for Play be explored, in those areas where this provision is deficient.***
- ***The opportunity to upgrade some LEAPs to NEAPs to provide facilities for teenagers be explored, particularly in the larger sustainable locations.***

- ***Where there are no quantitative deficiencies for provision, improvements to address the identified quality issues in respect of all typologies are to be addressed.***
- ***The design and layout of new residential development on larger sites should ensure adequate provision for children's play including reflecting the suggested accessibility standards, as well as amenity space and if appropriate outdoor sports.***
- ***The use of financial contributions (from planning applications) for open space sport and recreation provision is to be supported by the evidence provided in the Audit and Assessment. This will ensure provision is improved where needs are identified. This should include following the hierarchy and catchment area approach for the larger scale facilities.***
- ***Opportunities to enhance access to existing open spaces and establish links between green spaces, particularly in the built up areas, be explored. This takes pressure off the need to provide additional spaces, but instead makes some of the existing areas more accessible and provides important green infrastructure links.***
- ***Opportunities for the voluntary sector to take on the long term operation and maintenance of existing, new and improved sport and recreation facilities will be strongly encouraged.***

8. Monitoring

The Strategy, and the evidence base which underpins it, will be a live tool which will be continuously updated. The parish priorities, set locally, will also be updated as improvements are delivered. The database of open space, sport and recreation will provide up-to-date information about the current position in a parish at any given time.

The Strategy and the detailed parish priorities, once agreed, will be of great value to the operation of the recreation financial contributions scheme. It will provide a clear framework for spending to achieve improvements in provision and quality in areas of identified need. Again, as schemes are delivered, the database will be updated to ensure it reflects the latest position.

The Strategy and database will also be monitored to reflect issues and proposals that may be established through the Babergh Development Framework and Development Plan Documents.

**Appendix 1 To Strategy For Open Space, Sport and Recreation
Relevant “Saved” Policies Adopted Babergh Local Plan**

LP01 - Planning obligations

EN02 - County Wildlife Sites, Regionally Important Geological /
Geomorphological Sites or Local Nature Reserves

EN04 - Semi-natural habitats

EN06 - Habitat creation

HS01 – Towns

HS02 – Villages

HS14 - Peoples Park, Sudbury

HS15 - Grays Close, Hadleigh

HS17 – Carsons Drive, Great Cornard

HS18 – Bures Road, Great Cornard

HS19 – Rotheram Road, Bildeston

HS20 – Friends Field/Tawneys Rise, Bures St Mary

HS21 – Goodlands Farm, Boxford

HS22 – Folly Road, Great Waldingfield

HS23 – Church Farm, Whatfield

HS24 – Church Lane, Sproughton

HS25 – Crownfield Road, Glemsford

HS27 – Density and House Type

HS28 – Infilling

HS31 – Public Open Space

HS32 – Public Open Space

EM03 – Land to the south-east of Lady Lane, Hadleigh

EM04 – Former sugar beet factory site, Sproughton

CR22 – Proposed LNR, Belstead

CN01 – Design standards

CN03 – Open space within settlements

RE01 – Sports facilities

RE02 – New playing fields

RE04 – Quay Lane, Sudbury

RE05 – Shawlands Avenue, Great Cornard

RE06 - Small and Medium-scale recreation

RE07 – Large-scale recreation

RE11 – Land at Wherstead

RE13 – Great Cornard Country Park

RE17 – Alton Water

RE18 – Rivers Stour and Gipping

CP01 – Chilton Mixed Use Development Package

Further information on the policies can be obtained from the Babergh Local Plan

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