



WOKINGHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL

PPG17 OPEN SPACE, SPORT & RECREATION AUDIT UPDATE

FINAL AMENDED OPEN SPACE ASSESSMENT REPORT

FEBRUARY 2012

Integrity, Innovation, Inspiration

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Glossary

BTCV	British Trust for Conservation Volunteers
DCLG	Department for Communities and Local Government
DDA	Disability Discrimination Act
FC	Forestry Commission
FIT	Fields in Trust
FOG	Friends of Group
GIS	Geographical Information Systems
KKP	Knight, Kavanagh and Page
LBAP	Local Biodiversity Action Plans
LDF	Local Development Framework
LNR	Local Nature Reserve
MUGA	Multi-use Games Area
NAG	Neighbourhood Action Group
NHS	National Health Service
NSALG	National Society of Allotment and Leisure Gardeners
ONS	Office of National Statistics
PPG	Planning Policy Guidance
PROW	Public Rights of Way
RSS	Regional Spatial Strategy
SANG	Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace
SDL	Strategic Development Location
SOA	Super Output Areas
SPA	Special Protection Area (Thames Basin Heath)
SPD	Supplementary Planning Document
SSSI	Sites of Special Scientific Interest
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
WBC	Wokingham Borough Council
WBSP	Wokingham Borough Strategic Partnership
WCP	Wokingham Citizen Panel

PART 1: INTRODUCTION

This is the Open Space Assessment Report prepared by Knight Kavanagh & Page (KKP) for Wokingham Borough Council (WBC). It focuses on reporting the findings of the extensive research, consultation, site assessments, data analysis and GIS mapping that underpins the study.

This factual report provides an audit based assessment of both quantitative and qualitative open space, sport and recreation facilities in accordance with Planning Policy Guidance Note 17 and the Companion Guide entitled 'Assessing Needs and Opportunities' published in September 2002. The specific objectives of this audit and assessment are to:

- ◀ Verify WBC work to date (including recent community consultation exercises)
- ◀ Enhance the existing Study's credibility (via association with experienced, Sport England rated consultants)
- ◀ Provide an objective update of the Audit (including all sites updated with quality and value assessments)
- ◀ Identify and update local needs
- ◀ Update local provision standards for use in securing developer contributions and develop associated guidance to ensure effective use of contributions either on site or off site.
- ◀ Identify surpluses/deficiencies and explore opportunities for improving provision and the need to further protect current provision.
- ◀ Provide strategic options for WBC open space, sport and recreation facilities to inform local planning policies

This study and its audit findings are important in the contribution to the production of Wokingham's Local Development Framework (LDF) and is an integral part of identifying and regulating Wokingham's open space infrastructure. Through recognising the provision of open spaces in plan form, provision can be assessed in terms of quantity, quality and accessibility, strengthening their protection in planning policy from future encroachment.

This is not to say open space outside of the recognised provision should be seen as secondary or surplus. Sites can be of equal significance to the neighbourhoods they service and/or be of wider strategic importance to the Borough. This should be reflected in policy, which should aim to provide better linkages and standards of provision where appropriate.

WOKINGHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL

PPG17 OPEN SPACE AUDIT UPDATE

This assessment covers the following open space typologies as set out in 'Assessing Needs and Opportunities: A Companion Guide to PPG17'

Table 1.1: PPG17 definitions

	PPG17 typology	WBC typology	Primary purpose
Greenspaces	Parks and gardens	Parks and gardens	Accessible, high quality opportunities for informal recreation and community events.
	Natural and semi natural greenspaces	Natural and semi natural greenspaces	Wildlife conservation, biodiversity and environmental education and awareness. Includes urban woodland and beaches, where appropriate.
	Amenity greenspace	Amenity greenspace	Opportunities for informal activities close to home or work or enhancement of the appearance of residential or other areas.
	Provision for children and young people	Provision for children and young people	Areas designed primarily for play and social interaction involving children and young people, such as equipped play areas, ball courts, skateboard areas and teenage shelters.
	Allotments, community gardens and urban farms	Allotments	Opportunities for those people who wish to do so to grow their own produce as part of the long term promotion of sustainability, health and social inclusion.
	Green corridors	Green corridors including Public Rights of Way	Walking, cycling or horse riding, whether for leisure purposes or travel, and opportunities for wildlife migration.
	Cemeteries, disused churchyards and other burial grounds	Cemeteries/graveyards	Quiet contemplation and burial of the dead, often linked to the promotion of wildlife conservation and biodiversity.
Civic spaces	Civic and market squares and other hard surfaced areas designed for pedestrians including the promenade	Civic space	Providing a setting for civic buildings, public demonstrations and community events.

Report structure

Open spaces

This report considers the supply and demand issues for open space facilities in Wokingham. Each part contains relevant typology specific data. Further description of the methodology on open spaces can be found in Part 2. The report as a whole covers the predominant issues for all the typologies defined in 'Assessing Needs and Opportunities: A Companion Guide to PPG 17'; it is structured as follows:

- Part 3: General open space issues
- Part 4: Parks and gardens
- Part 5: Natural and semi-natural greenspace
- Part 6: Amenity greenspace
- Part 7: Play areas for children and young people
- Part 8: Allotments
- Part 9: Cemeteries/graveyards
- Part 10: Civic space
- Part 11: Green corridors

Sports facilities

The study also incorporates an assessment of outdoor and indoor sports facilities in accordance with the methodology provided in the Sport England 'Towards a Level Playing Field – A guide to the production of playing pitch strategies' for assessing demand and supply for outdoor sports facilities. This is provided separately in a report entitled 'Final Sports Assessment Report'.

National context

PPG17 describes the role of the planning system in assessing opportunities and needs for sport and recreation provision and safeguarding open space that has recreational value. The guidance observes that it is part of the function of the planning system to ensure that, through the preparation of development plans, adequate land and water resources are allocated for organised sport and informal recreation.

It states that local planning authorities should take account of the community's need for recreational space, having regard to current levels of provision and deficiencies and resisting pressures for development of open space where such development would conflict with the wider public interest. It discusses the role of all levels of plan, planning agreements, and the use of local authority land and compulsory purchase powers.

'Assessing Needs and Opportunities: A Companion Guide to PPG17' reflects the Government policy objectives for open space, sport and recreation, as set out in PPG17. The long-term outcomes of PPG17 aim to deliver:

- ◀ Networks of accessible, high quality open spaces and sport and recreation facilities, in both urban and rural areas, which meet the needs of residents and visitors that are fit for purpose and economically and environmentally sustainable
- ◀ An appropriate balance between new provision and the enhancement of existing provision
- ◀ Clarity and reasonable certainty for developers and landowners in relation to the requirements and expectations of local planning authorities in respect of open space and sport and recreation provision

The recent Localism Bill, introduced in December 2010, contains the Governments measures for strengthening local democracy. It establishes an aim to shift decision making powers from central Government to local councils and communities, giving them the legal support and confidence to deliver more innovative and efficient services. Plans include:

- ◀ Devolving significant new powers to councils
- ◀ Establishing powerful new rights for local people and communities
- ◀ Radically reforming planning
- ◀ Making housing fairer and more democratic
- ◀ Creating powerful incentives for economic growth

One of the key aspects of the Bill with regard to open space, sport and recreation provision is the creation of the Community Right to Build. This will give communities more control over local housing decisions. It removes the need for any organisation bringing forward developments under this power to apply for planning permission, as long as it meets minimum criteria and is supported locally. It is part of the legislations wider Neighbourhood Planning reforms, which also sees the introduction of a New Homes Bonus. The scheme offers cash for councils that allow new homes to be built in their area, through matching council tax revenue raised on each new house for six years.

The long term implementation of the legislation is yet to be seen. However, the importance of councils having an up to date and clear understanding of open space, sport and recreation provision is vital. Schemes such as the Community Right to Build and the New Homes Bonus are likely to increase the need for councils to be able to provide a sufficient amount of provision to an acceptable standard of quality.

Local context

This study and its audit findings are important in the contribution to the production of Wokingham's Local Development Framework (LDF) and is an integral part of identifying and regulating Wokingham's open space infrastructure. Through recognising the provision of open spaces in plan form, provision can be assessed in terms of quantity, quality and accessibility, whilst strengthening its presence in planning policy for the future. Below is the local context in which the study has been undertaken.

Corporate Plan

WBC's Corporate Plan 2008-2018 aims to achieve the Vision of providing "an excellent place to live and work, where residents feel valued and the Council promotes economic growth with good quality of life and opportunity for all". Its aim is to become an authority that provides high quality services combined with excellent value for money and engagement with residents on the key decisions that affect their lives. In order to deliver the Vision, WBC has developed eight priorities:

- ✦ Sound Finances and Value for Money
- ✦ Excellent Children's Services and Skills for All
- ✦ Better Health for All and Support for Vulnerable People
- ✦ A Cleaner and Greener Local Environment
- ✦ Keeping the Borough Moving
- ✦ Sustainable, Quality Development
- ✦ Safer and Stronger Communities
- ✦ Keeping the Customer Satisfied

Sustainable networks of open spaces will help achieve these aspirations.

Building on Success

The Borough's Sustainable Community Strategy (2002- 2012) was published in 2002. The Council and its partners on the Wokingham Borough Strategic Partnership (WBSP) agreed four 'community ambitions' which underpin the key strategies and plans affecting the borough. These are:

- ✦ Balancing economic prosperity with a sustainable quality of life
- ✦ Being a healthy and well-educated community
- ✦ Supporting and caring for people who need help
- ✦ Being a community where everyone feels safe, welcome and respected

Wokingham Borough Core Strategy

The Core Strategy for Wokingham was adopted by the Council in January 2010. The document sets out the long-term 'spatial vision' for the Borough up to 2026. It incorporates the future development policies for housing, transport and other infrastructure provision for the area. Both the vision and policies set out within the Core Strategy are informed by the views of the community through consultation.

Identified within the Strategy is the Council's commitment to 'making the Borough a great place to live with a good quality of life for all residents'. Key to this aim is the delivery and access to suitable sport, leisure and cultural facilities. This includes the supply of open spaces, country parks and public rights of way. In particular the vision for Dinton Pastures Country Park and improvements to California Country Park are recognised as future challenges.

One of the key aspects of the Core Strategy is the future provision in the Borough of four strategic development locations (SDLs). Information on these is set out below.

Strategic Development Locations

The Strategic Development Locations (SDLs) in Wokingham are areas of the Borough that are identified to accommodate planned new developments. In total there are four SDLs:

- ◀ Arborfield Garrison
- ◀ South of the M4
- ◀ North Wokingham
- ◀ South Wokingham

Set out in the WBC Core Strategy, the four SDLs identify where new growth can be sustainably provided. Each SDL has its own masterplan to help guide future development and infrastructure plans for its corresponding area.

Consultation on the draft SDL masterplans ran between the 9th and 23rd of February 2010. A total of 877 written responses were received and raised issues concerning open spaces including the loss of open space/trees/green land/threats to wildlife and location of proposed community facilities and Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANGs). A brief summary update for each SDL is detailed below (as of May 2011).

All four plans identify that a network of green spaces should be created as part of each locations growth. The Key Design Principles in the four masterplans recognise the requirement for developers to consider the provision of:

- ◀ Designated play areas
- ◀ Youth facilities
- ◀ Outdoor sports pitches
- ◀ Changing room facilities
- ◀ Parks and open spaces
- ◀ Allotments
- ◀ Green corridors

Arborfield Garrison

The site is identified for a sustainable, well designed, mixed use development to provide 3,500 new dwellings. This would provide an increase of circa 8,400 people, assuming an average household size of 2.4 persons per dwelling. It will also include new employment, appropriate retail facilities, and transport, social and physical infrastructure. Furthermore, there is a requirement for the provision of sufficient SANGs to mitigate the impact on the Thames Basin Heath Special Protection Area. This will also help to retain the separation from Finchampstead North, Arborfield Cross and Barkham.

In accordance with Circular 5/05, and Council Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD) relating to Infrastructure Delivery for the SDL, developers are expected to enter into a legal agreement to ensure the provision of necessary infrastructure and facilities.

In terms of open spaces the Development Components and Key Design Principles should specifically include:

- ◀ One district and two neighbourhood centres; designed to act as community hubs
- ◀ Any necessary flood mitigation measures especially in relation to California Country Park and impact on the SSSI

Furthermore, the Council recognises the requirement for additional public open space as part of the SDL and would prefer to see the following:

- ◀ Any additional new outdoor sport facilities are located with retained facilities or immediately adjacent to any associated built facilities
- ◀ A large District Equipped Area of Play, catering for ages 1-13
- ◀ NEAPS within each of the proposed neighbourhoods
- ◀ Linear trim trail
- ◀ Outdoor gym
- ◀ At least one new MUGA within each of the proposed neighbourhoods
- ◀ A purpose built Skate Park and BMX track
- ◀ Preferable a single new allotment site meeting the 4.37 hectares required

South of M4

The South of the M4 SDL is located in the area around Shinfield, Spencers Wood and Three Mile Cross. The sustainable, mixed use development is to provide 2,500 dwellings in addition to a range of employment/retail uses and open space/social infrastructure. This would provide an increase of circa 6,000 people, assuming an average household size of 2.4 persons per dwelling. Separation of the existing settlements is required to be maintained and any impacts on the Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area are mitigated. In terms of open space provision key design principles should include:

In terms of open spaces the Development Components and Key Design Principles should specifically include:

- ◀ Retention of an area of open land north-south through the centre of the SDL, linking with SANGS to the north and south. This is likely to be the most appropriate location for sports pitch provision/multifunctional open space
- ◀ Two new neighbourhood centres to act as community hubs
- ◀ Expansion of existing children's centre and youth facilities

Furthermore, the Council recognises the requirement for additional public open space as part of the SDL and would prefer to see the following:

- ◀ Any additional new outdoor sport facilities are located with retained facilities or immediately adjacent to any associated built facilities
- ◀ A large District Equipped Area of Play, catering for ages 1-13
- ◀ NEAPS within each of the proposed neighbourhoods
- ◀ Linear trim trail
- ◀ Outdoor gym
- ◀ At least one new MUGA within each of the proposed neighbourhood developments

- ◀ A purpose built Skate Park and BMX track
- ◀ Preferable a single new allotment site meeting the 3.12 hectares required

South Wokingham

The South Wokingham SDL focuses on the landscape setting as the key factor for the areas concept. In addition, the need to improve east-west connection through the southern part of the town is fundamental to the concept rationale. The proposed development is capable to provide 2,500 new dwellings. This would provide an increase of circa 6,000 people, assuming an average household size of 2.4 persons per dwelling.

In terms of open spaces the Development Components and Key Design Principles should specifically include:

- ◀ A continuous open space network should be planned along the course of the Emmbrook. This should incorporate the flood plain and give access to the Brook for recreation. Playing fields and formal open space should also be provided in the vicinity
- ◀ SANG provision in the immediate vicinity of the SDL
- ◀ A local and a neighbourhood centre to act as community hubs

The Council formally adopted the South Wokingham SDL on the 21st of October 2010. Furthermore, the Council recognises the requirement for additional public open space as part of the SDL and would prefer to see the following:

- ◀ Any additional new outdoor sport facilities are located with retained facilities or immediately adjacent to any associated built facilities
- ◀ A large District Equipped Area of Play, catering for ages 1-13
- ◀ NEAPS within each of the proposed neighbourhoods
- ◀ Linear trim trail
- ◀ Outdoor gym
- ◀ At least one new MUGA within each of the proposed neighbourhoods
- ◀ A purpose built Skate Park and BMX track
- ◀ Preferable a single new allotment site meeting the 3.12 hectares required

North Wokingham

North Wokingham SDL along with the South Wokingham SDL set out the future for the town of Wokingham. The North Wokingham SDL plans to provide 1,500 dwellings in addition to local services such as a primary school, public open space and SANGs provision. This would provide an increase of circa 3,600 people, assuming an average household size of 2.4 persons per dwelling.

In terms of open spaces the Development Components and Key Design Principles should specifically include:

- ◀ Creation of a linear public park parallel to the A329(M). This should open in places to provide playing fields and formal open space. It should also incorporate the SANG mitigation
- ◀ One neighbourhood centre to act as a community hub
- ◀ Providing separation between new housing and the existing sewerage treatment works
- ◀ Integrating with Cantley Recreation Ground to enhance local amenity

The Council formally adopted the North Wokingham SDL on the 21st of October 2010. Furthermore, the Council recognises the requirement for additional public open space as part of the SDL and would prefer to see the following:

- ◀ A proportion of the required outdoor sports provision to be delivered through the enhancement of existing facilities at Cantley Park. Such as:
 - ◀ Conversion of three tennis courts to air covered courts
 - ◀ One natural grass pitch to an artificial surface
 - ◀ Installation of additional drainage on some natural grass pitches
- ◀ A large District Equipped Area of Play, catering for ages 1-13
- ◀ Linear trim trail
- ◀ Outdoor gym
- ◀ Preferable a single new allotment site meeting the 1.87 hectares required

Town Centre Masterplan

The document provides the guidance for the development of Wokingham Town Centre. It builds upon the policies set out within the Wokingham Core Strategy. Specifically it is designed to:

- ◀ Provide a coordinated vision for the town centre as a whole
- ◀ Facilitate a high quality network of streets and spaces
- ◀ Encourage companies to invest in the town to secure long-term social and economic regeneration
- ◀ Ensure that community, infrastructure and quality issues remain top priorities
- ◀ Provide clear planning policy to help make decisions about future planning applications

No detail on the sites development is yet available. However, the Council acknowledges in its response to consultation comments that 'a sensitive and balanced approach is required. The historic and recreational value of this area is widely appreciated, and the challenge in progressing development of the area will be to balance the retention of an attractive green space with development capable of improving the competitiveness of the town centre. The creation of a more attractive, flexible, integrated and high quality green space will be central to the success of the development

Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace

A Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG) is an area of open space that has been identified to be made more accessible and attractive to visitors following a procedure of enhancement. The aim is to lessen the impact of new households (and resultant population growth) on the Thames Basin Heaths by providing alternative outdoor areas for the general public to visit.

The 2007 Wokingham Visitor Survey was used to assess the suitability and potential of eight sites within the Borough to absorb recreational use. In 2009 the Council approved plans for a SANG to be located at the Rooks Nest Wood in Barkham. The site is approximately 18.3 hectares in size.

Housing development

Borough housing targets are based on achieving the overall Regional Spatial Strategy requirements, plus the backlog of 772 dwellings, as at April 2006. These will be met primarily by housing development in SDLs. However, according to WBC, housing development in LDLs should generally not exceed 25 dwellings, and is unlikely to generate significant new demand for indoor or outdoor sport and recreation facilities. Most future residential development will occur in SDLs. This reflects the approach advocated by the Core Strategy (i.e., a few locations taking a large proportion of all development), in order to protect the existing character of the area. Housing land supply will be phased by WBC as follows:

Year	2006-11	2011-16	2016-21	2021-26	2006-26
Total projected housing development	2,901	4,804	3,645	2,138	13,487

This indicates a likely 'spike' in demand for open spaces between 2011 and 2016. Assessment calculations will, however, estimate changes in demand for the whole period (i.e., up to 2026).

Demographic profile

The total population in Wokingham increased between 2006 and 2009 at a slightly lower and more consistent rate than in the Region as a whole. However, Borough demographic characteristics vary from regional and national equivalents. For example, the proportion of males decreased slightly in Wokingham between 2006 and 2009, whilst it increased regionally and nationally during the same period. Whilst the number of non-white residents increased locally, regionally and nationally it was more significant in Wokingham - as illustrated below:

Wokingham: Demographic characteristic proportions

Indicator	Wokingham			South East			England		
	2006	2008	2009	2006	2008	2009	2006	2008	2009
Male	49.2%	48.9%	48.8%	48.3%	48.5%	48.5%	48.7%	48.8%	48.9%
Female	50.8%	51.1%	51.2%	51.7%	51.5%	51.5%	51.3%	51.2%	51.1%
16 to 19	7.9%	7.2%	7.1%	6.4%	6.4%	6.4%	6.5%	6.4%	6.3%
20 to 24	7.4%	6.1%	7.5%	7.4%	7.6%	7.7%	8.1%	8.4%	8.5%
25 to 34	15.5%	16.6%	11.8%	15.4%	14.9%	14.8%	16.4%	16.1%	16.2%
35 to 49	31.0%	32.3%	32.5%	28.1%	27.9%	27.6%	27.7%	27.5%	27.2%
50 to 64	22.5%	21.9%	25.1%	23.0%	23.1%	23.1%	22.2%	22.3%	22.3%
65+	15.6%	15.8%	16.1%	19.8%	20.0%	20.3%	19.1%	19.2%	19.4%
White	93.6%	89.3%	89.6%	94.5%	93.6%	93.3%	89.9%	89.1%	88.9%
Non-White	6.4%	10.7%	10.3%	5.4%	6.3%	6.5%	10.0%	10.9%	11.0%
Both DDA & work limiting	4.5%	4.3%	5.2%	6.8%	6.7%	6.7%	8.6%	8.4%	8.3%
DDA only disabled	3.4%	3.5%	4.1%	4.1%	4.2%	4.3%	3.9%	4.0%	4.1%

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Indicator	Wokingham			South East			England		
	2006	2008	2009	2006	2008	2009	2006	2008	2009
Work-limiting only disabled	2.2%	2.3%	2.7%	2.6%	2.5%	2.4%	2.5%	2.5%	2.5%
Not disabled	74.2%	74.1%	71.9%	66.6%	66.6%	66.3%	65.9%	65.8%	65.7%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Source: Annual Population Survey Year: 2006, 2008 & 2009

Population projections

The population figure for Wokingham in the 2008 ONS figures is 159,134. In the period between 2008 and 2026 (to fit with the Core Strategy) Wokingham's population is projected to increase by 10.2% across the Borough. According to the distribution of proposed housing numbers (1,200 in North, 8,000 in South East and 2,800 South West), WBC has estimated the following area increases

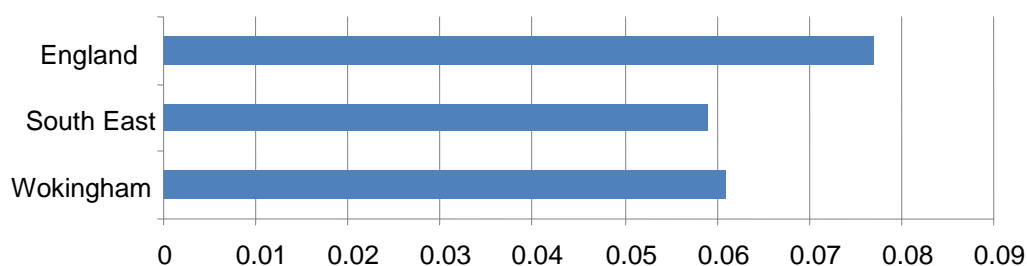
Analysis area	Current population (2008)	Increase	Future population (2026)
North	53,106	1,623	54,729
South East	46,395	10,821	57,216
South West	59,633	3,788	63,421
Wokingham	159,134	16,232	175,366

It is anticipated that male: female proportions will remain similar during this period, but significant increases are projected in the number of older people and there is a projected decline in the number of young adults and 'early retirees' (i.e., 60 – 64 year olds).

Unemployment

In 2009, the Borough's unemployment rate as a proportion of the economically active population was higher than the Regional average and less than the national average, as illustrated below:

Wokingham: Unemployment rate as a proportion of Economically Active Population



Source: Annual Population Survey Year: 2009

Obesity levels and life expectancy

Adult and childhood obesity rates are lower in Wokingham than regional and national averages. Male and female Borough residents' life expectancy is greater (as illustrated below). Demand for sport and recreation facilities (particularly specialist facilities and those that cater for older people) is, thus, likely to be higher in Wokingham than in other areas.

Wokingham: Life expectancy by gender

Geography	Life expectancy (years)	
	Male	Female
Wokingham	81.1	83.8
South East	79.2	83
England	77.9	82

Source: Department of Health: Year: 2006-2008

Deprivation

Deprivation maps that follow illustrate the ranking of super output areas (SOAs) in Wokingham based on the '*Indices of Multiple Deprivation 2007*' (IMD 2007). These are based upon 32,482 SOAs throughout England, which relate to the geography used in the 2001 Census. The manner in which the ranking works is for a rank position of one to indicate the most deprived SOA in the Country.

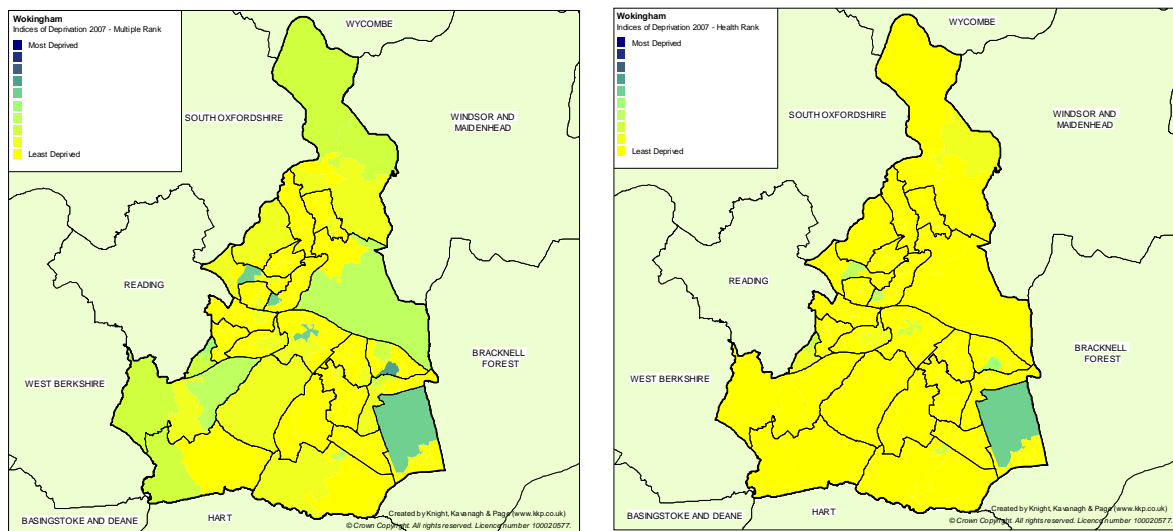
The IMD 2007 is a valuable source of information about spatial patterns of deprivation in England and is used to help focus policy and interventions on deprived areas and particular types of deprivation. It comprises 37 different indicators grouped in seven 'domains' of deprivation covering income, employment, health deprivation and disability, education, skills and training, barriers to housing and services, living environment deprivation and crime.

As of 2007, none of Wokingham residents lived in areas deemed to be in the bottom 30% of SOAs. (i.e., in the most deprived areas of the country). This is confirmed by the Department for Communities and Local Government, which, in 2007, ranked the Borough 352 out 353 local authorities in the Index of Multiple Deprivation. In other words, across the board, Wokingham is one of the least deprived local authority areas in England.

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Wokingham: maps illustrating IMD multiple and health rankings



The table below shows the proportion of Wokingham's population who live in deprived areas:

Deprivation	IMD Rank Percent	Population in Band	% of Area Population
Most deprived	0.0 – 10.0	00	0.0%
	10.1 – 20.0	00	0.0%
	20.1 – 30.0	00	0.0%
	30.1 – 40.0	1,668	1.1%
	40.1 – 50.0	6,204	4.1%
	50.1 – 60.0	1,164	0.8%
	60.1 – 70.0	4,515	3.0%
	70.1 – 80.0	9,996	6.6%
Least deprived	80.1 – 90.0	24,909	16.4%
	90.1 – 100.0	103,557	68.1%

Some areas in the Borough do contain areas of relative deprivation. This applies particularly to the east of Wokingham town, adjacent to Bracknell Forest. Consultation with local residents also suggests that the Norreys area (Borough Ward) contains a deprived area and a more affluent area next to one another.

PART 2: METHODOLOGY

Background information

An extensive range of background information has been reviewed and incorporated into the assessment of key issues for each typology. Background documentation reviewed for the study is listed below:

- ✦ Wokingham Open Space and Sports Assessment Volume 1 and 2, Atkins, 2005.
- ✦ Play Area Review value and assessment reports, 2010/11.
- ✦ A Play Strategy for Wokingham, WBC, 2006 – 2010
- ✦ FIT (Fields in Trust), Planning and Design for Outdoor Sport and Play
- ✦ Draft Arborfield Garrison Strategic Development Location Masterplan, WBC, 2010.
- ✦ Final Draft South of the M4 Strategic Development Location Masterplan, WBC, 2010.
- ✦ Adopted North Wokingham Strategic Development Location Masterplan, WBC, 2010.
- ✦ Adopted South Wokingham Strategic Development Location Masterplan, WBC, 2010.
- ✦ Wokingham Town Centre Masterplan Supplementary Planning Documents, WBC, 2010.
- ✦ Parish and Town Council Plans and Consultation, various.
- ✦ Rights of Way Improvement Plan (ROWIP), WBC, 2009.
- ✦ Biodiversity Action Plan for Wokingham 2003 – 2012: A plan to maintain and enhance Wokingham Districts wildlife, WBC, 2003
- ✦ Wokingham Borough Core Strategy, WBC, January 2010.
- ✦ A Sustainable Community Strategy for Wokingham 2020, Wokingham Borough Strategic Partnership, 2010.
- ✦ Sustainable Community Strategy 2010 – 2020 consultation findings, Wokingham Borough Strategic Partnership.
- ✦ Wokingham Borough Visitor Surveys, Footprint Ecology/WBC, 2007.

Auditing local provision

The site audit for this study was undertaken by the KKP Field Research Team. In total, 466 open spaces (including play areas) are identified, plotted on GIS and assessed to evaluate site value and quality. Each site is classified based on its primary open space purpose, so that each type of space is counted only once. The audit, and therefore the report, utilise the following typologies as agreed/defined by WBC and in accordance with PPG17:

1. Parks and gardens
2. Natural and semi-natural greenspace (including country parks)
3. Amenity greenspace
4. Play areas for children and young people
5. Allotments
6. Cemeteries/graveyards
7. Civic space
8. Green corridors

In accordance with PPG17 recommendations a size threshold of 0.2 hectares has been applied to the inclusion of some typologies within the study. This means that, in general, sites that fall below this threshold are not audited. However, some sites below the threshold (i.e. those that are identified through consultation as being of significance) are included.

The list below details the threshold for each typology:

- ◀ Parks and gardens – no threshold
- ◀ Natural and semi-natural greenspace – 0.2 ha
- ◀ Amenity greenspace – 0.2 ha
- ◀ Play areas for children and young people – no threshold
- ◀ Allotments – no threshold
- ◀ Cemeteries/graveyards – no threshold
- ◀ Civic space – 0.2 ha

It is important to note that the number of sites assessed may not correspond to the actual amount of provision that exists. For example, a total of 26 allotment sites are identified in the Borough. However, six of these are not assessed as entry to the site could not be gained. Often this was because the gate to the site was locked.

Database development

All information relating to open spaces across Wokingham is collated in the project open space database (supplied as an Excel electronic file). All sites included within the audit, as identified and assessed, are included within it. The database details for each site are as follows:

Data held on open spaces database (summary)

- ◀ KKP reference number (used for mapping)
- ◀ Site name
- ◀ Ownership
- ◀ Management
- ◀ Typology
- ◀ Size (hectares)
- ◀ Site visit data

Sites are primarily identified by KKP in the audit using official site names, where possible, and/or secondly using road names and locations.

Quality and value

Quality and value are fundamentally different and can be unrelated. For example, a high quality space may be in an inaccessible location and, thus, be of little value; while, if a rundown (poor quality) space may be the only one in an area and thus be immensely valuable. As a result, quality and value are also treated separately in terms of scoring. Each type of open space receives separate quality and value scores as follows. This will also allow application of a high and low quality/value matrix to further help determine prioritisation of investment and to identify sites that may be surplus to a particular open space typology.

Analysis of quality

Data collated from site visits is based upon those derived from the Green Flag Award scheme (a national standard for parks and green spaces in England and Wales, operated by the Green Flag Plus Partnership). This is utilised to calculate a quality score for each site visited. Scores in the database are presented as percentage figures. The quality criteria used for the open space assessments carried out are summarised in the following table.

Quality criteria for open space site visit (score)

- ◆ Physical access, e.g., public transport links, directional signposts
- ◆ Access-social, e.g., appropriate minimum entrance widths
- ◆ Parking, e.g., disabled parking
- ◆ Information signage, e.g., presence of up to date site information
- ◆ Equipment and facilities, e.g., assessment of both adequacy and maintenance of provision such as seats, benches, bins, toilets
- ◆ Location value, e.g., proximity of housing, other greenspace
- ◆ Site problems, e.g., presence of vandalism, graffiti
- ◆ Healthy, safe and secure, e.g., staff on site
- ◆ Maintenance and cleanliness, e.g., condition of landscape
- ◆ Groups that the site meets the needs of, e.g., elderly, young people
- ◆ Site potential

For play areas, the criteria is also built around Green Flag and is a non technical visual assessment of the whole site, including general equipment and surface quality/appearance but also includes an assessment of, for example, bench and bin provision. In 2010/11 WBC carried out a review of play areas. Sites were assessed on the value of play, risk assessment grade and any required actions or elements to monitor. It differs from the site visit assessments carried out by KKP, as it is a technical assessment of equipment. Subsequently, for the purpose of any future equipment requirements, the findings of the review should be used.

Analysis of value

Using data calculated from the site visits and desk based research a value score for each site is identified. Value is defined in PPG17 in relation to the following three issues:

- ◆ Context of the site i.e. its accessibility, scarcity value and historic value.
- ◆ Level and type of use.
- ◆ The wider benefits it generates for people, biodiversity and the wider environment.

The value criteria set is derived from PPG17. It is summarised below:

Value criteria for open space site visits (score)

- ◆ Level of use (observations only)
- ◆ Context of site in relation to other open spaces
- ◆ Structural and landscape benefits
- ◆ Ecological benefits
- ◆ Educational benefits
- ◆ Social inclusion and health benefits
- ◆ Cultural and heritage benefits
- ◆ Amenity benefits and a sense of place
- ◆ Economic benefits

Value - non site visit criteria (score)

- ✦ Designated site such as LNR or SSSI
- ✦ Educational programme in place
- ✦ Historic site
- ✦ Listed building or historical monument on site
- ✦ Registered 'friends of group' to the site

Setting thresholds for quality and value

In order to determine whether sites are high or low quality (as recommended by PPG17); the results of the site assessments have been colour-coded against a baseline threshold (high being green and low being red).

The primary aim of applying a threshold is to identify sites where investment and/or improvements are required. It can also be used to set an aspirational quality standard to be achieved at some point in the future and to inform decisions around the need to further protect sites from future development (particularly when applied with its respective value score in a matrix format).

The base line threshold for assessing quality is, for most typologies, set around 60%; based on the pass rate for Green Flag criteria (site visit criteria also being based on Green Flag). This is the only national benchmark available for parks and open spaces. However, the site visit criteria used for Green Flag is not always appropriate for every open space typology. Therefore the baseline threshold for certain typologies is amended to better reflect this.

Typology	Quality threshold	Value threshold
Parks and gardens	60%	20%
Natural and semi-natural greenspace	40%	20%
Amenity greenspace	40%	20%
Play areas for children and young people	60%	20%
Allotments	40%	20%
Cemeteries/graveyards	60%	20%
Civic space	60%	20%

Identifying local need

Local need has been assessed in Wokingham via:

- ✦ Stakeholder consultation (face-to-face and/or telephone interviews) with key officers, agencies and stakeholders
- ✦ Residents' survey
- ✦ Young people Survey

Stakeholder Consultation

The core of this phase focused around extensive consultation with circa 100 stakeholders including key individuals, interest and community groups. This included voluntary organisations such as 'friends of' groups, conservation groups, sports clubs and hobby clubs. In addition, representatives from public bodies like WBC officers, and agencies working in and around Wokingham were consulted. Qualitative in-depth interviews were conducted either face-to-face or by telephone with a list of consultees provided by the

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client along with those uncovered by KKP during the study. A full list of stakeholders is included in the appendices.

A broad understanding of open spaces drives the presentation of key issues emerging from the consultation. KKP brings a pragmatic approach to consultation in order to manage the expectations of stakeholders and present a realistic picture of issues, alongside evaluation of the aspirations of residents and users.

Residents survey

KKP also carried out a survey via the Wokingham Citizen Panel (WCP) in order to identify the attitudes and needs of the broader local community.

Members were sent an invitation to complete a short questionnaire consisting of 16 questions. The survey was also hosted on the Council website for those who wished to complete it electronically. Key issues covered within the questionnaire include the following:

- ◆ Current usage of open spaces
- ◆ Reasons for usage/non-usage of open spaces
- ◆ Time taken/distance travelled to open spaces
- ◆ Attitudes to open spaces (e.g., adequacy, quality, accessibility)

The survey provides a good sample of both users and non-users of provision across Wokingham. In total 415 responses were received out of a possible 688 members. The majority (225) of responses were received by paper version with 190 individuals submitting online.

To reflect the local demographics, responses were broken down by gender and age to enable sound sub-analysis and provide a representation of respondents. The age and gender splits are as follows:

Respondents' age splits

Analysis area	Total	Age groups						
		17 & under	18-25	26-35	36-45	46-60	61 & over	Do not state
Total	415	3	0	14	41	134	186	37

Respondents' gender splits

Analysis area	Male	Female	Do not state
Total	180	200	35

The minimum age for survey participants is 16. Consultation with children and young people for the study is carried out in addition to the WCP survey through a Borough wide Young People Survey.

The survey results use descriptions slightly amended to those described by PPG17 and those listed on p9 of this report. For example, it refers to 'nature areas' rather than 'natural and semi natural greenspace' to enable ease of understanding for the general public.

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The following table details the descriptions used and the audit typology that they correspond to:

Resident survey typology	Report typology
Public park	Park and gardens
Nature area (e.g. woodland, wildlife area)	Natural and semi-natural greenspace
Grassed area on a housing estate or recreation ground	Amenity greenspace
Play areas for small/young children	Play areas for children and young people
Teenage/youth provision	
Allotments	Allotments
Footpaths/cyclepaths	Green corridors
Churchyard/cemetery	Cemeteries/graveyards
Civic space/non-green space (e.g. market square)	Civic space

Survey results have been analysed and presented in typology based formats with associated commentary. A number of results include substantial percentages of 'don't know'. This does not always mean, for example, that the respondent does not know how often they use provision (i.e. they may visit provision but are not aware of their rate of use). It may also, for instance, mean that they could not answer because she/he has no interest in using the facility.

Both users and non-users of provision are asked to rate provision of open spaces. This may also lead to a higher level of "don't know" responses, as non-users are more likely to not know how they would rate provision. However, this is done in order to capture non-user opinions and/or perceptions and to build up a picture of awareness of provision. This is particularly the case for allotments and teenage/youth provision. 'Don't know' responses are usually high for these types of provision due to the small specific number of users of these kinds of sites. We have therefore, where possible, consulted directly with users of these niche types of open space with regard to provision. For example, with allotments we consulted with parish and town councils in order to establish the level of provision. For teenage/youth provision we carried out the young people survey in addition to meeting with relevant contacts such as WBC Youth Services and community wardens.

Young people survey

In order to gather the views of young people consultation was also undertaken through a young people survey. In total 159 individuals across Wokingham took part in the survey. The survey was hosted online on the Active Youth website and via paper versions distributed at youth centres and by community wardens.

Some of the questions contain a number of 'no reply' responses. This is likely to be an indication of an individual's lack of awareness or lack of interest in a specific typology. For example, responses for the typology of parks continuously receive a lower number of 'no replies' compared to other typologies. This could be interpreted as meaning parks are a more popular and more frequently accessed type of open space. There is also, within any questionnaire, going to be a proportion of participants that choose not to answer all questions.

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Summaries of these consultation findings with 159 young people, the majority of which are aged between 12-18 years of age, can be found under key issues within the individual typology sections. Issues covered within the survey include the following:

- ✦ Attitudes towards open spaces in terms of quality of provision
- ✦ Opinions about open spaces in terms of the amount of provision
- ✦ Method of travel to open spaces
- ✦ Reason for visiting open space provision
- ✦ Reasons for none usage

To reflect the local demographics, responses are broken down by gender and age to enable sound sub-analysis and provide a representation of respondents. The age and gender splits for the young people survey are as follows:

Young people survey respondents' age splits

Analysis area	Total	Age groups					
		Under 12	12-13	14-15	16-18	Over 18	Do not state
Total	159	36	62	35	22	1	3

Young people survey respondents' gender splits

Analysis area	Male	Female	Do not state
Total	75	73	11

Participants are also asked to identify which area of Wokingham they live in. This is summarised in the following table.

Parish area	Number of respondents	Parish area	Number of respondents
Arborfield	3	St Nicholas Hurst	3
Barkham	3	Swallowfield	-
Charvil	14	Twyford	29
Earley	18	Wargrave	7
Finchampstead	5	Winnersh	7
Remenham	7	Wokingham	25
Ruscombe	3	Wokingham Without	-
Shinfield	2	Woodley	13
Sonning	3	Do not state	17

Most participants provide an answer although 17 choose not to state in which area they reside. A significant number of young people survey respondents are from the areas of Twyford, Wokingham, Earley and Charvil. Factors such as these are taken into account when analysing findings in the typology sections later in the report.

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Questions in the survey use descriptions slightly amended to those described by PPG17 and those listed on p9 of this report. For example, it refers to 'grassed areas in/near housing estates' rather than 'amenity greenspace' to enable ease of understanding for participants. Similar to the resident survey, the following table sets out the descriptions used and the audit typology with which they fit:

Young people survey typology	Report typology
Public park	Park and gardens
Natural space (e.g. woodland, wildlife area)	Natural and semi-natural greenspace
Grassed area in/near housing estates	Amenity greenspace
Children's play area	Play areas for children and young people
Teenage play provision (e.g. youth shelter, BMX track, skatepark, MUGA)	
Allotments	Allotments
Green corridors (e.g. footpaths, cyclepaths, canals)	Green corridors
Burial grounds (e.g. cemetery)	Cemeteries/graveyards
Civic space (e.g. market square)	Civic space

Parish and town council survey

A survey of the 17 parish and town councils within the Borough was also carried out. This helped to pick up on issues, problems and concerns relating to open space provision at a more local level, as well as identifying the attitudes and needs of the broader local community. It also allowed any local issues and aspirations to be identified through consulting with the parish and town councils.

In total 16 out of the 17 parish and town councils participated in the consultation process. Face-to-face meetings, where possible, were scheduled with each of the town councils, whilst a paper questionnaire was sent to the remaining parish councils. The table below summarises the method in which each of the parish and town councils were approached.

Parish and town council	Consultation method
Arborfield and Newland PC	Survey
Barkham PC	Survey
Charvil PC	Survey
Earley TC	Face-to-face
Finchampstead PC	Did not complete
Remenham PC	Survey
Ruscombe PC	Survey
Shinfield PC	Survey
Sonning PC	Survey
St Nicholas Hurst PC	Survey
Swallowfield PC	Survey
Twyford PC	Survey
Wargrave PC	Survey
Winnersh PC	Survey
Wokingham TC	Telephone
Wokingham Without PC	Survey
Woodley TC	Face-to-face

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A number of parishes identify plans to develop new or existing open spaces. The following table summarises these plans as identified by the parish/town clerks during the consultation.

Parish/town council	Plans
Barkham	Identifies that a suitable alternative natural greenspace (SANG) is currently being created along Barkham Ride.
Charvil	Considering the possibility of leasing a small area of land on Pennine Way from WBC This would be in order to create an allotment site able to house around 15 small allotment plots.
Shinfield	Looking to improve play equipment at the Milworth Lane Recreation Ground. Plans have been delayed to 2011/12 due to the withdrawal of central governments play builder funding scheme. It is also seeking s106 funding for an outdoor gym in Shinfield village.
Swallowfield	Looking to develop an allotment site with 27 half plots at Van Demans Field.
Wargrave	Plans to bring Mulberry Field Nature Reserve and Chalk Pit back into use.
Winnersh	It identifies that WBC had plans to install paths, benches and a play area on Winnersh Meadows. Lottery funding has been received and the project is commencing.
Wokingham Without	Has plans to install an adult trim trail and a nature trail at the Pinewood site. This is dependent on the success of external funding bids. It is also looking to find a suitable area to install a MUGA.

Analysis areas

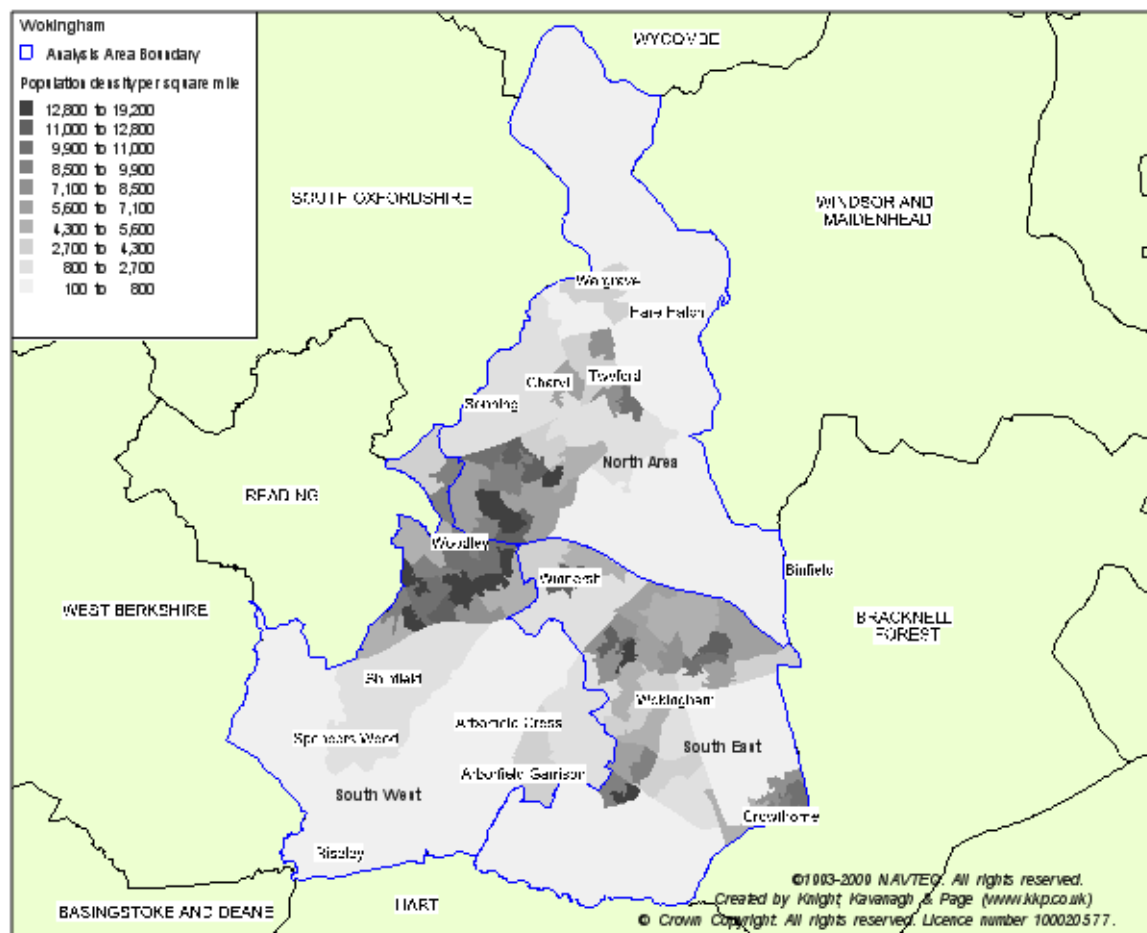
For mapping purposes and audit analysis, Wokingham is divided into three analysis areas (reflecting the geographical and demographical nature of the Borough). These allow more localised assessment of provision in addition to examination of open space/facility surplus and deficiencies at a local level. Use of analysis areas also allows local circumstances and issues to be taken into account. Wokingham is therefore, broken down as follows:

Analysis area	Settlement	Population (ONS 2007)
North Area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◀ Bulmershe and Whitegates ◀ Charvil ◀ Coronation ◀ Hurst ◀ Loddon ◀ Remenham, Wargrave and Ruscombe ◀ Sonning ◀ South Lake ◀ Twyford 	45,915

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Analysis area	Settlement	Population (ONS 2007)
South East	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Emmbrook Evendons Finchampstead North Finchampstead South Norreys Wescott Winnersh Wokingham Without 	58,787
South West	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Arborfield Barkham Hawkedon Hillside Maiden Erlegh Shinfield North Shinfield South Swallowfield 	51,917

Figure 2.1: Analysis areas in Wokingham



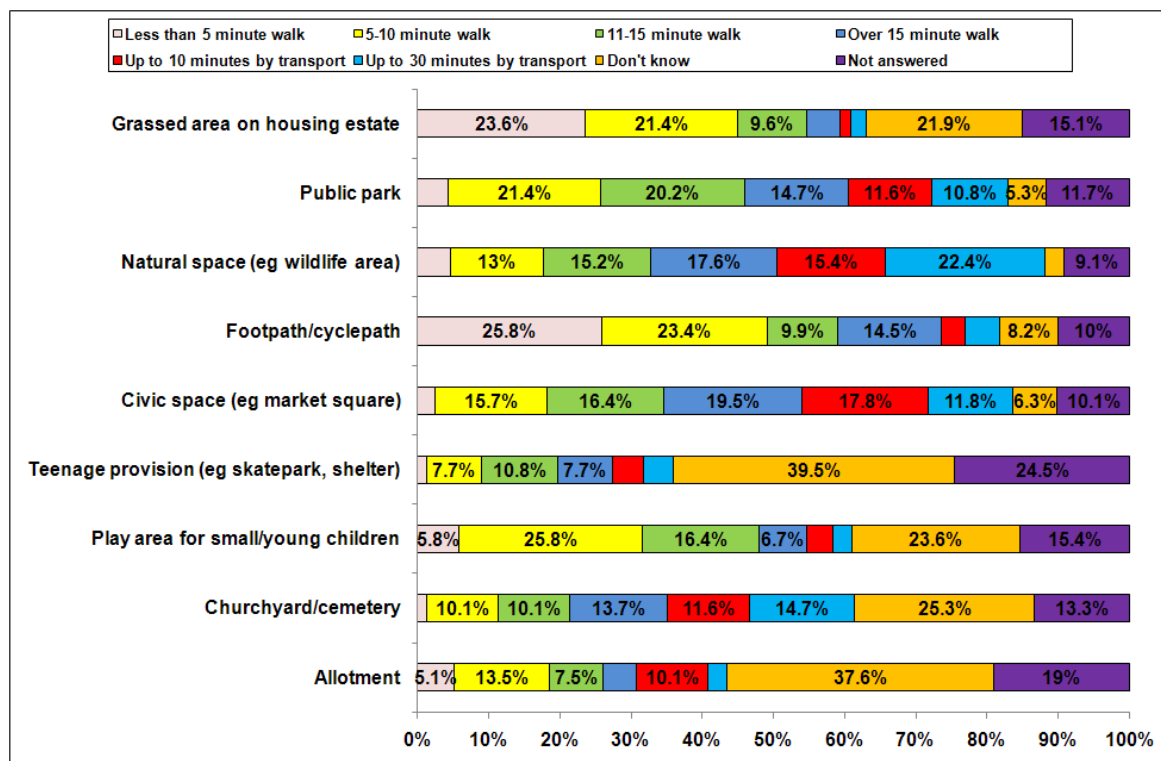
Catchment areas

Catchment areas for different types of provision are a tool to identify communities currently not served by existing facilities. It is recognised that factors that underpin catchment areas vary from person to person, day to day and hour to hour. This problem is overcome by accepting the concept of 'effective catchments', defined as the distance that would be travelled by the majority of users.

Open space catchment areas

Guidance is offered by the Greater London Authority (GLA) (2002): 'Guide to preparing open space strategies' with regard to appropriate catchment areas for authorities to adopt. However, in order to make accessibility standards more locally specific to Wokingham, we propose to use data from the street survey to set appropriate catchments. The following survey responses were recorded in relation to how far residents would be willing to travel to access different types of open space provision:

Figure 2.2: Resident willingness to travel to open space provision



The typologies of grassed areas on housing estates (24%) and footpath/cyclepath (26%) demonstrate respondents expect to travel less than 5 minutes' walk to these types of provision. Additionally 21% and 23% respectively are willing to walk 5-10 minutes to access these facilities. Both trends show an indication towards the local nature and usage of such provision.

A 5-10 minute walking threshold is also the most popular response by respondents (26%) for the typology of play areas for small/young children. Again, this demonstrates the demand for such provision to be locally accessible. Responses for parks also show respondents willingness to travel slightly further, with 21% and 20% willing to walk 5-10 minutes and 11-15 minutes respectively.

In keeping with previous trends, respondents do not know how far they would be willing to travel to visit allotments (38%) and teenage provision (40%).

The following table summarises the survey responses and recommends accessibility standards to be applied in Wokingham (to be agreed with the steering group) to further aid identification of deficiencies in provision:

Table 2.1: Summary of survey responses and accessibility standards

Typology	Survey responses	Recommended distance threshold for Wokingham	Equivalent distance
Parks and gardens	Most respondents are willing to walk 5 – 10 minutes to access provision. With a proportion also willing to walk 11-15 minutes.	10 minute walk	440 metres
Natural and semi natural greenspaces	Most respondents will accept travelling up to 30 minutes by transport.	30 minute drive	10,000 metres (at approx 30 mph)
Amenity greenspace	Most respondents are willing to travel less than 5 minutes to access provision. This is closely followed by those respondents willing to walk 5-10 minutes.	10 minute walk	440 metres
Provision for children and young people	A significant proportion of respondents are willing to walk 5 – 10 minutes to access provision.	10 minute walk	440 metres
Allotments	Most respondents would accept a 5-10 minute walk in order to reach an allotment.	10 minute walk	440 metres
Green corridors	Most respondents are willing to travel less than 5 minutes to access provision. This is closely followed by those respondents willing to walk 5-10 minutes.	10 minute walk	440 metres
Cemeteries/ graveyards	Most respondents would accept travelling up to 30 minutes by transport. Closely followed by those willing to walk over 15 minutes.	30 minute drive	10,000 metres (at approx 30 mph)
Civic space	Most respondents would walk over 15 minutes to access provision. Although a proportion would also be willing to travel up to 10 minutes by transport.	15 minute walk	880 metres

PART 3: GENERAL OPEN SPACE ISSUES

Introduction

Consultation with users and non-users of open spaces across Wokingham covered many issues. Typology and site specific issues are covered in the relevant sections of this report. This section describes generic issues that cut across more than one typology; it also includes a summary from the surveys.

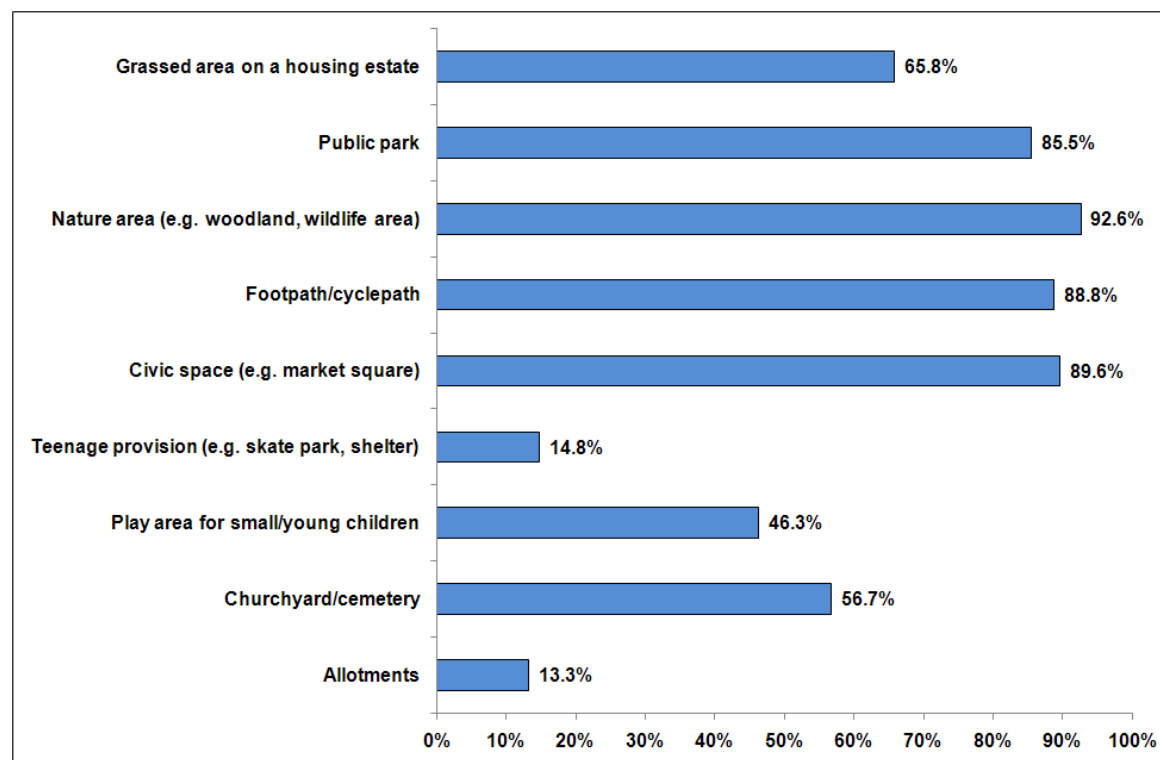
Key issues

Usage

The most popular typology visited in the last twelve months within Wokingham, by resident survey respondents, is nature areas (93%). This is closely followed by the typologies of civic spaces (90%), footpaths/cyclepaths (89%) and public parks (86%). The results reflect the prominence and popularity of these kinds of provision amongst the wider general public.

Two typologies are noticeably visited less often compared to other types of open space provision. Both teenage provision (15%) and allotments (13%) are the two least visited typologies. This is likely to be due to the smaller user numbers and niche attractiveness for both these kinds of open spaces. For example, teenage provision (e.g. youth shelters, skateparks) is only likely to be used by its intended target audience i.e. teenagers. Other user groups are unlikely to have any interest in using such provision.

Figure 3.1: Types of open spaces visited in the previous 12 months



Specific, popular sites mentioned via consultation include Sol Jol Park (Earley), Woodford Park (Woodley), Dinton Pastures (St Nicholas Hurst), Elms Field (Wokingham) and King Georges Field (Twyford).

The popularity of typologies such as nature areas, civic spaces, footpaths/cycle paths and parks is likely to reflect the availability and wide appeal of such kinds of provision. All four typologies are types of open space that offer opportunities for a range of popular recreational activities.

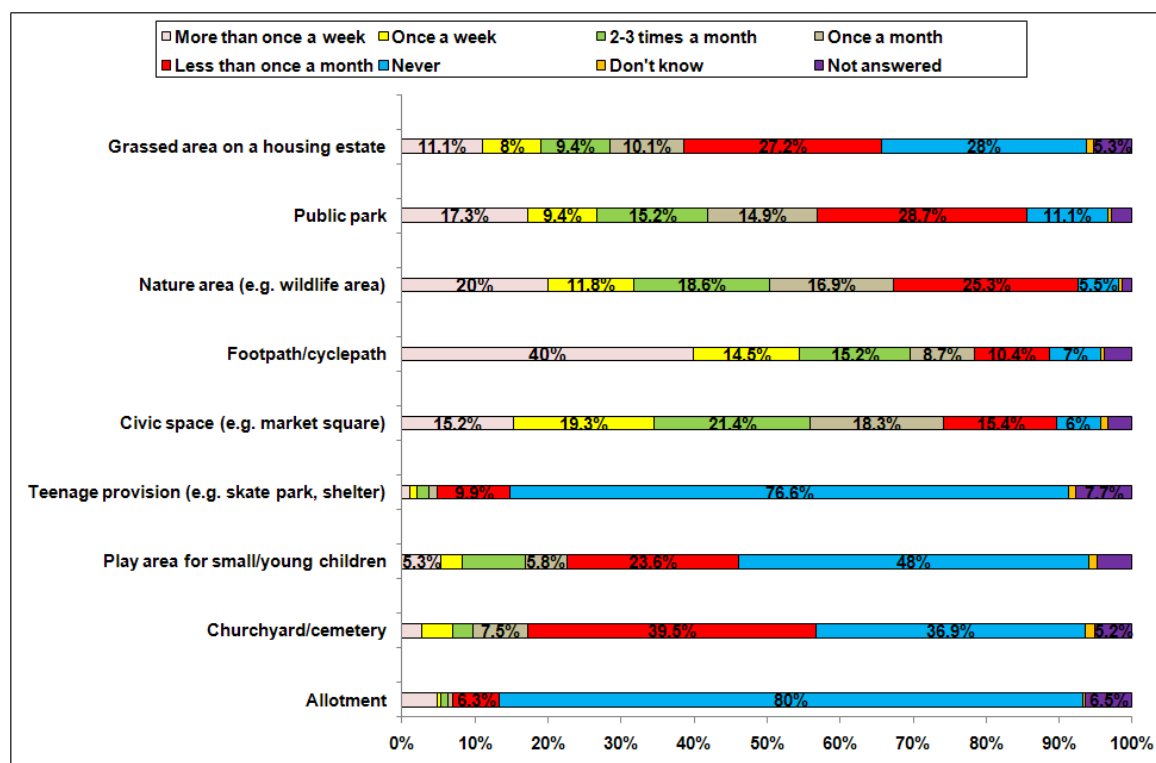
Nature areas can provide the chance to experience flora and fauna as well as the sense of open landscapes, providing a break from urban environments and acting as a buffer to the countryside. Civic spaces often act as a focal point for local communities, hosting local cultural events and providing an opportunity for individuals to sit and/or observe. Footpaths/cycle paths offer routes for walking and cycling whether for recreational purposes (e.g. rambling) or for travel between two sites. Parks have the potential to provide the widest variety of activities and uses. The typology often has a number of sub-typologies such as sporting amenities, play facilities and natural features (e.g. flowerbeds, water features).

When looking at frequency of visits. The typology of footpath/cyclepath is the most regularly visited. Nearly double the number of respondents (40%) visits this typology 'more than once a week' compared to any other type of open space.

The typology of churchyard/cemeteries (40%) tends to be visited on a less frequent basis i.e. less than once a month. This is likely to reflect the forms of use associated with this category given its specific nature. For example, visitors to churchyard/cemeteries may be to attend to a grave, a practice often only needed to be carried out a few times every 12 months.

A significantly high proportion of respondents have not visited the typologies of teenage provision and allotments, with 77% and 80% respectively stating this. Again this could well be a reflection towards the niche use of such types of provision.

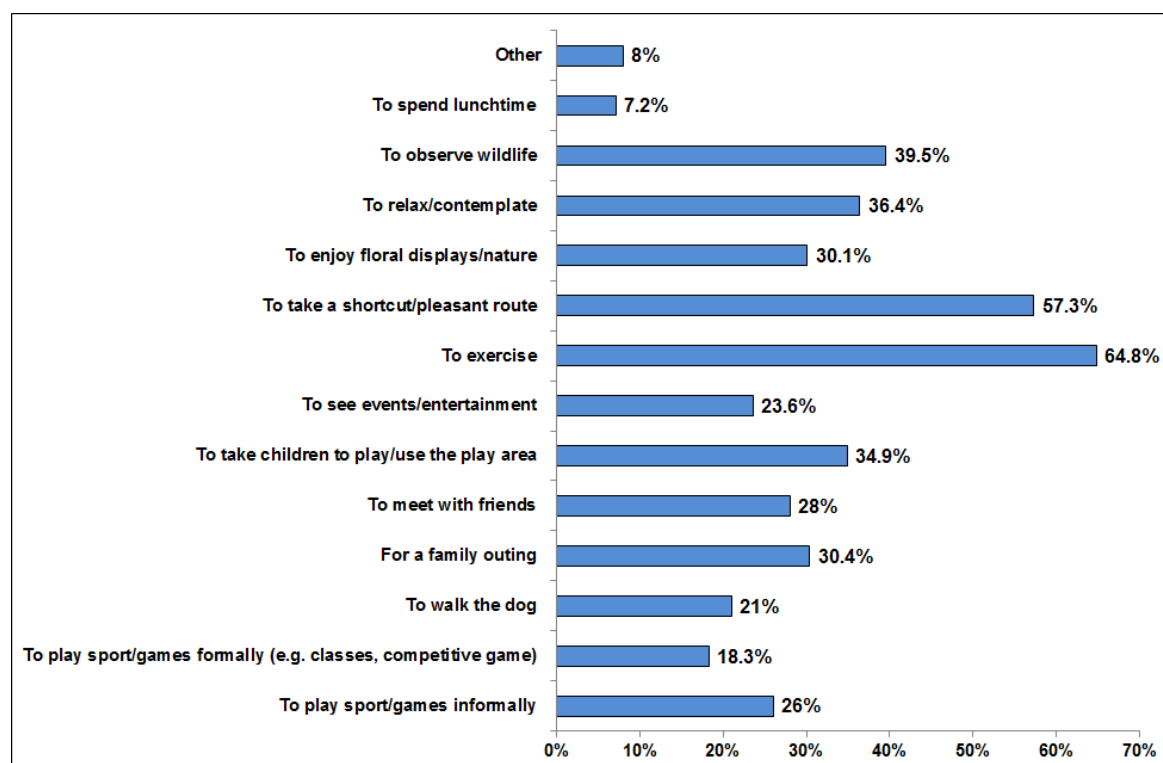
Figure 3.2: Frequency of visits to open space provision in last 12 months



The most popular reason for visiting open spaces in Wokingham is to exercise; nearly two thirds (65%) of resident respondents cite this as the reason for accessing provision. This is followed by the 57% of respondents that list a shortcut/pleasant route as a reason for visiting open spaces. The popularity of these two activities may contribute to why typologies such as footpaths/cycle paths and parks are amongst the most popular types of open space to be visited.

In addition to the role of open spaces in the context of health benefits, the function of open space provision for social interaction is also reflected in the results. Amongst some of the other reasons cited for accessing provision are taking children to play/use the play area (35%), family outings (30%) and to meet with friends (28%). All these reasons for usage indicate the value open spaces have for local communities in Wokingham.

Figure 3.3 Reasons for usage of open space in the previous 12 months



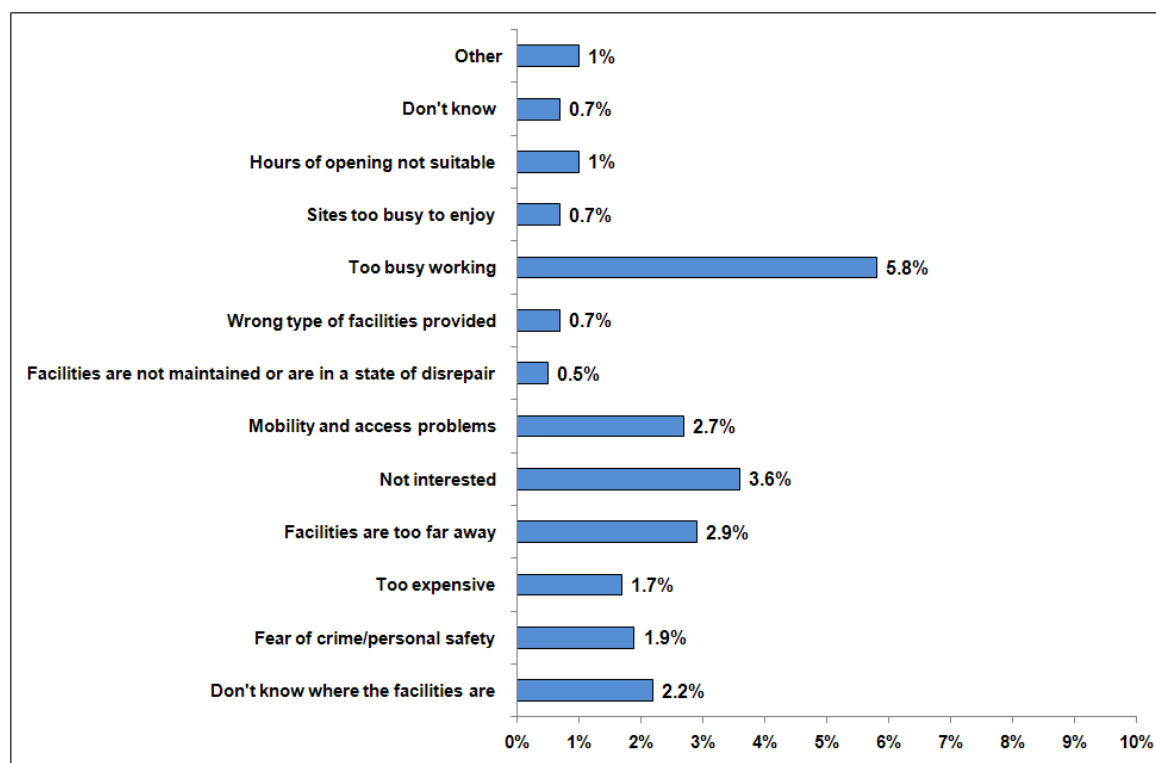
The most commonly visited open space, sport and recreation provision amongst young people is parks (80%). Nearly four out of five young people cite this. The level of response for parks is much higher compared to any other typology. Its popularity as a typology may be contributed to by the fact the most common reasons for visiting open space provision are to meet with friends (59%) and to play sport with friends (53%). Both activities are often ideally catered for at a park.

Natural space is the second most visited open space amongst young people (47%), interestingly more so than the typology of teenage facilities (45%). This, along with the results from the resident survey, affirms the popularity of nature areas in Wokingham.

The attractiveness of natural space is reflected in the reasons for regular usage of open space in both the resident and young people surveys. Activities such as observing wildlife (40%) and relaxation/contemplation (36%) are also cited in the resident survey as reason for visiting open spaces. Whilst activities such as to go for a walk (35%), for a family day out (31%) and to relax (29%) are identified in the young people survey.

In the resident survey, respondents which stated they had not visited open space provision in the previous 12 months were asked what the main reasons are preventing usage. A combined total of 105 comments were received. The main reason given by respondents is they are too busy working (6%). Other reasons stated include lack of interest (4%), facilities are too far away (3%) and mobility/access problems (3%).

Figure 3.4 Reasons for non-usage of open spaces



The resident survey asked participants to identify the two most important ways open spaces could be improved. The most suggested improvement is in relation to dogs and dog owners. Comments refer to the need for the reduction in dog fouling through greater education of dog owners and enforcement, through fines towards those who disregard the rules/signage (this is still a sensitive issue as all dog bins were removed some time ago). Respondents also suggest providing specially designated fenced areas where dogs are allowed off their leads. A number of locations are identified from the site assessment as being used by dog walkers. Finchampstead Ridges, Winnersh Triangle (aka Winnersh Meadows), Culloden Way Recreation Ground and Cantley Park are all specifically highlighted as being popular areas for walking dogs. Site assessment data highlights that Culloden Way Recreation Ground could benefit from improved bin provision (although bins are provided near to the site) and increased maintenance.

The second most suggested way of improving open space provision is to ensure the continued maintenance and cleanliness of sites.

Young people were also asked what the main reasons are for not visiting open space sites. The two most common responses are provision is not interesting (41%) and that it is too far away/a lack of transport (31%). The latter is a common problem, raised in similar studies, for young people. WBC Youth Services suggest this is a particular problem in the more rural areas of the Borough.

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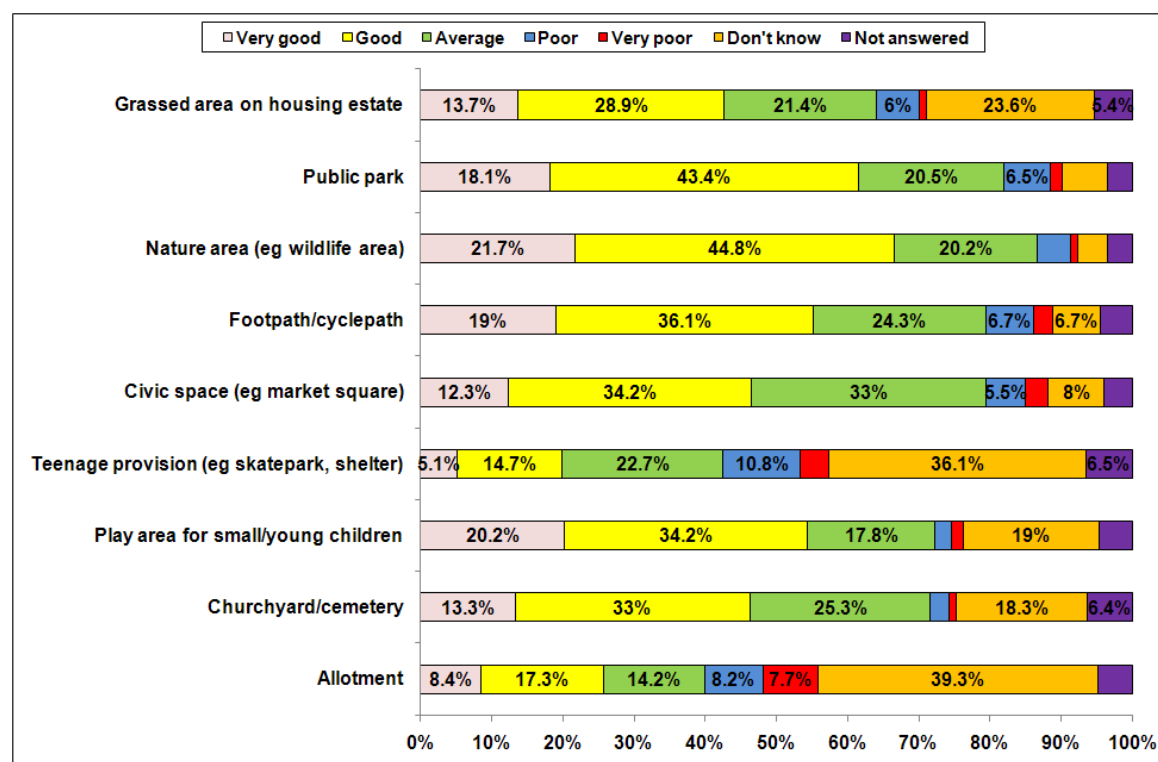
A regular issue highlighted during consultation is the perceived lack of places and provision for young people (i.e. teenagers). Interestingly, the need for more teenage provision is also one of the most suggested ways of improving open space identified in the resident survey. Findings from the young people survey also point towards this trend with the most common reason (41%) for non-usage is due to sites not being interesting enough. In addition, nearly a quarter (23%) of young people state they do not visit open space provision as there is nothing for young people/children.

Availability

The majority of typologies, with the exception of teenage provision and allotments, are rated as having a good level of availability by resident respondents. In particular nature areas (45%) and public parks (43%) are viewed as having a good level of availability. Naturally this is likely to correspond to the high frequency of usage both types of provision are recorded as receiving.

Similar to the trends for previous questions, a significant proportion of respondents do not know how they would rate the availability of allotments (39%) and teenage provision (36%).

Figure 3.5: Availability of open spaces by resident respondents



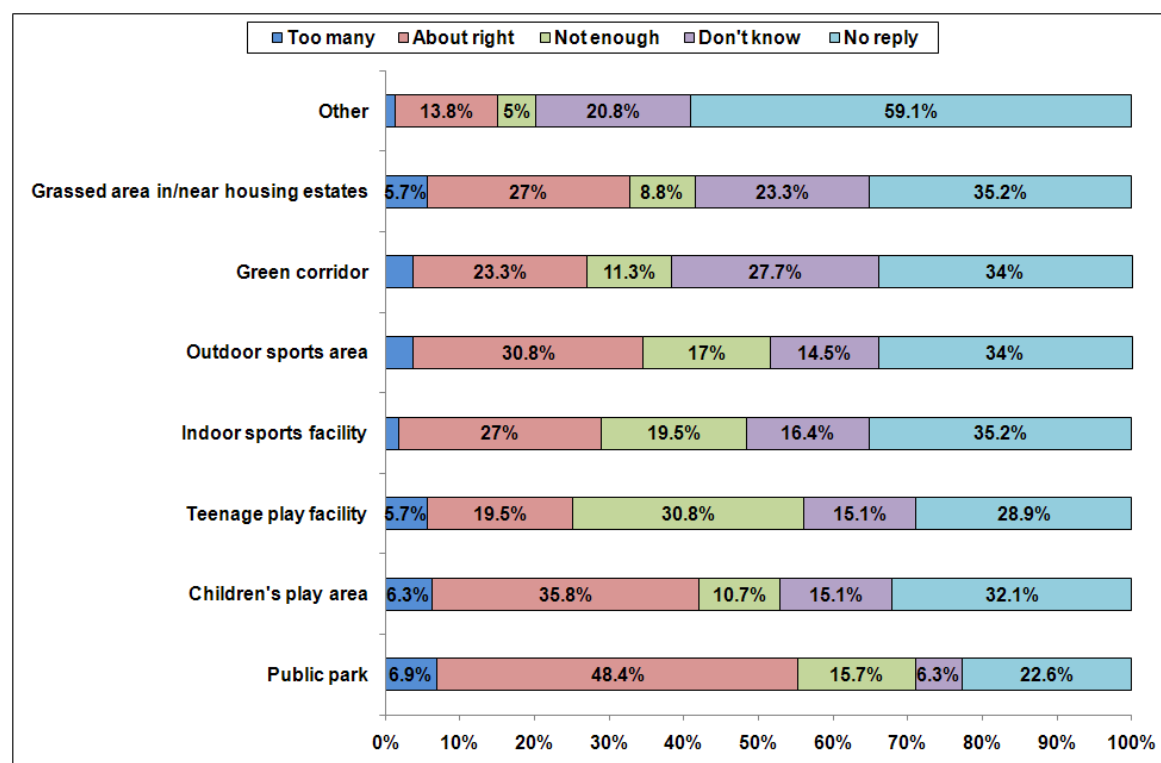
There is a general perception amongst parishes that there is enough open space provision within their respective areas to meet the needs of residents. Only Shinfield Parish Council answer no, highlighting a need for a 'BMX style area for young people' and 'dog walking areas, separate from playing fields'.

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Both Charvil Parish Council and Barkham Parish Council state in general there is enough open space to meet resident needs. However, both identify there is demand for certain additional types of provision. Charvil Parish Council signals a desire for allotments based requests, whilst Barkham identifies that play area equipment for older children (8-14 year olds) is lacking.

In keeping with previous comments and findings, nearly a third (31%) of young people suggests that there is a lack of teenage play facilities in Wokingham. This could range from skateparks, climbing walls, MUGAs and BMX facilities. The council acknowledges that many requests for BMX and Quad bike facilities across the Borough are received. However, most typologies of open space are viewed as having about the right level of availability.

Figure 3.6: Availability of open spaces by young people



Consultation highlights a number of deficiencies and/or needs in relation to existing provision. The areas and sites highlighted during consultation as requiring additional teenage provision include:

- Woodford Park for a small skate area and youth shelter (S106 monies have already been allocated for this).
- Spencers Wood for a skatepark.
- East Park Farm, Charvil, where this is a petition for a skatepark.

The small skate facility at Woodford Park is a development Woodley Town Council is looking to progress. At the time the consultation took place with the Town Council, it had recently applied for s106 funding towards the development.

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Quality

The methodology for assessing quality is set out in Part 2. The table below summarises the results of all the quality assessment for open spaces across Wokingham.

Table 3.1: Quality scores for all open space typologies

Typology	Threshold	Maximum score	Lowest score	Highest score	Low	High
Allotments	40%	112	25%	59%	6	14
Amenity greenspace	40%	118	8%	85%	68	112
Cemeteries/graveyards	60%	155	21%	75%	15	7
Play areas for children and young people	60%	97	19%	90%	36	95
Civic space	60%	137	74%	77%	0	2
Park and gardens	60%	159	24%	83%	17	9
Natural and semi-natural greenspace	40%	117	5%	79%	29	24
WOKINGHAM	-	155	5%	90%	171	263

Over half (61%) of assessed open spaces in Wokingham score high for quality. More cemeteries and parks score low for quality compared to other typologies. Allotments, play areas, amenity greenspace and civic spaces are generally all of a good quality. The quality of natural and semi-natural greenspace is fairly even.

In general maintenance of open spaces is considered to be of a good standard. This is further reflected in the results from the resident survey; with poor maintenance issues only receiving a small percentage (1%). Furthermore, only one instance of poor maintenance is given highlighted in the survey.

The responsibility for management and maintenance of most open space within Wokingham lies with WBC. An explanation of each typologies maintenance regime is provided in more detail in its corresponding chapter later in the report. However, on average an open space site receives a cut every five weeks. Maintenance, such as grass cutting and glass removal etc, of WBC sites is contracted out to Quadron Services Ltd (as of December 2010).

Parish and town councils are also responsible for the maintenance/management of some open space sites; in particular, allotments with day-to-day maintenance being the responsibility of plot holders. Councils with a larger portfolio of sites, such as Wokingham Woodley and Earley Town Councils, employ their own maintenance staff to carry out regular works.

In addition, maintenance is undertaken on some sites by associated voluntary conservation and 'friends of' groups. These groups provide a valuable input to the regular upkeep of sites throughout Wokingham. For example, the Holt Copse Conservation Volunteers and Moor Green Lakes Group both carry out maintenance on Holt Copse (part of Joel Park, Wokingham) and Moor Green Lake (part of Blackwater Valley) sites respectively. Also the Friends of the Emmbrook carry out many enhancement works on the Woosehill and Emmbrook Meadows. Groups such as these assist councils with

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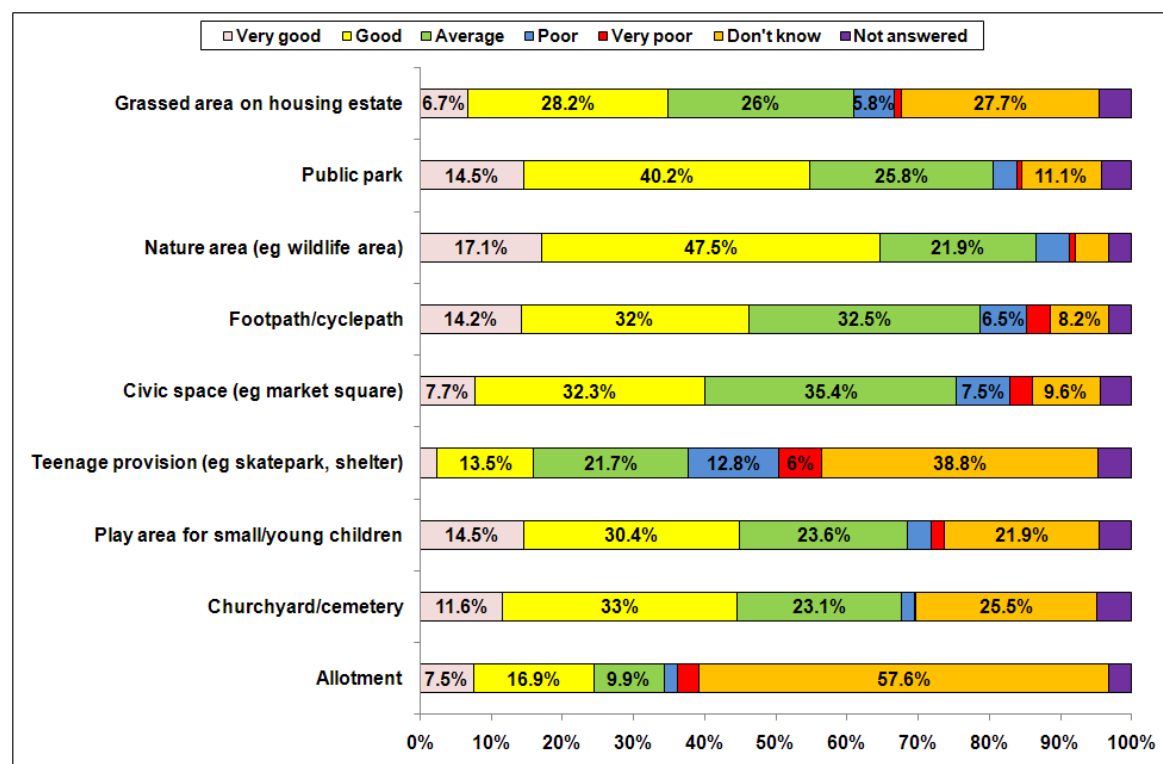
maintaining sites and help to manage evasive species, sustain footpaths, coppice flora to encourage healthy growth and install beneficial features (e.g. bird boxes, benches).

Similar to results for availability most typologies, except teenage provision and allotments, are rated as being of good quality. Parks and nature areas score particularly well with 40% and 48% of respondents rating provision as good quality.

In general, no typology receives a significant level of response rating quality of provision as poor or very poor. Teenage provision is the only typology to gain a comparatively higher rate of poor (13%) or very poor (6%) percentages compared to other types of open space. This is likely to be an impact of the lack of provision rather than poor quality equipment.

In keeping with wider trends the majority of respondents (58%) do not know how they would rate the quality of allotments. Furthermore, most respondents (39%) do not know the quality score they would give to teenage provision. This is likely to be a reflection on the relatively small attraction of these types of provision to the wider public.

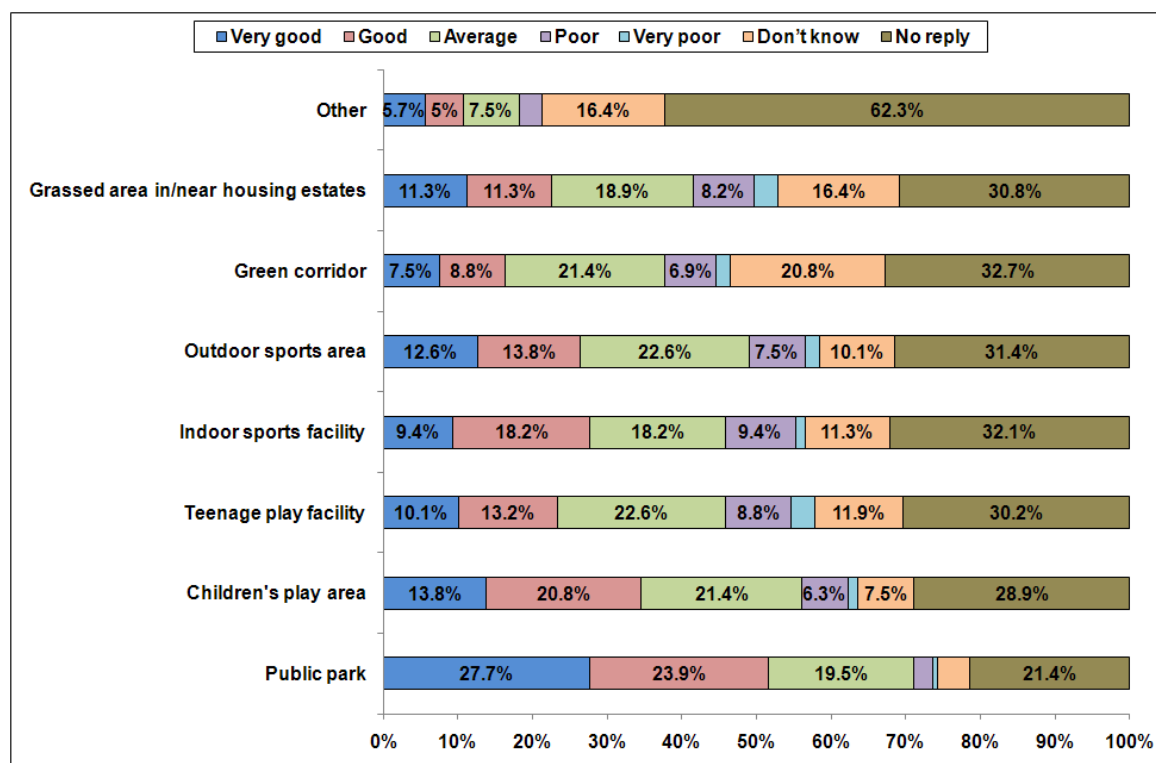
Figure 3.7: Quality of provision of open space by resident respondents



In the young people survey most typologies are given an average or good quality rating, with no types of open space provision receiving a significantly poor or very poor rating. Over a quarter (28%) of young people view the provision of parks in Wokingham as being of a very good quality. This is likely to relate to the popularity and frequency of visits to this kind of open space discussed earlier.

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Figure 3.8: Quality of provision of open space by young people



Through the consultation process a number of sites are highlighted due to their quality. Sites such as the ones below are generally regarded as being sites of a better quality, offering users a varied and pleasant experience.

- ✦ Sol Jol Park (Earley)
- ✦ Woodford Park (Woodley)
- ✦ Dinton Pastures (St Nicholas Hurst)
- ✦ Elms Field (Wokingham).
- ✦ King Georges Field (Twyford)
- ✦ Cantley Park (Wokingham)
- ✦ Recreation Ground (Wargrave)

In addition to the good example sites above, consultation also provides sites that are considered to be of a lesser quality. Sites specifically mentioned include:

- ✦ California Country Park (Finchampstead)
- ✦ South Lake (Woodley)

Comments made regarding South Lake refer to the site being slightly dated and in need of cleaning. California Country Park and its play area score relatively high for quality in the site assessments. However, it is viewed as having the potential to be better, with particular reference made towards the quality and scope of play equipment on site.

Value

The methodology for assessing value is set out in Part 2 (Methodology). The table below summarises the results of the value assessment for open spaces across Wokingham.

Table 3.2: Value scores for all open space typologies

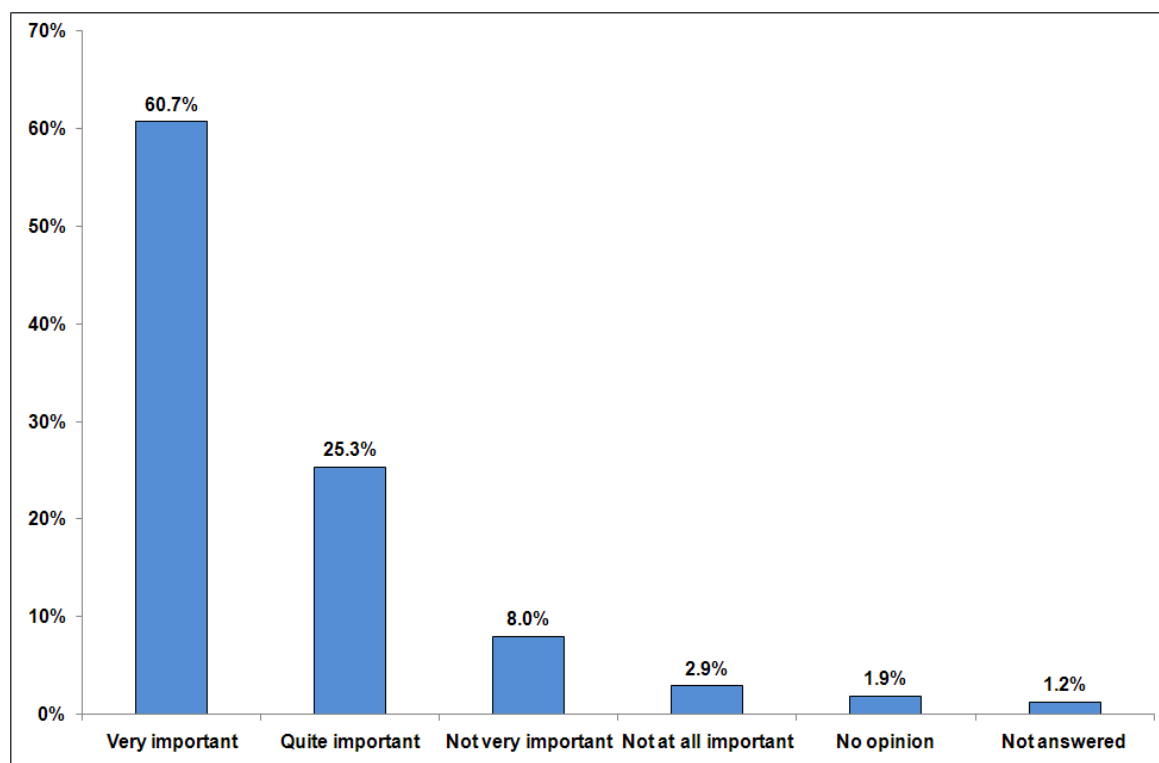
Typology	Threshold	Maximum score	Lowest score	Highest score	Low	High
Allotments	20%	85	18%	54%	1	19
Amenity greenspace	20%	85	2%	73%	24	156
Cemeteries/graveyards	20%	85	20%	72%	0	22
Play areas for children and young people	20%	55	20%	76%	0	131
Civic space	20%	85	59%	71%	0	2
Park and gardens	20%	95	25%	75%	0	26
Natural and semi-natural greenspace	20%	95	7%	74%	11	42
WOKINGHAM	20%	95	2%	76%	36	398

The majority of sites are assessed as being of high value. Similar to the quality scores; natural greenspace and amenity greenspace typologies have a proportion of low value sites. This is likely to reflect the sites within these typologies that lack any particular features. However, the role these sites play in providing a visual amenity and as a break from the built form is important.

A high value site is considered to be one that is well used by the local community, well maintained (with a balance for conservation), provides a safe environment and has features of interest; for example play equipment and landscaping. Sites that provide for a cross section of users and have a multi-functional use are considered a higher value than those that offer limited functions and that are thought of as bland and unattractive.

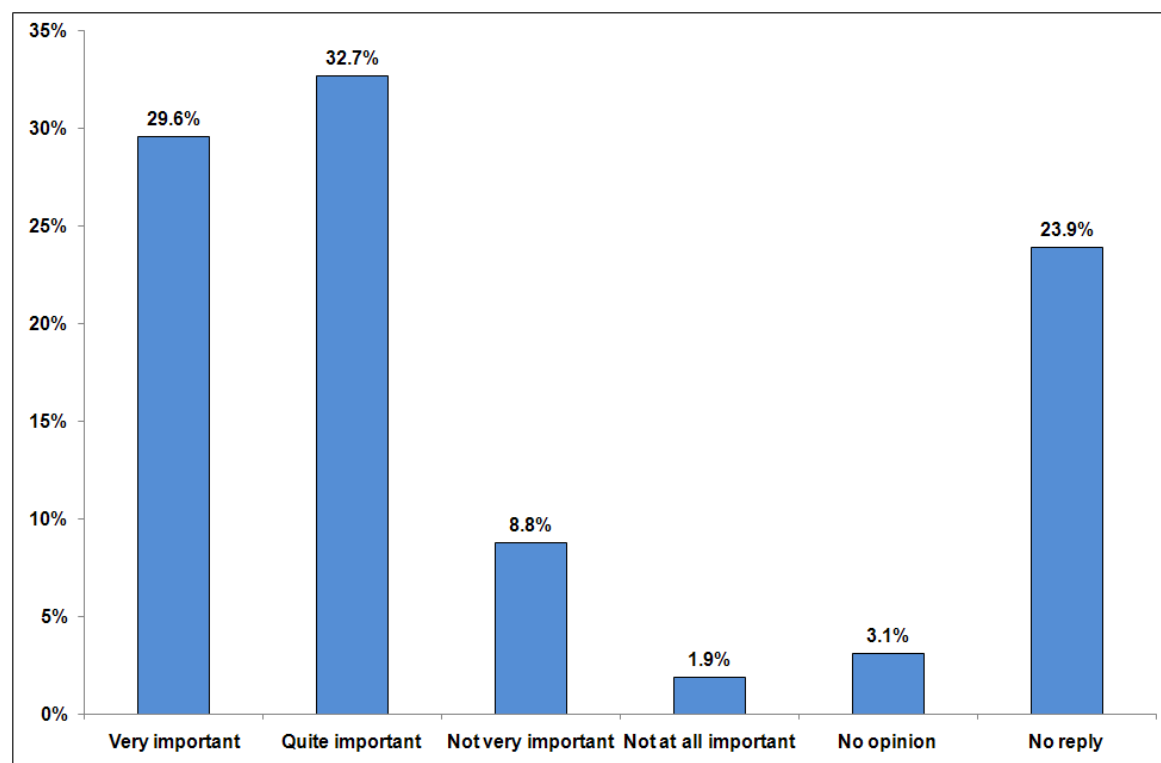
The majority of resident survey respondents (86%) view open spaces as being either very important (61%) or quite important (25%). This reflects the high value placed on open space provision by respondents and the significance it plays in people lives. Only a very small proportion of respondents consider provision to be not at all (3%) or not very important (8%).

Figure 3.9: Importance of open spaces by resident respondents



The importance of open spaces is also recognised by young people in Wokingham. Nearly two thirds of respondents in the young people survey rate open space provision as being either quite important (33%) or very important (30%). Similarly to results from the resident survey, only a small percentage of participants view open spaces as being not very (9%) or not at all important (2%).

Figure 3.10: Importance of open spaces by young people



Recent research shows that informal recreational pursuits (in open spaces) can also improve a person's health. For example, research cited by the National Health Service demonstrates that physical activity has been shown to have the following benefits:

- ◆ Better health
- ◆ More energy
- ◆ Reduced stress
- ◆ Stronger bones and muscles
- ◆ Better balance, strength, suppleness and mobility
- ◆ Improved sleep
- ◆ Improved body shape
- ◆ Reaching and maintaining a healthy weight
- ◆ More social opportunities
- ◆ A sense of achievement
- ◆ More independence in later life

The importance of providing good quality open spaces and its contribution to increasing health and well being is widely acknowledged in Wokingham and should not be underestimated.

Initiatives such as the WBC Health Walk Project demonstrate the Council's commitment to helping people improve their own health. The free scheme provides a programme of 16 walks a week; each being graded in terms of difficulty and led by trained guides. Walks often meet and/or take place at some of the larger and more accessible (i.e. car parking and toilet facilities) open space sites in Wokingham. Sites in the 2010-2011 programme, for example, included: Dinton Pastures, Cantley Park, California Country Park and the

Blackwater Valley Lakes. The presence of organised activities like this helps to increase the perceived value of sites.

Summary

General summary

- ◆ In total there are 466 sites identified in Wokingham as open space provision. This is an equivalent of over 1273 hectares across the Borough.
- ◆ The most visited typology in the last twelve months within Wokingham is natural and semi-natural greenspace (92.6%). Civic spaces (89.9%), footpaths/cyclepaths (88.8%) and public parks (85.5%) are also well visited types of provision. The two least visited typologies are teenage provision (14.8%) and allotments (13.3%). This is likely to be due to the smaller user numbers and niche attractiveness of both these types of open space.
- ◆ Willingness to travel to open spaces varies depending on typology. Amenity greenspace and green corridors as well as parks and play areas for children and young people are preferred to be within walking distance i.e. less than five minutes walk and 5-10 minutes respectively. A willingness to travel further, i.e. up to 30 minutes by transport, is demonstrated for the typologies of natural/semi-natural greenspace and cemeteries.
- ◆ The majority of typologies are perceived as having a good level of availability, with the exception of teenage provision and allotments. In particular, provision for teenagers is felt to be lacking. One of the most suggested ways of improving open space provision from consultation is to provide more provision for teenagers.
- ◆ Over half of all open spaces (61%) in Wokingham score high for quality. The typologies of Allotments and Play areas for children and young people score well with the majority of sites rated as high quality, 70% and 72% respectively. Parks and natural/semi-natural greenspace generally score low for quality with 65% and 55% of sites receiving a low score for quality.
- ◆ The main suggestion to improve usage of open spaces in Wokingham is in relation to dogs and dog owners. The need for the reduction in dog fouling through greater education of dog owners and enforcement, through fines, towards those who disregard the rules/signage is often mentioned. The second most suggested improvement, which relates to the first, is to ensure the continued maintenance and cleanliness of sites.
- ◆ Consultation highlights that general maintenance of open spaces is considered to be of a good standard. Maintenance of sites is mostly the responsibility of WBC. This is carried out on behalf of the Council by Quadron Services Ltd (as of December 2010). In addition, parish and town councils as well as voluntary groups also undertake maintenance of open spaces sites across the Borough.
- ◆ Nearly all open spaces (92%) are assessed as being of high value. Reflecting the quality scores; all Play areas for children and young people score high for value. In addition, all parks, cemeteries and civic space provision also score high. Amenity greenspace is the only typology to receive a number of low value sites (13%). Reflecting provision is often either roadside verges or small grassed areas, lacking any features. However, the visual and habitat contribution of these sites should not be overlooked.
- ◆ A number of sites are highlighted through consultation as being of a high quality and well valued. They include Sol Jol Park (Earley), Woodford Park (Woodley), Dinton Pastures (St Nicholas Hurst), Elms Field (Wokingham) and King Georges Field (Twyford).

PART 4: PARKS AND GARDENS

Introduction

As set out in PPG17: A Companion Guide, the typology of parks and gardens generally covers urban parks, country parks and formal gardens (including designed landscapes), which provide 'accessible high quality opportunities for informal recreation and community events'. To better reflect local provision with the audit, the typology is amended to parks and gardens, and as such does not include country parks. This type of provision can be found in the natural/semi-natural greenspace section of this report (Part 5).

Key issues

Current provision

There are 26 sites classified as parks and gardens, an equivalent of almost 190 hectares. This figure may not include all provision in Wokingham; as in accordance with PPG17 recommendations, a size threshold of 0.2 hectares for sites has been applied.

Table 4.1: Distribution of parks by analysis area

Analysis area	Parks and formal gardens		
	Number	Size (ha)	Current standard (2008) (ha per 1,000 population)
North Area	7	66.57	1.25
South East	12	76.38	1.64
South West	7	43.93	0.74
WOKINGHAM	26	186.89	1.17

Managed countryside areas such as country parks (e.g. Dinton Pastures Country Park and California Country Park) may also be perceived to contribute to provision of parks and gardens in Wokingham. However, for the purpose of this study they are included within the natural and semi-natural greenspace section (see Part 5). This is due to them being managed by WBC Countryside Services and are therefore considered separately in terms of Section 106 allocations.

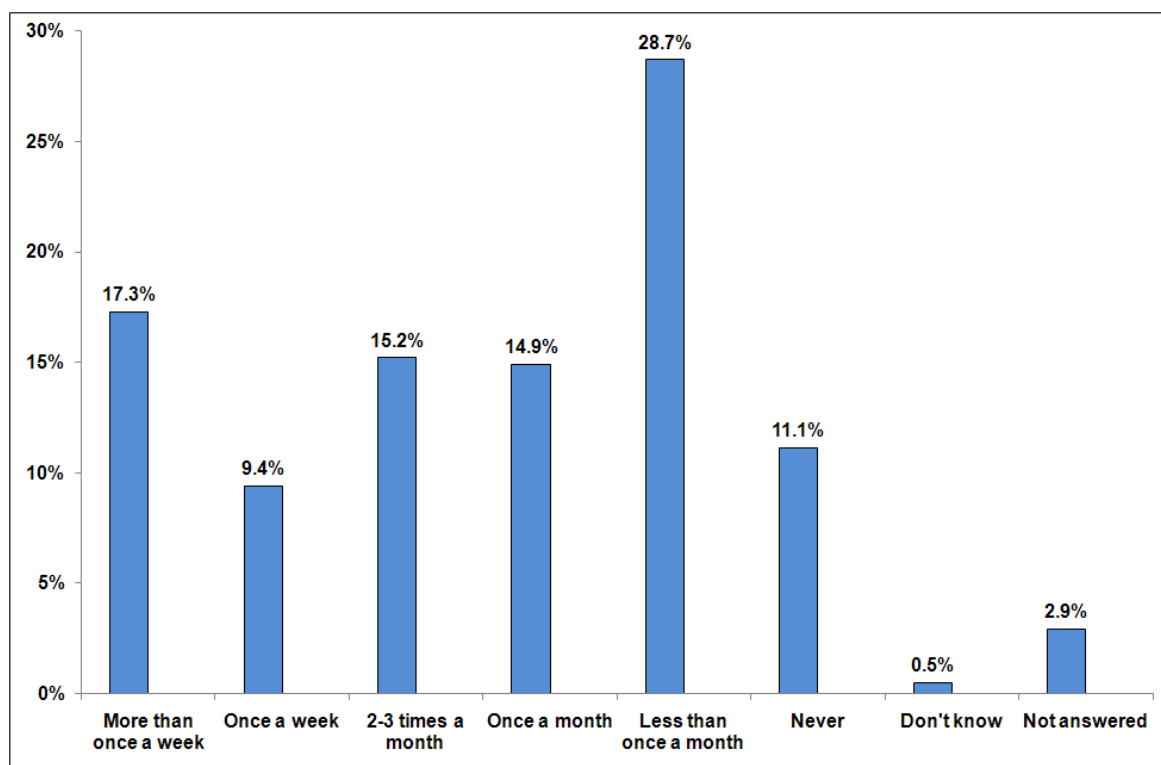
It is important to recognise that many residents consider these sites to be important recreational resources and contribute towards residents perceptions of parks provision. Therefore, due to overlapping perceptions of the two typologies (parks and natural greenspace), residents may not necessarily recognise the same gaps in provision that are identified via accessibility mapping.

Usage

Almost three out of ten (29%) resident survey respondents indicate they visit a park less than once a month. In addition, a good proportion of respondents also visit provision more than once a week (17%), 2-3 times a month (15%) and once a month (15%).

Frequency of usage of parks is evenly spread. However, it is clear that this kind of provision is popular. Only 11% of respondents state they have not visited a park in the last 12 months. A further small percentage of respondents state they either don't know (0.5%) when they last accessed provision or they do not provide an answer (3%).

Figure 4.1: Frequency of usage of parks in the past 12 months

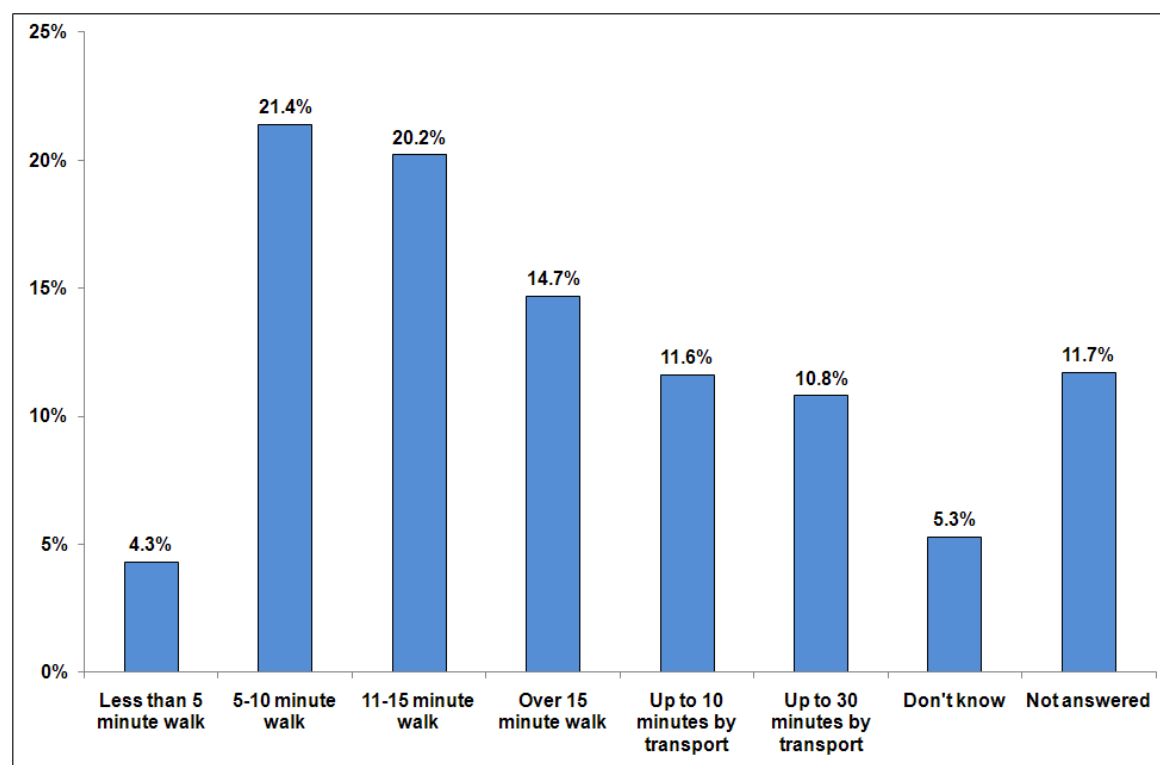


Accessibility

Just over a fifth (21%) of resident survey respondent's state they would be willing to walk 5-10 minutes in order to access provision. This is followed closely by those willing to walk for 11-15 minutes (20%). Interestingly, only 4% state they are willing to walk less than 5 minutes walk. This suggests that individuals expect provision to be within easy access (i.e. walking distance) but not necessarily on the doorstep. Supporting this notion, many respondents signal they are also willing to access provision by transport. A combined total of 22% of participants' state they are prepared to travel either up to 10 minutes by transport (12%) or up to 30 minutes by transport (11%).

Consultation identifies a number of sites that are particularly popular. Sol Jol Park (Earley), Woodford Park (Woodley), and Elmsfield (Wokingham) are all cited through consultation as being well liked sites.

Figure 4.2: Time prepared to travel to access parks



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Figure 4.3: Parks and gardens mapped against analysis areas

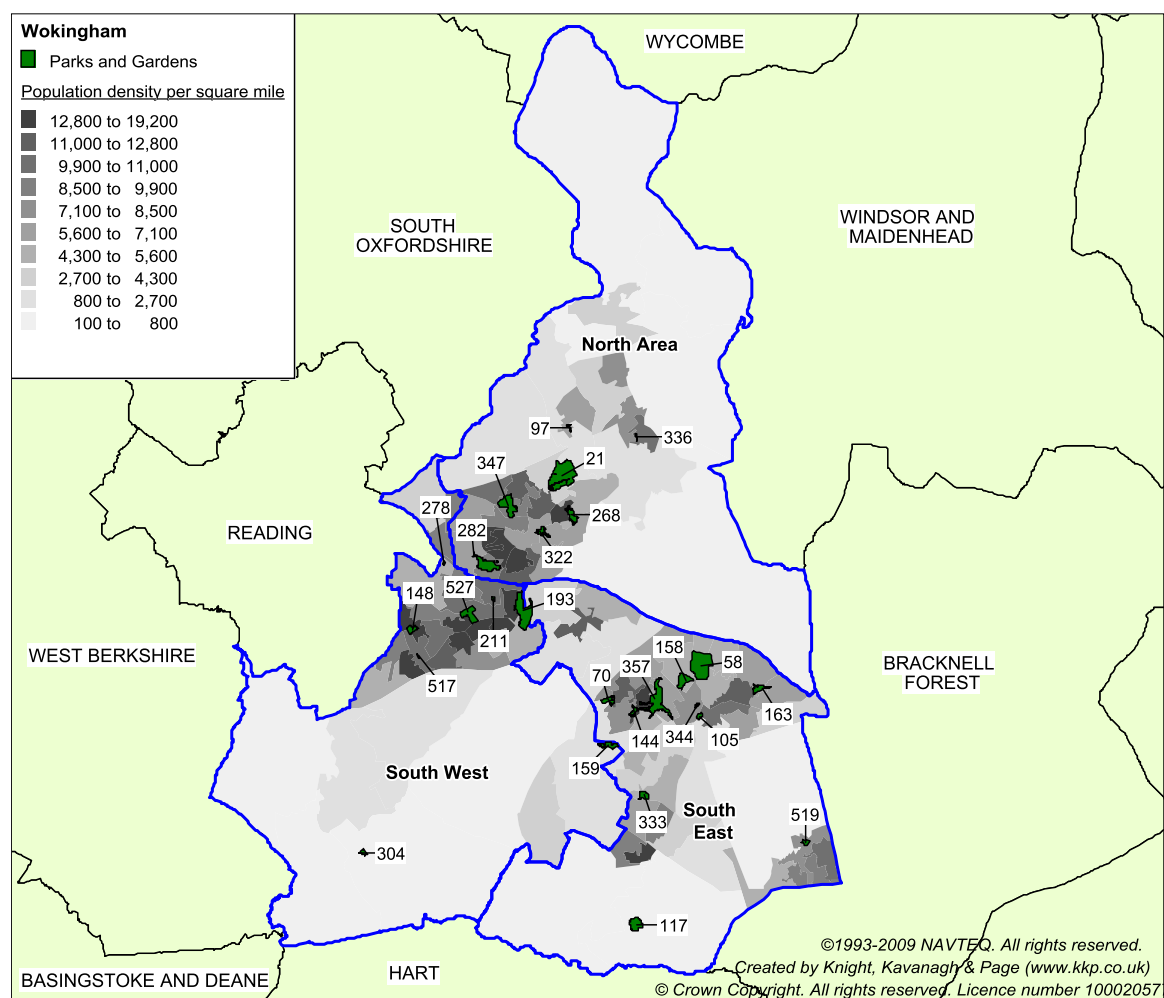


Table 4.2: Key to sites mapped

KKP ref	Site	Analysis area	Ownership	Quality score	Value score
21	Ashenbury Park	North Area	WBC		
58	Cantley Park	South East	WBC		
70	Chestnut Park	South East	WBC		
97	East Park Farm	North Area	WBC		
105	Elmsfield	South East	WBC		
117	Finchampstead Park	South East	Finchampstead Parish Council		
144	Heron Field	South East	WBC		
148	Hillside	South West	WBC		
158	Joel Park	South East	Wokingham Town Council		
159	The Junipers	South West	WBC		
163	Keepatch Road Park	South East	WBC		
193	Riverside Park	South West	WBC		
211	Meadow Park	South West	Earley Town Council		

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KKP ref	Site	Analysis area	Ownership	Quality score	Value score
268	Sandford Park	North Area	WBC		
278	Sol Joel Park	South West	Earley Town Council		
282	Southlake Park	North Area	WBC		
304	Swallowfield Park	South West	Swallowfield Parish Council		
322	Vauxhall Park	North Area	WBC		
333	Waverley Way Park	South East	WBC		
336	Wessex Gardens	North Area	WBC		
344	Wokingham District Council Gardens	South East	WBC		
347	Woodford Park	North Area	Woodley Town Council		
357	Woosehill Meadows	South East	WBC		
517	Chalfont Park	South West	WBC		
519	Bigshotte Park	South East	WBC		
527	Laurel Park	South West	WBC		
561	Howard Palmer Park	South East	Wokingham Town Council		

In order to determine whether sites are high or low quality (as recommended by PPG17); the results of the site assessments have been colour-coded against a baseline threshold (high being green and low being red). Further explanation of quality and value scores can be found in the methodology (Part two).

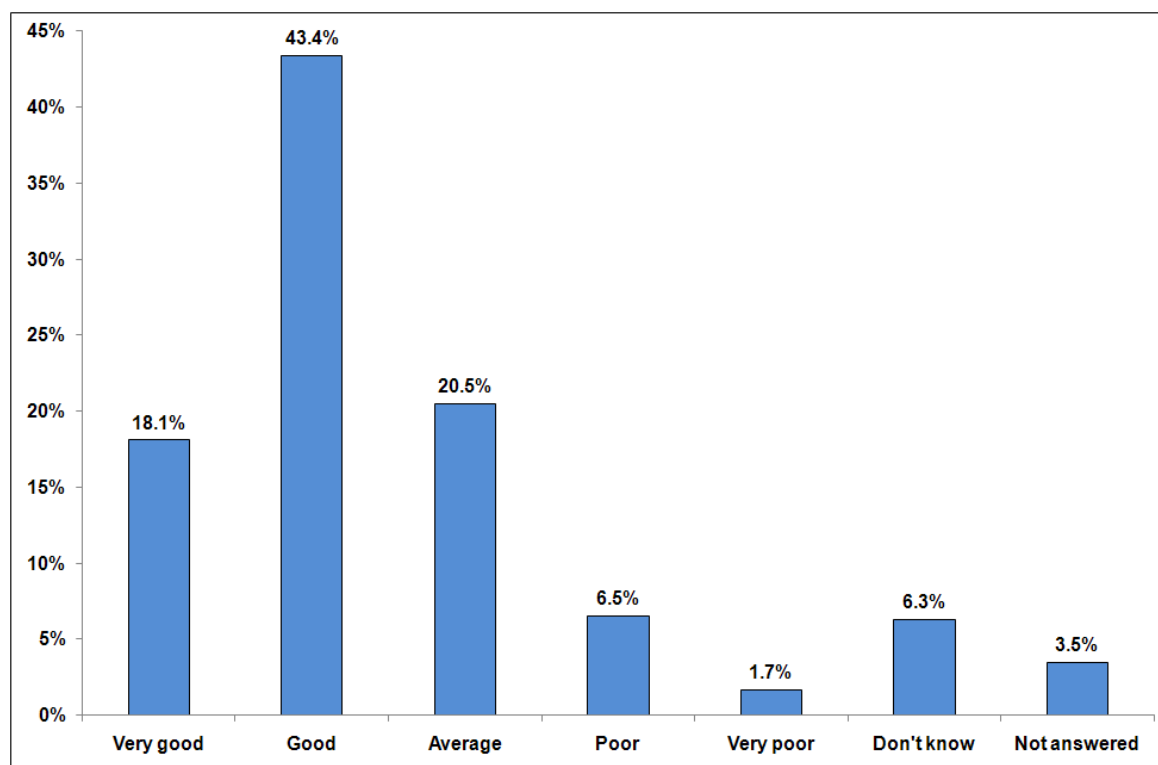
In addition, we have also identified Howard Palmer Gardens in Wokingham owned and maintained by Wokingham Town Council and situated 140m from Wokingham Town Hall. This will be assessed and included within the final report. This site is also recognised as a civic space but its primary purpose is as a park and garden and is therefore included under this typology within the audit.

Mapping shows park provision is provided in the areas of Wokingham with a higher population density. Being located in these areas means sites are easily accessible to more people, as provision is only a short distance away and can often be reached by walking.

A number of sites, such as Finchampstead Park, East Park Farm and Swallowfield Park, are identified as being in more dispersed locations. These sites, and others like them, are likely to offer valuable open space provision aside from the surrounding countryside.

The majority (62%) of resident survey respondents rate the availability of parks and gardens across Wokingham as either good (43%) or very good (18%). Only a small proportion (8%) considers availability to be below average (poor/very poor). Such positive responses may correspond to the regular frequency of usage highlighted earlier. These results might also indicate that access to provision is sufficient with no obvious barriers preventing usage.

Figure 4.4: Availability of parks



Management

The parks and open spaces team manage all WBC owned parks and gardens excluding countryside sites which is managed by the Countryside Team. WBC has a grounds maintenance contract with Quadron Services Ltd who maintains the sites in accordance with the contract specification as set out by the Parks Team.

On average a site has its grass cut every five weeks with bins being collected on a weekly basis. Popular sites or sites requiring a higher level of maintenance (due to size or number of features or the number of people they serve, such as Cantley Park) are visited on a more regular basis by maintenance teams. In addition, hedges are cut and litter picked twice a year outside of bird nesting seasons (only Cantley Park has monthly hedge litter picking).

Members of the public can report issues (e.g. broken glass, graffiti) to the WBC Parks and Open Space Team which will then instruct the contractors accordingly. Response rates vary depending on the level/urgency of the problem. Contractors aim to respond within two hours if the issue is severe (e.g. broken glass shards, racially offensive graffiti). If not, i.e. the problem is considered less immediate, the contractors aim to resolve the issue within 24 hours of being notified.

Town/parish owned parks are managed by the relevant town/parish and often maintained by in-house contractors. In particular, the three town councils all employ their own staff to maintain sites. Town councils carry out regular inspections and undertake routine maintenance approximately every two weeks.

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Quality

The methodology for assessing quality is set out in Part 2 (Methodology). The table below summarises the results of the quality assessment for parks in Wokingham. A threshold of 60% is applied in order to identify high and low quality.

Table 4.3: Quality ratings for parks by analysis area

Analysis area	Maximum score	Lowest score	Mean score	Highest score	Spread	Low <60%	High >60%
North Area	159	43%	59%	68%	25%	4	3
South East	159	24%	54%	83%	58%	7	5
South West	159	42%	51%	62%	19%	6	1
WOKINGHAM	159	24%	55%	83%	58%	17	9

The majority of park sites in Wokingham score low for quality against the Green Flag criteria. The lowest scoring site is Chestnut Park (24%). Site observations suggest this is due to a lack of personal security and features rather than a reflection on the condition and maintenance of the site. The highest scoring site is Cantley Park (83%). The Council's flagship park and outdoor sports facility is noted as providing a wide range of good quality features such as grass football pitches, an artificial all weather pitch, tennis courts, a pavilion with changing rooms, showers and an outdoor play area. All help to serve a variety of different users and sports clubs.

The 18 sites scoring low for quality may be slightly misleading. Six of the sites classified as low quality only just fall outside the set threshold of 60%. Sol Joel Park (59.7%), Southlake (59.3%) and Laurel Park (59.3%) are in particular close to the boundary and could be regarded as being easily capable of achieving a higher mark with a few minor improvements.

Consultation with the Parks and Open Space Team and the Sports Team identifies a need for many improvements to Cantley Park to reach its full potential and its identity as a flagship site. Whilst the site scores well in terms of quality, two of its football pitches are recognised as being in need of drainage improvements. However, all the football pitches at Cantley are in need of general improvement and upgrading. The drainage is very poor and needs to be rectified. Furthermore, the play area at Cantley Park is not perceived through consultation to match the level of provision or role that the whole site provides as a high quality and well valued recreational open space.

Cantley Park is one of three sites including Ashenbury Park and Elizabeth Park that are regularly cited by residents in the stakeholder survey as sites that suffer from an issue with dog foul. No specific issues relating to this problem are noted in the site assessment data. It is worthy of remembering that as dog waste is no longer considered hazardous it can now be disposed of in ordinary litter bins and more promotion of this may be required.

Young people 'hanging out' in parks are raised as an issue from the stakeholder survey and consultation with the community wardens. In particular, teenagers gathering in children's play areas are highlighted. This causes negative perceptions of young people and is said to inhibit 'genuine' open space use for smaller children. Sites identified in consultation where this has been a specific issue include Leslie Sears Park and Woodford Park. The latter may relate to the lack of teenage provision identified earlier.

Open spaces are also, potentially, safe environments for young people. Recognising this, WBC Community Wardens currently implement preventative work; providing/promoting opportunities and working closely with the police/parks team to actively engage with young adults in specific areas.

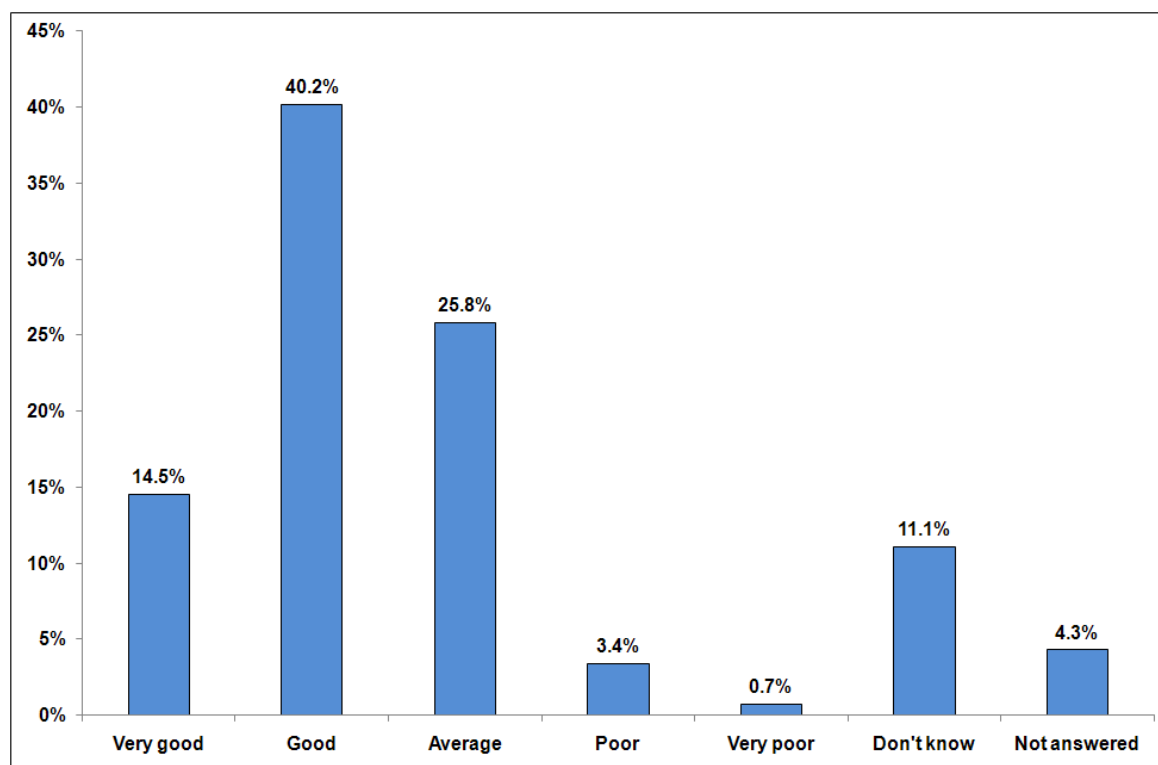
Sites mentioned through consultation as being of a good standard include Sol Jol Park, Elmsfield and Woodford Park. The quality scores for these sites also reflect the comments received. In particular, Woodford Park is considered to provide a variety of facilities that are accessible to a wide range of users. For example, it contains a play area, bowling green, paddling pool and cricket field. Some comments are given in the stakeholder survey about the lack of teenage provision in the park. Woodley Town Council is aware of the desire for this kind of facility and is currently looking at providing some form of youth provision (e.g. skatepark) in the near future.

The Elmsfield site is acknowledged as an extremely popular and heavily utilised facility, offering features such as a play area, picnic benches and table tennis. The popularity of the site is due to the fact this is the only large open green space in the town centre and it is easily accessible from the shops and also offers a play facility for children, which is viewed as being well used by parents and their children. In addition, it provides a venue for hosting events such as the annual food and drinks festival and numerous local fairs.

Elmsfield forms part of the Wokingham Town Centre Regeneration Plan. WBC has a development partner in place and an adopted Wokingham Town Centre Masterplan Supplementary Planning Document (June 2010). Concern regarding the loss of open space at Elmsfield is a common topic amongst consultation and survey respondents. The value of the site and the 'relief' it provides within the surrounding built up area is recognised in the Regeneration Plan. However, the plan signals a lack of use and is focused on providing 'a place which can develop its own identity and become a desirable place to visit'. The importance of retaining the play area and the sites role as an event space are vital to its future development. This is mentioned throughout consultation and is fittingly recognised in the plans for the site.

Over half (55%) of all resident survey respondents rate the quality of parks as above average (good/very good). Most consider provision to be of a good quality (40%). In addition, a further quarter (26%) of participants views park quality as average. Reflecting the popularity and frequency of visits to parks, only a small percentage of survey respondents rate provision as either poor (3%) or very poor (0.7%).

Figure 4.5: Quality of provision of parks



Green Flag

The Green Flag Plus Partnership, consisting of Keep Britain Tidy, BTCV and GreenSpace, manages the Green Flag Award scheme. It provides national standards for parks and greenspaces across England and Wales. Public service agreements, identified by the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) highlight the importance placed on Green Flag status as an indicator of high quality. This in turn impacts upon the way parks and gardens are managed and maintained.

A recent survey by improvement charity GreenSpace highlights that parks with a Green Flag Award provide more satisfaction to members of the public compared to those sites without it. The survey of 16,000 park users found that more than 90% of Green Flag Award park visitors were very satisfied or satisfied with their chosen site, compared to 65% of visitors to non-Green Flag parks.

Currently there are no Green Flag accredited sites in Wokingham. However, there is an ambition from the Parks and Open Space Team to achieve Green Flag in the future, when resources permit, for suitably recommended sites. WBC could look to encourage community groups and parish councils to manage the application of sites for a Green Flag in the short term.

Site assessments show that a number of parks in Wokingham would be appropriate and likely to score well if they were to be submitted for the Green Flag Award scheme. Cantley Park scores particularly well for quality, receiving a score of 83% from the site assessments. A number of other sites score well above the 60% threshold used for determining a sites potential ability to achieve accreditation

Sites identified include:

- ◀ Cantley Park
- ◀ Keephatch Road Park
- ◀ Sandford Park
- ◀ Woodford Park
- ◀ Finchampstead Park

In addition, the sites of Vauxhall Park, Meadow Park and Elmsfield score just above 60% in the site assessments but would need further attention before an application could be considered.

A requirement for any site wishing to apply for Green Flag status is to have an active 'friends of group' (FOG). FOG's can provide a valuable function in applying for the Award. They can help to assist with the initial application process as well as the long-term management of the site. Currently there are a limited number of active 'friends of groups' at parks in Wokingham. These include:

- ◀ Sol Joel Park
- ◀ Woodford Park
- ◀ Friends of the Emmbrook, Woosehill Meadows
- ◀ Friends of the Emmbrook, Emmbrook Meadows
- ◀ Earley Lake

If any future applications are to be submitted for a Green Flag Award it will be important for WBC to establish and support the creation and development of FOGs. Either directly for sites such as Cantley or through supporting parish councils for the sites they manage.

If a desire for Green Flag Awards is to be seriously considered, an incremental and pragmatic approach to applications should be taken. For instance, the best positioned sites to carry forward for the process are Cantley Park and Woodford Park. The latter already having a FOG in place, in addition to the support from Woodley Town Council, and Cantley Park due its strong quality score and management by WBC. Furthermore, Sol Joel Park is also in a good position to be put forward for the scheme given it is managed by Earley Town Council and receives a high quality score. Any further applications for sites could occur once these three relatively well positioned sites are successful.

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Value

The methodology for assessing value is set out in Part 2 (Methodology). The table below summarises the results of the value assessment for parks and gardens in Wokingham. A threshold of 20% is applied in order to identify high and low quality.

Table 4.4: Value scores for parks by analysis area

Analysis area	Maximum score	Lowest score	Mean score	Highest score	Spread	Low <20%	High >20%
North Area	95	44%	58%	69%	25%	0	7
South East	95	25%	53%	75%	49%	0	12
South West	95	43%	57%	64%	21%	0	7
WOKINGHAM	95	25%	56%	75%	49%	0	26

All parks are assessed as being of high value in the site assessments. This is supported in consultation with users recognising the high social inclusion and health benefits, ecological value and sense of place sites offer. Cantley Park and Woodford Park are regularly mentioned through consultation as sites of high value to local residents. This is often a result of their role in providing a range of facilities, which appeal to a variety of users, and their level of condition. Chestnut Park scores the lowest value score (25%) of the parks, reflecting its low quality score.

Sites such as Cantley Park and Elmsfield, which host large annual community events like bonfire night and the food and drinks festival, help to promote and raise the profile of park provision across the Borough. Furthermore, they have an importance in providing social and learning opportunities to a wide range of individuals. In addition (although country parks are included with Part 5), the Dinton Pastures project will result in more community events being offered in future years.

The value of provision is also supported from the play area review. Comments refer to the contribution sites provide in improving an areas look and feel whilst also helping to improve the health and well being of individuals.

Summary

Parks and formal gardens

- ▶ There are 26 sites classified as parks and gardens totalling over 190 hectares. In addition, there are a number of country parks within Wokingham (included within natural greenspace section), that contribute to the perception of park provision.
- ▶ The majority of residents (60.6%) state they are willing to walk in order to access provision. This suggests that individuals expect provision to be within easy access i.e. walking distance.
- ▶ The availability and quality of parks is viewed positively with most residents rating provision as being of a good standard (62% and 55% respectively).
- ▶ Most parks score low for quality against the Green Flag criteria. The lowest scoring site is Chestnut Park (24%).
- ▶ There are currently no Green Flag sites in Wokingham. A number of sites are identified as having the potential to do well if submitted for Green Flag accreditation. In particular, Cantley Park and Woodley Park.
- ▶ Significant regeneration is intended for Elmsfield as part of the Wokingham Town Centre Regeneration Plan. A general concern regarding the loss of open space at the site is a common topic amongst consultation and survey respondents.
- ▶ All parks and gardens are assessed as being of high value, with the high social inclusion and health benefits, ecological value and sense of place sites offer being acknowledged. The lowest scoring site is Chestnut Park (25%), reflecting its poor quality score.
- ▶ Greater community ownership of parks could be encouraged through further development of 'friends of groups'.

PART 5: NATURAL AND SEMI-NATURAL GREENSPACE

Introduction

As set out in PPG17: A Companion Guide, the natural and semi-natural greenspace typology includes woodland (coniferous, deciduous, mixed) and scrub, grassland (e.g. downland, meadow), heath or moor, wetlands (e.g. marsh, fen), open running water, wastelands (including disturbed ground), and bare rock habitats (e.g. cliffs, quarries, pits). These provide 'wildlife conservation, biodiversity and environmental education and awareness.'

To better reflect local provision within the audit, the typology is amended to include the provision of country parks and local nature reserves.

Responses for the natural and semi-natural greenspace typology are recorded under the heading 'natural space' in order to simplify the definition for survey participants.

Key issues

Current provision

In total 53 sites are identified as publicly accessible natural and semi-natural greenspace, totalling over 700 hectares of provision. These totals may not include all provision in Wokingham as a size threshold of 0.2 ha for sites is set. However, some sites below this threshold, which are identified as being of local significance, are also included.

Table 5.1: Distribution of natural and semi-natural greenspace by analysis area

Analysis area	Natural and semi-natural greenspace		
	Number	Size (ha)	Current standard (2008) (ha per 1,000 population)
North Area	10	242.25	4.56
South East	24	331.58	7.15
South West	19	147.26	2.47
WOKINGHAM	53	721.10	4.53

Wokingham has a variety of natural and semi-natural sites including woodlands, grasslands and wetlands. A number of sites across Wokingham have been designated for nature conservation. Two sites have been given national statutory protection as Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs). These include the sites of Heathlake LNR, designated due to it being the only acid lake in Berkshire, and Longmoor Bog, designated for its rare heathland and bog communities. The Borough also contains the following country parks:

- ◀ California Country Park
- ◀ Charvil Country Park
- ◀ Dinton Pastures Country Park

As a statutory declaration, LNRs provide a clear signal to local communities of local authority commitment to nature conservation and access to it. In addition, LNRs can help local authorities meet Local Biodiversity Action Plans (LBAP) and Sustainable Development targets. There are 10 local nature reserves (LNRs) designated in Wokingham:

- ◀ Aldermoor
- ◀ Ali's Pond
- ◀ Heathlake
- ◀ Highwood
- ◀ Lavell's Lake
- ◀ Maiden Erlegh Park
- ◀ Pearman's Copse
- ◀ Holt Copse
- ◀ Swallowfield Meadow
- ◀ Longmoor Bog

LNRs contribute a total of 92 hectares to natural provision in Wokingham. In 1996, English Nature (now Natural England) recommended that there should be one hectare of designated LNR per 1,000 population. To put this into local context, with a population of 159,134 (mid 2008 estimate), across the Borough there should be provision of least 159 hectares of provision, leaving a shortfall of 67 hectares.

The Friends of Ali's Pond identify the possibility of designating land to the rear of the site (currently owned by Bluecoats School) as additional LNR status.

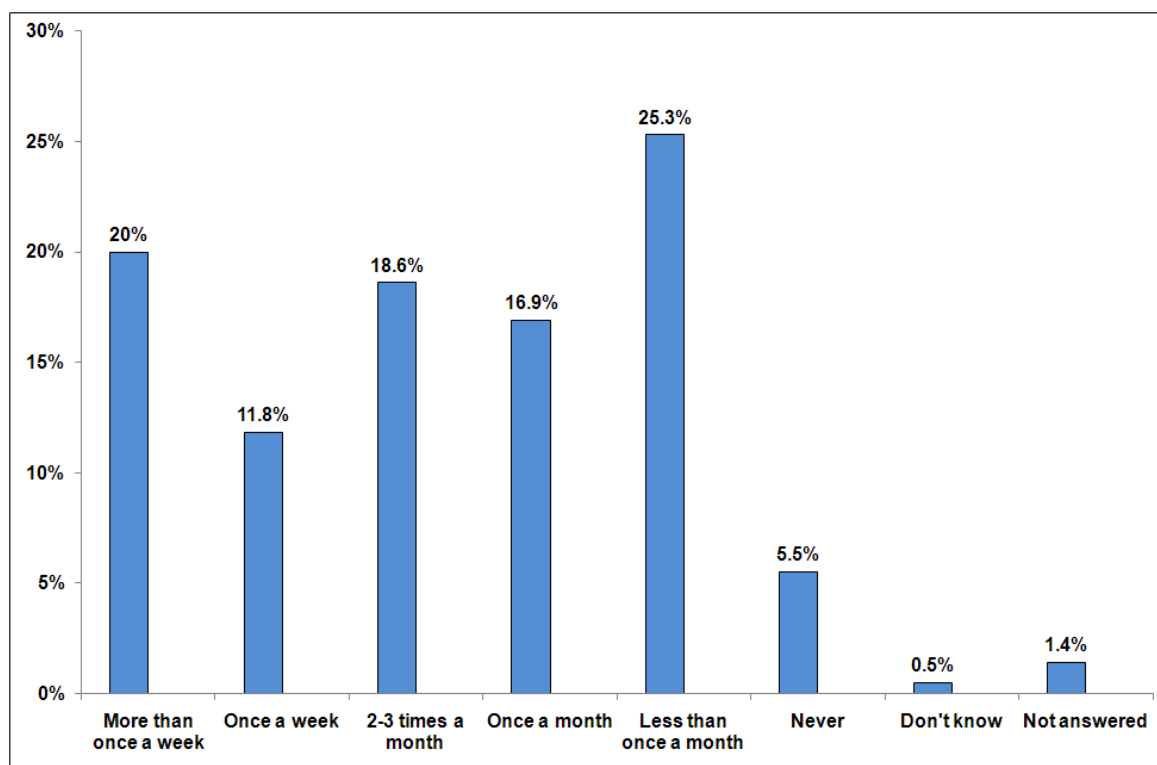
Usage

Natural and semi-natural sites in Wokingham offer opportunities for a wide range of recreational activities. The 2007 Wokingham Borough Visitor Survey (carried out to assess the suitability and potential of eight sites within the Borough to absorb recreational use as part of the creation of SANGs), shows sites as being popular for walking, dog walking and exercising. In addition, activities such as taking children out, picnicking and viewing wildlife are also recognised as popular reasons for accessing provision.

The resident survey results show natural and semi-natural greenspace to be the most visited typology, with the majority (93%) of all respondents stating they have visited this kind of provision in the last year.

Over a quarter of respondents (25%) state they have visited a natural and semi-natural greenspace less than once a month in the last year. A further fifth of participants (20%) access provision on a regular basis i.e. more than once a week. Given this spread of responses for frequency of usage; results would suggest provision is used for a range of different activities. For instance, dog walking may occur on a daily basis whilst pursuits such as family days out may take place less frequent.

Figure 5.1: Frequency of usage of natural and semi-natural greenspace in the past 12 months



Accessibility

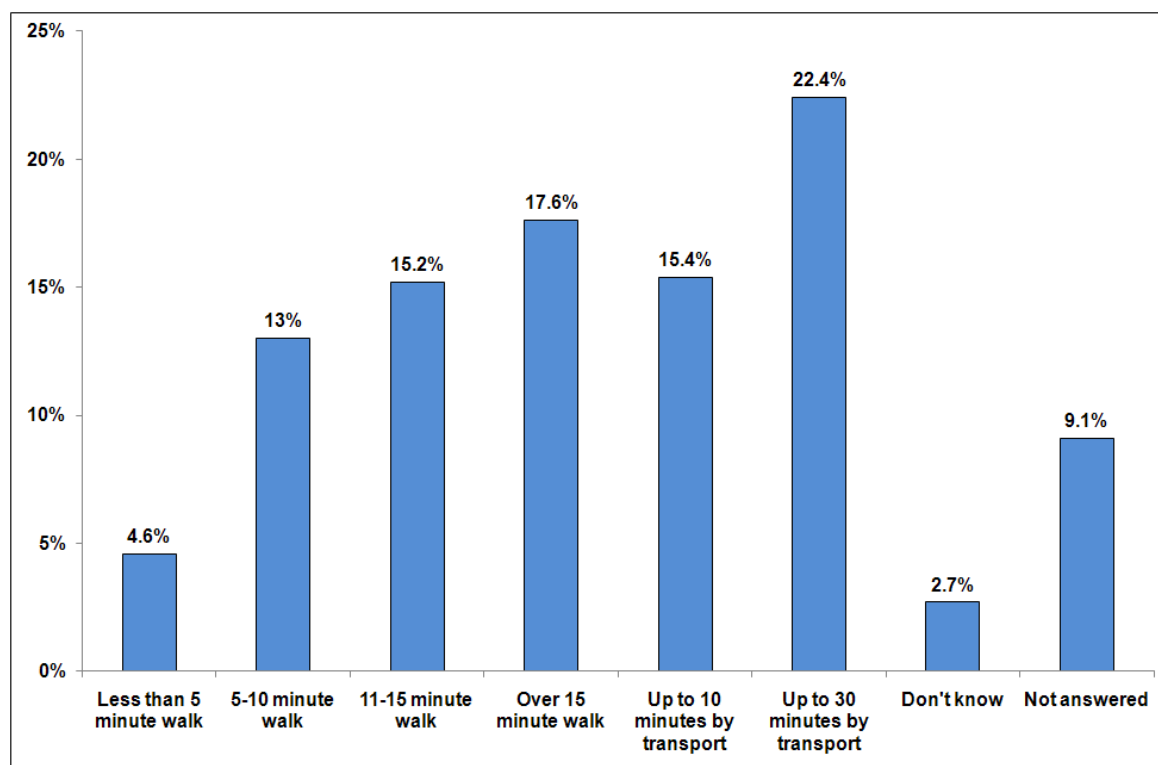
A number of issues are highlighted from the consultation regarding the local accessibility of California Country Park. The main comments refer to the cost of car parking for local residents. Whilst accessing the play area has no charge, access to the site is conducive to cars. The site has two primary roles; one as a destination place that people travel to visit from a wide catchment and the second as an open space resource for residents living locally. Creating a balance of the two roles is difficult and is felt to cater towards the former.

In comparison to other typologies, natural and semi-natural greenspace is the typology which most respondents are willing to travel up to 30 minutes by transport to access (22%). A further 15.4% are prepared to travel up to 10 minutes by transport. Meaning a combined 38% of respondents will travel by transport methods (e.g. car, bus) in order to reach natural and semi-natural greenspace provision.

A significant proportion of respondents (50%) is also willing to walk in order to access the typology; with most prepared to travel over 15 minutes (18%).

The Wokingham Borough Visitor Survey 2007 also demonstrates the willingness of residents to walk to access natural and semi-natural greenspace provision. The survey found 40% of those people interviewed had chosen to travel to their destination on foot. However, despite the figure the survey found more people had arrived by car (54%).

Figure 5.2: Time prepared to travel to reach a natural and semi-natural greenspace



Natural England's Accessible Natural Greenspace Standard (ANGSt) provides a set of benchmarks for ensuring access to places near to where people live. These standards recommend that people living in towns and cities should have:

- ✦ An accessible natural greenspace of at least 2 hectares in size, no more than 300 metres (5 minutes walk) from home
- ✦ At least one accessible 20 hectare site within two kilometres of home
- ✦ One accessible 100 hectare site within five kilometres of home
- ✦ One accessible 500 hectare site within ten kilometres of home
- ✦ One hectare of statutory Local Nature Reserves per thousand population

In some areas, this will be hard to achieve in the short term, but it should be a long-term aim for all local authorities. Although there is a different methodology of identifying accessible natural greenspace to that employed through PPG17, it is like that Wokingham will meet the majority of these standards, however, further work should be done to confirm this.

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Figure 5.3: Natural and semi-natural greenspace mapped against analysis areas

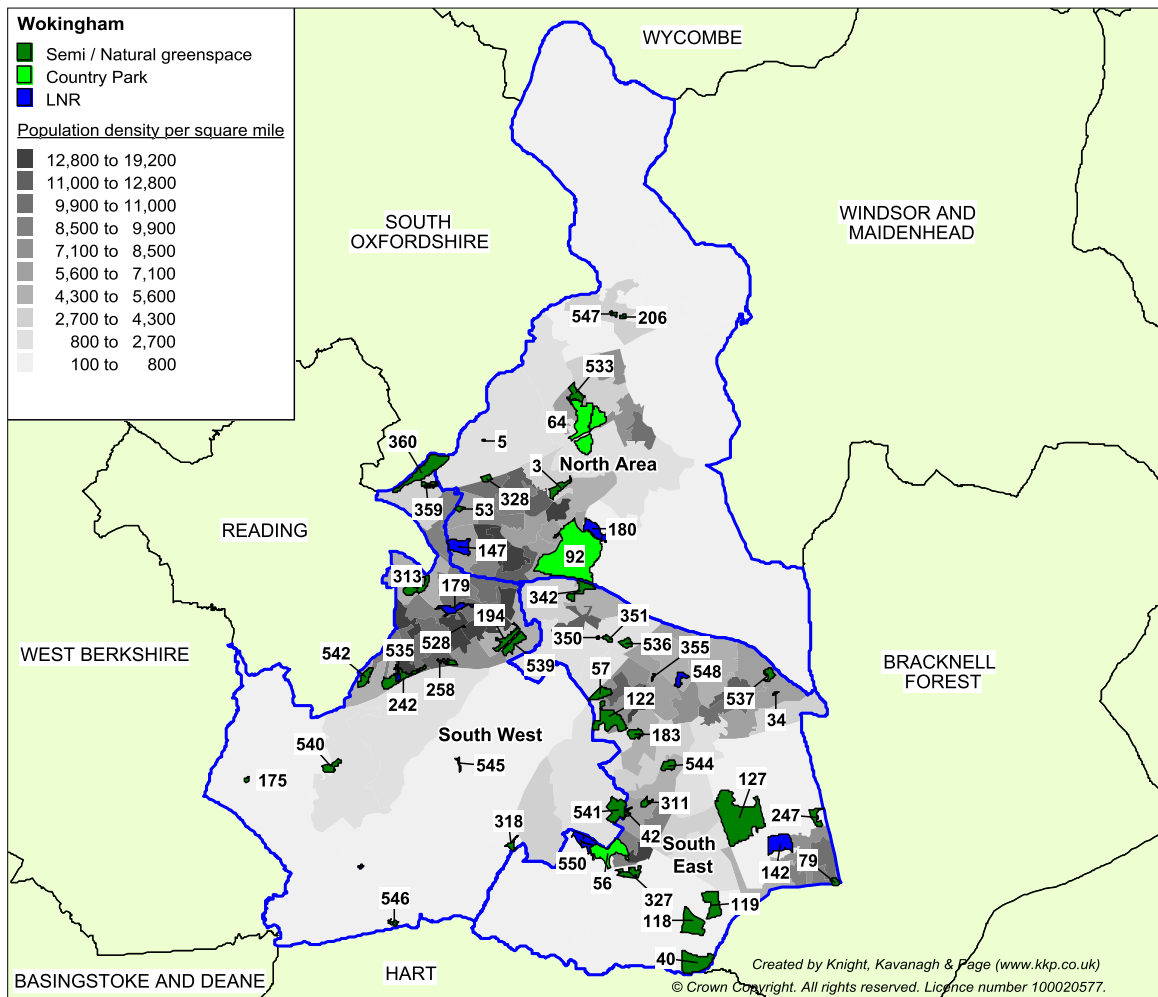


Table 5.2: Key to sites mapped

KKP ref	Site	Analysis area	Ownership	Quality score	Value score
3	Aldermoor's Local Nature Reserve	North Area	WBC		
5	Ali's Pond	North Area	Sonning Parish Council		
34	Bean Oak Copse	South East	WBC		
40	Blackwater Valley Lakes	South East	WBC		
42	Booth Drive 1	South East	WBC		
47	Broad Hinton Amenity Area	North Area	Earley and Woodley TC		
53	Bulmershe Park	North Area	WBC		
56	California Country Park	South East	WBC		
57	Cammelia Way	South East	WBC		
64	Charvil Country Park	North Area	WBC		
79	Circle Hill	South East	WBC		

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KKP ref	Site	Analysis area	Ownership	Quality score	Value score
92	Dinton Pastures Country Park	North Area	WBC		
118	Finchampstead Ridges	South East	National Trust		
119	Finchampstead Ridges and Simon's Wood	South East	National Trust		
122	Fox Hill / Round Hill	South East	Publicly owned		
127	Gorrick Plantation	South East	WBC		
142	Heathlake Local Nature Reserve	South East	WBC		
147	Highwood Local Nature Reserve	North Area	WBC		
175	Lambwood Hill Common	South West	Earley Town Council		
179	Maiden Erlegh Park	South West	WBC		
180	Lavell's Lake Local Nature Reserve	North Area	WBC		
183	Limmerhill Open Field	South East	WBC		
194	Lower Early Woodland and Meadow	South West	Wargrave Parish Council		
206	Mambery Hill	North Area	WBC		
242	Pearman's Copse Local Nature Res.	South West	WBC		
247	Pinewood	South East	WBC		
258	Redhouse Close	South West	WBC		
311	The Moors	South East	WBC		
313	The Wilderness	South West	University of Reading		
318	Tyler Drive	South West	WBC		
327	Warren Wood	South East	WBC		
328	Warren Road	North Area	Publicly owned		
342	Winnerish Triangle / Bluebell Woods	South East	WBC		
350	Woodward Close	South East	WBC		
351	Woodward Close (East)	South East	WBC		
355	Woosehill	South East	WBC		
359	Oracle Parkway Open Space	South West	WBC		
360	Thames Valley Park	South West	Earley Town Council		
528	Marefield Pond	South West	WBC		
533	Charvil Meadows	North Area	WBC		
535	Pearman's Copse Local Nature Reserve	South West	WBC		
536	Millenium Arboretum	South East	WBC		
537	Keephatch Park	South East	WBC		
539	Sindleshaw Meadows	South West	WBC		
540	Clares Green Field	South West	WBC		
541	Rooks Nest Wood	South West	WBC		
542	Nores Hill Woods	South West	WBC		

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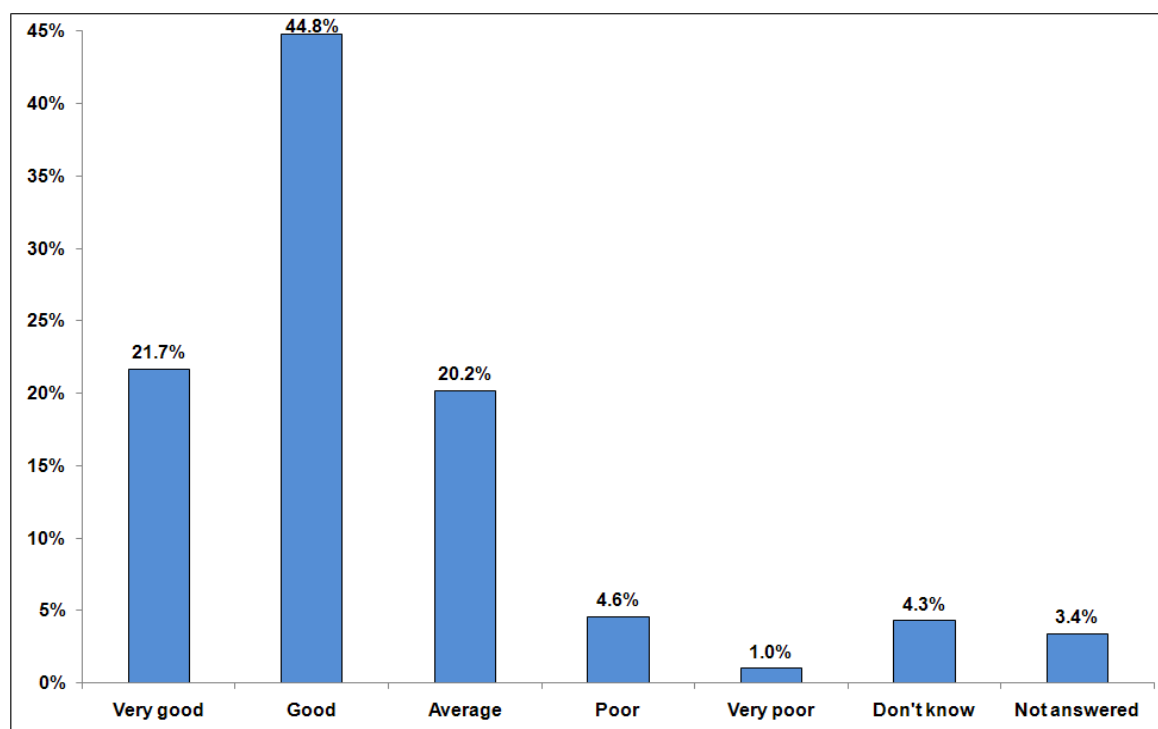
KKP ref	Site	Analysis area	Ownership	Quality score	Value score
544	Viking Field	South East	Arborfield and Newland Parish Council		
545	Pound Copse	South West	WBC		
546	The Marshes	South West	Wargrave Parish Council		
547	Wargrave Chalkpit	North Area	WBC		
548	Holt Copse & Joel Park	South East	Wokingham Town Council		
549	Swallowfield Meadow	South West	WBC		

Mapping shows there are large areas of the Borough that do not contain any publicly accessible natural or semi-natural greenspace. However, these are predominantly areas that are rural in setting and are likely to have access to alternative provision such as the general countryside.

Densely populated areas towards Reading appear to be well served by natural greenspace provision. This enables relative ease of access for residents living in more urban areas.

The resident survey reveals that availability of provision is considered overall (67%) to be above average (good/very good). This is in keeping with results for the other typologies. Similar to results for other types of open space only a small number (6%) consider it to be inadequate (poor/very poor).

Figure 5.4: Availability of natural and semi-natural greenspace



Supporting the findings of the resident survey, and reflecting the proximity of provision to the more urban areas of the Borough, consultation further supports the general opinion that there is felt to be sufficient availability of natural greenspace provision. However, in view of the Thames Basin Heath Special Protection Area (SPA) the Council has the option to provide Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspaces (SANG).

Management

A total of 527 hectares of natural and semi-natural sites across Wokingham, including local nature reserves and country parks, is identified as being owned by WBC.

Maintenance is also undertaken on some sites by associated voluntary conservation and 'friends of' groups. These groups provide a valuable input to the regular upkeep of sites throughout Wokingham. For example, the Holt Copse Conservation Volunteers and Moor Green Lakes Group both carry out maintenance on Holt Copse (part of Joel Park) and Moor Green Lake (part of Blackwater Valley) sites respectively. Groups such as these assist parish and town councils with maintaining sites and help to manage evasive species, sustain footpaths, coppice flora to encourage healthy growth and install beneficial features (e.g. bird boxes, benches).

The Countryside Service comprises of rangers, admin support and various officers focusing on topics such as biodiversity and education. There are also a number of volunteers who assist with maintenance of sites through volunteer days organised by the Countryside Service. These days, held throughout the year, offer opportunities for willing participants to enhance local wildlife habitats. Activities often include surveying wildlife and practical jobs such as hedge laying, coppicing and path construction. In the previous 12 months volunteer days have been held at Highwood, Heathlake, Keephatch and Lavell's Lake. The latter is not led by the rangers at the Countryside Service but by the Friends of Lavell's Lake Group.

Country park provision in the Borough of Wokingham totals 304 hectares. Dinton Pastures Country Park is the flagship countryside site. This relates not only to the parks size (137 ha) but also to the variety of activities and features that can be found there. Popular for families and activities such as walking, cycling and fishing the park also offers water sport activities, on Black Swan Lake, and bird watching opportunities, on Lavell's Lake, throughout the year. The site also has busy ancillary facilities such as the Dragonfly Café and the children's play area.

The Wokingham Countryside Service Plan sets out the Service's objectives for the next three years. It focuses on six core areas of the Countryside Service's work. These are:

- ✦ Quality of life – desire to ensure both habitats and habitat management/access benefits all as quality of provision is regularly expressed by residents.
- ✦ Partnership – to achieve aims there is a need to ensure that everyone is involved.
- ✦ Best value – in order to provide the best service possible within the Councils budget.
- ✦ People – the strength of the service is based on the well-being of its work force.
- ✦ Customer care – a commitment to making sure residents have a say in the management of sites and the Service through a network of 'Friends of Groups' and Forums.
- ✦ Statutory obligations – a commitment to sites such as SSSI, lakes and heritage sites.

Quality

The methodology for assessing quality is set out in Part 2 (Methodology). The table below summarises the results of the quality assessment for natural and semi-natural greenspace in Wokingham. A threshold of 40% is applied in order to identify high and low quality.

Table 5.3: Quality rating for natural and semi-natural greenspace by analysis area

Analysis area	Maximum score	Lowest score	Mean score	Highest score	Spread	Low <40%	High >40%
North Area	117	5%	44%	79%	74%	5	5
South East	117	13%	36%	73%	60%	13	11
South West	117	16%	39%	77%	60%	11	8
WOKINGHAM	117	5%	39%	79%	74%	29	24

Slightly more sites (29) score low for quality than high. This is due to a large number being undesignated open spaces without any specific features or facilities (i.e. open grassland). Sites of this kind also tend to score low for personal security given their often isolated places not overlooked by other land uses. Often they deliberately have very little ongoing management or maintenance in order to provide, for example, unmanaged habitats. This does not necessarily come through the audit carried out. However, these sites serve a purpose and should be recognised for their important function.

A total of 24 sites score high for quality. The highest scoring sites are Dinton Pastures Country Park and Thames Valley Park. Both of which receive a quality rating of 79%. For Dinton Pastures this is a reflection of the range of facilities and features that can be found on the site. Attractions at the site include the natural features such as lakes, woods and wildlife as well as facilities like the play area, café, toilets. The site also offers the possibility of participating in activities for fishing, golf and boating. Thames Valley Park scores especially well for its provision of wildlife habitats and interpretation boards. In addition the site offers a number of events both on land and on the river. In addition the Dinton Pastures project will result in more community events being offered in the future.

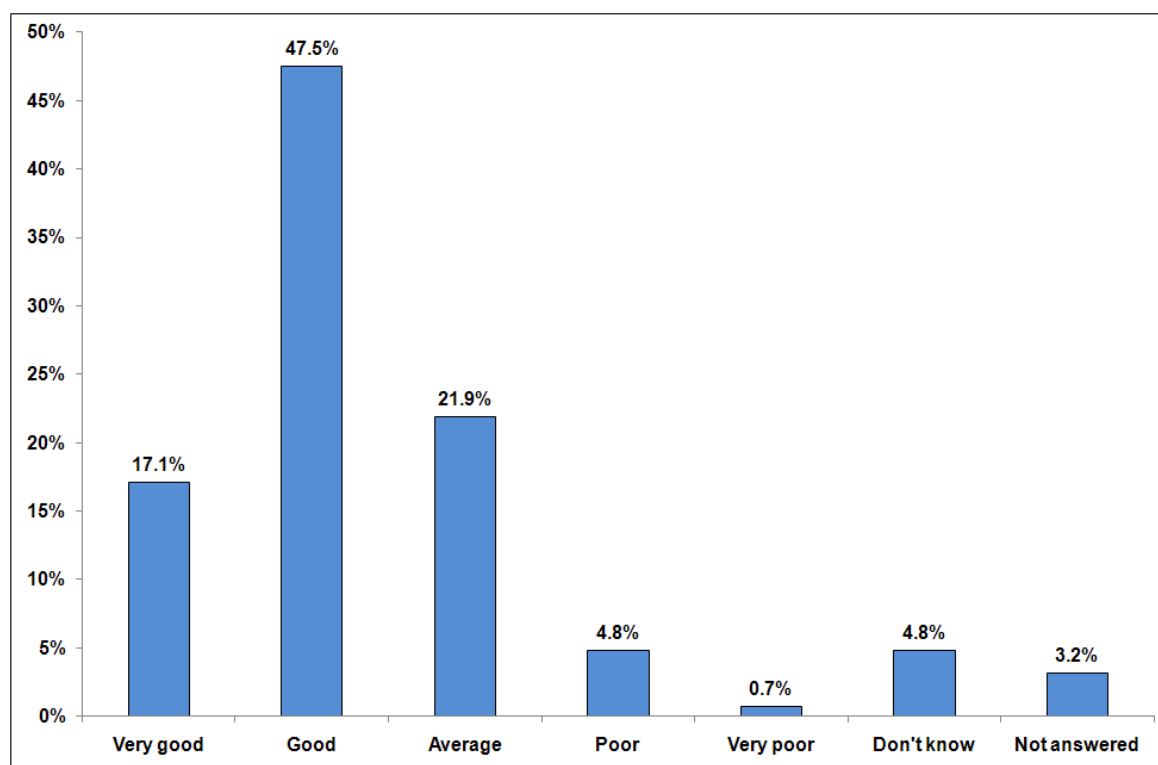
Other high scoring sites of note include:

- ✦ California Country Park (73%)
- ✦ Oracle Parkway Open Space (73%)
- ✦ Maiden Erlegh Park (69%)
- ✦ Swallowfield Meadow (62%)
- ✦ Ali's Pond (61%)
- ✦ Lower Early Woodland and Meadow (61%)
- ✦ Viking Field (60%)

Consultation on the whole reinforces the positive perceptions of natural greenspace provision in Wokingham. Possible circumstantial issues concerning dog foul and litter are raised at some of the more popular sites in the Borough, such as Dinton Pastures Country Park. However, this is not identified as a serious problem in the site assessments.

Nearly two thirds (65%) of all respondents rate the quality of natural space as above average (good/very good), with nearly half (48%) rating provision as good. Emphasising the perceived high quality of provision, only a small proportion of respondents rate provision as either poor (9%) or very poor (1%).

Figure 5.5: Quality of natural and semi-natural greenspace



Green Flag

As discussed earlier in the Parks Section, the Green Flag Plus Partnership, consisting of Keep Britain Tidy, BTCV and GreenSpace, manages the Green Flag Award scheme. It provides national standards for parks and greenspaces across England and Wales. Public service agreements, identified by the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) highlight the importance placed on Green Flag status as an indicator of high quality. This in turn impacts upon the way open spaces are managed and maintained.

Currently there are no Green Flag accredited sites in Wokingham. However, in addition to the sites identified in the parks section, a number of natural greenspaces are also well placed to be submitted.

The two highest scoring sites, Dinton Pastures Country Park and Thames Valley Park are both in a favourable position given their high quality score (79%). The California Country Park site is also well placed due to its quality score of 73% and its remit under the management of the Countryside Services.

Similar to parks, if any future applications are to be submitted for a Green Flag Award it will be important for WBC to establish and support the creation and development of FOGs, a requirement for any Green Flag Award site.

Value

The methodology for assessing quality is set out in Part 2 (Methodology). The table below summarises the results of the value assessment for natural and semi-natural greenspace in Wokingham. A threshold of 20% is applied in order to identify high and low value.

Table 5.4: Value scores for natural and semi-natural greenspace by analysis area

Analysis area	Maximum score	Lowest score	Mean score	Highest score	Spread	Low <20%	High >20%
North Area	95	12%	46%	74%	62%	1	9
South East	95	7%	38%	69%	62%	5	19
South West	95	7%	38%	69%	62%	5	14
WOKINGHAM	95	7%	40%	74%	66%	11	42

The majority of natural and semi-natural greenspace scores high for value. However, there is quite a considerable spread between the lowest and highest scoring sites, with sites such as Gorrick Plantation and Warren Road, scoring particularly low. Both sites are privately owned or managed and scores tend to reflect that these are undesignated open spaces without any specific features or facilities.

As well as providing important nature conservation and biodiversity value, many countryside sites in Wokingham are well used for recreational purposes and are a valuable open space resource for local communities. As mentioned earlier in the quality section, some sites score low for quality and value as a result of their function (e.g. an open field, unmanaged habitat). Therefore audit scoring may not initially reflect actual provision quality.

The value of sites is also recognised by the number of walks, as part of the WBC Health Walk Project, take place at natural and semi-natural greenspace. The free scheme provides a programme of 16 walks a week; each being graded in terms of difficulty and led by trained guides. Walks often meet and/or take place at some of the larger and more accessible (i.e. those with car parking and toilet facilities) open space sites in Wokingham. Natural and semi-natural sites listed in the 2010-2011 programme, for example, included: Dinton Pastures, California Country Park and the Blackwater Valley Lakes.

It is also important that Wokingham's countryside should be valued as a contributor to the level of provision. For example, 39% of residents in the young people survey identify that they have visited the countryside in the last 12 months, making it the third highest accessed type of open space by young people in Wokingham.

Summary

Natural space and accessible summary

- ◆ Wokingham is identified as having 53 individual natural and semi-natural greenspace sites, totalling over 700 hectares of provision.
- ◆ There is a shortfall of 67 hectares of LNR provision. WBC should support local groups such as Ali's Pond LNR in looking to expand provision of this type.
- ◆ In order to account for the high level of responses for walking and driving to access provision, we recommend application of both due to the variety in responses provided. Access to country parks should be considered separately to other natural greenspace and take account of both local and wider catchment use. Further account should also be taken of the Natural England ANGSt standards.
- ◆ Availability of provision is considered overall to be good. However, issues are raised towards the cost of parking as an inhibitor to local usage. WBC should investigate the possibility of schemes such as free or reduced parking for those living locally.
- ◆ Natural greenspace sites are generally viewed as being of good quality by residents. California Country Park scores the highest for quality. However, slightly more sites (29) score low for quality than high (24) in the audit. No specific issues impacting on the quality of sites are noted, although dog foul/usage at sites such as Dinton Pastures is noted.
- ◆ There are currently no Green Flag sites in Wokingham. However, a number of sites are viewed from the site assessment scores as having the potential to do well if submitted; Dinton Pastures Country Park and Thames Valley Park.
- ◆ There is a considerable spread between the lowest and highest value scoring sites, with sites such as Gorrick Plantation and Warren Road, scoring particularly low.
- ◆ As well as providing nature conservation and biodiversity value, natural and semi-natural sites are also recognised for their recreational value through schemes such as the Health Walks Project.

PART 6: AMENITY GREENSPACE

Introduction

The amenity space typology, as set out in PPG17: A Companion Guide defines sites as offering 'opportunities for informal activities close to home or work or enhancement of the appearance of residential or other areas'. These include informal recreation spaces, housing green spaces, village greens and other incidental space.' For the purpose of the street survey, responses for this typology were recorded under the heading 'grassed areas on housing estates' to simplify the definition for respondents.

Key issues

Current provision

There are a total of 179 amenity greenspace sites identified in Wokingham. This results in there being just over 208 hectares of provision. Site sizes vary from the smallest incidental open space on housing estates, such as Rainbow POS, to the largest, Stanlake Meadow Recreation Ground, at just over 10 hectares.

Amenity spaces are most often found in housing estates and function as informal recreation spaces or as open spaces along highways that provide a visual amenity. The total hectare figure may not include all provision in Wokingham as a size threshold of 0.2 hectares for sites is set. However, some sites below this threshold, which are identified as being of local value, are also included.

Table 6.1: Distribution of amenity greenspace sites by analysis area

Analysis area	Amenity greenspace		
	Number	Size (ha)	Current standard (2008) (ha per 1,000 population)
North Area	38	56.44	1.06
South East	72	82.00	1.77
South West	69	69.67	1.17
WOKINGHAM	179	208.12	1.31

Usage

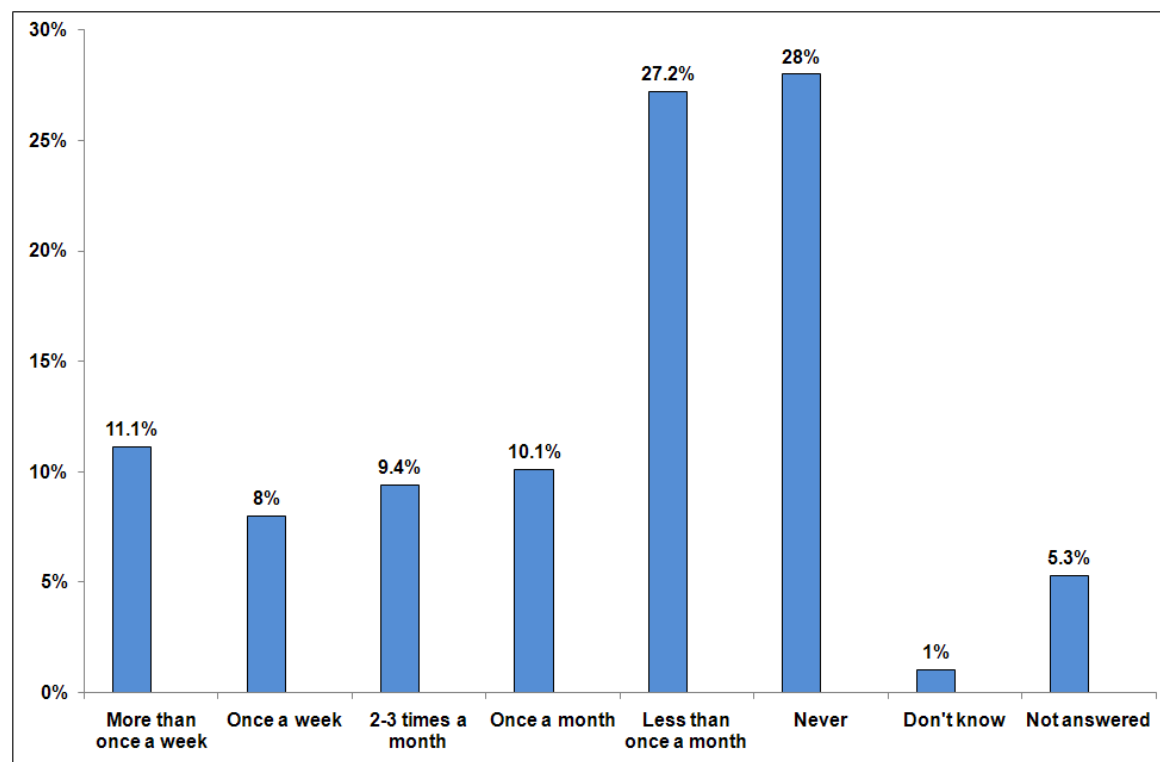
Amenity spaces on housing estates tend to be visited on a less frequent basis, with 27% of respondents accessing provision less than once a month. Only 11% of respondents have visited amenity space more than once a week in the previous 12 months.

Most residents (28%) state they have never visited an amenity greenspace (i.e. a grassed area on a housing estate) in the last 12 months. This is followed by a similar proportion of respondents that access amenity greenspace provision less than once a month (27%).

Specific reasons for non-usage of amenity greenspace are not given. However, the two most popular reasons for use are to exercise (64.8%) and to take a shortcut/pleasant route (57.3%). It is also likely that this type of facility is used more by children and youths due to proximity to dwellings.

The lack of want or need to visit provision is further demonstrated by the low percentages received for more frequent usage. For instance, only 11% of respondents state they access provision more than once a week. Reflecting the uses that would be anticipated for this typology (i.e. dog walking or being used as a cut through), it is uncommon, that those who use this open space typology do so on an infrequent basis.

Figure 6.1: Frequency of usage of amenity greenspace



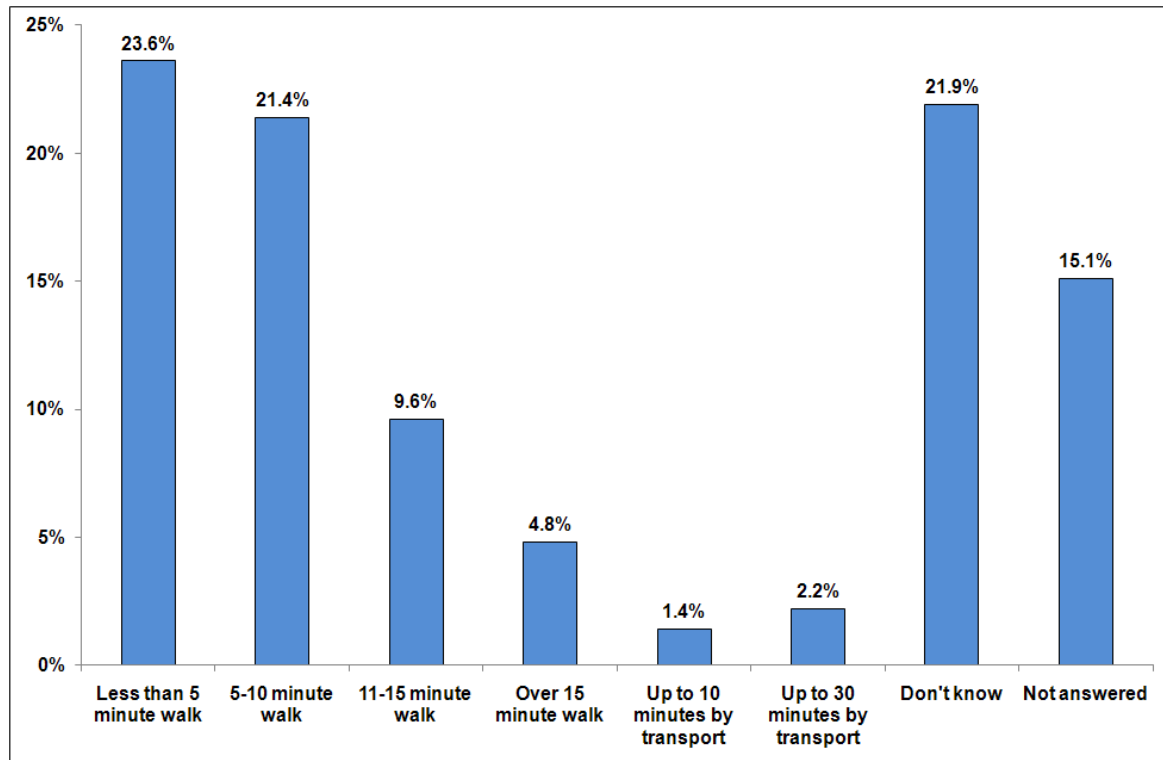
Interestingly, amenity greenspace is the fourth most visited form of open space provision visited by young people (39%) in the last 12 months. It is also the second popular type of open space to be visited more than once a week (15%), behind public parks (32%). This suggests the typology of amenity greenspace is reasonably well used by young people as a form of open space provision.

Accessibility

Across Wokingham just over a fifth of respondents (22%) state they 'don't know' how far they would be willing to travel to reach amenity greenspace. This is likely to reflect the proportion of respondents that signal they have never visited such provision in the last 12 months.

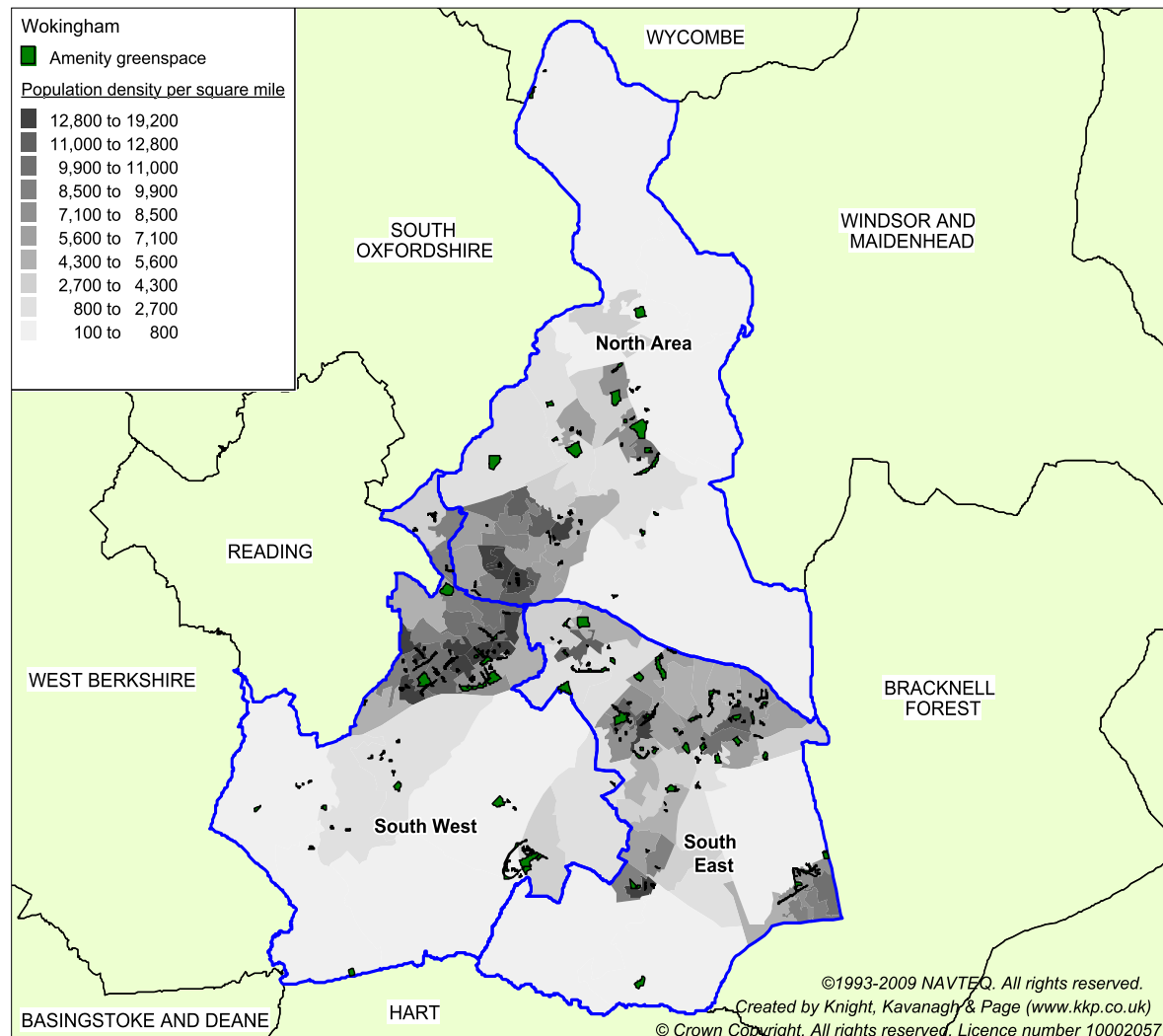
Of those that did respond, most show a willingness to walk to access the typology (59.4%) rather than travel by transport (4%). This is not surprising given the nature of provision. Nearly a quarter of residents (24%) state they would be prepared to walk less than 5 minutes to amenity greenspace. This is followed by a further 21% that are willing to walk 5-10 minutes. Both these percentages indicate the expectation and nature of provision to be locally accessible and within easy reach i.e. a short walking distance from a person's home.

Figure 6.2: Time prepared to travel to reach amenity greenspace



It is important to note that whilst the majority of provision is considered as being small grassed areas in housing estates or visual landscaped space, there is some variation of sites within this typology. For example, recreation grounds, which serve a different purpose to grassed areas in housing estates, are included under amenity greenspace. These often provide an extended range of opportunities for recreational activities compared to grass areas. In addition, these sites are often much larger in size.

Figure 6.3: Amenity greenspace mapped against analysis areas



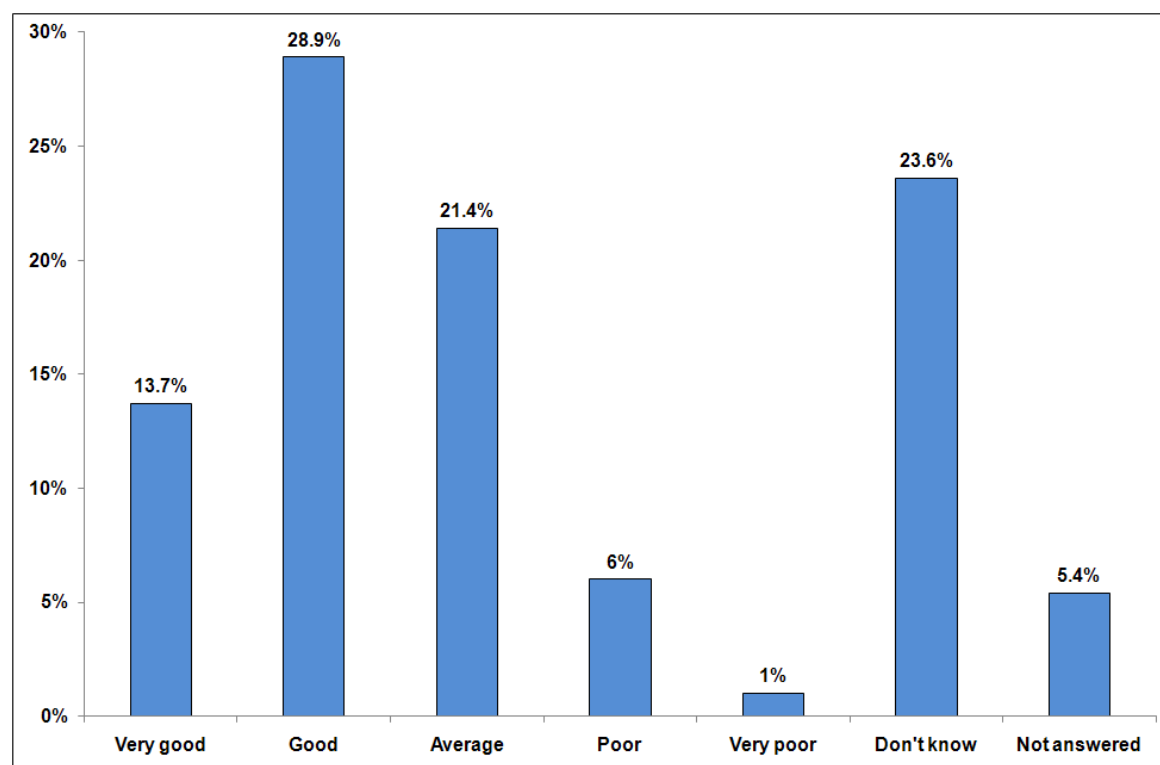
A full list of amenity spaces in Wokingham can be viewed in Appendix Two.

More amenity greenspace sites are located in the South West (69) and the South East (76) Analysis Areas compared to the North Area (37). This is most likely due to the denser populations of the Borough being located within the South West and South East Analysis Areas. Fewer sites in the north are likely to be as a result of its more rural nature. In general amenity greenspace sites tend to be less present in rural areas, which are often also served by the general countryside.

On the whole, residents appear to be happy with the amount of amenity greenspace; as 29% rate the availability of provision as good. The amount of provision in the Borough appears to be sufficient and is supported by the fact only a small percentage of residents rate availability as being either poor (6%) or very poor (1%).

Similar to the proportion of residents stating availability is average, a total of 23.6% 'don't know' how they would rate the availability of amenity greenspace. This percentage of respondents is likely to reflect the 28% of residents that have 'never' visited provision in the last year.

Figure 6.4: Availability of amenity greenspace



There is limited, if any, demand for additional provision in the Borough. However, there will be a need for the creation of amenity greenspace in areas of new development. This is in order to meet the demand created by the new populace. The lack of demand for additional provision is affirmed by resident survey results, which show ratings for availability (43%) and quality (35%) of amenity greenspace as above average (e.g. good/very good). However, consultation with community wardens and groups does highlight a theme of provision lacking ancillary facilities such as play equipment and general functionality.

Quality

The methodology for assessing quality is set out in Part 2 (Methodology). The table below summarises the results of the quality assessment for amenity greenspace in Wokingham. A threshold of 40% is applied in order to identify high and low quality.

Table 6.2: Quality ratings for amenity greenspaces by analysis area

Analysis area	Maximum score	Lowest score	Mean score	Highest score	Spread	Low <40%	High >40%
North Area	118	20%	50%	85%	65%	9	28
South East	118	8%	41%	75%	68%	39	35
South West	118	16%	47%	69%	53%	22	47
WOKINGHAM	118	8%	45%	85%	78%	70	112

The majority of amenity greenspace sites in Wokingham (62%) receive a high quality rating. In particular provision in the South West scores well with 68% of sites being rated as high quality.

The highest scoring site is King George's Field in Sonning, which receives a score of 85%. Such a high score is partly due to the range of facilities provided on the site. There are a number sports and ancillary facilities such as a cricket field, football pitches, tennis courts and car park that all contribute to its attractiveness. In addition there is a play area, which is adjacent to Ali's Pond. These secondary uses allow for a greater range of activities to take place. This creates more opportunities and reasons for people to access the provision on site, contributing to its overall quality.

Consultation identifies Southlake Crescent in Woodley as a well liked site. Comments refer to it as an excellent example of provision. This is supported by the observations of the site assessment, which specifically highlight how clean and tidy it appears.

Anson Crescent in Shinfield is one of the lowest scoring sites in the audit assessment. It receives a quality score of 16.1%. The main reason for its low quality score is identified due to its general untidiness and use of the site for fly tipping. A low level of use is also observed.

In addition to Anson Crescent, other sites identified in the assessment as scoring significantly low include:

- ✦ Amenity Space/North Flood Plain (17.8%)
- ✦ Old Forest Road (18.6%)
- ✦ Ruscombe Pond (19.9%)
- ✦ Shefford Crescent Open Space (17.8%)
- ✦ The Brackens (17.4%)

It seems all the above sites are low scoring due to their classification as either roadside verges or small grassed areas, which by their nature lack any form of ancillary feature. No specific issues are identified on the sites. However, their contribution as a visual amenity should not be overlooked. In addition the offer of wildlife habitats (e.g. trees and shrubs) also add to their role.

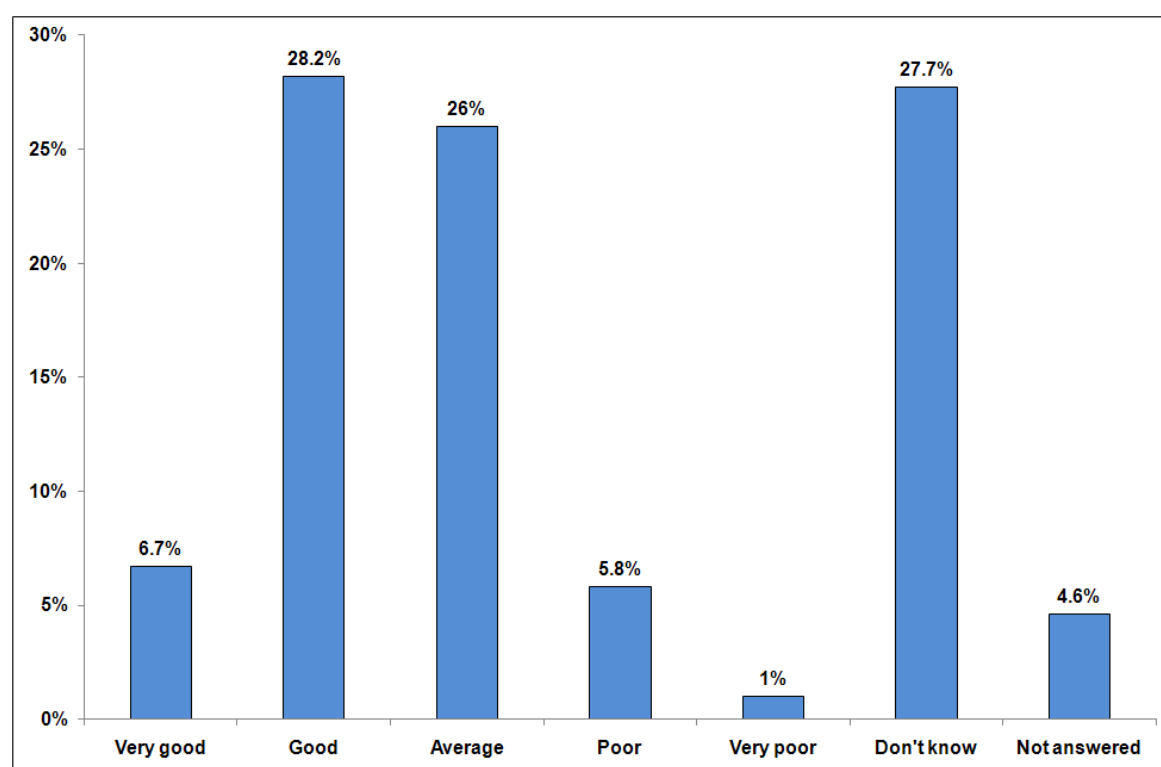
Amenity greenspaces in general are popular sites for recreational activities such as dog walking, informal play and walking. The associated issue of dog foul is a common concern; one often commented upon in the stakeholder survey. This can be perceived to impact negatively on site usage, particularly on informal play for children. Suggestions on how to reduce this include greater provision of dog only areas and better enforcement/education of owners. However, only one amenity greenspace site is identified in the audit assessment as having a dog foul problem. This is the amenity green space by Cantley Park site which was highlighted as having dog foul on the pathways. This may not be a reoccurring problem but further investigation should be carried out to establish if it is an issue.

As dog foul is no longer considered hazardous waste it can now be disposed of in ordinary litterbins. There is a consensus that raising awareness of responsible behaviour by dog owners can be achieved through increasing signage/on the spot fines to encourage greater use of existing litterbins.

Parking on amenity greenspaces is a minor issue identified from the site visits throughout the Borough. This is likely to be a result of increased car ownership and a desire for cars to be within sight of homes. Sites identified during the assessment audit as being used for parking vehicles include Gorrick Square (West), Amenity Space off London Road and Waterloo Road Amenity Greenspace.

The resident survey found that 35% of all respondents rate the quality of amenity greenspace as above average (good/very good). Only 7% of respondents from across Wokingham believe provision to be below average quality (6% poor, 1% very poor).

Figure 6.5: Quality of amenity greenspace on housing estate



Management

Management of amenity greenspace is split by ownership, although predominately WBC is responsible for maintaining most sites in the Borough. Other site maintenance is undertaken by the relevant parish and town councils.

Grass cutting is undertaken on behalf of WBC by Quadron Services Ltd and sites are visited on average every five to six weeks. The current level of maintenance appears to be more than sufficient, as demonstrated by the quality scores and resident survey results, with only a handful of issues being raised during consultation. These tend to refer to the need for the current level of maintenance to at least be upheld.

The only site to be specifically mentioned is Martineau Lane Open Space in St Nicholas Hurst, which the respondent feels could be better cared for/cut. However, in terms of quality the site is given a high score of 41%.

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Two sites are highlighted in the audit assessment as scoring low for maintenance. One is Anson Crescent (16%) in Shinfield, mentioned earlier, which scores low for general quality as a result of its untidiness. The other site, Bathurst Road Open Space in Winnersh, is rated poorly for maintenance but receives an overall high quality score of 45%. This is due to it scoring well in other categories such as entrances, lighting and for level of use.

Green Pennant Award

The Green Pennant Award (renamed the Green Flag Community Award), part of the Green Flag Award Scheme, is a national award recognising high quality greenspaces in England and Wales that are managed by voluntary and community groups. One of the main differences to Green Flag is that Green Pennant sites do not require a written management plan, as they are often community-led sites. Currently there are no such Awards designated in Wokingham. However, a number of sites are well positioned to be put forward as possible future applicants. These are:

- ✦ King George's Field, Sonning (85.3%)
- ✦ Stanlake Meadow Recreation Ground, Twyford (81.1%)
- ✦ Emmbrook Walk, Wokingham (75.1%)
- ✦ King George V Recreation Ground, Twyford (72%)

The Stanlake Meadow Recreation Ground and King George V sites in Twyford as well as King George's Field in Sonning are best placed to be put forward. Firstly due to their high quality scores and secondly as all three are parish council sites. Any future application would be best being undertaken through partnership with the respective parish council.

Value

The methodology for assessing value is set out in Part 2 (Methodology). The table below summarises the results of the value assessment for amenity greenspace in Wokingham. A threshold of 20% is applied in order to identify high and low value.

Table 6.3: Value ratings for amenity greenspace by analysis area

Analysis area	Maximum score	Lowest score	Mean score	Highest score	Spread	Low <20%	High >20%
North Area	85	15%	43%	72%	56%	2	35
South East	85	2%	33%	66%	64%	18	56
South West	85	12%	38%	73%	61%	4	65
WOKINGHAM	85	2%	37%	73%	71%	24	156

Similar to quality results, value ratings for amenity greenspace sites are high (86%). However, unlike quality scores more sites are rated as being of high value than low. The South West Analysis Area receives the most valued sites with only four being viewed as low value.

The role amenity greenspaces play as a form of open space provision is emphasised by the fact the majority of sites score high for value. Compared to quality where 62% of sites score high. This suggests even though a number of sites may score low for quality, they still receive a high value. Often the visual environment these sites provide is recognised.

Consultation identifies that young people congregating in amenity greenspaces, usually in those sites close to housing, is a perceived problem. Frequency of visits by young people suggest this may be so as amenity greenspace is the second most popular typology to be visited more than once a week. Consultation with WBC community wardens suggests that this problem is due to a lack of features such as benches, ball courts, and casual kick about areas resulting in young people becoming bored and potentially causing a nuisance. The lack of teenage provision in the Borough is discussed further in Part Seven: Play Areas for Children and Young People.

Amenity greenspaces should also be recognised for their multi-purpose function, offering opportunities for a variety of leisure and recreational activities. They can often be used for informal recreational activity such as casual play and dog walking. Many amenity greenspaces in Wokingham have a dual function; recreation grounds for example are used as amenity resources for residents but also provide informal outdoor sports provision for competitive sports such as football and cricket.

All these attributes add to the quality, accessibility and visibility of amenity greenspace. The greater these features, combined with the presence of facilities (e.g. benches, landscaping, trees), the greater sites are respected and valued by the local community.

Summary

Amenity greenspace summary

- ◆ A total of 179 amenity greenspace sites are identified in Wokingham, totalling just over 208 hectares of amenity space.
- ◆ The majority of amenity greenspace provision is located in the South East (40%) and South West (44%) analysis areas.
- ◆ The multifunctional role of amenity greenspace to local communities is recognised. This is reflected in the high proportion of respondents (23.6%) willing to walk less than five minutes to reach provision. Signalling the expectation for provision to be locally accessible.
- ◆ Availability of provision is viewed as good (29.9%). However, there is a perceived lack of ancillary facilities, particularly for teenagers, on amenity greenspace sites.
- ◆ Overall the quality of amenity greenspaces is good with both the resident survey and audit results supporting this. However, a number of sites score low and this felt to reflect their classification as either roadside verges or small grassed areas, which by their nature lack any form of ancillary feature. The contribution these sites provide as a visual amenity and for wildlife habitats should not be overlooked.
- ◆ There are currently no Green Pennant Award (now Green Flag Community Award) sites in Wokingham. However, a number of sites are well positioned to be put forward as possible future applicants. In particular King Georges Field, Sonning and Stanlake Meadow Recreation Ground, Twyford.
- ◆ In addition to the multifunctional role of sites, amenity greenspace provision is particularly valuable towards the visual aesthetics of residential areas.

PART 7: PLAY AREAS FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

Introduction

As set out in PPG17: A Companion Guide, the typology of provision for children and young people, includes 'areas designated primarily for play and social interaction involving children and young people, such as equipped play areas, ball courts, skateboard areas and teenage shelters.'

Provision in Wokingham is also assessed against Fields In Trust (FIT) standards and as such, play area provision is further categorised into sub-groups to identify their effective catchment (how far residents are willing, on average, to travel to access the different types) as follows:

FIT Classification	Definition
LAP	A local area for play. This area must contain more than or equal to one piece of play equipment.
LEAP	A local equipped area for play. This area must contain more than or equal to five pieces of play equipment.
NEAP	Neighbourhood equipped area for play. This area must contain more than or equal to eight pieces of play equipment. This area may contain MUGA, skate parks, youth shelters, adventure play equipment and is often included within large park sites.

Key issues

Current provision

A total of 134 play areas are identified in Wokingham. This combines to create a total of almost eight hectares. The table below shows the distribution of play areas in Wokingham by analysis area. No threshold has been applied to play provision and as such all provision is identified and included within the audit.

Table 7.1: Distribution of play areas by analysis area

Analysis area	Play provision		
	Number	Size (ha)	Current standard (2008) (ha per 1,000 population)
North Area	37	2.30	0.04
South East	49	2.87	0.06
South West	48	2.38	0.04
WOKINGHAM	134	7.55	0.05

In addition to these play sites there are six youth shelters provided by WBC.

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The tables below summarises the provision of play in Wokingham using the Fields in Trust (FIT) classifications of play areas.

Table 7.2: Categorised distribution of play areas by analysis area

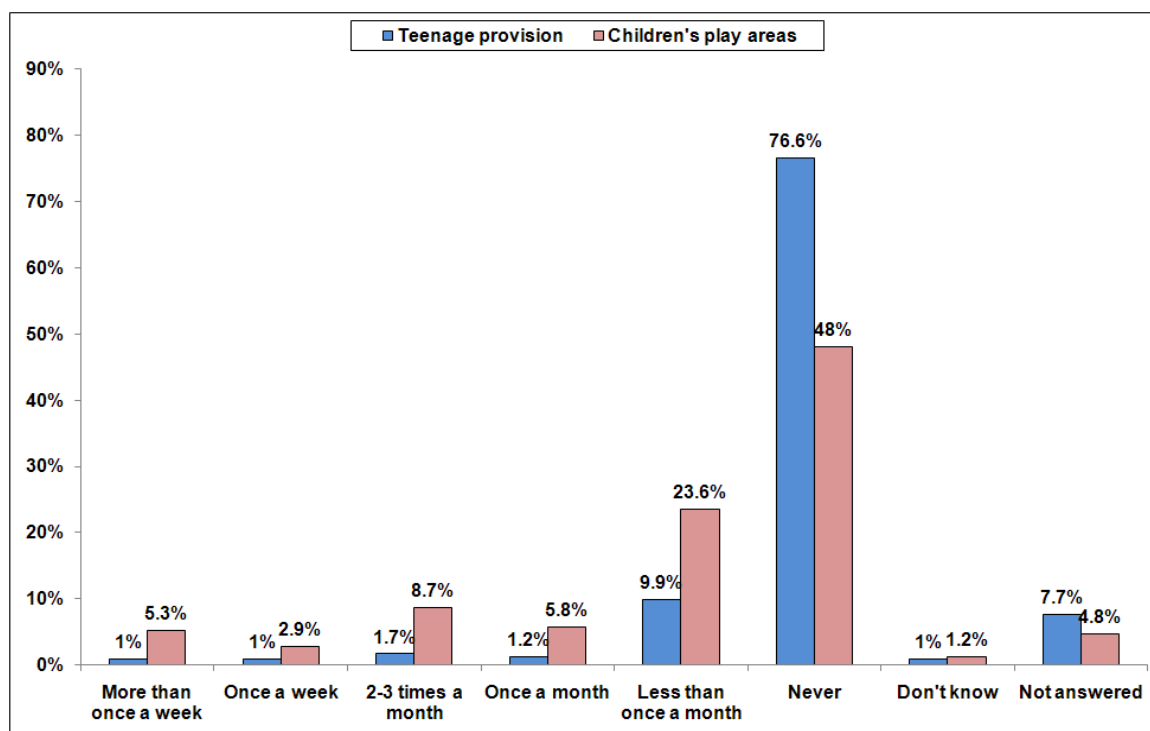
Analysis area	Play areas				
	LAP	LEAP	NEAP	Skateparks/ BMX	TOTAL
North Area	12	17	5	3	37
South East	19	23	4	2	48
South West	25	17	6	1	49
WOKINGHAM	56	57	15	6	134

Almost half of play provision in Wokingham is identified as being of LEAP classification. However, a high proportion of play areas is also classified as LAP provision, which are viewed as small with limited types/amounts of equipment.

Play quality assessments have not included a technical assessment of equipment. There will therefore be a number of sites requiring new equipment provision in the near future. For an update report on the condition of play equipment the WBC Annual Inspection Report should be sort.

Usage

Figure 7.1: Frequency of usage of play provision by residents in the last 12 months



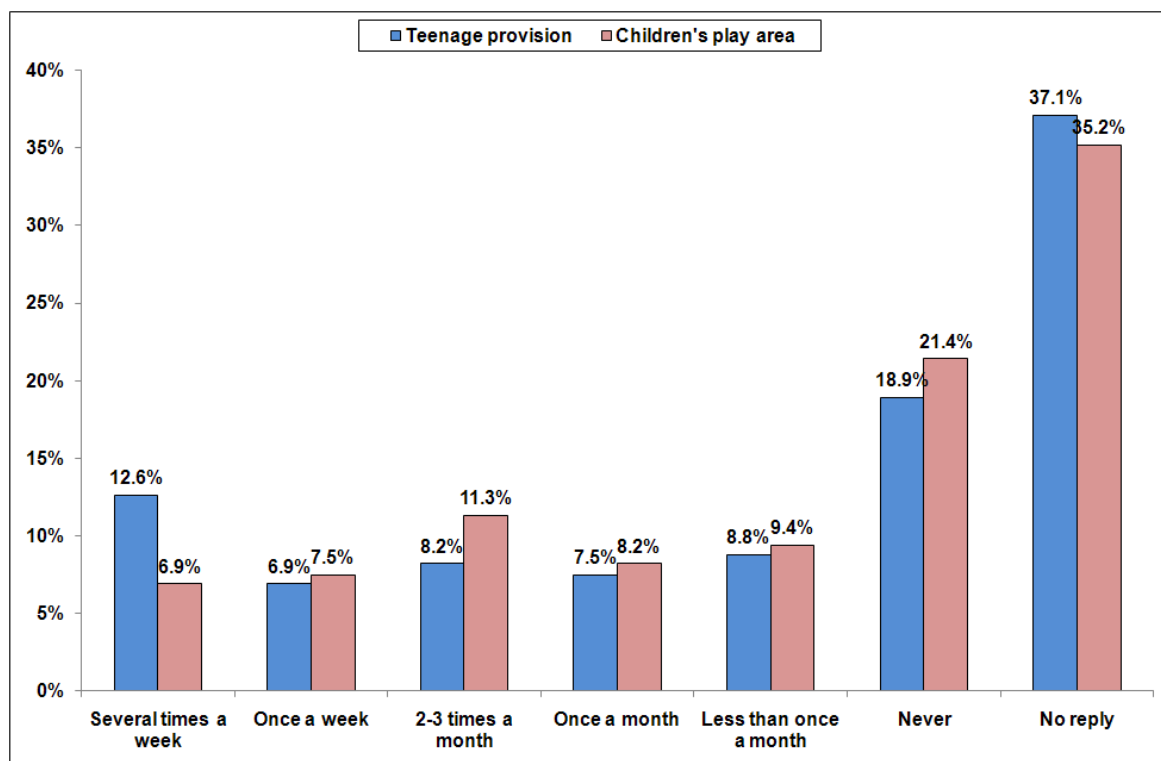
Nearly half of all resident survey respondents (48%) have never visited a play area in Wokingham in the last 12 months. This is a relatively high response rate but not surprising given that play areas generally attract 'niche' users i.e. children and adults with small children. Similarly for teenage provision, the majority of residents (77%) also signal they have not visited provision for teenagers.

A further explanation for this level of response is likely to be due to the large proportion of survey participants (45%) aged 61 and over. To gain a better insight towards play provision in Wokingham a survey of young people was carried out. The results of which, along with those from the stakeholder survey, are set out in this section.

The second most visited typology by young people is teenage play facilities, with a total of 45%. However, this is some way behind the open space typology of parks, which the majority of young people surveyed (80%) state they have visited in the last 12 months.

Of those young people that access provision, most (13%) tend to access teenage provision on a frequent basis i.e. several times a week. Visits to children's play areas are less regular with most young people accessing provision 2-3 times a month.

Figure 7.2: Frequency of usage of play provision by young people in the last 12 months



Accessibility

The Wokingham Play Strategy: Waking up to Play 2006-2010, sets out the aims and objectives to help improve the amount and quality of play opportunities in the Borough. A number of barriers to play are identified within the Strategy relating to accessibility. These include, fear for safety from traffic, restrictions on playing ball games, limited provision for older age ranges, and bullying by teenagers and others.

A lack of provision for older age ranges, especially teenagers, is one of the most common barriers highlighted through consultation. The North Analysis Area has the most youth provision; however, this is reflective of where most demand is.

Shinfield Parish Council highlights locally expressed demand for a 'BMX style area for young people'. Barkham Parish Council identifies that although demand exists, play area equipment for older children (8-14 year olds) is lacking in the area.

As stated earlier, nearly a third (31%) of young people consulted suggests that there is a lack of teenage play facilities in Wokingham. The areas and sites highlighted as requiring additional teenage provision include:

- ◀ Woodford Park for a small skate area and youth shelter (£106,000 has already been allocated for this).
- ◀ Spencers Wood for a skatepark.
- ◀ East Park Farm, Charvil, where there is a petition for a skatepark/BMX.

WBC Youth Service officers and community wardens also reiterate the need for teenage provision such as skateparks and youth shelters in Woodford Park, Spencers Wood and East Park Farm. In addition, Arborfield Park is also identified to be in need of additional teenage provision.

The highlighted demand for a small skate facility at Woodford Park is a development Woodley Town Council is looking to progress. WBC Youth Services are aware of the possibility for the site to accommodate additional provision and support the plans set out by the Town Council.

The demand for provision, particular at East Park Farm, is demonstrated by a local petition of young people for such facilities to be located at the site. It is identified by WBC that Charvil Parish Council is now looking at options to create a skatepark/BMX.

This lack of play provision for older age ranges often results in the reported problem of teenagers using play areas designed for younger children. This impedes genuine usage due to the associated issues of intimidation and vandalism. Sites identified through consultation as having this kind of problem include:

- ◀ Chestnut Park Play Area –
- ◀ Elms Field Play Area
- ◀ Leslie Sears Park Play Area (Parish play area)
- ◀ Woodford Park Play Area (Woodley Parish Council)

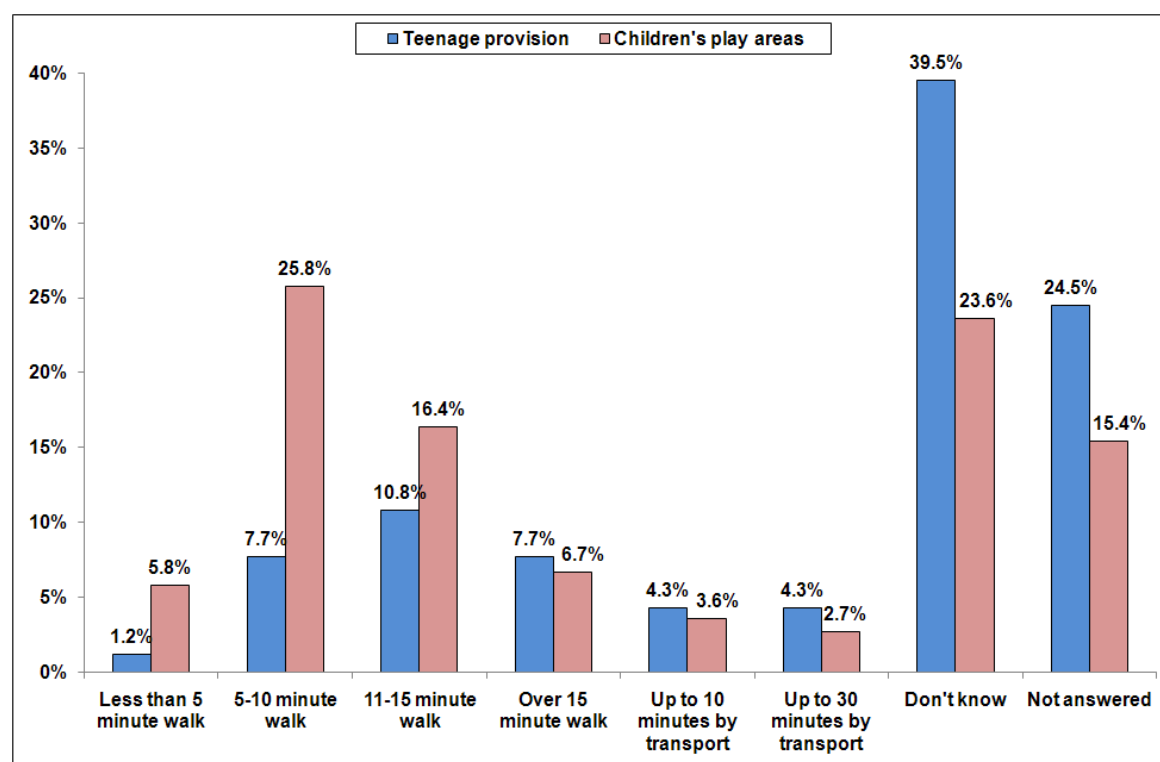
As mentioned earlier, Woodley Town Council has aspirations to provide additional teenage provision at Woodford Park. A youth shelter has also been installed at Chestnut Park to discourage inappropriate use of play provision designed for younger children.

The perceived issue with teenagers 'hanging out' at the Elms Field Play Area, according to community wardens, is an opportunity to be addressed as part of the Wokingham Town Centre Regeneration Plans. Ensuring a play facility is kept on the site is recognised by consultees as important to its future development. It is the only large open space with play provision in Wokingham Town Centre. Subsequently this is set out with the Council's masterplan for the Area.

In keeping with the trends seen earlier, most residents (40%) state they don't know how far they would be willing to travel in order to reach teenage provision. A further quarter does not provide an answer. This is likely to be as a result of the niche attraction of such provision and the demographic of survey participants. However, an indication that provision for teenagers should be within walking distance is given by the proportion of stakeholder survey respondents (11%) who state they consider facilities to be within an 11-15 minute walk. Consultation with the Youth Services also acknowledges that some young people are willing to travel in order to reach provision of this type.

The result for children's play areas is more reliable in that over a quarter of resident survey respondents (26%) signal they would be prepared to travel 5-10 minutes by walking to access play areas. This suggests the expectation for children's play provision is to be within walking distance, as a further 16% state a willingness to walk 11-15 minutes. Consultation also suggests that users are willing to walk further, often passing smaller play sites, in order to access larger sites viewed as having better/more varied equipment.

Figure 7.3: Time prepared to travel to reach a play provision by residents



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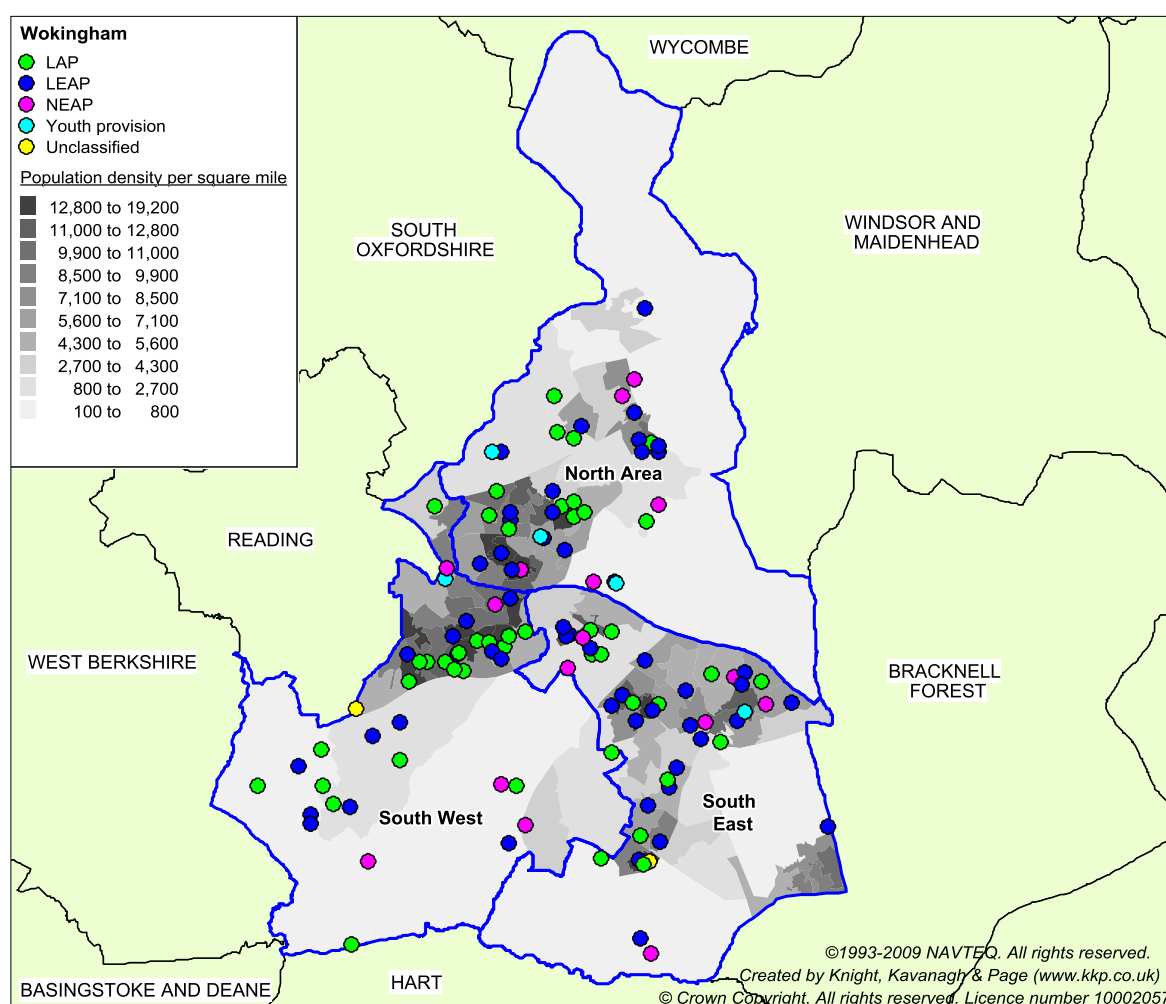
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In addition to catchment areas derived through the stakeholder survey. The FIT sets the following distances and walking times by classification. This is designed to further reflect patterns of use which are often driven by the size and type of provision.

Table 7.3: play catchment areas as per FIT standards:

Facility	Time	Pedestrian route	Straight line distance
LAP	1 minute	100 metres	60 metres
LEAP	5 minutes	400 metres	240 metres
NEAP	15 minutes	1,000 metres	600 metres.

Figure 7.4: Play areas mapped against analysis areas



A full list of play areas in Wokingham can be viewed in Appendix Three.

There is generally a good spread of provision across Wokingham, serving settlements well. There are no significant gaps in provision, however, there is little provision servicing the Crowthorne area of Wokingham (close to the boundary with Bracknell Forest). The lack of play areas in Crowthorne is felt to be due to the lack of open space in the area in general. However, there is some play provision at the Pinewood Leisure Centre and at

the Morgan Recreation Ground. At the latter, Crowthorne Parish Council has received Play Builder funding to refurbish the equipment.

As already discussed, there is a perceived lack of provision for older age ranges across Wokingham, primarily demand is identified for skateparks. However, facilities such as youth shelters, MUGAs and casual kick about areas also contribute to meeting demand and there are some good examples highlighted during consultation (see below). However, there is still deemed to be localised gaps in provision.

Locations cited where the equipment caters well for older children include King Georges Field in Twyford (various play equipment) and Sol Joel Park in Earley (skatepark and MUGA). Both of these are parish council run sites. In addition, the Skate Park next to St Crispin's Sports Centre is also a popular and well used WBC facility. Furthermore, Vauxhall Park in Woodley (BMX track), a WBC managed site, is viewed by community wardens as a well used facility. Despite its popularity WBC identifies the facility is old and run down.

There are a total of six youth shelters in Wokingham provided and managed by WBC; Park Farm, Ashridge Road, The Junipers, Simons Park, Kilnsea Drive and Woosehill Meadows.

WBC Youth Service also operates a number of youth centres across the Borough. These are popular and allow young people to meet up and participate in activities together in a supervised environment. Currently there are facilities at:

- ◆ Bulmershe Centre, Woodley
- ◆ Earley Centrepont Youth Centre, Earley
- ◆ Finchampstead Youth Centre, Finchampstead
- ◆ Silverdale Youth Centre, Earley
- ◆ Twyford Youth Centre, Twyford
- ◆ Woodley Airfield Centre, Woodley
- ◆ Wokingham Youth Centre, Wokingham

WBC has previously provided mobile youth provision but this was recently stopped due to budget restraints. It is now looking at ways of subsidising transport for young people in the more remote parts of the Borough to travel to existing youth centres.

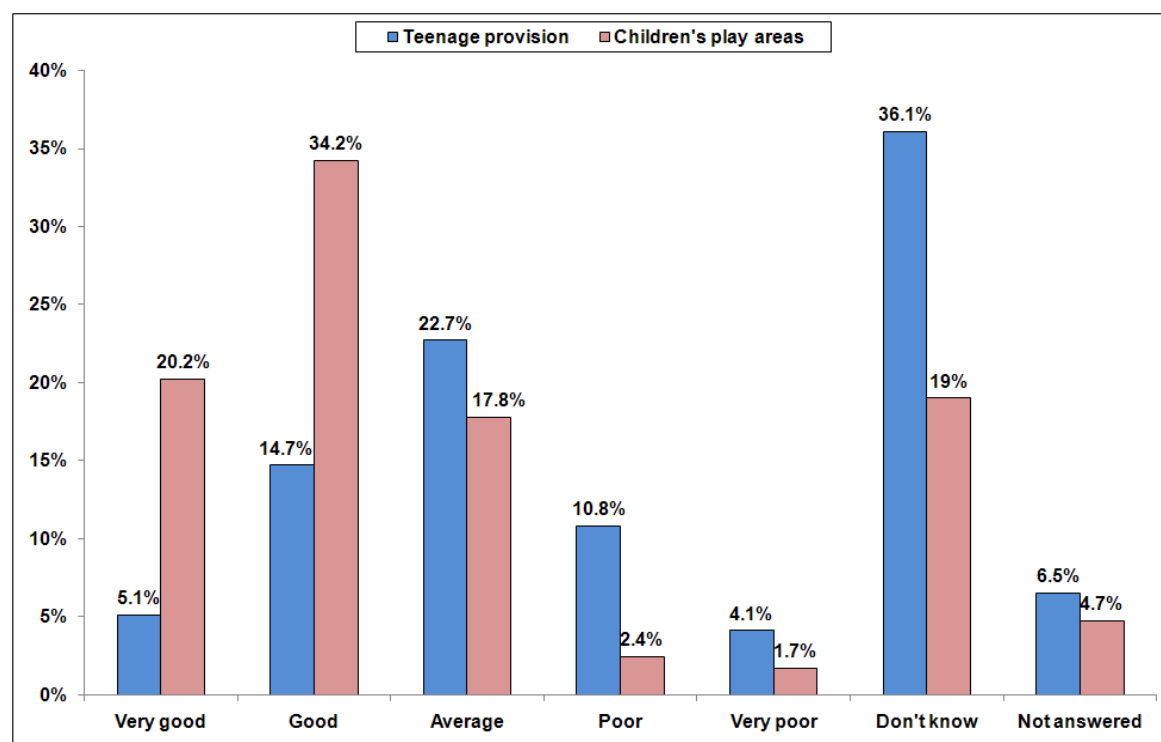
A new MUGA is being developed next to the Wokingham Youth Centre. This is a partnership venture which will see the adjacent Holt School have use of the facility during the day time with WBC Youth Service having access in the evenings. This will help meet the current demand for youth provision and demonstrate the ability of schools to address the lack of facilities for older age ranges. However, accessibility to schools outside of hours is often limited. Health and safety fears, cost implications and vandalism fears all attribute to it being notoriously difficult to persuade schools to open facilities for the community.

Audit data shows that there are seven play sites in the Twyford area including parish play areas. However, due to the large number of small sites in Wokingham, residents have become used to provision being available within short walking distance, even if it is of limited value. The Parks Team has been consciously encouraging larger play facilities with more inclusive elements. This will enable the team to have fewer play areas but with higher play value.

In terms of children's play areas over half of residents (54%) rate availability as above average (i.e. good/very good), with most (34%) considering it to be good. Very few respondents believe the existence of provision to be poor (2%) or very poor (2%). This would suggest that the amount of play areas in the Borough is viewed to be sufficient. Consultation also supports this, with several comments acknowledging that the general quantity of provision is good.

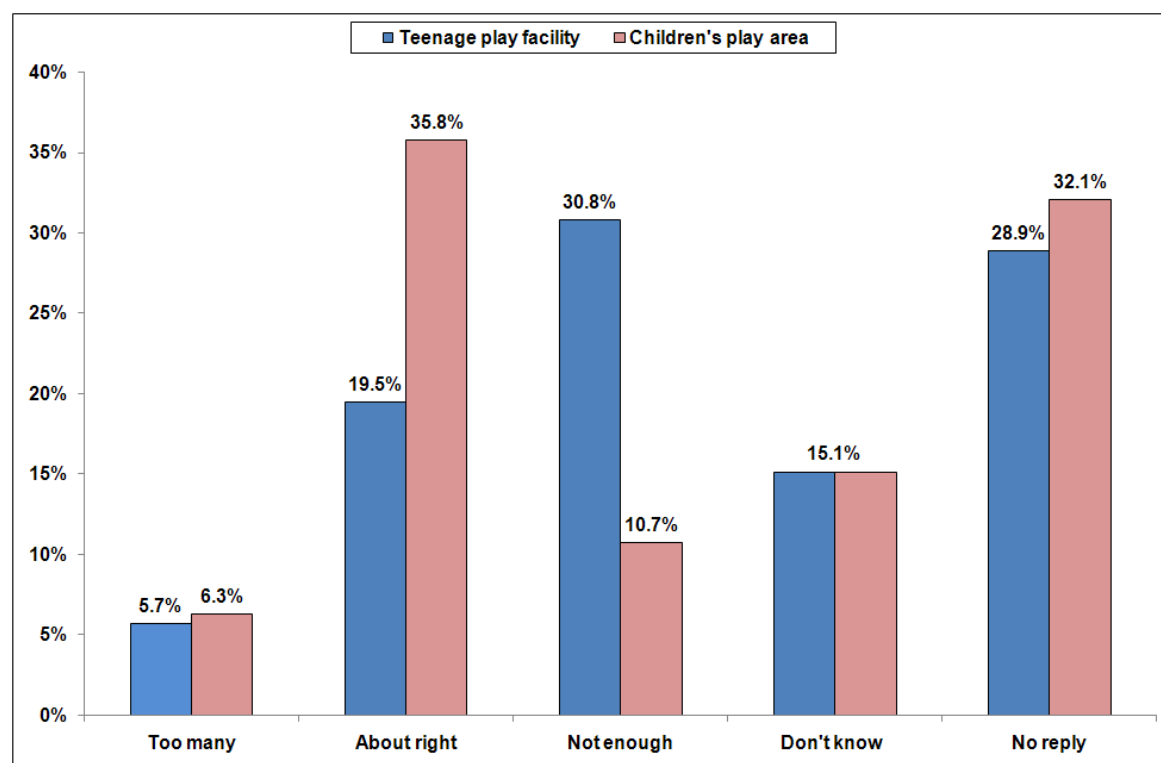
There is a further indication that the amount of teenage facilities could be better. Nearly a quarter (22.7%) of survey respondents rate availability as average. Yet compared to results received for other typologies, more respondents rate the availability of teenage provision as poor (10.8%) or very poor (4.1%).

Figure 7.5: Availability of play provision by residents



The findings from the young people survey also support the perception of a lack of teenage provision. Whilst most respondents (35.8%) rate the amount of children's play areas as 'about right', nearly a third of young people (30.8%) think there is 'not enough' provision of teenage play facilities.

Figure 7.6: Availability of play provision by young people



Management

The WBC Parks and Open Spaces Team is responsible for the management of the majority of WBC owned play areas in Wokingham (98 sites in total although figure changes when new sites are adopted). The remaining sites are managed by parish/town councils and housing developers.

WBC contracts out the maintenance of play areas to an external company (Quadron), providing three staff for inspections/maintenance and an out of hours call out service. The majority of sites receive weekly inspections. As standard, there is no sand or water based play areas and most are wet pour, tiger mulch or bark. The bark on sites is topped up every quartile. There are some grass mat surfaces but this is not a preferred surface type.

Wokingham Borough Council Play Area Review (PAR)

In 2010/11 WBC carried out a review of play areas. Sites were assessed on the value of play, risk assessment grade and any required actions or elements to monitor. The PAR differs from the site visit assessments carried out by KKP. The PAR is a technical assessment of equipment compared to the non technical assessment of play facilities by KKP, which is a visual assessment of the whole site, including for example bench and bin provision. Subsequently, for the purpose of any future equipment requirements, the findings of the PAR should be used.

Wokingham Play Strategy: Waking up to Play 2006 –2010

The Wokingham Play Strategy: Waking up to Play 2006-2010, sets out the aims and objectives to help improve the amount and quality of play opportunities in the Borough. In order to do this the strategy details eight aims to be achieved. These are to:

- ✦ Protect, improve and develop play provision.
- ✦ Ensure that play opportunities reflect and meet the diverse and cultural needs of children and young people.
- ✦ Be respectful, understand and meet the needs of the community.
- ✦ Ensure that there is a range and balance between supervised and unsupervised play.
- ✦ Ensure that public areas and play spaces are well planned and stimulus to empower.
- ✦ Utilise investment opportunities and funding.
- ✦ Raise awareness and promote the value of play to children and young peoples' health.
- ✦ Develop and increase the understanding of play.

Five key developments to support the delivery of the Strategy objectives for Wokingham are:

- ✦ Providing advice and support to current and new play provision and providers.
- ✦ Supporting schools and the extended services programme.
- ✦ Raising quality and standards in play within play provision.
- ✦ Raise awareness of the importance of play and play opportunities in the Borough.
- ✦ Raise the professional status of play work through training and development.

Creating more choice and better play opportunities in Wokingham is a key theme of the Play Strategy. This matches the expectations and want of users identified through this study, which suggests, in the main that users would like to see more opportunities for older age ranges.

One of the main sources of funding for the improvement of play areas in England is Central Government's Play Builder scheme. The following play areas form part of the Play Builder funding and are designed to incorporate natural elements with the latest equipment. This is designed to provide more challenging and more inclusive play. The following sites have been recently refurbished with funding from Central Government under the Playbuilder scheme:

WBC Owned Playbuilder sites:

- ✦ Woosehill Meadows, Wokingham
- ✦ Gorse Ride Community Centre, Finchampstead

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Parish/Town Council owned Playbuilder sites:

- ✦ Wargrave Recreation Ground, Wargrave
- ✦ King George V Playing Field, Sonning
- ✦ Swallowfield Recreation Ground, Swallowfield
- ✦ King George V Field, Tywford
- ✦ Pinewood Centre, Wokingham Without
- ✦ Arborfield Park, Arborfield
- ✦ Sol Joel Park, Earley
- ✦ School Road, Hurst - now going to Dinton Pastures (Not yet installed)
- ✦ Woodford Park, Woodley

Quality

The methodology for assessing quality is set out in Part 2 (Methodology). The table below summarises the results of the quality assessment for play provision in Wokingham. A threshold of 60% is applied to play provision in order to identify high and low quality. This is based on the pass mark applied in the Green Flag site assessment.

Table 7.5: Quality ratings for play provision by analysis area

Analysis area	Maximum score	Lowest score	Mean score	Highest score	Spread	Low	High
						<60%	>60%
North Area	97	39%	66%	90%	51%	11	26
South East	97	41%	66%	82%	41%	11	35
South West	97	19%	64%	80%	61%	14	34
WOKINGHAM	97	19%	66%	90%	71%	36	95

The majority of play areas are assessed as high quality (73%) against the KKP site criteria. However, there is a significant spread between the highest and lowest scoring sites with Grazeley Village Hall Play Area scoring only 19% (Village Hall Committee owned) compared to King George's Field Play Area which scored 90% (Sonning Parish Council owned).

The majority of WBC play areas have wet pour/tile surfaces with many users noted as being poor quality with gaps appearing.

Some sites are consistently raised during consultation as being of a good standard and well used by children. Southlake Crescent in Woodley is often referred to as a site offering an excellent range of equipment. The good level of maintenance and cleanliness at this site is also regularly highlighted. Furthermore, Elmsfield Play Area in Wokingham is also a site acknowledged for its good level of play provision. Both these sites score high for quality in the audit assessment, receiving a quality score of 62% and 71% respectively. Other sites scoring high quality include:

- ✦ Shefford Crescent (82%)
- ✦ Waverley Park Play Area (81%)
- ✦ Enstone Road Play Area (81%)
- ✦ Church Farm (Deardon Way) (80%)
- ✦ East Park Farm Play Area (80%)

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- Skylark Way Play Area (80%)
- Chatsworth Avenue Play Area (80%)

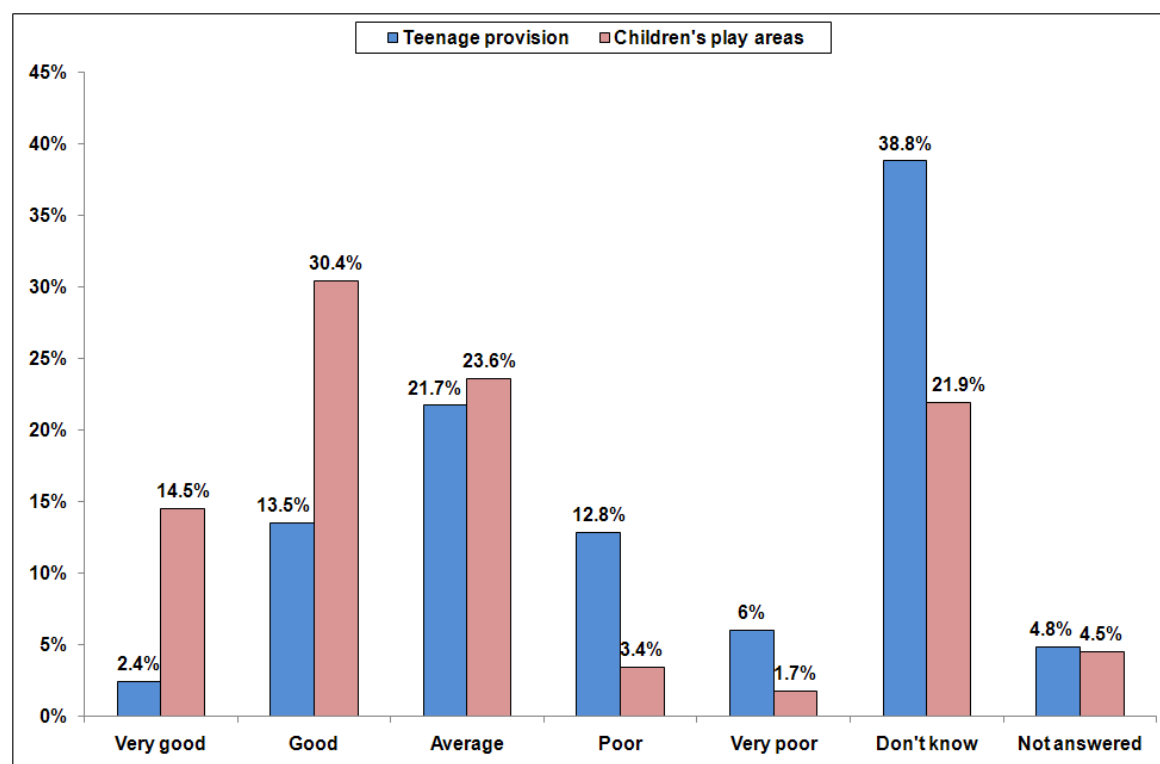
The sites at Waverley Park Play Area and Chatsworth Avenue in particular are observed as looking new with equipment noted as being clean.

A number of comments received also identify the examples of good provision outside of the Borough. Play provision in the town of Sandhurst, located in the Borough of Bracknell Forest, is often referred to as a provider of good facilities. In particular provision at Memorial Park is cited.

Reflecting the quality scores received within the site audit, nearly a third (30%) of residents rate the quality of play areas as good with a further 15% rating provision as very good. Only a small proportion of respondents consider play area quality to poor (3%) or very poor (2%).

As has already been seen for previous survey results, most residents (39%) don't know how they would rate the quality of teenage provision in the Borough. However, of those that provide a quality rating, just over a fifth (22%) think quality of provision is average. The low proportion of respondents not providing a rating and the lack of ratings for good/very good is likely to also be a reflection towards the lack of actually provision.

Figure 7.7: Quality of provision of play areas

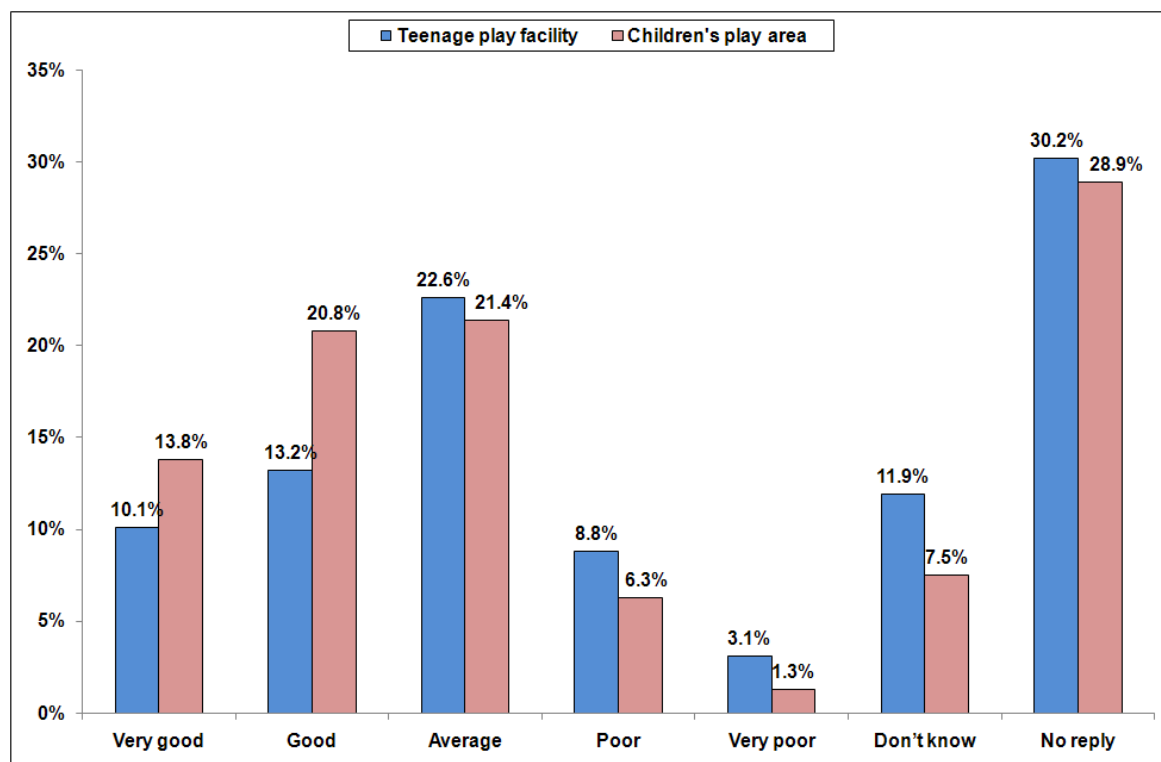


Most young people rate the quality of play areas as average (21%). This is followed by the 21% which considers provision to be good. Reflecting the high number of sites scoring well for quality in the audit assessment, only a small proportion of respondents (9%) rate play areas as below average (poor/very poor).

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Similar to the results from the resident survey (22%), most young people rate existing teenage provision as being of average quality (23%). However, the high proportion of young people, nearly a third (30%), that do not reply is likely to indicate the low level of provision in the Borough.

Figure 7.8: Quality of provision of play areas by young people



Value

The methodology for assessing value is set out in Part 2 (Methodology). The table below summarises the results of the value assessment for play provision in Wokingham. A threshold of 20% is applied to play provision in order to identify high and low value.

Table 7.6: Value ratings for play provision by analysis area

Analysis area	Maximum score	Lowest score	Mean score	Highest score	Spread	Low <20%	High >20%
North Area	55	27%	47%	67%	40%	0	37
South East	55	20%	42%	76%	56%	0	46
South West	55	20%	42%	49%	29%	0	48
WOKINGHAM	55	20%	43%	76%	56%	0	131

All play provision is rated as being of high value. Comments during consultation allude to the fact provision in Wokingham is well regarded not only for its role in providing locations

for children to play but also for their contribution to aesthetically pleasing local environments, offering children safe places to learn and to socialise with others.

Consultation with the Bridges Resource Centre highlighted play sites within Wokingham that offer a more suitable level of provision for children with physical and/or learning disabilities. Sites such as Woodford Park and Gorse Ride North are identified, along with play facilities at California Country Park and Dinton Pastures Country Park, as providing the most suitable forms of provision.

It is also important to recognise the benefits that play provides in terms of health, active lifestyles, social inclusion and interaction between children plus its developmental and educational value. It is essential that parents, carers and members of the public are made aware of the importance of play and of children's rights to play in their local communities. Creative and innovative ways need to be found to involve all sectors of the community in better understanding play.

Summary

Play areas for children and young people summary

- ▶ Quantity of provision is not a specific issue in Wokingham, but equipment quality is generally poor, being dated and unexciting. There is evidence to suggest that there are still too many sites of low play value and quality.
- ▶ Pockets of over provision are identified, in particular Lower Earley.
- ▶ There are no significant gaps in provision demonstrated through mapping. However, nearly a third (31%) of young people consulted suggests that there is a lack of teenage play facilities in Wokingham. This is further supported through consultation with parish councils, community wardens and WBC Youth Service. Woodley, Shinfield, Arborfield and Charvil areas are identified as having demand for provision, predominately skateparks, but this could also include outdoor climbing walls, MUGAs and BMX facilities.
- ▶ Wokingham contains a high proportion of LAP (small) sized play areas, many of which score lower for play value.
- ▶ The majority of play area sites are assessed as overall high quality (71%). However, please note that most play area equipment needs updating to meet current DDA standards.
- ▶ All play provision is rated as being of high value to residents. However, in comparison, the play value of sites (as identified in the PAR) is considered to be low/poor with dated equipment and variety available.

PART 8: ALLOTMENTS

Introduction

Allotments as set out in PPG17: A Companion Guide is a typology which covers sites that provide 'opportunities for those people who wish to do so to grow their own produce as part of the long term promotion of sustainability, health and social interaction.' This may include provision such as allotments, community gardens and city farms.

Key issues

Current provision

There are 26 sites classified as allotments in Wokingham, equating to just over 52 hectares. No size threshold has been applied to allotments and as such all provision is identified and included within the audit. However, a number of sites could not be accessed for site visiting. Therefore these sites do not receive a quality or value score in the audit.

Table 8.1: Distribution of allotment sites by analysis area

Analysis area	Allotments		
	Number of sites	Size (ha)	Current standard (2008) (Ha per 1,000 population)
North Area	11	29.84	0.56
South East	7	13.21	0.28
South West	8	9.00	0.15
WOKINGHAM	26	52.05	0.33

The National Society of Allotment and Leisure Gardeners (NSALG) suggests a national standard of 20 allotments per 1,000 households (i.e. 20 allotments per 2,000 people based on 2 people per house) or 1 allotment per 200 people. This equates to 0.125 hectares per 1,000 population based on an average plot-size of 250 metres squared.

Based on the current population of 156,619 (ONS 2007), Wokingham as a whole meets the NSALG standard. Using the suggested national standard, the minimum amount of allotment provision for Wokingham is 19.58 hectares. The existing provision of 52.05 hectares is over double this.

Two parish councils signal the intention to provide further allotment provision in the future. Charvil Parish Council is looking at the possibility of generating a small site on Pennine Way, which would accommodate around 15 new plots. Whilst Swallowfield Parish Council is looking at creating a new allotment site, with 27 half plots, at Van Demans Field. Currently both these developments are aspirational and do not have planning permission or allocated funding yet.

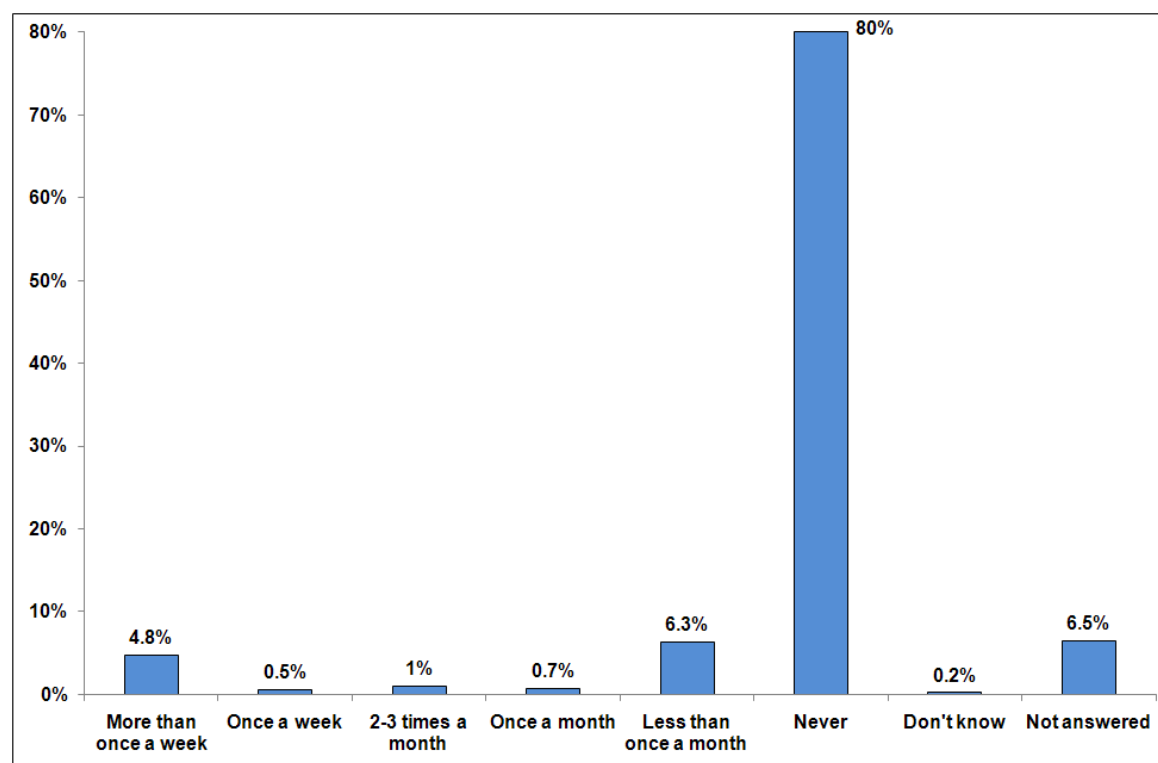
Usage

Reflecting the specialist interest and usage of allotment sites across Wokingham, only a small proportion of resident survey respondents (13.3%) state they have visited an allotment in the previous 12 months. In total, four out five people have not accessed provision in the last year.

Most visits (6.3%) take place on a relatively infrequent basis i.e. less than once a month. This is surprising given that we would generally expect users/plot holders to attend more frequently. These respondents may represent friends or family of users rather than actual plot holders. The 4.8% of residents that do access provision regularly (more than once a week) are most probably actual plot holders.

The survey also found that most (40%) of the respondents who visit allotment provision more than once a week are male and aged over 61 years. This is a typical profile of an allotment user.

Figure 8.1: Frequency of usage allotments in the previous 12 months

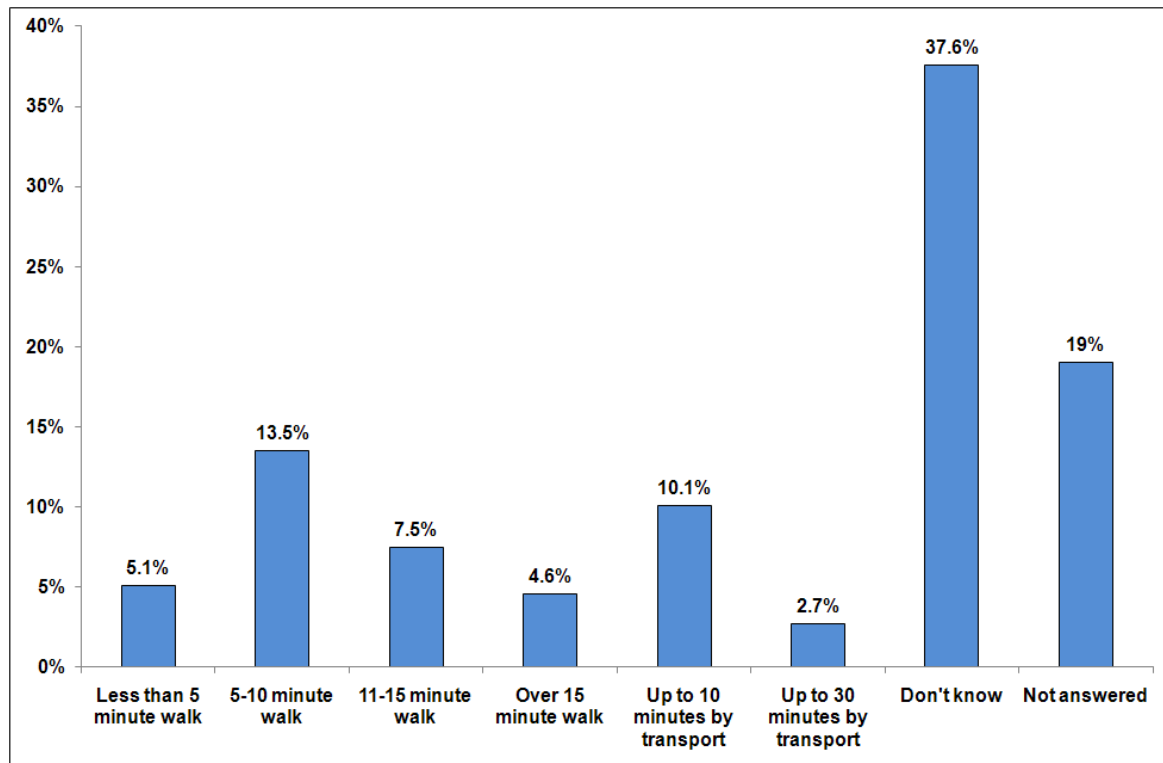


Accessibility

All resident survey respondents were asked how long they are willing to travel to access allotment provision. Most (37.6%) 'don't know' how far they would be prepared to travel to reach provision. Interestingly, of those which do provide a distance; more are willing to walk (30.7%) compared to those prepared to travel by transport (12.8%). This may be a reflection towards the rural characteristics of the Borough, as well as the expectation by residents for settlements to be served by at least one form of allotment provision.

The highest proportion of those that would walk to access provision is willing to walk 5-10 minutes (13.5%).

Figure 8.2: Time prepared to travel to access an allotment



Although none of the allotments in Wokingham have car parking provision, consultation does not raise this as a problem. This is likely due to the fact most people expect to be able to walk, rather than drive, to access provision.

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KKP ref	Site	Analysis area	Ownership	Quality score	Value score
86	Culver Lane Allotments*	South West	Earley Town Council		
126	Glebe Garden Allotments	North Area	Sonning Parish Council		
134	Greencroft Allotments Matson Drive	North Area	Henley-on-Thames		
137	Hartley Court Road	South West	Shinfield Parish Council		
156	Hurst Road Allotments	North Area	Twyford Parish Council		
177	Latimer Allotments*	South East	Wokingham Town Council		
216	Millworth Lane Allotments	South West	Shinfield Parish Council		
235	Ormond Road Allotments*	South East	Wokingham Town Council		
243	Pearson Road Allotments	North Area	Sonning Parish Council		
249	Pound Green Allotments	South West	Shinfield Parish Council		
254	Reading Road Allotment Site*	North Area	Woodley Town Council		
256	Recreation Lane*	South West	Shinfield Parish Council		
290	St James' Allotments*	North Area	Ruscombe Parish Council		
300	St Pauls Gate Allotments	South East	Wokingham Town Council		
343	Gipsy Lane Allotments	South East	Wokingham Town Council		
515	Pinewood Leisure Centre Allotments	South East	WBC		
551	Tape Lane Allotments	North Area	Wokingham Town Council		
552	Heathlands Garden Centre Allotments	South East	Private		
553	Winnersh Allotments*	South East	Winnersh Parish Council		

*Although 26 allotment sites are identified across Wokingham, we were only able to gain entry to 14 sites to assess quality and value. In addition, some sites were observed from the fence as the entry was secured and therefore the scores may not be a complete reflection of the actual quality of the site.

Most provision (nine sites and an equivalent of 29.8 hectares) is located in the North Analysis Area.

Consultation highlights there is strong demand for the creation of additional allotment provision in Finchampstead. It is reported the Parish Council is looking for possible

locations to provide a new site with the capacity of offering circa 50 plots. It is hoped a new site will be found and ready within the next two years.

The number of plots offered at allotment sites in Wokingham varies. The largest is at Reading Road, Woodley with a total of 300 plots. Other significant contributors are; Ormonde Road, Wokingham and the Heathlands Garden Centre Allotments with 131 and 110 plots respectively. In comparison Arborfield Road Allotments in Shinfield has just four plots.

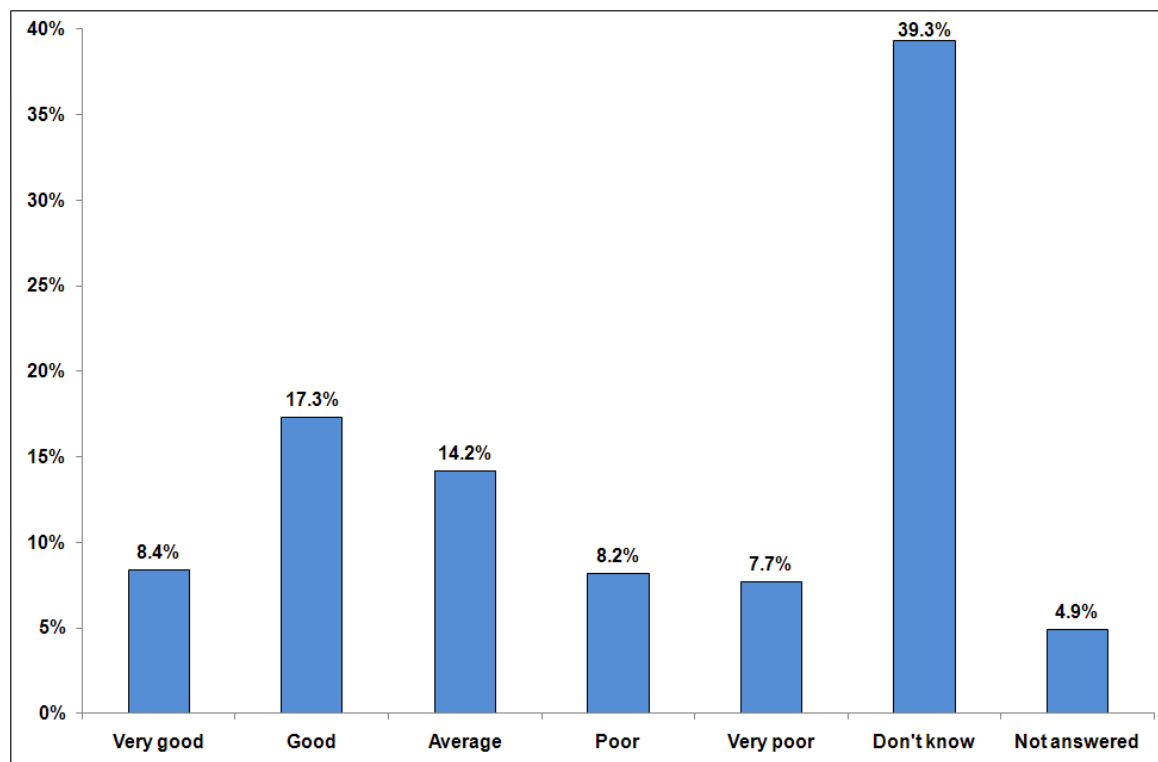
Three sites in Wokingham are privately managed. These include; Pond Green Allotments (Shinfield), Pearson Road Allotments (Sonning) and Heathlands Garden Centre Allotments (Finchampstead). The former two, are both owned by the respective parish councils but only available for use to private residents living close by. The allotment site at the Heathland Garden Centre is a new venture set up earlier this year. The 'Grow Your Own Plot' scheme provides 110 plots for a weekly fee of £5. Included within this price is use of the Garden Centres facilities such as the café and toilets. This has proved popular with most of the 110 plots being taken up.

Overall, there are a combined total of 1305.5 plots, including half plots, at allotment sites across Wokingham.

Of those that do provide an availability rating, most (17.3%) consider the level of provision to be good. Although survey results find that residents are, in the main, content with the level of allotment provision, the current waiting list total of 320 would appear to indicate that current provision is not meeting demand.

It is important to note that, inevitably due to the percentage of residents which do not access provision, the majority of survey responses are likely to be based on respondent perceptions rather than actual experiences.

Figure 8.4: Availability of allotments



Woodley Town Council has recently created 60 new plots at Reading Road Allotments in the area to help to satisfy demand. Furthermore, the parish councils of Charvil and Swallowfield are both looking at the possibility of providing plots. Both areas do not have any specific allotment sites and intentions are for each to supply 15 and 27 (half plots) plots respectively.

Waiting lists

The majority of sites are identified as having a waiting list. Management of these is carried out by the responsible parish or town council. Consultation suggests a person wanting an allotment plot has an average wait of five years.

Currently there is a combined waiting list of 379 individuals across the Borough. The analysis area with the largest waiting list of 175 is the South East. This is predominately due to the four allotment sites located in the settlement of Wokingham. These are identified, by Wokingham Town Council, as having a combined total of 135 people waiting for a plot.

There is no centralised management of waiting lists in Wokingham. Instead each parish or town council has a combined waiting list for its allotments. This helps to allocate any available plots to local residents identified on waiting lists but limits the ability for cross boundary use to occur. For instance, individuals outside a particular parish may not be aware that provision is available in a neighbouring parish. However, given most residents expect provision to be within walking distance the existing system is best suited to meet current circumstances.

Table 8.3: Allotment plots and waiting lists by analysis area

Analysis area	Number of sites	Number of plots	Waiting list
North Area	11	610	118
South East	7	492	175
South West	8	203.5	46
Total	26	1305.5	339

The combined waiting list across Wokingham, of 339, demonstrates that demand for allotments is not met by current provision. This high demand for provision is relatively recent (predominantly within the last four/five years) and the surge of new plot holders is thought to represent an increase in demand for healthier living and home grown produce.

It is possible to be on the waiting list for more than one site as there is no catchment area policy in operation. However, parish councils, such as Shinfield, do record whether individuals wanting a plot are residents of the parish or non-residents. Restricting allotment allocation to local residents could help to reduce waiting lists (although demand will still exist).

Table 8.2 shows that demand for plots does differ between analysis areas. This range in demand is thought to relate to the current level of provision and demand being a function of supply.

Most allotments in Wokingham are operating at 100% capacity with no vacant plots identified. Heathlands Garden Centre is the only site to register the availability of vacant plots. This is likely to be due to the cost of plots at this site; a minimum of £5 a week.

Management

Management of allotments is predominately the responsibility of the parish and town councils in Wokingham. Nearly all allotment sites in the Borough are owned and managed by their respective parish/town councils. Woodley Town Council leases Reading Road Allotments from Reading Borough Council on a long-term base.

Bulmershe Allotments and Heathlands Garden Centre are privately owned. The latter is owned and managed by the garden centre, whilst the former falls under the management of Reading Borough Council. Also worthy of note is the Greencroft Allotments in Remenham, which is technically owned and managed by Henley-on-Thames Town Council in South Oxfordshire but services residents of Wokingham.

Some sites are identified through consultation as being managed, on behalf of parish councils, by an allotment association. The six sites in Shinfield (not including the privately managed Pound Green Allotments) are managed by the Shinfield Allotment Holders and Gardeners Association and the Spencers Wood Allotment Gardeners Association. The Reading Road Allotments, Woodley and Woodclyffe Allotments, Wargrave are also identified as having allotment committees.

There is no WBC Allotment Strategy as provision and management of sites is carried out by parish and town councils. However, consideration could be given to the possibility of establishing a Wokingham Allotment Forum. This could help to improve communication

between associations and parishes as well as WBC. It may also assist with the sharing of skills and advice on funding.

The rate charged for a plot varies across the Borough. The average cost of a full plot in Wokingham is approximately £30 per year. The lowest price for a full plot is £10 in Shinfield although the Parish Council does charge a higher rate of £40 for non-parish/new tenants. The most expensive plots in the Borough are those at the Heathlands Garden Centre at a charge of £5 a week, a total of £260 a year.

Throughout Wokingham there is limited promotion of allotments and their associated health and well-being benefits. This is thought to be a result of current provision not being able to meet demand, so promotion is not conducive. It may also not be in the best interest of users, for the time being, to promote the benefits of taking up an allotment plot. As any further demand that may be generated for allotment plots could not be satisfied

However, in the future if improved promotion for allotments is required this could be achieved simply via increased information on the WBC or parish/town websites. This could be accompanied by production and distribution of a promotional leaflet, establishment of an allotment starter pack to provide relevant information for new tenants. Establishment of an Allotment Forum may also help to achieve some of these aims for Wokingham.

Quality

The methodology for assessing quality is set out in Part 2 (Methodology). The table below summarises the results of the quality assessment for allotments in Wokingham. A threshold of 40% is applied in order to identify high and low quality.

Please also note, as detailed earlier, we were only able to gain entry to 14 sites to fully assess quality. In addition, some sites were observed from the fence as the entry was secured and therefore the scores may not be a complete reflection of the actual quality of the site.

Table 8.4: Quality ratings for allotments by analysis area

Analysis area	Maximum score	Lowest score	Mean score	Highest score	Spread	Low <40%	High >40%
North Area	112	35%	42%	48%	13%	2	5
South East	112	32%	48%	54%	22%	1	5
South West	112	25%	43%	59%	34%	3	4
WOKINGHAM	112	25%	35%	59%	34%	6	14

In terms of quality, most of the allotments in Wokingham (70%) score highly. The highest scoring site is Milworth Lane Allotments in Shinfield with a score of 58.9%. Shinfield also has the lowest scoring quality site at Pound Green Allotments, which receives a score of 25%. Both sites are owned by Shinfield Parish Council although the latter is privately managed. A number of sites are not given a quality score rating as they could not be accessed i.e. the site was locked.

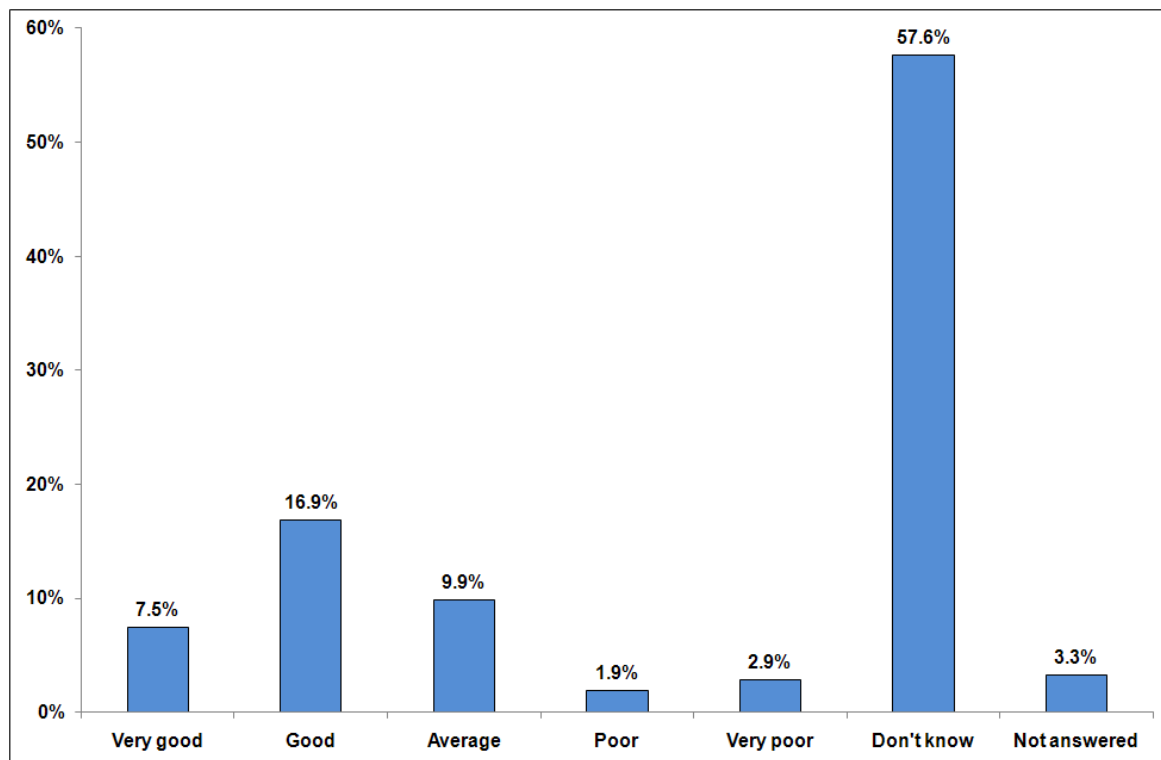
No significant problems or issues are raised with regard to the general quality of provision. All sites are currently in use or with no vacant plots. However, consultation with Sonning Parish Council suggests the general quality of Glebe Garden Allotments could be better. This is supported by the low quality score of 38.4% that the site receives. In addition, Wokingham Town Council reports that there have been instances of vandalism at the Latimer Road Allotment site. For approximately 18 months the greenhouses on site have been periodically damaged, although the site assessment does not reflect this.

The Recreation Lane Allotments in Shinfield is the only site identified as providing space for junior 'growers'. The site currently offers two small communal plot areas for children of existing plot holders. No charge is applied for these spaces.

Hurst Road Allotment in Twyford is identified from consultation as suffering from a problem with flooding. No issue is raised by the parish council and site assessment scores do not reflect this, as the site score well for quality (53.6%).

Only a small proportion (4.8%) of resident survey respondents rate allotment quality as poor/very poor, while just under one quarter (24.4%) rate them as above average (good/very good).

Figure 8.5: Quality of provision of allotments



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Value

The methodology for assessing value is set out in Part 2 (Methodology). The table below summarises the results of the value assessment for allotments in Wokingham. A threshold of 20% is applied to allotments in order to identify high and low value.

Please also note, as detailed earlier, we were only able to gain entry to 14 sites to fully assess value. In addition, some sites were observed from the fence as the entry was secured and therefore the scores may not be a complete reflection of the actual value of the site.

Table 8.5: Value ratings for allotments by analysis area

Analysis area	Maximum score	Lowest score	Mean score	Highest score	Spread	Low <20%	High >20%
North Area	85	42%	47%	54%	12%	0	7
South East	85	31%	38%	51%	20%	0	6
South West	85	18%	34%	54%	36%	1	6
WOKINGHAM	85	18%	32%	54%	36%	1	19

All allotments in Wokingham are assessed as high value. This is due to the associated social inclusion and health benefits, amenity value and the sense of place offered by provision. The value of allotments in Wokingham is further enhanced due to the large waiting lists and by the reasonable rental cost; considered to be on a par with neighbouring authority charges.

Please note that the six sites that could not be accessed due to being locked are not given a value scoring, but are also likely to score highly for the reasons cited above.

Allotments in Wokingham are generally under-utilised by community groups. Only a few are identified as having an allotment association and none are identified as working with external groups. The creation of a Wokingham Allotment Forum could help to assist with any future plans to increase community usage.

Summary

Allotments summary

- ▶ A total of 26 sites are classified as allotments in Wokingham, equating to just over 52 hectares. The majority of provision is owned and managed by parish and town councils. With three sites that are privately managed.
- ▶ The current provision of 52 hectares is over twice the suggested amount of 19.6 hectares. However, the combined total of individuals on a waiting list in Wokingham of 339 demonstrates the high demand for allotments is not currently being met by supply. Opportunities to increase provision should be pursued.
- ▶ Charvil Parish Council and Swallowfield Parish Council are looking at accommodating around 15 plots and 27 half plots of additional provision, respectively. Finchampstead Parish Council is also reported to be looking to provide additional provision.
- ▶ The only site to register any vacant plots is the Allotments at the Heathlands Garden Centre. The charge of £5 a week for a basic plot is likely to deter some potential plot holders from acquiring provision. Due to the charge vacant plots at this site should not be viewed as being suitable to meet the current high demand.
- ▶ There is no Allotment Strategy for Wokingham as provision and management of sites is by parish and town councils. However, consideration could be given to the possibility of establishing a Wokingham Allotment Forum. This could help to improve communication between associations and parishes as well as WBC.
- ▶ The majority of allotments (70%) score high for quality. Consultation suggests Latimer Road Allotments in Wokingham has suffered from periodic instances of vandalism (e.g. greenhouses being smashed). However, site audits do not necessarily reflect this.
- ▶ Nearly all allotments in Wokingham are assessed as high value (19 out of 20), reflecting the associated social inclusion and health benefits, their amenity value and the sense of place offered by provision. The only low value site is in the South West Analysis Area.

PART 9: CEMETERIES/GRAVEYARDS

Introduction

The cemeteries typology as defined in PPG17: A Companion Guide includes areas for 'quiet contemplation and burial of the dead, often linked to the promotion of wildlife conservation and biodiversity.'

Key issues

Current provision

There are 22 sites classified as cemeteries/graveyards, equating to just over 26 hectares of provision in Wokingham. No threshold has been applied and as such all provision is identified and included within the audit.

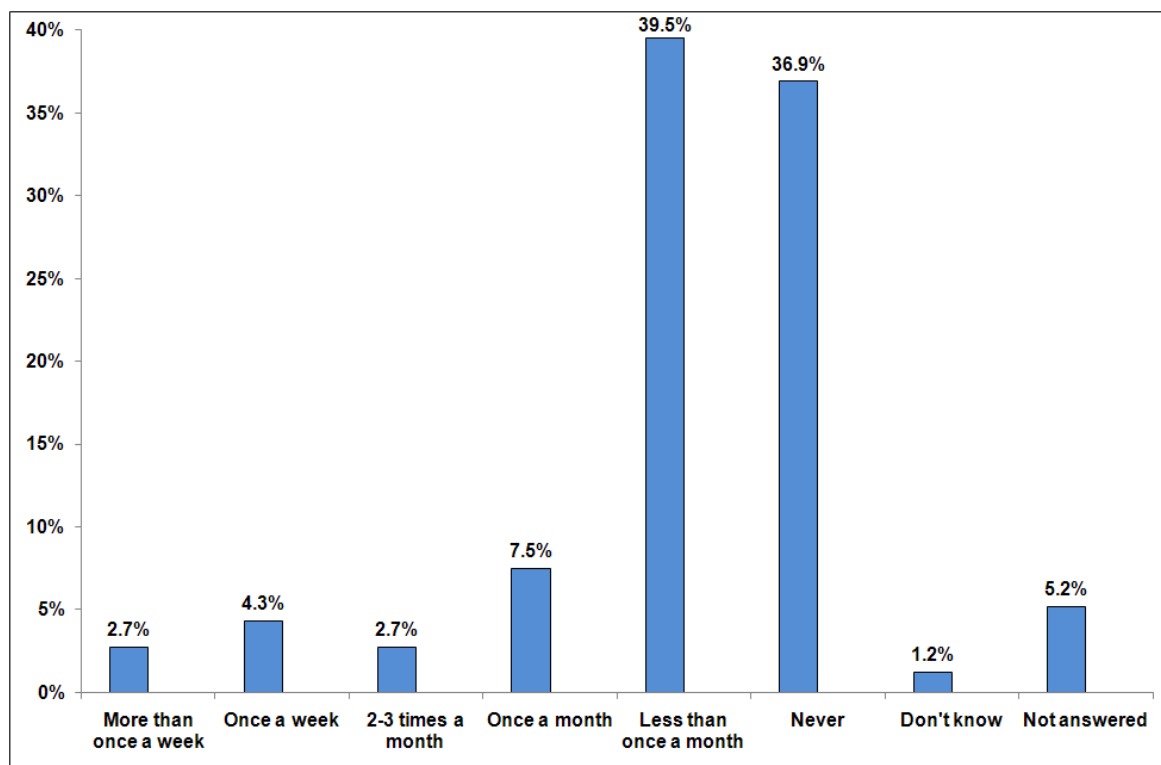
Table 9.1: Distribution of cemeteries by analysis area

Analysis area	Cemeteries		
	Number of sites	Size (ha)	Current standard (2008) (Ha per 1,000 population)
North Area	10	11.28	0.21
South East	6	5.72	0.12
South West	6	9.28	0.16
WOKINGHAM	22	26.29	0.17

Usage

Cemeteries are most often visited less than once a month. The highest proportion of respondents (39.5%) state they visit cemetery provision less than once a month. It is likely that this reflects the nature of occasional use for provision. For example, most people are likely to visit provision in order to pay their respects or to tend to a grave. These kinds of visits are liable to occur at set special dates throughout the year i.e. on certain anniversaries.

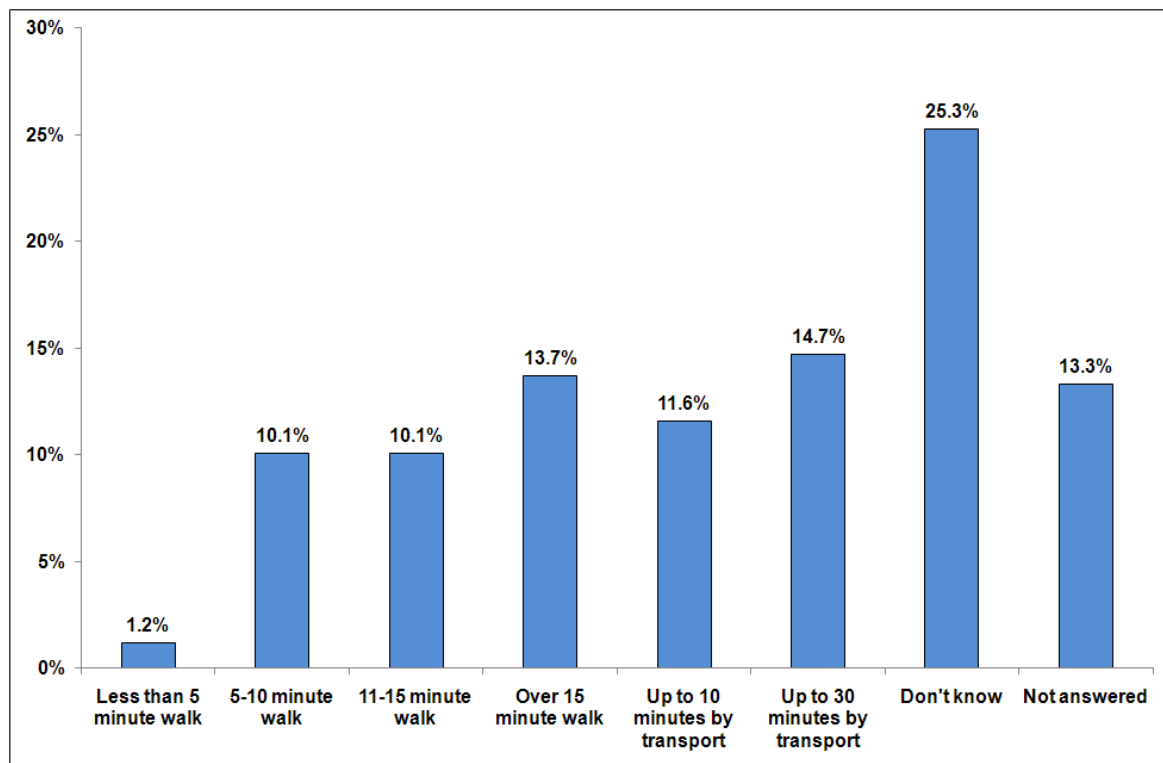
Figure 9.1: Frequency of usage of cemeteries in the previous 12 months



Accessibility

There is no clear response to 'how far residents are prepared to travel'. Responses are fairly even between those willing to travel up to 30 minutes by transport (14.7%) and those prepared to walk over 15 minutes (13.7%). The lack of a clear response suggests current provision could be dispersed between those sites accessible locally by walking and those further afield requiring vehicle travel. This may be a reflection towards the rural nature of the Borough.

Figure 9.2: Time prepared to travel to reach a cemetery



According to the Parks Team, most residents drive to the cemeteries. Although residents would accept over a 15 minute walk or up to a 30 minute drive to access provision, it is recommended that new cemetery provision is driven by the need for burial capacity rather than accessibility.

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Figure 9.3: Cemetery sites mapped against analysis areas

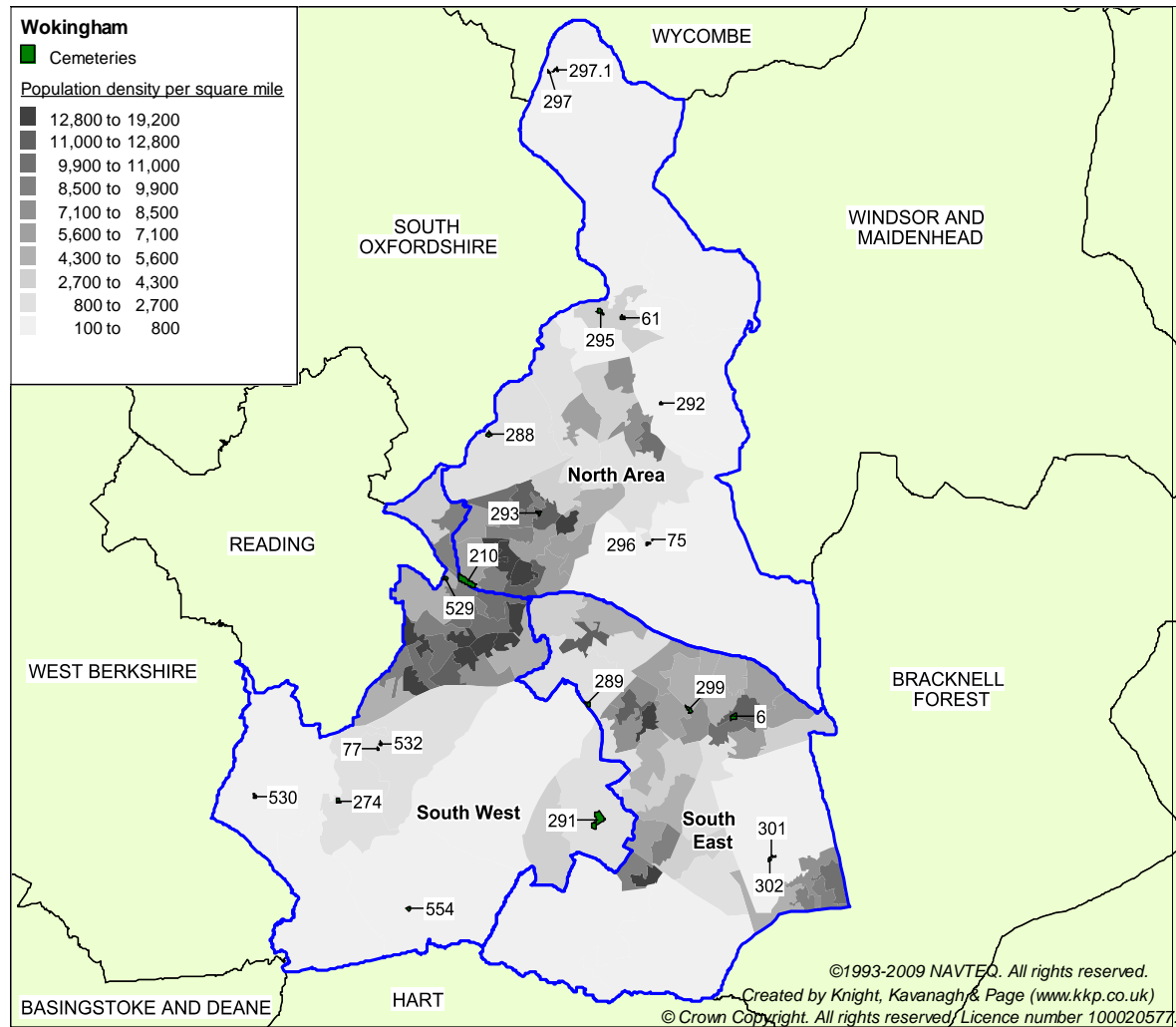


Table 9.2: Key to sites mapped

KKP ref	Site	Analysis area	Ownership	Quality score	Value score
6	All Saints Church	South East	Diocese of Oxford		
61	Cemetery, off Baybrooke Road	North Area	Other		
75	Church Hill	North Area	Diocese of Oxford		
77	Church Lane Cemetery	South West	Diocese of Oxford		
210	Mays Lane Burial Ground	North Area	Earley Town Council		
274	Shinfield Cemetery	South West	WBC		
288	St Andrews Church Yard and Graveyard	North Area	Diocese of Oxford		
289	St Catherine's Parish Church Bearwood	South East	Diocese of Oxford		

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KKP ref	Site	Analysis area	Ownership	Quality score	Value score
291	St James' Church and Barkham Park Village Hall	South West	Diocese of Oxford		
292	St James the Great - Ruscombe Church	North Area	Diocese of Oxford		
293	St John the Evangelist	North Area	Diocese of Oxford		
295	St Mary's Church	North Area	Diocese of Oxford		
296	St Nicholas Church	North Area	Diocese of Oxford		
297	St Nicholas Parish Church	North Area	Diocese of Oxford		
297.1	St Nicholas Parish Churchyard	North Area	Diocese of Oxford		
299	St Pauls Church and Parish Rooms	South East	Diocese of Oxford		
301	St Sebastian's Cemetery	South East	WBC		
302	St Sebastian's Church	South East	WBC		
529	St Peter's Church, Earley	South West	Diocese of Oxford		
530	Holy Trinity Church, Grazeley	South West	Diocese of Oxford		
532	St Mary's Church	South West	Diocese of Oxford		
554	Nutbean Cemetery	South West	Swallowfield Parish Council		

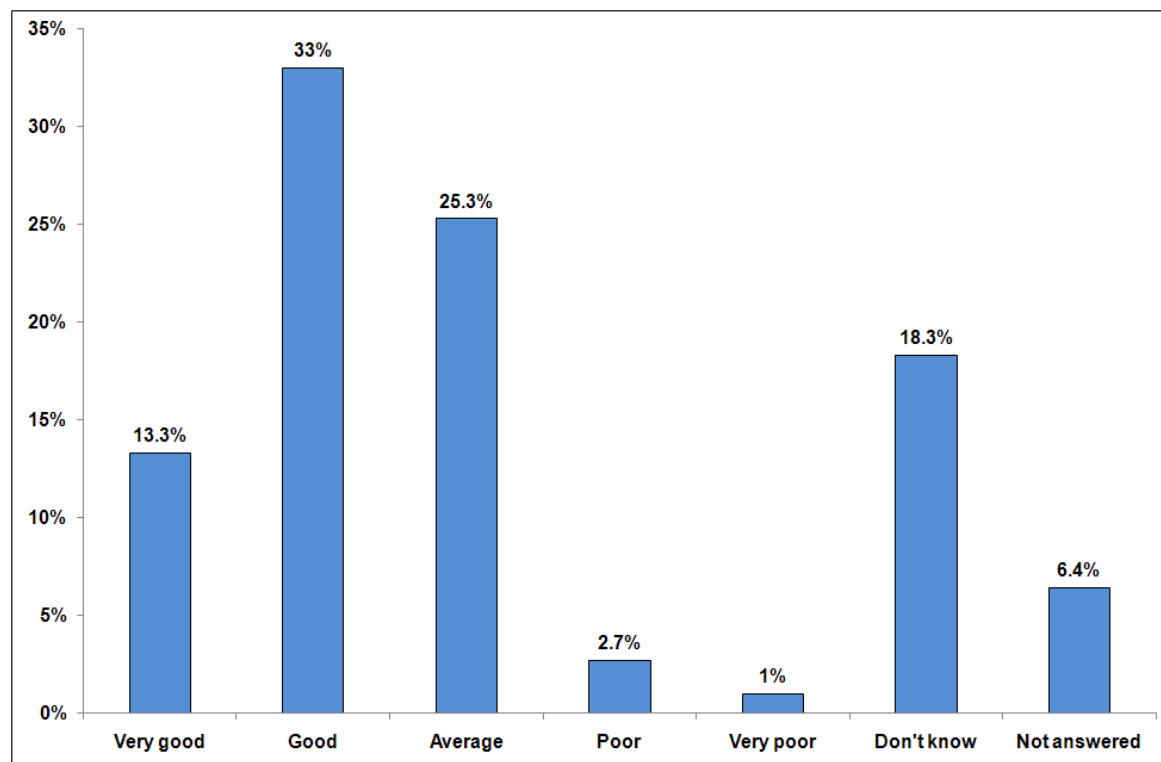
In terms of cemeteries, mapping shows provision is evenly distributed across the Borough. Slightly more sites (10) are located in the North Analysis Area compared to any other.

As noted earlier, the need for additional provision should be driven by burial capacity requirement. Burial capacity in Wokingham is not identified within this report, except for those sites managed by WBC.

The resident survey results suggest the overall provision of cemeteries in the Borough is adequate. A third of respondents (33%) rate the availability of cemetery provision as good. Another quarter (25.3%) views the current amount of provision as average. Furthermore, only a small proportion of residents consider availability to be poor (2.7%) or very poor (1%).

It is likely that the 18.3% of residents that 'don't know' how they would rate availability is a reflection on those respondents who state, earlier, they have never accessed provision in the last year. It may also be possible that responses may be due to a lack of awareness rather than a deficiency in the actual availability of sites.

Figure 9.4: Availability of cemeteries



Management

WBC Owned Cemeteries

Provision of burial space is not a statutory council requirement. However, WBC does manage and maintain two active cemeteries in the Borough; these are St Sebastian's Cemetery in Wokingham Without and Shinfield Cemetery in Shinfield.

The two cemetery sites maintained by WBC are visited by maintenance teams, from Quadron Services Ltd, on a regular basis. On average this is around every 2-3 weeks. This frequency relates to the level of popularity and use of these sites.

In terms of burial capacity, the two sites managed by WBC are both identified as having remaining interment space. In 2007, the remaining areas of unblessed land were consecrated for the use as burial sites by the Bishop of Reading. St Sebastian's Cemetery and Shinfield Cemetery have capacity expected to last for another five and nine years respectively

The WBC Burial Review in 2010 identified the potential at St Sebastian's Cemetery to remove some existing trees in order to provide additional burial space. A detailed tree survey of the site has been commissioned by the Parks Team to determine the amenity value of the landscape.

Furthermore, recommendation six of the Burial Review identifies eight sites for the Councils consideration in having the potential to provide new burial space. No further investigations (e.g. soil samples) of the sites have taken place until they have been tested against the current Strategic Development Location Masterplans. The Review also highlights the opportunity to work with Town and Parish Councils in order to fully explore the future options of burial provision.

Non WBC Cemeteries/Burial Grounds

Maintenance of other cemetery and churchyard sites in the Borough is the responsibility of individual churches. The majority of these are accounted for under the Diocese of Oxford with maintenance being predominately carried out by volunteers from the churches themselves.

Mays Lane Burial Ground is managed and maintained by Earley Town Council. Maintenance is undertaken regularly throughout the year with a push on grass turving taking place in April. An area of the site is also reserved to cater for Islamic burials.

Quality

The methodology for assessing quality is set out in Part 2 (Methodology). The table below summarises the results of the quality assessment for cemeteries in Wokingham. A threshold of 60% is applied in order to identify high and low quality.

Table 9.3: Quality ratings for cemeteries by analysis area

Analysis area	Maximum score	Lowest score	Mean score	Highest score	Spread	Low <60%	High >60%
North Area	155	32%	54%	75%	43%	5	5
South East	155	37%	55%	60%	23%	5	1
South West	155	21%	44%	69%	48%	5	1
WOKINGHAM	155	21%	52%	75%	54%	15	7

The majority of cemeteries in the Borough (68%) are rated as being of a low quality. However, six of the sites given a low score only just fall outside the threshold of 60% set for the difference between low and high scoring sites. Sites for example like St Sebastian's Cemetery (58.3%), St Peter's Church (58.4%) and Shinfield Cemetery (59%) are close to meeting the 60% threshold. As such these sites should not necessarily be regarded as being of a low quality but be encouraged to meet the threshold through continued improvements. This particularly applies to the three sites that are maintained by WBC, as the ability to perform and increase improved quality of these sites will be easier.

The highest scoring site for quality (75.1%) is St Mary's Church in Wargrave. The site scores well due to quality of features such as benches, paths and the garden of remembrance. Maintenance of the site is excellent and this is likely to be as a result of volunteer commitment.

No significant problems or issues are raised with regard to the general quality of provision, reflecting the value and quality of work by those who carry out maintenance at sites across the Borough. However, a couple of instances of inappropriate use are given but these are not reflected in the audit assessment.

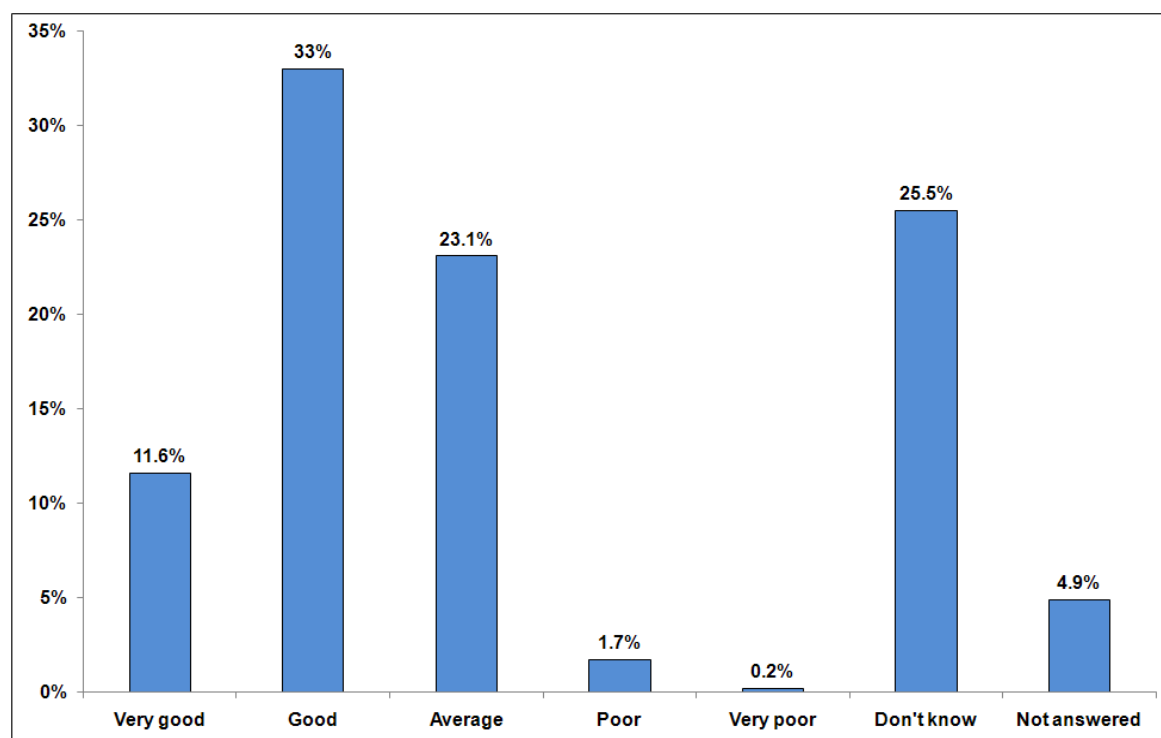
St Paul's Churchyard in Wokingham is reported to suffer from an issue with litter. This is likely to be as a result of the site acting as a cut (as there is a PROW running through it) through for people accessing the nearby railway station and Holt School. However, no issue of litter was noted in the audit assessment.

Consultation with the Swallowfield Neighbourhood Action Group (NAG) reports the Nutbean Cemetery site has recently had drug paraphernalia found in the layby outside. The isolated setting of the site is likely to be an attraction for this kind of misuse. Further investigation and cooperation with the community wardens for the area should be carried out to explore whether the issue is a persistent problem.

The overall positive view of cemetery provision in Wokingham is supported by the results of the resident survey. Nearly half of resident survey respondents (44.6%) rate the quality of cemeteries as above average (good/very good). Most of these, a third of all residents, consider provision to be of a good quality. In addition, a further quarter (23.1%) rate cemeteries in the Borough as average.

Further emphasising the positive perception of provision is the fact only a very small proportion (1.9%) of residents view provision to be below average (poor/very poor) in terms of quality. Again the 25.6% of resident who don't know what quality score they would rate provision is likely to reflect the proportion of residents that have 'never' accessed provision in the last year.

Figure 9.5: Quality of cemeteries



Green Pennant Award

The Green Pennant Award (renamed the Green Flag Community Award), part of the Green Flag Award Scheme, is a national award recognising high quality greenspaces in England and Wales that are managed by voluntary and community groups. One of the main differences to Green Flag is that Green Pennant sites do not require a written management plan, as they are often community-led sites.

Currently there are no Awards designated in Wokingham. However, St Mary's Church in Wargrave is well positioned to be put forward as a possible future applicant given its high score of 75% in the audit. The excellent standard of maintenance on site, including the garden of remembrance, is undertaken by volunteers of the church.

Value

The methodology for assessing value is set out in Part 2 (Methodology). The table below summarises the results of the value assessment for cemeteries in Wokingham. A threshold of 20% is applied to cemeteries in order to identify high and low value.

Table 9.4: Value ratings for cemeteries by analysis area

Analysis area	Maximum score	Lowest score	Mean score	Highest score	Spread	Low <20%	High >20%
North Area	85	20%	41%	72%	52%	0	10
South East	85	31%	36%	48%	18%	0	6
South West	85	28%	33%	42%	14%	0	6
WOKINGHAM	85	20%	37%	72%	52%	0	22

All cemeteries are assessed as being of high value, reflecting the role they play in peoples' lives. Value scores are supported by the work that volunteers provide in helping to maintain the majority of sites in the Borough.

Furthermore, sites can have added value through catering for multi religion burial. Both Mays Lane Cemetery and Shinfield Cemetery cater for Muslim burials.

In addition, the cultural/heritage value of sites and the sense of place they provide to the local community are acknowledged in the site assessment data. The majority are scored for their contribution to wildlife/habitats or sense of place to the local environment.

Summary

Cemeteries summary

- ◀ WBC is identified as having 22 sites classified as cemeteries, equating to just over 26 hectares of provision in Wokingham.
- ◀ Availability of provision is considered overall to be good with sites being evenly distributed across the Borough.
- ◀ Management of sites is predominately undertaken by individual churches, although two active sites, Shinfield Cemetery and St Sebastian's Cemetery, are run by WBC. Collectively these sites have 14 years remaining of burial space capacity.
- ◀ There are currently no Green Pennant Award (now Green Flag Community Award) sites in Wokingham. However, St Mary's Church in Wargrave, which receives the highest score of 75% for quality, is well positioned to be submitted for a future Award. Especially as the high level of maintenance for the site is carried out by dedicated church volunteers.
- ◀ The majority of cemeteries (68%) within the WBC audit are rated as low quality. However, six sites that score low only just fall outside the 60% threshold. No significant problems or issues are raised with regard to the general quality of provision. However, Nutbean Cemetery and St Paul's Churchyard are perceived to suffer from instances of misuse through evidence of drug paraphernalia and litter respectively.
- ◀ All cemeteries are assessed as high value in Wokingham, reflecting that generally provision has cultural/heritage value and provide a sense of place to the local community.

PART 10: CIVIC SPACE

Introduction

The civic space typology, as set out in PPG17: A Companion Guide includes civic and market squares and other hard surfaced areas designed for pedestrians, providing a setting for civic buildings, public demonstrations and community events.

Key issues

Current provision

There are just two formal civic space sites, equating to over one hectares of provision, identified in Wokingham. However, there are likely to be other informal pedestrian areas or market squares which residents view as civic space.

Table 10.1: Distribution of civic spaces by analysis area

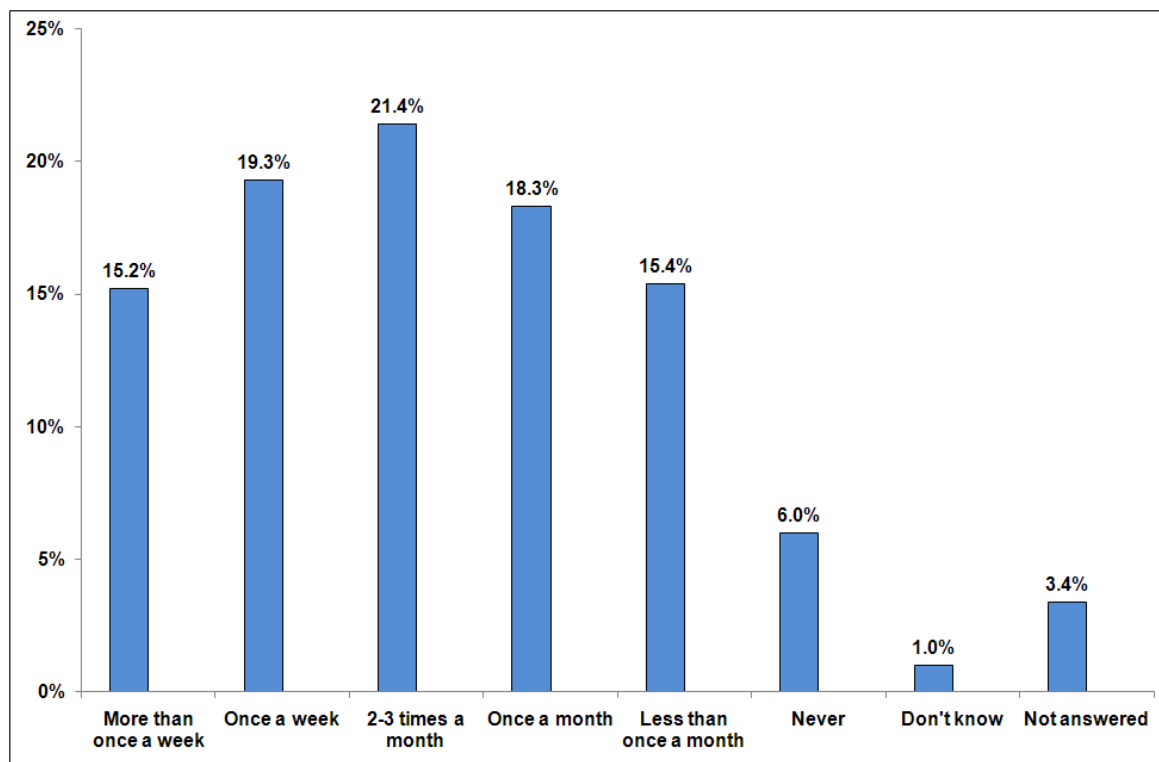
Analysis area	Civic space		
	Number of sites	Size (ha)	Current standard (2008) (Ha per 1,000 population)
North Area	1	1.12	0.02
South East	1	0.69	0.01
South West	-	-	-
WOKINGHAM	2	1.81	0.01

Usage

Civic space is the second most visited typology in the resident survey. A total of 89.6% of all respondents signal they have visited a civic space site in the last 12 months. Most people access provision on a fairly regular basis with just over a fifth of respondents (21.4%) identifying they visit provision 2-3 times a month.

A significant number of individuals also access provision more regularly. Just under a fifth (19.3%) state they visit a civic space site once a week, whilst a further 15.2% indicate they access provision more than once a week.

Figure 10.1: Usage frequency of civic space in the previous 12 months



Young people in Wokingham also show an interest in civic spaces, with 27% of respondents stating they have accessed provision in the last 12 months. The most likely reason for this is to meet with friends (59.1%).

Accessibility

Over half (54%) of all respondents are willing to walk to reach civic space, although, nearly a third (29.6%) of respondents state they will travel by transport. Overall, most residents (19.5%) are willing to walk over 15 minutes to access a civic space site.

In keeping with the high level of usage, only a combined 16.4% of respondents either don't know how far they would be willing to travel or do not provide an answer.

Figure 10.2: Time prepared to travel to reach a civic space

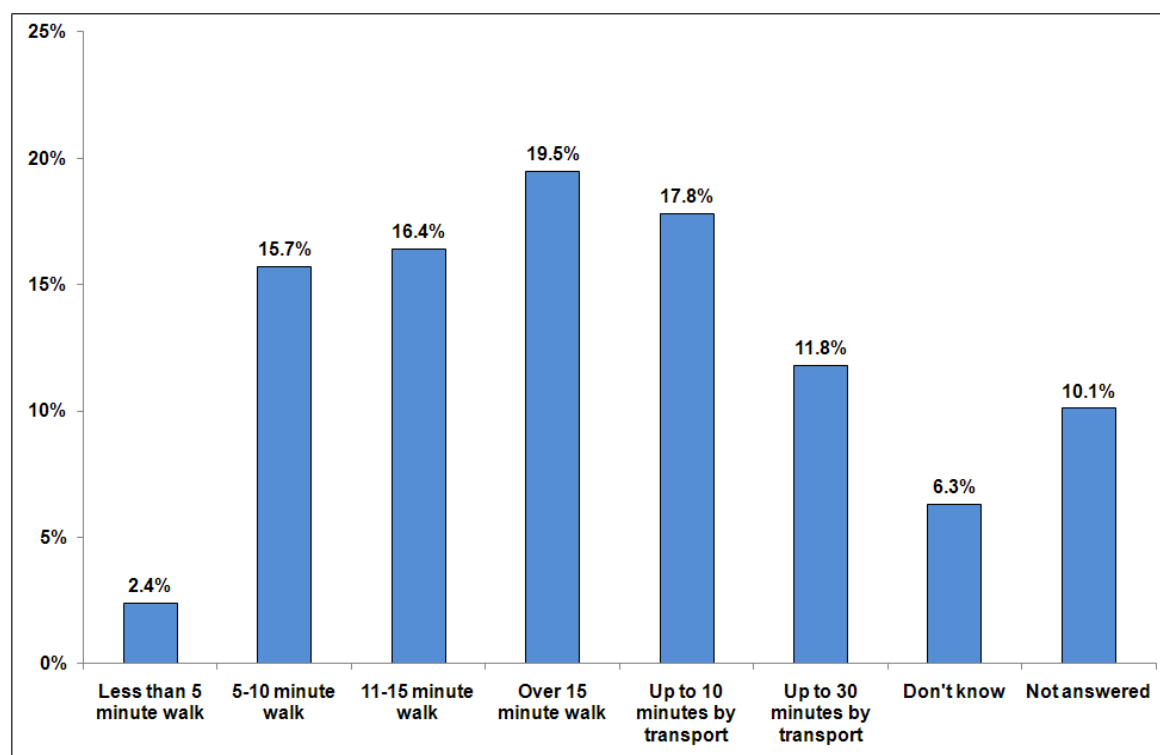


Table 10.2: Civic spaces in Wokingham

KKP ref	Site	Analysis area	Ownership	Quality score	Value score
555	Woodley Centre	North Area	WBC		
556	Market Place	South East	WBC		

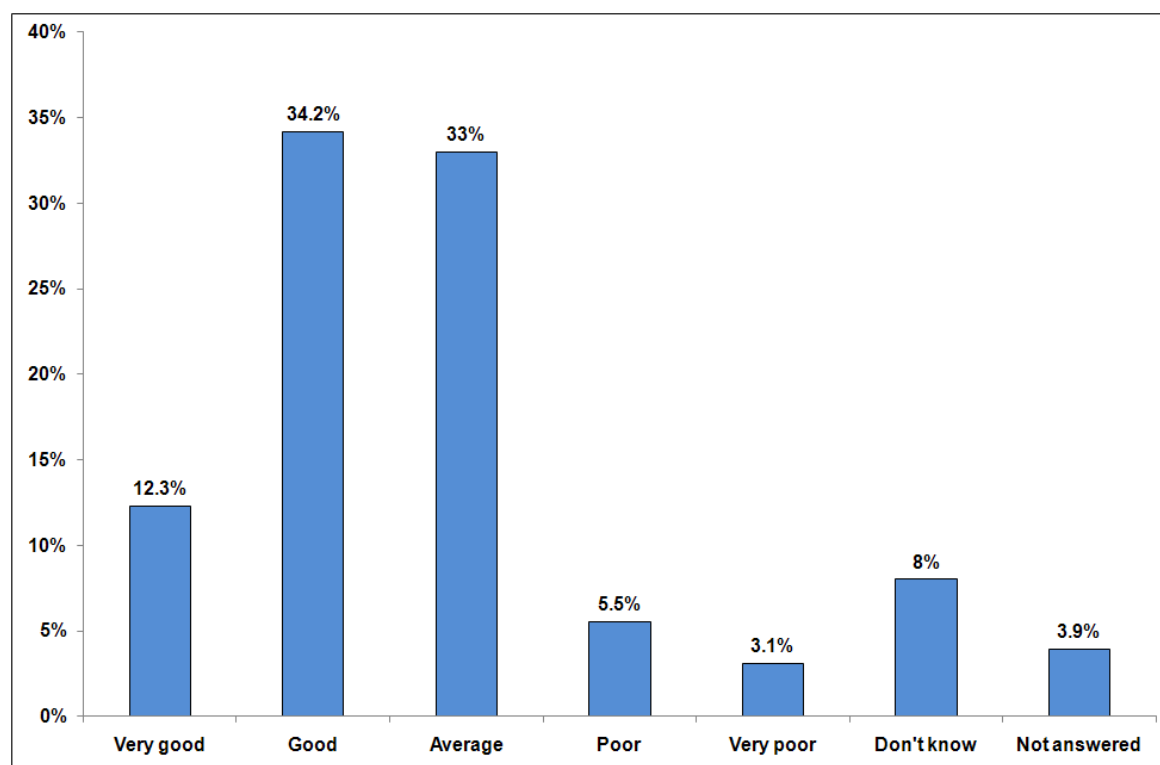
The two formal civic spaces identified in the audit are provided in the larger settlements of Wokingham and Woodley. Given the nature of the typology it makes sense for civic space provision to be found in the areas with higher population densities.

Consultation supports the consensus that the amount of civic space in the Borough is good. Comments often refer to civic facilities being 'more than adequate'. Furthermore, the close proximity of civic space in Reading Town Centre is likely to provide some level of provision to Wokingham. In addition, sites such as Howard Palmer Gardens and Elmsfield are classified as parks but also provide a secondary role as a civic space and a space for events. The future development of the Elmsfield site is also likely to contribute additional civic space provision in the future.

Overall, residents rate the availability of civic space as above average (good/very good) with nearly a half (46.5%) of respondents citing this. A further third of residents (33%) view provision to be average.

Reflecting the frequency and quality ratings, only a small proportion of residents considers the amount of civic space to be poor (5.5%) or very poor (3.1%). This suggests the current level of provision is adequate and meets the needs of residents in the Borough.

Figure 10.3: Availability of civic space



Quality

The methodology for assessing quality is set out in Part 2 (Methodology). The table below summarises the results of the quality assessment for civic spaces in Wokingham. A threshold of 60% is applied in order to identify high and low quality.

Table 10.3: Quality ratings for civic spaces by analysis area

Analysis area	Maximum score	Lowest score	Mean score	Highest score	Spread	Low <60%	High >60%
North Area	137	74%	74%	74%	0%	0	1
South East	137	77%	77%	77%	0%	0	1
South West	137	-	-	-	-	-	-
WOKINGHAM	137	74%	76%	77%	2%	0	2

The two civic spaces are, in general, regarded as being of high quality. Both offer the opportunities for events to be held at the heart of the local community. In addition to being well served by public transport, due to their location in the centre of settlements, the two sites form the focal point for retail provision in the Borough.

Wokingham Town Centre is the subject of regeneration plans by WBC in the near future. Specific plans in the Wokingham Town Centre Masterplan are still being developed but the Council acknowledges 'a sensitive and balanced approach is required'. A focus of the development is the Elmsfield site close to the urban centre of Wokingham, defined in this study as a park and garden. The value of the site is widely recognised and a key objective of its future will be to create an attractive high quality greenspace, helping to improve the competitiveness of the town centre.

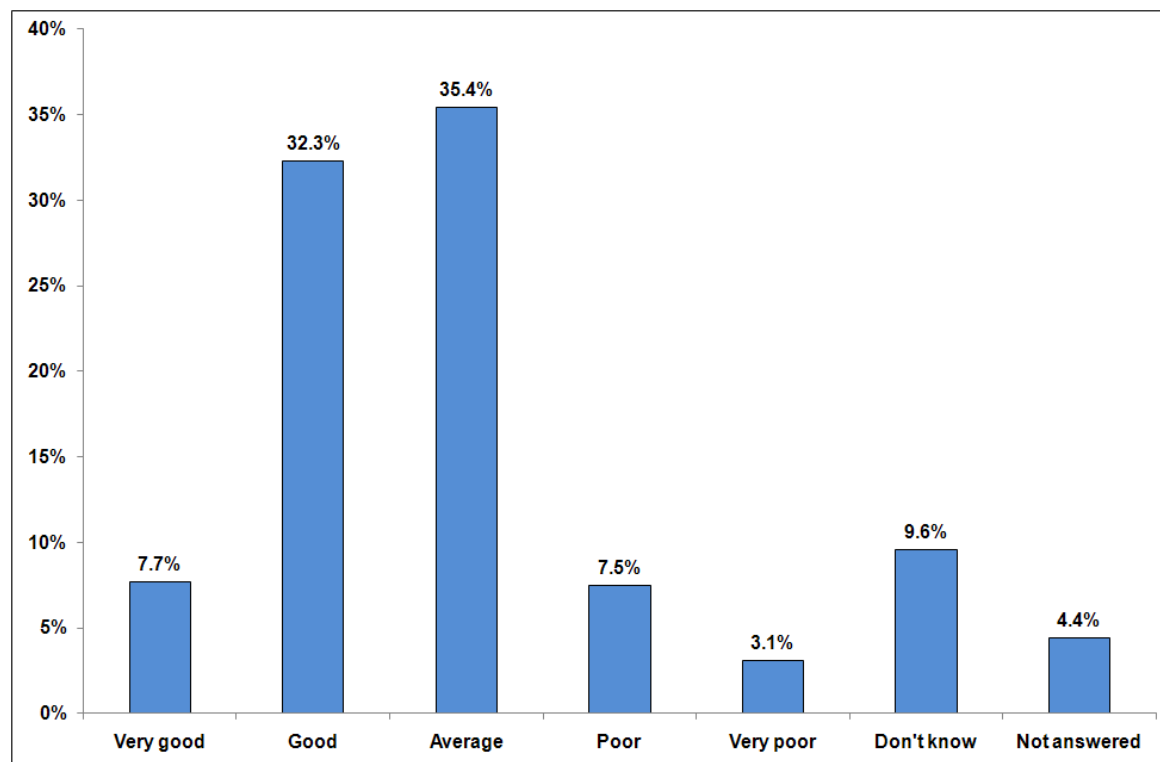
In the long-term this new 'event/green space' will help to maintain the level of high quality civic space provision available in the Borough.

Provision of civic flower displays is no longer undertaken by WBC due to budget restraints. This does not seem to have an impact on the overall quality but is suggested through consultation as a way of potentially improving the visual quality of sites. A future aspiration may be to work in partnership with volunteers to help create and maintain such features on civic space sites. An alternative idea could be to consider sponsoring sites and sections of sites to local nurseries and charities etc.

The resident survey found that respondents consider the quality of civic spaces positively. Nearly a third (32.3%) rate civic space as being of a good quality, with a further 7.7% rating provision as very good. The largest proportion of residents (35.4%) views the typology of civic spaces as being average in quality.

As seen for the other results for civic space very few residents (10.6%) rate the quality of provision as below average (poor/very poor).

Figure 10.4: Quality of civic spaces



Value

The methodology for assessing value is set out in Part 2 (Methodology). The table below summarises the results of the value assessment for civic spaces in Wokingham. A threshold of 20% is applied to civic spaces in order to identify high and low value.

Table 10.4: Value ratings for civic spaces by analysis area

Analysis area	Maximum score	Lowest score	Mean score	Highest score	Spread	Low <20%	High >20%
North Area	85	71%	71%	71%	0%	0	1
South East	85	59%	59%	59%	0%	0	1
South West	85	-	-	-	-	-	-
WOKINGHAM	85	59%	65%	71%	12%	0	2

Both civic spaces are assessed as high value, reflecting that provision has cultural/heritage value whilst also providing a sense of place to the local community. This is further supported by the consultation, which confirms the social and cultural value of civic spaces through their use as attractive shopping and event spaces. The role of provision in providing breaks from urban landscapes is also commented upon during consultation.

The value of civic spaces is demonstrated by the range of different events held on sites of this kind. For example, Woodley Centre hosts a number of attractions such as regular car boot sales, farmers and Christmas markets. The Market Place in Wokingham also holds a regular weekly market and is the location for the towns Christmas tree and lights switch on.

Summary

Civic space summary

- ▶ Two sites are classified as civic spaces in Wokingham equating to over one hectare of provision.
- ▶ Civic spaces are provided in the larger settlements of Wokingham and Woodley. In addition, sites such as Elmsfield and Howard Palmer Gardens, which are classified under the typology of parks, are also felt to provide a secondary function as civic space. Furthermore, the close proximity of civic space in Reading Town Centre is likely to provide some level of provision to the Borough.
- ▶ Reflecting this, availability and quality of provision is overall rated as good.
- ▶ Regeneration of Wokingham Town Centre will see the likely future development of a civic/event space as part of the Elmsfield project. This future project should help to maintain the high level of civic space provision within the Borough.
- ▶ Both civic spaces are assessed as high value, reflecting provision has a cultural/heritage value and provides a sense of place to the local community. This is further supported by the consultation, which highlights the social and cultural value of civic spaces resulting from their use as attractive shopping and event spaces.

PART 11: GREEN CORRIDORS

Introduction

The typology of green corridors, as set out in PPG17: A Companion Guide includes sites that offer opportunities for 'walking, cycling or horse riding, whether for leisure purposes or travel and opportunities for wildlife migration'. This also includes river and canal banks, road and rail corridors, cycling routes, pedestrian paths, rights of way and permissive paths.

Key issues

Current provision

The Borough's PROW network consists of just less than 230 km. Most of the network (151.9km) takes the form of footpaths. There is also the equivalent of 22.8km of bridleways, 38.5km of byways and 16.4km of restricted byways within the Borough.

Wokingham has a designated PROW Officer and has already adopted, in December 2009, a Rights Of Way Improvement Plan (ROWIP). The ROWIP for Wokingham identifies the following key aims to:

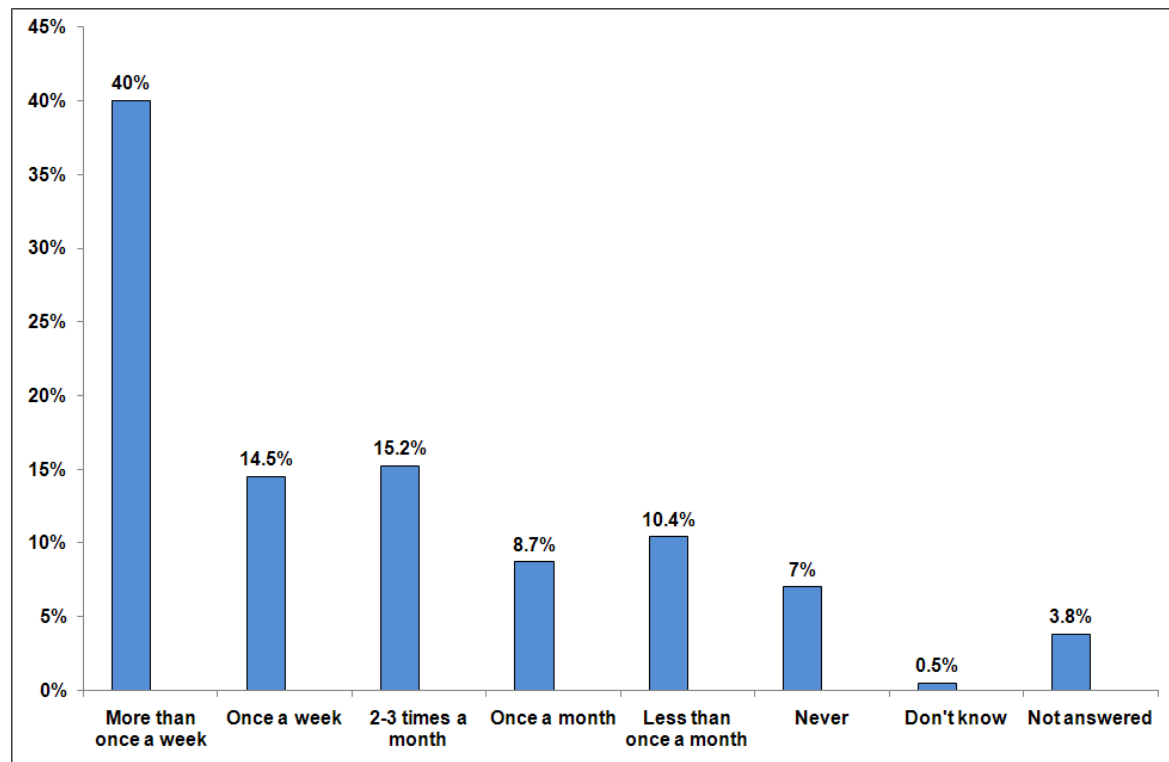
- ◀ Identify ways to improve access on PROW for those with visual or mobility impairments and to extend wherever possible the accessibility of the network.
- ◀ Encourage greater use of the PROW network especially by current non-users.
- ◀ Improve access to open space typologies in the Borough via PROW, creating links from these to urban areas.
- ◀ Ensure future improvements to the PROW network are included within the Local Development Framework (LDF) and that new developments contribute to the maintenance of existing PROW and the creation of new PROW.
- ◀ Increase opportunities for sustainable travel where appropriate to places of work and schools, using existing PROW or by creating new PROW.
- ◀ Enhance the range, type and accessibility of information available about the PROW network.

One of the largest contributors to provision is the Thames Path National Trail. This follows the River Thames for 184 miles from source to sea. It is a long distance walking route only and for most of its length cannot be cycled. Within Wokingham Borough Council the Path follows the River Thames through the outskirts of Reading, Sonning, Wargrave, Henley-on-Thames and Remenham.

Usage

Respondents identify footpath/cycle paths to be a well visited typology. The majority of respondents (88%) signal they have accessed such provision in the last 12 months. Of these, most (40%) do so more than once a week.

Figure 11.1: Usage frequency of green corridors in the previous 12 months

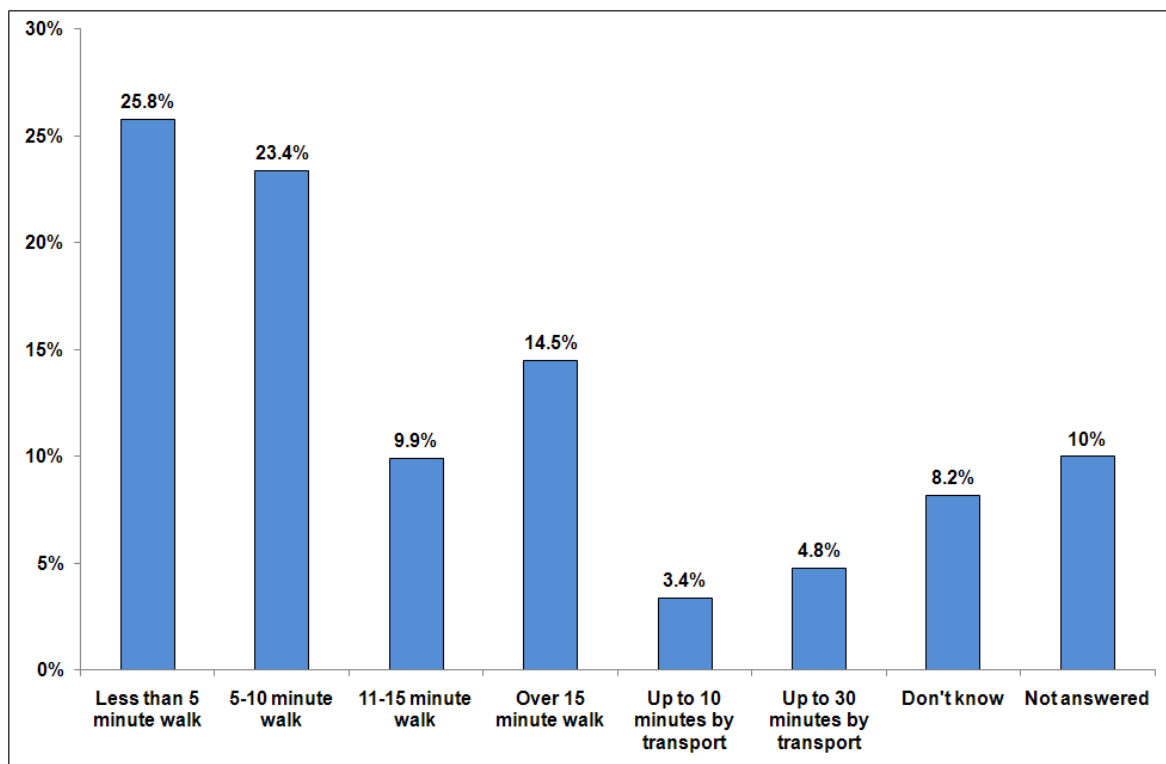


Accessibility

Nearly three quarters of respondents (73.6%) are willing to walk to reach green corridor provision. Furthermore only a small percentage of respondents (8.2%) state they will travel by transport to a green corridor. Overall, most residents (25.8%) are willing to walk less than five minutes to access a green corridor.

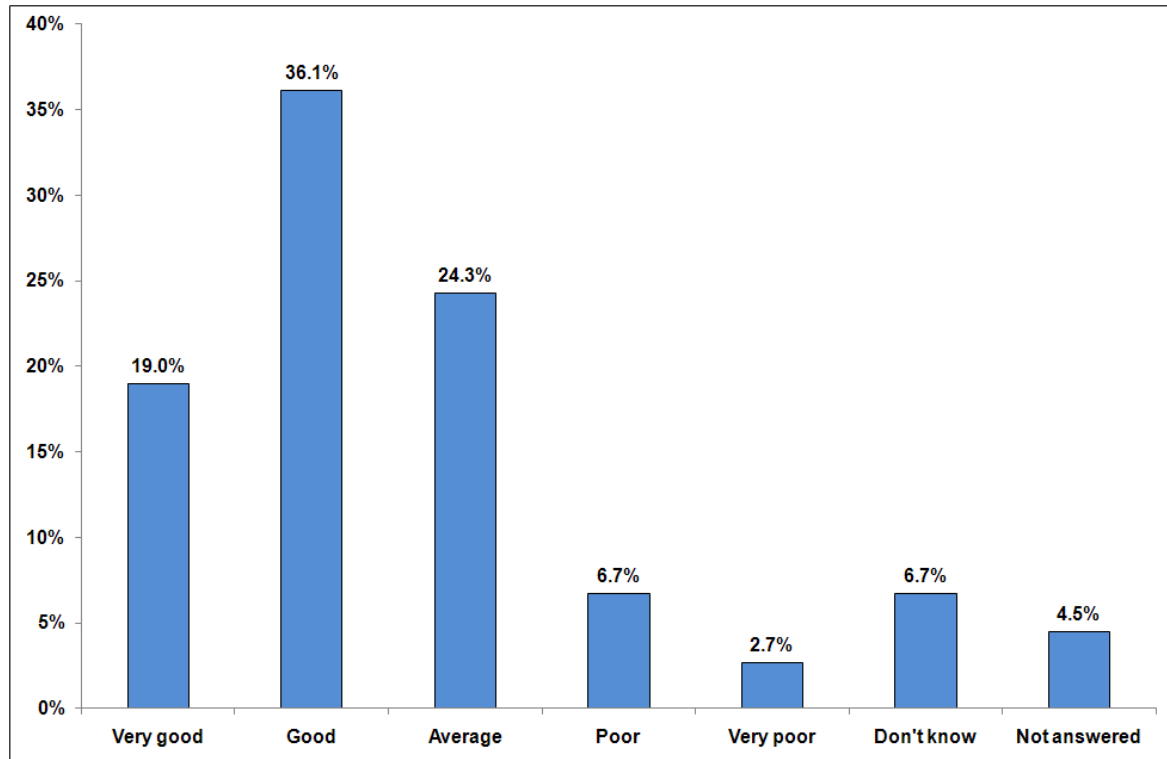
In keeping with the high level of usage, only a combined 18.2% of respondents either don't know how far they would be willing to travel or do not provide an answer.

Figure 11.2: Time prepared to travel to reach a green corridor



Availability of footpath/cyclepath provision is, in general, viewed well by respondents. Just over a third (36%) considers the amount of provision to be good, with a further 19% rating current provision as very good.

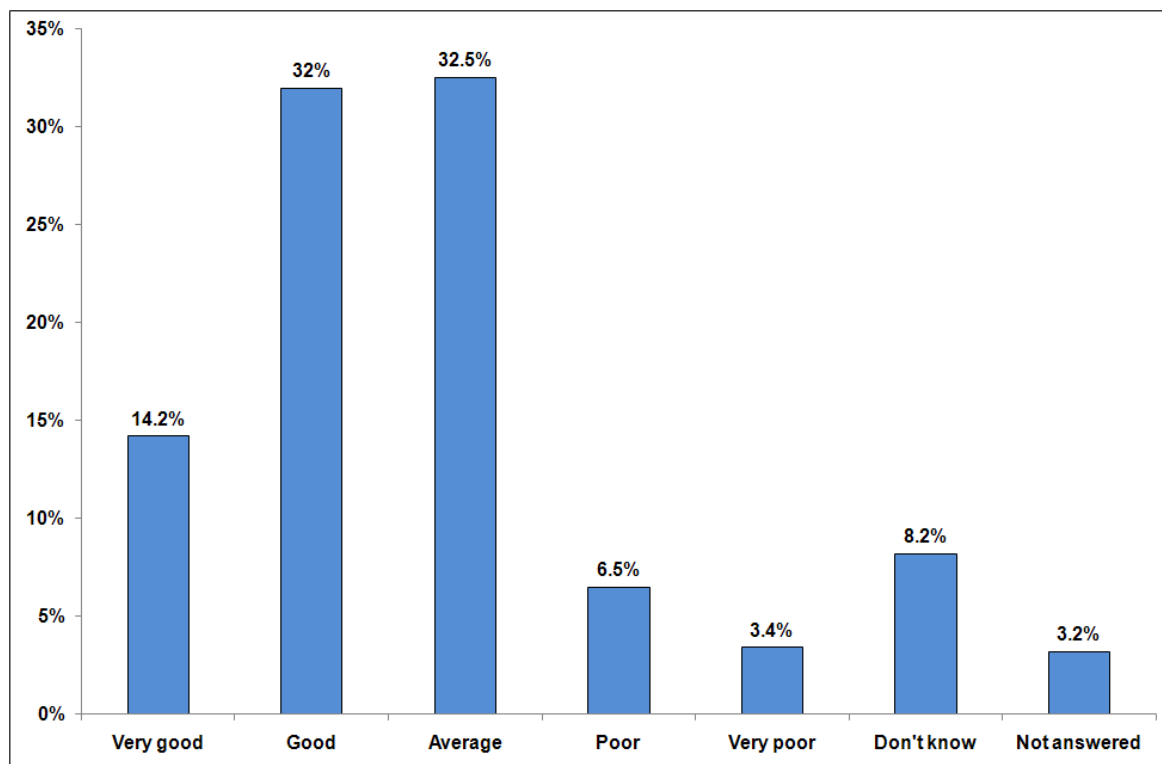
Figure 11.3: Availability of green corridors



Quality

Quality of provision is also rated favourable with a similar proportion of respondents rating footpath/cycle paths as good (32%) or average (32.5%). Only a small percentage of respondents views quality of provision as poor (6.5%) or very poor (3.4%).

Figure 11.4: Quality of green corridors



As part of the ROWIP the Council carried out a range of public consultations. In summary, the key points identified are for improved availability of information, better accessibility for wheelchairs/pushchairs, seasonal restrictions on some byways, continuing maintenance of PROW, linking of paths to create circular routes and reducing personal safety concerns.

Summary

Greenspace summary

- ◆ The Borough's PROW network consists of just less than 230 km. Most of the network (151.9km) takes the form of footpaths. There is also the equivalent of 22.8km of bridleways, 38.5km of byways and 16.4km of restricted byways within the Borough. One of the largest contributors to provision is the Thames Path National Trail.
- ◆ The majority of respondents signal they have accessed such provision in the last 12 months. Of these, most do so more than once a week.
- ◆ Quality of provision is also rated favourable with a similar proportion of respondents rating footpath/cycle paths as good (32%) or average (32.5%).
- ◆ Key points from consultation identified areas for improvement - availability of information, better accessibility for wheelchairs/pushchairs, seasonal restrictions on some byways, continuing maintenance of PROW, linking of paths to create circular routes and reducing personal safety concerns.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Stakeholders

Name	Designation	Organisation
Julia Woodbridge	Horticulture & Amenities Co-ordinator	WBC, Parks Team
Chris Buggy	Countryside Co-ordinator	WBC, Countryside Team
Andy Glencross	Ecology and Countryside Services	WBC, Countryside Team
Jane Stevens	Outdoor Play & Development Officer	WBC, Parks Team
Steve Smith	Horticulture and Amenities Officer	WBC, Parks Team
Jennifer Watson	Horticulture and Amenities Officer	WBC, Parks Team
Beverley Thomson	Sports and Leisure Co-ordinator	WBC, Sports & Leisure Team
Angie Gibson	Resources Manager	WBC, Business Services
Louise Strongitharm	Policy Manager – Community Infrastructure	WBC
Chris Gillette	Asset Management	WBC
Jane Ireland	Principle Policy Planner	WBC
Alison Ward	Clerk	Parish Council (Arborfield and Newland)
Judith Neuhofer	Clerk	Parish Council (Barkham)
Mr. I Cohen	Clerk	Parish Council (Charvil)
Barrie Shelton	Clerk	Parish Council (Remenham)
Mr D J Couzens	Clerk	Parish Council (Ruscombe)
Mrs J Barnes	Clerk	Parish Council (Shinfield)
Mrs L Bates	Clerk	Parish Council (Sonning)
Mrs Maria Bradshaw	Clerk	Parish Council (St Nicholas Hurst)
Celia Adams	Clerk	Parish Council (Swallowfield)
John March	Clerk	Parish Council (Twyford)
Stephen Hedges	Clerk	Parish Council (Wargrave)
Clive Hudson	Clerk	Parish Council (Winnersh)
Judith Moore	Clerk	Parish Council (Wokingham Without)
Phillip Truppinn	Clerk	Town Council (Earley)
Paul Smith	Amenities Officer	Town Council (Wokingham)
Deborah Mander	Clerk	Town Council (Woodley)
Kevin Murray	Service Support Manager	Town Council (Woodley)
Mike Saynor	Coordinator	Holt Copse Conservation Volunteers
Alastair Driver	Voluntary Warden	Friends of Ali's Pond LNR
Steve Bailey	Manager	Blackwater Valley Countryside Project
Iain Oldcorn	Chairman	Moor Green Lakes Group
Jude Whyte	Area Manager – Woodley and	WBC

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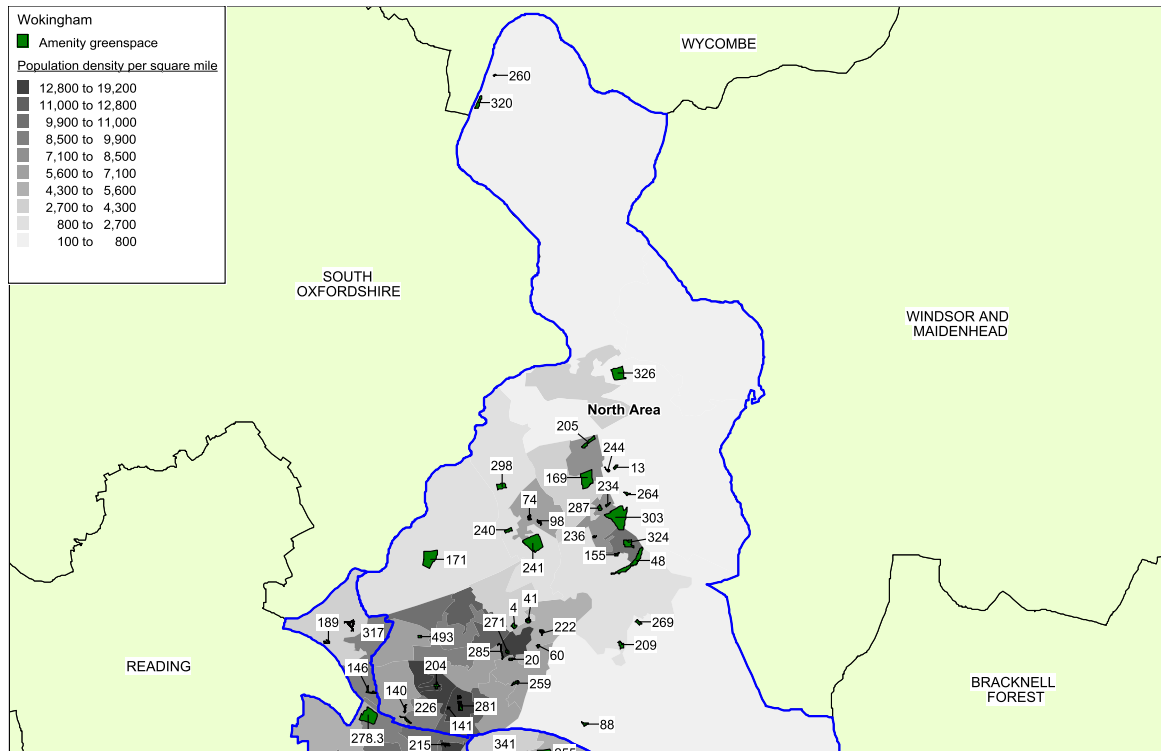
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Name	Designation	Organisation
	North	
Alan Tiplady	Area Manager – Earley and South West	WBC
Nigel Shaw	Head of Youth Service	WBC
David Wilby	Senior Transport Planner	WBC
Rebecca Walkley	Countryside Officer	WBC
Emma Bacca	Community Warden	WBC
Zarron Phillips	Community Warden	WBC
Mohammed Ahmed	Community Warden	WBC
Jennie Cox	Community Warden	WBC
Harun Kimani	Community Warden	WBC
Robert Newman	Chair	Barkham and Arborfield Neighbourhood Action Group
Celia Adams	Chair	Shinfield and Swallowfield Neighbourhood Action Group
Stuart Barnes	Chair	Woosehill and Emmbrook Neighbourhood Action Group
Pat Rowell	Chair	Winnersh Neighbourhood Action Group
Peter Must	Chairman	Wokingham Society
Brian Hoare	Former member	Wokingham Healthy Walks Scheme
Sheila Garfoot	Chair	Dinton Walking Group
Fraser Cottington	Chairman	Friends of Lavell's Lake
Chris Young	Chairman	Shinfield Allotment Holders and Gardeners Association
-	Staff Member	Heathlands Garden Centre
Angela King	Administrative Assistant	Parish Council (Shinfield)
Barbara Stagles	Chair	Wokingham District Veteran Tree Association
David Green	Bridges Resource Centre	Registered Manager

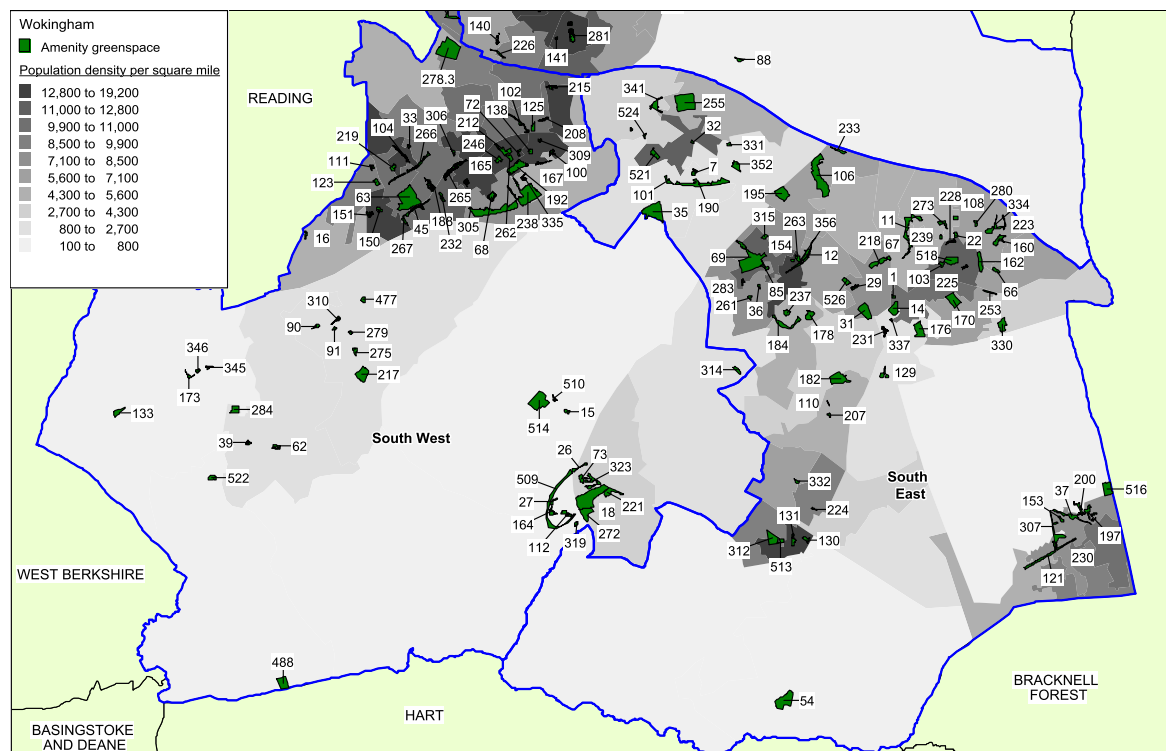
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Appendix 2: Amenity greenspace maps

North Area:



South East and South West:



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PPG17 OPEN SPACE AUDIT UPDATE

Key to maps:

KKP Ref	Site	Analysis area	Ownership	Quality	Value
1	Adjacent Paddocks and Car Park	South East	WBC		
4	Alderwood Open Space	North Area	WBC		
7	Alnatt Avenue	South East	WBC		
11	Amenity Green Space By Cantlry Park	South East	WBC		
12	Amenity Space / North Flood Plain	South East	WBC		
13	Amenity Space off London Road	North Area	WBC		
14	Amenity Space Opposite Elms Park	South East	WBC		
15	Anderson Crescent Open Space	South West	WBC		
16	Anson Crescent	South West	WBC		
18	Arborfield Garrison Recreation	South West	MOD		
20	Armstrong Way	North Area	WBC		
22	Ashridge Open Space	South East	WBC		
26	Baird Road	South West	WBC		
27	Baird Road Amenity	South West	WBC		
29	Banbury Close	South East	WBC		
31	Barkham Recreation Ground	South East	WBC		
32	Bathurst Rd Open Space	South East	WBC		
33	Beaconsfield Way	South West	WBC		
35	Bearwood Recreation Ground	South East	Winnersh Parish Council		
36	Bedfordshire Way Amenity Space	South East	WBC		
37	Bigshotte Byway	South East	WBC		
39	Blackwater Close Open Space	South West	WBC		
41	Blanchard Close	North Area	WBC		
45	Bradmore Way	South West	WBC		
54	Burn Moor Amenity Space	South East	WBC		
60	Catalina Close	North Area	WBC		
62	Century Drive Open Space	South West	WBC		
66	Charwood Road Open Space	South East	WBC		
67	Chatsworth Avenue	South East	WBC		
68	Chatteris Way	South West	WBC		
69	Simons Park	South East	WBC		
72	Chilcombe Way (South)	South West	WBC		

WOKINGHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL

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KKP Ref	Site	Analysis area	Ownership	Quality	Value
73	Valon Road Open Space	South West	Other publicly owned		
74	Chilton Drive Amenity Space	North Area	WBC		
85	Culloden Way Recreation Ground	South East	WBC		
88	Davis Street Playing Field	North Area	WBC		
90	Deardon Way 2	South West	WBC		
91	Deardon Way 3	South West	WBC		
98	Vale View	North Area	WBC		
100	Eastington Drive Open Space	South West	WBC		
101	Eden Way	South East	WBC		
102	Egremont Drive	South West	WBC		
103	Elizabeth Park	South East	WBC		
104	Elm Lane	South West	WBC		
106	Emmbrook Walk	South East	WBC		
108	Eustace Crescent	South East	WBC		
110	Evendons Lane Open Space	South East	WBC		
111	Fair Lawn Green	South West	WBC		
112	Faraday Amenity	South West	WBC		
121	New Wokingham Road	South East	WBC		
123	Frensham Green Open Space	South West	WBC		
125	Gipsy Lane Filed	South West	WBC		
129	Gorrick Square (West)	South East	WBC		
130	Gorse Ride Amenity Space	South East	WBC		
131	Gorse Ride Woods Open Space	South East	WBC		
133	Grazely Village Hall	South West	WBC		
138	Hawkendon Way Open Space	South West	WBC		
140	Hazel Drive (South)	North Area	WBC		
141	Hearn Road	North Area	WBC		
146	High Tree Drive Amenity Space	South West	WBC		
150	Hilmanton North	South West	WBC		
151	Hilmanton South	South West	WBC		
153	Holmbury Avenue	South East	WBC		
154	Humber Close	South East	WBC		
155	Hurst Park	North Area	WBC		

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KKP Ref	Site	Analysis area	Ownership	Quality	Value
160	Keep Hatch Copse	South East	WBC		
162	Keep Hatch Road	South East	WBC		
164	Kelvin Close Amenity	South West	Other publicly owned		
165	Kensington Close Open Space	South West	WBC		
167	Kilnsea Lane Open Space	South West	WBC		
169	King George Field	North Area	Twyford Parish Council		
170	King George V Recreation Ground	South East	WBC		
171	King George's Field	North Area	Sonning Parish Council		
173	Kingfisher Grove	South West	WBC		
176	Langborough Recreation Ground	South East	WBC		
178	Laurel Close	South East	WBC		
182	Leslie Sears and Viking Playing Field	South East	Wokingham Town Council		
184	Limmerhill Road Amenity Space	South East	WBC		
188	Loddon Valley Leisure Centre	South West	Private sector		
189	Logo Roundabout	South West	WBC		
190	Longdon Road	South East	WBC		
192	Lower Earley Events Field	South West	WBC		
195	Lowther Road Recreation Ground	South East	WBC		
197	Lupin Ride	South East	WBC		
200	Lupin Ride (West)	South East	WBC		
204	Malone Road Open Space	North Area	WBC		
205	Malvern Way	North Area	WBC		
207	Manor Road Open Space	South East	WBC		
208	Markby Way	South West	WBC		
209	Martineau Lane Open Space	North Area	WBC		
212	Measham Way	South West	WBC		
215	Mill Lane Open Space	South West	WBC		
217	Millworth Lane Recreation Ground	South West	Shinfield Parish Council		
218	Milton Gardens	South East	WBC		
219	Mint Close	South West	WBC		
221	MOD Police Site	South West	MOD		

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KKP Ref	Site	Analysis area	Ownership	Quality	Value
222	Mollison Close Open Space	North Area	WBC		
223	Montague Close	South East	WBC		
224	Mornington Ave Open Space	South East	WBC		
225	Mylne Square Amenity Space	South East	WBC		
226	Nightingale Road	North Area	WBC		
228	Norreys Avenue	South East	WBC		
230	Oaklands Lane Byway	South East	WBC		
231	Oakley Drive	South East	WBC		
232	Odell Close	South West	WBC		
233	Old Forest Road	South East	WBC		
234	Orchard Park Open Space	North Area	WBC		
236	Orpington Close	North Area	WBC		
237	Owl Close	South East	WBC		
238	Paddick Drive	South West	WBC		
239	Paiuce Green	South East	WBC		
240	Park Lane Open Space	North Area	WBC		
241	Park Lane Community Hall and Amenity Space	North Area	WBC		
244	Penfield Amenity Space	North Area	WBC		
246	Pickwell Close	South West	WBC		
252	Rainbow Park Amenity Space		WBC		
253	Rances Lane	South East	WBC		
255	Recreation Ground off Arbor Lane	South East	WBC		
259	Redwood Ave Open Space	North Area	WBC		
260	Remenham Parish Village Hall	North Area	Remenham Parish Council		
261	Riding Way	South East	WBC		
262	Roman Way	South West	WBC		
263	Roycroft Lane Natural Space	South East	WBC		
264	Ruscombe Pond	North Area	WBC		
265	Rushey Way	South West	WBC		
266	Rushey Way Amenity Space	South West	WBC		
267	Ryhill Park	South West	WBC		
269	School Rd Open Space	North Area	WBC		
271	Shackleton Way	North Area	WBC		
272	Sheerlands Road	South West	MOD		
273	Shefford Crescent Open Space	South East	WBC		
275	Shinfield Village Green	South West	WBC		

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KKP Ref	Site	Analysis area	Ownership	Quality	Value
278.3	Sol Joel Playing Field	South West	Earley Town Council		
279	Skylark Way	South West	WBC		
280	Sorrel Close	South East	WBC		
281	Southlake Crescent	North Area	WBC		
283	Spencer Close Amenity Space	South East	WBC		
284	Spencers Wood Pavillion	South West	WBC		
285	Spitfire Way	North Area	WBC		
287	Springfield Park Amenity Space	North Area	WBC		
298	St Patrick's Recreation Ground	North Area	Reading University		
303	Stanlake Meadow Recreation Ground	North Area	Twyford Parish Council		
305	Swallows Meadow	South West	WBC		
306	Thannington Way Open Space	South West	WBC		
307	The Brackens	South East	WBC		
309	The Delph	South West	WBC		
310	The Manor	South West	WBC		
312	Gorse Ride Community Centre Open Space	South East	WBC		
314	The Woodlands	South West	WBC		
315	Topaz Close	South East	WBC		
317	Trout Close	South West	WBC		
319	Tyler Drive	South West	WBC		
320	Upper Thames Rowing Club	North Area	Private sector		
323	Venning Road Amenity	South West	Other publicly owned		
324	Waltham Close Amenity Space	North Area	WBC		
326	Woodclyffe Recreation Ground	North Area	WBC		
330	Waterloo Road Amenity Space	South East	WBC		
331	Watmore Lane Open Space	South East	WBC		
332	Waverely Way	South East	WBC		
334	Webb Court	South East	WBC		
335	Wellington Grange	South West	WBC		
337	West Forest Gate Industrial Estate	South East	WBC		
341	Winnersh Triangle	South East	Private sector		
345	Woodcock Close	South West	WBC		

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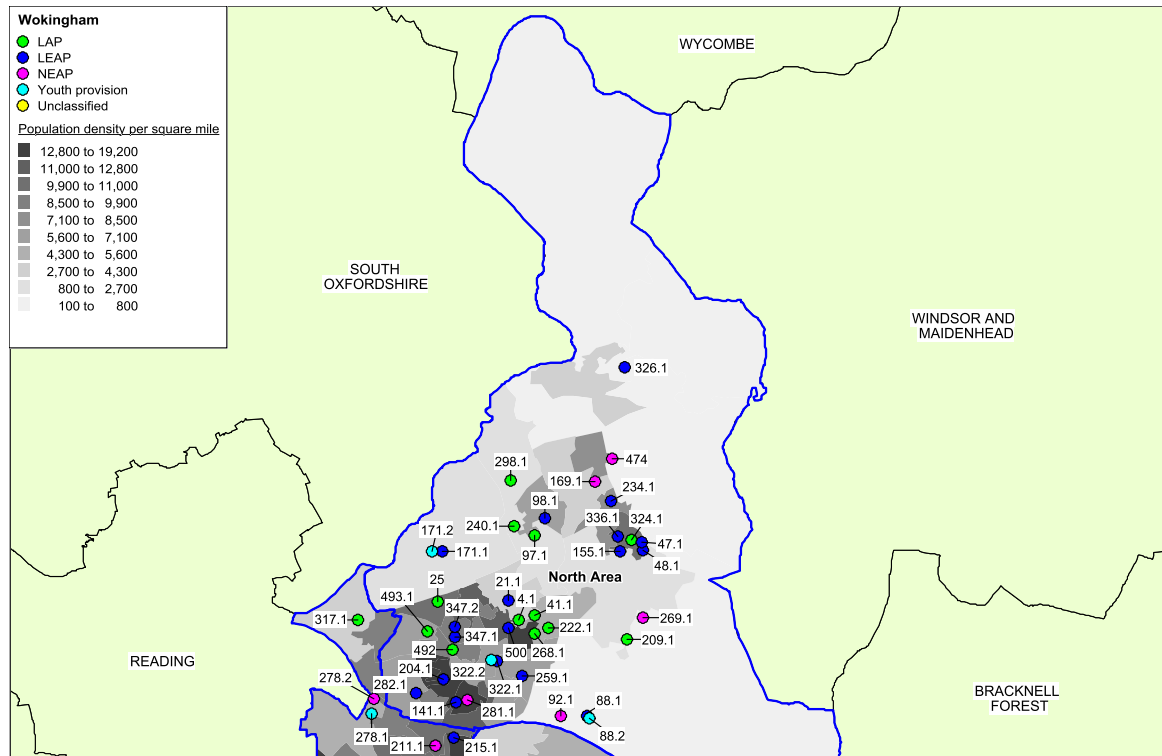
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KKP Ref	Site	Analysis area	Ownership	Quality	Value
346	Woodcock Court	South West	WBC		
352	Woodward Close (North)	South East	WBC		
356	Woosehill Central Reservation	South East	WBC		
477	Kendal Avenue Open Space	South West	WBC		
488	Odiham Road Recreation Ground	South West	Swallowfield Parish Council		
493	Wheble Park	North Area	WBC		
509	Baird Road Open Space	South West	WBC		
510	Arborfield Cross Memorial Site	South West	WBC		
513	Whittle Close Open Space	South East	WBC		
514	Aborfield Park	South West	Arborfield and Newland Parish Council		
516	Pinewood Leisure Centre Playing Fields	South East	WBC		
518	Elizabeth Road Recreation Ground (Pyke Close)	South East	WBC		
521	Guernsey Way Open Space	South East	WBC		
522	Warrens Croft (Benham Drive) Open Space	South West	WBC		
524	Chatswoth Avenue x2 (Jersey Drive) Open Space	South East	WBC		
526	Murray Road Playing Field	South East	WBC		
562	King George V Playing Field, Farley Hill		WBC		
563	Rainbow POS		WBC		

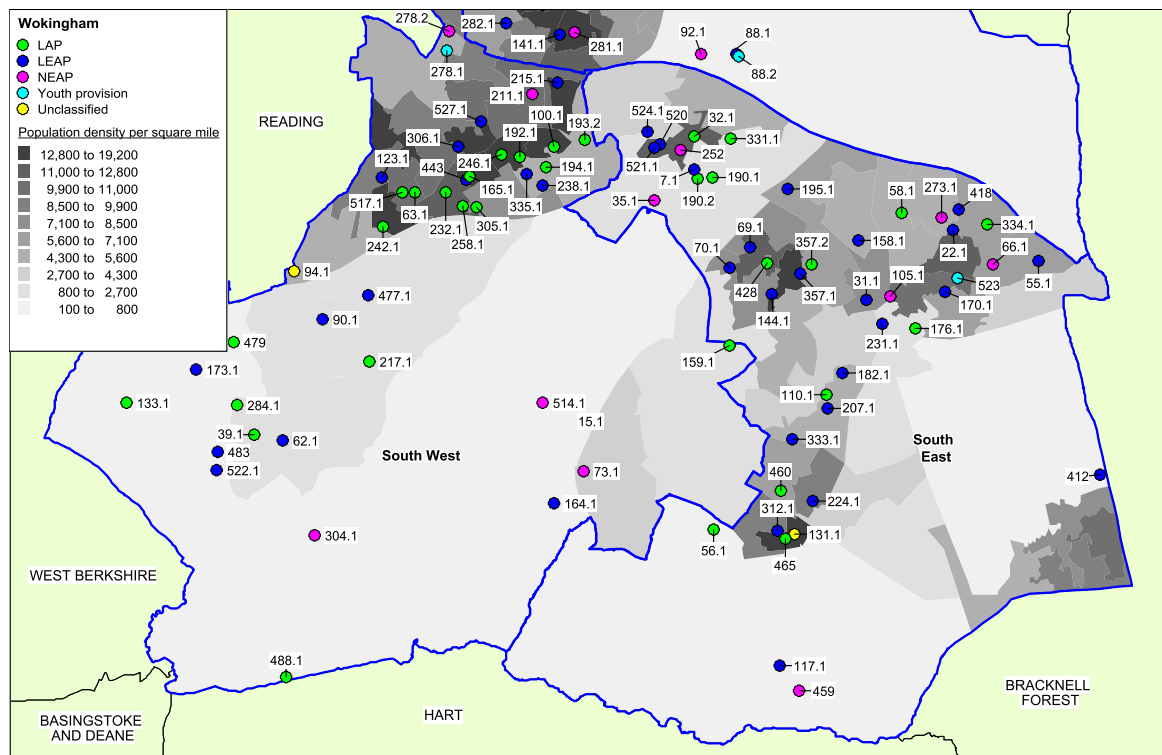
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Appendix 3: Provision for children and young people maps

North Area



South East and South West



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Key to sites mapped:

KKP ref	Site	Analysis area	Ownership	Quality score	Value score
4.1	Alderwood (Mannock Drive) Play Area	North Area	WBC		
7.1	Alnatt Avenue Play Area	South East	WBC		
15.1	Anderson Crescent Play Area	South West	WBC		
21.1	Ashernbury Park Play Area	North Area	WBC		
22.1	Ashridge Road Play Area	South East	WBC		
22.2	Ashridge Road Youth Shelter	North Area	WBC		
25	Badgers Rise	South West	WBC		
27.1	Atwood Drive Play Area	South East	Private sector		
31.1	Barkham Recreation Ground Play Area	South East	WBC		
32.1	Bathurst Rd Play Area	South East	WBC		
35.1	Bearwood Recreation Ground Play Area	South West	Winnersh Parish Council		
39.1	Blackwater Close Play Area	North Area	WBC		
41.1	Blanchard Close Play Area	North Area	WBC		
55.1	Plough Lane (Buttercup Close) Play Area	North Area	WBC		
56.1	California Country Park Play Area	South East	WBC		
58.1	Cantley Park Play Area	South East	WBC		
62.1	Century Drive Play Area	South East	WBC		
66.1	Charwood Road Play Area	South West	WBC		
69.1	Simons Park Play Area	South West	WBC		
69.2	Simons Park Youth Shelter	South East	WBC		
70.1	Chestnut Park Play Area (Ruskin Way)	South East	WBC		
73.1	Valon Road Play Area	South East	Other publicly owned		
88.1	Davis Street Play Area	South West	St Nicholas Parish Council		
88.2	Davis Street Youth Provision	North Area	St Nicholas Parish Council		
90.1	Church Farm (Deardon Way)	North Area	WBC		
92.1	Dinton Pastures Country Park Play Area	South West	WBC		
93.1	Dowles Green Play Area	North Area	Private sector		
94.1	Drewett Close Play Area	South East	WBC		
97.1	East Park Farm Play Area	South West	WBC		
97.2	East Park Farm Youth Shelter	North Area	WBC		
98.1	Vale View Play Area	North Area	WBC		
100.1	Easington Drive Play Area	South West	WBC		
105.1	Elms Field Play Area	South East	WBC		
110.1	Evendons Lane Play Area	South East	WBC		
117.1	Finchampstead Park Play Area	South East	Finchampstead Parish Council		

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KKP ref	Site	Analysis area	Ownership	Quality score	Value score
123.1	Frensham Green Play Area	South West	WBC		
131.1	Gorse Ride Woods (Whittle Close) Play Area	South East	WBC		
133.1	Grazely Village Hall Play Area	South West	Village Committee		
141.1	Hearn Road Play Area	North Area	WBC		
144.1	Heron Field Play Area	South East	WBC		
155.1	Hurst Park Play Area	North Area	WBC		
158.1	Joel Park & Holt Copse Play Area	South East	Wokingham Town Council		
159.1	The Junipers Play Area	South West	WBC		
159.2	The Junipers Youth Shelter	South West	WBC		
164.1	Kelvin Close Play Area	South West	Other publicly owned		
165.1	Kensington Close Play Area	North Area	WBC		
169.1	King George Field Play Area	South East	Twyford Parish Council		
170.1	King George V Recreation Ground Play Area	North Area	Wokingham Town Council		
171.1	King George's Field Play Area	North Area	Sonning Parish Council		
171.2	King George's Field Youth Provision	South West	Sonning Parish Council		
173.1	Kingfisher Grove (Grazley Road)	South East	WBC		
176.1	Langborough Recreation Ground Play Area	South East	Wokingham Town Council		
182.1	Leslie Sears and Viking Playing Field Play Area	South East	Wokingham Town Council		
190.1	Labumham Road Play Area	South East	WBC		
190.2	Longdon Road Play Area	South West	WBC		
192.1	Carnival Field Play Area	South West	WBC		
193.2	Riverside Park (Thistleton Way)	South West	WBC		
194.1	Alder Close Play Area	South East	WBC		
194.2	Kilnsea Drive Youth Shelter	North Area	WBC		
195.1	Lowther Road Recreation Ground Play Area	South East	WBC		
204.1	Malone Road Play Area	North Area	Woodley Town Council		
207.1	Manor Road Play Area	South West	WBC		
209.1	Martineau Lane Play Area	South West	WBC		
211.1	Meadow Park Play Area	South West	Earley TC		
215.1	Skelmerdale West Play Area	North Area	WBC		
217.1	Millworth Lane Recreation Ground Play Area	South East	Shinfield Parish Council		
222.1	Mollison Close Play Area	South East	WBC		
224.1	Mornington Ave Play Area	South West	WBC		
231.1	Oakey Drive Play Area	North Area	WBC		

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KKP ref	Site	Analysis area	Ownership	Quality score	Value score
232.1	Odell Close Play Area	South West	WBC		
234.1	Orchard Park Play Area	North Area	WBC		
238.1	Paddick Drive Play Area	South West	WBC		
240.1	Park Lane Play Area	South West	WBC		
242.1	Ryhill Way Play Area (Worrell Way)	South West	WBC		
242.2	Ducketts Mead Play Area	South East	Private sector		
246.1	Measham Way Play Area	South West	WBC		
252.1	Rainbow Park Play Area	North Area	WBC		
258.1	Redhouse Close Play Area	North Area	WBC		
259.1	Redwood Ave Play Area	North Area	WBC		
268.1	Sandford Park Play Area (Hurricane Way)	South East	WBC		
269.1	School Rd Play Area	South West	St Nicholas Parish Council		
273.1	Shefford Crescent Play Area	South West	WBC		
278.1	Sol Joel Park Youth Provision	South West	Earley TC		
278.2	Sol Joel Park Play Area	North Area	Earley TC		
279.1	Skylark Way Play Area	North Area	WBC		
281.1	Southlake Crescent Play Area	South West	WBC		
282.1	Southlake Amenity Play Area (Kingfisher Drive)	North Area	WBC		
284.1	Spencers Wood Pavillion Play Area	South West	Shinfield Parish Council		
298.1	St Patrick's Recreation Ground Play Area	South West	Charvil Parish Council		
304.1	Swallowfield Park Play Area	South West	Swallowfield Parish Council		
305.1	Chatteris Way (Wimblington Drive)	South East	WBC		
306.1	Thannington Way Play Area	South West	WBC		
312.1	Gorse Ride Community Centre Play Area	North Area	WBC		
317.1	Trout Close Play Area	North Area	-		
322.1	Vauxhall Park Play Area	North Area	WBC		
322.2	Vauxhall Park BMX	North Area	WBC		
324.1	Verey Close Play Area	South East	WBC		
324.2	Waltham Chase Play Area	South East	WBC		
326.1	Woodclyffe Recreation Ground Play Area	South East	Wargrave Parish Council		
331.1	Watmore Lane Play Area	South West	WBC		
333.1	Waverley Park Play Area	North Area	WBC		
334.1	Campion Way Play Area	North Area	WBC		
335.1	Wellington Grange	North Area	WBC		
336.1	Wessex Gardens Play Area	South East	WBC		
347.1	Woodford Park Play	South East	Woodley Town Council		
347.2	Woodford Park Play (Community Centre)	South East	Woodley Town Council		

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KKP ref	Site	Analysis area	Ownership	Quality score	Value score
357.1	Sirius Close Play Area	South East	WBC		
357.2	Woosehill Meadows Play Area (behind Morrisons)	South East	WBC		
357.3	Woosehill Meadows Youth Provision	South West	WBC		
357.4	Woosehill Meadows Youth Shelter	South West	WBC		
412	Pinewood Leisure Centre Play Area	South East	WBC		
418	Piggott Road Play Area	South East	WBC		
428	Culloden Way Play Area	South East	WBC		
443	Conygree Close Play Area	North Area	WBC		
459	Woodmoor Play Area	South West	WBC		
460	Roycroft Lane Play Area	South West	WBC		
465	Gorse Ride South Play Area	South West	WBC		
474	Pennfields Play Area	South West	WBC		
477.1	Kendal Avenue Open Space Play Area	North Area	Shinfield Parish Council		
479	Church Farm Play Area	North Area	WBC		
483	Clements Close Play Area	North Area	WBC		
488.1	Odiham Road Recreation Ground Play Area	South West	Swallowfield Parish Council		
492	Woodley Shops Play Area	South West	WBC		
493.1	Wheble Park Play Area	South East	Woodley Town Council		
500	Enstone Road Play Area	South East	WBC		
514.1	Arborfield Park Play Area	South West	Arborfield and Newland Parish Council		
517.1	Chalfont Park Play Area (Tiptree Close)	South East	WBC		
517.2	Chalfont Pavilion Play Area (Chalfont Way)	South East	WBC		
520	Dunstans Drive Play Area	South West	WBC		
521.1	Guernsey Way Play Area	South East	-		
522.1	Warrens Croft (Benham Drive) Play Area	South West	WBC		
523	St Crispins Skatepark (London Road)	South West	WBC		
524.1	Chatswoth 1 Play Area	South West	WBC		
524.2	Chatswoth 2 Play Area	South West	WBC		
527.1	Laurel Park Play Area	South West	WBC		
557	Rosebay Play Area	South East	Private sector		
558	Little Horse Close Play Area	South West	Private sector		
559	Cutbush Lane (Monarch Drive) Play Area	South West	Private sector		
560	Rossby/Greenwich Road Play Area	South West	Private sector		
563.1	Rainbow POS Play Area		WBC		