



# **Isle of Wight PPG17 Open Space Sport and Recreation Audit**

**April 2010**

**Isle of Wight Council**

## Isle of Wight PPG17 Open Space, Sport and Recreation Audit

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On behalf of: Isle of Wight Council

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## **Executive Summary Isle of Wight PPG17 Open Space, Sport and Recreation Study 2009**

### **What is an Open Space Sport and Recreation Study?**

An Open Space, Sport and Recreation Study is designed to set local standards based on assessments of local needs, demographics and audits of existing open spaces. It is the basis for addressing quantitative and qualitative deficiencies through the planning process and recommends policies and actions for inclusion within future leisure and planning documents. The main aim of the Isle of Wight PPG17 Open Space, Sport and Recreation Study is to:

“Provide a clear picture of the Island’s existing and future needs for open space and its current ability to meet those needs in terms of its function, quality, quantity and accessibility in accordance with the requirements of the latest Planning Policy Guidance Note 17 (Planning for Open Space Sport and Recreation, July 2002) and its Companion Guide (September 2002)”

This study has been developed to provide an overall framework that will guide the Isle of Wight Council’s Planning and Leisure Services over the next five years in the future management and designation of open spaces. This will enable the Isle of Wight Council to ensure the most effective and efficient use of open spaces within the Island and plan and respond appropriately to any pressures of immediate and future developments.

### **Why an Open Space, Sport and Recreation Study?**

A local assessment of open space and the development of this study will enable the Council to:

- Plan positively, creatively and effectively in identifying priority areas for improvement and to target appropriate types of open space required
- Ensure an adequate provision of high quality, accessible open space to meet needs of community
- Ensure any accessible funding is invested in the right places where there is the most need

This strategy will assist in providing targets for the performance of existing services which impact on the provision of open space within the Island.

### **Scope of the Open Space Sport and Recreation Study**

The scope of the study includes all open space types identified within the latest Planning Policy Guidance Note 17 (Planning for Open Space Sport and Recreation, July 2002) and its Companion Guide (September 2002). These include parks and gardens, natural and semi-natural areas, green corridors, amenity green space, provision for children and young people, outdoor sports facilities, allotments, cemeteries and churchyards and civic spaces.

### **Development of the Study**

The methodology and development of the study has been undertaken in accordance with the guidance provided in Planning Policy Guidance Note 17 (Planning for Open Space Sport and Recreation, July 2002) and its Companion Guide (September 2002).

PPG 17 Companion Guide sets out a 5 step logical process for undertaking a local assessment of open space. This process was used in developing this study using our own appropriate mechanisms that meet the requirements of the council to plan, monitor and set targets for the existing and future provision of open space within the Island. The 5 step process is as follows:

- Step 1 - Identifying Local Needs
- Step 2 - Auditing Local Provision
- Step 3 - Setting Provision Standards
- Step 4 - Applying Provision Standards
- Step 5 - Drafting Implementation and Action Plan

Research, consultations, a detailed and comprehensive Audit and analysis including quantity, quality, accessibility, usage and value have culminated in the production of this study.

### Provision Standards

The local provision standards justified through the analysis are detailed below. The methodology for setting these standards has been followed in accordance with PPG17 and using both qualitative and quantitative information sources both from the audit and consultation responses.

Open Space Type	m2 per person	
	URBAN	RURAL
Parks and gardens (PG)	6	6
Natural and semi-natural areas (NGS)	N/A	N/A
Local amenity greenspace (AGS)	5	5
Provision for children and young people (CYP)	0.6	0.6
Outdoor sports facilities (OSF)	16	8
Green corridors (GC)	N/A	N/A
Allotments and community gardens (ACG)	3	3
Cemeteries and churchyards (CC)	N/A	N/A

### Where are we now? - Audit and Analysis

Prior to developing the study there was a general viewpoint that there is an adequate provision of open space within the urban areas but there are increasing pressures on these spaces for housing developments. The detailed and comprehensive audit and analysis undertaken in developing this study reaffirms this viewpoint.

When applying the provision standards the following key points were extracted:

**Parks & Gardens:** both the urban and some rural areas are well endowed with parks and gardens across the Island with some excellent provision in some of the towns in particular.

**Natural and Semi-Natural:** there are no deficiencies across the Island in relation to natural green space, except the Bay Growth Area. There are large quantities of open available areas especially in relation to coastal areas, country walks, woodlands and country parks.

**Amenity Greenspace:** There are very few deficiencies across the Island in relation to amenity green space, with most of the towns only having localised smaller deficiencies.

**Provision for Children and Young People:** there are considerable deficiencies in accessibility but in relation to quantity, there are no deficiencies between urban and rural, although accessibility to play facilities is far more important than overall quantity of provision.

**Green Corridors:** there is a large amount of provision of green corridors across both the urban and rural areas linking settlements, including cycleways, bridleways and the coastal footpath.

**Outdoor Sports Facilities:** there is a surplus of outdoor sports facilities within the urban areas but a deficiency in some of the rural areas but this does not necessarily mean a surplus of playing pitches.

**Allotments:** there is an overall deficiency of allotments within the urban area and rural areas. There are no allotment sites in West Wight.

**Cemeteries and Churchyards:** the provision of cemeteries and churchyards appears to meet existing demands.

## Quality

There are many high quality open spaces provided on the Island with the majority of sites rated as well above average and more sites than any other rated as 'good'. This was the case for both the urban and rural area.

The Island has many areas designated as Special Sites of Scientific Interest (SSSI's) or Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC's). This inherent quality is very positive but does have implications upon management and maintenance.

## Accessibility

Most open spaces within the Island are accessible to the public. Within the rural area most sites are rated as 'very good' and in the urban area most sites are rated as 'good'. This demonstrates the high standards of provision that currently exist within the Island.

## Value

Most sites that have a high level of use normally have a good or very good quality and accessibility rating. This is because the factors are related and interlinked.

Each type of open space has been assessed separately and specific sites detailed within the appropriate sections. However, given that over 450 sites have been audited within the Island there are very few sites that are questioned whether the primary purposes is the most beneficial.

## Summary

It is clear that the Island has predominantly high quality open spaces that have a high level of accessibility.

However there are some slight deficiencies in both the urban and rural areas and very few areas with a surplus of provision particularly when undertaking a local area needs analysis not taking into account the larger Islandwide provision.

## Where do we want to be?

The vision for open spaces on the Island should be:

*“The Isle of Wight will provide a network of accessible, high quality, highly valued green spaces which its local communities are proud of, and which promotes sustainability, supports biodiversity and extensively contributes to the economic, social and environmental aspirations of the Island.”*

There are a number of objectives which should provide the key assessment targets to achieving this vision. These act as the ‘drivers for change’ with regards to open space provision in the Island:

- To aspire to high standards of quality and care in relation to open space provision across the Island
- To ensure all residents and visitors to the Island have appropriate access to open spaces offering the widest possible range of facilities to meet varied recreational needs
- To increasingly consider biodiversity and ecological value of existing and new open space sites enhancing habitats, wildlife corridors, and providing greater biodiversity within the area
- To address areas of deficiency, or, where this is not possible, to improve accessibility and utilisation of existing provision
- To protect existing open spaces of high value, or those with potential high value (i.e. high quality and/or high usage)
- Seek to enhance open space provision and management through community involvement working in partnership with appropriate groups and organisations
- To increase awareness and usage of open spaces within the Island through effective marketing and promotion

## How will we get there?

In a rapidly changing society, more leisure time, higher aspirations, greater choice in leisure activities leading to competing demands in terms of functions of open space require a creative and flexible response to open space planning and provision by those responsible for the Island’s open spaces to ensure that such changes are acknowledged and responded to accordingly.

## Action Plan

Any future strategy should include a detailed Action Plan which should form the tactical element where by key issues identified within the Audit will be addressed and the objectives of the strategy will be achieved. It should include a number of actions and targets which can be achieved in order to fulfil the needs and demands for open space both within the urban and rural area of the Island.

The action plan should include the following key actions:

- Maintain the standards of high quality that have been set within existing open spaces
- The recognition of the importance of biodiversity and action plan targets in all strategies and policies, including any development plans
- A further specific study is undertaken on supply and demand for playing pitches
- Any forthcoming Best Value or Comprehensive Performance Assessment linked with the provision of open space is utilised as an opportunity to enhance standards of open spaces within the Island in terms of provision, quality and accessibility
- A review of Core Strategy policies in terms of addressing the key issues raised within the open space analysis and assessment
- Continue to identify and attempt to access sources of funding to improve and enhance existing open space and provide new open space in areas of need
- Develop best practice on the management, design, planning and maintenance of open spaces
- Develop educational awareness in raising the importance of caring for open spaces both within urban and rural areas and identifying opportunities for involving the local community within this process
- Address the areas of quantity, quality and accessibility deficiency identified within the audit achieving an improved distribution of open space types across the urban and rural areas
- Entering and obtaining a Green Flag Award for different open space types within the Island that can then be seen as realistic visions for other open spaces of similar types
- Investigate the use of, and access too, school sports facilities in areas of deficiency through the School's Reorganisation Programme
- That the provision of teenage facilities is targeted to encourage teenagers to use park areas helping to bring youths together in one place and therefore making it more manageable avoiding problematic issues within close residential areas

## Proposed Policies

A number of policies could be developed as part of a strategy and it is proposed that these policies should be adopted where appropriate. A summary of these policies is provided below:

### New Open Space Provision

- Ensure that open space needs and demands are a key consideration in any urban regeneration or renewal investment programmes
- Any new open space sites should be targeted at areas of deficiency identified within this strategy
- Support the conversion of disused railway lines to footpaths and cycleways, linking various types of open space, subject to satisfactory arrangements for maintenance and car parking
- When dealing with developers contributions and new provision of open space the council should ensure that the area of land is large enough on one site to provide significant recreational value as well as aesthetic value within the new development

### Protection

- Ensure all sites of high usage and high quality are afforded maximum protection and are seen as best practice examples
- In accordance with PPG17 any proposal to dispose of open space land needs to be assessed in context within an overall analysis of all open space types within the Island particularly with identified deficiencies in specific areas
- For any future developments to modify any areas of open space, it is recommended that an ecological survey is undertaken at an early stage to determine the presence of legally protected or notable species and conservation value of the site
- Support the protection of playing fields through consultation with Sport England and the identification and protection of playing fields and surrounding grounds that either currently or potentially could provide opportunities for enhancing and promoting biodiversity

### Management

- No additional open spaces to be provided without realistic plans for implementing and resourcing maintenance agreements to provide the required quality
- Involve and support communities in open space planning, management and delivery

# 1 Introduction

## 1.1 Purpose of the Open Space, Sport and Recreation Audit

1.1.1 The purpose of the Open Space, Sport and Recreation Audit is to undertake a comprehensive Island-wide audit of the distribution, quantity and quality of the Isle of Wight's open spaces, sport and recreation facilities including an assessment of the open space and recreational needs of the local community in accordance with the requisite Government guidance set out in Planning Policy Guidance 17<sup>1</sup> and its Companion Guide<sup>2</sup>. The Audit will help inform the preparation of the Isle of Wight's Local Development Framework (LDF).

1.1.2 The purposes of the Isle of Wight's Open Space, Sport and Recreation Audit, are as follows:

- Identify surpluses and deficiencies in open space, sport and recreational provision and to consider these against current needs and future growth
- Provide local standards for open space, sport and recreation drawing on stakeholder views to enable the setting of local policies up to 2026
- Understand the split in responsibility for open space, sport and recreation provision between the private and educational sectors, Parish/Town Council and the Council to inform future policies and planning obligations
- Provide specific recommendations for the type and amount of open space, sport and recreation provision across the Island and for each growth area
- Form part of a wider evidence base about how each settlement within the Island functions, and in particular how improved open space, sport and recreation provision can contribute to wider social, economic and environmental objectives

1.1.3 The study will also:

- Provide the Council with the necessary information to inform planning application decisions, including Section 106 negotiations
- Provide recommendations and identify opportunities for alternative sites where deficiencies have been identified
- To bring the planning and management 'systems' together to ensure that the Isle of Wight has a network of green spaces and sport and recreation facilities which make the Island 'a place to be proud of'

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<sup>1</sup> Planning Policy Guidance 17: Planning for Open Space, Sport and Recreation, ODPM, July 2002

<sup>2</sup> Assessing Needs and Opportunities: A Companion Guide to PPG17, ODPM, May 2006



*Gurnard Bay*

## 1.2 Scope of the Open Space Audit

1.2.1 PPG17 sets out a typology of green spaces, based upon the concept of primary purpose. The green space typology adopted for this study is in line with this as it reflects the particular character of green spaces on the Isle of Wight.

The Isle of Wight Open Space, Sport and Recreation Audit will cover:

1. Parks and gardens
2. Local amenity green space
3. Natural and semi-natural green space
4. Churchyards and cemeteries
5. Green corridors
6. Allotments and community gardens
7. Outdoor sports facilities - football, cricket and rugby pitches, as well as outdoor bowling, tennis and hockey
8. Children and young people's play areas and youth facilities
9. Education
10. Other green space

1.2.2 An explanation of each typology is provided below:

#### **Parks and gardens**

1.2.3 These areas of land are normally enclosed, designed and managed and maintained as a public park or garden. Their primary purpose is to provide accessible, high quality opportunities for informal recreation and community events.

#### **Local amenity green space**

1.2.4 These are landscaped areas that are a visual amenity and/or separate land uses e.g. green spaces within housing areas and business parks that are usable for informal recreation, social activities and informal play. Their primary purpose is to provide opportunities for informal recreation close to home or work or enhancement of the appearance of residential and other areas. Recreation grounds that are not consciously laid out to an original layout and village greens in rural areas are also included.

#### **Natural and semi-natural green space**

1.2.5 These are areas of undeveloped or previously undeveloped land with residual natural habitats. Their primary purpose is for wildlife conservation, biodiversity and environmental education and awareness.

#### **Churchyards and cemeteries**

1.2.6 This category includes municipal cemeteries, churchyards and other burial grounds with legitimate public access. Their primary purpose is for burial of the dead and quiet contemplation, often linked to the promotion of wildlife conservation and biodiversity.

#### **Green corridors**

1.2.7 These are green routes/linkages including disused railways, river corridors, canal towpaths, major road verges and hedgerows connecting different areas within urban and rural areas and connecting green spaces together. Their primary purpose is for walking, cycling or horse riding routes and for wildlife migration.

#### **Allotments and community gardens**

1.2.8 Areas of land rented for growing vegetables, fruits or flowers. Their primary purpose is to provide opportunities for people to grow their own produce as part of the long-term promotion of sustainability, health and social inclusion.

#### **Outdoor sports facilities**

1.2.9 These are large and generally flat areas of grassland or specially designed surfaces used for designated sports e.g. playing fields, football pitches, tennis courts and outdoor bowling greens - areas which can generally be booked and whose primary purpose is for playing of sport.

## Children and young people's play areas

- 1.2.10 This includes equipped play areas, ball courts, BMX tracks, skateboard areas and multi-use games areas for children and young people. Where these are within larger parks and gardens or areas of amenity space they will be recorded as a subtype to the predominant type.

## Education

- 1.2.11 These are large areas of open space associated with primary and secondary schools and are generally flat areas of grassland with a combination of playing fields, play grounds, play facilities or other areas of sport such as tennis, cricket or football. Many are inaccessible to the public but can have multi-use purposes and can be used by the public after school hours and at weekends. As part of the open spaces study, these sites were not audited, due mainly to general inaccessibility, but may become important locally if deficiencies occur within a certain vicinity. Those which are dual use however, were audited accordingly.

## Other green space

- 1.2.12 There are a large number of green spaces on the Island that have a degree of accessibility but may not necessarily be fully accessible, for example woodland copses with a right of way through it or a coastal area or headland that has limited access. These open spaces are often important in relation to local biodiversity, amenity or rights of way but have not been audited but have been mapped as *other green space*. They are important however as part of the Islands green infrastructure (GI) and connectivity and should be developed further as part of future GI work.

## 1.3 Exclusions from the typology

- 1.3.1 These are areas that in shape, form, size are not conducive to public use or are not available continuously to the public such as:
- Private woodlands (note woodlands with public footpaths running through them are excluded unless the whole wood is available to the public)
  - Historic gardens not accessible to the public even if included on the English Heritage Listed Gardens
  - Highway verges unless they provide a broad green corridor
  - School and college grounds, unless dual use and available for local communities to use after hours
  - Beaches and land between high and low water
  - Semi-private communal gardens belonging to flats and elderly persons homes
  - Large private gardens
  - Indoor sports facilities, although external facilities were audited and included

1.3.2 Whilst excluded from the typology and the audit of the green spaces, any open space or future Green Infrastructure Strategy should recognise the above areas as they often provide important visual amenity and biodiversity benefits.

#### **1.4 Background**

1.4.1 The open space, sport and recreation audit information is required to act as an evidence base to inform the Core Strategy and subsequent policy approaches.

1.4.2 The Core Strategy of the Island Plan contains only essential key policy elements for open space, sports and recreational facilities that will apply Island-wide, and sets the context for lower tier plan documents.

1.4.3 No previous open space, sport or recreation audit has been carried out on the Island so the basis of the initial audit was based on existing documentation related to grounds maintenance, management and land ownership, statutory designations such as Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI's) Local Nature Reserves, Historic parks and gardens etc and through detailed on-site assessments.

#### **1.5 The Isle of Wight's open spaces**

1.5.1 The Isle of Wight is split into distinct areas:

- The main urban areas of Newport, Cowes, East Cowes, Shanklin, Sandown, Ryde and Ventnor
- Smaller settlements in Freshwater, Totland and Yarmouth
- The surrounding predominantly rural and coastal area

1.5.2 Agriculture and horticulture take up approximately 80% of the Island with forest and woodland covering 8.5% of the Island. The Island area also consists of approximately 3,500 hectares of parks, recreation grounds, open spaces and nature reserves. Within the Island there are 43 SSSIs, 6 Local Nature Reserves, 1 National Nature Reserve, 28 miles of Heritage Coast, and over 300 Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation as well as 50% of the Isle of Wight is within the AONB.

1.5.3 The Isle of Wight has a legacy of a number of quality parks, countryside sites including coastal areas and other green spaces. However, as in many other areas there is a need to refocus green space planning to ensure effective provision and good management of green space in the future. The Council is committed to good quality, well managed parks, open spaces, and recreational facilities and recognises their important role in:

- Contributing to the heritage and urban and rural landscape of the Island
- Contributing to the attraction of the Island for residents, tourists, businesses and other organisations and workers
- Improving the sense of wellbeing for residents and workers
- Providing a focus for interaction of local communities
- Education and health of residents
- Nature conservation and opportunities to enhance biodiversity
- Supporting the wider environmental aims of the Council

1.5.4 The Council is committed to ensuring that the recreational needs of local communities are taken into account in planning the development of their areas.

## 1.6 Benefits of green space

1.6.1 Parks and green spaces make an important contribution to improving the quality of life of communities and provide a sense of place for local communities. Parks and green spaces provide significant benefits to users, neighbourhoods, towns and cities. Provision of quality parks and green spaces contribute to delivering Government objectives and policy on sustainable communities and social inclusion. In particular parks and green spaces, as recognised by the Urban Green Spaces Taskforce:

- Improve the quality of urban regeneration and neighbourhood renewal projects and the attractiveness of locations for business, and creating community enterprise and new jobs
- Promote healthy living and preventing illness, by providing places for physical activities, including walking and cycling
- Foster social inclusion and community development, citizenship and local pride by giving people the chance to participate in the design, management and care of their local spaces
- Encourage education and lifelong learning by providing a valuable resource for learning about the natural world and local environment
- Support environmental sustainability by countering the pollution
- Contribute to heritage and culture by providing venues for local festivals and civic celebrations and a more varied townscape

- 1.6.2 Networks of accessible high quality open space and recreation facilities fulfill an important function in terms of the structure of both urban and rural areas, visual amenity, regeneration, townscape and ecological value. Green spaces provide breathing space and offer places for formal and informal recreation, where people can walk and relax and enjoy cultural activities.
- 1.6.3 Parks and green spaces provide an outdoor environment for children to learn through play and close social and family interaction. Green spaces provide important wildlife habitats and corridors. Attractive walking and cycling routes and riverside walks provide opportunities for recreation and traffic free routes. Urban green spaces in particular have an important role in mitigating the impact of climate change e.g. their cooling and shading effects are likely to become more important with hotter summer temperatures. The benefits of open spaces can be reduced or negated if green space is badly located, badly designed or poorly managed and maintained.



*Victoria Recreation Ground, Newport*

## 2 Policy context

### 2.1 Introduction

2.1.1 A review of relevant policy documents and strategies is an essential component of setting the baseline and ensures that the Open Space, Sport and Recreation Audit reflects the Government's policy objectives for open space, sport and recreation. Planning policies relating to open space, sport and recreation have developed over the past few years and are now seen as part of the government's wide-ranging "liveability" agenda and therefore covers a wide range of strategies and policies. The key policies, plans and strategies applicable to the Audit are summarised below. The full context review is contained in Appendix 2.

### 2.2 National planning policy and Guidance

#### Planning Policy Guidance 17 Planning for Open Space, Sport and Recreation, OPDM, July 2002

2.2.1 In the past 5-6 years, a new green space movement has emerged in the UK which champions the value of networks of high quality green spaces and sport and recreation facilities. Reversing the trend of the past couple of decades will take some time, but the Government has recognised the problem and, with the publication of 'Planning Policy Guidance PPG17, Open Space, Sport and Recreation (PPG17)', requires planning authorities to undertake assessment of needs and opportunities in their area.

2.2.2 The guidance advises local planning authorities to provide the strongest protection for open space, to resist development pressures that could diminish recreational provision, and to adopt a strategic approach to the provision and protection of sports facilities. In doing this, "*local authorities should undertake robust assessments of the existing and future needs of their communities for open space, sport and recreational facilities*".

2.2.3 This PPG also sets out the benefits of open space, sport and recreation, which are:

- Supporting an urban renaissance
- Supporting a rural renewal
- Promotion of social inclusion and community cohesion
- Health and well being
- Promoting more sustainable development

#### Assessing Needs and Opportunities: A Companion Guide to PPG17, ODPM, 2002

2.2.4 This guide reflects the Government's policy objectives for open space, sport and recreation as set out in PPG17. The document sets out the long term aims of PPG17 which are: creating a network of accessible, high quality open spaces and sport and recreation facilities; new provision and enhancing the existing provision of open space; provides clarity and certainty for developers and land owners in relation to the open space provision.

2.2.5 The guidance sets out the four guiding principles of open space local assessments, which are to:

- Take into consideration the local needs according to the different socio-demographic
- The delivery of high quality, sustainable, publicly owned open spaces can be achieved only through multi-disciplinary working across different departments
- Enhance the existing provision of open spaces and the new provision of open spaces should assist in improving the linking of and access from one green space to another
- The value of open space to the local community, wildlife, biodiversity and the wider environment

#### **Our Town and Cities: The Future, ODPM, November 2000**

2.2.6 The paper sets out a new vision of urban living with an aim to offer a high quality of life and building on the existing success of towns, cities and suburbs. The paper recognises that over the last few decades a lot of public open spaces within urban areas have been lost to development and the remaining has been neglected and poorly maintained. Open spaces in urban areas are one of the most valued features of the places people live in, where access to green spaces reduces stress and promotes well being. Hence the study aims to safeguard open space through encouraging development at reasonable densities to prevent under provision; well designed and managed public open spaces; improves access to well maintained and safe open spaces.

#### **Green Spaces, Better Places, ODPM, November 2001**

2.2.7 The study seeks to ensure that open spaces such as parks, play areas and green spaces improve the quality of lives of people in towns and cities. The objective is to create green spaces that are safe, accessible and sustainable for the users and should cater for everyone in the community, with a particular regard to children, young people with disabilities and the elderly.

2.2.8 The report sets out the main principles for delivering a new and sustainable future for urban parks and green spaces, which are:

- Regenerating existing urban parks and green spaces
- Ensuring that provision of local parks, play areas and green spaces caters for the diverse needs of local people
- Making best use of available and new resources
- Developing new partnerships to assist in creating and managing urban green spaces

### **Living Places: Cleaner, Safer, Greener, ODPM, 2002**

- 2.2.9 The management of public open spaces have an important role in the provision of safe, well maintained and attractive open spaces. Public open spaces create a sense of place of where people live and in turn are crucial to building community cohesion and sustainable communities, hence the Government is committed to making public spaces cleaner, safer, greener to enhance the quality of life in towns and cities.
- 2.2.10 This document sets out the approach the Government intends to take in making cleaner, safer, greener public spaces, which are:
- Reducing some forms of anti-social behaviour and improving the public sector's response to the following issues such as: litter; graffiti; fly-tipping; joy-riding; abandoned cars; dog fouling; and chewing gum
  - Promoting better 'joined up thinking' and more importantly joined up action amongst the various public agencies responsible for the design and maintenance of the public realm

### **Planning Policies for Sport: A Land Use Planning Policy on Behalf of Sport England, Sport England, November 1999**

- 2.2.11 Sport England has a commitment to the land use planning system and actively seeks to influence the planning system in a positive, responsible way on behalf of sport. The document expresses Sport England concerns and how they wish to see these issues addressed through the planning system. Hence they have produced guiding principles of the providing sport and recreation space which are:
- Sustainable development
  - Commitment to working with the land use planning system to ensure that the needs of sport are properly addressed
  - A planning approach to provision, where detailed assessments of requirements should be carried out as part of the strategic planning work of Sport England and local authorities
  - Protecting existing resources and providing new opportunities for sport
  - Partnership approach, whereby local authorities should support and enable appropriate development through the planning system, fostering cooperation between activities and users
  - Management solution should be sought to resolve conflicts of interest and that this principle should inform the development and implementation of land use policies

## 2.3 Regional planning policy

### The South East Plan - The Regional Spatial Strategy for the South East of England (Government Office for the South East May 2009)

2.3.1 The Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) for the South East of England (known as the South East Plan) sets out the long term spatial planning framework for the region over the years 2006-2026. The Plan is a key tool to help achieve more sustainable development, protect the environment and combat climate change. It provides a spatial context within which Local Development Frameworks and Local Transport Plans need to be prepared, as well as other regional and sub-regional strategies and programmes that have a bearing on land use activities. These include the regional economic and housing strategies as well as strategies and programmes that address air quality, biodiversity, climate change, education, energy, community safety, environment, health and sustainable development. In addition, policies in this Plan carry weight in decisions made on planning applications and appeals for development.

2.3.2 The most relevant policies to this study included within this plan are:

- **Policy CC8:** Green Infrastructure which requires local authorities and others to work together to plan, provide and manage connected and substantial networks of existing and new accessible multi-functional green space. To deliver the widest range of linked environmental and social benefits including conserving and enhancing biodiversity as well as landscape, recreation, water management, social and cultural benefits to underpin individual and community health and 'well being'
- **Policy CC8** is included in the Plan to ensure that connected networks of green spaces around new built environment are treated as integral to a planning and design process which is conscious of its place within wider GI networks. GI should not just be considered as an adjunct to new development, and policies and strategies relating to GI assets in local development frameworks should have a spatial expression and not just be restricted to its definition

2.3.3 The Plan identifies the following areas as forming part of the Green Infrastructure Network:

- Parks and gardens - including urban parks, country parks and formal gardens
- Natural and semi-natural urban greenspaces - including woodlands, urban forestry, scrub
- Grasslands (e.g. downlands, commons and meadows) wetlands, open and running water
- Wastelands and derelict open land and rock areas (e.g. cliffs, quarries and pits)
- Green corridors - including river and canal banks, cycleways, and rights of way
- Outdoor sports facilities (with natural or artificial surfaces, either publicly or privately owned) - including tennis courts, bowling greens, sports pitches, golf courses, athletics tracks
- School and other institutional playing fields, and other outdoor sports areas

- Amenity greenspace (most commonly, but not exclusively, in housing areas) - including informal recreation spaces, greenspaces in and around housing, domestic gardens and village greens
- Provision for children and teenagers - including play areas, skateboard parks, outdoor basketball hoops, and other more informal areas (e.g. 'hanging out' areas, teenage shelters)
- Allotments, community gardens, and city (urban) farms
- Cemeteries and churchyards
- Accessible countryside in urban fringe areas
- River and canal corridors
- Green roofs and walls

2.3.4 **Policy S1: Supporting Healthy Communities** recognises the role the planning system can play in developing and shaping healthy sustainable communities, in respect of

- Community access to amenities such as parks, open spaces, physical recreation activity, and cultural facilities
- Healthier forms of transport, by incorporating cycle lanes and safe footpaths in planned developments

2.3.5 **Policy S5: Cultural and Sporting Activity** requires local authorities to encourage increased and sustainable participation in sport, recreation and cultural activity through the development of local development documents and other measures in order to improve the overall standard of fitness enhance cultural diversity and enrich the overall quality of life. The provision of these facilities is expected to be based upon an up to date audit of current supply and an assessment of this supply against estimated demand/growth. The audits are expected to cover the quantitative, qualitative and accessible nature of provision. Authorities are to encourage formal partnership working to put in place effective programmes of provision and management.

#### **South East Green Infrastructure Framework - From Policy into Practice 2009**

2.3.6 This framework has been produced by a Partnership of key governmental and non-governmental bodies in the South East to help implement the South East Plan's green infrastructure policy. It seeks firstly to engender a common understanding of the role and importance of green infrastructure throughout the South East and its urban and rural areas. Secondly and most importantly, it encourages local authorities to embed green infrastructure in any local plans and processes from the earliest stages, delivering through partnership working.

2.3.7 The documents recognises that green infrastructure will provide a range of functions, including landscaping, flood control, recreation, cool spots in a warming climate, food production, safer routes and of course biodiversity. Together they form a 'life support system' and give rise to a wide range of environmental and quality of life benefits, including improved public health, opportunities for sustainable transport, and provision of attractive and distinctive places to live work and play.

2.3.8 It recognises Planning Policy Guidance 17 (PPG17) requires local authorities to undertake robust assessments of existing and future needs for open space, sports and recreational facilities and that the definition of green infrastructure in the South East Plan is broadly consistent with the typology in PPG17. Assessments under this Guidance will therefore provide a valuable information source for planning green infrastructure.

## 2.4 Local planning policy

### Isle of Wight Unitary Development Plan 1996 - 2011

2.4.1 The UDP remains the extant development plan for the Island until the adoption of the LDF and the Core Strategy which is being prepared in line with Planning Policy Statement 12. It notes that the Island is well catered for in terms of informal open space, coast and countryside but increased participation in sports that use these areas can threaten the environmentally most sensitive areas of the Island. Accordingly the plan's recreational policies seek to encourage the provision of recreational facilities where they do not conflict with the need to protect the natural and built heritage of the Island and do not have an unacceptable impact upon amenity. In addition the UDP seeks to protect existing open spaces (including school playing fields), village greens and allotments which are identified in the UDP.

### Isle of Wight Council Corporate Plan 2008 - 2013 revised November 2009 Isle of Wight Council 2009

2.4.2 The corporate plan provides a framework for the delivery of the council's services. The plan identifies three of its strategic priorities for 2009/2013 as PFI and Roads, Delivering Modern Services, and Regeneration and the Economy. Under the priority of PFI and Roads, it is envisaged that there will be benefits to the public realm. Under the second two headings, a strategic project for leisure facility improvement is identified which will refurbish community leisure facilities that will accommodate existing and future demand.

### Ecoland The Isle of Wight's Sustainable Community Strategy 2008 - 2020 Island Strategic Partnership

2.4.3 This is a broad based strategy for improving the social, economic and environmental sustainability of the Island by offering a framework for improving the quality of life for all stakeholders of the Isle of Wight. Some of the priorities identified in the strategy to achieve this objective include:

- The need to protect and enhance the island's natural beauty
- The need to improve health and emotional well being by for example making the most of the Island's natural potential
- Ensuring people have places to live and things to do in their local area
- Improving the visual appeal and ambience of the Island

2.4.4 Of relevance to this study is the Strategy's promise to deliver:

- 3 new local nature reserves across the Island by 2010
- Low carbon communities
- Encouraging 22,000 more people to use leisure centres
- The provision of a health trainer in each community to promote healthy active lifestyles

#### **Isle of Wight Cultural Strategy 2004-8 Adding the Sparkle Isle of Wight Council**

2.4.5 The strategy provides a strategic framework to help to sustain and develop the Island's cultural assets and values for the benefit of both residents and visitors. It embraces the following activities:

- The performing and visual arts, crafts, media and film
- Museums, artefacts, record office and design
- Libraries, literature, writing and publishing
- The built heritage, architecture and archaeology
- Sports events, facilities and development
- Parks, open spaces, landscape, the coast, wildlife habitats, water environment and countryside recreation
- Children's play, playgrounds and play activities
- Tourism, festivals and attractions
- Informal leisure pursuits

2.4.6 It suggests the richness of the Isle of Wight's cultural diversity is reflected in the provision of an estimated 380 leisure and visitor centres and attractions on the Island by public, private, not-for-profit and voluntary organisations, of relevance for this study are:

- Both English Heritage and The National Trust are active on the Island, with Osborne House and The Needles Old Battery respectively notable interests
- The Island has a rich mix of both indoor and outdoor sports and leisure facilities. All of these facilities are easily accessible to Island residents, visitors, schools, businesses, clubs and groups
- There are more than 250 parks, gardens and open spaces on the Island, together with 35 playgrounds and 1100 public seats. 64 miles of coastline are managed, and there are 11 miles of award winning beaches

*(continued)*

- Ventnor Botanic Garden consists of 22 acres of maintained garden containing 8000 plant species, plus a plant production facility and visitor centre. Residents, visitors, researchers, schools and businesses all use the Garden

#### 2.4.7 Research undertaken as background to the strategy revealed

- 93% of residents visit beaches and esplanades at least once a week
- 92% visit the countryside, over half of these at least once a week. There is high public satisfaction with these opportunities and parks & gardens, and access to them

2.4.8 The strategy concluded that it was important to recognise the significance of the environmental assets bestowed upon the Island and to conserve and sustain these assets for the benefit of current and future generations. In addition it suggested the Council should give greater importance and publicity to the natural beauty of the Island, and the many and varied interests which flow from it, in order to enhance local cultural life and the tourist economy.



*Hersey Nature Reserve*

### 3 Approach and methodology

#### 3.1 Introduction

3.1.1 This section provides an overview of our approach for undertaking the Open Space Audit. Our approach to the Open Space Audit is in accordance with best practice guidance including:

- PPG17: Planning for Open Space, Sport and recreation
- Assessing Needs and Opportunities: A Companion Guide to PPG17
- Green Space Strategies: A good practice guide, CABI Space



*Hillside Allotments, Newport*

3.1.2 The key tasks involved in the preparation of the Isle of Wight Open Space, Sport and Recreation Audit are as follows:

**Open space audit activity - Establish context through data collection and literature review**

**Approach** - A thorough review and collation of all existing information sources on open space and recreation facilities was undertaken. All sites identified were given a unique ID and recorded in a Microsoft Excel database, categorised according to their typology and mapped on a suite of GIS maps.

**Open space audit activity - Understanding local needs**

**Approach** - The assessment of local needs comprised of two main components:

1. Analysing the views of local people through detailed questionnaires sent out to users/non-users and stakeholder groups as well as Isle of Wight Council staff
2. Two Focus groups with workshop attended by Council Officers and local stakeholders and discussion meetings with Council Officers.

**Open space audit activity - The audit**

**Approach** - In order to assess current supply a comprehensive audit of existing open space and recreation provision was undertaken.

A bespoke audit pro-forma designed to evaluate the quality and value of green spaces was completed for each site. Nearly 500 sites were audited and each site was classified as either being of high or low quality and value. Each space was assessed against a suite of criteria and the scores accumulated to give each site an overall score. The “cut off” point between high and low quality and value was decided in agreement with the Council as 60% reflecting an overall aspiration to bring all green space sites up to this standard.

A copy of the audit pro-forma and the master spreadsheet of results are included at Appendix 3 and 4 respectively. The audit results are presented in Section 6. The results constitute a database of local provision with information on factors such as the location of different spaces or facilities, quality and therefore the possible need for enhancement.

**Open space audit activity - Analysing quality and assessing current provision standards**

**Approach** - We derived quality standards for the Council’s future use from a variety of sources, including the Green Flag scheme and good practice advice from agencies such as Sport England and Natural England. The resulting standards are outlined in Section 6 of this report.

**Open space audit activity - Analysing quantity**

**Approach** - For the quantity analysis, the audit results were analysed to identify the total quantity of existing provision for each typology, expressed as a square metre per person.

This is subsequently compared to local views on the adequacy of existing provision. Details of this analysis and the existing quantity standards are in Section 7 of this report. Finally, we compared the actual level of provision on the Island with the amount required by the application of any existing quantity provision standard to assess the broad level of need for additional provision across the Island.

**Open space audit activity - Analysing accessibility:**

**Approach** - In order to undertake the accessibility analysis, we derived distance/accessibility thresholds. The accessibility analysis is detailed in Section 8.

**Open space audit activity - Issues, options and recommendations:**

**Approach** - Using the results and findings of the foregoing steps we provide a number of recommendations and policy conclusions, these issues and recommendations are set out in Sections 10 and 11 respectively.

## 4 Assessing local needs

### 4.1 Introduction

4.1.1 Taking into account local views is fundamental to achieving a successful open space network that people are satisfied with, feel safe using and is locally used. Consultation and collaboration with the Island's local community and stakeholders was a key element of the study process and informed the assessment of local needs and demand for open spaces and recreation facilities on the Isle of Wight.

4.1.2 The involvement of local residents and stakeholders is advocated in current advice set out in PPG17. PPG17 emphasises the importance of developing local provision standards, rather than the blanket application of national standards. Consultation will also provide an overview of current attitudes towards open space provision and recreation facilities and will help determine people's priorities for open space and recreation provision.

### 4.2 Scope of consultation

4.2.1 To ascertain current public attitudes towards existing open space provision, recreation facilities and opinions for improvements the following community engagement techniques were adopted for this study:

- Use of written questionnaires to stakeholders and Parish Councils
- Online Questionnaires through Isle of Wight Council to over 1000 stakeholders and consultees
- 2 focus group workshops

#### Questionnaires

4.2.2 To help establish the demand for existing open space and recreation facilities and to provide the opportunity provide for stakeholders to give their views on existing provision and provide recommendations for improvement detailed questionnaires were sent to residents groups, community groups, voluntary groups, schools, sports clubs, general open space users. Specifically the questionnaires were distributed to:

- All the Island's primary and secondary schools
- All relevant sports clubs (clubs with outdoor facilities) on the Island
- Town and Parish Councils, Residents Associations, Community Associations, Civic Societies, Disability Groups, Wildlife Groups

### **Online questionnaires through Isle of Wight Council to over 1000 stakeholders and consultees**

- 4.2.3 To help understand local people's attitudes on the Island's open spaces and recreation facilities and to assist with the quantity, quality and accessibility assessments, all Council 'consultees' were asked to fill in questionnaires whether non user or users of open space, sport and recreational facilities. Staff were also consulted as this represented a large immediate user/non-user resource that was immediately accessible who are also residents on the island and live in both rural and urban areas. Informal face to face user interviews within existing areas of open space, allotments and at recreational facilities were not conducted as it was felt a much more thorough picture could be obtained from the online survey.

### **Focus group workshops**

- 4.2.4 In addition to the questionnaires, user and non-user surveys 2 focus groups workshops attended by Council Officers and local stakeholders was held. The focus group workshops provided an interactive forum to discuss open spaces and recreation facilities.
- 4.2.5 Full details on the local community, stakeholder consultation process and a full list of consultees is set out in the Isle of Wight Open Space, Sport and Recreation Consultation Strategy located in Appendix 5.

## **4.3 Consultation key issues**

- 4.3.1 The key issues arising from the consultation are summarised below:

### **Open space and recreation facilities key issues from focus groups**

- Concerns over facilities for rugby and general lack of them with funding opportunities not been taken advantage of
- Skate boarding is popular on the Island with many facilities available
- Lack of allotments across the Island as demand is high
- Aging population across the Island
- Lack of youth and play facilities
- Accessibility to many facilities is poor especially in rural areas, as public transport is poor
- Funding pressures in relation to capital and revenue
- Better access needed to school facilities

### Open space and recreation facilities key issues from online survey

- The majority of respondents felt the following were classed as **good** - country parks and commons; rural footpaths; bridleways; nature conservation sites; woodlands; water sports areas; recreation grounds; parks and gardens; amenity green spaces; sports pitches; tennis courts; bowling greens; allotments; churchyards and cemeteries; and play areas for under 8's. Only play areas for 8-12 year olds and teenage facilities were classed as poor
- Most felt all facilities were about right in relation to current provision except local amenity green spaces; changing pavilions; public tennis courts; allotments; play areas for 8-12 year olds and teenage facilities
- Popular parks and gardens ranged from Northwood Park; Litten Park; Ventnor Park and Botanical Gardens; Puckpool Park; Rylstone Gardens; and Steyne Park to Victoria Recreation Ground
- Popular teenage facilities included Seaclose Park skate facility and Ryde Skate Park
- Sports facilities rated highly included Victoria Recreation Ground; Newchurch; Seaclose and Steyne Park
- Most people will drive to country parks, wildlife sites, sports pitches and allotments but prefer to walk to parks and gardens, grass pitches and play areas



## **5 Auditing local provision**

### **5.1 Introduction**

5.1.1 To help establish the quantity, quality and value of open spaces and outdoor recreation facilities a comprehensive audit and qualitative assessment of existing recreation and open space provision was undertaken. The audit recorded the quality and value of each site, facility or space. This task also helped identify those spaces and facilities which should be given the highest level of protection, assess priorities for enhancement and opportunities for new provision.

### **5.2 Baseline information review**

5.2.1 A thorough review and collation of all existing information sources on open space and recreation facilities was undertaken. The information sources reviewed were as follows:

- Isle of Wight Council documents on Council owned/maintained recreation and play areas
- Open Space data already available
- Existing consultation data
- Aerial photographs
- Parish Councils
- Private Institutions
- Countryside Access and Rights of Way Improvement Plan

5.2.2 This was an important stage of the study and all sites identified were given a unique ID and recorded in a Microsoft Excel database, categorised according to their typology (see Section 5.3.2) and mapped on a suite of Geographical Information System (GIS) maps. The full suite of typology maps is located at Appendix 8, 9, and 10.

### **5.3 Categorising open spaces**

5.3.1 Not all green spaces serve the same purpose. A playing field is not a park, for example. At the same time many green spaces are multi-functional, for example, a park can contain one or more pitches but it is still primarily a park, whilst a playing field or recreation ground in a residential area also enhances local amenity. For clarity in setting policies and assessing the adequacy of provision, this makes it desirable to use a typology of provision, related to the primary or main purposes of different forms of open space.

5.3.2 The typology we have used for the Audit process in is based on the one set out in PPG17. The individual typologies are set out below:

- Parks and gardens (PG)
- Local amenity green space (AGS)
- Green corridors (GC)
- Natural and semi-natural green spaces (NGS)
- Allotments and community gardens (ACG)
- Cemeteries and churchyards (CC)
- Provision for children and young people (CYP)
- Outdoor sports facilities (OSF)
- Civic space (CS)
- Education - dual use (EDUC)
- Other green space (OGS)

#### 5.4 Audit objectives

5.4.1 The Audit and qualitative assessment of existing open space and recreation provision had 3 key purposes:

1. To ascertain the quality and value of each site through evaluating a range of features or characteristics as objectively and consistently as possible
2. To identify the features or characteristics which result in some sites being of low quality or value, to provide a focus for improvements or enhancements
3. To identify those sites that the Council should protect from development, those that would benefit from improvement and enhancement or those that may benefit from consideration for alternative uses

5.4.2 Although driven partly by PPG17, the audit encompasses wider implications than land use planning and seeks to provide the basis for prioritising improvements in local site management and maintenance.

## 5.5 Quality and value

5.5.1 The terms 'quality' and 'value' are quite different and require definition:

- **Quality** relates to the range of features or facilities on a site and their nature or condition. The quality audit covers factors such as site accessibility, safety and security, management and maintenance and the presence of planting, trees, biodiversity, seats, and other facilities. The quality standards for the typologies are set out in Appendix 6
- **Value** relates to the contribution the site makes to local amenity, recreation and well-being, biodiversity, cultural heritage, community or other strategic objectives

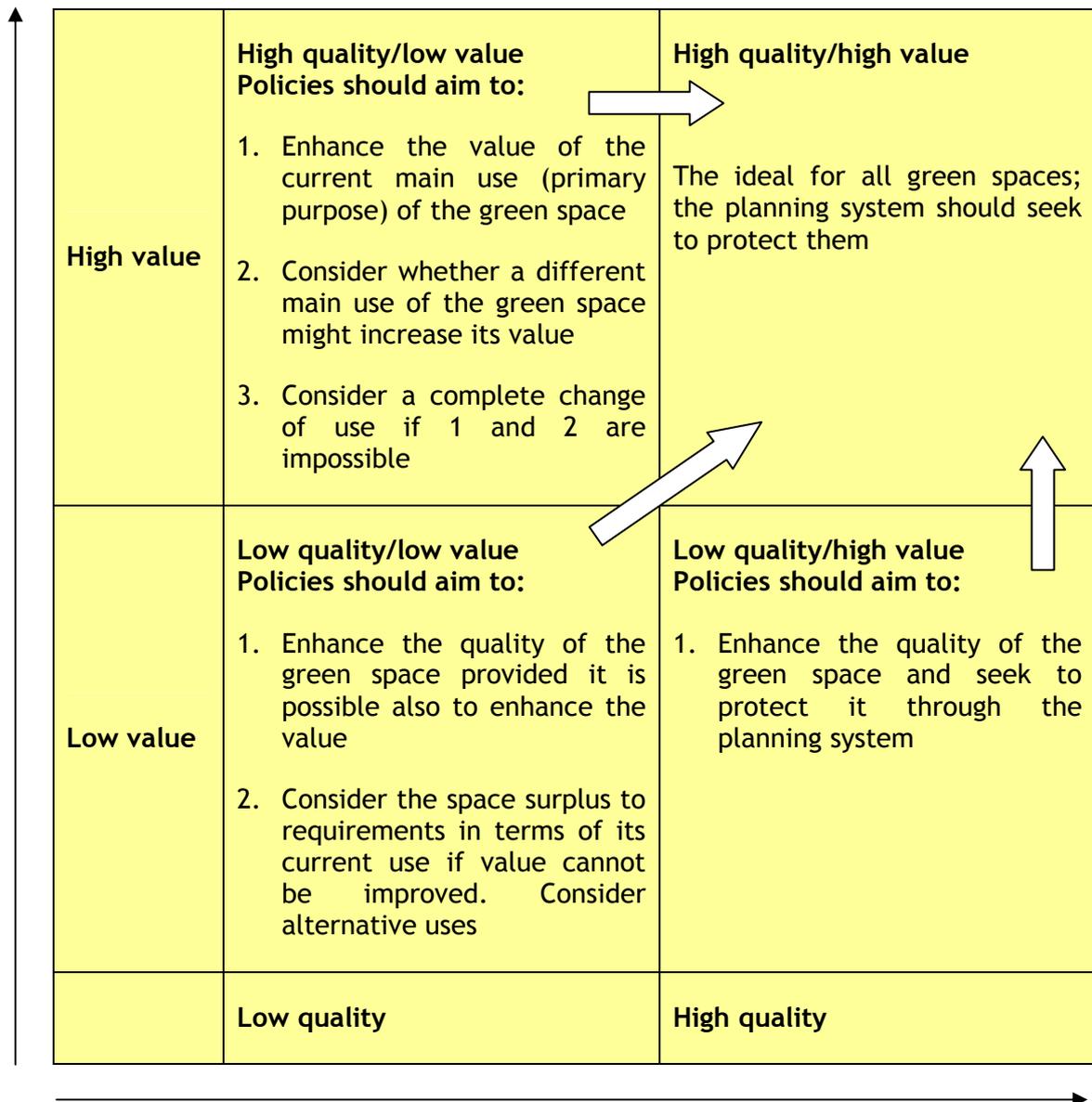
5.5.2 Quality and value are therefore entirely independent of each other. For example, a site that is assessed as being of very poor quality could be of high value if it is the only site within an area where young people are able to participate in a 'kick-about' and a site which looks an eyesore may be extremely valuable for wildlife. Conversely, a space or facility of superb quality may be of low value if it is inaccessible.

5.5.3 We consider that the Council should set an overall policy aspiration that all of the spaces and facilities in its area should be of both high quality and high value. The issue is then to determine what 'high' means. The audit scores obviously provide comparative data on each site, but it is necessary to use an essentially arbitrary 'cut off' point above which sites are classed as high quality or value and below which they are classed as low quality or value. This approach provides an initial method to assess the sites in a broad brush manner and underpin further policy assessments, based on the diagram overleaf:



*Newport duck pond*

**‘PPG17 Quality/Value Matrix’** - as summarised by CABE Space  
(Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment)



**5.6 The scope of the Audit**

5.6.1 A quality and value audit of all sites identified through the desk top review was undertaken during late Summer 2009. A bespoke audit pro-forma designed to evaluate the quality and value of green spaces was completed for each site. Each space was assessed against a suite of quality and value criteria and the scores accumulated to give each site an overall quality and value score. The audit pro-forma template is located at Appendix 3.

5.6.2 The quality scores provide a basis for comparing sites and provide an overview of the present state of open space on the Island. They also provide a preliminary identification of those spaces the Council should protect through the planning system and those that are a priority for future enhancement. The number of sites audited is summarised in Table 5-1. The full suite of quality and value maps is located at Appendices 8, 9 and 10.

Typology	Quantity audited
Parks and gardens	24
Local amenity green spaces	125
Natural and semi-natural green spaces	69
Cemeteries and churchyards	64
Allotments and community gardens	25
Green corridors	14
Children and young peoples facilities	52
Outdoor sports facilities	51
Civic spaces	27

*Table 5-1 - Quantity of sites audited*

5.6.3 The detailed results of the audits are displayed in an audit master schedule in Appendix 4. The master schedule provides a quick and transparent way of determining priorities for future investment. The detailed schedule will assist the Council:

- Rank sites across the Island in terms of value or quality either in general or in relation to specific features or characteristics
- Identify priorities for investment or changes to management and maintenance practices
- Identify the need for S106 developer contributions to fund the enhancement of existing provision within the vicinity of a proposed development
- The audit schedule can be particularly useful if, for example, the Council adopts a policy aspiration that all of its open spaces and sports and recreation facilities should achieve above a certain quality and value score, as it is possible to identify those sites with overall scores above or below the chosen score automatically. Again, the Council can set its policy aspiration and score at any level it sees fit

## 5.7 Updating the Audit

5.7.1 Open spaces and recreation facilities do not stay in the same condition for long so it is important to review and update the audit information from time to time so that it remains a useful tool for both planning and management purposes. We recommend that the Council undertake this review on a more or less continuous basis with a target of re-auditing around 20-25% of sites each year. This will give a 100% update roughly every 4 to 5 years. The review will assist the Council identify whether the overall quality and value of open spaces and outdoor sport and recreation facilities on the Island is improving, declining or static.

## 6 Audit results

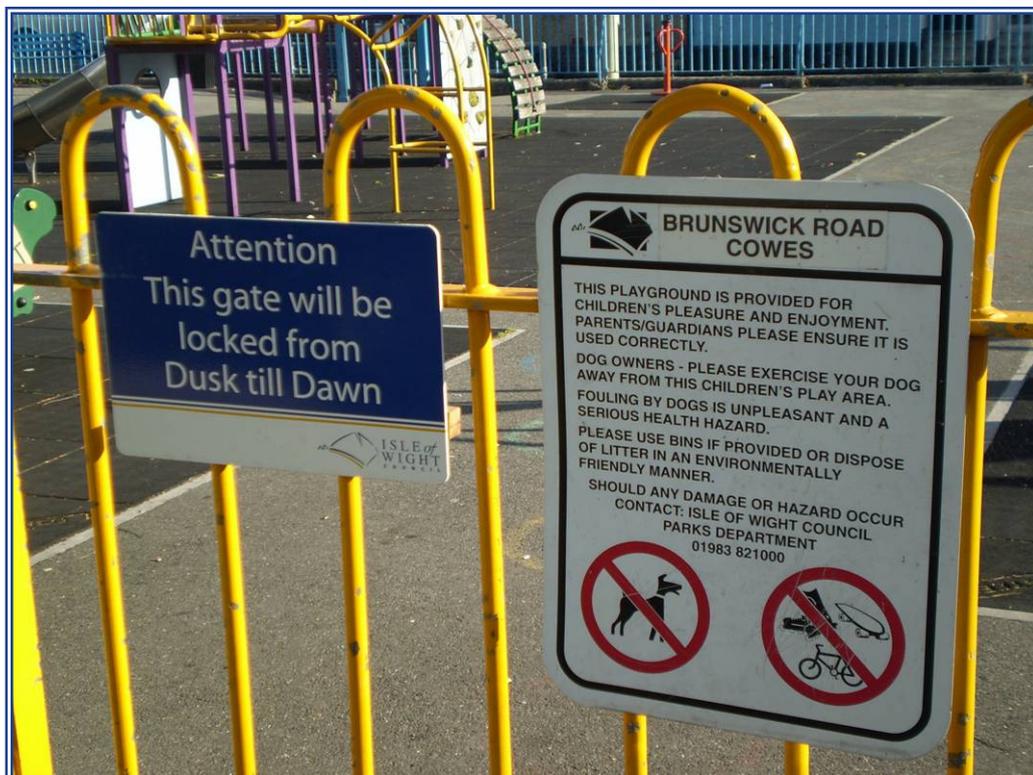
### 6.1 Introduction

6.1.1 This section summarises the results of the Island wide Audit by providing an overview of the findings in relation to each typology under the following standard headings:

- Scope of the Audit (the audit results have been split into the main urban areas to include Newport; Ryde/Binstead; Shanklin; Sandown; Cowes/East Cowes; Totland/Freshwater and Ventnor; and the surrounding rural area)
- Quality
- Accessibility and geographical spread
- Level of use
- Value and amenity
- Desirable improvements

6.1.2 Table 6-1 provides a summary of the quality and value audit scores for each typology. The full audit results are set out in Appendix 4. The scoring thresholds are as follows:

- 0% - 59%: Low
- 60% - 100%: High



*Brunswick Road, Cowes*

Typology	Sites audited	Average urban quality score	Average urban value score	Average rural quality score	Average rural value score	Range of quality scores	Range of value scores
Parks & gardens	24	83	62	91	59	51-100	40-75
Local amenity green space	125	80	52	91	54	8-100	13-75
Natural & semi-natural green spaces	69	83	58	93	59	63-100	13-67
Cemeteries & churchyards	64	85	53	93	57	59-100	22-63
Allotments	25	81	70	81	53	56-100	38-100
Green corridors	14	84	54	98	61	75-100	57-63
Children & young peoples facilities	52	81	61	84	66	48-100	5-97
Outdoor sports facilities	51	85	50	92	58	59-100	14-84
Civic spaces	27	96	59	96	50	86-100	26-63

Table 6-1 - Quality and value audit scores

## 6.2 Allotments

### Scope of the Audit

6.2.1 IoW Council currently owns 23 sites where allotments are maintained, the majority of these being in the urban areas with 4 managed by Allotment Associations. The sites are listed below:

- WISE Old Pan - Newport
- Hillside - Newport
- Field House - Newport
- Castle Road - Newport
- Millers Lane - Carisbrooke
- Clatterford - Carisbrooke
- Vectis Road - East Cowes
- Moorgreen - Cowes
- Seaview allotments - Seaview
- Harry Baldwin Allotments - St. Helens
- Pell Lane - Ryde
- Weeks Road - Ryde
- Alfred Street - Ryde
- Quarry Road - Ryde
- Marlborough Road - Ryde
- Fort Mews - Sandown
- Barn Ground - Sandown
- Wroxall allotments - Wroxall
- Grove Road - Wroxall
- West Hill Road - Shanklin
- Batts Road - Shanklin

There are also sites in Merstone, Niton and Brading.



#### Key findings from the quality audit:

Facilities such as water points and composting facilities are on occasions lacking;

- The quality of allotment sites across the Island is very high with most sites well tended and fully cultivated
- Boundary treatments are only occasionally poor
- Most sites have clear signage or information so anyone interested in applying for a plot would easily know how to do that. Only a very small number do not have signage and are generally not under Council ownership
- There is little evidence on sites of any real incursion or vandalism, despite occasional poor boundary treatments
- Accessibility within some sites is poor particularly for disabled users

6.2.5 The Council does not currently have a dedicated and adopted Allotments Strategy and there is currently a considerable demand for allotments across the Island.

#### Accessibility and geographical spread

6.2.6 The spread and accessibility of sites on the Island is generally reasonable with several some large sites available across the urban areas, particularly in Newport, Ryde and Shanklin. Provision in the rural areas and West Wight is generally poor with most villages having little kind of allotment provision although some larger villages in the East Wight have some limited provision e.g. Wroxall, St. Helens and Brading.

#### Level of use

6.2.7 The main factors influencing level of use are:

- Overall quality
- Attractiveness and accessibility of location
- Sense of security
- Quality of maintenance
- Amount of car parking
- Extent of vandalism
- Anti-social behaviour on the site

## Value

6.2.8 The range of value scores for all 25 sites is:

- Lowest score 38%
- Average score 61%
- Highest score 100%

## Desirable improvements

- **Improve boundary treatments**

6.2.9 Improving boundary treatments will not only increase the quality of the sites, but also improve the amenity of surrounding areas. Boundary treatments to entire allotments sites are even more significant because of the impact they have on the wider area and the surrounding community.

- **Improve the appearance of allotment sites**

6.2.10 Unused and unkempt allotments reduce the visual quality of a site and a more proactive approach to the management of sites might encourage holders to improve their existing plots. For example, the Council might provide limited incentives schemes designed to promote biodiversity and support wildlife. Following improvements, when there are fewer numbers of unused or unkempt allotments, the effect on the whole site can be encouraging for other allotment holders to maintain higher standards.

- **Paths and facilities**

6.2.11 Ideally, the paths on every allotment site should be wide and well drained and there should also be a range of facilities such as water supplies, possibly with toilets at the largest sites with over 50 plots. While some sites have at least one good main path, the smaller paths leading to individual allotments are often neglected. Although investment would be required to provide additional facilities such as sustainable toilets, smaller and important improvements could be made to the path networks within the allotments quite easily. Another suggestion might be for the Council to make suitable materials, such as paving slabs, available to plot holders at low cost.

- **An Isle of Wight Allotment Strategy**

6.2.12 Without a doubt, the development of an allotment strategy for the Isle of Wight would help raise the profile of allotments across the Island, as well as assisting in the availability and obtaining of capital and revenue funding. Grants are often available to community groups such as allotment associations and an adopted allotment strategy would highlight current deficiencies, priorities and assist in the allocation of resources.



*WISE Allotments*

## 6.3 Green corridors

### Scope of the Audit

6.3.1 The Isle of Wight has a number of significant green corridors throughout the urban settlements and rural area, providing a series of important wildlife as well as pedestrian routes. These range from railways lines that have been developed as local nature reserves and pedestrian routes and cycleways as well as significant bridleways across the Island. Likewise, they include a number of Seafront promenades and esplanades. A number of urban and strategic green corridors were audited such as cycleways and disused railway lines but we did not include the many rural bridleways and rural footpaths across the Island. Their location, condition and importance are covered elsewhere in the Rights of Way Improvement Plan. However a number were audited that were within the urban areas or defined as important linear open spaces. The Cowes Cycleway in particular is an important link between Newport and Cowes urban areas that has been developed as popular route. Likewise the Island-wide Coastal footpath is both important for creating links as pedestrian and wildlife routes. Proposals are developed later within this report in relation to green corridors.

### Quality

	Quality	Value and amenity
<b>Lowest score</b>	75% (Shide Path, Newport; Zoo Promenade, Sandown)	57% (Coppins Bridge, Newport)
<b>Average score</b>	84%	54%
<b>Highest score</b>	96% (Coastal Path, Shanklin)	63% (Cowes Cycleway)

*Table 6-4 - Green corridors: Island urban areas*

	Quality	Value and amenity
<b>Lowest score</b>	94% (Coastal Path, Colwell)	60% (Hamstead Trail, Wellow)
<b>Average score</b>	98%	61%
<b>Highest score</b>	100% (Newport Sandown Cycleway, Merstone)	63% (Newport Sandown Cycleway, Merstone)

*Table 6-5 - Green corridors: Island rural area*

### 6.3.2 The range of quality scores for the 14 sites is:

- Lowest score 75%
- Average score 91%
- Highest score 100%

### 6.3.3 Key findings from the quality audit:

- More consistent, clear signage is necessary although some good examples exist on the Cowes Cycleway and the Troll Walk as well as the Coastal Footpath
- Most of the Corridors change character as they pass through different areas and are affected by different pressures although the quality overall of these corridors was very high
- More facilities such as seating areas and litter/dog mess bins are required
- Better management of litter and vandalism, a particular issue where these corridors are heavily used
- Improvements to infrastructure such as paths, street furniture and landscaping are required in some locations
- Improving the links between existing Green Corridors and other links. The Coastal Footpath at times was confusing as to where it actually was
- Creation of links and connections to the green space network as a whole

### 6.3.4 The Council has recently made substantial investments with various improvements to some green corridors, in particular the Cowes Cycleway, Coastal Footpath and Troll Walk which are now suitably surfaced and have good access for less able users and pushchairs. At the same time the Council continues to promote a number of routes that take into account many of these areas as well as connecting other open spaces:

- Stenbury Trail - 10 miles from Newport to Ventnor
- Hamstead Trail - 7 miles from Hamstead to Brook
- Worsley Trail - 13 miles from Brightstone Forest to Shanklin
- Tennyson Trail - 14 miles from Newport to Alum Bay
- Bembridge Trail - 11 miles from Shide to Bembridge
- Nunwell Trail - 8 miles from Sandown to Ryde
- Shepherds Trail - 7 miles from Carisbrooke Castle to Shepherds Chine
- Freshwater Way - 5 miles from Yarmouth to Freshwater Bay

6.3.5 At the same time, the Council have successfully created a number of cycle routes that have taken into account the network of former railway lines on the Island:

- **Cowes to Newport** - This is a long established route following the old railway line along the banks of River Medina. A spur joins the route to Northwood providing good country routes to the west of the Island. It starts from the south end of Arctic Road, Cowes and at the Newport end can be found along the river at Dodnor Industrial Estate
- **Newport (Shide) to Sandown (Perowne Way)** - the continuation of Route 23 to Sandown again using the old railway line through a quiet rural part of the Island. Between Shide and Blackwater it lies beside the River Medina whilst past Merstone it joins the River Yar valley to Sandown
- **R22** - is signed from Wootton Bridge to Fairlee on the outskirts of Newport
- **Newport to Mountbatten Centre** - a quiet route from the harbour and along the river bank to Medina High School
- **Yarmouth to Freshwater** - a popular and practical route linking the two towns (part of the signed 'Round the Island' route) Starts at Thorley just east of Yarmouth but is signed from the Ferry Terminal to join the route at the old railway station. The route uses the old railway line to Freshwater
- **A signed coastal route from Ryde through Appley and Puckpool Park to Seaview Village** - it starts from east of the Canoe Lake following close to the sea wall and sandy beaches, past the Hersey Nature Reserve and into Seaview
- **Brading to St Helens following the old railway line** - however it is not surfaced but is a pleasant off road bridleway alternative to a busy road
- **Shanklin to Wroxall using another disused railway line** - an undeveloped route so the surface is poor in some places

#### Accessibility and geographical spread

6.3.6 Many green corridors have successfully been opened up and developed through such initiatives as 'Sustrans' and as Leisure Cycle Routes. There is still considerable potential to increase the accessibility of some green corridors, in particular links to the Coastal footpath and in areas that are perceived to have missing links, especially in the NE of the Island, an issue raised at one of the Focus Group workshops.

6.3.7 In considering links between open spaces, the Council will be developing a Green Infrastructure Strategy which will evolve from the PPG17 Audit and will need to consider current accessibility and geographical spread of open spaces and access to the wider countryside.

### Level of use

6.3.8 Many of the spaces within the Green Corridors contain well used open spaces with areas and places to relax outdoors. Many contribute to wider local biodiversity as well as informal play spaces. The path network also links into the wider pedestrian and cycle networks and forms green corridors commonly used by people moving around the Island with good links to the outer countryside. The level of use is considerable.

### Value

6.3.9 Strategically, the Green Corridors are of significance importance to the Island. They help to link the towns into the wider countryside; they support wildlife and biodiversity; and they provide attractive, traffic-free radial routes (in some cases) from centre to periphery and the surrounding countryside as well as provide a considerable contribution to local tourism. Not surprisingly therefore, they tend to score well on the value assessment.

6.3.10 The range of value scores for the 14 sites is:

- Lowest score 57%
- Average score 58%
- Highest score 63%



Troll Trail, Newport

## 6.4 Multi-functional green spaces

### Scope of the Audit

6.4.1 For the purposes of this Audit, “Multifunctional Green spaces” include parks and gardens, public golf courses, natural and semi-natural green spaces, churchyards and cemeteries and Civic Spaces. We audited 309 of these spaces, including natural and semi-natural green spaces and the remainder parks, churchyards and cemeteries or amenity spaces in housing areas. Playing fields and Outdoor Sports Facilities were audited separately and were classed based on their primary function and are discussed below. Some parks and amenity green spaces had sports pitches but where there was a dominant use, the space was given the typology based on its predominant usage.

### Quality

	Quality	Value and amenity
<b>Lowest score</b>	8% (Queens Rd AGS, Shanklin)	13% Queens Road, AGS, Shanklin
<b>Average score</b>	84%	56%
<b>Highest score</b>	100% (Ventnor Park, Ventnor Cemetery)	80% (Northwood Park, Cowes)

*Table 6-6- Multi-functional green spaces: Island urban areas*

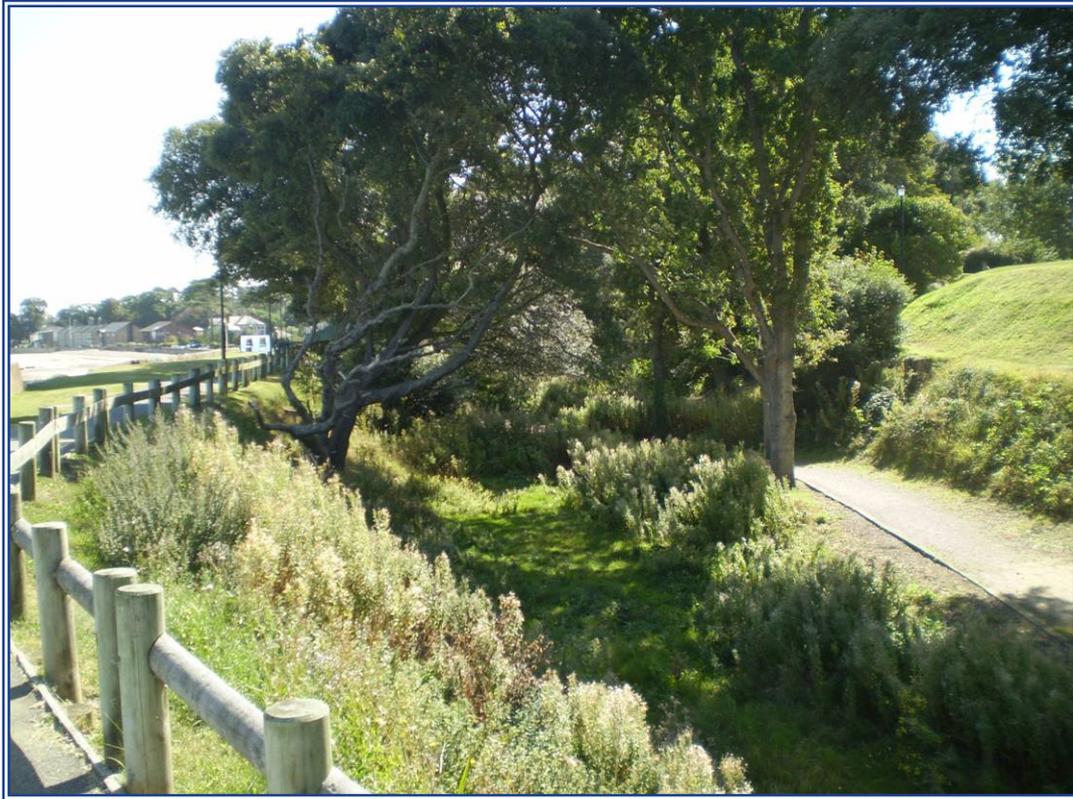
	Quality	Value and amenity
<b>Lowest score</b>	46% (Binstead Hill)	13% (The Pond AGS, Bonchurch)
<b>Average score</b>	91%	56%
<b>Highest score</b>	100% (Newtown NNR)	81% (Spanner Close Play Area, Chale Green)

*Table 6-7 - Multi-functional green spaces: Island rural areas:*

6.4.2 The range of quality scores is:

- Lowest score           8%
- Average score         88%
- Highest score         100%

- 6.4.3 The quality of the Isle of Wight multi-functional green spaces is very high, from the high quality parks at Ventnor Park, Litten Park, Puckpool Park, Ventnor Botanical Gardens, Northwood Park as well as the many smaller seaside garden and nature reserves on the Island such as the Forest Parks (Brighstone, Parkhurst and Combley Great Wood), Country Parks and Commons. At the lower end, there are a very small number of poor quality open spaces within some housing estates although these are few and far between. However, overall the average quality of multi functional open spaces in both the urban and rural areas of the Island is excellent, particularly due to the high level of maintenance many of these open spaces receive. Issues relating to litter, vandalism, graffiti, dog fouling is low.
- 6.4.4 The main issues affecting the quality of the lower quality sites are:
- Unclear entrances
  - Lack of signage and information but also an over provision of signage in some places, making spaces seem unwelcoming
  - Poor design and lack of unity
  - Limited facilities, including seats and litter bins
- 6.4.5 Surprisingly, the Island does not have any green flag parks at present but has considered entering on a number of occasions but currently feels that none of their parks are up to the standard of Green Flag. Clearly a number are high quality in relation to maintenance but some require enhanced management and further community involvement if they are to be successful. Ventnor Park and Ventnor Botanical Gardens would be worthy Green Flag holders.
- 6.4.6 Only 3% of all green spaces on the Island fall into the category of low quality with an average score of 88% for all multi functional spaces so overall quality is exceptionally high. There is however, clear potential to look at raising the profile of green space on the Island further and Green Flag is one way in which this should be encouraged.
- 6.4.7 Key findings:
- 6.4.8 **Puckpool Park** - Located on the east of the Island, between Ryde and Seaview, Puckpool Park is a high quality and valued park by both locals and tourists, due to the excellent facilities on offer as well as the coastal location, with lovely views towards Portsmouth. It is historically important due to the remains of fortifications which dominate the entrance and upper level of the park. It caters for a wide range of users with café, toilets, play area, car parking and coastal walk, all very popular and enhanced by high quality bedding displays. The park has potential Green Flag status.



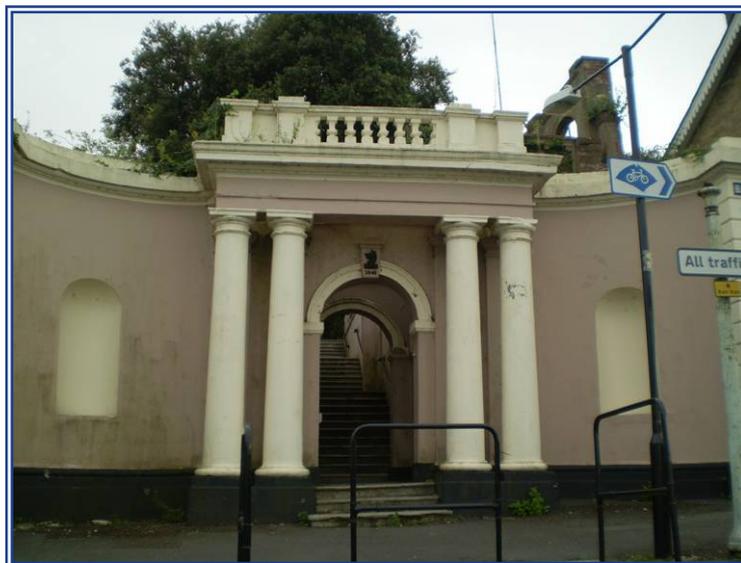
### *Puckpool Park*

- 6.4.9 **Ventnor Park** - one of the most popular parks on the Island, to the south with excellent views out to see from the upper level. It is dominated by high levels of horticultural standards, park “chalet” as well as the original Victorian Bandstand. The facilities are generally limited but its location as the town park for Ventnor offering a high quality parks experience are important. The park has potential Green Flag status.
- 6.4.10 **Ventnor Botanical Gardens** - A stunning collection of plants to the south of the Island in a remarkable setting taking advantage of a unique microclimate. Its facilities include visitor centre, catering, gift shop, education rooms, community facilities as well as an excellent play facility. It is freely open all year round and is accessible to local people as well as visitors and tourists alike.
- 6.4.11 **Litten Park** - a former cemetery in the heart of Newport, this small high quality park is well maintained to high horticultural standards with a recently enhanced play facility which is very popular. The historical archway is especially unique and dominates this high quality park, despite being next to a busy street. The park has potential Green Flag status.



*Litten Park, Newport*

- 6.4.12 **Northwood Park** - one of the most important parks on the Isle of Wight with its prominent position to the north of the Island, within the heart of Cowes, and popular with local residents as well as tourists. It is dominated by Northwood House, with the park the former estate and gardens of the house. Well served by facilities such as bowling, play areas, tennis courts, toilets, much of the park is dated and would benefit from considerable investment, particularly in relation to the park infrastructure and the integration of Northwood House into the park landscape. There have been a number of inappropriate introductions such as fencing, buildings and structures as well as poor attention to detail which detract from the quality of the overall park. The “grand” entrance from lower Cowes is poor in condition yet a unique park entrance with its grand steps and archway. Consideration should be given to a possible Heritage Lottery Fund Parks For People application.



*Northwood Park, Cowes*

- 6.4.13 **Rylstone Gardens** - Shanklin, described locally as a hidden gem and centred on Rylstone Manor House and adjacent to Shanklin Cline. It is well maintained, with impressive entrance, visitor facilities, tea rooms, crazy golf as well as including a contemporary bandstand, well used during the summer. The park is considered a tourist attraction and is well used by locals and visitors alike.
- 6.4.14 **Seaclose Park and Medina Arboretum** - adjacent to the High School outside Newport, Medina Arboretum is a continuation of a long linear green space, starting with Seaclose Park which provides one of the largest green spaces on the island, with play areas, skate park, tennis courts, pitches, bowling green, changing facilities as well as the location for the Isle of Wight Festival. Seaclose Park is high quality but requires substantial investment in changing facilities, toilets as well as play areas. The portakabin changing facilities are especially poor. The Median Arboretum is a small arboretum which is popular with local people as well as locals who use the nearby Leisure Centre and High School. The number of species of trees is impressive and is constantly added to although some attention to detail is required in relation to poor quality footpaths and signage which lets the park down.



*Medina Arboretum*

- 6.4.15 **Brighstone Forest** - Brighstone is the largest forest on the Island of Wight, which offers spectacular views of the coastline and many outdoor activities including biking, horseback riding and hiking. Brighstone Forest is popular with tourists who come to enjoy views of the southern coastline and the Solent. The forest contains two waymarked walks known as 'Jubilee Walk' and the 'Beech Trail'. Visitors tend to access these trails from the National Trust's Jubilee Car Park adjacent to the southern woodland boundary. Conflict arises within the woodland where mountain bikes and off-road vehicles stray from the Byway Open to All Traffic (BOAT) known as 'Tennyson Trail', threatening the nearby ancient monuments.





*Shide Quarry*

- 6.4.20 **Fort Victoria Country Park** - An old fort located in a prominent coastal location which has been converted into tourist shops and café with a museum/gallery and large car park. There is plenty of signage for the built development, however walks through surrounding mature broadleaved woodland are less well signed. There is no obvious link between the fort itself and its high quality, wooded setting. This could be improved to enhance the recreational value of the site.



*Fort Victoria*

- 6.4.21 **Northwood Cemetery** - The Island has a large number of well established cemeteries across the whole Island but this Cemetery on the descent into Cowes is very impressive, giving a 'untidy' unkempt appearance which is very high in heritage value due to the size and quality of headstones, buildings and monuments. It appears "run down" but has a strong historic and heritage value that should be maintained. It requires investment to improve some aspects of its infrastructure, in particular footpaths and buildings. Consideration should be given to a possible HLF bid to restore and 'manage' this cemetery for ongoing benefits to local wildlife as well as enhancing the heritage of the space.
- 6.4.22 The quality of the Island's best parks and open spaces is excellent. Not surprisingly, the best sites are the flagship sites, in particular the Forest and Country Parks and many of the Island parks. They show what the Council and Partners can achieve with adequate funding and should set the standard for other green spaces. In particular, they are among the few sites where signage is good and the information presented of a reasonably consistent standard and quality.
- 6.4.23 Several of the town and neighbourhood Recreational Grounds are however of a slightly lower quality standard providing less comprehensive facilities for local people. However, despite scoring generally quite high, they do lack consistency in identity, and range of overall facilities. Across the Island, signage is generally very good but in many open spaces, there is over provision and adds to the overall clutter of street furniture.
- 6.4.24 Churchyards and cemeteries can also make attractive spaces if accessible and well planted. In general, most of the churchyards and cemeteries are high quality open spaces, maintained to a very high standard and used by formal and informal users, in particular the cemeteries in the towns and outlying villages.

#### Accessibility and geographical spread

- 6.4.25 Overall the distribution of multi functional open spaces on the Island is very good with most settlements having access to either Natural Green Space, Amenity Green Space, churchyard or cemetery with some minor exceptions of little amenity green space in Bembridge and central Ryde and parks and gardens in West Wight where none currently exist. Access and spread of natural green spaces is exceptional with access to coast and countryside well provided for across the Island.
- 6.4.26 Accessibility to multi functional open spaces in the rural areas is good, with excellent access generally to open countryside and the coast as well as several villages having recreation grounds/playing fields. There are some very good examples of village facilities in villages such as St. Helens, Brading, Totland, Freshwater, Bembridge and Brighstone.

#### Level of use

- 6.4.27 The main factor that limits many spaces from actually being used more significantly is the lack of facilities, particularly play facilities, seating areas and rubbish bins. A small grassy area is unlikely to be used by many people if there is nowhere to sit. The issue of local amenity green space is discussed later but many of these are high quality due to good maintenance but most are low in value. In most cases this is due to a lack of facilities but clearly to provide such in every local amenity green space is simply not economically possible.

## Value

- 6.4.28 The Island has a number of strategically important sites. These are natural green spaces, parks and gardens or Forest/Country Parks. It is clear that most of these are very high quality yet value appears to be low for a number.
- 6.4.29 A number of sites are classed as low value because they are often lacking in facilities. For example a recreation ground may be of low value because it is lacking in facilities relating to children and young people. The introduction of Multi Use Games Areas (MUGA) only 'ticks' a small box in relation to teenage facilities. A site may also be low in biodiversity value with the value of the site to local people and wildlife diminished as a result. In many cases improvements to the quantity of facilities within a space rather than quality of facilities is required to increase the overall value of a site.
- 6.4.30 The range of value scores for the sites is:
- Lowest Score 13%
  - Average Score 56%
  - Highest Score 81%

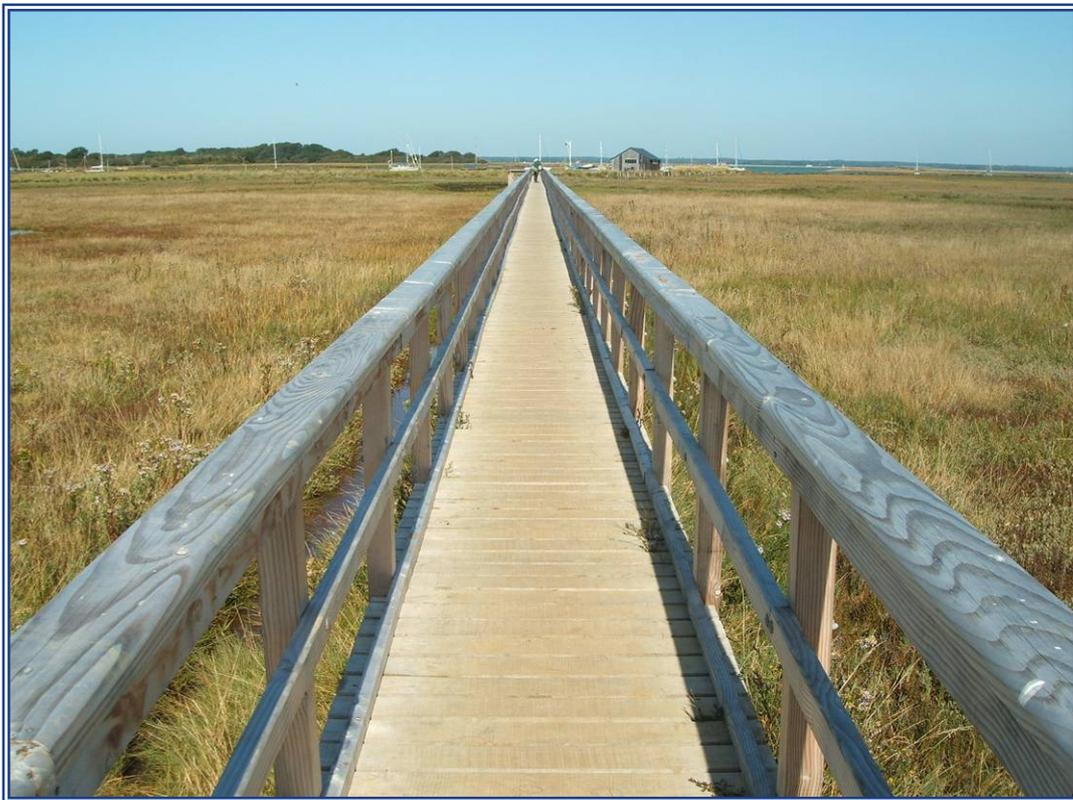
## Desirable improvements

- **Improve quality of design and attention to detail**
- 6.4.31 There are 2 main opportunities for improvement:
1. Clearly marking the entrance(s) to sites with obvious and consistent signage is important and this is the case with many sites across the Island but in many cases, attention to detail and quality of design is poor which diminishes the overall quality of an open space. Some sites have poor entrances due to clutter of signage, litter bins, dog bins and fencing. Many of the sites are unique and require a more concise design focus related to the individual site rather than a blanket application of standards.
  2. Removing signs and features that are dilapidated and/or out of date. This will demonstrate that the Council is making an effort both to improve the Island's environment and persuade local people to make greater use of green spaces.
- **Provide more facilities**
- 6.4.32 Litter is a short term issue and a number of sites lack sufficient or any litter bins at all. Providing more litter bins should help to reduce litter problems, albeit to only a limited extent. To complement them, the Council needs to work with local communities to try to develop peer group pressure which will work to reduce littering. Basic actions such as this should make spaces seem both safer and more welcoming.
- 6.4.33 Street furniture and infrastructure (fencing, footpaths etc) in many areas is either lacking or has deteriorated. A program of re-investment is required in key strategic sites based on a developed hierarchy of open spaces.

6.4.34 The average score for value is low and a program of improvements developed through community involvement would make a significant improvement to the value of many of the Island's green spaces.

- **Provide more native planting**

6.4.35 Increasing the amount of planting and trees will provide many low value sites with much needed interest and improve their contribution to nature conservation, thereby increasing their value. This is particularly relevant on a number of Recreation Grounds where sites are dominated by pitches or amenity green space. There are also large areas within housing estates that have potential for improving the wildlife value and hence biodiversity.



## 6.5 Outdoor sports facilities

### Scope of the Audit

- 6.5.1 51 outdoor sports facilities were audited across the Island which included football, cricket and rugby pitches. Also included were bowling greens, tennis courts and other sports facilities such as archery grounds!
- 6.5.2 The Isle of Wight Council does not have a Playing Pitches Strategy which we recommend to ensure compliance with Sport England guidance “Towards a Level Playing Field”. Such a study would provide an analysis of supply and demand on the Island for football, cricket, hockey and rugby. It should include an analysis of quality particularly in terms of playability and should take into account such issues as number games being cancelled due to poor quality facilities. The preparation of a comprehensive Playing Pitch Strategy is of particular importance as the 2009 PPG17 Audit did not include a detailed pitch quality assessment and did not include all school grounds and sports clubs facilities as many of these were inaccessible. A detailed Playing Pitch Strategy would identify and analyse all these facilities over a considered period of time.

### Quality

	Quality	Value and amenity
Lowest score	63% (Ryde Mead LTC)	14% (Newclose CC Ground)
Average score	80%	47%
Highest score	100% (Newclose CC Ground)	80% (Seaclose Park)

Table 6-8 - Outdoor sports facilities: Island rural areas

	Quality	Value and amenity
Lowest score	59% (Wroxall FC)	14% (Whitecroft sports Club)
Average score	88%	58%
Highest score	100% (Arreton Cricket Club)	84% (Brighstone Rec Ground)

Table 6-9 - Outdoor sports facilities: Island urban areas

6.5.3 The range of quality scores is:

- Lowest score            59%
- Average score           84%
- Highest score           100%

### Outdoor sports facilities 2009 audit findings

- 6.5.4 To assist with the assessment of the Island's level of playing field provision, the multi functional green spaces assessment form was used to assess the overall quality of each facility based on the range of facilities on offer and available, looking at issues such as management, maintenance, design, biodiversity, accessibility and health and safety. This information was analysed and supplemented with visual inspections of pitches and changing accommodation that was accessible and consultation with Sports clubs. Questionnaires were distributed to all sports clubs on the Island but resulted in an extremely low response (9 responses).
- 6.5.5 The figures are based on the PPG17 site audit but due to lack of access to many changing rooms and shortage of consultation responses, external assessments were made based on appearance. A more detailed assessment is required through a detailed Playing Pitch Strategy with close consultation with Sports Clubs and Associations.

### Summary of findings

- 6.5.6 **Cricket:** There are some good examples of cricket facilities across the Island, in particular Ryde Cricket Club, Brading CC, Arreton Cricket Club, Ventnor Cricket Club, Shanklin Cricket Club, Northwood Cricket Club and Newclose County Cricket Ground. Recent investment in cricket on the Island can be seen by some existing good facilities. However, the Isle of Wight Schools Cricket Association has highlighted the issue of poor cricket facilities within schools and with the move to High School tier provision, there is now a greater need for artificial cricket provision across most of the proposed High Schools. Most schools currently use club facilities which are much better than current school facilities. There is deemed potential for growth within the sport locally too.



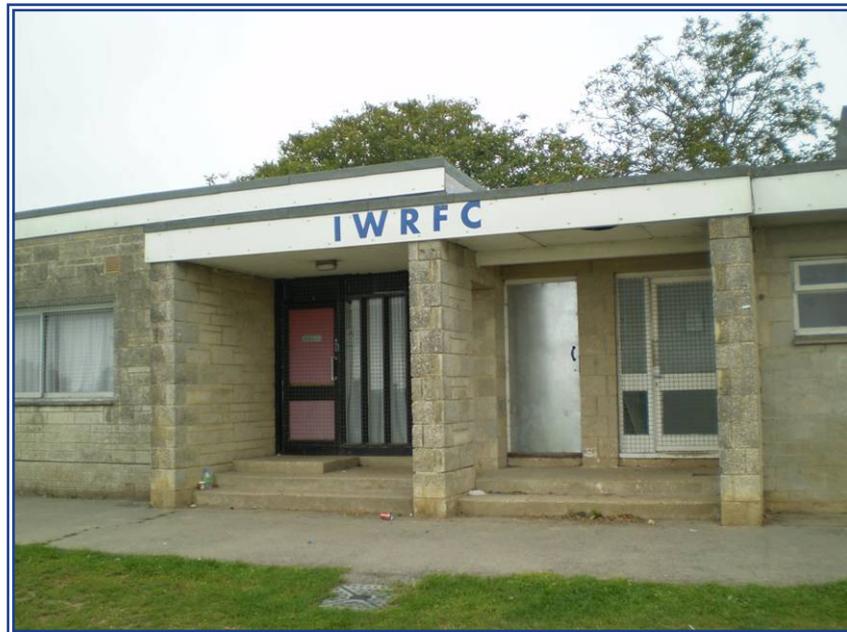
*Seaclose, Newport*

- 6.5.7 **Football:** The sport is popular on the Island with a considerable number of facilities audited and reasonable response from Island Clubs. There are some excellent facilities across the Island, in particular club facilities at Yarmouth and Calbourne FC, Newport FC, East Cowes FC, Kyngs Towne FC, Peter Henry Ground, Westwood Park Cowes FC, and Shanklin FC. The following clubs responded:- Binstead and COB FC; Sandown and Lake Youth FC; Whitecroft Sports Ground Trust; and Ryde Saints FC. The quality of facilities overall is relatively good with some sites having invested considerably in club facilities including changing facilities and pitch improvements. Club facilities as well as Council facilities are generally high in quality although there are some concerns in relation to changing facilities. Local clubs consider Newchurch, Sandown and Lake, East Cowes Vics, St Georges Park, Newport and Gurnard as being good facilities, with West Wight, Freshwater, Oakfield, Carisbrooke Rec, Brighstone Rec and Cowes Middle School being poor. There are mixed views in relation to the growth potential of the sport on the Island, although the Hampshire Football Association in February 2008 identified as priorities for the Isle of Wight as more grass pitches in Ryde and a football complex in Ryde.



*Football changing rooms*

- 6.5.8 **Rugby:** A small number of Rugby Clubs exist across the Island with Ryde Rugby Union FC, Ventnor RFC, as well as Sandown and Shanklin RFC and Isle of Wight RFC providing facilities. Local clubs expect growth in the sport by up to 15% but are concerned by the lack of and poor existing facilities, as well as funding issues. The worst facilities are within Ryde High School with the best facilities used by clubs often off the Island and include Basingstoke, Eastleigh and Ellingham/Ringwood. Changing Facilities are a concern on the Island as well as lack of floodlighting.



#### *Isle of Wight RFC, Wootton Bridge*

- 6.5.9 **Hockey:** Popular on the Island with Solent Junior Hockey Club and the Isle of Wight Hockey Club with a large number of members. It is estimated that there will be a 25-50% increase in the demand for the sport, yet there are concerns in relation to the quality of facilities available on the Island, lack of funding and poor access to existing facilities. Teams are using facilities in Eastleigh and Portsmouth which are much superior in comparison to Island facilities currently available at Carisbrooke High Schools and Ryde School (Smallbrook).
- 6.5.10 **Artificial turf pitches:** Only a few artificial turf pitches were audited but it is known a number exist within school grounds such as Rew Valley Sports Centre, Ventnor.

#### **Accessibility and geographical spread**

- 6.5.11 The distribution, accessibility and spread of sports facilities and pitches across the Island is generally very good, particularly in the urban areas with the majority of the rural areas having good access to the local towns. In some areas, access is however restricted, in particular East Cowes, and Ryde. The only provision locally is within public parks or recreation grounds. A number of Recreation Grounds and Parks provide high levels of sports facilities across the Island, in particular Seaclose Park, Newport; Victoria Recreation Ground, Newport; Nine Acres Recreation Ground, Newport; Clatterford Recreation Ground, Carisbrooke; Park Road Rec, Cowes; Manor Road Rec, Sandown; Wootton Rec, Wootton Bridge and Brighstone Recreation Ground, Brighstone. However, securing further or enhanced community use at many of the educational and school sites could help to alleviate some imbalance in the distribution of pitches particularly within the new tier of High Schools.

### Level of use

- 6.5.12 The most important factors influencing levels of usage include pitch quality and capacity, location, security, maintenance, car parking, changing accommodation and other ancillary facilities.
- 6.5.13 Local consultation carried out in 2009 has highlighted varying issues in relation to sports facility usage including:
- There is a demand for private and school facilities to be opened to the public in both rural and urban areas
  - Some sports facilities suffer from problems of dog fouling in both rural and urban areas
  - There is potentially increased demand likely to be experienced in most pitch sports such as cricket, hockey and rugby as well as to a lesser extent, in football

### Value

- 6.5.14 The range of value scores is:
- Lowest score            14%
  - Average score            53%
  - Highest score            84%
- 6.5.15 In many instances, value scores are very low due to the limited singular use and on occasions limited or restricted access to a facility. For instance, a recreation ground that is classed as an outdoor sports facility that has open and free access to all members of the community and has football, cricket and a tennis court will be deemed of higher value than a cricket club that has only a single activity and has a paid membership. Both are valuable but in “value” terms as previously defined, open free multi use is higher in value.

### Desirable improvements

- **Secure community use of school facilities where possible**
- 6.5.16 In seeking to address any geographical imbalance in playing pitch provision on the Island the Council should seek to secure increased community use at educational sites. Some of the Island’s primary schools have sufficient land to accommodate at least one mini-soccer or junior pitch in the rural areas in particular.

Through lottery initiatives and an increasing emphasis on community and neighbourhood development, it is likely that more junior teams will be seeking to access primary school pitches and facilities. It will clearly be sensible to maximise the use of these sites before considering any additional provision.

- **Secure community use of private facilities where possible**

6.5.17 The Island has a considerable number of private club facilities in relation to sports overall including tennis and pitch sports. These are often of a high quality but of a low value to the community as they are deemed “difficult” to access. A Playing Pitch Strategy should seek ways in which to involve local communities with clubs and increasing access to such facilities.

- **Provide more perimeter tree planting**

6.5.18 While many pitches have an element of tree planting or shrubs around their perimeter, strengthened boundary tree planting will make sites more attractive, provide shelter for players and spectators and support nature conservation and biodiversity. This is especially the case for a number of Parks and Recreation Grounds that are classed as outdoor sports facilities rather than parks or gardens.

- **Improve signage**

6.5.19 The provision of improved on-site information and more welcoming signage is clearly desirable and should be reasonably achievable.



*Newport FC*

### Other issues:

- The need for improvements to pitch quality at certain sites needs to be identified as part of a Playing Pitch Strategy. In addition with the development of new facilities to satisfy the demands of all sectors of football, any new pavilions supported by the Council must be inclusive of the requirements of women's football and provide segregated changing facilities and toilets
- In recognising the responsibilities arising from the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act the Council needs to encourage, when reviewing applications for site developments, adequate design for access and facilities in order that people with disabilities are encouraged to watch and participate in sports
- The demand for small sided football is being hampered by the lack of available facilities. Full encouragement and support should be given to any new proposals for the provision of these facilities
- The Playing Pitch Strategy should specifically highlight the following recommendations
- Maximising the playing potential of existing stock through improvements to pitch quality by, for example
  - Harnessing the expertise of turf specialists and other bodies in establishing the best way to construct pitches in varying locations
  - Levelling and draining pitches
  - Supporting improvements in pitch construction (such as interweaving of artificial grass in the goalmouths on football pitches)
  - Adopting maintenance regimes that are tailored to the priority needs of the site and the strategic significance of venues. Significant improvements can be achieved through maintenance/refurbishment rather than new build
- Maximising the playing potential of existing stock through a strategic approach to improving ancillary facilities by, for example:
  - Providing changing facilities where none exist currently
  - Improving existing changing facilities, taking special account of the needs of girls, women and youth players
  - Reviewing the programming and timetabling of the use of sites to ensure the most efficient use of both pitches and changing facilities
  - Promotion of single multi-sports clubs based upon the European model or 'soccer centre' to reduce costs
  - Ensuring that major capital and revenue investment, notably in the main towns, results in sustainable and viable facilities. For example the design for changing facilities should be appropriate to the site and not elaborate or costly if they are primarily designed for grassroots participation

continued...

- Joint development of facilities on multi-use sites (such as football and cricket)
- Strongly enforcing existing legislation regarding fouling of sports pitches by dogs

## 6.6 Children and young people’s facilities

### Scope of the Audit

6.6.1 All Council managed teenagers and children’s play areas were audited. IoW Council presently provides and maintains 37 publicly accessible play areas and a small number of young people’s facilities within the urban area and rural areas. A further 14 play areas and young people’s facilities are provided by parish councils in the rural area.

### Quality

	Quality	Value and amenity
<b>Lowest score</b>	54% (Seaclose Park, Newport)	5% (Ventnor Skate Park)
<b>Average score</b>	81%	61%
<b>Highest score</b>	98% (Oakfield Rec, Ryde)	97% (Oakfield Park, Ryde)

*Table 6-10 - Children and young people’s facilities - Island urban areas:*

	Quality	Value and amenity
<b>Lowest score</b>	48% (Binstead)	36% (Clatterford Rd Play Area)
<b>Average score</b>	83%	68%
<b>Highest score</b>	100% (Rookley)	85% (Brighstone Rec)

*Table 6-11 - Children and young people’s facilities - Island rural area:*

6.6.2 The range of quality scores is:

- Lowest Score            48%
- Average Score         82%
- Highest Score         100%

- 6.6.3 The quality of spaces designated as play areas varies. The poorer sites are however still in reasonable condition and are lower in quality due mainly to age rather than poor management or maintenance. The majority of play areas are well located in safe positions that are reasonably well overlooked. Within the rural area, quality standards are slightly more varied with a few play areas scoring poor to average, either due to poor design or the facility coming to its end of its lifespan. Poor to average play areas include:

#### Urban areas

- Seaclose Park, Newport
- Nelson Road Play Area, Newport
- Batts Road, Shanklin
- Victoria Rec, East Cowes
- Jubilee Road Rec, East Cowes
- Oakwood Road Rec, Ryde
- Binstead Rec Play Area, Binstead
- Binstead Hill, Binstead

#### Rural area

- Havenstreet Recreation Area
- Clatterford Play Area, Carisbrooke

#### Accessibility and geographical spread

- 6.6.4 The Isle of Wight currently does not have a Play Area Strategy in relation to fixed equipment play areas therefore no previous work has been carried out in relation to accessibility. The number of play areas across the Island is varied with some areas having reasonable access to play areas, but with others having few facilities within their neighbourhoods.

#### Value

- 6.6.5 Often the single most important factor affecting the amenity of play facilities is either the quality of restorative work after equipment has been removed or the unimaginative design of play areas/youth facilities. Many of the older sites are low in value as they simply do not provide any stimulation for play. There are examples of success such as the Seaclose Park skate board facility which is of high quality as well as Steyne Park, Bembridge and Oakfield Park, Ryde. The provision of teenage facilities is limited across the Island, although recent introductions of skate parks have improved the situation. However the most valued children and young people's facility is an integrated facility which combines facilities for young and older children, with not just a basketball facility but other needs catered for - kickabout, skateboarding, seating, BMX. Oakfield Park in Ryde is an exemplar of an integrated facility.

6.6.6 The provision of integrated facilities need to be weighted to balance aspirations, as these facilities would require large areas of open space, something that the urban area of the Island is lacking in the majority of locations.

6.6.7 The range of value scores is:

- Lowest Score 5%
- Average Score 64%
- Highest Score 97%



*Oakfield Arc, Ryde*

6.6.8 Good management and maintenance are also of significant importance to children's play areas and facilities for teenagers. Well maintained play areas where issues of broken glass, litter and vandalism are dealt with quickly make a positive contribution to young people's lives. The majority of children's play areas have surrounding landscaped borders which provide opportunities for planting trees and shrubs to further increase interest for young people and for biodiversity.

### Desirable improvements

- **Restore key sites**

6.6.9 The majority of children's play areas and facilities for young people are in good, secure locations and maintained in a safe and positive manner. It is recommended that the Council should focus primarily on continuing in restoring facilities, followed by effective management and maintenance. The key improvements required are:

- Replacement of equipment where necessary
- Repairing and repainting vandalised equipment and fences, ideally in bright colours; changing the colour of something, rather than repainting in the same colour, makes it very obvious to the community that 'something has been done';
- Further provision of integrated teenage facilities
- Surfaced paths between pavements and play areas or between items of equipment within sites
- Improved cleaning and maintenance
- **Develop more interesting and stimulating sites**

6.6.10 Many sites are doing little more than 'ticking the box' in terms of meeting the basic minimum requirements for equipped play areas. Sites should be designed to stimulate children's imagination. The National Playing Fields Association maintains that this requires at least five types of play equipment, although Play England believes that integrated natural environments offer far more to most children than fairly sterile equipped play areas and their Design for Play Guide reinforces this issue. The Children's Play Council also has a simple message "*Children need and want to take risks when they play*". Any new Play Strategy should endorse the philosophy of creating more risky and stimulating areas to play.

- Provide better planting and enhance natural play opportunities

6.6.11 Young children enjoy trees and watching birds and small animals. Increasing the diversity of planting around the edges of sites to encourage nature conservation will therefore improve their attractiveness to many children. However, any planting scheme should not prevent overlooking as this promotes safety.



*Exemplar young children's play areas in Berlin, Germany, and Stockton on Tees*

## 7 Quantity

### 7.1 Introduction

7.1.1 This section analyses the quantity of existing open space provision for the Island. An assessment of existing open space provision in relation to adopted quantity standards has been undertaken. The existing quantity (provision) of open space within the Isle of Wight is summarised in Table 7-1.

Typology	Existing Provision Urban areas (M <sup>2</sup> )	Existing Provision Rural (M <sup>2</sup> )	Urban Areas M <sup>2</sup> (per person)	Rural Area M <sup>2</sup> (per person)	Existing Provision Bay growth area (M <sup>2</sup> ) per person	Existing Provision Medina Valley growth area (M <sup>2</sup> ) per person	Existing Provision Ryde growth area (M <sup>2</sup> ) per person
Parks & gardens	564,574	105,556	6.35	2.05	8.7	4.5	1.03
Local amenity green spaces	566,618	384,284	6.4	7.5	6.6	4.6	7.8
Green corridors	371,345	296,178	4.2	5.8	1.2	8.4	0.95
Natural/ semi-natural green Spaces	10,178,439	16,620,083	114	323	19	110	5.43
Allotments	164,515	26,614	1.85	0.52	2.0	1.7	2.5
Churchyards & cemeteries	374,045	300,819	4.2	5.8	3.7	5.4	2.3
Outdoor sports facilities	1,251,142	478,052	14.1	9.3	9.3	13	18
Children and young people's facilities	61,308	25,009	0.69	0.49	0.24	0.36	1.3
Civic space	18,671	21,954	0.21	0.43	0	0.1	0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>13,550,657</b>	<b>18,258,549</b>	<b>152</b>	<b>355</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>148</b>	<b>40</b>

(Based on a mid 2008 population of 140,200- 88,808 Urban which includes Newport, Shanklin, Sandown, East Cowes, Cowes, Ryde, Binstead, Ventnor, Totland and Freshwater; 51,392 Rural; Growth areas Medina Valley - Newport, Cowes, East Cowes; Ryde; and The Bay - Shanklin, Sandown and Lake)

**Table 7-1 - Quantities of open space provision within the Isle of Wight**

7.1.2 The National Playing Fields Association (NPFA) have for many years advocated open space provision, the most well known being the 6 acres (2.4ha) of open space per 1000 population. IoW Council has used the NPFA standards for many years but in line with recent thinking, has determined that local standards should be set based on the latest revisions to PPG17 and the latest guidance. The standards that the Council have used are shown below in Table 7-2.

Open space typology	Existing provision standard
Parks and gardens	None
Natural and semi-natural areas	None
Amenity greenspace	None
Children's play space	0.6-0.8ha per 1000 population
Outdoor sports facilities	1.6-1.8ha per 1000 population
Green corridors	None
Allotments and community gardens	None
Cemeteries and churchyards	None

**Table 7-2 - Adopted open space provision standards based on the NPFA Standards referred to in the current UDP**

## 7.2 Quantity standards of open space

7.2.1 We have reviewed the Council's current adopted green space standards and where appropriate have proposed new provision standards. The proposed quantity standards for each typology have been determined from a number of factors, including:

- Consultation with stakeholders and the local community
- Combining the existing level of provision with local views as to its adequacy
- Review of existing provision standards
- Review of best practice and national standards
- Qualitative assessment results and issues
- Benchmarked against other authorities who have recently adopted new local standards based on a PPG17 audits. These include Blyth Valley in Northumberland, the Scottish Borders and Horsham in Sussex. The three areas were deemed appropriate for the following reasons:
  - Blyth Valley is a large rural area with 3 major settlements - Cramlington, Blyth and Seaton Delaval, with smaller villages between
  - The Scottish Borders is a large rural area with satellite towns that provide the majority of sport and recreation facilities
  - Horsham is a large rural southern authority
  - All 3 authorities have gone through the PPG17 process

7.2.2 Each typology are now considered separately and for each typology we set out:

- Existing quantity standards
- Existing provision
- Key Issues from the audit
- Accessibility issues
- Proposed quantity standards and revisions if required
- The application of quantity standards

7.2.3 We have also included the 3 growth areas that have been identified by Isle of Wight Council which are Medina Valley, Ryde and The Bay.

### 7.3 Parks and gardens

Summary	Urban area m <sup>2</sup> per person	Rural area m <sup>2</sup> per person	Bay area m <sup>2</sup> per person	Medina area m <sup>2</sup> per person	Ryde area m <sup>2</sup> per person
Existing quantity Standard	None	None	None	None	None
Existing provision	6.35	2.05	8.7	4.5	1.03
Proposed revised quantity standard	6	6	6	6	6
Comparator	Blyth: 3.6 m <sup>2</sup> Scottish Borders: 5 m <sup>2</sup> Horsham: N/A				

Table 7-3 - Parks and gardens provision standards

7.3.1 There is currently no parks hierarchy in the LDF. It is recommended that the Island’s LDF identifies a hierarchy of parks through the Green Infrastructure Strategy. To form the basis of the park hierarchy the following definition of a park is suggested:

*“A high quality green space, with a specific local name and enclosed by walls, railings or hedges, containing a range of landscape features or built facilities, designed and maintained in such a way as to be seen as an attractive place to visit by people of all ages.”*

7.3.2 Given the Island’s compact nature we suggest a two-tier hierarchy linking the following spaces:

7.3.3 **Strategic parks:** major parks with a good range of facilities, intended to serve town-wide catchments and beyond. The Council should seek to make these parks different and complementary. Any future Green Flag parks should be included in this level of the hierarchy. These should include Ventnor Park, Northwood Park, Ventnor Botanical Gardens, Litten Park, Rylstone Gardens and Puckpool Park. A number of open spaces also require upgrading to strategic park status, and these should include Big Mead, Shanklin; Los Altos Park, Sandown; Appley Park, Ryde and Totland Recreation Ground, Freshwater.

7.3.4 **Neighbourhood parks:** smaller parks or recreational grounds within walking distance of each of the main neighbourhoods in the towns and larger villages, with a lesser range of facilities, designed to complement those in other spaces in the same neighbourhood but generally with an emphasis on providing a high quality landscape and horticultural interest. The Council should actively seek to maximise pedestrian and cycling access to these spaces.

7.3.5 As a matter of policy, each of the parks should contain a children’s play area and the Strategic parks should also have teenage facilities. The parks hierarchy is recommended to comprise the following strategic and neighbourhood parks:

<b>Strategic and neighbourhood parks hierarchy</b>	
<b>Strategic parks:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ventnor Park, Ventnor</li> <li>• Ventnor Botanical Gardens, Ventnor</li> <li>• Litten Park, Newport</li> <li>• Northwood Park, Cowes</li> <li>• Rylstone Gardens, Shanklin</li> <li>• Los Altos Park, Sandown</li> <li>• Big Mead Park, Shanklin</li> <li>• Totland Rec, Totland</li> <li>• Puckpool Park, Seaview</li> <li>• Esplanade Gardens, Shanklin</li> <li>• Appley Park, Ryde</li> </ul>
<b>Neighbourhood parks:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Medina Arboretum</li> <li>• Jubilee Road Rec, East Cowes</li> <li>• HMS Royal George Gardens, Ryde</li> <li>• Arctic Park, Cowes</li> <li>• Lake Common, Lake</li> <li>• Newport Road Rec, Lake</li> <li>• Eastcliff Prom, Shanklin</li> <li>• Tower Cottage Gardens, Shanklin</li> <li>• Batts Road, Shanklin</li> <li>• Lake Gardens, Sandown</li> <li>• Battery Gardens, Sandown</li> <li>• Ferncliff Gardens, Sandown</li> <li>• Sandhams Ground, Sandown</li> <li>• Vernon Square, Ryde</li> <li>• Waterside Pool, Ryde</li> <li>• Simeon Road Rec, Ryde</li> </ul>
<b>The following should be upgraded from AGS and OSF to neighbourhood park status:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Havenstreet Rec, Havenstreet</li> <li>• Victoria Grove Rec, East Cowes</li> <li>• Oakfield Rec, Ryde</li> <li>• Stroud Recreation Ground, Freshwater</li> <li>• Binstead Road Rec, Binstead</li> <li>• Colwell Common, Colwell</li> <li>• Brighstone Rec, Brighstone</li> <li>• Calbourne Rec, Calbourne</li> </ul>



### *Esplanade, Cowes*

#### **Key issues from the Audit**

- 7.3.6 The detailed audit database contains details of all the parks, many of them lacking in a range of facilities but of a generally high quality, with few exceptions where quality is poor overall. The urban areas of the Island are well endowed with parks and gardens, although there is a current lack of parks and gardens in the rural areas as well as Medina Valley and Ryde Growth Areas.
- 7.3.7 The Council should focus its efforts primarily on ensuring that this network of strategic and neighbourhood parks is of high quality, increase the overall value and that all are accessible.

#### **Proposed quantity standard**

- 7.3.8 The Council should protect all the spaces identified as strategic and neighbourhood parks and these should form the foundation for any Parks Strategy or Green Infrastructure Strategy. However, many of them require significant enhancement in their value to the local community if they are to fulfil their role. As new developments will increase the demand pressure on parks, it will be for developers to contribute to their continued enhancement as a matter of course.
- 7.3.9 The appropriate provision standard is therefore:
- Strategic Parks                      3 m<sup>2</sup> per person
  - Neighbourhood Parks                3 m<sup>2</sup> per person
  - Total:                                      6 m<sup>2</sup> per person

### Application of the quantity standard

7.3.10 For the foreseeable future, the Council's immediate priority should be to enhance its existing parks and especially those designated as neighbourhood parks which are currently dominated by sports facilities and offer little value to the local community. More specifically, they should seek S106 contributions from all developments which will increase the use made of parks, such as residential and office developments, based on two components:

- A contribution towards the general improvement of strategic parks, based on 3 sq m per person with all rural developments also contributing to the nearest strategic park
- A contribution towards the enhancement of the nearest neighbourhood park, based on 3 sq m per person

7.3.11 The Council's policy within the rural and growth areas should also be to increase the provision of parks and gardens, in particular in West Wight and Ryde and should seek alternative uses for existing typologies such as local amenity green space and outdoor sports facilities and upgrade to parks and gardens status, rather than adding to the existing network of open space.

### 7.4 Local amenity green spaces

Summary	Urban area m <sup>2</sup> per person	Rural area m <sup>2</sup> per person	Bay area m <sup>2</sup> per person	Medina area m <sup>2</sup> per person	Ryde area m <sup>2</sup> per person
Existing quantity standard	None	None	None	None	None
Existing provision	6.4	7.5	6.6	4.6	7.8
Proposed revised quantity standard	5	5	5	5	5
Comparator	Blyth: 6 m <sup>2</sup> Scottish Borders: N/A Horsham: 4m <sup>2</sup>				

Table 7-4 - Local amenity green spaces

7.4.1 While there is ample amenity green space on the Island as a whole, there are some minor geographical imbalances in the distribution of these spaces, with paucity in some areas and a reasonably high number of sites in others. These are generally few and far between with most of the towns having access to amenity green spaces. Where there is a local deficiency of parks and gardens or children and young people's facilities in areas, we suggest amenity green space could be enhanced to provide such facilities, particularly in areas of large housing provision. We have suggested a number of sites that are currently Recreation Grounds but are classed as Amenity Green Space that should be upgraded to Parks and Gardens status, in particular to Neighbourhood Parks.

### Proposed quantity standard

- 7.4.2 There is no clear rationale for determining the appropriate quantity of amenity green space in a residential or other area and indeed the need for it will vary from one area to another. For example, long established low density leafy suburbs where houses have reasonably large gardens have much less need for a network of publicly accessible green spaces than typical “developer suburbs” containing houses with fairly small gardens. In turn, these areas require less publicly accessible green space than inner suburban areas of high density housing.
- 7.4.3 Broadly speaking, the Island has adequate amenity green space; the Council’s clear priority should be to enhance and increase the value of existing run-down spaces rather than seek the provision of more. It is also the case that it could dispose of some of its existing poor quality and low value spaces in order to generate some of the funds required to enhance other spaces. Accordingly the amenity green space quantity standard should be slightly lower than the present level of provision.

### Application of the quantity standard

- 7.4.4 On the Island most new residential development is likely to be one of three types: typical developer suburbs designed for owner-occupation, infill and other small developments and the ‘densification’ of those areas in which houses have large gardens. The approach to these various types of development should be:
- 7.4.5 **Developer suburbs:** if there are no existing amenity green spaces within the distance threshold of each dwelling, the development must include an on-site network of green spaces and paths. In addition, the total amount of amenity green space must be not less than that required by the application of the quantity standard to the development. If there are existing green spaces within the distance threshold of the development, the developer must contribute to their enhancement on the basis of the quantity standard. In addition, all developments should contribute to the enhancement of neighbourhood and strategic parks.
- 7.4.6 **Infill and other small developments:** no requirement for new on-site green spaces but development must contribute to the enhancement of the nearest amenity green space and neighbourhood and strategic parks.
- 7.4.7 **Densification areas:** no requirement for new green spaces but development must contribute to the enhancement of the nearest amenity green space and neighbourhood parks and strategic parks.
- 7.4.8 For the foreseeable future, the Council should ask developers to provide on-site amenity green spaces and seek contributions towards the enhancement of existing spaces.

## 7.5 Natural green spaces

Summary	Urban area m <sup>2</sup> per person	Rural area m <sup>2</sup> per person	Bay area m <sup>2</sup> per person	Medina area m <sup>2</sup> per person	Ryde area m <sup>2</sup> per person
Existing quantity standard	None	None	None	None	None
Existing provision	114	323	19	110	5.43
Proposed revised quantity standard	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Comparator	Blyth: 20m <sup>2</sup> Scottish Borders: N/A Horsham: 20m <sup>2</sup>				

Table 7-5 - Natural green spaces

- 7.5.1 It is proposed that any quantity standard for natural green space should reflect the current high level of provision which is seen as more than sufficient in all areas.

### Proposed quantity standard

- 7.5.2 The quantity standard for natural green spaces is more than adequately met and accessibility to natural green space is seen as the priority rather than the increased provision of already high levels of natural green space. We have therefore not proposed a quantity standard as the Council is already using the ANGST Standard for Natural Green Space in relation to new developments.

### Application of the quantity standard

- 7.5.3 For the foreseeable future, the Council should not ask developers to provide on-site natural green spaces but seek contributions towards the enhancement of either existing natural green spaces and to increase the biodiversity of other existing green space typologies such as parks and gardens, sports pitches sites, education land and amenity green spaces, particularly in the urban areas on the existing 'Recreation Grounds' and sports pitches sites and in particular the Ryde Growth Area.

## 7.6 Equipped play areas

Summary	Urban area m <sup>2</sup> per person	Rural area m <sup>2</sup> per person	Bay area m <sup>2</sup> per person	Medina area m <sup>2</sup> per person	Ryde area m <sup>2</sup> per person
<b>Existing quantity standard</b>	0.6-0.8ha per 1000 (6-8 m <sup>2</sup> per person)	0.6-0.8ha per 1000 (6-8 m <sup>2</sup> per person)	0.6-0.8ha per 1000 (6-8 m <sup>2</sup> per person)	0.6-0.8ha per 1000 (6-8 m <sup>2</sup> per person)	0.6-0.8ha per 1000 (6-8 m <sup>2</sup> per person)
<b>Existing provision</b>	0.69	0.49	0.24	0.36	1.3
<b>Proposed revised quantity standard</b>	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.6
<b>Comparator</b>	Blyth: 0.8m <sup>2</sup> Scottish Borders: 0.6m <sup>2</sup> Horsham: 0.5m <sup>2</sup>				

*\*based on fixed equipped play areas*

*Table 7-6 - Equipped play areas*

### Theoretical standards

7.6.1 As play areas do not have a fixed capacity to accommodate use, it is not possible to adopt a supply and demand approach to determine an appropriate quantity standard. Accordingly a standard has been developed from first principles based on a conceptual model developed by Kit Campbell Associates (author of the PPG17 Companion Guide) and the key requirements of the recommended quality standards and distance thresholds.

7.6.2 The basis parameters are:

- Minimum size: 400m<sup>2</sup> (taken from recommended quality standards)
- Minimum distance threshold: 400m (taken from recommended distance thresholds)
- Assumed housing density: 30 dwellings/hectare (taken from PPS3)
- Average dwelling occupancy: 2.20 people (taken from 2001 census for the Isle of Wight).

7.6.3 The conceptual model consists of a circular residential area with a radius of 400m. It therefore has an area of approximately 50 ha. At 30 dwellings/ha, this area will contain roughly 1,500 dwellings and just over 3,300 people. Assuming that this area requires a minimum of one play area, this gives a minimum quantity standard of 400 sq m to 3,300 people, or 0.12 sq m per person.

7.6.4 We have also used the same model to derive a provision standard for older children, with a different distance threshold and minimum size:

- Minimum size: 1,000m<sup>2</sup> (taken from the recommended quality standards)
- Distance threshold: 550m (taken from the recommended distance thresholds)

This gives a minimum quantity standard of 0.16m<sup>2</sup> per person.

7.6.5 These two calculations assume that residents of the conceptual model residential area will require only one 400m<sup>2</sup> play area for young children and one 1,000m<sup>2</sup> area for older ones, giving a composite quantity standard of 0.28m<sup>2</sup> per person. However, older children should have a choice of play areas and there will be few areas where the model will apply on the ground. For example, it is wholly undesirable for children to have to cross main roads to get to play areas. Accordingly, it is recommended to double the above theoretical requirement to allow for these factors, giving a (rounded) quantity standard of 0.6 m<sup>2</sup> per person.

#### Application of the quantity standard

7.6.6 When applying the proposed quantity standard, the Council should:

- Aim to achieve only the minimum level of provision, but with the highest possible quality and play value
- Give priority, in at least the short term, to using developer contributions and any capital investment it can afford to improving the quality, interest, attractiveness, safety and security of existing sites with potential and value
- Encourage, if not require, residential developers to adopt a 'home zone' approach in order to make it possible for children to play safely and informally in their immediate home environment
- Ensure that 'play space' is improved as part of proposed improvements to parks, gardens, natural green space or amenity space

## 7.7 Youth activity areas

Summary	Urban area m <sup>2</sup> per person	Rural area m <sup>2</sup> per person	Bay area m <sup>2</sup> per person	Medina area m <sup>2</sup> per person	Ryde area m <sup>2</sup> per person
Existing quantity standard	None	None	None	None	None
Existing provision	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown
Proposed revised quantity standard	0.4 m <sup>2</sup>	0.4 m <sup>2</sup>	0.4 m <sup>2</sup>	0.4 m <sup>2</sup>	0.4 m <sup>2</sup>
Comparator	Blyth: 0.1 m <sup>2</sup> Scottish Borders: 0.4 m <sup>2</sup> Horsham: 0.2-0.4 m <sup>2</sup>				

Table 7-7 - Youth activity areas

### Theoretical standards

7.7.1 We have used the same basic conceptual model for youth provision as for equipped play, with the following parameters as recommended by Kit Campbell Associates:

- Minimum size: 1,000m<sup>2</sup> (taken from recommended quality standards)
- Distance threshold: 500m (taken from recommended distance thresholds)
- Housing density and occupancy: as above

The conceptual model residential area extends to some 78.5 ha and contains around 5,181 people, giving a theoretical provision standard of around 0.19m<sup>2</sup> per person. However, this assumes that the area requires only a single youth facility and ignores the findings of the local consultation and the need for both choice and the possible issue of territorialism. Accordingly we recommend a doubling of the theoretical minimum standard to 0.4m<sup>2</sup> per person.

### Application of the quantity standard

7.7.2 When applying this quantity standard, the Council should:

- Require developers to involve young people in the design of facilities intended for them
- Support brightly coloured facilities: A Council policy of painting the fencing around ball courts for instance would cheer up several sites and mark them out as intended primarily for young people
- Increase the value of existing teenage and youth facilities by incorporating a range of activities rather than a single use. A MUGA is a high quality addition but its value would be increased by introduction of youth shelters, skate facility, adventure play as well as increased biodiversity. The Council should seek to develop a number of key strategic teenage/youth sites across the Island, with town parks having a good range of teenage facilities as a priority



*Oakfield ARC, Ryde*

## 7.8 Allotments

Summary	Urban area m <sup>2</sup> per person	Rural area m <sup>2</sup> per person	Bay area m <sup>2</sup> per person	Medina area m <sup>2</sup> per person	Ryde area m <sup>2</sup> per person
Existing quantity standard	None	None	None	None	None
Existing provision	1.85	0.52	2.0	1.7	2.5
Proposed revised quantity standard	3 m <sup>2</sup>	3 m <sup>2</sup>	3 m <sup>2</sup>	3 m <sup>2</sup>	3 m <sup>2</sup>
Comparator	Blyth: 4.4 m <sup>2</sup> Scottish Borders: 3-4m <sup>2</sup> Horsham: 1.25m <sup>2</sup>				

Table 7-8 - Allotments

### Proposed quantity standard

- 7.8.1 As the Island appears to have insufficient allotment sites at present to satisfy current and growing demand, including in all 3 Growth Areas, we have proposed a quantity standard above the level of current provision. The Council will need to review the demand for plots annually and monitor waiting lists, which are noted as currently growing due to increased demand, and adjust supply accordingly.

### Application of the quantity standard

- 7.8.2 **New development:** apply the quantity standard, aiming to achieve only the minimum level of provision, but with the highest possible quality and value. Apply the accessibility standard to improve the quality and interest, attractiveness, safety and security of existing sites with potential and value.
- 7.8.3 **Existing areas:** apply the accessibility standard, together with the quality standard. If this test is not satisfied by existing provision, the Council's priority will be to remedy the deficiency.

## 7.9 Sports pitches

Summary	Urban area m <sup>2</sup> per person	Rural area m <sup>2</sup> per person	Bay area m <sup>2</sup> per person	Medina area m <sup>2</sup> per person	Ryde area m <sup>2</sup> per person
Existing quantity standard	16-18m <sup>2</sup>	16-18m <sup>2</sup>	16-18m <sup>2</sup>	16-18m <sup>2</sup>	16-18m <sup>2</sup>
Existing provision	14.1	9.3	9.3	13	18
Proposed revised quantity standard	15m <sup>2</sup>	10m <sup>2</sup>	15m <sup>2</sup>	15m <sup>2</sup>	15m <sup>2</sup>
Comparator	Blyth: 10m <sup>2</sup> Scottish Borders: 15m <sup>2</sup> Horsham: 14m <sup>2</sup>				

\*does not include school playing fields, as most are currently inaccessible

*Table 7-9 - Sports pitches*

### Proposed quantity standard

7.9.1 The current quantity standard is based on the NPFA 6 acre standard. We would **strongly recommend** that the Council research the current usage and provision of sports pitch provision on the Island through a comprehensive survey of sports clubs, usage, pitch quality and potential future needs. This would require the development of a comprehensive Playing Pitch Strategy. We have however proposed a quantity standard until a more robust assessment is carried out, based on existing provision and local consultation feedback.

### Application of the quantity standard

7.9.2 Ideally, the Isle of Wight should have its pitches on a limited number of sites in the towns and villages across the Island as this will maximise economies of scale in development, management and maintenance costs. In particular, the Council should avoid creating more pitch sites as current provision appears about right and local consultation affirms this view, although current provision with the Bay Growth Area is deemed deficient. Accordingly, the Council should not require developers to make any on-site provision but instead require them to contribute to off-site provision on a town by town-wide basis, using patterns of participation in pitch sports as the justification for this approach. This will allow the Council to aggregate contributions from different developments in order to make a worthwhile difference to the quality on priority sites. However, this would need further research through current usage rates.

- 7.9.3 As a result of the initial analysis undertaken and the fact that Isle of Wight has been proved to already be sufficiently provided in most areas against the recommended minimum guidelines, the Council should initially oppose building development on playing fields in all but exceptional cases, whether the land is in public, private or educational use until a more detailed analysis has been undertaken. However, consideration could be given to possible alternative uses of some playing pitch sites that are currently underperforming. This could include potentially selling for development opportunities or re-allocating for other green space uses e.g. upgrading to park status. Sport England would likely oppose such a move but if disposal is considered, capital receipts must be ring-fenced and re-invested into the green space network, whether by improving other nearby pitch provision or used to invest in upgrading to another green space use. It will however continue to oppose development because the loss of any part of a playing field may represent the irretrievable loss of an opportunity for participation in pitch sports, and with it the many benefits which sports brings.
- 7.9.4 The Council should aim to ensure that there is no immediate reduction in the supply of conveniently located, good quality playing fields to satisfy current and future demand.



*Seaview Football Club*

## 8 Accessibility

### 8.1 Introduction

8.1.1 For green spaces or facilities to be of value to people on the Island they have to be accessible. Accessibility is therefore of critical importance to assessing the adequacy of provision on the Island. An evaluation in terms of accessibility to different types of open spaces and recreation facilities has been undertaken.

8.1.2 In order to assess accessibility deficiencies, a range of distance thresholds/accessibility standards for all typologies has been developed. Appropriate walking and driving thresholds have been set. Buffer zones have been set for each typology. The buffer zones are shown on the accessibility maps in Appendix 10.

8.1.3 There are 3 key factors relating to the Isle of Wight's geography which has an important bearing on the formulation of distance thresholds for the Island and determining which communities have 'accessibility deficiencies' to different forms of provision. The key factors are:

- The compact nature of the Island and lack of easy access to neighbouring authority facilities
- The relatively high degree of community severance between the town and some of the rural areas as well as between the rural West of the Island
- The low levels of multiple deprivation and related high levels of car ownership

### 8.2 The nature of distance thresholds

8.2.1 Distance thresholds are not hard facts, but a broad and flexible guide to the distance which people in general will be willing to travel in order to use or visit a facility or space. This point is made in paragraph 5.9 of the Companion Guide to PPG17 by Kit Campbell Associates. They are affected by many issues - such as human factors and individual circumstances and variations in external circumstances.

8.2.2 The distance that people in any particular area travel to spaces or facilities is a function of the distribution of provision, coupled with the range of factors summarised above. In an area with little provision, empirically established distance thresholds will be much higher than in another area with a high level of well distributed provision.

8.2.3 There is a clear difference between people's need to travel and willingness to do so. In parts of the country, for example, people need to travel 50-60 miles to visit an NHS dentist but may not be willing to travel a few hundred metres to their local park if they perceive it as not being worthy of a visit, or if the route is potentially dangerous. Football players may not be willing to travel more than a mile, say, to their local club, but the distance they will need to travel to take part in matches depends primarily on the geographical area covered by the league in which their team plays. The higher a player's standard of skill, the wider this area will be.

### 8.3 Island distance thresholds

8.3.1 Based on considerable recent research on distance thresholds as well as local consultation, we have determined appropriate distance thresholds for straight-line walking and driving distance thresholds. Table 6 provides a summary of the distance thresholds for open space. Appendix 7 provides further details on how these have been determined.

Typology	Accessibility walking threshold	Accessibility driving threshold
Parks and gardens	400 metres	3.3 km
Local amenity green space	400 metres	
Natural and semi-natural green space	1200 metres	3.3 km
Allotments	600 metres	
Outdoor sports facilities	650 metres	3.5 km
Play areas	400 metres	4.5 km
Youth facilities	500 metres	

*Table 8-1 - Straight line distance thresholds for open spaces*

8.3.2 To assist in identifying potential accessibility deficiencies the accessibility thresholds were plotted onto GIS maps. The accessibility maps for each typology located in Appendix 10.

## 8.4 Deficiencies in accessibility

8.4.1 Most forms of green space are multi-functional in nature and serve other uses besides their primary function. For these reasons, it would be wrong to apply the distance thresholds in a mechanical manner and assume that those areas beyond them automatically require additional provision. There will nearly always be a proportion of dwellings slightly beyond the distance thresholds for most forms of provision. Accordingly, we have made a pragmatic judgement based on a number of factors:

- The character of the location: in some areas, amenity green space is not a priority, for example in a residential area where the dwellings have large garden grounds or where there is easy access to rural countryside areas
- Whether the facility or space that requires a Island - wide catchment to support it or is one to which people would generally drive
- Whether there are likely to be sufficient people within the area of deficiency who would support or require a specific type of provision in order to justify the additional spaces or facilities. If so, what form of provision would meet local needs most effectively and economically?
- Quality issues: are the available sites of such unusually high quality that people may be willing to travel further? People will readily travel much further to a higher quality facility, bypassing a poor facility nearby
- Is there any land available for new provision?

8.4.2 We have analysed walking distance thresholds for outdoor sports facilities, play areas, parks and gardens, natural and semi natural spaces, local amenity green space as well as allotments and community gardens. We have then combined parks and gardens, local amenity green space and natural/semi-natural green space, as these are the most easily accessible, as well as often being multi functional to assess any overall wider accessibility deficiencies.

8.4.3 **Island urban areas** - Newport, Ventnor, Ryde, Shanklin, Sandown, Cowes/East Cowes, Totland and Freshwater.

8.4.4 **Allotments and community gardens** - There is reasonable accessibility across the urban areas but particular deficiencies to the north and north west of Newport, the west of Ventnor, mid Shanklin, Binstead, East Cowes and West Wight where none exist.

8.4.5 **Parks and gardens** - For the sites we have audited overall accessibility across the Islands main urban areas is reasonable with Ventnor, Shanklin and Ryde with a number of accessible parks and gardens. There are some deficiencies in Newport and in particular West Wight where no parks and gardens are present.

8.4.6 **Natural/semi-natural green spaces** - As the largest typology area, it is not surprising to see that accessibility is also very good across the whole of the Island urban areas with no deficiencies that are a concern.

- 8.4.7 **Local amenity green space** - with only a 400m threshold for walking, this should be the most accessible of green spaces and this is shown by the very good access across the Island's towns apart from some minor deficiencies in the SW of Newport, south of Cowes, and central Ryde.
- 8.4.8 **Combined parks and gardens/natural/semi-natural/local amenity green space** - as the most accessible types of green space, when these are combined across the urban areas there is total accessibility across the whole of the urban areas with no deficiencies identified.
- 8.4.9 **Sports pitches** - there is almost total accessibility across the urban areas highlighting excellent provision and access to sports facilities with only minor deficiencies in East Cowes.
- 8.4.10 **Children's and young people's facilities** - with a 400m distance threshold for walking, a number of accessibility issues are highlighted, especially in Newport east, centre and north, West Wight, Shanklin centre, Ryde west, Cowes centre and south. In comparison to other areas however, coverage is good.

### Conclusion

- 8.4.11 Access to green space overall within the Island urban areas is excellent with a number of deficiencies highlighted in certain typologies. However, when combined, everyone in the urban areas has access within the walking distance threshold to some kind of green space.

### Island rural areas - including larger villages

- 8.4.12 The use of distance thresholds is particularly relevant within the rural areas as is the classification and typology of open spaces. In many areas within local villages, green space is truly multi functional with recreation grounds often acting as a sports pitch, playing field and local amenity space. We have also derived driving distance thresholds for some of the typologies based on national recommended guidance.
- 8.4.13 **Allotments and community gardens** - Rural provision is supply led and accessibility in relation to walking is reasonable to the eastern half of the Island but with several communities having no access within walking distance. The west of the Island has no provision at all. This is not unusual as the number of properties with gardens in the rural areas is obviously higher than in the urban area itself.
- 8.4.14 **Parks and gardens** - These are few and far between within the rural area with most village recreation grounds being dominated by playing pitches and with a number of village greens and Commons, classed as amenity green space and the Country Parks being classed as natural/semi-natural green space, parks and gardens are less desirable.
- 8.4.15 **Natural and semi-natural green space** - on the doorstep of much of the rural area, both driving and walking thresholds show very good accessibility to this typology, provided by the Country Parks, Commons, and coastal areas in particular. There is access to this typology for all residents within the driving distance threshold.
- 8.4.16 **Local amenity green space** - many villages and rural settlements have local amenity green space and access to it, but as previously stated, this may be classified predominantly as sports pitches.

- 8.4.17 **Combined parks and gardens/natural/semi-natural/local amenity green space** - as the most accessible types of green space, when these are combined across the rural area, there is total accessibility across the whole of the rural area with few deficiencies highlighted at all. Nearly all rural settlements have access to green space when combined.
- 8.4.18 **Sports pitches** - As with the urban areas, walking distance thresholds show excellent accessibility to playing fields across the whole rural area and to a large number of settlements. As previously discussed, teams play at home and away so driving distance thresholds are especially relevant and when applied, shows total coverage across the whole Island.
- 8.4.19 **Children's and young people's facilities** - Access within the rural areas to children and young peoples facilities is poor. There are a number of play facilities in many villages but almost as many without access to fixed play or youth facilities. These obviously need to be within a walking distance threshold to be of any value to the local community.

### Conclusion

- 8.4.20 Accessibility within the Island rural areas is reasonable. Local facilities such as play and allotments are in many areas sporadic and accessibility is an issue with some villages not having any provision. However for the typologies covering natural / semi natural green space and sports pitches, where driving accessibility is more relevant, accessibility is very good with no deficiencies identified.

## 9 Applying provision standards

### 9.1 Introduction

9.1.1 This section provides a series of recommendations on how the different components of the provision standards should be applied.

9.1.2 PPG17 states that planning agreements designed to mitigate the impact of new developments should relate only to deficiencies in quality and quantity. However, in terms of assessing current deficiencies, all three components of the standard must be balanced according to typological and spatial requirements. In broad terms, because of the Isle of Wight's compact as well as rural nature, accessibility is more important than quantity. The Council should therefore use the following policy test:

**Apply either the quantity or accessibility standards, together with the quality standard. If this test is not satisfied by existing provision, the Council's priority should then be to remedy that deficiency.**

9.1.3 Provision standards represent both a requirement in relation to new developments, and an aspiration in relation to areas which have already been developed. While developers can be required to comply with adopted standards for new developments relatively easily, it is more difficult to achieve results in developed areas. In some areas, the only way to achieve a standard might be to demolish buildings in order to release land, and this is clearly unlikely unless long term regeneration initiatives are planned. This is clearly also difficult with many of the towns restricted by the coast to one side and topography restricting growth to the other side, hence the compact nature of many of the Island's towns.

9.1.4 In some circumstances, it may be possible to overcome an identified existing deficiency in a way which is linked to a new development, but developers can be required to fund or provide only the level of community infrastructure required as a direct result of their developments. These issues are discussed in more detail below.

#### Application of provision standards

9.1.5 In general, the Council should aspire to all green spaces and facilities meeting the quality standards. How the accessibility and quantity standards should be applied to each of the typologies of green space set out below.

### 9.2 Natural and semi-natural green space

9.2.1 It is not desirable for accessible natural green space to be a discrete category of provision. Instead, the Council and its partners should adopt a policy of supporting its integration into other forms of green space wherever possible especially on the many sports pitch sites and recreation grounds where biodiversity is low and the site is dominated by pitches. In addition to this strategy, the ongoing development and improvement of green corridors and enhanced access to the countryside should be a key focus for the continuing improvement of the quality and accessibility of natural green space within urban areas.

### Accessibility

- 9.2.2 Every dwelling should be within 1200m of at least one accessible natural and semi natural green space. Every dwelling should be within 2 km of at least one accessible natural green space site of at least 20 Ha (based on Accessible Natural Green Spaces Standards recommended by Natural England)
- 9.2.3 Well located accessible natural and semi natural green space should be given a high degree of protection by the Isle of Wight Council and should be protected by LDF policies relating to nature conservation or specific nature conservation designations.

### Justification

- 9.2.4 Natural and semi natural green spaces offer local residents and visitors the opportunity to experience the great outdoors and to be close to nature. Such sites should be easily accessible to all residents. When coupled with high quality, accessibility is more important than quantity because smaller but higher quality sites should have a greater capacity to accommodate users than larger but lower quality ones. They should also provide a better experience for visitors.

## 9.3 Allotments

### Quantity

- 9.3.1 The amount of provision of allotments should at least match the amount of provision required by the application of the quantity standard.

### Accessibility

- 9.3.2 All dwellings should be within walking distance threshold of at least one allotment site.

### Justification

- 9.3.3 The main need for allotments is in the Island towns where due to their very compact nature, gardens linked to dwellings tend to be small, shared spaces or almost non-existent. In the more affluent, low density leafy areas where dwellings have large gardens demand for allotments is generally lower.

## 9.4 Local amenity green space

- 9.4.1 Most forms of green space are multi-functional and therefore serve a number of purposes, the most important of which is to “soften” and enhance the appearance of an area and provide an attractive setting for buildings and for pathways and other transport routes. When assessing whether there is adequate amenity space in an area, it is important to consider the whole of the green network. Therefore, distance thresholds for amenity green spaces can be applied to other forms of green space, irrespective of their primary purpose, where they serve an amenity function.

### Quantity

- 9.4.2 The total amount of amenity green space should at least match the amount of provision required by the application of the quantity standard. This could include some of the parks that could be downgraded from parks to amenity space or vice versa where there is under provision of parks, amenity green space could be upgraded to meet that deficiency. The latter is the key priority with some sites having the potential to be upgraded to parks status along with a number of recreation grounds dominated by sports pitches.

### Accessibility

- 9.4.3 Every dwelling should be within the walking distance threshold of at least one amenity green space or public access pitch.

### Justification

- 9.4.4 Accessibility is more important than quantity because accessible, high quality green spaces meet local needs better than larger, more distant sites.

## 9.5 Equipped play areas

### Quantity

- 9.5.1 The total quantity of provision should at least match the amount of provision required by the application of the quantity standard.

### Accessibility

- 9.5.2 All dwellings with more than one bedroom should be within the walking distance threshold of at least one town or neighbourhood equipped play area.

### Justification

- 9.5.3 All children should be able to use play areas. These spaces also meet a valuable social need for parents and carers. Accessibility is more important than quantity because many young children will not be able to walk far to a play area.

## 9.6 Sports pitches

### Quantity

- 9.6.1 The total quantity of grass and artificial pitches available to community based clubs and teams should at least match the amount of provision required by the application of the quantity standards.

### Accessibility

- 9.6.2 All dwellings should be within walking distance of at least one football pitch and the driving distance threshold of at least one publicly accessible pitch site or recreation ground.

### Justification

9.6.3 All residents should have the opportunity to take part in the pitch sport of their choice. In the first instance this requires that there should be enough pitches and accessibility is secondary as the competitive nature of sports pitches means that participants will not always use the pitch nearest their home. In addition, approximately half of all matches are played 'away'.

9.6.4 Cricket and rugby teams tend to draw their membership from a wider area than football teams and many football pitches are also used by young people for mini-soccer or casually for 'kick-about'. Especially in the more built-up areas, there is a need for football pitches to be more accessible than cricket or rugby pitches.

### 9.7 Other outdoor sports facilities

#### Quantity

9.7.1 The total quantity of provision should at least match the amount of provision required by the application of the provision standards.

#### Accessibility

9.7.2 All dwellings must be within the driving threshold of at least one bowling-green, multi-use games area (MUGAs) and tennis court. (Multi-use games areas may be on school sites provided there is public access).

#### Justification

9.7.3 Bowling greens are particularly popular amongst older people and in principle every resident of the town should be able to enjoy the sport within a reasonable distance of home. However, for a bowling club to be viable it needs around 80-100 members.

9.7.4 MUGAs and tennis courts are needed most in densely populated areas and tend to be used by young people, many of whom lack personal transport. Therefore a walking distance threshold is most appropriate. For both forms of provision it is possible to improve their capacity by using artificial surfaces or floodlighting and therefore accessibility is more important than quantity.

### 9.8 Urban parks, gardens and recreation grounds

#### Quantity

9.8.1 The total quantity of provision should at least match the amount of provision required by the application of the quantity standard.

#### Accessibility

9.8.2 All dwellings should be within the walking distance threshold of at least one park, garden, recreation ground or a sports pitch site providing opportunities for informal recreation.

### Justification

- 9.8.3 All residents should have easy access to a park, garden or recreation ground. This means that accessibility is more important than quantity. Suitably designed and managed outdoor sports facilities can fulfil some of the functions of parks and recreation grounds, but there will be a need for additional space over and above that required for the pitches and support accommodation alone. Where particular forms of green space can be multifunctional - and recreation grounds generally contain a mix of several recreation opportunities - this makes the most effective use of land.

## 9.9 Youth facilities

### Quantity

- 9.9.1 The total quantity of provision should at least match the amount of provision required by the quantity standard.

### Accessibility

- 9.9.2 All dwellings with more than one bedroom should be within walking distance of at least one neighbourhood youth area.

### Justification

- 9.9.3 Young people tend to be a neglected group in terms of access to community infrastructure, partly because their needs can be difficult to define. Indeed, many young people are unable to give a clear answer when asked to identify the facilities they would like in their area; and if they can, may be fickle with the result that what they want today may be ignored tomorrow. However, young people have every right to “hang about” and indulge in largely harmless but sometimes noisy activities close to home, so there is a clear need to provide for them. Given the nature of youth culture and the difficulties of territorialism, it is important that young people should have a degree of choice, through access to more than one youth area within their neighbourhood.

## 10 Key green space issues and options

### 10.1 Introduction

10.1.1 This Section outlines the main issues and options facing the Council if it is to achieve a vision for green spaces on the Island. A vision for the Isle of Wight's open spaces should guide and support the Council's actions in improving the Island's open space and green infrastructure network. We recommend that the following vision that includes references to 'quality', 'value' and 'sustainability' is adopted in the emerging LDF Core Strategy.

***“The Isle of Wight will provide a network of accessible, high quality, highly valued green spaces which its local communities are proud of, and which promotes sustainability, supports biodiversity and extensively contributes to the economic, social and environmental aspirations of the Island”.***

10.1.2 The vision has a number of key components:

- The network of spaces and facilities is more important than any individual space or facility: the whole is greater than the sum of the parts
- Every space and facility does not have to be suitable for every possible use. Spaces that are designed and used for specific purposes can be of as much value as multi functional spaces. The Council will therefore adopt a different regime for different forms of provision
- Quality and accessibility on the Island, are more important than quantity
- Meeting local needs is more important than retaining spaces if they have no or very low value
- Green Spaces and facilities support 'liveability'. Green spaces in particular help to form an image of the Island for residents and visitors
- Green spaces support sustainability in various ways; provided they are managed in a manner which makes this possible
- Green spaces should be designed and managed in ways which support and encourage biodiversity

10.1.3 We suggest that any future strategy for Green Spaces should be developed around 3 key issues:

1. A Green Spaces Strategy Action Plan - a draft framework for the creation of the strategy that will guide all future green spaces and public places improvements based on a defined action plan
2. A Green Spaces Consultative Network - identifying a way in which the local community will be actively involved in decisions about the management and development of our green spaces and public places
3. Measuring progress - suggesting how to measure what has been done and how much there is still to do

- 10.1.4 We recommend that the Council develop a series of policies in relation to green space based on the following 10 principles:

### Stewardship

#### 1. The Council's stewardship role

As the representative of the residents of the Island, the Council should manage green spaces in the interests of the whole community.

#### 2. Green space history and heritage

The Council should protect and preserve the historic and architectural heritage found within the Island's green spaces. They should ensure that this heritage is protected, now and for the future.

### Management

#### 3. Green spaces as community assets

The Island's green spaces are an essential and permanent community resource. The Council should work in partnership with partners, users, and stakeholders and involve them in the "decision making" process relating to the use, development and management of the Island's green spaces.

#### 4. Investing in community green space

The Council recognise that green spaces require investment. They should actively secure resources for the regeneration of many of their green spaces, in partnership with the local community and external agencies based on a developed "strategic network". The proposed Strategic Network will be developed as part of the proposed Green Infrastructure Strategy. They should ensure any investment is sustainable, maintenance regimes are developed and where new developments and initiatives are introduced, maintenance issues are taken into account in the design, management and ongoing sustainability of the facility.

### Use

#### 5. Universal access to green spaces

The Island's green spaces are available for use by all sections of the local community, including the business community. The Council should support and promote fully inclusive access and use of the Island's green spaces for all lawful purposes.

#### 6. The right to safety

All sections of the local community have the right to use the Island's green spaces in safety and without fear of crime. The Council should work in partnership with local people and other agencies in order to provide cleaner, safer and greener environments.

## **7. Education for citizenship**

The Council should recognise that their green spaces are a rich resource for learning, not only about the living environment, but the Island's history and culture. They should encourage the use of their green spaces as important centres of education as well as places to celebrate the Island's cultural diversity.

## **8. Spaces for play, sport and recreation**

The Island's green spaces are an essential community resource in providing quality spaces for play, sport and recreation. They should ensure that these uses are provided for, in health, enjoyment and well being of the Island's local communities.

### **Environmental protection**

## **9. Community living space**

The Council should continue to develop their green spaces to ensure that they remain 'living spaces'. They should protect and enhance the Island's biodiversity, maximise resource efficiency by increasing recycling opportunities, establish a better use of essential energy sources and minimise the use of pesticides and chemicals.

## **10. Aiming high and ensuring quality**

The Council should make best use of resources available to ensure the highest quality for all their green spaces. They should strive to adopt the principles of the Civic Trust Green Flag standard across all of their green spaces and assess the quality and value of them all as set out in the recently revised PPG17. Their aim should be to build on their current successes and gain Green Flag awards in all its main town parks.

## 10.2 Key issues

10.2.1 We have identified a number of key issues for the future of open space, sport and recreation provision on the Isle of Wight, including:

- Involving communities
- Urban parks and gardens
- Local amenity green space and open space on housing estates
- Natural and semi-natural green space areas
- Green corridors and creating the links
- Equipped play areas and youth provision
- Sports pitches and multi-courts
- Churchyards and cemeteries
- Allotments and community gardens
- Reviewing green space opportunities
- Partnership working with schools and education authorities
- Green space design, management and maintenance
- Funding

10.2.2 Each of these issues is taken in turn in detail below.

## 10.3 Involving communities

### Needs

10.3.1 As has been identified throughout the work towards this Study, there is a need to develop better ways of involving local communities in green spaces design, management, maintenance and development. There are only a very small number of Friends Groups established on the Island in relation to parks and open spaces and there are clear benefits to developing groups to work with green space management.

10.3.2 A key dimension of successful green space management is a willingness to engage local communities in the task, and to think creatively about means to make this happen. Community participation needs to happen within a framework which gives weight to different voices within the community, and that is not un-duly influenced by sectional interests. Involving the voluntary sector in urban green space management can tap an under-utilised resource. There is also a need to work with other partners with an interest in the management of green space, e.g. the Wildlife Trust, Housing Associations, Wight Wildlife, Island 2000, Civic Organisations and Town and Parish Councils.

## Opportunities

- 10.3.3 With the proposed development of a green infrastructure strategy and possible opportunities for restoration of a number of urban parks (Northwood Park), there are clear immediate opportunities to involve communities in green spaces on the Island.
- 10.3.4 The lower 'value' of many of the Island's green spaces however means that the involvement of local communities is essential in delivering a better valued and more diverse green space network in relation to management, maintenance, development and assisting in attracting funding to allow much of this to happen. One of the issues identified during consultation was the need for a more diverse use of green space as many sites were considered high quality but low in contributing any real value to the local community.

## 10.4 Urban parks and gardens

### Needs

- 10.4.1 The quality of parks, gardens and recreation grounds on the Island is very good but the overall value needs considerably improving with the average score currently between 40% and 80%. Any future Strategy should identify that urban parks and gardens should be a strategic priority and should be managed and maintained to a high standard to ensure all are high quality and high value. The successful management of the Island's green spaces depends upon a correct understanding of the nature and needs of different types of green spaces. Locally derived green space typologies are valuable to differentiate between green space types and their appropriate aspirations and management regimes.
- 10.4.2 A coherent management strategy is required to cope with the diversity of green spaces, and to integrate management regimes, preferably under the auspices of one organisation.
- 10.4.3 A clear distinction between ownership and management responsibilities for urban green space can help to establish a unified and integrated management regime.

## Opportunities

- 10.4.4 A theme coming from consultation has been the need to diversify many green spaces which are currently underperforming. These sites should have a management plan or management brief for each one of them identified. This would give the following:
- A vision on how the site should develop
  - A prescriptive work programme for grounds staff to work from
  - A clear view of opportunities and constraints to maintenance and development
  - A collection of information - all in one place - pertaining to the site
  - Recognition of the various aspects, which come together to make the site what it is e.g. community use, nature conservation, heritage interest, recreational use. It is important to remember that each site and the community who use it has its own identity and needs and that management plans need to reflect this diversity
  - Strong guidelines for how each site can improve its wildlife value by incorporating habitat improvement plans where possible
  - Standards of maintenance
  - Long-term development plans for the site
- 10.4.5 There are opportunities as part of the drive to involve communities in developing Management Plans for the parks, gardens and recreation grounds within the Island. To achieve these opportunities, there is a need to develop a “**strategic green space network**” which should identify the following:
- Parks and gardens hierarchy (Strategic and Neighbourhood parks)
  - Principal natural and semi-natural green space sites
  - Country parks
  - Strategic green corridors
  - Key sports sites
  - Sites of regional importance
  - Play and youth facilities
- 10.4.6 The quality of all the strategic network sites should meet the quality standards requirements in all respects. The priorities should be to enhance the quality of the sites in the strategic network and also those sites that score above 50% for quality and value. They will be relatively cost effective to improve.

- 10.4.7 There is a particular need to increase the quality and value of a number of sites in the towns, as well as in the rural parts, in particular the recreation grounds. Most scored highly but were assessed on their current condition. Whilst Parks and Gardens such as Northwood Park, Ventnor Park, Puckpool Park and many of the esplanade Gardens scored highly, much of the infrastructure was beginning to look “tired and worn”. Maintenance is of a high standard but there is now a considerable need for investment in a large number of Island Parks and Gardens. Northwood Park is a good example, despite scoring 75% in quality, would not currently pass as a Green Flag Park with its infrastructure generally in a poor condition and no long term plan in place to “secure its future”. It is also recommended that any development in the towns as well as rural areas should focus on meeting the needs of young people and providing sports facilities alongside generating economic growth.
- 10.4.8 The Council continues to manage and improve open spaces and facilities proactively with limited resources. However, a Green Spaces Strategy should emphasise the need to continue to improve proactively at a more strategic level, concentrating on enhancing the value of its green space network. Community involvement in the strategic network of open spaces and in improving sites is critical. Although involving the community can require increased resources, these efforts should result in lower maintenance costs through an increase in local pride and less vandalism/abuse through peer pressure.
- 10.4.9 We suggest delivering this change through a series of defined Action Plans with short, medium and long term targets. These should all be broadly achievable but many may only be aspirational and should be aligned to the Vision created and the 10 principles proposed.

## 10.5 Local amenity green space and open space in residential areas

### Needs

- 10.5.1 The Island has sufficient quantities of amenity green space in the towns and most villages and where less accessible in certain localised areas, other typologies of open space such as natural green space, parks, pitches or play areas provide sufficient green space provision.

### Opportunities

- 10.5.2 Local Amenity green space which is found in most residential areas should at least be managed and maintained to a standard where it is kept at least clean and safe as these spaces are mostly on people’s immediate doorsteps and therefore most visible.
- 10.5.3 However, despite the quantity of local amenity green space seemingly being sufficient within the Island, there is seemingly a shift in national perception of local amenity green space and the role of housing providers, primarily Registered Social Landlords (RSL’s). RSL’s are now responsible for significant areas of green space nationally and in cases the amount of green space probably exceeds that of public parks.
- 10.5.4 A recent article in ‘Green Places’ (June 2007) describes social housing green spaces as *“the Cinderella of green space”* and that *“the spaces in and around social housing are largely poor.... A banal mosaic of rye grass deserts, punished shrubberies, tired lollipop trees, incessant railings and sweeping concrete vistas...”*

- 10.5.5 For all the deprivations that public parks suffer, they are often nothing compared to the poverty of the spaces in and around much of the social housing. This is also the case in areas of the Island's towns. Although not to the extent of many of our inner city areas, much of the land in the towns is reasonably well maintained but very low in value, offering nothing or little to the local community. RSL's recognise that landscape management is not their core business, and they rarely consider the consequences of policies and programmes that do not focus on housing provision.
- 10.5.6 With recent stock transfers, land is usually transferred with the stock, but without the staff skills and resources that previously managed this. Another key barrier has been the acute lack of information on the spaces social landlords are responsible for and they are often omitted from local authority open space strategies. Many of the issues raised by the likes of CABE Space and others are generic also to spaces of social housing.
- Significant legacy of poorly designed and under-managed spaces
  - Accumulative disinvestment over many decades
  - Competition for resources
  - Low aspirations in terms of design and use
  - High fragmentation
  - Ambiguous ownership for users, and tensions between private and communal needs
  - Existence of marked social territories
  - Increasing complexity of tenure
  - Competition for use (such as car parking, development)
  - Absence of regulatory framework
- 10.5.7 However, why are these spaces important? Many of these areas house people that are described as 'disadvantaged', with disproportionately high numbers of black and minority ethnic residents, single parents, long term unemployed, and those suffering physical and mental disabilities. 70% of social residents have incomes from the poorest two fifths of overall income distribution, and over 50% of working age residents are not in paid employment.
- 10.5.8 Areas of housing are more likely to be poor environmental quality with public space deficiency. Research has shown there is a strong correlation between economic and environmental deprivation.
- 10.5.9 On the Island, many of the estates have large areas of local amenity green space, with some good examples of 'rye grass deserts'. Largely well maintained, as described previously, they offer little to local communities in the way of activity, biodiversity value or recreational value.

10.5.10 There has been a plethora of recent initiatives to encourage the development of local amenity and community spaces through initiatives such as Doorstep Greens, Millennium Greens and Neighbourhood Greens. There has also been some excellent work in areas like Sheffield, with the Green Estate's Work on the Manor Estate as well as work in Knowsley where Landlife have transformed many green deserts and proposed work to be developed by RSL's such as the Peabody Trust and Places for People. There are clearly opportunities on the Island to improve the appearance and value of green areas associated with Social housing. However, as previously discussed, the green space profession needs to assist RSL's by:

1. Getting to understand social landlords and how they operate (they know little about landscape design and management)
2. Ensuring sectoral language, information and guidance better reflect the spaces owned and managed by social landlords
3. Engaging with social landlords on strategic green space policies and projects
4. Establishing grants and funding streams to encompass the quasi-public and communal spaces they manage

10.5.11 We would recommend the Council involve Social Housing providers on the Island in strategic development of open space and that certainly in any future Open Space Strategy, RSL's are included.

## 10.6 Natural and semi-natural green spaces

### Needs

10.6.1 The Island clearly has a rich and varied landscape and contains many Sites of Special Scientific Interest, several Local Nature Reserves, a number of Regionally Important Geological Sites, 50% of the total land area is designated as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, RAMSAR SPA and SAC sites, and considerable Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation. The Council's major challenge will be to accommodate housing growth, employment, community needs and infrastructure whilst delivering a high quality of life and minimising harm to its environmental assets. To assist the Council in this challenge all the Island's accessible nature conservation sites were audited.

10.6.2 Quality of Natural green spaces ranged from 63% to 100% but with the majority over 80%. The Value scores ranged from 13% to 69% but as many of these sites provided a specific facility, were less likely to have a range of facilities on offer hence the lower scores in value. A large number of natural green spaces were not audited where existing public access was not available. However many of these, which included woodland copses, land between high and low water are significantly important to visual amenity and local biodiversity. Any future study on Green Infrastructure should acknowledge the presence of these areas.

## Opportunities

- 10.6.3 Natural green spaces offer local residents and visitors the opportunity to experience the great outdoors and to be close to nature. The nature conservation sites should be easily accessible to all residents. The development of a strategic network is therefore an essential part of improving access and opportunities to these areas. These sites should be protected from development where appropriate. The introduction of site specific management plans should be encouraged for all nature conservation sites and Country Parks with the larger sites such as The Duver, Hersey Nature Reserve, Parkhurst Forest Park, Medina Riverside Park, Fort Victoria Country Park, Golden Hill Fort Country Park enhanced to Green Flag Standard. Management of current sites by Wight Wildlife and the National Trust is to be commended, particularly many of the Commons and Downs.
- 10.6.4 We would wholly recommend the enhancement of many of the local recreation grounds e.g. Simeon Road Rec, Havenstreet Rec, and local amenity open spaces within housing areas by improving local biodiversity, in consultation with local people, stakeholders and Social Landlords. As discussed, there are many good examples found where value has been increased by simply improving local biodiversity.

## 10.7 Green corridors and creating the links

### Needs

- 10.7.1 Green corridors are an important part of the green space network providing visual, wildlife and sustainable transport links between urban spaces and the countryside. They are especially a feature of the Island, with its cycle routes and disused railway lines, many of which are high quality and highly valued.

### Opportunities

- 10.7.2 As many of these are historically important, there are opportunities available for utilising many of these routes as “green links” and are important in the development of the strategic green space network and developing green infrastructure. They are important visual links as well as wildlife corridors. The Island has already developed a number of green links with publicised routes developed as leisure routes. We have identified the importance of Green Corridors, particularly the Cowes Cycleway corridor, the Shide Path and Coastal Walk.
- 10.7.3 There is no logic in developing provision standards for green corridors. Their importance is more in the linking of open spaces and in the creation of the strategic network across the Island. There are a number of important corridors already established within the Island but there is considerable potential to develop further green links and improving wider links to the countryside around the towns. These routes however, need integrating into the wider green space network.

## 10.8 Equipped play areas and youth provision

### Needs

- 10.8.1 As a result of the lack of youth provision, teenagers tend to colonise play facilities intended for younger children and their quality suffers as a result. In surveys conducted, local people identified increasing youth provision as a priority (53% highlighted it as a priority). At the same time, there are issues in relation to the value rather than the quality of play facilities in many areas as well as accessibility.

## Opportunities

10.8.2 As part of the initiative to improve green space quality across the Island, opportunities exist to improve the quality and accessibility of play areas and youth facilities. The re-development of youth and play facilities is an excellent way in which to empower a local community to get involved. The Council is currently working towards improving a number of play areas as part of the national playbuilder programme. However, a key requirement of many of the play facilities examined was despite the high quality of many play and teenage facilities, overall value could be enhanced by improving play value. Many sites were “ticking the box” and could be improved by more diverse ranges of play, whether improving the play space or by improving the design of the play area itself. Teenage facilities likewise were of good quality with some excellent skate facilities incorporated, but likewise, a skate park only provides limited use for a number of teenagers, whereas more integrated multi activity teenage sites would give far greater value to local young people. Such sites could include games court, basketball, seating, skateboarding, BMX as well as adventure play. Simply providing a MUGA or seating pod is not sufficient for a section of society that others see as often being a problem. The skate facility at Seaclose Park in Newport is popular but there is considerable potential for an Island wide destination youth facility in this location including MUGA facilities, BMX, extended and more challenging skate facilities as well as a destination play area.

## 10.9 Sports pitches and multi-courts

### Needs

10.9.1 The spread of pitches across the Island is good to very good. There are some issues related to the quality of provision at some particular pitch sites, as well as changing facilities but the audit and consultation highlighted most pitches as either good to very good quality.

### Opportunities

10.9.2 Any future Playing Pitch Strategy should be aimed at “ensuring an adequate supply and distribution of playing fields to meet demand and to encourage participation in chosen sports”.

10.9.3 The need for improvements to pitch quality and changing pavilions at certain sites needs to be identified in much more detail. It is important that the Council seek to develop a comprehensive Playing Pitch Strategy as highlighted as part of this audit report. The feedback from clubs and sports organisations was very poor and requires a more concerted detailed piece of work to ascertain quality and usage. There is currently a perception that there is a satisfactory provision of sports pitches across the Island based on existing recent consultation (37% felt current provision was about right, with 31% feeling slightly more was needed), but more detailed analysis is required. If this is indeed the case, there could be opportunities for re-allocation of land to other uses which could bring about considerable improvements to key strategic sites.

10.9.4 In addition with the development of any new facilities to satisfy the demands of all sectors of football, any new pavilions supported by the Council and partners should now be inclusive of the requirements of women’s football and provide segregated changing facilities and toilets.

## 10.10 Churchyards and cemeteries

### Needs

10.10.1 The quality of churchyards and cemeteries is very good with good overall provision. Churchyards are not provided in response to standards, but as an integral part of (mainly long established) churches or other places of worship. Some of those who visit them do so to tend a specific grave and if so distance is largely immaterial. Churchyards are nonetheless useful as places for quiet contemplation and often have nature conservation value.

### Opportunities

10.10.2 In areas where there are deficiencies of certain typologies of open space, churchyards and cemeteries are important in providing areas of natural green space or areas for gentle passive recreation, such as walking, sitting, fresh air or quiet contemplation.

## 10.11 Allotments and community gardens

### Needs

10.11.1 The quality of allotments across the Island is exceptional. Access within allotments is however, often poor due to path networks, poor surfacing and steep gradients in some places. However, many sites have been improved over the years and as a result, tenancy rates are very high with many fully let. 56% of those consulted as part of this study felt slightly more to a lot more were needed.

### Opportunities

10.11.2 There is potential for reallocating areas of land to satisfy demand for allotments, particularly in re-allocating existing land within some typologies e.g. Amenity Green Spaces to allotments. The continued upgrading of sites is also required with improved accessibility. The Council should encourage further partnerships on allotment sites through such initiatives as “Green Gym”, as well as develop partnerships with the PCT. Funding is also now available for Healthy Eating initiatives through the Big Lottery Fund.

## 10.12 Reviewing green space opportunities

### Issues

10.12.1 The Isle of Wight overall has sufficient quantity of green spaces but there is a conflict between the strongly expressed desire for even better management and maintenance and what the Council can afford as well as increasing the diversity of many sites.

### Opportunities

10.12.2 There are opportunities to rationalise provision and possibly convert some spaces to other uses or dispose of some sites which currently offer little to local communities although these are minimal. The Audit information identifies those spaces that are of least value to community or wildlife currently shown as low quality and low value.

- 10.12.3 If the Council is able to find alternative uses for some sites but retain its present revenue budget for management and maintenance, it will be able to spend slightly more on each site it retains. However there will inevitably be strong opposition to any disposal of green spaces. It is imperative that further localised consultation is carried out as part of any rationalisation process.
- 10.12.4 What is clear is that many sites are offering limited opportunities in relation to a variety of facilities, hence low values and poor multi functionality. Opportunities for rationalisation are limited and the opportunities for creation of new spaces is also limited therefore the challenge is in enhancing existing open spaces where multi functionality of use is available. A Recreation Ground that simply provides a sports pitch and toddlers play area, whilst important, often has the capacity for providing much more including improved local biodiversity, youth facility, opportunities for allotment or community gardening whilst still providing its original function. The Council as part of any green spaces strategy should look at identifying sites based on the proposed strategic network that could be enhanced through improved multi functionality.



*Rural Play area*

## 10.13 Reviewing green space opportunities

### Issues

10.13.1 Out of hours access to school facilities varies from one school to another across the Island. A number of sports clubs have identified that they currently use some school facilities. However, given the heightened security of recent years, many school grounds are now locked, while others still have open access but with little formal community use. Some schools however have been noted as having multi and dual use by the school as well as community use out of hours, particularly in the rural areas. These have been mapped accordingly. It is important to note however that any after school access could be withdrawn at any time. No school sites were audited as part of this audit due to limited access but consultation has highlighted mixed views on quality of facilities on offer. The recent move to a two tier structure education system and schools reorganisation will allow and encourage greater access to school facilities and opportunities for further investment in sports facilities.

### Needs

10.13.2 As with community indoor sports facilities, there is a growing need to modernise school indoor facilities. At the same time, there is a need to promote better school club-community club links and pathways.

### Opportunities

10.13.3 The Council has the opportunity to work more closely with school governors to develop artificial turf pitches and community pitch sports clubs. Where a school has indoor facilities which are suitable for community use, there is an obvious opportunity to widen the concept of the community club.

10.13.4 For schools with current community use, there are opportunities to co-ordinate and promote these arrangements more effectively. An approach could be adopted using revenue-subsidised dry leisure facilities, such as sports halls, mainly as gateways to introduce adults and children to new sports experiences. Those who have an interest in a particular sport can then be referred to sports specific clubs, usually at school sites, geared up to welcome new members and meet their needs.

## 10.14 Green space design, management and maintenance

### Issues

10.14.1 Local people have indicated that they would like to continue see their green spaces managed and maintained to a high standard. There are however pressures in many areas, with new open spaces being introduced as part of recent and proposed developments e.g. Pan in Newport. At the same time, it was highlighted as part of the Audit that whilst maintenance of open spaces and sport and recreation facilities was generally high, design and subsequent detailing was poor. There is often an over cluttering of street furniture without any consideration of the overall character and design of the space, and often refurbishment is ad hoc and opportunity driven rather than considered or based on any long term plan.

## Needs

- 10.14.2 Improving design, management and maintenance is not simply a matter of doing things differently, but generally also requires additional resources.
- 10.14.3 This would require either an increase in the grounds maintenance budget or reducing the numbers of spaces to be managed and maintained by the Council whilst retaining its present revenue budget.

## Opportunities

- 10.14.4 Some sites such as the several Recreation Grounds would benefit from being kept free of litter by a team of volunteers. However, there are obvious limits to the extent to which volunteers can deliver long term management and maintenance. Likewise, while wildflower meadows are welcome and contribute much to the nature conservation value of a site as well as providing maintenance saving, it would not be desirable to restructure all green spaces to wildflower meadows. The development of Management Plans, based on Green Flag criteria and CABE Space guidance, in partnership with the local community or Friends Groups, offers good opportunities to see the quality of many sites improve, by localised involvement and site specific management plans. The involvement of a landscape architect or urban designer in long term development plans would ensure unity of design in many of the Islands open spaces as well as ongoing involvement in longer term management plans for key open spaces. A Design Guide for open spaces used successfully elsewhere would also ensure clarity in design.

## 10.15 Funding

- 10.15.1 This would require either an increase in the grounds maintenance revenue budget, allocation of capital resources aimed at reinvestment or reducing the numbers of spaces to be managed and maintained by the Council while retaining its present revenue budget.

## Issues

- 10.15.2 In recent years, maintenance resources have declined. Restricted resources have forced the Council to adopt a strategy of focusing on a fewer flagship sites, particularly key parks, esplanades, sea front gardens the town centre sites and countryside sites. This approach of enhancing a few key sites has been successful, with some of the town parks being subject to good quality enhancement and redevelopment programmes. However, the outcome is that the general quality of the rest of the green space network is declining or remained as 'status quo'. The 3 key areas have been identified where changes could be implemented:
1. Increasing the funding/resources available
  2. Altering the management and maintenance regimes
  3. Prioritising fewer sites

### Needs

10.15.3 Given that there is little need for much in the way of new provision and that this should be a lower priority than enhancing existing provision, the main need is for the Council either to increase its revenue funding for green space maintenance or reduce the amount of green space it maintains.

### Opportunities

10.15.4 Developer contributions from any future development proposals on the Island may support further green space or facility enhancement or development but are likely to be limited to certain areas. However, there may be opportunities for 'pooled' Section 106 contributions towards the strategic network which have 'Island wide' benefits. The Council should also maximise every opportunity in relation to grant funding to include the following:

- Heritage Lottery Fund
- Landfill Tax Credit Scheme
- Big Lottery Fund
- Sport England
- Arts Council
- Groundwork UK
- National Trust
- Department for Communities and Local Government
- Department For Children, Schools and Families
- Natural England

10.15.5 Planning agreements require developers to contribute towards green space provision through Section 106 agreements. It is an intention of PPG17 that developers' contributions should increasingly be used to enhance the quality of existing green space that would be used by residents of a proposed development within existing urban areas.

10.15.6 The Council should consider a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) on Planning Obligations. This would require developer contributions in the form of standard charges towards the cost of informal open space, play and sports pitch facilities to address the cumulative impact of small schemes on the existing provision within the Island. On-site provision and on-going maintenance is generally required for the larger schemes instead of the standard charge.

## **10.16 The need for enhancement of existing provision**

10.16.1 Not every proposed development will require additional provision. If the amount and quality of provision within the appropriate distance thresholds of the proposed development site will match or exceed the adopted provision standards when the development is complete, there is no need for either additional provision or the enhancement of any existing provision.

10.16.2 If either or both of these pre-conditions are not met, however, the Council will be justified in requiring the developer either to make on-site provision or contribute to the provision or enhancement of off-site provision.

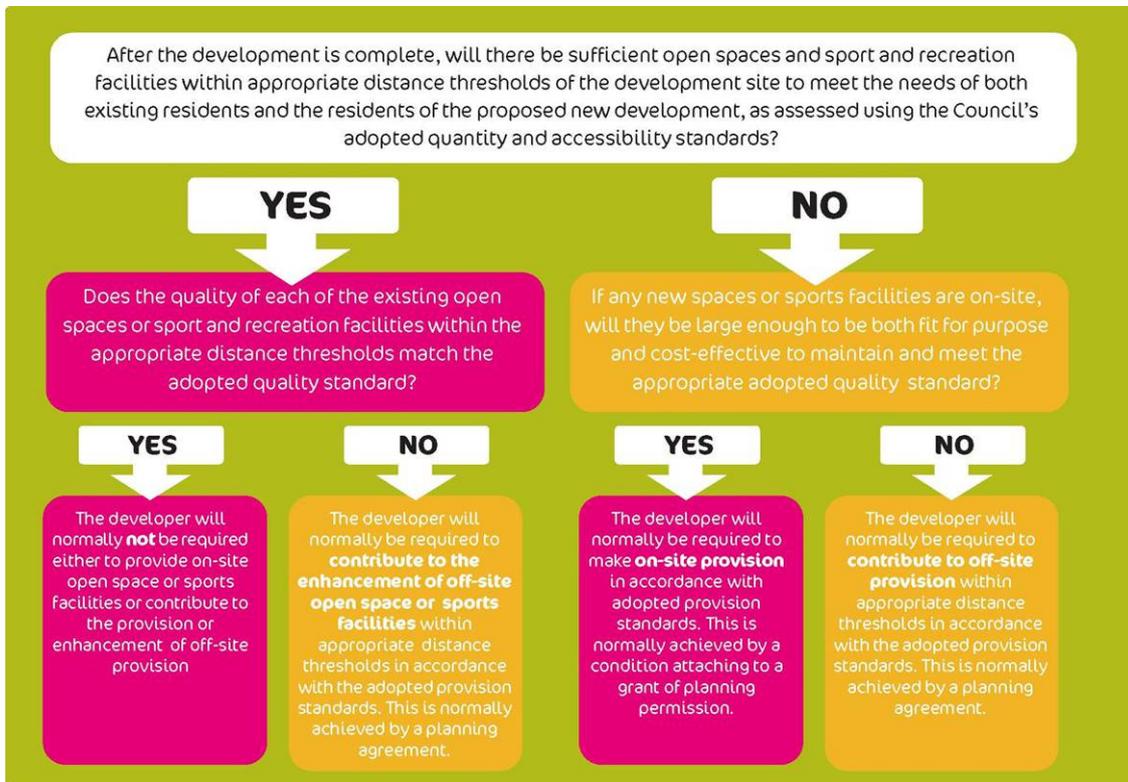
10.16.3 Before seeking contributions to off-site provision, the Council should ensure they are satisfied that they will be able to use them within the distance threshold of the proposed development site. The Council should also seek contributions to its strategic network of open spaces provided an “Islandwide” benefit can be proved such as towards Island sports facilities, Strategic parks such as Northwood Park, Ventnor Park, Seaclose Park or any of the principal countryside sites.

## **10.17 Contributions to the enhancement of existing provision**

10.17.1 The need for the enhancement of existing provision arises when there will be a sufficient quantity of provision within the distance threshold of the development site after the development, but some elements of this provision fail to meet the adopted quality standard. The developer’s contribution and/or commuted sum for each type of provision is then whichever is the lower of:

- The contribution calculated using the method prescribed in the PPG17 Guidance
- The capital cost or commuted sum per sq m of provision multiplied by the quantity of provision requiring enhancement

10.17.2 The diagram below summarises a logical 'line of thinking' which the Council should use to apply our provision standards as part of the development control process:



10.17.3 The Council should seek developer contributions based on a Development Control model based on information available from the PPG17 Audit, provision and quality standards for off site contributions based on the above model.



*Simeon Road Recreation Ground, Ryde*

## 11 Conclusions and recommendations

### 11.1 Introduction

11.1.1 This final Section brings together our strategic conclusions and recommendations.

#### Basic policy aspiration

- There should be a strategic network of Island wide parks, sports and recreation grounds with countryside sites, complemented by neighbourhood and local play spaces serving specific areas of the Island
- All the principal towns should have at least one Green Flag Park and every neighbourhood should have at least a neighbourhood park
- The best use of land should be made and which would imply that the Council will see low value low quality spaces as an opportunity to make better use of land
- Every dwelling should be within the distance threshold of at least one site in each typology which meets the quality standards and is of high value
- Overall, the quantity of provision should at least match the quantity standard on an Island wide basis, in both rural and urban areas. Where there is a shortfall, the Council should seek to provide new facilities in those areas with lowest provision

### 11.2 Delivering change

11.2.1 As we have outlined, the Council can choose to continue to manage 'the status quo' or to improve open spaces and facilities proactively.

11.2.2 Community involvement in the strategic network of open spaces and in improving sites is critical. Although involving the community can require increased resources, these efforts should result in lower maintenance costs through an increase in local pride and less vandalism/abuse through peer pressure.

### 11.3 The strategic network level

11.3.1 We recommend that the Strategic Island-wide network should be based on:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Strategic parks:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Ventnor Botanical Gardens, Ventnor</li> <li>○ Ventnor Park, Ventnor</li> <li>○ Litten Park, Newport</li> <li>○ Northwood Park, Cowes</li> <li>○ Rylstone Gardens, Shanklin</li> <li>○ Los Altos Park, Sandown</li> <li>○ Big Mead Park, Shanklin</li> <li>○ Totland Rec, Totland</li> <li>○ Puckpool Park, Seaview</li> <li>○ Esplanade Gardens, Shanklin</li> <li>○ Appley Park, Ryde</li> </ul> </li> <li>• <b>Neighbourhood parks:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Medina Arboretum</li> <li>○ Jubilee Road Rec, East Cowes</li> <li>○ HMS Royal George Gardens, Ryde</li> <li>○ Arctic Park, Cowes</li> <li>○ Lake Common, Lake</li> <li>○ Newport Road Rec, Lake</li> <li>○ Eastcliff Prom, Shanklin</li> <li>○ Tower Cottage Gardens, Shanklin</li> <li>○ Batts Road, Shanklin</li> <li>○ Lake Gardens, Sandown</li> <li>○ Battery Gardens, Sandown</li> <li>○ Ferncliff Gardens, Sandown</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Sandhams Ground, Sandown</li> <li>○ Vernon Square, Ryde</li> <li>○ Waterside Pool, Ryde</li> <li>○ Simeon Road Rec, Ryde</li> <li>○ Jubilee Gardens, Bembridge</li> <li>○ Adelaide Place Gardens, Ryde</li> <li>○ Havenstreet Rec, Havenstreet</li> <li>○ Victoria Grove Rec, East Cowes</li> <li>○ Oakfield Rec, Ryde</li> <li>○ Stroud Recreation Ground, Freshwater</li> <li>○ Binstead Road Rec, Binstead</li> <li>○ Colwell Common, Colwell</li> <li>○ Brighstone Recreation Ground, Brighstone</li> <li>○ Calbourne Recreation Ground, Calbourne</li> <li>• <b>Green Corridors</b>, in particular the existing cycleways, and coastal paths</li> <li>• <b>Countryside Sites</b> including all Country Parks: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ The Duver</li> <li>○ Hersey Nature Reserve;</li> <li>○ Shide Quarry;</li> <li>○ Parkhurst Forest Park;</li> <li>○ Medina Riverside Park;</li> <li>○ Combley Great Wood</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ St. Catherine's Down;</li> <li>○ Newtown NNR;</li> <li>○ Brighstone Forest;</li> <li>○ Mottistone Common;</li> <li>○ Grammars Common;</li> <li>○ Tennyson Down;</li> <li>○ Needles and West High Down;</li> <li>○ Headon Warren;</li> <li>○ Fort Victoria Country Park;</li> <li>○ Golden Hill Fort Country Park;</li> <li>○ Yar Estuary;</li> <li>○ St. Boniface Down;</li> <li>○ Luccombe Chine;</li> <li>○ Bleak Down;</li> <li>○ Arreton Down;</li> <li>○ St. George's Down;</li> <li>○ Chillerton Down;</li> <li>○ Pyle Shute;</li> <li>○ Southdown; and</li> <li>○ Blackwater Hollow.</li> <li>• <b>Sports facilities at:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ All Recreation Grounds;</li> <li>○ Seaclose Park, Newport;</li> <li>○ Steyne Park, Bembridge;</li> <li>○ West Wight Sports Centre, Freshwater;</li> <li>○ Rew Valley Sports Centre</li> </ul> </li> <li>• <b>Play and Youth Facilities.</b></li> </ul>
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11.3.2 The quality of all the strategic network sites should meet the quality standards requirements in all respects.

#### 11.4 The neighbourhood provision level

11.4.1 The spaces that the Council should upgrade to make **high quality/high value** as a priority are all included in the proposed strategic network.

#### 11.5 Opportunities and sites for review

11.5.1 The Council should review those spaces we have classed as being of genuinely low quality and low value, in the light of wider planning policies and if appropriate, seek alternative uses.

#### 11.6 Policy proposals plan

11.6.1 We have mapped the effects of the above policy proposals outlined and described above. The principal map shows the proposed strategic network taking into account the strategic and neighbourhood parks as proposed.

